Merd-Urinous

Stories

Out of

Ben Jonson’s

Famous Voyage

In Dedication, to the Memory of,

my Father,

Professor E. Slöve, *Promblés!*

“Never forget—it’s only a story.”

A Novella by his only daughter, Fluffë Promblés.

Chapter One

**҉**

Appendix 1

A Brief Prolog for the Reader

“O Rare Ben” Jonson, born Benjamin (1572-1637), was a London bricklayer, soldier who bragged of his killings, murderer as an *easy* winner of a duel, prisoner for lewd and mutinous behaviors, poet and playwright. As playwright he is considered second only to Shakespeare. Because of the murder he was branded with the Tyburn T, but I do not know where that T was placed upon his body, a body that once dead, was buried standing upright to save money. Tyburn, by the way, refers to the gallows, a fate that Ben escaped, but whose first victim, “William with-the Beard,” did not. In the year 1196 the “Beard” was dangled for treason and once dead he was disemboweled and quartered. Each of his quarters was placed in a different part of London as a warning to others. That’s why the Tyburn Gallows came to be known as the *“Deadly But Never Green Tyburn Tree.”*

Jonson’s *On the Famous Voyage* first appeared as the final poem in his *Epigrammes,* a book that made its appearance on May 15, 1612 at sixpence a copy. The poem stands out, not only as the lon-g-e-s—t poem by more than four times the longest of one hundred and thirty-three epigrams, but by being noticeably *not* an epigram. It comprises one hundred ninety-six lines and mentions the infamous “Parliamentary Fart” which occurred in the English House of Commons on March 4th, a Friday if I recall, in the year of our Lord, 1607. The work, as you shall soon discover, is both farcical and judicious.

On the Famous Voyage

The Introduction

**N**o longer are those fabled stories of the heroes of Ancient Greece told, those of Hercules and his squire Theseus and their adventures in Hell, nor the hell-bound Orpheus in the rescuing of his unruly wife, nor stories of the wily voyager Ulysses, nor even the tales of that other teller-of-tales, Roman’s Virgil. And so they continue to argue their points to one another, these two friends Shelton and Heyden. Yes, no longer have they such stories to tell, they both conclude. But to remedy that, they can manufacture new stories of their own. Those ancient heroes, *all,* brag of slipping across the River Styx to explore the Land of the Dead. And as these two look upon the stream surrounding their abode, filled with filth and stench and noise, they decide to act, in order to create their *own* adventure. Their rowboat had no sail, but these two knaves, more horrid than Charon, that old man whose job it is to ferry the dead souls of the most recently departed across the river to Hell, these two knaves, as I was saying, were naively on their way to a land where arses croaked instead of frogs and Cerberus, that three-headed dog, set guarding the entrance to Hades, was diligently on the job. Ahead were ogresses and furies galore and the cries of ghosts, both of women and of men, each plagued with the sores of their sins, lashed open by regrets, as they die alone and afraid. And with them they brought me, your poet, or so they thought, for it was really *I* that brought forth both *they* and their adventures.

The Voyage

Itself

1

**T**he poet , standing at the top of his hill, declares to all within hearing, his intent—to sing a heroic song describing the brave yet unfortunate journey of two human beings, one of knightly quality and of such character as to someday find himself a place, perhaps, at the round table of Sir Arthur. He travels with his squire, a subordinate deep in the process of learning the trade of the cavalier knight. Although the knight is both strong and intelligent, the squire consistently bests him whenever actions come into play. Good and proper action has always trumped large muscles and highfalutin thoughts, both *then* as they still do now. But as far as squires go, he was about average in build and in height, yet without said squire, maybe they *all* would never-have made it back from their tour of Hell.

2

**T**he poet then tells *us* all, both you and me, to listen up, for he is about to start his story. It all begins on the day of the full tide. The high waters are lapping the sides of the river’s banks and flashing in the shine, or shoon, of the moon. That’s what one might think if you didn’t know better, but once you learn that *shoons* are “shoes,” well now you know better and what you know is that the water is lapping at one’s *shoes* as you stand on the banks of the river when the tide is full on the day the story commences. Either way the story to be told is promised to be near perfect.

3

**T**he jittery knight and his lively squire are sitting in the Mermaid, a bar located at the edge of the stream passing along London’s Bread Street. They have eaten well and are feeling merry due to the imbibed ale and in their good spirits they pounce upon a thus-merry plan to journey to Holborn, generally a twenty-minute walk, in a rowboat stranded along the sand-shriveled shore. This watery routeway may very well take them *more* than twenty-minutes—it could, in fact, take them the greater part of three hours—and possibly more. But they, if you recall, under the spell of feeling “*quite* merry,” why, they were up for the challenge. “List Ho!” they shout as they stroll towards the dock, a dock named *“Avernus: Gateway to Hell.”*

4

**T**he poet once again injects himself into his poem to speak to us, his readers. He informs us that the local jail, a dungeon prison, may concern each one of us, but instead of providing clear prophesy that may prove helpful in getting us out of a jam, he diverts our attention to a personal problem of his own. Seems he forgot to invoke the power and the blessings of some god or goddess over the “stuff” of his verse, nor did he provide such voodoo with a proper dosage of *“bombard style and phrase,”* whatever that is. And if he had only remembered to do that, well maybe none of the bad stuff that follows will have been, well… bad! Meanwhile our two adventurers have begun floating along this river of *sh…—*oh!, dear me, but I’m getting ahead of myself. With the warning of the author’s prison long forgotten they take turns paddling the rowboat, creaking quietly along, all alone but for the two of them. With no help from Greek gods or goddesses, wizardry objects, or magic spells offered, they stream merrily along. The poet, aware of where the two are headed and the horrors that are soon to be seen, wonders if Hercules should have been enticed to act as tour guide for this sozzled-friends’ journey into Hell. He’s been there a number of times, Hercules has, and he knows, more or less, not only the populace but all its nooks and crannies as well. And being a *Greek* god, why he could provide the poet, as muse, a helping hand with the flow and cadences of his story. Hence he praises Hercules, softening him up for the *ask.* But he is never given the chance because as he holds a fiery and well-rhymed light up to the entry of a dire and cavernous portal for his two passengers to see, both you and me, along with our two travelers, all find ourselves straddling the waste and pollution of Ycleped Mud! They could not believe the quantity *and depth* of this ycleped mud, which, for those who are not in the know, refers to the human excrement discharged hourly into the river, waste that chemically breaks down to form a foaming and bulky sludge. It was through this muck and mire that the crewmen tenuously rowed. The stirring of their oars detonated the surrounding bubbles of foam sending forth belches of candied air, both hot and sticky. As they slithered on, continuous cartfuls of London waste were spilled into the river all around them. As the tumbling of excrement flew about, the seamen transformed them into Gorgonian scolds and angry Harpies, each dripping with stench and disease, famines and sorrows—all emerging from the privies of London, while gurgling like Livy’s talking ox, portending the rumblings of an upcoming earthquake. Such booms and reverberations brought the two affrightened sailors together as one. From that time on they were forever joined in a manner similar, but not quite, to that of the twin half-brothers (and such an interesting juxtaposition of relationships we have here) known as Castor and Pollux. They were *that* close.

5

“**P**loughing the main” is what the two did, together, when they met with their second test, which would scare any one of us who had never seen worse. Before them rose a giant monster with fifty heads and two hundred arms and legs and a minor church officer leading the creature upon a leash. The beadle, for that was the church officer’s official title, the *beadle* seems to have a hundred hands whenever he meddles, and meddling is what he does all the time! So it’s easy for him to operate the leash. That’s what *Sheldon* saw, at any rate, as his side of the skiff sailed by.

6

**H**ere, duly described, is what *Haydon* saw. For it was *his* mind that evoked Hydra, the many-headed serpent. And along the tapestry of rocks upon which the dragon sat, he projected, taking flight, swirling above her dying prey, the *trull* daughter of Nisus, purple clipped locks stolen from her father’s vivifying hair dangling from her talons, all for the childlike love, of their supersized enemy, King Minos, now, employed in what he always thought would be his retirement, as the underworld’s supervising judge of the dead, or *the* SJD. But in actuality, it was not the writhing Hydra, nor the trull, at all, and *certainly* not the beadle or his leashed monster, either. It was, instead, a large, flat-bottomed barge, used for loading and unloading otherworldly freight. It was more than “large”—in fact it was *huge!*  Even standing from here you could hardly see the tip-end of it.

“Back! Go back!” a brace of Charons shout.

Our quaking men shout in return, “No! We are not going back. What is this place we have entered?”

“You are afloat upon the river Cocytus. That bank there lies the boundary between London and Hell!”

*“Charons!”* Sheldon whispers in the ear of Haydon. “Those are the creatures that ferry the acerbic souls of the dead across the souring river leading straight into Hell!”

Suddenly the two are alerted. They clearly hear the Charon’s command: “Slaves! Row thee close to those *yet* still-living gatecrashers.”

Haydon squeals, *“They’re going to shite on us!”*

To which Sheldon responds with a shrug, “No matter now. We stink so much the shit will be an improvement. Just row and get us out of here. Hey! What’s that croaking sound I hear? Is it frogs?”

“No. *It’s guts windbound over our heads*.”

“Well then, row *faster!”*

7

**A**t this very moment a loud and thunderous fart explodes above their heads, through which bursts a storm-dropping, *ab excelsis,* along with a watery bam! And there stands, before them, dripping ankle-deep in water, the great god Mercury, whose *own* official job title is Conductor of Departed Souls to Hades. That’s right, blocking their way was the CDSH officer himself. He’s calling on his walkie-talkie trying to make contact with the fortune-telling astrologer *and* alchemist, the *new* guy, Paracelsus, to berate him for some unknown offence and Paracelsus has to take it with a smile just because Mercury is the god of the *Subtleties* of Metals, intricacies necessary in order to be successful in Paracelsus’ preferred alchemical trade. We can now, if we squint but a little, just about make out almost exactly what is actually causing Mercury to reach this level of increasing *angry.* Paracelsus, as a physician and healer, has been dispensing Mercury’s spirit in pills, potions, suppositories, poultices, and lotions, all to alleviate the queasy rumblings of the gut along with other-like infirmities of the body. The rowboat drifts around the two of them as Mercury continues to complain, gripe, and grumble. If they had the nerve to reach out, they could have *poked* either one of them, but neither dared even try. As the starboard side of their well-greased vessel, slick with the sullied grey slime all about them, slithers across Mercury’s burly-tensed thigh, each of the men experiences a cold, wet, bone-chattering shiver that vibrates the ribs of the rowboat and, hence, the waters rippling about them. Rolling along they hear “Merc” whisper something about a *grave* fart he recently deposited, with a sulfuric splash, onto the floor of the House of Parliament, a fart which had quickly vanished, as most farts do—all but the fumes—and *this* one he blamed on some poor sot named Ludlow, blaming him, the now sot-less Ludlow, if you recall, blamed him entirely, for the *pungency* of a sigh. With this as the source of their breeze, blowing against the flat of their backs, they floated lazily towards the rising stink of piled and rotting bears, surrounding the burning flesh of a convicted murderess, the odor of whose charred remains reminds both our adventurers of the Lord Mayor’s *foisting*—that wet fart so unexpectedly *let* while he was sitting upright and agitatedly, on that chilly but infamous day, in the early days of March, within the well-waxed Chambers of Parliament.

8

**P**ondering such ponderous thoughts, they reached the Stygian pool, noticing all around them its denizens, sitting upon their stools of worship, their blubbery chins bouncing against their corpulent breasts. Ghosts flit all about the bone-strewn shore; they were in fact, these ghosts, the farts of the lately departed. Colored white, black, blue and green, they were, and in number an uncountable array of shapes and queer distortions. *These*, the inspiration for the thick and fragrant mists arising and drifting across the vastness of the place, obscuring the ripples through which the craft did float, while exasperating the unused valor of their palpitating snouts. Nary a nostril could avoid the acid tainting. There existed no pincer, no thumb and finger. Nor could one of any other design be made available to plug the throbbing stench stretching out from this pernicious pong and headway into shit-stained snouts. All hands were needed on deck to grasp the oars. A reeking mizzle precipitated upon the walls within this much used London toilet. Dried fecal flakes drifted *back-and-forth* and into the air, to once again land, piles upon piles, into newly-risen heaps of mish, mulch, and filth. Our heroes continued to move, heroically, rippling on. They moved along the southern bank, exiting from the *left* side of the Styx, to enter the great Acheron, another of the five rivers surrounding Hell, yet placid as an ever-simmering flood, a still-scalding stream, where the Fleet Lane furies mingled where the *hot* cooks dwelled. They skated their rowboat along grease-dripping pots brewing the hair of measled hogs, and the heads, thighs, entrails and hides, of once-pesky dogs. The scullions, ever so nasty in their measly demeanors, scooped the skins of this stew, the offal too, and dribbled one spoonful at a time into circular meat pies. Cats, flayed and well-toasted then left to grow mold, were once again toasted, then minced, again and again, until the rankness of the cat was at its peak. Only *then* were they found ready to be thrown into the simmering pot. Yet eight-nineths of the cats did not drown, for these still had lives to spare. And amongst these Tabithas, who do you think was discovered? Why it was Old Banks, that old hustler, the master of the counting-horse Morocco! Both he and his horse where burnt at the stake for sorcery, and both, now crispy and ready for sauces, were reincarnated as stew cats, all ready for mincing and mold. Haydon looks over the stern of his craft and sees, emerging from the slimy pool, a fat, furry face with whiskers, and great grey eyes, still mewing and spitting, before diving again below the surface to magically reemerge, mewing and spitting again, two more times before plunging one last time into the oily glaze of the steaming water below.

9

**O**ur brave heroes’ melodic voices, with a harmonic glissando so mild, steer on and sing, “How to dare your dainty nostrils, in so hot a season, when every clerk eats artichokes and peas, laxative lettuce and fried windy meat.” They enter into a passageway that looks promising, where each privy’s seat is filled with a buttery buttock and the walls ooze sweat mixed with urine and the squirts. The noise beats against their eardrums with so unsweet a discordance of sound, that one could barely make out the syncopated outcries of the newly damned being tossed into pools of frothing sludge, wriggling there below them, where they shakingly stood, standing upon the darkened docks, of Fleet Street. Not even a Bill of Mortality, advertising the presence of the scourge of human plague, nor the bells of loud sepulchers with their hourly knells, will keep these wretched beings from succumbing to their final tumults into grisly Pluto’s Hall. Behold the barking Cerberus, three-headed sergeant’s dog, guarding the unwelcoming gates of the underworld, located just left of the walled-up Street of Holborn. And there the dog stays, even as they come, *merd-urinously,* unto its diamond door. They knock loud despite the sign that warns: “Tempt not the Fury, for Pluto is away!” The Roman Queen herself, Proserpina, Queen of the Underworld, crowned such when Pluto stole her away while she was wandering in her father’s garden, to *make* her his wife. Well, you too would lose your wits at such a sight, even if you were a child of Zeus’ or had the immortal might of Hercules. These two did indeed cry out “Puss” whereby she transformed into aforementioned Mr. Banks, the same Mr. Banks that had showed us all the merry counting pranks made by his horse Morocco. They laughed and laughed, both our two heroes and Mr. Banks and Morocco, his horse, too. And they all passed into the Triple-Headed Bar without a sop. Finally, calling out for Rhadamanthus and Aeacus, the owners of the ale-house, and little Mino, too, for he too worked there, behind the bar—they called for drinks. So by the time the ale was delivered by the ancient, purblind fletch, the one with the *high* nose, both Shelton and Heyden were ready to gather together all the ale-house’ patrons to (1) make good on their bets and to (2) gain witnesses to their adventures now that they were at the terminal end of their … the saga of their *journey* upon the *still-warm* doormat of Hell and back. And so they bravely commenced in the telling of their tales, and *from-out-of* what little memory they could muster out of their newly inebriated skulls. Shelton started cautiously with, “No longer are those fabled stories of the heroes of Ancient Greece told…,” and then out it all gushed, without protraction, for they both, talking together, wildly proceeded, oar stroke by oar stroke, into deeper and deeper kinks and crannies, slowly but boundlessly, deep into their two rapidly-diverging stories.

† † †

An Even Briefer Epilog

**Y**ears later the *“legend of liquid deed,”* both drunken and paddled through, has grown to the size of a city raised atop a pyramid on the side of some large mountain. And I, your *always-present* poet, playing for eternalized stakes, note this for all prosperity, the following implication:

If my muse had plowed with his,

then we two sang a song

in harmony of

AJAX.[[1]](#footnote-1)

Chapter Two

**҉**

“ Undertaken in a mad frolic, and celebrated in no very sane one, I shall only say that more humor and poetry are wasted on it than it deserves. As a picture of a populous part of London, it is not without some interest, and might admit of a few remarks; but I dislike the subject, and shall therefore leave the reader, who will not follow my example, and pass lightly over it, to the annotations of Whalley.”--W. Gifford, Esq. 1816

The 2nd Appendix

An Annotated Original (Circa. 1610)

Ben Jonson’s “On the Famous Voyage”[[2]](#footnote-2)

No more let Greece her bolder fables tell

Of Hercules,[[3]](#footnote-3) or Theseus[[4]](#footnote-4) going to hell,[[5]](#footnote-5)

Orpheus,[[6]](#footnote-6) Ulysses:[[7]](#footnote-7) or the Latin muse,[[8]](#footnote-8)

With tales of Troy’s just knight,[[9]](#footnote-9) our faiths abuse:

We have a Shelton, and a Heyden[[10]](#footnote-10) got,

Had power to act, what they to feign had not.

All, that they boast of Styx, of Acheron,

Cocytus, Phlegeton,[[11]](#footnote-11) our[[12]](#footnote-12) have proved in one;[[13]](#footnote-13)

The filth, stench, noise: same only what was there

Subtly distinguished, was confused[[14]](#footnote-14) here.

Their[[15]](#footnote-15) wherry[[16]](#footnote-16) had no sail, too; ours had none:

And in it, two more horrid knaves than Charon.[[17]](#footnote-17)

Arses were heard to croak,[[18]](#footnote-18) instead of frogs;[[19]](#footnote-19)

And for one Cerberus,[[20]](#footnote-20) the whole coast was dogs,

Furies[[21]](#footnote-21) there wanted not: each scold[[22]](#footnote-22) was ten.

And, for the cries of ghosts, women, and men,

Laden with plague-sores, and their sins, were heard,

Lashed by their consciences, to die, afeared.

Then let the former age, with this content her,

She brought the poets forth, but ours the adventer.

**The Voyage Itself**

I sing the brave adventure of two wights,[[23]](#footnote-23)

And pity ‘tis, I cannot call them knights:

One was; and he, for brawn, and brain, right able

To have been styled of King Arthur’s table.

The other was a squire,[[24]](#footnote-24) of fair degree;

But, in the action, greater man than he:

Who gave, to take at his return from Hell,

His three for one.[[25]](#footnote-25) Now, lordings, listen well.

It was the day, what time the powerful moon[[26]](#footnote-26)

Makes the poor Bankside creature wet it’ shoon,[[27]](#footnote-27)

In its own hall; when these (in worthy scorn

Of those, that put out monies, on return

From Venice, Paris, or some inland passage

Of six times to, and fro, without embassage,[[28]](#footnote-28)

Or him that backward went to Berwick,[[29]](#footnote-29) or which

Did dance the famous Morris,[[30]](#footnote-30) unto Norwich,[[31]](#footnote-31)

At Bread Street’s Mermaid,[[32]](#footnote-32) having dined, and merry,

Proposed to go to Holborn[[33]](#footnote-33) in a wheery;[[34]](#footnote-34)

A harder task, than either his to Bristo’.[[35]](#footnote-35)

Or his to Antwerp.[[36]](#footnote-36) Therefore, once more list ho.[[37]](#footnote-37)

A dock there is,[[38]](#footnote-38) that called is Avernus,[[39]](#footnote-39)

Of some Bridewell,[[40]](#footnote-40) and may, in time, concern us

All, that are readers: but, methinks ‘tis odd,

That all this while I have forgot some god,

Or goddess to invoke, to stuff my verse;

And with both bombard style, and phrase, rehearse

The many perils of this port, and how

Sans help of Sybil,[[41]](#footnote-41) or a golden bough,[[42]](#footnote-42)

Or magic sacrifice, they passed along!

Alcides,[[43]](#footnote-43) be thou succoring[[44]](#footnote-44) to my song.

Thou hast seen hell (some say) and know’st all nooks there,

Canst tell me best, how every Fury[[45]](#footnote-45) looks there,

And art a god, if Fame thee not abuses,

Always at hand, to aid the mercy muses.

Great club-fist,[[46]](#footnote-46) though thy back, and bones be sore,

Still, with thy former labors; yet, once more,

Act a brave work, call it thy last adventry:[[47]](#footnote-47)

But hold my torch, while I describe the entry

To this dire passage. Say, though stop[[48]](#footnote-48) thy nose:

‘Tis but light pains: indeed this dock’s no rose.

In the first jaws appeared that ugly monster,

Ycleped[[49]](#footnote-49) Mud, which, when their oars did once stir,

Belched forth an air, as hot, as at the muster

Of all your night-tubs, when the carts do cluster,

Who shall discharge first his merd-urinous[[50]](#footnote-50) load:

Between two walls; where, on one side, to scar men,

Were seen your ugly centaurs, ye call car-men,

Gorgonian[[51]](#footnote-51) scolds[[52]](#footnote-52) and harpies;[[53]](#footnote-53) on the other

Hung stench, diseases, and old filth, their mother.

With famine, wants, and sorrows many a dozen,

The least of which was to the plague a cousin.

But they unfrighted pass, though many a privy

Spake to them louder, than the ox in Livy;[[54]](#footnote-54)

And many a sink[[55]](#footnote-55) poured out her rage anenst[[56]](#footnote-56) ‘hem;[[57]](#footnote-57)

But still their valour, and their virtue fenced[[58]](#footnote-58) ‘hem,

And, on they went, like Castor brave, and Pollux:[[59]](#footnote-59)

Ploughing the main.[[60]](#footnote-60) When see (the worst of all lucks)

They met the second prodigy, would fear a

Man, that had never heard of a Chimera.[[61]](#footnote-61)

One said, it was bold Briareus,[[62]](#footnote-62) or the beadle,[[63]](#footnote-63)

(Who hath the hundred hands when he doth meddle)

The other thought it Hydra,[[64]](#footnote-64) or the rock

Made of the trull,[[65]](#footnote-65) that cut her father’s lock:[[66]](#footnote-66)

But, coming near, they found it but a lighter,[[67]](#footnote-67)

So huge, it seemed, they could by no means quit her.

“Back,” cried their brace of Charons:[[68]](#footnote-68) they cried, “No,

No going back; on still you rogues, and row.

How hight[[69]](#footnote-69) the place?” A voice was heard, “Cocytus.”[[70]](#footnote-70)

“Row close then, slaves.” “Alas, they will beshite us.”

“No matter, stinkards, row. What croaking sound

Is this we hear? Of frogs?” “No, guts wind-bound,

Over your heads”: “Well, row.” At this a loud

Crack did report itself, as if a cloud

Had burst with storm, and down fell, *ab excelsis*,[[71]](#footnote-71)

Poor Mercury,[[72]](#footnote-72) crying out on Paracelsus,[[73]](#footnote-73)

And all his followers, that had so abused him:

And, in so shitten sort, so long had used him:

For (where[[74]](#footnote-74) he[[75]](#footnote-75) was the god of eloquence,

And subtlety of metals) they dispense

His spirits, now, in pills, and eke[[76]](#footnote-76) in potions,

Suppositories, cataplasms,[[77]](#footnote-77) and lotions.

But many moons there shall not wane (quoth he)

(In the meantime, let them imprison me)

But I will speak (and know I shall be heard)

Touching this cause, where they will be afeared

To answer me. And sure, it was the intent

Of the grave fart,[[78]](#footnote-78) late let in parliament,

Had it been seconded, and not in fume

Vanished away: as you must all presume

Their Mercury did now. By this the stem

Of the hulk touched, and, as by Polypheme[[79]](#footnote-79)

The sly Ulysses stole in a sheepskin

The well-greased wherry[[80]](#footnote-80) now had got between,

And bade her farewell sough,[[81]](#footnote-81) unto the luden:[[82]](#footnote-82)

Never did bottom more betray her burden;

The meat-boat of Bears’ college,[[83]](#footnote-83) Paris garden,[[84]](#footnote-84)

Stunk not so ill; nor, when she kissed, Kate Arden.[[85]](#footnote-85)

Yet, one day in the year, for sweet ‘tis voiced,

And that is when it is the Lord[[86]](#footnote-86) Mayor’s foist.[[87]](#footnote-87)

By this time had they reached the Stygian pool,

By which the masters swear, when, on the stool

Of worship,[[88]](#footnote-88) they their nodding chins do hit

Against their breasts. Here, several hosts did flit

About the shore, of farts, but late departed,

White, black, blue, green, and in more forms outstarted,

Than all those atomi[[89]](#footnote-89) ridiculous,

Whereof old Democrite,[[90]](#footnote-90) and Hill Nicholas,[[91]](#footnote-91)

One said, the other swore the world consists.

These be the cause of those thick frequent mists

Arising in that place, through which, who goes,

Must try the unused valour[[92]](#footnote-92) of a nose:

And that ours did. For, yet, no nare[[93]](#footnote-93) was tainted,

Nor thumb, nor finger to the stop acquainted,

But open, and unarmed encountered all:

Whether it languishing stuck upon the wall,

Or were precipitated down the jakes,[[94]](#footnote-94)

And, after, swom abroad in ample flakes,

Or, that it lay, heaped like a usurer’s mass,

All was to them the same, they were to pass,

And so they did, from Styx, to Acheron.[[95]](#footnote-95)

The ever-boiling flood. Whose banks upon

Your Fleet Lane Furies;[[96]](#footnote-96) and hot cooks do dwell,

That, with still-scalding steams, make the place hell.

