

William Baldwin

d. in or before 1563

For a biography of Baldwin, as well as a discussion of and selections from his other works, see the print anthology, pp. 235-305.

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from *A Mirror for Magistrates*

THE SECOND PART OF
THE MIRROR FOR MAGISTRATES

[...]

“Tush,” quoth another, “what stand we hereupon?¹
It is a poesy and no divinity,² and it is lawful for
poets to feign what they list so it be appurtenant
to the matter. And therefore let it pass even in
5 such sort as you have read it.”

“With a good will,” quoth I. “But whereas you
say a poet may feign what he list, indeed methink it
should be so, and ought to be well taken of the
hearers, but it hath not at all times been so allowed.”

10 “Ye say truth,” quoth the reader, “for here fol-
loweth in the story, that after the death of this
Duke, one Collingbourne was cruelly put to death
for making of a rhyme.”

15 “I have his tragedy here,” quoth I, “for the
better perceiving whereof, you must imagine that
you see him a marvellous well favoured man,
holding in his hand his own heart, newly ripped
out of his breast, and smoking forth the lively
spirit, and with his other hand, beckoning to and
20 fro, as it were to warn us to avoid, and with his
faint tongue and voice, saying as courageously as
he may, these words that follow”:

¹ Baldwin’s editorial group has just finished discussing “The Induction” by Thomas Sackville, a poem describing its narrator’s journey through Hell and his meeting with various allegorical figures from Sorrow to Remorse of Conscience to Death. The poem may prove controversial, one of Baldwin’s fellow editors points out, for two reasons: first, it assumes certain princes are in Hell, when they are assuredly in Heaven; and second, the description of Hell sounds too much like the Catholic Purgatory.

² *divinity* theology; theological or doctrinal text.

How Collingbourne³ Was Cruelly Executed
for Making a Foolish Rhyme.

Beware, take heed, take heed, beware, beware
You poets you, that purpose to rehearse⁴
By any art what tyrants’ doings are!

³ *Collingbourne* The first-person speaker of this tragic tale is, according to Fabyan, William Collingbourne, who was executed for treason just prior to the invasion of Henry Tudor (later Henry VII) and the defeat of Richard III at the Battle of Bosworth Field. Fabyan attributes Collingbourne’s condemnation implicitly to his “affinity” with a number of English noblemen and gentlemen who had recently fled to France to join Henry Tudor and explicitly to the rhyme “The cat, the rat, and Lovell our dog, / Ruleth all England under a hog,” which Fabyan interprets as referring to “Catesby, Ratcliffe and the Lord Lovell, rul[ing] the land under the King” (p. 672). Fabyan’s Collingbourne does not speak except just before his death. Hanged on “a new pair of gallows” made especially for him, Collingbourne was “cut down, being alive, and his bowels ripped out of his belly, and cast into the fire there by him, and lived till the bowcher [i.e., executioner] put his hand into the bulk of his body; insomuch that he said in the same instant, ‘O Lord Jesu, yet more trouble,’ and so died to the great compassion of much people” (p. 672). Hall says: “Yet the wild worm of vengeance wavering in his [i.e., Richard III’s] head could not be contented with the death of divers gentlemen suspected of treason, but also he must extend his bloody fury against a poor gentleman called Collingbourne for making a small rhyme of three of his unfortunate councillors, which were the Lord Lovell, Sir Richard Radcliffe (his mischievous minion), and Sir William Catesby (his secret seducer), which meter was: ‘The Rat, the Cat and Lovell our Dog / Rule all England under the Hog.’” Meaning by “the hog,” the dreadful wild boar which was the King’s cognizance [i.e., badge or emblem], but because the first line ended in “dog,” the metrician could not observing the regiments of meter end the second verse in “Bore,” but called the bore a hog. This poetical schoolmaster, corrector of breves and longes [i.e., short and long syllables], caused Collingbourne to be abbreviate shorter by the head, and to be divided into four quarters (p. 398). Collingbourne and his rhyme are not mentioned in More.

⁴ *rehearse* recount, describe at length.

