

SIDE I

BIRON

'Tis more than need.
Have at you, then, affection's men at arms.
O, we have made a vow to study, lords,
And in that vow we have forsworn our books.
For when would you, my liege, or you, or you,
In leaden contemplation have found out
Such fiery numbers as the prompting eyes
Of beauty's tutors have enrich'd you with?
Other slow arts entirely keep the brain;
But love, first learnèd in a lady's eyes,
Lives not alone immurèd in the brain;
But, with the motion of all elements,
Courses as swift as thought in every power,
And gives to every power a double power.
It adds a precious seeing to the eye;
A lover's eyes will gaze an eagle blind;
A lover's ear will hear the lowest sound;
Love's feeling is more soft and sensible
Than are the tender horns of cockl'd snails;
Love's tongue proves dainty Bacchus gross in taste:
For valour, is not Love a Hercules?
Subtle as Sphinx; as sweet and musical
As bright Apollo's lute, strung with his hair:
And when Love speaks, the voice of all the gods
Makes heaven drowsy with the harmony.
From women's eyes this doctrine I derive:
They sparkle still the right Promethean fire;
They are the books, the arts, the academes,
That show, contain and nourish all the world:
Then fools you were these women to forswear,
Or keeping what is sworn, you will prove fools.
Let us once lose our oaths to find ourselves,
Or else we lose ourselves to keep our oaths.

SIDE II

BIRON

And I, forsooth, in love! I, that have been love's whip;
A very beadle to a humorous sigh;
A critic, nay, a night-watch constable;
A domineering pedant o'er the boy;
Than whom no mortal so magnificent!
This whimpled, whining, purblind, wayward boy;
This senior-junior, giant-dwarf, Dan Cupid;
Regent of love-rhymes, lord of folded arms,
The anointed sovereign of sighs and groans,
Liege of all loiterers and malcontents,
Dread prince of plackets, king of codpieces,
Sole imperator and great general
Of trotting 'paritors:--O my little heart:--
And I to be a corporal of his field,
And wear his colours like a tumbler's hoop!
What, I! I love! I sue! I seek a wife!
A woman, that is like a German clock,
Still a-repairing, ever out of frame,
And never going aright, being a watch,
But being watch'd that it may still go right!
Nay, to be perjured, which is worst of all;
And, among three, to love the worst of all;
A wightly wanton with a velvet brow,
With two pitch-balls stuck in her face for eyes;
Ay, and by heaven, one that will do the deed
Though Argus were her eunuch and her guard:
And I to sigh for her! to watch for her!
To pray for her! Go to; it is a plague
That Cupid will impose for my neglect
Of his almighty dreadful little might.
Well, I will love, write, sigh, pray, sue and groan:
Some men must love my lady and some Joan.

Exit

SIDE III

COSTARD

My sweet ounce of man's flesh! my incony Jew!

Exit MOTH

Now will I look to his remuneration. Remuneration!
O, that's the Latin word for three farthings: three farthings--remuneration.--'What's the price of this inkle?'--'One penny.'--'No, I'll give you a remuneration:' why, it carries it. Remuneration! why, it is a fairer name than French crown. I will never buy and sell out of this word.

Enter BIRON

BIRON

O, my good knave Costard! exceedingly well met.

COSTARD

Pray you, sir, how much carnation ribbon may a man buy for a remuneration?

BIRON

What is a remuneration?

COSTARD

Marry, sir, halfpenny farthing.

BIRON

Why, then, three-farthing worth of silk.

COSTARD

I thank your worship: God be wi' you!

BIRON

Stay, slave; I must employ thee:
As thou wilt win my favour, good my knave,
Do one thing for me that I shall entreat.

COSTARD

When would you have it done, sir?

BIRON

This afternoon.

COSTARD

Well, I will do it, sir: fare you well.

BIRON

Thou knowest not what it is.

COSTARD

I shall know, sir, when I have done it.

BIRON

Why, villain, thou must know first.

COSTARD

I will come to your worship to-morrow morning.

BIRON

It must be done this afternoon.

Hark, slave, it is but this:

The princess comes to hunt here in the park,

And in her train there is a gentle lady;

When tongues speak sweetly, then they name her name,

And Rosaline they call her: ask for her;

And to her white hand see thou do commend

This seal'd-up counsel. There's thy guerdon; go.

