

Literary works influenced by alchemy

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Ben Jonson - Mercury Vindicated

This is a masque by the playwright Ben Jonson entitled *Mercury Vindicated from the Alchemists at Court*, which was performed on Jan 1st and 6th, 1616. It is not often appreciated that Ben Jonson, although well known for his play the Alchemist of 1611, also wrote a number of these allegorical (often satirical) masques for the Court. It shows that alchemical ideas had in the first decades of the 17th century penetrated to a great extent into the culture of that time.

Mercury Vindicated from the Alchemists at Court

By Gentlemen, the King's Servants.

After the loud music, the scene discovered, being a laboratory, or alchemist's workhouse; Vulcan looking to the registers, while a Cyclope, tending the fire, to the cornets began to sing.

Cyclope. Soft, subtile fire, thou soul of art,
Now do thy part
On weaker Nature, that through age is lamed.
Take but thy time, now she is old,
And the sun her friend grown cold,
She will no more in strife with thee be named.
Look but how few confess her now
In cheek or brow !
From every head, almost, how she is frightened !
The very age abhors her so
That it learns to speak and go
As if by art alone it could be righted.

The song ended, Mercury appeared, thrusting out his head and afterward his body at the tunnel of the middle furnace, which, Vulcan espying, cried out to the Cyclope.

Vulcan. Stay, see! our Mercury is coming forth; art and all the elements assist. Call forth our philosophers. He will be gone, he will evaporate. Dear Mercury ! Help ! He flies. He is 'scaped. Precious golden Mercury, be fixed; be not so volatile. Will none of the sons of art appear ?

In which time Mercury, having run once or twice about the room, takes breath and speaks.

Mercury. Now the place and goodness of it protect me. One tender-hearted creature or other save Mercury and free him. Ne'er an old gentlewoman i' the house that has a wrinkle about her to hide me in? I could run into a serving-woman's pocket now, her glove, any little hole. Some merciful farthingale among so many be bounteous and undertake me: I will stand close up anywhere to escape this polt-footed philosopher, old Smug here of Lemnos, and his smoky family. Has he given me time to breathe? O the variety of torment that I have endured in the reign of the Cyclops, beyond the most exquisite wit of tyrans. The whole household of 'em are become alchemists (since their trade of armor-making failed them) only to keep themselves in fire for this winter; for the mischief of a secret that they know, above the consuming of coals and drawing of usquebagh. Howsoever they may pretend under the specious names of Geber, Amold, Lully, Bombast of Hohenheim to commit miracles in art and treason again' nature. And as if the title of philosopher, that creature of glory, were to be fetched out of a furnace, abuse the curious and credulous nation of metal-men through the world, and make Mercury their instrument. I am their crude and their sublimate, their precipitate and their unctuous, their male and their female, sometimes their hermaphrodite; what they list to style me. It is I that am corroded and exalted and sublimed and reduced and fetched over and filtered and washed and wiped; what between their salts and their sulfurs, their oils and their tartars, their brines and their vinegars, you might take me out now a soused Mercury, now a salted Mercury, now a smoked and dried Mercury, now a powdered and pickled Mercury: never herring, oyster, or cucumber passed so many vexations; my whole life with 'em hath been an exercise of torture; one, two, three, four and five times an hour ha' they made me dance the philosophical circle, like an ape through a hoop, or a dog in a wheel. I am their turn-spit indeed: they eat or smell no roast meat but in my name. I am their bill of credit still, that passes for their victuals and house-room. It is through me they ha' got this corner o' the court to cozen in, where they shark for a hungry diet below stairs, and cheat upon your under-officers, promising mountains for their meat, and all upon Mercury's security. A poor page o' the larder they have made obstinately believe he shall be physician for the household next summer; they will give him a quantity of the quintessence, shall serve him to cure kibes, or the mormal o' the shin, take away the pustules i' the nose, and Mercury is engaged for it. A child o' the scullery steals all their coals for 'em too, and he is bid sleep secure, he shall find a corner o' the philosophers' stone for't under his bolster one day, and have the proverb inverted. Against which, one day I am to deliver the buttery in, so many firkins of aurum potable as it delivers out bombards of budge to them between this and that. For the pantry, they are at a certainty with me, and keep a tally: an ingot, a loaf, or a wedge of some five pound weight, which is a thing of nothing, a trifle. And so the blackguard are pleased with a toy, a lease of life (for some 999), especially those o' the boiling house: they are to have Medea's kettle hung up, that they may souse into it when they will and come out renewed like so many stripped snakes at their pleasure. But these are petty engagements, and (as I said) below the stairs; marry, above here, perpetuity of beauty (do you hear, ladies?), health, riches, honors, a matter of immortality is nothing. They will calcine you a grave matron (as it might be a mother o' the maids) and spring up a young virgin out of her ashes, as fresh as a phoenix; lay you an old courtier o' the coals like a sausage or a bloat-herring, and after they ha' broiled him enough, blow a soul into him with a pair of bellows till he start up into his galliard that was made when Monsieur was here. They profess familiarly to melt down all the old sinners o' the suburbs once in half a year into fresh gamesters again. Get all the cracked maidenheads and cast 'em into new ingots; half the wenches o' the town are alchemy. Sec, they begin to muster again and draw their forces out against me! The genius of the place defend me ! You that are both the Sol and Jupiter of this sphere, Mercury invokes your majesty against the sooty tribe here; for in your favor only I grow recovered and warm.

At which time Vulcan entering with a troupe of threadbare alchemists prepares them to the first antimasque.

Vulcan. Begin your charm, sound music, circle him in and take him:
if he will not obey, bind him.

They all danced about Mercury with variety of changes, whilst he defends himself with his caduceus, and after the dance spake.

Mercury. It is in vain, Vulcan, to pitch your net in the sight of the fowl thus: I am no sleepy Mars to be caught i' your subtle toils. I know what your aims are, sir, to tear the wings from my head and heels, and lute me up in a glass with my own seals, while you might wrest the caduceus out of my hand to the adultery and spoil of Nature, and make your accesses by it to her dishonor more easy. Sir, would you believe it should be come to that height of impudence in mankind that such a nest of fire-worms as these are (because their patron Mulciber heretofore has made stools stir and statues dance, a dog of brass to bark, and--which some will say was his worst act--a woman to speak) should therefore with their heats called balnei cineris, or horse dung, profess to outwork the sun in virtue and

contend to the great act of generation, nay, almost creation ? It is so, though. For in yonder vessels which you see in their laboratory they have enclosed materials to produce men, beyond the deeds of Deucalion or Prometheus (of which one, they say, had the philosophers' stone and threw it over his shoulder, the other the fire, and lost it). And what men are they, they are so busy about, think you? Not common or ordinary creatures, but of rarity and excellence, such as the times wanted and the age had a special deal of need of: such as there was a necessity they should be artificial, for nature could never have thought or dreamt o' their composition. I can remember some o' their titles to you, and the ingredients: do not look for Paracelsus' man among 'em, that he promised you out of white bread and deal-wine, for he never came to light. But of these, let me see; the first that occurs, a master of the duel, a carrier of the differencies. To him went spirit of ale, a good quantity, with the amalgama of sugar and nutmegs, oil of oaths, sulfur of quarrel, strong waters, valor precipitate, vapored o'er the helm with tobacco, and the rosin of Mars with a dram o' the business, for that's the word of tincture, the business. Let me alone with the business, I will carry the business. I do understand the business. I do find an affront i' the business. Then another is a fencer i' the mathematics, or the town's cunning man, a creature of art too; a supposed secretary to the stars, but indeed, a kind of lying intelligencer from those parts. His materials, if I be not deceived, were juice of almanacs, extraction of ephemerides, scales of the globe, filings of figures, dust o' the twelve houses, conserve of questions, salt of confederacy, a pound of adventure, a grain of skill, and a drop of truth. I saw vegetals too, as well as minerals, put into one glass there, as adder's tongue, tittle-bane, niter of clients, tartar of false conveyance, aurum palpabile, with a huge deal of talk, to which they added tincture of conscience with the feces of honesty; but for what this was I could not learn, only I have overheard one o' the artists say, out o' the corruption of a lawyer was the best generation of a broker in suits: whether this were he or no, I know not.

Vulcan. Thou art a scorner, Mercury, and out of the pride of thy protection here mak'st it thy study to revile art, but it will turn to thine own contumely soon. Call forth the creatures of the first class and let them move to the harmony of our heat, till the slanderer have sealed up his own lips to his own torment.

Mercury. Let 'em come, let 'em come, I would not wish a greater punishment to thy impudence.

There enters the second antimasque of imperfect creatures, with helms of limbecks on their heads, whose dance ended, Mercury proceeded.

[**Mercury.**] Art thou not ashamed, Vulcan, to offer in defense of thy fire and art, against the excellence of the sun and Nature, creatures more imperfect than the very flies and insects that are her trespasses and scapes ? Vanish with thy insolence, thou and thy impostors, and all mention of you melt before the majesty of this light, whose Mercury henceforth I profess to be, and never again the philosophers'. Vanish, I say, that all who have but their senses may see and judge the difference between thy ridiculous monsters and his absolute features.

At which the whole scene changed to a glorious bower wherein Nature was placed with Prometheus at her feet, and the twelve masquers standing about them. After they had been a while viewed, Prometheus descended and Nature after him, singing.

Nature. How young and fresh am I tonight,
To see't kept day by so much light,
And twelve my sons stand in their maker's sight!
Help, wise Prometheus, something must be done
To show they are the creatures of the sun,
That each to other
Is a brother,

And Nature here no stepdame, but a mother
Chorus. Come forth, come forth, Prove all the numbers then
That make perfection up, and may absolve you men.

[**Nature.**] But show thy winding ways and arts,
Thy risings and thy timely starts
Of stealing fire from ladies' eyes and hearts.
Those softer circles are the young man's heaven,
And there more orbs and planets are than seven,
To know whose motion
Were a notion
As worthy of youth's study as devotion.

Chorus. Come forth, come forth, prove all the time will gain,
For Nature bids the best, and never bade in vain.

The first dance, after which this song.

Prometheus. How many 'mongst these ladies here
Wish now they such a mother were !

Nature. Not one, I fear,
And read it in their laughters.
There's more, I guess, would wish to be my daughters.

Prometheus. You think they would not be so old
For so much glory.

Nature. I think that thought so told
Is no false piece of story.

'Tis yet with them but beauty's noon,
They would not grandams be too soon.

Prometheus. Is that your sex's humor?
'Tis then since Niobe was changed that they have left that tumor.

Chorus. Move, move again in forms as heretofore.

Nature. 'Tis form allures.
Then move; the ladies here are store.

Prometheus. Nature is motion's mother, as she is yours;

Chorus. The spring whence order flows, that all directs,
And knits the causes with th'effects.

The main dance. Then dancing with the ladies; then their last dance. After which, Prometheus calls to them in song.

Prometheus. What, ha' you done
So soon?

And can you from such beauty part?
You'll do a wonder more than I.

I woman with her ills did fly,
But you their good and them deny.

Chorus. Sure, each hath left his heart
In pawn to come again, or else he durst not start.

Nature. They are loath to go,
I know,

Or sure they are no sons of mine.
There is no banquet, boys, like this,

If you hope better, you will miss;
Stay here, and take each one a kiss.

Chorus. Which if you can refine
The taste knows no such cates, nor yet the palate wine.

No cause of tarrying shun:
They are not worth his light, go backward from the sun.

Ben Jonson - The Alchemist

Ben Jonson (1573-1637) was one of the foremost of the Jacobean dramatists. He wrote a number of plays (both comedies and tragedies) and a series of stylised masques for the Court. He had a keen eye for the follies of his contemporaries, and in this play he particularly satirises human gullibility. He displays considerable understanding of alchemy and makes many jokes based on its symbolism (and in two places even refers to Dee and Kelly). He obviously expected the audience for this play to have some knowledge of alchemical ideas. Jonson's *The Alchemist* written in 1610, thus presents us with a satirical window through which we can see one way in which alchemy was perceived in the opening decade of the 17th century.

[The First Act](#)
[The Second Act](#)
[The Third Act](#)
[The Fourth Act](#)
[The Fifth Act](#)

The characters in the play:-

Subtle - The Alchemist.

Face - The house-keeper, otherwise Lovewit's butler Jeremy.

Dol Common - The conspirator of Subtle and Face.

Lovewit - The owner of the house in which Subtle sets up his work.

Dapper - A Lawyer's Clerk, who wants Subtle to help him in gambling.

Abel Druggier - A Tobacco merchant, who wants Subtle to assist him, through magic in setting up an apothecaries shop.

Sir Epicure Mammon - A Knight, who wants Subtle's help in making him wealthy.

Tribulation Wholesome - A Pastor of Amsterdam.

Ananias - A Deacon, colleague of Tribulation. These religious brothers want Subtle's help in minting money to help establish Puritanism in Britain.

Kastril - The angry boy, recently come into an inheritance. He wants Subtle's help in aiding him to win fights.

Dame Pliant - A widow, sister of Kastril, wants to know her fortune in marriage.

Pertinax Surly - A Gamester, who sees through the deceptions.

Neighbours, Officers, Attendants.

The action takes place in Lovewit's house in London, while he is away in the country.

Ben Jonson - The Alchemist Act I

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ACT THE FIRST

SCENE I: A room in Lovewit's House.

[Enter Face, in a captain's uniform, with his sword drawn, and Subtle with a vial, quarrelling, and followed by Dol Common.]

Face. Believe 't, I will.

Subtle. Thy worst. I fart at thee.

Dol. Have you your wits? why, gentlemen! for love -

Face. Sirrah, I'll strip you... out of all your sleights.

Dol. Nay, look ye, sovereign, general, are you mad-men?

Subtle. O, let the wild sheep loose. I'll gum your silks
With good strong water, an you come.

Dol. Will you have

The neighbours hear you? will you betray all!

Hark ! I hear somebody.

Face. Sirrah -

Subtle. I shall mar

All that the tailor has made, if you approach.

Face. You most notorious whelp, you insolent slave,

Dare you do this?

Subtle. Yes, faith; yes, faith.

Face. Why, who

Am I, my mungrel! who am I?

Subtle. I'll tell you,

Since you know not yourself.

Face. Speak lower, rogue.

Subtle. Yes, you were once (time's not long past) the good,

Honest, plain, livery-three-pound-thrum, that kept

Your master's worship's house here in the Friars,

For the vacations -

Face. Will you be so loud

Subtle. Since, by my means, translated suburb-captain.

Face. By your means, doctor dog !

Subtle. Within man's memory,

All this I speak of.

Face. Why, I pray you, have I

Been countenanced by you, or you by me?

Do but collect, sir, where I met you first.

Subtle. I do not hear well.

Face. Not of this, I think it.

But I shall put you in mind, sir; - at Pie-corner,

Taking your meal of steam in, from cooks' stalls,

Where, like the father of hunger, you did walk

Piteously costive, with your pinch'd-horn-nose,

And your complexion of the Roman wash,

Stuck full of black and melancholic worms,

Like powder-corns shot at the artillery-yard.

Subtle. I wish you could advance your voice a little.

Face. When you went pinn'd up in the several rags

You had raked and pick'd from dunghills, before day;

Your feet in mouldy slippers, for your kibes;

A felt of rug, and a thin threaden cloak,

That scarce would cover your no buttocks -

Subtle. So, sir !

Face. When all your alchemy, and your algebra,

Your minerals, vegetals, and animals,

Your conjuring, cozening, and your dozen of trades,

Could not relieve your corps with so much linen

Would make you tinder, but to see a fire;

I gave you countenance, credit for your coals,

Your stills, your glasses, your materials;

Built you a furnace, drew you customers,

Advanced all your black arts; lent you, beside,

A house to practise in -

Subtle. Your master's house !

Face. Where you have studied the more thriving skill

Of bawdry since.

Subtle. Yes, in your master's house.

You and the rats here kept possession.

Make it not strange. I know you were one could keep

The buttery-hatch still lock'd, and save the chippings,

Sell the dole beer to aqua-vita men,

The which, together with your Christmas vails

At post-and-pair, your letting out of counters,

Made you a pretty stock, some twenty marks,

And gave you credit to converse with cobwebs,
Here, since your mistress' death hath broke up house.

Face. You might talk softer, rascal.

Subtle. No, you scarab,
I'll thunder you in pieces: I will teach you
How to beware to tempt a Fury again,
That carries tempest in his hand and voice.

Face. The place has made you valiant.

Subtle. No, your clothes. -
Thou vermin, have I ta'en thee out of dung,
So poor, so wretched, when no living thing
Would keep thee company, but a spider, or worse?
Rais'd thee from brooms, and dust, and watering-pots,
Sublimed thee, and exalted thee, and fix'd thee
In the third region, call'd our state of grace?
Wrought thee to spirit, to quintessence, with pains
Would twice have won me the philosopher's work?
Put thee in words and fashion, made thee fit
For more than ordinary fellowships?
Giv'n thee thy oaths, thy quarrelling dimensions,
Thy rules to cheat at horse-race, cock-pit, cards,
Dice, or whatever gallant tincture else?
Made thee a second in mine own great art?
And have I this for thanks ! Do you rebel,
Do you fly out in the projection !
Would you be gone now?

Dol. Gentlemen, what mean you?

Will you mar all?

Subtle. Slave, thou hadst had no name -

Dol. Will you undo yourselves with civil war?

Subtle. Never been known, past equi clibanum,
The heat of horse-dung, under ground, in cellars,
Or an ale-house darker than deaf John's; been lost
To all mankind, but laundresses and tapsters,
Had not I been.

Dol. Do you know who hears you, sovereign!

Face. Sirrah -

Dol. Nay, general, I thought you were civil.

Face. I shall turn desperate, if you grow thus loud.

Subtle. And hang thyself, I care not.

Face. Hang thee, collier,
And all thy pots, and pans, in picture, I will,
Since thou hast moved me -

Dol. O, this will o'erthrow all.

Face. Write thee up bawd in Paul's, have all thy tricks
Of cozening with a hollow cole, dust, scrapings,
Searching for things lost, with a sieve and sheers,
Erecting figures in your rows of houses,
And taking in of shadows with a glass,
Told in red letters; and a face cut for thee,
Worse than Gamaliel Ratsey's.

Dol. Are you sound?

Have you your senses, masters?

Face. I will have

A book, but barely reckoning thy impostures,
Shall prove a true philosopher's stone to printers.

Subtle. Away, you trencher-rascal!

Face. Out, you dog-leach !

The vomit of all prisons -

Dol. Will you be

Your own destructions, gentlemen?

Face. Still spew'd out

For lying too heavy on the basket.

Subtle. Cheater !

Face. Bawd !

Subtle. Cow-herd !

Face. Conjurer !

Subtle. Cut-purse !

Face. Witch !

Dol. O me!

We are ruin'd, lost! have you no more regard

To your reputations I where's your judgment? 'sight,

Have yet some care of me, of your republic -

Face. Away, this brach! I'll bring thee, rogue, within

The statute of sorcery, tricesimo tertio

Of Harry the eighth: ay, and perhaps, thy neck

Within a noose, for laundring gold and barbing it.

Dol. [Snatches Face's sword.] You'll bring your head within a cockscomb, will you?

And you, sir, with your menstrue - [dashes Subtle's vial out of his hand.] - gather it up.

'Sdeath, you abominable pair of stinkards,

Leave off your barking, and grow one again,

Or, by the light that shines, I'll cut your throats.

I'll not be made a prey unto the marshal,

For ne'er a snarling dog-bolt of you both.

Have you together cozen'd all this while,

And all the world, and shall it now be said,

You've made most courteous shift to cozen yourselves?

You will accuse him! you will bring him in [to Face].

Within the statute! Who shall take your word?

A whoreson, upstart, apocryphal captain,

Whom not a Puritan in Blackfriars will trust

So much as for a feather: and you, too, [to Subtle].

Will give the cause, forsooth! you will insult,

And claim a primacy in the divisions !

You must be chief! as if you only had

The powder to project with, and the work

Were not begun out of equality?

The venture tripartite? all things in common?

Without priority! 'Sdeath ! you perpetual curs,

Fall-to your couples again, and cozen kindly,

And heartily, and lovingly, as you should,

And lose not the beginning of a term,

Or, by this hand, I shall grow factious too,

And take my part, and quit you.

Face. 'Tis his fault;

He ever murmurs, and objects his pains,

And says, the weight of all lies upon him.

Subtle. Why, so it does.

Dol. How does it! do not we

Sustain our parts !

Subtle. Yes, but they are not equal.

Dol. Why, if your part exceed to-day, I hope

Ours may, to-morrow, match it.

Subtle. Ay, they may.

Dol. May, murmuring mastiff! ay, and do. Death on me!

Help me to throttle him. [Seizes Subtle by the throat.]

Subtle. Dorothy! mistress Dorothy !

'Ods precious, I'll do any thing. What do you mean?

Dol. Because o' your fermentation and cibation,

Subtle. Not I, by heaven -

Dol. Your Sol and Luna-help me. [to Face.]

Subtle. Would I were hang'd then ! I'll conform myself.

Dol. Will you, sir? do so then, and quickly: swear.

Subtle. What should I swear?

Dol. To leave your faction, sir,

And labour kindly in the common work.

Subtle. Let me not breathe if I meant aught beside.

I only used those speeches as a spur to him.

Dol. I hope we need no spurs, sir. Do we?

Face. 'Slid, prove to-day, who shall shark best.

Subtle. Agreed.

Dol. Yes, and work close and friendly.

Subtle. 'Slight, the knot

Shall grow the stronger for this breach, with me.

[They shake hands.]

Dol. Why, so, my good baboons ! Shall we go make

A sort of sober, scurvy, precise neighbours,

That scarce have smiled twice since the king came in,

A feast of laughter at our follies? Rascals,

Would run themselves from breath, to see me ride,

Or you t' have but a hole to thrust your heads in,

For which you should pay ear-rent? No, agree.

And may don Provost ride a feasting long,

In his old velvet jerkin and stain'd scarfs,

My noble sovereign, and worthy general,

Ere we contribute a new crewel garter

To his most worsted worship.

Subtle. Royal Dol !

Spoken like Claridiana, and thyself.

Face. For which at supper, thou shalt sit in triumph,

And not be styled Dol Common, but Dol Proper...

[Bell rings without.]

Subtle. Who's that? one rings. To the window, Dol.

[Exit Dol.] - pray heaven,

The master do not trouble us this quarter.

Face. O, fear not him. While there dies one a week

O' the plague, he's safe, from thinking toward London:

Beside, he's busy at his hop-yards now;

I had a letter from him. If he do,

He'll send such word, for airing of the house,

As you shall have sufficient time to quit it:

Though we break up a fortnight, 'tis no matter.

[Re-enter Dol.]

Subtle. Who is it, Dol?

Dol. A fine young quodling.

Face. O, My lawyer's clerk, I lighted on last night,

In Holborn, at the Dagger. He would have
(I told you of him) a familiar,
To rifle with at horses, and win cups.

Dol. O, let him in.

Subtle. Stay. Who shall do't?

Face. Get you

Your robes on: I will meet him, as going out.

Dol. And what shall I do?

Face. Not be seen; away ! [Exit Dol.]

Seem you very reserv'd.

Subtle. Enough. [Exit.]

Face. [Aloud and retiring.] God be wi' you, sir,

I pray you let him know that I was here:

His name is Dapper. I would gladly have staid, but -

Dapper. [Within.] Captain, I am here.

Face. Who's that? - He's come, I think, doctor.

[Enter Dapper.]

Good faith, sir, I was going away.

Dapper. In truth,

I am very sorry, captain.

Face. But I thought

Sure I should meet you.

Dapper. Ay, I am very glad.

I had a scurvy writ or two to make,

And I had lent my watch last night to one

That dines to-day at the sheriff's, and so was robb'd

Of my pass-time.

[Re-enter Subtle in his velvet cap and gown.]

Is this the cunning-man?

Face. This is his worship.

Dapper. Is he a doctor?

Face. Yes.

Dapper. And have you broke with him, captain?

Face. Ay.

Dapper. And how!

Face. Faith, he does make the matter, sir, so dainty,

I know not what to say.

Dapper. Not so, good captain.

Face. Would I were fairly rid of it, believe me.

Dapper. Nay, now you grieve me, sir. Why should you wish so?

I dare assure you, I'll not be ungrateful.

Face. I cannot think you will, sir. But the law

Is such a thing-and then he says, Read's matter

Falling so lately.

Dapper. Read! he was an ass,

And dealt, sir, with a fool.

Face. It was a clerk, sir.

Dapper. A clerk !

Face. Nay, hear me, sir, you know the law

Better, I think -

Dapper. I should, sir, and the danger:

You know, I shew'd the statute to you.

Face. You did so.

Dapper. And will I tell then ! By this hand of flesh.

Would it might never write good court-i-land more.
If I discover. What do you think of me,
That I am a chiaus?

Face. What's that?

Dapper. The Turk was here.

As one would say, do you think: I am a Turk?

Face. I'll tell the doctor so.

Dapper. Do, good sweet captain.

Face. Come, noble doctor, pray thee let's prevail;
This is the gentleman, and he is no chiaus.

Subtle. Captain, I have return'd you all my answer.
I would do much, sir, for your love - But this
I neither may, nor can.

Face. Tut, do not say so.

You deal now with a noble fellow, doctor,
One that will thank you richly; and he is no chiaus:
Let that, sir, move you.

Subtle. Pray you, forbear -

Face. He has four angels here.

Subtle. You do me wrong, good sir.

Face. Doctor, wherein? to tempt you with these spirits!

Subtle. To tempt my art and love, sir, to my peril.
Fore heaven, I scarce can think you are my friend,
That so would draw me to apparent danger.

Face. I draw you ! a horse draw you, and a halter,
You, and your flies together -

Dapper. Nay, good captain.

Face. That know no difference of men.

Subtle. Good words, sir.

Face. Good deeds, sir, doctor dogs-meat. 'Slight, I bring you
No cheating Clim o' the Cloughs, or Claribels,
That look as big as five-and-fifty, and flush;
And spit out secrets like hot custard -

Dapper. Captain !

Face. Nor any melancholic under-scribe,
Shall tell the vicar; but a special gentle,
That is the heir to forty marks a year,
Consorts with the small poets of the time,
Is the sole hope of his old grandmother;
That knows the law, and writes you six fair hands,
Is a fine clerk, and has his cyphering perfect,
Will take his oath o' the Greek Testament,
If need be, in his pocket; and can court
His mistress out of Ovid.

Dapper. Nay, dear captain -

Face. Did you not tell me so

Dapper. Yes; but I'd have you
Use master doctor with some more respect.

Face. Hang him, proud stag, with his broad velvet head ! -
But for your sake, I'd choke, ere I would change
An article of breath with such a puckfist:
Come, let's be gone. [Going.]

Subtle. Pray you let me speak with you.

Dapper. His worship calls you, captain.

Face. I am sorry
I e'er embark'd myself in such a business.

Dapper. Nay, good sir; he did call you.
Face. Will he take then?
Subtle. First, hear me -
Face. Not a syllable, less you take.
Subtle. Pray you, sir -
Face. Upon no terms, but an assumpsit.
Subtle. Your humour must be law.
[He takes the four angels.]
Face. Why now, sir, talk.
Now I dare hear you with mine honour. Speak.
So may this gentleman too.
Subtle. Why, sir - [Offering to whisper Face.]
Face. No whispering.
Subtle. Fore heaven, you do not apprehend the loss
You do your self in this.
Face. Wherein? for what !
Subtle. Marry, to be so importunate for one,
That, when he has it, will undo you all:
He'll win up all the money in the town.
Face. How !
Subtle. Yes, and blow up gamester after gamester,
As they do crackers in a puppet-play.
If I do give him a familiar,
Give you him all you play for; never set him:
For he will have it.
Face. You are mistaken, doctor.
Why, he does ask one but for cups and horses,
A rifling fly; none of your great familiars.
Dapper. Yes, captain, I would have it for all games.
Subtle. I told you so.
Face. [Taking Dapper aside.] 'Slight, that is a new business !
I understood you, a tame bird, to fly
Twice in a term, or so, on Friday nights,
When you had left the office, for a nag
Of forty or fifty shillings.
Dapper. Ay, 'tis true, sir;
But I do think now I shall leave the law,
And therefore -
Face. Why, this changes quite the case.
Do you think that I dare move him?
Dapper. If you please, sir;
All's one to him, I see.
Face. What ! for that money
I cannot with my conscience; nor should you
Make the request, methinks.
Dapper. No, sir, I mean
To add consideration.
Face. Why then, sir,
I'll try. - [Goes to Subtle.] Say that it were for all games, doctor?
Subtle. I say then, not a mouth shall eat for him
At any ordinary, but on the score,
That is a gaming mouth, conceive me.
Face. Indeed !
Subtle. He'll draw you all the treasure of the realm,
If it be set him.
Face. Speak you this from art !

Subtle. Ay, sir, and reason too, the ground of art.
He is of the only best complexion,
The queen of Fairy loves.

Face. What! is he?

Subtle. Peace.

He'll overhear you. Sir, should she but see him -

Face. What?

Subtle. Do not you tell him.

Face. Will he win at cards too?

Subtle. The spirits of dead Holland, living Isaac,
You'd swear, were in him; such a vigorous luck
As cannot be resisted. 'Slight, he'll put
Six of your gallants to a cloak, indeed.

Face. A strange success, that some man shall be born to !

Subtle. He hears you, man -

Dapper. Sir, I'll not be ingrateful.

Face. Faith, I have confidence in his good nature:

You hear, he says he will not be ingrateful.

Subtle. Why, as you please; my venture follows yours.

Face. Troth, do it, doctor; think him trusty, and make him.

He may make us both happy in an hour;
Win some five thousand pound, and send us two on't.

Dapper. Believe it, and I will, sir.

Face. And you shall, sir. [Takes him aside.]

You have heard all?

Dapper. No, what was't? Nothing, I, sir.

Face. Nothing !

Dapper. A little, sir.

Face. Well, a rare star

Reign'd at your birth.

Dapper. At mine, sir! No.

Face. The doctor

Swears that you are -

Subtle. Nay, captain, you'll tell all now.

Face. Allied to the queen of Fairy.

Dapper. Who' that I am?

Believe it, no such matter -

Face. Yes, and that

You were born with a cawl on your head.

Dapper. Who says so!

Face. Come,

You know it well enough, though you dissemble it.

Dapper. I'fac, I do not: you are mistaken.

Face. How !

Swear by your fac, and in a thing so known
Unto the doctor? how shall we, sir, trust you
In the other matter? can we ever think,
When you have won five or six thousand pound,
You'll send us shares in't, by this rate?

Dapper. By Jove, sir,

I'll win ten thousand pound, and send you half.

I' fac's no oath.

Subtle. No, no, he did but jest.

Face. Go to. Go thank the doctor: he's your friend,
To take it so.

Dapper. I thank his worship.

Face. So !

Another angel.

Dapper. Must I?

Face. Must you ! 'sight,

What else is thanks! will you be trivial ? - Doctor,

[Dapper gives him the money.]

When must he come for his familiar?

Dapper. Shall I not have it with me !

Subtle. O, good sir!

There must a world of ceremonies pass;

You must be bath'd and fumigated first:

Besides, the queen of Fairy does not rise

Till it be noon.

Face. Not, if she danced, to-night.

Subtle. And she must bless it.

Face. Did you never see

Her royal grace yet?

Dapper. Whom?

Face. Your aunt of Fairy?

Subtle. Not since she kist him in the cradle, captain;

I can resolve you that.

Face. Well, see her grace,

Whate'er it cost you, for a thing that I know.

It will be somewhat hard to compass; but

However, see her. You are made, believe it,

If you can see her. Her grace is a lone woman,

And very rich; and if she take a fancy,

She will do strange things. See her, at any hand.

'Slid, she may hap to leave you all she has:

It is the doctor's fear.

Dapper. How will't be done, then?

Face. Let me alone, take you no thought. Do you

But say to me, captain, I'll see her grace.

Dapper. Captain, I'll see her grace.

Face. Enough. [Knocking within.]

Subtle. Who's there?

Anon. - Conduct him forth by the back way.

[Aside to Face.]

Sir, against one o'clock prepare yourself;

Till when you must be fasting; only take

Three drops of vinegar in at your nose,

Two at your mouth, and one at either ear;

Then bathe your fingers' ends and wash your eyes,

To sharpen your five senses, and cry hum

Thrice, and then but as often; and then come. [Exit.]

Face. Can you remember this ?

Dapper. I warrant you.

Face. Well then, away. It is but your bestowing

Some twenty nobles 'mong her grace's servants,

And put on a clean shirt: you do not know

What grace her grace may do you in clean linen.

[Exeunt Face and Dapper.]

Subtle. [Within.] Come in ! Good wives, I pray you forbear me now;

Troth I can do you no good till afternoon -

[Re-enters, followed by Drugger.]

What is your name, say you, Abel Drugger ?

Drugger. Yes, sir.

Subtle. A seller of tobacco ?

Drugger. Yes, sir.

Subtle. Umph !

Free of the grocers ?

Drugger. Ay, an't please you.

Subtle. Well -

Your business, Abel?

Drugger. This, an't please your worship;
I am a young beginner, and am building
Of a new shop, an't like your worship, just
At corner of a street: - Here is the plot on't -
And I would know by art, sir, of your worship,
Which way I should make my door, by necromancy,
And where my shelves; and which should be for boxes,
And which for pots. I would be glad to thrive, sir:
And I was wish'd to your worship by a gentleman,
One captain Face, that says you know men's planets,
And their good angels, and their bad.

Subtle. I do,

If I do see them -

[Re-enter Face.]

Face. What ! my honest Abel !

Thou art well met here.

Drugger. Troth, sir, I was speaking,

Just as your worship came here, of your worship:

I pray you speak for me to master doctor.

Face. He shall do any thing. - Doctor, do you hear?

This is my friend, Abel, an honest fellow;

He lets me have good tobacco, and he does not

Sophisticate it with sack-lees or oil,

Nor washes it in muscadel and grains,

Nor buries it in gravel, under ground,...

But keeps it in fine lily pots, that, open'd,

Smell like conserve of roses, or French beans.

He has his maple block, his silver tongs,

Winchester pipes, and fire of juniper:

A neat, spruce, honest fellow, and no goldsmith.

Subtle. He is a fortunate fellow, that I am sure on.

Face. Already, sir, have you found it? Lo thee, Abel !

Subtle. And in right way toward riches -

Face. Sir!

Subtle. This summer

He will be of the clothing of his company,

And next spring call'd to the scarlet; spend what he can.

Face. What, and so little beard !

Subtle. Sir, you must think,

He may have a receipt to make hair come:

But he'll be wise, preserve his youth, and fine for't;

His fortune looks for him another way.

Face. 'Slid, doctor, how canst thou know this so soon,
I am amused at that !

Subtle. By a rule, captain,
In metoposcopy, which I do work by;
A certain star in the forehead, which you see not.
Your chestnut or your olive-colour'd face
Does never fail: and your long ear doth promise.
I knew't, by certain spots, too, in his teeth,
And on the nail of his mercurial finger.

Face. Which finger's that !

Subtle. His little finger. Look.

You were born upon a Wednesday ?

Drugger. Yes, indeed, sir.

Subtle. The thumb, in chiromancy, we give Venus;
The fore-finger, to Jove; the midst, to Saturn;
The ring, to Sol; the least, to Mercury,
Who was the lord, sir, of his horoscope,
His house of life being Libra; which fore-shew'd,
He should be a merchant, and should trade with balance.

Face. Why, this is strange! Is it not, honest Nab ?

Subtle. There is a ship now, coming from Ormus,
That shall yield him such a commodity
Of drugs -This is the west, and this the south?
[Pointing to the plan.]

Drugger. Yes, sir.

Subtle. And those are your two sides !

Drugger. Ay, sir.

Subtle. Make me your door, then, south; your broad side, west :
And on the east side of your shop, aloft,
Write Mathlai, Tarmiel, and Baraborat;
Upon the north part, Rael, Velel, Thiel.
They are the names of those Mercurial spirits,
That do fright flies from boxes.

Drugger. Yes, sir.

Subtle. And
Beneath your threshold, bury me a load-stone
To draw in gallants that wear spurs: the rest,
They'll seem to follow.

Face. That's a secret, Nab !

Subtle. And, on your stall, a puppet, with a vice
And a court-fucus, to call city-dames:
You shall deal much with minerals.

Drugger. Sir, I have
At home, already -

Subtle. Ay, I know you have arsenic,
Vitriol, sal-tartar, argaile, alkali,
Cinoper: I know all. - This fellow, captain,
Will come, in time, to be a great distiller,
And give a say - I will not say directly,
But very fair - at the philosopher's stone.

Face. Why, how now, Abel ! is this true ?

Drugger. Good captain,
What must I give ! [Aside to Face.]

Face. Nay, I'll not counsel thee.

Thou hear'st what wealth (he says, spend what thou canst,)

Thou'rt like to come to.

Drug I would gi' him a crown.

Face. A crown! and toward such a fortune ? heart,
Thou shalt rather gi' him thy shop. No gold about thee?

Drugger. Yes, I have a portague, I have kept this half year.

Face. Out on thee, Nab ! 'Slight, there was such an offer
Shalt keep't no longer, I'll give't him for thee. - Doctor,
Nab prays your worship to drink this and swears
He will appear more grateful, as your skill
Does raise him in the world.

Drugger. I would entreat
Another favour of his worship.
Face What is't, Nab ?

Drugger. But to look over, sir, my almanack,
And cross out my ill-days, that I may neither
Bargain, nor trust upon them.

Face. That he shall, Nab:
Leave it, it shall be done, 'gainst afternoon.

Subtle. And a direction for his shelves.

Face. Now, Nab,
Art thou well pleased, Nab ?

Drugger. Thank, sir, both your worships.

Face. Away. - [Exit Drugger.]

Why, now, you smoaky persecutor of nature !
Now do you see that something's to be done,
Beside your beech-coal, and your corsive waters,
Your crosslets, crucibles, and cucurbites !
You must have stuff, brought home to you, to work on:
And yet you think, I am at no expense
In searching out these veins, then following them,
Then trying them out. 'Fore God, my intelligence
Costs me more money, than my share oft comes to,
In these rare works.

Subtle. You are pleasant, sir. -

[Re-enter Dol.]

How now !

What says my dainty Dolkin?

Dol. Yonder fish-wife
Will not away. And there's your giantess,
The bawd of Lambeth.

Subtle. Heart, I cannot speak with them.

Dol. Not afore night, I have told them in a voice,
Thorough the trunk, like one of your familiars.
But I have spied sir Epicure Mammon -

Subtle. Where?

Dol. Coming along, at far end of the lane,
Slow of his feet, but earnest of his tongue
To one that's with him.

Subtle. Face, go you, and shift. [Exit Face.]

Dol, you must presently make ready, too.

Dol. Why, what's the matter?

Subtle. O, I did look for him
With the sun's rising: 'marvel he could sleep.
This is the day I am to perfect for him

The magisterium, our great work, the stone;
And yield it, made, into his hands: of which
He has, this month, talk'd as he were possess'd.
And now he's dealing pieces on't away. -
Methinks I see him entering ordinaries,
Dispensing for the pox, and plaguy houses,
Reaching his dose, walking Moor-fields for lepers,
And offering citizens' wives pomander bracelets,
As his preservative, made of the elixir;...
I see no end of his labours. He will make
Nature asham'd of her long sleep: when art,
Who's but a step-dame, shall do more then she
In her best love to mankind, ever could:
If his dream last, he'll turn the age to gold.

[Exeunt.]

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ACT THE SECOND

SCENE I: An outer room in Lovewit's House.

[Enter Sir Epicure Mammon and Surly.]

Mammon. Come on, sir. Now, you set your foot on shore
In Novo Orbe; here's the rich Peru:

And there within, sir, are the golden mines,
Great Solomon's Ophir! he was sailing to't,
Three years, but we have reach'd it in ten months.
This is the day, wherein, to all my friends,
I will pronounce the happy word, BE RICH;
THIS DAY YOU SHALL BE SPECTATISSIMI.
You shall no more deal with the hollow dye,
Or the frail card. No more be at charge of keeping
The livery-punk for the young heir, that must
Seal, at all hours, in his shirt: no more,
If he deny, have him beaten to't, as he is
That brings him the commodity. No more
Shall thirst of satin, or the covetous hunger
Of velvet entrails for a rude-spun cloke,
To be display'd at madam Augusta's, make
The sons of Sword and Hazard fall before
The golden calf, and on their knees, whole nights,
Commit idolatry with wine and trumpets:
Or go a feasting after drum and ensign...
And unto thee I speak it first, BE RICH.
Where is my Subtle, there! Within, ho!

Face. [Within.] Sir, he'll come to you by and by.

Mammon. That is his fire-drake,
His Lungs, his Zephyrus, he that puffs his coals,

Till he firk nature up, in her own centre.
You are not faithful, sir. This night, I'll change
All that is metal, in my house, to gold:
And, early in the morning, will I send
To all the plumbers and the pewterers,
And buy their tin and lead up; and to Lothbury
For all the copper.

Surly. What, and turn that too?

Mammon. Yes, and I'll purchase Devonshire, and Cornwall,
And make them perfect Indies! you admire now ?

Surly. No, faith.

Mammon. But when you see th' effects of the Great Medicine,
Of which one part projected on a hundred
Of Mercury, or Venus, or the moon,
Shall turn it to as many of the sun;
Nay, to a thousand, so ad infinitum:
You will believe me.

Surly. Yes, when I see't, I will....

Mammon. Do you think I fable with you? I assure you,
He that has once the flower of the sun,
The perfect ruby, which we call elixir,
Not only can do that, but, by its virtue,
Can confer honour, love, respect, long life;
Give safety, valour, yea, and victory,
To whom he will. In eight and twenty days,
I'll make an old man of fourscore, a child.

Surly. No doubt; he's that already.

Mammon. Nay, I mean,
Restore his years, renew him, like an eagle,
To the fifth age; make him get sons and daughters,
Young giants; as our philosophers have done,
The ancient patriarchs, afore the flood,
But taking, once a week, on a knife's point,
The quantity of a grain of mustard of it ;
Become stout Marses, and beget young Cupids.
...'Tis the secret

Of nature naturized 'gainst all infections,
Cures all diseases coming of all causes;
A month's grief in a day, a year's in twelve;
And, of what age soever, in a month:
Past all the doses of your drugging doctors.
I'll undertake, withall, to fright the plague
Out of the kingdom in three months.

Surly. And I'll

Be bound, the players shall sing your praises, then,
Without their poets.

Mammon. Sir, I'll do't. Meantime,
I'll give away so much unto my man,
Shall serve the whole city, with preservative,
Weekly; each house his dose, and at the rate -

Surly. As he that built the Water-work, does with water !

Mammon. You are incredulous.

Surly. Faith I have a humour,
I would not willingly be gull'd. Your stone
Cannot transmute me.

Mammon. Pertinax, [my] Surly,

Will you believe antiquity ? records ?
I'll shew you a book where Moses and his sister,
And Solomon have written of the art;
Ay, and a treatise penn'd by Adam -

Surly. How!

Mammon. Of the philosopher's stone, and in High Dutch.

Surly. Did Adam write, sir, in High Dutch?

Mammon. He did;

Which proves it was the primitive tongue.

Surly. What paper ?

Mammon. On cedar board.

Surly. O that, indeed, they say,

Will last 'gainst worms.

Mammon. 'Tis like your Irish wood,
'Gainst cob-webs. I have a piece of Jason's fleece, too,
Which was no other than a book of alchemy,
Writ in large sheep-skin, a good fat ram-vellum.
Such was Pythagoras' thigh, Pandora's tub,
And, all that fable of Medea's charms,
The manner of our work; the bulls, our furnace,
Still breathing fire; our argent-vive, the dragon ?
The dragon's teeth, mercury sublimate,
That keeps the whiteness, hardness, and the biting;
And they are gather'd into Jason's helm,
The alembic, and then sow'd in Mars his field,
And thence sublimed so often, till they're fix'd.
Both this, the Hesperian garden, Cadmus' story,
Jove's shower, the boon of Midas, Argus' eyes,
Boccace his Demogorgon, thousands more,
All abstract riddles of our stone;-

[Enter Face, as a servant.]

How now!

Do we succeed ? Is our day come ? and holds it ?

Face. The evening will set red upon you, sir;
You have colour for it, crimson: the red ferment
Has done his office; three hours hence prepare you
To see projection.

Mammon. Pertinax, my Surly,
Again I say to thee, aloud, Be rich.

