

Prosopopoia: Or Mother Hubberds Tale

Edmund Spenser

Table of Contents

<u>Prosopopoia: Or Mother Hubberds Tale</u>	1
<u>Edmund Spenser</u>	2
<u>PROSOPOPOIA: OR MOTHER HUBBERDS TALE. BY ED. SP. DEDICATED TO THE RIGHT HONORABLE, THE LADIE COMPTON AND MOUNTEGLE</u>	3
<u>TO THE RIGHT HONORABLE, THE LADIE COMPTON AND MOUNTEGLE</u>	4
<u>PROSOPOPOIA: OR MOTHER HUBBERDS TALE</u>	5

Prosopopoeia: Or Mother Hubberds Tale

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Prosopopoia: Or Mother Hubberds Tale

PROSOPOPOIA:

**OR
MOTHER HUBBERDS TALE.**

BY ED. SP.

**DEDICATED TO THE RIGHT HONORABLE, THE
LADIE COMPTON AND MOUNTEGLE.**

**TO THE RIGHT HONORABLE, THE
LADIE COMPTON AND MOUNTEGLE.**

MOST faire and vertuous Ladie; having often sought opportunitie by some good meanes to make knownen to your Ladiship the humble affection and faithfull duetie, which I have alwaies professed, and am bound to beare to that House, from whence yee spring, I have at length found occasion to remember the same, by making a simple present to you of these my idle labours; which having long sithens composed in the raw conceipt of my youth, I lately amongst other papers lighted upon, and was by others, which liked the same, mooved to set them forth. Simple is the device, and the composition meane, yet carrieth some delight, even the rather because of the simplicitie and meannesse thus personated. The same I beseech your Ladiship take in good part, as a pledge of that profession which I have made to you; and keepe with you untill, with some other more worthie labour, I do redeeme it out of your hands, and discharge my utmost dutie. Till then, wishing your Ladiship all increase of honour and happinesse, I humblie take leave.

Your La: ever humbly;

ED. SP.

PROSOPOPOIA: OR MOTHER HUBBERDS TALE.

It was the month in which the righteous Maide,
That for disdain of sinfull worlds upbraide
Fled back to heaven, whence she was first conceived,
Into her silver bowre the Sunne received;
And the hot Syrian Dog on him awayting,
After the chafed Lyons cruell bayting,
Corrupted had th' ayre with his noysome breath,
And powr'd on th' earth plague, pestilence, and death,
Emongst the rest a wicked maladie
Raign'd emongst men, that manie did to die,
Depriv'd of sense and ordinarie reason,
That it to Leaches seemed strange and geason.
My fortune was, mongst manie others moe,
To be partaker of their common woe;
And my weake bodie, set on fire with griefe,
Was rob'd of rest and naturall reliefe.
In this ill plight there came to visite mee
Some friends, who, sorie my sad case to see,
Began to comfort me in chearfull wise,
And meanes of gladsome solace to devise:
But seeing kindly sleep refuse to doe
His office, and my feeble eyes forgoe,

They sought my troubled sense how to deceave
With talke, that might unquiet fancies reave;
And, sitting all in seates about me round,
With pleasant tales (fit for that idle stound)
They cast in course to waste the wearie howres.
Some told of Ladies, and their Paramoures;
Some of brave Knights, and their renowned Squires;
Some of the Faeries and their strange attires;
And some of Giaunts, hard to be beleaved;
That the delight thereof me much releaved.
Amongst the rest a good old woman was,
Hight Mother Hubberd, who did farre surpas
The rest in honest mirth, that seem'd her well:
She, when her turne was come her tale to tell,
Tolde of a strange adventure, that betided
Betwixt the Foxe and th' Ape by him misguided;
The which, for that my sense it greatly pleased,
All were my spirite heavie and deseased,
He write in termes as she the same did say,
So well as I her words remember may.
No Muses aide me needes heretoo to call;
Base is the style, and matter meane withall.
Whilome (said she) before the world was civill,

Prosopopoiia: Or Mother Hubberds Tale

The Foxe and th' Ape, disliking of their evill
And hard estate, determined to seeke
Their fortunes farre abroad, lycke with his lycke,
For both were craftie and unhappie witted;
Two fellowes might no where be better fitted.
The Foxe, that first this cause of griefe did finde,
Gan first thus plaine his case with words unkinde.
'Neighbour Ape, and my Gossip eke beside,
(Both two sure bands in friendship to be tide)
To whom may I more trustely complaine
The evill plight that doth me sore constraine,
And hope thereof to finde due remedie?
Heare, then, my paine and inward agonie.
Thus manie yeares I now have spent and worne
In meane regard, and basest fortunes scorne,
Dooing my Countrey service as I might,
No lesse, I dare saie, than the prowdest wight;
And still I hoped to be up advanched,
For my good parts; but still it has mischaunced.
Now therefore that no lenger hope I see,
But froward fortune still to follow mee,
And losels lifted up on high, where I did looke,
I meane to turne the next leafe of the booke:
Yet, ere that anie way I doo betake,
I meane my Gossip privie first to make.'
'Ah! my deare Gossip, (answer'd then the Ape)
Deeply doo your sad words my wits awhape,
Both for because your griefe doth great appeare,
And eke because my selfe am touched neare:
For I likewise have wasted much good time,
Still wayting to preferment up to clime,
Whilest others alwayes have before me stept,
And from my beard the fat away have swept;
That now unto despaire I gin to growe,
And meane for better winde about to throwe.
Therefore to me, my trustie friend, aread
Thy Councell: two is better than one head.'
'Certes (said he) I meane me to disguise
In some straunge habit, after uncouth wize;
Or like a Pilgrim, or a Lymiter,
Or like a Gipsen, or a Juggeler,
And so to wander to the worldes ende,
To seeke my fortune, where I may it mend:
For worse than that I have I cannot meete.
Wide is the world I wote, and everie streete
Is full of fortunes, and adventures straunge,
Continuallie subject unto chaunge.
Say, my faire brother now, if this device
Doth like you, or may you to like entice.'
'Surely (said th' Ape) it likes me wondrous well;
And would ye not poore fellowship expell,

Prosopopoiia: Or Mother Hubberds Tale

My selfe would offer you t' accompanie
In this adventures chauncefull jeopardie:
For to wexe olde at home in idlenesse

Is disadventrous, and quite fortunelesse;
Abroad, where change is, good may gotten bee.'

The Foxe was glad, and quickly did agree:
So both resolv'd, the morrow next ensuing,
So soone as day appeared to peoples vewing,
On their intended journey to proceede;
And over night whatso theretoo did neede
Each did prepare, in readiness to bee.
The morrow next, so soone as one might see
Light out of heavens windowes forth to looke,
Both their habiliments unto them tooke,
And put themselves (a Gods name) on their way;
Whenas the Ape, beginning well to wey
This hard adventure, thus began t' advise.
'Now read, Sir Reynold, as ye be right wise,
What course ye weene is best for us to take,
That for our selves we may a living make.
Whether shall we professe some trade or skill,
Or shall we varie our device at will,
Even as new occasion appears?
Or shall we tie our selves for certaine yeares
To anie service, or to anie place?
For it behoves, ere that into the race
We enter, to resolve first hereupon.'
'Now surely brother (said the Foxe anon)
Ye have this matter motioned in season;
For everie thing that is begun with reason
Will come by readie meanes unto his end,
But things miscounselled must needs miswend.
Thus therefore I advize upon the case,
That not to anie certaine trade or place,
Nor anie man, we should our selves applie;
For why should he that is at libertie
Make himselfe bond? sith then we are free borne,
Let us all servile base subjection scorne;
And as we bee sonnes of the world so wide,
Let us our fathers heritage divide,
And chalenge to our selves our portions dew
Of all the patrimonie, which a few
Now hold in hugger mugger in their hand,
And all the rest doo rob of good and land.
For now a few have all, and all have nought,
Yet all be brethren ylike dearly bought:
There is no right in this partition,
Ne was it so by institution
Ordained first, ne by the law of Nature,
But that she gave like blessing to each creture,

