

LOVE IS A BATTLEFIELD

Ralph Roister Doister by Nicholas Udall (1550)

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DRAMATIS PERSONAE

RALPH ROISTER DOISTER – a vain-glorious, cowardly Blockhead.
MATTHEW MERRYGREEK - a needy Humorist.
GAWIN GOODLUCK - a Merchant.
DOBINET DOUGHTY/HARPAX - Servants of Ralph.
TRUEPENNY - Servant of Dame Custance.
DAME CHRISTIAN CUSTANCE - A Widow, betrothed to Gawin Goodluck
MADGE MUMBLECRUST, TIBET TALKAPACE, ANNOT ALIFACE -
Servants of Dame Custance.

ACT 1, SCENE 1.

[M. MERRY. He enters singing.]

As long liveth the merry man - they say,
As doth the sorry man, and longer by a day;
Yet the grasshopper, for all his summer piping,
Starveth in winter with hungry griping:
Therefore another sad saw doth men advise,
That they be together both merry and wise.
This lesson must I practice or else, ere long,
With me, Matthew Merrygreek, it will be wrong.
Indeed men so call me; for, by him that us bought,
Whatever chance betide, I can take no thought.
Yet wisdom would that I did myself bethink,
Where to be provided this day of meat and drink;
For know ye that, for all this merry note of mine,
He might oppose me now, that should ask where I dine.
My living lieth here and there, of God's grace,
Sometime with this good man, sometime in that place;
Sometime Lewis Loiterer biddeth me come near;
Somewhiles Watkin Waster maketh us good cheer;
Sometime Davy Diceplayer, when he hath well cast,
Maketh revel-rout, as long as it will last;
Sometime I hang on Hankin Hoddydoddy's sleeve;

But this day on Ralph Roister Doister's, by his leave.
For truly of all men he is my chief banker,
Both for meat and money, and my chief sheet-anchor.
But now of Roister Doister somewhat to express,
That ye may esteem him after his worthiness,
In these twenty towns, and seek them throughout,
Is not the like stock whereon to graft a lout.
All the day long is he facing and draking
Of his great acts in fighting and fray-making;
But when Roister Doister is put to his proof,
To keep the King's peace is more for his behoof.
If any woman smile, or cast on him an eye,
Up is he to the hard ears in love by and by :
And in all the hot haste must she be his wife,
Else farewell his good days, and farewell his life!
Master Ralph Roister Doister is but dead and gone,
Except she on him take some compassion.
Then chief of council must be Matthew Merrygreek!
What, if I for marriage to such a one seek?
Then must I agree it, whatever it is;
For what he saith or doth cannot be amiss.
Hold by his yea and nay, be his own dear son:
Praise and rouse him well, and ye have his heart won;
For so well liketh he his own fond fashions,
That he taketh pride of false commendations.
But such sport have I with him, as I would not lose,
Though I should be bound to live with bread and cheese.
For exalt him and have him as ye lust indeed;
Yea, to hold his finger in a hole for a need.
I can with a word make him fain or loth;
I can with as much make him pleased or wroth ;
I can, when I will, make him merry and glad ;
I can, when me lust, make him sorry and sad;
But I marvel I see him not all this same day:
I will seek him out. But lo! he cometh this way.
I have yond espied him sadly coming,
And in love, for twenty pound, by his glooming.

ACT I, SCENE 2.
[R. DOISTER, M. MERRY.]

R. DOISTER. Come, death, when thou wilt: I am weary of my life.
M. MERRY. I told you, I, we should woo another wife. [Aside]
R. ROYSTER. Why did God make me such a goodly person?
M. MERRY. He is in, by the week; we shall have sport anon. [Aside]
R. DOISTER. And where is my trusty friend, Matthew Merrygreek?
M. MERRY. I will make as I saw him not; he doth me seek. [Aside]
R. DOISTER. I have him espied, me-thinketh; yond is he;
Ho! Matthew Merrygreek, my friend, a word with thee.
M. MERRY. I will not hear him, but make as I had haste. [Aside]
Farewell, all my good friends, the time away doth waste;
And the tide, they say, tarryeth for no man.
R. DOISTER. Thou must with thy good counsel help me, if thou can.
M. MERRY. God keep thee, worshipful Master Roister Doister,
And farewell the lusty Master Roister Doister.
R. DOISTER. I must needs speak with thee a word or twain.
M. MERRY. Within a month or two I will be here again.
Negligence in great affairs, ye know, may mar all.
R. DOISTER. Attend upon me now, and well reward thee I shall.
M. MERRY. I have take my leave, and the tide is well-spent.
R. DOISTER. I die, except thou help; I pray thee be content.
Do thy part well now, and ask what thou wilt;
For without thy aid my matter is all spilt.
M. MERRY. Then to serve your turn I will some pains take,
And let all mine own affairs alone for your sake.
R. DOISTER. My whole hope and trust resteth only in thee.
M. MERRY. Then can ye not do amiss, whatever it be.
R. DOISTER. Gramercies, Merrygreek, most bound to thee I am.
M. MERRY. But up with that heart, and speak out like a ram;
Ye speak like a capon that had the cough now:
Be of good cheer; anon ye shall do well enou'.
R. DOISTER. Upon thy comfort I will all things well handle.
M. MERRY. So, lo! that is a voice to blow out a candle.
But what is this great matter, I would fain know?
We shall find remedy therefore, I trow.
Do ye lack money t ye know mine old offers:
Ye have always a key to my purse and coffers.
R. DOISTER. I thank thee: had ever man such a friend!
M. MERRY. Ye give unto me: I must needs to you lend.
R. ROISTER. Nay, I have money plenty all things to discharge.
M. MERRY [aside] That knew I right well, when I made offer so large.

