

**A Groat's-worth of Wit
Bought with a Million of Repentance**

By

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ROBERT GREENE

A GROAT'S-WORTH OF WIT
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**GREENE'S,
GROAT'S-WORTH
of Wit,
bought with a million of Repentance.**

Describing the folly of youth, the falsehood of make-shift flatterers, the misery of the negligent, and mischiefs of deceiving Courtesans.

Written before his death and published at his dying request.

Fœlicem fuisse infaustum.

LONDON
Imprinted for William Wright.
1592.

The printer to the gentle readers.

I Have published here Gentlemen for your mirth and benefit *Greene's* goat's worth of wit. With sundry of his pleasant discourses, ye have been before delighted: But now hath death given a period to his pen: only this happened into my hands which I have published for your pleasures: Accept it favourably because it was his last birth and not least worth: In my poor opinion. But I will cease to praise that which is above my conceit, and leave itself to speak for itself: and so abide your learned censuring.

Yours W. W.

To the Gentlemen Readers.

Gentlemen. The Swan sings melodiously before death, that in all his life useth but a jarring sound. *Greene* though able enough to write, yet deeplier searched with sickness than ever heretofore, sends you his Swan like song, for that he fears he shall never again carol to you wonted love lays, never again discover to you youths pleasures. How ever yet sickness, riot, incontinence, have at once shown their extremity, yet if I recover, you shall all see, more fresh sprigs, then ever sprang from me, directing you how to live, yet not dissuading ye from love. This is the last I have writ, and I fear me the last I shall write. And how ever I have been censured for some of my former books, yet Gentlemen I protest, they were as I had special information. But passing them, I commend this to your favourable censures, and like an Embryo without shape, I fear me will be thrust into the world. If I live to end it, it shall be otherwise: if not, yet will I commend it to your courtesies, that you may as well be acquainted with my repentant death, as you have lamented my careless course of life. But as *Nemo ante obitum felix*, so *Acta Exitus probat*: Beseeching therefore to be deemed hereof as I deserve, I leave the work to your likings, and leave you to your delights.

A GROAT'S-WORTH OF WIT
Bought with a Million of Repentance



GREENE'S GROAT'S-WORTH OF WIT.

IN an Island bounded with the Ocean there was sometime a City situated, made riche by Merchandise, and populous by long peace: the name is not mentioned in the Antiquary, or else worn out by time's Antiquity, what it was greatly skills not: but therein thus it happened. An old new-made Gentleman herein dwelt, of no small credit, exceeding wealth, and large conscience: he had gathered from many to bestow upon one, for though he had two sons he esteemed but one, that being as himself, brought up to be gold's bondman, was therefore held heir apparent of his ill gathered goods.

The other was a Scholar, and married to a proper Gentlewoman and therefore least regarded, for 'tis an old said saw: To learning & law, there's no greater foe than they that nothing know: yet was not the father altogether unlettered, for he had good experience in a *Noverint*, and by the universal terms therein contained, had driven many a young Gentleman to seek unknown countries, wise he was, for he bore office in his parish and sat as formally in his fox-furred gown, as if he had been a very upright dealing Burgess: he was religious too, never without a book at his belt, and a bolt in his mouth, ready to shoot through his sinful neighbour.

And Latin he had somewhere learned, which though it were but little, yet was it profitable, for he had this Philosophy written in a ring, *Tu tibi cura*, which precept he curiously observed, being in self-love so religious, as he held it no point of charity to part with anything, of which he living might make use.

But as all mortal things are momentary, and no certainty can be found in this uncertain world: so *Gorinius*, (for that shall be this Usurer's name) after many a gouty pang that had pinched his exterior parts, many a curse of the people that mounted into heaven's presence, was at last with his last summons, by a deadly disease arrested, where-against when he had long contended, and was by Physicians given over, he called his two sons before him: and willing to perform the old proverb *Qualis vita finis Ita*, he thus prepared himself, and admonished them. My sons (for so your mother said ye were) and so I assure myself one of you is, and of the other I will make no doubt.

You see the time is come, which I thought would never have approached and we must now be separated, I fear never to meet again. This sixteen years daily have I lived vexed with disease: and might I live sixteen more, how ever miserably, I should think it happy. But death is relentless, and will not be entreated witless: and knows not what good my gold might do him: senseless & hath no pleasure in the delightful

places I would offer him. In brief, I think he hath with this fool my eldest son been brought up in the university, and therefore accounts that in riches is no virtue. But thou my son, (laying then his hand on the younger's head) have thou another spirit: for without wealth, life is a death: what is gentry if wealth be wanting, but base servile beggary? Some comfort yet it is unto me, to see how many Gallants sprung of noble parents, have crouched to *Gorinius* to have sight of his gold: O gold, desired gold, admired gold! and have lost their patrimonies to *Gorinius*, because they have not returned by their day that adored creature! How many scholars have written rimes in *Gorinius'* praise, and received (after long capping and reverence) a sixpenny reward in sign of my superficial liberality. Briefly my young *Lucanio* how I have been revered thou seest, when honest men I confess have been set far off: for to be rich is to be anything, wise, honest, worshipful, or what not. I tell thee my son: when I came first to this City my whole wardrobe was only a suit of white sheep skins, my wealth an old groat, my wooing, the wide world. At this instant (O grief to part with it) I have in ready coin threescore thousand pound, in plate and jewels xv. thousand; in Bonds and specialties as much, in land nine hundred pound by the year: all which, *Lucanio* I bequeath to thee, only I reserve for *Roberto* thy well read brother an old groat, (being ye stock I first began with) wherewith I wish him to buy a groats-worth of wit: for he in my life hath reprov'd my manner of life, and therefore at my death, shall not be contaminated with corrupt gain. Here by the way Gentlemen must I digress to show the reason of *Gorinius'* present speech: *Roberto* being come from the Academy, to visit his father, there was a great feast provided: where for table talk, *Roberto* knowing his father and most of the company to be execrable usurers, inveighed mightily against the abhorred vice, insomuch that he urged tears from divers of their eyes, and compunction in some of their hearts. Dinner being past, he comes to his father, requesting him to take no offence at his liberal speech, seeing what he had uttered was truth. Angry son (said he) no by my honesty (and that is some what I may say to you) but use it still, and if thou canst persuade any of my neighbours from lending upon usury I should have the more customers: to which when *Roberto* would have replied he shut himself into his study, and fell to tell over his money.