The sinks ran grease, and hair of measled[[97]](#footnote-97) hogs,

The heads, houghs,[[98]](#footnote-98) entrails, and the hides of dogs:

For, to say truth, what scullion[[99]](#footnote-99) is so nasty,

To put the skins, and offal in a pasty?[[100]](#footnote-100)

Cats there lay divers had been flayed and roasted,

And, after mouldy grown, again were toasted

Then, selling not, a dish was ta’en to mince[[101]](#footnote-101) them,

But still, it seemed, the rankness did convince them.

For, here they were thrown in with the melted pewter,

Yet drowned they not. They had five lives in future.

But ‘monst these Tiberts,[[102]](#footnote-102) who do you think there was?

Old Banks[[103]](#footnote-103) the juggler,[[104]](#footnote-104) our Pythagoras,[[105]](#footnote-105)

Grave tutor to the learned horse. Both which,

Being, beyond sea, burned for one witch:

Their spirits transmigrated to a cat:

And, now, above the pool, a face right fat

With great grey eyes, are lifted up, and mewed;

Thrice did it spit; thrice dived. At last, it viewed

Our brave heroes with a milder glare,

And, in piteous tune, began. “How dare

Your dainty nostrils (in so hot a season,

When every clerk eats artichokes, and peason,[[106]](#footnote-106)

Laxative lettuce, and such windy meat[[107]](#footnote-107))

‘Tempt such a passage? When each privy’s seat

Is filled with buttock? And the walls do sweat

Urine, and plaisters?[[108]](#footnote-108) When the noise doth beat

Upon your ears, of discords so unsweet?

And outcries of the damned in the Fleet?[[109]](#footnote-109)

Cannot the plague-bill[[110]](#footnote-110) keep you back? Nor bells

Of loud sepulchres[[111]](#footnote-111) with their hourly knells,

But you will visit grisly Pluto’s[[112]](#footnote-112) hall?

Behold where Cerberus,[[113]](#footnote-113) reared on the wall

Of Holborn[[114]](#footnote-114) (three sergeants’ heads)[[115]](#footnote-115) look o’er

And stays but till you come unto the door!

Tempt not his fury, Pluto is away:

And madam Caesar,[[116]](#footnote-116) great Proserpina,[[117]](#footnote-117)

Is now from home. You lose your labours quite,

Were you Jove’s[[118]](#footnote-118) sons, or had Alcides’[[119]](#footnote-119) might.”

They cried out puss. He told them he was Banks,

That had, so often, showed them merry pranks.

They laughed, at his laugh-worthy fate. And passed

The triple head without a sop.[[120]](#footnote-120) At last,

Calling for Rhadamanthus,[[121]](#footnote-121) that dwelt by,

A soap-boiler;[[122]](#footnote-122) and Aeacus[[123]](#footnote-123) him nigh,

Who kept an ale-house: with my little Minos,[[124]](#footnote-124)

An ancient purblind[[125]](#footnote-125) fletcher,[[126]](#footnote-126) with a high nose;[[127]](#footnote-127)

They took them all to witness of their action:

And so went bravely back, without protraction.[[128]](#footnote-128)

In memory of which most liquid deed,

The city since hath raised a pyramid.[[129]](#footnote-129)

And I could wish for their eternized sakes,

My muse had ploughed[[130]](#footnote-130) with his, that sung A-JAX.[[131]](#footnote-131)

† † † † †

Chapter Three

**҉**

A Libelous Addendum

Libel is a verse genre that started with ancient Greek poetry, generally in the form of epigrams. The Romans took it from there, and then it became rather prominent during the Renaissance, after which London, through much of the 17th-century, delighted in its poetic form and recklessness. Such a means of expression was penchantly used as an over-the-line attack on the character and style of public figures, *and* each other, while generally produced anonymously. And so these poems and song lyrics were quickly printed, oft’ copied elsewhere, and proliferated everywhere amongst the elite—aristocratically controlled social groups. These were the people who had something to gain, or lose, depending on the political winds and who their friends were. It was easier to libel each other, from hidden ambush, than risk repercussions, from royalty. Poetic quality was not generally high, but the vindictiveness, along with a special type of scatological fecundity, made up for this quality-lack. During the 1600’s, many of these works were banned because they kept a running commentary on the political and royal scandals of the day, including chronicling the homosexual affairs of Kings and the exposure of the assassins of deceased political leaders. Banned items where, at the time, hidden away to avoid destruction of the literary history of those fun-packed days. Hidden, mostly in the back hallways of the British Library, and scattered amongst the bookshelves of the staunch libraries of Bodleian, they lay, awaiting, to be read once again. They provide many insights into the politics and intrigues occurring during that time of censorship. The poem *The Parliamentary Fart* does this, as well. And it happens to be one of the 350 broadsides recently (2005) released out of atheneum hiding to be organized and studied by Andrew McRae of the University of Exeter and Alastair Bellamy of Rutgers University. Says McRae: “[The poem] is a lot more about parliament as an institution and how it functions.” He continues after looking *this-way-and-that* for the censors: “This is a time [1607] when people were arguing what Parliament can *do* and how it stands *up* to a King. The author was arguing that Parliament had a *right* to argue what it wants. In that context you could argue that the fart becomes an *illicit* form of political debate” And who can argue with that? The poem came into existence on account of the Fart of 4 March 1607. Though still a bit on the chilly side that day, nevertheless, Spring was in the Air. Suddenly, Lord Ludlow, one of the younger members of the House of Commons, residing from Ludgershall, Wiltshire, broke wind rather noisily! Years later Ben Jonson would *suddenly* begin his play, *The Alchemist*, in a similar manner, mimicking a rather loudish *fart* of a similar kind. In response, Sir Epicure Mammon says: “poets…that writ so subtly of the fart, whom I will entertain still for that subject.” I don’t know what it means, but it really sounds great! But Jonson is, without doubt, referencing *our* poem, *The Parliamentary Fart,* and that ties nicely back to the two previous appendices, so, as you can see, it is appropriate to present this bit of libel—*here.* Its relevance, *here,* as a weight on my heart, is now a weight gone. Meanwhile, the fart was in response to Sir John Croke’s message from the House of Lords during some debate concerning the naturalization of the Scots. Some people, even some in London, still felt bitter about *their* country joining up with that of the Scots. Back in 1603 the Scottish-born King James unified the English and Scottish crowns making them both a part of *one* Empire—*his* empire, no doubt, hence arguments sometimes got heated on more than one occasion. And this, apparently, was one of them. The fart was Henry Ludlow’s way of saying, “Noe!,” but not knowing the question asked, we can say *“noe”* more concerning the nuance of his answer, except that his answer was remembered, through this poem, mostly, for at least fifty years, maybe more, following the fart itself, and once again emerging into the minds of selected citizens of the *21st*-century.

The following addendum is copied directly off the website for [Early Stuart Libels](https://www.earlystuartlibels.net/htdocs/index.html). The only change made was to put the footnotes, all 133 of them, closer to the text and to match it to the style of annotation used in the second appendix (above) for Jonson’s Voyage poem. Then, a bit later, I decided to update the spelling to twenty-first century standards, except for the first ten lines (so as to leave an example of how fluid spelling was in those days). The footnotes are *great* and are almost identical here to those located at the original website. Like the poem, the footnotes appear to have been anonymously written. For fully-restored details, go directly to the Early Stuart Libels’ website, do not pass go, and do not collect $200.

***“Notes.*** *The chosen version of “The Parliament Fart”, in Bodleian MS Malone 23, is one of the longest and most careful copies in circulation. On the whole it lacks the transcription errors frequently found in other copies; the names of members, with one or two possible exceptions, are given correctly; and there is an effort to provide the poem with some regularity (e.g. collating couplets attributed to the same member). The framing verses designate the poem’s value as an artful piece of wit, and hence the product of a sophisticated and urbane political culture. Given its status within parliamentary and legal circles, the notes concentrate on identifying members of parliament to whom the poem refers, and situating them within this context. Moreover, given the way in which the poem accrued substance and meaning into the 1620s, the notes regularly identify dates of death for men mentioned who died in these years. The notes also contain references to important variants.”**Source for what’s to follow:* Bodleian MS Malone 23, pp. 2-10.

҉The Censure of the Parliament: *Fart* †

Never was bestowed such art

Upon the tuning of a Fart.

Down came grave auntient[[132]](#footnote-132) Sir John Crooke[[133]](#footnote-133)

And redd his message in his booke.

Fearie well, Quoth Sir William Morris,[[134]](#footnote-134)

Soe: But Henry Ludlowes[[135]](#footnote-135) Tayle cry’d Noe.

Up starts one fuller[[136]](#footnote-136) of devotion

The Eloquence; and said a very ill motion

Not soe neither, quoth Sir Henry Jenkin,[[137]](#footnote-137)

The Motion was good; but for the stincking

Well, quoth Sir Henry Poole,[[138]](#footnote-138) it was a bold trick

To Fart in the nose of the body politic

Indeed I must confess, quoth Sir Edward Grevill[[139]](#footnote-139)

The matter of itself was somewhat uncivil.

Thank God, quoth Sir Edward Hungerford,[[140]](#footnote-140)

That this Fart proved not a Turd.

Quote Sir Jerome the less,[[141]](#footnote-141) there was no such abuse

Ever offer’d in Poland, or Spruce.[[142]](#footnote-142)

Quoth Sir Jerome in folio,[[143]](#footnote-143) I swear by the Mass

This Fart was enough to have broke all by Glass.

Indeed, quoth Sir John Trevor,[[144]](#footnote-144) it gave a fowl knock

As it launched forth from his stinking Dock.[[145]](#footnote-145)

I (quoth another) it once so chanced

That a great Man farted as he danced.[[146]](#footnote-146)

Well then, quoth Sir William Lower[[147]](#footnote-147)

This fart is no Ordinance fit for the Tower.

Quoth Sir Richard Houghton,[[148]](#footnote-148) no Justice of Quorum,[[149]](#footnote-149)

But would take it in snuff[[150]](#footnote-150) to have a fart let before him.

If it would bear an action quoth Sir Thomas Holcrofte[[151]](#footnote-151)

I would make of this fart a bolt, or a shaft.

Quoth Sir Walter Cope[[152]](#footnote-152) ‘twas a fart rarely let

I would ‘twere sweet enough for my Cabinet.

Such a Fart was never seen

Quoth the Learned Counsel of the Queen.[[153]](#footnote-153)

No, quoth Mr. Pecke,[[154]](#footnote-154) I have a President[[155]](#footnote-155) in store

That his Father farted the Session before

Nay, then quoth Noy,[[156]](#footnote-156) ‘twas lawfully done

For this fart was entail’d[[157]](#footnote-157) from father to son

Quoth Mr. Recorder,[[158]](#footnote-158) a word for the city

To cut of the aldermen’s right[[159]](#footnote-159) were great pity

Well, quoth Kitt Brookes,[[160]](#footnote-160) we give you a reason

Though he has right by dissent he had not livery & seizin[[161]](#footnote-161)

Ha ha, quoth Mr. Evans,[[162]](#footnote-162) I smell a fee

It’s a private motion here’s something for me[[163]](#footnote-163)

Well, saith Mr. Moore,[[164]](#footnote-164) let this motion repeal

What’s good for the private is oft ill for commonweal[[165]](#footnote-165)

A good year on this fart, quoth gentle Sir Harry,[[166]](#footnote-166)

He has caus’d such an Earthquake that my coalpits[[167]](#footnote-167) miscarry[[168]](#footnote-168)

‘Tis hard to recall a fart when its out,

Quoth with a loud shout[[169]](#footnote-169)

Yes, quoth Lawrence Hyde,[[170]](#footnote-170) that we may come by it

We’ll make a Proviso, time it and tie it.

Quoth Harry, the hardie[[171]](#footnote-171) look well to each clause

As well England’s liberties as laws

Now then, so?, the knightly Doctor[[172]](#footnote-172) protests,

This fart shall be brought into the court of requests[[173]](#footnote-173)

Nay, rather, saith Sir Edwyn,[[174]](#footnote-174) I’ll make a digression

And fart him a Project[[175]](#footnote-175) shall last him a Session.

Quoth Sir William Wade,[[176]](#footnote-176)you may do as you please

For it hath broken already out of little ease,[[177]](#footnote-177)

Then swore Sir John Hollis,[[178]](#footnote-178) by the Mass

Such a fart would not I let pass

Nor willingly make such a vacuity[[179]](#footnote-179)

Without some reward or hope of gratuity[[180]](#footnote-180)

For from the belly to the britch[[181]](#footnote-181) to make such a transition

It a thriftless example of a frugal position

Then start up a fat one, call’d Sir Thomas Shurley,[[182]](#footnote-182)

Saying now durst he crack so being no Burley[[183]](#footnote-183)

Quoth Sir John Fortescue,[[184]](#footnote-184) this fart was let fall

Not without great presumption doing it withal[[185]](#footnote-185)

Quoth Sir John Sheffield,[[186]](#footnote-186) in my opinion

‘Twere better leave this fart and fall to the union[[187]](#footnote-187)

Nay, quoth Sir Hugh Beeston[[188]](#footnote-188) and swore by the Mass,

Its rather the braying of some Puritan Ass

Tush,[[189]](#footnote-189) quoth Ned Hobbie,[[190]](#footnote-190) whatsoever it be

From Rome or Geneva ‘tis all one to me.

Swooks, quoth Sir John Lee,[[191]](#footnote-191) is your arse in dottage[[192]](#footnote-192)

Could you not have kept this breath to have cool’d your pottage

Why (quoth Sir Roger Owen)[[193]](#footnote-193) if books be no liars

I knew one fart divided amongst a dozen Fryeres[[194]](#footnote-194)

Phillip Gawdie[[195]](#footnote-195) stroke th’ old stubble of his face

And said the fart was well pen’d, so squat down in his place.

The modest Sir John Hollis[[196]](#footnote-196) said, on his word

It was a shoe creek’d on a board.

Not so, quoth Sir John Acklam,[[197]](#footnote-197) that cannot be

The place underneath is matted you see.

Before God, quoth Mr. Brooke,[[198]](#footnote-198) to tell you no lie

This fart by our Law is of the Post-nati[[199]](#footnote-199)

Grave Senate (quoth Duncombe)[[200]](#footnote-200) upon my salvation

This fart wanteth greatly some due reformation.

Quoth the country courtier,[[201]](#footnote-201) upon my conscience

‘Twould be well mended with a little frankincense.

Quoth Sir Thomas Challenor,[[202]](#footnote-202) I’ll demonstrate this fart

To be the voice of his belly, no thought of his heart.

Quoth Sir Hugh Beeston,[[203]](#footnote-203) it was a dissembling speech

Our mouth hath privilege[[204]](#footnote-204) but not our breech.

Upstart Ned Wymark, the Pasquill of Powles,[[205]](#footnote-205)

And said it were fitter for the chapel of the Roolles[[206]](#footnote-206)

Then wisely spake Sir Anthony Cope,[[207]](#footnote-207)

Pray God it be not a Bull from the Pope.[[208]](#footnote-208)

Not so, saith his brother,[[209]](#footnote-209) words are but wind.

Yet no man likes of this motion behind

I said, Oxenbridge[[210]](#footnote-210) there is great suspicion

That this fart savoreth of popish superstition.

Nay, quoth Mr. Goad,[[211]](#footnote-211) and also some other,

It should by is Liberty be a reformed brother.[[212]](#footnote-212)

Then up start Sir John Young,[[213]](#footnote-213) & swore by God’s nails,

Was never such a fart let on the borders of Wales.

Quoth Sir Roger Aston,[[214]](#footnote-214) how shall I tell it,

A fart hearsay and not see it nor smell it

Again quoth Sir Roger, it would well mend the matter

It this fart were well shav’d and washed with rose water.[[215]](#footnote-215)

Quoth Sir Thomas Knevett,[[216]](#footnote-216) I fear there may lurk

Under this Vault some more powder work.[[217]](#footnote-217)

No, quoth Sir John Parker,[[218]](#footnote-218) I swear by my Rapier,

It was a Bombard[[219]](#footnote-219) stopped with vile copy paper

Then said Mr. Moore in his wonted order,[[220]](#footnote-220)

I rise but to speak of the House’s disorder.

And methinks that motion with no reason stands

A man should be charg’d with that’s not in his hands.

In his hands, quoth Price,[[221]](#footnote-221) no, the fault was in his britch.

Some Taylor should have given the hose another stitch

As no talebearer dares carry to the king.[[222]](#footnote-222)

Yes, quoth Sir Roger Aston,[[223]](#footnote-223) without any pain

My Memory will serve to report the word again.

Quoth Sir Lewis his brother,[[224]](#footnote-224) if it come of ambassage

The master of Ceremonies must give it passage.[[225]](#footnote-225)

I, quoth Sir Robert Drury,[[226]](#footnote-226) that had been your part

It if had been a Forraine fart.

Well, quoth a friend,[[227]](#footnote-227) ere this be transacted

I fear we must have this fart enacted.

And wee shall have therefore (so you do not abhor it)

A fart from Scotland reciprocal for it.

A very good jest by this light,

Quoth little Mr. James of the Isle of Wight.[[228]](#footnote-228)

Quoth Sir Robert Johnson,[[229]](#footnote-229) if you will not laugh

I’ll measure this fart with my Jacobs staff,[[230]](#footnote-230)

And though it be hard, I’ll bend my intentions

To survey it out equal into several dimensions.

No that must not be, said Sir John Bennett,[[231]](#footnote-231)

We must have a select committee to pen it.

Nay, quoth Sir Richard Lovelace,[[232]](#footnote-232) to end the difference

It were fit with the lords to have a conference.[[233]](#footnote-233)

Why, said Doctor Crompton,[[234]](#footnote-234) no man can draw

This fart within the compass of the civil law.[[235]](#footnote-235)

No, said Doctor Paddy,[[236]](#footnote-236) yet dare I assure him

Though it be Præter modestiam its not Præter naturam.[[237]](#footnote-237)

Hark hark, quoth Sir John Towneshend,[[238]](#footnote-238) this fart was of might

To deny his m owne master to be dubbed knight,

For had it ambition, or orationis pars

Your Son could have told you Quid est Ars.[[239]](#footnote-239)

Then, So Quoth Sir Richard Gargrave,[[240]](#footnote-240) by and by

This man’s arse speaks better than I.

‘Twere no great grievance, quoth Mr. Hare,[[241]](#footnote-241)

The Surveyor herein had his share.[[242]](#footnote-242)

Be patient gent, quoth Sir Francis Bacon,[[243]](#footnote-243)

There’s none of us all but may be thus overtaken.

Silence, quoth Bond,[[244]](#footnote-244) though words be but wind

Yet I much mislike of this motion behind

For, quoth he, it stinks the more you stir it,

Naturam Expellas surca licet usque recurrit.[[245]](#footnote-245)

Then gan sage Mounson[[246]](#footnote-246) silence to break

And said, this fart would make an Image speak.

Then quoth Sir Dannett,[[247]](#footnote-247) this youth is too bold

The privilege of farting b’longs to us that are old.

Then said Mr. Tolderbury,[[248]](#footnote-248) I like not this passage

A fart interlocutory in the midst of a message.

With all your Eloquence, quoth Sir Richard Martin,[[249]](#footnote-249)

You cannot find out this figure of farting,

Nor what part of speech save an interjection

This fart can be in grammatic perfection.

Up riseth the speaker that noble Ephestion[[250]](#footnote-250)

And said, Gents I’ll put it to the question

The question once made, the yea’s did loose

For the Major part went clear with the nose.

Sir Robert Cotto well read in old stories,[[251]](#footnote-251)

Conferring his notes with good Mr Pories,[[252]](#footnote-252)

Can witness well that these are not fables

And yet it was hard to put the Fart in his tables.[[253]](#footnote-253)

Quoth Sir Thomas Lake, if this house not be able

To censure this fart, I’ll have it to the council table.[[254]](#footnote-254)

Quoth Sir George Moore,[[255]](#footnote-255) I think it be fit

That we this fart to the Serjant commit.

Not so, quoth the Serjant[[256]](#footnote-256) low on his knees,

Farts will break prison but never pay fees.[[257]](#footnote-257)

Why? Yet quoth the clerk,[[258]](#footnote-258) it is most true

That for a private fart a fee is my due.

This scent grows hot, quoth Mr. Dyett[[259]](#footnote-259)

Let each man take his share, and be quiet.

Look, quoth Sir William,[[260]](#footnote-260) it had been no matter

If this fart were butter’d & put in a platter,[[261]](#footnote-261)

That these that had not their judgements well spent

Might have of the taste as well as the scent.

Then Richard Buckley[[262]](#footnote-262) that angry lad,

Rose swearing (Goggs wounds) & sat down half mad.

Quoth Sir John Perrot,[[263]](#footnote-263) it grieves me at the heart

A private Man should swear for a public fart.

All of them concluded it was not well

To store up this fart so odious I smell.

And merry Mr. Hoskins[[264]](#footnote-264) swore ‘twas but a stale[[265]](#footnote-265)

To put the plain Serjant out of his written tale.

Fie, fye, I think you never did see

Such a thing as this, quoth Sir John Lee.[[266]](#footnote-266)

With many more whom here I omit

In censuring this fart who busied their wit.

Come come, quoth the King, libeling is not safe.

Bury you the fart, I’ll make the Epitaph.[[267]](#footnote-267)

**Other known sources.** *Musarum Deliciae* 65; *Le Prince d’Amour* 93; Bodleian MS Ashmole 36-37, fol. 131r; Bodleian MS CCC. 328, fol. 94v; Bodleian MS Douce f.5, fol. 28r; Bodleian MS North b.24, fol. 28r; Bodleian MS Rawl. Poet. 26, fol. 7r; Bodleian MS Rawl. Poet. 117, fol. 196v; Bodleian MS Rawl. Poet. 160, fol. 157v; Bodleian MS Rawl. Poet. 172, fol. 8r; Bodleian MS Sancroft 53, p. 53; Bodleian MS Tanner 306, fol. 254r; BL Add. MS 4149, fol. 213r; BL Add. MS 10309, fol. 123r; BL Add. MS 15227, fol. 17v; BL Add. MS 23229, fol. 16r; BL Add. MS 30982, fol. 33r; BL Add. MS 34218, fol.

20r; BL Add. MS 44963, fol. 19v; BL Add. MS 58215, fol. 190v; BL MS Egerton 2230, fol. 25r; BL MS Egerton 2725, fol. 45v; BL MS Harley 4931, fol. 10r; BL MS Harley 5191, fol. 17r; BL MS Sloane 1394, fol. 172r; BL MS Sloane 1489, fol. 25r; BL MS Sloane 1792, fol. 104v; BL MS Sloane 2023, fol. 59r; BL MS Stowe 354, fol. 43r; BL MS Stowe 962, fol. 66v; HRO, Malmesbury Papers, 9M73/G3(b); TCD MS G.2.21, p. 409; Beinecke MS Osborn b.197, p. 99; Folger MS J.a.2, fol. 81r; Folger MS V.a.160, p. 79; Folger MS V.a.275, p. 101; Folger MS V.a.322, p. 226; Folger MS V.a.399, fol. 248v; Huntington MS HM 198, 1.3; Rosenbach MS 239/22, fol. 42v; Rosenbach MS 1083/15, p. 109; Rosenbach MS 1083/16, p. 9

Source: Bodleian MS Malone 23, pp. 2-10

Chapter Four

**҉**

The Backmatter Four

The

Sir Ralph Shelden

Interlude

From the [Shelton Family History ~ – and related families (shelton-family-history.com)](https://shelton-family-history.com/)

Jane West, future wife of Sir Ralph Shelton, Jr. Ralph on the evening of his first arrest A person with a beard

Description automatically generated with low confidence

Sir Ralph Shelton, 26th Lord of Shelton, was born on November 1, 1560, in Shelton, Norfolk, England. Under the calendar of the time, that would have been a Friday whereas, upon utilizing our current calendar, it was a Tuesday. He was the third son of Sir Ralph Shelton Sr. and Mary Wodehouse. Soon after he was knighted at Theobald’s, Warwickshire, England on December 10, 1607. That would have been a Monday. According to records in the British Museum, he was Minister to Spain, Secretary to the Prince of Wales, and one of the entourage of the Earl of Carlisle on the trip to France in 1612 to arrange for the marriage of Charles I with a sister of the French King. And it was *this* Sir Ralph who held the Norfolk and Suffolk estates in 1606 (succeeding his brother John) before the sale of Shelton. Ralph *Junior* married Jane West (see photo), daughter of William West and Elizabeth Strange, in England at a time when the strange still descended upon the wily-west. In an accounting of his marriage to Jane, he is given as Ralph *Sheldon*, Esquire of Beoley, Worcestershire. Jane was born *about* 1558 in England, but not quite. They had at least two children of consequence: (1) James, and (2) Thomas. James Shelton, *Gentleman,* was born a gentle *boy* about 1585 in England. Thomas was born about 1588, *also* in England. *Everyone* in this story, except for the French King’s sister, was in England at the time. And there is *nothing* in the historical record alluding to Thomas’ being a gentleman. Hence, one can only speculate as to why he would not be, but that task of gentlemanly speculation will be left for future investigators. Thomas, though, invented the first process for writing in shorthand, doing so as early as 1630. If this *process* had been used to write this short history, *this* history would undoubtably have been a lot *shorter!* Nevertheless, this new form of writing was handsomely used by the great Samuel Pepys in the writing of his *“Diary.”* But getting back to Sir Ralph, he was a member of the Second and Third London Companies. An internet search tells us that the London Company, also known as the Virginia Company of London, was an**English joint-stock company** established in 1606 via royal charter by King James I (priorly the VIth…) with the sole purpose of establishing colonial settlements in North America. Amongst the Colonial Records of the Second Charter granted to the London Company on May 23, 1609, the names of (1) Sir Ralph Shelton of Norfolk, England, (2) Captain Shelton, and (3) James Shelton, *Gentleman,* appear.  The Second London Company sailed under the helm of Lord de la Warr,[[268]](#footnote-268) a helm containing *nine* ships and 500 *people.*  The admiral’s ship was admirably named the “Sea Venture”.  They landed, with a slight *bump,* on the shores of prehistoric America in the year of 1610. And so, being a success, a charter was granted for a *Third* London Company in 1611 as well.  As a *celebrated* Member of Parliament, to his own mind anyway, Sir Ralph signed a petition circulating within Parliament, a petition issued by the Company itself in 1610. I am not intending to insinuate any mal play here. I’m *just-sayin’.* There is nothing to indicate Sir Ralph ever came to America with the intention of growing some roots to stay for the long run. Of certainty, though, he returned to England just in time to row a boat into the Underworld with his friend, Sir Christopher Heyden, *Pher* for short, also a *noble* member of the honorable House of Commons. This rowing feat, as you might remember, was not only implemented upon a whim, but upon a whim that was invigorated by the enthusiastically drunk pledges being promised upon their safe return. Even Jane’s young sister was giving him the eye! *His* son, James Shelton, ever the *Gentleman*, did choose to remain in America, at the frantic insistence of his now *hand*-holding Lord dé la Warr. Together they founded the mighty Shelton Family of America, in the scintillating wilderness of Virginia.[[269]](#footnote-269)  Sir Ralph, having survived his travels to Hades and getting back sometime during June of 1610, was eventually killed in 1628 at the Isle of Rhe, France, at the old age of 68.[[270]](#footnote-270)

MORAL

*He who thus or half-finished lived in the age,*

*It has become longer than the given life.*

Chapter Five

**҉**

And Yet Another Appendix

**STARRING**

Ben Jonson’s Epigram

Wherein He Jests with His Friend

Sir Ralph Shelton

CXIX. TO SIR RA[L]PH SHELTON

Not he that flies the court for want of clothes,

At hunting rails,[[271]](#footnote-271) having no gift in oaths,

Cries out ‘ginst cocking,[[272]](#footnote-272) since he cannot bet,

Shuns prease,[[273]](#footnote-273) for two main causes, pox, and debt,

With me can merit more, then that good man,

Whose dice not doing well, to a pulpit ran.