Erinnis' rage is grown so fell¹ and fierce
 5 That vicious acts may not be touched in verse.
 The Muses' freedom, granted them of eld,²
 Is barred;³ sly reasons treasons high are held.

Be rough in rhyme, and then they say you rail,⁴
 Though Juvenal⁵ so be, that makes no matter.
 10 With Jeremy⁶ you shall be had to jail,
 Or forced with Martial,⁷ Caesar's faults to flatter;
 Clarks must be taught to claw and not to clatter;⁸
 Free Helicon and frank Parnassus⁹ hills
 Are helly haunts¹⁰ and rank pernicious ills.

15 Touch covertly in terms, and then you taunt,¹¹
 Though praised poets always did the like,
 "Control us not, else traitor vile avaunt!¹²
 What pass¹³ we what the learned do dislike?
 Our sins we see, wherein to swarm we seek.
 20 We pass not what the people say or think.

¹ *Erinnis* See print anthology p. 293, note 3; *fell* cruel, ruthless, terrible.

² *Muses* the nine semi-divine patrons of the human arts and sciences; thus, here, the freedom of expression and inquiry granted to those who pursue these arts and sciences; *eld* antiquity.

³ *barred* shut up, confined.

⁴ *rail* utter abusive language.

⁵ *Juvenal* Decimus Junius Juvenalis (c. 60-c.130 CE), Latin satirical poet; his sixteen satires constitute a bitter condemnation of Roman society, and were influential models for Renaissance writers.

⁶ *Jeremy* the prophet Jeremiah, author of some of the most vituperative condemnations of vice and idolatry in the Old Testament. He was arrested at least four times in response to his prophecies (Jeremiah 26:7-8; 36:20-26; 37:11-15; 38:6).

⁷ *Martial* Marcus Valerius Martialis (c. 40-c. 104 CE), Latin poet, most famous for his epigrams, was also a panegyrist to the Roman emperor (the Caesar) Domitian, whom he praised as a pattern of virtue; after Domitian's death, however, Martial exposed him as a cruel and vice-ridden monster (*Classical Dict.*, p. 390).

⁸ *Clarks* clerks; scholars; *claw and not to clatter* to flatter and not to talk idly (babble or chatter).

⁹ *Helicon* a mountain in Boetia, sacred to the Muses; *Parnassus* a mountain in central Greece, sacred to Apollo (god of poetry) and the Muses.

¹⁰ *belly* hellish, devilish; *haunts* places of resort or usual abode; habitations.

¹¹ *covertly in terms* secretly in so many words; *taunt* reproach.

¹² *avaunt* Go away! Hence!

¹³ *pass* care.

Their shittle¹⁴ hate maketh none but cowards
 shrink."

"We know," say they, "the course of Fortune's
 wheel,

How constantly it whirleth still about,
 Arrearing¹⁵ now, while elder headlong reel,
 25 How all the riders always hang in doubt.
 But what for that? we count him but a lout¹⁶
 That sticks¹⁷ to mount, and basely like a beast
 Lives temperately for fear of blockam feast.¹⁸

"Indeed we would of all be deemed gods
 30 Whate'er we do: and therefore partly hate
 Rude preachers that dare threaten us plagues and
 rods,
 And blaze the blots¹⁹ whereby we stain our state:
 But nought we pass what any such do prate.²⁰
 Of course and office²¹ they must say their
 pleasure,
 35 And we of course must hear and mend at leisure.

"But when these pelting²² poets in their rhymes
 Shall taunt, and jest, or paint our wicked works,
 And cause the people know, and curse our
 crimes,
 This ugly fault no tyrant lives but irks.²³
 40 And therefore loathe we taunters worse than
 Turks.

¹⁴ *shittle* fickle, wavering. Collingbourne takes on here and for the next four stanzas the voice of the powerful who seek to restrain the poet's criticism.

¹⁵ *Arrearing* falling back.

¹⁶ *lout* bumpkin; awkward or ill-mannered fellow.

¹⁷ *sticks* hesitates, scruples.

¹⁸ *blockam feast* In England, the village feast is the great annual occasion (second to or rivalling Christmas) for family gatherings and the entertainment of visitors.

