

The Beggars Ape

Richard Niccols

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ABout that Moneth whose name at first begun
From great A V G V S T V S, that *Romes* Empire wonne:
When the fierce *Dog* of Heauen, began to rise
To baite the *Lyon* in th'*Olympian* skies.
Whose hot fire-breathing influence did cracke
With too much heate our aged Grandames backe,
Lapping vp Riuers with his blaring tongue
T'allay the thirst which his proud stomacke stung.
Then did each Creature languish pant and beate
Vnder the influence of this horrid heate,
And I that oft in my low seated Cell
Had felt the burning of his fury fell:
Vpon a time *Aurora* shining faire
Went forth to take the solace of the ayre.
And in those meades beyond the lofty Towers
Of that white Pallace, where the nightly houres
Haue oft bin spent in sounds of Musicke sweet
And actiue motion of the nimble feet:
Where earthly sonnes by night were seene to moue,
Whilest many hearts were fir'd with flames of Loue.
There I made choyse to walke before the Sunne
Had shewne his face, within our Horizon;
But on those bankes by which each turning tide
Thames louely *Isis* with calme streames doth glide,
I had not walked long ere Dayes bright King
T'*Olympus* top his golden carre did bring:
Whose Steedes with sting of his free lashes driuen
With such swift speed did gallop through the heauen,
That Natures faire productions heere beneath
Did seeme to melt vnder their burning breath,
The wing'd inhabitants both of earth and skie
That too and fro in th'open ayre did flie
To Thickets, Woods, and Groues, swift concourse made
To shroud themselues vnder their leauie shade,
The bleating *Lambe* and little wandring *Sheepe*
That in the open fields before did keepe,
Forsaking their free laire, all flocking came
To seeke for shelter 'gainst Sol's burning flame.
And I 'mongst the rest compeld by heate
Which on my head did violently beat
To seeke some couert straight tooke my way

Vnto a Groue which neere confining lay.
 Where when I came the lofty trees, I clad
 In Summers pride did cast a cooling shade,
 Vnder whose leaues from Phoebus burning rayes
 Sweet birds sate singing their Melodious layes,
 There sate I downe vpon the grassy ground
 Amid'st those silent shades encompast round
 By leauy trees that Arbour wise did spread
 There goodly armes thicke brauncht aboue my head,
 But as I there my selfe did closely shroud
 The chearefull voyce of many laughing loude
 All suddainely did penetrate myne eare
 Which did apall my sence with suddaine feare
 And casting round about my rowling eye
 Without the wood I chanced to espie
 A ragged crue of folke all set around
 About a sunny bancke vpon the ground
 They all were clad in rags of Beggery
 Taking no keepe of any faculty
 Or honest calling to rely vpon,
 For trade or true profession had they none;
 And now to passe the tedious time away
 With pleasant tales as in the Sunne they lay
 Each one in course the other did succeed
 Which much content 'mongst themselues did breed
 And I to be partaker of their mirth
 Being closely hidden with a hill of earth
 Vnheard or seene conuey'd my selfe to heare
 That all their chat I vn-espied did heare;
 Some told of battailes and of bloody fights,
 And some Ladies and of loues delights
 And some of dire euent and Tragicall
 And some of Iests and loues sports Comicall:
 But 'mongst the rout one well I wot there was
 That all the rest in fluent speech did passe
 Who with good vtterance that became him well
 A pretty story of an *Ape* did tell.

All which for that it seemeth vnto mee
 Worthy their view whose thoughts delighted bee
 In morrall discipline I will vnfold it
 And in those tearmes in which the Begger told it.

Not many yeares (quoth he) are past and gone
 Since heauens faire Virgin in her siluer throne
 From forth her lap such golden blessings threw
 As if th'old Age againe shee would renew,
 And at that time the vast worlds Forrest wide
 Deckt in the Summers coate of *Æstas* pride
 Did flourish and growe proude in lusty prime
 Beneath the Sunne-shine of sweet summers time
 There many Ioviall trees shoot vp on high
 With threatning heads did seeme to vaile the skie

Beneath the shade of whose protecting armes
 The Birds sate singing free from fearefull harmes,
 The Beasts likewise might all securely goe
 About the Forrest roaming too and fro,
 For with the *Eagle* that skie climbing bird
 And his consorts they late had made accord,
 And vnto peacefull state all things to bring
 As meete it was they made the *Lyon* King;
 And at that season many beasts found grace
 That liu'd obscure before and in meane place.
 'Mongst whome a beast that was of *Secrops* brood
 Whome of a man *Ioue* in his irefull moode,
 Detesting his deceitfull guile did make
 So foule a beast, that no man could him take
 T'haue bin a man, yet was it with such skill
 That being a beast a man he fauoured still.
 His limbes in lesser space then mans are knit
 Beneath his Eyes his Nose more flat doth sit
 And like the face which crabbed age doth spill
 Deepe wrinkles frowne-like his front did fill;
 There to his Apish limbs are euery where
 Thicke ouer-growne with sallow coloured haire,
 And him in land of *Apes Ile*, *Ioue* did place
 There to abide and neuer show his face
 Amongst vs men, where hee not long did stay
 Ere 'mongst the beasts lewd pranckes hee gan to play;
 For in the golden Age the worlds first spring
 Euen in the pallace of the Forrests King,
 His witty wiles he oft in practice put
 Them to deceiue, for which his taile was cut;
 Exiling him for euermore from thence
 To the *Ape Ile* againe for his offence.
 But he that long time there liu'd all a mort
 His taile being cut, for comming to the Court
 Of better fortunes now gan cogitate
 And forth he comes to mende his meane estate,
 His way vnto the Forrest straight he takes
 And in his iourney this obseruance makes
 Who liu'd disgracefull, who in fauour were
 And 'bout the *Lyon* who chiefe Place did beare;
 The golden fleeced *Sheepe* he first did spie
 Patterne of patience, and simplicitie
 Grasing obscurely 'mongst the meaner sort
 As being a stranger in the *Lions* Court;
 "For who so beares simplicities true badge
 "To liue in *Princes* Courts doe seldome fadge.
 And though the silly *Sheepe* contented were
 For that plaine honest life, which he did beare
 Yet for his golden Fleece against his will
 Hee was acquainted with the Courtiers still.
 Fast by the *Sheepe* the humble *Oxe* did graise