Prosopopoeia: Or Mother Hubberds Tale

As well of worldly livelode as of life,
That there might be no difference nor strife,
Nor ought cald mine or thine: thrice happie then
Was the condition of mortall men
That was the golden age of Saturne old,
But this might better be the world of gold;
For without golde now nothing wilbe got,
Therefore (if please you) this shalbe our plot:
We will not be of anie occupation;
Let such vile vassals, borne to base vocation,
Drudge in the world, and for their living droyle,
Which have no wit to live withouten toyle;
But we will walke about the world at pleasure
Like two free men, and make our ease our treasure.
Free men some beggars call, but they be free,
And they which call them so more beggers bee;
For they doo swinke and sweate to feed the other,
Who live like Lords of that which they doo gather,
And yet doo never thanke them for the same,
But as their due by Nature doo it clame.
Such will we fashion both our selves to bee,
Lords of the world; and so will wander free
Where so us listeth, uncontrol'd of anie:
Hard is our hap, if we (amongst so manie)
Light not on some that may our state amend;
Sildome but some good commeth ere the end.'

Well seemd the Ape to like this ordinaunce;
Yet, well considering of the circumstaunce,
As pausing in great doubt, awhile he staid,
And afterwards with grave advizement said:
'I cannot, my lief brother, like but well
The purpose of the complot which ye tell;
For well I wot (compar'd to all the rest
Of each degree) that Beggers life is best;
And they, that thinke themselves the best of all,

Oft-times to begging are content to fall.
But this I wot withall, that we shall roun
Into great daunger, like to bee undone,
Thus wildly to wander in the worlds eye,
Withouten pasport or good warrantye,
For feare least we like rogues should be reputed,
And for eare-marked beasts abroad be bruted.
Therefore, I read that we our counsells call,
How to prevent this mischiefe ere it fall,
And how we may, with most securitie,
Beg amongst those that beggers doo defie.'
'Right well, deere Gossip, ye advized have,
(Said then the Foxe) but I this doubt will save;
For ere we farther passe I will devise
A pasport for us both in fittest wize,

Prosopopoeia: Or Mother Hubberds Tale

And by the names of Souldiers us protect:
That now is thought a civile begging sect.
Be you the Souldier, for you likest are
For manly semblance, and small skill in warre:
I will but wayte on you, and, as occasion
Falls out, my selfe fit for the same will fashion.'

The pasport ended, both they forward went;
The Ape clad Souldierlike, fit for th' intent,
In a blew jacket with a crosse of redd
And manie slits, as if that he had shedd
Much blood through many wounds therein received,
Which had the use of his right arme bereaved.
Upon his head an old Scotch cap he wore,
With a plume feather all to peeces tore:
His breeches were made after the new cut,
Al Portugese, loose like an emptie gut;
And his hose broken high above the heeling,
And his shooes beaten out with traveling.
But neither sword nor dagger he did beare;
Seemes that no foes revengement he did feare:
In stead of them a handsome bat he held,
On which he leaned, as one farre in elde.
Shame light on him, that through so false illusion,
Doth turne the name of Souldiers to abusion,
And that, which is the noblest mysterie,
Brings to reproach and common infamie!
Long they thus travailed, yet never met
Adventure which might them a working set;
Yet manie waies they sought, and manie tried,
Yet for their purposes none fit espyed.
At last they chaunst to meet upon the way
A simple husbandman in garments gray;
Yet though his vesture were but meane and bace,
A good yeoman he was of honest place,
And more for thrift did care than for gay clothing:
Gay without good is good hearts greatest loathing.
The Foxe him spying, bad the Ape him dight
To play his part, for loe! he was in sight
That (if he er'd not,) should them entertaine,
And yeeld them timely profite for their paine.
Eftsoones the Ape himselfe gan up to reare,
And on his shoulders high his bat to beare,
As if good service he were fit to doo;
But little thrift for him he did it too:
And stoutly forward he his steps did straine,
That like a handsome swaine it him became.

When as they nigh approached, that good man,
Seeing them wander loosly, first began
T' enquire of custome, what and whence they were?
To whom the Ape, 'I am a Souldiere,
That late in warres have spent my deerest blood,

Prosopopoeia: Or Mother Hubberds Tale

And in long service lost both limbs and good;
And now, constrain'd that trade to overgive,
I driven am to seeke some meanes to live:
Which might it you in pitie please t' afford,
I would be readie, both in deed and word,
To doo you faithfull service all my dayes.
This yron world (that same he weeping sayes)
Brings downe the stowtest hearts to lowest state;
For miserie doth bravest mindes abate,
And make them seeke for that they wont to scorne,
Of fortune and of hope at once forlorne.'
The honest man, that heard him thus complaine,
Was griev'd as he had felt part of his paine;
And, well dispos'd him some reliefe to showe,

Askt if in husbandrie he ought did knowe,
To plough, to plant, to reap, to rake, to sowe,
To hedge, to ditch, to thrash, to thetch, to mowe?
Or to what labour els he was prepar'd,
For husbands life is labourous and hard?
Whenas the Ape him hard so much to talke
Of labour, that did from his liking balke,
He would have slipt the coller handsomly,
And to him said: 'Good Sir, full glad am I,
To take what paines may anie living wight;
But my late maymed limbs lack wonted might
To doo their kindly services as needeth.
Scarce this right hand the mouth with diet feedeth,
So that it may no painfull worke endure,
Ne to strong labour can it selfe enure:
But if that anie other place you have,
Which askes small paines, but thriftines to save,
Or care to overlooke, or trust to gather,
Ye may me trust as your owne ghostly father.'

With that the husbandman gan him avize,
That it for him were fittest exercise
Cattell to keep, or grounds to oversee;
And asked him, if he could willing bee
To keep his sheep, or to attend his swyne,
Or watch his mares, or take his charge of kyne?
'Gladly (said he) what ever such like paine
Ye put on me, I will the same sustaine;
But gladliest I of your fleecie sheepe
(Might it you please) would take on me the keep.
For ere that unto armes I me betooke,
Unto my fathers sheepe I usde to looke,
That yet the skill thereof I have not loste:
Thereto right well this Curdog, by my coste,
(Meaning the Foxe) will serve my sheepe to gather,
And drive to follow after their Belwether.'
The Husbandman was meanly well content