¹⁹ *blaze the blots* proclaim or make known publicly the sins, crimes, or other evils.

²⁰ *nought we pass what any such do prate* I.e., we don't care at all what any such do chatter.

²¹ *Of course and office* according to custom and duty (attaching to their occupation).

²² *pelting* paltry, contemptible, worthless.

²³ *irks* is disgusted with; loathes.

They mind thereby to make us know our miss,¹
And so to amend, but they but dote in this.

“We know our faults as well as any other;
We also doubt² the dangers for them due.
45 Yet still we trust so right to guide the rother,³
That scape we shall the surges⁴ that ensue.
We think we know more shifts than other knew.
In vain therefore for us are counsails⁵ writ:
We know our faults, and will not mend a whit.”⁶

50 These are the affections⁷ of the wicked sort,
That preace⁸ for honours, wealth, and pleasure
vain.
Cease therefore, Baldwin, cease I thee exhort,
Withdraw thy pen, for nothing shalt thou gain
Save hate, with loss of paper, ink, and pain.
55 Few hate their sins; all hate to hear them touched,
How covertly so ever they be couched.

Thy intent I know is godly, plain, and good,
To warn the wise, to fray the fond⁹ from ill.
But wicked worldlings are so witless wood¹⁰
60 That to the worst they all things construe still.
With rigour¹¹ oft they recompense good will;
They rack¹² the words till time their sinews burst,
In doubtful senses, straining still the worst.¹³

¹ *mind* intend, purpose; *miss* fault.

² *doubt* suspect.

³ *right* straight, precisely; *rother* rudder.

⁴ *scape* escape; *surges* i.e., of waves.

⁵ *counsails* counsels.

⁶ *a whit* even the least bit.

⁷ *affections* passions.

⁸ *preace* press.

⁹ *fray* frighten; *fond* foolish.

¹⁰ *worldlings* those devoted to the interests and pleasures of the world; *wood* mad, crazed.

¹¹ *rigour* harshness, severity.

¹² *rack* here, to strain the meaning of (words, etc.); to give a forced interpretation to (from the verb, “to rack,” describing a method of torture which involved the violent twisting, stretching, and contorting of the victim’s body).

¹³ *doubtful* uncertain, ambiguous; *straining still the worst* i.e., forcing the meaning or sense [of words so that they] always [mean] the worst possible thing.

A painful proof taught me the truth of this,
65 Through tyrant’s rage, and Fortune’s cruel
tourne.¹⁴
They murdered me for met’ring¹⁵ things amiss.
For wotst¹⁶ thou what? I am that Collingbourne
Which rhymed that which made full many mourn:
“The Cat, the Rat, and Lovel our Dog,
70 Do rule all England, under a Hog.”

Whereof the meaning was so plain and true,
That every fool perceived it at first.
Most liked it, for most that most things knew,
In higger-mugger, muttered what they durst.¹⁷
75 The King himself of most was held accursed,
Both for his own and for his faultours¹⁸ faults,
Of whom were three, the naughtiest of all
naughts.¹⁹

The chief was Catisby whom I called a Cat,²⁰
A crafty lawyer catching all he could.
80 The second Ratcliffe, whom I named a Rat,²¹
A cruel beast to gnaw on whom he should.

¹⁴ *tourne* turn.

¹⁵ *met’ring* metering, composing poetic lines with a certain “meter.”

¹⁶ *wotst* know.

¹⁷ *In higger-mugger* in secret, clandestinely; *durst* dared.

¹⁸ *faultours* fautors: supporters, abettors.

¹⁹ *naughtiest* most wicked or evil; *naughts* ones who are evil or wicked.

²⁰ William Catesby (d. 1485), lawyer, advisor to Richard III, and chancellor of the Exchequer (1483), a man who was known to have great influence with Richard both before and after Richard’s usurpation of the crown. Fabyan mentions only his name and that of Radcliffe and Lovell and states that they “ruled the land under the King” but gives no further information about them (p. 672); his account of Richard III’s reign is generally very brief. Hall’s representation of Catesby emphasizes his duplicity to Lord Hastings and his conivance with Richard’s plans to usurp the throne (p. 359); this section of Hall’s *Chronicles* reprints More’s account (pp. 45-46).

