Rhodon and Iris

Rhodon and Iris

To the Right Worshipful Mr. Nicholas Bacon of Gillingham, Esquire

Noble sir,

Considering your true affection to poesy, which no doubt proceeds from your singular perfection in that art—seeing also how fervently you are addicted to a speculation of the virtues and beauties of all flowers—I could not choose but present you with the patronage of this dramatical piece, bringing this small sacrifice to the altar of your worth as the little birds, having naught else, were wont to bring their feathers, and the bees their wax, to the Oracle of Apollo.

> Yet though the work doth crave nor bays nor cedar,
> But the mild censure of a gracious reader,
> This to the proudest critic I dare tell:
> It fears nor frankincense nor mackerel,
> Nor terrible tobacco, that consumes
> Atlantic volumes in his smoth'ring fumes.

But howsoever this small pittance may seem unworthy your acceptance, yet expecting to find your worth a protection for my weakness, I repose myself in an assured hope of your favor and rest till a more real occasion may make you a more true owner of my service.

Yours really, Ralph Knevet

To His Much Respected Friends, the Society of Florists

Gentlemen,

To you I am to speak of the fairest of vegetals, flowers, the minions of the spring, and for their beauties, deserving the title of terrestrial stars, being of such excellency that—if you will believe the asseveration of the wisest and the best of the sons of men—you must grant that the wisest and happiest prince that ever was, in all his glory, was not like one of them. And did not the omnipotent architect of the universe place his protoplast in a garden, as being the most convenient and pleasant habitation for man, as yet unstained with disobedience and abstaining from the forbidden fruit? And was not this Eden so holy and pure a place that Adam could no longer be tenant there than he kept his innocency? If I should expatiate in the commendation of these glorious creatures, I fear I should be brought into a maze whence I could not easily extricate myself; therefore I will refer you that are desirous to be industrious in the indagation of their virtues and beauties to those large volumes that are now extant, wherein their natures are amply and exactly described. Now as concerning your feast, quod multi infectis oculis conspiciunt. 'Tis true, many sanctimonists, that like the men of China think themselves wiser than all the world beside, do inveigh against it, how justly I know not; but as for my part, if I did think it might be any way prejudicial, either to politic or moral society, I should detest it as deeply as the most zealous heteroclite of them all. If it had any affinity with Bacchanalian riot, if Gluttony and Drunkenness ever found any entertainment there, I should utterly loath to name it. But since it is a meeting so civil, so unspotted, that Malice herself, had she a brazen face, might blush to detract from it—since it is a feast celebrated by such a conflux of gentlemen of birth and quality, in whose presence and commerce, I think, your city's welfare partly consists—I cannot but commend it, though not so highly as it deserves, in spite of Ignorance or Envy.

But some there be that are so pure and sage,

That they do utterly abhor a stage,
Because they would be still accounted holy,
And know, the stage doth oft bewray their folly.
You could but wonder to see what distaste
They took to see a hypocrite uncased:
Oh had they power, they would the author use
As ill as Bacchus' priests did Orpheus.

These, out of their malicious discretion—having no other way to satisfy their unjust envy—by mere misprisions, and under pretence that I should abuse a corporation, would fain engage me in your city's hatred, which although I account it one of the meanest disasters that can betide, yet I should think myself an unworthy man to do anything worthy of their hatred. But whereas they accuse me for taxing of some private persons, I am content to refer this controversy to the arbitrament of any that is ingenious. But this, as I tender my own reputation and Truth herself, I must tell ye, that should I spy villainy shelter herself under a scarlet gown, I durst be so bold as to spurn her with the left foot of contempt, though not be so prodigal of that small store the Muses have allotted me as to spend a line upon so despicable a subject.

To the Book and His Worthy Friend, the Author

Disperse and vindicate thy maker's merits,
Late disesteemed by lynx-eyed censuring spirits,
Whose captivated judgements now may see
In this clear glass their own deformity,
Whose malice found no cause to disrespect
Thy worth, but 'cause it passed their intellect.
My barren Muse cannot to life set forth
Thy abstruse poesy, learning, and worth;
Th'abilities which in thy bosom lie
Will be admired of posterity.

Were't thou but truly known, thy worth would raise
Thee and thy Muse: best poets would with bays
Crown thy rich temples and maugre thy will,
Would place thee highest on Parnassus hill.
Blessed be their names, thy nectar genius nourish:
By such, dejected poesy shall flourish.
    Let no Agnostus dare to read thy lines,
    Th'are made for those can judge of high designs.

In unknown waters lest I wade too far,
Let thy bright rising sun eclipse my star.

Richard Peart

To His Friend the Author

May none but Phoebus kiss thy lines with sight,
                He'll do thee right.
'Tis not for mortals once to dare to scan,
                Thy height 'bove man.
This speaks thy fellowship with supreme gods,
                There's naught puts odds
But life's eternity: tush, thy lines shall be
A saintlike canon of thy memory.

Be bold then to the world, and dumb that tongue
                That dares thee wrong.
Yet thus give leave to vulgar brains to clap
                Agnostus' cap
Upon their heads, whose brains do much less crave,
                Than I deprave.
Scorn blast their dwellings in simplicity
That spit their poison: none shall venom thee.

William Denny

To His Friend the Author

I cannot but admire this work of thine,
Right worthy author, that methinks each line
Should gain attention from a well tuned ear,
And please the eye of any shall appear
That apprehends it: always I'll attend
To wish this work well, as a faithful friend.

John Mingay

In Librum

En Metamorphosis dispar descendit in orbem
Illi, quam prisco descripsit tempore Naso:
Humanas vertit formas in florea Naso
Corpora: sed noster contra floralia vestit
Corpora forma hominum, cantandus laude Poeta.
> Pingis (Naso) tuam Metamorphosin Latiali
> Ample stilo: Nostrum hunc pellexit at Anglica penna.

Anglica penna vehat sublimis ad aethera pennis
Angelicis Anglum, qui tanta et talia finxit
Hanc Metamorphosin noster beet Author, et omnes
Applaudant docti: veterem qua Naso beavit
Voce suam, canat et redimitus tempora lauro.
> Iamque opus exegi, quod nec Iovis ira, nec ignis,
> Nec poterit ferrum, nec edax abolere vetustas.

M.S.

Rhodon and Iris

Prologue

Candid spectators, you that are invited
To see the lily and the rose united:
Consider that this comedy of ours,
A nosegay, is composed of sundry flowers,
Which we selected with some small expense
Of time to please each one that hath a sense.
But if this glorious Cynic crown contains
A head that wants a competence of brains,
We could desire his absence, and be glad
That one more wise his seat or standing had.
Because experience shows that such as he,
The greatest enemies to science be,
For what the noddy cannot understand,
He will seek to disparage underhand,
Branding eternal lines with black disgrace
Because they do his numbers smooth surpass.
For this bold critic would have the world know it,
That he no small fool is, though a small poet.
But with Icarian wings, why strives he thus
To mount Parnassus tops with Pegasus?
When 'tis most meet that he with asses meek,
His pasture at the mountain's feet should seek,
On thistles wild, and brakes there let him knabble,
While Pegasus does make the skies his stable.
But you, judicious friends, that well descry
The strength and worth of noble poesy,
That can discreetly judge of what is done:
We crave your favor and attention,
And shall applaud the fortune of our Muse
If ought worth your acceptance we produce.

Act 1, Scene 1

The scene is Thessaly. *Enter Poneria and Agnostus.*

Agnostus

Is the world's eye not yet asleep?

Poneria

Hath Jove not yet put on his starry nightcap?
No. Nor Juno her spangled smock?

Agnostus

What, hath Hesperus forgot to light heaven's tapers up?
Or be the chariot wheels of Night o'erloaden with the leaden weights of sleep,
That she delays to throw her misty veil upon the face of things?

Poneria

Blind Ignorance, that grop'st in Cimmerian darkness,
That liest enveloped in the shades of everlasting night,
That want'st those glorious spectacles of nature,
Those crystalline spheres that should illumine
Thy microcosmos:
Why dost thou thus malign the guiltless light,
She being the fairest creature that nature ever made?

Agnostus

I hate her because she is light. I say she is
The mistress of disquiet and unrest, and breeds
More troubles in the world than one of my young
Hungry lawyers doth in a commonwealth,

Or a schismatical self-conceited coxcomb in an ancient corporation.
Oh that I could Ulysses-like burn out the eye
Of that celestial Polypheme,
Or raise dull Chaos from Demogorgon's cell
To quench the world's unnecessary luminaries.

Poneria

Bold Ignorance, thou idol of these times
That o'er a woolen wit oft wear'st a satin cap,
And sometimes at our Bacchanalian feasts
Appear'st as brave as a canonical saint
In a calendar: I hug thy resolution, stupid devil,
That dost with generous malice amply supply
What is defective in thy intellect.
But if thou'lt give my faithful counsel leave
For to divert the torrent of thy wrath,
Then lend a facile ear to my advice.
Bend not thy bootless hate against that orb of light,
Whose mighty flames will scorch the impious wings
Of those nocturnal birds that shall attempt
With talons most profane to injure his bright beauty.
A meaner object than this shall satisfy
Thy wrath, and my displeasure.
This is the day whereon the new Society of
Florists have determined to keep their annual festivals,
Whose pompous celebration hath wont to eclipse
All feasts besides. Th'Olympian games
And Isthmian plays, with all those ludicrous
And ludibrious combats, are but mere puppet plays
To this grand feast, for Art and Nature both have tried
To make this feast surpass all feasts beside.
Unite thy force with mine, then ten to one

We shall disturb their mirth ere we have done.

Agnostus

Then mischief lend me all thy guilty nerves.
Let flames of boundless fury quite dispel
Lethean dullness from my clouded brain.
Assist our great design, ye subterraneous powers
That utterly abhor to view the glaring light.
Let not the weakness of my crazed intellectuals,
Nor yet this loathed deficiency of my sense,
Be prejudicial to the bent of our design.
Poneria, act thy part, for I am thine.

Exeunt.

Act 1, Scene 2

Enter Rhodon and Acanthus.

Acanthus

Rhodon, my honored, soul-united friend,
Cast off that dusky melancholy veil,
Too vile a robe for thy majestic brow.
Blast not the pride of Hybla's happiness
With thy offensive passion.

Rhodon

Nay, good Acanthus, did love e'er offend any?

Acanthus

And art not thou the map of love's calamity?
Witness those crystal bowls of thy bright eyne,

Which I have seen swelled up with brinish tears,
Prepared for sorrow's bitter beverage.
Witness those frequent tempests of thy sighs,
Which made thy breast a fiery sea of dolor.
Witness those pallid cheeks, whose glorious hue
Aurora late envied, and quite despairing
To reach thy beauty's height, with Cupid treated
And him suborned to wound thy generous heart,
Which no base passion ever durst assault,
That now like pale Narcissus on the brink
Of the beguiling stream thou liest a dying.

Rhodon

I tell thee, brazen coloss, marble statue,
Whose heart Love's darts could never penetrate:
Love is the prince of all affections
And like the element of fire transcends
His brothers in activity and splendor.

Acanthus

It is a fire indeed that doth consume
All virtuous actions, that feeds upon men's souls
Like the fiend Eurynomus upon dead carcasses,
That makes the microcosmos a mere chaos.
It is the remora of all noble enterprises
And the Lernaean fen which breeds a Hydra,
Crested with a thousand inconveniences.
Let me ne'er inherit more than my father's hempland,
Or ne'er be owner of more wit than some elder brothers,
If I think not Cupid the most pernicious deity
Among all the Olympian senators.
Oh that I had but Stentor's lungs

To thunder out the vanity of that idol.

RHODON

Now I hope you have railed yourself out of breath,
And therefore I may now have time to speak.
Thus 'tis, dear friend Acanthus, I confess
That once I loved the lady Eglantine,
Whose rare endowments both of art and nature,
Well corresponding with high birth and fortune,
Did moderately attract my sincere love,
Which love conspiring with a strong desire
To see the customs of some foreign nations
And know the manners of people far remote,
Made me to greet the princely dame
With a personal visitation.
Then my indulgent stars did me advise
For to suspend my suit, whose counsel I obeyed.
But trust me, friend, thou wert too much mistaken,
To think that love had scorched or singed so much
The wings of reason that I must needs fall
And perish in the furnace of despair.
Thou art a bad constructor of my thoughts,
If that thou think'st 'tis love which makes me sad.
Yea, thou, oft-times, dost take thy marks amiss,
To think me sad. Perhaps, when as my mind—
Upraised above the sphere of terrene things—
Is ravished with celestial contemplation,
For earthly passion hath no power at all
To work upon an elevated soul.
Passions are stars to lower orbs confined,
Scorching an earthly, not a heavenly mind.
Yet am I not so much a Stoic or a stock,

To plume the pinions of th'immortal soul,
Who while she's cloistered in this cell of clay,
Moves with the wings of the affections.
But lest she, like to heedless Icarus,
Should soar too high a pitch, or like young Phaeton,
Should shape her course too low, Jove hath appointed
Wise virtue for to regulate her flight.
Of these affections, love the empress is,
Who, while she stands submiss to reason's lore,
Doth keep the fabric of the little world in frame.
Love is the genial goddess, the Lucina
Which doth produce each honorable achievement,
Which this true axiom evidently proves:
"Nobilitas sub amore iacet."
Had not the spriteful flames of love egged on
That Theban killcow mighty Hercules
To brave adventures, he, perhaps, had died
As much inglorious as did base Thersites.
Had not the fair Andromache beheld
From Trojan towers Hector's valiant acts
Among the Greeks, amid the Phrygian fields,
The gallant dames of Troy then might, perchance,
Most justly have preferred Achilles far before him.
'Tis this heroical passion that incends
The sparks of honor in each noble mind,
Making dull sluggards study industry
And animating each unlearned head
To toil in arts and liberal sciences,
Even to the high degree of rare proficiency.
Then cease, Acanthus, with thy lawless tongue,
True love's condition to malign or wrong.

ACANTHUS

Thou zealous patron of the winged boy,
Well hast thou pleaded thy blind archer's case.
Pray Jove thou mayst deserve a lusty fee
For this Herculean labor of thy tongue.

RHODON

Surcease these malapert invectives, friend.
Cupid is armed with fire and arrows keen,
To be avenged on those that shall him spleen.

ACANTHUS

When Sol shall make the eastern seas his bed,
When wolves and sheep shall be together fed;
When stars shall fall, and planets cease to wander,
When Juno proves a bawd, and Jupiter a pander;
When Venus shall turn chaste, and Bacchus become sober,
When fruit in April's ripe that blossomed in October;
When prodigals shall money lend on use,
And usurers prove lavish and profuse;
When Art shall be esteemed, and golden pelf laid down,
When Fame shall tell all truth and Fortune cease to frown,
To Cupid's yoke then I my neck will bow.
Till then, I will not fear Love's fatal blow.

RHODON

Wert thou a mere spirit, then I confess,
And think, this resolution might endure.
But so long as thy soul wears robes of earth
Laced all with veins, that o'er a crimson deep
Set forth an azure bright, needs must thy heart
Yeild to the force of Cupid's golden dart.

Exeunt.

Act 1, Scene 3

Enter Clematis.

Clematis

Oh impotent desires, allay the sad consort
Of a sublime Fortune, whose most ambitious flames
Disdain to burn in simple cottages,
Loathing a hard unpolished bed.
But coveting to shine beneath a canopy
Of rich Sidonian purple, all embroidered
With purest gold and oriental pearls,
In tessellated pavements, and gilded roofs
Supported by proud artificial columns
Of polished ivory and marble, doth love delight
There. Doth he, like a mighty tyrant, rage,
Subverting the whole edifice of reason
With his impetuous conflagration.
That this is true, the gentle shepherdess
Fair Eglantine doth evidently show,
For she, a sister to the great Cynosbatus,
Was courted lately by the shepherd Rhodon,
Whose suit she entertained with due respect,
Requiting love with love. But fate, it seems,
Not condescending that great Hymen should
Accomplish their desires, forbade the banns,
And Rhodon hath relinquished his suit
And is returned to Hybla sweet, whose flow'ry vales
Began to droop and wither in his absence.
But Eglantine remains disconsolate,

Like to a turtle that hath lost her mate.

Enter Eglantine with her lute.

See where she comes, expressing in her face
A perfect map of melancholy.
I will retire, because I well descry
She's out of love with all society.

EGLANTINE

Exit Clematis.

Address thyself sweet warbling instrument,
My sorrow's sad companion, to tune forth
Thy melancholy notes, somewhat to slake
Those furious flames that scorch my tender heart.
She sings and plays upon the lute.

Upon the black rock of despair
My youthful joys are perished quite,
My hopes are vanished into air,
My day is turned to gloomy night;
For since my Rhodon dear is gone,
Hope, light, nor comfort, have I none.

A cell, where grief the landlord is,
Shall be my palace of delight,
Where I will woo with votes and sighs,
Sweet death to end my sorrows quite;
Since I have lost my Rhodon dear,
Death's fleshless arms why should I fear?

