

Renascence Editions

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A Dispvatation Betweene a Hee Conny-catcher and a Shee Conny-catcher. 1592.

Robert Greene

Note on the e-text: this [Renascence Edition](#) was transcribed, October 2007, by Risa Stephanie Bear, from Robert Greene, *The thirde and last part of Conny-catching. With the newly devised knauish Art of Foole-taking. The like Cosenages and Villenies neuer before discouered. A Dispvatation Betweene a Hee Conny-catcher and a Shee Conny-catcher*. New York: E. P. Dutton and Co. London: John Lane The Bodley Head Ltd. (The Bodley Head Quartos) 1923, ed. G.B. Harrison.

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"The original of this text is in the Bodleian Library (Malone 575). A very few misprints have been corrected in the text. G.B.H."

A DISPVTATION,
Betweene a Hee Conny-catcher, and a
Shee Conny-catcher, whether a theefe or a Whoore, is
most hurtfull in Cousonage, to the Com-
mon-wealth.
DISCOVERING THE SECRET VILLA-
nies of alluring Strumpets.
With the Conuersion of an English Courtizen, reformed
this present yeare, 1 5 9 2.
Reade, laugh, and learne.
Nascimur pro patria.
R. G.

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DISCOVERING THE SECRET VILLA-
nies of alluring Strumpets.

With the Conuerfion of an English Courtizen, reformed
this prefent year, 1592.

Reade, laugh, and learne.

Nafeimur pro patria.

R. G.



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To all Gentlemen, Marchants, Appren-
tises, and Countrey Farmers health.

GENTLEMEN, Countrey men, and kinde friends, for so I value all that are honest and enemies of bad actions, although in my bookes of Conny-catching I haue discovered diuers formes of cosonings, and painted out both the sacking and crosbyting lawes, which strumpets vse, to the destruction of the simple, yet willing to search all the substance, as I haue glauncst at the shadow, & to enter into the nature of villanie, as I haue broacht vp the secretes of vice, I haue thought good to publish this Dialogue or disputa-tion, betweene a hee Conny-catcher, and a shee Conny-catcher, whether of them are most preiudiciall to the Common-wealth, discoursing the base qualities of them both, and discovering the inconuenience that growes to men, through the lightnes of inconstant wantons, who being wholly giuen to the spoyle, seeke the ruine of such as light into their companie. In this Dialogue, louing Country-men, shall you finde what preiudice ensues by haunting of whore-houses, what dangers grows by dallying with common harlottes, what inconuenience followes the inordinate pleasures of vnchast Libertines, not onely by their consuming of their wealth, and impouerishment of their goods and landes, but to the great indangering of their health. For in conuersing with them they aime not simply at the losse of goods, and blemish of their good names, but they fish for diseases, sicknesse, sores incurable, vlcers bursting out of the ioyntes, and sault rhumes, which by the humour of that villanie, lepte from Naples into Fraunce, and from Fraunce into the bowels of Englande, which makes many crye out in their bones, whilst goodman Surgion laughs in his purse: a thing to be feared as deadly while men liue, as hell is to be dreaded after death, for it not only infecteth the bodie, consumeth the soule, and waste wealth and worship, but ingraues a perpetuall shame in the forehead of the partie so abused. Whereof Maister Huggins hath well written in his Myrror of Magistrates, in the person of Mempryciaus, exclaiming against har-lots, the verses be these:

*Eschue vile Venus toys shee cuts off age,
And learne this lesson oft, and tell thy frend,
By Pockes, death sodaine, begging, Harlots end.*

Besides, I haue here layde open the wily wisdomes of ouerwise Curtizens, that with their cunning, can drawe on, not only poore nouices, but such as hold themselues maisters of their occupa-tion. What flatteries they vse to bewitch, what sweet words to inueagle, what simple holines to intrap, what amorous glaunces, what smirking Ocyliades, what cringing curtesies, what stretch-ing Adios, following a man like a blood-hound, with theyr eyes white, laying out of haire, what frowning of tresses, what paintings, what Ruffes, Cuffes, and braueries, and all to betraie the eyes of the innocent nouice, whom when they haue drawne on to the bent of their bow, they strip like the prodigall childe, and turne out of doores like an outcast of the world. The Crocodile hath not more teares, Proteus, more shape, Ianus more faces, the Hieria, more sundry tunes to entrap the passen-gers, then our English Curtizens, to bee plaine, our English whores: to set on fire the hearts of lasciuious and gazing strangers. These common, or rather consuming strumpets, whose throathes are softer then oyle, and yet whose steppes leade vnto death. They haue their Ruffians to rifle, when they cannot fetch ouer with other cunning, their crosbiters attending vpon them, their foysts, their bufts, their nippes, and such like. Being wayted on by these villaines, as by ordinary seruantes, so that who thinkes himselfe wise inough to escape their flatteries, him they cros-byte, who holdes himselfe to rule, to be bitten with a counterfeyt Apparater, him they rifle, if hee be not so to bee verst vpon, they haue a foyst or a nyppe vpon him, and so sting him to the quicke. Thus he that medles with pitch, cannot but be defiled, and he that acquainteth himselfe or conuerseth with any of these Connycatching strum-pets, cannot but by some way or other

bee brought to confusion: for either hee must hazard his soule, blemish his good name, loose his goods, light vppon diseases, or at the least haue been tyed to the humor of an harlot, whose quiuer is open to euery arrow, who likes all that have fat purses, and loues none that are destitute of pence. I remember a Monke in *Diebus illis*, writ his opinion of the end of an Adulterer, thus:

*Quatuor his casibus sine dubio cadet adulter,
Aut hic pauper erit, aut hic subito morietur,
Aut cadet in causum qua debet iudice vinci,
Aut aliquod membrum casu vell crimine perdet,*

Which I Englished thus:

*He that to Harlots lures do yeeld him thrall,
Through sowre misfortune too bad end shall falll:
Or sodaine death, or beggerie shall him chance,
Or guilt before a Iudge his shame inhance:
Or els by fault or fortune he shall leese,
Some member sure escape from one of these.*

Seeing then such inconuenience grows from the caterpillers of the Common-wealth, and that a multitude of the monsters here about London, particularly & generally abroad in England, to the great ouerthrow of many simple men that are inueagled by their flatteries, I thought good not only to discouer their villanies in a Dialogue, but also to manifest by an example, howe preiuditiail their life is, to the state of the land, that such as are warned by an instance, may learne and looke before they leape, to that end kind Country-men, I haue set downe at the ende of the disputation, the wonderful life of a Curtezin, not a fiction, but a truth of one that yet liues not now in an other forme repentant. In the discourse of whose life, you shall see how dangerous such truls be to all estates that be so simple as to trust theyr fained subtilties: heere shall parents learne, how hurtfull it is to cocker vp their youth in their follies, and haue a deepe insight how to bridle their daughters, if they see them any waies grow wantons, wishing therefore my labors may be a caueat to my country-men, to auoyde the companie of such cousoning Courtezins.

Farewell.

R. G.

A disputation between Laurence a Foist
and faire Nan a Traffique, whether a Whore
or a Theefe is most preiuditiail.

Laurence.

FAIRE *Nan* well met, what newes about your Vine Court that you looke so blythe, your cherry cheekes discouers your good fare, and your braue apparell bewraies a fat purse, is Fortune now alate growne so fauourable to Foystes, that your husband hath lighted on some large purchase, or hath your smooth lookes linckt in some yong Nouice to sweate for a fauour all the byte in his Bounge, and to

leau[e] himselfe as many Crownes as thou hast good conditions, and then hee shall bee one of Pierce penillesse fraternitie: how is it sweet wench, goes the worlde on wheelles, that you tread so daintily on your typtoes?

Nan. Why Laurence are you pleasant or peeuish, that you quip with such breefe girdes, thinke you a quarterne winde cannot make a quicke saile, that easie lystes cannot make heauy burthens, that women haue not wiles to compasse crownes as wel as men, yes & more, for though they be not so strong in the fists, they bee more ripe in their wittes, and tis by wit that I liue and will liue, in dispight of that peeuish scholler, that thought with his conny-catching bookes to haue crosbyt our trade. Doest thou maruell to see me thus briskt, fayre wenches cannot want fauours, while the world is so full of amorous fooles, where can such girles as my selfe bee blemisht with a threedbare coat, as long as country Farmers haue full purses, and wanton Citizens pockets full of pence.

Laur. Truth if fortune so fauour thy husband, that hee be neither smoakt nor cloyed, for I am sure all thy brauery comes by his Nipping, Foysting, and lifting.

Nan. In faith sir no, did I get no more by mine own wit, then I reap by his purchase, I might both go bare & penillesse the whole yere, but mine eyes are stauls, & my hands lime twigs (els were I not worthie the name of a she Connycatcher). *Cyrces* had neuer more charms, *Calipso* more inchantments the *Syrens* more subtil tunes, the[n] I haue crafty slightes to inueagle a Conny, and fetch in a country Farmer. Laurence beleeu[e] mee, you men are but fooles, your gettings is vncertaine, and yet you still fish for the gallowes, though by some great chance you light vppon a good boun[g], yet you fast a great while after, whereas, as we mad wenches haue our tennants (for so I call euerie simple letcher and amorous Fox) as wel out of Tearme as in Tearm to bring vs our rentes, alas, were not my wits and my wanton pranks more profitable then my husbands foysting, we might often go to bed supperlesse for want of surfetting, and yet I dare sweare, my husband gets a hundreth pounds a yere by boun[g]s.

Laur. Why Nan, are you growne so stiffe, to thincke that your faire lookes can get as much as our nimble fingers, or that your sacking can gaine as much as our foysting, no, no, Nan, you are two bowes downe the wind, our foyst will get more then twentie the proudest wenches in all London.

Nan. Lye a litle further & giue mee some roome, what Laurence your toong is too lauish, all stands vpon prooffe, and sith I haue leisure and you no great busines, as being now when Powles is shut vp, and all purchasies and Connies in their burrowes, let vs to the Tauerne and take a roome to our selues, and there for the price of our suppers, I will proue that women, I meane of our facultie, a trafficque, or as base knaues tearme vs strumpets, are more subtill, more dangerous, in the common-wealth, and more full of wyles to get crownes, then the cunningest Foyst, Nip, Lift, Pragges, or whatsoever that liues at this day.

Laur. Content, but who shall be moderater in our controuersies, sith in disputing *pro & contra*, betwixt our selues, it is but your yea and my nay, and so neither of vs will yeeld to others victories.

Nan. Trust me Laurence, I am so assured of the conquest, offering so in the strength of mine owne arguments, that when I haue reasoned, I will referre it to your Judgement and censure.

Laur. And trust mee as I am an honest man, I will bee indifferent.

Nan. Oh sweare not so deeply, but let mee first heare what you can say for your selfe.