What is it? hath any man threatened you to beat?
R. ROISTER. What is he that durst have put me in that heat?
He that beateh me, by His arms, shall well find (by God's arm)
That I will not be far from him, nor run behind.
M. MERRY. That thing know all men, ever since ye overthrew
The fellow of the lion which Hercules slew.
But what is it then?
R. DOISTER. Of love I make my moan.
M. MERRY. Ah, this foolish love! will't ne'er let us alone?
But, because ye were refused the last day,
Ye said ye would ne'er more be entangled that way!
I would meddle no more, since I find all so unkind.
R. DOISTER. Yea, but I cannot so put love out of my mind.
M. MERRY. But is your love, tell me first, in any wise
In the way of marriage or of merchandise?
If it may otherwise than lawful be found,
Ye get none of my help for an hundred pound.
R. DOISTER. No, by my troth, I would have her to my wife.
M. MERRY. Then are ye a good man, and God save your life!
And what or who is she, with whom ye are in love?
R. DOISTER. A woman, whom I know not by what means to move.
M. MERRY. Who is it?
R. DOISTER. A woman yond.
M. MERRY. What is her name?
R. DOISTER. Her yonder.
M. MERRY. Whom?
R. DOISTER. Mistress, ah—
M. MERRY. Fie, fie for shame!
Love ye, and know not whom? but "her yond! a woman!"
We shall then get you a wife, I cannot tell when.
R. DOISTER. The fair woman that supped with us yesternight;
And I heard her name twice or thrice, and had it right.
M. MERRY. Yea, ye may see ye ne'er take me to good cheer with you:
If ye had, I could have told you her name now.
R. DOISTER. I was to blame indeed, but the next time perchance—
And she dwelleth in this house—
M. MERRY. What, Christian Custance?
R. DOISTER. Except I have her to my wife, I shall run mad.
M. MERRY. Nay, unwise perhaps; but I warrant you for mad.
R. DOISTER. I am utterly dead, unless I have my desire.

M. MERRY. Where be the bellows that blew this sudden fire?
R. DOISTER. I hear she is worth a thousand pound and more.
M. MERRY. Yea, but learn this one lesson of me afore:
An hundred pound of marriage-money, doubtless,
Is ever thirty pound sterling, or somewhat less; (exaggerated amount)
So that her thousand pound, if she be thrifty,
Is much near' about two hundred and fifty.
Although, wooers and widows are never poor.
R. DOISTER. Is she a widow? I love her better therefore.
M. MERRY. But I hear she hath made promise to another.
R. DOISTER. He shall go without her, e'en if he were my brother.
M. MERRY. I have heard say, I am right well advised,
That she hath to Gawin Goodluck promised.
R. DOISTER. What is that Gawin Goodluck?
M. MERRY. A merchant-man.
R. DOISTER. Shall he speed afore me? Nay, sir, by sweet Saint Anne!
Ah, sir! Backare, 'quod Mortimer to his sow' (quod=said)
I will have her mine own self, I make God a vow;
For, I tell thee, she is worth a thousand pound.
M. MERRY. Yet a fitter wife for your maship might be found;
(maship=mastership)
Such a goodly man as you might get one with land,
Besides pounds of gold a thousand and a thousand,
And a thousand and a thousand and a thousand,
And so to the sum of twenty hundred thousand:
Your most goodly personage is worthy of no less.
R. DOISTER. I am sorry God made me so comely, doubtless;
For that maketh me each where so highly favored,
And all women on me so enamored.
M. MERRY. Enamored, quod you? have ye spied out that?
Ah, sir, marry, now I see you know what is what.
Enamored, say? marry, sir, say that again;
But I thought not ye had marked it so plain.
R. DOISTER. Yes, each where they gaze all upon me, and stare.
M. MERRY. Yea, scarecrow, I warrant you, as much as they dare.
And ye will not believe what they say in the street,
When your maship passeth by, all such as I meet,
That sometimes I can scarce find what answer to make.
Who is this? (saith one) Sir Launcelot du Lake?
Who is this? Great Guy of Warwick, saith another?

No (say I), it is the thirteenth Hercules brother.
Who is this? noble Hector of Troy? saith the third:
No, but of the same nest (say I) it is a bird.
I know not if I said well—
R. DOISTER. Yes, for so I am.
M. MERRY. Yea, for there were but nine worthies, before ye came.
Sir, I pray you what lord or great gentleman is this?
Master Ralph Roister Doister, dame (say I), i-wis. (I know)
Lord (saith she then), what a goodly man it is!
Would Christ I had such a husband as he is!
Lord (say some), that the sight of his face we lack!
It is enough for you (say I) to see his back;
His face is for ladies of high and noble parentages,
With whom he hardly 'scapeth great marriages.
With much more than this and much otherwise.
R. DOISTER. I can thee thank, that thou canst such answers devise:
But I perceive thou dost me throughly know.
M. MERRY. I mark your manners for mine own learning, I trow.
But such is your beauty, and such are your acts,
Such is your personage, and such are your feats,
That all women, fair and foul, more and less,
They eye you, they love you, they talk of you doubtless.
Your pleasant look maketh them all merry:
Ye pass not by, but they laugh, till they be weary;
Yea, and money could I have, the truth to tell,
Of many, to bring you that way where they dwell.
R. DOISTER. Merrygreek, for this thy reporting well of me—
M. MERRY. What should I else, sir? it is my duty, parde. (excuse me)
R. DOISTER. I promise thou shalt not lack, while I have a groat. (coin)
M. MERRY. Faith, sir, and I ne'er had more need of a new coat.
R. DOISTER. Thou shalt have one to-morrow, and gold for to spend.
M. MERRY. Then I trust to bring the day to a good end.
For as for mine own part, having money enou',
I could live only with the remembrance of you—
But now to your widow, whom you love so hot—
R. DOISTER. By Cock, thou sayest truth, I had almost forgot.
M. MERRY. What, if Christian Custance will not have you, what?
R. DOISTER. Have me? yes, I warrant you, never doubt of that:
I know she loveth me, but she dare not speak.
M. MERRY. Indeed, meet it were somebody should it break.

R. DOISTER. She looked on me twenty times yesternight,
And laughed so—

M. MERRY. That she could not sit upright.

R. DOISTER. No, faith, could she not.

M. MERRY. No, even such a thing I cased.

R. DOISTER. But for wooing, thou knowest, women are shamefaced.

But, and she knew my mind, I know she would be glad,

And think it the best chance that ever she had.

M. MERRY. To her, then, like a man, and be bold forth to start :

Wooers never speed well, that have a false heart.

Act2, Scene 1 – the following day..

[DOBINET DOUGHTY.]

D. DOUGH. Where is the house I go to, before or behind!

I know not where nor when, nor how I shall it find.

If I had ten men's bodies and legs, and strength,

This trotting that I have must needs lame me at length.

And now that my master is new-set on wooing,

I trust there shall none of us find lack of doing:

Two pair of shoes a day will now be too little

To serve me, I must trot to and fro so mickle. (much)

"Go bear me this token;" "carry me this letter;"

Now this is the best way; now that way is better.

"Up before day, sirs, I charge you, an hour or twain. (two)

Trudge, do me this message, and bring word quick again"

If one miss but a minute, then, "His arms wounds,

I would not have slacked for ten thousand pounds!

Nay see, I beseech you, if my most trusty page

Go not now about to hinder my marriage"

So fervent hot wooing, and so far from wiving,

I throw, never was any creature living;

With every woman is he in some love's-pang;

Then up to our lute at midnight, twangledom twang.