҉

*What is Jonson saying here? Well, he certainly considers Ralph to be a well-dressed man. It is not for that reason he can’t be found hanging around the royal court these days. When they go hunting together, although he has no talent for swearing, he takes a firm stand against cockfighting. This is not because he has any concerns about the brutality of the battle, but because he can’t bring himself to enjoy himself while betting on one bird or the other. This is because all his money has been squandered. The real reason he has been avoiding the crowded royal court and the fun to be had there is that he is afraid of running into his creditors. Yes, and because he has no will-power, he also has to worry about getting a dose of the pox, or syphilis as it’s called today. But Jonson sees merit in his old friend Ralph, even though his luck has run out and he’s run to the pulpit to hide and possibly find salvation. Or, at least, Jonson is saying something like that. But you might see it differently, unless your eyes are closed. And* that *is what Jonson is saying here.*

҉

No, Shelton, give me thee, canst want all these,

But dost it out of judgement, not disease;

Dar’st breath in any air; and with safe skill,

Till thou canst find the best, choose the least ill.

҉

*This is a difficult task. Not being well-studied in late 16th-century English, specifically the English spoken in and around aristocratic London, I haven’t a clue what Jonson is* ever *saying. They sure did talk funny in those days. I couldn’t stop laughing, they sounded so, not funny but, not comical or whacky, nor comedic either, but* waggish*, that’s the word to describe it. Bringing our attention back to the task at hand, here is what I think Jonson might have been saying. That first line exposes the whole affair! Shelton and he are lovers. Second line: they had a lover’s quarrel; what it was about is obvious from the key words “judgement” and “disease.” Don’t ever trust Benjamin… Ralph won’t even breath the air popping out near Benjamin’s posterior he's so angry. “Now let’s talk about that disease again, why don’t we?” he says to Benjamin, but maybe he oughten’ve. Then, just before exiting the palace, he says, hankie in hand, “Till thou cants find the best, choose the least ill!” And he is gone leaving Benjamin alone, albeit unabashed and still farting. And* that *is what I* think *Jonson might have been saying.*

҉

That to the vulgar canst thyself apply

Treading a better path, not contrary;

And, in their error’s maze, thine own way know:

Which is to live to conscience, not to show.

҉

*Benjamin thinks to himself, bemusedly, “That to the vulgar canst thyself apply.” That means he can do better, anywhere, with anyone other than Ralph. And if he indeed takes this particular turn in life, he will be “treading a better path, not a contrary one.” And so, through the maze of life, a maze of one’s own making, made from the mistakes of the past, there is only one pathway:* “thine own”.  *Live this life with the fullness of your consciousness; do not to show anyone who you are; just be. And* that *is what Benjamin was be-musingly thinking to himself as he wrote those poetic lines.*

҉

He, that, but living half his age, dies such;

Makes the whole longer, than ‘twas given him, much.[[274]](#footnote-274)

҉

*Benjamin further contemplates that he, and I’m talking about his old fling Ralph, started picking up young boys, boys practically half his age, and only then did he actually get the disease he was so accusingly of. He got the bug from one of them and then he died.* Good riddance! *“How I ever got involved with him, I’ll never know.” And then Ben broke down in tears, and with his head bowed hard upon the dusty floor, he said, “Makes the whole longer, than ‘twas given him, much.” When later he was asked what he had meant by those lamentable words he confessed, “I haven’t a clue!”*

҉

MORAL

*He who thus or half-finished lived in the age,*

*It has still become longer than the given life.*

Chapter Six

**҉**

And Yet *Another*

Another Appendix

**STARRING**

The Epigrams of John Davies

Wherein He Jests with His Two Playmates

both

Christopher Heyden & Ben Jonson

John Davies *of Hereford* (1565–1618) was a writer and a poet. He had to add *“of Hereford,”* which referred to the place of his birth, a town about 150 miles west of London where his mother still lived, in order to distinguish himself from the contemporaneous poet, lawyer and politician *Sir* John Davies (1569–1626). *Sir* John was a corpulent man who died from apoplexy after eating too much. The sycophant John Davies *of Hereford* could have called himself John Davies *the Thinner* to distinguish himself from his misogynistic namesake, but he never did. John Davies *the Thinner*, as I will now forever call him, had already been dead and rotting eight years in his grave when the fat *Sir* John’s stomach burst open. Ourmalnourished John Davies wrote many epigrams highlighting his contemporaries, of which two, entered into his *Scourge of Folly,* concern a handsome Sir Christopher Hayden and the manly-pimpled Ben Jonson, each of which, each in his own turn, are reservedly presented, alas, anon.

†

***To the most learned and Valorous knight,* Sir****Christopher Hayden**

**(from my book of epigrams *Scourge of Folly,[[275]](#footnote-275)* 1611, page 191-2)**

*Learning* and *Arms*,[[276]](#footnote-276) both being much distressed,  
For want of *harbor[[277]](#footnote-277)* (since our *Sidney[[278]](#footnote-278)* died,  
Sith[[279]](#footnote-279) they sought *harbor* in one single Breast[[280]](#footnote-280))  
At last they entered thine;[[281]](#footnote-281) where they[[282]](#footnote-282) abide,  
Wherein, it's hard to say, which hath chief place  
*Mars*, or *Minerva*:[[283]](#footnote-283) but, both so do shine,  
That they, in Thee, are glorious for thy grace,

Which in *Fames Rubrick*,[[284]](#footnote-284) thus I enterline.[[285]](#footnote-285)  
Thou guardedst That,[[286]](#footnote-286) whereat a *Chamber* shott,[[287]](#footnote-287)  
With many a Hott-shortels;[[288]](#footnote-288) and didst return  
Their broken trash (which they for mischief got)  
Into their Breasts, where it, till death, did burn:[[289]](#footnote-289)

҉

*So,*Heav'n*and*Earth*must echo loud thy fame,[[290]](#footnote-290)*  
*Sith they[[291]](#footnote-291) are greatly pleasured by the same.[[292]](#footnote-292)*

† † †

†

†

**Epi. 156. *To my well accomplish'd friend Mr.* Ben Jonson*.***

**(also from my book of epigrams *Scourge of Folly,* 1611, page 75)**

I love thy *Parts*; so, must I love thy *Whole*:  
Then, still be whole in thy beloved *Parts*:  
Th'art sound in *Body*: but, some say thy *Soule*  
*Envy* doth ulcer: yet corrupted hearts[[293]](#footnote-293)  
Such censurers may have: But, if thou be  
An envious *Soul*, would thou couldst envy me:[[294]](#footnote-294)  
*But (ah!) I fear my Virtues are too dark*  
*For*Envies*shadow, from so bright a*Sparke*.*

A page from a book

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Chapter Seven

**҉**

A Tribute

to

Ben Jonson

and his

Sewer-Poem Epic

Chapter xvii.

Of the Baccanall Triumphe of the Nine Worthies of New Canaan.

by Thomas Morton and Friends

Thomas Morton: An American First

Thomas Morton was America’s first poet.[[295]](#footnote-295) He was also the writer of America’s first banned book[[296]](#footnote-296) in which he doesn’t have much good to say about the Pilgrims and their grim religious beliefs.

The Pilgrims[[297]](#footnote-297) arrived at Plymouth Rock in November of 1620 so that they could live and worship as they desired, in the cold, without harassment. They were stern, dour, austere, life-denying prigs,[[298]](#footnote-298) in other words they were Calvinist Puritans and Pilgrims. A pilgrim is a person who journeys to a sacred place for religious reasons. These pilgrims accepted the native Americans’ help while they secretly contemplated their genocide. That way they could claim the sacred land as their own. A few years later Thomas Morton led another group to Massachusetts. Morton, too, dreamed of a sacred land in which to enact another kind of paradise. He was a Englishman, steeped in the culture of London’s elite. He was friends with Ben Jonson and William Shakespeare. Nevertheless, he was a rapscallion. Trained as a lawyer he never practice. Today he is known as a chronicler and a poet. He also wrote plays and lived the life of a libertine and a rake.

For the thrill and the adventure, Morton came to America to check things out in 1622. He lived, tenuously, for a short period of time, among the pilgrims. He was a well-known figure to them as someone who was unhappy with the Puritan viewpoint on life. He retreated to England only to return to the Massachusetts region the next year with about thirty workers and a scurrilous friend, who happened to also be a notorious pirate, to set up their *own* colony, something with a little more pizazz! Being of bad character, this friend of his, he was kicked out of the newly established colony when he was caught selling some of his fellow settlers into Virginia slavery. With the treacherous despoiler gone, Morton quickly changed the name to Merry Mount and became their heathenistic quasi-leader. On May 1, “May Day,” Morton held a big party to celebrate, in the ways of the old pre-Christian villagers of England, the new directions the colony would explore. For the occasion he erected a forty-foot tall May Pole.[[299]](#footnote-299) Attached near the top were the antlers of a mature stag. And with barrels of beer and a variety of other intoxicating beverages, including the reading of poetry as further enticement, he invited everyone in the region, including the community’s new friends, their local indigenous neighbors. With a close intermingling of two cultures, they reveled, then reveled some more, and by all apparent appearances, they were all wildly happy on this day of festivity. For *this* colony, in opposition to their sternly religious neighbors, were nature loving, pleasure seeking, and Rabelaisian in the celebration of their secular delights. They represented what America *could* have become. Alas, Plymouth’s commander Myles Standish, a short man that Morton teasingly called *“Captain Shrimp,”* stood by, observed disapprovingly, then shook his puritanical head before slinking back to his Plymouth Plantation. He was especially upset by the flagrant comingling of white English men and women with their indigenous counterparts. Possibly Merry Mount’s highly successful endeavors in the local fur trade also irked him. And he *really* didn’t like the idea of Morton selling guns to the natives. That made him feel unsafe. Myles Standish prayed that it was a one-time deal—such satanic celebrations in the new wilderness’ colony that could never happen again. But when Morgan had the audacity to do it again the following May, Standish *had* to put a stop to it. And with a small party of his own, consisting of fellow enforcers of God’s law, they entered upon the festivities of their rambunctious and *very* drunk neighbors. And then, with a single well-placed whack, they chopped off Morton’s figurative May Pole. Morton was quickly arrested, too sozzled to resist, charged of being “out of harmony” with Christian moral behavior and thereby failing to act in a more appropriately-puritan manner. Talk about persecution! Morton was put in shackles and hauled away, thus putting an end to the colony’s gay times. But don’t take my word for it. Listen to what William Bradford had to say about it: *“They also set up a May-pole, drinking together and dancing about it many days together, inviting the Indian women, for their comforts, dancing and frisking consorts, dancing and frisking together like so many fairies, or furies, rather and worse practices. As if they had anew revived and celebrated the feasts of the Roman Goddess Flora, or the beastly practices of the mad Bacchanalians. Morton likewise (to show his poetry,) composed sundry rimes and verses, some tending to lasciviousness, and others to the detraction and scandal of some persons, which he affixed to this idle or idol Maypole."* Upon recovering from his drunken stupor, Morton found himself imprisoned off the rocky coast on the Isle of Shoals where he was left without provisions in the hopes that he would die of starvation, or any other convenient means of demise. But help soon arrived. His Native-American friends “came to the rescue” and thereby hung out with him until he could get a *quick* ship back to England.

Of course there is more to his story than just this, but this is just enough to orientate you, my Steady-Footed Reader, to the poem that follows, a poem that attaches some facts to the somewhat fictitious rendition of Morton’s arrest and escape. He does *not* portray his persecutors in a very kindly manner. But he does pay tribute to his friend, and mentor, Ben Jonson, by mimicking a fecal-filled trip to hell and back along the fecal-filled canals and similarly-filled waterways.[[300]](#footnote-300) At least that’s how he *started* it.

**†**

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**From Morton, Thomas: *New English Canaan or New Canaan. Containing an Abstract of New England*, Amsterdam, 1637, pp. 146-9. Notes written by Charles Francis Adams Jr. for the *New Canaan’s* reprinting in 1883 by Boston, Massachusetts’ Prince Society, established May 25th in the year 1858.** “TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTY COPIES.” Contains the first banned book in America!

The Separatists were not so contended, when mine Host of Ma-re Mount,[[301]](#footnote-301) soon to be known as the *happy* colony of Merrymont, was gone, but they were much more discontented when he was restored again:[[302]](#footnote-302) and the rather, because their passages about him, and the business, were so much derided and in songs exemplified: which, for better satisfaction of such as are in that kind affected, I have set forth, as it was then in use by the name of the Baccanall Triumphe, as followeth :

**THE POEM**

*Master Ben :*

*Johnson.*

I sing the adventures of nine worthy wights,

And pity 't is I cannot call them Knights,

Since they had brawn and brain, and were right able

To be installed of Prince Arthurs’s table;

Yet all of them were Squires of low degree,[[303]](#footnote-303)

As did appear by rules of heraldry.

The Magi told of a prodigious birth

That shortly should be found upon the earth,[[304]](#footnote-304)

By Archimedes art,[[305]](#footnote-305) which they miscontser[[306]](#footnote-306)

Unto their Land would prove a hideous monster ;

Seven heads it had, and twice so many feet,

Arguing the body to be wondrous great,

Besides a forked tail heaved up on high

As if it threaten d battle to the sky.[[307]](#footnote-307)

The Rumor of this fearful prodigy

Did cause the effeminate multitude to cry

For want of great Alcides aide,[[308]](#footnote-308) and stood

Like People that have seen Medusa’s head.[[309]](#footnote-309)

Great was the grief of heart, great was the moan,

And great the fear conceived by every one

Of Hydra’s hideous form and dreadful power,[[310]](#footnote-310)

Doubting in time this Monster would devour

All their best flocks, whose dainty wool comforts[[311]](#footnote-311)

Itself with Scarlet in all Princes’ Courts.[[312]](#footnote-312)

Not Jason nor the adventurous youths of Greece

Did bring from Colchis any richer Fleece.[[313]](#footnote-313)

In Emulation of the Grecian force

These Worthies nine[[314]](#footnote-314) prepared a wooden horse,[[315]](#footnote-315)

And, prick 'd with pride of like success, devise

How they may purchase glory by this prize;

And, if they give to Hydra’s head the fall,

It will remain a platform unto all

Their brave achievements, and in time to come,

Per fas aut nefas,[[316]](#footnote-316) they’ll erect a throne.[[317]](#footnote-317)

Clubs are turned trumps:[[318]](#footnote-318) so now the lot is cast:[[319]](#footnote-319)

With fire and sword to Hydra’s den they haste,

Mars in the ascendant, Sol in Cancer now,

And Lerna Lake[[320]](#footnote-320) to Pluto’s court[[321]](#footnote-321) must bow.

What though they [be] rebuked by thundering Jove,

Tis neither Gods nor men that can remove

Their minds from making this a dismal day.

These nine[[322]](#footnote-322) will now be actors in this play

And Summon Hydra to appear anon

Before their witless Combination:

But his undaunted spirit, nursed with meat

Such as the Cecrops[[323]](#footnote-323) gave their babes to eat,

Scorn’d their base actions; for with Cecrops’ charm

He knew he could defend himself from harm

Of Minos, Eacus, and Radamand,[[324]](#footnote-324)

Princes of Limbo;[[325]](#footnote-325) who must out of hand

Consult ‘bout Hydra, what must now be done :

Who, having fate in Counsel, one by one

Returned this answer to the Stygian fiends;

And first grim Minos spoke: most loving friends,

Hydra prognostics ruin to our state

And that our Kingdom will grow desolate;

But if one head from thence to tane[[326]](#footnote-326) away

The Body and the members will decay.

To take in hand, quoth Eacus,[[327]](#footnote-327) this task,

Is such as harebrained Phaeton[[328]](#footnote-328) did ask

Of Phoebus, to begird the world about ;

Which granted put the Netherlands[[329]](#footnote-329) to rout ;

Presumptuous fools learn wit at too much cost,

For life and labor both at once he lost.[[330]](#footnote-330)

Sterne Radamantus, being last to speak,

Made a great hum and thus did silence break:

What if, with rattling chains or Iron bands,

Hydra be bound either by feet or hands,

And after, being lashed with smarting rods,

He be conveyed by Stix unto the gods

To be accused on the upper ground

Of Lefœ Majestatis,[[331]](#footnote-331) this crime found

T’will be impossible from thence, I trowe,[[332]](#footnote-332)

Hydra shall come to trouble us below.

This sentence pleased the friends exceedingly,

That up they tossed their bonnets, and did cry,

Long live our Court in great prosperity.

The Sessions ended, some did straight devise

Court Revels, antiques and a world of joys,

Brave Christmas gambols:[[333]](#footnote-333) there was open hall

Kept to the full, and sport, the Devil and all:

Laboure 's despised, the loons are laid away,

And this proclaimed the Stygian Holliday.

In came grim Mino, with his motley beard,

And brought a distillation well prepared;

And Eacus, who is as sure as text,

Came in with his preparatives the next ;

Then Radamantus, last and principal,

Feasted the Worthies in his sumptuous hall.

There Charon Cerberus and the rout[[334]](#footnote-334) of friends

Had lap enough: and so their pastimes ends.[[335]](#footnote-335)

The Footnote

**Charles Francis Adams Jr.**

Morton implies that the "Poem" just presented was written shortly after the events to which it relates occurred, and before his return to New England in 1629. It was then, it seems, "in use" in London. The name of Ben Jonson appears in the margin of the original edition, as of this reprint, and opposite the first two lines, as above. Exactly what this signifies it is impossible now to say. Some critics that I have consulted are inclined to think that Jonson, who was then about fifty-five years old and at the height of his fame, may have written all the verses. Others suggest that Morton, by putting the name in the margin, meant to merely give the impression that Jonson wrote them all, and that this was another of the unscrupulous tricks of the author of the *New Canaan.* Neither explanation commends itself to my judgement. The first five verified lines are a paraphrase of five lines at the beginning of one of Jonson’s productions, for a poem it is not. In Jonson’s published works (Gifford’s ed, [1816] vol. viii. P. 241) they appear as follows:

I sing the brave adventure of two wights,

And pity ‘tis, I cannot call them knights:

One was; and he fore brawn and brain right able

To have been styled of king Arthur’s table.

The other was a squire, of fair degree.

With the last of the foregoing lines the paraphrase flops, and the rest of the verses in the *new Canaan* are, it must in justice be said, not only more cleanly, but in other respects superior to those to be found in Jonson’s works. Indeed, they are almost unequalled for the nastiness in which the writer seems to revel. Gifford not too strongly remarks[[336]](#footnote-336) of them, “I dislike the subject.” Morton, it appears to me, abandoning, at the sixth line, the paraphrase with which he began, went on with a production of his own, but very properly put Jonson’s name opposite the lines he borrowed from him. The remainder is in his own style, and not inferior to the mass of the contemporary verse. He himself explains it. The “nine worthy wights” are Standish and his party, who were sent to arrest him. The “prodigious birth,” was the establishment of the Mount Wollaston[[337]](#footnote-337) plantation. The “seven heads” were the seven persons composing the company at Mount Wollaston at the time of the arrest. The “forked tail” was the Maypole, with its antlered top. The fear that the Hydra of Mare Mount would devour “all their best flocks” refers to the apprehended competition in the fur trade. The “Soll in Cancer” indicates the season; the “thundering Jove” the storm, in which Morton made his escape from his captors at Wessagusset.[[338]](#footnote-338) The arrest at Mount Wollaston is passed over very lightly. Then follows the discussion among the magistrates at Plymouth, as to the disposition to be made of the prisoner. Standish would seem to be designated under the name of Minos. He recommends death. Eacus is more difficult to identify. In the preceding chapter (*Supra*, 288), Morton speaks of him as being the one whose *“voice was more allowed of then both the others,”* whatever *that* means. My supposition is that, by Eacus, Morton meant Dr. Samuel Fuller, who then apparently (Bradford, pp. 264, *note* 306, *note*) stood, next to Standish, at the head of the assistants. Morton says that he *“confounded all the arguments that Eacus could make;”* and he afterwards, in the *New Canaan*, refers to Fuller with peculiar bitterness. (*Infra,* 298.) *“Sterne Radamant”* is clearly Bradford, *“the chief Elder.”* The remainder of the poem calls for no explanation; and the whole of it is much less unintelligible than is usual with Morton.

THE ILLUSTRATIONS

**Thomas Morton, in his own words, *mostly.***

**N**ow to illustrate this Poem, and make the sense more plain,[[339]](#footnote-339) it is to be considered that the Persons at Ma-​re-​Mount were seven, and they had seven heads and fourteen feet; these were accounted Hydra with the seven heads: and the Maypole, with the Horns nailed near the top, was the forked tail of this supposed Monster, which they (for want of skill) imposed upon themselves. They feared that in time, (if they hindered not mine Host), mine Host would hinder the benefit of their Beaver trade, as he had done, (by means of this help,) in Kynyback river finely, ere they were awares; who, coming too late, were much dismayed to find that mine Host, piled triumphantly high in his boat, had gleaned away all skins before they came; which Beaver is a fit companion for Scarlet: and I believe that Jason’s golden Fleece was either the same, or some other Fleece not of so much value.

**T**his action bred a kind of heart, burning evil in the Plymouth Planters breasts, who after sought occasion against mine Host to overthrow his undertakings and to destroy his Plantation; whom they accounted a main enemy to their Church and State.

**N**ow when they had begun with him, they thought best to proceed: forasmuch as they thought themselves far enough from any control of Justice, and therefore resolved to be their own carvers: (and the rather because they presumed upon some encouragement they had from the favorites of their Sect in England:) and so with fire and sword, nine in number, pursued mine Host, who had escaped their hands, in scorn of what they intended, and betook him to his habitation in a night of great thunder and lightning, when they durst not follow him, as hardy as these nine worthies seemed to be.

**I**t was late in the Month of June that these “Marshallists” had appointed to go about this mischievous project, and deal so crabbidly with mine Host.

**A**fter a parley, he capitulated with them about the jail-quarter they proffered him, if he would consent to go for England, there to answer; his crimes: crimes they could only pretend to, crimes for which they could object to, against *him*, in principal *only* to the general. But what that would actually be he cared not, neither was it anything material. They were out to *get* him, no matter what, even though on the surface they agreed to send him back to England, next flight *out.*

**Y**et when the next flight was upon them, they, contrariwise, abused him, and carried him to their town of Plymouth, where, if they had thought he durst have gone to England, rather then they would have been any more affronted by him they would have dispatched him, as Captain Shrimp,[[340]](#footnote-340) in a rage of protest, said that he would do with his Pistol, if mine Host “dared to set his foot into that boat.” Howsoever, the chief Elders voice in that place was more powerful than any of the rest, who concluded to send mine Host without any other thing to be done to him. And this being the final agreement, (contrary to Shrimp and the others,) the nine Worthies, Puritan wannabees all, had a great Feast made, and the furmity pot[[341]](#footnote-341) was provided for the boat’s gang, too, to celebrate, *by no allowance: and all manner of pastime,* my razor thin departure.

**C**aptain **S**hrimp was so overjoyed in the performance of this exploit, that they had, at that time, extraordinary merriment, (a thing not usual amongst those *precisians[[342]](#footnote-342)*); and when the wind served they took mine Host into their Shallop, hoisted Sail, and carried him, not to England as promised, but to the Northern parts of the Atlantic cold shore; where they left him upon an Island to perish.