Laur. What? why more Nan, then can be painted out in a great volume, but briefly this, I need not discribe the lawes of villanie, because R. G. hath so amply pend them downe in the first part of Conny-catching, that though I be one of the facultie, yet I cannot discouer more then hee hath layde open. Therefore first to the Gentlemen Foyst, I pray you what finer qualitie? what Art is more excellent either

to trie the ripenes of the wit, or the agilitie of the hand, then that for him that will be maister of his Trade, must passe the proud-est iugler aliue, the poynts of Leger *de maine*, he must haue an eye to spye the boung or pursse, and then a heart to dare to attempt it, for this by the way, he that feares the Gallowes shal neuer be good theefe while he liues, hee must as the Cat watch for a Mouse, and walke Powles, Westminster, the Exchange, and such common haunted places, and there haue a curious eye to the person, whether he be Gentleman, Citizen or Farmer, and note, either where his boung lyes, whether in his hoase or pockets, and then dogge the partie into a presse where his staule with heauing and shouing shall so molest him, that hee shall not feele when wee strip him of his boung, although it bee neuer so fast or cunningly coucht about him, what poore Farmer almost can come to plead his case at the barre, to attend vpon his Lawyers at the bench, but looke he neuer so narrowly to it we haue his pursse, wherin some time there is fat purchase, twentie or thirtie poundes, and I pray you how long would one of your Traffiques be earning so much with your Chamber worke. Besides in faires and markets, and in the circuites after Judges, what infinit mony is gotten from honest meaning men, that either busie about their necessarie affaires, or carelesly looking to their Crownes, light amongst vs that be foysts, tush wee dissemble in show, we goe so neat in apparrell, so orderly in outward appearance, some like Lawyers Clarkes, others lyke Seruingmen, that attended there about their maisters businesse, that wee are hardly smoakt, versing vpon all men with kinde courtesies and faire wordes, and yet being so warily watch-full, that a good purse cannot be put vp in a faire, but wee sigh if wee share it not amongst vs, and though the bookes of Conny-catching hath some-what hindred vs, and brought many braue foystes to the haulter, yet some of our Country farmers, nay of our Gentlemen and Citizens, are so carelesse in a throng of people, that they shew vs the praie, and so draw on a theefe, and bequeath vs their purses, whether we will or no, for who loues wyne so ill, that hee will not eate grapes if they fall into his mouth, and who is so base, that if he see a pocket faire before him, wil not foyst in if he may, or if foysting will not serue, vse his knife and nip, for although there bee some foysts that will not vse their kniues, yet I hold him not a perfect worke-man or maister of his Mysterie, that will not cut a purse as well as Foyst a pocket, and hazard any limme for so sweet a gaine as gold, how answere you me this breefe obiection Nan, can you com-pare with either our cunning to get our gaines in purchase.

Nan. And haue you no stronger arguments goodman Laurence, to argue your excellencie in villanie but this, then in faith put vp your pipes, and giue mee leaue to speake, your choplodgicke hath no great subtilltie for simple, you reason of foysting, & appropriate that to your selues, to you men I meane, as though there were not women Foysts and Nippes, as neat in that Trade as you, of as good an eye, as fine and nimble a hand, and of as resolute a heart, yes Laurence, and your good mistresses in that mystery, for we without like suspition can passe in your walkes vnder the couler of simplicitie to Westminster, with a paper in our hand, as if we were distressed women, that had some supplication to put vp to the iudges, or some bill of information to deliuer to our Lawyers, when God wot, we shuffle in for a boung as well as the best of you all, yea as your selfe Laurence, though you bee called King of Cutpurses, for though they smoke you, they will hardly mistrust vs, and sup-pose our stomacke stand against it to foyst, yet who can better playe the staule or the shadowe then wee, for in a thrust or throng if we shoue hard, who is hee that will not fauour a woman, and in giuing place to vs, giue you free passage for his purse. Againe, in the market, when euerie wife hath almost her hand on her boung, and that they crie beware the Cutpurse and Conny-catchers, then I as fast as the best with my hand basket as mannerly as if I were to buye great store of butter and egges for prouision of my house, do exclaime against them with my hand on my purse, and say the worlde is badde when a woman cannot walke

safely to market for feare of these villanous Cut-purses, when as the first bounge I come to, I either nip or foyst, or els staule an other while hee hath stroken, dispatcht and gone, now I pray you gentle sir, wherein are we inferiour to you in foyst-ing, and yet this is nothing to the purpose. For it is one of our most simplest shifts, but yet I pray you what thinke you when a farmer, gentleman, or Citizen, come to the Tearme, perhaps hee is wary of his purse, and watch him neuer so warily, yet he will neuer be brought to the blow, is it not possible for vs to pinch him ere hee passe, hee that is most charie of his crownes abroad, and will cry ware the Conny-catchers, will not be afraide to drinke a pinte of wine with a prety wench, and perhaps goe to a trugging house to ferry out one for his purpose, then with what cunning we can feede the simple fop, with what fayre words, sweete kisses, fained sighes, as if at that instant we fell in loue with him that we neuer saw before, if we meet him in an euening in the street, if the farmer or other whatsoeuer, bee not so forward as to motion some curtesie to vs, we straight insinuate into his company, and claime acquaintance of him by some meanes or other, and if his minde be set for lust, and the diuell driue him on to match him selfe with some dishonest wanton, then let him looke to his purse, for if he do but kisse me in the streete ile haue his purse, for a farwell, although nee neuer commit any other act at all. I speake not this onely by my selfe Lawrence, for there bee a hundreth in London more cunning then my selfe in this kinde of cunny-catching. But if hee come into a house then let our trade alone to verse vpon him, for first we faine ourselues hungry, for the benefit of the house, although our bellies were never so ful, and no doubt the good Pander or Bawde shee comes foorth like a sober Matron, and sets store of Cates on the Table, and then I fall aboard on them, and though I can eate little, yet I make hauocke of all, and let him be sure euerie dish is well saucst, for hee shall pay for a pipping Pye that cost in the Market four pence, at one of the Trugging houses xviii. pence, tush what is daintie if it bee not deare bought, and yet he must come off for crownes besides, and when I see him draw to his purse, I note the putting vp of it well, and ere wee part, that worlde goes hard if I foyst him not of all that hee hath, and then suppose the woorst, that he misse it, am I so simply acquainted or badly prouided, that I haue not a friend, which with a few terrible oathes and countenance set, as if he were the proudest Souldado that euer bare armes against *Don Iohn of Austria*, will face him quite out of his money, and make him walke lyke a woodcocke homeward by weeping crosse, and so buy repentance with all the crownes in his purse. how say you to this Lawrence, whether are women Foystes inferiour to you in ordinarie cousonage or no.

Laur. Excellently well reasoned Nan, thou hast told mee wonders, but wench though you be wily and strike often, your blowes are not so big as ours.

Nan. Oh but note the subiect of our disputa-tion, and that is this, which are more subtill and daungerous in the Common-wealth, and to that I argue.

Laur. I and beshrow me, but you reason quaintly, yet wil I proue your wittes are not so ripe as ours, nor so readie to reach into the subtilties of kinde cousonage, and though you appropriate to your selfe the excellencie of Conny-catching, and that you doo it with more Art then we men do, because of your painted flatteries and sugred words, that you flourish rethorically like nettes to catch fooles, yet will I manifest with a merry in-stance, a feate done by a Foyst, that exceeded any that euer was done by any mad wench in England.

*A pleasant Tale of a Country Farmer, that tooke it
in scorn to haue his purse cut or drawne from*

him, and how a Foyst serued him.

IT was told me for a truth that not long since here in London, there laie a country Farmar, with diuers of his neighbours about Law matters, amongst whom, one of them going to Westminster-Hall, was by a Foyst stript of all the pence in his purse, and comming home, made great complaint of his misfortune, some lamented his losse, and others exclaimed against the Cutpurses, but this Farmer he laught loudly at the matter, and said such fooles as could not keep their purses no surer, were well serued, and for my part quoth hee, I so much scorne the Cutpurses, that I would thanke him hartily that would take paines to foyst mine, well saies his neighbor, then you may thank me, sith my harmes learns you to beware, but if it be true, that many things fall out between the cup and the lip, you know not what hands Fortune may light in your owne lap, tush quoth the Farmar, heeres fortie pounds in this purse in gold, the proudest Cutpurse in England win it and weare it, as thus he boasted, there stood a subtill Foyst by and heard all, smiling to himselfe at the folly of the proude Farmar, and vowed to haue his purse or venture his necke for it, and so went home and bewrayed it to a crue of his companions, who taking it in dudgion, that they should be put down by a Pesant, met either at Laurence Pickerings, or at Lambeth: let the Blackamore take heede I name him not, least an honorable neighbor of his frowne at it, but wheresoeuer they met they held a conuocation, and both consulted and concluded all by a generall consent, to bend all their wits to bee possessers of this Farmers Bounge, and for the execution of this their vow, they haunted about the Inne where he laie, and dogd him into diuers places, both to Westminster Hall and other places, and yet could neuer light vpon it, he was so watch-full and smoakt them so narrowly, that all their trauell was in vaine, at last one of them fledde to a more cunning pollicie, and went and learnde the mans name and where hee dwelt, and then hyed him to the Counter and entered an Action against him of trespasse, damages two hundreth pounds, when hee had thus done, hee feed two Sargiants, and carried them downe with him to the mans lodging, wishing them not to arrest him till he commaunded them, well agreed they were, and downe to the Farmers lodging they came, where were a crue of Foystes, whom he had made priuy to the end of his practise, stood wayting, but he tooke no knowledge at all of them, but walkt vp and downe, the Farmer came out and went to Powles, the Cutpurse bad staie, and would not yet suffer the Officers to meddle with him, til he came into the West end of Paules Churchyard, and there he willed them to do their Office, and they step-ping to the Farmer arrested him, the Farmer amazed, beeing amongst his neighbors, asked the Sargiant at whose suite hee was troubled, at whose suite soeuer it be, sayd one of the Cutpurses that stood by, you are wrongd honest man, for hee hath arested you here in a place of priuiledge, where the Sherifes nor the Offices haue nothing to do with you, and therefore you are vnwise if you obey him, tush saies an other Cutpurse, though the man were so simple of himselfe, yet shall hee not offer the Church so much wrong, as by yeelding to the Mace, to imbollish Paules libertie, and therefore I will take his part, and with that hee drew his sword, another tooke the man and haled him away, the Officer he stooke hard to him, and sayd hee was his true prisoner, and cride Clubbes, the Prentises arose, and there was a great hurly burly, for they tooke the Officers part, so that the poore Farmer was mightily turmoyld amongst them, and almost haled in peeces, whilst thus the strife was, one of the Foystes had taken his purse away, and was gone, and the Officer carried the man away to a Tauerne, for he swore he knew no such man, nor any man that he was indebted too, as then they satte drinking of a quart of wine, the Foyst that had caused him to be arrested, sent a note by a Porter to the Officer that he should release the Farmer, for he had mistaken the man, which note the Officer shewed him, and bad him pay his fees and go his

waies: the poore Country-man was content with that, and put his hand in his pocket to feele for his purse, and God wot there was none, which made his heart far more cold then the arrest did, and with that fetching a great sigh he sayd, alas maisters I am vndone, my purse in this fraie is taken out of my pocket and ten pounds in gold in it besides white money. Indeed sayd the Sar-giant, commonly in such brawles the cutpurses be busie, and I pray God the quarell was not made vpon purpose by the pickpockets, well saies his neighbor, who shall smile at you now, the other day when I lost my purse you laught at mee, the Farmer brooke all, and sat malecontent, and borrowed money of his neighbors to paye the Sargiant, and had a learning I beleeeue euer after to braue the cutpurse.

How say you to this mistresse Nan, was it not well done, what choyce witted wench of your facultie, or the Foyst, hath euer done the like, tush Nan, if we begin once to apply our wittes, all your inuentions are follies towards ours.

Nan. You say good goodman Laurence, as though your subtilties were sodaine as womens are, come but to the olde Prouerbe, and I put you downe, Tis as hard to finde a Hare without a Muse, as a woman without a scuse, and that wit that can devise a cunnyng lye, can plot the intent of deep villanies. I grant this fetch of the foyst was prettie, but nothing in respect of that we wantons can compasse, and therefore to quit your tale with an other, heare what a mad wench of my profession, did alate to one of your facultie.