Then twang with our sonnets, and twang with our dumps, (mournful tune)

And heigho from our heart, as heavy as lead-lumps.

"Ah, for these long nights! heigho! when will it be day ?

I fear, ere I come, she will be wooed away."

Then, when answer is made, that it may not be,

"O death, why comest thou not?" by and by saith he.

But then from his heart to put away sorrow,

He is as far in with some new love next morrow.

But, in the mean season, we trudge and we trot:

From dayspring to midnight I sit not nor rest not.

And now am I sent to dame Christian Custance;

But I fear it will end with a mock for pastance. (past-time or amusement)

I bring her a ring with a token in a clout,

And by all guess this same is her house out of doubt.

I will tarry here this month, but some of the house

Shall take it of me, and then I care not a louse.

But yonder cometh forth a wench or a lad :

If he have not one coin's touch, my luck is bad.

Act 2, Scene 2.

{TRUEPENNY, D. DOUGH., TIBET T., ANNOT AL.}

TRUEPENNY. I am clean lost for lack of merry company;

We 'gree not half well within, our wenches and I:

They will command like mistresses, they will forbid;

If they be not served, Truepenny must be chid.

Let them be as merry now, as ye can desire

With turning of a hand our mirth lieth in the mire.

I cannot skill of such changeable mettle,

There is nothing with them but, 'In dock, out nettle.'

D. DOUGH. Whether is it better that I speak to him first,

Or he first to me? It is good to cast the worst.

If I begin first, he will smell all my purpose :

Otherwise I shall not need anything to disclose. [Aside.]

TRUEPENNY. What boy have we yonder? I will see what he is.

D. DOUGH. He cometh to me. It is hereabout, i-wis. [Aside]

TRUEPENNY. Wouldst thou ought, friend, that thou lookest so about?

D. DOUGH. Yea; but whether ye can help me or no, I doubt.

I seek to one Mistress Custance house here dwelling.

TRUEPENNY. It is my mistress ye seek, too, by your telling.

D. DOUGH. Is there any of that name here but she?

TRUEPENNY. Not one in all the whole town that I know, parde.

D. DOUGH. A widow she is, I trow.

TRUEPENNY. And what, and she be?

D. DOUGH. But ensured to an husband?

TRUEPENNY. Yea, so think we.

D. DOUGH. And I dwell with her husband that trusteth to be.

TRUEPENNY. In faith, then must thou needs be welcome to me.

Let us, for acquaintance, shake hands together,

And, whate'er thou be, heartily welcome hither. [Tib and Annot Enter]

TIB. TALK. Well, Truepenny, never but flinging?

And frisking?

AN. ALYFACE.

TRUEPENNY. Well, Tibet and Annot, still swinging and whisking?

TIB. TALK. But ye roil abroad.

AN. ALYFACE.

TRUEPENNY. Where are ye twain? In chambers, when ye meet me there?

But come hither, fools: I have one now by the hand,

Servant to him that must be our mistress' husband;

Bid him welcome.

AN. ALYFACE. To me truly he is welcome.

TIB. TALK. Forsooth and, as I may say, heartily welcome.

D. DOUGH. I thank you, mistress maids.

AN. ALYFACE. I hope we shall better know.

TIB. TALK. And when will our new master come?

D. DOUGH. Shortly, I trow.

TIB. TALK. I would it were to-morrow; for, till he resort,

Our mistress, being a widow, hath small comfort:

And I heard our nurse speak of an husband today,

Ready for our mistress; a rich man and a gay.

And we shall go in our French hoods every day:

TIB. TALK. Will you now in with us unto our mistress go?

D. DOUGH. I have first for my master an errand or two.

But I have here from him a token and a ring;

They shall have most thank of her, that first doth it bring.

TIB. TALK. Marry, that will I.

TRUEPENNY. See, and Tibet snatch not now!

TIB. TALK. And why may not I, sir, get thanks as well as you? [Exit.

AN. ALYFACE. Yet get ye not all, we will go with you both.

And have part of your thanks, be ye never so loth. [Exit except Dough.]

D. DOUGH. So my hands are rid of it, I care for no more.

I may now return home: so durst I not afore. [Exit]

Act2, Scene 3

[C. CUSTANCE, TIBET, ANNOT ALYFACE, TRUEPENNY.]

C. CUSTANCE. Nay, come forth all three; and come hither, pretty maid:

Will not so many forewarnings make you afraid?

TIB. TALK. Yes, forsooth.

C. CUSTANCE.

But still be a runner up and down?

Still be a bringer of tidings and tokens to town?

TIB. TALK. No, forsooth, mistress.

C. CUSTANCE.

Is all your delight and joy

In whisking and ramping abroad, like a Tom-boy?

TIB. TALK. Forsooth, these were there too, Annot and Truepenny.

TRUEPENNY. Yea, but ye alone took it, ye cannot deny.

AN. ALYFACE. Yea, that ye did.

TIB. TALK.

But, if I had not, ye twain would.

C. CUSTANCE. You great calf, ye should have more wit, so ye should. [To

Truep.]

But why should any of you take such things in hand?

TIB. TALK. Because it came from him that must be your husband.

C. CUSTANCE. How do ye know that?

TIB. TALK.

Forsooth, the boy did say so.

C. CUSTANCE. What was his name?

AN. ALYFACE.

We asked not.

C. CUSTANCE.

No, did ye so?

AN. ALYFACE. He is not far gone, of likelihood.

TRUEPENNY.

I will see.

C. CUSTANCE. If thou canst find him in the street, bring him to me.

TRUEPENNY. Yes. [Exit]

C. CUSTANCE.

Well, ye naughty girls, if ever I perceive

That henceforth you do letters or tokens receive,

To bring unto me from any person or place,

Except ye first show me the party face to face,

Either thou, or thou, truly suffer thou shalt.

TIB. TALK. Pardon this, and the next time powder me in salt.

C. CUSTANCE. I shall make all girls by you twain to beware.

TIB. TALK. If I ever offend again, do not me spare.

But if ever I see that false boy any more,

By your mistress's licence, I tell you afore,

I will rather have my coat twenty times swinged,

Than on the naughty wag not to be avenged.

C. CUSTANCE. Good wenches would not so ramp abroad idly,

But keep within doors, and ply their work earnestly.

If one would speak with me, that is a man likely,

Ye shall have right good thank to bring me word quickly;

But otherwise with messages to come in post,

From henceforth I promise you shall be to your cost.

Get you into your work.

TIB. AND ANNOT. Yes, forsooth.