Chapter Eight

**҉**

**“Sweven”**

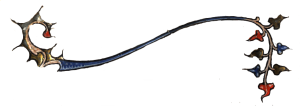
Two

recipes for furmity

pot stew

A Fourteenth-Century Receipt[[343]](#footnote-343) (or, *Recipe*):

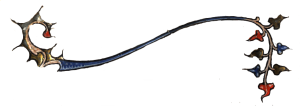
For to make furmenty nym clene wete & bray it in a mortor wel, þat þe[[344]](#footnote-344) holys gon al of, & seyt yt[[345]](#footnote-345) til yt breste; & nym yt vp & let it kele. And nym fayre fresch broþ & swete mylk of almandys or swete mylk of kyne and temper yt al. & nym þe zolkys of evryn & saffron & do þerto boyle it a lityl & set yt adoun, & messe yt forþe wyþ fat venysoun & fresch motoun.



Translated into modern English this becomes:

To make furmenty, take (*nym*) clean wheat and beat it into small pieces (i.e., *bray* it well) in a mortar until the hulls (*holys*) are all gone (*gon al*) from the kernels. Boil (*seyt*)[[346]](#footnote-346) it until the kernels burst (*bfeste*) then take it up from the heat and let it cool (*kele*). Now take fair[[347]](#footnote-347) fresh both and sweet milk of almonds or the sweet milk of cow (*kyne*) and temper it[[348]](#footnote-348) all. Next step, take the “yokes of eggs” (zolkys of evryn) and some saffron and do, thereto, boil it a little and set it down and serve it (or, as they once used to say, *“mess it forth”*) with fat venison and fresh mutton. Venison is the meat of deer and mutton, regardless of whether it is fresh or not, is the flesh of a mature dead sheep.

Few people know, and even fewer of *them* remember, that about forty years ago [from an unspecified date—could be *any* time!] country women in tattered shawls and sun bonnets used to come to the market at Weston-super-Mare in *little* carts carrying little *basins* of *new-*wheat, boiled to a jelly. This dripping and *drooling* jelly, which reminded the women of old-times and *sloppy* sex, was put into a large pot with milk, eggs, and sultanas (a type of small grape)[[349]](#footnote-349), and was lightly cooked; the resulting mixture was poured into pie-dishes and served on mid-Lent Sunday and during the ensuing week. And we called it “Frumenty.” It is *still* prepared at Devizes[[350]](#footnote-350)  for Mothering Sunday![[351]](#footnote-351)



WHAT If you *don’t* have any mutton or venison, but you *do* have a Dead porpoise.

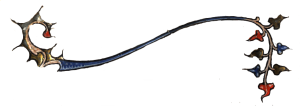
Receipt #2

**Wandering by himself, the poet lies down by a hawthorn tree and has a dream vision, or *sweven,* in which he sees two opposing armies, and a gold and red pavilion raised on top of a hill.**

-- Author Unknown circa.1390

*“The Forme of Cury* (1390 CE), one of the oldest known recipe books in the English language, contains a version of the recipe which is still very much enjoyed today and is known by the name *Frumenty with Porpoise,”* or so-says the Weston Museum located on *Burlington* Street, Western-super-Mare.

‘furmente wt porpays‘- Tak clene whete & bete hyt smale in a mort’ & fanne out clene þe doust. & þenne[[352]](#footnote-352) waysch hit clene & boyle hit tyl hit be tendur & broken. & þenne tak þe secunde mylke of almaňds & do þ’to. Boyle hē to gyd’ tyl hyt be stondyng & tak þe furſt mylke and alye hit up wiþ it. Take up the porpays out of the Furmente and leshe hem í in a dishe with hoot wat`. & do safroň to þe furment and if the porpays[[353]](#footnote-353) be salt, seeth it by hý self and s’ue hit forth.



Translated into modern English this becomes:

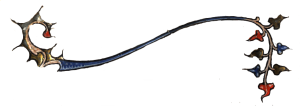
**Furmente with Porpoise.** Yum! Take some clean wheat and beat it small, small *pieces* that is, and do it in a mort, *mort’* being old slang for mortar. Fan or filter out the dust from the now-cleaned wheat, even though, I recall, we *started* with cleanwheat.[[354]](#footnote-354) Then wash the now-cleaned wheat even cleaner and for a reward, boil it until it becomes tender and broken. And ***th****ene* take the *second* milk of almonds, no mention of a first, yet, anyway, and “do ***þ****’to,*” whatever that entrails, I mean *entails.* Now boil *“hē to gyd’”[[355]](#footnote-355)* until it be “stondyng,”[[356]](#footnote-356) and, finally, take the *first* milk and mix it all up. Pull out a few slices of porpoise and taste them to make sure they’re not too salty, but if they are, just pull the porpoise out of the furmente and leshe[[357]](#footnote-357) it in a sizable bowl of hot water. Last, sprinkle it with dusting of saffron while chanting over it to honored it its name: Furmente. Then quick serve it up, fast-&-sloppy. *Bon appétit!*

At a website entitled *A Dollop of History* we learn that *“this dish was an especially popular one, especially on meatless days, especially for Lent and Advent. On these especial holidays it was a common specialty for cooks to serve milk-based frumenty, over fish, being, in this case, porpoise. The above recipe was likely written out in the blood of a porpoise by the head chef in King Richard II’s court where porpoise was an appropriate luxury-ingredient for such a feast.”* This was back in the days when everyone still thought a porpoise was a fish. I wonder whether the Christian god noticed, or even cared, that the rich people of London were breaking their covenant against eating meat on Fridays? The answer to this surprisingly comes from the 14th century, within a book of Sunday and *Holy-Day* sermons, written in the 1380’s, in pen and ink, by John Mirk. Although it was called *Liber Festivalis*, the squibbing Mirk always referred to it as his *Festial,* or so I recall*.* He said: (translated to modern English): *“For when God, for Adam’s sin, cursed the earth and the land, he cursed not the water; wherefore it is lawful for a man to eat, in* Lent*, that which cometh of the water.”* To put it differently, we eat fish on Fridays because God fucked up and forgot to curse the water. So, in this case, even though a porpoise is a mammal and *not* a fish, because of the water-thing, they didn’t really break their covenant after all and all is cool with the Christian god.

Lines 333-335 of the 14th-century poem *Wynnere and Wastoure*[[358]](#footnote-358) regurgitates: 

*Buk-tayles full brode in brothes there besyde,*  
***Venyson with the frumentee****,[[359]](#footnote-359) and fesanttes full riche,*  
*Baken mete therby one the burde sett,*

Broad bucks’ haunches, covered in sauce,  
Venison with frumenty, and excellent pheasants,  
Roast meat beside them, set on the board,[[360]](#footnote-360)



How to prepare and cook a porpoise, *English Style*. Unfortunately this topic must wait for the sequel.[[361]](#footnote-361) -FP

Chapter Nine

**҉**

one Final Appendix

The Apologia and its opposition

In a work entitled *News from the Lowe-Countreys, or Podex his Encomium,* is a lengthy poem regarding twin buttocks, bound together by a shared intergluteal cleft, discontinuous at a single point, a mere central lacuna able to produce a variety of scents and sounds, and one rum product of a more potent substance. It was written by the mysterious Mercurius Lepidus in 1652. We find at the bottom of page ten, the penultimate page of the 1652 pamphlet, this apology for his choice of subject:

Sence queinter Pens have not disdain’d the grain[[362]](#footnote-362)

Of stuffs as course as this: And, to this strain,[[363]](#footnote-363)

The Prince of modern *English* Poets hath,[[364]](#footnote-364)

In his term’d , *Famous Voyage*, trac’d a Path.[[365]](#footnote-365)

It is not so much an apology but an *excuse* or contrived *permission* allowing him to pen his own scatological tribute. Perhaps he is merely engaging in name-dropping. You can decide for yourself. Presented here is the poem in its entirety. The poem is listed in a catalogue of the printed books, manuscripts, autograph letters and engravings of the great bibliophile Henry Huth’s (1815-1878) collection of English literature, along with his bibliographical descriptions for each entry. Here is what Henry had to say about the present work: “MERCURIUS LEPIDUS. *News from the Lowe-Countreys. Or, Podex his Encomium. Held out for publick Information.* London: printed for W. N. 1652. 8vo. Eight leaves. A humorous publication in verse.” The author’s name appears to be a pseudonym. Mercurius Lepidus is Latin for *nice Mercury*. I leave it to you to figure that one out. The authors true identity is unknow and nothing at all, except for this work, is known of Mercurius. Beside his *Podex* he leaves a dark void in the historical record – much like the point of discontinuity described above. He likes his Latin, though. The title page of the ten-paged pamphlet contains the following declaration: *Nulla cruenta canunt, caveas at, candide Lector, Carmina ni madidas dent tibi nostra genas.* Loosely translated what is being so gallantly declared is that

There are no bloody songs, but beware, dear reader,

that our cheeks do not give you wet songs.

I give you a minute to let that sink in… It was printed for “W. N.” We can only speculate for whom these initials stand, of which only those of William Neast (1623-1670) comes to mind. Neast was a Member of Parliament in the years 1653 and 1656. He was married to Elizabeth Atwood of Old Sodbury, which is just **one mile north-east of Chipping Sodbury**. But, just to remind you, this is *only* speculation.

*Definition of Podex: “The anal region; the rump.” —Merriam-Webster*

**H**ere is the poem, in full, for whom the blame was draped upon our Ben Jonson and his *Famous Voyage.* Note that it is placed here, so appropriately and prominently, at the tale’s end of this little book of mine.

M.L.[[366]](#footnote-366) to the Reader

*Scents* are in Things, not Words. A Rose, or Pink

Hath no sweet smell; nor hath a —[[367]](#footnote-367) a stink

In the bare Name: less, when the name doth lurk,

Wrapped in clean Linen, and lets *Fancy* work.

It will not, then, I hope, offend thy Nose,

I praise Him, here, that breathes within thy Hose.

Podex:

His Encomium[[368]](#footnote-368)

OF *Microcosm* his chiefest Base

*Don Podex* hight,[[369]](#footnote-369) and of his Race,

His Honor, Qualities, and Parts,

And of his many Slights and Arts,

I mean to sing. Great *Ajax,[[370]](#footnote-370)* Thou

That know'st his Matter, Mould,[[371]](#footnote-371) and how

His Humor flows, inspire my Quill,

That, to this Age, it may distill,

Of its long clouded Excellence,

A Lick,[[372]](#footnote-372) to season every sense.

When, first, the first confused Mass

Did, from its mish-mash medley, pass

To those four segregated forms,[[373]](#footnote-373)

Whose re-commixture[[374]](#footnote-374) now informs

And, Being, gives to whatsoe’er

Subsists in this Terrestrial Sphere.

And that the Arch[[375]](#footnote-375)-Thees's stollen Fire

Did, first, the Thing, called Man, inspire,

*Podex* then breathed.[[376]](#footnote-376) His shape most rare,

For tis not oval, long, or square,

Trigonal, or Pentagonal,

Or any of the Gones[[377]](#footnote-377) at all,

But pure *Orbicular:* And so

As an Ecliptic Line doth go,

To the Antarctic Pole, and frames

Two *semi Rotunds;* But Oakes[[378]](#footnote-378) names

Them Ho-rise-on-tails.[[379]](#footnote-379) Wondrous fair

Is his Complexion, for the Air

Doth seldom nip it, or the Sun

Give it a kiss, to make it done.

His Dress is of as many kinds,

As there are Nations, Modes, and Minds,[[380]](#footnote-380)

Sometimes, forsooth, the *Spanish* Hose

Doth trick him up, and there He goes;[[381]](#footnote-381)

The *French* Trunk sometimes doth him house

The *Dutch* Slop, and the *Irish* Trouse,

(That best his just proportion shows)

The *Scottish Brackin,* (O my Toes!)

The German, Dane, the Swisser-cut,

And thousands more, together put,

In rank and file, of no mean worth,

Do all contend to set him forth.[[382]](#footnote-382)

But above all, (and somewhat more)

The Shees, from ten, to twice two score,

And upwards yet, most cast about

How they may make him flaunt it out:[[383]](#footnote-383)

And take it in a high disdain,

He should walk forth without a Train;[[384]](#footnote-384)

Which close still at his heels must wait,

For his more Glory, Pomp, and State.

Now though indeed, he[[385]](#footnote-385) hath resort

In ev'ry Place, (for Camp, and Court,

The Country, City knows him well)

Yet he is chiefly pleased to dwell

In the Low-Countries, ‘mong the Crew

of Fat-chops, of the purest hue.[[386]](#footnote-386)

This *Podex* is in fame, so great

All Callings grace him with a Seat,

What Syn'drim,[[387]](#footnote-387) Synod, Senate, State

Without him ere in Council sate?[[388]](#footnote-388)

What Courts of Conscience, Criminal,

Pleas Common, Chequer,[[389]](#footnote-389) Admiral

Do sentence give on That, or This,

But *Podex* an Assessor is?[[390]](#footnote-390)

What Conclave can, or Cabal be,

What Conventicle, Committee[[391]](#footnote-391)

Doth hold, or meet, but *Podex,* there,

Before all others, takes the Chair?

What public show, what Masque, or Play,

Ball, Banquet, Feast, Wake, Games of *May;*

Are solemnized, for sport, or grace,

But *Podex* still is first in place?[[392]](#footnote-392)

Yet though we thus, of *Podex* speak,

Mistake him not, or think him weak

In Spirit, as if only made

For Pastimes; or that duller trade

Called Contemplation, that presents

Language for Launces; Tubs for Tents.

No, No;[[393]](#footnote-393) The highest Feats of Arms,

The hottest Conflicts, and Alarms

Of thundering *Mars, Bellona[[394]](#footnote-394)* fierce

Are not without him. To rehearse

His active Fortitude, would spend

Quills to the stumps, and yet not end.[[395]](#footnote-395)

What private challenge, Duel, Fray,

Doth passe without him? What Array

Of War; what March by Day or Night,

What Skirmish, Battle, Onslaught, Fight

By Sea, or Land; What City stormed;

What Fort besieged; What Deed performed

Of noted Fame, in Trenches, Grafts,

At Breaches, Turnpikes, Bridges, Rafts,

Mines, Sconces, Passes, anywhere,

But gallant *Podex* still is there?

What Plot, Design of any size,

What Stratagem, or Enterprise,

Whether in Parties, or alone,

But daring *Podex* still is one?

What need more on this Point to tarry?[[396]](#footnote-396)

*Podex* is an Ubiquitary.[[397]](#footnote-397)

Yet further to enlarge his Praise

(Which well deserves, and wears the Bayse[[398]](#footnote-398))

Know, *Podex* is of such high sway

That Kings, when he Commands, obey:

Princes, Lords, Ladies must do so,

And, where he bids, not send, but go

Themselves in Person, and no boot

For them to scorn to trudge a foot.

Coach, Horse, Sedan, and of that kind,

All other Knacks must stay behind.

*Podex* is mighty, stout, and strong

To baffle All, would do him wrong.

*Podex* is in so high request,

That each one strives to please him best.

Is *Podex* out of tune, pray tell,

Who spares for Cost, to make him Well?

Is *Podex* foul, what Dame so nice,

Will scorn to wipe him once, or twice?

Whom *Podex* once but takes to favour

*Podex,* in lose, makes him a Savor.

*Podex,* with ev'ry Sex, and Sort

Of People, hath a loud Report.[[399]](#footnote-399)

*Podex* is of an humble Mind,

Steps not before, but comes behind,[[400]](#footnote-400)

*Podex* yet standeth bare to None

But to strong-scented *Ajax's* throne.[[401]](#footnote-401)

Should I of all his Places speak,

Pen, Ink, and Paper were too weak.[[402]](#footnote-402)

What House of Office in the Land,

But *Podex,* therein, hath Command?

*Podex,* a Statist,[[403]](#footnote-403) much of Note,

Doth in all Privy-Council’s Vote.

*Podex* a Judge is, that decrees,

Without respects, or bribes, or fees,

A *Habeas Corpus,* on a pain

None ere incurred without a Stain.[[404]](#footnote-404)

*Podex* is Doctor of the Chair,

And where he speaks hold your Tongue there.[[405]](#footnote-405)

*Podex* a Lawyer is, your Case

Can clear at any Time and Place.[[406]](#footnote-406)

And when occasion rightly needs

In Fee-tail[[407]](#footnote-407) best can draw your Deeds.

*Podex's*-a *Herald, Aeolus,[[408]](#footnote-408)*

By him, Proclaims his Hests[[409]](#footnote-409) to us,[[410]](#footnote-410)

From his *Culabrian[[411]](#footnote-411)* snowy Cliff,

A *Zone* more hot then *Teneriff.[[412]](#footnote-412)*

*Podex* is a Physician, much

Cures Collicks, Belly-Ach, and such.

*Podex* a Soldier is, doth keep

His Watch and Rounds whilst you do sleep.

*Podex's a* Sergeant, whose Arrest

Admits no Bail, To go is best.[[413]](#footnote-413)

But by the way, ere I proceed

With *Podex* further, let his Seed,

His Brood, his Off-spring, Issue, be

Made known to You. Yet (let me see)[[414]](#footnote-414)

It is so numerous, so great,

So strange, so divers to repeat,

That should I go this task about

I ne'r should find a clean way out.

Take Notice only, for his grace,

That that which takes the chiefest place,

As most in power, strength, and Sense,

A Knight is, called, Sir Reverence.[[415]](#footnote-415)

Come to his Parts. Can any **Dance**

The *Spanish* Pavin, tricks of *France,*

The *Scottish* Jig, the *Irish* Trot,

And thousands more: And *Podex* not?

Can any fence, or vault, or ride,

But *Podex,* there, is in his Pride?

*Podex* a Linguist is, affects

To speak in sundry Dialects.[[416]](#footnote-416)

*Podex* is versed, in **Grammar**, Well,

His ev'ry Part of Speech can tell:

Knows all his Rules, among the rest,

Ease *in praesenti,*[[417]](#footnote-417) likes him best.

And Priscian[[418]](#footnote-418) (be it no disgrace)

Dares hardly look him in the face.

*Podex* in **Ret'rick**[[419]](#footnote-419) hath a Vein

Oft uttering in a fluent strain.

His Elocutions Excellence

The object is of ev'ry Sense.

You may there, taste, touch, smell, see, hear:

The Schoolmen but affect the Ear.

*Podex,* in **Logic**, is profound,

His Syllogisms are strong, and sound.

*Festino[[420]](#footnote-420)* a main Figure is

He loves, and sometimes

Disamis[[421]](#footnote-421)

Does-amiss.

His force doth in Bocardo[[422]](#footnote-422) lie;

And bears all out with,

Datisi.[[423]](#footnote-423)

That—is—I.

**Music** doth *Podex* so delight,

He sings by Day, he sings by Night;

He sings with All, in ev'ry Place,

All kind of Parts; His chief is Base.

Knows Thirds, Fifths, Eights, Rests, Mood and Time:

His Gamut[[424]](#footnote-424) can descend and climb.

If to **Arithmetic** you come,

*Podex* can cast,[[425]](#footnote-425) can clear a sum.

Add, Multiply, Subtract, Divide;

Work still to the Sinister side.[[426]](#footnote-426)

The Rules of Fellowship, of Three,[[427]](#footnote-427)

And more to him familiar be.

*Podex* is for **Geometry**,

Shows *Area,* shows *Periphery.*

Shows Circle, Center, Parallels;

Shows the Diameter, (that tells

How to split justly Rounds in Two:)

And shows you more the I will do.

Talk of **Astronomy**, and there

*Podex* excels; Displays the Sphere,

Its Motions, Constellations, Range,

Eclipses, Changes: Shows (O strange!)

The Smooth-faced Twins, the milky way,

The Pole, the Line, and such as they.

Shall not then *Podex* for his parts

Be styled **Master in the Arts**?[[428]](#footnote-428)

Nay rather make their number even,

By adding *Podex* to the Seven.[[429]](#footnote-429)

*Podex* is Liberal, and may

Better be called, Arse, then They.[[430]](#footnote-430)

Something of *Podex* yet I find,

Of no small Moment, left behind,

His Slights and Arts.[[431]](#footnote-431) But who should tell,

All, would a Volume vastly Swell.

True Symmetry, 'tis truly Said,

Will, by the Foot, describe the Head.

It shall suffice, that, by a Spole,[[432]](#footnote-432)

A Sense acute may sent the Hole.

*Podex* an **Archer** is, of Those

That aim at Heel, and hit the Nose.

*Podex* is a **Perfumer**, vents

Strong, and of sundry sorts of Scents.[[433]](#footnote-433)

*Podex* a **Painter** is, can lay

Colors, as well By Night as Day.

*Podex* is a rare ***Pilot****,[[434]](#footnote-434)* knows

Whence the Wind comes, and where it blows.

Is for all weathers, sometimes sails

With gentle, sometimes blustering Gales.

His steady Course doth seldom stoop,

For he hath still the Wind in Poop.[[435]](#footnote-435)

*Podex*'s a **Husbandman**,[[436]](#footnote-436) can soil

His Ground with ease when others toil.

*Podex* a **Tucker[[437]](#footnote-437)** is, and knows

A speedy way to thicken Clothes.

*Podex*'s a **Chandler**,[[438]](#footnote-438) and you may

Fetch much-Turd there, fresh ev'ry Day.

*Podex* a **Trumpeter[[439]](#footnote-439)** is too,

And blows as strong as you can do.

*Podex* is, — Nay I fain would know,

What *Podex* is not? Which to show

But in the Negative, would more

Puzzle the Brain, then what, before,

Of him is said. In this, conclude,

That High, and Low, the fil’d,[[440]](#footnote-440) the rude,

The rich, the poor, the foul, the faire,

The-All the World, his Vassals[[441]](#footnote-441) are.

Who dares withstand his force and might

If once he says, You must go—Walk?

*Podex* then only doth surmount,

*Podex* is sole Lord Paramount.

*Podex* still moans within his Sphere;

*Podex* is *Podex* ev'ry where!

*Podex* shall breathe in spite of Fate,

While Tails do croak, and Tongues do prate.

*FINIS.*

Podex

His Vindication.

IF carping *Momes[[442]](#footnote-442)* shall flirt in *Podex*'s face

A Flout,[[443]](#footnote-443) to blur his Matter with Disgrace:

*Podex,* with a full Breath, reflurts[[444]](#footnote-444) it back

Into their Teeth, that so much wit do lack.[[445]](#footnote-445)

**Since quainter Pens have not disdained the grain**

**Of stuffs as course as this: And, to this strain,**

**The Prince of modern *English* Poets hath,**

**In his, termed, *Famous Voyage,* traced a Path.**

M.L.

His Salutiferous Advice to the Feminine Gender.

When *Podex* stout shall cease to speak.

Then, not before, your Hearts will break.

Take therefore care (you Simpering Ones)

He still may breathe long-winded Tones.

No Music, were it of the Spheres,

Can, with like Raptures, charm your Ears.

No Eastern Sweets, or Fragrant Rose

Can more affect, and catch your Nose.

These only please the External Sense:

Those have intrinsic Excellence.

They oft let loose, where you are bound:

And, if distempered, make you sound.

*Podex,* your Minion, charged, will give

True strong Reports, That still you live.

Which if some chance to take in snuff,

Cry, *Claudius,[[446]](#footnote-446)* and it is enough.

*FINIS.*

To which Ben Jonson, author of the immortal *On the Famous Voyage,* responded:

*O, call me home again dear Chief, and put me back to yoking foxes, milking of he-goats, the pounding of water in a mortar, and laving the sea dry with a nutshell. I long to gather all the leaves that are fallen this Autumn, to draw farts out of dead bodies, and make ropes of sand while catching the winds together in a net. I long for the mustering of ants, and the numbering all the atoms! All that poetry you thought exquisite is but a torment to me. Rather than stay me here, a moment more, I would sooner keep fleas within a circle, and be accountable for a thousand years, the keeping of records regarding which of them escaped and how far from the circle it leap’t, than endure another minute of such a circle of poems and stories I have found myself agonizingly within. There is no hell worse than these perpetual tortures. T’would be refreshing for me, to be i’ the fire again, from hence.*

And with *that,* he was gone!