²¹ Sir Richard Radcliffe (or Ratcliffe) (d. 1485), advisor to Richard III, and like Catesby known to be among Richard’s closest and most influential confidantes. He was instrumental in helping Richard gain the crown by seeing that several of Richard’s most powerful opponents were summarily executed (*DNB*, p. 577). Hall mentions Radcliffe, but offers little detail (p. 377, 398). He does not adopt details found in More’s account, which attributes the execution of Rivers, Grey, and Vaughan to Radcliffe; More characterizes Radcliffe, a man “bold in mischief, as far from pity as from all fear of God,” and as the perfect instrument of Richard’s lawlessness (p. 57).

Lord Lovell barked and bit whom Richard
 would,¹
 Whom therefore rightly I did term our Dog,
 Wherewith to rhyme I cleped² the King a Hog.

85 Till he usurped the crown, he gave the Bore,
 In which estate would God he had deceased,
 Then had the realm not ruined so sore.
 His nephew's reign should not so soon have
 ceased,
 The noble blood had not been so decreased.

90 His Rat, his Cat, and Bloodhound had not 'noyed
 So many thousands as they have destroyed.

Their lawless dealings all men did lament,
 And so did I, and therefore made the rhymes
 To show my wit, how well I could invent,

95 To warn withal the careless of their crimes;
 I thought the freedom of the ancient times
 Stood still in force. *Ridentem dicere verum
 Quis vetat?* None, save climbers still *in ferum*.³

Belike no tyrants were in Horace' days,
 And therefore poets freely blamed vice.
 Witness their satyr⁴ sharp, and tragic plays,
 With chiefest princes chiefly had in price.
 They name no man, they mix their gall⁵ with spice,
 No more do I, I name no man outright,

105 But riddle-wise, I mean them as I might.

¹ Francis Lovell, Viscount Lovell (1454-?87), ally and supporter of Richard III, as well as one of the King's "most trusted friends." Apart from its obvious derogatory connotations, "dog" also refers to the design on Lovell's crest (*DNB*, p. 172). Hall mentions Lovell's creation as a viscount, but offers little more information (p. 475). More does not mention Lovell at all.

² *cleped* called, named.

³ Latin, from Horace, *Satires* 1.1.24-25: "and yet what is to prevent one from telling truth as he laughs ...?" (trans. H.R. Fairclough, *Satires, Epistles and Ars Poetica* [Cambridge, MA, 1929]); *in ferum* Latin, "in ferrum" or "in this iron age," referring to the last of the increasingly degenerate stages of human history, one full of violence, abuse of power, and lawlessness.

⁴ *satyr* satire.

⁵ *gall* bitterness, virulence.

When bruit⁶ had brought this to their guilty ears,
 Who rudely named were noted in the rhyme,
 They all conspired like most greedy bears,
 To charge me with most heinous trait'rous crime,
 110 And damned me the gallow-tree to climb,
 And strangled first, in quarters to be cut,
 Which should on high over London gates be put.⁷

This wicked judgement vexed⁸ me so sore,
 That I exclaimed against their tyranny,
 115 Wherewith incensed, to make my pain the more,
 They practiced a shameful villainy.
 They cut me down alive, and cruelly
 Ripped up my paunch and bulk⁹ to make me
 smart,
 And lingered long ere they took out my heart.

120 Here Tyrant Richard played the eager Hog,
 His grashing tusks my tender gristels shore.¹⁰
 His bloodhound Lovel played the ravening Dog,
 His wolfish teeth, my guiltless carcass tore.
 His Rat and Cat did what they might, and more:
 125 Cat Catesby clawed my guts to make me smart;
 The Rat Lord Ratcliffe gnawed me to the heart.

If Jews had killed the justest king alive,
 If Turks had burnt up churches, gods, and all,
 What greater pain could cruel hearts contrive,
 130 Than that I suffered for this trespass small?
 I am not prince nor peer, but yet my fall
 Is worthy to be thought upon for this:
 To see how cankered tyrant's malice is.