Prosopopoeia: Or Mother Hubberds Tale

Triall to make of his endeavourment;
And, home him leading, lent to him the charge
Of all his flocke, with libertie full large,
Giving accompt of th' annuall increce
Both of their lambes, and of their woolly fleece.
Thus is this Ape become a shepherd swaine,
And the false Foxe his dog (God give them paine!)
For ere the yeare have halfe his course out-run,
And doo returne from whence he first begun,
They shall him make an ill accompt of thrift.
Now whenas Time, flying with winges swift,
Expired had the terme, that these two javels
Should render up a reckning of their travels
Unto their master, which it of them sought,
Exceedingly they troubled were in thought,
Ne wist what answer unto him to frame,
Ne how to scape great punishment, or shame,
For their false treason and vile theeverie:
For not a lambe of all their flockes supply
Had they to shew; but, ever as they bred,
They slue them, and upon their fleshes fed;
For that disguised Dog lov'd blood to spill,
And drew the wicked Shepheard to his will.
So twixt them both they not a lambkin left,
And when lambes fail'd the old sheepes lives they reft;
That how t' acquite themselves unto their Lord
They were in doubt, and flatly set aboard.
The Foxe then counsel'd th' Ape for to require
Respite till morrow t' answer his desire;
For times delay new hope of helpe still breeds.
The goodman granted, doubting nought their deeds,
And bad next day that all should readie be:
But they more subtill meaning had than he;
For the next morrowes meed they closely ment,
For feare of afterclaps, for to prevent:
And that same evening, when all shrowded were
In careles sleep, they without care or feare
Cruelly fell upon their flock in folde,
And of them slew at pleasure what they wolde.
Of which whenas they feasted had their fill,
For a full complement of all their ill,
They stole away, and tooke their hastie flight,
Carried in clowdes of all-concealing night.
So was the husbandman left to his losse,
And they unto their fortunes change to tosse:

After which sort they wandered long while,
Abusing manie through their cloaked guile,
That at the last they gan to be descryed
Of everie one, and all their sleights espyed.
So as their begging now them failed quyte,

Prosopopoeia: Or Mother Hubberds Tale

For none would give, but all men would them wyte:
Yet would they take no paines to get their living,
But seeke some other way to gaine by giving,
Much like to begging, but much better named,
For manie beg which are thereof ashamed.
And now the Foxe had gotten him a gowne,
And th' Ape a cassocke sidelong hanging downe;
For they their occupation meant to change,
And now in other state abroad to range:
For, since their souldiers pas no better spedd,
They forg'd another, as for Clerkes booke-redd.
Who passing foorth, as their adventures fell,
Through manie haps, which needs not here to tell, 360
At length chaunst with a formall Priest to meete,
Whom they in civill manner first did greeete,
And after askt an almes for Gods deare love.
The man straightway his choler up did move,
And with reproachfull tearmes gan them revile,
For following that trade so base and vile;
And askt what license, or what Pas they had?
'Ah! (said the Ape, as sighing wondrous sad)
Its an hard case, when men of good deserving
Must either driven be perforce to sterving,
Or asked for their pas by everie squib,
That list at will them to revile or snib:
And yet (God wote) small oddes I often see
Twixt them that aske, and them that asked bee.
Natheles, because you shall not us misdeeme,
But that we are as honest as we seeme,
Yee shall our pasport at your pleasure see;
And then ye will (I hope) well mooved bee.'
Which when the Priest beheld, he vew'd it nere,
As if therein some text he studying were,
But little els (God wote) could thereof skill;
For read he could not evidence, nor will,
Ne tell a written word, ne write a letter,
Ne make one title worse, ne make one better;
Of such deep learning little had he neede,
Ne yet of Latine, ne of Greeke, that breede
Doubts mongst Divines, and difference of texts,
From whence arise diversitie of sects,
And hatefull heresies, of God abhor'd:
But this good Sir did follow the plaine word,
Ne medled with their controversies vaine;
All his care was, his service well to saine,
And to read Homelies upon holidayes;
When that was done, he might attend his playes:
An easie life, and fit high God to please.
He, having overlookt their pas at ease,
Gan at the length them to rebuke againe,
That no good trade of life did entertaine,

Prosopopoeia: Or Mother Hubberds Tale

But lost their time in wandring loose abroad;
Seeing the world, in which they bootles boad,
Had wayes enough for all therein to live;
Such grace did God unto his creatures give.
Said then the Foxe: 'Who hath the world not tride,
From the right way full eath may wander wide:
We are but Novices, new come abroad,
We have not yet the tract of anie troad,
Nor on us taken anie state of life,
But readie are of anie to make preife.
Therefore might please you, which the world have proved,
Us to advise, which forth but lately moved,
Of some good course that we might undertake;
Ye shall for ever us your bondmen make.'
The Priest gan wexe halfe proud to be so praide,
And thereby willing to affoord them aide;
'It seemes (said he) right well that ye be Clerks,
Both by your wittie words, and by your werks.
Is not that name enough to make a living
To him that hath a whit of Natures giving?
How manie honest men see ye arize
Daylie thereby, and grow to goodly prize;
To Deanes, to Archdeacons, to Commissaries,
To Lords, to Principalls, to Prebendaries?
All jolly Prelates, worthie rule to beare,
Who ever them envie: yet spite bites neare.

Why should ye doubt, then, but that ye likewise
Might unto some of those in time arise?
In the meane-time to live in good estate,
Loving that love, and hating those that hate;
Being some honest Curate, or some Vicker
Content with little in condition sicker.'
'Ah, but (said th' Ape) the charge is wondrous great,
To feed mens soules, and hath an heavie threat.'
'To feede mens soules (quoth he) is not in man;
For they must feed themselves, doo what we can.
We are but charg'd to lay the meate before:
Eate they that list, we need to doo no more.
But God it is that feedes them with his grace,
The bread of life powr'd downe from heavenly place.
Therefore said he, that with the budding rod
Did rule the Jewes, *All shalbe taught of God* .
That same hath Jesus Christ now to him raught,
By whom the flock is rightly fed, and taught:
He is the Shepheard, and the Priest is hee;
We but his shepheard swaines ordain'd to bee.
Therefore herewith doo not your selfe dismay;
Ne is the paines so great, but beare ye may,
For not so great, as it was wont of yore,
It's now a dayes, ne halfe so streight and sore.

Prosopopoiia: Or Mother Hubberds Tale

They whilome used duly everie day
Their service and their holie things to say,
At morne and even, besides their Antheemes sweete,
Their penie Masses, and their Complynes meete,
Their Diriges, their Trentals, and their shrifts,
Their memories, their singings, and their gifts.
Now all those needlesse works are laid away;
Now once a weeke, upon the Sabbath day,
It is enough to doo our small devotion,
And then to follow any merrie motion.
Ne are we tyde to fast, but when we list;
Ne to weare garments base of wollen twist,
But with the finest silkes us to aray,
That before God we may appeare more gay,
Resembling Aarons glorie in his place:
For farre unfit it is, that person bace
Should with vile cloaths approach Gods majestie,
Whom no uncleanes may approachen nie;
Or that all men, which anie master serve,
Good garments for their service should deserve;
But he that serves the Lord of hoasts most high,
And that in highest place, t' approach him nigh,
And all the peoples prayers to present
Before his throne, as on ambassage sent
Both too and fro, should not deserve to weare
A garment better than of wooll or heare.
Beside, we may have lying by our sides
Our lovely Lasses, or bright shining Brides:
We be not tyde to wilfull chastitie,
But have the Gospell of free libertie.'

By that he ended had his ghostly sermon,
The Foxe was well induc'd to be a Parson,
And of the Priest eftsoones gan to enquire,
How to a Benefice he might aspire?
'Marie, there (said the Priest) is arte indeed:
Much good deep learning one thereout may reed;
For that the ground-worke is, and end of all,
How to obtaine a Beneficiall.
First, therefore, when he have in handsome wise
Your selfe attyred, as you can devise,
Then to some Noble-man your selfe applye,
Or other great one in the worldes eye,
That hath a zealous disposition
To God, and so to his religion.
There must thou fashion eke a godly zeale,
Such as no carpers may contrayre reveale;
For each thing fained ought more warie bee.
There thou must walke in sober gravitee,
And seeme as Saintlike as Saint Radegund:
Fast much, pray oft, looke lowly on the ground,
And unto everie one doo curtesie meeke:

Prosopopoeia: Or Mother Hubberds Tale

These lookes (nought saying) doo a benefice seeke,
And be thou sure one not to lacke or long.