This day, thou shalt have ingots; and, to-morrow,
Give lords th' affront. - Is it, my Zephyrus, right?
Blushes the bolt's-head ?

Face. Like a wench with child, sir,
That were but now discover'd to her master.

Mammon. Excellent witty Lungs! - my only care is,
Where to get stuff enough now, to project on;
This town will not half serve me.

Face. No, sir ! buy
The covering off o' churches.

Mammon. That's true.

Face. Yes.

Let them stand bare, as do their auditory;
Or cap them, new, with shingles.

Mammon. No, good thatch:

Thatch will lie light upon the rafters, Lungs. -
Lungs, I will manumit thee from the furnace,
I will restore thee thy complexion, Puffe,
Lost in the embers; and repair this brain,
Hurt with the fume o' the metals.

Face. I have blown, sir,
Hard for your worship; thrown by many a coal,
When 'twas not beech; weigh'd those I put in, just,
To keep your heat still even; these blear'd eyes
Have wak'd to read your several colours, sir,
Of the pale citron, the green lion, the crow,
The peacock's tail, the plumed swan.

Mammon. And, lastly,
Thou hast descried the flower, the sanguis agni ?

Face. Yes, sir.

Mammon. Where's master ?

Face. At his prayers, sir, he;
Good man, he's doing his devotions
For the success.

Mammon. Lungs, I will set a period
To all thy labours; thou shalt be the master
Of my seraglio.

Face. Good, sir.

Mammon. But do you hear ?...
Thou art sure thou saw'st it blood ?

Face. Both blood and spirit, sir.

Mammon. I will have all my beds blown up, not stuf:

Down is too hard: and then, mine oval room
Fill'd with such pictures as Tiberius took
From Elephantis, and dull Aretine
But coldly imitated....My flatterers
Shall be the pure and gravest of divines,
That I can get for money. My mere fools,
Eloquent burgesses, and then my poets
The same that writ so subtly of the fart,
Whom I will entertain still for that subject...
We will be brave, Puffe, now we have the med'cine.
My meat shall all come in, in Indian shells,
Dishes of agat set in gold, and studded
With emeralds, sapphires, hyacinths, and rubies.
The tongues of carps, dormice, and camels' heels,
Boil'd in the spirit of sol, and dissolv'd pearl,
Apicius' diet, 'gainst the epilepsy:
And I will eat these broths with spoons of amber,
Headed with diamond and carbuncle.

My foot-boy shall eat pheasants, calver'd salmons,
Knots, godwits, lampreys: I myself will have
The beards of barbels served, instead of sallads;
Oil'd mushrooms; and the swelling unctuous paps
Of a fat pregnant sow, newly cut off,
Drest with an exquisite, and poignant sauce;
For which, I'll say unto my cook, There's gold,
Go forth, and be a knight.

Face. Sir, I'll go look

A little, how it heightens. [Exit.]

Mammon. Do. - My shirts

I'll have of taffeta-sarsnet, soft and light
As cobwebs; and for all my other raiment,
It shall be such as might provoke the Persian,
Were he to teach the world riot anew.
My gloves of fishes and birds' skins, perfumed
With gums of paradise, and eastern air -
Surly. And do you think to have the stone with this ?
Mammon. No, I do think t' have all this with the stone.
Surly. Why, I have heard, he must be homo frugi,
A pious, holy, and religious man,
One free from mortal sin, a very virgin.
Mammon. That makes it, sir; he is so: but I buy it;
My venture brings it me. He, honest wretch,
A notable, superstitious, good soul,
Has worn his knees bare, and his slippers bald,
With prayer and fasting for it: and, sir, let him
Do it alone, for me, still. Here he comes.
Not a profane word afore him: 'tis poison. -

[Enter Subtle.]

Good morrow, father.

Subtle. Gentle son, good morrow,
And to your friend there. What is he, is with you?

Mammon. An heretic, that I did bring along,
In hope, sir, to convert him.

Subtle. Son, I doubt
You are covetous, that thus you meet your time
In the just point: prevent your day at morning.
This argues something, worthy of a fear
Of importune and carnal appetite.
Take heed you do not cause the blessing leave you,
With your ungovern'd haste. I should be sorry
To see my labours, now even at perfection,
Got by long watching and large patience,
Not prosper where my love and zeal hath placed them.
Which (heaven I call to witness, with your self,
To whom I have pour'd my thoughts) in all my ends,
Have look'd no way, but unto public good,
To pious uses, and dear charity
Now grown a prodigy with men. Wherein
If you, my son, should now prevaricate,
And, to your own particular lusts employ
So great and catholic a bliss, be sure
A curse will follow, yea, and overtake
Your subtle and most secret ways.

Mammon. I know, sir;
You shall not need to fear me: I but come,
To have you confute this gentleman.

Surly. Who is,
Indeed, sir, somewhat costive of belief
Toward your stone; would not be gull'd.

Subtle. Well, son,
All that I can convince him in, is this,
The WORK IS DONE, bright sol is in his robe.
We have a medicine of the triple soul,

The glorified spirit. Thanks be to heaven,
And make us worthy of it ! - Ulen Spiegel !

Face. [Within.] Anon, sir.

Subtle. Look well to the register.
And let your heat still lessen by degrees,
To the aludels.

Face. [Within.] Yes, sir.

Subtle. Did you look
O' the bolt's-head yet?

Face. [Within.] Which? on D, sir?

Subtle. Ay;
What's the complexion?

Face. [Within.] Whitish.

Subtle. Infuse vinegar,
To draw his volatile substance and his tincture:
And let the water in glass E be filter'd,
And put into the gripe's egg. Lute him well;
And leave him closed in balneo.

Face. [Within.] I will, sir.

Surly. What a brave language here is ! next to canting.

Subtle. I have another work, you never saw, son,
That three days since past the philosopher's wheel,
In the lent heat of Athanor; and's become
Sulphur of Nature.

Mammon. But 'tis for me?

Subtle. What need you?
You have enough in that is perfect.

Mammon. O but -

Subtle. Why, this is covetise !

Mammon. No, I assure you,
I shall employ it all in pious uses,
Founding of colleges and grammar schools,
Marrying young virgins, building hospitals,
And now and then a church.

[Re-enter Face.]

Subtle. How now !

Face. Sir, please you,
Shall I not change the filter ?

Subtle. Marry, yes;
And bring me the complexion of glass B. [Exit Face.]

Mammon. Have you another ?

Subtle. Yes, son; were I assured
Your piety were firm, we would not want
The means to glorify it: but I hope the best. -
I mean to tinct C in sand-heat to-morrow,
And give him imbibition.

Mammon. Of white oil ?

Subtle. No, sir, of red. F is come over the helm too,
I thank my maker, in S. Mary's bath,
And shews lac virginis. Blessed be heaven !
I sent you of his faeces there calcined:

Out of that calx, I have won the salt of mercury.

Mammon. By pouring on your rectified water !

Subtle. Yes, and reverberating in Athanor.

[Re-enter Face.]

How now! what colour says it?

Face. The ground black, sir.

Mammon. That's your crow's head ?

Surly. Your cock's-comb's, is it not ?

Subtle. No, 'tis not perfect. Would it were the crow !

That work wants something.

Surly. O, I look'd for this.

The hay's a pitching. [Aside.]

Subtle. Are you sure you loosed them

In their own menstrue!

Face. Yes, sir, and then married them,

And put them in a bolt's-head nipp'd to digestion,

According as you bade me, when I set

The liquor of Mars to circulation

In the same heat.

Subtle. The process then was right.

Face. Yes, by the token, sir, the retort brake,

And what was saved was put into the pellican,

And sign'd with Hermes' seal.

Subtle. I think 'twas so.

We should have a new amalgama.

Surly. O, this ferret

Is rank as any pole-cat. [Aside.]

Subtle. But I care not:

Let him e'en die; we have enough beside,

In embrion. H has his white shirt on ?

Face. Yes, sir,

He's ripe for inceration, he stands warm,

In his ash-fire. I would not you should let

Any die now, if I might counsel, sir,

For luck's sake to the rest: it is not good.

Mammon. He says right.

Surly. Ay, are you bolted ! [Aside.]

Face. Nay, I know't, sir,

I have seen the ill fortune. What is some three ounces

Of fresh materials ?

Mammon. Is't no more?

Face. No more, sir,

Of gold, t'amalgame with some six of mercury.

Mammon. Away, here's money. What will serve?

Face. Ask him, sir.

Mammon. How much ?

Subtle. Give him nine pound:- you may give him ten.

Surly. Yes, twenty, and be cozen'd, do.

Mammon. There 'tis. [Gives Face the money.]

Subtle. This needs not; but that you will have it so,

To see conclusions of all: for two

Of our inferior works are at fixation,

A third is in ascension. Go your ways.

Have you set the oil of luna in kemia ?

Face. Yes, sir.

Subtle. And the philosopher's vinegar ?

Face. Ay. [Exit.]

Surly. We shall have a sallad !

Mammon. When do you make projection ?

Subtle. Son, be not hasty, I exalt our med'cine,
By hanging him in balneo vaporoso,
And giving him solution; then congeal him;
And then dissolve him; then again congeal him:
For look, how oft I iterate the work,
So many times I add unto his virtue.

As, if at first one ounce convert a hundred,
After his second loose, he'll turn a thousand;
His third solution, ten; his fourth, a hundred:
After his fifth, a thousand thousand ounces
Of any imperfect metal, into pure
Silver or gold, in all examinations,
As good as any of the natural mine.

Get you your stuff here against afternoon,
Your brass, your pewter and your andirons.

Mammon. Not those of iron ?

Subtle. Yes, you may bring them too:
We'll change all metals.

Surly. I believe you in that.

Mammon. Then I may send my spits ?

Subtle. Yes, and your racks.

Surly. And dripping-pans, and pot-hangers, and hooks,
Shall he not ?

Subtle. If he please.

Surly. - To be an ass.

Subtle. How, sir !

Mammon. This gentleman you must bear withal:
I told you he had no faith.

Surly. And little hope, sir;
But much less charity, should I gull myself.

Subtle. Why, what have you observ'd, sir, in our art,
Seems so impossible?

Surly. But your whole work, no more.
That you should hatch gold in a furnace, sir,
As they do eggs in Egypt!

Subtle. Sir, do you
Believe that eggs are hatch'd so?

Surly. If I should?

Subtle. Why, I think that the greater miracle.
No egg but differs from a chicken more
Than metals in themselves.

Surly. That cannot be.
The egg's ordain'd by nature to that end,
And is a chicken in potentia.

Subtle. The same we say of lead and other metals,
Which would be gold, if they had time.

Mammon. And that
Our art doth further.

Subtle. Ay, for 'twere absurd
To think that nature in the earth bred gold
Perfect in the instant: something went before.
There must be remote matter.

Surly. Ay, what is that?

Subtle. Marry, we say -

Mammon. Ay, now it heats: stand, father,
Pound him to dust.

Subtle. It is, of the one part,
A humid exhalation, which we call
Materia liquida, or the unctuous water;
On the other part, a certain crass and viscous
Portion of earth; both which, congregate,
Do make the elementary matter of gold;
Which is not yet propria materia,
But common to all metals and all stones;
For, where it is forsaken of that moisture,
And hath more dryness, it becomes a stone:
Where it retains more of the humid fatness,
It turns to sulphur, or to quicksilver,
Who are the parents of all other metals.
Nor can this remote matter suddenly
Progress so from extreme unto extreme,
As to grow gold, and leap o'er all the means.
Nature doth first beget the imperfect, then
Proceeds she to the perfect. Of that airy
And oily water, mercury is engender'd;
Sulphur of the fat and earthy part; the one,
Which is the last, supplying the place of male,
The other of the female, in all metals.
Some do believe hermaphrodeity,
That both do act and suffer. But these two
Make the rest ductile, malleable, extensive.
And even in gold they are; for we do find
Seeds of them, by our fire, and gold in them;
And can produce the species of each metal
More perfect thence, than nature doth in earth.
Beside, who doth not see in daily practice
Art can beget bees, hornets, beetles, wasps,
Out of the carcasses and dung of creatures;
Yea, scorpions of an herb, being rightly placed ?
And these are living creatures, far more perfect
And excellent than metals.

Mammon. Well said, father !
Nay, if he take you in hand, sir, with an argument,
He'll bray you in a mortar.

Surly. Pray you, sir, stay.
Rather than I'll be bray'd, sir, I'll believe
That Alchemy is a pretty kind of game,
Somewhat like tricks o' the cards, to cheat a man
With charming.

Subtle. Sir ?

Surly. What else are all your terms,
Whereon no one of your writers 'grees with other !
Of your elixir, your lac virginis,
Your stone, your med'cine, and your chrysosperme,
Your sal, your sulphur, and your mercury,
Your oil of height, your tree of life, your blood,
Your marchesite, your tutie, your magnesia,
Your toad, your crow, your dragon, and your panther;
Your sun, your moon, your firmament, your adrop,
Your lato, azoch, zernich, chibrit, heautarit,

And then your red man, and your white woman,
With all your broths, your menstrues, and materials,...
Hair o' the head, burnt clouts, chalk, merds, and clay,
Powder of bones, scalings of iron, glass,
And worlds of other strange ingredients,
Would burst a man to name ?

Subtle. And all these named,
Intending but one thing; which art our writers
Used to obscure their art.

Mammon. Sir, so I told him -
Because the simple idiot should not learn it,
And make it vulgar.

Subtle. Was not all the knowledge
Of the Aegyptians writ in mystic symbols ?
Speak not the scriptures oft in parables ?
Are not the choicest fables of the poets,
That were the fountains and first springs of wisdom;
Wrapp'd in perplexed allegories ?

Mammon. I urg'd that,
And clear'd to him, that Sisyphus was damn'd
To roll the ceaseless stone, only because
He would have made Ours common. [Dol appears at the door.] -Who is this!

Subtle. 'S precious ! - What do you mean ? go in, good
lady,
Let me entreat you. [Dol retires.] - Where's this varlet ?

[Re-enter Face.]

Face. Sir.

Subtle. You very knave ! do you use me thus ?

Face. Wherein, sir ?

Subtle. Go in and see, you traitor. Go ! [Exit Face.]

Mammon. Who is it, sir ?

Subtle. Nothing, sir; nothing.

Mammon. What's the matter, good sir ?

I have not seen you thus distemper'd: who is't ?

Subtle. All arts have still had, sir, their adversaries;
But ours the most ignorant;

[Re-enter Face.]

What now ?

Face. 'Twas not my fault, sir; she would speak with you.

Subtle. Would she, sir ! Follow me. [Exit.]

Mammon. [stopping him.] Stay, Lungs.

Face. I dare not, sir.

Mammon. Stay, man; what is she ?

Face. A lord's sister, sir.

Mammon. How ! pray thee, stay.

Face. She's mad, sir, and sent hither -

He'll be mad too. -

Mammon. I warrant thee. -

Why sent hither ?

Face. Sir, to be cured.

Subtle. [Within.] Why, rascal !

Face. Lo you! - Here, sir ! [Exit.]

Mammon. 'Fore God, a Bradamante, a brave piece.
Surly. Heart, this is a bawdy-house ! I will be burnt else.
Mammon. O, by this light, no: do not wrong him. He's
Too scrupulous that way: it is his vice.
No, he's a rare physician, do him right,
An excellent Paracelsian, and has done
Strange cures with mineral physic. He deals all
With spirits, he; he will not hear a word
Of Galen, or his tedious recipes. -

[Re-enter Face.]

How now, Lungs !

Face. Softly, sir; speak softly. I meant
To have told your worship all. This must not hear.

Mammon. No, he will not be "gull'd:" let him alone.

Face. You are very right, sir; she is a most rare scholar,
And is gone mad with studying Broughton's works.

If you but name a word touching the Hebrew,
She falls into her fit, and will discourse
So learnedly of genealogies,

As you would run mad too, to hear her, sir.

Mammon. How might one do t' have conference with her, Lungs ?

Face. O divers have run mad upon the conference
I do not know, sir. I am sent in haste,
To fetch a vial.

Surly. Be not gull'd, sir Mammon.

Mammon. Wherein ? pray ye, be patient.

Surly. Yes, as you are,
And trust confederate knaves and bawds and whores.

Mammon. You are too foul, believe it. - Come here, Ulen,
One word.

Face. I dare not, in good faith. [Going.]

Mammon. Stay, knave.

Face. He is extreme angry that you saw her, sir.

Mammon. Drink that. [Gives him money.] What is she
when she's out of her fit ?

Face. O, the most affablest creature, sir ! so merry ! So pleasant!...

Subtle. [Within.] Ulen !

Face. I'll come to you again, sir. [Exit.]

Mammon. Surly, I did not think one of your breeding
Would traduce personages of worth.

Surly. Sir Epicure,
Your friend to use; yet still, loth to be gull'd:
I do not like your philosophical bawds.
Their stone is letchery enough to pay for,
Without this bait.

Mammon. 'Heart, you abuse your self.
I know the lady, and her friends, and means,
The original of this disaster. Her brother
Has told me all.

Surly. And yet you never saw her
Till now !

Mammon. O yes, but I forgot. I have, believe it,
One of the treacherousest memories, I do think,
Of all mankind.

Surly. What call you her brother ?

Mammon. My lord -

He will not have his name known, now I think on't.

Surly. A very treacherous memory!

Mammon. On my faith -

Surly. Tut, if you have it not about you, pass it,
Till we meet next.

Mammon. Nay, by this hand, 'tis true.

He's one I honour, and my noble friend;

And I respect his house.

Surly. Heart ! can it be,

That a grave sir, a rich, that has no need,

A wise sir, too, at other times, should thus,

With his own oaths, and arguments, make hard means

To gull himself ? An this be your elixir,

Your lapis mineralis, and your lunary,

Give me your honest trick yet at primero,

Or gleek; and take your lutum sapiensis,

Your menstruum simplex ! I'll have gold before you,

And with less danger....

[Re-enter Face.]

Face. Here's one from captain Face, sir, [to Surly.]

Desires you meet him in the Temple-church,

Some half hour hence, and upon earnest business.

Sir, [whispers Mammon.] if you please to quit us, now; and come

Again within two hours, you shall have

My master busy examining o' the works;

And I will steal you in, unto the party,

That you may see her converse. - Sir, shall I say,

You'll meet the captain's worship ?

Surly. Sir, I will. - [Walks aside.]

But, by attorney, and to a second purpose.

Now, I am sure it is a bawdy-house;

I'll swear it, were the marshal here to thank me:

The naming this commander doth confirm it.

Don Face ! why he's the most authentic dealer

In these commodities, the superintendent

To all the quainter traffickers in town !...

Him will I prove, by a third person, to find

The subtleties of this dark labyrinth:

Which if I do discover, dear sir Mammon,

You'll give your poor friend leave, though no philosopher,

To laugh: for you that are, 'tis thought, shall weep.

Face. Sir, he does pray, you'll not forget.

Surly. I will not, sir.

Sir Epicure, I shall leave you. [Exit.]

Mammon. I follow you, straight.

Face. But do so, good sir, to avoid suspicion.

This gentleman has a parlous head.

Mammon. But wilt thou, Ulen,

Be constant to thy promise?

Face. As my life, sir.

Mammon. And wilt thou insinuate what I am, and praise me,

And say, I am a noble fellow ?

Face. O, what else, sir ?

And that you'll make her royal with the stone,
An empress; and yourself, king of Bantam.

Mammon. Wilt thou do this ?

Face. Will, sir !

Mammon. Lungs, my Lungs ! I love thee.

Face. Send your stuff, sir, that my master
May busy himself about projection.

Mammon Thou hast witch'd me, rogue: take, go.

[Gives him money.]

Face. Your jack, and all, sir.

Mammon. Thou art a villain - I will send my jack,
And the weights too. Slave, I could bite thine ear.
Away, thou dost not care for me.

Face. Not I, sir !

Mammon. Come, I was born to make thee, my good weasel,
Set thee on a bench, and have thee twirl a chain
With the best lord's vermin of 'em all.

Face. Away, sir.

Mammon. A count, nay, a count palatine -

Face. Good, sir, go.

Mammon. Shall not advance thee better: no, nor faster. [Exit.]

[Re-enter Subtle and Dol.]

Subtle. Has he bit ? has he bit ?

Face. And swallow'd too, my Subtle.

I have given him line, and now he plays, i' faith.

Subtle. And shall we twitch him ?

Face. Thorough both the gills.

A wench is a rare bait, with which a man
No sooner's taken, but he straight firks mad.

Subtle. Dol, my lord What'ts'hums sister, you must now
Bear your self statelich.

Dol. O let me alone.

I'll not forget my race, I warrant you.

I'll keep my distance, laugh and talk aloud;

Have all the tricks of a proud scurvy lady,

And be as rude as her woman.

Face. Well said, sanguine !

Subtle. But will he send his andirons ?

Face. His jack too,

And's iron shoeing-horn; I have spoke to him. Well,

I must not lose my wary gamester yonder.

Subtle. O monsieur Caution, that will not be gull'd

Face. Ay,

If I can strike a fine hook into him, now ! -

The Temple-church, there I have cast mine angle.

Well, pray for me. I'll about it. [Knocking without.]

Subtle. What, more gudgeons!

Dol, scout, scout ! [Dol goes to the window.] Stay, Face,
you must go to the door,

'Pray God it be my anabaptist.-Who is't, Dol ?

Dol. I know him not: he looks like a gold-end-man.

Subtle. 'Ods so ! 'tis he, he said he would send what call you him ?
The sanctified elder, that should deal
For Mammon's jack and andirons. Let him in.
Stay, help me off, first, with my gown. [Exit Face with the gown.] Away,
Madam, to your withdrawing chamber. [Exit Dol.] Now,
In a new tune, new gesture, but old language. -
This fellow is sent from one negociates with me
About the stone too; for the holy brethren
Of Amsterdam, the exiled saints; that hope
To raise their discipline by it. I must use him
In some strange fashion, now, to make him admire me. -

[Enter Ananias.]

Where is my drudge? [Aloud.]

[Re-enter Face.]

Face. Sir !

Subtle. Take away the recipient,
And rectify your menstree from the phlegma.
Then pour it on the Sol, in the cucurbite,
And let them macerate together.

Face. Yes, sir.

And save the ground !

Subtle. No: terra damnata

Must not have entrance in the work. - Who are you !

Ananias. A faithful brother, if it please you.

Subtle. What's that ?

A Lullianist ! a Ripley ? Filius artis ?

Can you sublime and dulcify ? Calcine ?

Know you the sapor pontic ? sapor stiptic ?

Or what is homogene, or heterogene ?

Ananias. I understand no heathen language, truly.

Subtle. Heathen ! you Knipper-doling ? is Ars sacra,

Or chrysopoeia, or spagyrica,

Or the pamphysic, or panarchic knowledge,

A heathen language!

Ananias. Heathen Greek, I take it.

Subtle. How ! heathen Greek!

Ananias. All's heathen but the Hebrew.

Subtle. Sirrah, my varlet, stand you forth and speak to him,

Like a philosopher: answer, in the language.

Name the vexations, and the martyrizations

Of metals in the work.

Face. Sir, putrefaction,

Solution, ablution, sublimation,

Cohobation, calcination, ceration, and

Fixation.

Subtle. This is heathen Greek, to you, now ! -

And when comes vivification,

Face. After mortification.

Subtle. What's cohobation ?

Face. 'Tis the pouring on

Your aqua regis, and then drawing him off,

To the trine circle of the seven spheres.

Subtle. What's the proper passion of metals ?

Face. Malleation.

Subtle. What's your ultimatum supplicium auri ?

Face. Antimonium.

Subtle. This is heathen Greek to you ! - And what's your mercury ?

Face. A very fugitive, he will be gone, sir.

Subtle. How know you him ?

Face. By his viscosity,

His oleosity, and his suscitability.

Subtle. How do you sublime him ?

Face. With the calce of egg-shells,

White marble, talc.

Subtle. Your magisterium, now,

What's that ?

Face. Shifting, sir, your elements,

Dry into cold, cold into moist, moist into hot,

Hot into dry.

Subtle. This is heathen Greek to you still !

Your lapis philosophicus ?

Face. 'Tis a stone,

And not a stone; a spirit, a soul, and a body:

Which if you do dissolve, it is dissolv'd;

If you coagulate, it is coagulated;

If you make it to fly, it flieth.

Subtle. Enough. [Exit Face.]

This is heathen Greek to you ! What are you, sir ?

Ananias. Please you, a servant of the exiled brethren,

That deal with widows and with orphans' goods;

And make a just account unto the saints:

A deacon.

Subtle. O, you are sent from master Wholsome,

Your teacher ?

Ananias. From Tribulation Wholsome,

Our very zealous pastor.

Subtle. Good ! I have

Some orphans' goods to come here.

Ananias. Of what kind, sir ?

Subtle. Pewter and brass, andirons and kitchen-ware,

Metals, that we must use our medicine on:

Wherein the brethren may have a pennyworth,

For ready money.

Ananias. Were the orphans' parents

Sincere professors ?

Subtle. Why do you ask ?

Ananias. Because

We then are to deal justly, and give, in truth,

Their utmost value.

Subtle. 'Slid, you'd cozen else,

And if their parents were not of the faithful -

I will not trust you, now I think on it,

'Till I have talk'd with your pastor. Have you brought money

To buy more coals ?

Ananias. No, surely.

Subtle. No ! how so ?

Ananias. The brethren bid me say unto you, sir,

Surely, they will not venture any more,

Till they may see projection.

Subtle. How !

Ananias. You have had,
For the instruments, as bricks, and loam, and glasses,
Already thirty pound; and for materials,
They say, some ninety more: and they have heard since,
That one, at Heidelberg, made it of an egg,
And a small paper of pin-dust.

Subtle. What's your name ?

Ananias. My name is Ananias.

Subtle. Out, the varlet

That cozen'd the apostles ! Hence, away !
Flee, mischief ! had your holy consistory
No name to send me, of another sound,
Than wicked Ananias ? send your elders
Hither, to make atonement for you, quickly,
And give me satisfaction; or out goes
The fire; and down th' alembecs, and the furnace,
Piger Henricus, or what not. Thou wretch !
Both sericon and bufo shall be lost,
Tell them. All hope of rooting out the bishops,
Or the antichristian hierarchy, shall perish,
If they stay threescore minutes: the aqueity,
Terreity, and sulphureity
Shall run together again, and all be annull'd,
Thou wicked Ananias ! [Exit Ananias.] This will fetch 'em,
And make them haste towards their gulling more.
A man must deal like a rough nurse, and fright
Those that are froward, to an appetite.

[Re-enter Face in his uniform, followed by Drugger.]

Face. He is busy with his spirits, but we'll upon him.

Subtle. How now ! what mates, what Baiards have we here ?

Face. I told you, he would be furious. - Sir, here's Nab,
Has brought you another piece of gold to look on:
-We must appease him. Give it me, - and prays you,
You would devise - what is it, Nab ?

Drugger. A sign, sir.

Face. Ay, a good lucky one, a thriving sign, doctor.

Subtle. I was devising now.

Face. 'Slight, do not say so,
He will repent he gave you any more -
What say you to his constellation, doctor,
The Balance ?

Subtle. No, that way is stale, and common.
A townsman born in Taurus, gives the bull,
Or the bull's-head: in Aries, the ram,
A poor-device ! No, I will have his name
Form'd in some mystic character; whose radii,
Striking the senses of the passers by,
Shall, by a virtual influence, breed affections,
That may result upon the party owns it:
As thus -

Face. Nab !

Subtle. He shall have a bel, that's Abel;

And by it standing one whose name is Dee,
In a rug gown, there's D, and Rug, that's drug:
And right anenst him a dog snarling er;
There's Drugger, Abel Drugger. That's his sign.
And here's now mystery and hieroglyphic!

Face. Abel, thou art made.

Drugger. Sir, I do thank his worship.

Face. Six o' thy legs more will not do it, Nab.
He has brought you a pipe of tobacco, doctor.

Drugger. Yes, sir:

I have another thing I would impart -

Face. Out with it, Nab.

Drugger. Sir, there is lodged, hard by me,
A rich young widow -

Face. Good ! a bona roba ?

Drugger. But nineteen, at the most.

Face. Very good, Abel.

Drugger. Marry, she's not in fashion yet; she wears
A hood, but it stands a cop.

Face. No matter, Abel.

Drugger. And I do now and then give her a fucus -

Face. What ! dost thou deal, Nab ?

Subtle. I did tell you, captain.

Drugger. And physic too, sometime, sir; for which she trusts me
With all her mind. She's come up here of purpose
To learn the fashion.

Face. Good (his match too !) - On, Nab.

Drugger. And she does strangely long to know her fortune.

Face. 'Ods lid, Nab, send her to the doctor, hither.

Drugger. Yes, I have spoke to her of his worship already;
But she's afraid it will be blown abroad,
And hurt her marriage.

Face. Hurt it ! 'tis the way

To heal it, if 'twere hurt; to make it more
Follow'd and sought: Nab, thou shalt tell her this.
She'll be more known, more talk'd of; and your widows
Are ne'er of any price till they be famous;
Their honour is their multitude of suitors:
Send her, it may be thy good fortune. What I
Thou dost not know.

Drugger. No, sir, she'll never marry
Under a knight: her brother has made a vow.

Face. What ! and dost thou despair, my little Nab,
Knowing what the doctor has set down for thee,
And seeing so many of the city dubb'd ?

One glass o' thy water, with a madam I know
Will have it done, Nab: what's her brother, a knight ?

Drugger. No, sir, a gentleman newly warm in his land, sir,
Scarce cold in his one and twenty, that does govern
His sister here; and is a man himself

Of some three thousand a year, and is come up
To learn to quarrel, and to live by his wits,
And will go down again, and die in the country.

Face. How! to quarrel ?

Drugger. Yes, sir, to carry quarrels,
As gallants do; to manage them by line.

Face. 'Slid, Nab, the doctor is the only man
In Christendom for him. He has made a table,
With mathematical demonstrations,
Touching the art of quarrels: he will give him
An instrument to quarrel by. Go, bring them both,
Him and his sister. And, for thee, with her
The doctor happ'ly may persuade. Go to:
'Shalt give his worship a new damask suit
Upon the premisses.

Subtle. O, good captain !

Face. He shall;

He is the honestest fellow, doctor. - Stay not,
No offers; bring the damask, and the parties.

Drugger. I'll try my power, sir.

Face. And thy will too, Nab.

Subtle. 'Tis good tobacco, this ! what is't an ounce ?

Face. He'll send you a pound, doctor.

Subtle. O, no.

Face. He will do't.

It is the goodest soul ! - Abel, about it.
Thou shalt know more anon. Away, be gone. -

[Exit Abel Drugger.]

A miserable rogue, and lives with cheese,
And has the worms. That was the cause, indeed,
Why he came now: he dealt with me in private,
To get a med'cine for them.

Subtle. And shall, sir. This works.

Face. A wife, a wife for one of us, my dear Subtle !
We'll e'en draw lots, and he that fails, shall have
The more in goods...

Subtle. Rather the less: for she may be so light
She may want grains.

Face. Ay, or be such a burden,

A man would scarce endure her for the whole.

Subtle. Faith, best let's see her first, and then determine.

Face. Content: but Dol must have no breath on't.

Subtle. Mum.

Away you, to your Surly yonder, catch him.

Face. 'Pray God I have not staid too long.

Subtle. I fear it.

[Exeunt.]

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ACT THE THIRD

SCENE I: The Lane before Lovewit's House.

[Enter Tribulation Wholesome, and Ananias.]

Tribulation. These chastisements are common to the saints,
And such rebukes we of the separation
Must bear with willing shoulders, as the trials
Sent forth to tempt our frailties.

Ananias. In pure zeal,
I do not like the man, he is a heathen,
And speaks the language of Canaan, truly.

Tribulation. I think him a profane person indeed.

Ananias. He bears
The visible mark of the beast in his forehead.
And for his stone, it is a work of darkness,
And with philosophy blinds the eyes of man.

Tribulation. Good brother, we must bend unto all means,
That may give furtherance to the holy cause.

Ananias. Which his cannot: the sanctified cause
Should have a sanctified course.

Tribulation. Not always necessary:
The children of perdition are oft-times
Made instruments even of the greatest works:
Beside, we should give somewhat to man's nature,
The place he lives in, still about the fire,
And fume of metals, that intoxicate
The brain of man, and make him prone to passion.
Where have you greater atheists than your cooks ?
Or more profane, or choleric, than your glass-men ?
More antichristian than your bell-founders ?
What makes the devil so devilish, I would
Sathan, our common enemy, but his being
Perpetually about the fire, and boiling
Brimstone and arsenic ? We must give, I say,
Unto the motives, and the stirrers up
Of humours in the blood. It may be so,
When as the work is done, the stone is made,
This heat of his may turn into a zeal,
And stand up for the beauteous discipline,...
We must await his calling, and the coming
Of the good spirit. You did fault, t' upbraid him
With the brethren's blessing of Heidelberg, weighing
What need we have to hasten on the work,
For the restoring of the silenced saints,
Which ne'er will be, but by the philosopher's stone.
And so a learned elder, one of Scotland,
Assured me; aurum potabile being
The only med'cine, for the civil magistrate,
T' incline him to a feeling of the cause;
And must be daily used in the disease.

Ananias. I have not edified more, truly, by man;
Not since the beautiful light first shone on me:

And I am sad my zeal hath so offended.

Tribulation. Let us call on him then.

Ananias. The motion's good,
And of the spirit; I will knock first. [Knocks.] Peace be within !

[The door is opened, and they enter.]

SCENE II: A Room in Lovewit's House.

[Enter Subtle, followed by Tribulation and Ananias.]

Subtle. O, are you come? 'twas time. Your threescore minutes
Were at last thread, you see; and down had gone
Furnus acediae, turris circulatorius:
Lembec, bolt's-head, retort and pelican
Had all been cinders. - Wicked Ananias !
Art thou return'd ? nay then, it goes down yet.

Tribulation. Sir, be appeased; he is come to humble
Himself in spirit, and to ask your patience,
If too much zeal hath carried him aside
From the due path.

Subtle. Why, this doth qualify !

Tribulation. The brethren had no purpose, verily,
To give you the least grievance: but are ready
To lend their willing hands to any project
The spirit and you direct.

Subtle. This qualifies more !

Tribulation. And for the orphans' goods, let them be valued,
Or what is needful else to the holy work,
It shall be numbered; here, by me, the saints,
Throw down their purse before you.

Subtle. This qualifies most !

Why, thus it should be, now you understand.
Have I discours'd so unto you of our stone,
And of the good that it shall bring your cause ?
Shew'd you (beside the main of hiring forces
Abroad, drawing the Hollanders, your friends,
From the Indies, to serve you, with all their fleet)
That even the med'cinal use shall make you a faction,
And party in the realm ? As, put the case,
That some great man in state, he have the gout,
Why, you but send three drops of your elixir,
You help him straight: there you have made a friend.
Another has the palsy or the dropsy,
He takes of your incombustible stuff,
He's young again: ...A lord that is a leper,
A knight that has the bone-ache, or a squire
That hath both these, you make them smooth and sound,
With a bare fricace of your med'cine: still
You increase your friends.

Tribulation. Ay, it is very pregnant.

Subtle. And then the turning of this lawyer's pewter
To plate at Christmas; -

Ananias. Christ-tide, I pray you.

Subtle. Yet, Ananias !

Ananias. I have done.

Subtle. Or changing

His parcel gilt to massy gold. You cannot
But raise you friends. Withal, to be of power
To pay an army in the field, to buy
The king of-France out of his realms, or Spain
Out of his Indies. What can you not do
Against lords spiritual or temporal,
That shall oppone you ?

Tribulation. Verily, 'tis true.

We may be temporal lords ourselves, I take it.

Subtle. You may be any thing, and leave off to make

Long-winded exercises; or suck up

Your ha! and hum! in a tune. I not deny,

But such as are not graced in a state,

May, for their ends, be adverse in religion,

And get a tune to call the flock together:

For, to say sooth, a tune does much with women,

And other phlegmatic people; it is your bell.

Ananias. Bells are profane; a tune may be religious.

Subtle. No warning with you ! then farewell my patience.

'Slight, it shall down: I will not be thus tortured.

Tribulation. I pray you, sir.

Subtle. All shall perish. I have spoke it.

Tribulation. Let me find grace, sir, in your eyes; the man

He stands corrected: neither did his zeal,

But as yourself, allow a tune somewhere.

Which now, being tow'rd the stone, we shall not need.

Subtle. No, nor your holy vizard, to win widows

To give you legacies; or make zealous wives

To rob their husbands for the common cause:

Nor take the start of bonds broke but one day,

And say, they were forfeited by providence.

Nor shall you need o'er night to eat huge meals,

To celebrate your next day's fast... Nor cast

Before your hungry hearers scrupulous bones;

As whether a Christian may hawk or hunt,

Or whether matrons of the holy assembly

May lay their hair out, or wear doublets,

Or have that idol starch about their linen.

Ananias. It is indeed an idol.

Tribulation. Mind him not, sir.

I do command thee, spirit of zeal, but trouble,

To peace within him ! Pray you, sir, go on.

Subtle. Nor shall you need to libel 'gainst the prelates,

And shorten so your ears against the hearing

Of the next wire-drawn grace. Nor of necessity

Rail against plays, to please the alderman

Whose daily custard you devour: nor lie

With zealous rage till you are hoarse. Not one

Of these so singular arts. Nor call your selves

By names of Tribulation, Persecution,

Restraint, Long-patience, and such like, affected

By the whole family or wood of you,

Only for glory, and to catch the ear

Of the disciple.

Tribulation. Truly, sir, they are
Ways that the godly brethren have invented,
For propagation of the glorious cause,
As very notable means, and whereby also
Themselves grow soon, and profitably, famous.

Subtle. O, but the stone, all's idle to it ! nothing !
The art of angels, nature's miracle,
The divine secret that doth fly in clouds
From east to west; and whose tradition
Is not from men, but spirits.

Ananias. I hate traditions;
I do not trust them.

Tribulation. Peace !

Ananias. They are popish all.
I will not peace: I will not -

Tribulation. Ananias !

Ananias. Please the profane, to grieve the godly; I may not.

Subtle. Well, Ananias, thou shalt overcome.

Tribulation. It is an ignorant zeal that haunts him, sir:

But truly, else, a very faithful brother,
A botcher, and a man, by revelation,
That hath a competent knowledge of the truth.

Subtle. Has he a competent sum there in the bag
To buy the goods within ? I am made guardian,
And must, for charity, and conscience sake,
Now see the most be made for my poor orphan;
Though I desire the brethren too good gainers:
There they are within. When you have view'd, and bought 'em,
And ta'en the inventory of what they are,
They are ready for projection; there's no more
To do: cast on the med'cine, so much silver
As there is tin there, so much gold as brass,
I'll give't you in by weight.

Tribulation. But how long time,
Sir, must the saints expect yet ?

Subtle. Let me see,
How's the moon now ? Eight, nine, ten days hence,
He will be silver potate; then three days
Before he citronise: Some fifteen days,
The magisterium will be perfected.

Ananias. About the second day of the third week,
In the ninth month !

Subtle. Yes, my good Ananias.

Tribulation. What will the orphan's goods arise to, think you ?

Subtle. Some hundred marks, as much as fill'd three cars,
Unladed now: you'll make six millions of them.-
But I must have more coals laid in.

Tribulation. How !

Subtle. Another load,
And then we have finish'd. We must now increase
Our fire to ignis ardens, we are past
Fimus equinus, balnei, cineris,
And all those lenter heats. If the holy purse
Should with this draught fall low, and that the saints
Do need a present sum, I have a trick
To melt the pewter, you shall buy now, instantly,

And with a tincture make you as good Dutch dollars
As any are in Holland.

Tribulation. Can you so ?

Subtle. Ay, and shall 'bide the third examination.

Anu. It will be joyful tidings to the brethren.

Subtle. But you must carry it secret.

Tribulation. Ay; but stay,
This act of coining, is it lawful ?

Ananias. Lawful

We know no magistrate: or, if we did,
This is foreign coin.

Subtle. It is no coining, sir.

It is but casting.

Tribulation. Ha ! you distinguish well:
Casting of money may be lawful.

Ananias. 'Tis, sir.

Tribulation. Truly, I take it so.

Subtle. There is no scruple,
Sir, to be made of it; believe Ananias:
This case of conscience he is studied in.

Tribulation. I'll make a question of it to the brethren.

Ananias. The brethren shall approve it lawful, doubt not.
Where shall it be done ? [Knocking without.]

Subtle. For that we'll talk anon.

There's some to speak with me. Go in, I pray you,
And view the parcels. That's the inventory.
I'll come to you straight. [Exeunt Tribulation and Ananias.]
Who is it ? - Face ! appear.

[Enter Face in his uniform.]

How now ! good prize !

Face. Good pox ! yond' costive cheater
Never came on.

Subtle. How then ?

Face. I have walk'd the round
Till now, and no such thing.

Subtle. And have you quit him ?

Face. Quit him ! an hell would quit him too, he were happy.

Slight ! would you have me stalk like a mill-jade,
All day, for one that will not yield us grains ?

I know him of old.

Subtle. O, but to have gull'd him,
Had been a mastery.

Face. Let him go, black boy !
And turn thee, that some fresh news may possess thee.
A noble count, a don of Spain, my dear
Delicious compeer, and my party-bawd,
Who is come hither private for his conscience,
And brought munition with him, six great slops,
Bigger than three Dutch hoys, beside round trunks,
Furnished with pistols, and pieces of eight,
Will straight be here, my rogue, to have thy bath,
(That is the colour,) and to make his battery
Upon our Dol, our castle, our cinque-port,
Our Dover pier, our what thou wilt. Where is she !

She must prepare perfumes, delicate linen,
The bath in chief, a banquet, and her wit...
Where is the doxy ?

Subtle. I'll send her to thee:

And but dispatch my brace of little John Leydens,
And come again my self.

Face. Are they within then ?

Subtle. Numbering the sum.

Face. How much ?

Subtle. A hundred marks, boy. [Exit.]

Face. Why, this is a lucky day. Ten pounds of Mammon !

Three of my clerk ! a portague of my grocer !

This of the brethren ! beside reversions,

And states to come in the widow, and my count !

My share to-day will not be bought for forty -

[Enter Dol.]

Dol. What ?

Face. Pounds, dainty Dorothy ! art thou so near ?

Dol. Yes; say, lord general, how fares our camp ?

Face. As with the few that had entrench'd themselves

Safe, by their discipline, against a world, Dol,

And laugh'd within those trenches, and grew fat

With thinking on the booties, Dol, brought in

Daily by their small parties. This dear hour,

A doughty don is taken with my Dol;

And thou mayst make his ransom what thou wilt....

Dol. What is he, general ?

Face. An adalantado,

A grandee, girl. Was not my Dapper here yet ?

Dol. No.

Face. Nor my Drugger ?

Dol. Neither.

Face. A pox on 'em,

They are so long a furnishing ! such stinkards

Would not be seen upon these festival days. -

[Re-enter Subtle.]

How now ! have you done ?

Subtle. Done. They are gone: the sum

Is here in bank, my Face. I would we knew

Another chapman now would buy 'em outright.

Face. 'Slid, Nab shall do't against he have the widow

To furnish household.

Subtle. Excellent, well thought on:

Pray God he come.

Face. I pray he keep away

Till our new business be o'erpast.

Subtle. But, Face,

How cam'st thou by this secret don ?

Face. A spirit

Brought me th' intelligence in a paper here,

As I was conjuring yonder in my circle

For Surly; I have my flies abroad. Your bath

Is famous, Subtle, by my means... His great
Verdugoship has not a jot of language;
So much the easier to be cozen'd, my Dolly.
He will come here in a hired coach, obscure,
And our own coachman, whom I have sent as guide,
No creature else. [Knocking without.] Who's that?
[Exit Dol.]

Subtle. It is not he ?

Face. O no, not yet this hour.

[Re-enter Dol.]

Subtle. Who is't?

Dol. Dapper, Your clerk.

Face. God's will then, queen of Fairy,
On with your tire; [Exit DOL.] and, doctor, with your robes.
Let's dispatch him for God's sake.

Subtle. 'Twill be long.

Face. I warrant you, take but the cues I give you,
It shall be brief enough. [Goes to the window.] 'Slight, here are more !
Abel, and I think the angry boy, the heir,
That fain would quarrel.

Subtle. And the widow ?

Face. No, Not that I see. Away! [Exit Subtle.]

[Enter Dapper.]

O sir, you are welcome.
The doctor is within a moving for you;
I have had the most ado to win him to it! -
He swears you'll be the darling of the dice:
He never heard her highness dote till now.
Your aunt has given you the most gracious words
That can be thought on.

