

Greenes Groatsworth of Wit, bought with a Million of Repentance.

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

If wofull experience may moue you (Gentlemen) to beware, or vnheard of wretchednes intreate you to take heed: I doubt not but you wil looke backe with sorrow on your time past, and indeuour with repentance to spend that which is to come. Wonder not, (for with thee wil I first begin) thou famous "racer of Tragedians, that *Greene*, who hath said with thee (like the foole in his heart) There is no God, shoulde now giue glorie vnto his greatnes: for penetrating is his power, his hand lyes heauie vpon me, hee hath spoken vnto mee with a voice of thunder, and I have felt he is a God that can punish enemies. Why should thy excellent wit, his gift, bee so blinded, that thou shouldst giue no glorie to the giuer? Is it pestilent Machiuilian pollicy that thou hast studied? O peeuish follie! What are his rules but meere 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 commaund: and it it be lawfull *Fas & nefas* to do any thing that is beneficiall: only Tyrants should possesse the earth, and they striuing to exceed in tyrannie, should each to other be a slaughter man; till the mightiest outliuing all, one stroke were lefte for Death, that in one age mans life should end. The brocher of this Diabolicall Atheisme is dead, and in his life had neuer the felicitie hee aymed at: but as he began in craft; liued in feare, and ended in despaire. *Quam inscrutabilia sunt Dei iudicia?* This murder of many brethren, had his conscience seared like *Caine*: this betrayer of him that gaue his life for him, inherited the portion of *Iudas*: this Apostata perished as ill as *Iulian*: and wilt thou my friend be his disciple? Looke but to me, by him perswaded to that libertie, and thou shalt find it an infernall bondage. I knowe the least of my demerits merit this miserable death, but wilfull striuing against knowne truth, exceedeth all the terrors of my soule. Defer not (with me) till this last point of extremitie; for little knowst thou how in the end thou shalt be visited.

With thee I ioyne yong *Iuuenall*, that byting Satyrists, that lastly with mee together writ a Comedie. Sweet boy, might I aduise thee, be aduisde, and get not many enemies by bitter wordes: inueigh against vaine men, for thou canst do it, no man better, no man so well: thou hast a libertie to reprove all, and name none; for one being spoken to, all are offended; none being blamed no man is iniured. Stop shallow water still running, it will rage, or tread on a worme and it will turne: then blame not Schollers vexed with sharpe lines, if they reprove thy too much liberty of reproofe.

And thou no lesse deseruing than the oher two, in some things rarer, in nothing inferiour; driuen (as my selfe) to extreme shiftes, a litle haue I to say to thee: and were it not an idolatrous oth, I would swear by sweet S. George, thou art vnworthy better hap, sith thou dependest on so meane a stay. Base minded men all three of you, if by my miserie you be not warnd: for vnto none of you (like mee) sought those burses to cleaue: those Puppets (I meane) that spake from our mouths, those Anticks garnisht in our colours. Is it not strange, that I, to whom they all haue beene beholding: is it not like that you, to whome they all haue beene beholding, shall (were yee in that case as I am now) bee both at once of them forsaken? **Yes trust them not: for there is an vpstart Crow, beautified with our feathers, that with his *Tygers hart wrapt in a Players hyde*, supposes he is as well able to bombast out a blanke verse as the best of you: and being an absolute Iohannes fac totum, is in his owne conceit the onely Shake-**

scene in a countrey. O that I might intreat your rare wits to be imployed in more profitable courses: & let those Apes imitate your past excellence, and neuer more acquaint them with your admired inuentions. I knowe the best husband of you all will neuer proue an Vsurer, and the kindest of them all will neuer proue a kind nurse: yet whilest you may, seeke you better Maisters; for it is pittie men of such rare wits, should be subject to the pleasure of such rude groomes.

In this I might insert two more, that both haue writ against these buckram Gentlemen: but lette their owne workes serue to witnesse against their owne wickednesse, it they perseuere to maintaine any more such peasants. For other new-commers, I leaue them to the mercie of these painted monsters, who (I doubt not) will driue the best minded to despise them: for the rest, it skills not though they make a ieast at them.

But now returne I againe to you three, knowing my miserie is to you no newes: and let mee hartily intreat you to be warned by my harms. Delight not (as I haue done) in irreligious oathes; for from the blasphemers house, a curse shall not depart. Despise drunkennes, which wasteth the wit, and maketh men all equall vnto beasts. Flie lust, as the deathman of the soule, and defile not the Temple of the holy Ghost. Abhorre those Epicures, whose loose life hath made religion lothsome to your eares: and when they sooth you with tearms of Maistership, remember *Robert Greene*, whome they haue often so flattered, perishes now for want of comfort. Remember Gentlemen, your liues are like so many lighted Tapers, that are with care deliuered to all of you to maintaine: these with wind-puff wrath may be extinguisht, which drunkennes put out, which negligence let fall: for mans time is not of it selfe so short, but it is more shortened by sinne. The fire of my light is now at the last snuffe, and for want of wherewith to sustaine it, there is no substance left for life to feede on. Trust not then (I beseech ye) to such weake staies: for they are as changeable in minde, as in many attyres. Wel, my hand is tyrde, and I am forst to leaue where I would begin: for a whole booke cannot containe their wrongs, which I am forst to knit vp in some few lines of words.

Desirous that you should liue, though himselfe be dying:
Robert Greene.