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This documentary edition has been edited to provide an accurate and transparent transcription of a single copy of the earliest surviving print edition of this play. Further material, including editorial policy and XML files of the play, is available on the EMED website. EMED texts are edited and encoded by Meaghan Brown, Michael Poston, and Elizabeth Williamson, and build on work done by the EEBO-TCP and the Shakespeare His Contemporaries project. This project is funded by a Humanities Collections and Reference Resources grant from the NEH’s Division of Preservation and Access.

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THE True Chronicle History of King LEIR, and his three daughters, Gonoril, Ragan, and Cordella.

As it hath been divers and sundry times lately acted.

LONDON, Printed by Simon Stafford for John Wright, and are to be sold at his shop at Christ’s Church door, next Newgate Market. 1605.

The true Chronicle History of King Leir and his three daughters.

ACTUS I.

Enter King Leir and Nobles.

Thus to our grief the obsequies performed
Of our (too late) deceased and dearest Queen,
Whose soul I hope, possessed of heavenly joys,
Doth ride in triumph ’mongst the Cherubins;
Let us request your grave advice, my Lords,
For the disposing of our princely daughters,
For whom our care is specially employed,
As nature bindeth to advance their states,
In royal marriage with some princely mates:
For wanting now their mother’s good advice,
Under whose government they have received
A perfect pattern of a virtuous life:
Left as it were a ship without a stern,
Or silly sheep without a Pastor’s care;
Although ourselves do dearly tender them,
Yet are we ignorant of their affairs:
For fathers best do know to govern sons;
But daughters’ steps the mother’s counsel turns.
A son we want for to succeed our Crown,
And course of time hath canceled the date
Of further issue from our withered loins;
One foot already hangeth in the grave,
And age hath made deep furrows in my face:
The world of me, I of the world am weary,
And I would fain resign these earthly cares,
And think upon the welfare of my soul:
Which by no better means may be effected,
Than by resigning up the Crown from me,
In equal dowry to my daughters three.

Skalliger. A worthy care, my Liege, which well declares,
The zeal you bare unto our quondam Queen:
And since your Grace hath licensed me to speak,

I censure thus; Your Majesty knowing well,
What several Suitors your princely daughters have,
To make them each a Jointure more or less,
As is their worth, to them that love profess.

Leir. No more, nor less, but even all alike,
My zeal is fixed, all fashioned in one mold:
Wherefore unpartial shall my censure be,
Both old and young shall have alike for me.

Noble My gracious Lord, I heartily do wish,
That God had lent you an heir indubitate,
Which might have sat upon your royal throne,
When fates should lose the prison of your life,
By whose succession all this doubt might cease;
And as by you, by him we might have peace.
But after-wishes ever come too late,
And nothing can revoke the course of fate:
Wherefore, my Liege, my censure deems it best,
To match them with some of your neighbor Kings,
Bord’ring within the bounds of Albion,
By whose united friendship, this our state
May be protected ’gainst all foreign hate.

Leir. Herein, my Lords, your wishes sort with mine,
And mine (I hope) do sort with heavenly powers:
For at this instant two near neighboring Kings
Of Cornwall and of Cambria, motion love
To my two daughters, Gonoril and Ragan.
My youngest daughter, fair Cordella, vows
No liking to a Monarch, unless love allows.
She is solicited by divers Peers;
But none of them her partial fancy hears.
Yet, if my policy may her beguile,
I’ll match her to some King within this Isle,
And so establish such a perfect peace,
As fortune’s force shall ne’er prevail to cease.

Perillus. Of us and ours, your gracious care, my Lord,
Deserves an everlasting memory,
To be enrolled in Chronicles of fame,
By never-dying perpetuity:

Yet to become so provident a Prince,
Lose not the title of a loving father:
Do not force love, where fancy cannot dwell,
Lest streams being stopped, above the banks do swell.