*A passing pleasant Tale, how a whore Conny-catcht
a Foyst.*

THERE came out of the country a Foyst, to trie his experience, here in Westminster Hall, and strooke a hand or two, but the diuell a snap hee would giue to our citizen Foystes, but wrought warily, and could not bee fetcht off by no meanes, and yet it was knowne he had some twentie poundes about him, but hee had planted it so cunningly in his doublet, that it was sure inough for finding. Although the cittie Foyst layde all the plottes they could, as well by discoueryng him to the Gaylors as otherwayes, yet hee was so pollitique, that they could not verse vpon him by any meanes, which greeued them so, that one day at a dinner, they held a counsaile amongst themselues how to couzen him, but in vain, til at last a good wench that sat by, vndertooke it, so they would sweare to let her haue all that hee had, they confirmed it sollemply, and she put it in practise thus, she subtilly insinuated her selfe into this Foysts company, who seeing her a prettie wench, began after twise meeting to waxe familiar with her, and to question about a nights lodging, after a little nyce louing & bidding she was content for her supper and what els hee would of curtesie bestowe vpon her, for she held it scorne shee sayd, to set a salarie price on her bodie, the Foyst was gladde of this, and yet hee woulde not trust her, so that hee put no more but tenne shillings in his pocket, but hee had aboute twentie poundes twilted in his doublet, well to be short, supertime came, and thither comes my gentle Foyst, who making good cheere, was so eagar of his game, that hee would straight to bedde by the leaue of dame Bawde, who had her fee too, and there hee laye till about midnight, when three or foure old Hacksters whom she had prouided vpon purpose came to the doore and rapt lustely, who is there sayes the Bawde looking out of the window, marry say they, such a Iustice, and named one about the Cittie that is a mortall enemy to Cutpurses, who is come to search your house for a Iesuite and other suspected persons, alas sir sayes shee I haue none heere, well quoth they, oape the doore, I will sayes shee, and with that shee came into the Foystes Chamber, who

heard all this, and was afraide it was some search for him, so that hee desired the Bawde to helpe him that hee might not be seene, why then quoth shee, steppe into this Closet, hee whipt in hastely and neuer remembred his cloathes, she lockt him in safe, and then let in the crue of Rakehels, who making as though they searcht euerye chamber, came at last into that where his Lemman laie, and asked her what shee was, shee as if she had been afrayde, desired their worshippes to bee good to her, shee was a poore Countrey mayde come vp to the Tearme, and who is that quoth they, that was in bedde with you, none forsooth saies shee, no saies one, that is a lye, here is the print of two, and besides, wheresoeuer the Foxe is, here is his skinne, for this is his doub-let and hoase, then downe she falles vppon her knees, and saies indeed it was her husband, your husband quoth they, nay that cannot be so Minion, for why then wold you haue denied him at the first, with that one of them turnde to the Bawd, and did question with her what he was and where hee was, truly sir sayes she, they came to my house and sayd they were man and wife, and for my part I know them for no other, and hee being afrayd, is indeed to confesse the troth, shut vp in the Closset. No doubt if it please your worships saies one rakehell, I warrant you hee is some notable Cutpurse or pickpocket, that is afrayd to shew his face, come and open the Closet, and let vs looke on him, nay sir saies she not for to night I beseech your worship carry no man out of my house, I will giue my word hee shall bee foorth comming to morrow morning, your word dame Bawde saies one, tis not worth a straw, you huswife that saies ye are his wife, ye shall go with vs, and for him that we may be sure hee may not start, ile take his doublet, hoase and cloake, and tomorrow ile send them to him by one of my men, were there a thousand poundes in them, there shall not be a peny diminisht, the whore kneeled downe on her knees and fayned to cry pittifully, and desired the iustice which was one of her companions, not to carry her to prison, yes huswife quoth he, your mate and you shall not tarry together in one house, that you may make your tales all one, and therefore bring her away, and after ye dame Bawde see you lend him no other cloaths, for I wil send his in the morning betimes, and come you with him to answer for lodging him. I will sir saies she, and so away goes the wench & her companions laughing, and left the Bawde and the Foyst, assoone as the Bawde thought good, shee vnlockt the Closet and curst the time that euer they came in her house, now quoth shee, here wil be a fayre adoo, how will you answere for your selfe, I feare mee I shall be in danger of the Cart, well quoth he, to be short, I would not for fortie poundes come afore the Iustice, marry no more would I quoth she, let me shift if you were conueyed hence, but I haue not a rag of mans apparell in the house, why quoth he, seeing it is early morning, lend me a blanket to put about me, and I wil scape to a friends house of mine, then leaue me a pawne quoth the Bawde, alas I haue none saies he but this ring on my finger, why that quoth she, or tarry while the Iustice comes, so he gaue it her, tooke the blanket and went his waies, whether I know not, but to some friends house of his. Thus was this wily Foyst by the wit of a subtill wench, cunningly stript of all that hee had and turnde to grasse to get more fat.

Nan. how say you to this deuce Lawrence, was it not excellent? What thinke you of a womans wit if it can woorke such woonders.

Laur. Marry I thinke my mother was wiser then all the honest women of the parish besides.

Nan. Why then belike shee was of our facultie, and a Matrone of my profession, nimble of her handes, quicke of toong, and light of her taile, I should haue put in sir reuerence, but a foule word is good enough for a filthie knaue.

Laur. I am glad you are so pleasant Nan, you were not so merry when you went to Dunstable, but indeede I must needes confesse that women Foysts if they be carefull in their trades are (though not so

common) yet more daungerous then men Foystes, women haue quicke wittes, as they haue short heeles, and they can get with pleasure, what wee fish for with danger, but now giuing you the bucklers at this weapon, let me haue a blow with you at another.

Nan. But before you induce any more argu-ments, by your leaue in a litle by talke, you know Laurence that though you can foyst, nyp, prig, lift, courbe, and vse the blacke Art, yet you cannot crosbite without the helpe of a woman, which cros-biting now adaies is growne to a maruellous profitable exercise, for some cowardly knaues that for feare of the gallowes, leaue nipping and foysting, become Crosbites, knowing there is no danger therein but a litle punishment, at the most the Pillorie, and that is saued with a litle *Vngantum Aureum*, as for example, *Iacke Rhoades* is now a reformed man, whatsoever he hath been in his youth, now in his latter daies hee is growne a correcter of vice, for whom soeuer hee takes suspitious with his wife, I warrant you he sets a sure fine on head, though he hath nothing for his mony but a bare kisse, and in this Art wee poore wenchs are your surest props and staie. If you will not beleue mee, aske poore *A. B.* in Turnmill street, what a sawcie Signer there is, whose purblind eyes can scarcely discerne a Lowse from a Flea, and yet hee hath such insight into the mysticall Trade of Cros-biting, that hee can furnish his boord, with a hundreth poundes worth of Plate, I doubt the sandeyde Asse, will kicke like a Westerne Pugge: if I rubbe him on the gaule, but tis no matter if hee finde himselfe toucht and stirre, although hee boastes of the chiefe of the Clargies fauour, yet ile so set his name out, that the boyes at Smithfield barres shall chalke him on the backe for a Crosbite, tush you men are foppes in fetching nouices ouer the coales, hearken to me Lawrence, ile tell thee a woonder. Not far off from Hogsdon, perhaps it was there, and if you thinke I lye, aske master Richard Chot, and maister Richard Strong, two honest gentlemen that can witnesse as well as I, this prooffe of a womans witte. There dwelt here somtimes a good auncient Matron that had a faire wench to her daughter, as yong and tender as a morrow masse priests Lemman, her shee set out to sale in her youth, and drew on sundrie to bee suters to her daughter, some wooers, and some speeders, yet none married her, but of her bewtie they made a profite, and inueagled all, till they had spent vpon her what they had, and then forsooth, she and her yoong Pigion turne them out of doores like prodigall children, she was acquainted with Dutch & French, Italian & Spaniard as wel as English, & at last, as so often the Pitcher goes to the brooke that it comes broken home, my faire daughter was hit on the master vaine and gotten with childe, now the mother to colour this matter to saue her daughters marriage, begins to weare a Cushion vnder her owne kirtle, and to faine her selfe with child, but let her daughter passe as though she ailde nothing, when the fortie weekes were come, & that my young mistres must needs cry out forsooth, this olde *B.* had gotten huswifes answerable to her selfe, and so brought her daugh-ter to bed, and let her go vp and downe the house, and the old Croane lay in child bed as though shee had been deliuered, and sayd the childe was hers, and so saued her daughters scape, was not this a wittie wonder maister Lawrence, wrought by an olde Witch, to haue a childe in her age, and make a yoong whoore seeme an honest virgin, tush this is litle to the purpose, if I should recite all, how many shee had cousoned vnder the pretence of marriage, well poore plaine *Signor, See*, you were not stiffe inough for her, although it cost you many crownes and the losse of your seruice. lie say no more, perhaps she will amend her maners. Ah Lawrence how lyke you of this geare, in Cros-byting wee put you downe, for God wot it is little lookt too in and about London, and yet I may say to thee, many a good Citizen is Crosbyt in the yeare by odde *Walkers* abroad, I heard some named the other day as I was drinking at the Swanne in Lambeth Marshe, but let them aloane, tis a foule byrd that defiles the owne neast, and it were a shame for me to speake against any good wenchs or boon Companions, that by their wittes can

wrest mony from a Churle, I feare me *R. G.* will name them too soone in his blacke booke, a pestilence on him, they say, hee hath there set downe my husbandes pettegree, and yours too Lawrence, if he do it, I feare me your brother in law *Bull*, is like to be troubled with you both.

Laur. I know not what to say to him Nan, hath plagued mee alreadie, I hope hee hath done with mee, and yet I heard say, hee would haue about at my Nine hoales, but leauing him as an enemy of our trade, againe to our disputation. I cannot deny Nan, but you haue set down strange Presidents of womens preiudicial wits, but yet though you be Crosbites, Foysts, and Nips, yet you are not good Lifts, which is a great helpe to our facultie, to filche a boulte of Satten or Veluet.

Nan. Stay thee a word, I thought thou hadst spoken of *R. B.* of Long Lane and his wife, take heed they be parlous folks and greatly acquainted with keepers and Gaylers, therefore meddle not you with them, for I heare say, *R. G.* hath sworne in despite of the brasill staffe, to tell such a fowle Tale of him in his blacke Booke, that it will cost him a daungerous Ioynt.

Laur. Nan, Nan, let *R. G.* beware, for had not an ill fortune falne to one of *R. B.* his friends, he could take little harme.

Nan. Who is that Lawrence?

Laur. Nay I will not name him.

Nan. Why then I prythie what misfortune befell him?

Laur. Marry Nan, hee was strangely washt alate by a French Barbar, and had all the haire of his face miraculously shauen off by the Sythe of Gods vengeance, in so much that some sayd he had that he had not, but as hap was, how soeuer his haire fell off, it stoad him in some stead when the brawle was alate, for if hee had not cast off his beard and so being vnknowne, it had cost him some knockes, but it fell out to the best.

Nan. The more hard fortune that hee had such ill hap, but hastie iournies breed dangerous sweates, and the Phisitians call it the Ale *Peria*, yet omitting all this, againe to where you left.

Laur. You haue almost brought me out of my matter, but I was talking about the Lift, com-mending what a good quallitie it was, and how hurtfull it was, seeing we practise it in Mercers shops, with Haberdashers of small wares, Haber-dashers of Hattes and Cappes, amongst Marchaunt Taylors for Hoase and Doublets, and in suche places getting much gains by Lifting, when there is no good purchase abroad by Foysting.

Nan. Suppose you are good at the lift, who be more cunning the we women, in that we are more trusted, for they little suspect vs, and we haue as close conueyance as you men, though you haue Cloakes, we haue skirts of gownes, handbaskets, the crownes of our hattes, our plackardes, and for a need, false bagges vnder our smockes, wherein we can conuey more closely, then you.