C. CUSTANCE. Hence, both twain.

And let me see you play me such a part again! [Ex. Tib. and Annot.]

TRUEPENNY (entering). Mistress, I have run past the far end of the street,

Yet can I not yonder crafty boy see nor meet.

C. CUSTANCE. No!

TRUEPENNY. Yet looked as far beyond the people

As one may see out of the top of Paul's steeple.

C. CUSTANCE. Hence, in at doors, and let me no more be vexed!

TRUEPENNY. Forgive me this one fault, and lay on for the next.[Exits]

C. CUSTANCE. Now will I in too, for I think, so God me mend,

This will prove some foolish matter in the end. [Exit]

Act 3, Scene 1.

[MATTHEW MERRYGREEK]

M. MERRY. Now say this again : he hath somewhat to doing

Which followeth the trace of one that is wooing;

Specially that hath no other wit in his head,

Than my cousin Roister Doister withal is led.

I am sent in all haste to espy and to mark,

How our letters and tokens are likely to work.

Master Roister Doister must have answer in haste,

For he loveth not to spend much labor in waste.

Now as for Christian Custance, by this light,

Though she had not her troth to Gawin Goodluck plight.

Yet rather than with such a loutish dolt to marry,

I darsay would live a poor life solitary.

But fain would I speak with Custance, if I knew how,

To laugh at the matter. Yond cometh one forth now.

Act3, Scene 2.

[TIBET. M. MERRYGREEK (aside).]

TIB. TALK. Ah! that I might but once in my life have a sight

Of him who made us all so ill-spent! By this light,

He should never escape, if I had him by the ear,

But even from his head I would it bite or tear.

Yea, and if one of them were not enou',

I would bite them both off, I make God avow.

M. MERRY. What is he, whom this little mouse doth so threaten ? [Aside.]

TIB. TALK. I would teach him, I trust, to make girls shamed or beaten.

M. MERRY. I will call her. [Aside] Maid, with whom are ye so hasty?

TIB. TALK. Not with you, sir, but with a little wage-pasty;

A deceiver of folks by subtle craft and guile.

M. MERRY. I know who she is: Dobinet hath which he said was sent

TIB. TALK.- He brought a ring and token, which he said was sent

From our dame's husband, but I know well I was shent;

For it liked her as well (to tell you no lies)

As water in her ship, or salt cast in her eyes :

And yet, whence it came, neither we nor she can tell.

M. MERRY. We shall have sport anon: I like this very well . [Aside.]

And dwell ye here with mistress Custance, fair maid?

TIB. TALK. Yea, marry do I, sir: what would ye have said?

M. MERRY. A little message unto her, by word of mouth.

TIB. TALK. No messages, by your leave, nor tokens forsooth.

M. MERRY. Then help me to speak with her.

TIB. TALK. With a good will that.

Here she cometh forth. Now speak—ye know best what.

C. CUSTANCE. None other life with you, maid, but abroad to skip?

TIB. TALK. Forsooth, here is one would speak with your mistresship.

C. CUSTANCE. Ah, have ye been learning of mo(re) messages now?

TIB. TALK. I would not hear his mind, but bade him show it to you.

C. CUSTANCE. In at doors!

TIB. TALK. I am gone. [Exit.]

M. MERRY. [Approaching] Dame Custance, God ye save!

C. CUSTANCE. Welcome, friend Merrygreek; and what thing would ye have?

M. MERRY. I am come to you a little matter to break.

C. CUSTANCE. But see it be honest, else better not to speak.

M. MERRY. How feel ye yourself affected here of late?

C. CUSTANCE. I feel no manner change, but after the old rate.

But whereby do ye mean?

M. MERRY. Concerning marriage.

Doth not love lade you?

C. CUSTANCE. I feel no such carriage.

M. MERRY. Do ye feel no pangs of dotage? Answer me right.

C. CUSTANCE. I doat so, that I make but one sleep all the night.

But what need all these words?

M. MERRY. O Jesus! will ye see

What dissembling creatures these same women be? {Aside}

The gentleman ye know of, whom ye do so love,

That ye would fain marry him, if he durst it move,
Among other rich widows which are of him glad,
Lest ye for losing of him perchance might run mad,
Is now contented that, upon your suit making,
Ye be as one in election of taking.

C. CUSTANCE. What a tale is this! That I know of! Whom I love!
M MERRY. Yea, and he is as loving a worm again as a dove.
E'en of very pity he is willing you to take,
Because ye shall not destroy yourself for his sake.

C. CUSTANCE. Marry, God (sh)'eld his maship! whatever he be,
It is gentlemanly spoken.

M. MERRY. Is it not, trow ye?
If ye have the grace now to offer yourself, ye speed.

C. CUSTANCE. As much as though I did; this time it shall not need.
But what gentleman is it, I pray you tell me plain,
That woeth so finely?

M. MERRY. Lo, where ye be again!
As though ye knew him not!

C. CUSTANCE. Tush! ye speak in jest.

M. MERRY. Nay, sure the party is in good knocking earnest,
And have you he will (he saith) and have you he must.

C. CUSTANCE. I am promised during my life, that is just.

M. MERRY. Marry, so thinketh he—unto him alone.

C. CUSTANCE. No creature hath my faith and troth but one,
That is Gawin Goodluck: and if it be not he,
He hath no tittle this way, whatever he be,
For I know none to whom I have such words spoken.

M. MERRY. Ye know him not, you, by his letter and token?
C. CUSTANCE. Indeed true it is, that a letter I have,
But I never read it yet, as God me save.

M. MERRY. Ye a woman? and your letter so long unread!
C. CUSTANCE. Ye may thereby know what haste I have to wed.
But now, who is it for my hand? I know by guess.

M. MERRY. Ah! well, I say—
C. CUSTANCE. It is Roister Doister, doubtless.

M. MERRY. Will ye never leave this dissimulation?
Ye know him not?

C. CUSTANCE. But by imagination;
For no man there is, but a very dolt and lout,

That to woo a widow would so go about.
He shall never have me his wife, while he do live.

M. MERRY. Then will he have you if he may, so might I thrive,
And he biddeth you send him word by me,
That ye humbly beseech him ye may his wife be,
And that there shall be no let in you nor mistrust,
But to be wedded on Sunday next, if he lust;
And biddeth you to look for him.

C. CUSTANCE. Doth he bid so?
M. MERRY. When he cometh, ask him whether he did or no?
C. CUSTANCE. Go say, that I bid him keep him warm at home,
For, if he come abroad, he shall cough me a mome. (mome=fool)

My mind was vexed, I 'shrew his head, sottish dolt.

