

## ***Chaucer New Painted* (1623): Three Hundred Proverbs in Performance Context**

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Among many battles currently being lost by English professors is one to retain the meaning of the word “unique.” Unfortunately, nobody who substitutes it for “unusual” is apt to read this argument that the long poem *Chaucer New Painted*, which is unique in certain aspects and nearly unique in others, can open a gateway to realms of information less accessible were scholarly inquiry limited to more prevalent forms of verbal art. Investigation of this very unusual Jacobean-era poem will reveal wide-ranging diachronic issues about the interface between oral tradition and formal education. It will indicate that a genre nowadays neglected or maligned, the proverb, has stood as keystone in the continuity of oral and written culture across millennia of Western intellectual history, up until the present century.

The useful poetic gateway to such an expanse of scholarly issues has survived only by chance, in a unique copy owned by the Huntington Library. My introduction to the Appendix, which consists of its text reprinted and annotated for the first time, gives bibliographic details. The sole copy of *Chaucer New Painted* begins at the beginning but ends before the end of the story being told, for the title page and at least one concluding page are missing.

*Chaucer New Painted* is not quite unique in its form, that of a proverb collection incorporated into a frame narrative. Literature in English offers five additional examples of framed proverb collections, done respectively by Geoffrey Chaucer before 1400, John Heywood in 1546, Jonathan Swift in 1738, Benjamin Franklin in 1758, and William Blake ca. 1793 (all to be discussed below). *Chaucer New Painted* differs somewhat from all five in sheer concentration of proverbs: 301 documentable proverbs within 1153 lines of poetry, 287 of them packed into the 743 lines framed by narrative.<sup>1</sup> The author William Painter, apparently a tradesman

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<sup>1</sup> Lines 105-847 of the Appendix.

in the service of a powerful London merchant,<sup>2</sup> often manages to construct quatrains that incorporate three proverbs in four lines. In his *tour de force*, lines 605-8 interconnect four proverbs in four lines.

*Chaucer New Painted* remains truly unique, even within its tiny fellowship of frame-narrative proverb collections in English, inasmuch as the author has recreated a live performance context. In the narrative frame, participants vaunt their individual skill at performance of traditional oral genres within an unofficial, yet structured, verbal game. Herein Painter may well have been inspired by the schema for the *Canterbury Tales*—namely, that the Canterbury-bound pilgrims exchange performances within a tale-telling contest proposed and judged by the Host. Painter conjoins Chaucer’s name and a pun on his own, for his title, because of this resemblance and others to be noted, many of which are based on Jacobean-era ideas no longer held about England’s first poet. Besides the frame-story contest, another relatively direct connection appears in the opening couplets of *Chaucer New Painted*. The scene evokes the commencement of Chaucer’s work best known then and now (97-100):

IN Christmas time I needs abroad would walke,  
Desirous for to heare some merry talke:  
It was my chance to meet a merry Crew,  
And what their talke was I will heare tell you.

The *General Prologue* to the *Canterbury Tales* likewise specifies the season and then presents a chatty company, whom a first-person narrator meets by chance and offers to quote for our benefit. *Chaucer New Painted* soon diverges from its prototype, however. Chaucer introduces each pilgrim individually, and in doing so divulges also the personality of “I”—of the naive, bashful, and well-meaning but inept Chaucer-the-narrator. Instead, Painter’s “merry Crew” promptly disappears behind a smokescreen of high-density proverb lore wrenched toward end rhymes (105-6):

Soone ripe soone rotten, the proverb doth say:  
And seldome seen, soone be forgotten may . . . .

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<sup>2</sup> In the only previous scholarship on this poem, excepting perusal of it for *ODEP* 1970, Wright 1933 distinguishes the author from the William Painter (1540?-1594) who compiled *The Palace of Pleasure*. Spurgeon, the indefatigable compiler of Chauceriana, noted the Stationers’ Register entry but found no copy of the book in British libraries at the turn of the twentieth century (1960:I.198, III.4.65). The Huntington Library acquired its copy in 1926.

Hundreds of lines later there reemerges the frame story, the implied performance context. Members of the merry and, presumably, patient crew have been lounging around the fireplace at a local tavern. Conversation ensues, followed by declaration of a folkloric challenge (925-28):

Then one that was there in the company,  
Said masters, if you will be ruled me by,  
Who will not sing, read riddle, nor tell tale,  
Shall neither taste of Apples nor of Ale.

Nothing like the subsequent contest occurs in either of the two frame-story proverb collections available to Painter, those done by Heywood and Chaucer. Probably the author actually read Heywood's popular *Dialogue of Proverbs*, which was reprinted ten times between 1546 and 1598. In 2754 lines of iambic pentameter couplets, Heywood presents a young man asking advice from the first-person narrator: should he marry a poor young girl for love, or an old widow for money? Conveniently, the narrator's two sets of next-door neighbors exemplify those two marital states. After hearing two sad stories, replete with appropriate proverbs advising opposite actions, the young man decides against o'er-hasty marriage to anybody at all.

It is less likely, though not impossible, that Painter read with full comprehension the whole of the Middle English precedent to *Chaucer New Painted: the Tale of Melibeus*, that "litel tretys" containing "somwhat moore / Of proverbes than ye han herd befoore," which is humbly offered by Chaucer-the-narrator after the exasperated Host terms his *Tale of Sir Thopas* "rym dogerel . . . nat worth a toord."<sup>3</sup> Chaucer-the-author translated from French the *Tale of Melibeus*. As prose, it differs from the poems by Heywood and Painter also in having no first-person narrator. Its frame story opens with one brief burst of action: while Melibeus is away from home, enemies attack his wife and daughter. Throughout the rest of the treatise (920 prose lines in standard editions) the protagonist cites proverbs that urge revenge, while his wife, who is named Prudence, cites proverbs that urge prudence. Although the woman does win this debate, the Wife of Bath and her lively sisterhood seem far distant in spirit.

Both of the precedent frames available to Painter are unequivocal fictions. Neither author pretends that live human beings would actually discuss marriage or revenge by citing proverbs back and forth. In contrast, the frame to *Chaucer New Painted* does seem intended to preserve, however

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<sup>3</sup> *SirT* 955-57, 925, 930. Subsequent references are parenthesized with tale abbreviation and line numbers, as stipulated in the References under Benson 1987.

stiffly, a performance context like those in which Painter himself must have participated—however stiffly. His narrative “I” seems rather a pompous killjoy. To begin with, he promptly expurgates what he considers irrelevant: all of the fireside “tales and iests” told (101).

As much as one might regret the loss of any tales or jests, quite a few seventeenth-century examples do survive elsewhere in manuscripts and print sources. Riddles, as a genre, have been less often preserved. Here Painter provides four riddle questions and a colloquial sense of orally delivered answers (e.g., “a foole may well know this,” 957). In addition, Painter the proto-folklorist sketches the contest rules, which are agreed upon without ado. His informants are sitting side by side, facing the hearth. As response to the challenge quoted above, the man at one end of the row tells a riddle. The man at the opposite end of the row has to match the genre and try to cap the offering, such that he poses a three-riddle series (929-31, 937). Next, each man sitting second from an end of the row must sing a song. With thoroughness worthy of a trained fieldworker, but in fact based on the customary form of printed ballads at his time, Painter even supplies both tune names (961-64).

Apparently Painter-the-narrator is sitting third from one end of the row, and apparently his position allows him to choose the genre that his counterpart will have to match. When his turn comes to perform, at line 1108, humility about his own verbal skill echoes that of Chaucer-the-narrator (*SirT* 691-711). Abashed but game, he ventures to claim his share of apples and ale with an anagram that beatifies one Joan Clark, whom he then reveals to be his mother.

A battle of words erupts, yet another skirmish in the male-orchestrated War Between the Sexes. “The last man whom by lot it vnto came” poses in response a cynical anagram such that the four words “woe . . . yealousy . . . flattering . . . euill” spell “wyfe.” Painter-the-narrator, permitted or goaded to take an extra turn, counters with “worth . . . youth . . . faithful . . . [turn from] euill.” He tops off his verbal dexterity with an antimisogynistic proverb that has no exact analogue. And at that page bottom ends the unique surviving copy of *Chaucer New Painted*.

The loss is a pity, for this folkloric debate probably did proceed to a conclusion in defense of womankind, perhaps one further evoking Chaucer’s work itself. Could it be that some disgruntled misogynist ripped out the last pages, thereby revenging damage wrought by the Wife of Bath upon her young husband’s “book of wikked wyves” (*WBP* 685, 788-93)? More seriously, might the conclusion have contained even stronger indications for Painter’s comprehension of *Canterbury Tales* in terms of folkloric debate? The *Friar’s Tale*, which attacks summoners, sparks the

*Summoner's Tale* attacking friars, and so on. If so, the whole would add historical data for recent approaches to Chaucer's work, which await further development by medievalists trained in methodologies appropriate to oral tradition transformed into literature.<sup>4</sup>

As another possibility, that lost conclusion might well have added diachronic fuel to the inflammatory present-day topic of sexual bias in textual interpretation. Did this representative seventeenth-century male look upon Chaucer as an affable promoter of female sovereignty, as argued by many scholars today? Or did Painter inevitably bond with a sexist patriarch who glorifies rape and who "silences" and victimizes even the Wife of Bath, as claimed by one faction of feminist Chaucerians? Applied to such current controversies, medievalists' thoughtful awareness of the author's reception and reputation throughout six centuries can help disentangle concerns specific to the late twentieth century from legitimate approaches to Chaucer's verbal art within its own social and intellectual context.

It remains problematic, of course, that Chaucerians reconstruct the social and intellectual history of late-fourteenth-century London based to some inevitable degree on their own concerns and expectations. This and other vast interpretive issues would not be resolved should a dusty bookshelf somewhere reveal a second extant copy of *Chaucer New Painted*, this one intact. It is worthwhile to articulate such problems, however, and in the meantime to appreciate the value of whatever Chauceriana have survived. *Chaucer New Painted* happens to be incomplete, although unlike the *Canterbury Tales* it was not a work in progress at the time of the author's death. It imitates certain aspects of Chaucer's best-known poem—some of them still considered significant, others retrievable via reception studies. Painter's partial and, to be sure, inexpert imitation provides a reconstructed performance context for excruciatingly retextured oral texts, primarily proverb texts. Undeniable aesthetic deficiencies notwithstanding, Painter's poem offers an extraordinarily direct record of the oral art of early seventeenth-century folks, lounging hearthside at a tavern in winter. It thereby permits an extraordinarily piercing insight into their attitudes and expectations toward England's first and most consistently loved poet.

The texture of *Chaucer New Painted*, of this literary text as a whole, may most kindly be described as sing-song. Normal word order, a major carrier of discursive meaning in English, is frequently sacrificed to maintenance of rigid iambic pentameter couplets. Like others at his time,

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<sup>4</sup> See Lindahl 1987 and Bowden 1987.

Painter believed that he was improving on his Middle English model by regularizing its rough meter. He lived during the stretch of centuries intervening between the Great Vowel Shift and today's consensus that, in Middle English poetry, the final *e* and other minor syllables were enunciated or dropped at will, whichever way better fit the meter. Early commentators, tackling the language with their own pronunciations of Modern English, bemoan Chaucer's childlike inability to write smooth iambic pentameter verse.<sup>5</sup>

Although *Chaucer New Painted* itself was seldom purchased or preserved, apparently, other evidence implies that seventeenth-century readers would have preferred Painter's poetic texture to Chaucer's own. Those few aficionados presumably considered Painter's poetic skill inferior to that of Jacobean poets whose publications were much more widely read and retained, however.

Throughout Painter's poem, the most frequent verse-form is that of quatrains rhymed *aabb*. The entire collection of explicated proverbs is printed in quatrains, with but two exceptions: a Biblical paraphrase to be discussed; and just before it a segment rhymed *aaabb*, which contains supposedly "this last prouerb" followed by another "almost quite forgotten" (lines 761-65). Verse-form varies somewhat before and after the collection itself, though. The preliminary matter is printed in continuous couplets, which is Chaucer's predominant choice for the *Canterbury Tales*. Printed thus are a dedication to Painter's wealthy but middle-class patron; a superficially modest address "To the Reader;" and a page in large print addressed to visual artists, which expresses Painter's opinion that a primary value of proverbs lies in their striking use of visual imagery (lines 85-96).