Dapper. Shall I see her grace ?

Face. See her, and kiss her too. -

[Enter Abel, followed by Kastril.]

What, honest Nab !
Hast brought the damask ?

Nab. No, sir; here's tobacco.

Face. 'Tis well done, Nab: thou'lt bring the damask too ?

Drugger. Yes: here's the gentleman, captain, master Kastril,
I have brought to see the doctor.

Face. Where's the widow?

Drugger. Sir, as he likes, his sister, he says, shall come.

Face. O, is it so ! good time. Is your name Kastril, sir ?

Kastril. Ay, and the best of the Kastrils, I'd be sorry else,
By fifteen hundred a year. Where is the doctor ?

My mad tobacco-boy, here, tells me of one
That can do things: has he any skill ?

Face. Wherein, sir?

Kastril. To carry a business, manage a quarrel fairly,
Upon fit terms.

Face. It seems, sir, you are but young

About the town, that can make that a question.

Kastril. Sir, not so young, but I have heard some speech
Of the angry boys, and seen them take tobacco;
And in his shop; and I can take it too.
And I would fain be one of 'em, and go down
And practise in the country.

Face. Sir, for the duello,
The doctor, I assure you, shall inform you,
To the least shadow of a hair; and shew you
An instrument he has of his own making,
Wherewith no sooner shall you make report
Of any quarrel, but he will take the height on't
Most instantly, and tell in what degree
Of safety it lies in, or mortality.
And how it may be borne, whether in a right line,
Or a half circle; or may else be cast
Into an angle blunt, if not acute:
All this he will demonstrate. And then, rules
To give and take the lie by.

Kastril. How ! to take it ?

Face. Yes, in oblique he'll shew you, or in circle;
But never in diameter. The whole town
Study his theorems, and dispute them ordinarily
At the eating academies.

Kastril. But does he teach
Living by the wits too ?

Face. Any thing whatever.
You cannot think that subtlety but he reads it.
He made me a captain. I was a stark pimp,
Just of your standing, 'fore I met with him;
It is not two months since. I'll tell you his method:
First, he will enter you at some ordinary.

Kastril. No, I'll not come there: you shall pardon me.

Face. For why, sir ?

Kastril. There's gaming there, and tricks.

Face. Why, would you be
A gallant, and not game !

Kastril. Ay, 'twill spend a man.

Face. Spend you ! it will repair you when you are spent:
How do they live by their wits there, that have vented
Six times your fortunes ?

Kastril. What, three thousand a year !

Face. Ay, forty thousand.

Kastril. Are there such ?

Face. Ay, sir,
And gallants yet. Here's a young gentleman
Is born to nothing, - [Points to Dapper.] forty marks a year
Which I count nothing: - he is to be initiated,
And have a fly of the doctor. He will win you,
By irresistible luck, within this fortnight,
Enough to buy a barony. They will set him
Upmost, at the groom porters, all the Christmas:
And for the whole year through, at every place,
Where there is play, present him with the chair;
The best attendance, the best drink; sometimes
Two glasses of Canary, and pay nothing;

The purest linen, and the sharpest knife...
You shall have your ordinaries bid for him,
As play-houses for a poet; and the master
Pray him aloud to name what dish he affects,
Which must be butter'd shrimps: and those that drink
To no mouth else, will drink to his, as being
The goodly president mouth of all the board.

Kastril. Do you not gull one ?

Face. 'Ods my life ! do you think it ?

You shall have a cast commander, (can but get
In credit with a glover, or a spurrier,
For some two pair of either's ware aforehand,)
Will, by most swift posts, dealing [but] with him,
Arrive at competent means to keep himself,...
And be admired for't .

Kastril. Will the doctor teach this?

Face. He will do more, sir: when your land is gone,
As men of spirit hate to keep earth long,
In a vacation, when small money is stirring,
And ordinaries suspended till the term,
He'll shew a perspective, where on one side
You shall behold the faces and the persons
Of all sufficient young heirs in town,
Whose bonds are current for commodity;
On th' other side, the merchants' forms, and others,
That without help of any second broker,
Who would expect a share, will trust such parcels:
In the third square, the very street and sign
Where the commodity dwells, and does but wait
To be deliver'd, be it pepper, soap,
Hops, or tobacco, oat-meal, woad, or cheeses.
All which you may so handle, to enjoy
To your own use, and never stand obliged.

Kastril. I'faith ! is he such a fellow ?

Face. Why, Nab here knows him.

And then for making matches for rich widows,
Young gentlewomen, heirs, the fortunat'st man !
He's sent to, far and near, all over England,
To have his counsel, and to know their fortunes.

Kastril. God's will, my suster shall see him.

Face. I'll tell you, sir,

What he did tell me of Nab. It's a strange thing ! -
By the way, you must eat no cheese, Nab, it breeds melancholy,
And that same melancholy breeds worms; but pass it:-
He told me, honest Nab here was ne'er at tavern
But once in's life.

Drugger. Truth, and no more I was not.

Face. And then he was so sick -

Drugger. Could he tell you that too ?

Face. How should I know it ?

Drugger. In troth we had been a shooting,
And had a piece of fat ram-mutton to supper,
That lay so heavy o' my stomach -

Face. And he has no head

To bear any wine; for what with the noise of the fiddlers,
And care of his shop, for he dares keep no servants -

Drugger. My head did so ach -

Face. And he was fain to be brought home,
The doctor told me: and then a good old woman -

Drugger. Yes, faith, she dwells in Sea-coal-lane, - did cure me,
With sodden ale, and pellitory of the wall;
Cost me but two-pence. I had another sickness
Was worse than that.

Face. Ay, that was with the grief
Thou took'st for being cess'd at eighteen-pence,
For the water-work.

Drugger. In truth, and it was like
T' have cost me almost my life.

Face. Thy hair went off ?

Drugger. Yes, sir; 'twas done for spite.

Face. Nay, so says the doctor.

Kastril. Pray thee, tobacco-boy, go fetch my suster;
I'll see this learned boy before I go;
And so shall she.

Face. Sir, he is busy now:
But if you have a sister to fetch hither,
Perhaps your own pains may command her sooner;
And he by that time will be free.

Kastril. I go. [Exit.]

Face. Drugger, she's thine: the damask! - [Exit Abel.] Subtle and I
Must wrestle for her. [Aside.] - Come on, master Dapper,
You see how I turn clients here away,
To give your cause dispatch: have you perform'd
The ceremonies were enjoin'd you !

Dapper. Yes, of the vinegar,
And the clean shirt.

Face. 'Tis well: that shirt may do you
More worship than you think. Your aunt's a-fire,
But that she will not shew it, t' have a sight of you.
Have you provided for her grace's servants ?

Dapper. Yes, here are six score Edward shillings.

Face. Good !

Dapper. And an old Harry's sovereign.

Face. Very good !

Dapper. And three James shillings, and an Elizabeth groat,
Just twenty nobles.

Face. O, you are too just.

I would you had had the other noble in Maries.

Dapper. I have some Philip and Maries.

Face. Ay, those same

Are best of all: where are they ? Hark, the doctor.

[Enter Subtle, disguised like a priest of Fairy, with a stripe of cloth.]

Subtle. [In a feigned voice.] Is yet her grace's cousin come?

Face. He is come.

Subtle. And is he fasting ?

Face. Yes.

Subtle. And hath cried hum ?

Face. Thrice, you must answer.

Dapper. Thrice.

Subtle. And as oft buz ?

Face. If you have, say.

Dapper. I have.

Subtle. Then, to her cuz,

Hoping that he hath vinegar'd his senses,
As he was bid, the Fairy queen dispenses,
By me, this robe, the petticoat of fortune;
Which that he straight put on, she doth importune.
And though to fortune near be her petticoat,
Yet nearer is her smock, the queen doth note:
And therefore, ev'n of that a piece she hath sent,
Which, being a child, to wrap him in was rent;
And prays him for a scarf he now will wear it,
With as much love as then her grace did tear it,
About his eyes, [They blind him with the rag.] to shew he is fortunate.
And, trusting unto her to make his state,
He'll throw away all worldly pelf about him;
Which that he will perform, she doth not doubt him.

Face. She need not doubt him, sir. Alas, he has nothing,
But what he will part withal as willingly,
Upon her grace's word - throw away your purse -
As she would ask it: - handkerchiefs and all -

[He throws away, as they bid him.]

She cannot bid that thing, but he'll obey. -
If you have a ring about you, cast it off,
Or a silver seal at your wrist; her grace will send
Her fairies here to search you, therefore deal
Directly with her highness: if they find
That you conceal a mite, you are undone.

Dapper. Truly, there's all.

Face. All what !

Dapper. My money; truly.

Face. Keep nothing that is transitory about you.
Bid Dol play music. [Aside to Subtle.] - Look, the elves are come
[Dol plays on the cittern within.]
To pinch you, if you tell not truth. Advise you.
[They pinch him.]

Dapper. O ! I have a paper with a spur-ryal in't.

Face. Ti, ti.

They knew't, they say.

Subtle. Ti, ti, ti, ta. He has more yet.

Face. Ti, ti-ti-ti. In the other pocket ? [Aside to Sub.]

Subtle. Titi, titi, titi, titi, titi.

They must pinch him or he will never confess, they say.
[They pinch him again.]

Dapper. O, O !

Face. Nay, pray you hold: he is her grace's nephew,
Ti, ti, ti? What care you! good faith, you shall care. -
Deal plainly, sir, and shame the fairies. Shew
You are innocent.

Dapper. By this good light, I have nothing.

Subtle. Ti, ti, ti, ti, to, ta. He does equivocate, she says:
Ti, ti do ti, ti ti do, ti da; and swears by the light when he is blinded.

Dapper. By this good dark, I have nothing but a half-crown
Of gold about my wrist, that my love gave me;

And a leaden heart I wore since she forsook me.
Face. I thought 'twas something. And would you incur
Your aunt's displeasure for these trifles ? Come,
I had rather you had thrown away twenty half-crowns.
[Takes it off.]
You may wear your leaden heart still. -

[Enter Dol hastily.]

How now !

Subtle. What news, Dol ?

Dol. Yonder's your knight, sir Mammon.

Face. 'Ods lid, we never thought of him till now !
Where is he ?

Dol. Here hard by: he is at the door.

Subtle. And you are not ready, now ! Dol, get his suit.
[Exit Dol.]

He must not be sent back.

Face. O by no means.

What shall we do with this same puffin here,
Now he's on the spit ?

Subtle. Why, lay him back awhile,
With some device.

[Re-enter Dol with Face's clothes.]

-Ti, ti, ti, ti, ti, ti, Would her grace speak with me !

I come. - Help, Dol ! [Knocking without.]

Face. [Speaks through the key-hole.] Who's there? sir Epicure,
My master's in the way. Please you to walk
Three or four turns, but till his back be turn'd,
And I am for you. - Quickly, Dol !

Subtle. Her grace

Commends her kindly to you, master Dapper.

Dapper. I long to see her grace.

Subtle. She now is set

At dinner in her bed, and she has sent you
From her own private trencher, a dead mouse,
And a piece of gingerbread, to be merry withal,
And stay your stomach, lest you faint with fasting:
Yet if you could hold out till she saw you, she says,
It would be better for you.

Face. Sir, he shall

Hold out, an 'twere this two hours, for her highness;
I can assure you that. We will not lose
All we have done. -

Subtle. He must not see, nor speak
To any body, till then.

Face. For that we'll put, sir,
A stay in's mouth.

Subtle. Of what !

Face. Of gingerbread.

Make you it fit. He that hath pleas'd her grace
Thus far, shall not now crinkle for a little. -

Gape sir, and let him fit you.

[They thrust a gag of gingerbread in his mouth.]

Subtle. Where shall we now bestow him ?

Dol. In the privy.

Subtle. Come along, sir,

I now must shew you Fortune's privy lodgings.

Face. Are they perfum'd, and his bath ready ?

Subtle. All. Only the fumigation's somewhat strong.

Face. [Speaking through the key-hole.] Sir Epicure, I am yours, sir, by and by.

[Exeunt with Dapper.]

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ACT THE FOURTH

SCENE I: A room in Lovewit's House.

[Enter Face and Mammon.]

Face. O sir, you are come in the only finest time. -

Mammon. Where's master ?

Face. Now preparing for projection, sir.

Your stuff will be all changed shortly.

Mammon. Into gold ?

Face. To gold and silver, sir.

Mammon. Silver I care not for.

Face. Yes, sir, a little to give beggars.

Mammon. Where's the lady ?

Face. At hand here. I have told her such brave things of you,

Touching your bounty, and your noble spirit -

Mammon. Hast thou ?

Face. As she is almost in her fit to see you.

But, good sir, no divinity in your conference,

For fear of putting her in rage. -

Mammon. I warrant thee.

Face. Six men [sir] will not hold her down: and then,

If the old man should hear or see you -

Mammon. Fear not.

Face. The very house, sir, would run mad. You know it,

How scrupulous he is, and violent,

'Gainst the least act of sin. Physic, or mathematics,

Poetry, state, or bawdry, as I told you,

She will endure, and never startle; but

No word of controversy.

Mammon. I am school'd, good Ulen.

Face. And you must praise her house, remember that,

And her nobility.

Mammon. Let me alone:

No herald, no, nor antiquary, Lungs,

Shall do it better. Go.

Face. Why, this is yet

A kind of modern happiness, to have

Dol Common for a great lady. [Aside, and exit.]

Mammon. Now, Epicure,
Heighten thy self, talk to her all in gold;
Rain her as many showers as Jove did drops
Unto his Danae; shew the god a miser,
Compared with Mammon. What! the stone will do't.
She shall feel gold, taste gold... I will be puissant,
And mighty in my talk to her. -

[Re-enter Face with Dol richly dressed.]

Here she comes.

Face. To him, Dol, suckle him; - This is the noble knight,
I told your ladyship -

Mammon. Madam, with your pardon,
I kiss your vesture.

Dol. Sir, I were uncivil
If I would suffer that; my lip to you, sir.

Mammon. I hope my lord your brother be in health, lady.

Dol. My lord, my brother is, though I no lady, sir.

Face. Well said, my Guinea bird. [Aside.]

Mammon. Right noble madam -

Face. O, we shall have most fierce idolatry. [Aside.]

Mammon. 'Tis your prerogative.

Dol. Rather your courtesy.

Mammon. Were there nought else t' enlarge your virtues to me,
These answers speak your breeding, and your blood.

Dol. Blood we boast none, sir, a poor baron's daughter.

Mammon. Poor ! and gat you ? profane not....

Dol. Sir, although
We may be said to want the gilt and trappings,
The dress of honour, yet we strive to keep
The seeds and the materials.

Mammon. I do see
The old ingredient, virtue, was not lost,
Nor the drug money used to make your compound.
There is a strange nobility in your eye,
This lip, that chin ! methinks you do resemble
One of the Austriac princes.

Face. Very like !
Her father was an Irish costarmonger. [Aside.]

Mammon. The house of Valois just had such a nose,
And such a forehead yet the Medici
Of Florence boast.

Dol. Troth, and I have been liken'd
To all these princes.

Face. I'll be sworn, I heard it.

Mammon. I know not how ! it is not any one,
But e'en the very choice of all their features.

Face. I'll in, and laugh. [Aside and exit.]

Mammon. A certain touch, or air,
That sparkles a divinity, beyond
An earthly beauty !

Dol. O, you play the courtier.

Mammon. Good lady, give me leave -

Dol. In faith, I may not,

To mock me, sir.

Mammon. To burn in this sweet flame;
The phoenix never knew a nobler death.

Dol. Nay, now you court the courtier, and destroy
What you would build: this art, sir, in your words,
Calls your whole faith in question.

Mammon. By my soul -

Dol. Nay, oaths are made of the same air, sir.

Mammon. Nature

Never bestow'd upon mortality
A more unblamed, a more harmonious feature;
She play'd the step-dame in all faces else:
Sweet madam, let me be particular -

Dol. Particular, sir ! I pray you know your distance.

Mammon. In no ill sense, sweet lady; but to ask
How your fair graces pass the hours ? I see
You are lodg'd here, in the house of a rare man,
An excellent artist; but what's that to you ?

Dol. Yes, sir; I study here the mathematics,
And distillation.

Mammon. O, I cry your pardon.

He's a divine instructor ! can extract
The souls of all things by his art; call all
The virtues, and the miracles of the sun,
Into a temperate furnace; teach dull nature
What her own forces are. A man, the emperor
Has courted above Kelly; sent his medals
And chains, to invite him.

Dol. Ay, and for his physic, sir -

Mammon. Above the art of Aesculapius,
That drew the envy of the thunderer !
I know all this, and more.

Dol. Troth, I am taken, sir,
Whole with these studies, that contemplate nature.

Mammon. It is a noble humour; but this form
Was not intended to so dark a use.
Had you been crooked, foul, of some coarse mould,
A cloister had done well; but such a feature
That might stand up the glory of a kingdom,
To live recluse ! is a mere solaecism,
Though in a nunnery. It must not be.

I muse, my lord your brother will permit it:
You should spend half my land first, were I he.
Does not this diamond better on my finger,
Than in the quarry ?

Dol. Yes.

Mammon. Why, you are like it.
You were created, lady, for the light.
Here, you shall wear it; take it, the first pledge
Of what I speak, to bind you to believe me.

Dol. In chains of adamant ?

Mammon. Yes, the strongest bands.
And take a secret too - here, by your side,
Doth stand this hour, the happiest man in Europe.

Dol. You are contented, sir ?

Mammon. Nay, in true being,

The envy of princes and the fear of states.

Dol. Say you so, sir Epicure ?

Mammon. Yes, and thou shalt prove it,
Daughter of honour. I have cast mine eye
Upon thy form, and I will rear this beauty
Above all styles.

Dol. You mean no treason, sir ?

Mammon. No, I will take away that jealousy.
I am the lord of the philosopher's stone,
And thou the lady.

Dol. How, sir ! have you that ?

Mammon. I am the master of the mastery.
This day the good old wretch here o' the house
Has made it for us: now he's at projection.
Think therefore thy first wish now, let me hear it;
And it shall rain into thy lap, no shower,
But floods of gold, whole cataracts, a deluge,
To get a nation on thee.

Dol. You are pleased, sir,

To work on the ambition of our sex.

Mammon. I am pleased the glory of her sex should know,
This nook, here, of the Friars is no climate
For her to live obscurely in, to learn
Physic and surgery, for the constable's wife
Of some odd hundred in Essex; but come forth,
And taste the air of palaces; eat, drink
The toils of empirics, and their boasted practice;
Tincture of pearl, and coral, gold and amber;
Be seen at feasts and triumphs; have it ask'd,
What miracle she is ? set all the eyes
Of court a-fire, like a burning glass,
And work them into cinders, when the jewels
Of twenty states adorn thee, and the light
Strikes out the stars I that, when thy name is mention'd,
Queens may look pale; and we but shewing our love,
Nero's Poppaea may be lost in story !
Thus will we have it.

Dol. I could well consent, sir.

But, in a monarchy, how will this be ?

The prince will soon take notice, and both seize
You and your stone, it being a wealth unfit
For any private subject.

Mammon. If he knew it.

Dol. Yourself do boast it, sir.

Mammon. To thee, my life.

Dol. O, but beware, sir ! you may come to end
The remnant of your days in a loth'd prison,
By speaking of it.

Mammon. 'Tis no idle fear:

We'll therefore go withal, my girl, and live
In a free state, where we will eat our mullets,
Soused in high-country wines, sup pheasants eggs,
And have our cockles boil'd in silver shells;
Our shrimps to swim again, as when they liv'd,
In a rare butter made of dolphins milk,
Whose cream does look like opals;...

....And thou shalt have thy wardrobe
Richer than nature's, still to change thy self,
And vary oftener, for thy pride, than she,
Or art, her wise and almost-equal servant.

[Re-enter Face.]

Face. Sir, you are too loud. I hear you every word
Into the laboratory. Some fitter place;
The garden, or great chamber above. How like you her ?
Mammon. Excellent ! Lungs. There's for thee. [Gives him money.]
Face. But do you hear ?
Good sir, beware, no mention of the rabins.
Mammon. We think not on 'em. [Exeunt Mammon and Dol.]
Face. O, it is well, sir. - Subtle !

[Enter Subtle.]

Dost thou not laugh?
Subtle. Yes; are they gone ?
Face. All's clear.
Subtle. The widow is come.
Face. And your quarrelling disciple ?
Subtle. Ay.
Face. I must to my captainship again then.
Subtle. Stay, bring them in first.
Face. So I meant. What is she ?
A bonnibel ?
Subtle. I know not.
Face. We'll draw lots:
You'll stand to that ?
Subtle. What else ?
Face. O, for a suit,
To fall now like a curtain, flap !
Subtle. To the door, man.
Face. You'll have the first kiss, 'cause I am not ready. [Exit.]
Subtle. Yes, and perhaps hit you through both the nostrils.
Face. [within.] Who would you speak with ?
Kastril. [within.] Where's the captain ?
Face. [within.] Gone, sir.
About some business.
Kastril. [Within.] Gone !
Face. [Within.] He'll return straight.
But master doctor, his lieutenant, is here.

[Enter Kastril, followed by Dame Pliant.]

Subtle. Come near, my worshipful boy, my terrae fili,
That is, my boy of land make thy approaches:
Welcome; I know thy lusts, and thy desires,
And I will serve and satisfy them. Begin,
Charge me from thence, or thence, or in this line;
Here is my centre: ground thy quarrel.
Kastril. You lie.
Subtle. How, child of wrath and anger ! the loud lie ?
For what, my sudden boy ?

Kastril. Nay, that look you to,
I am aforehand.

Subtle. O, this is no true grammar,
And as ill logic ! You must render causes, child,
Your first and second intentions, know your canons
And your divisions, moods, degrees, and differences,
Your predicaments, substance, and accident,
Series extern and intern, with their causes,
Efficient, material, formal, final,
And have your elements perfect ?

Kastril. What is this !
The angry tongue he talks in ? [Aside.]

Subtle. That false precept,
Of being afore-hand, has deceived a number,
And made them enter quarrels, often-times,
Before they were aware; and afterward,
Against their wills.

Kastril. How must I do then, sir ?

Subtle. I cry this lady mercy: she should first
Have been saluted. [Kisses her.] I do call you lady,
Because you are to be one, ere 't be long,
My soft and buxom widow.

Kastril. Is she, i'faith?

Subtle. Yes, or my art is an egregious liar.

Kastril. How know you !

Subtle. By inspection on her forehead,
And subtlety of her lip, which must be tasted
Often, to make a judgment. [Kisses her again.] 'Slight, she melts
Like a myrobolane: - here is yet a line,
In rivo frontis, tells me he is no knight.

Dame Pliant. What is he then, sir ?

Subtle. Let me see your hand.
O, your linea fortunæ makes it plain;
And stella here in monte Veneris.
But, most of all, junctura annularis.
He is a soldier, or a man of art, lady,
But shall have some great honour shortly.

Dame Pliant. Brother,
He's a rare man, believe me !

[Re-enter Face, in his uniform.]

Kastril. Hold your peace.
Here comes the t' other rare man; - 'Save you, captain.

Face. Good master Kastril! Is this your sister ?

Kastril. Ay, sir.
Please you to kuss her, and be proud to know her.

Face. I shall be proud to know you, lady. [Kisses her.]

Dame Pliant. Brother,
He calls me lady too.

Kastril. Ay, peace: I heard it. [Takes her aside.]

Face. The count is come.

Subtle. Where is he ?

Face. At the door.

Subtle. Why, you must entertain him.

Face. What will you do with these the while ?

Subtle. Why, have them up, and shew them
Some fustian book, or the dark glass.

Face. Fore God,

She is a delicate dab-chick ! I must have her. [Exit.]

Subtle. Must you ! ay, if your fortune will you must. -

Come, sir, the captain will come to us presently:

I'll have you to my chamber of demonstrations,

Where I will shew you both the grammar, and logic,

And rhetoric of quarrelling: my whole method

Drawn out in tables; and my instrument,

That hath the several scales upon't, shall make you

Able to quarrel at a straw's-breadth by moonlight.

And, lady I'll have you look in a glass,

Some half an hour, but to clear your eye-sight,

Against you see your fortune; which is greater,

Than I may judge upon the sudden, trust me.

[Exit, followed by Kastiril and Dame Pliant.]

[Re-enter Face.]

Face. Where are you, doctor ?

Subtle. [Within.] I'll come to you presently.

Face. I will have this same widow, now I have seen her,
On any composition.

[Re-enter Subtle.]

Subtle. What do you say ?

Face. Have you disposed of them ?

Subtle. I have sent them up.

Face. Subtle, in troth, I needs must have this widow.

Subtle. Is that the matter ?

Face. Nay, but hear me.

Subtle. Go to,

If you rebel once, Dol shall know it all:

Therefore be quiet, and obey your chance.

Face. Nay, thou art so violent now - Do but conceive....

Subtle. I will not treat with thee; what ! sell my fortune ?

'Tis better than my birth-right. Do not murmur:

Win her, and carry her. If you grumble, Dol

Knows it directly.

Face. Well, sir, I am silent.

Will you go help to fetch in Don in state? [Exit.]

Subtle. I follow you, sir: we must keep Face in awe,
Or he will over-look us like a tyrant.

[Re-enter Face, introducing Surly disguised as a Spaniard.]

Brain of a tailor ! who comes here ? Don John !

Surly. Senores, beso las manos a vuestras mercedes....

Subtle. He looks in that deep ruff like a head in a platter,
Serv'd in by a short cloak upon two trestles.

Face. Or, what do you say to a collar of brawn, cut down
Beneath the souse, and wriggled with a knife ?

Subtle. 'Slud, he does look too fat to be a Spaniard.

Face. Perhaps some Fleming or some Hollander got him
In d' Alva's time; count Egmont's bastard.

Subtle. Don,

Your scurvy, yellow, Madrid face is welcome.

Surly. Gratia.

Subtle. He speaks out of a fortification.

Pray God he have no squibs in those deep sets.

Surly. Por dios, senores, muy linda casa !

Subtle. What says he ?

Face. Praises the house, I think;

I know no more but's action.

Subtle. Yes, the casa,

My precious Diego, will prove fair enough

To cozen you in. Do you mark ? you shall

Be cozen'd, Diego.

Face. Cozen'd, do you see,

My worthy Donzel, cozen'd.

Surly. Entiendo.

Subtle. Do you intend it! so do we, dear Don.

Have you brought pistolets, or portagues,

My solemn Don? - Dost thou feel any?

Face. [Feels his pockets.] Full.

Subtle. You shall be emptied, Don, pumped and drawn Dry, as they say.

Face. Milked, in troth, sweet Don.

Subtle. See all the monsters; the great lion of all, Don.

Surly. Con licencia, se puede ver a esta senora ?

Subtle. What talks he now ?

Face. Of the senora.

Subtle. O, Don,

That is the lioness, which you shall see

Also, my Don.

Face. 'Slid, Subtle, how shall we do?

Subtle. For what ?

Face. Why Dol's employ'd, you know.

Subtle. That's true.

'Fore heaven, I know not: he must stay, that's all.

Face. Stay ! that he must not by no means.

Subtle. No ! why ?

Face. Unless you'll mar all. 'Slight, he will suspect it:

And then he will not pay, not half so well....

Subtle. What shall we do then ?

Face. Think: you must be sudden.

Surly. Entiendo que la senora es tan hermosa, pue codicio

tan verla, coma la bien aventuranza de mi vida.

Face. Mi vida! 'Slid, Subtle, he puts me in mind o' the widow.

What dost thou say to draw her to it, ha !

And tell her 'tis her fortune ? all our venture

Now lies upon't....

What dost thou think on't, Subtle !

Subtle. Who, I ? why -

Face. The credit of our house too is engaged.

Subtle. You made me an offer for my share erewhile.

What wilt thou give me, i' faith ?

Face. O, by that light

I'll not buy now: You know your doom to me.

E'en take your lot, obey your chance, sir; win her,

And wear her out, for me.

Subtle. 'Slight, I'll not work her then.

Face. It is the common cause; therefore bethink you.

Dol else must know it, as you said.

Subtle. I care not.

Surly. Senores, porque se tarda tanto ?

Subtle. Faith, I am not fit, I am old.

Face. That's now no reason, sir.

Surly. Puede ser de hazer burla de mi amor ?

Face. You hear the Don too ! by this air, I call,

And loose the hinges: Dol !

Subtle. A plague of hell -

Face. Will you then do ?

Subtle. You are a terrible rogue !

I'll think of this: will you, sir, call the widow ?

Face. Yes, and I'll take her too with all her faults,

Now I do think on't better.

Subtle. With all my heart, sir;

Am I discharg'd o' the lot ?

Face. As you please.

Subtle. Hands. [They take hands.]

Face. Remember now, that upon any change,

You never claim her.

Subtle. Much good joy, and health to you, sir.

Marry a whore ! fate, let me wed a witch first.

Surly. Por estas honradas barbas -

Subtle. He swears by his beard.

Dispatch, and call the brother too. [Exit Face.]

Surly. Tengo duda, senores, que no me hagan alguna traycion.

Subtle. How, issue on ? yes, praesto, sennor. Please you

Enthratha the chambratha, worthy don:

Where if you please the fates, in your bathada,

You shall be soaked, and stroked and tubb'd, and rubb'd,

And scrubb'd, and fubb'd, dear don, before you go.

You shall in faith, my scurvy baboon don.

Be curried, claw'd and flaw'd, and taw'd, indeed.

I will the heartlier go about it now,...

To be revenged on this impetuous Face:

The quickly doing of it is the grace.

[Exeunt Subtle and Surly.]

SCENE II: Another room in the same.

[Enter Face, Kastril, and Dame Pliant.]

Face. Come, lady: I knew the doctor would not leave

Till he had found the very nick of her fortune.

Kastril. To be a countess, say you, a Spanish countess, sir ?

Dame Pliant. Why, is that better than an English countess ?

Face. Better ! 'Slight, make you that a question, lady !

Kastril. Nay, she is a fool, captain, you must pardon her.

Face. Ask from your courtier, to your inns-of-court-man,

To your mere milliner; they will tell you all,

Your Spanish gennet is the best horse; your Spanish

Stoup is the best garb: your Spanish beard
Is the best cut; your Spanish ruffs are the best
Wear; your Spanish pavin the best dance;
Your Spanish titillation in a glove
The best perfume: and for your Spanish pike,
And Spanish blade, let your poor captain speak -
Here comes the doctor.

[Enter Subtle, with a paper.]

Subtle. My most honour'd lady,
For so I am now to style you, having found
By this my scheme, you are to undergo
An honourable fortune, very shortly.
What will you say now, if some -

Face. I have told her all, sir;
And her right worshipful brother here, that she shall be
A countess; do not delay them, sir: a Spanish countess.

Subtle. Still, my scarce-worshipful captain, you can keep
No secret ! Well, since he has told you, madam,
Do you forgive him, and I do.

Kastril. She shall do that, sir;
I'll look to't, 'tis my charge.

Subtle. Well then: nought rests
But that she fit her love now to her fortune.

Dame Pliant. Truly I shall never brook a Spaniard.

Subtle. No !

Dame Pliant. Never since eighty-eight could I abide them,
And that was some three year afore I was born, in truth.

Subtle. Come, you must love him, or be miserable;
Choose which you will.

Face. By this good rush, persuade her,
She will cry strawberries else within this twelve-month.

Subtle. Nay, shads and mackerel, which is worse.

Face. Indeed, sir !

Kastril. 'Ods lid, you shall love him, or I'll kick you.

Dame Pliant. Why, I'll do as you will have me, brother.

Kastril. Do,
Or by this hand I'll maul you.

Face. Nay, good sir,
Be not so fierce.

Subtle. No, my enraged child;
She will be ruled. What, when she comes to taste
The pleasures of a countess ! to be courted -

Face. And kiss'd, and ruffled !

Subtle. Ay, behind the hangings

Face. And then come forth in pomp !...

Subtle. Is serv'd
Upon the knee !

Face. And has her pages, ushers,
Footmen, and coaches -

Subtle. Her six mares -

Face. Nay, eight !

Subtle. To hurry her through London, to the Exchange,
Bethlem, the china-houses -

Face. Yes, and have

The citizens gape at her, and praise her tines,
And my lord's goose-turd bands, that rides with her!
Kastril. Most brave ! By this hand, you are not my suster,
If you refuse.
Dame Pliant. I will not refuse, brother.

[Enter Surly.]

Surly. Que es esto, senores, que no venga? Esta tardanza me mata !
Face. It is the count come:
The doctor knew he would be here by his art.
Subtle. En gallanta madama, Don ! gallantissima !
Surly. Por todos los dioses, la mas acabada hermosura,
que he visto en mi vida !
Face. Is't not a gallant language that they speak ?
Kastril. An admirable language ! Is't not French ?
Face. No, Spanish, sir.
Kastril. It goes like law French,
And that, they say, is the courtliest. language.
Face. List, sir.
Surly. El sol ha perdido su lumbre, con el esplendor que
trae esta dama! Valgame dios!
Face. He admires your sister.
Kastril. Must not she make curt'sy?
Subtle. 'Ods will, she must go to him, man, and kiss him !
It is the Spanish fashion, for the women
To make first court.
Face. 'Tis true he tells you, sir:
His art knows all.
Surly. Porque no se acude ?
Kastril. He speaks to her, I think.
Face. That he does, sir.
Surly. Por el amor de dios, que es esto que se tarda ?
Kastril. Nay, see: she will not understand him ! gull, Noddy.
Dame Pliant. What say you, brother?
Kastril. Ass, my suster,
Go kuss him, as the cunning man would have you;
I'll thrust a pin in your buttocks else.
Face. O no, sir.
Surly. Senora mia, mi persona esta muy indigna de allegar a tanta hermosura.
Face. Does he not use her bravely ?
Kastril. Bravely, i' faith !
Face. Nay, he will use her better.
Kastril. Do you think so ?
Surly. Senora, si sera sererida, entremonos.

[Exit with Dame Pliant.]

Kastril. Where does he carry her ?
Face. Into the garden, sir;
Take you no thought: I must interpret for her.
Subtle. Give Dol the word. [Aside to Face, who goes out.] - Come, my fierce child, advance,
We'll to our quarrelling lesson again.
Kastril. Agreed.
I love a Spanish boy with all my heart.
Subtle. Nay, and by this means, sir, you shall be brother

To a great count.

Kastril. Ay, I knew that at first.

This match will advance the house of the Kastrils.

Subtle. 'Pray God your sister prove but pliant !

Kastril. Why,

Her name is so, by her other husband.

Subtle. How !

Kastril. The widow Pliant. Knew you not that ?

Subtle. No faith, sir;

Yet, by erection of her figure, I guest it.

Come, let's go practise.

Kastril. Yes, but do you think, doctor,

I e'er shall quarrel well ?

Subtle. I warrant you.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE III: Another room in the same.

[Enter Dol in her fit of raving, followed by Mammon.]

Dol. For after Alexander's death -

Mammon. Good lady -

Dol. That Perdiccas and Antigonus were slain,

The two that stood, Seleuc' and Ptolomee -

Mammon. Madam.

Dol. Make up the two legs, and the fourth beast,

That was Gog-north, and Egypt-south: which after

Was call'd Gog-iron-leg, and South-iron-leg -

Mammon. Lady -

Dol. And then Gog-horned. So was Egypt, too:

Then Egypt-clay-leg, and Gog-clay-leg -

Mammon. Sweet madam.

Dol. And last Gog-dust, and Egypt-dust, which fall

In the last link of the fourth chain. And these

Be stars in story, which none see, or look at -

Mammon. What shall I do ?

Dol. For, as he says, except

We call the rabbins, and the heathen Greeks -

Mammon. Dear lady.

Dol. To come from Salem, and from Athens,

And teach the people of Great Britain -

[Enter Face hastily, in his servant's dress.]

Face. What's the matter, sir ?

Dol. To speak the tongue of Eber, and Javan -

Mammon. O, she's in her fit.

Dol. We shall know nothing -

Face. Death, sir,

We are undone !

Dol. Where then a learned linguist

Shall see the ancient used communion

Of vowels and consonants -

Face. My master will hear !

Dol. A wisdom, which Pythagoras held most high -

Mammon. Sweet honourable lady !

Dol. To comprise

All sounds of voices, in few marks of letters -

Face. Nay, you must never hope to lay her now.

[They all speak together.]

Dol. And so we may arrive by Talmud skill,

And profane Greek, to raise the building up

Of Helen's house against the Ismaelite,

King of Thogarma, and his habergions

Brimstony, blue, and fiery; and the force

Of King Abaddon, and the beast of Cittim;

Which rabbi David Kimchi, Onkelos,

And Aben Ezra do interpret Rome.

Face. How did you put her into't ?

Mammon. Alas, I talk'd

Of a fifth monarchy I would erect,

With the philosopher's stone, by chance, and she

Falls on the other four straight.

Face. Out of Broughton !

I told you so. 'Slid, stop her mouth.

Mammon. Is't best ?

Face. She'll never leave else. If the old man hear her,

We are but faeces, ashes.

Subtle. [within.] What's to do there ?

Face. O, we are lost ! Now she hears him, she is quiet.

[Enter Subtle, they run different ways.]

Mammon. Where shall I hide me !

Subtle. How! what sight is here ?

Close deeds of darkness, and that shun the light !

Bring him again. Who is he? What, my son !

O, I have lived too long.

Mammon. Nay, good, dear father,

There was no unchaste purpose.

Subtle. Not ! and flee me,

When I come in?

Mammon. That was my error.

Subtle. Error !

Guilt, guilt, my son: give it the right name. No marvel,

If I found check in our great work within,

When such affairs as these were managing !

Mammon. Why, have you so ?

Subtle. It has stood still this half hour:

And all the rest of our less works gone back.

Where is the instrument of wickedness,

My lewd false drudge ?

Mammon. Nay, good sir, blame not him;

Believe me, 'twas against his will or knowledge:

I saw her by chance.

Subtle. Will you commit more sin,

To excuse a varlet ?

Mammon. By my hope, 'tis true, sir.

Subtle. Nay, then I wonder less, if you, for whom

The blessing was prepared, would so tempt heaven,

And lose your fortunes.

Mammon. Why, sir ?

Subtle. This will retard
The work, a month at least.

Mammon. Why, if it do,
What remedy ? But think it not, good father:
Our purposes were honest.

Subtle. As they were,
So the reward will prove. [A loud explosion within.] - How now ! ah me !
God, and all saints be good to us. -

[Re-enter Face.]

What's that?

Face. O sir, we are defeated ! all the works
Are flown in fumo, every glass is burst:
Furnace, and all rent down ! as if a bolt
Of thunder had been driven through the house.
Retorts, receivers, pelicans, bolt-heads,
All struck in shivers !

[Subtle falls down as in a swoon.]

Help, good sir ! alas,
Coldness, and death invades him. Nay, sir Mammon,
Do the fair offices of a man ! you stand,
As you were readier to depart than he.

[Knocking within.]

Who's there? my lord her brother is come.

Mammon. Ha, Lungs !

Face. His coach is at the door. Avoid his sight,
For he's as furious as his sister's mad.

Mammon. Alas !

Face. My brain is quite undone with the fume, sir,
I ne'er must hope to be mine own man again.

Mammon. Is all lost, Lungs ? will nothing be preserv'd
Of all our cost ?

Face. Faith, very little, sir;

A peck of coals or so, which is cold comfort, sir.

Mammon. O my voluptuous mind ! I am justly punish'd.

Face. And so am I, sir.

Mammon. Cast from all my hopes -

Face. Nay, certainties, sir.

Mammon. By mine own base affections.

Subtle. [Seeming to come to himself.] O, the curst fruits of vice and lust !

Mammon. Good father,

It was my sin. Forgive it.

Subtle. Hangs my roof

Over us still, and will not fall, O justice,

Upon us, for this wicked man !

Face. Nay, look, sir,

You grieve him now with staying in his sight:

Good sir, the nobleman will come too, and take you,

And that may breed a tragedy.

Mammon. I'll go.

Face. Ay, and repent at home, sir. It may be,
For some good penance you may have it yet;

A hundred pound to the box at Bethlem -

Mammon. Yes.

Face. For the restoring such as - have their wits.

Mammon. I'll do't.

Face. I'll send one to you to receive it.

Mammon. Do. Is no projection left!

Face. All flown, or stinks, sir.

Mammon. Will nought be sav'd that's good for med'cine, think'st thou?

Face. I cannot tell, sir. There will be perhaps,

Something about the scraping of the shards,

Will cure the itch, - though not your itch of mind, sir. [Aside.]

It shall be saved for you, and sent home. Good sir,

This way for fear the lord should meet you.

[Exit Mammon.]

Subtle. [raising his head.] Face !

Face. Ay.

Subtle. Is he gone ?

Face. Yes, and as heavily

As all the gold he hoped for were in's blood.

Let us be light though.

Subtle. [leaping up.] Ay, as balls, and bound

And hit our heads against the roof for joy:

There's so much of our care now cast away.

Face. Now to'our don.

Subtle. Yes, your young widow by this time

Is made a countess, Face; she has been in travail

Of a young heir for you.

Face. Good, sir.

Subtle. Off with your case,

And greet her kindly, as a bridegroom should,

After these common hazards.

Face. ·Very well, sir.

Will you go fetch don Diego off, the while ?

Subtle. And fetch him over too, if you'll be pleased, sir:

Would Dol were in her place, to pick his pockets now !

Face. Why, you can do't as well, if you would set to't.

I pray you prove your virtue.

Subtle. For your sake, sir.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE IV: Another room in the same.

[Enter Surly and Dame Pliant.]

Surly. Lady, you see into what hands you are fall'n;

'Mongst what a nest of villains ! and how near

Your honour was t'have catch'd a certain clap,

Through your credulity, had I but been

So punctually forward, as place, time,

And other circumstances would have made a man;

For you're a handsome woman: would you were wise too !

I am a gentleman come here disguised,

Only to find the knaveries of this citadel;

And where I might have wrong'd your honour, and have not,

I claim some interest in your love. You are,

They say, a widow, rich; and I'm a bachelor,

Worth nought: your fortunes may make me a man,
As mine have preserv'd you a woman. Think upon it,
And whether I have deserv'd you or no.

Dame Pliant. I will, sir.

Surly. And for these household-rogues, let me alone
To treat with them.

[Enter Subtle.]

Subtle. How doth my noble Diego,
And my dear madam countess? hath the count
Been courteous, lady ? liberal, and open ?
Donzel, methinks you look melancholic,...
I do not like the dulness of your eye;
It hath a heavy cast, 'tis upsee Dutch,
And says you are a lumpish whore-master.
Be lighter, I will make your pockets so.

[Attempts to pick them.]

Surly. [Throws open his cloak.] Will you, don bawd and pick-purse? [strikes him down.] how now ! Reel you !
Stand up, sir, you shall find, since I am so heavy,
I'll give you equal weight.

Subtle. Help ! murder !

Surly. No, sir,
There's no such thing intended: a good cart,
And a clean whip shall ease you of that fear.
I am the Spanish don that should be cozen'd,
Do you see, cozen'd ! Where's your captain Face,
That parcel broker, and whole-bawd, all rascal ?

[Enter Face in his uniform.]

Face. How, Surly !

Surly. O, make your approach, good captain.
I have found from whence your copper rings and spoon
Come, now, wherewith you cheat abroad in taverns.
'Twas here you learn'd t' anoint your boot with brimstone,
Then rub men's gold on't for a kind of touch,
And say 'twas naught, when you had changed the colour
That you might have't for nothing. And this doctor,
Your sooty, smoky-bearded compeer, he
Will close you so much gold, in a bolt's-head,
And, on a turn, convey in the stead another
With sublimed mercury, that shall burst in the heat,
And fly out all in fumo! Then weeps Mammon;
Then swoons his worship. [Face slips out.] Or, he is the Faustus,
That casteth figures...

[Seizes Subtle as he is retiring.] - Nay, sir, you must tarry,
Though he be scaped; and answer by the ears, sir.

[Re-enter Face with Kastril.]

Face. Why, now's the time, if ever you will quarrel
Well, as they say, and be a true-born child:
The doctor and your sister both are abused.

Kastril. Where is he ? which is he ? he is a slave,
Whate'er he is, and the son of a whore. - Are you

The man, sir, I would know ?

Surly. I should be loth, sir, to confess so much.

Kastril. Then you lie in your throat.

Surly. How !

Face. [To Kastril.] A very errant rogue, sir, and a cheater,

Employ'd here by another conjurer

That does not love the doctor, and would cross him,

If he knew how.