Who for he sought not his estate to raise,
 Was held in base contempt for his meeke minde
 "Meekenesse in Greatnesse we so seldome finde.
 The *Ape* being glad to see the *Sheepes* bad case
 And plaine simplicity in such disgrace
 Thought with himselfe as true it was indeed
 That wily wit would stand him in best steed,
 And on his way he forth gan wend a pace
 Hoping at Court to finde such future grace;
 That in the end he doubted not to bring
 Himselfe in faouour with the Forrest King.
 Where when he came himselfe he did apply
 T'obserue all fashions with an heedfull eye,
 The first on whome he any notice tooke
 Was that high horned beast who in his looke
 Beares signes apparent of his secret minde
 To wit the *Goat*, a louer borne by kinde
 For he the habit had of all chiefe sleights
 In wanton loues and Ladies Court delights.
 On which most Gallants now their wits doe proue
 To serue their Ladies and their Lemmons loue.
 But he surpast them all for he could sing
 in chaunting songs, and on the warbling string
 Of Vyoll sweet thereto diuinely played
 The sound of which would charme the chaistest Maide,
 For which he was of Females so approu'd
 That they 'boue all the rest him chiefly lou'd;
 Yet he with whally eyes and shaggy beard
 And welked hornes so *Satir*-like appeard
 That such a grim fac'd fellow would affright
 A lewd *Faustinaes* selfe in darkest night,
 Thereto his body did so ranckly smell
 That he himselfe might not abide it well;
 But he that fault did hide with pleasing sent
 Of sweet perfume when ere abroad he went,
 The *Ape* him oft beheld in passing by
 And in his seruice would his fortune try
 By meanes made by the *Monkey*, his neere friend
 Who on the *Goate* chiefe seruant did attend.
 But loe not long hee stood thus all a mort,
 Ere hee beheld at entring of the Court
 A troupe of Gallants, rushing in the way
 All proudly in strange and rich aray,
 With wide-big-babon-lookes they all did gape
 In passing by vpon the silly *Ape*.
 For mickle pride (full well I wot) they tooke
 To daunt a stranger with ascornefull looke;
 Thereto, from fullest mouthes they tooke delight
 With horrid Oathes, the golden Starres to smite,
 Ne gaue they due regard, or Reuerend loue
 Vnto the King of Gods the thundring *Ioue*,

But all their *Pæns* consecrated bee
 To drunken *Bacchus* on low bended knee.
 The chiefe 'mongst these that bare supreamest sway
 Was the fell *Bore*, who with the least delay
 Euen for a looke misdeem'd, would hazard life
 In any furious broyle or bloody strife,
 With him came many Beasts that did delight
 In sternefull rage, debate and bloody fight:
 And therefore loued euer for to bee
 Together with the *Bore* in company.
 There came the *Tyger*, who withouten dread
 Was into any danger headlong lead.
 The wrathful *Beare*, whom in his fiery rage
 Nought else but blood and vengeance might asswage,
 The *Bull* and *Ram*, who both couragious were
 But wanted wit in fury to forbear.
 Amidst this Crew a simple beast there was
 To Court being newly come, to wit, the *Asse*,
 Whom they with fawning speech and threats withall
 So wrought unto their will, that at their call
 They had both him and his, and sooth to say
 Inricht with golden store, he was fit pray
 For such in Court whose credit waxed bare,
 So witlesse was hee and so voyd of care;
 For he of late had left his Countrey home
 His Sire being dead, and now to Court was come,
 Where all a flaunt, hee ryots and consumes
 In gold, in siluer, silke and sweet perfumes
 His old Sires, ill-got-goods now goes to wracke,
 Farmes, Forrests, Fields, hee beares vpon his backe,
 And neuer deemes what Fate will him betide
 When all is spent by his vnseemely pride.

The *Ape* that had obseru'd with heedful eye
 The stout demeanour of this Company,
 Tooke little liking to this kind of life,
 For hee ne loued for to bee in strife;
 Ne fauour would hee with such perill winne,
 "But thought best sleeping in the soundest skinne.
 Long did hee lurke about the Court in vayne,
 Before his close intent hee could obtayne:
 "But hee that doth his Fate with heed attend,
 "Seldome but findes good Fortune in the end.
 And at the last good Fortune being his guide,
 An old acquaintance he in Court espide;
 To wit, the *Fox*, who found in Court such grace
 That he about the King had gotten place.
 For the Dread *Lyon* loathing Luxurie
 "The Canker-worme of true Nobilitie,
 T'allay the pride that in the flesh beares sway
 And banish loathsome Idlenesse away:
 To spend his golden houres still deuise

In Kingly pastime and faire exercise,
There to rich guifts, Prince-like he gaue to those,
That did themselues to exercise dispose;
Thereby to purge his Court to ease inclin'd,
And base sloath banish from the Noble mind.
In which the *Fox*, his Soueraigne did so please,
Seeming the common Enemie of ease:
That hee himselfe in mickle grace did bring
With the bold *Lyon*, his dread Lord and King.
But hee foule *Carle* (not as his King) did make
This vse of exercise for vertues sake,
But gaue himselfe thereto with this intent
To creepe in fauour with foule blandishment
To him the *Ape* in humble manner came
To scrape acquaintance and make knowne his name;
But the proud *Fox*, though him hee well did know,
Like a true Courtier gan himselfe to show
With Elboe pride, and cast of scornfull eye
Hee stoutly stalk't vpon his tiptoes high
Disdaining to th'*Apes* words to lend his eare
Though hee of yore his old acquaintance were.
And in such proud contempt he passed by,
That the *Apes* former hopes began to dye;
Being in despaire his meane estate to mend
Forsaken thus of his old fellow friend.

But the slie *Fox* aduising all this while
How the *Ape* being wittie, prompt, and full of guile,
"And that two working wits will soone preuaile
"In any plot where one may chance to faile;
Straight sends vnto the *Ape*, and greets him well,
Bidding him come to him his case to tell.
The forlorne *Ape* being almost in despaire
With double diligence did make repaire
Vnto the *Fox*, to whom obeysance made
These famous words in humble wise hee said.

All haile (graue Sir) quoth hee, good fates attend
Your steps in Court, still Fortune be your freind
And in sweet showers, th'auspicious heau'ns down-shed
Their bounteous blessings on your reuerent head.

The *Fox* him thanking, answered in this sort,
But say (Sir *Ape*) what wind brings you to Court?
Seemes you haue liued in some barren place
And want lifes needements for to doe you grace;
That scarce your legs your limbs vpholden can.
For which, I weene, you want that wanted wit
And iudgements sharpe, that seem'd of yore to fit
In th'ilke same head, by which you could at need
Both helpe your selfe and stand your freind in steed.

Ah mee (Sir *Reynald*) sayd the wretched *Ape*
Of all the Forrest hardest is my hap
That I vnhappy wretch, thus as you see

Am made the scorne of other beasts to bee;
Yet ne'rtheless Sir, if of your grace you please
You of your bounty may my fortunes ease,
And set my wit in the old working way
"Want of imployment makes best wits decay.

Now certes (said the *Fox*) yee say right well,
"For custome doth in power so excell;
"That vertues selfe in the most liberall minde
"For want of it oft times decay'd we find
"And vse being common made in vseful things
"Vice to inseperable habit brings.

The pittie t'were, so ripe a wit you haue
The want of good imploiment should deprauē.
Read then, Sir *Ape*, what course you doe intend
And if in it my helpe may you befriend:
Doubt not to find for old acquaintance sake
My furtherance in any course you take.

To this the *Ape*, deepe sighing, thus did say
Ah (noble Sir) y blessed be this day,
That with such hap good fortune did me greet
As with your selfe so happily to meet;
For well I weene, I onely hope to rise
By sage instruction of your sound deuise.
Then read (faire Sir) of fauour I you pray
What custome in the Court now beares cheife sway
To what things most is that *Heroicke* mind
Of our dread Soueraigne chiefly now enclind,
"For well I wot the subiect that will bring
"Himselfe in fauour with his Lord and King,
"What his Lord likes at least must seeme to loue
"And of his fancy must alwayes approue.