Giving him a shilling

COSTARD

Gardon, O sweet gardon! better than remuneration,

a'leven-pence farthing better: most sweet gardon! I

will do it sir, in print. Gardon! Remuneration!

SIDE IV

Don Armado & Moth

SCENE II. The same.

Enter DON ADRIANO DE ARMADO and MOTH

ARMADO

Boy, what sign is it when a man of great spirit grows melancholy?

MOTH

A great sign, sir, that he will look sad.

ARMADO

I will hereupon confess I am in love: and as it is base for a soldier to love, so am I in love with a base wench. Boy, I do love that country girl that I took in the park with the rational hind Costard. Comfort me, boy: what great men have been in love?

MOTH

Hercules, master.

ARMADO

Most sweet Hercules! More authority, dear boy, name more; and, sweet my child, let them be men of good repute and carriage.

MOTH

Samson, master: he was a man of good carriage, great carriage, for he carried the town-gates on his back like a porter: and he was in love.

ARMADO

O well-knit Samson! strong-jointed Samson! I do excel thee in my rapier as much as thou didst me in carrying gates. I am in love too. Who was Samson's love, my dear Moth?

MOTH

A woman, master.

ARMADO

Of what complexion?

MOTH

Of all the four, or the three, or the two, or one of the four.

ARMADO

Tell me precisely of what complexion.

MOTH

Of the sea-water green, sir.

ARMADO

Is that one of the four complexions?

MOTH

As I have read, sir; and the best of them too.

ARMADO

Green indeed is the colour of lovers; but to have a love of that colour, methinks Samson had small reason for it. He surely affected her for her wit.

MOTH

It was so, sir; for she had a green wit.

ARMADO

My love is most immaculate white and red.

MOTH

Most maculate thoughts, master, are masked under such colours.

ARMADO

Define, define, well-educated infant.

MOTH

If she be made of white and red,
Her faults will ne'er be known,
For blushing cheeks by faults are bred
And fears by pale white shown:

Then if she fear, or be to blame,
By this you shall not know,
For still her cheeks possess the same
Which native she doth owe.

A dangerous rhyme, master, against the reason of
white and red.

ARMADO

Is there not a ballad, boy, of the King and the Beggar?

MOTH

The world was very guilty of such a ballad some
three ages since: but I think now 'tis not to be
found; or, if it were, it would neither serve for
the writing nor the tune.

ARMADO

I will have that subject newly writ o'er, that I may
example my digression by some mighty precedent.

SIDE V

Don Armado

ARMADO

I do affect the very ground, which is base, where
her shoe, which is baser, guided by her foot, which
is basest, doth tread. I shall be forsworn, which
is a great argument of falsehood, if I love. And
how can that be true love which is falsely
attempted? Love is a familiar; Love is a devil:
there is no evil angel but Love. Yet was Samson so
tempted, and he had an excellent strength; yet was
Solomon so seduced, and he had a very good wit.
Cupid's butt-shaft is too hard for Hercules' club;
and therefore too much odds for a Spaniard's rapier.
The first and second cause will not serve my turn;
the passado he respects not, the duello he regards
not: his disgrace is to be called boy; but his
glory is to subdue men. Adieu, valour! rust rapier!
be still, drum! for your manager is in love; yea,
he loveth. Assist me, some extemporal god of rhyme,
for I am sure I shall turn sonnet. Devise, wit;
write, pen; for I am for whole volumes in folio.

SIDE VI

Dull & Costard

Enter DULL with a letter, and COSTARD

DULL

Which is the duke's own person?

BIRON

This, fellow: what wouldst?

DULL

I myself reprehend his own person, for I am his grace's tharborough: but I would see his own person in flesh and blood.

BIRON

This is he.

DULL

Signior Arme--Arme--commends you. There's villany abroad: this letter will tell you more.

FERDINAND

A letter from the magnificent Armado.

BIRON

How low soever the matter, I hope in God for high words.

COSTARD

The matter is to me, sir, as concerning Jaquenetta. The manner of it is, I was taken with the manner.

BIRON

In what manner?

COSTARD

In manner and form following, sir; all those three: I was seen with her in the manor-house, sitting with her upon the form, and taken following her into the park; which, put together, is in manner and form following. Now, sir, for the manner,--it is the manner of a man to speak to a woman: for the form,--in some form.

BIRON

For the following, sir?

COSTARD

As it shall follow in my correction: and God defend the right!

FERDINAND

Will you hear this letter with attention?