1. The dimwitted Ajax is the name of a strapping Greek warrior whose name *somehow* became associated with the toilet. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The voyage of two men, possibly, as we shall soon note, mere baboons, in a boat down London’s Fleet River (sometimes referred to as “Fleet’s Ditch”) from Bridewell to Holborn, sometimes alleged for a visit to a Holborn whorehouse. Holborn is often associated with public floggings. They are set adrift in raw sewage, animal carcasses and filth on a journey that begins along the northside of the city wall at Bridewell, a formal Royal Place but since then fallen. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. We all have some idea of who Hercules was. His father, identified below, seduced a mortal girl who then had sex with her husband, so she ended up pregnant twice, with twins, each with a different father. Hence Hercules, half man and half god, had no trouble becoming Greece’s greatest hero. He was strong and unflinchingly stouthearted. In addition he had a superior sexual prowess that clinched his popularity. Here is a brief synapse containing some of the highlights of his life where much is left out. As a boy Hercules strangled a snake sent to kill him by his step-mother who was still angry with, not only the boy’s father, but the boy’s great-great grandfather, too. That would be the womanizing Zeus, both father and great-great grandfather to the boy. But that is another story all unto itself. Apparently he, Hercules, did not enjoy practicing the lyre so he bludgeoned his music teacher with same-said instrument, bludgeoning him, in fact, to death. Typical preteen stuff. He then went on, at this step-mother’s provocation, to kill his first wife and their three children. To make up for this this madness he was instructed to complete twelve (12) labors wherein he captured and/or slayed eight or nine assorted animals, stole some apples and stuff, and cleaned up the Augean stables consisting of 3000 cattle and their diseased feces. The cleanup miraculously took only a day. Nevertheless he was still mandated to wear woman’s clothing and slave for the queen Omphale. He was such an efficient worker, though, that she fell in love with him and forced him to marry her. I do not know if he still had to wear women’s clothing once the vows were shared and the honeymoon was over. He died, accidentally poisoned by the Hydra’s blood, thought to be a love potion, sprinkled upon him by the last of his earthly wives. If you had been there you would have seen the venom eating away at his skin, exposing his bones—not a pleasant way to die. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Theseus was the mythical founder and hero-king of Athens. Among his many heroic and dangerous feats, Theseus was able to capture the terrifying Marathonian Bull and behead the half-man/half-bull Minotaur. He then went on to complete his six labors (only *half* as many as demanded upon Hercules) that yielded for him an entranceway into Hades. It was at this point he lost courage and so called out for a friend’s help to ensure his escape from the underworld. Hercules was happy to comply and proved successful in the endeavor. Incidentally, Theseus, as hero, was second only to Hercules just as Jonson was second only to Shakespeare. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Hercules’ 12th labor was to bring Cerberus, the three-headed dog, from Hell. So he had been back-and-forth at least a couple of times. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. The musical Orpheus was a talented lyre player. (If he were Hercules teacher, he would’ve been dead.) He was even able to entice the trees and rocks to shimmy and sway once he was warmed up. His wife, poisoned by a snake, resided in the underworld. He went-there after-her and, by entrancing the guardians of Hades with his lyre, was able to sneak her out. On the way out the two of them gave a vow to Pluto, King of the Underworld, to *never* look back. Unfortunately his incautious wife couldn’t help herself and, promise broken, was immediately taken back into the bowels of Hell’s inferno where she rots to this day. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Homer’s Ulysses, heroic adventurer. During his Odyssey (XI), Ulysses sails to the land of the Cimmerians which, like London, has access to Hades. Ulysses slides from there straight into the underworld to ask for directions on how to get back to his home in Ithaca. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. The *Latin muse* referred to here is most likely that of the imaginative Roman writer **Publius Vergilius Maro**, otherwise known as Virgil. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. *Troy’s just knight* is the pious Aeneas, the Trojan hero with a good nose and black, twinkling eyes. He had earlier made a visit to Hades in *Aeneid VI,* which was written by Virgil between 29-19 BCE*.*  [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Shelton and Heyden are two scallywags soon to embark on a perilous journey. *Shelton* is most likely Sir Ralph Shelton (1560-1628), of whom Jonson immortalized with Epigram CXIX (119),which is presented in full as a third or fourth appendix to the present work (*fifth* appendix, if my calculations are accurate, regarding the novella as a whole) along with more biographical material, maybe. Ralph is also immortalized in Sir John Harrington’s scatological essay *Apologie for Ajax*. In that work Sir John tells us that Sir Ralph, “of Beeley, in the County of Worchester Esquire,” nearly loses his land “within two years” upon which he has “a fine house in Weston.” Harrington, incidentally, wrote several other scatological works and is purported to be the innovator of the flush toilet, a feat of which he was very proud. We learn elsewhere that *“Chamberlain told Carleton”* (and I leave it up to you to work out who these two gossips are) that “Sir Rofe *(sic)* Shelton” was a buffoon!—and perhaps he was. [Another possibility, though unlikely, is that *Shelton* is actually *Thomas* Shelton, a minor poet and first translator of Don Quixote, published in 1612.] *Heyden* is most likely Sir *Christopher* Heyden (1561-1623), an English soldier, defender of astrology, and Member of Parliament and perhaps present for the poem’s upcoming “Parliament Fart.” These two rapscallions are about to embark on a voyage, though at times wishing they had *not,* for they are soon to be dipping into the swift-flowing sewer of London’s Fleet River. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. These are the four rivers surrounding Hades. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. At the time this poem was written, *our* was still often used for “ours.” Such usage lasted well into the seventeenth century even though the differentiated form “ours” had entered into general use by the year 1500. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. The “one” being the sewers of London, specifically Fleet Ditch, once used for shipping cargo, but at the time of this poem, for depositing waste. It ran south into the Thames. Charles Harold Herford and Percy & Evelyn Simpson tell us more: “Its earlier course, from Clerkenwell to Holborn Bridge (where the Viaduct now stands [in 1965]), was called Turnmill Brook; [and] from that point to the Thames [it was called] Fleet Ditch. Originally used by ships but Stow records that by his time the stream had been narrowed.” (See John Stow: *A Survey of London,* 1603, Volume 1, page 26, for more details.) Much of Jonson’s childhood was spent living along another sewer ditch, Hartshorn Lane. It was a ditch running from the Strand into the Thames. The ‘great sewer,’ which ran down the middle of Hartshorn Lane, was liable of overflowing with all its “*merd-urinous”* content and malodorous malignancies. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. *Confused* = all mixed together into a horrible mess. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. *Their* referring to the Greek heroes mentioned above. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. A light rowboat used for carrying passengers. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. *Charon* was an old man with a grey ponytail, sometimes braided, who ferried the souls of the dead across the Styx and Acheron rivers. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. The two young travelers are aurally subjected to the sounds of farts. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. A reference to the *frogs* of Aristophanes who did the same. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. A three-headed dog guarding the entrance to Hades. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. The *furies* were snake-haired Greek deities of vengeance. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. A *scold* is a woman who constantly finds fault. For each scold there are at least ten furies and there were a lot of scolds. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. *Wight* is another term for a person of a specified kind, especially one regarded as unfortunate. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. A *squire* is a young nobleman acting as an attendant to a knight before becoming a knight himself. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. A *three for one* dividend to be paid upon the journey’s end. Probably a wagered bet to be paid upon the successful completion of the journey. For example, William Kemp put money up for his walk to Norridge with the expectation of a threefold return on his investment. He was annoyed when many of those with whom he had placed bets refused to pay him upon his return to London. See end of footnote 29 regarding this and other such wagers. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. *Powerful moon* = full moon. Also interpreted as a “spring tide,” which is a tide just after a new or full moon, when there is the greatest difference between high and low water. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. *Shoon* = shoes. The sloshing water upon one’s shoes is an allusion to it being at high tide. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. *Embassage* = the business or message of an envoy. Possibly referring to a commission. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. *Berwick* = a town south of the Anglo-Scottish border and the northmost English town. Backward went to Berwick refers to a trip made from London to Berwick made by \*\*\* while walking backwards all the while. A worthwhile quote regarding this and the following references comes from actor and dramatist William Rowley’s *A Search for Money or the Lamentable Complaint for the Loss of the Wandering Knight Monsieur L’Argent* published in 1609. I quote here from the preface, with updated language: *“Ye have been either an ear or eye witnesses, or both, to many mad voyages made of late years, both by sea and as the travel to Rome with the return in certainties, the wild Morris to Norridge, the fellows going backward to Barwick, another hopping from Yorke to London…”* No doubt this passage was available to Jonson at the time of the writing of his poem. Although history does not record who it exactly was that did the backwards walking, in 1589 Sir Robert Carey won 2,000 pounds for walking that distance in twelve days. Such wagering pertaining to such feats seemed to be all the rage in the time of the Tutors. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. The *Morris* is an old-styled English folk dance based on rhythmic stepping while wearing bells on the shins. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. *Norwich* = an inland English town, located 125 miles from London, to which William Kemp traveled while allegedly dancing the Morris all the while. Kemp, a comedic actor, performed in several of Shakespeare’s plays including *Romeo and Juliet* as Peter and *Much Ado* as Dogberry. Starting in London on February 10, 1599 before an enthusiastic crowd, he strained his hip on the second full day of his trip, fell into a pothole near Braintree, and had his spirits rise as several local girls danced with him along the way. He arrived in Norwich, apparently still dancing, on Saturday, March 8th to a welcoming crowd, music and cheers. A year later he celebrated his feat by publishing his *Kemps Nine Daies Wonder. Performed in a Daunce from London to Norwich.* Ben Jonson also alludes to Kemp’s *tour de force* in his play *Every Man out of his Humour* where Carlo Buffone exclaims, “Would I had one of Kemp’s shoes to throw after you!” [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. The Mermaid, located on Bread Street, was a London tavern well-known to Ben Jonson. It was the meeting place for innumerable poets, dramatists, and political adventurers. The group, led by Jonson himself, called themselves the “Mermaid Club” and helped to sharpen Jonson’s political instincts as well as satiate his desire for sociability. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. *Holborn*, the adventurers’ destination, is a part of London located north of the Thames. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. A wherry is a light rowboat used on rivers. The proposed trip from Bread Street to Holborn would entail a twenty-minute walk. By rowboat, though, it takes longer. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Regarding *his to Bristo’:* Whereas to travel by walking from Bread Street to Bristo’ (i.e., Bristol) would take three-and-a-half hours, rowing took much longer. In 1590 Richard Ferris rowed his wherry (rowboat) from the Tower Wharf in London to Bristol. Ferris, whose fame lasted from 1580 until 1606, was an English adventurer who, although without prior sailing skills, nevertheless, along with his two friends Andrew Hill and William Thomas, was determined to row their newly-built wherry, by sea, from London to Bristol. Their trip proved more difficult than anticipated. Leaving London’s Tower Wharf on Midsummer Day (around June 21st) they did not reach Bristol until August 3rd. Five days later they returned to London and were jovially received wherever they went. Ballads were sung and a book (*The most dangerous and memorable Adventure of Richard Ferris*) was written. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Antwerp is in Belgium and a much more difficult trip would entail the daring feat of rowing across the English Channel to get there. Quoting Samuel Rowlands (1573-1630, English author of pamphlets and verse): “Another with his oars and slender wherry, From London unto Antwerpe o’re did ferry.” [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. List = enlist? And *ho* as in “westward ho!”, “tally ho!” or “land ho!”? [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. And, more specifically, the dock and outlet for Fleet Ditch being referred to here is Bridewell Dock. And this dock is where our journey officially begins. Fleet prison was on its western bank. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. *Avernus* is one of the gateways to hell. It is also the name of a lake near Naples. It was there, through a nearby cave, that Aeneas was able to find his way into the underworld. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. *Bridewell* was the name of a prison in 1550’s London. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. *Sybil* was one of a number of ancient Greek female oracles. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. The *golden bough* was a tree branch with golden leaves that enabled the Trojan Aeneas to travel through the underworld safely. In *Aeneid VI* we learn that this bough forced Cerberus to ferry him over the Acheron River. It was Sybil who taught him how to pluck the bough from the tree. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. *Alcides* is another name for Hercules. Hercules once entered hell to rescue Princess Alcestis. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. To *succor* is to aid or assist. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. A *fury* is a female spirit of vengeance who serves the god Hades. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. The *great club-fist* represents the large club Hercules often held for his weapon. In addition, he once accidentally killed a man with his *fist*. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. *Adventry* = adventure. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. *Stop* or plug one’s nose. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. *Yclept* means “by the name of.” And the name “Mud” refers to the excrement discharged into the water that eventually coalesces into a thick bubbly sludge. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. *Merd* is French for shit. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. Three monsters from Greek mythology of which the famous Medusa is one. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. A *scold* is a woman that nags. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. *Harpy -* from Homer – a creature half woman and half bird. It has come to describe a mean, foul-tempered woman. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. *Livy* is a Roman historian who told of an *ox* speaking as a portent to an earthquake. The ox said, “Rome, beware of yourself!” [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. *Sink* refers to a drain leaking into the sewer. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. *Anenst* = “with regards to…” [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. *‘hem* = them. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. *Fenced* = protected. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. *Castor* and *Pollux* were twin half-brothers. They are the sons of Leda and Zeus. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. *Ploughing* (i.e., plowing) *the main* (or high seas) indicates moving their boat through the water. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. A *chimera* is a monster forever changing between lion, goat, and snake, sometimes a conglomeration of all three. Sometimes described as fire-breathing with a lion’s head, a goat’s body, and a serpent’s tail. It’s hard to pin down. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. *Briareus* was a Homeric giant with 100 arms and 50 heads—a son of the earth and the sky. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. A *beadle* is a church officer or parish constable. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. *Hydra* is a many-headed serpent. It was killed by Hercules as his second labor. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. A *trull* is another word for prostitute. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. A onetime ruler of Crete, the callous King Minos, was attacking and besieging all around him, but he was unable to conquer the lands controlled by the mighty King Nisos. Alas King Minos having cast a spell upon King Nisos’ young daughter; she fell in love with the tyrant, willing to do his bidding. One night she snuck into her father’s chamber as he was sleeping and cut a lock of his red hair. Although some claim the lock of hair was purple, he nevertheless, without his pomegranate-colored lock, lost his strength and was overcome in battle. Ben Jonson did not think highly of Nisos’ treasonous daughter and, as you can see, he called her a trull in an attempt to gain some vengeance. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. A *lighter* is a large, flat-bottomed barge used for loading or unloading ships. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. *Charons* are those beings that ferry the souls of the dead over the river Styx. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. *Hight*  = “named,” i.e., What is the name of this place? [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. *Cocytus,* the “river of wailing,” is one of the five rivers that surround Hades. The other four are the Styx, Phlegethon, Lethe, and Acheron. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. *Ab excelsis* is Latin for “from on high.” [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. *Mercury*, the god with the winged sandals who flew too close to the sun, is a god of many things including the god overseeing the of conduction of departed souls to Hade. [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. *Paracelsus* (1493-1541) was a Swiss physician, alchemist, astrologer, alleged prophet, and diviner who lived in the sixteenth century. The Paracelsians considered mercury to be an essential element in their alchemical experimentations. Medically it was much used in purges. [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. Substitute here “whereas” instead. [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. *He*, referring to Mercury, god of eloquence and metals. [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. To *eke* is to supply frugally. [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
77. A *cataplasm* is a poultice. [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
78. This *grave fart* is the famous fart let in the House of Commons, either voluntarily or involuntarily, in answer to a message brought to Henry Ludlow by the Sergeant of Arms of the House of Lords. This occurred at 1:13 PM on March 4th, a *Sunday* if I properly recall, in the year of our Lord 1607, at a time when the House of Lords was adjourned (from February 10th until March 24th) to celebrate the anniversary of James I’s accession. It was omce described (by Herford & Simpson) as a fart that was “the peculiar manner in which Henry Ludlow said ‘noe’ to a message brought … from the Lords.” A libelous poem was composed regarding this fart. It is recorded, in annotated form, as an addendum to this work. [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
79. *Polypheme* was a cyclops who imprisoned Ulysses and some of his men, while drowning others. He was eventually blinded by Ulysses while making their escape. [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
80. A *wherry* is a light rowboat used for carrying passengers. [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
81. A *sough* is a soft, sighing sound. [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
82. A *lurden* is a lazy stream. It can also connote feebleness, idleness, or rascality, but these do not seem to apply here. [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
83. *Bears’ College* is a reference to bear-baiting, a form of entertainment that involved setting dogs to attack a captive bear. At this time the Butchers’ Company used to send offal, often rotting, by boat for the King’s bears located in the Paris Garden, near the Globe Theater, where dogs as well as bears were kept for baiting. There was a terrible stench coming from the barge that daily crossed the Thames with the rotting meat used to feed the King’s bears. The bears were supervised by the “Keeper of the Royal Game”—a position held for some years by the retired actor Edward Alleyn. Many of London’s playhouses were within smelling distance. [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
84. The *Paris Garden* was a major bear-baiting facility operating around 1598. Herford and Simpson have this to say regarding *meat-boat*: “A letter from the Earl of Manchester among the City Corporation records dated 29 September 1664 to the Lord Mayor and aldermen states that he had been informed that before the Civil War ‘the Butchers’ Company had formerly caused all their offal in Eastcheap and Newgate Market to be conveyed by the beadle of that Company unto two barrow houses, conveniently placed on the river side, for the provision and feeding of the King’s Game of Bears’. He directs that the custom be revived.” Every year there was a festival to inaugurate the new Lord Mayor. A barge containing the Mayor’s party floated along the Thames headed toward Westminster. This and other barges were decorated. Music was provided in the form of trumpets and small bands. The extravaganza was carefully prepared with “a fair pageant, chariot and lion, two galleys, fireworks, banners, streamers, and all other things, including mermaids and a man that went on stilts.” Ben Jonson himself was commissioned, for £12, to plan the 1603 festivities. [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
85. *Kate Arden* is a reference to a famous whore. She was the Li’l Abner’s “Moonbeam McSwine” of the early seventeenth-century London. [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
86. *Lord* was the title given to the mayor of London. [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
87. A galley-*foist* is an elaborately decorated ship-rigged foist (galley, pinnace, or brigantine) – a sailing vessel, though small enough that it can be propelled by oars if desired. A foist also refers to a wet fart. [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
88. Here *the stool of worship* refers to a toilet. [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
89. *Atomi* is another way to pluralize the word atom. [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
90. *Democrite* is another name for the Greek epicurean philosopher Democritus, the first to postulate the existence of atoms. [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
91. I.e., Nicholas Hill (1570-1610), an author and **natural philosopher.** He was a fellow of St. John’s college at Oxford who adapted the notions of Democritus regarding atoms and therefore was a great patron of Corpuscularianism. He was a follower of Giordano Bruno and is most famous for having written *Philosphia, Epicurea, Democritiana, Theophrastica, proposita simpliciter, non edocta* [i.e., “Philosophy, Epicurean, Democritian, Theophrastic, proposed simply, not taught”] (Paris: 1601) in which he described an imaginary trip to the moon. He was also a secretary to Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford. He committed suicide after the death of his son. Herford and Simpson make the ridiculous suggestion that the inversion of Hill’s name was “perhaps” suggested by ‘Harry Nicholas’ mentioned in *The Alchemist* (Act 5, Scene 3, Line 453). I suggest he made the inversion only to make the rhyme. [↑](#footnote-ref-91)
92. *Valour* = valor: strength or bravery. [↑](#footnote-ref-92)
93. A *nare* is a nostril. [↑](#footnote-ref-93)
94. A *jakes* is another word for toilet. [↑](#footnote-ref-94)
95. Recall that *Acheron* is one of the five rivers surrounding Hades. [↑](#footnote-ref-95)
96. The *Fleet Lane Furies* refers to cooks from Fleet Street. “Fleet-lane and Pie-corner” described where a number of cooks’ shops were located. [↑](#footnote-ref-96)
97. *Measled* = leprous. [↑](#footnote-ref-97)
98. From thigh (leg), i.e., hocks. [↑](#footnote-ref-98)
99. A *scullion* is a kitchen helper. [↑](#footnote-ref-99)
100. A *pasty* is a meat pie. [↑](#footnote-ref-100)
101. To *mince* is to chop into very small pieces. [↑](#footnote-ref-101)
102. *Tiberts* is the name of the cat in the story/fable *Reynard the Fox”* (late 15th-cent.) “thence used as a quasi-proper name for any cat.” (OED) [↑](#footnote-ref-102)
103. *Old Banks* and his *learned horse:* The “learned horse” was named Morocco (1586-1607), also known as the “Thinking Horse.” William Banks, upon realizing the horse’s intelligence and wit, sold all of his belongings to purchase a quartet of silver horseshoes. In 1591 the two of them then traveled to London’s theater district to perform their act at the Crosse-keyes on Gracious Street. There Morocco walked on three legs, played dead on command, drank large amounts of water and peed it back out whenever Old Banks told him to. The horse could pick out the “maids” (virgins) from the “maulkins” (slatterns) and while he would bow at the Virgin Queen Victoria, he would show his teeth towards the King of Spain. And, of course, as with all horse acts at the time, he could count by stomping his hoof, the front left one if I remember correctly. By the mid-1590’s they had become one of London’s most popular entertainments. In 1601 they took the act to Paris where they were charged with heresy. The story was that they were found guilty of sorcery and burned at the stake—hence the assertion Jonson makes in the poem regarding their deaths. Jonson’s reference to their fiery deaths in Paris was a mistake though. The horse actually died of natural causes in 1606 and Banks was then free to become a wine merchant and innkeeper in Cheapside. He married and had a daughter and was well known for his wealth and his wit in his old age. He too died of natural causes, but thirty-five years after the horse. Doing the math, it appears that William Banks died in 1641. [↑](#footnote-ref-103)
104. Or, more generally, *juggler* as entertainer. [↑](#footnote-ref-104)
105. Pythagoras believed in the transmigration of souls, hence Banks’ and Morocco’s being reincarnated as cats. [↑](#footnote-ref-105)
106. *Peason* – an old plural for pea (dialectal, chiefly British). [↑](#footnote-ref-106)
107. *Meat* = food in general. [↑](#footnote-ref-107)
108. *Plaister* = a medicated or protective dressing. [↑](#footnote-ref-108)
109. *Fleet* refers to the nearby prison. [↑](#footnote-ref-109)
110. *Plague bills:* Starting in 1603, government officials published weekly **plague** mortality statistics in a broadside series known as the Bills of Mortality. [↑](#footnote-ref-110)
111. *Sepulchres* refers to the hourly knells of St. Sepulcher’s church during London’s 1603 plague when at least 33,347 Londoners died: “A pathetic letter written from Newgate on 25 July [1603] by a Roman Catholic gentleman informs us that the bell of St. Sepulchre’s never ceased tolling by day or night” (from F. P. Wilson: *The Plague in Shakespeare’s London*, 1927, p. 96). [↑](#footnote-ref-111)
112. *Pluto* is the name the Romans gave to their god of the underworld. [↑](#footnote-ref-112)
113. *Cerberus,* is sometimes referred to as the “hound of Hades.” He is a tri-headed dog that guards the gates of the underworld and prevents the dead from escaping. [↑](#footnote-ref-113)
114. *Holborn* is a district of London. [↑](#footnote-ref-114)
115. The *three sergeants’ heads* are those of Rhadamanthus, Minos, and Aeacus, soon to be mentioned (see footnotes 117-119). They were carved into a sign to identify one of Holborn’s public-houses. A public-house is better understood today by its truncated form: a *pub* or alehouse. [↑](#footnote-ref-115)
116. *Madam Caesar* was a noted courtesan or bawd of the day. Also referred to as Madam Augusta. (See Jonson’s *The Alchemist* V, 4.) Elsewhere she is referred to as “the mistress of a gambling house,” a reference that makes more sense in regards to the Jonson’s poem. [↑](#footnote-ref-116)
117. *Proserpina* is the Roman name for the “Queen of the Underworld” a role she took on after Pluto absconded her away and made her his wife. [↑](#footnote-ref-117)
118. *Jove*, the equivalent of the Greek Zeus, was the Roman Jupiter, ruler of the gods, god of the sky, and of the rain, thunder and lightning. [↑](#footnote-ref-118)
119. *Alcides* is an alternative name for Hercules. [↑](#footnote-ref-119)
120. A *sop* is a propitiatory bribe, gift or gesture. [↑](#footnote-ref-120)
121. The brothers *Rhadamanthus, Aeacus,* and *Minos,* who, as rulers and judges of the dead in the underworld, were renowned for their justice. Their father was Zeus/Jove. [↑](#footnote-ref-121)
122. A *soap-boiler* was a manufacturer of soap. It appears the boys needed to clean themselves up before settling down in their final destination. [↑](#footnote-ref-122)
123. *Aeacus*—see footnotes 324 & 327. [↑](#footnote-ref-123)
124. *Minos*—see footnote 121. [↑](#footnote-ref-124)
125. To be *purblind* is to have impaired vision, or in this case, to be squinty-eyed and dimwitted. [↑](#footnote-ref-125)
126. A *fletcher* is a person who makes and sells arrows. [↑](#footnote-ref-126)
127. Perhaps this describes a person well-known to Ben’s contemporaneous readers. [↑](#footnote-ref-127)
128. *Without protraction* is without being prolonged, i.e. without delay. [↑](#footnote-ref-128)
129. To *raise a pyramid* is understood to be anything grand and stupendous [see Shakespeare’s *Sonnet 123*]. [↑](#footnote-ref-129)
130. *Plough* is the British spelling for plow. [↑](#footnote-ref-130)
131. He who has *sung Ajax* was Homer in his Iliad. Here though it is a reference to Sir John Harrington’s witty treatise on water closets entitled *The Metamorphosis of Ajax: A Cloacinean Satire with the Anatomy and Apology* andwritten in 1596. Harrington was the inventor of the first flush toilet, a feat for which he was very proud. Ajax, the Greek hero, somehow became a euphemism for a toilet. Ajax is more often referred to as the truncated *jakes.* [↑](#footnote-ref-131)
132. Archaic form of the word “ancient”. [↑](#footnote-ref-132)
133. *Sir John Crooke:* Croke sat in the 1584, 1597 and 1601 Parliaments. He was the King’s Serjeant in the 1604 Parliament, and thus brought messages and bills from the Lords to the Commons. He died in 1620. [↑](#footnote-ref-133)
134. *Sir William Morris:* Maurice, or Morris, sat in the 1593, 1601 and 1604 Parliaments. James I referred to him as his godfather, since Maurice hailed James “King of Great Britain” on his accession, in the belief that this fulfilled a Welsh prophecy. He was the most ardent and vocal apologist for the Union of the Kingdoms in the Commons, and the House frequently censured his speeches due to their length or departure from business. In the 1610 Parliament, his two-hour speech on Union was subject to interruption and whistling, and was eventually stopped by the Speaker. He died in 1622. [↑](#footnote-ref-134)