Surely, said *Reynald*, this which you haue spoken
Of your graue iudgement giues sufficient token,
And know, that now the *Lyons* chiefe delight
Is to behold those that in nimble fight,
Can best pursue the wilder beasts in chase
And such as they be now in speciall grace;
For he with idle ease may not away
The obstacle to vertues best assay.
And therefore least good dayes may be mispent
To noble exercise he still is bent:
Ne doe I doubt but you by pregnant wit
To any exercise your selfe can fit,
And though of footmanship you be not slow
Yet none amongst the best of beasts I know
In all the woods with you compar'd may bee
For nimblenes and swift Agility.
By which you may in frowning Fates despight
Purchase you fauor in your Soueraignes sight.

Ah (deere Sir) said the *Ape*, yblessed be
Your life with length of dayes for Charitie

To me poore wretch. But say Sir, I you pray
 By what step shall I make my best assay
 To gaine the Forests King vnto my friend
 "A good beginning makes a happy end.

To this the *Fox* replied, Sir *Ape*, said hee
 Well haue you said, yet that my busines bee
 Meane while your wits for my imployment frame
 For in the Forrest wee will find good game.
 "Let Drudges by base toile there liuing get
 "The generous borne will onely liue by wit;
 This said, the subtle *Fox* in secret wise
 The *Ape* gan counsell with such sound aduise
 That in short space in Court he got much grace
 When those of more desert could find no place.
 "For few there be, that for good guifts of mind
 "Or vertues bare regard doe fauour find
 "Onely they rise that can by guilefull wit
 "Serue their owne turne with gainefull benefit,
 "The honest mind from thence is made to flye
 "When shamelesse ribaulds are aduanced high
 "The simple-hearted are accounted base,
 "When bold and impudent are most in grace,
 "Vaine boasting *Thrasoes*, soothing Flatterers,
 "Sly cogging *Gnatoes*, secret whisperers,
 "Tale-bearing *Fleerers*, and false accusing Iackes,
 "There beare best shewes vpon their golden backes.
 'Mongst whom the *Ape* did beare himselfe so well
 That hee in rich attire did farre excell;
 And eke his sides with flesh so filled were,
 That not a bone did any where appeare.
 Ne, few him knew that knew him well before
 T'haue bin the wretched *Ape* he was of yore,
 For neuer more did *Proteus* change his shape;
 For to deceiue, then did this wilie *Ape*
 At first with lowly lookes and humble minde,
 Himselfe in great States fauour he did winde,
 With Sycophantlike trickes, hee tooke delight,
 With euery Iacke to play the *Parasite*,
 To sooth, to cogge, to fawne, to lye, to sweare,
 To crouch, to glose, and patiently to beare
 All grosse abuse, to take vp euery word
 Falne from the lying lippes of some great Lord:
 To laugh, looke sad, to like and dislike both,
 To say and vnsay, sweare and forswear troth.
 But when by humble seruice and long suite
 In Court hee came to bee of some repute,
 Hee many subtle sleights did quickly find
 T'exhalt himselfe when others came behind:
 Then waxt hee proud, and bent his guilefull wit
 To turne all things to his owne benefit;
 False of his faith, yet prodigall in word,

Darke in his talke, yet seldome would afford
Poore Suitors hearing; but vnlesse they came
With golden warrants signed for the same:
Yet if that Suitors meanes for suites would vse,
Whom better, then Sir *Ape*, could any chuse;
For many a Canker worme of common state
Some farming Huckster, or Sea runagate,
T'increase their priuate good by publique ill,
Might through his helpe with ease obtaine their will.
Thus they slye *Ape* with naturall wit endow'd,
Grew great in wealth, by wealth grew wondrous proud.
"For costly wealth euen to the basest wight
"Giues golden wings to soare a lofty flight.

Now while the *Ape* did study more and more
By daily begging to increase his store,
The *Fox* that idle was, but by his wit
For the *Apes* turne still layd foundation fit,
And on a time I weene, aboute the rest,
To th'*Ape* hee commeth with a merry Iest.
(Sir *Ape*) quoth hee, if you my friend will stand,
Wee will not want t'haue gold at our command;
For I in Court haue found a gallant gull
Whom of his gold, (of which hee yet is full)
We well may fleece, if you will lend your ayde
To which in hast, the *Ape* this answer made.

Say in good sooth, Sir *Reynald*, I you pray,
In what my word and deed you helpen may
And of what *Mister* wight make you report
I know him not? spends he his dayes in Court?

Yes, quoth the *Fox*, to Court he came of late
And well I wot hee is a lolly mate;
It is to wit, the *Asse*, whose aged syre
Did toyle himselfe and drudge for daily hyre
And left his thrifty gaine vnto his sonne
To gentilize it here when he was gone.

Sayd then the *Ape*, foule shame such fooles betide
That to maintayne their sonnes vnthrifty pride
Will bow their labouring backes and take no pleasure
For all their paines vpon their hardrackt treasure.

The *Fox* reply'd, you seeme to bee a Foe
To gentle kind; for if it were not so,
How should the Forrest in a moment space,
Breed so much gentle-blood of meaner race,
And sooth to say, this *Asse* though meanely borne
Yet though much wealth, made wondrous full of scorn.
An humour strange in his conceit doth feed
That by discent hee comes of Noble breed.
It was my chance the other day to be
With th'horned *Goate*, and him in company,
Who both were clad in goodly rich array :
But in attire, the *Asse* was farre more gay.

His head with plume of Feathers was bedight,
 His trappings all with Bells and Bosses bright
 Was richly furnished, which with more pride
 Hung downe vnto the ground on eyther side.
 These lustie Gallants to increase their fame,
 In their conceits at Knighthood both doth ayme.
 Which if for them wee can by friends obtayne,
 Wee shall not fayle for meed t'haue double gayne;
 For the *Asse* so vaine appeares that he will giue
 His whole estate, ere he vnknighthed liue.
 And for the *Goate*, we shall haue golden fee
 Of Female kind, that they may Ladyed bee.
 Being dub'd by him; Say then (Sir *Ape*) I pray
 Good gaine is oft times lost by long delay.

Sir *Reynald*, said the *Ape*, my forward mind
 Brookes no delay, where I a meane may find
 To worke my will: but know that your intent
 Makes me much doubt, the sequell of th'euent:
 For this high Order is to those assign'd,
 That famous be for vertue of the mind,
 Or for some high atchieuement; for their meed
 Haue purchas'd it, to glorifie their deed.
 How may we then bring such a thing to passe,
 As purchase Knighthood for the golden *Asse*.

Tush, quoth the *Fox*, the world now doth not see
 The thing that is, but that which seemes to bee.
 And hee whose tongue the tayle of Greatnesse lickes
 If he will thriue, his Conscience neuer stickes
 To ouergild, and lift vp to the skies
 With deepest oathes, inuentions blackest lyes;
 And that we may our purpose bring to passe,
 We must obscure the folly of the *Asse*.
 The vertues rare that beautifie his mind,
 Wee must applaud, thereby the world to blind;
 And say and swaere, that hee amongst the best
 Of all the Forrest is the hopeful'st beast;
 So to the world they both shall seeme to bee
 For vertues sake, much worthy this degree.