Surly. Sir, you are abused.

Kastril. You lie:

And 'tis no matter.

Face. Well said, sir ! He is

The impudent'st rascal -

Surly. You are indeed: Will you hear me, sir ?

Face. By no means: bid him be gone.

Kastril. Begone, sir, quickly.

Surly. This 's strange! - Lady, do you inform your brother.

Face. There is not such a foist in all the town,

The doctor had him presently; and finds yet,

The Spanish count will come here. - Bear up, Subtle. [Aside.]

Subtle. Yes, sir, he must appear within this hour.

Face. And yet this rogue would come in a disguise,

By the temptation of another spirit,

To trouble our art, though he could not hurt it !

Kastril. Ay,

I know - Away, [to his sister.] you talk like a foolish mauther.

Surly. Sir, all is truth she says.

Face. Do not believe him, sir.

He is the lying'st swabber ! Come your ways, sir.

Surly. You are valiant out of company !

Kastril. Yes, how then, sir ?

[Enter Drugger with a piece of damask.]

Face. Nay, here's an honest fellow, too, that knows him,

And all his tricks. Make good what I say, Abel,

This cheater would have cozen'd thee o' the widow.- [Aside to Drugger.]

He owes this honest Drugger here seven pound,

He has had on him, in two-penny'orths of tobacco.

Drugger. Yes, sir.

And he has damn'd himself three terms to pay me.

Face. And what does he owe for lotium ?

Drugger. Thirty shillings, sir;

And for six syringes.

Surly. Hydra of villainy !

Face. Nay, sir, you must quarrel him out o' the house:

Kastril. I will:

- Sir, if you get not out o' doors, you lie;

And you are a pimp.

Surly. Why, this is madness, sir,

Not valeur in you; I must laugh at this.

Kastril. It is my humour: you are a pimp and a trig,

And an Amadis de Gaul, or a Don Quixote.

Drugger. Or a knight o' the curious coxcomb, do you see ?

[Enter Ananias.]

Ananias. Peace to the household !

Kastril. I'll keep peace for no man.

Ananias. Casting of dollars is concluded lawful.

Kastril. Is he the constable ?

Subtle. Peace, Ananias.

Face. No, sir.

Kastril. Then you are an otter, and a shad, a whit. A very tim.

Surly. You'll hear me, sir?

Kastril. I will not.

Ananias. What is the motive?

Subtle. Zeal in the young gentleman,
Against his Spanish slops.

Ananias. They are profane,
Lewd, superstitious, and idolatrous breeches.

Surly. New rascals !

Kastril. Will you be gone, sir ?

Ananias. Avoid, Sathan !

Thou art not of the light ! That ruff of pride
About thy neck, betrays thee; and is the same
With that which the unclean birds, in seventy-seven,
Were seen to prank it with on divers coasts:
Thou look'st like antichrist, in that lewd hat.

Surly. I must give way.

Kastril. Be gone, sir.

Surly. But I'll take
A course with you -

Ananias. Depart, proud Spanish fiend !

Surly. Captain and doctor.

Ananias. Child of perdition !

Kastril. Hence, sir ! - [Exit Surly].

Did I not quarrel bravely ?

Face. Yes, indeed, sir.

Kastril. Nay, an I give my mind to't, I shall do't.

Face. O, you must follow, sir, and threaten him tame:
He'll turn again else:

Kastril. I'll re-turn him then. [Exit.]

[Subtle takes Ananias aside.]

Face. Drugger, this rogue prevented us, for thee:
We had determin'd that thou should'st have come
In a Spanish suit, and have carried her so; and he,
A brokerly slave ! goes, puts it on himself.
Hast brought the damask !

Drugger. Yes, sir.

Face. Thou must borrow
A Spanish suit: hast thou no credit with the players ?

Drugger. Yes, sir; did you never see me play the Fool ?

Face. I know not, Nab:- thou shalt, if I can help it, [Aside.]
Hieronimo's old cloak, ruff, and hat will serve;
I'll tell thee more when thou bring'st 'em.

[Exit Drugger.]

Ananias. Sir, I know

The Spaniard hates the brethren, and hath spies
Upon their actions: and that this was one

I make no scruple. - But the holy synod
Have been in prayer and meditation for it;
And 'tis reveal'd no less to them than me,
That casting of money is most lawful.

Subtle. True,

But here I cannot do it: if the house
Shou'd chance to be suspected, all would out,
And we be lock'd up in the Tower for ever,
To make gold there for the state, never come out;
And then are you defeated.

Ananias. I will tell

This to the elders and the weaker brethren,
That the whole company of the separation
May join in humble prayer again.

Subtle. And fasting.

Ananias. Yea, for some fitter place. The peace of mind
Rest with these walls ! [Exit.]

Subtle. Thanks, courteous Ananias.

Face. What did he come for ?

Subtle. About casting dollars,
Presently out of hand. And so I told him,
A Spanish minister came here to spy,
Against the faithful -

Face. I conceive. Come, Subtle,

Thou art so down upon the least disaster !
How wouldst thou ha' done, if I had not help't thee out ?

Subtle. I thank thee, Face, for the angry boy, i' faith.

Face. Who would have look'd it should have been that rascal ?
Surly ? he had dyed his beard and all. Well, sir,
Here's damask come to make you a suit.

Subtle. Where's Druggier ?

Face. He is gone to borrow me a Spanish habit;
I'll be the count, now.

Subtle. But where's the widow ?

Face. Within, with my lord's sister; madam Dol
Is entertaining her.

Subtle. By your favour Face,

Now she is honest, I will stand again

Face. You will not offer it ?

Subtle. Why ?

Face. Stand to your word,

Or - here comes Dol, she knows -

Subtle. You are tyrannous still.

[Enter Dol hastily.]

Face. Strict for my right. - How now, Dol ! Hast [thou] told her,
The Spanish count will come ?

Dol. Yes; but another is come,
You little look'd for !

Face. Who is that ?

Dol. Your master;
The master of the house.

Subtle. How, Dol !

Face. She lies,

This is some trick. Come, leave your quibblins, Dorothy.

Dol. Look out, and see. [Face goes to the window.]

Subtle. Art thou in earnest ?

Dol. 'Slight,

Forty o' the neighbours are about him, talking.

Face. 'Tis he by this good day.

Dol. 'Twill prove ill day

For some on us.

Face. We are undone, and taken.

Dol. Lost, I'm afraid.

Subtle. You said he would not come,

While there died one a week within the liberties.

Face. No: 'twas within the walls.

Subtle. Was't so ! cry you mercy.

I thought the liberties. What shall we do now, Face ?

Face. Be silent: not a word, if he call or knock.

I'll into mine old shape again and meet him,

Of Jeremy, the butler. In the mean time,

Do you two pack up all the goods and purchase,

That we can carry in the two trunks. I'll keep him

Off for to-day, if I cannot longer: and then

At night, I'll ship you both away to Ratcliff,

Where we will meet to-morrow, and there we'll share.

Let Mammon's brass and pewter keep the cellar;

We'll have another time for that. But, Dol,

'Prithee go heat a little water quickly;

Subtle must shave me: all my captain's beard

Must off, to make me appear smooth Jeremy.

You'll do it ?

Subtle. Yes, I'll shave you, as well as I can.

Face. And not cut my throat, but trim me ?

Subtle. You shall see, sir.

[Exeunt.]

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ACT THE FIFTH

SCENE I: Before Lovewit's door.

[Enter Lovewit, with several of the Neighbours.]

Lovewit. Has there been such resort, say you ?

1 Neighbour. Daily, sir.

2 Neighbour. And nightly, too.

3 Neighbour. Ay, some as brave as lords.

4 Neighbour. Ladies and gentlewomen.

5 Neighbour. Citizens' wives.

1 Neighbour. And knights.

6 Neighbour. In coaches.

2 Neighbour. Yes, and oyster-women.

1 Neighbour. Beside other gallants.

3 Neighbour. Sailors' wives.

4 Neighbour. Tobacco men.

5 Neighbour. Another Pimlico !

Lovewit. What should my knave advance,
To draw this company ? he hung out no banners
Of a strange calf with five legs to be seen,
Or a huge lobster with six claws ?

6 Neighbour. No, sir.

3 Neighbour. We had gone in then, sir.

Lovewit. He has no gift
Of teaching in the nose that e'er I knew of.
You saw no bills set up that promised cure
Of agues, or the tooth-ache ?

2 Neighbour. No such thing, sir.

Lovewit. Nor heard a drum struck for baboons or puppets ?

5 Neighbour. Neither, sir.

Lovewit. What device should he bring forth now ?
I love a teeming wit as I love my nourishment:
'Pray God he have not kept such open house,
That he hath sold my hangings, and my bedding !
I left him nothing else. If he have eat them,
A plague o' the moth, say I ! Sure he has got
Some bawdy pictures to call all this ging;...
Or't may be, he has the fleas that run at tilt
Upon a table, or some dog to dance.
When saw you him ?

1 Neighbour. Who, sir, Jeremy ?

2 Neighbour. Jeremy butler ? We saw him not this month.

Lovewit. How!

4 Neighbour. Not these five weeks, sir.

6 Neighbour. These six weeks at the least.

Lovewit. You amaze me, neighbours !

5 Neighbour. Sure if your worship know not where he is, he's slipt away.

6 Neighbour. Pray god, he be not made away.

Lovewit. Ha ! it's no time to question, then.

[Knocks at the door.]

6 Neighbour. About some three weeks since, I heard a doleful cry,
As I sat up a mending my wife's stockings.

Lovewit. 'Tis strange that none will answer! Didst thou hear
A cry, sayst thou ?

6 Neighbour. Yes, sir, like unto a man
That had been strangled an hour, and could not speak.

2 Neighbour. I heard it too, just this day three weeks, at two o'clock
Next morning.

Lovewit. These be miracles, or you make them so !
A man an hour strangled, and could not speak,
And both you heard him cry ?

3 Neighbour. Yes, downward, sir.

Low. Thou art a wise fellow. Give me thy hand, I pray thee,
What trade art thou on ?

3 Neighbour. A smith, an't please your worship.

Lovewit. A smith ! then lend me thy help to get this door open.

3 Neighbour. That I will presently, sir, but fetch my tools. [Exit.]

1 Neighbour. Sir, best to knock again, afore you break it.

Lovewit. [Knocks again.] I will.

[Enter Face, in his butler's livery.]

Face. What mean you, sir ?

1, 2, 4 Neighbour. O, here's Jeremy !

Face. Good sir, come from the door.

Lovewit. Why, what's the matter ?

Face. Yet farther, you are too near yet.

Lovewit. In the name of wonder,
What means the fellow !

Face. The house, sir, has been visited.

Lovewit. What, with the plague ? stand thou then farther.

Face. No, sir, I had it not.

Lovewit. Who had it then ! I left
None else but thee in the house.

Face. Yes, sir, my fellow,
The cat that kept the buttery, had it on her
A week before I spied it; but I got her
Convey'd away in the night: and so I shut
The house up for a month -

Lovewit. How !

Face. Purposing then, sir,
T'have burnt rose-vinegar, treacle, and tar,
And have made it sweet, that you shou'd ne'er have known it;
Because I knew the news would but afflict you, sir.

Lovewit. Breathe less, and farther off ! Why this is stranger:
The neighbours tell me all here that the doors
Have still been open -

Face. How, sir !

Lovewit. Gallants, men and women,
And of all sorts, tag-rag, been seen to flock here
In threaves, these ten weeks, as to a second Hogsden,
In days of Pimlico and Eye-bright.

Face. Sir, Their wisdoms will not say so.

Lovewit. To-day they speak
Of coaches, and gallants; one in a French hood
Went in, they tell me; and another was seen
In a velvet gown at the window: divers more
Pass in and out.

Face. They did pass through the doors then,
Or walls, I assure their eye-sights, and their spectacles;
For here, sir, are the keys, and here have been,
In this my pocket, now above twenty days:
And for before, I kept the fort alone there.
But that 'tis yet not deep in the afternoon,
I should believe my neighbours had seen double
Through the black pot, and made these apparitions !
For, on my faith to your worship, for these three weeks
And upwards, the door has not been open'd.

Lovewit. Strange !

1 Neighbour. Good faith, I think I saw a coach.

2 Neighbour. And I too, I'd have been sworn.

Lovewit. Do you but think it now ?
And but one coach ?

4 Neighbour. We cannot tell, sir: Jeremy is a very honest fellow.

Face. Did you see me at all ?

1 Neighbour. No; that we are sure on.

2 Neighbour. I'll be sworn o' that.

Lovewit. Fine rogues to have your testimonies built on !

[Re-enter third Neighbour, with his tools.]

3 Neighbour. Is Jeremy come !

1 Neighbour. O, yes; you may leave your tools;

We were deceived, he says.

2 Neighbour. He has had the keys;

And the door has been shut these three weeks.

3 Neighbour. Like enough.

Lovewit. Peace, and get hence, you changelings.

[Enter Surly and Mammon.]

Face. Surly come !

And Mammon made acquainted ! they'll tell all.

How shall I beat them off ? what shall I do ?

Nothing's more wretched than a guilty conscience. [Aside.]

Surly. No, sir, he was a great physician. This,

It was no bawdy-house, but a mere chance !

You knew the lord and his sister.

Mammon. Nay, good Surly -

Surly. The happy word, BE RICH -

Mammon. Play not the tyrant. -

Surly. Should be to-day pronounced to all your friends.

And where be your andirons now ? and your brass pots,

That should have been golden flaggons, and great wedges ?

Mammon. Let me but breathe. What, they have shut their doors,

Methinks !

Surly. Ay, now 'tis holiday with them.

Mammon. Rogues, [He and Surly knock.]

Cozeners, impostors, bawds !

Face. What mean you, sir ?

Mammon. To enter if we can.

Face. Another man's house !

Here is the owner, sir: turn you to him,

And speak your business.

Mammon. Are you, sir, the owner ?

Lovewit. Yes, sir.

Mammon. And are those knaves within your cheaters ?

Lovewit. What knaves, what cheaters ?

Mammon. Subtle and his Lungs.

Face. The gentleman is distracted, sir ! No lungs,

Nor lights have been seen here these three weeks, sir,

Within these doors, upon my word.

Surly. Your word, Groom arrogant !

Face. Yes, sir, I am the house-keeper,

And know the keys have not been out of my hands.

Surly. This is a new Face.

Face. You do mistake the house, sir:

What sign was't at ?

Surly. You rascal! this is one

Of the confederacy. Come, let's get officers,
And force the door.

Lovewit. 'Pray you stay, gentlemen.

Surly. No, sir, we'll come with warrant.

Mammon. Ay, and then

We shall have your doors open. [Exeunt Mammon and Surly.]

Lovewit. What means this ?

Face. I cannot tell, sir.

I Neighbour. These are two of the gallants
That we do think we saw.

Face. Two of the fools !

You talk as idly as they. Coed faith, sir,

I think the moon has crased 'em all. - O me,

[Enter Kastril.]

The angry boy come too ! He'll make a noise,
And ne'er away till he have betray'd us all. [Aside.]

Kastril. [Knocking.] What rogues, bawds, slaves, you'll open the door, anon !

Punk, cockatrice, my suster! By this light
I'll fetch the marshal to you. You are a whore

To keep your castle -

Face. Who would you speak with, sir ?

Kastril. The bawdy doctor, and the cozening captain,
And puss my suster.

Lovewit. This is something, sure.

Face. Upon my trust, the doors were never open, sir.

Kastril. I have heard all their tricks told me twice over,
By the fat knight and the lean gentleman.

Lovewit. Here comes another.

[Enter Ananias and Tribulation.]

Face. Ananias too ! And his pastor !

Tribulation. [beating at the door.] The doors are shut against us.

Ananias. Come forth, you seed of sulphur, sons of fire !

Your stench it is broke forth; abomination
Is in the house.

Kastril. Ay, my suster's there.

Ananias. The place,

It is become a cage of unclean birds.

Kastril. Yes, I will fetch the scavenger, and the constable.

Tribulation. You shall do well.

Ananias. We'll join to weed them out.

Kastril. You will not come then, punk devise, my sister !

Ananias. Call her not sister; she's a harlot verily.

Kastril. I'll raise the street.

Lovewit. Good gentleman, a word.

Ananias. Satan avoid, and hinder not our zeal !

[Exeunt Ananias, Tribulation and Kastril.]

Lovewit. The world's turn'd Bethlem.

Face. These are all broke loose,

Out of St. Katherine's, where they use to keep

The better sort of mad-folks.

1 Neighbour. All these persons

We saw go in and out here.

2 Neighbour. Yes, indeed, sir.

3 Neighbour. These were the parties.

Face. Peace, you drunkards ! Sir,

I wonder at it: please you to give me leave

To touch the door, I'll try an the lock be chang'd.

Lovewit. It mazes me !

Face. [Goes to the door.] Good faith, sir, I believe

There's no such thing: 'tis all deceptio visus. -

Would I could get him away. [Aside.]

Dapper. [Within.] Master captain ! master doctor !

Lovewit. Who's that ?

Face. Our clerk within, that I forgot ! [Aside.] I know not, sir.

Dapper. [within.] For God's sake, when will her grace be at leisure ?

Face. Ha! Illusions, some spirit o' the air ! - His gag is melted,

And now he sets out the throat. [Aside.]

Dapper. [Within.] I am almost stifled -

Face. Would you were altogether. [Aside.]

Lovewit. 'Tis in the house.

Ha! list.

Face. Believe it, sir, in the air.

Lovewit. Peace, you.

Dapper. [within.] Mine aunt's grace does not use me well.

Subtle. [within.] You fool,

Peace, you'll mar all.

Face. [speaks through the Key-hole, while Lovewit advances to the door unobserved.]

Or you will else, you rogue.

Lovewit. O, is it so ? then you converse with spirits ! -

Come, sir. No more of your tricks, good Jeremy,

The truth, the shortest way.

Face. Dismiss this rabble, sir. -

What shall I do! I am catch'd. [Aside.]

Lovewit. Good neighbours,

I thank you all. You may depart. [Exeunt Neighbours.]

- Come sir,

You know that I am an indulgent master;

And therefore conceal nothing. What's your medicine,

To draw so many several sorts of wild fowl ?

Face. Sir, you were wont to affect mirth and wit -

But here's no place to talk on't in the street.

Give me but leave to make the best of my fortune,

And only pardon me the abuse of your house:

It's all I beg. I'll help you to a widow,

In recompense, that you shall give me thanks for,

Will make you seven years younger, and a rich one.

'Tis but your putting on a Spanish cloak:

I have her within. You need not fear the house;

It was not visited.

Lovewit. But by me, who came

Sooner than you expected.

Face. It is true, sir.

'Pray you forgive me.

Lovewit. Well: let's see your widow.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE II: A room in the same.

[Enter Subtle, leading in Dapper, with his eyes bound as before.]

Subtle. How ! have you eaten your gag ?

Dapper. Yes faith, it crumbled away in my mouth.

Subtle. You have spoil'd all then.

Dapper. No ! I hope my aunt of Fairy will forgive me.

Subtle. Your aunt's a gracious lady; but in troth
You were to blame.

Dapper. The fume did overcome me,
And I did do't to stay my stomach. 'Pray you
So satisfy her grace.

[Enter Face in his uniform.]

Here comes the captain.

Face. How now! is his mouth down ?

Subtle. Ay, he has spoken !

Face. A pox, I heard him, and you too. - He's undone then. -
I have been fain to say, the house is haunted
With spirits, to keep churl back.

Subtle. And hast thou done it ?

Face. Sure, for this night.

Subtle. Why, then triumph and sing
Of Face so famous', the precious king
Of present wits.

Face. Did you not hear the coil
About the door ?

Subtle. Yes, and I dwindled with it.

Face. Shew him his aunt, and let him be dispatch'd:
I'll send her to you. [Exit Face.]

Subtle. Well, sir, your aunt her grace
Will give you audience presently, on my suit,
And the captain's word that you did not eat your gag
In any contempt of her highness. [Unbinds his eyes.]

Dapper. Not I, in troth, sir.

[Enter Dol like the queen of Fairy]

Subtle. Here she is come. Down o' your knees and wriggle :
She has a stately presence. [Dapper kneels, and shuffles towards her.] Good! Yet nearer,
And bid, God save you !

Dapper. Madam !

Subtle. And your aunt.

Dapper. And my most gracious aunt, God save your grace.

Dol. Nephew, we thought to have been angry with you;
But that sweet face of yours hath turn'd the tide,
And made it flow with joy, that ebb'd of love.
Arise, and touch our velvet gown.

Subtle. The skirts,
And kiss 'em. So !

Dol. Let me now stroak that head.
Much, nephew, shalt thou win, much shalt thou spend;
Much shalt thou give away, much shalt thou lend.

Subtle. Ay, much indeed. [Aside.] Why do you not thank her grace ?

Dapper. I cannot speak for joy.
Subtle. See, the kind wretch !
Your grace's kinsman right.
Dol. Give me the bird.
Here is your fly in a purse, about your neck, cousin;
Wear it, and feed it about this day sev'n-night,
On your right wrist -
Subtle. Open a vein with a pin.
And let it suck but once a week; till then,
You must not look on't.
Dol. No: and, kinsman,
Bear yourself worthy of the blood you come on.
Subtle. Her grace would have you eat no more Woolsack pies,
Nor Dagger frumety.
Dol. Nor break his fast
In Heaven and Hell.
Subtle. She's with you every where !
Nor play with costarmongers, at mum-chance, tray-trip,
God make you rich; (when as your aunt has done it;)
But keep the gallant'st company, and the best games -
Dapper. Yes, sir.
Subtle. Gleek and primero: and what you get, be true to us.
By this hand, I will.
You may bring's a thousand pound
Before to-morrow night, if but three thousand
Be stirring, an you will.
Dapper. I swear I will then.
Subtle. Your fly will learn you all games.
Face. [within.] Have you done there ?
Subtle. Your grace will command him no more duties ?
Dol. No:
But come, and see me often. I may chance
To leave him three or four hundred chests of treasure,
And some twelve thousand acres of fairy land,
If he game well and comely with good gamesters.
Subtle. There's a kind aunt !...
But you must sell your forty mark a year, now.
Dapper. Ay, sir, I mean.
Subtle. Or, give 't away; pox on't !
Dapper. I'll give 't mine aunt: I'll go and fetch the writings. [Exit.]
Subtle. 'Tis well, away.

[Re-enter Face.]

Face. Where's Subtle ?
Subtle. Here: what news ?
Face. Druggier is at the door, go take his suit,
And bid him fetch a parson, presently;
Say, he shall marry the widow. Thou shalt spend
A hundred pound by the service ! [Exit Subtle.] NOW, queen Dol,
Have you pack'd up all !
Dol. Yes.
Face. And how do you like the lady Pliant?
Dol. A good dull innocent.

[Re-enter Subtle.]

Subtle. Here's your Hieronimo's cloak and hat.

Face. Give me them.

Subtle. And the ruff too ?

Face. Yes; I'll come to you presently. [Exit.]

Subtle. Now he is gone about his project, Dol,
I told you of, for the widow.

Dol. 'Tis direct against our articles.

Subtle. Well, we will fit him, wench.

Hast thou gull'd her of her jewels or her bracelets ?

Dol. No; but I will do't.

Subtle. Soon at night, my Dolly,

When we are shipp'd, and all our goods aboard,
Eastward for Ratcliff; we will turn our course
To Brainford, westward, if thou sayst the word,
And take our leaves of this o'er-weening rascal,
This peremptory Face.

Dol. Content, I'm weary of him.

Subtle. Thou'st cause, when the slave will run a wiving, Dol,
Against the instrument that was drawn between us.

Dol. I'll pluck his bird as bare as I can.

Subtle. Yes, tell her,

She must by any means address some present
To the cunning man, make him amends for wronging
His art with her suspicion; send a ring,
Or chain of pearl; she will be tortured else
Extremely in her sleep, say, and have strange things
Come to her. Wilt thou ?

Dol. Yes.

Subtle. My fine flitter-mouse,

My bird o' the night ! we'll tickle it at the Pigeons,
When we have all, and may unlock the trunks,
And say, this's mine, and thine; and thine, and mine. [They kiss.]

[Re-enter Face.]

Face. What now! a billing ?

Subtle. Yes, a little exalted

In the good passage of our stock-affairs.

Face. Druggar has brought his parson; take him in, Subtle,
And send Nab back again to wash his face.

Subtle. I will: and shave himself ? [Exit.]

Face. If you can get him.

Dol. You are hot upon it, Face, whate'er it is !

Face. A trick that Dol shall spend ten pound a month by.

[Re-enter Subtle.]

Is he gone?

Subtle. The chaplain waits you in the hall, sir.

Face. I'll go bestow him. [Exit.]

Dol. He'll now marry her, instantly.

Subtle. He cannot yet, he is not ready. Dear Dol,
Cozen her of all thou canst. To deceive him
Is no deceit, but justice, that would break
Such an inextricable tie as ours was.

Dol. Let me alone to fit him.

[Re-enter Face.]

Face. Come, my venturers,
You have pack'd up all? where be the trunks ? bring forth.

Subtle. Here.

Face. Let us see them. Where's the money ?

Subtle. Here, In this.

Face. Mammon's ten pound; eight score before:
The brethren's money, this. Drugger's and Dapper's.
What paper's that ?

Dol. The jewel of the waiting maid's,
That stole it from her lady, to know certain -

Face. If she should have precedence of her mistress ?

Dol. Yes.

Face. What box is that ?

Subtle. The fish-wives' rings, I think,
And the ale-wives' single money: Is't not Dol ?

Dol. Yes; and the whistle that the sailor's wife
Brought you to know an her husband were with Ward.

Face. We'll wet it to-morrow; and our silver-beakers
And tavern cups. Where be the French petticoats,
And girdles and hangers ?

Subtle. Here, in the trunk,
And the bolts of lawn.

Face. Is Drugger's damask there,
And the tobacco ?

Subtle. Yes.

Face. Give me the keys.

Dol. Why you the keys ?

Subtle. No matter, Dol; because
We shall not open them before he comes.

Face. 'Tis true, you shall not open them, indeed;
Nor have them forth, do you see ? not forth, Dol.

Dol. No !

Face. No, my smock-rampant. The right is, my master
Knows all, has pardon'd me, and he will keep them;
Doctor, 'tis true - you look - for all your figures:
I sent for him, indeed. Wherefore, good partners,
Both he and she be satisfied; for here
Determines the indenture tripartite
'Twixt Subtle, Dol, and Face. All I can do
Is to help you over the wall, o' the back-side,
Or lend you a sheet to save your velvet gown, Dol.
Here will be officers presently, bethink you
Of some course suddenly to 'scape the dock:
For thither you will come else. [Loud knocking.] Hark you, thunder.

Subtle. You are a precious fiend !

Officer. [without.] Open the door.

Face. Dol, I am sorry for thee i' faith; but hearst thou ?
It shall go hard but I will place thee somewhere:

Thou shalt have my letter to mistress Amo -

Dol. Hang you !

Face. Or madam Caesarean.

Dol. Pox upon you, rogue,

Would I had but time to beat thee !

Face. Subtle,

Let's know where you set up next; I will send you

A customer now and then, for old acquaintance:

What new course have you ?

Subtle. Rogue, I'll hang myself;

That I may walk a greater devil than thou,

And haunt thee in the flock-bed and the buttery.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE III: An outer room in the same.

[Enter Lovewit in the Spanish dress, with the Parson.]

[Loud knocking at the door.]

Lovewit. What do you mean, my masters ?

Mammon. [without.] Open your door, cheaters, bawds, conjurers.

Officer. [without.] Or we will break it open.

Lovewit. What warrant have you ?

Officer. [without.] Warrant enough, sir, doubt not,
If you'll not open it.

Lovewit. Is there an officer, there ?

Officer. [without.] Yes, two or three for failing.

Lovewit. Have but patience,
And I will open it straight.

[Enter Face, as butler.]

Face. Sir, have you done ?

Is it a marriage ? Perfect ?

Lovewit. Yes, my brain.

Face. Off with your ruff and cloak then; be yourself, sir.

Surly. [without.] Down with the door.

Kastril. [without.] 'Slight, ding it open.

Lovewit. [opening the door.] Hold,
Hold, gentlemen, what means this violence ?

[Mammon, Surly, Kastril, Ananias, Tribulation, and Officers rush in.]

Mammon. Where is this collier ?

Surly. And my captain Face ?

Mammon. These day owls.

Surly. That are birding in men's purses.

Mammon. Madam suppository.

Kastril. Doxy, my suster.

Ananias. Locusts of the foul pit.

Tribulation. Profane as Bel and the dragon.

Ananias. Worse than the grasshoppers, or the lice of Egypt.

Lovewit. Good gentlemen, hear me. Are you officers,
And cannot stay this violence ?

1 Officer. Keep the peace.

Lovewit. Gentlemen, what is the matter ? whom do you seek ?

Mammon. The chemical cozener.

Surly. And the captain pander.

Kastril. The nun my suster.

Mammon. Madam Rabbi.

Ananias. Scorpions, and caterpillars.

Lovewit. Fewer at once, I pray you.

2 Officer. One after another gentlemen, I charge you,
By virtue of my staff.

Ananias. They are the vessels

Of pride lust, and the cart.

Lovewit. Good zeal, lie still

A little while.

Tribulation. Peace, deacon Ananias.

Lovewit. The house is mine here, and the doors are open;

If there be any such persons as you seek for,

Use your authority, search on o' God's name.

I am but newly come to town, and finding

This tumult 'bout my door, to tell you true,

It somewhat mazed me; till my man, here, fearing

My more displeasure, told me he had done

Somewhat an insolent part, let out my house

(Belike, presuming on my known aversion

From any air o' the town while there was sickness,)

To a doctor and a captain: who, what they are

Or where they be, he knows not.

Mammon. Are they gone ?

Lovewit. You may go in and search, sir. [Mammon, Ananias and Tribulation go in.]

Here, I find

The empty walls worse than I left them, smok'd,

A few crack'd pots, and glasses, and a furnace;

The ceiling fill'd with poesies of the candle...

Only one gentlewoman I met here,

That is within, that said she was a widow -

Kastril. Ay, that's my suster; I'll go thump her. Where is she ? [Goes in.]

Lovewit. And should have married a Spanish count, but he,

When he came to't, neglected her so grossly,

That I, a widower, am gone through with her.

Surly. How ! have I lost her then !

Lovewit. Were you the don, sir ?

Good faith, now, she does blame you extremely, and says

You swore, and told her you had taken the pains

To dye your beard, and umbre o'er your face,

Borrowed a suit; and ruff, all for her love;

And then did nothing. What an oversight,

And want of putting forward, sir, was this !

Well fare an old harquebuzier, yet,

Could prime his powder, and give fire, and hit,

All in a twinkling !

[Re-enter Mammon.]

Mammon. The whole nest are fled !

Lovewit. What sort of birds were they ?

Mammon. A kind of choughs,

Or thievish daws; sir, that have pick'd my purse

Of eight score and ten pounds within these five weeks,

Beside my first materials; and my goods,

That lie in the cellar, which I am glad they have left,

I may have home yet.

Lovewit. Think you so, sir ?

Mammon. Ay.

Lovewit. By order of law, sir, but not otherwise.

Mammon. Not mine own stuff !

Lovewit. Sir, I can take no knowledge

That they are yours, but by public means.

If you can bring certificate that you were gull'd of them,

Or any formal writ out of a court,

That you did cozen yourself, I will not hold them.

Mammon. I'll rather lose them.

Lovewit. That you shall not, sir,

By me, in troth: upon these terms, they are yours.

What, should they have been, sir, turn'd into gold, all ?

Mammon. No, I cannot tell - It may be they should - What then ?

Lovewit. What a great loss in hope have you sustain'd !

Mammon. Not I, the common-wealth has.

Face. Ay, he would have built

The city new; and made a ditch about it

Of silver, should have run with cream from Hogsden;

That, every Sunday, in Moor-fields, the younkers,

And tits and tom-boys should have fed on, gratis.

Mammon. I will go mount a turnip-cart, and preach

The end of the world, within these two months. Surly,

What ! in a dream ?

Surly. Must I needs cheat myself,

With that same foolish vice of honesty !

Come, let us go and hearken out the rogues:

That Face I'll mark for mine, if e'er I meet him.

Face. If I can hear of him; sir, I'll bring you word,

Unto your lodging; for in troth, they were strangers

To me, I thought them honest as myself, sir.

[Exeunt Mammon and Surly.]

[Re-enter Ananias and Tribulation.]

Tribulation. 'Tis well, the saints shall not lose all yet. Go,

And get some carts -

Lovewit. For what, my zealous friends ?

Ananias. To bear away the portion of the righteous

Out of this den of thieves.

Lovewit. What is that portion ?

Ananias. The goods sometimes the orphans', that the brethren

Bought with their silver pence.

Lovewit. What, those in the cellar,

The knight sir Mammon claims ?

Ananias. I do defy

The wicked Mammon, so do all the brethren,

Thou profane man ! I ask thee with what conscience

Thou canst advance that idol against us,

That have the seal ? were not the shillings number'd,

That made the pounds; were not the pounds told out,

Upon the second day of the fourth week,

In the eighth month, upon the table dormant,

The year of the last patience of the saints,

Six hundred and ten ?

Lovewit. Mine earnest vehement botcher,
And deacon also, I cannot dispute with you:
But if you get you not away the sooner,
I shall confute you with a cudgel.

Ananias. Sir !

Tribulation. Be patient, Ananias.

Ananias. I am strong,
And will stand up, well girt, against an host,
That threaten Gad in exile.

Lovewit. I shall send you
To Amsterdam, to your cellar.

Ananias. I will pray there,
Against thy house: may dogs defile thy walls,
And wasps and hornets breed beneath thy roof,
This seat of falsehood, and this cave of cozenage !

[Exeunt Ananias and Tribulation.]

[Enter Drugger.]

Lovewit. Another too ?

Drugger. Not I, sir, I am no brother.

Lovewit. [beats him.] Away, you Harry Nicholas! do you talk? [Exit Drugger.]

Face. No, this was Abel Drugger. Good sir, go,
[To the Parson.]

And satisfy him; tell him all is done:
He staid too long a washing of his face.
The doctor, he shall hear of him at West-chester;
And of the captain, tell him, at Yarmouth, or
Some good port-town else, lying for a wind.
[Exit Parson.]

If you can get off the angry child, now, sir -

[Enter Kastril dragging in his sister.]

Kastril. Come on, you ewe, you have match'd most sweetly, have you not ?...
'Slight, you are a mammet ! O, I could touse you, now.
Death, mun' you marry, with a pox !

Lovewit. You lie, boy...

Kastril. Anon !

Lovewit. Come, will you quarrel ? I will feize you, sirrah;
Why do you not buckle to your tools ?

Kastril. 'Od'slight,
This is a fine old boy as e'er I saw !

Lovewit. What, do you change your copy now ? proceed,
Here stands my dove: stoop at her, if you dare.

Kastril. 'Slight, I must love him! I cannot choose, i' faith,
An I should be hang'd for't ! Suster, I protest,
I honour thee for this match.

Lovewit. O, do you so, sir ?

Kastril. Yes, an thou canst take tobacco and drink, old boy,
I'll give her five hundred pound more to her marriage,
Than her own state.

Lovewit. Fill a pipe full, Jeremy.

Face. Yes; but go in and take it, sir.

Lovewit. We will -

I will be ruled by thee in anything, Jeremy.

Kastril. 'Slight, thou art not hide-bound, thou art a jovy boy !

Come, let us in, I pray thee, and take our whiffs.

Lovewit. Whiff in with your sister, brother boy. [Exeunt Kastril and Dame Pliant.] That master

That had received such happiness by a servant,

In such a widow, and with so much wealth,

Were very ungrateful, if he would not be

A little indulgent to that servant's wit,

And help his fortune, though with some small strain

Of his own candour. [Advancing.] - Therefore, gentlemen,

And kind spectators, if I have outstript

An old man's gravity, or strict canon, think

What a young wife and a good brain may do;

Stretch age's truth sometimes, and crack it too.

Speak for thyself, knave.

Face. So I will, sir. [advancing to the front of the stage.] Gentlemen,

My part a little fell in this last scene,

Yet 'twas decorum. And though I am clean

Got off from Subtle, Surly, Mammon, Dol,

Hot Ananias, Dapper, Drugger, all

With whom I traded; yet I put myself

On you, that are my country: and this pelf,

Which I have got, if you do quit me, rests

To feast you often, and invite new guests.

[Exeunt.]

Chaucer - The Canon Yeoman's Tale

Geoffrey Chaucer (1340-1400) in his Canterbury Tales written between 1386-90, provided a portrait of the society of his times. Within this collection of stories, the Canon Yeoman's tale, gives us an insight into some of the ways in which alchemy was viewed at that time. Chaucer obviously had more than a superficial understanding of alchemy.

With this chanoun I dwelt have seven yeer,
And of his science am I never the neer.
Al that I hadde, I have y-lost ther-by;
And god wot, so hath many mo than I.
Ther I was wont to be right fresh and gay
Of clothing and of other good array,
Now may I were an hose upon myn heed;
And wher my colour was bothe fresh and reed,
Now is it wan and of a leden hewe;
Who-so it useth, sore shal he rewe.
And of my swink yet bled is myn ye,
Lo ! which advantage is to multiplie !
That slyding science hath me maad so bare,
That I have no good, wher that ever I fare;
And yet I am endetted so ther-by
Of gold that I have borwed, trewely,
That whyl I live, I shal it quyte never.
Lat every man be war by me for ever !
What maner man that casteth him ther-to,

If he continue, I holde his thrift y-do.
So helpe me god, ther-by shal he nat winne,
But empte his purs, and make his wittes thinne.
And whan he, thurgh his madnes and folye,
Hath lost his owene good thurgh Iupartye,
Thanne he excyteth other folk ther-to,
To lese hir good as he him-self hath do.
For unto shrewes Ioye it is and ese
To have hir felawes in peyne and disese;
Thus was I ones lerned of a clerk.
Of that no charge, I wol speke of our werk.
Whan we been ther as we shul exercyse
Our elvish craft, we semen wonder wyse,
Our termes been so clerghal and so queynte.
I blowe the fyr til that myn herte feynte.

What sholde I tellen ech proporcioun
Of thinges whiche that we werche upon,
As on fyve or sixe ounces, may wel be,
Of silver or som other quantite,
And bisie me to telle yow the names
Of orpiment, brent bones, yren squames,
That into poudre grounden been ful smal?
And in an erthen potte how put is al,
And salt y-put in, and also papeer,
Biforn these poudres that I speke of heer,
And wel y-covered with a lampe of glas,
And mochel other thing which that ther was ?
And of the pot and glasses enluting,
That of the eyre mighte passe out no-thing ?
And of the esy fyr and smart also,
Which that was maad, and of the care and wo
That we hadde in our matires sublyming,
And in amalgaming and calcening
Of quik-silver, y-clept Mercurie crude ?
For alle our sleightes we can nat conclude.
Our orpiment and sublymed Mercurie,
Our grounden litarge eek on the porphurie,
Of ech of these of ounces a certeyn
Nought helpeth us, our labour is in veyn.
Ne eek our spirites ascencioun,
Ne our materes that lyen al fire adoun,
Mowe in our werking no-thing us avayle.
For lost is al our labour and travayle,
And al the cost, a twenty devel weye,
Is lost also, which we upon it leye.
Ther is also ful many another thing
That is unto our craft apertening;
Though I by ordre hem nat reherce can,
By-cause that I am a lewed man,
Yet wol I telle hem as they come to minde,
Though I ne can nat sette hem in hir kinde;
As bole armoniak, verdegrees, boras,
And sondry vessels maad of erthe and glas,
Our urinales and our descensories,
Violes, croslets, and sublymatories,

Cucurbites, and alembykes eek,
And othere swiche, dere y-nough a leek.
Nat nedeth it for to reherce hem alle,
Watres rubifyng and boles galle,
Arsenik, sal armoniak, and brimstoon;
And herbes coude I telle eek many oon,
As egremoine, valerian, and lunarie,
And othere swiche, if that me liste tarie.
Our lampes brenning bothe night and day,
To bringe aboute our craft, if that we may.
Our fourneys eek of calcinacioun,
And of watres albificacioun,
Unslekked lym, chalk, and gleyre of an ey,
Poudres diverse, asshes, dong, pisse, and cley,
Cered pokets, sal peter, vitriole;
And divers fyres maad of wode and cole;
Sal tartre, alkaly, and sal preparat,
And combust materes and coagulat,
Cley maad with hers or mannes heer, and oile
Of tartre, alum, glas, berm, wort, and argoile,
Resalgar, and our materes enbibing;
And eek of our materes encorporing,
And of our silver citrinacioun,
Our cementing and fermentacioun,
Our ingottes, testes, and many mo.
I wol yow telle, as was me taught also,
The foure spirites and the bodies sevene,
By ordre, as ofte I herde my lord hem nevene.
The firste spirit quik-silver called is,
The second orpiment, the thridde, y-wis,
Sal armoniak, and the ferthe brimstoon.
The bodies sevene eek, lo ! hem heer anoon:
Sol gold is, and Luna silver we threpe,
Mars yren, Mercurie quik-silver we clepe,
Saturnus leed, and Iupiter is tin,
And Venus coper, by my fader kin !
This cursed craft who-so wol exercyse,
He shal no good han that him may suffyse;
For al the good he spendeth ther-aboute,
He lese shal, ther-of have I no doute.
Who-so that listeth outen his folye,
Lat him come forth, and lerne multiplye;
And every man that oght hath in his cofre,
Lat him appere, and wexe a filosofre.
Ascaunce that craft is so light to lere ?
Nay, nay, god moot, al be he monk or frere,
Preest or chanoun, or any other wight,
Though he sitte at his book bothe day and night,
In lernyng of this elvish nyce lore,
Al is in veyn, and parde, mochel more !
To lerne a lewed man this subtiltee,
Fy ! spek nat ther-of, for it wol nat be;
Al conne he letterure, or conne he noon,
As in effect, he shal finde it al oon.
For bothe two, by my savacioun,
Concluden, in multiplicacioun,

Y-lyke wel, whan they han al y-do;
This is to seyn, they faylen bothe two.
Yet forgat I to maken rehersaille
Of watres corosif and of limaille,
And of bodyes mollificacioun,
And also of hir induracioun,
Oiles, ablucions, and metal fusible,
To tellen al wolde passen any bible
That o-wher is; wherfor, as for the beste,
Of aile these names now wol I me reste.
For, as I trowe, I have yow told y-nowe
To reyse a feend, al loke he never so rowe.
A ! nay ! lat be; the philosophres stoon,
Elixir clept, we sechen faste echoon;
For hadde we him, than were we siker y-now.
But, unto god of heven I make avow,
For al our craft, ahan we han al y-do,
And al our sleighte, he wol nat come us to.
He hath y-maad us spenden mochel good,
For sorwe of which almost we wexen wood,
But that good hope crepeth in our herte,
Supposinge ever, though we sore smerte,
To be releved by him afterward;
Swich supposing and hope is sharp and hard;
I warne yow wel, it is to seken ever;
That futur temps hath maad men to dissever,
In trust ther-of, from al that ever they hadde.
Yet of that art they can nat wexen sadde,
For unto hem it is a bitter swete;
So semeth it; for nadde they but a shete
Which that they mighte wrappe hem inne a-night,
And a bak to walken inne by day-light,
They wolde hem selle and spenden on this craft;
They can nat stinte til no-thing be laft.
And evermore, wher that ever they goon,
Men may hem knowe by smel of brimstoon;
For al the world, they stinken as a goot;
Her savour is so rammish and so hoot,
That, though a man from hem a myle be,
The savour wol infecte him, trusteth me;
Lo, thus by smelling and threedbare array,
If that men liste, this folk they knowe may.
And if a man wol aske hem prively,
Why they been clothed so unthriftily,
They right anon wol rownen in his ere,
And seyn, that if that they espyed were,
Men wolde hem slee, by-cause of hir science;
Lo, thus this folk bitrayen innocence!
Passe over this; I go my tale un-to.
Er than the pot be on the fyr y-do,
Of metals with a certein quantite,
My lord hem tempreth, and no man but he -
Now he is goon, I dar seyn boldely -
For, as men seyn, he can don craftily; I
Algate I woot wel he hath swich a name,
And yet ful ofte he renneth in a blame;

And wite ye how ? ful ofte it happeth so,
 The pot to-breketh, and farewell ! al is go !
 Thise metals been of so greet violence,
 Our walles mowe nat make hem resistance,
 But if they weren wroght of lym and stoon;
 They percen so, and thurgh the wal they goon,
 And somme of hem sinken in-to the ground -
 Thus han Re lost by tymes many a pound -
 And somme are scatered al the floor aboute,
 Somme lepe in-to the roof; with-ouen doute,
 Though that the feend noght in our sighte him shewe
 I trowe he with us be, that ilke shrewe !
 In helle wher that he is lord and sire,
 Nis ther more wo, ne more rancour ne ire.
 Whan that our pot is broke, as I have sayd,
 Every mall chit, and halt him yvel apayd.
 Som seyde, it was long on the fyr-making,
 Som seyde, nay ! it was on the blowing;
 (Than was I fered, for that was myn office);
 'Straw !' quod the thridde, 'ye been lewed and nyce,
 It was nat tempred as it oghte be.'
 'Nay !' quod the ferthe, 'stint, and herkne me;
 By-cause our fyr ne was nat maad of beech,
 That is the cause, and other noon, so theeche !'
 I can nat telle wher-on it was long,
 But wel I wot greet stryf is us among.
 'What !' quod my lord, 'ther is na-more to done,
 Of thise perils I wol be war eft-sone;
 I am right siker that the pot was crased.
 Be as be may, be ye no-thing amased;
 As usage is, lat swepe the floor as swythe,
 Plukke up your hertes, and beth gladde and blythe.'
 The mullok on an hepe y-sweped was,
 And on the floor y-cast a canevas,
 And al this mullok in a sive y-throwe,
 And sifted, and y-piked many a throwe.
 'Pardee,' quod oon, 'somwhat of our metal
 Yet is ther heer, though that we han nat al.
 Al-though this thing mishapped have as now,
 Another tyme it may be wel y-now,
 Us moste putte our good in aventure;
 A marchant, parde ! may nat ay endure,
 Trusteth me wel, in his prosperitee;
 Somtyme his good is drenched in the see,
 And somtym comth it sauf un-to the londe.'
 'Pees !' quod my lord, 'the next tyme I wol fonde
 To bringe our craft al in another plyte;
 And but I do, sirs, lat me han the wyte;
 Ther was defaute in som-what, wel I woot.'
 Another seyde, the fyr was over hoot:-
 But, be it hoot or cold, I dar seye this,
 That we concluden evermore amis.
 We fayle of that which that we wolden have,
 And in our madnesse evermore we rave.
 And whan we been togidres everichoon,
 Every man semeth a Salomon.