This was *Roberto's* offence: now return, we to sick *Gorinius*, who after he had thus unequally distributed his goods and possessions, began to ask his sons how they liked his bequests: either seemed agreed, and *Roberto* urged him with nothing more than repentance of his sin: Look to thine own said he, fond boy, & come my *Lucanio*, let me give thee good counsel before my death: as for you sir, your books are your counsellors, and therefore to them I bequeath you. Ah *Lucanio*, my only comfort, because I hope thou wilt as thy father be a gatherer, let me bless thee before I die. Multiply in wealth my son by any means thou mayest, only fly Alchemy, for therein are more deceits than her beggarly Artists have words; and yet are the wretches more talkative than women. But my meaning is, thou shouldst not stand on conscience in causes of profit, but heap treasure upon treasure, for the time of need: yet seem to be devout, else shalt thou be held vile: frequent holy exercises, grave company, and above all use the conversation of young Gentlemen, who are so wedded to prodigality, that once in a quarter necessity knocks at their chamber doors: proffer them kindnesses to relieve their wants, but be sure of good assurance: give fair words till days of payment come, & then use my course, spare none: what though they tell of conscience (as a number will talk) look but into the dealings of the world, and thou shalt see it is but idle words. Seest thou not many perish in the streets, and fall to theft for need: whom small succour would relieve, then where is conscience, and why art

A GROAT'S-WORTH OF WIT
Bought with a Million of Repentance

thou bound to use it more than other men? Seest thou not daily forgeries, perjuries, oppressions, rackings of the poor, raisings of rents, enhancing of duties even by them that should be all conscience, if they meant as they speak: but *Lucanio* if thou read well this book (and with that he reached him *Machaivel's* works at large) thou shalt see, what 'tis to be fool-holy as to make scruple of conscience where profit presents itself.

Besides, thou hast an instance by the thread-bare brother here, who willing to do no wrong, hath lost his child's right: for who would wish anything to him, that knows not how to use it.

So much, *Lucanio*, for conscience: & yet I know not what's the reason, but some-what stings me inwardly when I speak of it. Aye, father, said *Roberto*, it is the worm of conscience, that urges you at the last hour to remember your life, that eternal life may follow your repentance. Out fool (said this miserable father), I feel it now, it was only a stitch. I will forward with my exhortation to *Lucanio*. As I said my son, make spoil of young Gallants, by insinuating thy self amongst them, & be not moved to think their Ancestors were famous, but consider thine were obscure, and that thy father was the first Gentleman of the name: *Lucanio*, thou are yet a Bachelor, and so keep thee till thou meet with one that is thy equal, I mean in wealth: regard not beauty, it is but a bait to entice thine neighbour's eye: and the most fair are commonly most fond, use not too many familiars, for few prove friends, and as easy it is to weigh the wind, as to dive into the thoughts of worldly glosers. I tell thee *Lucanio*, I have seen four-score winters besides the odd seven, yet saw I never him, that I esteemed as my friend but gold, that desired creature, whom I have so dearly loved, and found so firm a friend, as nothing to me having it hath been wanting. No man but may think dearly of a true friend, & so do I of it laying it under sure locks, and lodging my heart there-with.

But now (Ah my *Lucanio*) now must I leave it, and to thee I leave with this lesson, love none but thy self, if thou wilt live esteemed. So turning him to his study, where his chief treasure lay, he loud cried out in the wise man's words, *O mors quam amara*, O death how bitter is thy memory to him that hath all pleasures in this life, & so with two or three lamentable groans he left his life: and to make short work, was by *Lucanio* his son interred, as the custom is with some solemnity: But leaving him that hath left the world to him that censureth of every worldly man, pass we to his sons: and see how his long laid up store is by *Lucanio* looked into. The youth was of condition simple, shamefast, & flexible to any counsel, which *Roberto* perceiving, and pondering how little was left to him, grew into an inward contempt of his father's unequal legacy, and determined a resolution to work *Lucanio* all possible injury: hereupon thus converting the sweetness of his study to the sharp thirst of revenge, he (as Envy is seldom idle) sought out fit companions to effect his unbrotherly resolution. Neither in such a case is ill company far to seek, for ye Sea hath scarce so many jeopardies, as populous Cities have deceiving Syrens, whose eyes are Adamants, whose words are witchcrafts, whose doors lead down to death. With one of these female serpents *Roberto* consorts, and they conclude whatever they compassd equally to share to their contents. This match made, *Lucanio* was by his brother brought to the bush, where he had scarce pruned his wings but he was fast limed, and *Roberto* had what he expected. But that we may keep form, you shall hear how it fortun'd.

Lucanio being on a time very pensive, his brother spake with him in these terms. I wonder *Lucanio* why you are disconsolate, that want not anything in the world that may work your content. If wealth may delight a man, you are with that sufficiently furnished: if credit may procure any comfort, your word I know well, is as well accepted as any man's obligation: in this City, are fair buildings and pleasant gardens, and cause of solace: of them I am assured you have your choice. Consider brother you are young, then plod not altogether in meditating on our father's precepts: which howsoever they savoured of profit, were most unsavourly to one of your years applied. You must not think but certain Merchants of this City expect your company, sundry Gentlemen desire your familiarity, and by conversing with such, you will be accounted a Gentleman: otherwise a peasant, if ye live thus obscurely. Besides which I had almost forgot, and then had all the rest been nothing, you are a man by nature furnished with all exquisite proportion, worthy the love of any courtly lady, be she never so amorous: you have wealth to maintain her, of women not little longed for: words to court her you shall not want, for myself will be your secretary. Briefly, why stand I to distinguish ability in particularities, when in one word it may be said which no man can gainsay, *Lucanio* lacketh nothing to delight a wife, nor anything but a wife to delight him? My young master being thus clawed, and puffed up with his own praise, made no longer delay, but having on his holiday hose he tricked himself up, and like a fellow that meant good sooth, he clapped his brother on the shoulder and said. Faith brother *Roberto*, and ye say the word let's go seek a wife while 'tis hot, both of us together, I'll pay well, and I dare turn you loose to say as well as any of them all, well I'll do my best said *Roberto* and since ye are so forward let's go now and try your good fortune.

With this forth they walk, and *Roberto* went directly toward the house where *Lamilia* (for so we call the Courtesan) kept her hospital, which was in the suburbs of the City, pleasantly seated, and made more delectable by a pleasant garden wherein it was situate. No sooner come they within ken, but Mistress *Lamilia* like a cunning angler made ready her change of baits that she might effect *Lucanio's* bane: and to begin she discovered from her window her beauteous enticing face, and taking a lute in her hand that she might the rather allure, she sung this sonnet with a delicious voice,

Lamilia's song.