135. *Henry Ludlowes:* Ludlow, a member of the Inner Temple, sat in the 1601 and 1604 Parliaments. Ludlow represented Wiltshire with James Kirton, John Hoskyns’ friend from the Middle Temple. [↑](#footnote-ref-135)
136. *one fuller:* Nicholas Fuller, a member of Gray’s Inn, sat in the 1593, 1604 and 1614 Parliaments. He was a Puritan lawyer keen to secure ecclesiastical and moral reform, and willing to challenge the royal prerogative in relation to purveyance, the Union, and impositions. Toby Matthews, in a letter to John Donne describing the first Jacobean Parliament, said: “The vild [i.e. wild] Speakers are, Hoskyns, Fuller, with an &caetera of an hundred men” (Bald 145). Following his zealous opposition to the Crown in the 1606/07 sessions, he was censured over a legal decision by the Lord Chancellor, Thomas Egerton, Lord Ellesmere, as part of a campaign against those who too zealously studied the royal prerogative in the Commons (Cuddy 132-33). He died in 1620. [↑](#footnote-ref-136)
137. *Sir Henry Jenkin:* Jenkin, a member of Lincoln’s Inn and a Justice of the Peace in Yorkshire, was elected to parliament in 1604. On 14 April 1604, during the purveyance debates, he cited the Magna Carta, defended freedom of election, and was called to order by the Speaker; on 20 Feb 1607 he followed a speech by Sir William Maurice with a prayer “that he might speak nothing impertinently and that the House would hear him with patience and attention”. [↑](#footnote-ref-137)
138. *Sir Henry Poole:* Poole, a member of Lincoln’s Inn, sat in the 1597, 1604, 1610, 1621, 1624 and 1626 Parliaments. He established a reputation as a parliamentary wit in James’s first Parliament; his brother-in-law was Sir Henry Neville, Earl of Abergavenny, who contributed a panegyric verse to *Coryats Crudities*. In November 1606, he spoke against the ruling on the *post nati* [after birth], alongside Richard Martin. [↑](#footnote-ref-138)
139. *Sir Edward Grevill:* Greville sat in the 1593 and 1604 Parliaments. [↑](#footnote-ref-139)
140. *Sir Edward Hungerford:* Hungerford sat in the 1614, 1621, 1624, 1625, 1628 and 1640 Parliaments. A Sir John Hungerford, a kinsman of Sir Henry Poole, sat in the 1604 Parliament. (One source attributes the couplet to “Sir Tho: Hungerford”, and it is possible that “Tho:” may be a corruption of “John” (BL Add. MS 34218, fol. 21r).) [↑](#footnote-ref-140)
141. *Sir Jerome the lesse:* Sir Jerome Bowes sat in the 1601 and 1604 Parliaments. Bowes was temporarily banished from court in 1577 for slandering Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester. He was appointed English ambassador to Russia in 1583, and died in 1616. [↑](#footnote-ref-141)
142. *Spruce:* Prussia (derived from “Pruce”). [↑](#footnote-ref-142)
143. *Sir Jerome in folio:* Sir Jerome Horsey sat in the 1593, 1597, 1601, 1604, 1614 and 1621 Parliaments, and was appointed High Sheriff of Buckinghamshire in 1610. He went to Moscow as clerk of the Russia Company in 1573, and engaged in trade and diplomatic work until 1587. He was granted a license in 1592 to make drinking glasses in England and Ireland for twelve years. Since this and the preceding couplet are always cited together, “the lesse” and “in folio” function as a means of distinguishing the two Jeromes, although the contemporary significance of these phrases is now lost. [↑](#footnote-ref-143)
144. *Sir John Trevor:* Trevor sat in the 1593, 1597, 1601, 1604, 1614, 1621 and 1625 Parliaments. [↑](#footnote-ref-144)
145. *As it lanched...Docke:* aligns the contemporary colloquial meaning of “dock” as “arse” with a pointed naval metaphor. On 25 February 1606, Bowyer recorded that on the first reading of a bill “manie cried (away with it) then MR. TREVER of the Inner Temple, being a follower of the Lord Admyrall [Charles Howard, Earl of Nottingham], spake in favor of the bill...but the howse without farder question threw out the bill, Fearing least it would breade a new office which they though [i.e. ‘through’] some greate man aymed at ” (53). [↑](#footnote-ref-145)
146. *a great Man...danced:* allusion to Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford, who famously farted in front of Elizabeth I. [↑](#footnote-ref-146)
147. *Sir William Lower:* Lower sat in the 1601 and 1604 Parliaments. In 1614 he sent pursuivants after Sir Henry Goodyer, an act which may explain the couplet attributed to Lower in other copies: “Then all in anger sayd Sir Will: Lower / Wee may by our privilidge Comitt to the Tower” (BL Add. MS 34218, fol. 21r). [↑](#footnote-ref-147)
148. *Sir Richard Houghton:* Houghton sat in the 1601 and 1604 Parliaments. [↑](#footnote-ref-148)
149. *Justice of Quorum:* a Justice of the Peace whose presence was necessary to constitute a bench. [↑](#footnote-ref-149)
150. *take it in snuffe:* take offence. [↑](#footnote-ref-150)
151. *Sir Thomas Holcrofte:* Holcrofte sat in the 1593, 1601 and 1604 Parliaments. He died in 1620. [↑](#footnote-ref-151)
152. *Sir Walter Cope:* Cope, a noted antiquary, sat in the 1589, 1601, 1604 and 1614 Parliaments. He was appointed secretary to Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury, in 1609, and Master of the Wards in 1613. He died in 1615. [↑](#footnote-ref-152)
153. *Learned Councell of the Queene:* Sir Robert Hitcham, who attended Gray’s Inn, was appointed Queen Anne’s Attorney-General in 1603, and sat in the 1597, 1604, 1614, 1624, 1625 and 1626 Parliaments. [↑](#footnote-ref-153)
154. *Mr Pecke:* Edward Peake sat in the 1576, 1584, 1586, 1589, 1593, 1597, 1601 and 1604 Parliaments. He died in July 1607, before the fourth session of this parliament. [↑](#footnote-ref-154)
155. *President:* i.e. “precedent”. After members of the House of Lords were outraged by a message from the Commons claiming that some of its members were barons, Richard Martin reported on 5 March 1607 that Peake had a precedent in the description of representatives of the Cinque Ports. [↑](#footnote-ref-155)
156. *Noy:* there were three Noyes in Jacobean Parliaments: William Noye sat in the 1604, 1621, 1624, 1626 and 1628 Parliaments; John Noyes sat in the 1604 Parliament; and Peter Noyes sat in the 1614 Parliament. The most likely candidate, however, given the legal tenor of the couplet, was William Noy: a member of Lincoln’s Inn and a highly regarded lawyer. On 14 March 1606, William Noy argued against a higher subsidy to the King, implying that high taxation was the cause of civil war and brought the state into disrepute at home and abroad (Bowyer 80). [↑](#footnote-ref-156)
157. *entail’d:* pun on “tail”; to entail is to settle land or an estate on a designated series of possessors, hence from father to son. A joke of this type was made at the time, since Bowyer puts it in his diary (see above, section Introduction). [↑](#footnote-ref-157)
158. *Mr Recorder:* Sir Henry Mountague, Recorder of the City of London, sat in the 1593, 1597, 1603, 1604 and 1614 Parliaments, representing London in the last two of these. [↑](#footnote-ref-158)
159. *To cutt...right:* i.e. to deny the powerful City of London representation and a voice in parliament. [↑](#footnote-ref-159)
160. *Kitt Brookes:* Christopher Brooke, poet and member of Lincoln’s Inn, sat in the 1604, 1610, 1614, 1621, 1624 and 1628 Parliaments. He was active in opposition to the Union and impositions, and was identified by Francis Bacon as one of the popular or “opposite party” (*Works* 4.365). Variants on this couplet include: “Wee may be note so severe quoth Christopher Brooke / That it inter orata in the end of the Clarke booke” (BL Add. MS 23229, fol. 17r); “Nay quoth Kitt Brooke, I tooke it in ill part, / And ere I have done Ile abridge the fart” (BL Add. MS 58215, fol. 189r). [↑](#footnote-ref-160)
161. *livery & seizin:* “livery of seisin” refers to the delivery of property into the corporal possession of a person. Since a fart is intangible this cannot be done. [↑](#footnote-ref-161)
162. *Mr. Evans:* Ralph Ewens, a member of Gray’s Inn, sat in the 1597 and 1601 parliaments, and was Clerk of the Commons in the 1604 Parliament. He died in 1611. [↑](#footnote-ref-162)
163. *I smell...for mee:* fees were paid to the Speaker, Serjeant and possibly also the Clerk, to put private bills before the House. [↑](#footnote-ref-163)
164. *Mr. Moore:* Sir Francis Moore, a member of the Middle Temple, sat in the 1589, 1597, 1601, 1604 and 1614 Parliaments. He died in 1621 [↑](#footnote-ref-164)
165. *Whats good...comonweale:* Moore was known for his opposition to monopolies. In 1606, he denounced a patent for blue starch as a monopoly; and in 1614, in a speech concerning the glass patent, he “declared that it was typical for monopolists to pretend that their patent was for the public good even though they were primarily concerned with private gain”. [↑](#footnote-ref-165)
166. *Sir Harry:* Sir Henry Goodyer, a member of the Middle Temple and Gentleman of the Privy Chamber from 1605, sat in the 1604 Parliament. He was a close friend and correspondent of John Donne and the other “wits” credited with the composition of the “Parliaments Fart”. [↑](#footnote-ref-166)
167. *Coalpit =* a place where charcoal is made. [↑](#footnote-ref-167)
168. *He has caus’d...miscarry:* Goodyer held the monopoly on coal. [↑](#footnote-ref-168)
169. *Quoth...shoote:* the manuscript leaves a gap here, and of the other versions that include this couplet there is no agreement whose name should appear. Contenders include: “Sir Thomas Holcraft” [i.e. Holcrofte, mentioned earlier in the poem] (Bodleian MS Ashmole 36-37), “Sir John Frogmorton” (BL MS Stowe 962) [i.e. John Throckmorton, who sat in the 1601 and 1604 Parliaments], and “Mr. May” (BL MS Harley 5191) [i.e. Humphrey May, who sat in the 1604, 1614, 1621, 1625, 1624, 1626 and 1628 Parliaments]. A further couplet is attributed to May in other copies: “then spake Mr May this eloquent speech / would this accident had bin substance in his breech” (Rosenbach MS 1083/15, p. 57). [↑](#footnote-ref-169)
170. *Lawrence Hyde:* Hyde, a member of the Middle Temple, sat in the 1597 and 1604 Parliaments. He was a kinsman of Sir Edwin Sandys, was identified by Bacon as one of the “popular” party affiliated with the Earl of Southampton (*Works* 4.365), and vigorously defended parliamentary privileges, including freedom of speech. Couplets on Hyde in other versions include: “O wofull tymes, quoth Lawrence Hyde / yf once our freedome of speach be denyed” (BL Add. MS 23229, fol. 16v); “nay quoth Laurence Hyde I like not that fashion / for Monopolies wear forbidden by proclamation” (Rosenbach MS 1083/15, p. 56). (In March 1621 James I cancelled by proclamation the patents on concealed lands, inns, and gold and silver thread (*Stuart Royal Proclamations* 1.503-5).) [↑](#footnote-ref-170)
171. *Harry the hardie:* possibly Sir Henry Neville, who sat in the 1604 and 1614 Parliaments, and whose red hair and beard resembled those of Henry VIII. Neville was considered to be one of the leaders of the Commons, and at the end of the 1610 sessions was seen by one contemporary to have “ranged himself with those Patriots that were accounted of a contrary faction to the courtiers”. He died in 1615. [↑](#footnote-ref-171)
172. *the knightly Doctor:* Sir Daniel Dun, Master of Requests, sat in the 1598, 1601,1604 and 1614 Parliaments, representing Oxford University in the last two of these. He died in 1617. [↑](#footnote-ref-172)
173. *court of requests:* court for the recovery of small debts. [↑](#footnote-ref-173)
174. *Sir Edwyn:* Sir Edwin Sandys, member of the Middle Temple, sat in the 1589, 1593, 1604, 1614, 1621, 1624, 1625 and 1626 Parliaments. He was active in disputing the prerogative powers of the Crown in relation to the *post nati* [see footnotes 198-9] and impositions, and in defending parliamentary privileges. Following the dissolution of the 1614 Parliament, he had his papers on impositions called in and burnt in Whitehall, was examined by the Privy Council, and was held in custody for a month. [↑](#footnote-ref-174)
175. *Project:* “a practical scheme for exploiting material things” (Thirsk 1). Projects were controversial at this period because they often involved the granting of monopolies or patents. [↑](#footnote-ref-175)
176. *Sir William Wade:* Wade, a member of Gray’s Inn, sat in the 1584, 1589, 1601 and 1604 Parliaments. Lieutenant of the Tower between 1605 and 1613, he fell into disfavor and lost his post in part because of his failure to guard properly Arabella Stuart, **an English noblewoman** who was considered a possible successor to Queen Elizabeth I of England, who escaped from the Tower of London in 1611. They were caught and returned to the Tower where, refusing to eat, Arabella eventually died. Added to his offences, according to a popular conspiracy theory, he was unwilling to abet the murderers of Sir Thomas Overbury, who was murdered in 1613 (see Sections F and H). [↑](#footnote-ref-176)
177. *little ease:* punning on the name given to the dungeon at the Tower of London. [↑](#footnote-ref-177)
178. *Sir John Hollis:* Holles, a member of Gray’s Inn, sat in the 1604 and 1614 Parliaments. Though he increasingly sought patronage at court, and was made Lord Houghton in 1616 and first Earl of Clare in 1624, in the early Jacobean Parliaments Holles was a vocal critic of the Scottish bedchamber, an opponent of the Union, and a supporter of punitive restrictions on office-holding by Scots. [↑](#footnote-ref-178)
179. *vacuitie:* absolute emptiness of space; vacuum. [↑](#footnote-ref-179)
180. *Nor willingly...gratuitie:* Holles was well-known for his frugality, and was petitioning potential patrons in this period. [↑](#footnote-ref-180)
181. *Britch* = breech or buttock; hence the word breeches and britches, presently called pants. [↑](#footnote-ref-181)
182. *Sir Thomas Shurley:* two Sir Thomas Shirleys sat in James’s Parliaments. Sir Thomas Shirley the elder (1542-1612) sat in the 1572, 1584, 1593, 1601 and 1604 Parliaments. He raised his own army to follow Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, to the Low Countries, and was made Treasurer-at-War to the English army in 1587, which resulted in massive personal debt, as a result either of his abuse of the office or use of his own funds. He died in great debt in 1612. His son, Sir Thomas Shirley (c.1564- 1632), sat in the 1584, 1593, 1601, 1614 and 1621 Parliaments. He was one of the famous Shirley brothers, who engaged in privateering in the Levant until his capture by the Turks in 1603. The placing of the couplet after the “frugall” Sir John Holles suggests the “thriftles” Shirley senior. [↑](#footnote-ref-182)
183. *Burley:* probably intended as a punning reference to the Elizabethan statesman, William Cecil, Lord Burghley. [↑](#footnote-ref-183)
184. *Sir John Fortescue:* Fortescue sat in the 1559, 1572, 1586, 1589, 1593, 1597, 1601 and 1604 Parliaments. He was a cousin of Queen Elizabeth, and a close friend of Lord Burghley, Sir Francis Bacon, Sir Walter Raleigh and Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex. He died in December 1607, after the third session of the 1604 Parliament. [↑](#footnote-ref-184)
185. *Not without...withall:* this line may ironically refer to Fortescue’s presumption during elections to the 1604 Parliament. Fortescue lost the initial election to Sir Francis Goodwin; however, he convinced the Privy Council to void Goodwin’s election, and was elected himself at the second election. In turn, the Commons responded by declaring Goodwin elected, and rejecting Fortescue. Both men eventually sat in this Parliament. [↑](#footnote-ref-185)
186. *Sir John Sheffield:* Sheffield sat in the 1601 and 1604 Parliaments. An inactive member of James’s first Parliament, Sheffield accompanied Charles Howard, Lord Admiral Nottingham on his embassy to Spain in 1605, and travelled in France 1607-1610. He is not recorded making any speeches or serving on any committees relating to the Union. He died in 1614. A variant replaces Sheffield with a more likely candidate, Sir John Herbert (BL MS Stowe 354, fol. 43v). Herbert, a member of Gray’s Inn, sat in the 1586, 1589, 1593, 1597, 1601 and 1604 Parliaments. He was one of two Privy Councillors in the Commons in James’s first Parliament and, somewhat ineffectively, put the Crown’s case for the Union in this Parliament. [↑](#footnote-ref-186)
187. *fall to the union:* i.e. turn (our) attention to the matter of the Union. [↑](#footnote-ref-187)
188. *Sir Hugh Beeston:* there were two Hugh Beestons in this Parliament, though Sir Hugh (c.1547-1627) is the most likely referent. He was a member of Lincoln’s Inn, and sat in the 1589, 1593, 1597, 1601, 1604, and 1614 Parliaments. In 1604 he was ordered to prepare for the Hampton Court conference on religion, in 1606 he attended a conference on ecclesiastical grievances, and in 1610 he was among those appointed to consider a bill imposing the new oath of allegiance. His wife was prosecuted for recusancy (i.e., for being a Roman Catholic in England who refused to attend services of the Church of England) later in 1610, and in the 1624 Parliament he was said to be “suspect in religion since ‘his daughter and heir apparent is a recusant’”. [↑](#footnote-ref-188)
189. *Tush =* expressing disapproval, impatience, or dismissal; also another term for buttocks. [↑](#footnote-ref-189)
190. *Ned Hobbie:* Sir Edward Hoby sat in the 1580, 1585, 1586, 1589, 1593, 1597, 1601, 1604 and 1614 Parliaments. He was the author of *A Letter to Mr. T. H.* (1609), which attacked Catholic women on the basis that women should not have religious opinions. Questier argues that this work marks a shift from the “godly” views he expressed in the 1604 Parliament to an anti-Calvinist perspective (“Crypto- Catholicism” 60). He died in 1617. [↑](#footnote-ref-190)
191. *Sir John Lee:* Sir John Leigh sat in the 1597, 1601 and 1604 Parliaments. He died in 1612. [↑](#footnote-ref-191)
192. *dottage:* i.e. dotage. [↑](#footnote-ref-192)
193. *Sir Roger Owen:* Owen, a member of Lincoln’s Inn, sat in the 1597, 1601, 1604 and 1614 Parliaments. He died in 1617. In variants, another couplet refers to Owen: “Within the Compasse of the earthe 21,000 myle aboute / quothe Sir Roger Owen such a Farte was never lett owte” (BL Add. MS 34218, fol. 20r; see also BL Add. MS 58215, fol. 188v). [↑](#footnote-ref-193)
194. *if books...Fryeres:* the reference is to Chaucer’s “Summoner’s Tale”; the division of the fart, the scatological centerpiece of the tale, is part of an extended satire on the sophistry and hypocrisy of friars. [↑](#footnote-ref-194)
195. *Phillip Gawdie:* Gawdie sat in the 1589, 1597, 1601, 1604 and 1614 Parliaments. He died in 1617. [↑](#footnote-ref-195)
196. *Sir John Hollis:* Holles (the poem’s second reference to him—see footnote 178). [↑](#footnote-ref-196)
197. *Sir John Acklam:* Acland sat in the 1586 Parliament, and in 1607 he replaced Sir Thomas Ridgeway when the latter was appointed Treasurer in Ireland. He died in 1620. [↑](#footnote-ref-197)
198. *Mr. Brooke:* there were a number of Brookes sitting in this Parliament, and this one appears to be distinguished from “Kit Brooke”, even though the jest about the *post nati* is in keeping with Christopher Brooke’s stance on this issue. The other possibilities are Giles Brooke, Thomas Brooke and William Brocke. The scribe, uncertainly, writes “Cooke” above the line, as an alternate reading. Although Sir Edward Coke did not sit in James’s first Parliament, this identification might allude to his status as one of the leading Jacobean judges. Coke sat in the 1589, 1593, 1621, 1624, 1625, 1626 and 1628 Parliaments. [↑](#footnote-ref-198)
199. *Post-nati:* reference to debates on the mutual naturalization of Scots and English born since James’s accession to the English throne (the *post nati*). A literal translation of *post nati* is “born after” and, here, it relates to persons who were born into the new unification after its establishment. [↑](#footnote-ref-199)
200. *Duncombe:* Edward Duncombe sat in the 1604 and 1614 Parliaments. A different couplet on Duncombe in a variant alludes to “talebearers” reporting speeches to the King: “You did so, quoth Duncombe, but with an ill intent / you left but the sense precendent & the sense subsequent” (BL Add. MS 23229, fol. 16v). [↑](#footnote-ref-200)
201. *cuntrie courtier:* one copy identifies the “country courtier” as Sir Robert Wingfield, while another has “Sir R.W.” in the margin (BL Add. MS 23299; Rosenbach MS 1083/15). Wingfield, a member of Gray’s Inn, sat in the 1584, 1586, 1589, 1593, 1601 and 1604 Parliaments (the latter until his death in August 1609). Reputed a “grave person, and an ancient Parliament man”, he was very active in James’s first Parliament, and put forward a bill “for the establishment of true religion”. [↑](#footnote-ref-201)
202. *Sir Thomas Challenor:* Challenor sat in the 1586 and 1604 Parliaments. He died in 1615. [↑](#footnote-ref-202)
203. *Sir Hugh Beeston:* the poem’s second reference to Beeston. [See footnote 188.] [↑](#footnote-ref-203)
204. *mouth hath priviledge:* allusion to debates over the parliamentary privilege of freedom of speech. [↑](#footnote-ref-204)
205. *Ned Wymark...Powles:* Edward Wymark sat in the 1597, 1601, 1604 and 1614 Parliaments. A well- known Paul’s walker, money-lender and great wit, he compiled a register of concealed tenures, and St. Paul’s became (in the words of a contemporary writer) “his exchange to put out his money for 40 years together”. “Pasquill” refers to his apparent activity writing pasquils: witty, generally libelous verses. [↑](#footnote-ref-205)
206. *chappell of the Roolles:* Rolls House, Chancery Lane, was the official residence of the Master of the Rolls, Sir Edward Phelips. [↑](#footnote-ref-206)
207. *Sir Anthony Cope:* Cope, a member of Gray’s Inn, sat in the 1571, 1572, 1586, 1589, 1593, 1597, 1601, 1604 and 1614 Parliaments. He acquired a reputation as one of the “puritan Parliament men”, and during James’s first Parliament he sat on committees to consider bills for ecclesiastical government and for the restoration of deprived ministers, and prepared a petition on ecclesiastical grievances. He died in 1614. [↑](#footnote-ref-207)
208. *Bull from the Pope:* i.e. a papal bull (decree). [↑](#footnote-ref-208)
209. *his brother:* the poem’s second reference to Sir Walter Cope (see footnote 152). These sentiments are usually attributed to John Bond (who is mentioned again below). [↑](#footnote-ref-209)
210. *Oxenbridge:* two Sir Robert Oxenbridges sat in the Commons. Sir Robert Oxenbridge the elder (c.1586-1616), a member of the Inner Temple, sat in the 1604 Parliament only; his son (1595-1638), a member of Gray’s Inn, sat in the 1621, 1624, 1625 and 1626 Parliaments. The elder Oxenbridge is the more likely candidate here, particularly as his son was inactive in all four parliaments in which he sat. While the elder Oxenbridge’s brother became a Jesuit, Oxenbridge himself was active on committees on reform of the ministry, and in February 1606, following the Gunpowder Plot, accused Sir William Maurice of attending mass (although, as a contemporary noted, “the House took no hold of that speech”). He died in 1616. [↑](#footnote-ref-210)
211. *Mr. Goad:* John Good, a member of Lincoln’s Inn, sat in the 1604 Parliament. Good was a pro-Scottish Catholic who outwardly conformed, but whose autobiography set out his rejection of the Anglican Church. He made a speech on the bill “against Puritans” in 1604, and in 1610 he continued to speak against Puritan ministers and for leniency towards recusants, i.e., a Roman Catholic in England who refused to attend services of the Church of England. [↑](#footnote-ref-211)
212. *reformed brother:* derogatory reference to a Puritan. [↑](#footnote-ref-212)
213. *Sir John Young:* Yonge, who sat in the 1597 and 1604 Parliaments, was well-known for his profanities both within and without the Commons. He died around 1614. But the poem’s suggested connection with Wales would be more appropriate if applied to Richard Younge, a member of Lincoln’s Inn, who sat in the 1604, 1621 and 1624 Parliaments. The latter was well-known as a Welsh member of the Commons, and was on the committee for the Welsh government bill. A version of this couplet is also linked to “Mr. Jones” (e.g. “I am noe teller of tales / the like have I never heard in the marches of Wales” (BL Add. MS 34218, fol. 20v)). There were at least three Joneses in early Stuart parliaments: John Jones, who sat in 1604; Richard Jones, who sat in 1628, 1640 and 1647; and Robert Jones, who sat in 1625 and 1628. [↑](#footnote-ref-213)
214. *Sir Roger Aston:* Aston, a close friend of John Donne and Sir Henry Goodyer, sat in the 1604 Parliament. Bodleian MS Malone 23 appears to be collating two couplets on Aston that appear separately in other copies. He died in 1612. [↑](#footnote-ref-214)
215. *well shav’d...rose water:* a marginal note in one manuscript describes Aston as “The Kinges Barber ” (Rosenbach MS 1083/15, fol. 55v) [↑](#footnote-ref-215)
216. *Sir Thomas Knevett:* Knyvett sat in the 1572, 1584, 1586, 1589, 1597, 1601 and 1604 Parliaments. He died in 1622. [↑](#footnote-ref-216)
217. *I feare...worke:* as Justice of the Peace for Westminster, Knyvett discovered the explosives under the Houses of Parliament in 1605. [↑](#footnote-ref-217)
218. *Sir John Parker:* Parker sat in the 1589, 1593, 1601 and 1604 Parliaments. He died in 1617. [↑](#footnote-ref-218)
219. *Bombard:* an early cannon; also playing on bombast (overblown, windy speech). [↑](#footnote-ref-219)
220. *Mr. Moore...order:* Sir George More, a member of the Inner Temple, sat in the 1584, 1586, 1589, 1593, 1597, 1601, 1604, 1614, 1621, 1624, 1625 and 1626 Parliaments. He was one of the most senior members of the House, and, famously, John Donne’s father-in-law. More habitually rose in the Commons “about Eleven of the Clock...[to] make Repetition of all that had been spoken that Day” (Bald 145). [↑](#footnote-ref-220)
221. *Price:* this could be a reference to any one of several early Stuart parliamentarians named Price. Charles Price sat in the 1621, 1624, 1625, 1626, 1628, 1640 and 1642 Parliaments; James Price I sat in the 1593, 1597, 1601, 1604, 1614 and 1621 Parliaments; James Price II sat in the 1624, 1625 and 1626. [↑](#footnote-ref-221)
222. *As noe...king:* the first line of a couplet often attributed to Samuel Lewkenor (“I am gladd, quoth Sam: Lewkner, wee have found a thing / Which no talebearer can cary to the King” (Bodleian MS Rawl. Poet. 26, fol. 7v)), the second line of which seems to have been missed by this copyist. Lewkenor sat in the 1584 and 1604 Parliaments. Behind the couplet is a speech Lewkenor delivered on 6 May 1607, which set out a number of concerns about the way the House’s freedom of speech had been compromised by “private suggestions or reports” delivered to the King. He argued that men who had “expressly been blamed and reprehended by his Majesty for their speeches in the House” should be given an opportunity to clear themselves, and that in future the House should be able “with all liberty and freedom and without fear, [to] deliver their opinions in the matter in hand”. [↑](#footnote-ref-222)
223. *Sir Roger Aston:* the poem’s second reference to Aston [see footnotes 214-5]. A variant has Aston jest that he has already carried the House’s message (i.e. the fart) to the King: “naye quoth Sir Roger, I went from this place, / and reported it worde for worde to his grace” (BL Add. MS 23229, fol. 16v). [↑](#footnote-ref-223)
224. *Sir Lewis his brother:* Samuel’s brother, Sir Lewis Lewkenor, a member of the Middle Temple, sat in the 1597 and 1604 Parliaments. He was a contributor to *Coryats Crudities*. Several of his speeches in James’s first Parliament provoked hostile reactions. [↑](#footnote-ref-224)
225. *if it come...passage:* Lewis Lewkenor was the Master of Ceremonies. The lines perhaps also allude to the hostile reaction to Lewkenor’s interposed speech of 28 June 1604, in which he claimed “that he was induced by some late conference with a foreign ambassador to put the House in mind of some answer to be made to the King’s late letter, touching subsidy”. Regarded as ardently pro-Spanish from early in James’s reign, Lewkenor was briefly imprisoned in 1625 for presuming to order, without authorization, a ship for the departure of the Spanish ambassador. [↑](#footnote-ref-225)
226. *Sir Robert Drury:* Drury sat in the 1604 and 1614 Parliaments. An experienced soldier in the 1590s, he was appointed to an embassy to Spain in 1605. He was also a patron, and later landlord, of John Donne, who travelled with the Druries in Europe 1611-12. He died in 1615. [↑](#footnote-ref-226)
227. *a frend:* in one manuscript the “frend” is identified as Sir Edward Hoby (BL Add. MS 23299, fol. 15r). [↑](#footnote-ref-227)
228. *Mr. James...Wight:* Richard James represented Newport, Isle of Wight, in the 1597, 1601 and 1604 Parliaments. He died in 1613. When Sir William Maurice on 9 Dec 1606 pressed the House to read a bill for imperial title, Richard James launched into an anti-Scots tirade. A different couplet is attributed to James in a variant: “naye quoth mister James no saieing will serve, / But savinge your reverence yf well observe” (BL Add. MS 23229, fol. 15r). [↑](#footnote-ref-228)
229. *Sir Robert Johnson:* Johnson sat in the 1597, 1601, 1604 and 1614 Parliaments. He was appointed Surveyor in the Exchequer under Elizabeth, and prepared a treatise on reform of Crown lands. He was active in matters relating to land reform in James’s first Parliament, partly in order to increase Crown [↑](#footnote-ref-229)
230. *Jacobs staffe:* surveyor’s tool used for measuring distances and heights. [↑](#footnote-ref-230)
231. *Sir John Bennett:* Bennet, a member of Gray’s Inn, sat in the 1597 1601, 1604, 1614 and 1621 Parliaments. An ecclesiastical and civil lawyer, he was appointed to twenty-nine committees in the 1606-07 session and thirty-six in 1610. He was impeached in 1621 on corruption charges for accepting bribes in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury. [↑](#footnote-ref-231)
232. *Sir Richard Lovelace:* Lovelace, a member of Gray’s Inn, sat in the 1601, 1604, 1614 and 1621 Parliaments. [↑](#footnote-ref-232)
233. *to end...conference:* on 22 January 1606, Lovelace put the motion that a conference be called with the Lords before addressing Thomas Wentworth’s proposal for securing “an able, sufficient and resident ministry”; however, the House instead nominated a committee. [↑](#footnote-ref-233)
234. *Doctor Crompton:* Thomas Crompton sat in the 1589, 1597, 1601 and 1604 Parliaments. He died in February 1609, before the fourth session of the 1604 Parliament. [↑](#footnote-ref-234)
235. *no man...civill lawe:* alludes to a conflict between the civil and common law, which precipitated the attack in the Commons, led by Richard Martin, on *The Interpreter* (1607), by John Cowell, Professor of Civil Law at Cambridge. *The Interpreter* was perceived to undermine the authority of the common law and Parliament, asserting instead the superiority of the royal prerogative. One copy continues: “for well I wott being a Cyvillian doctor / this farte came into Court withoute a Proctor” (BL Add. MS 34218, fol. 20v). [↑](#footnote-ref-235)
236. *Doctor Paddy:* William Paddy, the King’s physician and President of the College of Physicians, sat in the 1604 Parliament only. [↑](#footnote-ref-236)
237. *Præter modestiam...naturam:* beyond propriety not beyond nature. [↑](#footnote-ref-237)
238. *Sir John Towneshend:* Towneshend sat in the 1604 Parliament only. [↑](#footnote-ref-238)
239. *orationis pars...Quid est Ars:* playing on the titles of the popular school Latin grammar books, Aelius Donatus’s *De partibus orationis ars minor* and *De partibus orationis ars maior*. Literally: “orationis pars” (speaking part); “Quid est ars” (what is art). [↑](#footnote-ref-239)
240. *Sir Richard Gargrave:* Gargrave sat in 1597, and took his seat in the 1604 Parliament on 7 April 1606. [↑](#footnote-ref-240)
241. *Mr Hare:* John Hare sat in the 1572, 1584, 1586, 1589, 1593, 1597, 1601 and 1604 Parliaments. [↑](#footnote-ref-241)
242. *The Surveyor...share:* the copyist has probably misread “Purveyor” for “Surveyor” (so the line could allude to complaints about the avarice of purveyors). A more plausible variant has: “yt wer noe grievance quoth Mr Hare / If this knave Purveyor of this Fart had a share” (Bodleian MS Tanner 306, p. 256). Hare was an effective leader of the Commons in putting the legal case against purveyance in James’s first Parliament (Croft, “Parliament” 13-14, 23-26). He died in 1613. [↑](#footnote-ref-242)
243. *Sir Francis Bacon:* Bacon, a member of Gray’s Inn, sat in the 1581, 1584, 1586, 1589, 1593, 1597, 1601, 1604 and 1614 Parliaments. Bacon’s activities as Attorney-General and a tract he published on duelling, *The charge of Sir Francis Bacon, knight, his Majesties Attorney Generall, touching Duells, upon information in the Star-chamber against Priest and Wright. With the Decree of the Star-Chamber in the same cause* (1614), inform a couplet in a variant: “Quoth fyne fraunces Bacon, yf it were not in this place / this farte maight bee prooved a starr Chamber case ” (BL MS Stowe 354, fol. 43v). Another couplet seems to allude to his fall from grace following his impeachment in 1621: “why what doe you meane so much to take on / he was fedd with swynes flesh quoth sir Frauncis Bacon” (Rosenbach MS