This preliminary matter incorporates occasional proverbs, in a proportion probably no larger than that of other Jacobean poems. A similar ratio of lines with and without proverbs occurs in the concluding passage, which likewise deviates from the quatrain as verse-form. Continuous couplets again, with breaks for sense rather than for versification, follow the narrator's statement at lines 848-49 that he will now cease listing proverbs.

Thus Painter uses the quatrain to distinguish his proverb collection from the rest of the poem. Throughout, in contrast, the meter never varies: iambic pentameter for the introductory matter and the folkloric scenario, as well as for the collection. Only the two songs differ, because English speakers would not be singing a five-beat line. The first song, lines 965-1041, resembles the rest of *Chaucer New Painted* except for its tetrameter:

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<sup>5</sup> See Spurgeon 1960:III.6.16-17, s.v. Verse.

each stanza is a quatrain rhymed *aabb*, plus a couplet as refrain. Verse-form deviates further for the second song, lines 1042-1107, such that it appears more musical. Perhaps it thus betters the first song, as the three-riddle series seems meant to cap the single riddle. The second song employs ballad meter—that is, lines alternating tetrameter and trimeter, here rhymed *abcb*—and the refrain’s longer lines repeat the meter and rhyme scheme of the stanzas. In each refrain, the feminine end-rhyme “feeding/heeding” enhances the song’s aesthetic complexity, for a listener would expect comparative simplicity in a repeated refrain.

Once upon a time my mention of complex versification, in reference to songs sung at hearthside, would have exiled “The Pleasant Life of Shepherds” (line 1042) and its companion song to the bleak and forbidding academic badlands, there to languish unapproached by scholars from either discipline of “Folklore” or “English.” Along with the two songs’ classical, Biblical, and pastoral references, sophisticated versification would formerly have disqualified each from consideration as a pure folksong generated spontaneously by the unlettered rural folk. The songs in *Chaucer New Painted* would have been shunned even more decisively by scholars of English literature. In order to gain prestige for university-level study of “high art” in the vernacular, through most of the twentieth century literary critics kept trying very hard to create methodology applicable only to items of known authorship that display aesthetic complexity on the printed page, without benefit of performance. Indeed, despite urgings from Booth (1981) and Bowden (1982), literary scholars still have barely begun to acknowledge that songs meant to be sung will require analytic techniques quite unlike those developed for silent or even spoken poetry.

Happily, though, this split between the academic disciplines of Folklore and English is both recent and reparable. Although signs of fissure may be spotted earlier, the chasm gaped wide only in the aftermath of World War II. Nazi transformation of folklore into propaganda had a negative impact on scholarship everywhere.<sup>6</sup> Academic commitment to folklore then became downright dangerous during the McCarthy Era, for many major concepts in the field had indeed emerged from Russia and Eastern Europe. Furthermore, the notion that ordinary men and women all around us are creating great art right now, orally, would have undermined literary critics’ desperate efforts to establish a vernacular canon as solid as the canon of Greco-Roman literature, then still accepted as such. Partly in justified fear of being unjustly linked to the International Communist Conspiracy, therefore, literary scholars forty years ago abruptly turned their

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<sup>6</sup> See Dow and Lixfeld 1994.

backs on certain genres of verbal art too hastily labeled mere “folklore”—including, least appropriately of all, the proverb.

In order to position *Chaucer New Painted* in relation to proverb collections of and before its time, it will be necessary to adjust our sights backward to scholarly attitudes that predate the Cold War. We must adjust our focus outward, also, toward an overview of the actual sociohistorical context for Painter’s pretended performance context, with its unique combination of oral traditional texts.

Painter, that is to say, composed his proverb collection and frame narrative at a specific time and place. As described by Wright (1933), Painter exemplifies the solid middle-class English mercantile values justified by Protestant Christianity. Protestants were to read and interpret the Bible for themselves. Accordingly, within Painter’s proverb collection the notable exception to printed quatrains occurs as a seven-couplet paraphrase of Ecclesiastes 3:1-8: “To every thing there is a season, and a time” (770-83). This passage concludes with two good reasons why there is, in contrast, no proper time for sin: sin breaks God’s law, and sin is a waste of time.

The latter theme expands after the list of proverbs gives way to retextured conversation about a recent American import, tobacco. Because this new product created social situations unaddressed by proverbial wisdom, only two proverbs occur throughout these conversational lines 848-922. (In comparison, the immediately preceding lines 773-847 feature twenty-four documentable proverbs in the same space.) Painter concludes his proverb collection by calling attention to the interface therein represented between oral and literate culture, with reference to the role of memory (848-51):

There was no more that I remember can,  
Worth writing that was spoke of any man.  
But some there was that would Tobacco take,  
Which as it seemed did one offended make.

The non-smoker lists numerous objections (857-60):

It makes them daily to dispend much time,  
And neuer haue enough of beare and wine.  
And neuer any good that I did heare  
It one man did this fiue and thirty yeare.

He who was offended continues to object primarily to the amount of time that is wasted rolling and smoking “that stinking Indian weed” (882). Since



no one else speaks up, Painter-the-narrator takes it upon himself to respond at length that any substance might be abused. In conclusion he urges tolerance and moderation. Perhaps he is echoing the tolerant attitude of Chaucer-the-narrator, who agreeably describes every Canterbury pilgrim and condemns no one (921-22):

Who good finds by it may sometimes it vse,  
And whom it hurts, from taking Ile excuse.

This 75-line conversation has its niche in the literary “tobacco wars” of the day, which were sparked partly by King James I’s detestation of secondhand smoke. The relationship of this passage to Chaucer is less obvious now than it was then. In a Jacobean-era poem now lost, but so widely circulated that at least two reply poems were composed, a speaker said to be Chaucer gave credit to tobacco for his poetic inspiration. The extant reply poem gleefully proves anachronism in such a pretense.<sup>7</sup>

At this point in *Chaucer New Painted*, a reader may imagine chairs shifting to establish smoking and non-smoking sections by the fireplace. In the poem itself the “apples and ale” challenge follows, so that the two men seated at row ends pose their riddles. The three-riddle series involves surname puns, resembling the one on Painter’s name in the poem’s title. The first riddle posed, though, is quite poignant. A coal has been smothered with ashes, says the riddler, whereas one blast from the bellows could have caused it to flame and warm many nearby (947-50):

[This] doth meane a poore mans Sonne I know,  
VWhich halfe a yeare to schoole did neuer goe,  
For had he had but learning to his wit,  
Sure many should haue profited by it.

Here and elsewhere Painter seems self-conscious, indeed psychologically defensive, about his own truncated education and thereby his want of any official relationship to proverb collections. By his time such collections, notably the *Distichs of Cato*, had been the mainstay of elementary education for many centuries. In addition, one century earlier Desiderius Erasmus had established influential goals for humanistic education at the highest levels of university, goals that decisively included the documentation of proverbs throughout Greek and Latin literature. As will be shown further, in Painter’s milieu proverb collections were firmly

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<sup>7</sup> See Spurgeon 1960:I.192, I.248, III.4.65.

associated with all levels of formal education. Yet in his poem's prefatory matter, Painter claims the right to list proverbs in spite of his own lack of opportunity for advanced study (21-24, 45-50, 59-64):

. . . I haue hope as the old prouerbe spake,  
That barking curs oft times great mastifs wake,  
That this my booke some scholler may incite,  
Ere it bee long some better for to write.

. . .  
I am well knowne no Scholler for to be,  
Therefore marke well what I shall say to thee,  
A foot-man may more easilier goe a mile,  
Then a lame cripple may ouer a stile,  
A Scholler might a thing of farre more worth,  
With much lesse labour very well set forth.

. . .  
For had I wit and learning as haue many,  
I would as bountifull haue been as any,  
Though learning euer did prohibit me,  
One of her Schollars in her schoole to bee.  
Yet common reason doth to mee declare,  
All they that worke, not master builders are.

The author's pose of humility is here just a pose, for he has openly defied social propriety by making and publishing a proverb collection. After apologizing for usurpation of a major role of the official culture, Painter ends "To the Reader" by apologizing for his own incompetence as a poet. Nonetheless he proudly works his full name into the very text of the poem, as well as into its title, at a time when many works carried the author's initials only or no credit (83-84):

Though Poetry my lines may seeme to shame,  
Yet truly *William Painter* is my name.

This last apology represents both a convention in seventeenth-century literature and an adaptation from the protests of Chaucer-the-narrator (*SirT* 707-9, 926-28). It is, in addition, accurate. No one would claim poetic genius for William Painter, then or now. There is no chance whatsoever that yet another dead white male is poised to enter the canon of English literature. Painter's poetry is worthwhile insofar as it establishes a performance context for traditional oral genres, along with an ethnographic context for Chaucer's reception during the third decade of the seventeenth century in London, all presented by someone who regrets the inaccessibility

of advanced education yet who proclaims his personal ability to contribute to scholarship in one of its most basic formats: the proverb collection.

How is it that a format so essential throughout European intellectual history, up until the twentieth century, has been so thoroughly eliminated from scholars' reconstructions of earlier literary contexts? At the New Chaucer Society meeting in 1992, for example, a panel gravely discussed the flimsy frame narrative of *Tale of Melibeus* for two full hours without so much as uttering the word "proverb." Rather than detour into further analysis of academia during the Cold War, I will here posit one apolitical reason for scholarly bypass: the profusion of terms for the same sort of item, across many centuries and many social contexts. Just during the five centuries prior to ours, active bearers of the genre have given the memorable sentence such labels as adage, aphorism, apothegm, axiom, balet, byword, commonplace, dictum, gnome, lesson, maxim, old text, old thing, parable, paroemia, platitude, precept, proverb, saw, saying, sentence, sententia, sententious remark, term, and truism, not to mention lists that long for languages other than English. Similarly, memorable sentences were collected into *summae*, *florilegia*, anthologies, bees, bouquets, commonplace books, compilations, copybooks, courtesy books, and so on. Twentieth-century attempts to claim consistent usage flounder and fail justly, for there was none.

By the early seventeenth century Chaucer's corpus of work, in spite of its vernacular language, had been elevated to intellectual respectability by serving as yet another form of proverb collection. Painter would have known Thomas Speght's second edition of Chaucer, printed in 1602. Emulating many of the manuscripts, it became the first printed edition to feature "Sentences and Prouerbes noted." Although scribes had commonly added manuscript marginalia with Latin versions of Chaucer's Middle English proverbs, the editor in 1602 does not attempt analogues. Speght simply prints little hands in the margins, pointing to sentences that he or his sources regard as memorable. Subsequent readers were to continue to experience Chaucer's text with its proverbs foregrounded: by asterisks in the 1687 Speght edition, then by italics in the 1721 Urry edition, and thereafter less prominently in notes.<sup>8</sup>

In 1598, Speght's first edition had become the earliest Chaucer publication to provide scholarly apparatus: the first-ever glossary, plot summaries, explanatory notes, and so on. At the end, after a list of errata

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<sup>8</sup> For general information on the Speght and Urry editions, see Hammond 1933:122-30 and Ruggiers 1984:71-115. For details it is necessary to consult physically existing copies of the books themselves.

that he intends to correct for the next printing, Speght comments that “Sentences also, which are many and excellent in this Poet, might have ben noted in the margent with some marke, which now must be left to the research of the Reader.” Along with other kinds of evidence, this comment by Speght shows that sixteenth-century readers normally sought proverbial wisdom within Chaucer’s works. Their expectations form a continuum with those of fifteenth-century scribes, as mentioned, and likewise with those of John Lydgate, who praises his mentor’s “many proverbe divers and unkouth,” and William Caxton, who praises the author’s “short quyck and hye sentences” (Spurgeon 1960:I.28, I.62).

Caxton thus heralds his edition of *Canterbury Tales*, one of the first four books printed in England. Of the three others, two were straightforward proverb collections. During that first year, 1477, Caxton printed Earl Rivers’ translation from French of the *Proverbes Morales* by Christine de Pizan; she had made this compilation for her son, modeling it on the *Distichs of Cato* and also on some among the voluminous works of the Spanish philosopher Ramon Llull. Another of Caxton’s first four books was *The Dicts and Sayings of the Philosophers*, which had been compiled from Greek sources in eleventh-century Damascus by Abû al-Wâfa Mubashshir ibn Fatik. It was translated from Arabic into Spanish in the early thirteenth century, then into Latin in the late thirteenth, French in the late fourteenth, and eventually into English by many translators including Earl Rivers for Caxton.