But al thing which that shyneth as the gold
Nis nat gold, as that I have herd it told;
Ne every appel that is fair at ye
Ne is nat good, what-so men clappe or crye.
Right so, lo ! fareth it amonges us;
He that semeth the wysest, by Iesus !
Is most fool, whan it cometh to the preef;
And he that semeth trewest is a theef;
That shul ye knowe, er that I fro yow wende,
By that I of my tale have maad an ende.

Explicit prima pars.

Et sequitur pars secunda.

Ther is a chanoun of religioun
Amonges us, wolde infecte al a toun,
Though it as greet were as was Ninivee,
Rome, Alisaundre, Troye, and othere three.
His sleighes and his infinit falsnesse
Ther coude no man wryten, as I gesse,
Thogh that he mighte liven a thousand yeer.
In al this world of falshede nis his peer;
For in his termes so he wolde him winde,
And speke his wordes in so sly a kinde,
Whan he commune shal with any wight,
That he wol make him doten anon right,
But it a feend be, as him-selven is.
Ful many a man hath he bigyled er this,
And wol, if that he live may a whyle;
And yet men ryde and goon ful many a myle
Him for to seke and have his aqueyntaunce,
Noght knowinge of his false governaunce.
And if yow list to yeve me audience,
I wol it tellen heer in your presence.
But worshipful chanouns religious,
Ne demeth nat that I sclaundre your hous,
Al-though my tale of a chanoun be.
Of every ordre som shrewe is, parde,
And god forbede that al a companye
Sholde rewe a singuler mannes folye.
To sclaundre yow is no-thing myn entente,
But to correcten that is mis I mente.
This tale was nat only told for yow,
But eek for othere mo; ye woot wel how
That, among Cristes apostelles twelve,
Ther nas no traytour but Iudas him-selve.
Than why sholde al the remenant have blame
That giltles were ? by yow I seye the same.
Save only this, if ye wol herkne me,
If any Iudas in your covent be,
Remeveth him bitymes, I yow rede,
If shame or los may causen any drede.
And beth no-thing displeed, I yow preye,
But in this cas herkneth what I shal seye.

In London was a preest, an annueleer,
That therin dwelled hadde many a yeer,
Which was so plesaunt and so servisable
Unto the wyf, wher-as he was at table,
That she wolde suffre him no-thing for to paye
For bord ne clothing, wente he never so gaye;
And spending-silver hadde he right y-now.
Therof no fors; I wol precede as now,
And telle forth my tale of the chanoun,
That broghte this preest to confusioun.
This false chanoun cam up-on a day
Unto this preestes chambre, wher he lay,
Biseching him to lene him a certeyn
Of gold, and he wolde quyte it him ageyn.
'Lene me a mark,' quod he, 'but dayes three,
And at my day I wol it quyten thee.
And if so be that thou me finde fals,
Another day do hange me by the hals!'
This preest him took a mark, and that as swythe,
And this chanoun him thanked ofte sythe,
And took his leve, and wente forth his weye,
And at the thridde day broghte his moneye, 1
And to the preest he took his gold agayn,
Wherof this preest was wonder glad and fayn.
'Certes,' quod he, 'no-thing anoyeth me
To lene a man a noble, or two or three,
Or what thing were in my possessioun,
Whan he so trewe is of condicioun,
That in no wyse he breke wol his day;
To swich a man I can never seye nay.
'What !' quod this chanoun, 'sholde I be untrewe ?
Nay, that were thing y-fallen al of-newe.
Trouthe is a thing that I wol ever kepe
Un-to that day in which that I shal crepe
In-to my grave, and elles god forbede;
Bileveth this as siker as is your crede.
God thanke I, and in good tyme be it sayd,
That ther was never man yet yvel apayd
For gold ne silver that he to me lente,
Ne never falskede in myn herte I mente.
And sir,' quod he, 'now of my privetee,
Sin ye so goodlich han been un-to me,
And kythed to me so greet gentillesse,
Somwhat to quyte with your kindenesse,
I wol yow shewe, and, if yow list to lere,
I wol yow teche pleyedly the manere,
How I can werken in philosophye.
Taketh good heed, ye shul wel seen at ye,
That I wol doon a maistrie er I go.'
'Ye,' quod the preest, 'ye, sir, and wol ye so ?
Marie ! ther-of I pray yow hertely !'
'At your comandement, sir, trewely,'
Quod the chanoun, 'and elles god forbede !'
Lo, how this theef coude his servyse bede !
Ful sooth it is, that swich profred servyse
Stinketh, as witnessen these olde wyse;

And that ful sone I wol it verifye
In this chanoun, rote of al trecherye,
That ever-more delyt hath and gladnesse -
Swich feendly thoughtes in his herte impresse -
How Cristes peple he may to meschief bringe;
God kepe us from his fals dissimulinge !
Noght wiste this preest with whom that he delte,
Ne of his harm cominge he no-thing felte.
O sely preest ! o sely innocent !
With coveityse anon thou shalt be blent!
O gracelees, ful blind is thy conceit,
No-thing ne artow war of the deceit
Which that this fox y-shapen hath to thee !
His wyly wrenches thou ne mayst nat flee.
Wherfor, to go to the conclusioun
That refereth to thy confusioun,
Unhappy man ! anon I wol me hye
To tellen thyn unwit and thy folye,
And eek the falsnesse of that other wrecche,
As ferforth as that my conning may strecche.
This chanoun was my lord, ye wolden wene?
Sir host, in feith, and by the hevenes quene,
It was another chanoun, and nat he,
That call an hundred fold more subtiltee !
He hath bitrayed folkes many tyme;
Of his falshede it dulleth me to ryme.
Ever whan that I speke of his falshede,
For shame of him my chekes wexen rede;
Algates, they biginnen for to glowe,
For reednesse have I noon, right wel I knowe,
In my visage; for fumes dyverse
Of metals, which ye han herd me reherce,
Consumed and wasted han my reednesse.
Now tak heed of this chanouns cursednesse !
'Sir,' quod he to the preest, 'lat your man gon
For quik-silver, that we it hadde anon;
And lat him bringen ounces two or three;
And whan he comth, as faste shul ye see
A wonder thing, which ye saugh never er this.'
'Sir,' quod the preest, 'it shall be doon, y-wis.'
He bad his servant fecchen him this thing,
And he al redy was at his bidding,
And wente him forth, and cam anon agayn
With this quik-silver, soothly for to sayn,
And took these ounces three to the chanoun;
And he hem leyde fayre and wel adoun,
And bad the servant coles for to bringe,
That he anon mighte go to his werkinge.
The coles right anon weren y-fet,
And this chanoun took out a crosselet
Of his bosom, and shewed it the preest.
'This instrument,' quod he, 'which that thou seest,
Tak in thyn hand, and put thy-self ther-inne
Of this quik-silver an ounce, and heer biginne,
In the name of Crist, to wexe a filosofre.
Ther been ful fewe, whiche that I wolde profre

To shewen hem thus muche of my science.
For ye shul seen heer, by experience,
That this quik-silver wol I mortifye
Right in your sighte anon, withouten lye,
And make it as good silver and as fyn
As ther is any in your purs or myn,
Or elleswher, and make it malliable;
And elles, holdeth me fals and unable
Amonges folk for ever to appere !
I have a poudre heer, that coste me dere,
Shal make al good, for it is cause of al
My conning, which that I yow shewen shal.
Voydeth your man, and lat him be ther-oute,
And shet the dore, whyls we been aboute
Our privetee, that no man us espye
Whyls that we werke in this philosophye.'
Al as he bad, fulfilled was in dede,
This ilke servant anon-right out yede,
And his maister shette the dore anon,
And to hir labour speedily they gon
This preest, at this cursed chanouns bidding,
Up-on the fyr anon sette this thing,
And blew the fyr, and bisied him ful faste;
And this chanoun in-to the croslet caste
A poudre, noot I wher-of that it was
Y-maad, other of chalk, other of glas,
Or som-what elles, was nat worth a flye,
To blynde with the preest; and bad him hye
The coles for to couchen al above
The croslet, 'for, in tokening I thee love,'
Quod this chanoun, 'thyn owene hondes two
Shul werche al thing which that shal heer be do.'
'Graunt mercy,' quod the preest, and was ful glad,
And couched coles as the chanoun bad.
And whyle he bisy was, this feendly wrecche,
This fals chanoun, the foule feend him fecche !
Out of his bosom took a bechen cole,
In which ful subtilly was maad an hole,
And ther-in put was of silver lymaille
An ounce, and stopped was, with-ouen fayle,
The hole with wex, to kepe the lymail in.
And understondeth, that this false gin
Tlras nat maad ther, but it was maad bifore;
And othere thinges I shal telle more
Herafterward, which that he with him broghte;
Er he cam ther, him to bigyle he thoghte,
And so he dide, er that they wente a-twinne;
Til he had torned him, coude he not blinne.
It dulleth me whan that I of him speke,
On his falshede fayn wolde I me wreke,
If I wiste how; but he is heer and ther:
He is so variaunt, he abit no-wher.
But taketh heed now, sirs, for goddes love !
He took his cole of which I spak above,
And in his hond he baar it prively.
And whyls the preest couchede busily

The coles, as I tolde yow er this,
This chanoun seyde, 'freend, ye doon amis;
This is nat couched as it oghte be;
But sone I shal amenden it,' quod he.
'Now lat me medle therrith but a whyle,
For of yow have I pitee, by seint Gyle !
Ye been right hoot, I see mel how ye swete,
Have heer a cloth, and wype away the were.'
And whyles that the preest wyped his face,
This chanoun took his cole with harde grace,
And leyde it above, up-on the middeward
Of the croslet, and blew wel afterward,
Til that the coles gonne faste brenne.
'Now yeve us drinke,' quod the chanoun thenne,
'As swythe al shal be wel, I undertake;
Sitte we doun, and lat us mery make.'
And whan that this chanounes bechen cole
Was brent, al the lymaille, out of the hole,
Into the croslet fil anon adoun;
And so it moste nedes, by resoun,
Sin it so even aboven couched was;
But ther-of wiste the preest no-thing, alas !
He demed aile the coles y-liche good,
For of the sleighte he no-thing understood.
And whan this alkamistre saugh his tyme,
'Rys up,' quod he, 'sir preest, and stondest by me;
And for I woot wel ingot have ye noon,
Goth, walketh forth, and bring us a chalk-stoon;
For I wol make oon of the same shap
That is an ingot, if I may han hap.
And bringeth eek with yow a bolle or a panne,
Ful of water, and ye shul see wel thanne
How that our businesse shal thryve and preve.
And yet, for ye shul han no misbileve
Ne wrong conceit of me in your absence,
I ne wol nat been out of your presence,
But go with yow, and come with yow ageyn.'
The chambre-dore, shortly for to seyn,
They opened and shette, and wente hir weye.
And forth with hem they carieden the keye,
And come agayn with-uten any delay.
What sholde I tarien al the longe day ?
He took the chalk, and shoop it in the wyse
Of an ingot, as I shal yow devyse.
I seye, he took out of his owene sieve,
A teyne of silver (yvele mote he cheve !)
Which that ne was nat but an ounce of weighte;
And taketh heed now of his cursed sleighte !
He shoop his ingot, in lengthe and eek in brede,
Of this teyne, with-uten any drede,
So slyly, that the preest it nat espyde;
And in his sieve agayn he gan it hyde;
And fro the fyr he took up his matere,
And in thingot putte it with mery chere,
And in the water-vessel he it caste
Whan that him luste, and bad the preest as faste,

'Look what ther is, put in thyn hand and grope,
Thew finde shalt ther silver, as I hope;
What, devel of helle ! sholde it elles be ?
Shaving of silver silver is, pardee !'
He putte his hond in, and took up a teyne
Of silver fyn, and glad in every veyne
Was this preest, whan he saugh that it was so.
'Goddes blessing, and his modres also,
And aile halwes have ye, sir chanoun,'
Seyde this preest, 'and I hir malisoun,
But, and ye vouche-sauf to techen me
This noble craft and this subtilitee,
I wol be youre, in al that ever I may !'
Quod the chanoun, 'yet wol I make assay
The second tyme, that ye may taken hede
And been expert of this, and in your nede
Another day assaye in myn absence
This disciplyne and this crafty science.
Lat take another ounce, 'quod he tho,
'Of quik-silver, with-uten wordes mo,
And do ther-with as ye han doon er this
With that other, which that now silver is.'
This preest him bisieth in al that he can
'To doon as this chanoun, this cursed man,
Comanded him, and faste he blew the fyr,
For to come to theeffect of his desyr.
And this chanoun, right in the mene whyle,
Al redy was, the preest eft to bigyle,
And, for a countenance, in his hande he bar
An holwe stikke (tak keep and be war !)
In the ende of which an ounce, and na-more,
Of silver lymail put was, as bifore
Was in his cole, and stopped with wex weel
For to kepe in his lymail every deel.
And whyl this preest was in his businesse,
This chanoun with his stikke gan him dresse
To him anon, and his pouder caste in
As he did er; (the devel out of his skin
Him tome, I pray to god, for his falshede;
For he was ever fals in thought and dede);
And with this stikke, above the croslet,
That was ordeyned with that false get,
He stired the coles, til relente gan
The wex agayn the fyr, as every man,
But it a fool be, woot wel it mot nede,
And al that in the stikke was out yede,
And in the croslet hastily it fel.
Now gode sirs, what wol ye bet than wel?
Whan that this preest thus was bigyled ageyn,
Supposing noght but trouthe, soth to seyn,
He was so glad, that I can nat expresse
In no manere his mirthe and his gladnesse;
And to the chanoun he profred eftsome
Body and good; 'ye,' quod the chanoun sone,
'Though povre I be, crafty thou shalt me finde;
I warne thee, yet is ther more bihinde.

Is ther any coper her-inne?' seyde he.
'Ye,' quod the preest, 'sir, I trowe wel ther be.'
'Elles go by us som, and that as swythe,
Now, gode sir, go forth thy wey and hy the.'
He wente his wey, and with the coper cam,
And this chanoun it in his handes nam,
And of that coper weyed out but an ounce.
Al to simple is my tonge to pronounce,
As ministre of my wit, the doublenesse
Of this chanoun, rote of al cursednesse.
He semed freendly to hem that knewe him noght,
But he was feendly bothe in herte and thought.
It werieth me to telle of his falsnesse,
And nathelees yet wol I it expresse,
To thentente that men may be war therby,
And for noon other cause, trewely.
He putte his ounce of coper in the croslet,
And on the fyr as swythe he hath it set,
And caste in poudre, and made the preest to blowe,
And in his werking for to stoupe lowe,
As he dide er, and al nas but a Iape;
Right as him liste, the preest he made his ape;
And afterward in the ingot he it caste,
And in the panne putte it at the laste
Of water, and in he putte his owene hond.
And in his sleve (as ye biforn-hond
Herde me telle) he hadde a silver teyne.
He slyly took it out, this cursed heyne -
Unwiting this preest of his false craft -
And in the pannes botme he hath it laft;
And in the water rombled to and fro,
And wonder prively took up also
The coper teyne, noght knowing this preest,
And hidde it, and him hente by the breest,
And to him spak, and thus seyde in his game,
'Stoupeth adoun, by god, ye be to blame,
Helpeth me now, as I dide yow whyl-er,
Putte in your hand, and loketh what is ther.
This preest took up this silver teyne anon,
And thanne seyde the chanoun, 'lat us gon
With thise three teynes, which that we han wroght,
To som goldsmith, and wite if they been oght.
For, by my feith, I nolde, for myn hood,
But-if that they were silver, fyn and good,
And that as swythe preved shal it be.'
Un-to the goldsmith with thise teynes three
They wente, and putte thise teynes in assay
To fyr and hamer; mighte no man sey nay,
But that they weren as hem oghte be.
This sotted preest, who was gladder than he ?
Was never brid gladder agayn the day,
Ne nightingale, in the sesoun of May,
Nas never noon that luste bet to singe;
Ne lady lustier in carolinge
Or for to speke of love and wommanhede,
Ne knight in armes to doon an hardy dede

To stonde in grace of his lady dere,
 Than had this preest this sory craft to lere;
 And to the chanoun thus he spak and seyde,
 'For love of god, that for us aile deyde,
 And as I may deserve it un-to yow,
 What shal this receit coste? telleth now !'
 'By our lady,' quod this chanoun, 'it is dere,
 I warne yow wel; for, save I and a frere,
 In Engelond ther can no man it make.'
 'No fors,' quod he, 'now, sir, for goddes sake,
 What shal I paye ? telleth me, I preye.'
 'Y-wis,' quod he, 'it is ful dere, I seye;
 Sir, at o word, if that thee list it have,
 Ye shul paye fourty pound, so god me save !
 And, nere the freendship that ye dide er this
 To me, ye sholde paye more, y-wis.'
 This preest the somme of fourty pound anon
 Of nobles fette, and took hem everichon
 To this chanoun, for this ilke receit;
 Al his werking nas but fraude and deceit.
 'Sir preest,' he seyde, 'I kepe han no loos
 Of my craft, for I wolde it kept were cloos;
 And as ye love me, kepeth it secree;
 For, and men knewe al my subtilitee,
 By god, they wolden han so greet envye
 To me, by-cause of my philosophye,
 I sholde be deed, ther were non other weye.'
 'God it forbede !' quod the preest, 'what sey ye?'
 Yet hadde I lever spenden al the good
 Which that I have (and elles wexe I wood!)
 Than that ye sholden falle in swich mescheef.'
 'For your good wil, sir, have ye right good preef,'
 Quod the chanoun, 'and far-wel, grant mercy!'
 He wente his way and never the preest him sy
 After that day; and whan that this preest sholde
 Maken assay, at swich tyme as he wolde,
 Of this receit, far-wel ! it wolde nat be !
 Lo, thus byiaped and bigyled was he !
 Thus maketh he his introduccioun
 To bringe folk to hir destruccioun. -

Considereth, sirs, how that, in ech estaat,
 Bitwixe men and gold ther is debaat
 So ferforth, that unnethes is ther noon.
 This multiplying blent so many oon,
 That in good feith I trowe that it be
 The cause grettest of swich scarsetee.
 Philosophres speken so mistily
 In this craft, that men can nat come therby,
 For any wit that men han now a-dayes.
 They mowe wel chiteren, as doon thise Iayes,
 And in her termes sette hir lust and peyne,
 But to hir purpos shul they never atteyne.
 A man may lightly lerne, if he have aught,
 To multiplie, and bringe his good to naught !
 Lo ! swich a lucre is in this lusty game,

A mannes mirthe it wol tome un-to grame,
And empten also grete and hevye purses,
And maken folk for to purchasen curses
Of hem, that han hir good therto y-lent.
O ! fy ! for shame ! they that han been brent,
Alias ! can they nat flee the fyres hete ?
Ye that it use, I rede ye it lete,
Lest ye lese al; for bet than never is late.
Never to thryve were to long a date.
Though ye prolle ay, ye shul it never finde;
Ye been as bolde as is Bayard the blinde,
That blundreth forth, and peril casteth noon;
He is as bold to renne agayn a stoon
As for to goon besydes in the weye.
So faren ye that multiplie, I seye.
If that your yen can nat seen aright,
Loke that your minde lakke nought his sight.
For, though ye loke never so brode, and stare,
Ye shul nat winne a myte on that chaffare,
But wasten al that ye may rape and renne.
Withdrawe the fyr, lest it to faste brenne;
Medleth na-more with that art, I mene,
For, if ye doon, your thrift is goon ful clene.
And right as swythe I wol yow tellen here,
What philosophres seyn in this matere.
Lo, thus seith Amold of the Newe Toun,
As his Rosarie maketh mencion;
He seith right thus, with-uten any lye,
'Ther may no man Mercurie mortifye,
But it be with his brother knowleching.
How that he, which that first seyde this thing,
Of philosophres fader was, Hermes;
He seith, how that the dragoun, doutelees,
Ne deyeth nat, but-if that he be slayn
With his brother; and that is for to sayn,
By the dragoun, Mercurie and noon other
He understood; and brimston by his brother,
That out of sol and luna were y-drawe.
And therfor,' seyde he, 'tak heed to my sawe,
Let no man bisy him this art for to seche,
But-if that he thentencion and speche
Of philosophres understonde can;
And if he do, he is a lewed man.
For this science and this conning,' quod he,
'Is of the secree of secrees, parde.'
Also ther was a disciple of Plato,
That on a tyme seyde his maister to,
As his book Senior wol bere witness,
And this was his demande in soothfastnesse:
'Tel me the name of the privy stoon ?'
And Plato answerde unto him anoon,
'Tak the stoon that Titanos men name.'
'Which is that?' quod he. 'Magnesia is the same,'
Seyde Plato. 'Ye, sir, and is it thus ?'
This is ignotum per ignotius.
What is Magnesia, good sir, I yow preye ?'

'It is a water that is maad, I seye,
Of elementes foure,' quod Plato.
'Tel me the rote, good sir,' quod he tho,
'Of that water, if that it be your wille?'
'Nay, nay,' quod Plato, 'certein, that I nille.
The philosophres sworn were everichoon,
That they sholden discovere it un-to noon,
Ne in no book it wryte in no manere;
For un-to Crist it is so leef and dere
That he wol nat that it discovered be,
But wher it lyketh to his deitee
Man for tenspyre, and eek for to defende
Whom that him lyketh; lo, this is the ende.'
Thanne conclude I thus; sith god of hevene
Ne wol nat that the philosophres nevene
How that a man shal come un-to this stoon,
I rede, as for the beste, lete it goon.
For who-so maketh god his adversarie,
As for to werken any thing in contrarie
Of his wil, certes, never shal he thryve,
Thogh that he multiplie terme of his lyve.
And ther a poynt; for ended is my tale;
God sende every trewe man bote of his bale ! - Amen.

Poems of John Donne with alchemical references

These poems published in 1633 show some influence of alchemy.

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Love's Alchemy

Some that have deeper digg'd love's mine than I,
Say, where his centric happiness doth lie;
I have lov'd, and got, and told,
But should I love, get, tell, till I were old,
I should not find that hidden mystery.
Oh, 'tis imposture all!
And as no chemic yet th'elixir got,
But glorifies his pregnant pot
If by the way to him befall
Some odoriferous thing, or medicinal,
So, lovers dream a rich and long delight,
But get a winter-seeming summer's night.

Our ease, our thrift, our honour, and our day,
Shall we for this vain bubble's shadow pay?
Ends love in this, that my man
Can be as happy'as I can, if he can
Endure the short scorn of a bridegroom's play?
That loving wretch that swears
'Tis not the bodies marry, but the minds,
Which he in her angelic finds,

Would swear as justly that he hears,
In that day's rude hoarse minstrelsy, the spheres.
Hope not for mind in women; at their best
Sweetness and wit, they're but mummy, possess'd.

The Sun Rising

Busy old fool, unruly Sun,
Why dost thou thus,
Through windows, and through curtains, call on us?
Must to thy motions lovers' seasons run?
Saucy pedantic wretch, go chide
Late schoolboys, and sour prentices,
Go tell court-huntsmen that the king will ride,
Call country ants to harvest offices,
Love, all alike, no season knows, nor clime,
Nor hours, days, months, which are the rags of time.

Thy beams, so reverend and strong
Why shouldst thou think?
I could eclipse and cloud them with a wink,
But that I would not lose her sight so long:
If her eyes have not blinded thine,
Look, and tomorrow late, tell me
Whether both the 'Indias of spice and mine
Be where thou leftst them, or lie here with me.
Ask for those kings whom thou saw'st yesterday,
And thou shalt hear: "All here in one bed lay."

She's all states, and all princes I,
Nothing else is.
Princes do but play us; compar'd to this,
All honour's mimic, all wealth alchemy.
Thou, sun, art half as happy as we,
In that the world's contracted thus;
Thine age asks ease, and since thy duties be
To warm the world, that's done in warming us.
Shine here to us, and thou art everywhere;
This bed thy centre is, these walls, thy sphere.

A Nocturnal upon St. Lucy's Day, being the shortest day

'Tis the year's midnight, and it is the day's,
Lucy's, who scarce seven hours herself unmasks;
The sun is spent, and now his flasks
Send forth light squibs, no constant rays;
The world's whole sap is sunk;
The general balm th' hydroptic earth hath drunk,
Whither, as to the bed's feet, life is shrunk,
Dead and interr'd; yet all these seem to laugh,
Compar'd with me, who am their epitaph.

Study me then, you who shall lovers be
At the next world, that is, at the next spring;
For I am every dead thing,
In whom Love wrought new alchemy.
For his art did express
A quintessence even from nothingness,
From dull privations, and lean emptiness;
He ruin'd me, and I am re-begot
Of absence, darkness, death: things which are not.

All others, from all things, draw all that's good,
Life, soul, form, spirit, whence they being have;
I, by Love's limbec, am the grave
Of all that's nothing. Oft a flood
Have we two wept, and so
Drown'd the whole world, us two; oft did we grow
To be two chaoses, when we did show
Care to aught else; and often absences
Withdrew our souls, and made us carcasses.

But I am by her death (which word wrongs her)
Of the first nothing the elixir grown;
Were I a man, that I were one
I needs must know; I should prefer,
If I were any beast,
Some ends, some means; yea plants, yea stones detest,
And love; all, all some properties invest;
If I an ordinary nothing were,
As shadow, a light and body must be here.

But I am none; nor will my sun renew.
You lovers, for whose sake the lesser sun
At this time to the Goat is run
To fetch new lust, and give it you,
Enjoy your summer all;
Since she enjoys her long night's festival,
Let me prepare towards her, and let me call
This hour her vigil, and her eve, since this
Both the year's, and the day's deep midnight is.

Reginald Scot on alchemy

Reginald Scot's influential *The discoverie of Witchcraft*, (first issued in 1584 and reprinted a number of times in the 17th century), has a section (the fourteenth book) devoted to a criticism of alchemy.

The first Chapter.

Of the art of Alcumystrie, of their woords of art and devises to bleare mens eies, and to procure credit to their profession.

Ere I thought it not impertinent to saie somewhat of the art or rather the craft of Alcumystrie, otherwise called Multiplication; which Chaucer, of all other men, most livelie deciphereth. In the bowels herof dooth both witchcraft and conjuration lie hidden, as whereby some cousen others, and some are cousened themselves. For by this mysterie
(as it is said in the chanons mans prolog)

They take upon them to turne upside downe,
All the earth betwixt Southwarke and Canturburie towne,

And to pave it all of silver and gold, etc.
But ever they lacke of their conclusion,
And to much folke they doo illusion.
For their stuffe slides awaie so fast,
That it makes them beggers at the last,
And by this craft they doo never win,
But make their pursse emptie, and their wits thin.

And because the practisers heereof would be thought wise, learned, cunning, and their crafts maisters, they have devised words of art, sentences and epithets obscure, and confectious so innumerable (which are also compounded of strange and rare simples) as confound the capacities of them that are either set on worke heerein, or be brought to behold or expect their conclusions. For what plaine man would not beleve, that they are learned and jollie fellowes, that have in such readinesse so many mysticall termes of art: as (for a tast) their subliming, amalgaming, englutting, imbibing, incorporating, cementing, citrination, terminations, mollifications, and indurations of bodies, matters combust and coagulat, ingots, tests, &c. Or who is able to conceive (by reason of the abrupt confusion, contrarietie, and multitude of drugs, simples, and confectious) the operation and mysterie of their stuffe and workemanship. For these things and many more, are of necessitie to be prepared and used in the execution of this indeavor; namelie orpiment, sublimed Mercurie, iron squames, Mercurie crude, groundlie large, bole armoniake, verdegrece, borace, boles, gall, arsenicke, sal armoniake, brimstone, salt, paper, burnt bones, unsliked lime, claie, saltpeter, vitriall, saltartre, alcalie, sal preparat, claie made with horsse doong, mans haire, oile of tartre, allum, glasse, woort, yest, argoll, resagor, gleir of an eie, powders, ashes, doong, pisse, &c. Then have they waters corosive and lincall, waters of albification, and waters rubifieng, etc. Also oiles, ablutions, and metals fusible. Also their lamps, their urinalles, discensories, sublimatories, alembecks, viols, croslets, cucurbits, stillatories, and their fornace of calcination: also their soft and subtill fiers, some of wood, some of cole, composed speciallie of beech, etc. And because they will not seeme to want anie point of cousenage to astonish the simple, or to moove admiration to their enterprises, they have (as they affirme) foure spirits to worke withall, whereof the first is, orpiment; the second, quicksilver; the third, sal armoniake; the fourth, brimstone. Then have they seven celestially bodies; namelie, Sol, Luna, Mars, Mercurie, Saturne, Jupiter, and Venus; to whome they applie seven terrestriall bodies; to wit: gold, silver, iron, quicksilver, lead, tinne, and copper, attributing unto these the operation of the other; speciallie if the terrestriall bodies be qualified, tempered, and wrought in the houre and daie according to the feats of the celestially bodies: with more like vanitie.

The second Chapter.

The Alcumysters drift, the Chanons yeomans tale, of alcumysticall stones and waters.

Now you must understand that the end and drift of all their worke, is, to atteine unto the composition of the philosophers stone, called Alixer, and to the stone called Titanus; and to Magnatia, which is a water made of the foure elements, which (they saie) the philosophers are sworne neither to discover, nor to write of. And by these they mortifie quicke silver, and make it malleable, and to hold touch: heereby also they convert any other mettall (but speciallie copper) into gold. This science (forsooth) is the secret of secrets; even as Salomons conjuration is said among the conjurors to be so likewise. And thus, when they chance to meete with yong men, or simple people, they boast and brag, and saie with Simon Magus, that they can worke miracles, and bring mightie things to passe. In which respect Chaucer truelie heereof saith:

Each man is as wise as Salomon,
When they are together everichone:
But he that seemes wisest, is most foole in preefe,
And he that is truest, is a verie theefe.
They seeme friendlie to them that knowe nought,
But they are feendlie both in word and thought,
yet many men ride and seeke their acquaintance,
Not knowing of their false governance.
He also saith, and experience verifieth his assertion, that they looke ill favouredlie, & are alwaies beggerlie attired:
his words are these:
These fellowes looke ill favouredlie,
And are alwaies tired beggerlie,
So as by smelling and thredbare araie,
These folke are knowne and discerned alwaie.
But so long as they have a sheet to wrap them in by night,
Or a rag to hang about them in the day light,

They will it spend in this craft,
They cannot stint till nothing be laft.
Here one may learne if he have ought,
To multiplie and bring his good to naught.
But if a man aske them privilie,
Whie they are clothed so unthriftilie,
They will round him in the eare and saie,
If they espied were, men would them slaie,
And all bicause of this noble science:
Lo thus these folke beetraien innocence.

The tale of the chanons yeoman published by Chaucer, dooth make (by waie of example) a perfect demonstration of the art of Alcumystrie or multiplication: the effect whereof is this. A chanon being an Alcumyster or cousenor, espied a covetous preest, whose pursse he knew to be well lined, whome he assaulted with flatterie and subtile speach, two principall points belonging to this art. At the length he borrowed monie of the preest, which is the third part of the art, without the which the professors can doo no good, nor indure in good estate. Then he at his daie repaid the monie, which is the most difficult point in this art, and a rare experiment. Finallie, to requite the preests courtesie, he promised unto him such instructions, as wherby with expedition he should become infinitelie rich, and all through this art of multiplication. And this is the most common point in this science; for herein they must be skilfull before they can be famous, or atteine to anie credit. The preest disliked not his proffer; speciallie bicause it tended to his profit, and embraced his courtesie. Then the chanon willed him foorthwith to send for three ownces of quicke silver, which he said he would transubstantiate (by his art) into perfect silver. The preest thought that a man of his profession could not dissemble, and therefore with great joy and hope accomplished his request. And now (forsooth) goeth this jollie Alcumyst about his busines and worke of multiplication, and causeth the preest to make a fier of coles, in the bottome whereof he placeth a croslet; and pretending onelie to helpe the preest to laie the coles handsomelie, he foisteth into the middle ward or lane of coles, a beechen cole, within the which was conveyed an ingot of perfect silver, which (when the cole was consumed) slipt downe into the croslet, that was (I saie) directlie under it. The preest perceived not the fraud, but received the ingot of silver, and was not a little joyfull to see such certeine successe proceed from his owne handie worke wherein could be no fraud (as he surelie conceived) and therefore verie willinglie gave the cannon fortie pounds for the receipt of this experiment, who for that summe of monie taught him a lesson in Alcumystrie, but he never returned to heare repetitions, or to see how he profited.

The third Chapter.

Of a yeoman of the countrie cousened by an Alcumist.

I could cite manie Alcumysticall cousenages wrought by Doctor Burcot, Feates, and such other; but I will passe them over, and onelie repeate three experiments of that art; the one practised upon an honest yeoman in the countie of Kent, the other upon a mightie prince, the third upon a covetous preest. And first touching the yeoman, he was overtaken and used in maner and forme following, by a notable cousening varlot, who professed Alcumystrie, juggling, witchcraft, and conjuration: and by meanes of his companions and confederats discussed the simplicitie and abilitie of the said yeoman, and found out his estate and humor to be convenient for his purpose; and finallie came a wooing (as they saie) to his daughter, to whome he made love cunninglie in words, though his purpose tended to another matter. And among other illusions and tales, concerning his owne commendation, for welth, parentage, inheritance, alliance, activitie, learning, pregnancie, and cunning, he boasted of his knowledge and experience in Alcumystrie; making the simple man beleve that he could multiplie, and of one angell make two or three. Which seemed strange to the poore man, in so much as he became willing enough to see that conclusion: whereby the Alcumyster had more hope and comfort to atteine his desire, than if his daughter had yeelded to have married him. To be short, he in the presence of the said yeoman, did include within a little ball of virgine wax, a couple of angels; and after certeine ceremonies and conjuring words he seemed to deliver the same unto him: but in truth (through legierdemaine) he conveyed into the yeomans hand another ball of the same scantling, wherein were inclosed manie more angels than were in the ball which he thought he had received. Now (forsooth) the Alcumyster bad him laie up the same ball of wax, and also use certeine ceremonies (which I thought good heere to omit). And after certeine daies, houres, and minuts they returned together, according to the appointment, and found great gaines by the multiplication of the angels. Insomuch as he, being a plaine man, was heereby persuaded, that he should not onelie have a rare and notable good sonne in lawe; but a companion that might helpe to adde unto his welth much treasure, and to his estate great fortune and felicitie. And to increase this opinion in him, as also to winne his further favour; but speciallie to bring his cunning Alcumystrie, or rather his lewd purpose to passe; he told him that it were follie to multiplie a pound of gold, when as easilie they might multiplie a millian: and therefore counselled him to

produce all the monie he had, or could borrowe of his neighbours and freends; and did put him out of doubt, that he would multiplie the same, and redouble it exceedinglie, even as he save by experience how he delt with the small summe before his face. This yeoman, in hope of gaines and preferment, etc.: consented to this sweete motion, and brought out and laid before his feete, not the one halfe of his goods, but all that he had, or could make or borrowe anie maner of waie. Then this juggling Alcumyster, having obtained his purpose, folded the same in a ball, in quantitie farre bigger than the other, and conveing the same into his bosome or pocket, delivered another ball (as before) of the like quantitie unto the yeoman, to be reserved and safelie kept in his chest; whereof (bicause the matter was of importance) either of them must have a key, and a severall locke, that no interruption might be made to the ceremonie, nor abuse by either of them, in defrauding ech other. Now (forsooth) these circumstances and ceremonies being ended, and the Alcumysters purpose therby performed; he told the yeoman that (untill a certeine daie and houre limited to returne) either of them might emploie themselves about their busines, and necessarie affaires; the yeoman to the plough, and he to the citie of London, and in the meane time the gold shuld multiplie, etc. But the Alcumyster (belike) having other matters of more importance came not just at the houre appointed, nor yet at the daie, nor within the yeare: so as, although it were somewhat against the yeomans conscience to violate his promise, or breake the league; yet partlie by the longing he had to see, and partlie the desire he had to enjoie the fruit of that excellent experiment, having (for his owne securitie) and the others satisfaction, some testimonie at the opening thereof, to witness his sincere dealing, he brake up the coffer, and lo he soone espied the ball of wax, which he himselve had laid up there with his owne hand. So as he thought (if the hardest should fall) he should find his principall: and whie not as good increase hereof now, as of the other before. But alas! when the wax was broken, and the metall discovered, the gold was much abased, and became perfect lead.

Now who so list to utter his follie,
Let him come foorth, and learne to multiplie;
And everie man that hath ought in his cofer,
Let him appeare, and waxe a philosopher,
In learning of this elvish nice lore,
All is in vaine, and pardee much more
Is to learne a lewd man this sutteltie,
Fie, speake not thereof it woll not bee.
For He that hath learning, and he that hath none,
Conclude alike in multiplcatione.

The fourth Chapter.

A certeine King abused by an Alcumyst, and of the kings foole a pretie jest.

The second example is of another Alcumyst that came to a certeine king, promising to worke by his art manie great things, as well in compounding and transubstantiating of mettals, as in executing of other exploités of no lesse admiration. But before he beganne, he found the meanes to receive by vertue of the kings warrant, a great summe of monie in prest, assuring the king and his councell, that he would shortlie returne, and accomplish his promise, etc.

Soone after, the kings foole, among other jestes, fell into a discourse and discoverie of fooles, and handled that common place so pleasantlie, that the king began to take delight therein, & to like his merrie veine. Whereupon he would needes have the foole deliver unto him a schedull or scroll, containing the names of all the most excellent fooles in the land.

So he caused the kings name to be first set downe, and next him all the names of the lords of his privie councell. The king seeing him so sawcie and malepert, ment to have had him punished: but some of his councell, knowing him to be a fellow pleasantlie conceipted, besought his majestie rather to demand of him a reason of his libell, etc, than to proceed in extremitie against him. Then the foole being asked why he so sawcilie accused the king and his councell of principall follie, answered; Bicause he sawe one foolish knave beguile them all, and to cousen them of so great a masse of monie, and finallie to be gone out of their reach. Why (said one of the councell) he maie returne and performe his promise, etc. Then (quoth the foole) I can helpe all the matter easilie. How (said the king) canst thou doo that? Marie sir (said he) then I will blotte out your name, and put in his, as the most foole in the world. Manie other practises of the like nature might be hereunto annexed, for the detection of their knaverie and deceipts whereupon this art dependeth, whereby the readers maie be more delighted in reading, than the practisers benefited in simplie using the same. For it is an art consisting wholie of subiltie and deceipt, whereby the ignorant and plaine minded man through his too much credulitie is circumvented, and the humor of the other slie cousener satisfied.

The fift Chapter.

A notable storie written by Erasmus of two Alcumysts, also of longation and curtation.

The third example is reported by Erasmus, whose excellent learning and wit is had to this daie in admiration. He in a certeine dialog intituled Alcumystica doth finelie bewraie the knaverie of this craftie art; wherein he proposeth one

Balbine, a verie wise, learned, and devout preest, howbeit such a one as was bewitched, and mad upon the art of Alcumystrie. Which thing another cousening preest perceived, and dealt with him in maner and forme following. M. Doctor Balbine (said he) I being a stranger unto you maie seeme verie saucie to trouble your worship with my bold sute, who alwaies are busied in great and divine studies. To whome Balbine, being a man of few words, gave a nodde: which was more than he used to everie man. But the preest knowing his humor, said; I am sure sir, if you knew my sute, you would pardon mine importunitie. I prairie thee good sir John (said Balbine) shew me thy mind, and be breefe. That shall I doo sir (said he) with a good will. You know M. Doctor, through your skill in philosophie, that everie mans destinie is not alike; and I for my part am at this point, that I cannot tell whether I maie be counted happie or infortunate. For when I weigh mine owne case, or rather my state, in part I seeme fortunate, and in part miserable. But Balbine being a man of some surlinesse, alwaies willed him to draw his matter to a more compendious forme: which thing the preest said he would doe, and could the better performe; bicause Balbine himselve was so learned and expert in the verie matter he had to repeat, and thus he began.

I have had, even from my childhood, a great felicitie in the art of Alcumystrie, which is the verie marrow of all philosophie. Balbine at the naming of the word Alcumystrie, inclined and yeilded himselve more attentivelie to hearken unto him: marie it was onelie in gesture of bodie; for he was spare of speech, and yet he bad him proceed with his tale. Then said the preest, Wretch that I am, it was not my lucke to light on the best waie: for you M. Balbine know (being so universallie learned) that in this art there are two waies, the one called longation, the other curtation; and it was mine ill hap to fall upon longation. When Balbine asked him the difference of those two waies; Oh sir said the preest, you might count me impudent, to take upon me to tell you, that of all other are best learned in this art, to whome I come, most humblie to beseech you to teach me that luckie waie of curtation. The cunninger you are, the more easilie you maie teach it me: and therefore hide not the gift that God hath given you, from your brother, who maie perish for want of his desire in this behalfe; and doubtlesse Jesus Christ will inrich you with greater blessings and endowments.

Balbine being abashed partlie with his importunitie, and partlie with the strange circumstance, told him that (in truth) he neither knew what longation or curtation meant; and therefore required him to expound the nature of those words. Well (quoth the preest) since it is your pleasure, I will doo it, though I shall thereby take upon me to teach him that is indeed much cunninger than my selfe. And thus he began: Oh sir, they that have spent all the daies of their life in this divine facultie, doo turne one nature and forme into another, two waies, the one is verie breefe, but somewhat dangerous; the other much longer, marie verie safe, sure, and commodious. Howbeit, I thinke my selfe most unhappie that have spent my time and travell in that waie which utterlie misliketh me, and never could get one to shew me the other that I so earnestlie desire. And now I come to your worship, whom I know to be wholie learned and expert herein, hoping that you will (for charities sake) comfort your brother, whose felicitie and well doing now resteth onelie in your hands; and therefore I beseech you releeve me with your counsell.