Laur. I know not where to touch you, you are so wittie in your answeres, and haue so many starting hoales, but let mee bee pleasant with you a little, what say you to priggin or horse stealing, I hope you neuer had experience in that facultie.

Nan. Alas simple sot, yes and more shift to shunne the gallowes then you.

Laur. Why tis impossible.

Nan. In faith sir no, and for prooffe, I will put you downe with a storie of a madde, merry, little, dapper, fine wench, who at Spilsby Fayre had three horse of her owne or an other mans to sell, as shee her husband and an other good fellow, walkt them vp and downe the faire, the owner came and apprehended them all, and clapt them in prison, the iaylor not keeping them close prisoners, but letting them lye all in a Chamber, by her wit she so in-structed them in a formall tale, that she saued all their liues

thus. Being brought the next morrow after their apprehension, before the Iustices, they examined the men how they came by those horses, and they confest they met her with them, but where shee had them they knewe not, then was my prettie peace brought in, who being a handsome Trul, blusht as if she had been full of grace, and being demanded where she had the horses, made this answere, may it please your worships, this man being my husband, playing the vnthrift as many more haue done, was absent from mee for a quarter of a yeare, which greeued me not a little, insomuch that desirous to see him, and hauing intelligence he wold be at Spilsby faire, I went thither euen for pure loue of him on foote, and beeing within some tenne myles of the Towne, I waxed passing weary and rested me often and grew very faynt, at last there came ryding by me a Seruingman in a blew coat, with three horses tyed one at anothers tayle, which he led as I gest to sell at the faire, the Seruingman seeing mee so tyred, tooke pitie on me, and asked me if I would ride on one of his emptie horses, for his owne would not beare double, I thankt him hartily, and at the next hill got vp, and roade till wee came to a Towne within three miles of Spilsby, where the Seruingman alighted at a house, and bad me ride on afore and he would presently ouertake mee, well forward I road halfe a myle, and looking behinde mee could see no bodie, so being alone, my heart began to rise, and I to thinke on my husband, as I had ridde a little farther, looking downe a lane, I saw two men comming lustily vp as if they were weary, & marking them earnestly, I saw one of them was my husband, which made my heart as light as before it was sad, so staying for them, after a little vnkinde greeting betwixt vs, for I chid him for his vnthriftinesse, he asked me where I had the horse, and I tolde him how curteously the Seruingman had vsed me, why then saies hee, staie for him, nay quoth I, lets ryde on, and get you two vp on the emptie horses, for he will ouertake vs ere we come at the Towne, hee rydes on a stout lustie yoong gelding, so forward wee went, and lookt often behinde vs, but our Seruingman came not, at last we comming to Spilsby alighted, & broake our fast, and tied our horses at the doore, that if he passed by, seeing them, hee might call in, after wee had broake our fast, thinking hee had gone some other way, wee went into the horse faire, and there walkt our horses vp and downe to meete with the Seruing-man, not for the intent to sell them. Now may it please your worship, whether hee had stolne the horses from this honest man or no, I knowe not, but alas, simply I brought them to the horse faire, to let him that deliuered me them haue them againe, for I hope your worships doth imagine, if I had stolne them as it is suspected, I would neuer haue brought them into so publicke a place to sell, yet if the law bee any way dangerous for the foolish deed because I know not the Seruingman, it is, I must bide the punishment, and as guiltlesse as any heere, and so making a low courtsie shee ended. The Iustice holding vp his hand and wondring at the womans wit that had cleared her husband and his friend, and saued her selfe with-out compasse of law. How like you of this Lawrence, cannot we wenches prigge well.

Laur. By God Nan, I thincke I shall bee faine to giue you the bucklars.

Nan. Alas good Lawrence, thou art no Logitian, thou canst not reason for thy selfe, nor hast no wittie arguments to draw me to an exigent, and therefore giue mee leaue at large to reason for this supper, remember the subiect of our disputation, is this positie question, whether whores or theeues are most preiudiciall to the Commonwealth, alas, you poore theeues do only steale and purloine from men, and the harme you do is to imbollish mens goods, and bring them to pouertie, this is the only end of mens theeuey, and the greatest prejudice that growes from robbing or filching, so much do we by our theft, and more by our lecherie, for what is the end of whoredome but consuming of goods and beggery, and besides perpetuall infamie, we bring yoong youthes to ruine and vtter de-struction, I pray you Lawrence whether had a Marchants sonne hauing wealthie parents, better light vpon a whoore then a Cutpurse,

the one only taking his money, the other bringing him to vtter confusion, for if the Foyst light vpon him or the Conny-catcher, he looseth at the most some hundreth poundes, but if hee fall into the companie of a whoore, shee flatters him, shee inueagles him, shee bewitcheth him, that hee spareth neither goods nor landes to content her, that is onely in loue with his coyne, if he be married, hee forsakes his wife, leaues his children, despiseth his friendes, onely to satisfie his lust with the loue of a base whoore, who when he hath spent all vpon her and hee brought to beggerie, beateth him out lyke the Prodigall childe, and for a small reward, brings him if to the fairest ende to beg, if to the second, to the gallowes, or at the last and worst, to the Pockes, or as preiudiciall diseases. I pray you Lawrence when any of you come to your con-fession at Tyborne, what is your last sermon that you make, that you were brought to that wicked and shamefull ende by following of harlots, for to that end doo you steale to maintaine whoores, and to content their bad humors. Oh Lawrence enter into your owne thoughts, and thinke what the faire wordes of a wanton will do, what the smiles of a strumpet will driue a man to act, into what ieopardie a man will thrust himselfe for her that he loues, although for his sweete villanie, he be brought to loathsome leprosie, tush Lawrence they say the Poxe came from Naples, some from Spaine, some from France, but whersoouer it first grew, it is so surely now rooted in England, that by S. (*Syth*) it may better be called *A Morbus Anglicus* then *Gallicus*, and I hope you will graunt, all these Frenche fauours grewe from whoores, besides in my high louing or rather creeping, I mean where men and women do robbe together, there alwaies the woman is most bloodie, for she alwayes vrgeth vnto death, and though the men wold only satisfie themselues with the parties coyne, yet shee endeth her theft in blood, murthring parties so deeply as she is malicious. I hope gentle Lawrence you cannot contradict these reasons they bee so openly manifestly probable. For mine owne part, I hope you doo not imagine but I haue had some friendes besides poore George my husband, alas, hee knowes it, and is content lyke an honest simple suffragan, to bee corriual with a number of other good companions, and I haue made many a good man, I meane a man that hath a housholde, for the loue of mee to goe home and beate his poore wife, when God wotte I mocke him for the money hee spent, and hee had nothing for his pence, but the waste beleauings of others beastly labours. Lawrence, Lawrence, if Concubines could inueagle Salomon, if Dalilah could betraie Sampson, then wonder not if we more nice in our wickednes then a thousand such Dalilahs, can seduce poore yoong Nouices to their vtter destructions. Search the Gayles, there you shall heare complaintes of whoores, looke into the Spittles and Hospitalles, there you shall see men diseased of the Frenche Marbles, giuing instruction to others that are sayd to beware of whoores, bee an Auditor or eare witnessse at the death of any theefe, and his last Testament is, Take heed of a whoore, I dare scarce speake of Bridewell because my shoulders tremble at the name of it, I haue so often deserued it, yet looke but in there, and you shall heare poore men with their handes in their Piggen hoales crye, Oh fie vpon whoores, when Fouler giues them the terrible lash, examine beggars that lye lame by the highway, and they say they came to that miserie by whoores, some threedbare citizens that from Marchants and other good trades, growe to bee base Infourmers and Knightes of the Poste, crye out whe[n] they dine with Duke Humfrey. Oh what wickednes comes from whoores, Prentises that runnes from their maisters, cryes out vpon whoores. Tush Lawrence, what enormities procedes more in the Common-wealth then from whooredome. But sith tis almost supertime, and myrth is the friend to digestion, I meane a little to bee pleasaunt, I prairie you how many badde profittes againe growes from whoores, Bridewell woulde haue verie fewe Tenants, the Hospitall would want Patientes, and the Surgians much woorke, the Apothecaries would haue surphaling water and Potato rootes lye deade on theyr handes, the Paynters coulde not dispatche and make away theyr

Vermiglian, if tallowe faced whoores vsde it not for their cheekes, how should sir Iohns Broades men doo if wee were not? why Lawrence the Gaily would bee moord and the blewe Boore so leane, that he would not be mans meate, if we of the Trade were not to supply his wants, doo you thinke in conscience the Peacocke could burnish his faire taylor, were it not the whore of Babilon and such like, makes him lustie with crownes, no no, though the Talbot hath bitten some at the game, yet new fresh huntsmen shake the shee crue out of the cupples. What should I say more Lawrence, the Suberbes should haue a great misse of vs, and Shordish wold complaine to dame Anne a Cleare, if wee of the sisterhood should not vphold her iollitie, who is that Lawrence comes in to heare our talke, Oh tis the boy Nan that tels vs supper is readie, why then Lawrence what say you to me? haue I not prooued that in foysting and nipping we excell you, that there is none so great inconuenience in the Common wealth, as growes from whores, first for the corrupting of youth, infecting of age, for breeding of brawles, whereof ensues murther, insomuch that the ruine of many men comes from vs, and the fall of many youthes of good hope, if they were not seduced by vs, doo proclaime at Tyborne, that wee be the meanes of their miserie, you men theeues touch the bodie and wealth, but we ruine the soule, and indanger that which is more pretious then the worldes trea-sure, you make worke onely for the gallowes, we both for the gallowes and the diuel, I and for the Surgian too, that some liues like loathsome laizers, and die with the French Marbles. Whereupon I conclude, that I haue wonne the supper.

Laur. I confesse it Nan, for thou hast tolde mee such wonderous villanies, as I thought neuer could haue been in women, I meane of your profession, why you are Crocodiles when you weepe, Basilisks when you smile, Serpents when you deuse, and the diuels cheefest breakers to bring the world to distruction. And so Nan lets sit downe to our meate and be merry.

THUS Country men, you haue heard the dis-putation between these two cousoning com-panions, wherein I haue shakte out the notable villany of whores, although mistresse Nan this good Oratresse, hath sworne to weare a long Hamborough knife to stabbe mee, and all the crue haue protested my death, and to prooue they ment good earnest, they belegard me about in the Saint Iohns head within Ludgate beeing at supper, there were some fourteene or fifteene of them met, and thought to haue made that the fatall night of my ouerthrowe, but that the courteous Cittizens and Apprentises tooke my part, and so two or three of them were carryed to the Counter, although a Gentleman in my company was sore hurt. I cannot deny but they beginne to waste away about London, and Tyborne (since the setting out of my booke) hath eaten vp many of them, and I will plague them to the extremitie, let them doe what they dare with their bilbowe blades, I feare them not: and to giue them their last adue, looke shortly Countrimen for a Phamphet against them, called *The blacke Booke*, contayning foure newe Lawes neuer spoken of yet, *The creeping Law* of petty theeues, that rob about the Suburbes. *The lymitting Lawe*, discoursing the orders of such as followe Iudges, in their circuites, and goe about from Fayre to Fayre. *The Iugging Law*, wherein I will set out the disorders at Nyneholes and Ryfling, how they are onely for the benefite of the Cut-purses. *The stripping Lawe*, wherein I will lay open the lewde abuses of sundry Iaylors in Eng-land. Beside, you shall see there what houses there bee about the Suburbes and townes ende, that are receyuers of Cut purses stolne goods, Lifts, and such like. And lastly, looke for a Bed-roll or Catalogue, of all the names of the Foystes, Nyps, Lifts, and Priggars, in and about London: and although some say, I dare not doe it, yet I will shortly set it abroach, and

whosoeuer I name or touch, if hee thinke himselfe greeued, I will aunswere him before the Honourable priuie Counsayle.