But if thee list unto the Court to throng,
And there to hunt after the hoped pray,
Then must thou thee dispose another way:
For there thou needs must learne to laugh, to lie,
To face, to forge, to scoffe, to companie,
To crouche, to please, to be a beetle-stock
Of thy great Masters will, to scorne, or mock.
So maist thou chaunce mock out a Benefice,
Unlesse thou canst one conjure by device,
Or cast a figure for a Bishoprick;
And if one could, it were but a schoole trick.
These be the wayes by which without reward
Livings in Court be gotten, though full hard;
For nothing there is done without a fee:
The Courtier needes must recompenced bee
With a Benevolence, or have in gage
The Primitias of your Parsonage:
Scarse can a Bishoprick forpas them by,
But that it must be gelt in privitie.
Doo not thou therefore seeke a living there,
But of more private persons seeke elsewhere,
Whereas thou maist compound a better penie,
Ne let thy learning question'd be of anie.
For some good Gentleman, that hath the right
Unto his Church for to present a wight,
Will cope with thee in reasonable wise;
That if the living yerely doo arise
To fortie pound, that then his yongest sonne
Shall twentie have, and twentie thou hast wonne:
Thou hast it wonne, for it is of franke gift,
And he will care for all the rest to shift,
Both that the Bishop may admit of thee,
And that therein thou maist maintained bee.
This is the way for one that is unlern'd
Living to get, and not to be discern'd.
But they, that are great Clerkes, have nearer wayes,
For learning sake to living them to raise;
Yet manie eke of them (God wote) are driven
T' accept a Benefice in pecces riven.
How saist thou (friend) have I not well discourst
Upon this Common-place, (though plaine, not wourst?)
Better a short tale than a bad long shriving:
Needes anie more to learne to get a living?'
'Now sure, and by my hallidome, (quoth he)
Ye a great master are in your degree:
Great thanks I yeeld you for your discipline,
And doo not doubt but duly to encline
My wits theretoo, as ye shall shortly heare.'

Prosopopoeia: Or Mother Hubberds Tale

The Priest him wisht good speed, and well to fare:
So parted they, as eithers way them led.
But th' Ape and Foxe ere long so well them sped,
Through the Priests holesome counsell lately tought,
And through their owne faire handling wisely wrought,
That they a Benefice twixt them obtained;
And craftie Reynold was a Priest ordained,
And th' Ape his Parish Clarke procur'd to bee.
Then made they revell route and goodly glee;
But, ere long time had passed, they so ill
Did order their affaires, that th' evill will
Of all their Parishners they had constrained;
Who to the Ordinarie of them complain'd,
How fowlie they their offices abus'd,
And them of crimes and heresies accus'd,
That Pursivants he often for them sent;
But they neglected his commaundement.
So long persisted obstinate and bolde,
Till at the length he published to holde
A Visitation, and them cyted thether:
Then was high time their wits about to geather.
What did they then, but made a composition
With their next neighbor Priest, for light condition,
To whom their living they resigned quight
For a few pence, and ran away by night.
So passing through the Countrey in disguise,
They fled farre off, where none might them surprize;
And after that long straid here and there,
Through everie field and forrest farre and nere,
Yet never found occasion for their tourne,
But almost sterv'd did much lament and mourne.
At last they chaunst to meete upon the way

The Mule all deckt in goodly rich aray,
With bells and bosses that full lowdly rung,
And costly trappings that to ground downe hung.
Lowly they him saluted in meeke wise;
But he through pride and fatnes gan despise
Their meanesse; scarce vouchsafte them to requite.
Whereat the Foxe, deep groning in his sprite,
Said; 'Ah! sir Mule, now blessed be the day,
That I see you so goodly and so gay
In your attyres, and eke your silken hyde
Fil'd with round flesh, that everie bone doth hide.
Seemes that in fruitfull pastures ye doo live,
Or fortune doth you secret favour give.'
'Foolish Foxe (said the Mule) thy wretched need
Praiseth the thing that doth thy sorrow breed:
For well I weene, thou canst not but envie
My wealth, compar'd to thine owne miserie,
That art so leane and meagre waxen late,

Prosopopoeia: Or Mother Hubberds Tale

That scarce thy legs uphold thy feeble gate.'
'Ay me! (said then the Foxe) whom evill hap
Unworthy in such wretchednes doth wrap,
And makes the scorne of other beasts to bee:
But read (faire Sir, of grace) from whence come yee;
Or what of tidings you abroad doo heare?
Newes may perhaps some good unweeting beare.'
'From royall Court I lately came (said he)
Where all the braverie that eye may see,
And all the happinesse that heart desire,
Is to be found: he nothing can admire,
That hath not seene that heavens portrature.
But tidings there is none, I you assure,
Save that which common is, and knowne to all,
That Courtiers, as the tide, doo rise and fall.'
'But tell us (said the Ape) we doo you pray,
Who now in Court doth beare the greatest sway,
That, if such fortune doo to us befall,
We make seeke favour of the best of all?'
'Marie, (said he) the highest now in grace
Be the wilde beasts, that swiftest are in chase;
For in their speedie course and nimble flight
The Lyon now doth take the most delight;
But chieflie joyes on foote them to beholde,
Enchaste with chaine and circulet of golde.
So wilde a beast so tame ytaught to bee,
And buxome to his bands, is joy to see;
So well his golden Circllet him beseemeth.
But his late chayne his Liege unmeete esteemeth;
For so brave beasts she loveth best to see
In the wilde forrest raunging fresh and free.
Therefore if fortune thee in Court to live,
In ease thou ever there wilt hope to thrive,
To some of these thou must thy selfe apply;
Els as a thistle-downe in th' ayre doth flie,
So vainly shalt thou too and fro be tost,
And loose thy labour and thy fruitles cost.
And yet full few which follow them, I see,
For vertues bare regard advaunced bee,
But either for some gainfull benefit,
Or that they may for their owne turnes be fit.
Nath'les perhaps ye things may handle soe,
That ye may better thrive than thousands moe.'

'But (said the Ape) how shall we first come in,
That after we may favour seeke to win?'
'How els (said he) but with a good bold face,
And with big words, and with a stately pace,
That men may thinke of you in generall,
That to be in you which is not at all:
For not by that which is, the world now deemeth,
(As it was wont) but by that same that seemeth.

Prosopopoeia: Or Mother Hubberds Tale

Ne do I doubt but that ye well can fashion
Your selves theretoo, according to occasion.
So fare ye well; good Courtiers may ye bee!'