Enter Clematis.

CLEMATIS

What time shall end thy sorrows, sweetest Eglantine?

EGLANTINE

Such grief as mine cannot be cured by time.
But when the gentle Fates shall disembogue
My weary soul, and that celestial substance free
From irksome manacles of clay, then may I find,
If not a sweet repose in blessed Elysium,
Yet some refrigeration in those shades
Where Dido and Hypsipyle do wander.

Exit Eglantine.

CLEMATIS

Thou gentle goddess of the woods and mountains,
That in the woods and mountains art adored,
The maiden patroness of chaste desires,
Who art for chastity renowned most,
Tresgrand Diana, who hast power to cure
The rankling wounds of Cupid's golden arrows:
Thy precious balsam deign thou to apply
Unto the heart of woeful Eglantine.
Then we thy gracious favor will requite
With a young kid than new fallen snow more white.

Exit.

Act 1, Scene 4

Enter Cynosbatus and Martagon.

CYNOSBATUS

My honored friend, most noble Martagon,
Who whilom didst with thy imperial power
Command the mountains proud and humble plains
Of happy Thessaly: who hath eclipsed

The splendor of thy light and clipped those wings
That did o'ershade these fields from east to west?
Each shepherd that was wont to feed his flocks
Upon these fertile meads was wont whilere
To pay the tribute of his primest lambs.
But now as one cooped in an angle up
Thou art compelled to satisfy thyself
With a small portion of that sovereignty
Which thou didst erst enjoy.

MARTAGON

Dear friend Cynosbatus, if that the world
Had been composed in a cubic form
And not orbicular—or if this globe
Were destined to be aught else than Fortune's ball,
By alterations racket-banded to and fro—
Then justly might'st thou wonder to behold
My present state, so short of my precedent height.
Nor doth this monster change bear sway alone
O'er elements, men, beasts, and plants,
But those celestial bodies that are framed
Of purer constitutions are compelled
To be obedient to her awful doom.
Rear up thy eyes unto the spangled cope
And there behold Jove's star-enchased belt,
The glittering zodiac wonderfully changed
In a few thousand years;
For those fixt stars, which like a diamond clear
Adorn the baldric of the Thunderer,
Have wandered from their former stations.
Witness the golden ram who now is gone astray
And shouldered hath the Cretan bull, and he

Those twins of Jove so sore hath butted
That they have crushed the crab and thrust him quite
Into the den of the Nemean lion.
Thus by the change of these superior bodies,
Strange alterations in the world are wrought,
Great empires maimed and kingdoms brought to naught.
And that auspicious lamp who freely lends
His light to lesser fires, the prince of generation,
Even Sol himself, is five degrees declined
Since learned Ptolemy did take his height.
But if Egyptian wizards we may trust,
Who in astrology wont to excel,
By them 'tis told that four times they have seen
That glorious charioteer flit from his place.
Twice hath he rose, they say, where now he sets,
And twice declined where he now doth rise.
If these celestial powers, whose influence
Commands terrestrial substances,
Be object to mutation, then needs must
Sublunar things submit themselves to Change.
Then wonder not, good friend Cynosbatus,
To see my state and power diminished thus.

CYNOSBATUS

'Tis true, dear Martagon, experience shows
That alteration every day brings forth
A new birth of effects.

MARTAGON

But I prithee friend, satisfy me in one thing.

CYNOSBATUS

My bosom's yours: take from that cabinet
The choicest secret that can pleasure you.
Tell me in what your will's to be resolved.

MARTAGON

There is a rumor spread through Thessaly
That your fair sister, madam Eglantine,
Shall be espoused to the shepherd Rhodon,
The prince of all the swains that dwell on Hybla.

CYNOSBATUS

From no ill grounds this rumor sprang, though
The Fates did cross what was by us intended.

MARTAGON

Then there's no expectation of thy nuptial rites?

CYNOSBATUS

No; all's dissolved.

MARTAGON

I thank my stars for that.

CYNOSBATUS

Your reason, noble friend?

MARTAGON

A kin he is to that male-spirited dame,
That stout virago, that proud shepherdess
Called Violetta, who complains of wrongs
Late suffered at my hands,
And he's the man by whom she hopes

To be avenged on me for this pretended injury.
And had he matcht your sister, sweet Eglantine,
Then might I have had cause for to suspect
Your love not to be sound, since you accepted
So great a foe of mine for your near friend.

Cynosbatus

Then I am glad the Fates would not agree
That I should lose so true a friend as thee.

Exeunt.

Act 1, Scene 5

Enter Rhodon, Anthophotus, Acanthus, Iris, and Panace.

Anthophotus

Never till now did my Hymettus flourish.
More blessed effects hath thy sweet presence wrought,
Honored Rhodon, than could have been produced
By moist-winged Zephyrus or Favonius,
Who fans our flowers with his gentle breath.

Rhodon

Thanks, good Anthophotus.

Anthophotus

Nor doth our sister Iris hold herself
Meanly engaged to you for this your gracious visit.

Rhodon

To be the meanest servant of so sweet a saint

Is the full height and scope of my ambition.

Iris

Fair sir, I wish you would be pleased t'employ
Your service on an object of more worth.

Rhodon

Dissemble not, admired shepherdess,
For thou art she that art as far beyond
That light piece of beauty, Helen of Greece,
In outward perfections as she was short of thee in inward graces.
Yea, had those fifty kings that did for her
Engage themselves in a long tedious war
Seen but the model of thy rare beauty,
Drawn by the hand of but a rude painter,
Doubtless they had their honors forfeited
And broke that sacred oath which they had ta'en.
Their work in hand they had relinquished quite
And left the walls of wretched Troy untoucht,
For each attracted with thy beauty's splendor,
No seas nor perils would have left unpast
To find thee in the furthest angle of the world.

Iris

Could my perfections, valued at the highest rate,
But countervail a dram of your great worth,
Then should I think myself born under stars
Most happy and auspicious.

Anthophotus

Surcease your compliments, dear Rhodon.
Let empty casks and hollow cymbals speak

That airy language, which unworthy is
Of your realities.

RHODON
Pardon me, gentle sir. This radiant star
My judgement's feeble eyes did dazzle so,
That I was forced to speak what passion did inform me.

Enter Messenger.

MESSENGER
Which is the shepherd Rhodon?

RHODON
I am the man.

MESSENGER
Then you are he whom Violetta greets.

RHODON
How fares my sister?

MESSENGER
This letter shall relate what I can never utter.

RHODON
Exit Messenger.
Pray Jove we have good news. Methinks I saw
A pallid horror settled in the face
Of the sad messenger. Be't good or ill,
We are resolved to see it, come what will.
He opens and reads the letter.

I, Violetta, much distressed
By Martagon my mortal foe,
Your succor humbly do request,
To set me free from servile woe.
Our flowers he hath trampled on,
Our gardens turned to thickets wild;
Our fields and meads he hath o'er-run,
That we are forced to live exiled.
We therefore do your aid implore,
Us to our freedom to restore.

Your distressed sister,
Violetta, Violetta.

'Twas for no good that the late shag-haired comet
With his erected staring looks did overlook
Our frighted flocks, who all amazed poor wretches
At such a horrid unexpected sight,
Ere Hesperus 'gan from the west to peep,
Half empty, did retire unto their folds again.
Nor were those idle fires which late we saw,
Hung like a flaming canopy above us,
When we did walk the round about our folds
To keep the werewolf from our lambs by night.
But is't possible that man should be so savage,
To vent his rage upon a silly woman?

ANTHOPHOTUS

It is no wonder gentle sir at all,
For when Prometheus formed his man of clay,
'Tis said that he did to his stomach add
The raging fury of a lion fierce.

RHODON

'Tis true, but histories report that a lion did
The suppliant Getulian virgin spare,
Scorning to make so innocent a creature
His prey or quarry.

ANTHOPHOTUS

Foul shame and infamy it is, God wot,
That manly might should women weak oppose,
Whom they by right for life ought to defend.

ACANTHUS

Rhodon, do thou but say amen, and I will in
An instant raise our spriteful youth
And lead them on with such a vigorous force
Against the most unhuman Martagon,
That we will pull the craven from his nest,
Disrobing him of all his borrowed plumes,
And repossessing Violetta of her own.

RHODON

In actions of such consequence as this,
We must not be too precipicious;
Mature deliberation must conclude
What shall be done in such a main design.
The stately steed that with a full career
Attempts to mount the brow of the steep hill
Oft breaks his wind ere he can reach the height.
But the slow snail without or harm or peril,
In time ascends unto the mountain's top,
For that true love we owe to Thessaly,
In which affection all we are engaged.

We by a friendly treaty will endeavor
To bring th'usurper to a restitution.
But if the olive branch will do no good,
Then let the scourge of war itself disclose:
They that our friendship scorn must be our foes.

ANTHOPHOTUS

And if my right hand fail to second thee,
Then for a peasant let me counted be.

Exeunt Rhodon, Anthophotus, and Iris. Panace offers to go out and is stayed by Acanthus.

ACANTHUS

Nay, stay fair nymph; I would request
A private conference with you.

PANACE

If that I could with my affairs dispense
I gladly should embrace your conference,
But my occasions bid me haste away.
Sweet sir, adieu; I can no longer stay.

ACANTHUS

Exit Panace.

I that of late was made of Scythian snow
And Hyperborean ice am now quite thawed
In the incessant flames of hot desire.
A new Vesuvius burns within my breast,
But shall I overturn those noble trophies
Which I most firmly have on virtue founded?
Or shall I singe the wings of reason so
In the outrageous flames of passion,
That I must needs fall down and perish quite
In the black hideous gulf of deep despair?

No, no, I will not;
Of this I am resolved whatso'er befall,
Or not to love too much, or not at all.

Exit.

Act 2, Scene 1

Enter Poneria and Agnostus.

Poneria

Bold foolish wickedness is that
Which walks by day, exposed to the world's eye.
Sin is the daughter of the darkest night
And therefore doth abhor to come to light.
Give me that coal black sin that can lie hid
Under the candid robes of seeming sanctity,
Which dares put out the perspicacious eyes
Of those that shall attempt to find her out.
Come dull Agnostus, let us disguise ourselves
And be prepared to act some stratagem
To eclipse the glory of these festivals.
She puts on the garment.
This robe of virtue doth belong to me;
This goodly veil shall hide my black intents.
Thus personated, I durst undertake
To rend a well-woven state in factious pieces,
To win the ears of mighty potentates,
And hoodwink kings, that they should neither see
To do what's just nor hear the piteous cries
Of those that are oppressed.
But that thou, Agnostus, mayst second my designs,
'Tis very fit thou shouldst be thus accoutered.

AGNOSTUS

My dear Poneria, I am yours.

PONERIA

Then first unto thy chin we must apply
This philosophical besom.
She puts on his beard.
Now is the old proverb really performed:
More hair than wit.
How like a senator he looks?
What a world of gravity's harbored in that beard?
Surely the world can take him for no other
Than the third Cato that should fall from heaven.
But here's the ensign of learning,
The badge of the seven liberal sciences:
Operculum ingenii, the silken case of wit,
The cap of knowledge. Clap this upon thy
Empty hogshead. Put this on and then thy head
Will become a Helicon and thy brain a Pyrene.

He puts on the cap.

AGNOSTUS

It fits me exceeding well.

PONERIA

Dost not perceive thy head begin to ache
With mere abundance of knowledge?

AGNOSTUS

Now, methinks, I could confute a college of divines,
A synod of doctors, a lyceum of philosophers.
Yet methinks my brains are not right

And somewhat too weak to maintain a paradox.

Poneria

Away fond idiot, do not conceit
That this cap can infuse anything real into thy pate,
That is incapable of all art and science.
Under the protection of this cap, thou mayst be bold
To traduce thy betters, to censure the best,
To decide controversies without discretion,
To torment all companies with thy discourse,
And weary ears of iron with thy impertinences.
Do but wear this headpiece over the coif of
Self-conceit, always provided that thou forget'st
Not to leave off a brazen face, and I dare
Undertake it, thou in a short time shalt gain
More respect—especially among plebeian coxcombs—
Than ever Pythagoras had of his auditors.

Agnostus

I am thy slave, divine Poneria,
Oh admirable rare artist that I am!

Poneria

But yet, methinks, there's somewhat else to do
To make thee more accomplished and complete.
'Slight, the political gown—I had as clean forgot it
As the time since I lost my maidenhead.
Here 'tis. Dispatch and put it on,
And then be reputed both grave,
Learn'd, and wise.
Doubtless it will become thee exceeding well.
He puts on the gown.

Now looks he not like a main stud of a corporation?

Agnostus

How heavy is the burden of authority?

Poneria

'Tis true, authority is heavy, I confess,
But not so heavy but an ass may bear't.
Since now, Agnostus, that we are well-fitted
With habits meet, to act what we intend:
Thou seeming like a grave and learned sire
Though thou indeed then that be'st nothing less,
And I like to a virtuous maiden dight
Though I all virtue deeply do abhor.
We thus disguised will all the world delude
And set the flowers at odds among themselves,
That they in civil enmities embroiled,
Shall of their pride and glories be despoiled.

Exeunt.

Act 2, Scene 2

Enter Martagon and Cynosbatus.

Martagon

To hinder the conjunction of those stars,
We must try all our skill, Cynosbatus.

Cynosbatus

I jealous am of their malign aspect,
And therefore hold it best to take away

That cause which may produce such bad effects.
For I shall never cease t'applaud his skill,
That in the shell, the cockatrice doth kill.

MARTAGON

The serpent will be hatched, I shrewdly fear,
Ere we the mischief can prevent, if thus
We should delay to act our purposes.
For late, a certain rumor through my ear
Did strike me to the heart when 'twas reported
That Rhodon on Hymettus hill was seen,
Where by Anthophotus, and his sister Iris,
He was with such solemnity received
That all surmise there is a match intended
Between the shepherd Rhodon and fair Iris.

CYNOSBATUS

If once they be conjoined in Hymen's rites,
Then all our toil's ridiculous and vain.
For Hymen's obligations are, we see,
Seldom by any cancelled, but by death.

MARTAGON

Then let us set some stratagem abroach,
The cords of their new amity to break.
The tender twig may easily be broke,
But who's so strong to bow the sturdy oak?
Our friends will say, if we procrastinate,
That like the Trojans we were wise too late.

Exeunt.

Act 2, Scene 3

Enter Eglantine alone.

EGLANTINE

Since that the gods will not my woe redress,
Since men are altogether pitiless,
Ye silent ghosts unto my plaints give ear.
Give ear—I say, ye ghosts—if ghosts can hear,
And listen to my plaints that do excel
The dol'rous tune of ravished Philomel.
Now let Ixion's wheel stand still a while,
Let Danaus' daughters now surcease their toil,
Let Sisyphus rest on his restless stone,
Let not the apples fly from Plota's son,
And let the full gorged vulture cease to tear
The growing liver of the ravisher.
Let these behold my sorrows and confess
Their pains do far come short of my distress.
Were I but lady of more wealthy store
Than e'er the sun beheld, or had I more
Than Midas e'er desired, I would, in brief,
Give all to be delivered from this grief.
Rocks of rich Indian pearl, shores paved with gems,
Mountains of gold, and empires' diadems—
These would I give, yea, and myself to boot,
Myself and these prostrating at his foot,
To enjoy him whom I so dearly love.
Aye me, fond love, that art a sweet sower evil,
A pleasant torture, a well-favored devil.

But why do I, weak wretch, prolong my grief?
Why do I live, since death affords relief?
Do thou, sweet poniard, all my sorrows ease,
That art a medicine for all grievances.
Assist my hand, thou goddess of revenge,
That on myself, I may myself avenge.

Enter Poneria and Agnostus.

PONERIA
Hold, hold thy hand, fair shepherdess.
Attempt not to commit a fact so horrid.

EGLANTINE
What Fury sent you hither, caitiffs vile,
Thus to prolong my sorrow, and my toil?

PONERIA
No Fury, but your happy genius
Brought us to these uncomfortable shades
For to prevent your mischievous intent.

EGLANTINE
Death is a plaster for all ills, they say.
What mischief then can be in death, I pray?

PONERIA
'Tis true: death is a mortal wound that cures all wounds
Of body and of mind. It is the soul's potion
That purgeth her from corporal pollution.
But you must not your own physician prove,
Not be the doctor, and the patient too.

For if thy soul be sickly and grow weary
Of this unwholesome earthly habitation,
Because this air's spissitude suits not
With her celestial constitution,
She must not like a bankrupt tenant prove,
That flies by night from an unprofitable farm
Before the term of his lease be expired,
But stay till heaven shall give her egress free
Unto the haven of rest and happiness.

EGLANTINE

Were I not plunged in a grievous plight,
Perhaps I would not think thy counsel light.

PONERIA

Art not thou the sister of Cynosbatus,
Lord of the silver mines and golden mountains?
And art not thou as fair a shepherdess
As trips upon the plains of Thessaly?