BIRON

As we would hear an oracle.

COSTARD

Such is the simplicity of man to hearken after the flesh.

FERDINAND

[Reads] Great deputy, the welkin's vicegerent and sole dominator of Navarre, my soul's earth's god, and body's fostering patron.

COSTARD

Not a word of Costard yet.

FERDINAND

[Reads] So it is,—

COSTARD

It may be so: but if he say it is so, he is, in telling true, but so.

FERDINAND

Peace!

COSTARD

Be to me and every man that dares not fight!

FERDINAND

No words!

COSTARD

Of other men's secrets, I beseech you.

FERDINAND

[Reads] So it is, besieged with sable-coloured melancholy, I did commend the black-oppressing humour to the most wholesome physic of thy health-giving air; and, as I am a gentleman, betook myself to walk. The time when. About the sixth hour; when beasts most graze, birds best peck, and men sit down to that nourishment which is called supper: so much for the time when. Now for the ground which; which, I mean, I walked upon: it is y-cleped thy park. Then for the place where; where, I mean, I did encounter that obscene and preposterous event, that draweth from my snow-white pen the ebon-coloured ink, which here thou viewest, beholdest, surveyest, or seest; but to the place where; it standeth north-north-east and by east from the west corner of thy curious-knotted garden: there did I see that low-spirited swain, that base minnow of thy mirth,—

COSTARD

Me?

FERDINAND

[Reads] that unlettered small-knowing soul,—

COSTARD

Me?

FERDINAND

[Reads] that shallow vassal,—

COSTARD

Still me?

FERDINAND

[Reads] which, as I remember, hight Costard,—

COSTARD

O, me!

FERDINAND

[Reads] sorted and consorted, contrary to thy established proclaimed edict and continent canon, which with,--O, with--but with this I passion to say

wherewith,--

COSTARD

With a wench.

FERDINAND

[Reads] with a child of our grandmother Eve, a female; or, for thy more sweet understanding, a woman. Him I, as my ever-esteemed duty pricks me on, have sent to thee, to receive the meed of punishment, by thy sweet grace's officer, Anthony Dull; a man of good repute, carriage, bearing, and estimation.

DULL

'Me, an't shall please you; I am Anthony Dull.

FERDINAND

[Reads] For Jaquenetta,--so is the weaker vessel called which I apprehended with the aforesaid swain,--I keep her as a vessel of the law's fury; and shall, at the least of thy sweet notice, bring her to trial. Thine, in all compliments of devoted and heart-burning heat of duty.

DON ADRIANO DE ARMADO.

BIRON

This is not so well as I looked for, but the best that ever I heard.

FERDINAND

Ay, the best for the worst. But, sirrah, what say you to this?

COSTARD

Sir, I confess the wench.

FERDINAND

Did you hear the proclamation?

COSTARD

I do confess much of the hearing it but little of the marking of it.

FERDINAND

It was proclaimed a year's imprisonment, to be taken with a wench.

COSTARD

I was taken with none, sir: I was taken with a damsel.

FERDINAND

Well, it was proclaimed 'damsel.'

COSTARD

This was no damsel, neither, sir; she was a virgin.

FERDINAND

It is so varied, too; for it was proclaimed 'virgin.'

COSTARD

If it were, I deny her virginity: I was taken with a maid.

FERDINAND

This maid will not serve your turn, sir.

COSTARD

This maid will serve my turn, sir.

FERDINAND

Sir, I will pronounce your sentence: you shall fast a week with bran and water.

COSTARD

I had rather pray a month with mutton and porridge.

FERDINAND

And Don Armado shall be your keeper.
My Lord Biron, see him deliver'd o'er:
And go we, lords, to put in practise that
Which each to other hath so strongly sworn.

SIDE VII

Holofernes & Sir Nathaniel

SCENE II. The same.

Enter HOLOFERNES, SIR NATHANIEL, and DULL

SIR NATHANIEL

Very reverend sport, truly; and done in the testimony of a good conscience.

HOLOFERNES

The deer was, as you know, sanguis, in blood; ripe as the pomewater, who now hangeth like a jewel in the ear of caelo, the sky, the welkin, the heaven; and anon falleth like a crab on the face of terra, the soil, the land, the earth.

SIR NATHANIEL

Truly, Master Holofernes, the epithets are sweetly varied, like a scholar at the least: but, sir, I assure ye, it was a buck of the first head.