So, prouddie neighing, from them parted hee.
Then gan this craftie couple to devize,
How for the Court themselves they might aguize;
For thither they themselves meant to addresse,
In hope to finde there happier successe.
So well they shifted, that the Ape anon
Himselfe had cloathed like a Gentleman,
And the slie Foxe, as like to be his groome,
That to the Court in seemly sort they come;
Where the fond Ape, himselfe uprearing by
Upon his tiptoes, stalketh stately by,
As if he were some great Magnifico,
And boldlie doth amongst the boldest go;
And his man Reynold, with fine counter-fesaunce,
Supports his credite and his countenance.
Then gan the Courtiers gaze on everie side,
And stare on him, with big lookes basen wide,
Wondring what mister wight he was, and whence:
For he was clad in strange accoustrements,
Fashion'd with queint devises, never seene
In Court before, yet there all fashions beene;
Yet he them in newfanglenesse did pas.
But his behaviour altogether was
Alla Turchesa, much the more admyr'd;
And his lookes loftie, as if he aspyr'd
To dignitie, and sdeign'd the low degree;
That all which did such strangenesse in him see
By secrete meanes gan of his state enquire,
And privily his servant thereto hire:
Who, throughly arm'd against such coverture,
Reported unto all, that he was sure
A noble Gentleman of high regard,
Which through the world had with long travel far'd,
And seene the manners of all beasts on ground;
Now here arriv'd, to see if like he found.

Thus did the Ape at first him credit gaine,
Which afterwards he wisely did maintaine
With gallant showe, and daylie more augment
Through his fine feates and Courtly complement;
For he could play, and daunce, and vaute, and spring,
And all that els pertaines to reveling,
Onely through kindly aptnes of his joynts.
Besides, he could doo manie other poynts,
The which in Court served to good stead;
For he mongst Ladies could their fortunes read
Out of their hands, and merie leasings tell,
And juggle finely, that became him well.

Prosopopoiia: Or Mother Hubberds Tale

But he so light was at legierdemaine,
That what he toucht came not to light againe;
Yet would he laugh it out, and proudly looke,
And tell them that they greatly him mistooke.
So would he scoffe them out with mockerie,
For he therein had great felicitie;
And with sharp quips joy'd others to deface,
Thinking that their disgracing did him grace:
So whilst that other like vaine wits he pleased,
And made to laugh, his heart was greatly eased.
But the right gentle minde would bite his lip,
To heare the Javell so good men to nip;
For, though the vulgar yeeld an open eare,
And common Courtiers love to gybe and fleare
At everie thing which they heare spoken ill,
And the best speaches with ill meaning spill,
Yet the brave Courtier, in whose beauteous thought
Regard of honour harbours more than ought,
Doth loath such base condition, to backbite
Anies good name for envie or despite:
He stands on tearmes of honourable minde,
Ne will be carried with the common winde
Of Courts inconstant mutabilitie,
Ne after everie tattling fable flie;
But heares and sees the follies of the rest,
And thereof gathers for himselfe the best.
He will not creepe, nor crouche with fained face,
But walkes upright with comely stedfast pace,
And unto all doth yeeld due curtesie;
But not with kissed hand belowe the knee,
As that same Apish erne is wont to doo:
For he disdaines himselfe t' embase theretoo.

He hates fowle leasings, and vile flatterie,
Two filthie blots in noble gentrie;
And lothefull idlenes he doth detest,
The canker worme of everie gentle brest;
The which to banish with faire exercise
Of knightly feates, he daylie doth devise:
Now menaging the mouthes of stubborne steedes,
Now practising the prooffe of warlike deedes,
Now his bright armes assaying, now his speare,
Now the nigh aymed ring away to beare.
At other times he casts to sew the chace
Of swift wilde beasts, or runne on foote a race,
T' enlarge his breath, (large breath in armes most needfull)
Or els by wrestling to wex strong and heedfull,
Or his stiffe armes to stretch with Eughen bowe,
And manly legs, still passing too and fro,
Without a gowned beast him fast beside,
A vaine ensample of the Persian pride;

Prosopopoeia: Or Mother Hubberds Tale

Who, after he had wonne th' Assyrian foe,
Did ever after scorne on foote to goe.

Thus when this Courtly Gentleman with toyle
Himselfe hath wearied, he doth recoyle
Unto his rest, and there with sweete delight
Of Musicks skill revives his toyled spright;
Or els with Loves, and Ladies gentle sports,
The joy of youth, himselfe he recomforts;
Or lastly, when the bodie list to pause,
His minde unto the Muses he withdrawes:
Sweete Ladie Muses, Ladies of delight,
Delights of life, and ornaments of light!
With whom he close confers with wise discourse,
Of Natures workes, of heavens continuall course,
Of forreine lands, of people different,
Of kingdomes change, of divers gouernment,
Of dreadfull battailes of renommed Knights;
With which he kindleth his ambitious sprights
To like desire and praise of noble fame,
The onely upshot whereto he doth ayme:
For all his minde on honour fixed is,
To which he levels all his purposis,
And in his Princes service spends his dayes,
Not so much for to gaine, or for to raise
Himselfe to high degree, as for his grace,
And in his liking to winne worthie place,
Through due deserts and comely carriage,
In whatso please employ his personage,
That may be matter meete to gaine him praise:
For he is fit to use in all assayes,
Whether for Armes and warlike amenaunce,
Or else for wise and civill governaunce.
For he is practiz'd well in policie,
And thereto doth his Courting most applie:
To learne the enterdeale of Princes strange,
To marke th' intent of Counsells, and the change
Of states, and eke of private men somewhile,
Supplanted by fine falshood and faire guile;
Of all the which he gathereth what is fit
T' enrich the storehouse of his powerfull wit,
Which through wise speaches and grave conference
He daylie eekes, and brings to excellence.

Such is the rightfull Courtier in his kinde,
But unto such the Ape lent not his minde:
Such were for him no fit companions,
Such would descrie his lewd conditions;
But the yong lustie gallants he did chose
To follow, meete to whom he might disclose
His witlesse pleasance, and ill pleasing vaine.
A thousand wayes he them could entertaine,
With all the thriftles games that may be found;

Prosopopoeia: Or Mother Hubberds Tale

With mumming and with masking all around,
With dice, with cards, with balliards farre unfit
With shuttelcocks, misseeming manlie wit,
With courtizans, and costly riotize,
Whereof still somewhat to his share did rize:
Ne, them to pleasure, would he sometimes scorne
A Pandares coate (so basely was he borne).
Thereto he could fine loving verses frame,
And play the Poet oft. But ah! for shame,
Let not sweete Poets praise, whose onely pride
Is virtue to advaunce, and vice deride,
Ne with the works of losels wit defamed,
Ne let such verses Poetrie be named!

Yet he the name on him would rashly take,
Maugre the sacred Muses, and it make
A servant to the vile affection
Of such, as he depended most upon;
And with the sugrie sweete thereof allure
Chast Ladies eares to fantasies impure.

To such delights the noble wits he led
Which him reliev'd, and their vaine humours fed
With fruitles follies and unsound delights.
But if perhaps into their noble sprights
Desire of honor or brave thought of armes
Did ever creepe, then with his wicked charmes
And strong conceipts he would it drive away,
Ne suffer it to house there halfe a day.
And whenso love of letters did inspire
Their gentle wits, and kindle wise desire,
That chieflie doth each noble minde adorne,
Then he would scoffe at learning, and eke scorne
The Sectaries thereof, as people base
And simple men, which never came in place
Of worlds affaires, but, in darke corners mewd,
Muttred of matters as their bookes them shewd,
Ne other knowledge ever did attaine,
But with their gownes their gravitie maintaine.
From them he would his impudent lewde speach
Against Gods holie Ministers oft reach,
And mocke Divines and their profession.
What else then did he by progression,
But mocke high God himselfe, whom they professe?
But what car'd he for God, or godlinesse?
All his care was himselfe how to advaunce,
And to uphold his courtly countenance
By all the cunning meanes he could devise:
Were it by honest wayes, or otherwise,
He made small choyce; yet sure his honestie
Got him small gaines, but shameles flatterie,
And filthie brocage, and unseemly shifts,

Prosopopoiia: Or Mother Hubberds Tale

And borowe base, and some good Ladies gifts:
But the best helpe, which chiefly him sustain'd,
Was his man Raynolds purchase which he gain'd.
For he was school'd by kinde in all the skill
Of close conveyance, and each practise ill
Of coosinage and cleanly knaverie,
Which oft maintain'd his masters braverie.
Besides, he usde another slipprie slight,
In taking on himselfe, in common sight,
False personages fit for everie sted,
With which he thousands cleanly coosined:
Now like a Merchant, Merchants to deceave,
With whom his credite he did often leave
In gage for his gay Masters hopelesse dett:
Now like a Lawyer, when he land would lett,
Or sell fee-simples in his Masters name,
Which he had never, nor ought like the same.
Then would he be a Broker, and draw in
Both wares and money, by exchange to win:
Then would he seeme a Farmer, that would sell
Bargaines of woods, which he did lately fell,
Or corne, or cattle, or such other ware,
Thereby to coosin men not well aware:
Of all the which there came a secret fee,
To th' Ape, that he his countenance might bee.