Leir. I am resolved, and even now my mind
Doth meditate a sudden stratagem,
To try which of my daughters loves me best:
Which till I know, I cannot be in rest.
This granted, when they jointly shall contend,
Each to exceed the other in their love:
Then at the vantage will I take Cordella,
Even as she doth protest she loves me best,
I’ll say, Then, daughter, grant me one request,
To show thou lovest me as thy sisters do,
Accept a husband, whom myself will woo.
This said, she cannot well deny my suit,
Although (poor soul) her senses will be mute:
Then will I triumph in my policy,
And match her with a King of Brittany.

Skalliger I’ll to them before, and bewray your secrecy.
Perillus Thus fathers think their children to beguile,
And oftentimes themselves do first repent,
When heavenly powers do frustrate their intent.        Exeunt.

Gonoril I marvel, Ragan, how you can endure
To see that proud pert Peat, our youngest sister,
So slightly to account of us, her elders,
As if we were no better than herself!
We cannot have a quaint device so soon,
Or new-made fashion, of our choice invention;
But if she like it, she will have the same,
Or study newer to exceed us both.
Besides, she is so nice and so demure;
So sober, courteous, modest, and precise,
That all the Court hath work enough to do,
To talk how she exceedeth me and you.

Ragan What should I do? would it were in my power,
To find a cure for this contagious ill:

Some desperate medicine must be soon applied,
To dim the glory of her mounting fame;
Else ere ’t be long, she’ll have both prick and praise,
And we must be set by for working days.
Do you not see what several choice of Suitors
She daily hath, and of the best degree?
Say, amongst all, she hap to fancy one,
And have a husband whenas we have none:
Why then, by right, to her we must give place,
Though it be ne’er so much to our disgrace.

Gonoril  By my virginity, rather than she shall have
A husband before me,
I’ll marry one or other in his shirt:
And yet I have made half a grant already
Of my good will unto the King of Cornwall.

Ragan  Swear not so deeply (sister) here cometh my Lord Skalliger,
Something his hasty coming doth import.  Enter Skalliger

Skalliger  Sweet Princesses, I am glad I met you here so luckily,
Having good news which doth concern you both,
And craveth speedy expedition.

Ragan  For God’s sake tell us what it is, my Lord,
I am with child until you utter it.

Skalliger  Madam, to save your longing, this it is:
Your father in great secrecy today,
Told me, he means to marry you out of hand,
Unto the noble Prince of Cambria;
You, Madam, to the King of Cornwall’s Grace:
Your younger sister he would fain bestow
Upon the rich King of Hibernia:
But that he doubts, she hardly will consent;
For hitherto she ne’er could fancy him.
If she do yield, why then, between you three,
He will divide his kingdom for your dowries.
But yet there is a further mystery,
Which, so you will conceal, I will disclose.

Gonoril  Whate’er thou speak’st to us, kind Skalliger,
Think that thou speak’st it only to thyself.

Skalliger  He earnestly desireth for to know,
Which of you three do bear most love to him,
And on your loves he so extremely dotes,
As never any did, I think, before.
He presently doth mean to send for you,
To be resolved of this tormentsing doubt:
And look, whose answer pleaseth him the best,
They shall have most unto their marriages.

Ragan  O that I had some pleasing Mermaid’s voice,
For to enchant his senseless senses with!

Skalliger  For he supposeth that Cordella will
(Striving to go beyond you in her love)
Promise to do whatever he desires:
Then will he straight enjoin her for his sake,
The Hibernian King in marriage for to take.
This is the sum of all I have to say;
Which being done, I humbly take my leave,
Not doubting but your wisdoms will foresee,
What course will best unto your good agree.

  Gonoril  Thanks, gentle Skalliger, thy kindness undeserved,
Shall not be unrequited, if we live.  Exit Skalliger.

  Ragan  Now have we fit occasion offered us,
To be revenged upon her unperceived.

  Gonoril  Nay, our revenge we will inflict on her,
Shall be accounted piety in us:
I will so flatter with my doting father,
As he was ne’er so flattered in his life.
Nay, I will say, that if it be his pleasure,
To match me to a beggar, I will yield:
For why, I know whatever I do say,
He means to match me with the Cornwall King.