In addition to four folio books, during 1477 Caxton published several quarto pamphlets. One was a Latin text and English paraphrase of the *Distichs of Cato*, which by then had served for thirteen centuries in elementary Latin education throughout Western Europe. Since at least the second century C.E. younger students had been memorizing its two- and three-word sentences, older students its two-line distichs offering succinctly worded advice. In incalculable multitudes of manuscripts and printed editions, varying widely in scope, with and without vernacular translations, the *Distichs of Cato* remained a staple of basic education well into the eighteenth century.<sup>9</sup>

Medievalists realize that Chaucer’s “Cato” refers to this collection, rather than to either historical Roman whose name was attached to it (Hazelton 1960). In contrast, to my knowledge no Dante scholar has wondered whether Cato in the *Divine Comedy*—Cato, the one and only pagan permitted to dwell in Purgatory—might represent the ahistorical “author” of the ubiquitous *Distichs*. The figure in Dante’s poem is Cato the

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<sup>9</sup> See Duff and Duff 1968:585-89.

Younger, whereas the *Distichs* were commonly attributed to Cato the Elder (according to Habenicht 1963:5). Would this precise distinction have held fast in Dante's precise sociohistorical and educational context? I pose that question to Dante specialists, in hopes that one *locus obscurus* in the *Divine Comedy* may be penetrated by proverbial light.

Not long after England's first printing of the *Distichs of Cato*, by Caxton, Erasmus himself prepared the first scholarly edition of it (1514). Erasmus' massive influence made central to Renaissance humanism the documentation of and commentary upon proverbs in Greek and Latin literature. The first book by Erasmus to be printed was *Adagiorum Collecteana* (1500, expanded as *Adagiorum Chiliades*). In it Erasmus provides a workable definition—"A proverb is a saying in popular use, remarkable for some shrewd and novel turn"—and then gives references and commentary for 4151 proverbs in the largest edition, including ones as familiar today as "Posterioribus melioribus [Better luck next time]," which he locates in Plautus, Plato, Terence, Aristotle, Euripides, and three places in Cicero's works.<sup>10</sup> This constantly growing collection saw 48 editions and reprints before the author's death in 1536, 37 more by 1670, and in total at least 88 epitomes and adaptations. In England, besides many versions of the Latin, vernacular translations of Erasmus' *Adagia* were made by Richard Taverner, Bartholomew Robertson, and others.

Erasmian scholarship soon trickled down to the lower schools. By Painter's day generations of boys had been made to translate Latin proverbs into Greek, translate Greek proverbs into Latin, and compose prose and verse essays upon proverbs assigned. Inevitably, this being England, a satiric counterpart arose: wit-laden commentaries upon vernacular proverbs, showing each one to be either wrong or else applicable to an authority figure who ought to know better. After composing *A Dialogue of Proverbs*, John Heywood saw a potential for fusion of that schoolboy game with a more respectably witty genre, the epigram. He thereupon produced *Two hundred Epigrammes upon two hundred prouerbes* (1555, later expanded). Other authors with access to print followed suit, such as John Davies of Hereford in *The Scourge of Folly* (1611?).

Solemn English writers embraced vernacular proverbs as enthusiastically as did the satirists. In William Baldwin's *Treatise of Morall Philosophie* the section of "Proverbes and Adages" helped generate a runaway bestseller, second only to the Bible in the number of editions published between 1547 and 1651. Proverbs were essential also to the practical education of merchants and other travellers abroad. Via lists of

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<sup>10</sup> Phillips 1982:4, 267. On Erasmus see Appelt 1942 and Phillips 1964.

parallel proverbs meant to be memorized, foreign-language phrasebooks instilled in the learner an idiomatic feel for the spoken tongue. To mention just one more among endless examples, the predominantly religious poet George Herbert left for posthumous publication a list of 1010 “Outlandish Proverbs” (1640). Many are indeed foreign (“outlandish”) proverbs translated, while others seem to be of Herbert’s own devising; some remain as familiar as #524, “Living well is the best revenge.”<sup>11</sup>

Proverbs permeated William Painter’s milieu, that is, in *belles lettres* as well as in formal education at every level. The author’s own personality and interests, not some social dictate, motivated him toward a serious rather than a satiric collection of proverbs. Assuredly, too, there was no social dictate that he differentiate traditional vernacular proverbs from his own comments on and paraphrases of them. Painter’s poetic lines always rhyme, sometimes alliterate, and often express general truths as do proverbs. Indeed, he does his level best to make his own thoughts sound proverbial. How then can we determine which lines actually restate proverbs from oral tradition at his time?

Scholarship on any early proverb collection encounters some degree of this same problem. Suppose that a memorable sentence first occurs in *A Dialogue of Proverbs*. How do we know whether Heywood recorded what he had heard, on the one hand, or instead invented a succinct sentence that he thought worthy of so honored a label as “proverb,” which then fulfilled his hopes by passing into oral tradition?<sup>12</sup> Entry of an author’s own words into oral tradition, complete with the variants that characterize folklore, surely does occur. My Swedish grandmother was not misquoting *Hamlet* I.iv.90 when she used to say, “There’s something rotten in Denmark, Switzerland.” Both Heywood and Shakespeare were, however, popular and influential. Because Painter was neither, his case is simpler. It is not a viable possibility than an author so obscure as Painter—unmentioned by any contemporary—created a proverb from scratch and launched it into future circulation. For the Appendix, therefore, I document all proverbs recorded elsewhere, even if those other occurrences postdate 1623.

Two documentation problems remain, both to be noted in the Introduction to the Appendix. In Painter’s poem about a dozen passages,

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<sup>11</sup> For more on proverb collections at and near Painter’s time, see Charlton 1965:89-130, 227-52, and *passim*; Crane 1986; and Wright 1935:147-53, 339-72, and *passim*. On the most prolific collector and publisher of parallel proverbs for Elizabethan travellers, see Yates 1968.

<sup>12</sup> See Habenicht 1963:18.

which I signal with question marks, to me sound absolutely proverbial; however, they lack recorded analogues. One example has already been quoted (47-48):

A foot-man may more easilier goe a mile,  
Then a lame cripple may ouer a stile.

Unlikely as it seems that Painter himself invented this succinct image, reference materials offer no proof to the contrary.

A second problem of documentation is well exemplified by the last extant line of the poem, with which Painter-the-narrator augments his defense of womankind (1153): “A wild wench may a good wife make one day.” In proverbial lore ragged colts become good horses, and good men are made from unhappy, ill, or shrewd boys.<sup>13</sup> Did Painter make an authorial decision to transform the species and/or gender toward his own artistic ends? Or was the “wild wench” itself an oral commonplace that nobody else happened to write down? After making editorial judgments that sometimes approached agonizing, I have documented each such unrecorded analogue with the sign ~ (for “approximately”) plus the code for some recorded proverb that either makes the same point using a different poetic image, as does the “wild wench” instance, or else makes a different point using the same image. An example of the latter occurs in lines 143-44:

Though *Salomon* were wise, and *Sampson* strong,  
They neither could their yeares one day prolong.

Whether Painter has reworded a proverb or just happens to be its only recorder, this sentence sounds at least as traditional as does its closest analogue S86: “Sampson was a strong man and Solomon was a wise man but neither of them both could pay money before they had it.”

Besides these three categories—documentable proverbs, mystery proverbs lacking analogues, and approximately analogous proverbs—Painter’s collection incorporates many lines and couplets that somewhat resemble proverbs but, to my editorial ear, sound too abstract to have circulated orally. Another editorial ear may hear otherwise. One example occurs as lines 413-14, which I understand to be Painter’s explication of the documentable proverb quoted immediately afterward:

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<sup>13</sup> Codes C522 and B580 in Tilley 1984, hereafter understood.

Some men will vainly spend more at one meale  
 Then would suffice for two by a great deale.  
 Yet the old Prouerb saith, Who wealth will win,  
 Must euer at the tables end begin.

Indeed, except for the frequent lines stating that a proverb will now be stated, just about any authorial comment or paraphrase might conceivably have been an abnormally abstract proverb that only Painter ever wrote down. However, at some point one must cease documenting that which is conceivable but improbable. Everything has an end and a pudding has two (E121). I have stopped with 301 documented proverbs and 14 mystery proverbs.

Among the 301 proverbs only four are duplicates. Variants occur of D100 at lines 148 and 1098, of C831 at lines 342 and 992, and of S585 at lines 805 and 1012. In each of these three cases the first variant occurs in the proverb collection itself, the second within one of the songs. As the fourth instance, in lines 745-56, Painter directly states his intention to record two variants of the same proverb, S267. In another passage, lines 493-96, Painter provides what he considers the “same prouerb” as the one just told; however, it is one that uses a different poetic image to give the same advice (C144, N319).

Elsewhere also Painter organizes his collection to highlight his awareness of relationships among proverbs. Sometimes he pairs two that offer opposite viewpoints on the same situation, as in lines 578-80 (B580, T232). At other points he juxtaposes proverbs of different import that happen to share a poetic image, such as the “foot” in lines 662-64 (F572, O103). Quite often he groups proverbs according to topic advised upon: marriage, or child-rearing, or friendship, or merchandising, or (in lines 407-50) eating. Nowadays we might wish for subtitles, or at least better-marked entrances and exits to these groupings. It is therefore important to realize that Painter is, again, unique or almost unique in imposing so much order on a proverb collection. The norm was to list at random, with occasional clusters free-associating on (usually) a visual image. Such a dearth of organizational principles appears in the collection of Painter’s contemporary George Herbert, for example, who was assuredly a superior poet *qua* poet, as well as in the long-established models by “Cato” and Erasmus.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> As a convenient set of examples, Ong 1977:166-81 describes three different formats for three proverb collections by two sixteenth-century scholars. Proverb collections, which now are library reference books, have by no means settled into one accepted format. Walther 1963-86 alphabetizes by the first substantive word in one



Presumably Painter might have rechanneled his enthusiasm, and his tendency toward innovative organization, into business ventures. Yet he never became rich or successful enough to warrant mention in London city records. If the first riddle posed is as self-referential as it seems, it is truly a tragic waste that this “poore mans Sonne” (947) was denied the education that would have earned him even a schoolmaster’s post.

Would Painter have had enough basic education and enough free time to comprehend fully the Middle English works of the author whose name he invokes in his title? Speght’s 1602 edition does supply a glossary and other aids; and its black-letter typeface, while appearing old-fashioned at the time, did not yet pose a barrier to readers. Among the connections to Chaucer so far suggested, however, none necessitates Painter’s having read very much Middle English at all. It may be that he read only the *General Prologue* and, guided by Speght’s headings in roman typeface, “The Rime of Sir Topas . . . purposely vttered by Chaucer . . . as though he himselfe were not the authour, but only the reporter of the rest,” along with “Chaucers Tale” of Melibeus. In the latter’s multitude of pointing hands Painter found reinforcement for his impression that Chaucer had a particular interest in proverbs. Furthermore, even if he did not read much past the opening action of *Tale of Melibeus*, Painter would have recognized it as a frame-narrative proverb collection somewhat resembling John Heywood’s, embedded within the better-known frame narrative of the *Canterbury Tales*.

Painter would not have had to read carefully all of Chaucer’s tales and tale links in order to acquire the sense of folkloric contest that he emulates. In the *General Prologue* the Host proposes the tale-telling competition that was familiar within Painter’s milieu, both specifically and in a more general sense. For several centuries beginning ca. 1550, “a Canterbury tale” occurs as a generic term somewhat resembling “folktale.” A Canterbury tale was wholly fictional, therefore sometimes decried, and was normally told in some kind of structured but unofficial social situation.

Besides knowing already about the frame narrative for the *Canterbury Tales*, Painter would have considered Chaucer’s work to be a

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instance of a proverb, a problematic system with regard to variants. *ODEP* 1970 is alphabetical according to key word, with cross-references to near-synonyms and to proverbs with that word in a non-key position. American scholars, whether in rivalry or isolation, set up two conflicting classification systems in which each proverb is assigned a letter (the initial of its first substantive word) plus a number. As an example, both Tilley 1984 (whose system Dent adopts) and Whiting 1968 consider “sight” the key term in “Out of sight, out of mind”; but its code is S438 in Tilley and S307 in Whiting.

respectable, well established, vernacular proverb collection with the relevant items clearly marked. How many of them did Painter incorporate into his own collection? Marginal hands in Speght's edition point out 707 proverbs in the *Canterbury Tales* alone: 194 in *Tale of Melibeus*, 132 in the *Parson's Tale*, and 381 in the versified tales put together.