Besides all this, he us'd oft to beguile
Poore suters, that in Court did haunt some while;
For he would learne their busines secretly,
And then informe his Master hastely,
That he by meanes might cast them to prevent,
And beg the sute the which the other ment.
Or otherwise false Reynold would abuse
The simple Suter, and wish him to chuse
His Master, being one of great regard
In Court, to compas anie sute not hard,
In case his paines were recompenst with reason.
So would he worke the silly man by treason
To buy his Masters frivolous good will,
That had not power to doo him good or ill.
So pitifull a thing is Suters state!
Most miserable man, whom wicked fate
Hath brought to Court, to sue for had ywist,
That few have found, and manie one hath mist!
Full little knowest thou, that hast not tride,
What hell it is in suing long to bide:
To loose good dayes, that might be better spent;
To wast long nights in pensive discontent;
To speed to day, to be put back to morrow;

To feed on hope, to pine with feare and sorrow;
To have thy Princes grace, yet want her Peeres;

Prosopopoiia: Or Mother Hubberds Tale

To have thy asking, yet waite manie yeeres;
To fret thy soule with crosses and with cares;
To eate thy heart through comfortlesse dispaire;
To fawne, to crowche, to waite, to ride, to ronne,
To spend, to give, to want, to be undonne.
Unhappie wight, borne to desastrous end,
That doth his life in so long tendance spend!

Who ever leaves sweete home, where meane estate
In safe assurance, without strife or hate,
Findes all things needfull for contentment meeke,
And will to Court for shadowes vaine to seeke,
Or hope to gaine, himselfe will a daw trie:
That curse God send unto mine enemie!
For none but such as this bold Ape, unblest,
Can ever thrive in that unluckie quest;
Or such as hath a Reynold to his man,
That by his shifts his Master furnish can.
But yet this Foxe could not so closely hide
His craftie feates, but that they were descride
At length by such as sate in justice seate,
Who for the same him fowlie did entreate;
And having worthily him punished,
Out of the Court for ever banished.
And now the Ape wanting his huckster man,
That wont provide his necessaries, gan
To growe into great lacke, ne could upholde
His countenance in those his garments olde;
Ne new ones could he easily provide,
Though all men him uneased gan deride,
Like as a Puppit placed in a play,
Whose part once past all men bid take away:
So that he driven was to great distresse,
And shortly brought to hopelesse wretchednesse.
Then, closely as he might, he cast to leave
The Court, not asking any passe or leave;
But ran away in his rent rags by night,
Ne ever stayd in place, ne spake to wight,
Till that the Foxe, his copesmate he had found,
To whome complayning his unhappy stound,
At last againe with him in travell joynd,
And with him far'd some better chaunce to fynde.

So in the World long time they wandered,
And mickle want and hardnesse suffered;
That them repented much so foolishly
To come so farre to seeke for misery,
And leave the sweetnes of contented home,
Though eating hipps, and drinking watry fome.
Thus as they them complayned too and fro,
Whilst through the forest rechlesse they did goe, 950
Lo! where they spide, how, in a gloomy glade,
The Lyon sleeping lay in secret shade,

Prosopopoeia: Or Mother Hubberds Tale

His Crowne and Scepter lying him beside,
And having doft for heate his dreadfull hide:
Which when they sawe, the Ape was sore afrayde,
And would have fled with terror all dismayde.
But him the Foxe with hardy words did stay,
And bad him put all cowardize away:
For now was time (if ever they would hope)
To ayme their counsels to the fairest scope,
And them for ever highly to advaunce,
In case the good, which their owne happie chaunce
Them freely offred, they would wisely take.
Scarse could the Ape yet speake, so did he quake;
Yet, as he could, he askt how good might growe
Where nought but dread and death do seeme in show?
'Now, (sayd he) whiles the Lyon sleepeth sound,
May we his Crowne and Mace take from the ground,
And eke his skinne, the terror of the wood,
Wherewith we may our selves (if we thinke good)
Make Kings of Beasts, and Lords of forests all
Subject unto that powre imperiall.'
'Ah! but (sayd the Ape) who is so bold a wretch,
That dare his hardy hand to those outstretch,
When as he knowes his meede, if he be spide,

To be a thousand deaths, and shame beside?'
'Fond Ape! (sayd then the Foxe) into whose brest
Never crept thought of honor, nor brave gest,
Who will not venture life a King to be,
And rather rule and raigne in soveraign see,
Than dwell in dust inglorious and bace,
Where none shall name the number of his place?
One joyous howre in blisfull happines,
I chose before a life of wretchednes.
Be therefore counselled herein by me,
And shake off this vile harted cowardree.
If he awake, yet is not death the next,
For we may coulor it with some pretext
Of this, or that, that may excuse the cryme:
Else we may flye; thou to a tree mayst clyme,
And I creepe under ground, both from his reach:
Therefore be rul'd to doo as I doo teach.'

The Ape, that earst did nought but chill and quake,
Now gan some courage unto him to take,
And was content to attempt that enterprise,
Tickled with glorie and rash covetise:
But first gan question, whether should assay
Those royall ornaments to steale away?
'Marie, that shall your selfe, (quoth he theretoo)
For ye be fine and nimble it to doo;
Of all the beasts, which in the forrests bee,
Is not a fitter for this turne than yee:

Prosopopoiia: Or Mother Hubberds Tale

Therefore, my owne deare brother, take good hart,
And ever thinke a Kingdome is your part.'
Loath was the Ape, though praised, to aduenter,
Yet faintly gan into his worke to enter,
Afraid of everie leafe that stir'd him by,
And everie stick that underneath did ly,
Upon his tiptoes nicely he up went,
For making noyse, and still his eare he lent
To everie sound that under heaven blew;
Now went, now stopt, now crept, now backward drew,
That it good sport had been him to have eyde:
Yet at the last, (so well he him applyde)
Through his fine handling, and his cleanly play,
He all those royall signes had stolne away,
And with the Foxes helpe them borne aside
Into a secret corner unespide.
Whither whenas they came they fell at words,
Whether of them should be the Lord of Lords:
For th' Ape was stryfull, and ambicious;
And the Foxe guilefull, and most covetous;
That neither pleased was to have the rayne
Twixt them divided into even twaine,
But either (algates) would be Lords alone;
For Love and Lordship bide no paragone.
'I am most worthie, (said the Ape) sith I
For it did put my life in jeopardie:
Thereto I am in person and in stature
Most like a Man, the Lord of everie creature,
So that it seemeth I was made to raigne,
And borne to be a Kingly soveraigne.'
'Nay (said the Foxe) Sir Ape, you are astray:
For though to steale the Diademe away
Were the worke of your nimble hand, yet I
Did first devise the plot by pollicie;
So that it wholly springeth from my wit:
For which also I claime my selfe more fit
Than you to rule; for government of state
Will without wisdom soone be ruinate.
And where ye claime your selfe for outward shape
Most like a man, Man is not like an Ape
In his chiefe parts, that is, in wit and spirite;
But I therein most like to him doo merite,
For my slie wyles and subtill craftinesse,
The title of the Kingdome to possesse.
Nath'les (my brother) since we passed are
Unto this point, we will appease our jarre;
And I with reason meete will rest content,
That ye shall have both crowne and government,
Upon condition, that ye ruled bee
In all affaires, and counselled by mee;
And that ye let none other ever drawe

Prosopopoeia: Or Mother Hubberds Tale

Your minde from me, but keepe this as a lawe:
And hereupon an oath unto me plight.'