M. MERRY. He hath in his head—
C. CUSTANCE. As much brain as a birdbolt. (birdbolt=short
thick arrow with a blunt head)

M. MERRY. Well, dame Custance, if he hear you thus play chop logic.
C. CUSTANCE. What will he?
M. MERRY. 'Play the devil in the horologe. (...the hours to try')

C. CUSTANCE. I defy him, lout.
M. MERRY. Shall I tell him what ye say?
C. CUSTANCE. Yea, and add whatsoever thou canst, I thee pray,
And I will avouch it, whatsoever it be.

M. MERRY. Then let me alone; we will laugh well, ye shall see :
It will not be long, ere he will hither resort.

C. CUSTANCE. Let him come when him will, I wish no better sport.
Fare ye well: I will in, and read my great letter :
I shall to my wooer make answer the better. [Exit]

Act 3, Scene 3

[MATTHEW MERRYGREEK]

M. MERRY. Now that the whole answer in my device doth rest,
I shall paint out our wooer in colors of the best,
And all that I say shall be on Custance's mouth,
She is author of all that I shall speak, forsooth.
But yonder cometh Roister Doister now in a trance.
[Enter R. DOISTER.]

R. DOISTER. Juno send me this day good luck and good chance!
I cannot but come see how Merrygreek doth speed.

M. MERRY. I will not see him, but give him a jut indeed. (jut=jostle)
 [puts head to side and runs into Roister Doister's shoulder]
 I cry your mastership mercy!
 R. DOISTER. And whither now?
 M. MERRY. As fast as I could run, sir, in post against you.
 But why speak ye so faintly, or why are ye so sad?
 R. DOISTER. Thou knowest the proverb—because I cannot be had.
 Hast thou spoken with this woman?
 M. MERRY. Yea, that I have.
 R. DOISTER. And what, will this gear be?
 M. MERRY. No, so God me save.
 R. DOISTER. Hast thou a flat answer?
 M. MERRY. Nay, a sharp answer.
 R. DOISTER. What?
 M. MERRY. Ye shall not (she saith), by her will, marry her cat.
 Ye are such a calf, such an ass, such a block,
 Such a lilburn, such a hobil, such a lobcock;
 And because ye should come to her at no season,
 She despised your maship out of all reason.
 "Beware what ye say - ko I - of such a gentleman!"
 "Nay, I fear him not - ko she -, do the best he can."
 He vaunteth himself for a man of prowess great,
 Whereas a good gander, I dare say, may him beat.
 And where he is mocked and laughed to scorn,
 For the veriest dolt that ever was born :
 And veriest lubber, sloven and beast,
 Living in this world from the west to the east;
 Yet of himself hath he such opinion,
 That in all the world is not the like minion.
 He thinketh each woman to be brought in dotage
 With the only sight of his goodly personage :
 Yet none that will have him: we do him lout and flock,
 And make him among us our common sporting- stock;
 And so would I now - ko she -, save only because—
 Better nay - ko I -, "I lust not meddle with daws."
 "Ye are happy - ko I - that ye are a woman :
 This would cost you your life, in case ye were a man."
 R. DOISTER. Yea, an hundred thousand pound should not save her life.
 M. MERRY. No, but that ye woo her to have her to your wife;
 But I could not stop her mouth.

R. DOISTER. Heigho, alas!
 M. MERRY. Be of good cheer, man, and let the world pass. (expression about
 heedless jollity)
 R. DOISTER. What shall I do or say, now that it will not be ?
 M. MERRY. Ye shall have choice of a thousand as good as she;
 And ye must pardon her; it is for lack of wit.
 R. DOISTER. Yea, for were not I an husband for her fit ?
 Well, what should I now do?
 M. MERRY. In faith, I cannot tell.
 R. DOISTER. I will go home, and die.
 M. MERRY. Then shall I bid toll the bell?
 Come forth, sirs; hear the doleful news I shall you tell. [*Evocat servos milites.*]
 Our good master here will no longer with us dwell,
 But in spite of Custance, which hath him wearied,
 Let us see his maship solemnly buried;
 And while some piece of his soul is yet him within,
 Some part of his funerals let us here begin.
Audivi vocem. All men take heed by this one gentleman,
 How you set your love upon an unkind woman:
 For these women be all such mad, peevish elves,
 They will not be won, except to please themselves.
 But, in faith, Custance, if ever ye come in hell,
 Master Roister Doister shall serve you as well—
 And will ye needs go from us thus in very deed?
 R. DOISTER. Yea, in good sadness.
 M. MERRY. Now Jesus Christ be your speed.
 [Pauses in thought]
 Soft, hear what I have cast.
 R. DOISTER. I will hear nothing, I am past.
 M. MERRY. Whough, wellaway!
 Ye may tarry one hour, and hear what I shall say.
 Ye were best, sir, for awhile to revive again,
 And (re)quite them, ere ye go.
 R. DOISTER. Trowest thou so?
 M. MERRY. Yea, plain.
 R. DOISTER. How may I revive, being now so far past?
 M. MERRY. I will rub your temples, and fet(ch) you again at last.
 R. DOISTER. It will not be possible.
 M. MERRY. Yes, for twenty pound.
 R. DOISTER. Arms! what dost thou?

M. MERRY. Get you again out of your sound. (swoom)

By this cross, ye were nigh gone indeed; I might feel

Your soul departing - within an inch of your heel.

Now follow my counsel—

E. ROISTER. What is it?

M. MERRY. If I were you,

Custance should else seek to me, ere I would bow.

R. DOISTER. Well, as thou wilt have me, even so will I do.

M. MERRY. Then shall ye revive again for an hour or two.

R. DOISTER. As thou wilt: I am content, for a little space.

M. MERRY. Good hap is not hasty : yet in space cometh grace.

To speak with Custance yourself should be very well;

What good thereof may come, nor I nor you can tell.

But now the matter standeth upon your marriage,

Ye must now take unto you a lusty courage.

Ye may not speak with a faint heart to Custance.

But with a lusty voice and countenance,

That she may know she hath to answer to a man.

R. DOISTER. Yes, I can do that as well as any can.

M. MERRY. Then, because ye must Custance face to face woo,

Let us see how to behave yourself ye can do.

Ye must have a portly brag after your estate.

R. DOISTER. Tush, I can handle that after the best rate.

M. MERRY. Well done; so, lo! up, man, with your head and chin!

Up with that snout, man: so lo! now ye begin.

So, that is somewhat like; but, pranky-coat, nay when?

That is a lusty brute! hands unto your side, man:

So, lo! now is it even as it should be;

That is somewhat like for a man of your degree.