To teach also all subjects to take heed
 135 They meddle not with magistrates' affairs,
 But pray to God to mend them if it need;

⁶ *bruit* rumour, report noised about publicly.

⁷ *And damned ... put* The traditional method of execution for high treason.

⁸ *vexed* distressed.

⁹ *paunch* belly, abdomen; *bulk* synonym for "belly," but also "trunk" or the body generally.

¹⁰ *grashing* gnashing; *gristels* cartilage; *shore* sheared, cut through.

To warn also all poets that be strayers,¹
 To keep them close in compass of their chayers,²
 And when they touch things which they wish
 amended.

140 To sauce them so that few need be offended.

And so to mix their sharp rebukes with mirth,
 That they may pierce, not causing any pain,
 Save such as followeth every kindly birth,
 Requited straight, with gladness of the gain.
 145 A poet must be pleasant, not too plain,³
 No flatterer, no bolsterer of vice,
 But sound and sweet, in all things ware⁴ and wise.

The Greeks do paint a poet's office whole
 In Pegasus, their feigned horse with wings,
 150 Whom shaped so Medusa's blood did foal,
 Who with his feet strake out the Muses' springs
 From flinty rocks to Helicon that clings.
 And then flew up unto the starry sky,
 And there abides among the heavens high.⁵

155 For he that shall a perfect poet be,
 Must first lie bred out of Medusa's blood:
 He must be chaste and virtuous as was she,
 Who to her power the Ocean god withstood.
 To th'end also his doom⁶ be just and good,
 160 He must (as she had) have one only eye,
 Regard of truth, that nought may lead awry.⁷

¹ *strayers* people who stray or wander.

² *close* confined; *chayers* chairs.

³ *plain* direct, straightforward; readily understood.

⁴ *ware* cautious, prudent; cunning (often coupled with "wise").

⁵ *The Greeks ... high* When Perseus killed Medusa, her blood magically gave birth to Pegasus, the winged horse of Bellerophon. Ovid recounts how Pegasus created the sacred spring of the Muses on Mount Helicon by stamping the ground with his hoofs (*Metamorphoses*, Bk. 5). Later, Pegasus was transformed by Jupiter (Zeus) into a constellation (*Classical Dict.*, p. 492).

⁶ *doom* judgement (although the sense of "fate" may be here as well).

⁷ *Medusa's blood ... awry* According to some accounts, Medusa, one of three sisters (the Gorgons), was originally a beautiful young woman whose hair Minerva turned into serpents as a punishment for Medusa's violation of her temple. Neptune, god of the ocean, had

In courage eke he must be like a horse;
 He may not fear to register the right.
 And that no power or fancy do him force,
 165 No bit nor rein his tender jaws may twilight.⁸
 He must be armed with strength of wit and
 spright⁹

To dash the rocks, dark causes and obscure,
 Till he attain the springs of truth most pure.

His hooves must also pliant be and strong,
 170 To rive¹⁰ the rocks of lust and errors blind,
 In brainless heads that always wander wrong:
 These must he brise¹¹ with reasons plain and kind,
 Till springs of grace do gush out of the mind.
 For till affections from the fond¹² be driven,
 175 In vain is truth told or good counsel given.

Like Pegasus a poet must have wings
 To fly to heaven, thereto to feed and rest.
 He must have knowledge of eternal things;
 Almighty Jove must harbour in his breast.
 180 With worldly cares he may not be oppressed;
 The wings of skill and hope must heave him
 high'r
 Than all the joys which worldly wits desire.

He must be also nimble, free, and swift
 To travel far to view the trades of men;
 185 Great knowledge oft is gotten by the shift;¹³
 Things notable he must be quick to pen,
 Reproving vices sharply now and then.
 He must be swift when touched tyrants chafe,
 To gallop thence to keep his carcass safe.

fallen in love with Medusa and had seduced her in Minerva's temple. Other accounts say that the three Gorgons were born as hideous monsters with only one tooth and one eye to use in turn between them (*Classical Dict.*, p. 287, 397).