By these and such other words when this cousening varlot had avoided suspicion of guile, and assured Balbine that he was perfect and cunning in the other waie: Balbine his fingers itched, and his hart tickled; so as he could hold no longer, but burst out with these words: Let this curtation go to the divell, whose name I did never so much as once heare of before, and therefore doo much lesse understand it. But tell me in good faith, doo you exactlie understand longation? Yea said the preest, doubt you not hereof: but I have no fansie to that waie, it is so tedious. Why (quoth Balbine) what time is required in the accomplishment of this worke by waie of longation? Too too much said the Alcumyster, even almost a whole yeere: but this is the best, the surest, and the safest waie, though it be for so manie moneths prolonged, before it yeeld advantage for cost and charges expended thereabouts. Set your hart at rest (said Balbine) it is no matter, though it were two yeeres, so as you be well assured to bring it then to passe.

Finallie, it was there and then concluded, that presentlie the preest should go in hand with the worke, and the other should beare the charge, the gaines to be indifferentlie divided betwixt them both, and the worke to be doone privilie in Balbins house. And after the mutuall oth was taken for silence, which is usuall and requisite alwaies in the beginning of this mysterie; Balbine delivered monie to the Alcumyster for bellowes, glasses, coles, &c: which should serve for the erection and furniture of the forge. Which monie the Alcumyster had no sooner fingered, but he ran merilie to the dice, to the alehouse, & to the stewes, and who there so lustie as cousening sir John: who indeed this waie made a kind of alcumysticall transformation of monie. Now Balbine urged him to go about his businesse, but the other told him, that if the matter were once begun, it were halfe ended: for therein consisted the greatest difficultie.

Well, at length he began to furnish the fornace, but now forsooth a new supplie of gold must be made, as the seed and spawne of that which must be ingendred and grow out of this worke of Alcumystrie. For even as a fish is not caught without a bait, no more is gold multiplied without some parcels of gold: and therefore gold must be the foundation and groundworke of that art, or else all the fat is in the fier. But all this while Balbine was occupied in

calculating, and musing upon his accompt; casting by arithmetike, how that if one ownc yeelded fifteene, then how much gaines two thousand ounces might yeeld: for so much he determined to emploie that waie.

When the Alcumyst had also consumed this monie, shewing great travell a moneth or twaine, in placing the bellows, the coles, and such other stuffe, and no whit of profit proceeding or comming thereof: Balbine demanded how the world went, our Alcumyst was as a man amazed. Howbeit he said at length; Forsooth even as such matters of importance commonlie doo go forward, wherunto there is alwaies verie difficult accesse. There was (saith he) a fault (which I have now found out) in the choice of the coles, which were of oke, and should have beene of beech. One hundred duckets were spent that waie, so as the dising house and the stewes were partakers of Balbines charges. But after a new supplie of monie, better coles were provided, and matters more circumspectlie handled. Howbeit, when the forge had travelled long, and brought forth nothing, there was another excuse found out; to wit, that the glasses were not tempered as they ought to have beene. But the more monie was disbursed hereabouts, the woorsse willing was Balbine to give over, according to the disers veine, whome frutelesse hope bringeth into a foles paradise.

The Alcumyst, to cast a good colour upon his knaverie, tooke on like a man moonesicke, and protested with great words full of forgerie and lies, that he never had such lucke before. But having found the error, he would be sure enough never hereafter to fall into the like oversight, and that henceforward all should be safe and sure, and throughlie recompensed in the end with large increase. Hereupon the workehouse is now the third time repaired, and a new supplie yet once againe put into the Alcumysts hand; so as the glasses were changed. And now at length the Alcumyst uttered another point of his art and cunning to Balbine; to wit, that those matters would proceed much better, if he sent our Ladie a few French crownes in reward: for the art being holie, the matter cannot prosperously proceed, without the favour of the saints. Which counsell exceedinglie pleased Balbine, who was so devout and religious, that no daie escaped him but he said our Ladie matterns.

Now our Alcumyster having received the offering of monie, goeth on his holie pilgrimage, even to the next village, & there consumeth it everie penie, among bawds and knaves. And at his returne, he told Balbine that he had great hope of good lucke in his businesse; the holie virgine gave such favourable countenance, and such attentive eare unto his praier and vowes. But after this, when there had beene great travell bestowed, and not a dram of gold yeelded nor levied from the forge; Balbine began to expostulate and reason somewhat roundlie with the cousening fellowe; who still said he never had such filthie lucke in all his life before, and could not devise by what meanes it came to passe, that things went so overthwartlie. But after much debating betwixt them upon the matter, at length it came into Balbines head to aske him if he had not foreslowed to heare masse, or to saie his houres: which if he had doone, nothing could prosper under his hand. Without doubt (said the cousener) you have hot the naile on the head. Wretch that I am! I remember once or twice being at a long feast, I omitted to saie mine Ave Marie after dinner. So so (said Balbine) no marvell then that a matter of such importance hath had so evill successe. The Alcumyster promised to doo penance; as to heare twelve masses for two that he had foreslowed; and for everie Ave overslipped, to render and repeate twelve to our Ladie.

Soone after this, when all our Alcumysters monie was spent, & also his shifts failed how to come by any more, he came home with this devise, as a man woonderfullie fraied and amazed, pitiouslie crieng and lamenting his misfortune. Whereat Balbine being astonished, desired to knowe the cause of his complaint. Oh (said the Alcumyster) the courtiers have spied our enterprise; so as I for my part looke for nothing but present imprisonment. Whereat Balbine was abashed, because it was flat fellonie to go about that matter, without speciall licence. But (quoth the Alcumyster) I feare not to be put to death, I would it would fall out so: marrie I feare least I shall he shut up in some castell or towre, and there shall be forced to tug about this worke and broile in this businesse all the daies of my life.

Now the matter being brought to consultation, Balbine, because he was cunning in the art of rhetorike, and not altogether ignorant in lawe, beat his braines in devising how the accusation might be answered, and the danger avoided. Alas (said the Alcumyster) you trouble your selfe all in vaine, for you see the crime is not to be denied, it is so generallie bruted in court: neither can the fact be defended, because of the manifest lawe published against it. To be short, when manie waies were devised, and divers excuses alledged by Balbine, and no sure ground to stand on for their securitie; at length the Alcumyster having present want and need of monie, framed his speech in this sort; Sir said he to Balbine, we use slowe counsell, and yet the matter requireth hast. For I thinke they are comming for me yer this time to hale me awaie to prison; and I see no remedie but to die valiantlie in the cause. In good faith (said Balbine) I knowe not what to saie to the matter. No more do I said the Alcumyster, but that I see these courtiers are hungrie for monie, and so much the readier to be corrupted & framed to silence. And though it be a hard matter, to give those rakehels till they be satisfied: yet I see no better counsell or advise at this time. No more could Balbine, who gave him thirtie ducats of gold to stop their mouthes, who in an honest cause would rather have given so manie teeth out of his head, than one of those peeces out of his pouch. This coine had the Alcumyster, who for all his

pretenses & gaie gloses was in no danger, other than for lacke of monie to leese his leman or concubine, whose acquaintance he would not give over, nor forbear hir companie, for all the goods that he was able to get, were it by never such indirect dealing and unlawfull meanes.

Well, yet now once againe dooth Balbine newlie furnish the forge, a praier being made before to our Ladie to blesse the enterprise. And all things being provided and made readie according to the Alcumysters owne asking, and all necessaries largelie ministred after his owne liking; a whole yeare being likewise now consumed about this bootlesse businesse, and nothing brought to passe; there fell out a strange chance, and that by this meanes insuing, as you shall heare.

Our Alcumyster forsooth used a little extraordinarie lewd companie with a courtiers wife, whiles he was from home, who suspecting the matter, came to the doore unlooked for, and called to come in, threatning them that he would breake open the doores upon them. Some present devise (you see) was now requisite, and there was none other to be had, but such as the oportunitie offered; to wit, to leape out at a backe window: which he did, not without great hazard, and some hurt. But this was soone blazed abroad, so as it came to Balbines eare, who shewed in countenance that he had heard heereof, though he said nothing. But the Alcumyster knew him to be devout, & somewhat superstitious: and such men are easie to be intreated to forgive, how great soever the fault be, and devised to open the matter in maner and forme following.

O Lord (saith he before Balbine) how infortunatlie goeth our businesse forward! I marvell what should be the cause. Whereat Balbine, being one otherwise that seemed to have vowed silence, tooke occasion to speake, saieing; It is not hard to knowe the impediment and stop heereof: for it is sinne that hindereth this matter; which is not to be dealt in but with pure hands. Whereat the Alcumyster fell upon his knees, beating his breast, & lamentable cried, saieing; Oh maister Balbine, you saie most trulie, it is sinne that hath doone us all this displeasure; not your sinne sir, but mine owne, good maister Balbine. Neither will I be ashamed to discover my filthinesse unto you, as unto a most holy and ghostlie father. The infirmitie of the flesh had overcome me, and the divell had caught me in his snare. Oh wretch that I am! Of a preest I am become an adulterer. Howbeit, the monie that erstwhile was sent to our Ladie, was not utterlie lost: for if she had not beene, I had certeinlie beene slaine. For the good man of the house brake open the doore, and the windowe was lesse than I could get out thereat. And in that extremitie of danger it came into my mind to fail downe prostrate to the virgine; beseeching hir (if our gift were acceptable in hir sight) that she would, in consideration thereof, assist me with hir helpe. And to be short, I ran to the windowe, and found it bigge enough to leape out at. Which thing Balbine did not onelie beleewe to be true, but in respect therof forgave him, religiouslie admonishing him to shew himselfe thankfull to that pitifull and blessed Ladie.

Now once againe more is made a new supplie of monie, and mutuall promise made to handle this divine matter hence forward purelie and holielie. To be short, after a great number of such parts plaied by the Alcumyster; one of Balbins acquaintance espied him, that knew him from his childhood to be but a cousening merchant; and told Balbine what he was, and that he would handle him in the end, even as he had used manie others: for a knave he ever was, and so he would proove. But what did Balbine, thinke you? Did he complaine of this counterfet, or cause him to be punished? No, but he gave him monie in his pursse, and sent him awaie; desiring him, of all courtesie, not to blab abroad how he had cousened him. And as for the knave Alcumyster, he needed not care who knew it, or what came of it: for he had nothing in goods or fame to be lost. And as for his cunning in Alcumystrie, he had as much as an asse. By this discourse Erasmus would give us to note, that under the golden name of Alcumystrie there lieth lurking no small calamitie; wherein there be such severall shifts and sutes of rare subtilties and deceits, as that not onelie welthie men are thereby manie times impoverished, and that with the sweete allurement of this art, through their owne covetousnesse; as also by the flattering baits of hoped gaine: but even wise and learned men hereby are shamefullie overshot, partlie for want of due experience in the wiles and subtilties of the world, and partlie through the softnesse and pliablenesse of their good nature, which cousening knaves doo commonlie abuse to their owne lust and commoditie, and to the others utter undoing.

The sixt Chapter.

The opinion of diverse learned men touching the follie of Alcumystrie.

Albert in his booke of minerals reporteth, that Avicenna treating of Alcumystrie, saith; Let the dealers in Alcumystrie understand, that the verie nature and kind of things cannot be changed, but rather made by art to resemble the same in shew and likeness: so that they are not the verie things indeed, but seeme so to be in appearance: as castels and towers doo seeme to be built in the clouds, whereas the representations there shewed, are nothing else but the resemblance of certeine objects beelow, caused in some bright and cleere cloud, when the aire is void of thicknes and grossenes. A sufficient prooffe hereof maie be the looking glasse. And we see (saith he) that yellow or orrenge colour laid upon red, seemeth to be gold. Francis Petrarch treating of the same matter in forme of a dialogue, introduceth a disciple of his, who fansied the foresaid fond profession and practise, saieing; I hope for prosperous successe in Alcumystrie. Petrarch answereth him; It is a woonder from whence that hope should spring,

sith the frute thereof did never yet fall to thy lot, nor yet at anie time chance to anie other; as the report commonlie goeth, that manie rich men, by this vanitie and madnes have beene brought to beggerie, whiles they have wearied themselves therewith, weakened their bodies, and wasted their wealth in trieng the means to make gold ingender gold. I hope for gold according to the workemans promise, saith the disciple. He that hath promised thee gold, will runne awaie with thy gold, and thou never the wiser, saith Petrarch. He promiseth mee great good, saith the disciple. He will first serve his owne turne, and releve his private povertie, saith Petrarch; for Alcumysters are a beggerlie kind of people, who though they confesse themselves bare and needle, yet will they make others rich and welthie: as though others povertie did more molest and pitie them than their owne. These be the words of Petrarch, a man of great learning and no lesse experience; who as in his time he sawe the fraudulent fetches of this compassing craft: so hath there beene no age, since the same hath beene broched, wherein some few wisemen have not smelt out the evill meaning of these shifting merchants, and bewraied them to the world.

An ancient writer of a religious order, who lived above a thousand yeares since, discovering the diversities of theftes, after a long enumeration, bringeth in Alcumysters, whom he calleth Falsificantes metallorum et mineralium, witches and counterfeters of metals and minerals; and setteth them as deepe in the degree of theeves, as anie of the rest, whose injurious dealings are brought to open arreignment. It is demanded (saith he) why the art of Alcumystrie doth never prove that in effect, which it pretendeth in precept and promise. The answer is readie; that if by art gold might be made, then were it behoovefull to know the maner and proceeding of nature in generation; sith art is said to imitate and counterfet nature. Againe, it is bicause of the lamenesse and unperfectnesse of philosophie, speciallie concerning minerals: no such manner of proceeding being set downe by consent and agreement of philosophers in writing, touching the true and undoubted effect of the same. Where upon one supposeth that gold is made of one kind of stuffe this waie, others of another kind of stuffe that waie. And therefore it is a chance if anie atteine to the artificiall applieng of the actives and passives of gold and silver. Moreover, it is certeine, that quicke silver and sulphur are the materials (as they terme them) of mettals, and the agent is heate, which directeth: howbeit it is verie hard to know the due proportion of the mixture of the materials; which proportion the generation of gold doth require. And admit that by chance they atteine to such proportion; yet can they not readilie resume or doo it againe in another worke, bicause of the hidden diversities of materials, and the uncerteintie of applieng the actives and passives.

The same ancient author concluding against this vaine art, saith, that of all christian lawmakers it is forbidden, and in no case tollerable in anie commonwealth: first bicause it presumeth to forge idols for covetousnes, which are gold and silver; whereupon saith the apostle, Covetousnesse is idolworship: secondlie, for that (as Aristotle saith) coine should be skant and rare, that it might be deere; but the same would ware vile, and of small estimation, if by the art of Alcumystrie gold and silver might be multiplied: thirdlie, bicause (as experience prooveth) wisemen are thereby bewitched, couseners increased, princes abused, the rich impoverished, the poore beggered, the multitude made fooles, and yet the craft and craftesmaisters (oh madnes!) credited. Thus far he. Whereby in few words he discountenanceth that profession, not by the imaginations of his owne braine, but by manifold circumstances of manifest proove. Touching the which practise I thinke inough hath beene spoken, and more a great deale than needed; sith so plaine and demonstrable a matter requireth the lesse travell in confutation.

The seventh Chapter.

That vaine and deceitfull hope is a great cause why men are seduced by this alluring art, and that there labours therein are bootelesse, etc.

Hitherto somewhat at large I have detected the knaverie of the art Alcumysticall, partlie by reasons, and partlie by examples: so that the thing it selfe maie no lesse appeare to the judiciall eie of the considerers; than the bones and sinewes of a bodie anatomized, to the corporall eie of the beholders. Now it shall not be amisse nor impertinent, to treat somewhat of the nature of that vaine and frutelesse hope, which induceth and draweth men forward as it were with chordes, not onelie to the admiration, but also to the approbation of the same: in such sort that some are compelled rufullie to sing (as one in old time did, whether in token of good or ill lucke, I doo not now well remember) Spes and fortuna valete; Hope and good hap adieu.

No mervell then though Alcumystrie allure men so sweetlie, and intangle them in snares of follie; sith the baits which it useth is the hope of gold, the hunger wherof is by the poet termed Sacra, which some doo English, Holie; not understanding that it is rather to be interpreted, Curssed or detestable, by the figure Acyron, when a word of an unproper signification is cast in a clause as it were a cloud: or by the figure Antiphrasis when a word importeth a contrarie meaning to that which it commonlie hath. For what reason can there be, that the hunger of gold should be counted holie, the same having (as depending upon it) so manie milians of mischeefes and miseries: as treasons, theftes, adulteries, manslaughters, trucebreakings, perjuries, cousenages, and a great troope of other enormities, which were here too long to rehearse. And if the nature of everie action be determinable by the end thereof, then cannot this hunger be holie, but rather accursed, which pulleth after it as it were with iron chaines such a band of

outrages and enormities, as of all their labor, charge, care and cost, etc: they have nothing else left them in lieu of lucre, but onlie some few burned bricke of a ruinous fornace, a pecke or two of ashes, and such light stuffe, which they are forced peradventure in fine to sell, when beggerie hath arrested and laid his mace on their shoulders. As for all their gold, it is resolved In primam materiam, or rather In levem quendam fumulum, into a light smoke or fumigation of vapors, than the which nothing is more light, nothing lesse substantiall, spirits onelie excepted, out of whose nature and number these are not to be exempted.

The eight Chapter.

A continuation of the former matter, with a conclusion of the same.

That which I have declared before, by reasons, examples, and authorities, I will now prosecute and conclude by one other example; to the end that we, as others in former ages, maie judge of vaine hope accordingly, and be no lesse circumspect to avoid the inconveniences therof, than Ulysses was warie to escape the incantations of Circes that old transforming witch. Which example of mine is drawne from Lewes the French king, the eleventh of that name, who being on a time at Burgundie, fell acquainted by occasion of hunting with one Conon, a clownish but yet an honest and hartie good fellow. For princes and great men delight much in such plaine clubhutchens. The king oftentimes, by meanes of his game, used the countrimans house for his refreshing; and as noble men sometimes take pleasure in homelie and course things, so the king did not refuse to eate turnips and rape rootes in Conons cottage. Shortlie after king Lewes being at his pallace, void of troubles and disquietnesse, Conons wife wild him to repaire to the court, to shew himselfe to the king, to put him in mind of the old intertainement which he had at his house, and to present him with some of the fairest and choisest rape rootes that she had in store. Canon seemed loth, alledging that he should but lose his labour: for princes (saith he) have other matters in hand, than to intend to thinke of such trifeling courtesies. But Conons wife overcame him, and persuaded him in the end, choosing a certeine number of the best and goodliest rape rootes that she had: which when she had given hir husband to carrie to the court, he set forward on his journie a good trudging pase. But Conon being tempted by the waie, partlie with desire of eating, and partlie with the toothsomnes of the meate which he bare, that by little and little he devoured up all the roots saving one, which was a verie faire and a goodlie great one indeed. Now when Canon was come to the court, it was his lucke to stand in such a place, as the king passing by, and spieng the man, did well remember him, and commanded that he should be brought in. Conon verie cheerelie followed his guide hard at the heeles, and no sooner sawe the king, but bluntlie comming to him, reached out his hand, and presented the gift to his maiestie. The king received it with more cheerefulnes than it was offered, and bad one of those that stood next him, to take it, and laie it up among those things which he esteemed most, and had in greatest accompt. Then he had Conan to dine with him, and after dinner gave the countriman great thanks for his rape roote; who made no bones of the matter, but boldlie made challenge and claime to the kings promised courtesie. Whereupon the king commanded, that a thousand crownes should be given him in recompense for his roote.

The report of this bountifulnes was spred in short space over all the kings houshold: in so much as one of his courtiers, in hope of the like or a larger reward gave the king a verie proper ginnet. Whose drift the king perceiving, and judging that his former liberalitie to the clowne, provoked the courtier to this covetous attempt, tooke the ginnet verie thankfullie: and calling some of his noble men about him, began to consult with them, what mends he might make his servant for his horsse. Whiles this was a dooing, the courtier conceived passing good hope of some princelie largesse, calculating and casting his cards in this maner; If his maiestie rewarded a sillie clowne so bountifullie for a simple rape roote, what will he doo to a jollie courtier for a galent gennet? Whiles the king was debating the matter, and one said this, another that, and the courtier travelled all the while in vaine hope, at last saith the king, even upon the sudden; I have now bethought me what to bestowe upon him: and calling one of his nobles to him, whispered him in the eare, and willed him to fetch a thing, which he should find in his chamber wrapped up in silke. The roote is brought wrapped in silke, which the king with his owne hands gave to the courtier, using these words therewithall, that he sped well, in so much as it was his good hap to have for his horsse a jewell that cost him a thousand crownes. The courtier was a glad man, and at his departing longed to be looking what it was, and his hart danced for joy. In due time therefore he unwrapped the silke (a sort of his fellow courtiers flocking about him to testifie his good lucke) and having unfolded it, he found therein a drie and withered rape roote. Which spectacle though it set the standers about in a lewd laughter, yet it quailed the courtiers courage, and cast him into a shrewd fit of pensifenes. Thus was the confidence of this courtier turned to vanitie, who upon hope of good speed was willing to part from his horsse for had I wist.

This storie dooth teach us into what follie and madnes vaine hope may drive undiscreete and unexpert men. And therefore no mervell: though Alcumysters dreame and dote after double advantage, faring like Aesops dog, who greedilie coveting to catch and snatch at the shadowe of the flesh which he carried in his mouth over the water, lost both the one and the other: as they doo their increase and their principall. But to breake off abruptlie from this

matter, and to leave these hypocrits (for whie may they not be so named, who as Homer, speaking in detestation of such rakehelles, saith verie divinelie and trulie;

Odi etenim seu claustra Erebi, quicunque loquuntur

Ore aliud, tacitoque aliud sub pectore claudunt:

I hate even as the Gates of hell,

Those that one thing with toong doo tell,

And notwithstanding closelie Keepe,

Another thing in hart full deepe:

To leave these hypocrits (I saie) in the dregs of their dishonestie, I will conclude against them peremptorilie, that they, with the rable above rehearsed, and the rowt hereafter to be mentioned, are ranke couseners, and consuming cankers to the common wealth, and therefore to be rejected and excommunicated from the fellowship of all honest men. For now their art, which turneth all kind of metals that they can come by into mist and smoke, is no lesse apparent to the world, than the cleere sunnie raies at noone sted; in so much that I may saie with the poet,

Hos populus ridet, multumque torosa juvenus

Ingeminat tremulos naso crispante cachinnos:

All people laugh them now to scorne,

each strong and lustie blood

Redoubleth quavering laughters lowd

with wrinkled nose a good.

So that, if anie be so addicted unto the vanitie of the art Alcumysticall (as everie foole will have his fansie) and that (beside so manie experimented examples of divers, whose wealth hath vanished like a vapor, whiles they have benee over rash in the practise hereof) this discourse will not moove to desist from such extreame dotage, I saie to him or them and that aptlie,

--- dicitque facitque puod ipse

Non sani esse hominis non sanus juret Orestes:

He saith and dooth that verie thing,

which mad Orestes might

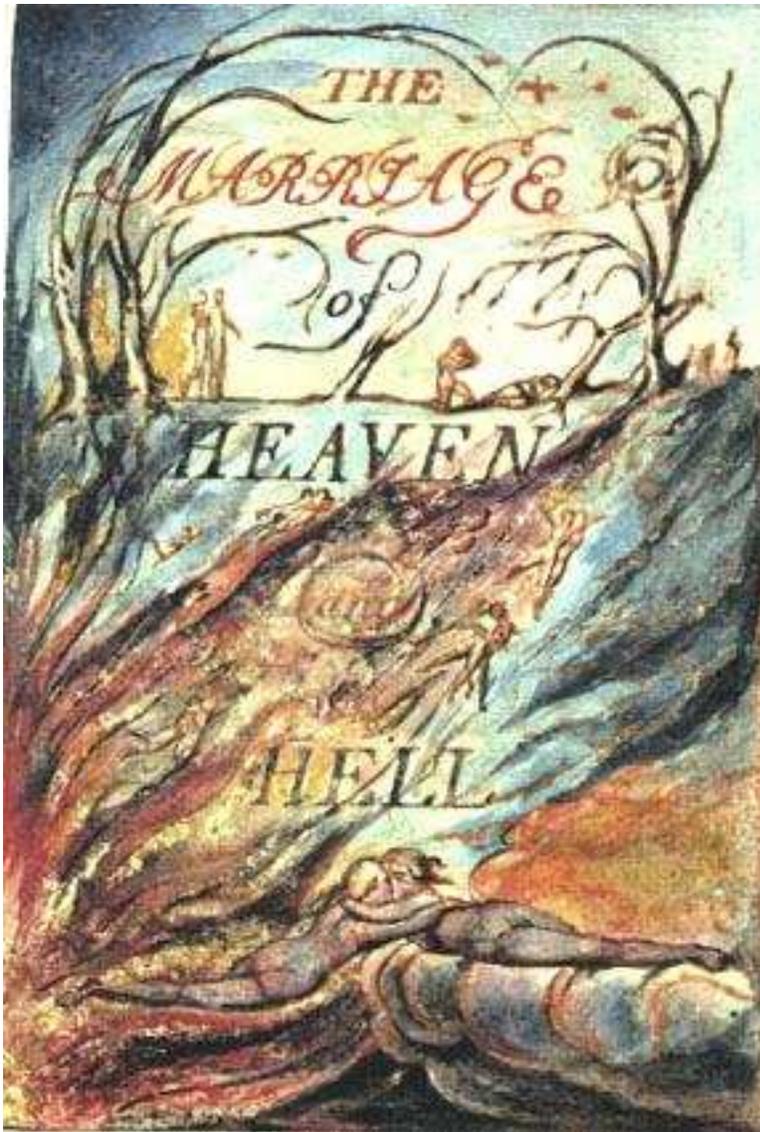
With oth averre became a man

beereft of reason right.

William Blake

The Marriage of Heaven and Hell

[Back to literary works.](#)



The Argument.

Rintrah roars & shakes his fires in the burden'd air;
Hungry clouds swag on the deep
Once meek, and in a perilous path,
The just man kept his course along
The vale of death.
Roses are planted where thorns grow.
And on the barren heath
Sing the honey bees.
Then the perilous path was planted:
And a river, and a spring
On every cliff and tomb;
And on the bleached bones
Red clay brought forth.
Till the villain left the paths of ease,
To walk in perilous paths, and drive
The just man into barren climes.

Now the sneaking serpent walks
 In mild humility.
 And the just man rages in the wilds
 Where lions roam.
 Rintrah roars & shakes his fires in the burden'd air;
 Hungry clouds swag on the deep.



As a new heaven is begun, and it is now thirty-three years since its advent: the Eternal Hell revives. And lo! Swedenborg is the Angel sitting at the tomb; his writings are the linen clothes folded up. Now is the dominion of Edom, & the return of Adam into Paradise; see Isaiah XXXIV & XXXV Chap:

Without Contraries is no progression. Attraction and Repulsion, Reason and Energy, Love and Hate, are necessary to Human existence.

From these contraries spring what the religious call Good & Evil. Good is the passive that obeys Reason. Evil is the active springing from Energy.

Good is Heaven. Evil is Hell.

The voice of the Devil.

All Bibles or sacred codes have been the causes of the following Errors.

1. That Man has two real existing principles Viz: a Body & a Soul.
2. That Energy, call'd Evil, is alone from the Body, & that Reason, call'd Good, is alone from the Soul.
3. That God will torment Man in Eternity for following his Energies.

But the following Contraries to these are True

1. Man has no Body distinct from his Soul for that call'd Body is a portion of Soul discern'd by the five Senses, the chief inlets of Soul in this age
2. Energy is the only life and is from the Body and Reason is the bound or outward circumference of Energy.
- 3 Energy is Eternal Delight



Those who restrain desire, do so because theirs is weak enough to be restrained; and the restrainer or reason usurps its place & governs the unwilling.

And being restrain'd it by degrees becomes passive till it is only the shadow of desire.

The history of this is written in Paradise Lost, & the Governor or Reason is call'd Messiah.

And the original Archangel or possessor of the command of the heavenly host, is call'd the Devil or Satan and his children are call'd Sin & Death.

But in the Book of Job Miltons Messiah is call'd Satan.

For this history has been adopted by both parties.

It indeed appear'd to Reason as if Desire was cast out, but the Devil's account is, that the Messiah fell, & formed a heaven of what he stole from the Abyss.



This is shewn in the Gospel, where he prays to the Father to send the comforter or Desire that Reason may have Ideas to build on, the Jehovah of the Bible being no other than he who dwells in flaming fire.

Know that after Christs death, he became Jehovah.

But in Milton; the Father is Destiny, the Son, a Ratio of the five senses, & the Holy-ghost, Vacuum!

Note: The reason Milton wrote in fetters when he wrote of Angels & God, and at liberty when of Devils & Hell, is because he was a true Poet and of the Devils party without knowing it.

A Memorable Fancy.

As I was walking among the fires of hell, delighted with the enjoyments of Genius; which to Angels look like torment and insanity. I collected some of their Proverbs: thinking that as the sayings used in a nation, mark its character, so the Proverbs of Hell, shew the nature of Infernal wisdom better than any description of buildings or garments.

When I came home; on the abyss of the five senses, where a flat sided steep frowns over the present world. I saw a mighty Devil folded in black clouds, hovering on the sides of the rock, with corroding fires he wrote the following sentence now percieved by the minds of men, & read by them on earth.

How do you know but ev'ry Bird that cuts the airy way,
Is an immense world of delight, clos'd by your senses five?

Proverbs of Hell.

In seed time learn, in harvest teach, in winter enjoy.

Drive your cart and your plow over the bones of the dead.

The road of excess leads to the palace of wisdom.

Prudence is a rich ugly old maid courted by Incapacity.

He who desires but acts not, breeds pestilence.

The cut worm forgives the plow.

Dip him in the river who loves water.

A fool sees not the same tree that a wise man sees.

He whose face gives no light, shall never become a star.

Eternity is in love with the productions of time.

The busy bee has no time for sorrow.

The hours of folly are measur'd by the clock, but of wisdom: no clock can measure.

All wholsom food is caught without a net or a trap.
Bring out number weight & measure in a year of dearth.
No bird soars too high, if he soars with his own wings.
A dead body revenges not injuries.
The most sublime act is to set another before you.
If the fool would persist in his folly he would become wise.
Folly is the cloke of knavery.
Shame is Prides cloke.
Prisons are built with stones of Law, Brothels with bricks of Religion.
The pride of the peacock is the glory of God.
The lust of the goat is the bounty of God.
The wrath of the lion is the wisdom of God.
The nakedness of woman is the work of God.
Excess of sorrow laughs. Excess of joy weeps.
The roaring of lions, the howling of wolves, the raging of the stormy sea, and the destructive sword, are portions of eternity too great for the eye of man.
The fox condemns the trap, not himself.
Joys impregnate. Sorrows bring forth.
Let man wear the fell of the lion. woman the fleece of the sheep.
The bird a nest, the spider a web, man friendship.
The selfish smiling fool, & the sullen frowning fool shall be both thought wise, that they may be a rod.
What is now proved was once only imagin'd.
The rat, the mouse, the fox, the rabbit; watch the roots; the lion, the tyger, the horse, the elephant, watch the fruits.
The cistern contains: the fountain overflows.
One thought fills immensity.
Always be ready to speak your mind, and a base man will avoid you.
Every thing possible to be believ'd is an image of truth.
The eagle never lost so much time, as when he submitted to learn of the crow.

The fox provides for himself. but God provides for the lion.
Think in the morning. Act in the noon. Eat in the evening. Sleep in the night.
He who has suffer'd you to impose on him knows you.
As the plow follows words, so God rewards prayers.
The tygers of wrath are wiser than the horses of instruction.
Expect poison from the standing water.
You never know what is enough unless you know what is more than enough.
Listen to the fools reproach! it is a kingly title!
The eyes of fire, the nostrils of air, the mouth of water, the beard of earth.
The weak in courage is strong in cunning.
The apple tree never asks the beech how he shall grow; nor the lion, the horse, how he shall take his prey.
The thankful reciever bears a plentiful harvest.
If others bad not been foolish, we should be so.
The soul of sweet delight can never be defil'd.
When thou seest an Eagle, thou seest a portion of Genius. lift up thy head!
As the catterpillar chooses the fairest leaves to lay her eggs, so the priest lays his curse on the fairest joys.
To create a little flower is the labour of ages.
Damn braces: Bless relaxes.
The best wine is the oldest, the best water the newest.
Prayers plow not! Praises reap not!
Joys laugh not! Sorrows weep not!

The head Sublime, the heart Pathos, the genitals Beauty, the hands & feet Proportion.
As the air to a bird or the sea to a fish, so is contempt to the contemptible.
The crow wish'd every thing was black, the owl, that every thing was white.
Exuberance is Beauty.
If the lion was advised by the fox. he would be cunning.

Improvement makes strait roads, but the crooked roads without Improvement, are roads of Genius.
Sooner murder an infant in its cradle than nurse unacted desires.
Where man is not, nature is barren.
Truth can never be told so as to be understood, and not be believ'd.
Enough! or Too much.



The ancient Poets animated all sensible objects with Gods or Geniuses, calling them by the names and adorning them with the properties of woods, rivers, mountains, lakes, cities, nations, and whatever their enlarged & numerous senses could perceive.

And particularly they studied the genius of each city & country, placing it under its mental deity;
Till a system was formed, which some took advantage of & enslav'd the vulgar by attempting to realize or abstract the mental deities from their objects: thus began Priesthood;
Choosing forms of worship from poetic tales.
And at length they pronounc'd that the Gods had order'd such things.
Thus men forgot that All deities reside in the human breast.

A Memorable Fancy.

The Prophets Isaiah and Ezekiel dined with me, and I asked them how they dared so roundly to assert that God spake to them; and whether they did not think at the time, that they would be misunderstood, & so be the cause of imposition.

Isaiah answer'd. 'I saw no God, nor heard any, in a finite organical perception; but my senses discover'd the infinite in every thing, and as I was then perswaded, & remain confirm'd, that the voice of honest indignation is the voice of God, I cared not for consequences but wrote.'

Then I asked: 'does a firm perswasion that a thing is so, make it so?'

He replied: 'All poets believe that it does, & in ages of imagination this firm perswasion removed mountains; but many are not capable of a firm perswasion of any thing.'

Then Ezekiel said. 'The philosophy of the east taught the first principles of human perception: some nations held one principle for the origin & some another; we of Israel taught that the Poetic Genius (as you now call it) was the first principle and all the others merely derivative, which was the cause of our despising the Priests & Philosophers of other countries, and prophecying that all Gods would at last be proved to originate in ours & to be the tributaries of

the Poetic Genius; it was this that our great poet King David desired so fervently & invokes so pathetic'ly, saying by this he conquers enemies & governs kingdoms; and we so loved our God. that we cursed in his name all the deities of surrounding nations, and asserted that they had rebelled; from these opinions the vulgar came to think that all nations would at last be subject to the jews.'

'This' said he, 'like all firm perswasions, is come to pass; for all nations believe the jews' code and worship the jews' god, and what greater subjection can be?'

I heard this with some wonder, & must confess my own conviction. After dinner I ask'd Isaiah to favour the world with his lost works; he said none of equal value was lost. Ezekiel said the same of his.

I also asked Isaiah what made him go naked and barefoot three years? he answer'd, 'the same that made our friend Diogenes the Grecian.'

I then asked Ezekiel why he eat dung, & lay so long on his right & left side? he answer'd, 'the desire of raising other men into a perception of the infinite; this the North American tribes practise, & is he honest who resists his genius or conscience. only for the sake of present ease or gratification?'



The ancient tradition that the world will be consumed in fire at the end of six thousand years is true, as I have heard from Hell.

For the cherub with his flaming sword is hereby commanded to leave his guard at the tree of life, and when he does, the whole creation will be consumed and appear infinite and holy whereas it now appears finite & corrupt.

This will come to pass by an improvement of sensual enjoyment.

But first the notion that man has a body distinct from his soul is to be expunged; this I shall do, by printing in the infernal method, by corrosives, which in Hell are salutary and medicinal, melting apparent surfaces away, and displaying the infinite which was hid.

If the doors of perception were cleansed every thing would appear to man as it is, infinite.

For man has closed himself up, till he sees all things thro' narrow chinks of his cavern.

A Memorable Fancy.

I was in a Printing house in Hell & saw the method in which knowledge is transmitted from generation to generation.

In the first chamber was a Dragon-Man, clearing away the rubbish from a cave's mouth; within, a number of Dragons were hollowing the cave.

In the second chamber was a Viper folding round the rock & the cave, and others adorning it with gold silver and precious stones.

In the third chamber was an Eagle with wings and feathers of air: he caused the inside of the cave to be infinite, around were numbers of Eagle like men, who built palaces in the immense cliffs.

In the fourth chamber were Lions of flaming fire raging around & melting the metals into living fluids.

In the fifth chamber were Unnam'd forms, which cast the metals into the expanse.

There they were reciev'd by Men who occupied the sixth chamber, and took the forms of books & were arranged in libraries.



The Giants who formed this world into its sensual existence and now seem to live in it in chains, are in truth the causes of its life & the sources of all activity, but the chains are the cunning of weak and tame minds which have power to resist energy, according to the proverb, the weak in courage is strong in cunning.

Thus one portion of being is the Prolific, the other the Devouring: to the devourer it seems as if the producer was in his chains, but it is not so, he only takes portions of existence and fancies that the whole.

But the Prolific would cease to be Prolific unless the Devourer, as a sea, received the excess of his delights.

Some will say: 'Is not God alone the Prolific?' I answer: 'God only Acts & Is, in existing beings or Men.'

These two classes of men are always upon earth, & they should be enemies; whoever tries to reconcile them seeks to destroy existence.

Religion is an endeavour to reconcile the two.

Note: Jesus Christ did not wish to unite but to separate them, as in the Parable of sheep and goats! & he says I came not to send Peace but a Sword.

Messiah or Satan or Tempter was formerly thought to be one of the Antediluvians who are our Energies.

A Memorable Fancy.

An Angel came to me and said: 'O pitiable foolish young man! O horrible! O dreadful state! consider the hot burning dungeon thou art preparing for thyself to all eternity, to which thou art going in such career.'

I said: 'perhaps you will be willing to shew me my eternal lot & we will contemplate together upon it and see whether your lot or mine is most desirable.'

So he took me thro' a stable & thro' a church & down into the church vault at the end of which was a mill: thro' the mill we went, and came to a cave: down the winding cavern we groped our tedious way till a void boundless as a nether sky appear'd beneath us & we held by the roots of trees and hung over this immensity; but I said, 'if you please we will commit ourselves to this void, and see whether providence is here also, if you will not, I will?' but he answer'd: 'do not presume, O young-man, but as we here remain, behold thy lot which will soon appear when the darkness passes away.'

So I remain'd with him, sitting in the twisted root of an oak; he was suspended in a fungus, which hung with the head downward into the deep.

By degrees we beheld the infinite Abyss, fiery as the smoke of a burning city; beneath us at an immense distance, was the sun, black but shining; round it were fiery tracks on which revolv'd vast spiders, crawling after their prey; which flew, or rather swam, in the infinite deep, in the most terrific shapes of animals sprung from corruption; & the

air was full of them, & seem'd composed of them: these are Devils, and are called Powers of the air. I now asked my companion which was my eternal lot? he said, 'between the black & white spiders.'

But now, from between the black & white spiders, a cloud and fire burst and rolled thro' the deep black'ning all beneath, so that the nether deep grew black as a sea, & rolled with a terrible noise; beneath us was nothing now to be seen but a black tempest, till looking east between the clouds & the waves, we saw a cataract of blood mixed with fire, and not many stones' throw from us appear'd and sunk again the scaly fold of a monstrous serpent; at last, to the east, distant about three degrees appear'd a fiery crest above the waves; slowly it reared like a ridge of golden rocks, till we discover'd two globes of crimson fire, from which the sea fled away in clouds of smoke; and now we saw, it was the head of Leviathan; his forehead was divided into streaks of green & purple like those on a tyger's forehead: soon we saw his mouth & red gills hang just above the raging foam tinging the black deep with beams of blood, advancing toward us with all the fury of a spiritual existence.

My friend the Angel climb'd up from his station into the mill; I remain'd alone, & then this appearance was no more, but I found myself sitting on a pleasant bank beside a river by moonlight, hearing a harper who sung to the harp; & his theme was: 'The man who never alters his opinion is like standing water, & breeds reptiles of the mind.'

But I arose, and sought for the mill, & there I found my Angel, who surprised, asked me how I escaped?

I answer'd: ' All that we saw was owing to your metaphysics; for when you ran away, I found myself on a bank by moonlight hearing a harper, But now we have seen my eternal lot, shall I shew you yours?' he laugh'd at my proposal; but I by force suddenly caught him in my arms, & flew westerly thro' the night, till we were elevated above the earth's shadow; then I flung myself with him directly into the body of the sun; here I clothed myself in white, & taking in my hand Swedenborg's, volumes sunk from the glorious clime, and passed all the planets till we came to saturn: here I staid to rest & then leap'd into the void, between saturn & the fixed stars.

'Here,' said I, 'is your lot, in this space, if space it may be call'd.' Soon we saw the stable and the church, & I took him to the altar and open'd the Bible, and lo! it was a deep pit, into which I descended driving the Angel before me, soon we saw seven houses of brick; one we enter'd; in it were a number of monkeys, baboons, & all of that species, chain'd by the middle, grinning and snatching at one another, but withheld by the shortness of their chains: however, I saw that they sometimes grew numerous, and then the weak were caught by the strong, and with a grinning aspect, first coupled with, & then devour'd, by plucking off first one limb and then another till the body was left a helpless trunk; this after grinning & kissing it with seeming fondness they devour'd too; and here & there I saw one savourily picking the flesh off of his own tail; as the stench terribly annoy'd us both, we went into the mill, & I in my hand brought the skeleton of a body, which in the mill was Aristotle's Analytics.

So the Angel said: 'thy phantasy has imposed upon me, & thou oughtest to be ashamed.'

I answer'd: 'we impose on one another, & it is but lost time to converse with you whose works are only Analytics.'



Opposition is true Friendship.



I have always found that Angels have the vanity to speak of themselves as the only wise; this they do with a confident insolence sprouting from systematic reasoning.

Thus Swedenborg boasts that what he writes is new; tho' it is only the Contents or Index of already publish'd books. A man carried a monkey about for a shew, & because he was a little wiser than the monkey, grew vain, and conceiv'd himself as much wiser than seven men. It is so with Swedenborg: he shews the folly of churches & exposes hypocrites, till he imagines that all are religious, & himself the single one on earth that ever broke a net. Now hear a plain fact: Swedenborg has not written one new truth. Now hear another: he has written all the old falshoods.

And now hear the reason. He conversed with Angels who are all religious, & conversed not with Devils who all hate religion, for he was incapable thro' his conceited notions.

Thus Swedenborgs writings are a recapitulation of all superficial opinions, and an analysis of the more sublime, but no further.

Have now another plain fact. Any man of mechanical talents may, from the writings of Paracelsus or Jacob Behmen, produce ten thousand volumes of equal value with Swedenborg's, and from those of Dante or Shakespear an infinite number.

But when he has done this, let him not say that he knows better than his master, for he only holds a candle in sunshine.

A Memorable Fancy.

Once I saw a Devil in a flame of fire, who arose before an Angel that sat on a cloud, and the Devil utter'd these words:

'The worship of God is: Honouring his gifts in other men, each according to his genius, and loving the greatest men best: those who envy or calumniate great men hate God; for there is no other God.'

The Angel hearing this became almost blue but mastering himself he grew yellow, & at last white, pink, & smiling, and then replied:

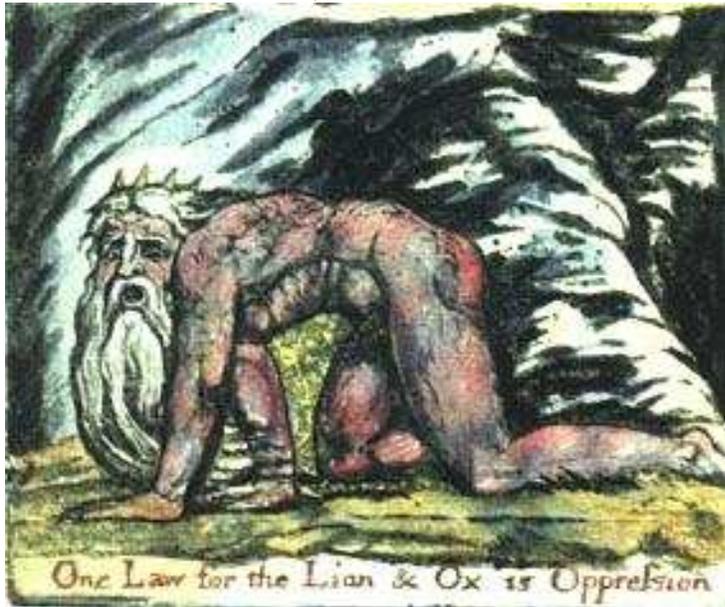
'Thou Idolater, is not God One? & is not he visible in Jesus Christ? and has not Jesus Christ given his sanction to the law of ten commandments, and are not all other men fools, sinners, & nothings?'