HOLOFERNES

Sir Nathaniel, haud credo.

DULL

'Twas not a haud credo; 'twas a pricket.

HOLOFERNES

Most barbarous intimation! yet a kind of insinuation, as it were, in via, in way, of explication; facere, as it were, replication, or rather, ostentare, to show, as it were, his inclination, after his undressed, unpolished, uneducated, unpruned, untrained, or rather, unlettered, or ratherest, unconfirmed fashion, to insert again my haud credo for a deer.

DULL

I said the deer was not a haud credo; twas a pricket.

HOLOFERNES

Twice-sod simplicity, his coctus!
O thou monster Ignorance, how deformed dost thou look!

SIR NATHANIEL

Sir, he hath never fed of the dainties that are bred
in a book; he hath not eat paper, as it were; he
hath not drunk ink: his intellect is not
replenished; he is only an animal, only sensible in
the duller parts.

HOLOFERNES

Sir Nathaniel, will you hear an extemporal epitaph
on the death of the deer? And, to humour the
ignorant, call I the deer the princess killed a pricket.

SIR NATHANIEL

Perge, good Master Holofernes, perge; so it shall
please you to abrogate scurrility.

HOLOFERNES

I will something affect the letter, for it argues facility.
The preycl princess pierced and prick'd
 a pretty pleasing pricket;
Some say a sore; but not a sore, till now made
 sore with shooting.
The dogs did yell: put L to sore, then sorel
 Jumps from thicket;
 Or pricket sore, or else sorel; the people fall
 a-hooting.
If sore be sore, then L to sore makes fifty
 sores o' sorel.
Of one sore I an hundred make by adding but one
 more L.

SIR NATHANIEL

A rare talent!

DULL

[Aside] If a talent be a claw, look how he claws
him with a talent.

HOLOFERNES

This is a gift that I have, simple, simple; a foolish extravagant spirit, full of forms, figures, shapes, objects, ideas, apprehensions, motions, revolutions: these are begot in the ventricle of memory, nourished in the womb of pia mater, and delivered upon the mellowing of occasion. But the gift is good in those in whom it is acute, and I am thankful for it.

SIDE VIII

Jaquenetta

ARMADO

I do betray myself with blushing. Maid!

JAQUENETTA

Man.

ARMADO

I will visit thee at the lodge.

JAQUENETTA

That's hereby.

ARMADO

I know where it is situate.

JAQUENETTA

Lord, how wise you are!

ARMADO

I will tell thee wonders.

JAQUENETTA

With that face?

ARMADO

I love thee.

JAQUENETTA

So I heard you say.

ARMADO

And so, farewell.

JAQUENETTA

Fair weather after you!

DULL

Come, Jaquenetta, away!

SIDE IX

Ferdinand, Biron, Longaville & Dumain

ACT I

SCENE I. The king of Navarre's park.

Enter FERDINAND king of Navarre, BIRON, LONGAVILLE and DUMAIN

FERDINAND

Let fame, that all hunt after in their lives,
Live register'd upon our brazen tombs
And then grace us in the disgrace of death;
When, spite of cormorant devouring Time,
The endeavor of this present breath may buy
That honour which shall bate his scythe's keen edge
And make us heirs of all eternity.
Therefore, brave conquerors,--for so you are,
That war against your own affections
And the huge army of the world's desires,--
Our late edict shall strongly stand in force:
Navarre shall be the wonder of the world;
Our court shall be a little Academe,
Still and contemplative in living art.
You three, Biron, Dumain, and Longaville,
Have sworn for three years' term to live with me
My fellow-scholars, and to keep those statutes
That are recorded in this schedule here:
If you are arm'd to do as sworn to do,
Subscribe to your deep oaths, and keep it too.

LONGAVILLE

I am resolved; 'tis but a three years' fast:
The mind shall banquet, though the body pine:
Fat paunches have lean pates, and dainty bits
Make rich the ribs, but bankrupt quite the wits.

DUMAIN

My loving lord, Dumain is mortified:
The grosser manner of these world's delights
He throws upon the gross world's baser slaves:
To love, to wealth, to pomp, I pine and die;
With all these living in philosophy.