EGLANTINE

For being great, I am maligned by fate.
For being fair, I am unfortunate.

PONERIA

I know thy sorrows, sweetest Eglantine.
Thy Rhodon's absence hath wrought all thy woe,
Who now, they say, doth beauteous Iris court.
But if thou wilt make me thy instrument,
I'll undertake to break the match;
If not, renew the love which erst he bare to thee.

EGLANTINE

Do this, and I will live, Poneria,
To give thy merit ample satisfaction.
I will adore thy skill, and thee adorn
With what may make thee famous through all Thessaly.

PONERIA

Then banish all these melancholy thoughts,
And deck thyself in thy most sumptuous weeds.
Make haste unto the fane of gentle Venus;
A pair of turtles of a snowy hue,
Upon her altars offer thou to her,
And her beseech to intercede for thee
Unto her angry boy. Then shalt thou find
The god and goddess to true lovers kind.

EGLANTINE

My dear Poneria, I am truly thine.
But tell me, I prithee, what grave sire is this
That looks like one of Greece's sages?
His reverent countenance makes me surmise
That he's a man of sublime qualities.

PONERIA

He is but what he seems, fair shepherdess.
His head's the officine of art, his tongue
The oracle of truth. He is the man
Whom only Nature hath vouchsafed to make
Her privy counsellor.
Those abstruse secrets which no mortal eye
Did ever view, he plainly can descry.
He is the man that's destined to find out

That grand mysterious secret, in whose discovery
So many bold adventurous wits have perished.
I mean th'elixir, the philosopher's precious stone.
He is the man who by strange policies
Can break the strong confederacies of kings,
And overthrow more empires by his plots
Than mighty Alexander e'er did by strength.
Agnostus is his name, renowned no less
For honesty than skill in sciences.

EGLANTINE
His silence argues something extraordinary.

AGNOSTUS
Belphegor, Zazel, Astragoth, Golguth,
Machon Malortor.

Eglantine offers to fly away and is stayed by Poneria.

EGLANTINE
Aye me, Poneria.

PONERIA
Agnostus, not a word more for thy life.
Stay, stay, sweet Eglantine, and dread no harm.
This is the language which the Persian magi used
When they with their familiars did converse,
To which he is so frequently accustomed
That oft he speaks it ere he be aware.
Agnostus, vouchsafe to use your native language,
That Eglantine may know what you are.
Aside to Agnostus. I hope you know your lesson:
Twice twenty times and ten, etc.

Agnostus

Twice twenty times and ten hath Titan run
Quite through the zodiac since I begun
To converse with wise fiends, that I might get
The golden key of nature's cabinet.
By industry I got immortal fame,
For ignorance begets contempt and shame.
So perfect in the magic arts I grew,
That nature's secrets most abstruse I knew.
The spirits of air and earth did me dread,
And did at my venite come with speed.
The silly ghosts from graves I did forth call.
The earth I make to bellow, stars to fall.
The world at my great awful charms did quake,
Nature herself for very fear did shake.
To change midday to midnight, or to cause
Aestival snows, or break the viper's jaws,
Or to drive rivers back to their spring heads
And make seas stand unmoved, or to strike dead
The vernal blossom or the harvest ear.
A man would think these strange conclusions were,
But I account them of small weight. I know
The use of herbs and whatsoever grow;
The cause to the effect I can apply,
And work strange things by hidden sympathies.
I do exactly know the compositions
Of unctuous philters and love's potions;
Figures, suspensions, and ligations,
Characters and suffumigations.
For I the virtues of all simples know
From whence, effects that seem impossible I show.
The gall of shriek owls and harsh night ravens' tongues,

Guts of panthers and chameleons' lungs,
A black bull's eyes, a speckled toad's dried head,
Frankincense, camphor, and white poppy seed;
Poisonous melanthion and a white cock's blood,
Sweet myrrh, bayberries, precious balsam wood,
A hart's marrow that hath devoured a snake,
And scalps which from a wild beast's jaws we take;
The bone that lies i'th'left side of a frog,
A stone that is bitten with a mad dog.
The mandrake root, the blood of a black cat,
A turtle's liver, the brains of a bat,
Hyena's heart, the cockatrice's blood,
That are against so many evils good.
The hair of a thief that hangs on a tree;
The nails of ships that wrecked be,
The blood of a wretched man that was slain,
The eyes of a dragon and weasels' brains.
These precious simples and a thousand more
I could produce. I have them all in store.
And though they seem to men mere trifling things,
Each one, I vow, o'erweighs ransoms of kings.
The blindness of these times cannot descry
The virtues rare that in these simples lie.

Poneria

Enough, Agnostus. Now fair shepherdess,
I hope you have a fair expression
Of this learn'd man's sublime desert and art?

Eglantine

I do admire his skill and see, by hap,
Good stuff may be beneath a satin cap.

Exeunt.

Act 2, Scene 4

Enter Rhodon, Martagon, Violetta, and Acanthus.

Rhodon

Know Martagon, that as no dynasties can stand,
No empires long subsist unless they be
Supported by the columns of true equity.
So shall that government of thine decay,
Since thy oppression makes the weak a prey.

Martagon

'Tis no oppression for to punish those,
That have transgressed the laws, as I suppose.

Violetta

The laws, colossus—proud, unjust tyrant
That dost observe nor equity nor law,
But by the torrent of ambition hurried
Dost act what lawless passion prompts thee to—
What laws have I transgressed? It is thy might,
That into seeming wrong hath changed our right.
Had fortune been as just as was our cause,
We that are censured now for breach of laws,
Maugre thy vip'rous hate, had now been free,
And for thy foul injustice censured thee.

Martagon

And is your pride, virago, still so high,
That it doth overtop your misery?

Can't sorrow strike thee dumb, can no disaster,
The liberty of thy tongue overmaster?

Acanthus

Nay, be assured, proud man, not any smart
Can cure the courage of a valiant heart.
No force a heart of adamant can break,
And losers must, and shall, have leave to speak.

Rhodon

No more, Acanthus. Hear me, Martagon:
Wilt thou give Violetta what's her own?
Wilt thou restore her right and due possessions,
And make a recompense for all oppressions,
That happy peace with joy and plenty crowned,
May in the fields of Thessaly be found?

Martagon

This will I do,
When seas shall be drunk dry by Phoebus' beams,
And when the lesser stars shall drink the streams.
This will I do,
When of my life and freedom I am weary.
Non minor est virtus quam quae rere parta tueri.

Acanthus

Before this guiltless woman shall endure
Such shameful injuries, thyself assure
I'll empty all these azure rivulets
Of their vermilion streams, and quite discharge
This contemned bulk of mine of living air.
And stretched upon the gelid bed of death,

I'll to the world this epitaph bequeath:
Here lies a swain that spent his dearest blood,
To kill a tyrant for a virgin's good.

Martagon

Bold hero, do thy worst. What I have won
I ne'er will part withal till life be done.

Rhodon

Tenacious tyrant, in whose flinty heart
Nor equity nor justice ere had part,
Assure thyself thy guilty soul shall feel
Revenge's hand, armed with a scourge of steel.

Exeunt.

Act 3, Scene 1

Enter Clematis alone.

Clematis

Well, if I were but once rid of her service,
If I ever served lovesick mistress again,
I would feed all my lifetime on agnus castus
And give all the world leave to let me die a maid.
I even spoiled a good mother wit
With beating my head about these knick-knacks,
Which my mistress, madam Eglantine,
Hath enjoined me to procure her.
For now seduced by the old bawd Poneria,
She thinks to recover her old sweetheart Rhodon.
Here is a catalogue as tedious as a tailor's bill

Of all the devices which I am commanded to provide, videlicet:
Chains, coronets, pendants, bracelets, and earrings,
Pins, girdles, spangles, embroideries, rings,
Shadows, rebatos, ribands, ruffs, cuffs, and falls;
Scarfs, feathers, fans, masks, muffs, laces, and cauls;
Thin tiffanies, cobweb lawn, and farthingales,
Sweet-balls, veils, wimples, glasses, crisping pins;
Pots, ointments, combs, with poking sticks and bodkins;
Coifs, gorgets, fringes, rolls, fillets, and hairlaces;
Silks, damasks, velvet, tinsels, cloth of gold,
And tissue, with colors of a hundrethfold.

Enter Gladiolus.

But in her tires so newfangled is she,
That which doth with her humor now agree,
Tomorrow she dislikes. Now doth she swear
That a loose body is the neatest wear,
But ere an hour be gone, she will protest
A straight gown graces her proportion best.
Now calls she for a boisterous farthingale,
Then to her hips she'll have her garments fall.
Now doth she praise a sleeve that's long and wide,
Yet by and by that fashion doth deride.
Sometimes sh'applauds a pavement-sweeping train,
And presently dispraiseth it again.
Now she commends a shallow band so small,
That it may seem scarce any band at all;
But soon to a new fancy doth she reel,
And calls for one as big as a coach wheel.
She'll wear a flow'ry coronet today,
The symbol of her beauty's sad decay;
Tomorrow she a waving plume will try,
The emblem of all female lenity.

Now in her hat, then in her hair she's drest,
For of all fashions she thinks change the best.

Gladiolus

Good fellow servant, honest Clematis,
Let me conclude thy tedious tale with this:
I say the restless sea and flitting wind,
Are constant in respect of womankind.

Clematis

Nor in her weeds alone is she so nice,
But rich perfumes she buys at any price.
Storax and spikenard she burns in her chamber,
And daubs herself with civet, musk, and amber.
With limbecks, vials, pots, her closet's filled,
Full of strange liquors by rare art distilled.
She hath vermilion and antimony,
Ceruse and sublimated mercury.
Waters she hath to make her face to shine;
Confections eke to clarify her skin;
Lipsalves, and cloths of a pure scarlet dye
She hath, which to her cheeks she doth apply;
Ointments wherewith she pargets o'er her face,
And lustrifies her beauty's dying grace.
She waters for the morphews doth compose,
And many other things as strange as those.
Some made of daffodils, some of lees,
Of scarwolfe some, and some of rinds of trees,
With centaury, sour grapes, and tarragon,
She maketh many a strange lotion.
Her skin she can both supple and refine
With juice of lemons and with turpentine.

The marrow of the heronshaw and the deer,
She takes likewise to make her skin look clear.
Sweet waters she distills, which she composes
Of flowers of oranges, woodbine, or roses.
The virtue of jasmine and three-leaved grass,
She doth imprison in a brittle glass,
With civet, musk, and odors far more rare,
These liquors sweet incorporated are.
Lees she can make which turn a hair that's old
Or colored ill into a hue of gold.
Of horses, bears, cats, camels, conies, snakes,
Whales, herons, bitterns, strange oils she makes,
With which dame Nature's errors she corrects,
Using Art's help to supply all defects.
She in the milk of asses bathes her skin,
As did the beautiful Poppaea when
She tempted Nero to forsake the bed
Of great Octavia, and herself to wed.

Gladiolus

If there be any gentlewoman here
That will with gracious acceptation use
The service of a tattling chambermaid,
I would advise her to make choice of this Frisketta,
That is as chaste as Helen or Corinthian Lais,
As chary of bewraying secrets as was Echo.
Oh she would prove a rare privy counsellor
In some great lady's privy chamber.
The perpetual motion for which artists have so labored
Is discovered nowhere so plainly as in her tongue,
Which scarce finds any leisure to rest—
No, not when she is asleep.

But of her courtesy she is so charitable,
And so heroically magnificent,
That she will both vouchsafe to commiserate
The low estate of an humble groom of the stable,
And also satisfy the desire
Of a high and mighty gentleman usher
In a kiss or any other amorous encounter.
Gentlemen, believe me in few: she is a pearl
Whose worth the age cannot value.
If there be any gentleman here
That will bestow a small pension upon her,
With a kiss or two once a fortnight,
To make her his intelligencer of state
In his wife's commonwealth,
I will undertake he shall be able to make good
A faction against his wife,
Had she an Amazon's stomach, a Zenobia's,
Or a Xanthippe's tongue.

CLEMATIS

Out you prattling parachito,
Come you hither to abuse me.
Take this for your pains.

She strikes him.

GLADIOLUS

Now thank thy stars that with a female signature
Did stamp thy sex, audacious strumpet.
Shall I draw? No, now I think on't, I will not,
For reason and experience shows that no man
E'er gained repute by drawing 'gainst a woman.

Clematis

Stripling, dost think I fear a naked blade?
I'll meet thee where thou dar'st, and whip thee too
For thy unruly tongue, thy sauciness.

Gladiolus

Well minion, remember this:
If I do not cry you quit for this abuse,
Then let me ne'er be trusted.
Your mistress shall know how you have used me—
So she shall.

Clematis

Skipjack, tell what you can—I weight not this.
I'll make you know that you have done amiss.

Exeunt.

Act 3, Scene 2

Enter Poneria and Eglantine.

Poneria

Forget you not the powder for your breath.

Eglantine

I took a dram of it this morning,
According to your appointment.

Poneria

Your pallid cheek requires, in mine opinion,
A deeper tincture of vermilion.

EGLANTINE

And I am of the same mind,
But 'twas my maid's fault.
I think she goes about utterly to undo me.
She is as good a servant as e'er was
Married to the whipping post.

PONERIA

I tell you true, I would not for twenty crowns
That Rhodon had seen you with this face.
That ceruse on your brow is extremely dull;
There is no lustre, no resplendency in it.
S'light, I have seen often times a stained cloth
Over a smoky chimney in an alehouse
Present me with a better face.

EGLANTINE

Nay, I could not for my heart persuade
The wicked pertinacious harlot
To lay more color on than pleased her fancy.
But if I live, I will cashier the quean.

PONERIA

If you do not, you are no friend to yourself.

EGLANTINE

How lik'st thou the color of my hair?

PONERIA

Oh that is exceedingly well-dyed.

EGLANTINE

Methinks the hue is not high enough.

PONERIA

Nay, pardon me madam: 'tis passing well.
The brown hue is the most incomparable color
For a hair of all other.
Those golden wires that on fair Hero's shoulders dangled,
And those fair flaxen threads that made Jove
Dote upon fair Nonacrine,
May not be compared with thy lovely brown.

EGLANTINE

Discreet Poneria, thy wise approbation
Doth give my fancy ample satisfaction.
But hear me, Poneria, will you undertake
That I shall meet with the shepherd Rhodon,
As you oft have promised me?

PONERIA

Fair shepherdess, I will.

EGLANTINE

But 'tis a thing impossible, I fear.

PONERIA

Why so, good Eglantine?

EGLANTINE

Because I hear he deeply is engaged
To Iris, that proud damsel of Hymettus.

Poneria

I grant he is. And since things are thus,
I will so act my part, that his new love
Shall be the means to renew that good will
That hath been heretofore 'twixt him and you.

Eglantine

Nor Circe's drugs nor all Ulysses' wits,
I tell thee beldam, can accomplish this.

Poneria

Good daughter, undervalue not my skill,
For 'tis contrived how it shall be effected.
And to satisfy thy curiosity,
I will declare how I have laid the plot.

Eglantine

I prithee bless my ears with this relation.

Poneria

I will a message bear in Iris' name
Unto the shepherd Rhodon, which shall show
That she desires an am'rous interview
With him in such a privacy
That day must not be guilty of it.
A solitary glade shall be the place
Where you, protected by the veil of conscious night,
Instead of Iris shall present yourself
Unto the shepherd Rhodon,
Whom you shall entertain with sweet discourse
And so comport yourself that he shall think
You are his dearest Iris.

But to assure him yours, I have provided
A precious philter of rare efficacy,
Composed according to the rudiments of art.
This shall you cause him to carouse
As water of inestimable worth.
Which done, he is your own,
And Iris then shall be forgotten clean
As one whom he had ne'er scarce known or seen.

EGLANTINE
'Tis bravely plotted, sweet Poneria.
But what hour wilt thou allot for this design?

PONERIA
Provide yourself to meet him in the myrtle grove
Upon eleven at night.

EGLANTINE
Very good.

PONERIA
Now I'll to Rhodon go, and him invite,
To meet you at the appointed place this night.

EGLANTINE
Now most auspicious be thy stars and mine,
Let all good luck attend our great design.

Exeunt.

Act 3, Scene 3

Enter Martagon and Cynosbatus.

CYNOSBATUS

But is the angry swain, say'st thou, so hot?
Is Rhodon grown so zealous in his sister's cause?

MARTAGON

If that his actions with his words agree,
I must expect a sudden storm.

CYNOSBATUS

I am resolved to take part in thy fortunes,
Be they the worst that e'er to any fell.

MARTAGON

Thanks, noble friend. Then here let's join our hands
In sign of most unseparable bands.

CYNOSBATUS

But there's Acanthus, a jolly swain.
He frets, they say, like a furious Myrmidon.

MARTAGON

In braving language he exceeded so,
That Martagon ne'er saw so bold a foe.
Surcharged with swelling passion, he did vow
To take a full revenge on me and you.