Now certes, said the *Ape*, this is good leasing
 And to the *Lyon* it will sure be pleasing:
 When in the Forrest hee shall heare the same,
 Which in their high applause wee can proclaime.
 Meane time, Sir *Reynald*, backe returne with speed
 Vnto them both, and tell them 'tis decreed,
 That worthy they shall weare the golden Spurre
 Like two true sonnes of *Mars*, and ne're incurre
 The hazard of the Filed, but onely this,
 To haue our fee before, we may not misse.

Tush, quoth the *Fox*, bee confident in mee,
 A foole hee is that will behind hand bee:
 If that our purpose haue but good euent

The gaine is ours, neere thinke your paines mispent.
 This said, themselues they both began t'apply
 T'effect their purpose, all their friends they try;
 And such applauses daily they impute
 To the *Asse* and *Goat*, for whom they make this suite
 That in the end both twaine in pompe and pride
 Were dubd Knights errand, of the Forrest wide
 Of whom in guerdon of their mickle paines
 The begging *Ape* and *Fox* had golden gaines,
 So both thinke well themselues apayd to bee
 They with their Knighthood, th'other with their Fee.
 But let not such base Lossels that account
 All merit vayne, and onely hope to mount
 Themselues with golden wings to such degree
 That seeke to purchase it with baser Fee;
 And thinke a siluer silken vestiment
 A gilded Spurre, or strange acoutrement
 The fruits of brainsicke fancies fond delight
 The onely meanes to make a perfect Knight.
 Let not such dunghill brood of Kestrill kinde
 That vnto honour neuer cast their minde
 Dismay the noble spirit that assayes
 Through deeds of Armes his name on high to raise;
 For bare degrees that want true vertues merit
 Shall in fames golden booke no place inherit.
 When Honour, Meede, and noble vertues praise
 In Swan-white age findes fresh and youthfull dayes;
 Then let not fond Sir *Asse*, disgracefull seeme
 To those that for their worth and high esteeme
 In vertues bare regard exalted bee
 By Princes grace to place of such degree;
 Let boasting *Bragadochioes* of our time
 And golden-handed Churles, that seeke to clime
 To places of such high credit, inly burne
 And with the vaine Sir *Asse*, the Begger spurne;
 So shall the *Ape* their follies still deride
 And fleece their store for their aspiring pride.
 Who tasting once the sweet delights that came
 By this his Begging trade, himselfe did frame
 With golden fees of dayly Begging base,
 Shamelight on gaine got with so foule disgrace;
 Yet shamelesse hee continued begging still
 To glut the gulfe of his vnsatiate will.
 Which many noble beasts did soone espie
 On whome the *Lyons* safetie did relye,
 To whose great wisdom and fore-casting cares
 Committed were the Forrests chiefe Affaires.
 But 'mongst them all, that most illustrate beast
 That worthy Counsellor from heau'n yblest,
 The noble *Elephant* tooke speciall heed
 That out of Court such Beggars he might weed.

And sooth to say, as *Greekes* doe well recite
 With crooked Trumpet he could truly write,
 And by the working of his prudent mind
 Could oft obscure the wits of humane kind;
 For on his care the Kingdomes happines
 Did most depend, and for her worthines
 To him committed was in custodie
 The keeping of the common Treasurie.
 This worthy Peere, who dayly did behold
 The shamelesse begging of these Beggars bold
 In wisdomes divers wayes did cast about
 To finde the wily *Apes* foule knavery out.
 But th'*Ape* so well him bore that long it was
 E're th'*Elephant* could bring his will to passe;
 Meane time like as the *Leach* vpon the store
 From greedy sucking ne're desists, before
 The place be bloodlesse left exhausted dry
 So did th'*Ape* to th'*Asse* himselfe apply.

For when the doltish beast ycleped was
 Through all the Court (by name of hight Sir *Asse*)
 Puft vppe with pride, he thought himselfe to bee
 The fairest beast that euer eye did see,
 Hee learned had to prauce with stately pace
 To rayne his *Asses* head with lofty grace
 And in each point himselfe so high to beare
 As if that hee some noble *Palfray* were;
 Which pride of his, was laughed so to scorne
 Of euery beast that knew him to bee borne
 Of base descent, yet hee through want of wit
 Swolne proud by wealth, such folly did commit,
 That he their common Gull accounted was
 And bore the title of the *golden Asse*.

Which th'*Ape* did well perceiue, & with vaine shoues
 Of fained friendship gan with him to glose,
 With soothing tongue his folly he did feed
 And gaue him counsell by some glorious deed
 To amplify his name in euery place,
 Hee knew he was not come of *Asses* race;
 But ra[t]her sprung of some such noble breed
 As swift wing'd *Pegasus* that heau'nly Steed.
 He wisht him therefore in a single race
 To challenge th'*Horse*, thereby to get him grace
 Ne did he doubt but he should win the day
 If hee with courage bold but gaue th'*Assay*.

Sir *Asse*, with selfe conceit being mou'd in minde
 To heare his praise, forgot himselfe by kinde
 T'haue bin an *Asse*, and in in this humour sent
 A challenge to the *Horse* with this intent,
 To runne with him before the Forrest King
 In hope himselfe in fauour for to bring.
 The day was set and chosen was the place

Vpon the open Plaine to runne this race;
 Where the dread King of beasts stood to behold
 The stout Sir *Asse*, performe his challenge bold;
 The time being come forth came the lustie *Horse*
 With comely grace to runne th'expected course,
 Who by his stately gesture gan to show
 Stout signes in proud contempt of his base foe.
 His crested neck hee often bow'd to ground
 With foaming mouth as if he would confound
 The earth at once, and from his nostrils came
 A fierie breath as from a furnace flame;
 His pricking Eares stood startling on his head
 And of a common cutome inlye bred,
 In iollity of pride which did abound,
 His hollow hoofe still played vpon the ground;
 At last from his strong necke in neighing shrill
 With sound thereof the Forrest hee did fill,
 Seeming thereby to call vpon Sir *Asse*,
 That in this challenge the appellat was.
 Who vainely vaunting with a gallant trayne
 Came proudly prauncing on the ample Plaine;
 Where when hee came beholding well the *Horse*
 His comely grace, braue shape, and wondrous force:
 Halfe in despaire hee hid himselfe repent
 Of his proud challenge and bold hardiment.
 Yet with the vayne applause of flattering mates
 Being proudly prickt, with Courage bold he waites,
 The time appointed to begin the race
 Before the Forrest King being then in place;
 The signe once giuen, Sir *Asse*, began to runne
 With greedy hope great fame thereby t'haue wonne.
 But the braue *Horse* in pace away did goe
 Like winged shaft shot from a Tuscan bowe,
 Or like a Swallow in the welkin bright
 That sheeres the subtle ayre with nimble flight,
 Leauing the sluggish *Asse* with shame behind
 To know himselfe to be an *Asse* by kind.
 With mickle laughter bred in euery place
 Amongst the beasts that stood to see the race,
 Which the *Ape* did well obserue with slye intent
 As he that knew, what would be he euent;
 For when the *Asse*, amongst the better sort
 Was held in base contempt throughout the Court,
 And left forlorne for his stupidity
 The *Ape* alone, did keepe him company.
 Whose doltish nature by his cunning wit
 In all his actions done he did so fit,
 That in the end by craft and cousening slye
 Hee gull'd the simple beast and suckt him dry.
 Who left forlorne returned all a mort
 Vnto his Country home, from *Princes* Court.