BIRON

I can but say their protestation over;
So much, dear liege, I have already sworn,
That is, to live and study here three years.
But there are other strict observances;
As, not to see a woman in that term,
Which I hope well is not enrollèd there;
And one day in a week to touch no food
And but one meal on every day beside,
The which I hope is not enrollèd there;
And then, to sleep but three hours in the night,
And not be seen to wink of all the day--
Which I hope well is not enrollèd there:
O, these are barren tasks, too hard to keep,
Not to see ladies, study, fast, not sleep!

FERDINAND

Your oath is pass'd to pass away from these.

BIRON

Let me say no, my liege, an if you please:
I only swore to study with your grace
And stay here in your court for three years' space.

LONGAVILLE

You swore to that, Biron, and to the rest.

BIRON

By yea and nay, sir, then I swore in jest.
What is the end of study? let me know.

FERDINAND

Why, that to know, which else we should not know.

BIRON

Things hid and barr'd, you mean, from common sense?

FERDINAND

Ay, that is study's godlike recompense.

BIRON

Come on, then; I will swear to study so,
To know the thing I am forbid to know:
As thus,--to study where I well may dine,
When I to feast expressly am forbid;
Or study where to meet some mistress fine,
When mistresses from common sense are hid;
Or, having sworn too hard a keeping oath,
Study to break it and not break my troth.
If study's gain be thus and this be so,
Study knows that which yet it doth not know:
Swear me to this, and I will ne'er say no.

FERDINAND

These be the stops that hinder study quite
And train our intellects to vain delight.

BIRON

Why, all delights are vain; but that most vain,
Which with pain purchased doth inherit pain:
As, painfully to pore upon a book
To seek the light of truth; while truth the while
Doth falsely blind the eyesight of his look:
Light seeking light doth light of light beguile:
So, ere you find where light in darkness lies,
Your light grows dark by losing of your eyes.
Study me how to please the eye indeed
By fixing it upon a fairer eye,
Who dazzling so, that eye shall be his heed
And give him light that it was blinded by.
Study is like the heaven's glorious sun
That will not be deep-search'd with saucy looks:
Small have continual plodders ever won
Save base authority from others' books.
These earthly godfathers of heaven's lights
That give a name to every fixèd star
Have no more profit of their shining nights
Than those that walk and wot not what they are.
Too much to know is to know nought but fame;
And every godfather can give a name.

FERDINAND

How well he's read, to reason against reading!

DUMAIN

Proceeded well, to stop all good proceeding!

LONGAVILLE

He weeds the corn and still lets grow the weeding.

BIRON

The spring is near when green geese are a-breeding.

DUMAIN

How follows that?

BIRON

Fit in his place and time.

DUMAIN

In reason nothing.

BIRON

Something then in rhyme.

FERDINAND

Biron is like an envious sneaping frost,
That bites the first-born infants of the spring.

BIRON

Well, say I am; why should proud summer boast
Before the birds have any cause to sing?
Why should I joy in any abortive birth?
At Christmas I no more desire a rose
Than wish a snow in May's new-fangled mirth;
But like of each thing that in season grows.
So you, to study now it is too late,
Climb o'er the house to unlock the little gate.

FERDINAND

Well, sit you out: go home, Biron: adieu.

BIRON

No, my good lord; I have sworn to stay with you:
Give me the paper; let me read the same;
And to the strict'st decrees I'll write my name.

FERDINAND

How well this yielding rescues thee from shame!

BIRON

[Reads] Item, That no woman shall come within a mile of my court: Hath this been proclaimed?

LONGAVILLE

Four days ago.

BIRON

Let's see the penalty. *[Reads] On pain of losing her tongue. Who devised this penalty?*

LONGAVILLE

Marry, that did I.

BIRON

Sweet lord, and why?

LONGAVILLE

To fright them hence with that dread penalty.

BIRON

A dangerous law against gentility!

[Reads]

Item, If any man be seen to talk with a woman within the term of three years, he shall endure such public shame as the rest of the court can possibly devise.

This article, my liege, yourself must break;
For well you know here comes in embassy
The French king's daughter with yourself to speak--

FERDINAND

What say you, lords? Why, this was quite forgot.

BIRON

So study evermore is overshot:
While it doth study to have what it would
It doth forget to do the thing it should,

FERDINAND

We must of force dispense with this decree;
She must lie here on mere necessity.

BIRON

Necessity will make us all forsworn
Three thousand times within this three years' space;
For every man with his affects is born,
Not by might master'd but by special grace:
If I break faith, this word shall speak for me;
I am forsworn on 'mere necessity.'
So to the laws at large I write my name.