CYNOSBATUS

And is the youth so filled with valorous heat?
Who would have thought the frozen mountains could
Have bred so brave a hotspur.

Martagon

These raging lions must, Cynosbatus,
Be undermined by some egregious sleight.
We must pitch some strong toil for these fierce beasts,
Where we may take them captive at our pleasure.
For if we should assail them openly,
Much peril then we might incur thereby.

Cynosbatus

What thy high judgement shall conclude to do,
I am resolved to condescend unto.

Martagon

Then hear what I propound. Cynosbatus,
Within a place nigh hand resides
A beldam much renowned for sacred skill
In magic mysteries.
She with her awful charms wonts to call forth
All sorts of noisome creatures that are bred
In sandy Libya or cold Scythia,
From whom she takes her choice of poison strong.
The herbs which grow on precipitious Eryx,
She with her bloody sickle crops,
And whatsoever poisonous weed springs on
The craggy top of snowy Caucasus,
That's sprinkled with the blood of wise Prometheus,
She carefully selects,
Those venoms which the warlike Medians and
The nimble Parthians or Arabians rich
Use to anoint their deadly shafts withal.
She doth by moonlight gather,
Each herb that in this fertile vernal season

Puts forth its head from Ops's pregnant bosom
She searches for. Whether the same be bred
In the cold forest of Hercynia,
Or in the deserts of parched Africa,
What flower soe'er doth in his seed or root
Strange causes of great mischief nourish,
She never faileth to find out.
Whether the same on banks of Tigris grows,
Or on the sunburned brink of warm Hydaspes,
Whose golden channels paved with precious stones.
Some of these herbs she doth by twilight gather,
At midnight some, and some at break of day.
Nor is she ignorant how to apply
The panting heart of the dull melancholy owl,
Or the breathing entrails cut from a living cat.
The proudest swain that lives in Thessaly
Is glad to be obsequious to her will,
For in her power it is to cure or kill.
Unto this reverent Sibyl let us go,
And her advice request in this design.
By her instructions let us our actions regulate,
Providing for our own security:
She can divine of all events and tell
Whether things shall succeed or ill or well.

CYNOSBATUS
What thy sound judgement thinks fit to be done,
I condescend to, noble Martagon.

Exeunt.

Act 3, Scene 4

Enter Rhodon, Anthophotus, and Acanthus.

RHODON

Since that the proud usurper Martagon
Will not restore what he hath ta'en away
By force and injury from Violetta,
We are resolved to put on lawful arms
To assuage the pride of that great termagant,
That of his prowess doth so vainly vaunt.
Therefore dear friends, address yourselves to show
Your true and faithful fortitudes, for know
An ignominious peace may not compare
With any just and honorable war.

ANTHOPHOTUS

Out upon this Fabian valor,
These tedious cunctations. I tell thee Rhodon,
I must needs chide thee for our loss of time.
My troops are all in perfect readiness,
And long to meet their foes in open field.
If we deliberate a day longer,
The edge of their valor, I fear, will be quite taken off.

RHODON

Now fie upon that valor which depends
On circumstance of time or place.
'Tis relative virtue, that like glass is brittle,
Whose force soon dies and perfects very little.

ACANTHUS

Now recollect thy spirits, Rhodon.
Let Spartan resolution spread itself

Into each angle of thy noble heart,
For now our hostile forces are assembled,
Covering the fields from Ossa to Olympus.
Their painted banners with the winds are playing;
Their pampered coursers thunder on the plains;
The splendor of their glist'ring arms repels
The bashful sunbeams back unto the clouds.
Their bellowing drums and trumpets shrill
Do many sad corrantos sound,
Which danger grim and sprawling death must dance.
Now therefore Rhodon, do reflect thy eye
Upon the glories of thy ancestors,
And strive by emulation to transcend
Those trophies which were yet ne'er paralleled.

Anthophotus

Surcease this needless talk; let us to action.
The loss of time consisteth in protraction.

Rhodon

Your noble courages, endeared friends,
A good event to our designs portends.

Exeunt.

Act 3, Scene 5

Enter Martagon and Cynosbatus.

Martagon

Within the precincts of this grove, Poneria dwells;
Here nightly she hath conventicles

With her wise spirits. See how the trees are carved
With magical mysterious characters,
See how the fiery fiends with their frequent resort have
Scorched the leaves and changed the
Merry livery of the spring into a mournful hue.
Behold the grass dyed with the swarthy gore
Of some great sacrifice that late was offered up
To the infernal powers.

Cynosbatus

The black aspect of this strange uncouth place
Doth make my heart to quake.

Martagon

Within a vault hewn from the stony bowels
Of yon high precipitous rock, she dwells.
Cheer up, Cynosbatus, and come away.
Let's to her cell, and I'll show thee the way.

Exeunt.

Act 4, Scene 1

Enter Iris, Panace, and Violetta.

Iris

Curst was the wight that did in murder first
Imbrue his guilty hands. Curst was that hand
Which first was taught by damned hellish art
To forge the killing blade in Vulcan's flames.
What raging Fury reigns in mortal breasts,
That man should man pursue with deadly hate.

Oh what malignant power hath defaced
That specious image of the gods above?
Who hath inspired man with that bestial quality
Of murderous revenge?
The Libyan lions seldom are at odds,
The tigers of Hyrcania do agree,
But man to man's become a very devil.
That Thracian god which is delighted most
With human sacrifices is now adored.
Bloodthirsty Mars now bears the only sway,
Who direful devastations doth affect;
Peace hath forsook the earth and fell debate
Shaking his battered arms now stalketh everywhere.
I hoped for nuptials sweet, of late, but now
I may have cause to fear a funeral.
Hymen affrighted with the confused noise
Of brutish war is fled I know not whither.
My dearest Rhodon must depart from me,
And in the field engage his tender corpse
To all extremities of death, of wounds, of danger,
Of sickness and unrest.

Violetta

Strike not the air with this vain language, Iris.
Wound not thy soul with these unseemly plaints,
But be content to wait the will of Jove,
Who will crown our designs with blessed success.
For in a cause that's honest, just, and right,
The gods themselves will take up arms and fight.

Iris

Then O ye powers that are the grand protectors

Of Hybla's happiness and welfare:
Whether ye do delight in our flower-crowned mountains,
Our od'rous vales, or in our crystal fountains,
Your gracious favor I implore, beseeching you
To guard the person of my dearest Rhodon.
Fond woman, how forgetful have I been?
Here is a gem whose price doth far transcend
All estimation. My faithful Panace,
Deliver't thou unto my gentle shepherd,
And pray him wear it for my sake.

PANACE
Madam, I will.

IRIS
It from the bowels of a cock was ta'en,
And whoso wears the same, as wise men say,
Shall ever be victorious in war.

VIOLETTA
Commend me to my brother, gentle nymph,
And bear this token of my love to him.
It is the precious herb called lettuce,
Which whosoever wears shall never want
Sufficient sustenance both for himself and his.
Besides, it frustrates quite the devilish force
Of strongest poisons or enchantments.
Now Iris, let us haste to Flora's fane. *Exit Panace.*
With our devotions let's importune her
These horrid stirs and troublous broils to cease,
That we again may live in happy peace.

Exeunt.

Act 4, Scene 2

Enter Martagon, Cynosbatus, and Poneria, with Agnostus behind.

MARTAGON
Divinest matron, god-inspired Sibyl:
Do this, and be what thou canst desire.

PONERIA
Doubt not, great Martagon, but I will effect it.

MARTAGON
Now dear Cynosbatus, let us prepare
To resist th'impression of our foes,
Since that our powerful forces ready stand,
To be obedient to our great command.

CYNOSBATUS
With thee I am resolved to spend my breath,
Indifferent in the choice of life or death.

PONERIA
Agnostus, come forth. Black cloud of ignorance,
Advance thy leaden pate, dull camel.

Exeunt Martagon and Cynosbatus.

Agnostus comes forward.

AGNOSTUS
I cannot brook this thin and piercing air.

PONERIA
Thou son of sleep, that hat'st the lightsome day,

Clap on thy spectacles of judgement and behold
How I have played my part.
Thou flow'st with gall, Agnostus, I confess,
But thou hast a brain intolerably dry,
As empty of wit as the world is of conscience.

AGNOSTUS
What, hast plucked up the flowers by the roots,
Or is all Thessaly in a combustion?

PONERIA
Surcharged with deep despite and vip'rous hate,
Their forces they against each other bend.

AGNOSTUS
Then I hope their painted pride shall quickly be abated.

PONERIA
But I have a plot, old plumbeous dotard,
To crop the proudest flower that grows
In Hybla or Hymettus.

AGNOSTUS
Poneria, I adore thy art and wisdom.

PONERIA
This glass contains a rare confection:
'Tis vipers' blood mixed with the juice of aconite.
This is the philter, the sweet love potion,
Which Eglantine poor lovesick fool
Must commend to the shepherd Rhodon,
Who this night by my appointment

Is to meet her in the myrtle grove under the
Name of Iris. Now I'll to Eglantine,
And bless her longing ears with these glad tidings.

Agnostus

Oh great profound Poneria, never yet
Was any that could parallel thy wit.

Exeunt.

Act 4, Scene 3

Enter Rhodon and Acanthus.

Rhodon

What hour of night is't, friend Acanthus?

Acanthus

Th'eleventh at least, for see Orion hath
Advanced very high his starry locks in our horizon.

Rhodon

Methinks the stars look very ruddy,
As if they did portend tempestuous weather.

Acanthus

They do but blush to see what crimes are acted
By mortals under covert of the night.

Rhodon

Saw'st thou yon star that northward fell?

ACANTHUS

I saw the blazing meteor stoop,
And bend his course toward the humble center.

RHODON

This seemed a glorious and resplendent star,
Yet was it but a gross ill-tempered meteor.
This meteor seemed as if it had been fixed
In an orb for a perpetuity,
Yet in a moment is it fallen, thou see'st.
And who regards this foolish and ignoble fire,
Or looks upon the place from whence it fell?

ACANTHUS

He that by honorable means is raised,
And hath his seat established on the square
Of never-sliding virtue, cannot fall.

RHODON

But if young Phaeton shall undertake
To guide the chariot of the great Apollo
And in that action shall miscarry, so
That the whole universe shall be engaged
To utter ruin and destruction,
Then ought great Jove to have a special care
For to preserve and keep the common good.
And if he shall dismount the charioteer
And with a deadly blow lay him along,
The world then for his justice shall thank Jove,
And Phaeton's fool-hardiness reprove.

ACANTHUS

Who dares contest with Jove, or question what
His sovereign highness shall do or determine.

Enter Eglantine and Poneria.

RHODON

'Tis altogether wicked and unjust. Acanthus, retire.
For now methinks I see a glimpse of Iris,
Who promised to meet me here this night.
Lo how the lustre of her beauty penetrates
The envious clouds of these nocturnal shades.

Exit Acanthus.

PONERIA

See yonder the beguiled lover walks
In vain, expecting the coming of his dear Iris.
Now, Eglantine, remember my instructions.
Have a care that your tongue betray you not.
Be not too talkative in any case.
Forget not the posture I so oft told you of:
Under pretence that these cold nightly dews are
Offensive, you may knit your veil more close,
And conceal your feature.

EGLANTINE

Poneria, retire. I will address myself unto him.

PONERIA

But be sure you persuade him to take the
Potion before he sleeps;
You'll remember those virtues which I told you it contains.
Forget not to declare them amply.

EGLANTINE

Make no doubt on't: thou hast armed me
For all assays.

RHODON

Exit Poneria.

Thou brightest star that shin'st this night,
Auspicious be thy influence to thy Rhodon.
My dearest Iris, I am surcharged with joy
To meet thee here.

EGLANTINE

Dear Rhodon who, like the vernal sun,
Dost lend refreshing heats to my affections:
Take't not amiss that I have chose this hour
And unfrequented place t'enjoy thy company.

RHODON

Sweet Iris, know that I esteem this hour of night,
Since I enjoy thy sweet society,
'Bove all the days that I e'er hitherto beheld.

EGLANTINE

But from a maiden's modesty, fair sir,
It may seem much to derogate,
To be abroad so late at night.

RHODON

Since no immodest act is here intended,
The time cannot be prejudicial
To thy unstained modesty.

EGLANTINE

Great pity 'tis indeed, sir, that true love
Should be disparaged because 'tis so true.

RHODON

I tell thee, I till now was never happy.
All those delights which I e'er saw before
Were but mere transitory dreams
Compared with that felicity which now I find.

EGLANTINE

The sudden news of this late-kindled war—
Wherein I hear, to my great grief, you are engaged—
Made me transgress the bounds of modesty so far,
That I desired once more to see your face
Ere your departure to the field of danger.

RHODON

Since my good fortune and thy constant love
Have joyed me once again with thy sweet presence,
I bless my lot and to the field will hasten,
As ready to out-face danger as scorn death.
And if I there find fortunate success,
Of all my good I'll count thee patroness.

EGLANTINE

And here on you I do bestow this vial,
Which such a precious dosis doth contain
That it doth far exceed the height of value.
It is a potion made by wond'rous art:
Nectar is no more comparable to it
Than bonnyclabber is to usquebaugh,

And aurum potabile is as far short of it
As poor metheglin is of rich canary.
All the confections even from the lowest degree
Of sage ale to the height of aqua celestis
Are no more like it than the beer of the low countries
Is to the high country wine.
A dram of it taken before you go to bed
Cheers the heart, prevents the incubus
And all frightful dreams, cheers the blood,
Comforts the stomach, dispels all colics,
Cures all aches, repairs the liver, helps
The lungs, rectifies the brain, quencheth
All the senses, strengthens the memory, refresheth
The spirits.
Taken fasting, it breaks the stone in bladder
Or kidneys, cures the gout, expels a quartan ague.
Outwardly applied, it kills the gangrene
And destroys the wolf, heals all sorts of wounds,
Bruises, boils, and sores.
And not to use more multiplicity of words,
I tell you gentle Rhodon, you shall find
It cures all griefs of body and of mind.

RHODON

Fair one, verbal expression cannot show
What I to thee for this great gift do owe.
But till for all I full requital make,
My constant love thou for a pledge shalt take.

EGLANTINE

But, gentle sir, although your constitution
So well-attempered seems, that no disease

Can either hurt or overthrow your health,
Yet if my counsel might prevail with you,
I should persuade you to make trial of this
Rare water this night before you sleep.

RHODON

Since thou vouchsaf'st to be my kind physician,
For this time I will act a patient's part,
And ere that sleep shall with his leaden keys
Lock up the portals of my drowsy eyes,
I'll taste of this most precious liquor.
But lest the gealed moisture of the night
Should prejudice thy health, sweet Iris,
Let me conduct thee homeward.

EGLANTINE

Since these nocturnal distillations
May be offensive to your health, sweet Rhodon,
I will be well-contented to be gone,
Though wond'rous loath from you to part so soon.

RHODON

But in my absence be assured of this,
That Rhodon's heart in thy possession is.

Exeunt.

Act 4, Scene 4

Enter Panace alone.

PANACE

Upon this shady bank with laurels crowned,
The gentle shepherd Rhodon dwells.
His cottage seated is upon a crystal river,
The sweetest stream that e'er in valley crept.
Two precious presents I to him must bear:
The one from his true love, the beaut'ous Iris,
And that's a gem of admirable virtue.
The bounty of the eastern mines could ne'er bestow
A jewel of such worth as this,
Which from the entrails of a cock was ripped,
For whosoever shall possess the same
Shall be invincible in fight.
But his dear sister, lovely Violetta,
Commends to him this admirable plant,
The noblest herb that e'er in garden grew.
For setting many precious properties aside,
It is the best and strongest antidote
That art or nature ever made.
No deadly poison can withstand its power,
But is expulst by it with great facility.
These noble gifts, beseeming well
Both the receiver's and the givers' qualities,
I will deliver to the honored swain.

Exit.

Act 4, Scene 5

Enter Martagon, Cynosbatus, and Poneria.

Martagon

Sage dame, how fares thy grand design?
Dost think thy plot will take?

Poneria

Nay, if you doubt it, I wish it ne'er might take.
Have I made hell a party in the action,
And laid such snares that more than human force
Cannot withstand my well-knit stratagem,
Yet will you still torment me with these doubts?

Martagon

Nay, gentle mother, be not so impatient.

Poneria

You tempt my patience while you thus mistrust
My skill and my ability.

Cynosbatus

We do adore thy matchless skill and wisdom,
Thou grace and wonder of thy sex.

Poneria

Methinks I see the merry post at hand,
That brings us joyful news of Rhodon's death.
And not behind him much methinks I see
Another post, who comes with better news,
That Rhodon's army is discouraged and discarded,
Yea quite disbanded and dispersed.

Martagon

Oh happy news, divine Poneria.

Poneria

Yet ye account me a mere silly dame.

Yea, as silly as some simple simpering citizen
That hath but manners enough to take
The upper end of a table at a feast,
And to carve a capon's leg to a coxcomb.