To document parallel proverbs, I had to keep *Chaucer New Painted* entire in my memory while scanning page after page of Speght's black-letter type. The number of Chaucerian proverbs reused by Painter may well be approximate, therefore, not exact. The number seems nonetheless significant, for the number is one. "All is not gold that glitters" (A146) occurs at line 708 of *Chaucer New Painted*, and at what is now line 962 of the unconvincing *Canon's Yeoman's Tale*. Rather than borrowing any of Chaucer's proverbs, it seems that Painter made just one slip-up in his plan to accomplish quite the opposite: to make a collection of vernacular proverbs that is mutually exclusive of Chaucer's precedent-setting work. Mutually exclusive, and thereby unique.

"To Generalize is to be an Idiot."<sup>15</sup> Scrawled in a book margin by William Blake, this proverb-like sentence deserves wider circulation among literary theorists prone to brush aside calls for textual evidence to support their abstract musings. Blake's pointed comment can here apply to analysis of the five other frame-narrative proverb collections in English. They resemble *Chaucer New Painted* principally in that each is unique in its own way. The six literary items display widely divergent formats, tones, apparent intentions, and effects upon real or implied readers. Blake's piece is intensely Blakean, moreover, and Swift's is quintessentially Swiftian. By no means do the six items exemplify diachronic development of a specialized genre. Probably the three eighteenth-century authors had some knowledge of the prototypes by Chaucer and Heywood; perhaps they even encountered *Chaucer New Painted*. Whether or not any given author knew any given predecessor, though, each was creating independently.

For Blake the effect of independent creation is magnified. In nearly all of his works, certainly including *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (ca. 1793), Blake intentionally defies social and generic expectations. His "Proverbs of Hell" constitute a central section of this early work in illuminated printing, in which Blake intends his audience to experience verbal and visual art unified, inseparable, unapproachable by any mind that gives credence to Reason. For example, the Proverb of Hell "One thought . fills immensity" contains a non-syntactic period that functions as a sort of

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<sup>15</sup> Blake's annotation to *The Works of Sir Joshua Reynolds* (1798), in Erdman 1982:641.

vortex for combined verbal/visual meaning. An entire seascape emerges through, as it were, that tiny black spot: after the words cease, an ocean scene with cliffs and ships completes the line visually.<sup>16</sup>

In addition to seventy decisively non-traditional proverbs listed, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* includes both poetry and prose (Erdman 1982:33-45). It thereby differs from Blake's other works in illuminated printing, which are poetry. Although unclassifiable even within Blake's own corpus, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* does function as a frame narrative. After the opening poem entitled "The Argument" (that is, the plot summary), a first-person narrator hears "The voice of the Devil" and then describes a series of Memorable Fancies, culminating in "A Song of Liberty" with its proverb-like ending, "For every thing that lives is Holy" (Erdman 1982:45). No Blake specialist has yet placed "Proverbs of Hell" in the context of late-eighteenth-century educational practices that sought to impose Reason upon innocent minds.<sup>17</sup> Blake meant to hoist that system with its own petard—namely, with the proverb collection.

Jonathan Swift was being equally subversive, but with quite a different tone and target, in his *Complete Collection of Genteel and Ingenious Conversation* (1738). As frame for this proverb collection he employs a genre readily identifiable, the play. In order to mock the empty lives of upper-class chatterers, Swift as "Simon Wagstaff, Esq." does a tongue-in-cheek "Introduction to the following Treatise," which glorifies Colley Cibber and other allegedly brilliant conversationalists. "The Argument" to the play carefully outlines its banal action: five gentlemen and three ladies meet in a fashionable park, take tea, stay to dinner, play cards, and then "all take leave, and go Home" (Davis and Landau 1973:130). Their complete conversation consists of clichés, stale witticisms, and about 500 documentable proverbs (Jarrell 1956). Swift was primarily satirizing high society, with no particular intent to harm the proverb collection as a genre. However, it may be that this comparatively obscure work reached enough Swift devotees that it began to undermine the esteem normally accorded to vernacular proverb collections.

Any such potential denigration of the genre was stolidly ignored by Benjamin Franklin. By the publication date of Swift's *Complete Collection*, Franklin was already generating long lists of proverbs for *Poor Richard's Almanack*, culminating in *The Way to Wealth* (1758). Within a shorter, more straightforward frame narrative than any of the other English-

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<sup>16</sup> See Erdman 1974:105.

<sup>17</sup> See Lansverk 1994.

language examples, the narrator “Richard Saunders” relates that “I stopt my Horse lately where a great Number of People were collected,” all complaining about taxes. They ask advice of Father Abraham, who orates with plentiful proverbs that he periodically credits to Poor Richard. The people listen, approve, and go right back to wasting money as soon as the market opens. Only the narrator acts upon the advice, noting that nine-tenths of the proverbs were not his own “but rather the *Gleanings* I had made of the Sense of all Ages and Nations” (Jorgenson and Mott 1962:281, 289).

As was not possible for a learning-deprived William Painter, Ben Franklin seized the opportunity to fan his own spark so as to warm many others. Seven years before publishing *The Way to Wealth*, Franklin had founded the academy that became the University of Pennsylvania. He defied educational propriety by insisting on a clause in the charter to stipulate that English be taught there as an academic discipline (see Bowden 1989). A century and a half would pass before English and other “modern languages” became acceptable fields in college curricula and, tentatively, scholarly research. At first, professors trained in Classics but teaching Modern Languages set out to document proverbs in vernacular literature, following Erasmian footsteps across a new field.<sup>18</sup> As printed schoolbooks grew cheaper and cheaper, though, proverb collections finally dropped out of lower-school curricula. Rote memorization and recitation of well-worded, idiomatic sentences lost favor even in foreign-language classes. Then, abruptly, circumspect scholars slapped the label “folklore” onto the genre “proverb” in spite of its central role in formal, official religion and education throughout human history.

Onward now struggles the hardy band of folklorists, burdened with genres ejected from the literary canon during the McCarthy Era. Yet picture a world in which scholars from other fields no longer cringe and cover their ears but instead, boldly, join up. Picture academic disciplines striding together past the dregs of Post-Post-Modernism, striding toward the reunification of what has so recently split asunder: the reunification in proverbs of canonical literature and folklore, of what is written and oral, of that imagined and performed, of visual and aural, of concrete and general, of official and unofficial, of cultural and personal, of education and entertainment, of tradition and innovation, of past and present. A mere

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<sup>18</sup> Concrete results include the indexes by Dent (1981, 1984), Tilley (1984), and Whiting (1968, 1989); the bibliographies by Mieder (1977, 1978, 1982); work by many scholars including Finnegan (1981), Rothstein (1968), and Taylor (1985); and three editions of the *Oxford Dictionary of English Proverbs*.

century or so has passed since proverbs were nudged out of their central role in scholarship at all levels. And hey, you know what they say. What goes around, comes around. And if you can't get on, get off.

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**Appendix:**  
**Annotated Text of**  
*Chaucer New Painted (1623),*  
**by William Painter**

*Introduction*

The Huntington Library in San Marino, California owns the only surviving copy of this 56-page octavo, designated as #RB82492. An indeterminate number of pages is missing from beginning and end, including the title page. The internal title before line 97, however, along with the author's self-promotion at line 84 and the running heads throughout ("CHAVCER *new painted*"), allows identification of this item as one licensed in the Stationers' Register on 14 May 1623.

To the poem as printed in 1623, I have added line numbers, glosses on obsolete words (marked °), and documentation for its proverbs (in brackets). I use the classification system developed by Tilley (1984) and adopted by Dent (1981, 1984.) The wider-ranging *ODEP* (1970) has been essential for searching and cross-checking, but *ODEP*'s full quotations would not have fit into margins as the Tilley/Dent code numbers do. For lines 58 and 1017, the marginal allusions are to the Bible rather than to any proverb separately documented.

Bracketed codes in the margin are sometimes preceded by "~," as the mathematical symbol for "approximately." In these borderline cases either a similar poetic image makes a different point or else a different abstraction or image makes a point similar to the proverb cited as an approximate analogue. For reasons explained in the article, it is sometimes difficult to determine whether Painter is inventing lines that sound proverbial or, instead, quoting a proverb variant known to him but not recorded elsewhere.

Besides these approximations marked "~," several lines are followed by bracketed question marks.<sup>19</sup> These indicate dead-ends reached after extensive searching under all imaginable variants in syntax and wording. Each set of lines sounds utterly proverbial, that is, yet utterly lacks recorded analogues. I welcome input on these mystery proverbs and on all other aspects of documentation.

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<sup>19</sup> Lines 48, 128, 204, 251, 280, 308, 358, 564, 598, 692, 702, 732, 742, and 809.

To the right Worshipfull, Sir *Paul Pinder*,  
 Knight, and late Lord Embassadour  
*At Constantinople, that Cittie so renown'd*  
*Whose like on earth is scarcely to be found,*  
*William Painter* wisheth all increase of grace, 5  
 In this life, and in heauen a Mansion place.  
*Rlight worshipfull Sir, for many fauours shown*  
*To me, that neuer yet deserued One.*  
*Some from your selfe: your brother many Moe:*  
*Your Sister, and their Children also.* 10  
*And though I no way can requite the same,*  
*If I forget them should, I were to blame;*  
*For meere humanity all men incite,*  
*Vnto their power all kindnesse to requite.*  
*I haue of late some little labour tooke,* 15  
*The English prouerbs to write in a booke;*  
*Though rudely, yet the best that I could doe,*  
*And to your Worship Dedicate it to:*  
*Yet certainly I thereby shall declare,*  
*The loue which I doe vnto learning beare;* 20  
*And I haue hope as the old prouerbe spake,*  
*That barking curs oft times great mastifs wake,* [C919]  
*That this my booke some scholler may incite,*  
*Ere it bee long some better for to write.*  
*If this I shall by any see amended,* 25  
*I shall bee pleased and no whit offended.*  
*If you vouchsafe but pleased herewithall,*  
*I double paid account my labour shall,*  
*If I could but in a full measure show,*  
*The loue and seruice which to you I owe,* 30  
*Although it came by labour and much paine,*  
*Or with some losse, I should account it gaine.*  
*But as the prouerbe saith, Few words suffice,*  
*When they are spoke to those men that be wise:* [W781]  
*So I had rather too abruptly end,* 35  
*Then with long protestations to offend.*  
*I thus conclude, beseeching mighty Ioue,*  
*Hourely to send you blessings from aboue.*  
*Your Worships Orator, wholly deuoted,*  
*Till death in sunder cut the vitall threed.* [T249] 40

W. P.

## TO THE READER.

**G**ood courteous Reader, be thou young or old,  
 Here giue me leaue to make a little bold,

*To shew to thee my want of learning here,  
 Which after will in euery verse appeare,* 45  
*I am well knowne no Scholler for to be,  
 Therefore marke well what I shall say to thee,  
 A foot-man may more easilier goe a mile,  
 Then a lame cripple may ouer a stile,* [?]  
*A Scholler might a thing of farre more worth,  
 With much lesse labour very well set forth,* 50  
*For had this by a Scholler beene set forth,  
 It surely would haue beene of lesser worth,  
 For he that wealthy is must liberally  
 Contribute to the poores necessity.  
 I seeing those that wealthy were and rich,* 55  
*Into the treasury did cast in much,  
 I my one mite, like to the widow poore,  
 Likewise cast in euen all I had in store,* [Mark 12.42-44]  
*For had I wit and learning as haue many,  
 I would as bountifull haue been as any,* 60  
*Though learning euer did prohibit me,  
 One of her Schollars in her schoole to bee.  
 Yet common reason doth to mee declare,  
 All they that worke, not master builders are,* [M107]  
*For some must carry water and some stones,* 65  
*And some fill vp the midst with shells and bones:  
 And some must carry mortar, and some other lime,  
 And some must tend the tooles all dinner time,  
 And in the euening safely them vp lay,  
 That in the morning nought bee wanting may.* 70  
*If I accounted like the worst of these  
 Shall bee, it will mee both content and please:  
 And I to thee will further promise make,  
 To quit thy loue some greater paines Ile take:  
 I will omit no opportunity,* 75  
*Vntill some better shall bee made mee by,  
 That what is wanting both in art and skill,  
 May bee supplide in kindnesse and good will:  
 What's here defectiue Ile no way defend it,  
 But hee that can Ile giue free leaue to mend it:* 80  
*I hast till I the matter shall you tell,  
 And for this time thrice heartily farewell.  
 Though Poetry my lines may seeme to shame,  
 Yet truly William Painter is my name.*

**YOu** curious Painters 85  
     and you Limmers all,  
 From Temple-barre  
     along to Charing-crosse,

That your gay pictures  
     hang out on the wall, 90  
 Goe take them downe,  
     for they are all but drosse:  
 For here are liuely  
     pictures to behold,  
 More worth then those 95  
     that guilded are with gold.