*The conuersion of an English
Courtizan.*

SITH to discouer my parentage, woulde double the grieue of my lyuing Parents, and reuiue in them, the memory of my great amisse, and that my vntoward fall, would be a dishonour to the house from whence I came. Sith to manifest y^e place of my birth, would be a blemish (through my beastly life so badly misledde) to the Shyre where I was borne: sith to discourse my name, might be holden a blot in my kindreds browe, to haue a sinew in their stocke of so little grace. I will conceale my parents, kin, and Country, and shroude my name with silence, least enuie myght taunt others for my wantonnesse. Knowe therefore, I was borne about threescore miles from London, of honest and welthy parents, who had many children, but I their onely daughter, and therefore the iewell wherein they most delighted, and more, the youngest of all, and therefore the more fauoured: for beeing gotten in the wayning of my parents age, they doted on me aboue the rest, and so set theyr harts the more on fire. I was the fairest of all, and yet not more beautifull then I was witty, in so much that beeing a pretty Parrat, I had such quaint conceipts, and witty words in my mouth, that the neighbours said, I was too soone wise, to be long olde. Woulde to God, eyther the Prouerbe had been authenticall, or their sayings prophecies, then had I by death in my nonage, buried many blemishes that my riper yeeres brought me to. For the extreme loue of my parents, was the very efficient cause of my follies, resembling heerin the nature of the Ape, that euer killeth that young one which he loueth most, with embracing it to ferue[n]tly. So my father and mother, but she most of all, although he to much, so cockered me vp in my wantonnes, that my wit grew to the worst, and I waxed vpward with the ill weeddes: what soeuer I dyd, were it neuer so bad, might not be found fault withall, my Father would smyle at it and say, twas but the tricke of a child, and my Mother allowed of my vnhappy parts, alluding to this prophane and olde prouerbe, an vntowarde gyrlle makes a good Woman.

But now I find, in sparing the rod, they hated the chyld, that ouer kind fathers, make vnruely daughters. Had they bent the wand while it had beene greene, it woulde haue beene plyant, but I, ill growne in my yeeres, am almost remediles. The Hawk that is most perfect for the flight and will, seldome proueth hagarde, and children that are vertuously nurtured in youth, will be honestly natured in age: fie vpon such as say, young Saints, olde deuils, it is no doubt a deuillish and damnable saying, for what is not bent in the Cradle, will hardly be bowed in the Saddle. My selfe am an instance, who after I grew to be sixe yeeres olde, was sette to Schoole, where I profited so much that I writ and read excellently well, playd vpon the virginals, Lute & Cytron, and could sing prick-song at the first sight: in so much, as by that time I was twelue yeeres olde, I was holden for the most faire, and best qualified young girle in all that Countrey, but with this, bewailed of my wel-wishers, in that my parents suffered me to be so wanton.

But they so tenderly affected mee, and were so blinded with my excellent quallities, that they had no insight into my ensuing follies. For I growing to be thirteene yeere old, feeling the rayne of liberty loose on myne owne necke, began with the wanton Heyfer, to ayme at mine own wil, and to measure content, by the sweetnes of mine owne thoughts, in so much, that pryde creeping on, I beganne to

prancke my selfe with the proudest, and to holde it in disdaine, that any in the Parish, should exceede me in brauery. As my apparrell was costly, so I grew to be licencious, and to de-light to be lookt on, so that I haunted and fre-quented all feasts and weddings, & other places of merry meetings, where, as I was gazed on of many, so I spared no glaunces to suruiew all with a curious eye-fauour: I obserued *Ouids* rule right: *Spectatum veniunt, vemunt spectentur vt ipse.*

I went to see & be seene, and deckt my selfe in the highest degree of brauerie, holding it a glory when I was wayted on with many eyes, to make censure of my birth. Beside, I was an ordinary dauncer, and grewe in that quality so famous, that I was noted as the chiefest thereat in all the Country, yea, and to soothe me vp in these follies, my Parents tooke a pride in my dauncing, which afterward prooued my ouerthrow, and their hart breaking.

Thus as an vnbridled Colte, I carelesly led fourth my youth, and wantonly spent the flower of my yeeres, holding such Maidens as were modest, fooles, and such as were not as willfully wanton as my selfe, puppies, ill brought vppe and without manners, growing on in yeeres, as tyde nor tyme tarrieth no man, I began to waxe passion-proud, and think her not worthy to lyue y^t was not a little in loue, that as diuers young men began to fauour me for my beautie, so I beganne to censure of some of them partially, and to delight in the multitude of many wooers, beeing ready to fall from the Tree, before I was come to the perfection of a blossome, which an Vnckle of myne seeing, who was my Mothers brother, as carefull of my welfare as nie to me in kinne, finding fit oportunity to talke with mee, gaue mee this wholesome exhortation.

A watch-word to wanton Maidens.

COZEN, I see the fayrest Hawke hath often times the sickest feathers, that y^e hottest day hath the most sharpest thunders, the brightest sunne, the most suddaine showre, & the youngest Virgins, the most daungerous fortunes, I speake as a kinsman, and wish as a friend, the blossome of a Maidens youth, (such as your selfe) hath attend-ing vpon it many frosts to nyp it, and many cares to consume it, so that if it be not carefully lookt vnto, it will perrish before it come to any perfec-tion.

A Virgins honour, consisteth not onely in the gyfts of Nature, as to be fayre and beautifull, though they bee fauours that grace Maidens much, for as they be glistering, so they be momentary, readie to be worne with euery winters blast, and parched with euery Summers sunne, there is no face so fayre, but the least Moale, the slenderest skarre, the smallest brunt of sicknesse, will quickly blemishe.

Beauty Cozen, as it florisheth in youth, so it fadeth in age, it is but a folly that feedeth mans eye, a painting that Nature lendes for a tyme, and men allowe on for a while, in so much, that such as onely ayme at your faire lookes, tye but their loues to an apprentishippe of beauty, which broken eyther with cares, misfortune, or yeeres, their destinies are at liberty, and they beginne to lothe you, and like of others.

*Forma bonum fragile est quantumque accedit ad
Annas, Fit minor et spado Carpitur ipsa suo.*

Then Cozin, stand not too much on such a slippery glorie, that is as brittle as glasse, bee not proude of beauties painting, that hatched by tyme, perrisheth in short tyme, neyther are Women the more admirable of wise men for theyr gay apparrell, though fooles are fed with gards, for a womans ornaments, is the excellencie of her vertues: and her inward good qualities, are of farre more worth then her outward braueries, imbroydred hayre, bracelets, silkes, rich attire, and such trash, doo rather bring

the name of a young Maide in ques-tion, then adde to her fame any title of honour.

The *Vestall* Virgins were not reuerenced of the Senators for their curious clothing, but for their chastitie. *Cornelia* was not famozed for ornaments of golde, but for excellent vertues. Superfluity in apparrell, sheweth rather lightnes of mind, then it importeth any other inward good quality: and men iudge of Maydens rarenesse, by the modestie of their rayment, holding it rather garish then glorious, to be trickt vp in superfluous and ex-ceeding braueries. Neither Cozen is it seemely for Maydes, to iet abroade, or to frequent too much company.

For shee that is looked on by many, cannot chuse but bee hardly spoken of by some, for report hath a blister on her tongue, and Maydens actions are narrowly measured. Therefore woulde not the auncient Romaines, suffer theyr Daugh-ters, to goe any further then theyr Mothers lookes guided them. And therefore *Diana* is painted with a Tortuse vnder her feete, meaning, that a Maid shoulde not be a stragler, but like the Snayle, carry her house on her heade, and keepe at home at her worke, so to keepe her name without blemish, and her vertues from the slaunder of enuie.

A maide that hazards herselfe in much com-pany, may venture the freedome of her hart by the folly of her eye, for so long the pot goes to the water, that it comes broken home, and such as looke much must needes like at last: the Fly dallyes with a flame, but at length she burneth, flax and fire put together will kindle, a maid in companie of yonge men shall be constraigned to listen to the wanton allurements of many cunning speeches: if she hath not eyther with *Vlisses* tasted of Moly, or stopt her eares warily, shee may either bee entised with the *Syrens*, or enchanted by *Cyrces*, youth is apt to yeeld to sweet perswasions, and therefore cozen thinke nothing more daungerous than to gad abroade, neither cozen doe I allowe this wanton dauncing in younge virgins, tis more comendation for them to moderate their manners, than to measure their feete, and better to heare nothing than to listen vnto vnreuerent Musicke: Sylence is a precious iewell, and nothing so much worth as a countenance full of chastitie, light behauiour is a signe of lewd thoughts, and men will say, there goes a wanton that will not want one, if a place and person were agreeable to her desires: if a maidens honor be blemisht, or her honestie cald in question, she is halfe deflowred, and therefore had maidens neede to bee chary, least enuy report them for vnchast. Cozen I speake this generally, which if you apply particularly to your selfe, you shall find in time my words were well saide.

I gaue him slender thankes, but with such a frump that he perceiued how light I made of his counsayle: which hee perceiuing, shakt his head, and with teares in his eyes departed. But I whom wanton desires had drawne in delight, still presumde in my former follies, and gaue my selfe either to gad abroad, or else at home to read dissolute Pamphlets, which bred in mee many ill affected wishes, so that I gaue leaue to loue and lust to enter into the center of my heart, where they harboured tyll they wrought my finall and fatall prejudice.

Thus leading my life loosely, and being soothed vp with the applause of my too kind and louing parents, I had many of euery degree that made loue vnto me, as wel for my beauty, as for the hope of wealth that my father would bestowe vpon mee: sundry sutors I had, and I allowed of all, though I particularly graunted loue to none, yeelding them friendly fauors, as being proud I had more wooers then any maid in the parish beside: amongst the rest there was a welthy Farmer that wished me well, a man of some forty yeeres of age, one too worthy for one of so little worth as my selfe, and him my father, mother, and other friendes, would haue had mee match my selfe withall: but I that had had the raynes of lybertie too long in mine owne hands, refused him and would not bee ruled by their perswasions, and though my mother with teares entreated mee to consider of mine owne estate, & how

wel I sped if I wedded with him, yet carelesly I despised her counsaile, and flatly made aunswere that I would none of him: which though it pinched my Parentes at the quicke, yet rather than they would displease me, they left me in mine own liberty to loue. Many there were beside him, mens sons of no meane worth, that were wooers vnto mee, but in vaine, either my fortune or destenie droue me to a worsor ende, for I refused them all, and with the Beetle, refusing to light on the sweetest flowers all day, nestled at night in a Cowsheard.

It fortun'd that as many sought to win me, so amongst the rest there was an od companion that dwelt with a Gentleman hard by, a fellowe of small reputation, and of no lyuing, neither had he any excellent quallities but thrumming on the gittron: but of pleasant disposition he was, and could gawll out many quaint & ribadrous Iigges & songs, and so was fauoured of the foolish sect for his foppery. This shifting companion, sutable to my selfe in vanitie, would oft times be iesting with me, and I so long dallying with him, that I beganne deeply (oh let me blush at this confession) to fall in loue with him, and so construed of all his actions, that I consented to mine owne ouerthrowe: for as smoake will hardly be concealed, so loue will not bee long, smothred, but will bewray her owne secrets, which, was manifest in mee, who in my sporting with him, so bewrayed my affection, that hee spying I fauoured him, began to strike when the yron was hotte, and to take opportunitie by the forehead, and one day finding me in a merry vaine, began to question with me of loue, which although at the first I slenderly denyed him, yet at last I graunted, so that not onely I agreed to plight him my faith, but that night meeting to haue farther talke, I lasciuiously consented that he cropt the flower of my virginity. When thus I was spoyled by such a base companion, I gaue my selfe to content his humor, and to satisfie the sweet of mine owne wanton desires. Oh heare let me breath and with teares bewaile the beginning of my miseries, and to exclayme against the folly of my Parents, who by too much fauouring mee in my vanitie in my tender youth, layde the first plot of my ensuing repentance: Had they with due correction chas-tised my wantonnesse, and suppress my foolish will with their graue aduise, they had made mee more vertuous and themselues lesse sorrowfull. A fathers frowne is a bridle to the childe, and a mothers checke is a stay to the stubborne daughter. Oh had my parents in ouerlouing mee not hated me, I had not at this time cause to complaine. Oh had my father regarded the saying of the wise man, I had not beene thus woe begone.