MARTAGON

The ten Sibyls were no more comparable to thee
Than an old gentlewoman is to a young chambermaid.
Sweet Poneria, I am even in love with thee.
Yea, I durst almost swear I should kiss thee,
If thou hadst but three rotten teeth in thy head.

PONERIA

Well, my masters, I hope you'll thank me
When you hear that I have made proud Rhodon
A leiger ambassador in Don Pluto's court.

MARTAGON

Thy thanks, Poneria, shall be duly paid
In eye-bewitching talents.
We'll rip the matrice of our grandam earth
To see the place where riches are conceived,
And from her pregnant womb we'll draw
A golden age for thee to live in, dear Poneria.

PONERIA

Who would leave any villainy undone,
To be thy slave, most noble Martagon.

CYNOSBATUS

Exit Poneria.

Now Martagon, let us go put on arms,
And toward Hybla march in strong array.

Let us deface the glory of their flowers;
If Rhodon be but dead, the day is ours.

Exeunt.

Act 5, Scene 1

Enter Acanthus and Anthophotus.

Anthophotus

Thou speak'st of things beyond belief, Acanthus.

Acanthus

Too true it is, I shrewdly fear,
For every circumstance makes it appear
That Rhodon in the myrtle grove last night
Had private conference with Iris,
From whom, it seems, he took the venomed potion.
For now he doth, in his extremest fits,
Exclaim on the untruth of womankind,
Bewailing the unlucky hour that did present
Your sister Iris to his sight.

Enter Panace.

Panace

Anthophotus and Acanthus, y'are well met.

Acanthus

Nay, never worse, thou wouldst say, gentle Panace,
If thou knew'st all.

PANACE

What dire disaster hath befall'n you, honored friends?
How fares the noble shepherd Rhodon?

ACANTHUS

Rhodon's mishap's the cause of all our sorrow.
Rhodon's betrayed, poisoned, and lies at point of death.

PANACE

Cursed be the hand that did attempt
A villainy so impious and foul.
But if you love yourselves, and Rhodon's health,
Conduct me to him immediately.
I have an antidote that shall cure him,
If any breath be left within his bulk.

ANTHOPHOTUS

Oh happy comfort! Come, sweet Panace.
To our sick friend, we'll thy conductors be.

Exeunt.

Act 5, Scene 2

Enter Martagon and Cynosbatus.

CYNOSBATUS

A happy morn be this to thee, friend Martagon.

MARTAGON

Nay, 'tis the happiest morn that e'er we two beheld:
Rhodon is dead.

And is by this time served up in a wooden dish,
To feast the worms upon an earthen table.
The purple-bosomed rose whose glorious pride
Disdained the beauties of all other flowers is cropped.
Yea, the ambitious bramble is quite withered,
And now is laid in the contemned dust.
Poneria's wit hath done this noble act.

CYNOSBATUS

This is good news, I must confess, yet could I wish
That noble Rhodon had not so ignobly died.

MARTAGON

Thou art too ceremonious for a politician,
And too superstitious: our duties 'tis to judge
Of the effect as it concerns the state of our affairs,
And not to look back on the means by which 'twas wrought.
He is unfit to rule a civil state
That knows not how in some respects to favor
Murder, or treason, or any other sin,
Which that subtle animal called man
Doth openly protest against, for this end,
That he may more freely act it in private
As his occasions shall invite him to't.
But 'tis no disputing now: the deed is done.
We are in a fair way to victory,
Conquest, triumph, and renown.
We have a fair beginning, and what's well begun,
If that the proverb speaks truth, is half done.

Exeunt.

Act 5, Scene 3

Enter Poneria and Agnostus.

Poneria

Now Agnostus, since by the death of Rhodon
We have endeared ourselves to Martagon,
'Tis meet we provide for a back-winter,
That we purchase some eminence of place
To make us glorious in the world's ill-sighted eye,
That being great we may the greater mischief do.
And since a war is newly set abroach,
I will a suitor be to General Martagon
To place thee in some military office
Of high regard and special consequence,
Where by thy ignorant conduct and base carriage
Thou mayst a thousand heroic souls send packing
Unto the Stygian shore.

Agnostus

Nay good Poneria, I find myself unfitting for the wars.

Poneria

What, neither heart nor brains! Out inglorious losel,
Thou most unwieldy burden of the earth.
I could find in my heart to kick thy soul out
Of thy carcass. Art all composed of earth and water?
Hast not a spark of air or fire in that bulk?

Agnostus

Nay sweet Poneria, I am thy slave.

Poneria

I tell thee, I will procure thee a captain's place.

Agnostus

But I am altogether ignorant in the words of command,
And know not one posture neither of musket or pike.

Poneria

Hast wit enough to swallow the dead pays,
And to patch up thy company in a mustering day.
Hast valor enough to wear a buff-jerkin
With three gold laces.
Hast strength enough to support a Dutch felt
With a flaunting feather?
Can thy side endure to be wedded to a rapier
Hatched with gold, with hilt and hangers of the new fashion?
Canst drink, drab, and dice;
Canst damn thyself into debt among
Believing tradesmen.
Hast manners enough to give thy lieutenant,
Ancient, or sergeant leave to go before thee
Upon any piece of danger?
Hast wit enough, in thy anger, not to draw a sword?
These are the chief properties that pertain
To our modern captains, and if thou
Could'st but be taught these military rudiments,
I doubt not but thou might'st prove a very
Excellent new soldier.

Agnostus

If this be all, I hope, in time, to be as famous
As e'er was Caesar or great Pompey.

Poneria

Agnostus, come along. Thyself prepare
To be a servant to the god of war.

Exeunt.

Act 5, Scene 4

Enter Rhodon, Acanthus, Anthophotus, and Panace.

Rhodon

This strange imposture hath amazed me so,
That I am almost to a statue struck,
Not knowing what to speak, or what to think.

Panace

Assure yourself it was a strange collusion,
For this, on my fidelity, believe:
That 'twas not Iris whom you met last night.

Rhodon

Then 'twas some hellish hag that, in her shape,
Gave me the venomous confection
Which had undone me quite, if thou in time
Hadst not applied thy precious antidote.
But yet, methinks, that heaven should not permit
The subtlest hellish power to counterfeit
The feature of so beautiful an angel.

ACANTHUS

Doubtless it was the false Poneria's plot,
Whom Martagon hath lately entertained
With her companion, old Agnostus.
For know the malice of your foes is such
That if by open force they can't destroy you,
By hidden plots they'll seek your overthrow.

RHODON

Then I must pardon crave of gentle Iris,
To whom I did ascribe this treacherous fact.

ANTHOPHOTUS

If she were guilty of so black a deed,
These hands should chain her to a fatal stake
And sacrifice her corpse in hideous flames
Unto the awful goddess of revenge.
Which done, I'd throw her hateful ashes up
Against the furious gusts of boist'rous winds,
That being so dispersed, there might remain
Not the least relic of so vile a wretch.

RHODON

My Iris is as clear as innocency itself.
And since my treacherous foes have gone about
By wicked slights to wrong so sweet a saint,
And bring me also to a shameful end,
I here enjoin ye, honorable friends,
Upon my sword to take a solemn oath,
He draws his sword. They lay their hands upon it and kiss it.
Ne'er to lay down your just and lawful arms
Until we be avenged to the full

For such unkindly and disloyal wrongs.
True honor that with dearest blood is sought,
Is like a precious gem that's cheaply bought.

Anthophotus

Ill is a life bestowed upon that wight
That dares not lose it to maintain the right.
Him I account a base inglorious sot
That dares not honor pull from danger's throat.

Exeunt.

Act 5, Scene 5

Enter Martagon, Cynosbatus, Agnostus, and Poneria.

Martagon

Lady Poneria, upon your commendation,
We bestow a regiment upon this gentleman.

Poneria

Thanks, worthy Martagon. Believe it sir,
Those good respects which I to your affairs owe
Urged me t'importune you for his employment
Because I know him to be a tried soldier
Of great experience, worth, and merit.
How say you, Colonel Agnostus?
I hope your actions shall make good my words hereafter.

Agnostus

I am at your service, madam Poneria.
I am a man of action, I confess.

Poneria

Trust me, sir: although he wants verbal expression,
He is a gentleman of singular abilities.

Martagon

And I think no less, for th'are not good words
That make deserving soldiers, but good swords.

Cynosbatus

He looks as if he had been bred, born,
And brought up in a leaguer all his lifetime.

Enter Gladiolus.

Gladiolus

Noble General, the beaut'ous Eglantine
Wisheth all happiness to your designs,
Desiring that this paper may kiss your hands for her.

He opens the letter.

Martagon

'Tis about a place, I'll pawn my life on't.
Hear me, monsieur, I understand the business:
Her request is granted.
She when she please, may at my hands command
A greater courtesy than this.

Gladiolus

Thanks, honored sir.

Martagon

On you I bestow a captain's place.

GLADIOLUS

Now I perceive that the readi'st way to attain
Preferment in the court of Mars
Is to creep into the favor of Venus.

MARTAGON

I understand you are a man of real worth,
And very sufficient for such an office.

Enter Acanthus.

ACANTHUS

Imperious Martagon, that art no less
Known for thy power than thy wickedness:
In Rhodon's name I do defy thee here,
Who challengeth the combat at thy hands
To be avenged on thee for thy foul wrongs.
But if thou dar'st not in a single fight
Give satisfaction to the noble shepherd,
Then thee and all thy troops he doth invite
To a bloody breakfast tomorrow morn.
Attended by a vigorous army he
Stands in the confines of his own dominions,
Swearing that he will prove it in the field,
That thou a tyrant and a traitor art.

MARTAGON

Bold friend, I prithee speak ingeniously.
Doth this defiance come from Rhodon's mouth?

ACANTHUS

Upon my life, and by the honor of a soldier it doth.

MARTAGON

Then tell him I'm resolved to be a guest,
More bold than welcome at his bloody feast.

ACANTHUS

I will, great Martagon. And misdoubt not
But that your cheer shall be exceeding hot.

MARTAGON

Exit Acanthus.

Dissembling witch, how hast thou beguiled us?

PONERIA

What adverse power hath crost our plot?

MARTAGON

Didst not thou with thy deep protestations force us
To give strong credence to thy false relations,
When thou affirm'd'st that thou hadst poisoned Rhodon?

PONERIA

The opposition of the cursed fates
Hath brought us to deserved confusion.

MARTAGON

Avaunt you hag, abominable sorceress.
Here I do thee on pain of death enjoin,
With that impostor thy companion,
Immediately to depart out of my dominions.

PONERIA

Now I accursed wretch have seen too well,

That heaven will not be overruled by hell.

Agnostus

How suddenly by one contrarious gust,
Is all our honor tumbled into dust.

Martagon

Since that our braving foe is now at hand,
Cynosbatus, we must not think of a retreat.

Cynosbatus

What your discretion holds fit to be done,
I condescend to, noble Martagon.

Martagon

Then let us meet our proud foe face to face,
And with our swords and spears that right maintain
Which lately we by sword and spear did gain.

Exeunt.

Act 5, Scene 6

Enter Rhodon, Anthophotus, and Acanthus.

Rhodon

Deserving friends and fellow soldiers,
Now arm yourselves with Roman fortitude.
First call to mind the justice of our cause,
And then let each remember that true honor,
Which must be valued above health and life.
Consider also that we must contend

Against a tyrant and a mere usurper,
A person guilty of no mean offences,
Which must be justly punished by our swords.

Enter Poneria and Agnostus.

PONERIA

Thrice noble Rhodon, in whose noble breast
True pity dwells, vouchsafe a pardon
To us distressed caitiffs.

RHODON

I neither know what your offences are, nor yet yourselves.

PONERIA

I am the unfortunate Poneria,
That was suborned by unjust Martagon
To work thy utter ruin.
I did conduct the lovesick Eglantine
Unto thy presence instead of Iris;
I caused her to give thee a poisonous drink
Under the pretence that it was a love potion.
I have deserved to die, and crave life at your hands.

RHODON

And are you the grand incendiary
That have so many mischiefs wrought in Thessaly?
Now I remember I have seen your elvish countenance,
Nor have I altogether forgot your reverent mate,
Who with his personated gravity deludes the world,
Being accounted a man of profound art.
Acanthus, see them committed to safe custody.

See you make them sure for starting.

PONERIA

Nay, worthy sir.

ACANTHUS

You must away, for no entreaties can prevail.

RHODON

Exeunt Acanthus, leading Poneria and Agnostus.

The apprehension of these wretches
doth presage
Auspicious fortunes to our actions.
Drum beats a march within.
List, list, Anthophotus, our enemies are at hand;
Their thund'ring drums warn us of their approach.
We'll bid them nobly welcome then. This day will I
Victorious be, I vow, or bravely die.

ANTHOPHOTUS

Thy honored resolution I commend,
And take it for a sign of good success.

Enter Acanthus.

ACANTHUS

Arm, arm! The hostile forces are in sight
And thus come marching on in proud array.
The battle's led by Martagon himself,
Wherein are marshalled near five thousand billmen,
All clad in coats of red.
A furious Amazon called Tulipa
Brings on three thousand burly Swissers

Arrayed in gorgeous coats of red and yellow,
And these make up the van,
To which are added for a forlorn hope
Two hundred melancholy gentlemen.
The fierce Cynosbatus brings up the rear,
Wherein about two thousand soldiers be
Clad all in green and armed with pikes of steel.
Narcissus with a thousand daffodils
Clad in deep yellow coats doth flank
The right side of the battle.
The left wing is by Hyacinthus led,
Wherein a thousand soldiers march
Arrayed in purple coats.

Enter Martagon and Cynosbatus.

MARTAGON
What Fury tempted thee, unhappy Rhodon,
In hostile manner thus to invade my confines?

RHODON
For Violetta's sake I took up arms,
Whom thou unjustly hast oppressed.

MARTAGON
What I have done my sword shall justify.

Music sounds.

RHODON
Whence comes this most harmonious melody?

Enter Flora, Iris, Panace, and Eglantine.

FLORA

Put up those murd'ring blades on pain of my displeasure.
Confine them to perpetual prison in the scabbard,
That they may ne'er come forth to manage civil broils.

ALL EXCEPT FLORA

We must obey, and will, O awful goddess.

FLORA

While in my flow'ry bowers I took repose,
I heard the noise of these tumultuous broils,
Which struck me with a wonderful amazement.
Then hastily I left my banks of pleasure,
And hither came to end these mortal jars.
Therefore I charge you both on that allegiance
And respect which you do owe to me,
Quite to dismiss your armed bands.
And you, Martagon, who have fair Violetta wronged,
To her shall make an ample restitution
Of what y'have ta'en from her,
And entertain a friendly league with Rhodon,
Which you, Cynosbatus, must also condescend to.
But as for you, fond madam Eglantine,
Since you have broke the sacred laws of love
And by unlawful means sought to accomplish
Your designs and make the shepherd Rhodon
Enamored on you,
You to a vestal temple shall be confined,
Where with ten years penance
You shall expiate your folly.
But where be those two intruders
Poneria and Agnostus,

These that have crept in among us and with false slights
Sought to overthrow our state?
Poneria and Agnostus brought.
We banish them quite
Out of Thessaly forever.
What I have decreed, you must assent unto.

MARTAGON
We do, because we must.

FLORA
Rhodon, I here bestow on thee this noble shepherdess.

RHODON
Thanks for your precious gift, renowned Queen.

FLORA
And now since all things are reduced to joyful peace,
Let us betake ourselves to sweet delights,
And solemnize with mirth your nuptial rites.

Epilogue

Exeunt.

Since Ignorance and Envy now are banished,
Since discord from among the flowers is vanished,
Since Rhodon is espoused to Iris bright,
Since war hath happy Thessaly left quite,
Let everyone that loves his country's peace,
His height of gladness with his hands express.

FINIS

Annotations

Nicholas Bacon Amy Charles identifies Knevet's patron as the "fourth son of Nicholas Bacon, son of the Lord Keeper" (243). According to the letter, Bacon took great interest in flowers.

poesy A pun referring to poetry (poesy) and a small bunch of flowers (a posy).

Oracle of Apollo Place where one could seek advice or prophecy from Apollo. While the Greco-Roman god Apollo has many associations, his connections to poetry and the pastoral world are relevant here. By comparing his patron to Apollo, Knevet casts Bacon as an authority over his verse and as a divine protector of the play. The Oracle of Delphi is perhaps the most famous oracle dedicated to Apollo.

nor ... cedar neither bays nor cedar. Bays refers to laurel wreaths, a sign of victory (here, in the pursuit of poetry); cedar may refer to the burning of rich, purfumed incense or, as Rudd notes, to the cedar oil used in book preservation (111). In other words, the play does not seek fame or immortality. The nor/nor construct is a Latinized form of neither/nor.

nor ... tobacco Frankincense, mackerel, and tobacco are subjected to fire and consumed. The convention draws from Catullus and Horace: "In 95.8 Catullus proclaims that Volusius' annals will provide many loose jackets for mackerel. That is, the sheets will be used for cooking fish. In *Epistles* II, 1.269-70 Horace speaks of frankincense, perfume, and pepper being wrapped in worthless paper" (Rudd 111). Knevet suggests that his play, although a humble piece of writing, merits ongoing readership and will not be reduced to disposable paper.

you ... them Cf. Matthew 6:28-29: "And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they toil not, neither do they spin. And yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these."

indagation Investigation; the act of searching out.

quod ... conspiciunt [Add translation. Temporary: "which many view with sharp

scrutiny" (Charles 243)]

heteroclite An abnormal or eccentric thing, commonly describing persons and things in the 17th and 18th centuries.