SIDE X

Princess & Retinue

SCENE II. The same.

Enter the PRINCESS, KATHARINE, ROSALINE, and MARIA

PRINCESS

Sweet hearts, we shall be rich ere we depart,
If fairings come thus plentifully in:
A lady wall'd about with diamonds!
Look you what I have from the loving king.

ROSALINE

Madame, came nothing else along with that?

PRINCESS

Nothing but this! yes, as much love in rhyme
As would be cramm'd up in a sheet of paper,
Writ o' both sides the leaf, margent and all,
That he was fain to seal on Cupid's name.

ROSALINE

That was the way to make his godhead wax,
For he hath been five thousand years a boy.

KATHARINE

Ay, and a shrewd unhappy gallows too.

ROSALINE

You'll ne'er be friends with him; a' kill'd your sister.

KATHARINE

He made her melancholy, sad, and heavy;
And so she died: had she been light, like you,
Of such a merry, nimble, stirring spirit,
She might ha' been a grandam ere she died:
And so may you; for a light heart lives long.

ROSALINE

What's your dark meaning, mouse, of this light word?

KATHARINE

A light condition in a beauty dark.

ROSALINE

We need more light to find your meaning out.

KATHARINE

You'll mar the light by taking it in snuff;
Therefore I'll darkly end the argument.

ROSALINE

Look what you do, you do it still i' the dark.

KATHARINE

So do not you, for you are a light wench.

ROSALINE

Indeed I weigh not you, and therefore light.

KATHARINE

You weigh me not? O, that's you care not for me.

ROSALINE

Great reason; for 'past cure is still past care.'

PRINCESS

Well bandied both; a set of wit well play'd.
But Rosaline, you have a favour too:
Who sent it? and what is it?

ROSALINE

I would you knew:
An if my face were but as fair as yours,
My favour were as great; be witness this.
Nay, I have verses too, I thank Biron:
The numbers true; and, were the numbering too,
I were the fairest goddess on the ground:
I am compared to twenty thousand fairs.
O, he hath drawn my picture in his letter!

PRINCESS

Any thing like?

ROSALINE

Much in the letters; nothing in the praise.

PRINCESS

Beauteous as ink; a good conclusion.

KATHARINE

Fair as a text B in a copy-book.

ROSALINE

'Ware pencils, ho! let me not die your debtor,
My red dominical, my golden letter:
O, that your face were not so full of O's!

KATHARINE

A pox of that jest! and I beshrew all shrows.

PRINCESS

But, Katharine, what was sent to you from fair Dumain?

KATHARINE

Madam, this glove.

PRINCESS

Did he not send you twain?

KATHARINE

Yes, madam, and moreover
Some thousand verses of a faithful lover,
A huge translation of hypocrisy,
Vilely compiled, profound simplicity.

MARIA

This and these pearls to me sent Longaville:
The letter is too long by half a mile.

PRINCESS

I think no less. Dost thou not wish in heart
The chain were longer and the letter short?

MARIA

Ay, or I would these hands might never part.

PRINCESS

We are wise girls to mock our lovers so.

ROSALINE

They are worse fools to purchase mocking so.
That same Biron I'll torture ere I go:
O that I knew he were but in by the week!
How I would make him fawn and beg and seek
And wait the season and observe the times
And spend his prodigal wits in bootless rhymes
And shape his service wholly to my hests
And make him proud to make me proud that jests!
So perttaunt-like would I o'ersway his state
That he should be my fool and I his fate.

PRINCESS

None are so surely caught, when they are catch'd,
As wit turn'd fool: folly, in wisdom hatch'd,
Hath wisdom's warrant and the help of school
And wit's own grace to grace a learnèd fool.

ROSALINE

The blood of youth burns not with such excess
As gravity's revolt to wantonness.

MARIA

Folly in fools bears not so strong a note
As foolery in the wise, when wit doth dote;
Since all the power thereof it doth apply
To prove, by wit, worth in simplicity.

PRINCESS

Here comes Boyet, and mirth is in his face.

Enter BOYET

BOYET

O, I am stabb'd with laughter! Where's her grace?

PRINCESS

Thy news Boyet?

BOYET

Under the cool shade of a sycamore
I thought to close mine eyes some half an hour;
When, lo! to interrupt my purposed rest,
Toward that shade I might behold address
The king and his companions: warily
I stole into a neighbour thicket by,
And overheard what you shall overhear,
That, by and by, disguised they will be here.