⁸ *twilight* touch.

⁹ *spright* variation of "sprite": spirit.

¹⁰ *rive* rend, split.

¹¹ *brise* bruise.

¹² *affections* feelings as opposed to reason; passions, lusts; *fond* foolish.

¹³ *by the shift* by way of makeshift (i.e., "on the fly").

190 These properties if I had well considered,
 Especially that which I touched last,
 With speedy flight my feet should have delivered
 My feeble body from the stormy blast.
 They should have caught me, ere I had be cast.¹
 195 But trusting vainly to the tyrant's grace,
 I never shrunk, nor changed port or place.

I thought the poet's ancient liberties
 Had been allowed plea at any bar.
 I had forgot how newfound tyrannies
 200 With right and freedom were at open war,
 That lust² was law, that might did make and mar,
 That with the lewd save this³ no order was:
*Sic volo, sic iubeo, stet pro ratione voluntas.*⁴

Where this is law, it booteth not⁵ to plead;
 205 No privilege or liberties avail.
 But with the learn'd whom law and wisdom lead,
 Although through rashness poets hap⁶ to rail,
 A plea of dotage may all quarrels quail:
 Their liberties their writings to expound,
 210 Doth quit them clear from faults by Momus⁷
 found.

This ancient freedom ought not be debarred
 From any wight that speaketh ought or writeth.
 The author's meaning should of right be heard;
 He knoweth best to what end he enditeth.⁸
 215 Words sometime bear more than the heart
 behiteth.⁹

¹ *ere I had be cast* I.e., before I had been condemned.

² *lust* desire, will.

³ *lewd* wicked, unprincipled, vile; *save this* except this.

⁴ Latin, from Juvenal, Satire 6.223 (somewhat misquoted: *Hoc volo, sic iubeo, sit pro ratione voluntas*: "As I wish, so I command it, let my will take the place of reason").

⁵ *it booteth not* it avails or helps not; it is useless.

⁶ *hap* chance, happen.

⁷ *quit them clear* acquit or absolve them completely; *Momus* a Greek divinity, the god of ridicule, who for his censures upon the gods was banished from Heaven; hence, a fault-finder, a captious critic.

⁸ *enditeth* inditeth: writes, composes.

⁹ *behiteth* obsolete form of "behigh," a word which was becoming obsolete in the sixteenth century and thus was often misused; here, the meaning is closest to "intends."

Admit therefore the author's exposition,
 If plain, for truth: if forced, for his submission.

Of slanderers just laws require no more
 Save to amend that seemed evil said,
 220 Or to unsay the slanders said afore,
 And ask forgiveness for the hasty braid.¹⁰
 To heretics no greater pain is laid
 Than to recant their errors or retract,
 And worse than these can be no writer's act.

225 "Yes," quoth the Cat, "thy railing words be
 treason,
 And treason is far worse than heresy."
 Then must it follow, by this foolish reason,
 That kings be more than God in majesty,
 And souls be less than bodies in degree.
 230 For heretics both souls and God offend;
 Traitors but seek to bring man's life to end.

I speak not this to abase the heinous fault
 Of trait'rous acts abhorred of God and man,
 But to make plain their judgement to be naught
 235 That heresy for lesser sin do ban.¹¹
 I curse them both as deep as any can,
 And always did: yet through my foolish rhyme,
 They arraigned and stained me with that shameful
 crime.

I never meant the King or Council harm,
 240 Unless to wish them safety were offence.
 Against their power I never lifted arm,
 Neither pen nor tongue for any ill pretence.
 The rhyme I made, though rude, was sound in
 sense,

For they therein whom I so fondly¹² named,
 245 So ruled all that they were foul defamed.

This was no treason but the very troth;¹³
 They ruled all, none could deny the same.

¹⁰ *braid* outburst of passion, envy, or anger; perhaps, assault or attack (of a verbal or written kind).

¹¹ *ban* curse.

¹² *fondly* foolishly.

¹³ *troth* truth.

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What was the cause then why they were so
wroth?¹
What, is it treason in a rhyming frame
250 To clip, to stretch, to add, or change a name?
And this reserved, there is no rhyme or reason,
That any craft can clout² to seem a treason.