**CHAVCER***new Painted.*

BY

WILLIAM PAINTER.

IN Christmas time I needs abroad would walke,  
 Desirous for to heare some merry talke:  
 It was my chance to meet a merry Crew,  
 And what their talke was I will heare tell you. 100

Some tales and iests they had which Ile omit,  
 Because they nothing to my purpose fit:  
 But all the ancient Prouerbs that I well  
 Remember, I will truly to you tell.

Soone ripe soone rotten, the proverb doth say: [R133] 105  
 And seldome seen, soone be forgotten may: [S208]  
 Yet what in youth a man hath most in °vre, °use  
 The same to keepe till death hee shall bee sure. [Y42]

Therefore bend thou the Plant whilst it is young,  
 Lest it in time doe wax for thee too strong; [T632] 110  
 For if it once vnto a tree doth growe,  
 Thou maist it breake before thou shalt it bowe. [B636]

Subjects and seruants neuer should withstand,  
 But gladly doe what they haue in command:  
 For why? the Prouerbe saith: Better or worse, 115  
 Bee alwaies rulde by them that beare the purse. [P646]

In high affaires that doth surmount thy state,  
 See that thou meddle not in any rate:  
 For hee shall scarce himselfe from danger keepe,  
 That doth awake a Lyon out of sleepe. [L317] 120

Against thy King and Countrey plot none ill,  
 For by some meanes it knowne be surely will;  
 Examples hereof every day appeares:  
 Besides that, little Pitchers all haue eares. [P363]

Thinke twise, then speak, the old Prouerbe doth say, [T219, T224] 125  
 Yet Fooles their bolts will quickly shoot away: [F515]  
 And one of these two euills comes thereby,  
 Their purse must pay for't; or say, tongue thou lye. [?]

And more at large the prouerbe this expresse,  
 Which saith, That man which in his drunkennesse 130  
 Doth kill a man, most commonly we see,  
 When hee is sober, for it hang'd shall bee. [M175]

Looke ere thou leape, the old prouerbe doth say; [L429]  
 For otherwise thou fall in the ditch may:  
 Yea, you shall neuer any boulder finde 135  
 To bee, then is old Byard that is blinde. [B112]

'Tis dangerous to meddle with edg'd tooles: [J45]  
 The prouerbe saith: therfore take heed when fooles  
 Set stooles, that you thereat breake not your shins, [F543]  
 For sure delay oft times great danger brings. 140

The old prouerbe thus, long agoe did say:  
 That time and tide for no man will not stay. [T323]  
 Though *Salomon* were wise, and *Sampson* strong,  
 They neither could their yeares one day prolong. [~S86]

Looke to the end before that thou begin, [E128] 145  
 What thou thereby maist either lose or winne,  
 For hast makes wast, the old prouerbe doth say: [H189]  
 And praise at night the fairenesse of the day. [D100]

Hee that a Theefe doth from the gallowes saue,  
 By him some mischiefe shall be sure to haue: [T109] 150  
 But I thinke none that any danger feares,  
 Will goe and take a madde Dogge by the eares. [W603]

Wee see it daily, that both great and small,  
 Will euer thrust the weakest to the wall: [W185]  
 And this by prooffe to speake I dare be bould, 155  
 That hee that worst may shall the candle hold. [C40]

Some euer will pinch on the Parsons side, [P67]  
 And cut a large thong off their neighbours hide [T229]

And where the Stile is troden and made low,  
There eury one will soonest ouer goe. [H364] 160

If some men might but in authority be,  
Them cruell Tyrants euer you should see:  
But God, to keepe poore silly beasts from harmes,  
Doth send a curst Cow euermore short hornes. [G217]

There is one prouerbe that doth thus alledge, 165  
Some steal may better then some looke o're th'hedg: [H692]  
For lawes may bee to Spiders webs compar'd,  
Which Great flies breake, and small ones be insnar'd [L116]

Goe not to law vnlesse thy cause be right,  
Especially against a man of might, 170  
For why? the prouerbe saith, As one's befrended,  
Hee shall bee sure to haue his Action ended. [M63]

Some men will euer ready haue at hand,  
An *Oliuer* for any other mans *Rowland*. [R195]  
And hee that such men sue shall at the law, 175  
May in the end perhaps to get a straw. [L99]

Some e're their Chickens hatch be, count them will. [C292]  
To such the prouerbe plainely saith vntill,  
They that the reckoning make without their host,  
Most commonly their labour proueth lost. [H726] 180

But fare and soft doth euer furthest goe, [S601]  
And a slow fire maketh sweet mault also: [F280]  
And hee that leaps e're hee the stile comes at,  
A broken shin surely hath often gat. [S856]

The shortest horse you soonest curry may. [H691] 185  
Thus the old prouerbe long agoe did say.  
And they that faine would liue at peace and rest,  
Must heare and see and alwaies say the best. [P140]

Let none reioyce in others griefe and paine:  
For why? the prouerbe telleth to vs plaine: 190  
Hee that his neighbours house on fire doth see,  
Should of the sparkes take heed and carefull bee. [N116]

By others losse who seeketh his owne gaine, [M337]  
And stormes, by any for to bee gainsaine,  
The prouerbe telleth vnto all such plaine, 195  
A worme that's troad on sure will turne againe. [W909]

Hee that doth glory in his strength and might,  
 That take no wrong will, nor will doe no right,  
 That prouerbe fits, which saith, the Pitcher long  
 Had to the wel, at length comes broken home. [P501] 200

Some say, Hang sorrow, care will kill a Cat, [C84, C85]  
 And surely euery Rogue hath learned that,  
 For they will sweare, e're they will carry coales, [C464]  
 Their feet shall fill vp eight of the nine holes. [?]

Some say, A bad scuse better then none is: [E214] 205  
 But I an honest man once heard, say this:  
 Finde Hares at any time that no °Muces haue, °gap in hedge (as escape route)  
 And Knanes no scuses, and Ile be a knaue. [H156]

And one thing more Ile tell you now in briefe,  
 That Fish is said to find but small reliefe, 210  
 Which to auoide a danger doe desire,  
 Leape forth the pan and fall into the fire. [F784]

The old prouerbe did long agoe say this:  
 That stopage no time any good law is: [~S901]  
 And further also the same prouerbe spake, 215  
 That euen reckoning alwaies long friends make. [R54]

Harm watch harm catch, the old prouerbe doth say, [H167]  
 And that to passe comes almost euery day:  
 For hee that striketh with the sword wee see,  
 Shall with the scabbard stricken againe bee. [S1047] 220

When the Steed's stoln, they'll lock the stable door,  
 That scarce would euer put it too before: [S838]  
 And Faulknors often say, had I but °wist, °known  
 I would haue kept my hauke still on my fist. [P453]

There is a saying, Happy is that man, 225  
 By others harmes that take a warning can: [M612]  
 And to this purpose hath the prouerbe said,  
 The burned child of fire is afraid. [C297]

Fair words the prouerbe saith makes fooles too faine [W794]  
 And further saith, which I thinke is certaine, 230  
 It is farre better for to haue one Thrush  
 In hand, then two that sitteth in the bush. [B363]

For any kindnesse thou hast done thy friend,  
 Vpbraid him not although hee thee offend:

For why? the prouerbe saith, It is not fit, 235  
To giue one roast, and beat him with the spit. [M147]

The greatest wonder, the old prouerbe saies,  
Did neuer yet endure aboue nine dayes; [W728]  
I would that wrath and enuy were like it,  
That men in ten dayes could them quite forget. 240

But wrath and enuy now is growne so rife,  
It dwell in house will with a man and wife:  
And one said, That doth deadliest hatred proue,  
That commeth from the quenched coales of loue. [H210]

One that offended was I did heare say, 245  
Th'offender in his *Pater noster* may  
Perhaps to come; but did protest indeed,  
That hee should neuer come into his *Creed*. [P96]

Ile tell you what I heard say of malice,  
That hee a very good Informer is, 250  
But no way fitting for to make a Iudge. [?]  
Whereat I °trowe he did no little grudge. °believe

Some will be angry ere they haue a touch,  
Yet the old Prouerb plainly teacheth such,  
Hee that is angry when none offends, 255  
Againe must pleased be without amends. [C200]

And some doe thinke how euer he offends,  
If he doe pardon craue he makes amends:  
But the old Prouerb sayes it small relieue,  
To breake ones head, and then a plaister giue. [H269] 260

When for offences any sorrowfull be,  
Adde not a torment to a misery,  
But comfort yeeld the penitent and humble,  
For men say that's a good horse that nere did stumble. [H670]

The old Prouerb this long agoe did tell, 265  
To halt before a cripple tis not well: [H60]  
For those that vse to mocke we dayly see,  
Shall for their mocking °flowted againe be. °insulted

A Lyar is counted in a common-wealth,  
Worse then a thiefe that liueth vpon stealth: [L218] 270  
And he whose tongue doth °cogge and lye apace, °deceive  
Men will with *Bolton* pray him bate an ace. [A20]



Truth seekes no corners, the old Prouerbs say, [T587]  
 But dares meer Falshood either night or day.  
 Though she by some may wrongfully be blamed, 275  
 She neuer shall by any be ashamed. [T584]

And this our swaggering gallants verifie,  
 For whosoeuer shall giue them the Iye,  
 Shall with a whole head scarcely goe his way,  
 For it deserues a stab they all doe say. [?] 280

The old Prouerb doth say as I doe find,  
 Tis best to sayle with current and with wind, [W429]  
 But these of all men ought to be controlld,  
 That run with Hayre & with the Hound will hold. [H158]

Young men that godly are all men delight, 285  
 But some so close haue playd the hypocrite,  
 Which caus'd this Prouerb I dare vndertake,  
 A young Saint alwayes an old Deuill doth make. [S33]

Young men thinke old men very fooles to be,  
 When old men young men very fooles doe see, [M610] 290  
 And some will other men rebuke and blame,  
 When they themselues are guilty of the same. [F107]

They that be nought the old Prouerb doth tell,  
 Will measure others by their owne bushell, [C663]  
 The mother neuer sought the daughter in 295  
 The place where she her selfe had neuer bin. [W353]

Ill may the Ouen speake, and say untill  
 In spitefull sort, a burnd arce is the Kill, [K33]  
 Yet you shall heare when women chide and brawle,  
 She that's a whore will th'other whore first call. [W319] 300

When thriftlesse prodigals the couetous blame,  
 And drunkards doe on vsurers cry shame,  
 Tis more then time for iustice to come in,  
 When vice thus openly rebuketh sinne. [V43]

He that a Lyons heart hath, and a Ladies hand, 305  
 May a fit °Chirurgion make in any land, °surgeon [S1013]  
 But these two me thinkes better doe agree,  
 Hands that be hard, and hearts that bended be. [?]

The couetous Vsurer whom neuer yet  
 A peny from him any one could get, 310

Except it were vpon a pawne or bill,  
For he the pan hold by the °steale fast will. °handle [~H513]

Like him be greedy Cormorants, which haue,  
A conscience more insatiate then the graue, [~C608]  
Which rake and scrape whateuer they can get, 315  
And all's good fish that comes within the net. [A136]

These will of no man any kindnesse take,  
For feare thereof they should requitall make,  
But like the Hogge that Acornes feed vpon,  
And neuer looke vp from what tree they come. [H492] 320

And if their neighbours any thing would borrow,  
They'll alwayes pray them come againe to morrow,  
But the old prouerb plainly telleth thee,  
While grasse doth grow the Steed may starued be, [G423]

And on the morrow if they come againe, 325  
He will not sticke to tell them flat and plaine,  
That charity alwayes doth at home begin, [C251]  
And none by lending any good doth win. [~L199]

Or in plaine words will vtterly deny,  
And in short termes these words to them will say; 330  
Good neighbour, if you would but such things buy,  
You should haue of your owne as well as I.