     1083/15, fol. 56v). [↑](#footnote-ref-243)
244. *Bond:* John Bond sat in the 1601 and 1604 Parliaments. A physician and classical scholar, Bond (d. 1612) published commentaries on Horace (1606) and left notes on Persius which were published posthumously in 1614. [↑](#footnote-ref-244)
245. *Naturam...recurrit:* allusion to Horace, *Epistles* 1.10: “Naturam expellas furca tamen usque recurret” (“Drive Nature out with a Pitchfork. She’ll be back again.”). [↑](#footnote-ref-245)
246. *Mounson:* Sir Thomas Monson sat in the 1597, 1604 and 1614 Parliaments. He was accused of complicity in the Overbury poisoning in 1615, and remained in the Tower until 1617; however, “sage” Monson did not break his silence over his part in the Overbury murder, and he was eventually released without standing trial (Bellany, *Politics* 77). [↑](#footnote-ref-246)
247. *Sir Dannett:* Thomas Damett (or Dannett) sat in the 1584, 1586, 1593, 1601 and 1604 Parliaments. He died in 1618. [↑](#footnote-ref-247)
248. *Mr Tolderbury:* Christopher Tolderrey sat in the 1604 Parliament. [↑](#footnote-ref-248)
249. *Sir Richard Martin:* Martin, a member of the Middle Temple, sat in the 1601 and 1604 Parliaments, and was permitted by the House to make a speech on behalf of the Virginia Company, as the Company’s counsel, in the 1614 Parliament. He was one of the leading wits in a tavern company that met at the Mitre and Mermaid taverns, and was highly regarded for his oratorical skills. After he delivered the oration to James I on his 1603 entrance into London, he was awarded the unofficial title of “London’s Oracle”. He died in 1618. [↑](#footnote-ref-249)
250. *the speaker...Ephestion:* the Speaker of the Commons, Sir Edward Phelips, a member of the Middle Temple, sat in the 1584, 1586, 1593, 1597, 1601 and 1604 Parliaments. Phelips was the key spokesman for Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury, in James’s first Parliament, which led in 1610 to protests over a conflict of interests. He may have acted as a patron of the wits, given his sponsorship of Thomas [↑](#footnote-ref-250)
251. *Sir Robert...stories:* Cotton, a member of the Middle Temple, sat in the 1604, 1624, 1626 and 1628 Parliaments. He was a well-known antiquary, a founding member of the Society of Antiquaries, and an advisor to Henry Howard, Earl of Northampton and James I on parliamentary matters. He was a friend of Jonson, Holland, Martin, Brooke, Donne, Goodyer, Jones and Richard James, among others. [↑](#footnote-ref-251)
252. *Mr Pories:* John Pory sat in the 1604 Parliament, taking his seat in 1605. He was a close friend of fellow antiquaries Cotton and Sir Walter Cope. [↑](#footnote-ref-252)
253. *putt the Fart...tables:* i.e. document the fart in his table book. Many copies of “The Parliament Fart” end either with these couplets, or add the Speaker putting the fart to the vote. [↑](#footnote-ref-253)
254. *if this house...table:* this reference could allude to events in 1607 or 1614. When Christopher Piggot, the member for Buckinghamshire, made an intemperate speech against the Scots in February 1607, the Commons initially failed to punish him, and he was only sent to the Tower after James I intervened. Some versions of the poem include the following couplet “quoth Sir Edw: Hobbie alleadgd with the spiggot,/Sir if you fart at the union remember Kitt Piggott” (Stowe 962, fol. 67r). Lake was made a Privy Councillor in 1614, and this couplet would have gained additional resonance with the Commons’ failure to censure members, including John Hoskyns, for inflammatory speeches made during the 1614 Parliament; hence the need for the Privy Council to intervene, as it did following the 1614 dissolution (see Section G). [↑](#footnote-ref-254)
255. *Sir George Moore:* the poem’s second reference to More, the first being footnote 220. [↑](#footnote-ref-255)
256. *the Serjant:* Roger Wood, appointed Serjeant-in-Ordinary in 1588, and Serjeant-at-Arms to the Speaker in 1590. [↑](#footnote-ref-256)
257. *Farts...fees:* possibly a reference to the fact that prisoners paid fees to their keepers. A related couplet refers to the gratuities that were sometimes paid to the Serjeant and servants by individuals or the city guilds in order to further business in Commons, see C1i note 31. [↑](#footnote-ref-257)
258. *the clerke:* the poem’s second reference to Ralph Ewens, Clerk of the Commons. [↑](#footnote-ref-258)
259. *Mr Dyett:* Anthony Dyott, a member of the Inner Temple, sat in the 1601, 1604 and 1614 Parliaments. He made a “long, learned” speech on the illegality of purveyance in 1606, spoke in support of the Union, and opposed impositions in this Parliament. He died in 1622. [↑](#footnote-ref-259)
260. *Sir William:* there are a number of candidates for “Sir William” in the 1604 Parliament, including those referenced elsewhere in other copies: Sir William Maurice, Sir William Lower, Sir William Waad, Sir William Paddy, and “Sir William Strowde of Sommersetshire” (BL Add. MS 23229, fol. 16v). [↑](#footnote-ref-260)
261. *If this fart...platter:* probably refers to some office held by “Sir William”, possibly within one of the royal households; however, this has not been identified. [↑](#footnote-ref-261)
262. *Richard Buckley:* Sir Richard Bullheley, a member of Lincoln’s Inn, sat in the 1563, 1604 and 1614 Parliaments. He died in 1621. “Angerie” might be a mistranscription of “Anglesey”; a variant has, “Then sayed Sir Rich: Buckley that Anglice Ladd / rose upp in a fury and rose upp halfe madd” (BL Add. MS 34218, fol. 21v). [↑](#footnote-ref-262)
263. *Sir John Perrot:* James Perrot, a member of the Middle Temple and friend of John Hoskyns, sat in the 1597, 1604, 1614, 1621, 1624 and 1626 Parliaments. In 1614 he was summoned before the Privy Council after a violent attack on impositions which blamed James’s mismanagement of royal finances, and in 1621 he was outspoken in his attacks on popery and monopolists. [↑](#footnote-ref-263)
264. *Mr Hoskins:* John Hoskyns, a member of the Middle Temple, sat in the 1604 and 1614 Parliaments. He was one of the lawyers in the Commons who studied the prerogative, alongside his friends Brooke, Hakewill, James Whitelocke, Martin, Sir Robert Phelips and others; and he was a vocal critic of James’s Scottish bedchamber in 1610 and 1614 (which led to his imprisonment following the dissolution of the latter Parliament). He was a leading wit in the tavern companies that met at the Mitre and Mermaid, and his poetry circulated widely in manuscript (see Section G). Other couplets on Hoskyns include: “Why quoth Sir John Hoskynes what needes this adoe / If youle bury the Farte I make an Epitaph therto” (BL Add. MS 34218, fol. 21r); “Gentlemen quoth Hoskins, to lible it is not safe, / Let the Fart bee buried, Ile make the Epitaph” (BL Add. MS 58215, fol. 189r); “Well quoth Mr Hoskins, I dare pawne my nose / The gentm: mente it noe farther than his hose / And yet not within that statute de dovis / Because a farte is nulli in bovis” (BL MS Sloane 1489, fol. 25r). [↑](#footnote-ref-264)
265. *stale:* lure or trap. [↑](#footnote-ref-265)
266. *Sir John Lee:* the poem’s second reference to Lee, the first located at footnote 191. [↑](#footnote-ref-266)
267. *Come...Epitaph:* the closing couplet perhaps alludes to James’s poem attacking those who wrote libels ( “O stay your teares yow who complaine”); however, other versions attribute the warning to Hoskyns. Endings of the poem are many and varied: some versions put the fart to the vote; another brings the poem back to the issue of the Union which Ludlow’s fart interrupted: “When all had well laughed they Concluded by art / That Parliaments of late wear subject to a fart / Yet they better likte the tricke of the Chollicke / Then the former blast of the Powder Catholique / And thus the parliament, in mens opinion / Hath turnde to a fart the mater of union!” (Bodleian MS Rawl. Poet. 117, fol. 194r; cf. BL MS Sloane 1394, fol. 173v-74r). [↑](#footnote-ref-267)
268. Lord de la Warr was probably a brother-in-law. The name given him on the day of his birth was Thomas West (1577-1618). He was a member of the House of Lords from 1602 until his death. He was one of the largest investors of the London Company and chartered two groups of colonists to Jamestown, who bequeathed him Governor for Life of their Virginia Colony. When the indigenous Powhatan’s attacked the intruding colony, Tommy retaliated by recruiting and outfitting 150 men and sailing three ships at his own expense to, true to his subsequent name, fight what became known as the Anglo-Powhatan War*.* He had lots of other adventures, too, and I could go on, but this is a history about Sir Ralph Shelton and *not* his brother-in-law! [↑](#footnote-ref-268)
269. Or as you have *most-likely* encountered it: the SFAV. [↑](#footnote-ref-269)
270. In 1627, an English invasion force under the command of George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, attacked the Ile of Rhe in order to relieve the Siege of La Rochelle. A lot of good *that* did! After three months of combat against the French under Marshal Toira, the Duke was forced to withdraw. The English lost more than 4,000 out of 7,000 troops during the campaign. My guess is that Sir Ralph might have been one of them, even though he was too old to fight. [↑](#footnote-ref-270)
271. The rails, or Rallidae, are a large cosmopolitan family of small- to medium-sized, ground-living birds. Rail hunting is done**along the edges of wetlands in shallow water, mud flats, dense marsh vegetation,** where they commonly are found searching for food. The preferred technique for hunting rails is to walk along the edges of a wetland in an attempt to cause the birds to flush like pheasants in heavy cover. [↑](#footnote-ref-271)
272. “*Cock*fighting” that is. [↑](#footnote-ref-272)
273. *Prease* = press, hence, of course, “crowds”. [↑](#footnote-ref-273)
274. 15-16 Martial, VIII, lxxvii. 7, 8 (translated *Und.* Lxxxix):