For where I meant the King by name of Hog,
I only alluded to his badge the Boar:³
255 To Lovel's name I added more our Dog,
Because most dogs have borne that name of yore.
These metaphors I use with other more,
As Cat, and Rat, the half names of the rest,
To hide the sense which they so wrongly wrest.⁴

260 I pray you now what treason find you here?
Enough: you rubbed the guilty on the gall;⁵
Both sense and names do note them very near.
I grant that was the chief cause of my fall,
Yet can you find therein no treason at all.
265 There is no word against the prince or state,
Nor harm to them whom all the realm did hate.

But sith the guilty always are suspicious,
And dread the ruin that must 'sue⁶ by reason,
They cannot choose but count their counsel
vicious
270 That note their faults, and therefore call it treason.
All grace and goodness with the lewd is geason.⁷
This is the cause why they good things detest,
Whereas the good take ill things to the best.

275 And therefore, Baldwin, boldly to the good
Rebuke thou vice, so shalt thou purchase thanks;

¹ *wroth* angry, enraged.

² *craft* cunning, guile; *clout* patch (to join awkwardly or coarsely together; to botch up).

³ A white boar and a lion were the main figures in Richard III's heraldic badge or emblem. See Fabyan, p. 672.

⁴ *wrest* twist, pervert.

⁵ *gall* a sore or wound produced by rubbing or chafing.

⁶ *'sue* i.e., ensue.

⁷ *geason* rare, scarce, uncommon.

As for the bad, thou shalt but move his mood,
Though pleasantly thou touch his sinful pranks.⁸
Warn poets therefore not to pass the banks
Of Helicon,⁹ but keep them in the streams,
280 So shall their freedom save them from extremes.

“God's blessing on his heart that made this,”
said one, “specially for reviving our ancient liberties. And I pray God it may take such place with the magistrates that they may ratify our old freedom.”

5 “Amen,” quoth another, “for that shall be a mean¹⁰ both to stay and uphold themselves from falling, and also to preserve many kind, true, zealous, and well meaning minds from slaughter and infamy. If King Richard and his councillors had allowed, or at the least but winked at some such wits, what great commodities¹¹ might they have taken thereby! First, they should have known what the people misliked and grudged at (which no one of their flatterers either would or durst have told them), and so might have found mean, either by amendment (which is best) or by some other policy, to have stayed the people's grudge, the forerunner commonly of rulers' destructions. *Vox populi, vox dei*,¹² in this case is not so famous a proverb as true. The experience of all times doth approve it. They should also have been warned of their own sins, which call continually for God's vengeance, which never faileth to fall on their necks suddenly and horribly, unless it be stayed with hearty repentance. These weighty commodities mought¹³ they have taken by Collingbourne's vain rhyme. But as all things work to the best in them that be good, so best things heap up mischief in the wicked, and all to hasten their utter destruction. For after this poor wretch's lament-

⁸ *pleasantly* cheerfully, good-humouredly; *pranks* wicked deeds.

⁹ *Helicon* the sacred dwelling place of the Muses.

¹⁰ *mean* method, way.

¹¹ *commodities* advantages, benefits (often in the sense of private or selfish interest).

¹² Latin, “The voice of the people is the voice of God” (Peter of Blois, *Epistulae*, 15).

¹³ *mought* might.

able persecution, (the common reward of best endeavours) straight followed the eternal destruction both of this tyrant and of his tormentors.

35 Which I wish might be so set forth that they might be a warning forever to all in authority to beware how they usurp or abuse their offices.”

“I have here,” quoth I, “King Richard’s tragedy.”

“Read it, we pray you,” quoth they.

40 “With a good will,” quoth I. “For the better understanding whereof, imagine that you see him tormented with Dives¹ in the deep pit of Hell, and thence howling this that followeth.”

[...]

—1563

¹ *Dives* the rich man in the parable of the Rich Man (Dives) and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31); when Dives dies, he finds himself tormented in Hell for his lack of charity to the beggar Lazarus, who in contrast dwells in heavenly bliss.