*Fie fie on blind fancy,
It hinder youth's joy:
Fair virgins learn by me,
To count love a toy.*

*When Love learned first the A B C of delight,
And knew no figures, nor conceited phrase:
He simply gave to due desert her right,
He led not lovers in dark winding ways:
He plainly willed to love, or flatly answered no,
But now who lists to prove, shall find it nothing so,*

*Fie fie on blind fancy,
It hinder youth's joy:*

A GROAT'S-WORTH OF WIT
Bought with a Million of Repentance

*Fair virgins learn by me,
To count love a toy.*

*For since he learned to use the Poet's pen,
He learned likewise with smoothing words to fain,
Witching chaste ears with truthless tongues of men,
And wronged faith with falsehood and disdain.
He gives a promise now, anon he sweareth no,
Who listeth for to prove shall find his changings so:*

*Fie fie on blind fancy,
It hinder youth's joy:
Fair virgins learn by me,
To count love a toy.*

While this painted sepulchre was shadowing her corrupting guilt, Hyena-like alluring to destruction, *Roberto* and *Lucanio* under her window kept even pace with every stop of her instrument, but especially my young Ruffler, (that before time like a bird in a cage, had been 'prentice for three lives or one and twenty years at least to extreme Avarice his deceased father). O 'twas a world to see how he sometime simpered it, striving to set a countenance on his new turned face, that it might seem of wainscot proof, to behold her face without blushing: anon he would stroke his bow-bent-leg, as if he meant to shoot love arrows from his shins: then wiped his chin (for his beard was not yet grown) with a gold wrought handkerchief, whence of purpose he let fall a handful of Angels. This golden shower was no sooner rained, but *Lamila* ceased her song, and *Roberto* (assuring himself the fool was caught) came to *Lucanio* (that stood now as one that had stared *Medusa* in the face) and awaked him from his amazement with these words: What in a trance brother? whence springs these dumps? are ye amazed at this object? or long ye to become love's subject? Is there not difference between this delectable life, and the imprisonment you have all your life hitherto endured? If the sight and hearing of this harmonious beauty work in you effects of wonder, what will the possession of so divine an essence, wherein beauty & Art dwell in their perfect excellence. Brother, said *Lucanio* let's use few words, an she be no more than a woman, I trust you'll help me to win her? and if you do, well, I say no more, but I am yours till death us depart, and what is mine shall be yours, world without end Amen.

Roberto smiling at his simpleness, helped him to gather up his dropped gold, and without any more circumstance, led him to *Lamilia's* house: for of such places it may be said as of hell. *Noctes atque dies patet atri iannua ditis.*

So their doors are ever open to entice youth to destruction. They were no sooner entered but *Lamilia* herself like a second *Helen*, court-like begins to salute *Roberto*, yet did her wandering eye glance often at *Lucanio*: the effect of her entertainment consisted in these terms, that to her simple house Signor *Roberto* was welcome, & his brother the better welcome for his sake: albeit his good report confirmed by his present demeanour were of itself enough to give him deserved entertainment in any place how honourable soever: mutual thanks returned, they lead this prodigal child into a parlour garnished with goodly portraitures of amiable personages: near which an excellent consort of music began at their entrance to play. *Lamilia* seeing *Lucanio* shamefast, took him by the hand, and tenderly wringing him used these words: Believe me Gentleman, I am very sorry that our rude entertainment

is such, as no way may work your content, for this I have noted since your first entering that your countenance hath been heavy, and the face being the glass of the heart, assures me the same is not quiet: would ye wish anything here that might content you, say but the word, and assure ye of present diligence to effect your full delight. *Lucanio* being so far in love, as he persuaded himself without her grant he could not live, had a good meaning to utter his mind but wanting fit words, he stood like a truant that lacked a prompter, or a player that being out of his part at his first entrance, is fain to have the book to speak what he should perform. Which *Roberto* perceiving, replied thus in his behalf: Madam, the Sun's brightness dazzleth the beholder's eyes, the majesty of Gods amazeth humane men, *Tully* Prince of Orators once fainted though his cause were good, and he that tamed monsters stood amazed at Beauty's ornaments: Then blame not this young man though he replied not, for he is blinded with the beauty of your sun-darkening eyes, made mute with the celestial organ of your voice, and fear of that rich ambush of amber coloured darts, whose points are levelled against his heart. Well Signor *Roberto* said she, how ever you interpret their shape level, be sure they are not bent to do him hurt, and but that modesty binds us poor maidens from uttering the inward sorrow of our minds, perchance the cause of grief is ours how ever men do colour, for as I am a virgin I protest, (and therewithal she tainted her cheeks with a vermillion blush) I never saw Gentleman in my life in my eye so gracious as is *Lucanio* only this is my grief, that either I am despised for that he scorns to speak, or else (which is my greater sorrow) I fear he cannot speak. Not speak, Gentlewoman! quoth *Lucanio*? that were a jest indeed, yea I thank God I am sound of wind and limb, only my heart is not as it was wont, but an you be as good as your word that will soon be well, and so craving ye of more acquaintance, in token of my plain meaning receive this diamond, which my old father loved dearly: and with that delivered her a ring wherein was a pointed diamond of wonderful worth. Which she accepting with a low congé, returned him a silk ribbon for a favour tied with a true love's knot, which he fastened under a fair jewel on his Beaver felt.

After this *Diomedis & Glauci permutatio*, my young master waxed crank, and the music continuing, was very forward in dancing, to show his cunning: and so desiring them to play on a horn-pipe, laid on the pavement lustily with his leaden heels, curvetting like a steed of *Signor Rocco's* teaching, and wanted nothing but bells, to be a hobbyhorse in a morrice. Yet was he soothed in his folly, and whatever he did, *Lamilia* counted excellent: her praise made him proud, insomuch that if he had not been entreated, he would rather have died in his dance, then left off to show his mistress delight. At last reasonably persuaded, seeing the table furnished, he was content to cease, and settle him to his victuals, on which (having before laboured) he fed lustily, especially of a woodcock pie, wherewith *Lamilia* his carver, plentifully plied him. Full dishes having furnished empty stomachs, and *Lucanio* thereby got leisure to talk, falls to discourse of his wealth, his lands, his bonds, his ability, and how himself with all he had, was at madam *Lamilia's* disposing: desiring her afore his brother to tell him simply what she meant. *Lamilia* replied: My sweet *Lucanio*, how I esteem of thee mine eyes do witness, that like handmaids, have attended thy beauteous face, ever since I first beheld thee: yet seeing love that lasteth gathereth by degrees his liking: let this for that suffice, if I find thee firm, *Lamilia* will be faithful: if fleeting, she must of necessity be unfortunate: that having never seen any whom she could affect, she should be of him injuriously forsaken. Nay said *Lucanio*, I dare say my brother here will give his word for that. I accept your own said *Lamilia*: for with me your credit is better than your brothers. *Roberto* brake off their amorous prattle

A GROAT'S-WORTH OF WIT
Bought with a Million of Repentance

with this speech; sith either of you are of other so fond at the first sight, I doubt not but time will make your love more firm. Yet madam *Lamilia*, although my brother and you be thus forward, some cross chance may come: for *Multa cadunt inter calicem supremaq; labe*. And for a warning to teach you both wit, I'll tell you an old wives' tale.