Bacchanalian Of Bacchus. Bacchus is the Roman god of wine and intoxication, also associated with impersonation and theatre. He is known as Dionysus in Greek mythology.

Ignorance or Envy A reference to the characters Agnostus (Ignorance) and Poneria (Envy), who plot to overthrow the florists' feast. The epilogue repeats these allegorical names (Epilogue.1).

Bacchus' ... Orpheus Thracian women or Bacchic maenads—women followers of Dionysus (or Bacchus in Roman mythology)—supposedly killed the mythical Greek singer Orpheus. Orpheus's tragic love for Eurydice appears in Vergil's *Georgics* (Book 4) and Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (Book 10).

fain Gladly, delightedly.

scarlet gown [Add note]

Late ... spirits [Add note]

Muse [Add note]

maugre [Add note]

Parnassus hill Mount Parnassus is a mountain in central Greece near the city of Delphi, and the figurative home of poetry and learning.

Agnostus I.e. the character Agnostus, a symbol of ignorance.

Richard Peart The 1631 playbook attributes the poem to "Ri. Pert." (sig. a2v). According to Amy Charles, the poet is "probably the Richard 'Peart' named in several records of the Norwich Consistory now in Lambeth Palace Library. Mentioned first on April 7, 1618, he was ordained under Samuel Hannett on August 30, 1619, and under Richard Corbet on May 20, 1632. The name is also spelled 'Purt' in some records" (243).

Phoebus Apollo, god of the sun and light.

scan (a) Analyze (especially the metrical correctness of verse). (b) Climb.

saintlike canon [Add note]

Agnostus' cap I.e. the "cap of knowledge" the witch Poneria gives Agnostus at 2.1.34

William Denny Denny was a minor Norwich writer and son of Sir William Denny, a "prominent man who had served as steward of Norwich and three times been a member of Parliament" (Charles 243). He wrote the pastoral play *The Shepherds' Holiday* in 1651, which was first published in Henry Huth's 1870 *Inedited Poetical Miscellanies*. Some scholars describe the text as a poem or eclogue, but it is clearly a dramatic work. The play concerns shepherds and a spring feast in May, and ends with the nymph Pega uniting Tomkin and Lipsona in marriage. Its similarities to *Rhodon and Iris* might lead one to wonder if *The Shepherds' Holiday* was also written for a florists' feast.

John Mingay Mingay was the son of an apothecary with the same name, who was "sheriff of Norfolk in 1602 and Mayor in 1617" (Charles 244).

In Librum About the Book. This poem is an example of neo-Latin poetry—verse that imitates or draws inspiration from classical genres, forms, and styles. Popular classical forms include the epigram, lyric, elegy, epic, and epyllion. Neo-Latin verse frequently invokes the pastoral genre, which flourished in the classical period with Vergil's *Georgics* and *Eclogues*. The dedicatory poem "In Librum" compares Knevet to Ovid, suggesting the playwright sings in "tones of Ovid" (12). However, Knevet's playful use of generic expectation—rather than his use of classical subjects—is perhaps what makes *Rhodon*

and Iris most like the poetry of Ovid. Knevet does not simply replicate the pastoralism of his predecessors, but tailors it to his own designs for the florist's feast.

En … vetustas.

Behold a Metamorphosis descend to earth
Unlike the one that Ovid wrote in ancient times.
Ovid changed bodies in a human form to flowers;
Conversely, my man cloaks the human form in garb
From Flora's festivals while singing Virgil's praise.
  You, Ovid, sketched your Roman *Metamorphoses*
  With a fine pen; mine charmed—but with a British quill.
May English feathers on fine wings convey aloft
With English angels this blessed Author who has made
This Metamorphosis with many varied things—
And may the learned men applaud; and may he sing
In tones of Ovid, temples wreathed in laurel leaves.
  I'm done now with this work, which neither wrath of Jove,
  Nor flames, nor swords, nor ravenous old age can end.

(Translated from 17th century Latin by A.M. Juster)

Naso Ovid (or Naso) was a Roman poet born in the 1st century BCE, renowned for writing the *Metamorphoses*. This Latin mytho-historical poem consists of 15 books that recount the creation of the world up to the deification of Julius Caesar. The poem inspired writings by Geoffrey Chaucer, Dante Alighieri, and William Shakespeare among others.

M.S. As Amy Charles points out, these initials may belong to the publisher and bookseller Michael Sparke. Other possible poets include Martin Sedley of Morley and Matthew Stevenson (Charles 244). Stevenson is a compelling option given his later composition of "Flora Wearing a Crown" and "The Song," which appear in his 1645 *Occasions Off-Spring* in a section titled "At the Florists Feast in Norwich."

Cynic Cynics pursue virtue through an ascetic life, rejecting wealth, ease, and social conventions. Knevet pokes fun at critics of the feast's extravagance by comparing their philosophy to that of ancient Cynics such as Antisthenes and Diogenes.

wants Lacks.

his ... had This line suggests the performance venue allowed for a combination of sitting and standing space. The Norwich Guildhall and Common Hall were two popular performance venues in Norwich during the early seventeenth century.

science Knowledge.

noddy Fool or simpleton.

numbers A reference to verse and poetic meter.

Icarian wings I.e. ambitious wings. The legendary Icarus flew too close to the sun with a pair of wings held together by wax. Upon flying too close to the sun, the wax melted and Icarus fell to his death in the sea. The story is a cautionary tale against aspiring to inhuman heights.

Pegasus The immortal winged horse of Greco-Roman mythology.

brakes Clumps of bushes, brushwood, or briers; thickets.

knabble Bite, gnaw, nibble.

Act ... 1 The modern text follows the original act and scene divisions of the 1631 playbook.

Thessaly A modern and ancient region of northern Greece, consisting of two plains separated by hills and surrounded by mountains. Knevet frequently reminds his audience that the play is set in antiquity: Acanthus names two mountains surrounding

Thessaly when he states that their enemies can be seen "covering the fields from Ossa to Olympus" (3.4.26); "Ixion's wheel" (2.3.7) invokes a legendary king from the region; and the Myrmidons (3.3.10) are a militant people originating from Thessaly.

Enter ... Agnostus. Every scene in the original playbook includes a list of characters who speak in the scene, but the lists occasionally include characters who enter later or omit those who should be present. The modern text replaces these lists with explicit entrances for clarity.

world's eye I.e. the sun. The following lines discuss whether night has arrived yet.

Jove Jupiter, king of the gods.

Juno Queen of the gods.

Hesperus The evening star; the planet Venus in the evening.

Night Personification of night. Night's chariot veils the world in darkness. Her journey parallels the daily venture of Helios, the Greek sun god who drives his chariot across the sky to illuminate the world.

Ignorance I.e. Agnostus.

Cimmerian darkness A dense darkness or gloom. The ancient Cimmerians are depicted in Book 11 of Homer's *Odyssey* as a people shrouded in darkness: the sun is unable to shine through the mist and clouds surrounding them, leaving the Cimmerians engulfed in perpetual night. The absence of light is associated with perceived ignorance.

crystalline spheres In Aristotelian and Ptolemaic astronomy, stars and other heavenly bodies are fixed on spheres that move around the earth.

microcosmos Little world.

Ulysses Another name for Odysseus, the hero of Homer's *Odyssey*

Polypheme The cyclops Polyphemus. The phrase "celestial Polypheme" imagines the sun as a single eye, much like the one-eyed cyclopes of Greek mythology (cf. "the world's eye" at 1.1.1). In Book 9 of Homer's *Odyssey*, Odysseus and his men escape Polyphemus by blinding the cyclops—a task Agnostus wishes to reenact against the sun. The comparison is apt given that Polyphemus was a shepherd tending to his sheep.

Chaos A personification of the formless void or primordial matter from which creation emerges. Given the creative potential of chaos, Agnostus seems to desire a sinister remaking of the world rather than mere destruction. Ovid captures this creativity in 1.5-12 of the *Metamorphoses*, describing chaos as the seeds or semina of matter. In Hesiod's *Theogony*, chaos gives birth to four entities necessary for creation: Gaia, Eros, Erebos, and Nyx. Erebos (Darkness) and Nyx (Night) are particularly suited to Agnostus's tenebrous world.

Demogorgon's cell I.e. hell or the underworld. Demogorgon is thought to be the primeval god of classical mythology, although the name may come from Plato's Demiourgos in the *Timaeus*.

idol Image, effigy, or figure of a person or thing. Poneria's following insult is the first of several instances where Agnostus appears as a counterfeit or mere representation of knowledge or divinity.

Appear'st ... calendar The Christian calendar of saints organizes the liturgical year, associating particular days with one or more saints.

Th'Olympian games The Olympian games were held in honor of Zeus every four years and involved contests and victory celebrations. The display of food and flowers at the florists' feast may have been reminiscent of the processions and banquets following the games.

Isthmian plays The Isthmian games were held in honor of Poseidon and took place in

Isthmia, a Greek city near Corinth. Poneria conflates games and theatre as modes of play, but she seems to elevate the florists' feast by reducing both the Olympian and Isthmian games to "mere puppet plays" (1.1.44).

ludibrious Ridiculous; worthy of jest or mockery. Note the pun on ludus, the Latin word for play or game.

Lethean dullness Obliviousness or forgetfulness. Agnostus refers to either the personification of Lethe, who represents oblivion, or to one of the five rivers of the underworld. The river Lethe causes anyone who drinks its water to forget all memories, and even the sound of its water induces drowsiness in Book 11 of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.

act thy part Poneria and Agnostus often signal their roles as actors within a play, as when they discuss the feast and Society of Florists at 1.1.39-48. Such metatheatricality is common in morality plays.

Hybla's Acanthus refers to the Hyblaean Mountains in Sicily. Rhodon's lofty brow has fallen with his changing emotions, both figuratively and literally as he frowns or casts his gaze down. The comparison is fitting given that the area is renowned for its honey: Rhodon's new disposition sours his former sweetness.

pallid Pale, wan, or lacking color (especially from illness or exhaustion).

Aurora Goddess of the dawn. Aurora is the Roman equivalent of the Greek goddess Eos. She ascends into the sky every morning to announce the arrival of the sun.

Cupid Roman god of love. In other words, Acanthus suggests that the goddess Aurora was jealous of Rhodon's beauty and, seeking vengeance, persuaded Cupid to strike Rhodon with an arrow of love.

Narcissus A beautiful youth. In Greek mythology, Narcissus falls in love with his reflection and, after pining away, transforms into a narcissus flower.

coloss More commonly colossus, a massive statue of a person or god. The famous Colossus of Rhodes depicts the sun god Helios and was erected in the Greek city of Rhodes.

element of fire One of the four elements (earth, water, air, fire). The nature of fire, associated with passion and energy, is commented on here.

Eurynomus A demon of the underworld who eats the flesh of human corpses.

remora A hindrance; something that causes delay.

Lernaean ... Hydra In Greek mythology, the Lernaean Hydra is the many-headed serpent Heracles kills as one of his Twelve Labors. After cutting off the Hydra's head, two grow in its place: the Lernaean fen is therefore the birthplace of great inconveniences. Other Labors include slaying the Nemean lion and capturing the Cretan bull, which Martagon mentions at 1.4.33-7.

hempland Land currently or formerly used to grow hemp (i.e. not valuable land).

elder brothers A reference to primogeniture, the right of inheritance given to the firstborn child (especially son) of a family. An elder brother does not need wit because he will inherit enough to support himself regardless.

senators I.e. gods (literally, a member of the senate or a governing body).

Stentor's According to Book 5 of Homer's *Iliad*, Stentor possessed "a 'brazen voice' equal to that of fifty other men" (March). He supposedly died after a shouting contest.

Stoic ... stock Stoics stress the importance of pursuing happiness through virtue rather than succumbing to fleeting emotions; a stock is a senseless person. In other words, while Rhodon refuses to make decisions based solely on his passions, he is not devoid of all emotion. This phrase was common in early modern England. See also Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*: "Let's be no stoics, nor no stocks I pray" (1.1.31).

plume the pinions Pluck feathers from the wings. Note that the word plume can, in other contexts, also refer to adding feathers or plumage to something.

cell of clay I.e. human body.

Icarus The legendary Icarus flew too close to the sun with a pair of wings crafted by his father Daedalus. The feathers of the wings, attached to a frame with wax, came loose with the heat of the sun and Icarus perished in the sea.

Phaeton Son of Apollo (or Helios), god of the sun. Phaeton sought proof of his father's connection to the sun and asked to drive his chariot, which he uses to pull the sun across the sky every day. According to Greek mythology, Zeus (or Jove) killed Phaeton when the latter lost control of the horses and flew too close to the earth—a story Rhodon recounts in detail at 4.3.21-31.

Lucina An epithet given to Juno and Diana as goddesses of childbirth.

Nobilitas ... iacet. Nobility falls subject to love. The phrase is a common motto in the early modern period and appears in Phaedra's letter to Hippolytus in Ovid's *Heroides*.

spriteful Spirited, bold, or passionate.

killcow A braggadocio or person of great bravado.

Hercules Roman name for the Greek hero Heracles. Heracles is the son of Zeus and the mortal Alcmene. Renowned for his strength, Heracles is perhaps most famous for his Twelve Labors.

Thersites Confronting Agamemnon in Book 2 of Homer's *Iliad*, Thersites argues that the Trojan War is a pointless exercise in greed. Odysseus beats him into silence and the crowd jeers at Thersites despite his efforts to prevent further deaths.

Hector's The hero who leads the Trojans to battle in Homer's *Iliad* and the husband of

Andromache.

Phrygian According to Homer's *Iliad*, the Phrygians were allies of Troy during the Trojan War.

Achilles Achilles is the son of Peleus and Thetis, famed as the great hero of Homer's *Iliad*. When Patroclus dies in the Trojan War, Achilles kills Hector and drags him behind a chariot before ransoming the body. Rhodon suggests that the love between Andromache and Hector contributed to his success—without it, the ladies of Troy could have justly preferred their enemy Achilles.

winged boy I.e. Cupid, sometimes depicted with a blindfold.

lusty fee Acanthus suggests his friend has pled Cupid's case as a lawyer might, and deserves to be paid for his argument.

Surcease Stop, end.

spleen (a) Regard with ill-humor. (b) Make angry or ill-tempered.

malapert Presumptuous, impudent, saucy.

Sol Sun god, equivalent to the Greek god Helios. Sol rises in the east and sets in the west. Acanthus argues that the sun would have to reverse its path before he fell in love.

Juno ... pander A bawd and pander are individuals—a female and male, respectively—who facilitate or procure sexual gratification between others.

planets ... wander In classical astronomy, planets are described as wandering stars.

Venus Roman goddess associated with love, desire, and seduction.

prodigals Individuals who are wastefully lavish or extravagant.

usurers Individuals who lend money and charge a very high rate of interest by the early modern period.

golden pelf Money, material possessions, riches (viewed as a corrupting influence).

Sidonian purple An expensive dye often associated with royalty. A city on the coast of modern Lebanon, Sidon was known for producing glass and purple dye in the Phoenician era. The dye was laboriously extracted from particular Mediterranean whelks or sea snails.

tessellated pavements Decorative mosaics of tiles on the floor or walls.

artificial (a) Artful. (b) Decorative (rather than load-bearing). Burlinson and Zurcher note in their edition of *A Supplement of the Faery Queene* that Knevet uses artificial to denote art or skill (36). In this instance, Knevet may be suggesting that the columns are either artfully decorated, or merely decorative rather than load-bearing parts of the architecture. A critique of overindulgence would align with Clematis's criticism of Eglantine's unnatural or contrived appearance.

doth ... There Clematis contrasts a luxurious, canopied bed to the "hard, unpolished" bed mentioned earlier.

Hymen God of marriage.

banns Announcement preceding a marriage. Banns also refer to the proclamation or prologue of a play.

Like ... mate Referring to turtle doves, which mate for life.

map of melancholy A conventional poetic phrase. Faces are often likened to maps that reveal something about a person's character or emotional state. Edward Young describes the face in terms of melancholy in "Night the First" of his *The Complaint, or, Night-Thoughts on Life, Death, and Immortality* (1777): "Such is earth's melancholy map! But

far / More sad! this earth is a true map of man" (1.288-9). Shakespeare uses maps to describe age in "Sonnet 68" ("Thus is his cheek the map of days outworn, / When beauty liv'd and died as flowers do now" (1-2)) and to descibe sleep in *The Rape of Lucrece* ("Showing life's triumph in a map of death, / And death's dim look in life's mortality" (402-403)) among many other instances.

society I.e. the companionship of other people.