The Devil answer'd: 'bray a fool in a mortar with wheat, yet shall not his folly be beaten out of him; if Jesus Christ is the greatest man, you ought to love him in the greatest degree; now hear how he has given his sanction to the law of ten commandments: did he not mock at the sabbath, and so mock the sabbaths God? murder those who were murder'd because of him? turn away the law from the woman taken in adultery? steal the labor of others to support him? bear false witness when he omitted making a defence before Pilate? covet when he pray'd for his disciples, and when he bid them shake off the dust of their feet against such as refused to lodge them? I tell you, no virtue can exist without breaking these ten commandments. Jesus was all virtue, and acted from impulse, not from rules.'

When he had so spoken, I beheld the Angel, who stretched out his arms, embracing the flame of fire, & he was consumed and arose as Elijah.

Note: This Angel, who is now become a Devil, is my particular friend; we often read the Bible together in its

infernal or diabolical sense which the world shall have if they behave well.
I have also The Bible of Hell, which the world shall have whether they will or no.



One Law for the Lion & Ox is Oppression.

A Song of Liberty.

1. The Eternal Female groan'd! it was heard over all the Earth:
2. Albion's coast is sick silent; the American meadows faint!
3. Shadows of Prophecy shiver along by the lakes and the rivers and mutter across the ocean: France, rend down thy dungeon;
4. Golden Spain, burst the barriers of old Rome;
5. Cast thy keys, O Rome, into the deep down falling, even to eternity down falling,
6. And weep!
7. In her trembling hands she took the new born terror howling;
8. On those infinite mountains of light, now barr'd out by the atlantic sea, the new born fire stood before the starry king!
9. Flag'd with grey brow'd snows and thunderous visages, the jealous wings wav'd over the deep.
10. The speary hand burned aloft, unbuckled was the shield; forth went the hand of jealousy among the flaming hair, and hurl'd the new born wonder thro' the starry night.
11. The fire, the fire, is falling!
12. Look up! look up! O citizen of London, enlarge thy countenance: O Jew, leave counting gold! return to thy oil and wine. O African! black African! (go, winged thought widen his forehead.)
13. The fiery limbs, the flaming hair, shot like the sinking sun into the western sea.
14. Wak'd from his eternal sleep, the hoary element roaring fled away:
15. Down rush'd, beating his wings in vain, the jealous king; his grey brow'd councillors, thunderous warriors, curl'd veterans, among helms, and shields, and chariots horses, elephants: banners, castles, slings and rocks,
16. Falling, rushing, ruining! buried in the ruins, on Urthona's dens;
17. All night beneath the ruins, then, their sullen flames faded, emerge round the gloomy King.
18. With thunder and fire: leading his starry hosts thro' the waste wilderness, he promulgates his ten commands, glancing his beamy eyelids over the deep in dark dismay,
19. Where the son of fire in his eastern cloud, while the morning plumes her golden breast,
20. Spurning the clouds written with curses, stamps the stony law to dust, loosing the eternal horses from the dens of night, crying:
Empire is no more! and now the lion & wolf shall cease.

Chorus.

Let the Priests of the Raven of dawn, no longer in deadly black, with hoarse note curse the sons of joy. Nor his accepted brethren, whom, tyrant, he calls free: lay the bound or build the roof. Nor pale religious lechery call that virginity, that wishes but acts not!
For every thing that lives is Holy.

'Gold' An alchemical adventure.

A play by Andrew Dallmeyer

This play, by the Edinburgh playwright, Andrew Dallmeyer, was performed in the early 1980's at the Theatre Workshop in Edinburgh. Andrew Dallmeyer has written many plays for the theatre and radio, and is a well known Scottish writer.

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Act I.

[Scene 1.](#) A room in Alexander Seton's house.

[Scene 2.](#) A street in Port Seton.

[Scene 3.](#) The cockfight.

[Scene 4.](#) The room in Alexander Seton's house as in scene 1

[Scene 5.](#) The Quayside, Amsterdam.

[Scene 6.](#) In the middle of the Black Forest.

Act II.

[Scene 1.](#) The Street of the Alchemists, Prague.

[Scene 2.](#) A room in the Palace.

[Scene 3.](#) The Palace.

[Scene 4.](#) In the dungeon.

[Scene 5.](#) Back at Seton's house.

[Scene 5b.](#) A street in Port Seton.

[Scene 6.](#) A room in Alexander Seton's house.

'Gold' An alchemical adventure.

A play by Andrew Dallmeyer

Act I. Scene 1.

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SCENE 1

Autumn 1601. A room in Alexander Seton's house in Port Seton, Scotland.
Large fireplace surrounded by pots, jars and chemicals.
A crucible over the fire, which is burning low.
Alexander Seton is asleep at the fireplace.

Enter Ann, Seton's wife.

ANN Alexander!
Alexander! (She moves to him)
Stir yourself man! (She shakes him)
Stir yourself!

(Alexander groans)

Do you not know the hour of the day?

SETON Mm?

ANN Tis near enough the middle of the morning.

SETON Oh! Forgive me Ann. Pray forgive me. I fear that I have driftit into slumber.

ANN Indeed you have. Meanwhile the dogs howl with hunger, the sheep have wanderit into the kale field and John Robertson awaits a reply to his request for firewood.

SETON Then I fear that I am guilty of the dereliction of my duties.

ANN That would be to state it mildly.

SETON But I can assure you that I have not been idle. In fact quite to the contrary. I have spent many hours at the fire and have workit right throughout the night.

ANN Work indeed! So that is what you call it!

SETON Oh. And what else should I call it?

ANN What I call work is what brings in money which then buys bread to feed hungry mouths.

SETON But cannot you understand Ann?

ANN This work could make us all rich beyond our wildest dreams.

ANN Aye, dreams! Dreams indeed! For that is what they are, the dreams of one who ought to know better.

SETON I see. So that is what you think.

ANN And what am I supposit to think? More and more of your precious time is taken up in this unholy pursuit. The children have startit to complain that their father has become a total stranger

to them. These days you are absent even at mealtimes and you come to our bedchamber but briefly and then in the early hours of the morning. Do you want to know something Alexander? I am become a widow!

SETON No!

ANN Aye! A widow. And well before my time. What was once a passtime with you is now become an obsession.

SETON I am heartily sorry.

ANN Sorry indeed! Fine to be sorry, but what remedies do you intend?

ANN Eh? That is what I wish to know. Look at the turmoil in this room!

SETON Pray do not touch the vessels Ann!

ANN Is not that my best crosslet you have taken from the kitchen?

SETON Aye, but I will return it. Please do not touch. I will clear everything away.

ANN When?

SETON Tomorrow.

ANN How often have I heard that said!

SETON But this time I mean it.

One more night. I beg of you. I feel that I am closer to my goal than I have ever been. Thy only last night did I observe the peacock's tail.

ANN The peacock's tail! And what pray is that?

SETON It is the many colourit flame that precedeth transmutation.

ANN Transmutation! Enough o' this!

SETON Do not chastise me Ann! Pray leave the fireplace!

ANN Is not that my flower vase?

SETON You will undo many hours of work.

ANN I shall require it back.

SETON The arrangement is concise.

ANN Concise? It appears chaotic.

SETON Pray desist! I cannot let you!

(he grabs her wrist)

ANN Unhand me!
SETON I cannot allow it.
ANN Let me go!

(he lets her go - there is a pause)

SETON I am sorry Ann. Pray forgive me.
ANN Well, well, well. You do surprise me Alexander.
SETON Truth be told I do surprise myself. But I cannot stand by and see hour upon hour of painstaking labour overturnit in an instant.
ANN That is plain enough to see.
SETON What troubles you about my work? Why do you dislike it so?
Tell me, Ann. Tell me!
ANN What if the meenister should chance to call?
SETON Ah! So now we have it.
ANN You are taking a grave risk.
He could make serious trouble for you.
SETON I am not afraid of that old scrunt. Besides, he is unlikely to call round. When last we met we quarrelit.
ANN The more reason then to be afraid. He is not without influence in the neighbourhood, and you know how folk live to tittle-tattle. Already the villagers are talking Alexander.
SETON Oh. And what pray are they saying?
ANN Well... nothing to my face.
SETON You see! Besides, I care not.
ANN You care not, eh? And what about your children? How would they be affectit to see their father haulit away for a common criminal and brought to trial? Answer me that!
SETON I cannot.
ANN No! You cannot.
SETON Perhaps there remains nothing left for me but to travel to foreign parts.
ANN What do you mean?
SETON Across the ocean. To Prague.
ANN Prague! Always Prague!
SETON And why not indeed?
ANN You imagine that conditions would be any different in Prague?
SETON I do not imagine, Ann, I know.
The practice of alchemy is toleratit in Prague. The King himself is said to be an adept. Not only toleratit but appreciatit also.
ANN And what is to become pray of your family while you seek refuge in this earthly paradise of yours?
How are we expectit to survive? On what are we expectit to live?

(Pause)

SETON Give me another day Ann.
ANN Oh Alexander!
SETON It surely is not too much to ask.
ANN Not again.
SETON If nothing comes about this time I swear to you that I shall cease to practice.
ANN I have heard all this before.
SETON This time I mean it. I know that I have been most negligent

and am resolutit to reform.
ANN Well... at least let me in to sweep this floor for it has not been swept in weeks.
SETON Swear to me that you will take care not to disturb these vessels.
ANN Oh. very well. I swear.

(She exits, returning with a broom. She starts to sweep)

SETON Ann, dearest....
ANN What now?
SETON Will this take long?
ANN No, not long.

(She sweeps on)

SETON Forgive me, but....
ANN Excuse me but I cannot be expectit to sweep right through your feet.
SETON Then I must go.
ANN Go where?
SETON Outside. I must go outside.
Such rude activity is too abrasive for me. I cannot stay here.
ANN Go then!
SETON I will.

(Exit Seton)

(Ann goes to the fireplace and runs her finger along the mantelpiece).

ANN I see no gold, but I see dust aplenty.

(She fetches a duster and runs it along the shelf, tipping a pile of dust into one of the pots. It is the pot containing Seton's 'powder of projection'.)

Oh Alexander! What is to become of us.

(She continues to work as the lights fade)

'Gold' An alchemical adventure.

A play by Andrew Dallmeyer

Act I. Scene 2.

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SCENE 2

A Street in Port Seton

Various passers by. Enter Seton. He walks like a man who is unfamiliar with the outside world. Various passers by. Enter Auld Mrs. Nesbitt.

MRS. NESBITT (to Seton) Aye, aye, aye. And how are ye keepin' son, eh? How's yoursel'?

SETON I thank you Mrs. Nesbitt. I am in good health. And how are you this day?

MRS. NESBITT To tell you the honest truth I'm no that weill, son, I'm no that weill.

SETON I am sorry to hear that Mrs. Nesbitt.

MRS. NESBITT I'm sufferin' somethin' mighty wi' ma legs. They're aye up tae somethin' agin ma will. Only the other day I was oot fur a shank when they just went frae under us, just like that. Ma left lug's mairtyrin', ma back's playin' me up and ma fourth son's had his heid choppit aff fur stealin' yin o' Mister Johnstoun's Yetholm yews. That apairt I canne complain. How's your brither keepin' son?

SETON Brother?

MRS. NESBITT Aye. Your brither.

SETON But I have no brother

MRS. NESBITT Eh?

SETON I have no brother Mrs. Nesbitt.

MRS. NESBITT Oh. How's that? Are ye not Mister Heriot then?

SETON No. I am Alexander Seton

MRS. NESBITT Seton, eh? Aye, so ye are tae, so ye are. I was thinkin' ye was somebody else, son. I was thinkin' ye was Heriot. Aye, Aye, aye, Weil, there ye go. I'll mebe see ye later son.

(Exit Mrs. Nesbitt)

(Various passers-by, including a young girl in great distress. A few seconds later an older man (her father) enters, in hot pursuit. Enter two youths, their manner is threatening and belligerent.)

1st YOUTH Oy, oy, oy. Watch us Erchie! See us!

(They move to Seton and stand on either side of him.)

1st YOUTH Do ye want yir hurdies thrapplin', eh?

(the boys giggle and snigger)

2nd YOUTH Do ye want yir hurdies yokin' in?

SETON I regret to have to say it, but your meaning escapes me.

1st YOUTH Eh?

SETON No doubt it is highly amusing.

1st YOUTH Did ye hear that Erchie? 'Highly amusing'.

What did ye think o' that?

2nd YOUTH Aye. He's a man o' perts awricht.

1st YOUTH Gi' us a peek o' yir whang man.

2nd YOUTH Aye. Gi' us a peek o' yir whang.

(they giggle)

SETON Go away you idle, stupid boys or else I shall wap your ears for you.

1st YOUTH Did ye hear that Erchie?

That's eskin' fir trouble. Shall we roust him over?
2nd YOUTH Aye.... weill.... later mebe.
1st YOUTH (Jeering) Oh. So you're affeart?
2nd YOUTH No.' I'm no affeart. But he seems to be hairless enough.
1st YOUTH (to Seton) Luckily fir ye, ma frien hasne the wind
fir it else yid be spalderin' flat on yir back.
2nd YOUTH Come awa, come awa! Leave him alane.

(Exeunt)

(Re-enter the father and daughter. The father has now caught her, and beats her round the head).

FATHER Hizzy! Duntet! Calet! Hure!
You'll nae come back o'er ma darecheck nae mair.
DAUGHTER No, faither, dinne.
FATHER I'll skelp ye!
DAUGHTER Pray mercy faither.
FATHER I'll belt ye!
DAUGHTER Hae pity on us.
FATHER I'll kill ye so I will.
DAUGHTER Leave us alane.
FATHER I'll skin ye alive.
SETON (Who has been watching and can bear it no longer)
Pray leave her alone. You are a shameless gouster man!
FATHER (Stopping his attack and turning to Seton)
And what's it got to do wi' you eh? What's it to you?
DAUGHTER (also turning on Seton) Aye, that's right enough.
What's it to you?
FATHER Aye, that's right enough. It's nane o' your business.
SETON Forgive me. I understood that the poor child was in a state
of great distress.
FATHER Puir child? Puir child? Get awa' to Hell man! She's noucht
but a hure.
DAUGHTER Aye. The deil tak ye!
FATHER (Setting about his daughter again)
Hizzy! Duntet! Calet! Hure!

(They exit. Seton stands astonished. Various passers-by.
Enter John Maxwell, a sea captain).

MAXWELL Sandy! Gid ta see ye man!
SETON Tis good to see you too John.
MAXWELL And how are ye keepin'? Eh? How's yoursel'?
SETON To tell you the honest truth, John, I am no longer entierely certain.
MAXWELL Ye were ai a queer yin Sandy. Ye were ai gey strange.
But tell us somethin', Sandy, where ha ye bin hidin' yoursel'
o late? We've nae seen much o' ye in recent times.
SETON I have been greatly preoccupied at home.
MAXWELL Oh?
SETON Aye. And what of yourself John?
MAXWELL Weil, ye ken us Sandy. Aye on the go.
This wey and that wey. Aye on the move.
I'm awa agin the morn.
SETON Oh. And where to this time?
MAXWELL Amsterdam. Wi' a shipment o' coals and fine linen back the wey.
But fir the day I hae a wee diversion in mind.

SETON Oh? And what is that?
MAXWELL Twixt ourselves, tis the cockfightin' Sandy.
SETON Oh. I see.
MAXWELL Wha's the maiter wi' ye man? Ye could mebe gang along wi' us.
SETON I fear that I would not enjoy such a spectacle.
MAXWELL Oh. I see. Tae gid fir the rest o' us eh? Tae gid, eh?
SETON Not at all. Not at all.
MAXWELL Weill, that's where I'm goin'.
Ye can please yoursel'.

(He starts to go).

SETON John! I will come along with you.
MAXWELL Gid man Sandy. You'll nae live tae regret it.

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SCENE 3

The Cockfight

The cockfighting takes place in a high sided circular pit. The actual fight is thus invisible to the audience and entirely dependent on the orchestrated reactions of the gamesters to give it a reality. As the scene begins, one cock has just killed another. There is a cloud of feathers and a loud cheer. This being a betting sport, there are winners and losers in the crowd. The winners surround Sibbet, the gamemaster.

1st GAMESTER Come on, Sibbet. Pay up!
2nd GAMESTER Aye. That's right. Pay up!
3rd GAMESTER Twa pence fir me.
4th GAMESTER Mine's a penny ferthing.
SIBBET Come on lads. Steady there. Steady.
You'll aw git your money.
5th GAMESTER Can ye no len us a wee somethin' George?
6th GAMESTER I canne fir I'm skint oot masel'.
5th GAMESTER It's mebe as weill. Ma wife'll kill us if she kens
I've bin a bettin'.
SIBBET And there's fir ye Cochrane, and there's
fir ye Craig. There ye go lads, aw payt up.
2nd GAMESTER I bet a penny.
SIBBET Ye didne.
2nd GAMESTER I did tae. See. Here's ma wad.

(he produces a ticket)

SIBBET Oh so ye did. Right enough.
I wouldne try te geck ye lads.
3rd GAMESTER Aye. Ye would tae.

(Enter Seton and Maxwell)

SIBBET (To Maxwell) Hello there John! Gid te see ye man. Weill look who's here lads. If it isne Mister Seton. Good day te you Mister Seton.

SETON Good day to you Mister Sibbet.

SIBBET Are ye comm' ower te join wi' us?

SETON I thank you Mister Sibbet but I do not think that I will.

SIBBET Oh what a shame! What a cryin' shame is that. I am sure that we would aw consider it a great honour. Would we no lads?

1st GAMESTER Aye. So we would tae.

4th GAMESTER A privelege indeed.

SETON I thank you all, but as I am sure you are aware I am not a betting man.

SIBBET No a bettin' man eh? Did you hear that lad's? Mister Seton's no a bettin' man. Then I'm sure we're aw distraucht to hear it and we'll jist hey te try te get on withoot ye as best we can. Do ye think that we can manage lads?

2nd GAMESTER Aye. Just git on wi' it Bill.

5th GAMESTER Aye. I've te be back fir ma dinner soon.

SIBBET Right lads. Whatever you say. And the next contest is betwixt twa rare wee burdies indeed. Firstly a Chinese broon fra Tranent belongin te Mister Forest and a wee blue crest fra Preston belongin te Mister Murray. Please place yir wads, lads, place yir wads!

3rd GAMESTER I'll hae a penny on the broon.

4th GAMESTER A ferthing on the blue.

MAXWELL Mine's twa pence on the broon.

1st GAMESTER Me tae, me tae.

2nd GAMESTER I'll tak the blue.

SIBBET Stand back there! Ony more wads?

5th GAMESTER (to 6th) Tam Weir's just lent us a penny. He'll mebe do the same fir you.

6th GAMESTER What about yir wife man?

5th GAMESTER I'll mebe win this time.

SIBBET Stert the battle movin' and may the best burdie win.

(Two boxes are brought to the ring and placed either side of it,
on the floor. At the appropriate moment, the birds are released into the ring, through small trap doors on floor level)

Send them awa!

(the birds are released. A long pause. All are absorbed).

1st GAMESTER Gang te it, gang te it!

2nd GAMESTER Had about!

3rd GAMESTER Gang about!

4th GAMESTER Get in there! Get ower!

(The first flurry from the ring. The observers respond with 'Whoas' and 'Wayays')

3rd GAMESTER The broon's far the stronger.
4th GAMESTER Awa man!
3rd GAMESTER We'll soon see.
2nd GAMESTER The blue's better spiket.
1st GAMESTER Wha says?
2nd GAMESTER I do.

(Another flurry. More hooting and hollering from the observers).

3rd GAMESTER The broon'll be the stronger. He's bin rearit on
 spring water.
4th GAMESTER Who telt ye that?
3rd GAMESTER I ken Forest the owner.
2nd GAMESTER Ye should o' telt us that afore.
3rd GAMESTER I'd never dae that. I've mere chance o' winnin.
1st GAMESTER That's the wey, there!
3rd GAMESTER Hod him doon!
2nd GAMESTER Broon bastert!
4th GAMESTER Spike him to the flair bluey!
5th GAMESTER Pit him down!
6th GAMESTER Spike him!

(The cockfight continues, though more as a background. Maxwell leaves the group and moves across to where Seton stands alone.)

MAXWELL It's no as bad as aw that. Ye shouldne tak on so.
 If ye'd tak a closer look you'd mebe enjoy it mair.
SETON I am perfectly happy over here, thank you John.
MAXWELL Have ye seen a fight afore?
SETON No.
MAXWELL If ye ken what te look fir ye get mere fun oot o' it.
 How's Ann keepin'? It's a long time since last I saw her.
SETON Oh, she is fine. Fine.
MAXWELL If ye dinne mind us sayin so Sandy ye seem a wee
 bit down the day. Here tak a nip o' this.

(He hands Seton a bottle).

It'll mebe chirk ye up.

SETON I thank you John but I am not thirsty.
MAXWELL Please yoursel'. (Maxwell drinks from the bottle)

(There is a roar from the cockfighters).

SETON Please do not feel under any obligation to talk to me John.
 I have no wish to spoil your sport.
MAXWELL Sandy! Ye are not the man ye used to be.
 I mind fine a time when you'd aye be the first te ony perty.
 Aye and the last to leave tae.
SETON Times change.

(Another cheer from the crowd)

Do not let me keep you from your sport.

(Maxwell returns to the group)

1st GAMESTER Haud onto him, man, haud onto him!
2nd GAMESTER See him go!
3rd GAMESTER Thraw his craig!
4th GAMESTER Aye, kill him, bluey, kill him!

(Another cheer)

1st GAMESTER See the blood there!
2nd GAMESTER He's bleedin' awright!
3rd GAMESTER That's the wey!
4th GAMESTER Now gently does it!
5th GAMESTER Aw!
6th GAMESTER Go canny!
1st GAMESTER Cry canny!
4th GAMESTER That's it. Let him bleed!
3rd GAMESTER Now fir the feenish!
2nd GAMESTER There's aye the feenish!

(More noises of sadistic enjoyment from the gamesters.
They are watching the death throes of the brown cock.
Suddenly Seton can tolerate this no longer.
He explodes with great force.)

SETON Cease! Stop! Cease! No more pray:

(The gamesters turn in astonishment)

How can you watch such tragic slaughter?
I cannot comprehend this strange desire.
To watch two of God's most innocent creatures as they
tear each other limb from limb, beaks bathherit,
flesh torn and feathers thick with blood.
Can this be sport? Is this amusement?
Forgive me, but such cruelty is abhorrent to me.
Tis not the sport of kings but cowards.
There. I have spoken. All is said.

(There is a long and awkward silence during which
the brown cock dies).

SIBBET Right lads! Payin' up time!
 Come on lads! Payin' up!
 James! You're a winner.

(The atmosphere is broken)

What's the maitter wi' yous, eh? What's the maitter?

1st GAMESTER Mebe the man's got somethin' there Bill.
SIBBETT Got somethin'? Got somethin'?
 Dinne be daft man.
 What's mair natural in the world than cruelty?
 Answer me that Mister Seton. You're a fermer so you

should ken aw about cruelty. Gang oot in the field and what will you see? The eagle eats the badger, the badger the beetle, and the beetle survives on the mite. Cruelty and nature are yin and the same. They aye go together, haun in haun, so dinne talk daft man, dinne gie us aw that.

SETON You talk with the zeal of a man whose very living were at stake.
Good day to you Mister Sibbet.

(Exit Seton)

SIBBET Right lads! Come on, payin' up!
2nd GAMESTER He's a strange man to be sure.
SIBBET Come on lads! What's the maiter wi' yours?
You're not usually so laggardly in comm' on forrit.
Come on lads! Come on!
1st GAMESTER I fear that we are all somewhat affectit.
SIBBET Och! Dinne worry about Seton. Listen lads,
I'll telt ye aw somethin' just twixt the group o' us here. A body telt us just the other day that our Mister Seton is a practitioner o' magic and somethin' o' an adept in the Black Erts.
MAXWELL Neiver!
SIBBET Aye. It's true.
MAXWELL Who telt you that?
SIBBET John, I canna reveal ma source but I've heard he can change hissel' into a cat. Aye. And they say he can flie an aw.
1st GAMESTER Come on man. Let's hae anither fight.
SIBBET Aye, but if it's aw the same te you mebe Tam here could tak ower the job o' gamemaister fir a wee while. To telt ye the truth I'm feelin' reedy fir a braith o' fresh air. Tam!
3rd GAMESTER Aye.
SIBBET Are ye game Tam?
3rd GAMESTER I'm game.
SIBBET Good man. Then it's ower te you.

(Sibbet steals away)

3rd GAMESTER And the next contest is betwixt twa rare wee burdies, Thomas Hunter's cock o' the North and Davie Duncan's big black cockerel. Place your wads, lads, place your wads.

(All crowd round him)

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SCENE 4

The room in Alexander Seton's house, as in Scene 1.

Seton bursts into the room, shutting the door behind him.
He is very distraught.

SETON What a sorry state is the world in to be sure!
 How full of cruelty and confusion! God bless you Ann
 for I see that you have not yet disturbit the arrangement.
 I must continue with the work and yet I know
 that it cannot be approachit in such a frantic
 fashion. I must calm myself a moment and
 collect my scatterit thoughts.

(He sits)

And yet it is not easy to be calm when others
are in pain. It is not easy to become a bubble
of serenity within a sea of suffering. But
still it is a precondition of the work.
Firstly the fire. There is no gold without
fire, for fire is the agent of Transformation
and must be attendit with due attention. I am
fortunate in having a good pair of bellows close at hand.

(he starts to operate the bellows)

Come on lazybones. Stir yourself! Stir yourself!
How many times have I kindlit in vain?
Four hundred perhaps? Five hundred?
Too many to count and that is for certain.
And yet I know in my heart that it
is only after many hours of fruitless practic
and empty striving that an adept may hope to
achieve anything of substance.
The crucible should now be heatit. See how the
orange tongue of the flame licks the base of the
vessel. Now it is time for the led to be
addit. There is no shortage of dross in these
parts. Base metals abound. It is gold that
is scarce.

(he places the lead in the crucible)

There. Now to leave it a moment in
order that it may melt and dissolve.
How many times have I watchit the led
melt? Perhaps Ann is right and I should
renounce the entire unhappy business
forever and ever. A plague on all such
thoughts for they serve no purpose whatever!
See how the led is beginning to bubble. Now is
the moment to add the powder, the
sacrit powder of projection. Where is the
powder? Ah! Now I have it. There.
In it goes. Now to sprinkle it in.

(He does so, reciting the while.)

Oh mighty phoenix
From your flame
May my soul
Be born again
And like our Savoir
Jesus Christ
Be born not once
But twice.

(A pause then a curl of white smoke)

How elegant is the swan's neck!
What a delicate curl of fine, white smoke!

(a puff of black smoke)

Now the crow's head. What a fine sight is that!

(A multi-coloured flame emerges from the crucible)

Now best of all, the peacock's tail, fannit out and
displayit in full finery. I have reachit this stage
several times previously but have never succedit in
going any further.

(A golden glow emerges from the crucible)

What?
What is this?
I cannot believe it.
It starts to grow golden.
Jesu Christe is't possible?
Perhaps I am dreaming.
Yet the room is suffusit.
It starts to glow golden. Gold!
Pure gold!

(The room is bathed in a golden aura.
Seton is transfixed. The glow dies away)

Gold! I have gold! God be praisit!
Now I must put it to the test to be certain.

(He picks up the gold with tongs and dips
it in water. It hisses.)

If it be not gold it will tarnish in acid.

(He dips it into the acid pot. He withdraws it).

Still golden! Now to touch it.

(he puts the gold down and lays aside the tongs.
He picks up the gold very cautiously)

It feels like gold. It has the right weight.
Does it bite like gold?

(he bites it)

It does, in deed. God be praisit for I have succedit!
Ann! Ann!

(He runs out of the room)

Ann!

ANN (off) Here!

SETON Ann!

ANN Aye. What is it?

SETON I have something to show you.

ANN Oh Alexander I am much occupiet presently.

SETON It is something of momentous consequence Ann.

ANN It had better be indeed or else I shall be greatly annoyit.

SETON Come with me!

(Seton and Ann enter the room)

SETON Look what I have done!

ANN What Alexander?

SETON There!

ANN Where?

SETON There! See! I have made gold.

ANN Gold! Where pray? Where is there gold?

SETON Here Ann. See!

ANN I do not believe you.

SETON See for yourself. Pick it up!

(Ann does so)

How can you be sure that it is gold?

SETON I know gold when I see it. Besides I have testit it.

It was not found wanting.

ANN Oh Alexander!

SETON It is true. I swear to you Ann, this time

I have done it.

ANN You are too easily gulled.

SETON Had you been in this room, you would not have
said that. It was suffusit in magic as the action
took place.

Well, are you not thrillit by the news Ann?

Do you not understand what this means for us?

Our troubles are over.

ANN How so?

SETON Now we have unlimitit money.

ANN Then our troubles are only beginning.

SETON How so?

ANN How are we to explain away the sudden acquisition
of innumerable pieces of fresh-mintit gold, if indeed
this substance be gold.

Think hard about that Alexander. Sooner or later
someone will hear of it and what then? It
cannot forever be kept a secret.

SETON I could always claim that I had dug it up struck
it with the plough. A piece of good fortune.

ANN Who would believe you? With your reputation.
SETON Perhaps you are right Ann. But what must I do?
I cannot be expectit to keep my light forever
hidden under a bushel. Such a thing is not
possible. I have been chosen among men. I
cannot now turn my back upon this responsibility.
I must go forth into the world around me and
share this great gift among mankind.
ANN Oh Alexander, I fear for you.
SETON Do not be afraid!
AN~ I fear for us all.

(A dog barks)

SETON Who is it?
ANN I know not.
SETON See who it be Ann.
ANN None is expectit.
SETON It must be a stranger. See who it be!

(Ann goes out, shutting the door.
We hear the sound of her opening the
front door. The following conversation
takes place offstage.)

WARDLAW Ah! Mrs. Seton!
ANN Meenister Wardlaw!
WARDLAW I am sorry to disturb you. Is your
husband at home?
ANN No. He is not.
WARDLAW May I enquire as to his whereabouts?
ANN You may enquire, but I know not where he is.
He went out this morning but I have not seen
him since.
WARDLAW I understand. Do you mind if I enter Mrs. Seton?
ANN Enter?
WARDLAW Aye.
ANN For what purpose?
WARDLAW Certain allegations concerning your husband have
recently come to my ears.

(Seton locks the door from the inside)

Naturally I am loath to believe them Mrs. Seton
but it is my duty to see for myself. Do you
mind if I make sure?
ANN Very well. If you must. But be quick about it.
WARDLAW May I look in here?
ANN There is nothing in there

(We hear the door tried on the outside.)

WARDLAW Yet the door is lockit. Have you a key?
ANN I am afraid that I have not. My husband has it.
WARDLAW I see Mrs. Seton. It has been my experience
that if a door is lockit, more often than not,
there is something to hide.

ANN It is my husband's reading room. Nothing more.
WARDLAW Then you surely will not mind if we
take a look. James! Hercules!
A hand with the door pray!

(James and Hercules start to push and shove at the door. Mrs. Seton shouts 'Stop it! How dare you! Enough o' that!' Seton looks around in panic. He puts the powder of projection into a leather pouch and the gold into his pocket.)

SETON Only one way out!

(Seton climbs up the chimney)

(James and Hercules break the door open and charge into the room, followed by Meenister Wardlaw and Ann. Wardlaw surveys the pots etc.)

WARDLAW Just as I thought! My worst fears are confirmit! The evidence is plain for all to see: James! Take the crucible and the alembic away!

JAMES I am gie sorry Mrs. Seton. I am only doing my duty.

WARDLAW Where is your husband?

ANN I have told you. I know not.

WARDLAW Do not lie to me woman!

ANN I know not. I swear it.

WARDLAW Very well. For the time being I will accept your word. But I will return for him later. Meanwhile I have the proof that I came for. This is a very serious matter. It seems that Mister Sibbet was telling the truth. Come along lads!

(Exeunt, all but Mrs. Seton.
The dog barks again as the men leave.
Eventually all is quiet)

(Seton descends from the chimney, coughing and covered in soot)

ANN Oh, Alexander! Look at the state of you!
I do not know whether to laugh or cry.

SETON A narrow escape Ann!

ANN What are we to do for he is to return before long?

SETON There is only one thing I can do Ann. I must leave Port Seton. Immediately. I must head for Prague.

ANN No!

SETON In Prague I will be welcome.

ANN But how will you travel?

SETON I will go directly to the harbour Ann. Captain Maxwell is sailing tomorrow for Amsterdam. I am certain that he will be willing to take me along with him.

ANN But Alexander how will we manage?
You cannot just leave us. We have no money.

SETON Here. Take this gold. Break it in pieces and sell it to a goldsmith in Edinburgh or Leith. Should he enquire as to how you came about it, tell him it came from Arabia. It is enough to provide for yourself and the children for some years to come.

ANN Some years? Some years? But how long will you be gone?

SETON I know not exactly.

ANN Oh Alexander! Will I ever see you again I wonder?

SETON Have faith, my beloved, and I will return. I love you Ann.

ANN And I love you too.

SETON I will take with me the remainder of the powder of projection.

ANN Aye and at least take your cloak along with you. Something to keep you warm on your journey.

SETON Goodbye Ann.

ANN Farewell. Oh Alexander!

SETON No more of that! Have courage beloved! I will return Ann. Of that I am certain.

(He goes out. Ann weeps.)

(The noise of the sea to denote the passage of time.)

'Gold' An alchemical adventure.

A play by Andrew Dallmeyer

Act I. Scene 5.

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SCENE 5

The Quayside. Amsterdam

Various passers-by. Enter a gypsy woman Meg. She carries a sack. She mutters furiously to herself "I must at all costs leave this Godforsaken place" etc. We cannot discern her words but she is clearly unhappy. She exits. Various passers-by. Enter Seton. He walks unsteadily like a man who has been long at sea. Various passers-by. To Seton they appear as if from another planet. Enter two young women.

SETON Pardon me ladies, but I was wondering if you could direct me to an hostelrie or inn? A place, perhaps where I may lay my head for a night or two?

(They look at one another in amusement. They giggle)

Somewhere to sleep. To lay my head.

(They look at one another and giggle.)

A place to lie. You (he points at them) tell me (he points to himself) a place to sleep

(he mimes sleep, with a pillow gesture).

(The girls giggle)

You! Me! Sleep!

(The girls are under the impression that they have been propositioned. One of them gives Seton a fearful clout across the face.)

SETON Ah! Ladies, I fear that you do not understand my meaning.

(The girls go out. Seton sits down, nursing his jaw. Enter Meg. She looks at him, he looks at her.)

MEG (In Latin) You! You are a sailor sir?

SETON Eh?

MEG (In Latin) At what time does your boat depart?

SETON I crave your pardon madam but I fear that I do not comprehend your meaning.

MEG What! What is this? Did I hear awright? Did I hear 'comprehend' and 'meaning'?

SETON You did indeed.

MEG Then woe is me for I fear that I have met an Englishman!

SETON An Englishman! Do not insult me, for I am a Scotchman through and through.

MEG A Scotchman, eh? Then God be praisit! For it is truly wonderful to hear some talk that is in a tongue that I can understand but to tell the honest truth to you, sir, I cannot abide the English. No! God bless you, sir, God bless you! (She embraces him) Scotchman!

SETON And pray tell me, madam, whence comes yourself?

MEG To tell the truth, sir, that is some story. Some story indeed sir! For all my natural life I have been houndit from post to pillar and from dale to dell, sir. Three times I have been taken for a witch and burnit, twice have I escapit clean away and once have I been left for dead sir. I have travellit along all the ways and woodlands of a dozen lands, sir. I have pickit the orange fruit from the tree in the land of Granada and crossit the frozen lake in the Nordic land of the midnight sun. So now no place do I call home but every place is home, sir. Up until the age of ten, sir, I livit in the land of Gwent in the town of Monmouth. Do you know it?

SETON No, I cannot say that I do.

Until this time I never venturit forth from the Scottish lowlands.

MEG Then what brings you, sir, to Amsterdam?

SETON That is also some story.

MEG You are I think a sailor sir?

SETON No. To trade I am a farmer.

MEG A farmer, eh? That is too bad. For I am sorely in need of a boat.

SETON A boat to where?

MEG To anywhere, sir. To anywhere. For truth be told I do not greatly like this land, sir.

SETON No?

MEG No indeed. The people are alright, sir, to be sure for they are friendly and well mannerit enough.

SETON Oh?

MEG But there is not a mountain to be seen and such a landscape is mighty queer, sir, and what is more it fits not well my peculiar condition of mind. I have walkit much inland from here and I have seen strange sights indeed sir. Tall towers with revolving arms to catch the breeze and great wooden doors across rivers which open up to let the water pass and close again for to keep it in. All this have I seen and more besides. But hills and mountains have they none and Meg without her mountains is like a fish without water or a dog without a bone. What ails you with your cheek, sir, that you do rub it so?

SETON Oh, tis nothing.

MEG A bruise, is it? Now stay you there, sir! I have a remedy for that.

(She rummages in her sack)

SETON Pray what have you in mind madam?

MEG Hold still sir!

SETON What is it?

MEG Tis but the leaves of agrimony.

SETON But madam -

MEG Do not jig about! Hold still!

(She holds him forcibly and presses the leaves onto his cheek)

There, there. It will soon soothe. Soft awhile! Soft!

SETON I can see that you have learnit much in your hard life.

MEG Hard life? No, sir, not so hard. Sometimes I have been cold and hungry to be sure, but no more often than most I believe. Besides I have seen the deer leap the brook at the first light of dawn and felt the warm rays of the midday sun. I have smelt the sweet smell of the fresh pressit grape and heard the brown owl hoot in the deep, black night. So when all is said and done life has not treatit me so badly, although in recent times my life is not so very happy. I am well pleasit to meet you, sir. Mister?

SETON Seton. Alexander Seton.

MEG My name is Megwyn, but I am known as Meg or Nutmeg. Whither are you bound Mister Seton?

SETON I am bound for Prague.

MEG Prague, eh? In Bohemia?

SETON The same.

MEG I have heard many tales of Prague though I have

never been there myself.
SETON Tales. What kind of tales?
MEG I have heard that they are kind to witches.
You have some business in Prague?
SETON I do. In a manner of speaking.
MEG How far is it to Prague?
SETON Four hundred miles. Five hundred perhaps.

(Pause)

MEG I will come with you.
SETON You will?
MEG I like you Mister Seton, sir.
SETON But what about your sea voyage?
MEG It makes no difference to me. Prague or Paris.
It makes no difference. So long as it is not
Amsterdam. Shall we go?
SETON I....
MEG Why not? The sooner we set out, the sooner we arrive.
SETON Well, I....
MEG Come on, Mister Seton, on your feet! Let
us see what a Scotchman is made of.

(Exeunt)

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Act I. Scene 6.

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SCENE 6.

(In the middle of the Black Forest. Night. Distant
howling of wolves. Meg and Seton sit by the fire.)

SETON Meg.
MEG Aye.
SETON How can you be sure that we are going in the
right direction?
MEG By the arc of the sun in the sky Alexander.
SETON But we have not seen the sight of the sun for well
nigh a week.
MEG No, we have not. But he is there none the less.

(Pause)

If the sun be directly ahead of us in the
forenoon and to the right of us in the afternoon
then we are headit East South East and that is
the right direction.
SETON I only wish that I could share your certainty.
MEG It can be no other. Put your mind at rest.

(Pause)

SETON Meg!
MEG Aye.
SETON How far have we travellit upon this day?
MEG Eight mile perhaps.
SETON Surely more!
MEG Possibly, possibly.
SETON And are we yet half way to Prague?
MEG Indeed we are. More than halfway.
SETON It seems an eternity since we left Amsterdam.
MEG Alexander, what ails you man for your humour is mighty melancholic?
SETON Indeed it is for I am cold, Meg. Cold and hungry, and greatly affeart.
MEG Your hunger and cold I can appreciate, for I too am cold and hungry. So hungry indeed that I could eat a whole horse, but as to being greatly affeart, well, that I do not understand. What is it that makes you affeart Alexander? Is it the howling of wolves? They will not come near because of the fire. Besides, I have something for that.

(She rummages in her sack)

SETON What is it Meg?
MEG The very substance. Wolfsbain.
SETON Wolfsbain?
MEG Aye. Look ye here.

(She sprinkles the dried leaves around the fire in a circle, muttering the incantation 'Ave, cane lapsus lupii')

There! That should keep the beasts at bay!
SETON I thank you Meg, but to be quite truthful I am not greatly convinvit of the veracity of your methods.
MEG No? Then I have a better idea. What if I were to remove my boots? That would assuredly keep away all living creatures in the vicinity.
SETON Aye. Myself includit!
MEG Please Alexander! I beseech you! For my feet are like raw hams and are sorely in need of a breath of air.
SETON Oh, Meg!
MEG I beg of you!
SETON Well... if you must. Things could scarcely be worse than they are already.
MEG God bless you sir! Bless you! I cannot tell you how much this means to me.
SETON Aye. And I fear it will mean much to me also!

(Meg starts to remove her right boot)

SETON Oh Meg! That is truly disgusting!
MEG But you are a farmer Alexander. You must be familiar with animal smells.

(Meg wiggles the toes of her right foot.
Her feet are filthy.)

Now for the other.

(She removes her left boot. Wiggles her toes)

Ah! What paradise! I will not air them long.
SETON I am thankfull for that!
MEG The night is too cold.
SETON I fear that I may be overcome by the fumes!
MEG Maybe so, maybe so. But see how the stench takes
your mind from your other troubles and woes.
SETON Tis too drastic a remedy!
MEG Did I ever tell you about the way in which I cam
to discover these boots?
SETON No, I do not believe that you did.
MEG One day I was walking in Umbria, when I saw an
old man lying in a ditch. He was lying in a
ditch at the side of the walkway. At first I
imagined that he was dead for he was lying as
still as stone and a trickle of blood came out
from his nose and ran along his chin and his
cheek. As I movit in closer I could also see
wounds in his ribs the size of gold pieces. To
my greatest surprise I saw that he still had
breath in his body, so I decidit to make for him
a potion of herbs. I had just sat down to
attend to his wounds, when all of a sudden he sat
bolt upright and, what is more, he shoutit and
rageit as if I myself was guilty of bringing
about his suffering. I was naturally most
disturbit by this and went on my way, his curses
still ringing in my ears. I was just reflecting
on how very often a good Samaritan is unjustly
abusit and had not procedit for more than a
furlong when there on the pathway I came
across a beautifull pair of pin-new boots. I
took them to be my just reward, but to this very day
I cannot imagine how or why they came to be there.
It is, however, a certain fact that I have worn
them ever since.
SETON Aye. But for the odd occasion!
MEG See! I will be as good as my word.
But I will tell you what I will do Alexander.
I will smoke a pipe and I will quell the smell.
That is what I will do.
SETON Smoke a pipe? And what pray is that?
I have heard pipes playit but never smokit.
MEG Then watch and attend and you will see.
There is a remedy for everything!

(She rummages in her sack)

Smoking is the latest fashion in England, though God
knows I am loath to adopt any fashion that goes by the name

of English.

SETON Why so?

MEG Why so? Because I hate the English. When I was but a slip of a lass I saw my father hackit to pieces by English soldiers and he unarmit too. But enough of that.

SETON What have you in your hand?

MEG This is a pipe.

SETON I await the melody with interest.

MEG It soothes the nerves and causes a pleasant light-headed feeling. But mainly it has a powerful odour.

(She lights the pipe from a stick from the fire. She blows smoke from her mouth. Seton is greatly alarmed.)

SETON Meg! You are lightit!

(She blows more smoke from her mouth. Seton picks up the water bottle and pours it over her head.)

MEG Christ's bones! Are you mad?

It is the purpose of the exercise!

SETON And what exercise is that?

MEG Smoking you numbskull!

SETON That others should seek to set you alight is believeable though unfortunate but that you should seek to do it to yourself is nothing short of insanity!

MEG This shawl is now soakit!

SETON This is witchcraft indeed!