Before ye go on with your tale (qd. mistress *Lamilia*) let me give ye a caveat by the way, which shall be figured in a fable.

Lamilia's Fable.

The Fox on a time came to visit the Gray, partly for kindred, chiefly for craft, and finding the hole empty of all other company, saving only one Badger enquiring the cause of his solitariness: he described the sudden death of his dam and sire with the rest of his consorts. The Fox made a Friday face, counterfeiting sorrow: but concluding that death's stroke was inevitable persuaded him to seek some fit mate wherewith to match. The badger soon agreed, so forth they went, and in their way met with a wanton ewe straggling from the fold: the Fox bade the Badger play the tall stripling, and strut on his tiptoes: for (qd he) this ewe is lady of all these lands and her brother chief bell-wether of sundry flocks. To be short, by the Fox's persuasion there would be a perpetual league, between her harmless kindred and all other devouring beasts, for that the Badger was to them all allied: seduced she yielded: and the Fox conducted them to the Badger's habitation. Where drawing her aside under colour of exhortation, pulled out her throat to satisfy his greedy thirst. Here I should note, a young whelp that viewed their walk, informed the shepherds of what happened. They followed, and trained the Fox and Badger to the hole: the Fox afore had craftily conveyed himself away: the shepherds found the Badger raving for the ewe's murder: his lamentation being held for counterfeit, was by the shepherds dog worried. The Fox escaped: the Ewe was spoiled: and ever since, between the Badgers and the dogs hath continued a mortal enmity: And now be advised *Roberto* (qd. she), go forward with your tale, seek not by sly insinuation to turn our mirth to sorrow. Go to *Lamilia* (qd. he), you fear what I mean not, but how ever ye take it, I'll forward with my tale.

Roberto's Tale.

IN the North parts there dwelt an old Squire, that had a young daughter his heir; who had (as I know Madam *Lamilia* you have had) many youthful Gentlemen that long time sued to obtain her love. But she knowing her own perfections (as women are by nature proud) would not to any of them vouchsafe favour: insomuch that they perceiving her relentless, showed themselves not altogether witless, but left her to her fortune, when they found her frowardness. At last it fortun'd among other strangers, a Farmer's son visited her Father's house: on whom at the first sight she was enamoured, he likewise on her. Tokens of love passed between them, either acquainted other's parents of their choice, and they kindly gave their consent. Short tale to make, married they were, and great solemnity was at the wedding feast. A young Gentleman, that had been long a suitor to her, vexing that the Son of a Farmer should be so preferred, cast in his mind by what means (to marre their merriment) he might steal away the Bride. Hereupon he confers with an old Beldam, called Mother *Gunby*, dwelling thereby, whose counsel having taken, he fell to his practise, and proceeded thus. In the afternoon, when dancers were very busy, he takes the Bride by

the hand, and after a turn or two, tells her in her ear, he had a secret to impart unto her, appointing her in any wise in the evening to find a time to confer with him: she promised she would, and so they parted. Then goes he to the Bridegroom, & with protestations of entire affect, protests that the great sorrow he takes at that which he must utter, whereon depended his especial credit, if it were known the matter by him should be discovered. After the Bridegroom's promise of secrecy, the gentleman tells him, that a friend of his received that morning from the Bride a Letter, wherein she willed him with some sixteen horse to await her coming at a Park side, for that she detested him in her heart as a base country hind, with whom her father compelled her to marry. The Bridegroom almost out of his wits, began to bite his lip. Nay, saith the Gentleman, if you will by me be advised, you shall salve her credit, win her by kindness, and yet prevent her wanton complot. As how said the Bridegroom? Marry thus said the Gentleman: In the evening (for till the guests be gone she intends not to gad) get you on horseback, and seem to be of the company that attends her coming: I am appointed to bring her from the house to the Park, and from thence fetch a winding compass of a mile about, but to turn unto old Mother *Gunby's* house, where her Lover my friend abides: when she alights, I will conduct her to a chamber far from his lodging; but when the lights are out, and she expects her adulterous copesmate, yourself (as reason is) shall prove her bedfellow, where privately you may reprove her, and in the morning early return home without trouble. As for the Gentleman my friend, I will excuse her absence to him, by saying, she mocked me with her Maid instead of herself, whom when I knew at her alighting, I disdained to bring her unto his presence. The Bridegroom gave his hand it should be so.

Now by the way you must understand, this Mother *Gunby* had a daughter, who all that day sat heavily at home with a willow garland, for that the Bridegroom (if he had dealt faithfully) should have wedded before any other. But men (*Lamilia*) are unconstant, money nowadays makes the match, or else the match is marred.

But to the matter: the Bridegroom and the Gentleman thus agreed: he took his time, conferred with the Bride, persuaded her that her husband (notwithstanding his fair show at the marriage) had sworn to his old sweetheart, their neighbour *Gunby's* daughter, to be that night her bedfellow: and if she would bring her Father, his Father, and other friends to the house at midnight, they should find it so.

At this the young Gentlewoman inwardly vexed to be by a peasant so abused, promised if she saw likelihood of his slipping away, that then she would do according as he directed.

All this thus sorting, the old woman's daughter was trickly attired ready to furnish this pageant, for her old mother provided all things necessary.

Well, Supper past, dancing ended, and the guests would home, and the Bridegroom pretending to bring some friend of his home, got his horse, and to the Park side he rode, and stayed with the horsemen that attended the Gentleman.

Anon came *Marian* like mistress Bride, and mounted behind the Gentleman, away they post, fetch their compass, & at last alight at an old wives house, where suddenly she is conveyed to her chamber, & the bridegroom sent to keep her company, where he had scarce devised how to begin his exhortation: but the Father of his Bride knocked at the chamber door. At which being somewhat amazed, yet thinking to turn it to a jest, sith his Wife (as he thought) was in bed with him, he opened the door, saying: Father, you are heartily welcome, I wonder how you found

A GROAT'S-WORTH OF WIT
Bought with a Million of Repentance

us out here; this device to remove our selves, was with my wife's consent, that we might rest quietly without the Maids and Bachelors disturbing. But where's your wife said the gentleman: why here in bed said he. I thought (quoth the other) my daughter had been your wife, for sure I am to day she was given you in marriage. You are merrily disposed, said the Bridegroom, what think you I have another wife: I think but as you speak quoth the Gentleman, for my daughter is below, and you say your wife is in the bed. Below (said he) you are a merry man, and with that casting on a night gown, he went down, where when he saw his wife, the Gentleman his Father, and a number of his friends assembled, he was so confounded, that how to behave himself he knew not; only he cried out that he was deceived. At this the old woman arises, and making herself ignorant of all the whole matter, inquires the cause of that sudden tumult. When she was told the new Bridegroom was found in bed with her daughter, she exclaimed against so great an injury. Marian was called in quorum: she justified, it was by his allurement: he being condemned by all their consents, was judged unworthy to have the Gentlewoman unto his Wife, and compelled (for escaping of punishment) to marry Marian: and the young Gentleman (for his care in discovering the Farmers son's lewdness) was recompensed with the Gentlewoman's ever during love.