When at his doore the poore and lame doe cry,  
Ere hee'll relieue them they shall starue and dye,  
And he'll say if his friend be in the goale, 335  
They that a cold be, let them blow the coale. [C460]

They say that conscience seuen yeares agoe,  
Was hang'd, and after buried also, [C602]  
And therefore God helpe rich men they all say,  
If poore men want they goe abegging may. [G193] 340

The Crocodile ne're weepes, I haue heard say,  
But when he's hungry, and doth want a prey, [C831]  
Yet though the couetous hath much riches got,  
Still wants what he hath as what he hath not. [M1144]

The old prouerb did tell this long agoe, 345  
The couetous man doth seldome ought bring home, [C745]  
The fable shewes you how the dog was crost,  
Which catching at the shadow the bone lost. [S951]

Make triall of thy friend ere thou hast need,  
 Lest thou dost faile when thou wouldest speed, [F718] 350  
 And he that friendship shewes thee at thy need,  
 Forget him not for he's a friend indeed. [F693]

Deceitfull euer will mistrustfull be, [~T559]  
 But no mistrust is found in honesty.  
 For honest men thinke all men would as they, [T221] 355  
 What they doe owe be carefull for to pay.

What one doth promise may performed be,  
 When two doe promise we it seldome see, [?]  
 For dayly by experience it is found,  
 Betwixt two stooles the taile falls to the ground. [S900] 360

Some borrow will of *Peter* to pay *Paul*, [P244]  
 And some will neither lend nor pay at all,  
 And yet this Prouerb euery one doth know,  
 That debt before a deadly sinne doth goe. [D167]

The old Prouerb did long agoe say this, 365  
 He that an ill name hath halfe hanged is, [N25]  
 Wherefore I wish that all men should for shame,  
 Such courses take they may haue a good name.

For wealth hath wings, and it may flye away, [R111]  
 And flatterers get friends, the Prouerb say, [F411] 370  
 But I know this, and so I thinke doe you,  
 The christned child may Godf'ers have enow. [C319]

Parents ought honest courses for take,  
 If no cause else were but posterity sake.  
 For why the Prouerb saith all men vntill, 375  
 If horse and mare both trot, the foale scarce amble will. [F408]

And to this purpose is that Prouerb sure,  
 Which at this day is most of all in °vre, °use  
 And I haue heard it oft where I haue gone,  
 That will nere out o'th flesh that's bred i'th bone. [F365] 380

Their tongues at no time should accustom'd be  
 To idle talke, much lesse to ribaldry,  
 For all men know that any thing discernes,  
 That as th'old Cocke doth crow the young doth learne. [C491]

Some parents in their children so delight, 385  
 They scarce be well when they are out of sight,

But one may loue his house in it t'abide,  
Though neuer he vpon the ridge doe ride. [M266]

The Prouerb saith, Giue children while they craue,  
And Dogges so long as they their tailes will waue, 390  
And in the morning you shall plainly she,  
Your dogges will cleaner then your children be. [C304]

As parents should not too indulgent be,  
So they abandon should all cruelty,  
Ile tell you what I heard one say last weeke, 395  
That's a neare °collop that's cut off the °fleeke. °slice of meat. . . flesh [C517]

What thou maist secret keepe neuer disclose,  
Although it be against thy vtter foes,  
But not against thy kin of all the rest,  
Men say that's an ill bird befiles the nest. [B377] 400

Though some both idle and lewd courses take,  
Their friends should suddenly not them forsake,  
For why? the prouerb telleth all men plaine,  
That he goes farre that neuer turned againe. [R210]

The prouerb sayes, That wind blowes euer ill, 405  
When no man profit it doth blow vntill: [W421]  
For fooles oft times prouide good store of meat,  
But wise men euer most of it doth eat. [F540]

Cookes at all times should looke most carefully,  
There may no fault be in their cookery, 410  
For euery asse will say that thereon looke,  
God sent the meat, but the Deuill sent the Cooke. [G222]

Some men will vainly spend more at one meale  
Then would suffice for two by a great deale.  
Yet the old Prouerb saith, Who wealth will win, 415  
Must euer at the tables end begin. [T3]

The old Prouerb saith thus of Gluttony,  
The belly is sooner filled then the eye, [G146]  
And that he is no kinder then a Kite,  
For what he cannot eate hee'll alwayes hide. [K113] 420

The shamelesse Glutton you shall euer see  
Vnbidden will at euery banquet be.  
And yet there is a saying in all Schooles,  
Vnbidden guests should with them carry stooles. [G476]

The Glutton and the Drunkard surely, 425  
 One's alwayes hungry, and the other dry: [M1149]  
 And surely he deserveth double blame,  
 That shall adde fuell to encrease a flame. [F785]

Some will find fault euen with the fattest Oxe, [F118]  
 And some are fed like Apes with bits and knockes, [B420] 430  
 But the old prouerb long agoe said this,  
 What thing is plenty neuer dainty is. [P425]

The prouerb saith, The more the merrier are, [M1153]  
 But fewest alwayes doe the better faire, [W798]  
 Yet one said it is merriest in the hall, 435  
 When tongues lye still and beards are wagging all. [H55]

Wishers and woulders I thinke none haue knowne  
 Two good housholders, nor yet scarcely one, [W539]  
 For one said he at no time worse did fare,  
 Then when he sate and wisht for his dinner. [S1001] 440

There is one prouerb which sayth on this wise,  
 Enough as well may as a feast suffice, [E158]  
 Yet one sayd, but I thinke he did but iest,  
 Farre fetcht and deare bought pleaseth Ladies best. [D12]

When one that's hungry you at meat doe see, 445  
 He may eat much, and yet no glutton be,  
 For the old prouerb long agoe thus spake,  
 Three bad meales will the fourth a glutton make. [M789]

The prouerb sayth, The fat Sow in the stye,  
 Nere thinkes what ayles the hungry that doth cry: [S676] 450  
 Yet too much pittie the same prouerb say,  
 Bring vnto ruine a great City may. [P366]

He that accustom'd is to sweare and curse,  
 If one rebuke him hee'll but be the worse,  
 For the old prouerb saith, It is the tricke, 455  
 A °gauld horse being rub'd to wince and kicke. °sore from chafing [H700]

Some spendeth euery day in the whole yeare  
 In gaming, drinking, and making good cheare,  
 And neuer doe themselues for death prepare,  
 Till he them napping catch, as *Mosse* did's mare. [M1185] 460

And then t'will be too late, the prouerb say,  
 When night is come, backe to recall the day, [~D70]

For he that will not wait at dinner time,  
Must fast unlesse he with Duke *Humfrey* dine, [D637]

Though some long time haue liued poore and bare, 465  
The prouerb biddeth such should not despaire,  
For God did neuer make a mouth as yet,  
But he likewise prouided meat for it. [G207]

Yet none should on Gods prouidence so rely,  
But they must vse their chiefest industry, 470  
For from the bridge who in the ditch shall swarue,  
And shall lye still, may lye vntill he starue. [D388]

For that old prouerb that doth say to thee,  
As thou beleeuest thou shalt saued be, [B265]  
Is but a mocke I tell thee plaine and briefe, 475  
For that is euer meant of vnbeleefe.

Some any kindnesse for their friends would doe,  
If they were but requested thereunto.  
And the old prouerb plainly telleth this,  
That's a bad dogge that not worth whistling is. [D488] 480

Ile tell you what I heard one lately say,  
As he and I were walking on the way,  
That he surely shall neuer be relieued,  
That doth conceale the thing wherewith he's griued. [G447]

Faint heart men say nere winne faire Ladies loue, [H302] 485  
Nor coward did a valiant champion proue, [~M496]  
And Robin Red-breast loseth God knowes what,  
Because that he afraid is of the Cat. [~F138]

When Cannons rore, and bullets thicke doe flye,  
Who aymes at honour must not feare to dye. [H565] 490  
Ile tell you what I heard one say of late,  
That's a hard battell where no man escape. [F207]

The prouerb saith, The Cat faine fish would eate,  
But that she's very loth her feet to wet: [C144]  
But the same prouerb sayes, Who ventures not, 495  
Hath seldome time great store of riches got. [N319]

Men say that barking Cures will seldome bite, [B85]  
And brauling Knaues will euen as seldome fight,  
Yet you shall euer see the bragging Iacke,  
Will a great dagger carry at his backe. [B591] 500

Some men there are that bitterly will curse  
 The cony-catching cheater and picke-purse,  
 But there's a saying, Foxes neuer fare  
 More better then when they most cursed are. [F632]

He that is borne to neither goods nor lands, 505  
 Must not thinke scorne to labour with his hands,  
 For the old father said, Yea by Saint Marry,  
 That's a proud horse will not his prouander carry. [H683]

Tis best hay making when the Sunne hath shin'd, [H235]  
 And winnowing when in'th barn doore sits the wind, 510  
 The prouerb sayes, The Ant that nothing get  
 In Summer, shall in winter nothing eat. [F772]

He that thrasht in his cloake, being contrould,  
 Said that he did as much as ere he could: [G342]  
 Yet the old prouerb plainly telleth this, 515  
 That idlenesse the mother of mischiefe is. [I13]

But this prouerb I very well did marke,  
 The Priest forgotten hath that he was Clearke: [P56]  
 And Fire and Water, as we daily see,  
 Good seruants both, but cruell masters be. [F253] 520

The prouerb saith, Nothing agreeth worse,  
 Then doth a proud heart and a beggers purse, [H324]  
 Yet beggers set on horse backe, all men say,  
 Will to the gallowes ride before they stay. [B239]

There is one prouerb saith, That through enuy 525  
 Idiots and fooles vntimely deaths doe dye, [~E174]  
 Yet the same prouerb saith, That begger's woe  
 That seeth another by the doore to goe. [B237]

Some men that neither learned be nor wise,  
 We daily see to great promotion rise, 530  
 Sure t'was of such one said the other day,  
 Giue a man lucke and cast him in the Sea. [M146]

And some promoted are we daily see,  
 Out of the hall into the kitchen be, [H56]  
 And such haue euermore beene said to come 535  
 Out of Gods blessing into the warme Sunne. [G272]

A ragged colt offtimes a good horse make, [C522]  
 Thus the old prouerb long agoe hath spake,

An Asse may goe that laden is with gold,  
Through Princes Courts, and neuer be controlld. [A356] 540

Let none neglect what he may lawfully  
By gift or bargaine either wayes come by:  
For why, the prouerb long agoe this told,  
Though Summer's hot yet Winter's alwayes cold. [~S190]

What's freely giuen thee neuer doe forsake, 545  
Nor of the goodnesse neuer question make:  
For it hath alwayes folly counted beene,  
To looke a giuen horses mouth within. [H678]

With them that freely giue make not too bold,  
Lest they grow weary and their hands withhold, 550  
For why the prouerb plainly telleth thee,  
The freest horse may soonest tired be. [H642]

Thy goods nor money at no time mispend,  
Nor carelessly the same to any lend:  
For the wise father to the sonne did say, 555  
Keepe somthing till there comes a rainy day. [D89]

For if a man to pouerty doe come,  
His friends and kindred will his company shun: [P529]  
And in such state as any one doth meet you,  
Hee with like salutations sure will greet you. [L286] 560

One that much time and money had mispent,  
And being asked what hee thereby meant:  
Answered hee car'd not, hee had °Boote on beame, °remedy  
If that his °naunt did die before his °neame. °aunt. . . uncle [?]