There hellesse to bewaile in wofull wise
 His lauish will and wanton riotize;
 O wretched end of idle vanity,
 Of misexpence and *Prodigality*.
 You younger wits that spend your golden houres,
 Your selues and substance in great *Princes* bowers;
 That quaffe downe Court delights, and dayly swill
 The seeming sugred *Nectar* of your ill;
 That weare your large left patrimonies bare
 In Drinke, in Dice, Dauncing and dainty fare.
 That vp and downe in Antick shapes doe jet,
 And on your golden backs doe beare your debt,
 And with a vaine bewitching hope struck blind
 Of idle fame doe watch to catch the wind,
 Yet thinke your selues all others to surpasse
 In reaching wit. Behold this forlorne *Asse*,
 Who 'mongst the best, once iolly blithe and trim
 In deepest waues of sweet delight did swim;
 Now of his golden good he being bereft
 And driuen home, when scarce no home was left:
 In stead of stately bower, where he had bin
 An homely Cottage gladly enters in,
 Where with sad sighes his wretched eyes doe fill
 In stead of *Arras* and sweet paintings skill,
 Vpon the broken rooffe and slender walls
 Sticks smoakie black and Spiders dusty coales,
 In stead of sweet perfumes, the bitter smoake
 With foggy clouds his tender sight doth choake,
 In stead of Siluer plate, or purest Glasse
 Hee with the Beggers dish now pleased was,
 In which for Wine to glad his wofull hart
 Hee takes cold Whey and water in good part,
 His Courtly dyet fraught with many a dish
 Of diuers kindes of dainty Flesh and Fish,
 Is now become the almes of some good house
 Or homely morsell of some hungry Mouse.
 The ground his board, greene grasse his Carpet makes
 And for his Bed a pad of Straw he takes
 In which distresse, by his owne folly bred
 Hee weeps, he sighes, and shakes his wofull head;
 Blaming his bitter Fate, but all in vaine
 Since of his wealthy store naught doth remaine.
 Meane time the *Ape* that liu'd vpon his losse
 Seeing the wretched fortune of the *Asse*,
 Did laugh to scorne his wofull misery
 And pitch'd his nets with fraud and subtilty;
 To circumvent the weake and simple sort
 That vsed to frequent the *Princes* Court.
 But thus while th'*Ape* such things to passe did bring
 About the pallace of the Forrest King
 The greedy *Wolfe* his part did also play

In woods abroad t'obtaine his wished pray,
 Who was a bloody beast of wicked brood
 And sought to liue by spoyle of others good.
 Yet had he large possessions of his owne,
 And in the woods was mighty wealthy growne,
 Whereby he daily sought in Cruell wise
 Vpon the poorer Beasts to Tyrannize,
 The Woods in Common, and th'adioyning Plaine
 Hee did conuert vnto his priuate gaine;
 And meaner beasts that nigh his Den did dwell,
 Hee from their owne abodes did oft expell.
 'Mongst whom the *Urchin* and the *Squirrel* hight,
 By the *Apes* helpe, he robbed of their right:
 For in close thicket farre from sight of Sunne
 Where in his darksome Den the *Wolfe* did wonne,
 The industrious *Urchin* in his little Cell,
 Not farre from thence alone did chance to dwell.
 At whose good hap the *Wolfe* did much repine
 And daily did behold with enuious eyne,
 How he is sharpest Winter did enioy
 The fruites of Sommers toyle without annoy;
 For when *Pomona* did in winters scorne
 The Woods greene heads with golden fruit adorne,
 When fields foe seem to laugh, when flowers doe spring
 When Beasts doe play, and Birds doe sweetly sing;
 Then would the *Urchin* watch with curious eye,
 When *Boreas* blasts did cuffe the Clouds in skye
 And shake the Tree when like thicke showers of raine
 The Fruit would fall, the which with mickle paine
 Vpon his brisled backe, the *Vrchin* bore
 Home to his Cell to make his winters store,
 Whereby from winters thrall hee liu'd secure,
 When other Beasts much sorrow did endure.
 Now at the entry of the sterne *Wolfes* denne
 The place of his abode had long time bin;
 That 'gainst the state nought could be done or sayd,
 But by the *Vrchin* it might be bewrayed.
 The *Wolfe* likewise out of his greedy moode
 Did seeke t'inlarge the place of his abode,
 By proud incroaching of that little Cell
 In which his neigghbour, th'*Vrchin* vs'd to dwell;
 Wherefore hee sought by death or some disgrace,
 To dispossesse the *Urchin* of that place.
 And on a time from home as th'*Vrchin* went
 Abroad into the Forrest with intent
 As was his wont, to get such labours meed,
 As Fortune in the Forrest had decreed.
 Loe in the way the rauening *Wolfe* did watch
 This silly beast within his pawes to catch,
 Whom he did often thinke to make his prey,
 Yet durst hee not at that time giue th'Assay,

So well the *Vrchin* did his body arme
With coate of prooffe, 'gainst all intended harme.
The *Wolfe* therefore perceiuing force to faile
Did seeke by flattering falshood to preuaile.
For in the way finding occasion meet
With fawning words, thus th'*Urchin* hee did greet.

Now neighbour, quoth the *Wolfe*, you will be well met
Vpon what high atchieuement be you set,
That you thus armed bee, seemes you doe stand
In dangers doubt, and feare some harme at hand.

Nay certes, quoth the *Vrchin*, nought I feare
Of harme t'ensue, this armed coate I weare
For no such cause; but that with paine I may
Vpon my brisled hide, such fruit conuay
To my poore home, which in the woods I find,
Least with the sluggard vnto ease inclin'd,
On Summers pleasure I doe fondly feed,
And want in Winter to sustaine my need.

The *Wolfe* replyed, y blessed be thy paine
And labour, that deserues to reape good gaine;
Yet let me now dissuade thee to disarm
Thy selfe this once, and feare no future harme,
This day desist from toyle and goe with mee
Vnto our friend, where wee will welcome bee;
For to all Beasts, this day is by the *Bore*
Kept festiuall, where we shall finde good store
Of diuers dainty Fruits, of which at will
Withouten labour thou mayest haue thy fill.
This sayd, he vsed such kinde courtesie
Mix'd with such friendly Importunitie;
That the poore *Vrchin*, thought his meaning good
And would with him vnto the neighbouring Wood,
Whereas the *Bore* should wonne; but loe at need
A friend was by, to helpe him at that steed.
And sure the silly *Vrchin* that same day
Vnto the Rauening *Wolfe* had beene a prey,
But that the *Squirrel* from the leaui Tree,
Vnseene to them the *Wolfes* intent did see;
Who to the *Vrchin*, call'd with loude exclaime;
Fond foole said hee, what madnes is this same?
How darest thou credit that same cruell Beast,
That on thy Carkasse seekes to make his Feast.
Take heed, by his seducements bee not led,
If thou disarm thy selfe thou art but dead.
For hence I did behold how in the way
In secret couert hid, he lurking lay,
And hadst thou not with stiffe quill'd pointed hide
Beene arm'd about ; by him thou sure hadst dy'd.