MEG And so is my smock too!

SETON Unadulteratit witchcraft!

MEG Now will I have to remove both of them.

SETON I cannot understand your desire for self destruction.

MEG I am soakit to the skin. I cannot sit here.

I cannot and what is more I will not either.

I shall have to remove them.

(She removes her outer layers. There are more layers beneath)

SETON (giving her his cloak) Here! Take this!

MEG I will not deprive you.

SETON Take it! It is warm!

MEG And what of yourself?

SETON There is room there for both of us. I will build up the fire.

(He does so. Meg sits. Seton sits beside her, somewhat tentatively. They huddle together. Enter a woman with three children. Because it is dark they are scarcely visible. They stand in silence for a while. Seton is the first to sense their presence. He jumps to his feet.)

SETON Hah! What are you? Robbers? Phantoms?

Make yourselves known! What are you?

(The woman steps slowly forward. She is pale and pathetic.)

WOMAN We saw the fire.
Do you mind if we sit by the fire?
MEG No. Not at all.
WOMAN I thank you. I thank you very much. May I bring
the children over as well?
MEG The more the merrier as far as I am concernit.
What say you Alexander?
SETON I am in full accord.
WOMAN Thank you. I thank you. (She goes back to the
children) Yes. We may sit by the fire.

(The woman and the children move to the fire. They
are a pathetic sight.) The children are cold.

(They all sit down).

MEG What is wrong with the children? What troubles them so?
WOMAN The children are ill. They all feel unwell.
They are suffering with fever.
MEG Ah! I see! Then your troubles are over for
I have the very thing for fever.

(Meg rummages in her sack)

Best apple water! But a few drops remaining.
A drop for each of you applied to the forehead
will work wonders in no time at all. Here. One for you.

(she places her hand on their foreheads to wipe
in the drops).

One for you and one for you.

(The children are alarmed by Meg's manner. One
of them starts to cry, then another, then the third.)

SETON So much for your remedies Meg!.
MEG Do not be harsh with me Alexander! I was but
attempting to help.
WOMAN We have had no food for well nigh a week. That
is why the children cry. We are all very hungry.
MEG And so are we. We cannot help you as
far as that is concernit. But I have here
something which might be of use.
WOMAN What is it?
MEG A curl of birch bark. When chewit in the mouth
it is a well known fact that it will keep hunger at bay.
SETON But you cannot give them birchbark to eat.
MEG It is better than nothing.
SETON I am not so certain.
MEG Here! Please take it! It is not much
but it is all that we have. Keep it in the
mouth for as long as possible before swallowing
it down my poor little starlings.

(One of the children takes the bark eagerly. He puts it in his mouth and starts to chew. His face crumbles slowly. He starts to cry. The others soon follow.)

MEG What troubles them now?
WOMAN They are all so cold.
Let us give the poor little starlings your cloak! Do I have your consent?
SETON Indeed you do. But they must all sit close to one another and thus will all three be benefitit.
MEG Here! Take this!

(Meg hands the woman the cloak).

WOMAN. I cannot take it.
MEG We want you to have it.
WOMAN No. no. I cannot.
MEG Go on!
WOMAN Thank you madam. Thank you sir.

(She takes the cloak)

Now, children, please sit closer together!

(The children obey. The woman puts the cloak around the children.)

MEG At last they are silent!
SETON Not for long I fear.
MEG What makes you say that?
SETON They are suffering greatly.
MEG Have you children of your own?
SETON I have, Meg. I have.
MEG How I would have lovit to have children myself. How kindly would I have treatit them all. Honey in the morning, laughter at table, walks in the countryside, stories at bedtime. But it is too late now. Aye. Far too late.

(One of the children starts to cry.)

Now there! Stop it! There is nothing to cry about!

(Meg stands up and pulls a funny face. This has the opposite effect to the one intended. All three children start to cry.)

Look! Watch you here!

(Meg tries an outlandish pose. The children are alarmed and cry louder than ever. She sits down defeated. The children cry on.)

SETON (suddenly) This pierces me to the very heart! I can no longer abide it!

Give me your earthenware pot Meg!
MEG For why?
SETON Do not ask. Just give it to me!

(She brings the bowl from the sack. Seton places
it over the fire.)

MEG What are you doing man? What are you doing?
Have you taken leave of your senses?
SETON I can assure you that I know exactly what I am
doing. Give me your brooch!
MEG What?
SETON Give me your brooch!
MEG No I will not.
SETON (With great force) Give it to me!
MEG This brooch is of worth.
SETON I will make it of more worth.
Give it to me!

(Reluctantly, she gives him the brooch.
He puts it into the pot.)

MEG What! How dare you! The brooch will be meltit.
SETON That is my intention.
MEG I cannot allow it.
SETON Stay where you are Meg!
MEG This is true madness.
SETON I will stop you with force!

(Meg sees that he means it)

MEG Wait and see what will become of your brooch.
That brooch means much to me. It was
given as a present. A Franciscan friar. In the
town of Bordeaux. I did him a service. I
curit him of the pox. A charming man too. I
swathit him in dung and dippit him in flour and
then washit his body all over in dew. And so
it was that he gave me a pin. A pin and clasp
and a brooch. Now all that remains is the
brooch! And that too will soon cease to exist!

(Seton adds the powder of projection.)

SETON I must not use all but must save some for Prague.
MEG Save some? Some what?
SETON Soon all will be plain.
MEG Ignorant Scotchman! I should never have trustit you!
SETON (Stirring the potion)
Oh mighty phoenix
From your flame
May my soul
Be born again
And like our Savoir
Jesus Christ
Be born not once
But twice.

MEG What? What is this?
SETON Go gentle! Go gentle!

(The crucible starts to glow. The children stop crying. They are transfixed.)

MEG What Alexander?
Do my eyes deceive me?

(The glow grows brighter. The forest is lit up. The wolves cease to howl.)

MEG Christ's bones! Tis a miracle!

(All are transfixed. Seton takes the pot from the fire. He pours the water over it. There is a hissing sound. He picks a lump of gold from the pot.)

SETON (To the woman) Here. Take this. Sell it if you wish. It will provide warmth, food and shelter for you and your family for the rest of your days.

WOMAN But....

SETON Please! It is yours!

WOMAN But I cannot take it.

SETON You can and you must.

WOMAN Gold! It is gold children!

Gold! We have gold! Now we are rich!

May god be praisit!

MEG I thank God that I have livit to see this day.
I never thought to see such a heavenly miracle.
I have heard of such things but I have never
thought to see them. Not with my own two eyes.
Tell me! Tell me, who are you pray?

SETON I am Alexander Seton.

MEG You are more than that (she kneels) I kneel at your feet.

SETON Pray stand up Meg! Such behaviour is unseemly.

MEG It is as if dawn had broken in the middle of the night.

(The forest is transformed from threatening to beautiful. The birds start singing)

WOMAN Gold! We have gold!
We are rich, children. Rich!

(The children start laughing.)

'Gold' An alchemical adventure.

A play by Andrew Dallmeyer

Act II. Scene 1.

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SCENE 1

The Street of the Alchemists, Prague

The street is alive with people. Fortune tellers, astrologers, soothsayers, musicians, acrobats, jugglers, palm readers, tumblers and fire-eaters. Stalls with relics for sale and tarot cards laid out. Enter Meg and Seton. They stroll through the crowd.

MEG Well, Alexander, what think you now?
SETON I think that life be worth the living.

(They walk on. Soon they are approached by a stranger. He is an alchemist.)

ALCHEMIST Sir. Madam! By your strange appearance I see that you are visitors to this kingdom. Could I interest you perchance in a demonstration of the noble art of alchemy?

SETON Aye, sir. You could.

ALCHEMIST Good man, good man! I will not disappoint you rest assurit. A moment pray.

(He goes off)

SETON This should be of great interest.
MEG I'll wager he will be counterfeit and will want money as reward.
SETON And money he shall have if he be genuine.
MEG Small hope of that.

(The alchemist returns with a bucket of fire.)

ALCHEMIST I have here in my hand a piece of lead.
SETON May I feel it pray?
ALCHEMIST Feel it?
SETON Aye.
ALCHEMIST Why feel it?
SETON To feel the weight of it.
ALCHEMIST Tis most irregular, but if you must....

(He hands the lead to Seton)

SETON Tis somewhat light for lead. No matter.

(He hands the lead back to the Alchemist)

Precede!

ALCHEMIST (angrily) I will indeed! I take this LEAD and I place it in the flame.

(He does so)

Now see what comes!
In no time at all it will be turnit to gold.
MEG (to Seton) See how the pigment melteth Alexander. He is counterfeit as predictit. Will you now

expose him for what her really is?
ALCHEMIST There. Tis finishit. Now for to cool it.

(He dips the 'gold' in water)

See for yourself!

(He hands the 'gold' to Seton. Seton inspects it.)

SETON It has much the quality of brass about it. Tis
but a lump of brass colourit with grey pigment.

(He gives the 'gold' back to the alchemist.)

ALCHEMIST How do you dare insult me sir? Who do you think
you are? My name is much esteemit in these parts.
I am a man of great distinction, yea, and honour too.
what are you but foreign scum! A plague on both
your houses. Seldom have I seen such a
disreputable pair. The sight of you offends me,
to say nothing of the smell!

(The Alchemist leaves in a rage. Meg and
Seton burst out laughing)

Poor soul! What a picture was his face!

(The banging of a drum.)

HERALD Hear ye, hear ye, hear ye!
We now perform, for your diversion, our moral
tale, 'The Fall of Man'.
Here ye, hear ye, hear ye!

(All stop what they are doing and watch.
The play is performed on a raised area.)

'The Fall of Man'
Scene 1
Hell

Enter Satan.

SATAN Here stand I, Satan,
In my Hell
Evil monster
Ne'r do well
Now God hath made
A creature - man
Who now in Paradise
Doth stand.

And from his rib hath made a wife
To hold his hand and share his life
And now to her shall Saton go
In guise of serpent to bring her woe.

(Exit Satan. He disguises himself as a snake.)

Scene 2

Paradise. A tree.

Eve in the garden.

SATAN Eve! Eve!
EVE Hark! Hark! What noise is that?
SATAN Tis I, a friend, behind your back.
EVE A fiend more like!
SATAN Why think you that?
EVE Your body is foul. Your colour black.
SATAN Of all the trees in God's green wood this tree is
best (he indicates the tree) the fruit is good.
EVE But God has warnit
Both Adam and I
Should we taste this fruit
We both shall die.
SATAN The reason is
God knows full well
That eating his fruit
Will his secrets tell
Small wonder then
He it forbids
For your wisdom is then
As great as his.
Come taste it, taste
And you will see
How this fine fruit
Will set you free.

(Eve hesitates)

Do you not now believe in me
For I but tell the truth to thee?
Take it, take now and boldly bite.
Eat! Eat! All will be right.

(She bites into the apple)

Now make Adam amend his mood
And eat also this tender food.

(Satan retires. Enter Adam.)

ADAM Alack! What dark strife have you made
For you have done what God forbade
Alas! Alack! You have done amiss.
And destroyit all our earthly bliss.
EVE No, Adam! No! It is not so
For this fruit bears the power to know
What is evil, what is good
We are now Gods within this wood.
ADAM Can you be sure?
EVE Aye. Eat and see!
It hindereth not me.

(Adam eats)

ADAM Oh woe is me, for far from bliss
is now revealit our nakedness
And for this fall we are to blame
And we must hide our sinful shame.

(A distant bell is heard, growing closer)

ADAM (out of character) Lepers!
EVE Lepers! Lepers!
ALL Lepers! Lepers! Lepers!

(Everybody leaves the stage as quickly as possible.
Only Seton and Meg remain.)

MEG Come, Alexander, come!
You surely do not mean to stay?
SETON I do.
MEG Then you are taken leave of your senses. Come,
away man! Come away!
SETON Leave me Meg!
MEG I beg of you! I for one will no longer risk it.

(She exits)
(Enter the lepers)

1st LEPER Why do you not retreat from us like all the rest?
SETON Because I am not afraid of you.
1st LEPER And why are you not afraid of us? What right
have you to be not afraid?
SETON I have nothing but pity for your plight.
1st LEPER Pity? We do not want your pity.
SETON Give me your bell!
1st LEPER What?
SETON Give me your bell!
2nd LEPER It is unclean sir.
SETON I care not. Give it to me!
MEG Alexander! I beg of you! Stop this madness!

(The leper hands Seton the bell.)

SETON The crucible is still hot. It will not take long.
2nd LEPER (to 1st.) Now look and see what you have done.
1st LEPER We will have to purchase another bell.
2nd LEPER That is easier said than done.
1st LEPER Forgive me but this man would brook no contradiction.
2nd LEPER Plainly he is of unsound mind. What on
earth can have possessit you to cooperate?
1st LEPER I crave your pardon, but I know not.
SETON Pass me the powder of projection Meg!
MEG But Alexander.....
SETON Pass it!
MEG There remains but little. Why waste it on
these wretched creatures? What good will
it do? They are past saving Alexander and have
but weeks of life ahead of them. The children

of the forest I can understand, but these miserable mortals are already doomed to die. Better by far to speed them on their way than to prolong their agony unnecessarily.

SETON At least they may die in comfort.
Pass the powder!

MEG Oh, Alexander!

(She reaches into her sack and produces the last of the powder of projection. Seton adds it to the crucible, muttering the incantation. Cautiously at first, various of the crowd who have earlier left the stage allow their curiosity to get the better of them. They creep back on and surround the crucible in a semi-circle but at a distance. They watch in silence. Gradually the fire starts to grow gold. The witnesses are amazed. Seton pulls the gold from the fire. All gasp in amazement.)

1st RESIDENT (to 2nd) Fetch the King! He must be informit of this immediately.

(Exit 2nd Resident.)

(To Seton) I know not your name, sir, but I honour you. Clearly we are in the presence of a maker of miracles.

SETON (to Lepers) Here. Take it! Though I cannot cure you of your sickness, at least I can ease your suffering. This will buy you a hundred bells and more besides.

1st LEPER (to 2nd) Should I take it?

2nd LEPER Aye. Why not?

1st LEPER Perhaps it is a trap.

2nd LEPER We have naught to lose.

(The 1st Leper takes the gold)

1st LEPER Sir, we are forever indebtit to you.

2nd LEPER Indeed we are.

1st LEPER Upon my knees I pay you homage.

I was once an educatit man but never have I seen such a thing as this.

2nd LEPER Already we have sufferit much and I have lost my thumbs and several fingers. But it is not the physical pain which breaks us but the avoidance of us by the rest of mankind which hurts us more deeply.

1st LEPER Was I not right to give him the bell?

2nd LEPER Indeed you were, but how could I have forseen these strange events?

1st LEPER Praise be to God!

2nd LEPER Gloria! Gloria! (they pray - the 'gloria')

1st RESIDENT The King approaches!

3rd RESIDENT It is his Majesty!

4th RESIDENT Long live the King!

(Enter King Rudolph the Second of Bohemia. He is led by his servant Alberto. Everybody kneels, but Seton. Alberto whispers something into the King's ear.)

KING Do you not know who I am Englishman?
SETON I am a Scotchman, sir.
KING Do you not know who I am? I am the King.
SETON Forgive me, sire.

(Seton kneels)

KING Good. That is better. How many languages can you speak?
SETON But one sire. And that inadequately.
KING I can speak five. English, Spanish, Ukranian and Polish. I can curse in a dozen others.
SETON That is but four, according to my calculation.
KING In addition to the ones aforementioned there is my own, of course. What is your name?
SETON Alexander Seton.
KING I understand Mister Seton that you have successfully performit a transmutation?
SETON Yes, sire, I have.
KING You know of course that all gold successfully transmuit in Bohemia is the rightful property of the King?
SETON No, sire, I did not know that.
KING Ah! However in view of the fact that this particular piece of gold has obviously been contaminatit with leperousness it would be better left in the soilit hands of those who already hold it. Besides, we shall no doubt have many opportunities for further transmutations. Where are you intending to stay, Mister Seton, during your visit to Prague?
SETON Sire, I do not know.
KING Good. Then you will stay with me at the Palace.
SETON I thank you, sire. There is also the question of my travelling companion.

(Meg steps forward.)

Might she accompany us also?
KING She is your weddit wife?
SETON No sire.

(Alberto whispers in the King's ear.)

KING I am afraid that I cannot be expectit to accommodate her also. The palace is not an inn Mister Seton. I hope you will understand.
SETON Where I go, she goes also.
KING Indeed? Such loyalty is touching.
MEG You go Alexander! You go with him! You cannot miss such an opportunity.
SETON But what of you Meg?
MEG It is my intention to stay in Prague so no doubt we will meet again in future. Go with the King Alexander!

SETON I thank you sire for your hospitality, and I most gratefully accept.
KING Good. That is settled. Come with me!
We have much to discuss. Alberto!
Lead us!

'Gold' An alchemical adventure.

A play by Andrew Dallmeyer
Act II. Scene 2.

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SCENE 2

A room in the Palace

(Enter the King and Seton. Alberto leads the King to a chair.
The King sits.)

KING (To Alberto) Thank you Alberto. Leave us!

(Exit Alberto)

As you have no doubt realised by now my sight is somewhat impaired. The result of a furnace explosion while attempting transmutation. Pray be seated!

SETON I thank you sire. I will most gratefully accept. (He sits.)
After the rigours of the open road this is luxury indeed!

KING How long have you travelled upon the open road?

SETON In all, four months, two weeks and four days.

KING Then you must now be ready for a rest. Now that you have arrived at your goal. By which route did you journey to Prague?

SETON I sailed from Scotland to Amsterdam by boat, and from there I walked across country to Bohemia. I have seen at least a hundred rivers, a thousand mountains, forests by the score, and enough vales and hills to last me a lifetime.

KING Then you are deserving of the very best attentions and you shall have them too. Perhaps you would wish to order a refreshment? I have many fine wines imported from the Duchy of Lorraine, light Tuscan reds and rich red cilioret straight from France?

SETON Your Majesty I....

KING Or if your taste is for something simpler, I have spring water from the Swiss Confederation or minerals from Brunswick also. No?

SETON Your Majesty is most generous. A glass of spring water would be warmly welcomed.

KING Alberto!

(Enter Alberto.)

ALBERTO Sire.

KING Bring me spring water!

ALBERTO Yes sire.

(Exit Alberto)

KING Now then, remind me of your name?
SETON Seton, sire. Alexander Seton.
KING Seton, eh? Seton with an 'e'.
Not to be confusit with Satan with an 'a', eh? Not to be
confusit with Satan! with an 'a'! (The king roars with
laughter at his own joke.) Forgive me! Do you mind if I
refer to you in your Christian name?
SETON No, sire. Not at all.
KING Good. Then I will.
Now, Alexandre, about this gold.
SETON Gold?
KING Aye, gold. How did you make it? Eh?
You know that I am experiencit in alchemy. You may talk to
me as one expert to another. How did you make it?
SETON With the aid of a powder, sire. I call it the powder of projection.
KING I see. And this powder, is it common in Scotland?
SETON. To tell you exactly, I do not know sire, for alchemy is contrary to
law in Scotland and I have not conferrit with any other alchemists,
although I know that they exist.
KING I see.

(Enter Alberto with a glass of spring water.)

Thank you Alberto.

(Alberto gives the water to Seton.)

I thank you.

KING May much shame be visitit upon me for I have forgot to offer you
something to eat.
SETON Your Majesty I...
KING Now, let me see, we have sweetmeats from Saxony, spicit sausage
from Solesia and succulent black olives from Provence. Or
perhaps you would prefer a simple Bohemian dish of potatoe,
cabbage and rye bread? What say you Alexandre?
SETON I thank you, sire, but I fear my stomach would revolt to such
culinary riches.
KING You may go Alberto.

(Exit Alberto)

KING This powder, Alexandre, how came you be it?
SETON I manufacturit the powder at home sire.
KING I see. As simple as that, eh?
You will make gold for me tonight Alexandre!
SETON Sire, I cannot.
KING Cannot? How so?
SETON The powder is finishit.
KING Finishit? Finishit? But you had some but lately.
It is all gone, sire.
KING Do not lie to me Scotchman!
SETON Sire it is the truth.
KING (Very angry) I do not believe you!

(Pause)

I am sorry. Pray forgive me.
I am rushing things forward in too great a haste.
No doubt you are tired and would wish to relax. Perhaps
I can help you. Listen to me Alexandre. I have exquisite
concubines here in the palace skilled in the art and practice
of love. They come in all shapes, all sizes, all colours.
Dark skinned beauties with flashing eyes from Egypt
and Persia or tall fair goddesses with golden limbs from
Denmark and the Kingdom of Sweden. All these women
have learned their trade under priests and Cardinals in the
Vatican's own bawdy house.
What say you Alexandre, what think you?

SETON I thank you sire and I am sorely temptit but I have
already wife and children back in Scotland and one
day I hope to return.

KING A devotit man of the family, eh? Your resolve is admirable
but you may yet be temptit. We shall see. We shall see.
This powder of yours, Alexandre. If indeed as you say,
it be finishit, is it possible that you make any more?

SETON More?

KING Aye. More powder.

SETON I am not certain that I can sire.

KING How so?

SETON I have not the ingredients here in Bohemia.

KING Ingredients? The ingredients are no problem whatever.
I have everything you could wish for right here in the palace.
I will put all my implements at your disposal. Tell me what
you require!

SETON I think I can remember the recipe.

KING Good! Go ahead!

SETON First purge mercury with salt and vinegar.

KING Mercury, salt, vinegar. We have all three.

SETON Sublime it with vitriol and saltpetre.

KING There is plenty vitriol and saltpetre.

SETON Dissolve the mixture in aqua fortis.

KING Yes, yes. I can get aqua fortis.

SETON Sublime it again, Calcine it and fix it. Dissolve sal
ammoniac in spirit of mercury.

KING Yes.

SETON Distill in vinegar of the sages. Heat in harsh vinegar and allow
to putrefy.

KING All this we have.

SETON Allow it to dry and the powder results!

KING Good. No sulphur, eh? That surprises me.
That must be where I have gone wrong in the past.
When can you start?

SETON Majesty I...

KING Forgive my impatience. There is so much to do. So much
to be achievit here in Bohemia. You and I, together Alexandre.
Together we will take the world by storm. We will make gold
plates and challices, golden goblets and golden bowls, gold swords
and scabbards, golden bows and golden arrows, gold carriages,
yea and even golden palaces. Then all the Kings and Queens of
Europe who now laugh at me and pour scorn upon my dreams shall
eat their words and be consumit with jealousy. And King
Rudolph of Bohemia will then be king indeed! Nay, King of
Kings. What do you say?

SETON Sire, I am much impressit with your grand design, but I am not certain that it is the best use of my talents.

KING What do you mean? You would I assure you be richly rewardit. A summer house in the palace grounds, a winter house in the Kingdom of Naples. Servants to attend on you. A pair of stallions from Arabia and naturally as much of the gold as it was your desire to possess.

SETON I thank you sire, and I am much flatterit by your kindness, but....

KING But? But what?

SETON But as I am sure you are aware, there is implicit in the art of alchemy certain terms and conditions behoven to the adept.

KING Conditions! What conditions?

SETON Certain moral obligations.

KING Be more precise!

SETON Your majesty must know.

KING Pray tell me!

SFTON The obligation that the art be usit for moral purposes and not squanderit in pursuit of idle luxuries.

KING What moral purposes?

SETON To put onself in the service of the poor, to benefit mankind, to act at all times with humility, to serve always the sick and needy, to shine the light in the darkest corners where it is most urgently requirit, to act with due consideration and without malice toward men. These are the true obligations of the adept.

KING So, Mister Seton, what are you saying?

SETON Sire, I...

KING Do you refuse to make more powder?

SETON Sire, I will do my best. I can do no more.

KING Good. I am glad. I am glad for your own sake. How long will it take you?

SETON Three days perhaps. Four maybe.

KING Excellent, excellent! Then today I shall send messengers to the courts of Poland and Saxony to invite the Kings and Queens to a feast to witness the miracle of transmutation. Meanwhile, is there nothing you would desire?

SETON There is one thing sire.

KING And what is that?

SETON I desire to sit immersit in a tub of warm water to cleanse my flesh.

KING Say no more! It is done!
Alberto! Alberto!

(Enter Alberto)

ALBERTO Sire.

KING Prepare a tub for Mister Seton.

ALBERTO Aye, sire. (To Seton) This way sir.

(Exeunt.)

KING Now at last true greatness is within my grasp.

'Gold' An alchemical adventure.

A play by Andrew Dallmeyer

Act II. Scene 3.

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SCENE 3

The Palace

(Enter courtiers.)

HERALD My lords, ladies and gentles, pray silence for the King and Queen of Poland, her Royal Highness Queen Catherine and his Royal Highness King Klaus.

(Fanfare. Enter the King and Queen.)

My lords, ladies and gentles, pray silence for the King and Queen of Saxony, her Royal Highness Queen Gertrude and his Royal Highness King Frederick.

(Fanfare. Enter the King and Queen)

My lords, ladies and gentles, pray silence for his Majesty King Rudolph the Second of Bohemia.

(The King is led in by Alberto.)

KING First we wish to thank you all for coming to the feast. As I am sure you will agree we have already eaten royally, as befits our state.

ALL Aye, aye!

KING To your royal highnesses in particular do we extend our special greetings. You have travellit far to be with us and your presence makes this day the more memorable.

ALL Aye, aye!

KING All that now remains for me is to introduce the piece-de-resistance of the evening, that rare and precious deed, that feat of heavenly alchemy, from that enchantit kingdom of mountains and forests in the North, ladies and gentles, the master magician and alchemist, Mister Alexander Seton.

(Applause. Enter Seton)

Your Royal Highness, ladies and gentles, I have here a small piece of lead. Pray take and hold it to see that it be lead!

(He hands it to the King of Poland who inspects it and passes it round.)

POLAND I agree that it be lead.
QUEEN I would not know lead if I saw it.
POLAND Do not show your ignorance!
SAXONY We agree that it be lead.

(They hand it back.)

SETON Now stir I the flame with the bellows thus.
KING Watch you! It will amaze!
POLAND Is it trickery then?
KING No, no! There is no conjuring or counterfeit.
POLAND (with sarcasm) Ah! Tis then a miracle.
KING Mock not! Be patient and you will see.
POLAND I fear that I can scarcely wait!
QUEEN Patience never was your strong point!
SETON Now add I the metal to let it melt.

(He places the lead inside the crucible.)

POLAND You know that I am not easily deceivit?
QUEEN I know nothing of the kind.
POLAND A man came to me the other day with what he
claimit was a ruby from the East. He wantit
five hundred gold pieces for it. I held it up
against the light and could immediatly see that
it was nought but a piece of red tintit glass.
I told the man in no uncertain terms what he
could do with his ruby.
KING Pray silence Poland! You irk me with your prattle
QUEEN Well said!
SETON Now add I the powder of projection new manufacturit
here in Bohemia.

(He does so.)

I mix the powder with the thick hot fistula.
POLAND Alchemy be damned! Tis nought but an
odious form of cookery!
KING Watch and attend Poland! You will soon
eat your words!
POLAND I once had a cook who stole from my clothes
chest. She gave all my finest furs to her
husband. She did not deceive me for long
however. One day I discoverit her with her
hand in the chest. I orderit her hand removit
from the wrist.
KING Cease Poland or else I shall order you gaggit!
Go to it, Seton! Go to it!
SETON Now will the mixture be transformit to gold.

(A pause)

Be transformit to gold.

(A very long pause.)

KING What is this?

SETON Nothing.
KING Nothing? How nothing?
SETON Sire, nothing comes.
KING Be warnit Seton. No good will come of
'nothing comes'. Keep stirring!

(Another pause. Poland starts to laugh.)

POLAND See! What did I tell you? See!
KING Shut your mouth Poland! Keep stirring!
POLAND You are highly offensive Bohemia! Besides, you
cannot fool me. I never have and I never will
believe alchemy to be other than sleight of hand.
You know what is the matter with you Bohemia? You
ar too easily gulled.
SETON Still nothing sire.
KING This is deliberate. Add more powder!
SETON But there is no more sire.
KING No more? No more? Imbecile! Cretin!
How dare you do this dastardly deed? It is deliberate!
Let me lay, my hands on you.
Come, cane. I will punish you for this.
Come, come. Where are you? where are you Seton?

(He lurches to where he last heard
Seton's voice. He lunges at Seton.
Seton naturally moves aside. The
King crashes to the ground.)

KING Come, come you coward!
POLAND Stop, Bohemia, stop!
SETON Sire, this is too foolish.
KING Ah! Now I have you.
POLAND Stop Bohemia! You will suffer serious injury.

(Once more the King lunges at Seton.
Once more Seton moves aside.
The courtiers are unsure as to how
they should respond.)

SETON Sire, I beseech you!
KING Ah! Now I have him.

(He lunges once more. Seton steps
aside. The king crashes into the fire,
burning his arm. He cries out in pain.)

KING Take him away! Throw him in the dungeon!

(Pause.)

Take him away!

(Two courtiers move forward to remove Seton.)

I do most humbly apologise to all of you. It
would appear that I have invitit you all here

under false pretences. This banquet is now over.
POLAND Hah! So much for alchemy.

(All disperse. The King lets out an exasperated yell.)

KING Damn him! Damn him!
A thousand curses on his blasted head! To be mortified in front of all my guests. To see all Poland's sneering justified. What shame is now descended on this Kingdom! What ignominy is now alighted on my crown. Now all my grand designs are left in ruins and all my dreams of power turn to dust.

(Enter the jailer.)

JAILER Your majesty.
KING What now?
JAILER Seton is in the dungeon as instructed.
KING Good!
JAILER Will he require attention sire?
KING He will indeed.
JAILER And what form should this attention take?
KING Drive a spike through his hands and feet! That should keep him occupied.
JAILER I will sire.
KING. Good. Go to it! We will soon see how human this master magician will suddenly become. Oh and jailer?
JAILER Yes sire.
KING Send the Lady Isolde in to see me!
JAILER I will sire.

(Exit the jailer.)

ALBERTO Sire, the punishment seems somewhat harsh.
KING Harsh? Not harsh enough.
Leave me Alberto! I wish to be alone.
ALBERTO Yes, sire. As you wish.

(Exit Alberto)

KING What torment to be forever in the dark!

(Enter Lady Isolde)

ISOLDE You sent for me your Majesty?
KING I did indeed. Come here Isolde!
I wish to touch you. Come here!

(Reluctantly Isolde moves forward.)

I am sorely in need of some distraction. Do you understand me?
ISOLDE I do sire.
KING Good. Then let us not delay.

(A scream is heard from offstage. It is Seton.)

ISOLDE Is that the alchemist?

KING It is.

ISOLDE You are too hard on him.

KING Not you as well! He has caused me deep humiliation in front of all my guests.

(A second scream is heard.)

KING Madam, it gives me no pleasure I assure you. In fact, quite to the contrary. I find it most distressing. Come here!

ISOLDE Sire, I....

KING Come here! The flesh, the flesh!

(A third scream.)

KING Such soft flesh.

ISOLDE Poor man! How can you tolerate so fearful a sound?

KING Ha has failit me and so must pay the price.

(A fourth scream.)

ISOLDE Pray give the order to halt sire. It is too much to bear.

KING It becomes you not to petition on his behalf. To the bedchamber Madam where your skills may be seen to best advantage. Come away, come away!

(Isolde runs off in tears.)

Isolde! Where are you?

Isolde! Isolde!

(The King runs off.)

'Gold' An alchemical adventure.

A play by Andrew Dallmeyer

Act I. Scene 4.

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SCENE 4

In the dungeon

Seton sits on the floor. His hands and feet are crudely bandaged. A guard stands outside the barred gate of the cell.

SETON (With great difficulty). Talk! Talk to me!

Will you not talk to me? (Pause)

Perhaps you cannot speak. Perhaps you have been orderit not to communicate. Water! Have you water? (Pause.)

I would not thank you for food but a drop of water would be greatly appreciatit. What say you? (Pause.)

Nothing. So be it. Would you mind if I were to talk to you?

It would help to take my mind of the pain.
Are you a married man I wonder? Married or single? What a wonderful thing is a wife! What is become of my beloved Ann? It will be spring time now in Port Seton. Perhaps she will have employit some assistance for the sewing of seeds. What say you? I hope she will not have attemptit it all on her own. Perhaps it is one of those miraculous mornings where everything appears to be bursting at the seams. Sea buckthorn breaking, curlews calling, spring tides filling the rock pools to o'er flowing. All along I was living in Paradise had I but been able to see it and grasp it! And there, in the trees, stands my good, sturdy house. And inside my house there stands my beloved. Perhaps by the fireplace, her eyes downcast, attending to duties. Oh Ann! Oh Ann! How I wish now that I had told you more often how much I love you. Oh Ann! Perhaps all this is but wishful thinking. Perhaps she will have given me up for lost. Marriet again. Or been houndit from home by Meenister Wardlaw. But why should I torture myself with these thoughts? Have I not pain enough as it is? One thing is for certain. I rue for ever the unfortunate day when I startit to dabble in the alchemical arts. I must try to stand. If I do not, then I fear that I may never walk again.

(He tries to rise.)

Do you know what pain is?
I thought that I did, but now I know that I did not.

(Enter King, led by Alberto.)
(The guard stands to attention and unlocks the door.
The King enters the cell.)

KING Leave us Alberto!

ALBERTO Yes, sire.

(Exit Alberto.)

KING Tell me, Mister Seton, how are you to-day? (Pause)
What? Not speaking?
Come, come! It is surely not as bad as all that.

SETON It is worse.

KING What! Are you lying on the floor?
Seton? Allow me to assist you to your feet.

SETON I cannot stand. I have recently tryit.

KING It is customary for commoners to stand when speaking to royalty. To stand or to kneel. Lying down is scarcely acceptable. However, in view of the unusual circumstance, it might be overlookit on this occasion.
You know, of course, why you are punishit? You are punishit for deliberate failure.

SETON But I did not fail deliberately.

KING Did you follow the usual procedure?

SETON I did.

KING And the ingredients. What of the ingredients?

SETON As far as I could tell they were identical.

KING Then why did you fail?

SETON I know not.
KING Still obstinate!
SETON Still in the dark!
KING I see! Look you here. I have now at my disposal both your method and recipe and I therefore propose to try for myself. Is there anything else that I need to know before attempting my own transmutation!
SETON Indeed there is! Your attitude of mind is all important. Success comes only with endless devotion.
KING (Very angry) There you go again! I am warning you Seton! What are you implying? What are you saying? That I have not the mental capacity for this? You arrogant, stupid, vain creature! You think that you are the only one in the world with this sort of talent, this (kind of) power? What makes you so special? Answer me that!
What make you so singular among men? Tell me!

(Pause)

Seton, why are you crying? Seton?
SETON Because I feel your pain as well as my own.
KING I will go now and try out the powder. If it does not work this time I will consider that you have failed me once again and that further treatment will unfortunately be necessitated. I am told that our wrack is quite exceptional in its brutality.
Alberto!

(Enter Alberto)

Good day to you Mister Seton. You will be hearing from me once again.

(Alberto leads the King out. The guard locks the door.)

SETON How can any man be so misguided?

(Enter Meg disguised as a guard)

MEG (In a man's voice) My turn for duty. I have had orders to relieve you early. Have you the keys?

(The guard gives Meg the keys and exits.)

MEG Alexander:
SETON Mm?
MEG Tis I! Meg!
SETON Meg?
MEG Aye. Can you hear me?
SETON Meg?
MEG Can you hear me?
SETON I can. But I cannot believe it.
Meg! How did you get in here?
MEG I have no time to tell you. Quick! On your feet!
SETON I cannot walk.
MEG You can and you must! I will assist you. We must get you to the courtyard. There a horse awaits you. But three hours ride should take you to safety. You must head for

Saxony. There you will be safe.
SETON But...
MEG Do not ask questions! Here. I will help you.
SETON God bless you Meg! Bless you! Ah! My poor feet.
MEG It is not too far.
SETON It is almost unbearable.
MEG 'Tis nothing to what awaits you tomorrow if you are still here.
I have heard the guards talk of the wrack. I have hidden my skirts
nearby in my sack and will soon be a woman once more.
SETON Will not you come with me?
MEG I am sure that I will not be. Besides I have decided to stay here
in Prague and open a stall in the Street of the Alchemists. Herbal
remedies. I like it much here. There are mountains nearby.
Come on man! That's it! Go steady! Go steady! I will
soon have you out of this place.
SETON Meg! Have you water?
MEG Outside in my sack.
SETON God bless you!
MEG Go steady!
SETON God bless you!

(They stagger out.)

(Galloping noise and sea sound to denote the passage of time.)

'Gold' An alchemical adventure.

A play by Andrew Dallmeyer

Act II. Scene 5.

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SCENE 5.

Back at Seton's House. The room is empty.

(Distant barking. After a few moments Seton enters the room.
He is limping badly. He moves to the fireplace. He sits

beside

the fireplace. There is no fire burning. All the vessels and
vials have been cleared away. A pause. Enter Ann. She
carries a basket of sticks. She drops the basket in

astonishment.)

ANN Alexander. Can it be true?
Or do my eyes deceive me?
SETON 'Tis true, Ann. 'Tis true.
ANN Oh Alexander!

(She runs to him. They embrace)

But look at the state you are in man.
SETON I am weary, that is all.
ANN How thin you are grown! How pale and sickly!
SETON At least I am still alive Ann.
ANN Oh Alexander! What has become of you?
Where have you been? Did you arrive at Prague?
SETON I did indeed.

ANN And was it all that you expectit it to be?
SETON It was not the Utopia I hopit it would be.
ANN Indeed?
SETON No, Ann. It was nought but a nightmare.
ANN A nightmare? How so?
SETON It is a long story and a distressing one too.
How long have I been gone?
ANN More than a year.
SETON And are you still faithful to me Ann?
ANN How can you even ask such a thing.
SETON I had though that you might have given me up for lost
and weddit again.
ANN I knew that you would return one day. How could I
ever marry another?
Sit you down man. Sit you down!
You look as though you are sorely in need of a rest.
SETON How are the children?
ANN They are both in good spirits.
They have misit their father. Helen has had lately a
touch of fever but nothing too serious.
SETON And how is the farm?
ANN I have coppit as well as I might. I have had help from John
Ramsay. Will you not sit? I will fetch you some food. Some
bread and some broth. Sit you down man! Sit you down!

(He moves with difficulty)

Why Alexander! What is the matter with your legs?
SETON It is nothing.
ANN Then why do you walk in that crabbity manner?
SETON I am crampit and stiff. That is all.
ANN Sit down (He does so) That is better.
Now take off your boots!
SETON I do not think that I had better.
ANN If it be the smell that worries you, have no fear on that account.
I am usit to smells. Take off your boots!
SETON I will do it later.
ANN Now, man, now! Here, let me help you.

(She removes his boot. She gasps in horror at the wound.)

Oh Alexander may the good Lord preserve me!
How terrible! How terrible! And right
through the foot too. How came this about?
Was it an accident?
SETON It was no accident. I was imprisonit and torturit.
ANN Oh my poor belovit! And the other foot too?
SETON Aye. The other foot too.
ANN Take off your boot! I will fetch warm water.
At least the wounds may be baithit and annointit.

(She goes off. Seton removes his other boot. Ann
re-enters with a bowl of warm water. She kneels at his
feet, and washes them.)

ANN For what offence were you so cruelly torturit?
SETON For failing to transmute in front of the King.

ANN And is this an offence in Bohemia?
SETON He felt that I was doing it deliberately but truth to tell I
 tried as best I could. He would not believe me though I told
 him the truth. It was only through the goodness and courage
 of others that I managed to escape and come safely back home.
ANN Oh Alexander my poor belovit. Nothing can touch you now.
 Nothing can touch you. Put your arms around me!
SETON I fear that I cannot. Not as you would wish, for my hands are
 likewise scarrit and markit.
ANN Let me see! This is too tragic! Too tragic for words.
 (She starts to cry.) Forgive me my tears.
 Such a mingling of joy and sorrow has left me much confusit.
SETON There, there Ann. There, there.
 My wounds are already much healit. There, there. I am home,
 Ann. I am home. There, there.

'Gold' An alchemical adventure.

A play by Andrew Dallmeyer

Act II. Scene 5b.

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SCENE 5b

Street in Port Seton

(Various passers by.)

Enter Seton. He walks with difficulty. Enter Mister Sibbet.)

SIBBET Weil, weil, weil. And look whi it isne! If it isne Alexander
 Seton hissel'!

I thought yid left the country fir good.

SETON Aye. So did I.

SIBBET And are ye still meddlin' round wi' the alchemy then?

SETON No. Not so much of late.

Are you still torturing, innocent creatures for pleasure and profit?

SIBBET You're a queer bastard Seton so ye are, so ye are tae. Here, let's
 shake hauns man and let bygones be bygones.

(He offers his hand to Seton.)

SETON (After a pause) Very well.

(They shake hands.)

SIBBET Come one, Sandy man, it canne pain ye that much. Weil, I'll
 be seein' ye. Fare ye weil, fare ye weil.

(Exit Sibbet. Enter Auld Nrs. Nesbitt.)

Mrs. NESBITT Aye, aye, aye. And how are ye keepin' son, eh? How's
 yoursel'?

SETON Truth to tell, I could scarcely be worse.

Mrs. NESBITT Good. That's good. Im gey glad to hear you're weil but I'm
 no

that weil mysel'. I'm sufferin' wi ma legs agin. I was gangin oot fur a loaf o' breid when aw o' a sudden there's a sharp stabbin pain in ma hip which fair left us breathless. Mind you, its better the day.

Am I right in thinkin' you've bin awa'? You've bin awa' fra here?

SETON Aye, you are right Mrs. Nesbitt.

Mrs. NESBITT Aye, I thought so. And where hae ye bin if ye dinne mind us eskin'?

SETON I have been to Hell and back.

Mrs. NESBITT Good. That's good. It'll hae bin a nice change fur ye. Weil, I

had better be off on ma road. I'll mebe see ye later son.

SETON Aye. Mebe, mebe.

(Exit Mrs. Nesbitt.
Various passers by.
Exit Seton.)

'Gold' An alchemical adventure.

A play by Andrew Dallmeyer

Act II. Scene 6.

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SCENE 6

Seton's house

(Seton sits in front of the fire, which is now lit.)

ANN Did you know that Mister Hadden had died since you have been away?

SETON Mm?

ANN Mister Hadden.

SETON What of him?

ANN He has died only lately. Do you listen to nothing of what I say?

SETON I am sorry Ann.

(Pause)

ANN Andrew Craig is now weddit too. To Mister Henderson's eldest daughter. I cannot rightly remember her name. Can you?

SETON Mm? No I am afraid that I cannot.

ANN What is the use? I might just as well be talking to the cowshed wall!

SETON I am sorry, my dear, but I am somewhat distractit.

ANN You must find yourself some amusement Alexander.

You cannot sit here day after day for you will start to fester and rot. There are plenty of small jobs which are requiring attention.

SETON I am afraid that I am no longer of much value, Ann, having neither the use of my hands nor my feet.

ANN You must exercise your hands and your feet Alexander.

Only thus may you gain your old skills back.

(Pause)

SETON You remember the meinister?
ANN Mm?
ANN Meinister Wardlaw.
SETON I do indeed.
ANN He went off to another parish but a few weeks after you had left Port Seton.
SETON Really? It all seems so long ago.
ANN The kirk is much changeit in attitude now. The practice of alchemy is no longer considerit to be such a serious crime.

(Pause)

That night when he callit round, he never returnit. I think he was but trying to frighten you. I still have all your vials and your vessels storit in the hallway. See, I will fetch them. Perhaps you may consider to use them again.
SETON I fear that I no longer have the desire.
ANN You may change your mind. See, I will fetch them.

(Exit Ann. She returns a few seconds later with a box full of pots etc. She places it by the fire.)

ANN Well, it is there if you want it. I must go now to fetch the children. I will not be long away.
SETON Where are they gone Ann?
ANN Who?
SETON The children.
ANN I have already told you Alexander. They are gone to Jeane Glassfurd's. Do you listen to nothing of what I say?

(She goes out. Seton stares at the box long and hard. Then, with great difficulty, he picks up the crucible and places it over the fire. Slowly, he places more pots around the fireplace.)

SETON Now, to begin again. At the beginning. Is hereby undertaken in the year of our Lord sixteen hundred and two, attempt at transmutation number one.
What a long hard road stretches before me. What a long, hard road.

(Slowly he starts to work once more)

First purge mercury with salt and vinegar.

(The lights fade.)