If thy daughter bee not shamefast holde her straightly, least shee abuse her selfe through ouermuch libertie.

Take heede of her that hath an vnshamefast eye, & maruell not if she trespasse against thee.

The daughter maketh the father to watch secretly, and the carefulnesse he hath for her, taketh away his sleepe.

In her virginity, least shee should be deflowred in her fathers house.

If therefore thy daughter be vnshamefast in her youth, keepe her straightlie, least shee cause thine enemies to laugh thee to scorne, and make thee a common talke in the Cittie, and defame thee among the people, and bring thee to publique shame.

Had my parentes with care considered of this holy counsaile, and leuelled my life by the load-stone of vertue: had they lookt narrowly into the faultes of my youth, and bent the tree while it was a wand, and taught the hound while he was a puppie, this blemish had neuer befortuned me, nor so great dishonour had not befallen them. Then by my example, let all Parents take heed, least in louing their

children too tenderly, they subuert them vtterly, least in manuring the ground too much with the vnskilful husbandman, it waxe too fat, and bring foorth more weeds then floures, least cockering their children vnder their winges without correction, they make them carelesse, and bring them to destruction, as their nurture is in youth, so will their nature grow in age. If the Palme tree be suppress while it is a sien, it wil contrary to nature be crooked when it is a Tree.

Quo semel est imbuta recens seruibit odorentesta diu.

If then vertue be to be ingrafted in youth, least they prooue obstinate in age, reforme your child-ren betimes both with correction and counsaile, os shall you that are parentes glorie in the honour of their good indeuours, but leauing this digression, againe to the loosenesse of mine owne life, who now hauing lost the glorie of my youth, and suffered such a base slaue to possesse it, which many men of woorth had desired to enioy, I waxed bold in sin & grew shameles, in so much he could not desire so much as I did grant, where-upon, seeing hee durst not reueale it to my father to demand me in marriage, hee resolued to carry me away secretly, and therefore wisht me to prouide for my selfe, and to furnish mee euery way both with money and apparrell, hoping as he sayd, that after we were departed, and my father saw wee were married, and that no meanes was to amend it, he would giue his free consent, and vse vs as kindly, and deale with vs as liberally as if wee had matcht with his good wil. I that was apt to any il, agreed to this, and so wrought the matter, that hee carried mee away into a straunge place, and then vsing me a while as his wife, when our mony began to wax low, he resolued secretly to go into the Country where my father dwelt, to heare not only how my father tooke my departure, but what hope we had of his ensuing fauour, although I was loath to be left alone in a strange place, yet I was willing to heare from my friendes, who no doubt concerned much heart sorrow for my vnhappy fortunes, so that I parted with a few teares and enioyned him, to make all the hast he might to returne, hee being gone, as the Eagles alwaies resort where the carrion is, so the brute being spred abroad of my bewtie, and that at such an Inne laie such a faire yoong Gentlewoman, there resorted thither many braue youthfull Gentlemen and cutting companions, that tickled with lust, aymed at the possession of my fauour, and by sundry meanes sought to haue a sight of me, which I easily graunted to all, as a woman that counted it a glory to be wondred at by many mens eyes, insomuch that comming amongst them, I set their harts more and more on fire, that there rose diuers brawles who should bee most in my company, beeing thus haunted by such a troupe of lustie Rufflers, I beganne to finde mine owne folly, that had placst my first affection so losely, and therefore beganne as deeply to loath him that was departed, as earst I likte him, when hee was present, vowing in my selfe though hee had the spoyle of my virginie, yet neuer after should he triumph in the possession of my fauour, and therefore beganne I to affection these new come guests, and one aboue the rest, who was a braue yoong Gentleman, and no lesse addicted vnto mee, then I deuoted vnto him, for daily hee courted mee with amorous Sonnets and curious proude letters, and sent me Iewels, and all that I might grace him with the name of my seruant, I returned him as louyng lines at last, and so contented his lusting desire, that secretly and vnknowne to all the rest, I made him sundry nights my bedfellow, where I so bewicht him with sweet wordes, that the man began deeply to doate vpon me, insomuch that selling some portion of land that he had, hee put it into readie money, and prouiding Horse and all things conuenient, carried mee secretly away, almost as farre as the Bathe. This was my second choyce and my second shame, thus I went forward in wickednesse and delighted in chaunge, hauing left mine olde loue to looke after some other mate more fit for her

purpose, how hee tooke my departure when hee returned I little cared, for now I had my content, a Gentleman, yoong, lustie, and indued with good qualities, and one that loued mee more tenderly then himselfe, thus liued this new entertained friend and I together vnmarried, yet as man and wife for a while, so louingly as was to his content and my credite, but as the Tygre though for a while shee hide her clawes, yet at last shee will reueale her crueltie; and as the Agnus Castus leafe when it lookes most drye, is then most full of moisture, so womens wantonnesse is not qualified by their warinesse, nor doe their charnesse for a moneth, warrant their chastitie for euer, which I proued true, for my supposed husband beeing euery way a man of worth could not so couertly hide himselfe in the country, though a stranger, but that he fel in acquaintance with many braue Gentlemen whom he brought home to his lodging, not only to honour them with his liberall courtesie, but also to see mee being proude of any man of woorth, applawded my beautie. Alas poore Gentleman, too much bewitcht by the wilnesse of a woman, had hee deemed my heart to bee a har-bour for euery new desire, or mine eye a sutor to euerie new face, hee would not haue beene so fonde as to haue brought his companions into my company, but rather would haue mewed mee up as a Henne, to haue kept that seuerall to himselfe by force, which hee could not retaine by kindnesse, but the honest minded Nouice little suspected my change, although I God wot placed my delight, in nothing more then the desire of new choyce, which fell out thus. Amongst the rest of the Gentlemen that kept him company, there was one that was his most familiar, and hee reposed more trust and confidence in him then in all the rest, this Gentleman beganne to bee deeply inamoured of mee, and shewed it by many signes which I easily perceiued, and I whose eare was pliant to euery sweete word, and who so allowed of all that were bewtiful, affected him no lesse, so that loue preuailing aboue friendship, hee broake the matter with mee, and made not many suites in vaine before hee obtained his purpose, for hee had what hee wisht, and I had what contented mee, I will not confesse that any of the rest had some sildome fauours, but this Gentleman was my second selfe, and I loued him more for the time at the heele, then the other at the heart, so that though the other youth beare the charges and was made sir pay for all, yet this newe friend was hee that was maister of my affections, which kindnesse betwixt vs, was so vnwisely cloaked, that in short time it was manifest to all our familiars which made my supposed husband to sigh and others to smile, but hee that was hit with the home was pincht at the heart, yet so extreame was the affection hee bare to mee, that he had rather conceale his greefe, then any way make me discontent, so that hee smothered his sorrow with patience, and brookt the iniurie with silence, till our loues grew so broad before, that it was a woonder to the worlde, where-upon one day at dinner, I being verie pleasant with his chosen friend and my choyce louer, I know not how, but either by fortune, or it may be some set match, there was by a gentleman, there present a question popt in about womens passions, and their mutabilitie in affection, so that the controuersie was defended, *pro & contra*, which arguments, whether a woman might haue a second friend or no, at last it was concluded, that loue and Lordshippe brookes no fellowship, and therefore none so base minded to beare a riuall. Hereupon arose a question about friendes that were put in trust, how it was a high point of treason, for one to betray an other, especially in loue, in so much that one gentleman at the boord, protested by a solemne oath, that if any friend of his made priuie and fauoured with the sight of his mistresse whom hee loued, whether it were his wife or no, should secretly seeke to inroach into his roome and offer him that dishonour to partake his loue, he would not vse any other reuenge, but at the next greeting stabbe him with his Poynado, though hee were condemned to death for the action. All this fitted for the humor of my supposed husband, and strooke both mee and my friend into a quandarie, but I scornfully iested at it, when as my husband taking the ball before it fel

to the ground, began to make a long discourse what faithlesse friends they were that would faile in loue, especially where a resolued trust of the partie beloued was com-mitted vnto them, and here vpon to make the matter more credulous, and to quip my folly, and to taunt the basenesse of his friends minde, that so he might with curtesie both warne vs of our wantonnes, and reclaime vs from ill, he promised to tell a pleasant storie performed as hee sayd not long since in England, and it was to this effect.

*A pleasant discourse, how a wife wanton by her hus
--bands gentle warning, became to be a modest Matron.*

THERE was a Gentleman (to giue him his due) an Esquire heere in England, that was married to a yong Gentlewoman, faire and of a modest behaiour, vertuous in her lookes, howsoeuer she was in her thoughts, and one that euery way with her dutifull indeuour and outward apparance of honestie, did breed her husbands content, insomuch that the Gentleman so deeply affected her, as he counted al those houres ill spent which he past not away in her company, besotting so himselfe in the beautie of his wife, that his onely care was to haue her euery way delighted, liuing thus pleasantly together, he had one spetiall friend amongst the rest, whom he so dearly affected, as euer *Damon* did his *Pythias*, *Pilades* his *Orestes*, or *Tytus* his *Gisippus*, he vnfolded all his secrets in his bosome, and what passion hee had in his minde that either ioyed him or perplexed him, he reuealed vnto his friend, & directed his actions according to the sequel of his counsailes, so that they were two bodies and one soule. This Gentleman for all the inward fauour showne him by his faithful friend, could not so withstand the force of fancy, but he grew enamoured of his friendes wife, whom he courted with many sweet words and faire promises, charms that are able to inchant almost the chastest eares, and so subtilly couched his arguments, discouered such loue in his eyes, and such sorrow in his lookes, that dispaire seemed to sit in his face, and swore, that if shee granted not him *Le don du merci*, the end of a louers sighes then would pre-sent his hart as a Tragick sacrifice to the sight of his cruel mistresse, the Gentlewoman waxing pitifull, as women are kinde harted and are loth Gentlemen should die for loue, after a few excuses, let him dub her husband knight of the forked order, and so to satisfie his humor, made forfeyt of her owne honor. Thus these two louers con-tinued by a great space in such plesures as vnchast wantons count their felicitie, hauing continually fit opportunitie to exercise their wicked purpose, sith the gentleman himself did giue them free libertie to loue, neither suspecting his wife, or suspecting his friend, at last, as such traytrous abuses will burst foorth, it fell so out, that a mayd who had been an old seruant in the house, began to grow suspitious, that there was too much familiaritie betweene her mistresse and her maisters friend, and vpon this watcht them diuers times so narrowly, that at last she found them more priuate then either agreed with her maisters honor, or her owne honestie, and thereupon reuealed it one day vnto her maister, he little credulous of the light behaiour of his wife, blamed the mayd and bad her take heed, least she sought to blemish her vertues with slaunder, whom hee loued more tenderly then his owne life, the mayd replied, that she spake not of enuy to him, but of meere loue she beare vnto him, and the rather that hee might shadow such a fault in time, and by some meanes preuent it, least if others should note it as well as shee, his wiues good name and his friends should bee cald in question, at these wise words spoken by so base a drug as his mayd, the Gentleman waxed astonished and listened to her discourse, wishing her to discouer how she knew or was so priuy to the folly of her mistresse, or by what meanes he might haue assured prooue of it, shee tolde him that to her, her owne eyes were wit-nesses, for shee saw them vnlawfully together, and please it you sir