Exit Clematis Clematis indicates that she will "retire" at 1.3.29, which could mean she stands aside or leaves the stage. Her stage direction to enter just after 1.3.46 could indicate she enters the stage anew or simply steps forward. In this edition, Clematis exits because it seems apt that Eglantine meditates on her loneliness while she is very much alone on stage.

votes Vows, prayers.

Fates The Fates were Greek goddesses who controlled human destiny, usually envisioned as three women: Klotho (the spinner), Lachesis (the apportioner), and Atropos (the inevitable). While the origins are unclear, a popular idea was that the Fates spun a length of yarn to represent a mortal's life; once the yarn was cut or ran out, the soul would depart.

disembogue Discharge, pour forth, drive out.

celestial substance I.e. soul. Cf. Eglatine's "irksome manacles of clay" in the following line and Rhodon's "cell of clay" at 1.2.68.

Elysium A paradise where the good or distinguished live after death. In Book 4 of Homer's *Odyssey*, Elysium is where a person can enjoy the easy life of a god.

refrigeration Refreshing or cooling of the blood or spirits.

Dido Legendary queen of Carthage. As narrated in Books 1 and 4 of Vergil's *Aeneid*,

Dido falls in love with the Trojan hero Aeneas and commits suicide after he embarks once more on his journey. The name Dido means wanderer, a word often used to describe Aeneas as well (cf. the early modern ballad "The Wandering Prince of Troy").

Hypsipyle Legendary queen of Lemnos. In Ovid's *Heroides*, Hypsipyle falls in love with Jason, the mythological Greek hero and leader of the Argonauts. Both Dido and Hypsipyle are abandoned by their lovers and driven to extreme measures by love.

Tresgrand Very great.

Diana Goddess of the hunt and the moon.

balsam An aromatic oily or resinous preparation used for healing wounds or soothing pain.

young kid An animal to be sacrificed to thank the goddess Diana for her favor (in this case, one whiter than fresh snow and therefore especially pure).

whilom Once, some time ago, at some time past.

clipped those wings One might clip a bird's wings to prevent it from flying away. In a similar fashion, Martagon can no longer sweep freely over the landscape.

cooped ... up The literal idea of Martagon trapped on a small promontory of land applies, but an astrological interpretation is also possible: an angle describes either the four cardinal points of an astological chart, or the four signs of the zodiac situated at the cardinal points of the compass (Aries, Cancer, Libra, and Capricorn). The astrological definition suggests the stars are against him.

Fortune's ball [Add note]

racket-banded Imagining the earth as a ball tossed about in a game of tennis was conventional.

cope The night sky; literally, a cloak or canopy.

baldric Belt (of Jove).

Have ... stations [Add note]

golden ram Aries is represented as a ram in the zodiac. The reference also brings to mind the golden fleece that Jason sought by order of King Pelias.

Cretan bull Taurus is represented as a bull in the zodiac and follows after Aries. Crete is famous for its mythology of bulls: Pasiphaë, the queen of Crete, fell in love with a bull and gave birth to the Minotaur. Heracles was given the task of killing the Cretan bull in his Twelve Labors.

twins of Jove The zodiac symbol for Gemini is twins.

crab The zodiac Cancer.

Nemean lion Leo is represented as a lion in the zodiac, but the reference also points to the Nemean lion Heracles killed as part of his Twelve Labors.

five degrees declined [Add note]

learned ... height Ptolemaic astronomy is geocentric: the sun was thought to revolve around the earth. Copernican heliocentrism was already circulating in the 16th century, but *Rhodon and Iris* seems to be set in classical Thessaly (hence the reference to Ptolemy's rise in the 2nd century CE).

glorious charioteer [Add note]

swains (a) Men of low degree; countrymen or shepherds. (b) Country gallants, lovers, or wooers (especially in pastoral poetry).

thy The 1631 playbook reads "my," which appears to be an error either by Knevet or the printer: Martagon is not engaged to be wed. Given that Cynosbatus will at least be involved in his sister's wedding, changing "my" to "thy" seems most logical.

virago A bold, impudent, or "man-like" woman.

Hymettus A mountain southeast of Athens. Hymettus was a source of high-quality marble and famous for its thyme honey, valued for its sweetness and pale color.

Zephyrus Greek god of the west wind. The gentle Zephyrus is associated with spring and sometimes depicted as the husband of the goddess Iris.

Favonius Roman equivalent of Zephyrus.

Helen of Greece Helen of Troy, renowned for her exceptional beauty. Helen was married to King Menelaus of Sparta but was abducted by Paris of Troy, an event that led to the Trojan War.

sacred oath Before Helen chose to marry Menelaus, the many suitors agreed to protect her and whichever suitor she selected. Breaking the oath meant facing the might of the other suitors combined.

countervail Equal or match.

dram A unit of weight equivalent to one eighth of an ounce.

Violetta, Violetta Violetta's reasons for signing the letter twice are unclear: the duplication could be an error by Knevet or the printer, or used intentionally to create an echo or dramatic effect.

pallid Pale, wan, or lacking color.

shag-haired Shaggy; referring to the coma and tail of the comet, which might

resemble hair.

Hesperus The evening star; the planet Venus in the evening.

silly Helpless, defenceless, powerless.

Prometheus In Greek mythology, Prometheus creates man from clay and steals fire from the gods to give to humanity. Locating man's raging fury in the stomach references this newly kindled appetite for skills and sciences—a topic particularly suited to a feast.

a ... spare In antiquity, the Getulians (or Gaetulians) were a Berber people who inhabited the North African desert region to the south and east of Numidia.

God wot God knows.

craven (a) A coward. (b) A cock that "is not game"

borrowed plumes I.e. Martagon is a bird wearing another bird's feathers. According to Aesop's *Fables*, Jupiter decided to appoint a king over the birds and declared that he would choose the most beautiful among them. The jackdaw (a small, grey-headed crow) knew he would not be chosen, and collected the fallen feathers of other birds to affix to his own body. The beautiful plumage impressed Jupiter, who nearly crowned the jackdaw king. The other birds, however, saw past his disguise and each plucked from him his own feather. Once more, the jackdaw was simply a jackdaw.

stately ... height An extended description of a horse galloping uphill and running out of breath before reaching the top.

olive branch An emblem of peace or goodwill.

scourge Whip or lash.

Scythian snow Scythia was a region to the north and east of the Greco-Roman world

"roughly from the Danube to the Don, Caucasus, and Volga" (Braund). In literary contexts, Scythia is associated with cold weather, barbarism, and ignorance. (Cf. "She with her awful charms wonts to call forth / All sorts of noisome creatures that are bred / In sandy Libya or cold Scythia" at 3.3.30-2.)

Hyperborean ice In Greek mythology, Hyperborea is a region to the far north (beyond the north wind Boreas). Literary sources often cast Hyperborea as a magical paradise, but its northern location may have led Acanthus to associate this region with ice and frigid passions.

Vesuvius A volcano on the Bay of Naples whose eruption on 24 August 79 CE destroyed the cities Pompeii, Herculaneum, and Stabiae.

founded The 1631 playbook reads "sounded," which may be appropriate. However, the noble acts are the foundation of Acanthus's virtue. The similarity between the ſ and f characters supports the change to "founded" here.

Of ... all Or/or is a Latinized construction of either/or. Acanthus poses a Stoic dilemma: his sense of virtue stands at odds with his sudden desire for Panace. Following Stoic values, he resolves to love in moderation—a decision that contrasts Eglantine's all-consuming love (or obsession) for Rhodon.

candid ... sanctity Apossible reference to white clerical robes.

these festivals Referring to the florists' feast and to the budding romances in the play.

personated Masked, counterfeited. In botany, a personated flower is characterized by a mask-like structure made by its corolla or petals (such as a snapdragon).

coal black The original spelling "cole" evokes several words beyond coal, the carbonized black fuel. A cole is also a conjuring trick, and kohl is a black powder used in eye makeup—both words could apply to crafting a disguise. In a world of flowers, the word also brings to mind cole crops, although most are green or a dark purple.

besom I.e. beard. A besom is a broom; the beard may resemble the shape or texture of a broom.

the third Cato According to Charles, Poneria is referencing "M. Favonius, who imitated Cato Uticensis, the Stoic" (246). She notes that Stoics typically wore beards.

ensign Emblem, badge, or sign.

seven liberal sciences The seven liberal sciences, or seven liberal arts, refers to subjects taught in medieval universities. They are divided into two groups: the trivium (grammar, logic, and rhetoric) and the quadrivium (arithmetic, music, geometry, and astronomy).

Operculum ingenii [Translation. Temporary: "a little work of wit" (Charles 246)]

silken ... knowledge A scholar's or humanist's cap.

hogshead I.e. head. A hogshead is a large cask used for storing liquids. In this case, Poneria suggests that Agnostus's head is an empty container.

Helicon A mountain in southwest Boeotia. Mount Helicon is home to the Valley of the Muses, where the Greek poet Hesiod lived in the village Ascra. By wearing the cap of knowledge, Agnostus might pretend to possess such a heightened mind.

Pyrene A possible reference to the Pyrenees, a mountain range named after the mythological nymph Pyrene. Alternatively, a pyrene is also the stone or pit of a fruit. Following Poneria's logic, the brain would become a seed within the fruitful cap of knowledge.

a ... doctors Groups of theologians or religious scholars associated with a university or church.

lyceum A place of study or instruction. Lyceum refers to a specific garden in Athens where Aristotle taught philosophy.

fond Foolish or silly.

pate Head.

coif A lawyer's regalia included a piece of white silk or lawn worn on the head. The coif was one of the main symbols of a lawyer in the early modern period.

plebeian Of undistinguished birth or rank; ordinary or commonplace.

coxcombs Fools or simpletons. Professional fools wore caps that looked like a cock's comb in shape and color. Although deceptive in appearance, Agnostus's satin cap is no better than that of a fool.

Pythagoras A Greek philosopher born in Samos in the mid-6th century BCE, Pythagoras is often invoked as a genius philosopher in early modern texts (just as modern audiences might invoke Albert Einstein as a figure of genius).

'Slight By God's light (a mild oath).

political gown [Add note]

corporation I.e. city guild.

habits meet Fitting clothing.

conjunction ... stars In astrology, conjunction describes the apparent proximity of two planets or heavenly bodies as viewed from earth. Rhodon and Iris are the two stars moving closer to one another—a movement Martagon seeks to disrupt.

malign aspect In astrology, aspect refers to the way the planets look upon each other.

Cynosbatus suggests that the loving gazes between Rhodon and Iris will have malevolent effects.

That ... kill A cockatrice is a mythical reptile thought to kill with its breath or gaze. According to mythology, a cockatrice hatched by a serpent (or toad) from the egg of a cockerel or rooster. Cynosbatus argues that it is better to kill a cockatrice when it is still an unhatched egg than to battle it once it has become a dangerous monster.

Hymen's rites Marriage.

The ... oak? The twig and oak reference is proverbial: it is easier to break something in its infancy rather than when it has had time to grow.

like the Trojans Referring to the Trojan War. After a long siege on Troy, the Greeks constructed a wooden horse and hid a small force inside. The Trojans took the horse into their city and the Greeks emerged under cover of night to lead the rest of the army into the city, bringing an end to the Trojan War.

Philomel Also called Philomela. Philomela was raped by her sister's husband, Tereus, who had her tongue cut out to silence her. After exposing the crime and seeking revenge, Philomela and her sister transformed into a swallow and nightingale. The nightingale's lament is a common literary trope, although only the male nightingale sings in nature.

Ixion's wheel A revolving fiery wheel. Ixion was a legendary king of Thessaly. As punishment for committing parricide and attempting to rape Hera, Ixion was crucified on a fiery wheel for eternity.

Danaus' daughters Danaus was the father of fifty daughters known as the Danaids. Their punishment in the underworld was to pour water into an endlessly leaking vessel.

Sisyphus The king and founder of Corinth. Sisyphus was renowned for his cunning and ability to cheat death. In Homer's *Odyssey*, he is tasked with pushing a boulder up a hill for eternity as punishment. Just before he can push the stone over the crest of the hill, it rolls back to the bottom and he must start anew.

Plota's son I.e. Tantalus. Tantalus is the son of the nymph Plota and faced eternal punishment. He was forced to stand in a pool of water from which he could not drink, just beneath a tree whose fruit he could not grasp.

the ravisher Prometheus. Prometheus was bound to a pillar and an eagle devoured his regenerating liver every day—a punishment for showing too much favor to humans.

Midas Legendary king of Phrygia. Eglantine refers to Midas's wish that everything he touched turn to gold. While Dionysus granted the wish, Midas did not anticipate that his greed would prevent him from eating or drinking. In another comical narrative, the king acquires donkey ears.

diadems Crowns.

poniard A small, slim dagger.

caitiffs Wretched or miserable people.

spissitude Density or thickness.

bankrupt tenant In other words, the bankrupt tenant is someone fleeing a piece of land without paying the due rent.

Fury A female spirit of vengeance in Greek mythology.

genius An attendant spirit allotted to every person, who governs that individual's fortunes; a guardian spirit.

plaster Medicated dressing used to heal and soothe a wound.

weeds Clothing, with a gardening pun.

fane Temple.

A ... hue A pair of turtle doves. Turtle doves mate for life and are a symbol of everlasting love (cf. “Like to a turtle that hath lost her mate” at 1.3.26).

angry boy Cupid.

god ... lovers Cupid and his mother Venus.

reverent Venerable, admirable, or deeply respectful.

officine Workshop or laboratory.

privy counsellor A private or confidential adviser, especially to a sovereign.

sages Wise or venerable individuals, with a pun on the herb sage.

th’elixir, ... stone The elixir refers to a liquid preparation thought to (a) change metals into gold and/or (b) cure all maladies and prolong life indefinitely (the elixir vitae). The elixir is somtimes conflated with the philosopher’s stone, which possesses the same transformative and revitalizing qualities.

mighty Alexander Alexander the Great, the 4th century BCE Macedonian king widely regarded as one of the most successful military commanders.

Belphegor, ... Malortor [Add note]

Titan (a) Members of a priestly caste specializing in cultic activities. (b) People skilled in magic and astrology; sorcerers.

familiars Spirits who obey or assist a witch, often taking the form of animals.

Titan [Add note]

venite A command for others to come; second-person plural imperative of the Latin verb venīre, meaning to come.

Aestival Summer.

vernal Spring; early or youthful.

suffumigations Fumes or vapors generated by burning herbs, incense, or other substances; used for medical purposes or witchcraft. This line contains a string of words associated with potion-making.

simples [Add note]

melanthion [Add note]

harvest ear Ear of corn (i.e. grain ready to be harvested).

ransoms of kings I.e. the fortune required to pay the ransom of a king being held captive by enemy forces.

as I suppose The meaning is ambiguous: Martagon may simply be saying that lawbreakers should be punished or, alternatively, that he determines the laws and how they should be enforced.

colossus (a) A massive statue of a person or god. (b) A person of great prominence or influence. The reference may bring to mind the Colossus of Nero, the bronze statue of an emperor whose rule is often associated with tyranny.

Maugre Defy or oppose.

virago A bold, impudent, or “man-like” woman.

adamant (a) A hard mineral. (b) A substance not easily overcome by physical blows or

strong emotions.

Phoebus' beams Sunbeams. Phoebus is a name or epithet given to Apollo, god of the sun and light, meaning bright.

Non ... tueri [Translation. Temporary: "There is no lesser virtue than to be killed seeking spoils" (Charles 246)]

azure rivulets Small bright blue streams, referring to veins. The brilliant blue color comes from the precious stone lapis lazuli.

vermilion streams Red streams, referring to blood. Vermilion is a red mercury sulphide known for its brilliant scarlet color. Clematis notes its cosmetic use at 3.1.55, which Poneria reiterates at 3.2.5.

gelid Extremely cold, icy, frosty.

Nor ... justice Neither equity nor justice. Nor/nor is a Latinized construction of neither/nor.

agnus castus Vitex agnus-castus, a symbol of chastity. This aromatic shrub was used to reduce sexual potency or desire and to treat menstrual and menopausal symptoms. In his 1597 *Herbal*, John Gerard notes the following virtues: "Agnus castus is a singular medicine and remedy for such as would willingly live chaste, for it withstandeth all uncleanness, or desires to the flesh, consuming and drying up the feed of generation" (1202). Clematis would rather live a chaste life than serve a lovesick mistress.

knick-knacks Trinkets or trifles.

bawd A person employed in pandering to sexual debauchery (or any evil design).

Here ... provide The catalogue contains items associated with high fashion and luxurious female clothing, all of which offer an image of a well-dressed noblewoman.