PRINCESS

But what, but what, come they to visit us?

BOYET

They do, they do: and are apparell'd thus.
Like Muscovites or Russians, as I guess.
Their purpose is to parle, to court and dance;
And every one his love-feat will advance
Unto his several mistress, which they'll know
By favours several which they did bestow.

PRINCESS

And will they so? the gallants shall be task'd;
For, ladies, we shall every one be mask'd;
And not a man of them shall have the grace,
Despite of suit, to see a lady's face.

SIDE XI

Princess, Rosa, Maria, Kath, Boyet

ACT II

SCENE I. The same.

Enter the PRINCESS of France, ROSALINE, MARIA, KATHARINE, BOYET

BOYET

Now, madam, summon up your dearest spirits:
Consider who the king your father sends,
To whom he sends, and what's his embassy:
Yourself, held precious in the world's esteem,
To parley with the sole inheritor
Of all perfections that a man may owe,
Matchless Navarre; the plea of no less weight
Than Aquitaine, a dowry for a queen.
Be now as prodigal of all dear grace
As Nature was in making graces dear
When she did starve the general world beside
And prodigally gave them all to you.

PRINCESS

Good Lord Boyet, my beauty, though but mean,
Needs not the painted flourish of your praise:
Beauty is bought by judgement of the eye,
Not utter'd by base sale of chapmen's tongues:
I am less proud to hear you tell my worth
Than you much willing to be counted wise
In spending your wit in the praise of mine.
But now to task the tasker: good Boyet,
You are not ignorant, all-telling fame
Doth noise abroad, Navarre hath made a vow,
Till painful study shall outwear three years,
No woman may approach his silent court:
Therefore to's seemeth it a needful course,
Before we enter his forbidden gates,
To know his pleasure; and in that behalf,
Bold of your worthiness, we single you
As our best-moving fair solicitor.

BOYET

Proud of employment, willingly I go.

PRINCESS

All pride is willing pride, and yours is so.

Exit BOYET

Who are the votaries, my loving friends,
That are vow-fellows with this virtuous duke?

MARIA

Lord Longaville is one.

PRINCESS

Know you the man?

MARIA

I know him, madam: at a marriage-feast,
In Normandy, saw I this Longaville:
A man of sovereign parts he is esteem'd;
Well fitted in arts, glorious in arms:
Nothing becomes him ill that he would well.
The only soil of his fair virtue's gloss,
If virtue's gloss will stain with any soil,
Is a sharp wit matched with too blunt a will;
Whose edge hath power to cut, whose will still wills
It should none spare that come within his power.

PRINCESS

Some merry mocking lord, belike; is't so?

MARIA

They say so most that most his humours know.

PRINCESS

Such short-lived wits do wither as they grow.
Who are the rest?

KATHARINE

The young Dumain, a well-accomplished youth,
Of all that virtue love for virtue loved:
Most power to do most harm, least knowing ill;
For he hath wit to make an ill shape good,
And shape to win grace though he had no wit.
I saw him at the Duke Alencon's once;
And much too little of that good I saw
Is my report to his great worthiness.

ROSALINE

Another of these students at that time
Was there with him, if I have heard a truth.
Biron they call him; but a merrier man,
Within the limit of becoming mirth,
I never spent an hour's talk withal:
His eye begets occasion for his wit;
For every object that the one doth catch
The other turns to a mirth-moving jest,
Which his fair tongue, conceit's expositor,
Delivers in such apt and gracious words
That aged ears play truant at his tales
And younger hearings are quite ravishèd;
So sweet and voluble is his discourse.

PRINCESS

God bless my ladies! are they all in love,
That every one her own hath garnishèd
With such bedecking ornaments of praise?

KATHERINE

Here comes Boyet.

SIDE XII

ROSALINE

Oft have I heard of you, my Lord Biron,
Before I saw you; and the world's large tongue
Proclaims you for a man replete with mocks,
Full of comparisons and wounding flouts,
Which you on all estates will execute
That lie within the mercy of your wit.
To weed this wormwood from your fruitful brain,
And therewithal to win me, if you please,
Without the which I am not to be won,
You shall this twelvemonth term from day to day
Visit the speechless sick and still converse
With groaning wretches; and your task shall be,
With all the fierce endeavor of your wit
To enforce the painèd impotent to smile.