But the wise prouerbe wish all men to saue 565  
Their foule water vntill they fayrer haue, [W90]  
For they that hope by dead men to haue boot,  
Wee often see goe ragged and barefoot. [M619]

The thriftles and the prodigall naught set by  
No little thing nor little quantity: 570  
Yet many a little the old prouerb said,  
Doth make a mickle when together laid. [L362]

Things of small value the old proverb say,  
Wise men seuen years will carefully vp lay,  
If in that time it will for nothing fit, 575  
Then any way they may dispose of it. [T141]



- Though wicked weeds apace grow many say, [W238]  
 Vntoward boyes may good men make one day; [B580]  
 Yet the old prouerbe said e're I was borne,  
 That's earely sharpe, that after proues a thorne. [T232] 580
- In trust is treason, the old prouerbe say, [T549]  
 For he that trusteth, soone deceiu'd be may: [T559]  
 Yet some will trust those that as sure will faile,  
 As hee that hath a quicke Eele by the tayle. [H508]
- Try e're thou trust, the old prouerb doth say, [T595] 585  
 Fast binde fast finde shall surely alway: [B352]  
 And hee that hideth neuer doubts in minde,  
 But hee the same at any time shall finde. [H453]
- Though some may one Theefe from the gallowes saue [~T109]  
 And one knowne lyar may some credit haue. 590  
 Yet the old prouerbe long agoe thus spake,  
 One swallow yet did neuer summer make. [S1025]
- Examples alwaies no good reasons bee, [R206]  
 Which makes a many say though foolishly,  
 What's meat for one, another poyson may, [M483] 595  
 When'ts ment of swords that both defend and slay.
- Who cares for no man, none for him will care, [F745]  
 And want with many men is a good spare, [?]  
 And the old prouerbe saith, that pouerty  
 Hath oftentimes parted good company. [P529] 600
- Ill gotten goods are seldome times well spent: [G301]  
 And one said lately whatsoe're hee meant:  
 That sweet meat alwaies sower sauce must haue, [M839]  
 As hee came from the whipping of a knaue.
- Change is no robbery thought the Fox in mind, [C228] 605  
 When he the Goose stole leauing the feathers behind [G365]  
 To chop and change hard neede constraineth many [C363]  
 For needs must taken bee the needy penny. [P208]
- The old prouerbe did long agoe tell this,  
 That no foole like vnto the old foole is: [F506] 610  
 Yet all men say, that horse is nought for saile,  
 That neither whinny can, nor wag his tayle. [H671]
- What men doe loue they hardly will forsake  
 This the old prouerbe long agoe hath spake,

The foole sure will not from his bable part,  
If hee might haue the Tower of London for't. [F476] 615

The wilfull man hath neuer wanted woe. [W396]  
Thus the old prouerbe said full long agoe.  
And further also the same prouerbe say,  
The swiftest course is that beside the way. [~W158] 620

The old prouerbe this long agoe hath told,  
That wares well bought are euermore halfe sold: [W66]  
And one must learne to creepe e're goe or runne, [C820]  
A match well made is euermore halfe wonne. [~W657]

Some will buy wares of any kind of rate, 625  
And then repent themselues when 'tis too late:  
But ther's a saying bad ware's alwaies deare: [W64]  
And what was good that n'ere yet lou'd the Frier. [F676]

Hee that good wares haue wheresoe're he dwell,  
Once in a yere hee shall be sure to sell: [W62] 630  
For the old prouerbe saith as much indeed,  
That good wine neuer of a °bush hath need. °inn sign [W462]

Buy not for time those wares that are too deare,  
For many lose thereby as I doe heare:  
And some doe buy and sell and liue by'th losse. 635  
And so at length come home by weeping crosse. [W248]

Chapmen no great care need to take, nor paines,  
To sell their ware vnlesse it bee for gaines: [M889]  
The prouerbe saith, hee's neuer chapman bare,  
That either ready money hath, or ware. [M884] 640

Some praise and dispraise will the selfe same wares,  
And prate and talke of euery mans affaires,  
When they know neither what is said nor done  
No more then doth the man that's in the Moone. [M240]

Some will make gaine of any wares they buy, 645  
Their tongues are so inur'd to °cog and lye; °deceive  
And the old prouerbe saith as much indeed,  
A crafty knaue doth neuer broker need. [K122]

Take heed thou neuer keep no companie,  
But such as honest men are knowne to bee: [M535] 650  
For why? the prouerbe saith, a man at Rome,  
Must bee inforst to doe as there is done. [R165]

If here against, any should make reply,  
 The prouerbe further telleth them plainly,  
 'Tis daily seene, fowles that bee of a feather, 655  
 Will flie in troopes and company together. [B393]

Another prouerbe there is like to it,  
 Which for some cause I will not here omit,  
 That like will to his like by night and day,  
 As once the Deuill did to the Colliar say. [L287] 660

Whose foote is alwaies his friends table vnder, [F572]  
 If he grow prouident it is a wonder:  
 And to giue counsell it doth seldome boote,  
 Where the blacke Oxe ne're trod vpon the foote. [O103]

He that hath left him goods and money much, 665  
 The prouerbe plainly sayeth of all such,  
 It is no mastery for them to swimme,  
 Whom others alwaies holds vp by the chinne. [C349]

Some will bee proud of any thing done well,  
 To such the old prouerbe doth plainly tell, 670  
 It was by fortune more then by good wit,  
 A blinde man shooting chanc't a Crow to hit. [M81]

Against the streame it is in vaine to striue, [S927]  
 But they must needs go whom the deuill doth driue [D278]  
 And this old prouerbe is too true God wot, 675  
 That hard need alwayes makes the old wife trot. [N79]

The prouerb say, Loue is a pleasant thing,  
 When like the Snake it once hath lost the Sting. [~N321]  
 Sure, 'tis not meant the loue of charity,  
 For that lies sicke, pray God it may not dye. [C253] 680

I know not whether 'tis meant of loue or lust,  
 But loue with loue repaid againe be must: [L515]  
 And by experience this I euer found,  
 That hee that lou'd me also lou'd my hound. [D496]

There is one prouerbe that saith on this wise, 685  
 Reason and loue lookes through two paire of eyes, [L517]  
 But all the Poets doe agree I finde,  
 It neuer saw ought, for it was borne blinde. [L506]

I heard one once say thus of Iealousie,  
 'Tis pittie loue should keepe it company: [L510] 690

Of all kind natures I may say as much,  
Tis pittie wit should wanting bee in such. [?]

This the old prouerbe long agoe hath spake,  
Bare walls doth euer giddy huswiues make: [W18]  
And hee that marrieth before hee's wise, 695  
Most commonly shall dye before hee thriues, [W229]

The old prouerbe did tell this long agone,  
That forward Children seldome time liue long, [~M1176]  
Wee forward wedlocke may compare thereto,  
For that vnto a night cap bring a man will doe. [A63] 700

Although a woman smile, yet thou must not  
Straight way conclude that thou a wife hast got, [?]  
For the old prouerbe plainely this doth show,  
That two words alwaies to a bargaine goe. [W827]

Many in chosing wiues deceiued bee, 705  
But most in too much praising their beauty: [W344]  
For this most true the old prouerbe doth say,  
All is not gold that glisters and showes gay. [A146]

One cannot wiue and thriue both in one yeare, [Y12]  
Some say, and yet to marry none need feare: 710  
For why? the prouerb saith all men vntill,  
A good Iacke alwaies maketh a good Gyll. [J1]

The prouerb saith, That man that meanes to thriue,  
Must first aske leaue and counsell of his wife, [L169]  
For as the good man saith, so say all we, 715  
But as the good wife saith, so all must be. [G331]

If maydens any young men doe entice  
To marry them, or to doe otherwise,  
The old prouerb still standeth in full force,  
Which saith, the gray mare was the better horse. [M647] 720

When a bad couple maryed be, I feare  
Men say of them you presently shall heare,  
It is the wisest way a man can doe,  
To fill one house, rather then trouble two. [H750]

Where nere a barrell better Herring is, [B94] 725  
A man in choosing cannot choose amisse:  
The man that foxes sold, said vse your skill,  
The baddest is best, therefore take which you will. [B316]

He that a widow marries with children three,  
 The prouerb say of four theeues sure shall be, [W335] 730  
 Who may go on the ground, and will goe on the ice,  
 Is sure a foole, and the other is scarce wise. [?]

When simple swaines fine wiues will needsly take,  
 I doubt they will their heads like Acteons make, [~L25]  
 If I them wrong, their pardons I beseech, 735  
 But sure I am most master weares no breech. [M727]

But all men count it folly for to be,  
 For any one to meddle twixt the barke and tree. [B83]  
 Ile say no more, but wish all men good wiues,  
 As dearly loue should as they loue their liues. 740

Many kind heart we heare and see daily,  
 Doth make them smart, the more is the pittty, [?]  
 And that none should by knaues deceiued be,  
 Ile tell them what one once did say to me.

They that deceiue me once I them beshrow, 745  
 They that deceiue me twice I say the same also,  
 But if they shall deceiue me any moe,  
 For that my selfe not them I will beshrow. [S267]

Another saying there is like to it,  
 Which for some cause I will not here omit, 750  
 If that by one I once deceiued be,  
 For that pray God forgiue both him and me.

But if I twice shall be deceiued him by,  
 Sure euery man will say the more foole I.  
 But if I thrice by him deceiued be, 755  
 No man that's wise for that will pittty me. [S267]

But this I often times haue heard men say,  
 Him that deceiues him well deceiue you may, [D180]  
 But true religion doth no more allow,  
 But deale with all as they should deale with yow. [D395] 760

But this last prouerb I like worst of all,  
 That men a iewell should plaine dealing call,  
 Saying, he that vse it dye a begger shall. [P382]  
 And I had almost quite forgotten this,  
 Too much of one thing good for nothing is. [T158] 765

Now giue me leaue to make a little bold,  
 To tell what one in priuate to me told,  
 If you shall iudge it not worth hearing is,  
 Then surely I did take my ayme amisse.

There's time to eate, and time to drinke, 770  
 And time to speake, and time to thinke,  
 And time to worke, and time to play,  
 And time to sing, and time pray,  
 And time to sit, and time to goe,  
 And time to reape, and time to sow, 775  
 And time to wake, and time to sleepe,  
 And time to laugh, and time to weepe.  
 Of all things else that's vnderneath the Sunne,  
 There is a time when it may best be done. [T314]  
 Except to sinne, and for that no time is, 780  
 Wherefore the workers shall be sure of this,  
 A double punishment shall inflicted be,  
 For abusing time, and breaking Gods decree.

Some men doe thinke howsoeuer they doe liue,  
 God is so mercifull hee'll them forgiue, 785  
 But common reason vnto all men show,  
 That none shall better reape then he doth sow. [S687]

And some men out of meere simplicity,  
 Will adde a torment to a misery,  
 Euen like to oyle which foolishly was cast 790  
 To quench the fire, which caused it burne more fast. [O30]

Some flatter will and humour euery man,  
 To get them friendship and what else they can,  
 Which gotten they'll not one good word afford, [F709]  
 Such yet was neuer good neither egge nor bird. [B381] 795

Some make no end whatsoeuer they begin,  
 And some will bargaine whether lose or win,  
 Yet common reason sheweth vnto all,  
 Tis better sitting still then rise and fall. [S491]

Some will both kindnesse and friendship professe, 800  
 When they indeed doe intend nothing lesse  
 But seeke their owne turnes for to sit and serue,  
 And neuer care though others pine and starue. [~S219]

Some men say there haue been sweet flowers nigh,  
 A Serpent foule seene for to lurke and lye, [S585] 805

And vice hath neuer done more hurt indeed,  
Then when he came cloathed in vertues weed. [V44]

He that his bed keepes when the weather is cold,  
Tis pittie but he be a hungry should: [?]  
And those that haunt Theaters certainly, 810  
Shall dance the beggers °galliard ere they dye. °a triple-time dance [~J56]

Some to get money will take any paine,  
And presently will spend the same in vaine.  
Euen like the cow that giueth milke great store,  
And with her foot straight throw it on the flowre. [M661] 815

When things are gone tis very hard to say  
Who haue them, or which way they went away.  
For men in iudging often iudge amisse,  
But they that see may alwayes say as tis. [~A285]

No man can surely of a wife be sped, 820  
Vntill such time as he to her be wed,  
For chances oft betwixt the lip and cup;  
Doe come before a man thereof can sup. [T191]

And though a man in imminent danger were,  
Of helpe he should not vtterly despaire, 825  
For twixt the bridge and water some haue found  
Such succour, that they scapt and were not drown'd. [~H411]

To erre and sinne is giuen to man by kind,  
But to perseuer doth shew a beastlike mind. [E179]  
A wise man may walke nye a riuers brim, 830  
Where fooles and idiots oft times haue fallen in. [~B668]

Some men that beastlike drunken you shall see,  
When they be sober for it griued will be  
Yet like the dogge that vomits vp his meat,  
And presently the same againe will eat. [D455] 835

Where many paths meet, one may lose his way, [~C642]  
And some that many trades haue I dare say,  
The worst of them will find them bread I thinke,  
And all the rest will scarcely find them drinke. [M293]

Some beat the bush and others catch the bird, [B740] 840  
And some will blowes giue sooner then a word. [W824]  
And some doe yet and did ere I was borne,  
Make a long haruest of a little corne. [H184]

And some there be that hath got an ill guise,  
 They are loth to bed, and lother for to rise. [S547] 845  
 Ile say no more lest some should be offended,  
 When little's said it soone may be amended. [L358]

There was no more that I remember can,  
 Worth writing that was spoke of any man.  
 But some there was that would Tobacco take, 850  
 Which as it seemed did one offended make.  
 One once, said he, Tobacco seed did sow,  
 I thinke it is the smallest seed that grow,  
 And would to God that it as small leaues bore,  
 Then in this land there would not be such store, 855  
 That they thereby will quite themselues vndoe.  
 It makes them daily to dispend much time,  
 And neuer haue enough of beare and wine.  
 And neuer any good that I did heare  
 It one man did this fiue and thirty yeare. 860  
 Beside the charge it putteth men vnto,  
 There is about it such a deale of doe,  
 First one must cut it, and then must it dry,  
 And then a while acooling let it lye.  
 Then pipe and stopper both must be ready, 865  
 And then a coale to light it presently,  
 Which they hold in a litle payre of tongs,  
 A pipe case also hereunto belongs,  
 And then a boxe you alwayes ready see,  
 To put vp that that shall vntaken be, 870  
 Which made of leather is, and gilt brauely,  
 And so there are be made of Iuory,  
 And some of siluer are, and some of tinne,  
 And some of horne, which are not worth a pinne.  
 And some of plate are made, and some of brasse, 875  
 For those of paper good for nothing was,  
 And some affect it so as many say,  
 That they will take it riding on the way,  
 And such must euer haue in readinesse  
 A tinder box, or else a burning glasse. 880  
 This charge and trouble daily doth proceed,  
 By taking of that stinking Indian weed.  
 Would all mens like mine from it were turned,  
 Then ere they take it would it should be burned.