quoth shee, to faine your selfe to go from home, and then in the backhouse to keepe you secret, I will let you see as much as I haue manifested vnto you, vpon this the maister agreed, and warnd his mayd not so much as to make it knowne to any of her fellowes. Within a day or two after, the Gentleman sayd, hee would goe a hunting and so rise verie early, and causing his men to couple vp his Houndes, left his wife in bed and went abroad, assoone as he was gone a myle from the house, he commanded his men to ryde afore and to start the Hare and follow the chase, and wee will come faire and softly after, they obeying their maisters charge, went theyr wayes, and he returned by a backway to his house, and went secretly to the place where his mayd and he had appointed. In the meane time, the mis-tresse thinking her husband safe with his Houndes, sent for her friend to her bed chamber, by a trustie seruant of hers, in whom shee assured that was a secret Pander in such affaires, and the Gentleman was not slacke to come, but making all the haste hee could, came and went into the chamber, asking for the Maister of the house very familiarly, the old mayd noting all this, assoone as she knew them together, went and cald her maister and carried him vp by a secret pair of staires to her mistresse chamber doore, where peeping in at a place that the mayd before had made for the purpose, he saw more then he lookt for, and so much as pincht him at the very heart, causing him to accuse his wife for a strumpet, and his friend for a traytor, yet for all this, valuing his owne honour more then their dishonestie, thinking if he should make an vprore, he should but ayme at his owne discredite, and cause himself to be a laughing game to his ene-mies, he concealed his sorrow with silence, and taking the mayd apart, charged her to keepe all secret, whatsoever she had seene, euen as she esteemed of her owne life, for if shee did bewray it to any, hee himselfe would with his Swoord make an ende of her daies, and with that putting his hand in his sleeue, gaue the poore mayd sixe Angels to buy her a new gowne, the wench glad of this gift, swore solemnely to tread it vnder foote, and sith it pleased him to conseale it, neuer to reueale it as long as she liued, vpon this they parted, she to her drudgery, and he to the field to his men, where after hee had kild the Hare, hee returned home, and finding his friend in the Garden, that in his absence had been grafting hornes in the Chimnies, and entertained him with his woonted familiaritie, and shewed no bad countenance to his wife, but dissembled al his thoughts to the full. Assoone as dinner was done, and that he was gotten solitarie by himselfe, he beganne to determine of reuenge, but not as euerie man would haue done, how to haue brought his wife to shame, & her loue to confusion, but he busied his braines how hee might reserue his honour inuiolate, reclaime his wife, and keep his friend, meditating a long time how he might bring all this to passe, at last a humour fell into his head, how cunningly to compasse all three and therefore he went & got him a certaine slips, which are counterfeyt peeces of mony being brasse, & couered ouer with siluer, which the common people call slips, hauing furnished himselfe with these, hee put them in his purse, and at night went to bed as he was wont to doo, yet not vsing the kind familiaritie that he accustomed, notwithstanding he abstained not from the vse of her body, but knew his wife as aforesaid, and euerie time hee committed the act with her, he layd the next morning in the window a slip, where hee was sure shee might finde it, and so many times as it pleased him to be carnally pleasant with his wife, so many slips he still layd down vpon her cushnet. This he vsed for the space of a fortnight, till at last, his wife finding euerie day a slip, or sometime more or lesse, wondred how they came there, and examining her wayting maydes, none of them could tell her anything touching them, wherevpon shee thought to question with her husband about it, but being out of her remembrance, the next morning as he & she lay dallying in bed, it came into her minde, and she asked her husband if he layd those slippes on her cushnet, that she of late found there, hauing neuer seene any before. I marry did I quoth hee, and I haue layd them there upon speciall reason, and it is

this. Euer since I haue been married to thee, I haue deemed thee honest, and therefore vsed and honored thee as my wife, parting coequall fauours betwixt vs as true loues, but alate finding the contrary, & with these eyes seeing thee play the whore with my friend in whom I did repose all my trust, I sought not as many would haue done, to haue reuenged in blood, but for the safetie of mine own honor, which otherwise would haue been blemisht by thy dishonestie, I haue bin silent, and haue neyther wronged my quandom friend, nor abused thee, but still do hold bed with thee, that the world should not suspect any thing, and to quench the desire of lust I do vse thy bodie, but not so lovingly as I would a wife, but carelesly as I would a strum-pet, and therefore euen as to a whoore, so I giue thee hyer, which is for euerie time a slip, a counterfeet coyne, which is good inough for such a slipperie wanton, that will wrong her husband that loued her so tenderly, and thus wil I vse thee for the safetie of mine owne honour, till I haue assured prooffe that thou becommest honest, and thus with teares in his eyes and his heart readie to burst with sighes, he was silent, when his wife stricken with remorse of conscience, leaping out of her bedde in her smocke, humbly confessing all, craued pardon, promising if he should pardon this offence which was new begun in her, shee would become a new reformed woman, and neuer after so much as in thought, giue him any occasion of suspition of ielousie, the patient husband not willing to vrge his wife, tooke her at her word, and told her that when he found her so reclaimed, he would as afore he had done, vse her louingly and as his wife, but till he was so perswaded of her honestie, he wold pay her stil slips for his pleasure, charging her not to reueale any thing to his friend, or to make it knowne to him that hee was priuy to their loues. Thus the debate ended, I gesse in some kinde greeting, and the Gentleman went abroad to see his pastures, leauing his wife in bed full of sorrow and almost renting her heart asunder with sighs, assoone as he was walked abroad, the Gentleman his friend came to the house and asked for the goodman, the pander that was priuy to all their practises, said, that his maister was gone abroad to see his pastures, but his mistresse was in bed, why then saies he, I will go and raise her vp, so comming into the chamber and kissing her, meaning as hee was wont to haue vsed other accus-tomed dalliance, shee desired him to abstaine with broken sighes & her eyes full of teares, he wondring what should make her thus discontent, asked her what was the cause of her sorow, protesting with a solemne oath, that if any had done her iniury, he wold reuenge it, were it with hazard of his life, she then tolde him scarce being able to speake for weeping, that shee had a sute to mooue him in, which if he granted vnto her, she would hold him in loue and affection without change next her husband for euer, he promised to do whatsoever it were, then saies she, swaere vpon a Byble you will do it without exception, with that he tooke a Byble that laie in the window & swore, that whatsoever she requested him to do, were it to the losse of his life, he would without exception performe it. Then she holding downe her head and blushing, began thus. I need not quoth shee make manifest how grosly and greuously you and I haue both offended God, and wronged the honest Gentleman my husband and your friend, hee putting a speciall trust in vs both, & assuring such earnest affiance in your vnfained friendship, that hee euen committeth me his wife, his loue, his second life, into your bosome, this loue haue I requited with inconstancy, in playing the harlot, that faith that he repositeth in you, haue you re-turned with trechery and falshood, in abusing mine honesty and his honor, now a remorse of conscience toucheth me for my sinnes, that I hartily repent, and vow euer hereafter to liue onely to my husband, and therefore my sute is to you, that from hencefoorth you shall neuer so much as motion any dishonest question vnto mee, nor seeke any vnlawfull pleasure or conuersing at my handes, this is my sute, and herevnto I haue sworne you, which oath if you obserue as a faithfull gentleman, I will conceale from my husband what is past, and rest in honest sort your

faithfull friend for euer, at this shee burst afresh into teares, and vttered such sighes, that he thought for very grieffe her hart would haue claue asunder. The Gentleman astonied at this straunge Metamorphosis of his mistresse, sat a good while in a maze, and at last taking her by the hand, made this reply, so God helpe mee faire sweeting, I am glad of this motion, and wondrous ioyfull that God hath put such honest thoughts into your mind,& hath made you the meanes to reclaime mee from my folly, I feele no lesse remorse then you doo, in wronging so honest a friend as your husband, but this is the frailnesse of man, and therefore to make amends, I protest a new, neuer hereafter so much as in thought, as to motion you of dishonestie, onely I craue you be silent, she promised that and so they ended. And so for that time they parted, at noone the gentleman came home and cheerfully saluted his wife and asked if dinner were ready, and sent for his friend, vsing him wonderfully familiarly, giuing him no occasion of mistrust, and so plea-santly they past away the day together, at night when his wife and he went to bed, shee told him all, what had past betweene her and his friend, and how she had bound him with an oath, and that hee voluntarily of himselfe swore as much being hartily sory that hee had so deeply offended so kinde a friend, the gentleman commended her wit, and found her afterward a reclaimed woman, shee liuing so honestly that she neuer gaue him any occasion of mistrust. Thus the wise gentleman reclaimed with silence a wanton wife, and retained an assured friend.

At this pleasant Tale all the boord was at a mutinie, and they said the gentleman did passing wisely that wrought so cunningly for the safetie of his owne honor, but highly exclaiming against such a friend as would to his friend offer such villany, all condemning her that wold be false to so louing a husband. Thus they did diuersly descant & past away dinner, but this Tale wrought litle effect in me, for as one past grace, I delighted in chaunge, but the gentleman that was his familiar and my Paramour, was so touched, that neuer after hee would touch me dishonestly, but reclaimed himselfe, abstained from me and became true to his friend, I wondring that according to his woonted custome, he did not seeke my company, he and I being one day in the chamber alone, and he in his dumps, I began to dally with him, and to aske him why he was so straunge, and vsed not his accustomed fauours to me. He solemnly made answeare, that though he had playd the foole in setting his fancy vpon an other mans wife, & in wronging his friend, yet his conscience was now touched with remorse, & euer since he heard the Tale afore rehearsed, hee had vowed in himselfe neuer to do my husband the like wrong againe: my husband quoth I, he is none of mine, he hath brought me from my friends and keepes mee here vnmarried, and therefore am I as free for you as for him, & thus began to grow clamorous, because I was debard of my lust, the gentleman seeing me shamelesse, wisht me to be silent, and sayd, although you be but his friend, yet he hold you as deare as his wife, and therefore I will not abuse him, neither would I wish you to be familiar with any other, seeing you haue a friend that loues you so tenderly, much good counsaile he gaue me, but all in vaine, for I scorned it, and began to hate him, and resolued both to be ridde of him and my sup-posed husband, for falling in an other familiar of my husbands, I so inueagled him with sweet words, that I caused him to make a peece of mony to steale me away, and so carry me to London, where I had not liued long with him, ere he seeing my light behaiour, left mee to the world, and to shift for my selfe. Here by my example may you note the inconstant life of Courtezens and common harlots, who after they haue lost their honestie, care not who grow into their fauour, nor what villany they commit, they fancy all as long as crownes last, and only ayme at pleasure and ease, they cleaue like Caterpillars to the tree, and con-sume the fruit where they fall, they be Vultures that praie on men aliue, and like the Serpent sting the bosome wherein they are

nourished. I may best discourse their nature, because I was one of their profession, but now being metamorphosed, I holde it meritorious for mee to warne women from being such wantons, and to giue a caueat to men, least they addict themselves to such stragling strumpettes, as loue none, though they like all, but affectionate only for profit, and when he hath spent all, they beate him out of doores with the prodigall childe, but stopping heere, till occasion serue mee fitter to discouer the manner of Courtezins, to my selfe, who now being brought to London, and left here at randon, was not such a housedoue while any friend staid with me, but that I had visite some houses in London, that could harbour as honest a woman as my selfe, when as therefore I was left to my selfe, I remoued my lodging, and gat mee into one of those houses of good hospitalitie whereunto persons resort, com-monly called a Trugging house, or to be plaine, a whore house, where I gaue my selfe to entertaine al companions, sitting or standing at the doore like a staule, to allure or draw in wanton passengers, refusing none that wold with his purse purchase me to be his, to satisfie the disordinate desire of his filthie lust, now I began not to respect parsonage, good qualities, to the gracious fauour of the man, when eye had no respect of person, for the oldest lecher was as welcom as the youngest louer, so he broght meate in his mouth, otherwise I pronounce against him,

Si nihil attuleris ibis homere foras.