See J.R. Planché's *A Cyclopaedia of Costume or Dictionary of Dress* and *History of British Costume* (289-291) for excerpts of the play within the history of fashion.

videlicet That is to say; namely. Videlicet comes from the Latin vidēre (to see) and licet (it is allowed or permitted).

tires Dress or attire.

train A long piece of material attached to the back of a dress or robe that trails along the ground.

band [Add note]

loose body A style of gown.

Storax A fragrant gum resin; in early modern usage, referring to resin from the tree Styrax officinalis

spikenard A perfumed ointment made from the plant Nardostachys Jatamansi of Northern India.

limbecks A limbeck (or alembic) is an early chemical apparatus used for distilling, consisting of two connected vessels—one containing the substance to be distilled, and another to collect the purified product.

civet, ... amber Odorous substances produced by the civet-cat, male musk deer, and whale (amber refers to ambergris).

vermilion ... mercury Substances one could apply to the face as cosmetics. Vermilion is a scarlet pigment made from mercuric sulphide, often used to produce red sealing-wax. Antimoney is a brittle, silvery-white metalloid that was, and sometimes still is, used to make black cosmetics such as kohl. Ceruse refers to white lead, which was often used in medicine, ointments, and cosmetics. A distilled metallic element

commonly used in medicine and alchemy, sublimated mercury also had cosmetic applications and was used to treat skin blemishes; the substance is still used in some illegal skin lightening creams.

Waters Distilled water infused with a substance to improve the appearance of skin.

eke Also.

pargets Covers, daubs, or plasters.

morphews Skin diseases causing discoloration of the skin or discolored lesions. In humoral theory, hyperpigmented lesions were attributed to black bile and hypopigmented lesions to phlegm.

lees Sediments deposited in a vessel containing wine (or other liquids).

scarwolfe [Add note]

centaury A herb used for healing wounds and balancing the humors. See "Of the great Centaury" (Ch. 153) and "Of small Centaury" (Ch. 154) in John Gerard's *Herbal* for descriptions of the plant and its virtues (435-8).

turpentine The semifluid resin of the terebinth tree.

heronshaw A heron; originally, the word specified a young or small heron.

three-leaved grass Likely a reference to clover.

conies Rabbits.

bitterns A genus of grallatorial birds that resemble small herons.

in ... skin Bathing in asses' milk was a luxurious and very expensive beauty treatment

in antiquity.

Poppaea Poppaea Sabina, who was first mistress then wife to Emperor Nero. She allegedly convinced Nero to divorce, banish, and execute his former wife Claudia Octavia in 62 CE.

Frisketta [Add gloss]

Helen ... Lais Helen of Troy and Lais of Corinth. Both women were considered sexually promiscuous and, therefore, the opposite of chaste: Helen was abducted by Paris while married to Menelaus, and Lais was a famous courtesan (or hetaira) of the 5th century BCE.

chary Shy, wary, or cautious; disinclined to do something.

Echo Punished by the goddess Hera, the nymph Echo lost her ability to speak freely and was condemned to only repeat the words of others. The reference is ironic as Echo must, as a result, repeat any secrets she hears.

The ... labored A reference to perpetual motion machines.

bestow ... her I.e. hire her and pay her a salary.

intelligencer of state Spy, informer.

faction A small rebel group.

Had ... tongue. All three are women a man would fear: a warrior, a queen, and a violent scold. The Amazons were a tribe of women warriors in Greek mythology; Zenobia was a powerful queen of the Palmyrene Empire in Syria who, upon her husband's death in 267 CE, claimed power for herself in the name of her young son; Xanthippe was the wife of the Greek philosopher Socrates. She was characterized as nagging and scolding, and her name has come to denote a shrewish wife (cf. 1.2.57 of Shakespeare's *The Taming*

of the Shrew).

parachito (a) Parakeet. (b) A person thought to talk or chatter mindlessly.

Shall I draw? Gladiolus considers whether he should draw a sword or knife, and engage in a duel (i.e. respond with physical violence).

Stripling A youth; one passing from boyhood to manhood.

sauciness Rudeness or impertinence (often used playfully).

naked blade With a sexual pun.

minion (a) An underling or servant. (b) A lover; a man or woman kept for sexual favors; a mistress or paramour.

cry you quit Declare oneself even or equal with a person, especially by retaliation or repayment.

Skipjack A lively, shallow-brained fellow; someone who is puppyish or foppish.

powder ... breath Sweet breath was considered an attractive feature.

dram A unit of weight equivalent to one eighth of an ounce.

pallid Pale, wan, or lacking color.

tincture (a) Color. (b) Dye or pigment; referring to a cosmetic substance (rather than just the color).

twenty crowns Twenty crowns was a significant amount of money, equal to roughly three days of wages for a skilled tradesman. One English crown was equal to five shillings.

a ... face A painted cloth, presumably one featuring an image of a woman's face.

ceruse ... brow In early modern England, a white forehead was considered attractive. Ceruse (white lead) was used as a cosmetic to lighten the complexion.

cashier Dismiss from service.

quean (a) Woman. (b) Prostitute (perhaps used as an insult here).

high Light, vibrant.

Hero's [Add note]

Nonacrine A person from Nonacris, a town in Arcadia. Poneria refers specifically to Callisto, a mythical Arcadian princess or nymph of great beauty.

Circe's drugs The daughter of Helios and the Oceanid Perse, Circe is a mythological sorceress who lives on the island of Aeaea. In Homer's *Odyssey*, she transforms Odysseus's men into pigs.

Ulysses' wits Odysseus (or Ulysses) is famous for his cunning and cleverness. He resists Circe's magic thanks to the power of a plant he receives from Hermes.

beldam (a) An aged woman. (b) A loathsome old woman or hag; a witch.

philter A potion or drug with magical properties, especially a love potion.

carouse Drink.

myrtle grove The myrtle tree is sacred to the goddess Venus, serving as an emblem of love.

Myrmidon A member of the militant people of Thessaly who accompanied Achilles in

the siege of Troy.

hotspur A rash or impetuous person. The term may allude to the character Hotspur in Shakespeare's *1 Henry IV*, a hot-tempered nobleman who leads the rebellion against Henry IV.

toil A net or nets forming an enclosed area into which game is trapped or entangled.

beldam (a) An aged woman. (b) A loathsome old woman or hag; a witch.

sandy ... Scythia Libya and Scythia are real places, but would have seemed distant, foreign, and mysterious to many English audiences. See also the references to "Libyan lions" (4.1.11) and "Scythian snow" (1.5.114).

Eryx A mountain in western Sicily.

sickle An agricultural tool similar in form and use to a reaping hook, consisting of a crescent-shaped blade with a serrated cutting edge.

Caucasus A mountain range stretching from the Black Sea to the Caspian Sea, and the location of Prometheus's suffering in Greco-Roman mythology.

Prometheus In Greek mythology, Prometheus steals fire from the gods to give to humanity. Early depictions have him bound to a pillar while an eagle eats his regenerating liver—a punishment for showing too much favor to humans.

warlike Medians Media was located in the mountainous region southwest of the Caspian Sea. Together with the Babylonians in the 7th century BCE, the Medes brought about the fall of Assyria through military force.

nimble Parthians [Add note]

Arabians rich [Add note]

anoint ... shafts Poison their arrows.

vernal Spring.

Ops's (a) Roman goddess of fertility and abundance. (b) Transitively, Ops refers to the earth itself.

Hercynia Although sources differ, the Hercynian Forest typically encompasses the wooded mountains from the Rhine to the Carpathians.

Tigris One of the two major rivers of Mesopotamia, slightly east of the Euphrates (the other major river).

Hydaspes The river where Alexander the Great defeated Porus in 326 BCE, now the Jhelum River in modern Pakistan.

Sibyl I.e. Poneria; a woman reputed to possess powers of prophecy and divination.

divine To predict or prophesy by supernatural insight.

cunctations Delays.

lawful arms A gesture toward just war theory, which argues that military action can be conisdered morally or theologically justifiable under certain circumstances.

termagant A violent, overbearing, or quarrelsome person.

Spartan resolution Sparta was renowned for its military prowess and centered much of its social life around developing military excellence.

Ossa to Olympus Ossa is a mountain in the Magnesia region of Thessaly. It is near Olympus, the highest mountain in the Greek peninsula (and is shared between Macedonia and Thessaly).

pampered coursers Large powerful horses.

glist'ring arms Glittering armor.

corrantos [Add note]

trophies Victories.

event Outcome; a result or consequence.

conventicles Assemblies or meetings, especially associated with gatherings of witches.

wight Living being.

the ... flames [Add note]

Hyrcania A province and city; the Latin name of modern Gorgān in northern Iran.

Thracian god Ares, god of war. While the goddess Athena represents the orderly aspects of war, Ares embodies its ambivalent or destructive forces. He is the Greek equivalent of the Roman god Mars, who is named two lines below.

fell debate Descended into degredation or strife.

Fond Loving, tender, affectionate (rather than the negative connotation of foolish).

cock I.e. cockatrice, not a male chicken.

lettuce [Add note]

Flora's fane A temple to Flora.

son With an ironic pun on sun.

brain intolerably dry [Add note]

Sibyl I.e. Poneria; a woman reputed to possess powers of prophecy and divination.

plumbeous Dull or dense; leaden.

juice of aconite An extraction from any poisonous plant of the genus aconitum, popularly known as monkshood or wolf's bane.

philter A potion or drug with magical properties, especially a love potion.

Orion A mighty hunter who was transformed into a constellation.

ruddy Red or rosy. Ruddy stars were thought to share the qualities of Mars, the planet named after the Roman god of war.

humble center [Add note]

Phaeton Son of Apollo (or Helios), god of the sun. Phaeton sought proof of his father's connection to the sun and asked to drive his chariot, which he uses to pull the sun across the sky every day. According to Greek mythology, Zeus (or Jove) killed Phaeton when the latter lost control of the horses and flew too close to the earth.

assays Tests, trials.

vernal Spring; early or youthful.

derogate Detract or deviate from.

dosis Dose; a quantity of medicine or drug to be administered.

philters Potions or drugs with magical properties.

Nectar (a) The drink of the gods. (b) A fluid in plants used to attract pollinators.

bonnyclabber Sour milk that has curdled.

usquebaugh Whiskey.

aurum potabile Oil containing particles of gold, used as a cordial or medicine.

metheglin Mead or other drink made with fermented honey and water.

canary A sweet fortified white wine from the Canary Islands.

sage ale Ale brewed with sage; considered much more humble than wine.

aqua celestis Heavenly water.

Are ... wine In this list of drinks, the former item is always considered less valuable than the latter.

dram A unit of weight equivalent to one eighth of an ounce.

incubus (a) A nightmare. (b) An evil spirit or demon thought to descend upon sleeping women for sexual intercourse.

colics Severe griping pains in the abdomen caused by affections of the bowels or other parts.

stone Kidney or bladder stones were among the most feared afflictions in the early modern period.

gout A disease characterized by painful inflammation of the smaller joints (especially

in the feet) and the deposition of chalkstones.

gangrene An area of dead tissue (especially resulting from a lack of blood supply) that is often accompanied by bacterial infection and putrefaction.

wolf An allusion to lupus, an autoimmune disease that causes inflammation of the skin (among other symptoms), or to other erosive diseases. The disease was named after the shape of the rash it creates on a person's face, which makes the face resemble that of a wolf. Lupus is the Latin word for wolf.

body The afflictions listed here were all painful, dangerous, and considered largely incurable. A single remedy for all would seem very impressive.

gealed Congealed or stiffened (as with cold).

nocturnal distillations I.e. dew.

quartan ague A fever that recurs every fourth day.

laurels Leaves from the laurel tree are often used as emblems of victory or distinction.

mother Martagon addresses her not as his literal mother, but as an older respected woman. The term may also suggest a kind of abbess or nun figure.

post (a) A courier, or one who delivers mail. (b) Letters or mail.

upper ... feast Seating arrangements were hierarchical: those of a higher rank sat closer to the head of the table, and taking a seat above one's rank violated etiquette.

capon's ... coxcomb A capon is a castrated cockerel, an expensive and desirable food dish. Serving a prime cut of meat to a coxcomb (a fool) would constitute a breach of etiquette. The term coxcomb shares a second reference to cocks: professional fools wore caps that resemble a cock's comb in shape and color.

ten Sibyls Women reputed to possess powers of prophecy and divination. While the Sibyl was originally one prophetic woman, the name became a generic term in later sources. Varro lists ten in his *Res Divinae*.

leiger ambassador A resident ambassador; one who is permanently stationed in a location.

Don Pluto's court I.e. the underworld. Pluto is god of the dead and king of the underworld in classical mythology.

matrice Womb. Martagon relies on the understanding that jewels and riches are conceived and grow in the womb of the earth.

wooden dish I.e. coffin.

purple-bosomed rose I.e. Rhodon.

what's ... done "Well begun is half done" is a common proverb, suggesting that a good beginning leads to success.

back-winter A return of winter after its regular time.

Stygian shore I.e. hell or the underworld. Styx refers to a deity and one of the five rivers of the underworld.

losel A scoundrel or worthless person.

Art ... bulk? [Add note]

posture A particular position or method of wielding a weapon.

musket A type of infantry gun with a long barrel.

pike A weapon consisting of a long wooden shaft with a pointed steel head.

dead pays Dead or absent soldiers for whom the captain still collected pay. As Paul Stewart writes, dead pays "represented a means for captains to profit by providing fewer than the number of men they had contracted" (404). The term should not be confused with the French morte-paye, which refers to living soldiers. See Stewarts's "Dead Pay and Morte-Paye."

patch up (a) Hastily repair. (b) Add a cloth emblem to a uniform to identify the wearer's military unit.

mustering day A day for assembling a military unit.

buff-jerkin A military jerkin (i.e. a close-fitting jacket or doublet with a short skirt and optional sleeves) made of buff-leather.

three gold laces An indication of military rank.

a Dutch felt A style of hat favored by soldiers.

rapier ... fashion An ostentatious, fashionable dueling sword with a scabbard and belt.

drab Associate with harlots; to whore.

dice Play or gamble with dice.

damn ... tradesmen Swear false oaths in order to get goods on credit.

thy ... sergeant Military ranks lower than a captain. Rather than risking his life by leading the troops himself, Agnostus will send his inferiors into battle before him.

Caesar ... Pompey Julius Caesar or Pompey the Great, renowned military and

political leaders during the end of the Roman Republic.

relic The remains of a holy person or object preserved for veneration in the Christian Church. Poneria alludes to the burning of heretics at the stake, whose ashes were scattered so that no bodily relics remained for admirers.

Iris With a double meaning, since Rhodon's own vision (or iris) is now clear.

wight Living being.

leaguer A military camp, especially one engaged in a siege.

the ... Venus To excel in war, pursue success in love.

Avaunt Onward, begone, or away; a term of dismissal.

vouchsafe Graciously confer or bestow.

caitiffs (a) Captives, prisoners. (b) More broadly, wretched or miserable people.

personated Represented or acted dramatically; feigned or pretended.

sure for starting [Add note]

Anthophotus The original 1631 playbook has Rhodon deliver two speeches in a row. Charles manages this issue by splitting the previous speech in half, assigning the final two lines to Anthophotus and retaining the Rhodon speech prefix here. However, it seems logical to assign this speech to Anthophotus instead: success and victory hinge on Rhodon rather than his friend.

billmen Soldiers armed with bills. A bill is a military weapon varying from a simple concave blade with a long wooden handle to a concave axe with a spike at the back and a shaft ending in a spear-head.

marshalled Assembled or arranged a procession of armed forces for fighting.

Swissers Swiss mercenaries.

van The vanguard or foremost division of an army.

rear Rearguard or rear division of an army.

Narcissus Narcissus is the Latin name for daffodils. The Narcissus leading these troops may either be a generic allegorical character or the Narcissus of Greek mythology who transformed into a daffodil upon death (cf. "Narcissus on the brink / Of the beguiling stream" at 1.2.18-9).

Hyacinthus Hyacinthus was a beautiful youth of Greek mythology, loved by both Apollo and Zephyrus. Jealousy between the two gods led to Hyacinthus's death, and a Hyacinth flower sprung from his blood.

Cynosbatus The original stage direction has Rhodon enter, but he is already on stage and has no reason to exit earlier. It seems appropriate that Cynosbatus would enter with his friend Martagon as he needs to be present when Flora addresses him at 5.6.83.

Eglantine As Charles points out, it seems logical for Clematis and Gladiolus to also enter with Eglantine to display all the flowers at the end of the play (247). Since their presence is not supported by the narrative, however, this edition does not insert entrances for these two characters.

scabbard A case or sheath to protect a blade when not in use.

broils Quarrels or confused disturbances.

jars Harsh, inharmonious sounds; discords.

vestal temple [Add note]

penance Religious discipline undertaken as a token of repentance and as compensation for sin.

slights [Add note]

with ... express An invitation for the audience to applaud.

- Site version: 0.1a
- Last modified: 2020-09-01T13:10:36.04
- SVN revision: 4622