Quoth *Lamilia*, and what of this: Nay nothing said *Roberto*, but that I have told you the effects of sudden love: yet the best is, my brother is a maidenly Bachelor; and for yourself, you have not been troubled with many suitors. The fewer the better, said *Lucanio*. But brother, I can you little thank for this tale: hereafter I pray you use other table talk. Let's then end talk, quoth *Lamilia*, and you (signior *Lucanio*) and I will go to the Chess. To Chess, said he, what mean you by that: It is a game, said she, that the first danger is but a check, the worst, the giving of a mate. Well, said *Roberto*, that game ye have been at already then, for you checked him first with your beauty, & gave him yourself for mate to him by your bounty. That's well taken brother, said *Lucanio*, so have we passed our game at Chess. Will ye play at Tables then, said she: I cannot, quoth he, for I can go no further with my game, if I be once taken. Will ye play then at cards. Aye said he, if it be at one and thirty. That fool's game, said she: Well all to hazard, said *Roberto*, and brother you shall make one for an hour or two: content quoth he. So to dice they went, and fortune so favoured *Lucanio*, that while they continued square play, he was no loser. Anon cozenage came about, and his Angels being double-winged, flew clean from before him. *Lamilia* being the winner, prepared a banquet; which finished, *Roberto* advised his brother to depart home, and to furnish himself with more Crowns, lest he were outcracked with new comers.

Lucanio loath to be outcountenanced, followed his advice, desiring to attend his return, which he before had determined unrequested: For as soon as his brothers back was turned, *Roberto* begins to reckon with *Lamilia*, to be a sharer as well in the money deceitfully won, as in the Diamond so wilfully given. But she, *secundum mores meretricis*, jested thus with the scholar. Why *Roberto*, are you so well read, and yet show yourself so shallow witted, to deem women so weak of conceit, that they see not into men's demerits. Suppose (to make you my stale to catch the woodcock your brother) that my tongue over-running mine intent, I spake of liberal reward; but what I promised, there's the point; at least what I part with I will be well advised. It may be you will thus reason: Had not *Roberto* trained *Lucanio* unto *Lamilia's* lure, *Lucanio* had not now been *Lamilia's* prey: therefore sith by *Roberto* she possesseth the prize, *Roberto* merits an equal part. Monstrous absurd if so you reason; as well you may reason thus: *Lamilia's* dog hath killed her a deer, therefore his Mistress must make

him a pasty. No poor penniless Poet, thou art beguiled in me, and yet I wonder how thou couldst, thou hast been so often beguiled. But it fareth with licentious men, as with the chased Boar in the stream, who being greatly refreshed with swimming, never feeleth any smart until he perish recurelessly wounded with his own weapons. Reasonless *Roberto*, that having but a brokers place, asked a lender's reward. Faithless *Roberto*, that hast attempted to betray thy brother, irreligiously forsaken thy Wife, deservedly been in thy father's eye an abject: thinkest thou *Lamilia* so loose, to consort with one so lewd. No hypocrite, the sweet Gentleman thy brother, I will till death love, & thee while I live, loathe. This share *Lamilia* gives thee, other gettest thou none.

As *Roberto* would have replied, *Lucanio* approached: to whom *Lamilia* discoursed the whole deceit of his brother, & never rested intimating malicious arguments, till *Lucanio* utterly refused *Roberto* for his brother, & for ever forbad him his house. And when he would have yielded reasons, and formed excuse, *Lucanio's* impatience (urged by her importunate malice) forbade all reasoning with them that was reasonless, and so giving him Jack Drum's entertainment, shut him out of doors: whom we will follow, & leave *Lucanio* to the mercy of *Lamilia*. *Roberto* in an extreme ecstasy rent his hair, cursed his destiny, blamed his treachery, but most of all exclaimed against *Lamilia*: and in her against all enticing Courtesans, in these terms.

*What meant the Poets in invective verse,
To sing Medea's shame, and Scylla's pride,
Calypso's charms, by which so many died?
Only for this their vices they rehearse,
That curious wits which in this world converse,
May shun the dangers and enticing shoes,
of such false Sirens, those home-breeding foes,
That from their eyes their venom do disperse.
So soon kills not the Basilisk with sight,
The Viper's tooth is not so venomous,
The Adder's tongue not half so dangerous,
As they that bear the shadow of delight,
Who chain blind youths in trammels of their hair,
Till waste bring woe, and sorrow hast despair.*

With this he laid his head on his hand, and leant his elbow on the ground sighing out sadly, *Heu patior telis vulnera facta meis.*

On the other side of the hedge sat one that heard his sorrow, who getting over, came towards him, and brake off his passion. When he approached, he saluted *Roberto* in this sort.

Gentleman, quoth he (for so you seem), I have by chance heard you discourse some part of your grief; which appeareth to be more than you will discover, or I can conceive. But if you vouchsafe such simple comfort as my ability may yield, assure yourself, that I will endeavour to do the best, that either may procure you profit, or bring you pleasure: the rather, for that I suppose you are a scholar, and pity it is men of learning should live in lack.