The *Vrchin* hearing this, vpon his chin
Did set his feet and drew his brisled skin
About his body round, as any ball

To shield himselfe, and shun his fall fall.

Which when the *Wolfe* perceiu'd, hee went his way
 Inrag'd in minde, and vow'd without delay
 To act a swift reuenge vpon them both,
 And for his cause, vnto the *Ape* he goeth;
 To whom, Complaint against them he doth bring
 To be preferr'd vnto the Forrests King.
 Hee told, how th'*Vrchin* like a theeuish wight
 Did steale abroad in dead of darksome night,
 Vsing to sucke the full-fed *Kine* vnkept,
 While the poore Neatheard all securely slept:
 And how the *Squirrel* to augment his store,
 Did rob the Forrest of the Fruit it bore;
 And to his will, that he might better shape
 The greedy fancy of the Begging *Ape*,
 Hee wish'd him begge the forfeit of their Goods,
 Since none amongst the Beasts about the woods
 There was, with whom such treasures could be found
 As with them twaine which chifly did abound
 With Nuts, and Aples, which the *Wolfe* could tell
 About all things, the *Ape* lou'd wondrous well.
 And sooth to say these tidings did so please
 Th'*Apes* greedy humor, that with little ease
 The *Wolfe* obtain'd his wish for in small space
 The *Urchin* and the *Squirrell* wanting grace
 Of friends to backe their cause were from those Woods
 Exil'd for aye, and forfeited there goods ;
 Whereby the *Wolfe* possession did obtaine
 Of th'*Vrchins* little Cell, and th'*Ape* did gaine
 By begging Nuts and Aples which of yore
 By others paines were hoarded vp in store.
 Thus dayly did the subtile *Ape* obtaine
 Pleasure and profit both withouten paine,
 By which I weene compar'd to all the rest
 "Amongst all Craftsmen Beggers are the best:
 For eu'n the proud'st that thinkes paines taking's base
 To turne oft Begger thinkes it no disgrace.
 But whilest the *Ape* lull'd in security
 Did swim in pleasures and felicity
 Not wanting ought, for seldome did he craue
 The guift of ought but he the same might haue,
 The noble *Elephant* that in the Court
 Did beare chiefe sway amongst the supreame sort
 Like a true Statesman, for the Forrest good
 Against the *Apes* incessant begging stood.
 Whereby the *Ape* did stoope his gallant minde
 For though by information he might finde
 Ought worthy begging, yet the *Princes* grant
 Hee did not craue; because by th'*Elephant*
 Oft to reuoke his grant the King was mou'd
 If to the state it preiudiciall stood;

Therefore the *Ape* that liu'd before secure
 And thought his golden begging would endure
 For euer certaine: with a heauy cheere
 Now hung the head; for well it did appeare
 Hee might goe swinke and sweat to get his liuing
 Since that the Forrest Prince did cease from giuing,
 Sir *Reynald* likewise that same crafty mate
 That did in the *Apes* beg'd guifts participate
 Now wanted meanes, whereby he might support
 His brauery 'mongst the gallants of the Court
 For long he watched had, and cast about
 By his fine wit to finde some purchase out
 Some ancient Ruine of Antiquitie
 Or ought that might be term'd inuilitie,
 But naught he found that in the Forrest stood
 That was inuilitie for common good,
 Which when he did perceiue: halfe in despaire
 Vnto the *Ape* his friend he made repaire
 Who to each other often though in vaine
 Their sad mishap in secret did complaine.
 Yet in the end the *Fox* did finde a fetch
 "For dire constraint, the wit at large doth stretch,
 Hee well remembered that if any beast
 Were found offensiue to the Kings beheast
 Or did infringe the Law through all the Woods
 By penall statutes lost both Lands and goods,
 The which without controle, as lawfull gaine
 Th'*Ape* for a boone by begging might obtaine,
 This once being thought vpon the wily *Ape*
 As carefull of their good this speech shape.

Sir *Reynald* (said the *Ape*) wee be in case
 To be vndone vnlesse by *Ioues* good grace
 Against the storme, in time we doe prouide
 "Time runnes away and no man stayes the tide.
 You see that wee be needy and in lacke
 And in the Court, the eyes of euery Iacke
 Are fix'd vpon vs, and these garments old
 Cannot in Court our countenance long vphold.
 Then say (Sir *Reynald*) as yee be right wise
 What hopefull course for vs you can deuise
 Wee must prouide for helpe without delay
 Or hopelesse leaue the Court and runne away.

The *Fox* reply'd full little did I weene
 That in this case so witlesse you had beene
 So long as hope remaines; why should we doubt
 Haue wee not working wit to cast about,
 Then haue good hope, for wee in little space
 Will worke our selues againe in Fortunes grace,
 We know right well the *Oxe* and silly *Sheepe*
 Though they themselues from Court in priuate keepe
 As being but rusticke Chuffes of base account

Yet they in wealthy substance farre surmount
 Whom if by subtilty we can but draw
 Within the compasse of the Princes law
 To stop mouthes we shall haue golden fee
 So much they feare in danger for to bee.
 And if this faile; yet we vpon our oath
 As loyal subiects can appeach them both
 For speaches spoken 'gainst the Gouernment
 Or other trespasse, which we can inuent,
 Which that wee may to better purpose bring
 We can disguis'd, talke of the Forrest King
 And aske what tydings in the Princes Court
 What vice in common they doe most support
 And in their speech if we them tripping take
 VVee by addition can the matter make
 To seeme farre worse; by which if they i'th'end
 Conuicted bee; then that which we intend
 VVee haue obtayn'd; for we theyr goods haue wonne
 In recompence of our good seruice done.
 This said, the *Ape* approuing *Reynald* wit
 In that hee at a pinch, could helpe with it
 VVith speed in some strange habit, both disguis'd
 VVould put in practice what hee had deuis'd,
 They both agreed themselues forthwith to clad
 Like stranger Countrymen of late decayed,
 VVhose habit and demeanor had you seene
 You would haue though[t] the wretched *Ape* t'haue been
 Some sturdy Clowne that late had left the Carre
 And in this strange disguise had come from farre,
 Hee was y clad all in a Russet gray
 Of coursest stuffe, yet with such meane aray,
 Hee seemed well appay'd as did appeare
 Being well contented with his countrey weare.
 His russet Ierkin, many yeares y worne
 Was waxen bare, and at the elboes torne:
 His Breeches of the same made scanty wise
 So close did fit vnto his brawny thighes,
 That his fat flankes that plumpe and jolly were
 Like two round Balls did through the same appeare;
 Thereto, his blew round Cap him well became
 With a plume Feather pendant on the same,
 Which o'th'one side of his head he euer wore
 As if in minde some high conceit hee bore.
 A rusty Sword hee carryed by his side
 And at his backe a Dagger well ytide,
 For many hackes therein made long agoe
 Sufficient proofes did of the mettall show,
 His woollen Hose were of the purest white
 Of thicke strong knit, and yet in open sight
 Were broken 'bove the heeles, and both his Shooes
 Worne with long trauell out about the toes.