When I saw none would, I did vndertake 885  
 Before them all this answer for to make:  
 Saying, Sir if you spoke had by aduice,  
 These speches might haue well beene spoke at twice,



For I my selfe some good haue had thereby,  
 Which Ile conceale lest you should thinke I lye. 890  
 And for the charge you say thereby arise,  
 It is not great to those men that be wise.  
 If things abused should be vsed no more,  
 Tobacco then should company haue store,  
 For bread is daily giuen to dogges and beares, 895  
 Which serue for nought but hinder mens affaires:  
 And if that corne to mault conuerted be,  
 That's so abused it would pittie one to see,  
 For many will more like to beasts then men,  
 Drinke more in one day then would serue for ten, 900  
 And some in one month spend more in good cheare  
 Then would suffice the best part of the yeare.  
 And some will haue a gay suit on his backe,  
 Though hee and all his houshold victualls lacke:  
 And yet I thinke for all this great abuse, 905  
 You'll say there is of these a lawfull vse.  
 So worldly wealth who so too much desire,  
 Shall find it of the nature of the fire,  
 Whereof a little doth at no time harme,  
 But oft times good cold bodies for to warme. 910  
 When as great flames the body scorch and burne, [F249]  
 So too much wealth oft times to woe doth turne,  
 But time, and place, and quantities required,  
 Before that any thing should bee desired:  
 For if there dung should in your Chimnye lye, 915  
 You out of doores would throw it presently:  
 And if there fire should on the dunghill be,  
 You soone would fetch it into your chimney.  
 Yet both of these are good in places fit, [T169]  
 And this is all that I will say of it: 920  
 Who good finds by it may sometimes it vse,  
 And whom it hurts, from taking Ile excuse.

Then store of Apples in the fire was laid,  
 And Ale was gone for as the good wife said.  
 Then one that was there in the company, 925  
 Said masters, if you will be ruled me by,  
 Who will not sing, read riddle, nor tell tale,  
 Shall neither taste of Apples nor of Ale.

Whereto the company agreed all,  
 And to begin the lot thus out did fall, 930  
 They at the rows end would their Riddles tell,  
 Which I must read that neuer well could spell.

There was a coale whereon one ashes cast,  
 Which if he had with bellowes giuen one blast,  
 It quickly would haue burn'd into a flame, 935  
 That one might well haue warmed them by the same  
 The second said, now marke what I shall tell,  
 There be three men in towne where I doe dwell,  
 The one hath been my neighbour dwelling long,  
 Who when he was in'th wright was then in'th wrong 940  
 The other dwels right ouer me againe,  
 Whose ioy was greatest when he was in paine.  
 The third, of long time I know certainly,  
 Hath wisht that both his wife and hee might dye.  
 Now, since the reading you haue put to mee, 945  
 Ile tell you what I thinke these for to bee.

The first doth meane a poore mans Sonne I know,  
 VVhich halfe a yeare to schoole did neuer goe,  
 For had he had but learning to his wit,  
 Sure many should haue profited by it. 950

And you that last spoke of your townes men three,  
 Ile tell you what I thinke them for to bee.  
 I doubt your neighbour takes too much delight,  
 In some lewd loue that is named VVright.  
 And hee that dwells right ouer you againe, 955  
 Doth loue another that is named Paine.  
 And for the third, a foole may well know this,  
 That he a Dyar by profession is.

They that sat next did not much time prolong,  
 But presently each of them sung a song: 960  
 To tell the tunes I thinke it me behoue,  
 The first is, *Liue with mee and bee my loue.*  
 The second is if I bee not deceiu'd,  
*Mad Tom of Bedlam*, of his wits bereau'd.

Who doth these dayes of ours not see 965  
 Most lamentable for to bee,  
 When great offences sore doe rage,  
 Whom iustice can no whit asswage:  
 From euill temptations night and day,  
 Deliuer vs Lord wee thee pray. 970

It endlesse were to goe about,  
 With colours for to paint them out:  
 But I wish all men should abstaine,  
 From those which chiefest now doe raigne.

- From euill temptations, &c. 975
- The poore mans faults compare I may,  
 To spots in Images made of clay:  
 But faults in great men to behold,  
 Like staines in statues are of gold. [M524]  
 From euill temptations &c. 980
- But as no man can safely ride,  
 Too neare vnto a riuers side,  
 So they that with bad men conuerse,  
 Oft times cannot but bee the worse.  
 From euill temptations &c. 985
- For as the *Syrens* pleasant song,  
 The hearers death doth hasten on  
 So hee that enuy entertaines,  
 Can haue no ioy vnmixt with paines.  
 From euill temptations, &c. 990
- When as the *Crocodile* most doth weep,  
 Doth most desire the silly sheepe. [C831]  
 So doth the flatterers double tongue  
 His dearest friend the deadliest wrong.  
 From euill temptations, &c. 995
- The strange *Camelion* that by kind,  
 Can change her colour with her minde [C221]  
 The Lye can as readily,  
 Of one lye make you two or three.  
 From euill temptations, &c. 1000
- As *Boreas* rough breakes Ships in twain  
 And causeth flames to burne amaine:  
 So doth the Tale-bearer hatred sow,  
 Where loue and friendship else would grow.  
 From euill temptations, &c. 1005
- From Wolues the worst of all ill beasts,  
 A man in house may safely rest: [~W605]  
 But from backe-byters deadly sting,  
 No house can safe secure him.  
 From euill temptations, &c. 1010
- As oftentimes sweet flowers nie,  
 Haue Serpents foule beene seene to lye, [S585]  
 So in a coat full gay hath beene,

A trecherous heart full often seene.  
From euill temptations, &c. 1015

But as wee read, once *Balaams* Asse,  
More wiser then his Master was: [Numbers 22.21-34]  
Euen so are they that dangers shunne,  
More wise then they that to them run.  
From euill temptations, &c. 1020

As Elephants strong in waters deepe,  
The weake ones doe from danger keep,  
I would all men would learne of them,  
To pittie their poore bretheren.  
From euill temptations, &c. 1025

What christian heart can thinke vpon,  
The wicked liues of many a one,  
And not with Christ our Sauour deare  
For them shed many a mournfull teare.  
From euill temptations, &c. 1030

But such as purposely entend,  
Their sinfull courses to amend,  
God with his Spirit assist them so,  
That they from grace to grace may grow.  
From euill temptations, &c. 1035

Now as a friend I all men will,  
Good men no harme to doe vntill:  
And when to speake you are inforst,  
Of bad men neuer speake the worst.  
Like to our selues Lord grant wee may,  
Our neighbors loue both night & day. 1040

THE pleasant life of Shepheards,  
hath euer yet been deemed,  
Amongst all Swains to take least paines  
and yet the best esteemed. 1045

*But now may they waile, both in mountaine and dale,  
where last their flockes were feeding,  
For now dead they be, scarce one of twentie  
is left that's worth the heeding.*

And if the liues of Shepheards,  
considered be aright, 1050  
All men must say both night and day,

- they liue in blisfull plight.  
*But now may they waile, &c.*
- Fayre *Flora* in the Spring time, 1055  
 first offereth vnto them,  
 The earths sweet flowers through Aprills showers,  
 before all other men.  
*But now may they waile, &c.*
- When *Phæbus* in his highest, 1060  
 with hottest beams doth shine,  
 He soone will hie, him downe to lye,  
 in shade vnder the Pine.  
*But now may they waile, &c.*
- And if *Apollo* chanceth, 1065  
 with raine to coole the heat,  
 His Pine will serue for to preserue,  
 him likewise from the wet.  
*But now may they waile, &c.*
- Whilst hee rests thus defenced, 1070  
 both from the raine and heat,  
 His pretty Lambes vpon the lands,  
 doe sweetly eate their meat.  
*But now may they waile, &c.*
- If any goe astray, 1075  
 in't meadow or in't graine:  
 His little Dog will at first word,  
 Soone fetch them forth againe.  
*But now may they waile, &c.*
- When Autumn's fully ended, 1080  
 and hay and corne in barne,  
 His flockes may goe both to and fro,  
 and neuer commit harme.  
*But now may they waile, &c.*
- Then hee with his faire *Phillida*, 1085  
 vnder a willow tree,  
 May sport and play each day by day  
 with mirth and melodie.  
*But now may they waile, &c.*
- And when that hoary *Hyems*, 1090  
 begins his raigne to hold.

A firre bush tree prouide will hee,  
 to keepe him from the cold.  
*But now may they waile, &c.*

Thus haue you heard recited, 1095  
 the blisfull Shepheards plight:  
 But I aduise no man to praise,  
 a faire day before night. [D100]  
*But now may they waile, &c.*

For many Shepheards now, 1100  
 are forced hereunto,  
 In raine and heat their bread to get,  
 or else a begging goe.  
*Wherefore may they waile, both in mountaine and dale,*  
*where late their flockes went feeding,* 1105  
*For now dead they bee, scarce one of twenty*  
*is left that's worth the heeding.*

The next of all it came to mee by lot,  
 To pay my penny to make vp the shot:  
 I neither sung had, riddle, nor good tale, 1110  
 Yet faine I would the apples tast and ale.  
 Then presently into my minde it came,  
 That I before had made an *Annagram*,  
 Which I them told in the stead of a tale.  
 And by that meanes I tasted of the ale. 1115

There bee nine Letters in the Alphabet,  
 Which vntill death I neuer will forget,  
 They to my minde doe giue so much delight:  
 And which they bee I briefly will recite.  
 The *I*, alwaies some ioyfull thing presage: 1120  
 The *O*, bids youth prouide against old age:  
 The *N*, good newes doth euer to vs tell:  
 The *E*, bids none let enuy with him dwell:  
 The *C*, to all men charity doth show:  
 The *L*, to all is louing where it goe. 1125  
 The *A*, is alwaies amiable to behold:  
 The *R*, said he by reason ruld bee would:  
 The *K*, doth keepe the key of knowledg so,  
 That no euill thing into the house can goe.  
 If I the reason hereof should not tell, 1130  
 I seeme to marre should what I haue made well,  
 But I may boldly tell it without shame,  
 It was the Anagram of my mothers name.

The last man whom by lot it vnto came,  
 Said he also would tell an Anagram, 1135  
 Which here Ile briefly shew vnto your view,  
 I lik't it not, no more I thinke will you.  
 The *w* presageth double woe,  
 The *y* nought else but yealousy doth show,  
 The *f* is flattering false vnto his friend, 1140  
 The *e* thinkes euill whatsoeuer it pretend,  
 Thus you may see that *w, y, f, e*,  
 Doth bring a man from wealth to misery.  
 If euery man were minded like to me,  
 Then surely they would married neuer be. 1145  
     Then said I, Sir, if you'll not be offended,  
 Your Anagram you shall heare soone amended.  
 The *w* doth worth and wealth presage,  
 The *y* bids youth prouide against old age,  
 The *f* is faithfull and doth friendship show, 1150  
 The *e* from euill bids all make hast to goe.  
 Thus you may see that *w, y, f, e*,  
 A wild wench may a good wife make one day. [~B580]