Roberto wondering to hear such good words, for that this iron age affords few that esteem of virtue; returned him thankful gratulations, and (urged by necessity) uttered his present grief, beseeching his advise how he might be employed. Why,

A GROAT'S-WORTH OF WIT
Bought with a Million of Repentance

easily, quoth he, and greatly to your benefit: for men of my profession get by scholars their whole living. What is your profession, said *Roberto*? Truly, sir, said he, I am a player. A player, quoth *Roberto*, I took you rather for a Gentleman of great living, for if by outward habit men should be censured, I tell you you would be taken for a substantial man. So am I where I dwell (quoth the player) reputed able at my proper cost to build a Windmill. What though the world once went hard with me, when I was fain to carry my playing Fardel-a-footeback; *Tempora mutantur*, I know you know the meaning of it better than I, but I thus conster it; it's otherwise now; for my very share in playing apparel will not be sold for two hundred pounds. Truly (said *Roberto*) 'tis strange, that you should so prosper in that vain practise, for that it seems to me your voice is nothing gracious. Nay then, said the Player, I mislike your judgement: why, I am as famous for Delphrigus, & the King of Fairies, as ever was any of my time. The twelve labours of *Hercules* have I terribly thundered on the Stage, and played three Scenes of the Devil in the Highway to heaven. Have ye so (said *Roberto*?) then I pray you pardon me. Nay more (quoth the Player) I can serve to make a pretty speech, for I was a country Author, passing at a Moral, for 'twas I that penned the Moral of man's wit, the Dialogue of Dives, and for seven years space was absolute Interpreter to the puppets. But now my Almanack is out of date:

*The people make no estimation,
Of Morals teaching education.*

Was not this pretty for a plain rime extempore? if ye will ye shall have more. Nay it's enough, said *Roberto*, but how mean you to use me? Why sir, in making Plays, said the other, for which you shall be well paid, if you will take the pains.

Roberto perceiving no remedy, thought best to respect of his present necessity, to try his wit, & went with him willingly: who lodged him at the Town's end in a house of retail, where what happened our Poet, you shall after hear. There, by conversing with bad company, he grew *A malo in peius*, falling from one vice to an other: and so having found a vain to finger crowns, he grew cranker than *Lucanio*, who by this time began to droop, being thus dealt with by *Lamilia*. She having bewitched him with her enticing wiles, caused him to consume in less than two years that infinite treasure gathered by his father with so many a poor man's curse. His lands sold, his jewels pawned, his money wasted, he was cashiered by *Lamilia*, that had cozened him of all. Then walked he like one of Duke *Humphrey's* Squires, in a thread-bare cloak, his hose drawn out with his heels, his shoes unseamed, lest his feet should sweat with heat: now (as witless as he was) he remembered his Father's words, his unkindness to his brother, his carelessness of himself. In this sorrow he sat down on penniless bench; where when *Opus* and *usus* told him by the chimes in his stomach it was time to fall unto meat, he was fain with the *Chameleon* to feed upon the air, & make patience his best repast.

While he was at this feast, *Lamilia* came flaunting by, garnished with the jewels whereof she beguiled him, which sight served to close his stomach after his cold cheer. *Roberto* hearing of his brothers beggary, albeit he had little remorse of his miserable state, yet did he seek him out, to use him as a property, whereby *Lucanio* was somewhat provided for. But being of simple nature, he served but for a block to whet *Roberto's* wit on; which the poor fool perceiving, he forsook all other hopes of life, and fell to be a notorious Pander, in which detested course he continued till death. But *Roberto*, now famozed for an Arch-playmaking-poet, his purse like the sea

sometime swelled; anon like the same sea fell to a low ebb; yet seldom he wanted, his labours were so well esteemed. Marry this rule he kept, whatever he fingered afore hand was the certain means to unbind a bargain, and being asked why he so slightly dealt with them that did him good? It becomes me, saith he, to be contrary to the world, for commonly when vulgar men receive earnest, they do perform, when I am paid anything afore-hand I break my promise. He had shift of lodgings, where in every place his Hostess writ up the woeful remembrance of him, his laundress, and his boy; for they were ever in his household, beside retainers in sundry other places. His company were lightly the lewdest persons in the land, apt for pilfery, perjury, forgery, or any villainy. Of these he knew the casts to cog at Cards, cozen at Dice: by these he learned the legerdemains of nips, foists, coney-catchers, cross-biters, lifts, high Lawyers, and all the rabble of that unclean generation of vipers: and pithily could he paint out their whole courses of craft: So cunning he was in all crafts, as nothing rested in him almost but craftiness. How often the Gentlewoman his Wife laboured vainly to recall him, is lamentable to note: but as one given over to all lewdness, he communicated her sorrowful lines among his loose trulls, that jested at her bootless laments. If he could any way get credit on scores, he would then brag his creditors carried stones, comparing every round circle to a groaning O, procured by a painful burden. The shameful end of sundry his consorts, deservedly punished for their amiss, wrought no compunction in his heart: of which one, brother to a Brothel he kept, was trust under a tree as round as a Ball.

To some of his swearing companions thus it happened: A crew of them sitting in a Tavern carousing, it fortun'd an honest Gentleman and his friend, to enter their room: some of them being acquainted with him, in their domineering drunken vain would have no nay, but down he must needs sit with them; being placed, no remedy there was, but he must needs keep even compass with their unseemly carousing. Which he refusing, they fell from high words to sound strokes, so that with much ado the Gentleman saved his own, and shifted from their company. Being gone one of these tipplers forsooth lacked a gold Ring, the other swore they see the Gentleman take it from his hand. Upon this the Gentleman was indicted before judge: these honest men are deposed: whose wisdom weighing the time of the brawl, gave light to the jury, what power wine-washing poison had, they according unto conscience found the Gentleman not guilty, and God released by that verdict the innocent.

With his accusers thus it fared: one of them for murder was worthily executed: the other never since prospered: the third, sitting not long after upon a lusty horse, the beast suddenly died under him: God amend the man.

Roberto every day acquainted with these examples, was notwithstanding nothing bettered, but rather hardened in wickedness. At last was that place justified, God warneth men by dreams and visions in the night, and by known examples in the day, but if he return not, he comes upon him with judgement that shall be felt. For now when the number of deceits caused *Roberto* be hateful almost to all men, his immeasurable drinking had made him the perfect Image of the dropsy, and the loathsome scourge of Lust tyrannized in his bones: lying in extreme poverty, and having nothing to pay but chalk, which now his Host accepted not for current, this miserable man lay comfortlessly languishing, having but one groat left (the just proportion of his Father's Legacy) which looking on, he cried: O now it is too late, too late to buy wit with thee: and therefore will I see if I can sell to careless youth what I negligently forgot to buy.

A GROAT'S-WORTH OF WIT
Bought with a Million of Repentance

Here (Gentlemen) break I off *Roberto's* speech; whose life in most parts agreeing with mine, found one self punishment as I have done. Hereafter suppose me the said *Roberto*, and I will go on with that he promised: *Greene* will send you now his goat's-worth of wit, that never showed a mite's-worth in his life: & though no man now be by to do me good: yet ere I die I will by my repentance endeavour to do all men good.