     Qui sic vel medio finitus vixi in aevo, longior huic facta est quam data vita fuit*.*

     He who thus or half-finished lived in the age,

     It has become longer than the given life. [↑](#footnote-ref-274)
275. The full name of my book is *The Scourge of Folly: Consisting of satyricall Epigrams, And others in honour of many noble Persons and worthy friends, together, with a pleasant (though discordant) Descant upon most English Proverbs and others.* [↑](#footnote-ref-275)
276. *Learning,* for, as we shall soon see, we lost a great man of letters, and *arms,* for at the same time, we lost a great warrior, both in the demise of Sidney. [↑](#footnote-ref-276)
277. *Harbor* = a place of shelter, refuge, or asylum. Why is it that learning and arms must find a safe haven? Recall, this was a time of censorship and intrigue. [↑](#footnote-ref-277)
278. Davies is here referring to the highly revered poet and soldier Sir Philip Sidney (30 Nov 1554 – 17 Oct 1586), who heroically died in battle, a shot through his upper thigh, whether the left or right is alas left amongst the mysteries of history, that invited gangrene and death, at the young age of 31. As he lay dying, he composed a song, asking it to be sung back to him. And sing it they did! The Virgin Queen once characterized him as: *“the most accomplished gentleman in Europe.”* If Sir Philip has any luck left him at all, he will be gifted with a tale of his own in this little book of stories. [↑](#footnote-ref-278)
279. In this context, amongst so many nuances to its meaning, most likely *sith* = “subsequently”. [↑](#footnote-ref-279)
280. Whose breast? Christopher Heyden’s of course. But can Heyden actually fill the great man’s shoes? History has told us that the answer was no. [↑](#footnote-ref-280)
281. *Thine* = “yours” = Christopher Heyden’s [↑](#footnote-ref-281)
282. *They* no doubt being “Learning and Armes”. [↑](#footnote-ref-282)
283. It is either Mars or Minerva who is already an occupant in Christopher’s breast, because, apparently, it is either one or the other, not both, i.e., the explicit “xor” from logic. Mars is the single-minded Roman God of *violent* War. Minerva is the Roman Goddess of **Wisdom, and thus she is all for *strategic* War (as well as Art, Schools, Justice and Commerce). Conclusion: There appears to be room enough for both the two of them for “both so do shine!”** [↑](#footnote-ref-283)
284. The meaning of *rubrick* to be taken here is that of the Spanish rubric whereby is meant the flourishes attached to a signature and is as individual and characteristic as the handwriting, in this instance, as are the hands of fate. [↑](#footnote-ref-284)
285. *Enterline* = an obsolete form of “interline,” or “to insert words, comments, even entire stories, between lines already written or printed." [↑](#footnote-ref-285)
286. Sir Christopher guards the learning and arms of Sidney, if you recall, within his “one single breast.” [↑](#footnote-ref-286)
287. This references the bullet entering the soft flesh of Sidney’s young thigh. [↑](#footnote-ref-287)
288. *Hott-shortets* = pieces of iron, brittle or friable (i.e., easily crumbled) in its hot state due to an excess of sulfur in the metal. These pieces of iron comprised the projectile that entered Sidney’s vulnerable upper leg. Earlier called “*red-*shorts.” [↑](#footnote-ref-288)
289. Somehow, they, the Spanish enemy somehow “got theirs,” for it was at the Battle of Zutphen, fighting for the Protestant cause against the Spanish, when Sidney “got his.” (The Battle of Zutphen was fought on 22 September 1586, near the village of Warnsveld and the town of Zutphen, the Netherlands, during the Eighty Years’ War. It was fought between the forces of the United Provinces of the Netherlands, aided by the English, against the Spanish.) Or maybe it just describes that wondrous breast during his ongoing and agonizing death due to the maddening spread of infections due to *lots* and-lots of little gunshot holes in that adorable, but no longer laughing, *still-*adorable thigh. [↑](#footnote-ref-289)
290. And somehow Davies *the Thinner* thinks Sir Christopher *the Redeemer* had something to do with it. A topic for future scholarly study. There appears to be much more to Sir Christopher’s biography than is remembered by history. [↑](#footnote-ref-290)
291. *They* being Heaven and Earth? [↑](#footnote-ref-291)
292. Hence the use of the word describing Davies as a tongue-licking “sycophant.” (Were they secretly lovers?) [↑](#footnote-ref-292)
293. Not everyone thinks of Ben as unabashedly as does John Davies the Thinner. But just look at what this envious abuse does to their hearts! It ulcerates the organ that allows us to lavish such love. [↑](#footnote-ref-293)
294. Davies is just begging for some of the same attention Ben gets, and hopefully from Ben himself. Even he knows that his own poems won’t ever shed any light or be nearly as good as Ben’s “ bright Sparks” are. [And what *is* going on in that picture on the cover of his *Scourge of Folly* book?] [↑](#footnote-ref-294)
295. Poems of which his Puritan adversary, William Bradford, categorized as “sundry rhymes and verses, some tending to lasciviousness, and others to the detraction and scandal of some persons.” This is called foreshadowing, to enhance the tragedy that is still to come. [↑](#footnote-ref-295)
296. Thethree-volumed *New English Canaan.* [↑](#footnote-ref-296)
297. The Pilgrims were Puritan Separatists from England who believed that the Church of England was hopelessly corrupt and sought the freedom to practice their religion apart from government interference.  [↑](#footnote-ref-297)
298. The phrase is that of Ed Simon’s. [↑](#footnote-ref-298)
299. Think Freud… [↑](#footnote-ref-299)
300. In fact, though, Morton’s travails lack both feces and urine, and, compared to the original, not worth a Sir’s fart. [↑](#footnote-ref-300)
301. *Mine-host­* refers to Thomas Morgan himself. *Ma-re Mount* was an earlier name for the Merry Mount colony. [↑](#footnote-ref-301)
302. Morgan is perhaps referring to his surprise return to Plymouth after being force to flee the colonies to return to England where the Separatists believed he would be prosecuted for his crimes. As Morton himself put it, he was *“put in at Plymouth in the very faces of them, to their terrible amazement to see him at liberty.”* The Pilgrims’ response was that they took *“great … offence in* [once again having] *that unworthy man, and instrument of mischief” in their presence.”*  [↑](#footnote-ref-302)
303. These first five lines follow, with some deviation, the first five lines of Ben Jonson’s *On the Famous Voyage – The Voyage Itself.* And from there, Morton’s poem deviates even further. But if along the way we find that there are some similarities, they will be detailed in place as we come to them. There are some who claim that the “Master Ben Johnson” printed in the left margin of the poem indicates that Ben Jonson was a co-author to the work. Others believe he was just giving Master Ben credit for its inspiration, and giving him a reason to “name-drop.” [↑](#footnote-ref-303)
304. That would be the *mythological* Jesus. [↑](#footnote-ref-304)
305. Archimedes was one of the top five great mathematicians that ever lived. He had many interesting applications for his mathematical findings as well. But something tells me that our none-to-bright Morton didn’t know this and took Archimedes for a common magician able to transform good into evil. [↑](#footnote-ref-305)
306. Obviously a substitute for the word misconstrue, but he had to bungle it to make the awkward rhyme. Makes him sound haughty, doesn’t it? [↑](#footnote-ref-306)
307. And that, my suddenly frightened reader, is *quite* a monster! But don’t fret. It’s all just make-believe. [↑](#footnote-ref-307)
308. So the women cry out for great Alcides aide! Alcides is really Hercules. Everyone thinks they have to have a nickname even though it makes things more confusing. But who is Hercules’ aide? If I read that line a bit more carefully the answer will suddenly emerge. [↑](#footnote-ref-308)
309. Perseus was the one who cut off Medusa’s head and then posed nude, dripping penis and all, to be sculpted while triumphantly dangling the still-dripping head. It was a powerful and beautiful thing to behold! [↑](#footnote-ref-309)
310. The earlier described monster is now named, and her name is Hydra. [↑](#footnote-ref-310)
311. The monster, it appears, has her eye on the sheep. [↑](#footnote-ref-311)
312. And *this* is what becomes of the wool! [↑](#footnote-ref-312)
313. Recall that Jason traveled far, to Colchis anyway, to search for the Golden Fleece. [↑](#footnote-ref-313)
314. The *Nine Worthies* are nine historical, scriptural, and legendary men of distinction, represented by the three pagans (1) Hector, (2) Alexander the Great, and (3) Julius Caesar, the three Jews (1) Joshua, (2) David, and (3) Judas Maccabeus, and the three Christians (1) King Arthur, (2) Charlemagne, and (3) Godfrey of Bouillon. As an assignment, my Studious Reader, write a short essay on each of these nine new novella characters and provide nine suggestions as to why each is worthy of being associated with the other eight. More suggestions will provide you with extra credit. The Nine Worthies were first categorized together in this manner by the fourteenth century French writer Jacques de Longuyon of Lorraine in his seminal work *Voeux du Paon* (“The Vows of the Peacock”) first published in 1312. It was a *really* popular romance at the time. [↑](#footnote-ref-314)
315. No doubt an illusion to the nefarious Trojan Horse. [↑](#footnote-ref-315)
316. *Per fas aut nefas* means that**something can be achieved by either lawful or unlawful means.** It is a Latin phrase used in history to describe the different ways people would go about achieving their goals. [↑](#footnote-ref-316)
317. I am beginning to wonder if there might be a deeper and underlying meaning to all of this. Can a *Puritan* be a Worthie? How about a rapscallion? All I know for sure is that it can’t be *both!* [↑](#footnote-ref-317)
318. To *turn a trump* is a bridge term, where you play a card of a different suit when you haven’t one from the suit that’s required. This may be difficult to comprehend, but so is the game of bridge overall. [↑](#footnote-ref-318)
319. *The lot is cast*…an interesting phrase albeit a Biblical phrase. So I guess it’s in the hands of the *Christian* gods? [↑](#footnote-ref-319)
320. In classical Greece, *Lerna* (Greek: Λέρνη) was a region of springs and a former lake near the east coast of the Peloponnesus, south of Argos. Even though much of the area is marshy, Lerna is located on a geographically narrow point between mountains and the sea, along an ancient route from the Argolid to the southern Peloponnese; this location may have resulted in the importance of the settlement. But unknown to most, there is a secret entranceway into Hades located *somewhere* around there. [↑](#footnote-ref-320)
321. *Pluto’s court* is the central Chamber of Hell – so we’ve finally arrived! [↑](#footnote-ref-321)
322. And *who* are these nine in Morton’s mythology? [↑](#footnote-ref-322)
323. In Greek mythology *Cecrops* was an early, earth-born**king of Attica and founder the city of Athens**. He was depicted as a man from the waist up with a serpent's-tail in place of legs. Cecrops was the first man to offer sacrifices to the goddess Athena after her birth from the head of Zeus and he established her ancient shrine on the Acropolis. [↑](#footnote-ref-323)
324. Otherwise known as Rhadamanthus, Minos, and *Aeacus*, The brothers *Rhadamanthus, Aeacus,* and *Minos,* who, as rulers and judges of the dead in the underworld, were renowned for their justice. Their father was Zeus/Jove. [↑](#footnote-ref-324)
325. *Limbo* is just another form of Hell. [↑](#footnote-ref-325)
326. What a quaint phrase, *“thence to tane”.* I’ve never heard it before, and, it appears, nor has anyone else! Apparently its one-time use never caught on. I’ve been mute for a while before now, I confess, for the reason that I am having difficulties, as are, probably, you are too, in keeping up. Well, then, back to work. Now, if I can only figure out who is who?! [↑](#footnote-ref-326)
327. *A*eacus was the**son of Zeus** by Aegina, a daughter of the river-god Asopus, and thus, brother of Damocrateia. In some accounts, his mother was Europa and thus possibly brother to Minos, Rhadamanthus and Sarpedon. He was the father of Peleus, Telamon and Phocus and was the grandfather of the Trojan war warriors Achilles and Telemonian Ajax. [↑](#footnote-ref-327)
328. **Phaethon,** (Greek: “Shining” or “Radiant”) in Greek mythology, is the son of Helios, the sun god, and a woman or nymph variously identified as Clymene, Prote, or Rhode. The most influential extant version of the story, found in Ovid’s *Metamorphosis*, Books I–II, seems to echo the plot of  Euripides’ Phaethon, now partially known from papyrus discoveries. Taunted with illegitimacy, Phaethon appealed to his father, who swore to prove his paternity by giving him whatever he wanted. Phaethon asked to be allowed to drive the chariot of the sun through the heavens for a single day. Helios, bound by his oath, had to let him make the attempt. Phaethon set off but was entirely unable to control the horses of the sun chariot, which came too near to the earth and began to scorch it. To prevent further damage,  Zeus hurled a thunderbolt at Phaethon, who fell to the earth at the mouth of the Eridanus, a river later identified as the Po. [↑](#footnote-ref-328)
329. Finally. Here is a hint! The American pilgrims *first* fled Amsterdam and *Amsterdam* is in the Netherlands. [↑](#footnote-ref-329)
330. And who is “he”? Is he equivalent with the “presumptuous fool”? Such mysteries... [↑](#footnote-ref-330)
331. The law of majestas, or *lex maiestatis,* encompasses several ancient Roman laws (leges maiestatis) throughout the Republican and Imperial periods**dealing** with**crimes against the Roman people, state,**or**Emperor.**  [↑](#footnote-ref-331)
332. *“I trow…”* is the archaic form of “I believe…” [↑](#footnote-ref-332)
333. *Brave Christmas gambols* were, it may be remarked, not greatly in vogue in the Plymouth of 1628. [↑](#footnote-ref-333)
334. A *rout* represents a large evening party or reception. [↑](#footnote-ref-334)
335. ? –FP [↑](#footnote-ref-335)
336. See the opening quote to Chapter Two (top of page ten) for full context. [↑](#footnote-ref-336)
337. Mount *Wollaston* was the *earliest* name given to Merry Mount. Captain Richard *Wollaston* was the name of Morton’s bossy pirate friend who insisted on the Colony being named after him. [↑](#footnote-ref-337)
338. Morgan claims the Pilgrims came to arrest him on an earlier date, but he was too clever for them and hid in the woods to avoid capture. So, noticing he wasn’t home, they stole all his food and belongings and then burned down *clever-Morgan’s* house. But he doesn’t mention *that* in his poem. [↑](#footnote-ref-338)
339. You, my Clear-Headed Reader, can be the final judge to *that.*  [↑](#footnote-ref-339)
340. I.e. Miles Standish. [↑](#footnote-ref-340)
341. Furmity, sometimes *frumenty,* was once a popular dish in Merry Ol’ England. It is a thick -boiled grainy porridge, almost thick as Fleet’s Ditch. It is made with cracked wheat boiled in a milky broth. To enhance the meal, eggs, almonds, currants, sugar or a luxurious serving of orange flower water may be added. For Lent, a Christian festival that includes fasting, practitioners, upon resuming their food ingestion, served themselves *furmity,* cooked with chunks of still-bleeding porpoise, which at the time was thought of as a fish and, therefore, dietetically proper for the Rite of Lent. Furmity, as you may already know, has long been associated with the shearing of sheep, begun in early June. A cacographic diarist, in recalling his youth of the 1820’s, wrote that "almost every farmer in the village made a large quantity of frumenty on the morning they began to clip; and every child in the village was invited to partake of it” [as quoted in James Obelkevich’s *Religion and Rural Society: South Lindsey, 1825-1875*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1976, p. 57)]. A second batch, a furmity of better quality, was later boiled and taken round in buckets and presented, ladle by ladle, to every house in the village. [And *this* is as quoted, almost word for word, *almost,* from a *Wikipedia* article entitled “Frumenty”]. [↑](#footnote-ref-341)
342. A *precisian* is a person who is rigidly precise or punctilious, surgically gashed or grabbingly persnickety, especially in regards to, turgidly and overinflated religious, rules. [↑](#footnote-ref-342)
343. *Receipt* is what they used to call recipes. This recipe was cheerfully discovered betwixt the pages, scribbled by those two Canadian cooking scholars, Constance B. Hieatt and her friend and colleague Sharon Butler, of their magnificent work, *English Culinary Manuscripts of the Fourteenth Century*. It is found on page 56, if indeed, I remember correctly. Being the first recipe under the section heading entitled: “Part II: Diverse Servia, 1. Furmenty,” can we surmise it of being the oldest such recipe entered into that section? [↑](#footnote-ref-343)
344. Note that the obsolete English letter þ, called ***Thorn****,* is the same as our modern, and so more humble, *th.* Hence *þat þe* translates as “that the”. [↑](#footnote-ref-344)
345. The letter *y,* in *later* Old English, came to be essentially interchangeable with the *now* omnipresent i. [↑](#footnote-ref-345)
346. *Seyt* or seut-, being the Proto-Indo-European root for *seethe* or boil. [↑](#footnote-ref-346)
347. I am uncertain what needs to be done here to make the fresh broth *fair*. You are on your own regarding this. [↑](#footnote-ref-347)
348. The archaic meaning of *temper it* means to createa suitable proportion or balance of qualities; to finda middle state between extremes, in short: *stir well.*  [↑](#footnote-ref-348)
349. These *sultanas* are dried up, but only *partially* moisture-lacking*,* seedless green grapes—more than a raison and a lot more than a current. Sultanas superbly supplement the Saltine, or to be more precise, the Premium Soda Cracker, or PSC. [↑](#footnote-ref-349)
350. “Devizes” happens to be a market town and *the* civil parish of Wiltshire, England. [↑](#footnote-ref-350)
351. *Mothering Sunday* is a day honoring *mother* churches, a Christian fun time, whereby the church where one was baptized is honored by your visiting there and *re*visiting your vows to being, forever *and ever,* a “child of the church.” Like I said, we don’t have days like *that* anymore. It’s been celebrated since the Middle Ages throughout the United Kingdom, Ireland, and some other Commonwealth countries, but I don’t know which ones, or even what the traits are needed to belong to the Commonwealth. I am *not* British and don’t know their idiosyncrasies. But I do love their English literature, especially those written at the Time of the Tutors. Some people even liked to save that day for the receiving of their *very* first Sacrament of the Baptism. *Really!* That’s what they used to do back then! [↑](#footnote-ref-351)
352. Don’t forget that the letter *thorn* (þ) represents our modern *th,* therefore the word penne (sometimes written as *pāne*) represents the modern “then”. [↑](#footnote-ref-352)
353. *Sibi et Amicis*, that is, “for himself and his friends,” and in the words of Samuel Pegg, A.M., S.A.S., from the glossary of his 1785 collection of ancient cookbooks entitled *The Forme of Cury, A Roll of English Cookery,* regarding *porpays*: “Porpays, Porpeys. 69. 108. salted, 116. roasted, 78. Porpus or Porpoise. *Porpecia*, Spelm. Gl. v. *Geaspecia*, which he corrects *Seaspecia*. It is surprising he did not see it must be *Graspecia* or *Craspiscis*, i. e. or *Crassus Piscis*, any large fish; a common term in charters, which allow to religious houses or others the produce of the sea on their coasts. See Du Cange in vocibus. We do not use the Porpoise now, but both these and Seals occur in Archb. Nevill’s Feast*.* See Rabelais, IV. c. 60. and I conceive that the Balœnœ in Mr. Topham’s MS. means the Porpus.” [↑](#footnote-ref-353)
354. Am I hearing *attitude?* [↑](#footnote-ref-354)
355. *To gyd* or *togid* = “together” [↑](#footnote-ref-355)
356. *Stondyng* or “standing”, i.e., stiff or *thick*. [↑](#footnote-ref-356)
357. *Leashe* is a variant of the word *leach*, which at the time meant to cut the meat in pieces. [↑](#footnote-ref-357)
358. Loosely translates to “Winners and Waster”. [↑](#footnote-ref-358)
359. frumentee. A potage made of boiled hulled grain mixed with almond milk and sweeteners; often served with venison. [↑](#footnote-ref-359)
360. The translation is from *A Dollop of History.* [↑](#footnote-ref-360)
361. Here is a brief preview, lifted as presented on the Internet: *"According to a Transatlantic paper, the flesh of the porpoise is sold in Philadelphia as a substitute for beef, under the name of 'dolphin meat.' It is described as red, juicy, tender, fine-grained, and of very pleasant flavor." - "In the fifteenth century porpoises were brought whole to table, and were eaten with mustard.”*I hope this leaves you salivating for the sequel! -FP [↑](#footnote-ref-361)
362. Since quainter pens have not distained the grain of polite society, [↑](#footnote-ref-362)
363. With the kinds of things this *Podex* poem contains, and extended, even, to this kind of writing [↑](#footnote-ref-363)
364. The Prince of Modern English poets *has,* whereas the *Prince* is Ben Jonson, and whereas the *year,* 1612, was once considered “modern.” [↑](#footnote-ref-364)
365. In his term’d, the Famous Voyage, he traced a path that… [↑](#footnote-ref-365)
366. Can you guess to whom the initials M.L. refer? The answer, in retrospect, is obvious. [↑](#footnote-ref-366)
367. The missing word here is not specified. I can only guess what the author had in mind. And only you can guess what I have in mind to put into this slot—albeit I am not willing to expose myself in that way and leave it as given. [↑](#footnote-ref-367)
368. *Encomium:* an expression of praise or commendation. [↑](#footnote-ref-368)
369. *Hight =* to name or designate. His name is “Don Podex.” [↑](#footnote-ref-369)
370. The *Great Ajax* was forever immortalized by Sir John Harrington in his 1596 work *The Metamorphosis of Ajax.* Ajax, the powerful Greek god, has come to be synonymous with the toilet, of which Harrington was proud to have invented the first *flush* toilet. The euphemism, *the jakes*, is derived from the term Ajax. It may be insightful that the Colgate-Palmolive cleanser Ajax, introduced in 1947, had for its slogan “Stronger than dirt!” [↑](#footnote-ref-370)
371. *Mould* as in “a man of another *mould* and making.” But note the secondary meaning regarding the podex’s ability to mould the seat of one’s pants. [↑](#footnote-ref-371)
372. *Lick* as in a “small portion,” although the additional meaning of a “*slurping”* may lay not too far behind this use of the word *lick.* [↑](#footnote-ref-372)
373. *Those four segregated forms*…air, earth, fire and water. [↑](#footnote-ref-373)
374. I.e., recombine, blend or mingle. [↑](#footnote-ref-374)
375. *Arch* as in Arch-Bishop, or Arch-enemy, or that Arch-fiend Satan. [↑](#footnote-ref-375)
376. “It’s alive! It’s alive!” [↑](#footnote-ref-376)
377. Found in the OED under the “word” -*gon,* hyphen and all. *Gones* appears to be a word of our author’s own making. And although Mercurius was probably just trying to be witty, he actually made it into the OED for a second time with yet another quote, just read, from this poem we are all reading together! [↑](#footnote-ref-377)
378. *Oakes* may have been (1) John Okey (1606-1662), a soldier, renegade, and Member of Parliament. And he was also a religious radical who dared to practice as a Baptist and a Congregationalist at the same time. Shocking! (2) Nicholas Okes (?-1645) who was a London printer of such luminaries as William Shakespeare and Benjamin Jonson and from all I could learn about him, he seems to have had a great life. And Oakes may *not* have been either of these two. [↑](#footnote-ref-378)
379. Don’t read on until you *fully* understand this simple line. Study it. When the *full* image comes to you, you’ll *know.* (Hint: It’s like a puzzle.) [↑](#footnote-ref-379)
380. And that, I dare say, seems to be an *awful* lot! I won’t bother you with the actual math, though I am *fully* capable of doing so it needed. [↑](#footnote-ref-380)
381. And where, exactly, *does* he go? [↑](#footnote-ref-381)
382. I.e., cover “it” up anyway you want and in whatever way you think looks good—just make sure it’s covered! [↑](#footnote-ref-382)
383. You probably never thought of the girls and young women living during the seventeenth-century acting in quite that way, but apparently they did—just like now. *The* *Shees* refers to all females between the ages of ten and eighty. Or maybe our poet is just being naughty. [↑](#footnote-ref-383)
384. Yet still they remain haughty in their morals towards others. A train will surely cover up the competition and so they’ll fight it with the only available weapon allowed: ah-hem, Morals. [↑](#footnote-ref-384)
385. *“He”* surely refers directly to Don Podex, our very own Pastor Rump, Sir Reverence, and Mr. Arch-butt Master—the *Arse.* [↑](#footnote-ref-385)
386. Our poet has a great way with words, don’t you think? *I’m* enjoying this anyway. Are *you?* [↑](#footnote-ref-386)
387. *Syn’drim* = syndrome, as in a *“farraginous syndrome of knaves and fools”—*Noah Briggs, 1651. [↑](#footnote-ref-387)
388. *Sate* = sit or sat. [↑](#footnote-ref-388)
389. *Chequer:* “A judicial or deliberative assembly or body. Now *esp.* one of the ‘houses’ or divisions of a legislative body … Of the origin of this application of the word various more or less conjectural explanations have been offered: the earliest is that given in the *Dialogus de Scaccario* or *Dialogue concerning the Exchequer,* written in 1178 ‘by Richard Bishop of London the Treasurer, son of Bishop Nigel the Treasurer, and great-nephew of the justiciar Roger of Salisbury’ (Stubbs). According to this the *scaccarium* (chequer or eschequier) of the King was a quadrangular table, covered with a black cloth marked with traverse lines a foot or a palm apart, and having ‘calculi’ in the spaces; it was presumed to be so-called from its likeness to a *chequer* or chess-board.” [OED (1888) pgs. 256, 321] [↑](#footnote-ref-389)
390. Do I detect a pun? [↑](#footnote-ref-390)
391. A *conclave* is a private meeting, a *cabal*  is a secret political clique or factions, a *conventicle* is a secret or unlawful religious meeting, and a *committee* is a group of people appropriated for a specific function. [↑](#footnote-ref-391)
392. Go podex! [↑](#footnote-ref-392)
393. No, podex does not necessarily prefer diplomacy (language) over battle (the medieval lance), nor tubs for tents (= barrels for preserving Spanish wine?), for a hot bath will always be preferred over sleeping in the frosty morning dew, while stuck in a *tent.* He’ll show up to *any* fight, and fight *fiercely,* (if necessary)! [↑](#footnote-ref-393)
394. *Bellona* is the ancient Roman goddess of war, depicted dressed for battle with a military helmet upon her head and brandishing a weapon. *Mars,* her brother, was the ancient Roman god of war. [↑](#footnote-ref-394)
395. Yes, there is not a quill long enough nor is there enough ink in all the world with which to sufficiently praise the fortitude of podex! [↑](#footnote-ref-395)
396. None at all, obviously. [↑](#footnote-ref-396)
397. *Ubiquitary* – having the ability to be everywhere at once. [↑](#footnote-ref-397)
398. *Bayse* = baize, a course woolen cloth, introduced into England in 1525. It’s texture is similar to felt. [↑](#footnote-ref-398)
399. Podex Attribute #1. [↑](#footnote-ref-399)
400. Podex Attribute #2. [↑](#footnote-ref-400)
401. Podex Attribute #3. *Ajax throne,* if you have been paying attention, is *obviously* the toilet. [↑](#footnote-ref-401)
402. But M.L. is, nevertheless, doing his best. [↑](#footnote-ref-402)
403. And podex is a *statist* by having centralized control over all political encounters and affairs. [↑](#footnote-ref-403)
404. Indeed podex is all that *and* more! And, so we learn, *clean,* too! [↑](#footnote-ref-404)
405. Do you think M.L. means this literally? *Maybe…* [↑](#footnote-ref-405)
406. This, I dare say, is also true. [↑](#footnote-ref-406)
407. From *Wikipedia* we learn: “In English common law, *fee-tail* or entail is a form of trust, established by deed or settlement, that restricts the sale or inheritance of an estate in real property and prevents that property from being sold, devised by will, or otherwise alienated by the tenant-in-possession, and instead causes it to pass automatically, by operation of law, to an heir determined by the settlement deed. The term *fee-tail* is from Medieval Latin  *feodum talliatum*, which means ‘cut(-short) fee’. *Fee-tail* deeds are in contrast to ‘fee simple’ deeds, possessors of which have an unrestricted title to the property, and are empowered to bequeath or dispose of it as they wish (although it may be subject to the allodial title of a monarch or of a governing body with the power of eminent domain).  Equivalent legal concepts exist or formerly existed in many other European countries and elsewhere.” And this, *too,* can the podex lawyer *do!* [↑](#footnote-ref-407)
408. *Aeolus,* the “King of the Four Winds”: Boreas, Zephyr, Notus, and Eurus. [↑](#footnote-ref-408)
409. *Hests* = a person’s orders or commands (i.e., *behests*). From the Middle English hest or hes, from Old English hǣs; akin to Old English hātan: to command. [↑](#footnote-ref-409)
410. Or, as the nuns of old referred to, as a ringing at the backdoor. [↑](#footnote-ref-410)
411. *Calabria* is a region in Southern Italy, famous for its silk production. [↑](#footnote-ref-411)
412. *Tenerife* is the most populated of the seven Canary Islands, located off the Moroccan coast, whose average temperature ranges from 62° F in winter to 75° F in summer. [↑](#footnote-ref-412)
413. Thus the Sergeant avoids the Constipation. And, finally, we can all take a deep breath, before we must proceed. [↑](#footnote-ref-413)
414. Ugh-oh! Here comes the scary part! [↑](#footnote-ref-414)
415. The term *Sir Reverence* refers to human excrement, as detailed in OED under that heading, at definition #2 (no pun intended). [↑](#footnote-ref-415)
416. It is, after all, like mathematics *and* music, a universal language! [↑](#footnote-ref-416)
417. *in praesenti* = in present time. [↑](#footnote-ref-417)
418. Priscianus Caesariensis (fl. AD 500), commonly known as *Priscian,* was**a Latin grammarian and the author of the *Institutes of Grammar*, which was the standard textbook for the study of Latin during the Middle Ages**. [↑](#footnote-ref-418)
419. I.e., “rhetoric”. [↑](#footnote-ref-419)
420. *Festino* is the mnemonic name given by Petrus Hispanus (d.1252) to that mood of the third figure of syllogism of which the major premise is a particular affirmative and the minor premise a universal affirmative proposition. The form of this syllogism looks like this: (1) No P's are M's. (2) Some S's are M's. (3) Therefore, some S's are not P's. [↑](#footnote-ref-420)
421. *Disamis* is the 8th valid syllogism. It has the form (1) Some M's are P's (2) All M's are S's and (3) Therefore, some S's are P's [↑](#footnote-ref-421)
422. *Bocardo* is the 11th valid syllogism where (1) Some M's are not P's (2) All M's are S's and (3)Therefore, some S's are not P's. [↑](#footnote-ref-422)
423. *Datisi* is the 7th valid syllogism where (1) All M's are P's (2) Some M's are S's and (3) Therefore, Some S's are P's. *Wow!* M.L. sure knows his Aristotelian logic! [↑](#footnote-ref-423)
424. A *gamut* is a scale consisting of seven overlapping hexachords, containing all the recognized notes used in medieval music, covering almost three octaves from bass G to treble E. [↑](#footnote-ref-424)
425. I.e., *cast*(ing) out nines, a technique to quickly check your sums for correctness. Once you are done, your sum is then “cleared.” [↑](#footnote-ref-425)
426. The *sinister side* is the left side of the equation. [↑](#footnote-ref-426)
427. The *Rule of Three* pertains to proportional reasoning, i.e., if A is to B as C is to D. Knowing three of the unknowns ensures knowledge of the fourth. “The Rule of Three is commonly called the *Golden Rule*; and indeed it may rightly be so termed; for as Gold transcends all other Metals, so doth this Rule all others in Arithmetick.”

     --James Hodder 1702 [↑](#footnote-ref-427)
428. Oh, yes he shall! [↑](#footnote-ref-428)
429. The *seven—*the seven Wise Men of Greece? Perhaps he means the seven Wonders of the World? Your choice! [↑](#footnote-ref-429)
430. Alas, it’s the seven *wise* men and *not* the seven Wonders. Don’t ever call any of the wise men “Arse!” Only Podex fits *that* bill. [↑](#footnote-ref-430)
431. Here begins the discussion regarding the podex’s farting abilities. [↑](#footnote-ref-431)
432. A *spole* (obsolete variant of spool) is the small wheel near the distaff of the common spinning wheel. [↑](#footnote-ref-432)
433. This starts a *second* scariest part. [↑](#footnote-ref-433)
434. Of course there were no aeroplanes then and what M.L. is referring to is the pilot of a water ship. [↑](#footnote-ref-434)
435. And here ends the farting, at least *hopefully* it does. [↑](#footnote-ref-435)
436. *Husbandman*: an old word for farmer. [↑](#footnote-ref-436)
437. A *tucker* is one whose occupation is to dress or finish cloth after it comes from the weaver, especially to stretch it on “tenters.” After the process of pulling and dyeing, the dressed clothes are pricked on the tenter-hooks and stretched, bleeding, to their utmost bearing. (OED @ TENT and TENTER) [↑](#footnote-ref-437)
438. One whose trade is to make or sell candles. [↑](#footnote-ref-438)
439. Yet *another* fart reference. [↑](#footnote-ref-439)
440. The *fil’d* are the sullied or defiled. [↑](#footnote-ref-440)
441. A *vassal* is a serf or helot—a person who is held in servitude to a feudal lord. All creatures are vassals to their podex. [↑](#footnote-ref-441)
442. A *carping mome* is a foolishly talking buffoon. [↑](#footnote-ref-442)
443. A *flout*  is a mocking speech or action. [↑](#footnote-ref-443)
444. *Reflurt* a rare form of “reflirt” meaning to toss back again. The OED quotes this line as an example of its usage. [↑](#footnote-ref-444)
445. This recalls to memory the Miller’s (unfortunate) Tale of Chaucer. [↑](#footnote-ref-445)
446. Emperor Claudius, in the year 47AD, issued an edict, allowing to all people the liberty of giving vent whenever and wherever the need presented itself. *Hail Claudius!* [↑](#footnote-ref-446)