And thus he trauayl'd with his fellow *Foxe*
 About the Forrest for to finde the *Oxe*,
 And silly *Sheepe*, whom the *Ape* had first espide
 In Field farre off fast by the Riuer side,
 And said vnto the *Foxe*; Behold I see
 In yon same field, where both grasing bee:
 Now proue your wit Sir *Reynald*, if you can,
 Begin you first, you are the grauer man.
 This sayd, they came wher th'*Oxe* and *Sheepe* did grase,
 Whom thus the *Foxe* did greet with fawning phrase?
 All haile (Sir *Oxe*) said hee, full glad am I
 To see you beare your lofty head so high,
 It seemes to vs by this your goodly port
 You are in fauour in the *Princes* Court,
 You can informe vs of some tidings there
 And 'bout the *Lyon* who chiefe place doth beare.

"The *Oxe* reply'd, (good Sir) you deeme amisse
 "For your coniecture goes astray in this,
 "Seeing Courtly fauour is no cause that I
 "Seeme thus to beare my branched head so hie,
 "But humble thoughts, which wounded harts doe heale
 "In sweet content, is cause of all weale,
 "Pale enuy poyson to the Statesmans good
 "Nere gnawes my heart ne suckes my vitall blood,
 "Nor greedy Auarice of others shares
 "Disturbs my sweet content with boundlesse cares;
 "These pastures bounds my thoughts doe euer bound,
 "Ne doe I ioy to feed in stranger ground,
 "But with my Fate suffic'd I still abide
 "Not fearing any ill that may betide,
 "Of Musickes rarest skill I take no keepe
 "At any time to summon timely sleepe,
 "But sweet voyc'd Birds, and milde Streames gently gushes
 "My weary limbes, in restfull quiet Hushes.
 "The often horrid sounds of Courts Alarmes
 "Ne're startle me from sleepe for feare of harmes,
 "But sleeping till the morne secure of feares,
 "The Birds sing sweet *Bon-jours* about mine eares:
 "Yhus liue I happy in content of minde,
 "Which wee in Courtly greatnesse seldome finde.

Cetes, said the *Ape*, it seemes yee be right wise
 That can of worldly weale so well aduise,
 And yet in this me seemes you haue digrest,
 For 'mongst the best you being a goodly beast
 To great aduancement, may your selfe soone bring
 And authorize high Seruice for the King.

"Alas, (quoth the *Oxe*) How vulgar is affection
 "In vainely seeking after fond promotion,
 "As well th'Ignoble as the Noble blood
 "Deeme vading pompe the happie mans chiefe good.
 "Yet view the Court and marke the misery

"Of those that swim in Court felicitie,
 "Whose wretched steps in Princes Courts attends
 "His slauish will on others wills depends,
 "His turn-coat thoughts more light then lightest feather
 "Turn'd with the winde and return'd with the weather
 "Eu'n as his Masters changing humour is,
 "Must turne and Change to like of that or this
 "Against his Conscience praise impietie,
 "And sooth foule sinne with fawning flatterie.
 "And yet suppose thou shouldst exalted bee
 "To some place past Court-crouching with the knee,
 "And by the helpe of Greatnesse finde such grace
 "As neere the steps of Maiestie t'haue place,
 "Yet marke (fond foole) and see what vnseene woe
 "Would follow thee though in Gold shouldst goe,
 "To bee a Partner in the Priuitie
 "And close concealement of Authoritie,
 "Though to thy second selfe thou shew the same
 "Oft winnes thee Death, and neuer dying shame;
 "Yet in thy Conscience to conceale such things
 "VVhen life is gone, Death worse then death it brings.
 "Oh then how blest and happy a wight is hee
 "That liues from Court though nere so base he bee.
 T'enlarge the Theame the *Sheepe* did silence breake,
 "Deare neighbor *Oxe* (quoth he) the truth you speake,
 "Yet more then this, doe many vndergoe
 "That in the Court doe make a goodly show,
 "For many there that beare so bold a face
 "And deeme all vulgars beggerly and base,
 "That strut on Tiptoe, and with Elboe pride
 "Aspire to reach the square from side to side,
 "Oft stoope their gallant mindes and proue I weene,
 "VVorse Beggars farre then those that Beggars beene;
 "VVith fawning tongue and Court eclipsing guile
 "They claw the Great in vices more then vile,
 "And then of this or that in daily begging,
 "They still sollicite them with tedious gapping.
 "But loe alas, what proues this hardracket store
 "Got by encroaching on the pined poore,
 "Lifes bitter curse, while heere on Earth wee dwell
 "And soules sad burthen bearing downe to Hell.
 "Why then doe those that tediously importune
 "The royall *Lyon* to aduance their Fortune,
 "Thus base and Begger-like sollicite still
 "T'increase their profit by a generall ill:
 "They knew the noble *Lyons* Royall minde
 "To humble Suitors is by nature kinde,
 "Nor stearne nor statefull to the Subiects base.
 "But full of Lenitie and Gentle grace.
 "They know hee striues by his benignitie
 "To imitate the Gods in Charitie,

"Which they will still abuse, being Begger-lipt,
"Till from his Court such Beggers base be whipt.
This speech so toucht the *Ape*, that with much paine
Hee could himselfe in quiet moode containe.

But *Reynald* thus reply'd. "Well haue your spoken
"In this behalfe, for these your words betoken
"Your common care, which nature tyes vs to,
"Not for our selues being onely borne to doe.
"Yet you (me seemes Sir *Oxe*) without such shift
"By merit may your selfe to honour lift,
"Seeing euery where true merit hath her place
"At least it can no where receiue disgrace

The *Oxe* reply'd. "I would thy words were true
"Would merit euery where might haue her due,
"Then I should not behold vnto my grieffe
"The meritorious want without relieffe.
"But loe, Ah lasse, behold the noble *Horse*
"That eu'n hath spent the vtmost of his force,
"Gainst the *Ægle* and the *Dragon* his proud mate
"Who both of late made warre vpon our State,
"How oft haue I beheld him with delight
"Preparing of himselfe for bloody fight,
"Who neuer fear'd what might by foes bee done
"With ha, ha, ha, the Battaile hath begun,
"The eyes of *Gorgon* burning in his head
"With feare hath made his fainting foes halfe dead.
"And proudly prauncing with a side-long pace
"Lifting his fetlockes vp with nimble grace,
"All Rainbow-like hee bore his crest deckt necke
"In proud contempt of any Counterchecke,
"Then on the hard ground hauing made some prooffe
"Of the strong battery of his hardy hooffe,
"With nimble Capers in a stately daunce
"He towards the battaile bold would proudly praunce,
"And being come in sight of th'Armed foes
"Hee snuffs, he puffes, he Boggles, snoarts and blowes,
"And neighing with shrill voyce, hee seemes to cry
"And call for Combate with the Enemy.
"Then like the Lightning from the Easterne ayre
"Or swiftest whirlwind, in his fierce repayre
"To flie 'mongst thickest troupes he hath bin seene
"To lose his life, or worthy Conquest winne,
"VVhere in a moment, from the dusty ground
"Into the ayre hee vp would lightly bound,
"And falling downe againe, with finewise shankes
"VVould beat and batter downe the thickest rankes,
"From whence he oftentimes (though wounded) came
"VVith Conquests high renoune, and endlesse fame.
"But now where is the meed of his true merit?
"VVho now yeelds comfort to his fainting spirit?
"Liue not the sonnes of *Mars* in euery eye

"The perfect maps of Ragged beggery,
 "As often as their wounds they doe behold
 "The which they tooke their Countries cause t'vphold,
 "Their eyes, lippes, hands, and harts, to heau'n doe goe,
 "VVishing pale Death to end their helplesse woe;
 "VVhich being deny'd dire need doth them constraine
 "To doe the thing their soules did once disdaine,
 "Eu'n Begger-like one single Mite to craue
 "Poore life within his halfe-staru'd house, to saue.
 "This said, the *Foxe* forthwith with winking eyne
 "To th'*Ape* as was decreed gaue priuie signe.