The Ape was glad to end the strife so light,
And thereto swore; for who would not oft sweare,
And oft unswear, a Diademe to beare?
Then freely up those royall spoyles he tooke,
Yet at the Lyons skin he inly quooke;

But it dissembled, and upon his head
The Crowne, and on his backe the skin he did,
And the false Foxe him helped to array.
Then, when he was all dight, he tooke his way
Into the forest, that he might be seene
Of the wilde beasts in his new glory sheene.
There the two first whome he encountred were
The Sheepe and th' Asse, who, striken both with feare,
At sight of him, gan fast away to flye;
But unto them the Foxe alowd did cry,
And in the Kings name bad them both to stay,
Upon the payne that thereof follow may
Hardly, naythles, were they restrayned so,
Till that the Foxe forth toward them did goe,
And there disswaded them from needlesse feare,
For that the King did favour to them beare;
And therefore dreadles bad them come to Corte,
For no wild beasts should do them any torte
There or abroad; ne would his majestye
Use them but well, with gracious clemencye,
As whome he knew to him both fast and true.
So he perswaded them, with homage due
Themselves to humble to the Ape prostrate,
Who, gently to them bowing in his gate,
Receyved them with chearefull entertayne.
Thenceforth proceeding with his princely trayne,
He shortly met the Tygre, and the Bore,
Which with the simple Camell raged sore
In bitter words, seeking to take occasion
Upon his fleshly corpse to make invasion:
But, soone as they this mock-King did espy,
Their troublous strife they stinted by and by,
Thinking indeed that it the Lyon was.
He then, to prove whether his powre would pas
As currant, sent the Foxe to them streightway,
Commaunding them their cause of strife bewray;
And if that wrong on eyther side there were,
That he should warne the wronger to appeare
The morrow next at Court, it to defend;
In the mean-time upon the King t' attend.
The subtile Foxe so well his message sayd,
That the proud beasts him readily obayd:
Whereby the Ape in wondrous stomack woxe,

Prosopopoeia: Or Mother Hubberds Tale

Strongly encourag'd by the crafty Foxe;
That King indeed himselfe he shortly thought,
And all the Beasts him feared as they ought,
And followed unto his palaice hie;
Where taking Conge, each one by and by
Departed to his home in dreadfull awe,
Full of the feared sight which late they sawe.

The Ape, thus seized of the Regall throne,
Eftsones by counsell of the Foxe alone,
Gan to provide for all things in assurance,
That so his rule might lenger have endurance.
First to his Gate he pointed a strong gard,
That none might enter but with issue hard:
Then, for the safegard of his personage,
He did appoint a warlike equipage
Of forreine beasts, not in the forest bred,
But part by land and part by water fed;
For tyrannie is with strange ayde supported.
Then unto him all monstrous beasts resorted
Bred of two kindes, as Griffons, Minotaures,
Crocodiles, Dragons, Beavers, and Centaures:
With those himselfe he strengthened mightelie,
That feare he neede no force of enemie.
Then gan he rule and tyrannize at will,
Like as the Foxe did guide his graceles skill;
And all wylde beasts made vassals of his pleasures,
And with their spoyles enlarg'd his private treasures.
No care of justice, nor no rule of reason,
No temperance, nor no regard of season,
Did thenceforth ever enter in his minde;
But crueltie, the signe of currish kinde,
And sdeignfull pride, and wilfull arrogaunce:
Such followes those whom fortune doth advaunce.

But the false Foxe most kindly plaid his part;
For whatsoever mother-wit or arte

Could worke, he put in prooffe: no practise slie,
No counterpoint of cunning policie,
No reach, no breach, that might him profit bring,
But he the same did to his purpose wring.
Nought suffered he the Ape to give or graunt,
But through his hand must passe the Fiaunt.
All offices, all leases by him lept,
And of them all whatso he likte he kept.
Justice he solde injustice for to buy,
And for to purchase for his progeny.
Ill might it prosper that ill gotten was;
But, so he got it, little did he pas.
He fed his cubs with fat of all the soyle,
And with the sweete of others sweating toyle;
He crammed them with crumbs of Benefices,

Prosopopoeia: Or Mother Hubberds Tale

And filld their mouthes with meeds of malefices:
He cloathed them with all colours, save white,
And loded them with lordships and with might,
So much as they were able well to beare,
That with the weight their backs nigh broken were:
He chaffred Chayres in which Churchmen were set,
And breach of lawes to privie ferme did let:
No statute so established might bee,
Nor ordinaunce so needfull, but that hee
Would violate, though not with violence,
Yet under colour of the confidence
The which the Ape repos'd in him alone,
And reckned him the kingdomes corner stone.
And ever, when he ought would bring to pas,
His long experience the platforme was:
And, when he ought not pleasing would put by
The cloke was care of thrift, and husbandry,
For to encrease the common treasures store;
But his owne treasure he encreased more,
And lifted up his loftie towres thereby,
That they began to threat the neighbour sky;
The whiles the Princes pallaces fell fast
To ruine (for what thing can ever last?)
And whilest the other Peeres, for povertie,
Were forst their auncient houses to let lie,
And their olde Castles to the ground to fall,
Which their forefathers, famous over-all,
Had founded for the Kingdomes ornament,
And for their memories long moniment:
But he no count made of Nobilitie,
Nor the wilde beasts whom armes did glorifie,
The Realmes chiefe strength and girlond of the crowne.
All these through fained crimes he thrust adowne,
Or made them dwell in darknes of disgrace;
For none, but whom he list, might come in place.
Of men of armes he had but small regard,
But kept them lowe, and streigned verie hard.
For men of learning little he esteemed;
His wisdom he above their learning deemed.
As for the rascall Commons least he cared,
For not so common was his bountie shared:
Let God, (said he) if please, care for the manie,
I for my selfe must care before els anie.
So did he good to none, to manie ill,
So did he all the kingdome rob and pill,
Yet none durst speake, ne none durst of him plaine,
So great he was in grace, and rich through gaine.
Ne would he anie let to have accesse
Unto the Prince, but by his owne addresse,
For all that els did come were sure to faile.
Yet would he further none but for availe;

Prosopopoeia: Or Mother Hubberds Tale

For on a time the Sheepe, to whom of yore
The Foxe had promised of friendship store,
What time the Ape the kingdome first did gaine,
Came to the Court, her case there to complaine;
How that the Wolfe, her mortall enemye,
Had sithence slaine her Lambe most cruellie,
And therefore crav'd to come unto the King,
To let him knowe the order of the thing.