*Deceiving world, that with alluring toys,
Hast made my life the subject of thy scorn:
And scornest now to lend thy fading joys,
To lengthen my life, whom friends have left forlorn.
How well are they that die ere they be born,*

*And never see thy sleights, which few men shun,
Till unawares they helpless are undone.*

*Oft have I sung of Love, and of his fire,
But now I find that Poet was advised;
Which made full feasts increasers of desire,
And proves weak love was with the poor despised.
For when the life with food is not sufficed,*

*What thought of love, what motion of delight;
What pleasance can proceed from such a wight?*

*Witness my want, the murderer of my wit;
My ravished sense of wonted fury reft;
Wants such conceit, as should in Poems sit,
Set down the sorrow wherein I am left:
But therefore have high heavens their gifts bereft:*

*Because so long they lent them me to use,
And I so long their bounty did abuse.*

*O that a year were granted me to live,
And for that year my former wits restored:
What rules of life, what counsel would I give?
How should my sin with sorrow be deplored?
But I must die of every man abhorred.*

*Time loosely spent will not again be won,
My time is loosely spent, and I undone.*

O horrenda fames, how terrible are thy assaults? But *Vermis consientiaë*, more wounding are thy stings. Ah Gentlemen, that live to read my broken and confused lines, look not I should (as I was wont) delight you with vain fantasies, but gather my follies altogether, and as ye would deal with so many parricides, cast them into the fire: call them *Telegones*, for now they kill their Father, and every lewd line in them written, is a deep piercing wound to my heart; every idle hour spent by any in reading them, brings a million of sorrows to my soul. O that the tears of a miserable man (for never any man was yet more miserable) might wash their memory out with my death; and that those works with me together might be interred. But sith they cannot, let this my last work witness against them with me, how I detest them. Black is the remembrance of my black works, blacker than night, blacker than death, blacker than hell.

ROBERT GREENE

Learn wit by my repentance (Gentlemen) and let these few rules following be regarded in your lives.

1. First in all your actions set God before your eyes; for the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: let his word be a lantern to your feet, and a light unto your paths, then shall you stand as firm rocks, and not be mocked.

2. Beware of looking back, for God will not be mocked; of him that hath received much, much shall be demanded.

3. If thou be single, and canst abstain, turn thy eyes from vanity; for there is a kind of women bearing the faces of Angels, but the hearts of Devils, able to entrap the elect if it were possible.

4. If thou be married, forsake not the wife of thy youth to follow strange flesh; for whoremongers and adulterers the Lord will judge. The door of a harlot leadeth down to death, and in her lips there dwells destruction; her face is decked with odours, but she bringeth a man to a morsel of bread and nakedness: of which myself am instance.

5. If thou be left rich, remember those that want, & so deal, that by thy wilfulness thy self want not: Let not Taverners and Victuallers be thy Executors; for they will bring thee to a dishonorable grave.

6. Oppress no man, for the cry of the wronged ascendeth to the ears of the Lord; neither delight to increase by Usury, lest thou lose thy habitation in the everlasting Tabernacle.

7. Beware of building thy house to thy neighbours hurt; for the stones will cry to the timber, We were laid together in blood: and those that so erect houses, calling them by their names, shall lie in the grave like sheep, and death shall gnaw upon their souls.

8. If thou be poor, be also patient, and strive not to grow rich by indirect means; for goods so gotten shall vanish away like smoke.

9. If thou be a Father, master, or teacher, join good example with good counsel; else little avail precepts, where life is different.

10. If thou be a Son or Servant, despise not reproofe; for though correction be bitter at the first, it bringeth pleasure in the end.

Had I regarded the first of these rules, or been obedient to the last: I had not now, at my last end, been left thus desolate. But now, though to myself I give *Consilium post facta*; yet to others they may serve for timely precepts. And therefore (while life gives leave) I will send warning to my old consorts, which have lived as loosely as myself, albeit weakness will scarce suffer me to write, yet to my fellow Scholars about this City, will I direct these few ensuing lines.

To those Gentlemen his Quondam acquaintance, that spend their wits in making Plays, R. G. wisheth a better exercise, and wisdom to prevent his extremities.

IF woeful experience may move you (Gentlemen) to beware, or unheard of wretchedness entreat you to take heed; I doubt not but you will look back with sorrow on your time past, and endeavour with repentance to spend that which is to come. Wonder not (for with thee Will I first begin), thou famous gracer of Tragedians, that

A GROAT'S-WORTH OF WIT
Bought with a Million of Repentance

Greene, who hath said with thee (like the fool in his heart) There is no God, should now give glory unto his greatness: for penetrating is his power, his hand lies heavy upon me, he hath spoken unto me with a voice of thunder, and I have felt he is a God that can punish enemies. Why should thy excellent wit, his gift, be so blinded, that thou shouldst give no glory to the giver? Is it pestilent Machiavellian policy that thou hast studied? O peevish folly! What are his rules but mere confused mockeries, able to extirpate in small time the generation of mankind. For if *Sic volo, sic iubeo*, hold in those that are able to command: and if it be lawful *Fas & nefas* to do anything that is beneficial, only Tyrants should possess the earth, and they striving to exceed in tyranny, should each to other be a slaughter man; till the mightiest outliving all, one stroke were left for Death, that in one age man's life should end. The brother of this Diabolical Atheisme is dead, and in his life had never the felicity he aimed at: but as he began in craft, lived in fear, and ended in despair. *Quam inscrutabilia sunt Dei iudicia?* This murderer of many brethren, had his conscience seared like *Cain*: this betrayer of him that gave his life for him, inherited the portion of *Judas*: this Apostate perished as ill as *Julian*: and wilt thou my friend be his Disciple? Look unto me, by him persuaded to that liberty, and thou shalt find it an infernal bondage. I know the least of my demerits merit this miserable death, but wilful striving against known truth, exceedeth all the terrors of my soul. Defer not (with me) till this last point of extremity; for little knowst thou how in the end thou shalt be visited.

With thee I join young *Juvenal*, that biting Satirist, that lastly with me together writ a Comedy. Sweet boy, might I advise thee, be advised, and get not many enemies by bitter words: inveigh against vain men, for thou canst do it, no man better, no man so well: thou hast a liberty to reprove all, and none more; for one being spoken to, all are offended, none being blamed no man is injured. Stop shallow water still running, it will rage, or tread on a worm and it will turn: then blame not Scholars vexed with sharp lines, if they reprove thy too much liberty of reproof.