Then must ye stately go, jetting up and down. (jetting=jaunty walk)

Tut! can ye no better shake the tail of your gown?

M. MERRY. Hoiday! if fair fine Mistress Custance saw you now,

Ralph Roister Doister were her own, I warrant you.

R. DOISTER. I will speak out aloud, I care not who hear it.—

Sirs, see that my harness, my target and my shield

Be made as bright now, as when I was last in field :

I would have my sword and harness to shine so bright,

That I might therewith dun mine enemies' sight:

I would have it cast beams as fast, I tell you plain,

As doth the glitt'ring grass after a shower of rain.

And see that, in case I should need to come to arming,

All things may be ready at a minute's warning.

For such chance may chance in an hour: do ye hear?

M. MERRY. As perchance shall not chance again in seven year.

R. DOISTER. Now, draw ye near to her, and hear what shall be said.

M. MERRY. But I would not have you make her too much afraid.

Act 4 Scene 1

[Enters Custance]

R. DOISTER. Well found, sweet wife, (I trust) for all this your sour look.

C. CUSTANCE. Wife! Why call ye me wife?

Such will not be so, on my life!

R. DOISTER. Will ye have us then?

C. CUSTANCE. I will never have thee.

R. DOISTER. Then will I have you.

C. CUSTANCE. No, the devil shall have thee.

M. MERRY. Why, now may ye see what it com' th to in the end,

To make a deadly foe of your most loving friend:

How say ye, will ye have him?

C. CUSTANCE. No.

M. MERRY. Will ye take him—

C. CUSTANCE. I defy him.

M. MERRY. At my word ?

C. CUSTANCE. A shame take him!

Waste no more wind, for it will never be.

M. MERRY. This one fault with twain shall be mended, ye shall see.

Gentle Mistress Custance now, good Mistress Custance,

Honey Mistress Custance now, sweet Mistress Custance,

Golden Mistress Custance now, white Mistress Custance,

Silken Mistress Custance now, fair Mistress Custance.

C. CUSTANCE. Faith, rather than to marry with such a doltish lout,

I would match myself with a beggar, out of doubt.

Speak not of winning me; for it shall never be so.

R. DOISTER. Yes, dame, I will have you, whether ye will or no.

I command you to love me! Wherefore should ye not?

Is not my love to you chafing and burning hot?

M. MERRY. To her! That is well said.

R. DOISTER. Shall I so wrack my brain,

To doat upon you, and ye not love us again?

M. MERRY. Well said yet.

C. CUSTANCE. Go to, thou goose.
R. DOISTER. I say, Kit Custance,
In case ye will not haze, well; better yes, perchance.
C. CUSTANCE. Avaunt, loser! pick thee hence!
M. MERRY. Well, sir, ye perceive,
For all your kind offer, she will not you receive.
R. DOISTER. Then a straw for her, and a straw for her again:
She shall not be my wife, would she never so fain;
No, and though she would be at ten thousand pound cost,
M. MERRY. Lo, dame, ye may see what an husband ye have lost.
C. CUSTANCE. Yea, no matter; a jewel much better lost than found.
M. MERRY. Ah, ye will not believe how this doth my heart wound.
How should a marriage between you be toward,
If both parties draw back, and become so froward? (stubborn)
R. DOISTER. Nay, dame, I will fire thee out of thy house, though I die;
And destroy thee and all thine, and that by and by.
M. MERRY. Nay, for the passion of God, sir, do not so.
R. DOISTER. Yes, except she will say yea to that she said no.
C. CUSTANCE. And what, be there no officers, trow we, in town,
To check idle loiterers, bragging up and down?
Where be they by whom vagabonds should be repress,
That poor silly widows might live in peace and rest?
C. CUSTANCE: Then shall we see, I will trow, whether ye shall do me harm.
R. DOISTER: Yes, in faith, Kit. I shall thee and thine so charm.
That all women incarnate in thee may beware.
C. CUSTANCE: Nay, as for charming me, come hither if thou dare.
I shall slay thee til thou stink both thee and thy train.
And cuff thee mine own hands, and send thee home again.
R. DOISTER: Yea, say'st thou me that, dame? Dost thou me threaten?
Go we, I will see whether I shall be beaten.
M. MERRY: Nay, for the passion of God, let me now treat peace;
For bloodshed will there be, in case this strife increase.
Ah, good dame Constance, take better way with you!
C. CUSTANCE: Let him do his worst!
M. MERRY: Yeild in time.
R. DOISTER: Come hence, thou! [Exit Roister and Merry]

Act 4, Scene 2
CHRISTIAN CUSTANCE, ANNOT ALYFACE, TIBET TALKAPACE, M.
MUMBLECRUST. }

C. CUSTANCE: So Sirah! If I should not with him take this way,
I should not be rid of him, I think, till doom's day.
I will call forth my folks, that without any mocks,
If he come again, we may give him raps and knocks.
Madge Mumblecrust, come forth, and Tibet Talkapace;
Yea, and come forth too, Mistress Annot Alyface.
AN. ALYFACE. I come.
TIB. TALK. And I am here.
M. MUMBL. And I am here too, at length.
C. CUSTANCE. Like warriors, if need be, ye must show your strength.
The man that this day hath thus beguiled you
Is Ralph Roister Doister, whom ye know well enou';
The most lout and dastard that ever on ground trod.
TIB. TALK. I see all folk mock him, when he goeth abroad.
C. CUSTANCE. He threateneth to come hither with all his force to fight;
I charge you, if he come, on him with all your might:
M. MUMBL. I with my distaff will reach him one rap.
TIB. TALK. And I with my new broom will sweep him one swap;
And then with our great club I will reach him one rap.
And I with our skimmer will fling him one flap.
TIB. TALK. Then Truepenny's fire-fork will him; shrewdly fray:
And you with the spit may drive him quite away.
C. CUSTANCE. Go, make all ready, that it may be e'en so.
TIB. TALK. For my part, I shrew them that last about it go. [Exeant.