'Soft, Gooddie Sheepe! (then said the Foxe) not soe:
Unto the King so rash ye may not goe;
He is with greater matter busied
Than a Lambe, or the Lambes owne mothers hed.'
Ne, certes, may I take it well in part,
That ye my cousin Wolfe so fowly thwart,
And seeke with slaunder his good name to blot;
For there was cause, els doo it he would not:
Therefore surcease, good Dame, and hence depart.'
So went the Sheepe away with heavie hart:
So many moe, so everie one was used,
That to give largely to the boxe refused.
Now when high Jove, in whose almightie hand
The care of Kings and power of Empires stand,
Sitting one day within his turret hie,
From whence he vewes, with his black-lidded eye,
Whatso the heaven in his wide vawte containes,
And all that in the deepest earth remaines,
And troubled kingdome of wilde beasts behelde,
Whom not their kindly Sovereigne did welde,
But an usurping Ape, with guile suborn'd,
Had all subverst, he sdeignfully it scorn'd
In his great heart, and hardly did refraine,
But that with thunder bolts he had him slaine,
And driven downe to hell, his dewest meed:
But, him avizing, he that dreadfull deed
Forbore, and rather chose with scornfull shame
Him to avenge, and blot his brutish name
Unto the world, that never after anie
Should of his race be voyd of infamie;
And his false counsellor, the cause of all,
To damne to death, or dole perpetuall,
From whence he never should be quit, nor stal'd.
Forthwith he Mercurie unto him cal'd,
And bad him flie with never-resting speed
Unto the forrest, where wilde beasts doo breed,
And there enquiring privily, to learne
What did of late chauce happen to the Lyon stearne,
That he rul'd not the Empire, as he ought?
And whence were all those plaints unto him brought
Of wronges, and spoyles, by salvage beastes committed?
Which done, he bad the Lyon be remitted

Prosopopoeia: Or Mother Hubberds Tale

Into his seate, and those same treachours vile
Be punished for their presumptuous guile.

The Sonne of Maia, soone as he receiv'd
That word, streight with his azure wings he cleav'd
The liquid clowdes, and lucid firmament;
Ne staid, till that he came with steep descent
Unto the place where his prescript did showe.
There stouping, like an arrowe from a bowe,
He soft arrived on the grassie plaine,
And fairly paced forth with easie paine,
Till that unto the Pallace nigh he came.
Then gan he to himselfe new shape to frame;
And that faire face, and that Ambrosiall hew,
Which wons to decke the Gods immortall crew,
And beautefie the shinie firmament,
He doft, unfit for that rude rabblement.
So, standing by the gates in strange disguise,
He gan enquire of some in secret wize,
Both of the King, and of his government,
And of the Foxe, and his false blandishment:
And evermore he heard each one complaine
Of foule abuses both in realme and raine;
Which yet to prove more true he meant to see,
And an ey-witnes of each thing to bee.
Tho on his head his dreadfull hat he dight,
Which maketh him invisible in sight,
And mocketh th' eyes of all the lookers on,
Making them thinke it but a vision.
Through power of that he runnes through enemies swerds;
Through power of that he passeth through the herds
Of ravenous wilde beasts, and doth beguile
Their greedie mouthes of the expected spoyle;
Through power of that his cunning theeveries
He wons to worke, that none the same espies;
And, through the power of that, he putteth on

What shape he list in apparition.
That on his head he wore, and in his hand
He tooke Caduceus, his snakie wand,
With which the damned ghosts he governeth,
And furies rules, and Tartare tempereth.
With that he causeth sleep to seize the eyes,
And feare the harts of all his enemyes;
And, when him list, an universall night
Throughout the world he makes on everie wight;
As when his Syre with Alcumena lay.
Thus dight, into the Court he tooke his way,
Both through the gard, which never him descride,
And through the watchmen, who him never spide:
Thenceforth he past into each secrete part,
Whereas he saw, that sorely griev'd his hart,

Prosopopoeia: Or Mother Hubberds Tale

Each place abounding with fowle injuries,
And fild with treasure rackt with robberies;
Each place defilde with blood of guiltles beasts,
Which had been slaine to serve the Apes beheasts:
Gluttonie, malice, pride, and covetize,
And lawlesnes raining with riotize;
Besides the infinite extortions,
Done through the Foxes great oppressions,
That the complaints thereof could not be tolde.
Which when he did with lothfull eyes beholde,
He would no more endure, but came his way,
And cast to seeke the Lion where he may,
That he might worke the avengement for this shame
On those two caytives, which had bred him blame.
And, seeking all the forrest busily,
At last he found, where sleeping he did ly.
The wicked weed, which there the Foxe did lay,
From underneath his head he tooke away,
And then him waking, forced up to rize.
The Lion looking up gan him avize,
As one late in a traunce, what had of long
Become of him; for fantasie is strong.
'Arise, (said Mercurie) thou sluggish beast,
That here liest senseles, like the corpse deceast,
The whilst thy kingdome from thy head is rent,
And thy throne royall with dishonour blent:
Arise, and doo thyself redeeme from shame,
And be aveng'd on those that breed thy blame.'

Thereat enraged, soone he gan upstart,
Grinding his teeth, and grating his great hart;
And, rouzing up himselfe, for his rough hide
He gan to reach, but no where it espide.
Therewith he gan full terribly to rore,
And chafte at that indignitie right sore:
But when his Crowne and sceptor both he wanted,
Lord! how he fum'd, and sweld, and rag'd, and panted;
And threatned death, and thousand deadly dolours,
To them that had purloyn'd his Princely honours.
With that in hast, disroabed as he was,
He toward his owne Pallace forth did pas;
And all the way he roared as he went,
That all the forrest with astonishment
Thereof did tremble, and the beasts therein
Fled fast away from that so dreadfull din.
At last he came unto his mansion,
Where all the gates he found fast lockt anon,
And manie warders round about them stood:
With that he roar'd aloud, as he were wood,
That all the Pallace quaked at the stound,
As if it quite were riven from the ground,
And all within were dead and hartles left;

Prosopopoiia: Or Mother Hubberds Tale

And th' Ape himselfe, as one whose wits were reft,
Fled here and there, and everie corner sought,
To hide himselfe from his owne feared thought.
But the false Foxe, when he the Lion heard,
Fled closely forth, streightway of death afeard,
And to the Lion came, full lowly creeping,
With fained face, and watrie eyne halfe weeping,
T' excuse his former treason and abusion,
And turning all unto the Apes confusion.
Nath'les the royall Beast forbore beleeving,
But bad him stay at ease till further preeving.

Then, when he saw no entraunce to him graunted,
Roaring yet lowder that all harts it daunted,
Upon those gates with force he fiercely flewe,
And, rending them in pieces, felly slewe
Those warders strange, and all that els he met.
But th' Ape still flying he no where might get:
From rowme to rowme, from beam to beame he fled
All breathles, and for feare now almost ded;
Yet him at last the Lyon spide, and caught,
And forth with shame unto his judgement brought.
Then all the beasts he caus'd assembled bee,
To heare their doome, and sad ensample see.
The Foxe, first Author of that treacherie,
He did uncase, and then away let flie:
But th' Apes long taile (which then he had) he quight
Cut off, and both eares pared of their hight;
Since which all Apes but halfe their eares have left,
And of their tailes are utterlie bereft.
So Mother Hubberd her discourse did end,
Which pardon me, if I amisse have pend;
For weake was my remembrance it to hold,
And bad her tongue that it so bluntly tolde.