I waxed thus in this hell of voluptuousnes, daily worse & worse, yet hauing as they terme it, a respect to the maine chance, as neare as I could to auoyd diseases, and to keepe my selfe braue in apparell, although I payd a kind of tribute to the Bawde, according as the number and benefite of my companions did exceed, but neuer could I bee brought to be a pickpocket or theeuish, by any of their perswasions, although I wanted daily no instructions to allure me to that villany, for I thinke nature had wrought in me a contrary humor, otherwise my bad nurture, and conuersing with such bad company had brought me to it, mary in all their vices I carried a brazen face & was shamelesse, for what Ruffian was there in London, that would vtter more desperate oaths then I in mine anger, what to spet, quaffe, or carouse more diuelishly or rather damnable then my selfe, & for beastly communication *Messalyne* of Rome might haue bin wayting mayd, besides, I grew so grafted in sin, that *Consuetudo peccandi tollebat sensum peccati*, Custome of sin, tooke away the feeling of the sin, for I so accustomedly vse my selfe to all kinde of vice, that I accounted swearing no sinne, whordome, why I smile at that, and could prophanely saie, that it was a sin which God laught at, gluttony I held good fellowship, & wrath honor and resolution, I dispised God, nay in my conscience I might easily haue been persuaded there was no God, I contemned the preachers, and when any wisht mee to reforme my life, I bad away with the Puritan, and if any yoong woman refused to be as vitious euerie way as my selfe, I would then say, gip fine soule, a yoong Saint will prooue an old diuel, I neuer would go to the Church and Sermons, I vtterly refused, holding them as needles Tales told in a Pulpit, I would not bend mine eares to the hearing of any good discourse, but still delighted in iangling Ditties of rybaudrie, thus to the greefe of my friendes, hazard of my soule, and consuming of my bodie, I spent a yeare or two in this base and bad kinde of life, subiect to the whistle of euerie desperate Ruffian, till on a time, there resorted to our house a Cloathier, a propper yoong man, who by fortune, comming first to drinke, espying mee, asked mee if I would drinke with him, there needed no great intreatie, for as then I wanted company, and so clapt me downe by him, and began verie pleasantly then to welcome him, the man being of himselfe modest and honest, noted my personage, and iudicially reasoned of my strumpetlike behaiour, and inwardly as after he reported vnto mee, greued that so foule properties were hidden in so good a proportion, and that such rare wit and excellent bewtie, was blemisht with whoredomes base

deformitie, in so much that hee began to think well of me, and to wish that I were as honest as I was bewtiful. Againe, see how God wrought for my conuersion, since I gaue my selfe to my loose kinde of life, I neuer liked any so well as him, insomuch that I began to iudge of euerie part, and me thought he was the properest man that euer I saw, thus we sat both amorous of other, I lasciuously, & he honestly, at last he questioned with me what country woman I was, and why being so proper a woman, I would beseem to dwel or lie in a base Alehouse, especially in one that had a bad name, I warrant you hee wanted no knauish reply to fit him, for I tolde him the house was as honest as his mothers, marry if there were in it a good wench or two, that would pleasure their friends at a neede, I gesse by his noase what porredge hee loued, and that hee hated none such, well, seeing mee in that voice hee said little, but shaked his head, payd for the beere and went his way, only taking his leaue of me with a kisse, which me thought was the sweetest that euer was giuen mee, assoone as hee was gone, I began to thinke what a handsome man hee was, and wisht that he wold come and take a nights lodging with me, sitting in a dumpe to thinke of the quaintnes of his personage, til other companions came in, that shakte mee out of that melancholic, but assoone againe as I was secrete to my selfe, hee came into my remembrance, passing ouer thus a day or two, this Cloathier came againe to our house, whose sight cheared mee vp, for that spying him out at a Casement, I ranne downe the staires and met him at the doore, and hartily welcomed him, & asked him if he wold drinke, I come for that purpose saies he, but I will drinke no more below but in a Chamber, marry sir quoth I you shal, and so brought him into the fairest roome, in their sitting there together drinking, at last the Cloathier fell to kissing and other dalliance, wherein he found me not coy, at last told mee that he would willingly haue his pleasure of mee, but the roome was too lightsome, for of all things in the world, he could not in such actions away with a light Chamber, I consented vnto him, and brought him into a room more darke, but still hee said it was too light, then I carried him into a farther Cham-ber, where drawing a buckeram curtain afore the window, and closing the curtaines of the bed, I asked him smiling, if that were close inough, no sweet loue saies he, the curtain is thin & not broad inough for the window, peraduenture some watch-ing eye may espie vs, my heart misdoubts, & my credit is my life, good loue if thou hast a more close room then this, bring me to it, why then quoth I follow me, & with that I brought him into a backe loft, where stood a litle bed only appointed to lodge suspitious persons, so darke that at noone daies it was impossible for any man to see his owne hands, how now sir quoth I, is not this darke inough, he sitting him downe on the bed side, fetcht a deep sigh, fie: said indiffere[n]t, so, so, but there is a glimpse of light in at the tyles, some bodie may by fortune see vs, in faith no quoth I, none but God, God saies hee, why can God see vs here, good sir quoth I, why I hope you are not so simple, but Gods eyes are so cleare, and pene-trating, that they can peirce through wals of brasse, and that were we inclosed neuer so secretly, yet we are manifestly seene to him, and alas quoth he sweet loue, if God see vs shal we not be more ashamed to doo such a filthy act before him then before men, I am sure thou art not so shameles but thou woldst blush &c be afraid to haue the meanest commoner in London see thee in the actio[n] of thy filthy lust, and doest thou not shame more to haue God, the maker of all thinges see thee, who reuengeth sin with death, he whose eyes are clearer then the Sun, who is the searcher of the heart, and holdeth vengeance in his handes to punish sinners. Consider sweete loue, that if man and wife would be ashamed to haue any of their friendes see them in the act of generation, or performing the rightes of marriage which is lawful!, and allowed before God, yet for modestie do it in the most couert they may, then how impudent or gracelesse should we bee, to fulfill our filthie lust before the eyes of the Almighty, who is greater then all kings or princes on the earth. Oh let vs tremble that we but once durst

haue such wanton communication in the hearing of his diuine Maiesty, who pronounceth damnation for such as giue themselues ouer to adultery. It is not possible saith the Lorde, for any whoremaister or lasciuious wanton, to enter into the kingdome of God, for such sinnes whole Cities haue suncke, kingdomes haue beene destroyed, and though God suffreth such wicked liuers to escape for a while, yet at length he payeth home, in this world with beggarie, shame, diseases, or infamy, and in the other life, with perpetuall dampnation, weigh but the inconuenience that growes through thy loose life, thou art hated of all that are good, despised of the vertuous, and only well thought of, of reprobats, raskals, ruffians, and such as the world hates, subiect to their lust, and gaining thy liuing at the hands of euery diseased leacher. Oh what a miserable trade of life is thine that liuest of the vomit of sin, in hunting after maladies, but suppose, while thou art yoong, thou art fauoured of thy companions, when thou waxest old, and that thy beautie is vaded, then thou shalt be loathed and despised, euen of them that profest most loue vnto thee, then good sister call to minde the basenesse of thy life, the hainous outrage of thy sin, that God doth punish it with the rigor of his iustice, oh thou art made bewtifull, faire, and well fourmed, and wilt thou then by thy filthie lust make thy bodie, which if thou bee honest, is the Temple of God, the habi-tation of the diuel. Consider this, and call to God for mercy, and amend thy life, leaue this house, and I will become thy faithfull friend in all honestie, and vse thee as mine owne sister, at this, such a remorse of conscience, such a fearefull terror of my sin strooke into my minde, that I kneeled downe at his feete, and with teares besought him he would helpe me out of that misery, for his exhortation had caused in me a loathing of my wicked life, and I wold not only become a reformed woman, but hold him as dear as my father that gaue me life, whereupon he kist me with teares, and so we went downe together, where wee had further communication, and presently he prouided me an other lodging, where I not only vsde my selfe so honestly, but also was so penitent euery day in teares for my former folly, that he tooke me to his wife, and how I haue liued since and loathed filthie lust, I referre my selfe to the Maiestie of God, who knoweth the secrets of all hearts.

Thus Country men I haue publisht the conuersion of an English Courtizen, which if any way it bee profitable either to forewarne youth, or with-draw bad persons to goodnesse, I haue the whole end of my desire, only crauing euery father would bring vp his children with carefull nourture, and euery yoong woman respect the honour of her virginitie.

But amongst all these blythe and merry Iestes, a little by your leaue, if it be no farther then Fetter-lane, oh take heed, thats too nye the Temple, what then, I will draw as neare the signe of the white Hart as I can, and breathing my selfe by the bottle Ale-house, Ile tell you a merry lest, how a Conny-catcher was vsed.

*A merry Tale taken not far from Fetter Lane end, of a
new found Conny-catcher, that was Conny-catcht
himselfe.*

SO it fell out, that a Gentleman was sicke and purblinde, and went to a good honest mans house to soiourne, and taking vp his Chamber grew so sick, that the goodman of the house hired a woman to keep and attend day and night vpon the Gentleman, this poore woman hauing a good conscience, was carefull of his welfare and lookte to his dyet, which was so slender, that the man although sicke, was almost famisht, so that the woman would no longer staie, but bad his Hoste prouide him of some other

to watch with him, sith it greeued her to see a man lye and starue for want of foode, especially being set on the score for meate and drinke in the space of a fortnight, foure poundes. The goodman of the house at last, hearing how that poore woman did finde fault with his scoring, the Gentleman not only put her out of doores without wages, but would haue arrested her, for taking away his good name, and defaming and slaundering him, and with that calling one of his neighbours to him, sayd neighbour, whereas such a bad toongued woman hath reported to my discredite, that the Gentleman that lyes sicke in my house wants meat, and yet runnes very much on the score, I pray you iudge by his diet whether hee bee famisht or no, first in the morning, he hath a Cawdell next his heart, halfe an houre after that, a quart of Sugar sops, halfe an houre after that a neck of mutton in broath, halfe an houre after that Chickens in sorrell sops, and an houre after that, a ioynt of rostmeat for his dinner, now neigh-bour, hauing this prouision, you may iudge whether he be spoyld for lacke of meate or no, and to what great charges his dyet will arise, whereas in truth, the poore Gentleman would haue beene glad of the least of these, for he could get none at all, but the cousoning knaue, thought to verse vpon him, and one day seeing mony came not briefly to the Gentleman, tooke some of his apparrell, his cloake I gesse, and pawnde it for fortie shillings, whereas God wot, all he eate in that time was not woorth a Crowne, well, the Gentleman seeing how the knaue went about to Conny-catch him, and that he had taken his cloake, smothered all for reuenge, and watcht opportunitie to do it, and on a time, seeing the goodman out, borrowed a cloake far better then his owne, of the boy, saying that he would goe to a friend of his to fetch money for his maister & discharge the house, the boy lending it him, away walks the Gentleman though weake after this great diet, and neuer came at the Taylors house to answeare him cloake or mony. And thus was he Conny-catcht himselfe, that thought to haue verst vpon another.

FINIS



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