Act 4, Scene 3
[MERRYGREEK, CHRISTIAN CUSTANCE]
M. MERRY. Custance, I do you here well find.
C. CUSTANCE. Ah! Matthew Merrygreek, ye have used me well!
M. MERRY. Now, for altogether, ye must your answer tell. (for
altogether=once and for all)
Will ye have this man, woman, or else will ye not?
Else will he come, never boar so brim, nor toast so hot. (brim=fierce)
C. CUSTANCE. But why join ye with him? For mirth?
Or else in seriousness?
M. MERRY. The more fond of you both: hardly the matter guess.
Lo, how say ye, dame? Why, do ye think, dame Custance,
That in this wooing I have meant ought but pastance?
C. CUSTANCE. Much things ye spake, I wot, to maintain his dotage.
M. MERRY. But well might ye judge, I spake it all in mockage;

For why is Roister Doister a fit husband for you?
 C. CUSTANCE. I dare say ye never thought it.
 M. MERRY. No, to God I vow.
 And did not I know afore of the insurance
 Between Gawin Goodluck and Christian Custance?
 That if you could have take it up at the first bound,
 We should there-at such a sport and pastime have found,
 That all the whole town should have been the merrier.
 C. CUSTANCE. I'll ache your head! I was never wearier,
 But I feared thereof to take dishonesty.
 M. MERRY. This should both have made sport, and showed your honesty;
 And Goodluck, I dare swear, your wit therein would (al)low.
 Yea, being no worse than we know it to be now.
 And nothing yet too late: for, when I come to him,
 Hither will he repair with a sheep's look full grim,
 By plain force and violence to drive you to yield.
 C. CUSTANCE. If ye bid me, we will with him pitch a field,
 I and my maids together.
 M. MERRY. Let us see; be bold!
 C. CUSTANCE. Ye shall see women's war.
 M. MERRY. That fight will I behold.
 If occasion serve, taking his part full brim,
 I will strike at you, but the rap shall light on him.
 When we first appear—
 C. CUSTANCE. Then will I run away,
 As though I were afraid.
 M. MERRY. Do you that part well play,
 Then will he look as fierce as a Cotsold lion. (sheep)
 C. CUSTANCE. But when goest thou for him?
 M. MERRY. That do I very now.
 C. CUSTANCE. Ye shall find us here.
 M. MERRY. Well, God have mercy on you. [Exit]

Act 4, Scene 4

[R. DOISTER, M. MERRYGREEK, C. CUSTANCE, D. DOUGHTY,
 HARPAX]

R. DOISTER. Now, sirs, keep your 'ray, and see your hearts be stout.
 But where be these caittiffs! Me-think they dare not rout. (assemble)
 How sayest thou, Merrygreek? What do the Kit Custance say?
 M. MERRY. I am loth to tell you.

R. DOISTER. Tush, speak, man. Yea or nay?
 M. MERRY. Forsooth, sir, I have spoken for you all that I can;
 But if ye -win her, ye must e'en play the man :
 E'en to fight it out ye must a man's heart take.
 R. DOISTER. Yes, they shall know, and thou knowest, I have a stomach.
 M. MERRY. A stomach (quod you), yea, as good as e'er man had.
 R. DOISTER. I trow, they shall find and feel that I am a lad.
 M. MERRY. By this cross, I have seen you eat your meat as well
 As any that e'er I have seen of, or heard tell.
 A stomach, quod you? He that will that deny,
 I know was never at dinner in your company.
 R. DOISTER. Nay, the stomach of a man it is, that I mean.
 M. MERRY. Nay, the stomach of an horse or a dog, I ween.
 R. DOISTER. Nay, a man's stomach with a weapon, mean I.
 M. MERRY. Ten men can scarce match you with a spoon in a pie.
 R. DOISTER. Nay, the stomach of a man to try in strife.
 M. MERRY. I never saw your stomach cloyed yet in my life.
 R. DOISTER. Tush, I mean in strife or fighting to try.
 M. MERRY. We shall see how ye will strike now, being angry.
 R. DOISTER. Have at thy pate then, and save thy head, if thou may.
 M. MERRY. Nay, then, have at your pate again, by this day.
 R. DOISTER. Nay, thou mayest not strike at me again in no wise.
 M. MERRY. I cannot in fight make to you such warrantise:
 But as for your foes here let them the bargain by. (Abide by the bargain)
 R. DOISTER. Nay, as for [that,] they shall every mother's child die.
 And in this my fume a little thing might make me
 To beat down house and all, and else the devil take me.
 M. MERRY. If I were as ye be, by Gog's dear mother,
 I would not leave one stone upon another.
 Though she would redeem it with twenty thousand pounds.
 R. DOISTER. It shall be even so, by his lily wounds!
 M. MERRY. Be not at one with her(2) upon any amends. (at one=reconciled)
 R. ROISTER. No, though she make to me never so many friends.
 Not if all the world for her would undertake :
 No, not God himself neither shall not her peace make.
 On therefore, march forward ! Soft, stay a while yet.
 M. MERRY. On!
 R. DOISTER. Tarry.
 M. MERRY. Forth !
 R. DOISTER. Back.

M. MERRY. On!

R. DOISTER. Soft. Now forward set.
[Enter C. CUSTANCE.]

C. CUSTANCE. What business have we here? Out, alas, alas!

R. ROISTER. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!

Didst thou see that, Merrygreek, how afraid she was?

Didst thou see how she fled apace out of my sight?

All, good sweet Custance! I pity her, by this light.

M. MERRY. That tender heart of yours will mar altogether;
Thus will ye be turned with wagging of a feather.

R. DOISTER. On, sirs, keep your 'ray.

M. MERRY. On forth, while this gear is hot.

R. DOISTER. Soft, the Arms of Calais, I have one thing forgot.

M. MERRY. What lack we now?

R. DOISTER. Retire, or else we be all slain.

M. MERRY. Back, for the pash of God! back, sirs, back again!
What is the great matter?

R. ROISTER. This hasty forth-going
Had almost brought us all to utter undoing;
It made me forget a thing most necessary.

M. MERRY. Well remembered of a captain, by Saint Mary.

R. DOISTER. It is a thing must be had.

M. MERRY. Let us have it then.

R. DOISTER. But I wot not where or how.

M. MERRY. Then wot not I when.
But what is it?

R. ROISTER. Of a chief thing I am to seek.

M. MERRY. Tut, so will ye be, when ye have studied a week. [Aside.]
But tell me what it is?

R. DOISTER. I lack yet an headpiece.

M. MERRY. The kitchen collocavit the best hens to grease;
Run, fet it, Dobinet, and come at once withal,
And bring with thee my potgun, hanging by the wall. (potgun=small weapon)
I have seen your head with it, full many a time, [Dobinet exits]
Covered as safe as it had been with a scrine :
And I warrant it save your head from any stroke,
Except perchance to be amazed with the smoke :
I warrant your head therewith, except for the mist,
As safe as if it were fast locked up in a chist. [Dobinet returns]
And lo, here our Dobinet cometh with it now.