Who stepping forth with countenance fell, thus spake
 "Friend *Foxe* quoth hee, your witness here I take
 "Of their disloyall words, which intimate
 "Their treacherous thoughts against the Prince & State.

" Sure sayd the *Fox*, their speeches doe import
 "As much as Treason, if 'twere heard in Court.
 "But they perchance will happily repent
 "Let me dissuade you then from your intent,
 "For if the Councill of the *Lyon* dread
 "Bee certified of this, they are but dead.
 "They shall compound with you, and 'twere not good
 "For you to seeke the shedding of their blood.

With this intent the *Fox* thus spake, as hee
 That thought thereby to gaine some golden fee
 To stop their mouths, but both the *Sheepe* and *Oxe*,
 Perceiving well the knauery of the *Foxe*,
 As they that guiltlesse were, withouten doubt
 Defied both *Fox* and *Ape* with courage stout.

The *Ape* perceiuing this swore by his head
 For these their words, they should ere long be dead.
 And so enrag'd to Court he went againe
 With *Reynald* his slye copesmate to complaine.
 Where when they came, such Treason they detect
 Which 'gainst the *Oxe* and *Sheepe* they did object,
 That with swift summoning they cyted were
 Before the *Lyons* Councill to appeare.
 The time was set, and loe those Royall Peeres
 That on their backes the Forrests burthen beares
Ioue-like in Councill, each one tooke his place
 To giue their judgement in so weightie a case.
 The Guard attendent on the Forrest King
 The *Oxe* and *Sheepe*, vnto the Barre did bring;
 Then with shrill voyce, the Cryer' mongst them all
 A general silence through the Court did call,
 Which euery where auisefull audience bred
 While thus th'Inditement by the Clerke was read.

"Come forth Sir *Oxe* (sayd hee) stand at the Barre,
 "And thou Sir *Sheepe*, yee both Indited are
 "For Treason, 'gainst the *Lyon* our dread King
 "Which th'*Ape* and *Foxe* of late to light did bring,

"And for lewd Speech vs'd 'mongst the vulgar sort
 "Seeking thereby for to defame the Court;
 "Intitling those by names of Beggars base,
 "That for desert are in the Princes grace:
 "And which is worse for your disloyal hate
 "And treasonable grudging 'gainst the state
 "Of all which treasons worthy vengefull wreake
 "If you be guilty or not guilty speake?
 "To this, the *Oxe* not guilty did reply
 "And therewithall he craued liberty
 "With humble suite that he might answer shape
 "Gainst this Inditement of the *Fox* and *Ape*,
 "Which granted after humble reuerence made
 "Vnto the bench, these words he boldly sayd.
 "Right honored Lords, Peeres of a peerelesse King
 "From whose sole care our common good doth spring,
 "The greatest part of treason vrged heere
 "As by the inditement read may well appeare
 "Consists in words wich as our foes report
 "By us were spoken 'gainst the King and Court :
 "But daigne dread Lords, to marke what we haue sayd
 "And what construction thereof they haue made;
 "Naught 'gainst the Court or Courtier did wee say
 "But 'gainst such Vice as in the Court beares sway.
 "The Court where wonnes so many a Iouiall spring
 "Made famous by the influence of a noble King,
 "As like *Ioues* Pallace 'boue the starry skye,
 "Rather to bee admir'd, then judg'd with mortall eye;
 "Yet as in a Paradise of sweet delight
 "With rarest Fruits and fairest Flowers bedight,
 "Ne'rethelless the care the cunning Gardener takes
 "His hookes, his fyshes, his pickaxe, spade and rakes,
 "Some fruitlesse weeds are growing on the ground:
 "So in our Kings own Pallace may bee found
 "Amongst the number that praise-worthy bee
 "Some wicked Beasts of more then base degree.
 "And gainst such Vice, as they doe there support
 "Wee did inueigh; and not against the Court:
 "Ne did we say, that such haue Beggars bin
 "That by desert doe Grace or fauour winne:
 "But such as dayly use with restlesse gaping
 "with cloaked fasehood and with tedious begging
 "Of our dread Soueraignes golden guifts to craue
 "Although no merit in themselues they haue;
 "This is the summe in brief of what we spake
 "And this is it which they would treason make.
 This said, dumbe silence for a certaine space
 Did shut the lips of all that were in place
 Till at the last, that great *Heroe* rose
 Who of the Forrests treasure doth dispose
 The noble *Elephant*, who as he stood

From his sweet mouth poured forth a fluent flood
 Of honied eloquence, which wanting skill
 If I expresse the same, soone I should spill
 With sharpe inuectiue, first against that sort
 Of hungry Beggers that frequent the Court
 Hee did inueigh, then by his powerfull with
 Hee shewed since he in Counsels seat did sit;
 How many priuate States had changed bin
 Which by obseruance he had mark'd and seene,
 Supplanted all by cousenage of the *Ape*
 Or by some falsehood which the *Fox* did shape.
 Then 'gainst the *Ape*, his speech he gan to frame
 Hee shew'd what Beast he was and whence he came
 How *Ioue* at first, for his deceptfull guile
 Made him, of man a Beast, and in that Isle
 Call'd *Ape* Isle of his name, alone him put
 And how his taile at length for craft was cut.
 Then question's he the *Fox*, to know if hee
 Against the *Oxe* and *Sheepe* would witnes bee
 And what true depositions he could bring
 That they intended treason 'gainst the King.
 The *Fox* though halfe amaz'd with suddaine feare
 To heare such words from such a mighty Peere,
 Yet that his witnes might seeme more t'haue troth
 Hee did vnbidden seeke to take his oath.
 The booke was brought; but loe the Eternall *Ioue*
 Who by his power protecteth from aboue
 The cause of Innocence, with dreadfull frowne
 From Heau'ns high Pallace cast his count'nance downe.
 And as the *Foxe* his oath began to take
 As *Ioue* but stirr'd, hee made *Olympus* shake,
 And thundring horribly aboue the skie,
 Through the ayre hee made a sulphurie flash to flie,
 Which fell vpon the *Foxe*, for his foule sinne;
 And for his judgement strange, so syng'd his skinne
 That since, All *Foxes* smell of it and beare
 A synged colour euer in their haire.
 This suddaine change, amaz'd the standers by
 Who all with one consent, gan glorifie
 The name of *Ioue*, and s'judgement forthwith gaue
 Against the *Ape*, who now no wit could saue
 From punishment; for 'bout the Forrest wide
 They whipt him well, and soundly lasht his hide.

*So did the Begger bluntly end his Tale,
 In which (your pardon I craue) if ought I faile,
 And if in reading, Beggerly you hold it,
 Dislike it not, because a Begger told it.*