And thou no less deserving than the other two, in some things rarer, in nothing inferior; driven (as myself) to extreme shifts, a little have I to say to thee: and were it not an idolatrous oath, I would swear by sweet *S. George*, thou art unworthy better hap, sith thou dependest on so mean a stay. Base minded men all three of you, if by my misery ye be not warned: for unto none of you (like me) sought those burrs to cleave: those Puppets (I mean) that speak from our mouths, those Antics garnished in our colours. Is it not strange that I, to whom they all have been beholding: is it not like that you, to whom they all have been beholding, shall (were ye in that case that I am now) be both at once of them forsaken? Yes, trust them not: for there is an upstart Crow, beautified with our feathers, that with his *Tiger's heart wrapped in a Players hide*, supposes he is as well able to bombast out a blank verse as the best of you: and being an absolute *Iohannes fac totum*, is in his own conceit the only Shake-scene in a country. O that I might entreat your rare wits to be employed in more profitable courses: & let those Apes imitate your past excellence, and never more acquaint them with your admired inventions. I know the best husband of you all will never prove an Usurer, and the kindest of them all will never seek you a kind nurse: yet whilst you may, seek you better Masters; for it is pity men of such rare wits, should be subject to the pleasure of such rude grooms.

In this I might insert two more, that both have writ against these buckram Gentlemen: but let their own works serve to witness against their own wickedness, if they persevere to maintain any more such peasants. For other new-comers, I leave

ROBERT GREENE

them to the mercy of these painted monsters, who (I doubt not) will drive the best minded to despise them: for the rest, it skills not though they make a jest at them.

But now return I again to you three, knowing my misery is to you no news: and let me heartily entreat you to be warned by my harms. Delight not (as I have done) in irreligious oaths; for from the blasphemers house, a curse shall not depart. Despise drunkenness, which wasteth the wit, and maketh men all equal unto beasts. Fly lust, as the deathsman of the soul, and defile not the Temple of the holy Ghost. Abhor those Epicures, whose loose life hath made religion loathsome to your ears: and when they soothe you with terms of Mastership, remember *Robert Greene*, whom they have often so flattered, perishes now for want of comfort. Remember Gentlemen, your lives are like so many lighted Tapers, that are with care delivered to all of you to maintain: these with wind-puffed wrath may be extinguished, which drunkenness put out, which negligence let fall: for man's time is not of itself to short, but it is more shortened by sin. The fire of my light is now at the last snuffed, and the want of wherewith to sustain it, there is no substance left for life to feed on. Trust not then (I beseech ye) to such weak stays: for they are as changeable in mind, as in many attires. Well, my hand is tired, and I am forced to leave where I would begin; for a whole book cannot contain their wrongs, which I am forced to knit up in some few lines of words.

Desirous that you should live, though himself be dying, Robert Greene.

Now to all men I bid farewell in like sort, with this conceited Fable of that old Comedian *Aesop*.

AN Ant and a Grasshopper walking together on a Green, the one carelessly skipping, the other carefully prying what winters provision was scattered in the way: the Grasshopper scorning (as wantons will) this needless thrift (as he termed it) reproved him thus:

*The greedy miser thirsteth still for gain;
His thrift is theft, his weal works other's woe:
That fool is fond which will in caves remain,
When 'mongst fair sweets he may at pleasure go.*

To this the Ant perceiving the Grasshopper's meaning, quickly replied:

*The thrifty husband spares what unthrift spends,
His thrift no theft, for dangers to provide:
Trust to thy self, small hope in want yield friends,
A cave is better than the deserts wide.*

In short time these two parted, the one to his pleasure, the other to his labour. Anon Harvest grew on, and reft from the Grasshopper his wonted moisture. Then weakly skipped he to the meadow's brinks: where till fell winter he abode. But storms continually powering, he went for succour to the Ant his old acquaintance, to whom he had scarce discovered his estate, but the waspish little worm made this reply.

*Pack hence (quoth he) thou idle lazy worm,
My house doth harbour no unthriftly mates:
Thou scorned'st to toil, & now thou feel'st the storm,*

A GROAT'S-WORTH OF WIT
Bought with a Million of Repentance

*And starv'st for food while I am fed with cates.
Use no entreats, I will relentless rest,
For toiling labour hates an idle guest.*

The Grasshopper, foodless, helpless, and strengthless, got into the next brook, and in the yielding sand digged himself a pit: by which he likewise engraved this Epitaph.

*When Spring's green prime arrayed me with delight,
And every power with youthful vigour filled,
Gave strength to work whatever fancy wild:
I never feared the force of winters spite.*

*When first I saw the sun the day begin,
And dry the Morning's tears from herbs and grass;
I little thought his cheerful light would pass,
Till ugly night with darkness entered in.*

*And then day lost I mourned, spring past I wailed,
But neither tears for this or that availed.*

*Then too too late I praised the Emmet's pain,
That sought in spring a harbour 'gainst the heat:
And in the harvest gathered winters meat,
Preventing famine, frosts, and stormy rain.*

*My wretched end may warn Green springing youth,
To use delights as toys that will deceive,
And scorn the world before the world them leave:
For all world's trust, is ruin without ruth.*

*Then blest are they that like the toiling Ant,
Provide in time 'gainst winters woeful want.*

With this the Grasshopper yielding to the weathers extremity, died comfortless without remedy. Like him myself: like me, shall all that trust to friends or times inconstancy. Now faint of my last infirmity, beseeching them that shall bury my body, to publish this last farewell written with my wretched hand. *Fœlicem fuisse infaustum.*

A letter written to his wife, found with this book after his death.

The remembrance of the many wrongs offered thee, and thy unreproved virtues, add greater sorrow to my miserable state, than I can utter or thou conceive. Neither is it lessened by consideration of thy absence, (though shame would hardly let me behold thy face) but exceedingly aggravated, for that I cannot (as I ought) to thy own self reconcile myself, that thou mightest witness my inward woe at this instant, that have made thee a woeful wife for so long a time. But equal heaven hath denied that comfort, giving at my last need like succour as I have sought all my life: being in this extremity as void of help, as thou hast been of hope. Reason would, that after so long waste, I should not send thee a child to bring thee greater charge: but consider he is the fruit of thy womb, in whose face regard not the Father's faults so much, as thy own perfections. He is yet Greene, and may grow straight, if he be carefully tended: otherwise, apt enough (I fear me) to follow his Father's folly. That I have offended

ROBERT GREENE

thee highly I know; that thou canst forget my injuries I hardly believe: yet persuade I myself, if thou saw my wretched estate thou couldst not but lament it: nay, certainly I know thou wouldst. All my wrongs muster themselves before me, every evil at once plagues me. For my contempt of God, I am contemned of men: for my swearing and forswearing, no man will believe me: for my gluttony, I suffer hunger: for my drunkenness, thirst: for my adultery, ulcerous sores. Thus God hath cast me down, that I might be humbled: and punished me for example of other sinners: and altogether he suffers me in this world to perish without succour, yet trust I in the world to come to find mercy, by the merits of my Saviour to whom I commend this, and commit my soul.

Thy repentant husband for his disloyalty, Robert Greene.

Fœlicem fuisse infaustum.

FINIS