D. DOUGH. It will cover me to the shoulders well enou'.

M. MERRY. Let me see it on.

R. DOISTER. In faith, it doth meetly well.

M. MERRY. There can be no fitter thing. Now ye must us tell
What to do.

R. DOISTER. Now forth in 'ray, sirs, and stop no more.

M. MERRY. Now, Saint George to borrow! (normal expression is St George
to thrive)

Drum, dub-a-dub afore.

R. DOISTER. Yea, levy the camp, sirs, and hence again each one.
But be still in readiness, if I hap to call;
I cannot tell what sudden chance may befall.

M. MERRY. Do not off your harness, sirs, I you advise,
At the least for this fortnight, in no manner wise.
Perchance in an hour, when all ye think least,
Our master's appetite to fight will be best.
But soft, ere ye go, have once at Custance house.

R. DOISTER. Soft, what wilt thou do?

M. MERRY. Once discharge my arquebus;
And for my heart's ease, have once more with my potgun.

R. DOISTER. Hold thy hands! else is all our purpose clean fordone.

M. MERRY. And it cost me my life!

R. DOISTER. I say, thou shalt not.

M. MERRY. By the mass, but I will have once more with hail-shot.
I will have some pennyworth; I will not lose all.

Act 4, Scene 5

[M. MERRYGREEK, C. CUSTANCE, K. ROYSTER, TIB. T., AN.
ALYFACE, M. MUMBLECRUST, TRUEPENNY, DOBINET DOUGHTY,
HARPAX]

[Two drums with their Ensigns.]

C. CUSTANCE. What catiffs are those, that so shake my house-wall?

M. MERRY. Ah, sirrah now Custance, if ye had so much wit,

I would see you ask pardon, and yourselves submit.

C. CUSTANCE. Have I still this ado with a couple of fools?

M. MERRY. Hear ye what she saith?

C. CUSTANCE. Maidens, come forth with your tools,
In a ray.

M. MERRY. Dubba-dub, sirrah!

R. DOISTER. In a ray !

They come suddenly on us.

M. MERRY. Dub-a-dub-dub!

R. DOISTER. In a ray!

That ever I was born ! we are taken tardy.

M. MERRY. Now, sirs, quit yourselves like tall men and hardy.

C. CUSTANCE. On afore, Truepenny! Hold thine own, Annot !

On toward them, Tibet, for scape us they cannot!

Come forth, Madge Mumblecrust! so, stand fast together.

M. MERRY. God send us a fair day!

R. ROYSTER, See, they march on hither.

TIB. TALK. But, mistress—

C. CUSTANCE. What say'st thou?

TIB. TALK. Shall I go fet our goose ?

C. CUSTANCE. What to do ?

TIB. TALK. To yonder Captain I will turn her loose.

And she gape and hiss at him, as she doth at me,

I durst jeopard my hand she will make him flee.

C. CUSTANCE. On forward!

R. DOISTER. They come.

M. MERRY. Stand!

R. DOISTER. Hold!

M. MERRY. Keep!

R. DOISTER. There!

M. MERRY. Strike!

R. DOISTER. Take heed!

C. CUSTANCE. Well said, Truepenny!

TRUEPENNY. Ah, whoresons!

C. CUSTANCE. Well done, indeed!

M. MERRY. Hold thine own, Harpax! Down with them, Dobinet!

C. CUSTANCE. Now, Madge; there, Annot; now stick them, Tibet!

TIB. TALK. All my chief quarrel is to this same little knave,

That beguiled me last day; nothing shall him save.

D. DOUGH. Down with this little quean, that hath at me such spite!

Save you from her, master, it is a very sprite.

C. CUSTANCE. I myself will mounsure grand captain undertake.

R. DOISTER. They win ground!

M. MERRY. Save yourself, sir, for God's sake!

R. DOISTER. Out, alas ! I am slain; help!

M. MERRY. Save yourself!

R. EOISTER. Alas!

M. MERRY. Nay, then, have at you, mistress.

R. DOISTER. Thou hittest me, alas!

M. MERRY. I will strike at Custance here.

R. DOISTER. Thou hittest me!

M. MERRY. [aside] So I will.

Nay, mistress Custance.

R. DOISTER. Alas! Thou hittest me still.

Hold!

M. MERRY. Save yourself, sir!

R. DOISTER. Help! out alas! I am slain.

M. MERRY. Truce, hold your hands! Truce, for a pissing while or twain.

Now, how say you, Custance, for saving of your life,

Will ye yield, and grant to be this gentleman's wife?

C. CUSTANCE. Ye told me he loved me; call ye this love?

M. MERRY. He loved a while, even like a turtledove.

C. CUSTANCE. Gay love, God save it! so soon hot, so soon cold.

M. MERRY. I am sorry for you: he could love you yet, so he could.

R. DOISTER. Nay, by Cock's precious, she shall be none of mine.

M. MERRY. Why so?

R. DOISTER. Come away, by the matt, she is man-kind. { masculine }

I durst adventure the loss of my right hand.

If she did not slay her other husband.

And see, if she prepare not again to fight!

M. MERRY. What, then, Saint George to borrow, our Lady's knight ?

R. KOISTER. Slay else whom she will, by Gog, she shall not slay me.

M. MERRY. How then ?

R. DOISTER. Rather than to be slain, I will flee.

C. CUSTANCE. To it again, my knightesses! Down with them all!

R. DOISTER. Away, away, away! She will else kill us all

M. MERRY. Nay, stick to it, like an hardy man and a tall.

R. DOISTER. O bones, thou hittest me ! Away, or else die we shall.

M. MERRY. Away, for the pash of our sweet Lord Jesus Christ!

C. CUSTANCE. Away, lout and lubber, or I shall be thy priest!

[Exit Ralph, Mat, Dob, Harpax]

So this field is ours; we have driven them all away.

TIB. TALK. Thanks to God, mistress, ye have had a fair day.

C. CUSTANCE. Well, now go ye in, and make yourself some good cheer.

ALL OTHERS. We go.

C. CUSTANCE. Ah, sir ! what a field we have had here.

Act 4, Scene 6

[GAWIN GOODLUCK, C. CUSTANCE]

C. CUSTANCE. Now come he hitherward : I trust all shall be well.

G. GOOD. Sweet Custance, neither heart can think, nor tongue tell,
How much I joy in your constant fidelity.

Come now, kiss me, the pearl of perfect honesty.

C. CUSTANCE. God let me no longer to continue in life,

Than I shall towards you continue a true wife.

G. GOOD. Well, now to make you for this some part of amends,

I shall desire first you, and then such of our friends

As shall to you seem best, to sup at home with me,

Where at your fought field we shall laugh, and merry be.

FINIS.