  Ragan  I’ll say the like: for I am well assured;
Whate’er I say to please the old man’s mind.
Who dotes, as if he were a child again;
I shall enjoy the noble Cambrian Prince:
Only, to feed his humor, will suffice,
To say, I am content with any one
Whom he’ll appoint me; this will please him more.
Than e’er Apollo’s music pleased Jove.

  Gonoril  I smile to think, in what a woeful plight
Cordella will be, when we answer thus:
For she will rather die, than give consent
To join in marriage with the Irish King:
So will our father think, she loveth him not,
Because she will not grant to his desire,
Which we will aggravate in such bitter terms,
That he will soon convert his love to hate:
For he, you know, is always in extremes.

  Ragan  Not all the world could lay a better plot,
I long till it be put in practice.  Exeunt.

Enter Leir and Perillus.

Leir.  Perillus, go seek my daughters,
Will them immediately come and speak with me.

Perillus  I will, my gracious Lord.  Exit.

Leir.  Oh, what a combat feels my panting heart,
’Twixt children’s love, and care of Common weal!
How dear my daughters are unto my soul,
None knows, but he, that knows my thoughts and secret deeds.
Ah, little do they know the dear regard,
Wherein I hold their future state to come:
When they securely sleep on beds of down,
These aged eyes do watch for their behalf:
While they like wantons sport in youthful toys,
This throbbing heart is pierced with dire annoys.
As doth the Sun exceed the smallest Star,
Enter Perillus, with the three daughters.

So much the father's love exceeds the child's.
Yet my complaints are causeless: for the world
Affords not children more conformable:
And yet, methinks, my mind presageth still
I know not what; and yet I fear some ill.

Enter Perillus, with the three daughters.

Well, here my daughters come: me: I have found out
A present means to rid me of this doubt.

Gonoril Our royal Lord and father, in all duty,
We come to know the tenor of your will,
Why you so hastily have sent for us?

Leir Dear Gonoril, kind Ragan, sweet Cordella,

Ye flourishing branches of a Kingly stock,
Sprung from a tree that once did flourish green,
Whose blossoms now are nipped with Winter's frost,
And pale grim death doth wait upon my steps,
And summons me unto his next Assizes.
Therefore, dear daughters, as ye tender the safety
Of him that was the cause of your first being,
Resolve a doubt which much molests my mind,
Which of you three to me would prove most kind;
Which loves me most, and which at my request
Will soonest yield unto their father's hest.

Gonoril I hope, my gracious father makes no doubt
Of any of his daughter's love to him:
Yet for my part, to show my zeal to you,
Which cannot be in windy words rehearsed,
I prize my love to you at such a rate,
I think my life inferior to my love.
Should you enjoin me for to tie a millstone
About my neck, and leap into the Sea,
At your command I willingly would do it:
Yea, for to do you good, I would ascend
The highest Turret in all Brittany,
And from the top leap headlong to the ground:
Nay, more, should you appoint me for to marry
The meanest vassal in the spacious world,
Without reply I would accomplish it:
In brief, command whatever you desire,
And if I fail, no favor I require.

Leir. O, how thy words revive my dying soul!

Cordella O, how I do abhor this flattery!

Leir. But what saith Ragan to her father's will?

Ragan O, that my simple utterance could suffice,
To tell the true intention of my heart,
Which burns in zeal of duty to your grace,
And never can be quenched, but by desire
To show the same in outward forwardness.
Oh, that there were some other maid that durst
But make a challenge of her love with me;

I’d make her soon confess she never loved
Her father half so well as I do you.
Ay then, my deeds should prove in plainer case,
How much my zeal aboundeth to your grace:
But for them all, let this one mean suffice,
To ratify my love before your eyes:
I have right noble Suitors to my love,
No worse than Kings, and happily I love one:
Yet, would you have me make my choice anew,
I’d bridle fancy, and be ruled by you.

Leir.  Did never Philomel sing so sweet a note.
Cordella  Did never flatterer tell so false a tale.
Leir.  Speak now, Cordella, make my joys at full,
And drop down Nectar from thy honey lips.

Cordella  I cannot paint my duty forth in words,
I hope my deeds shall make report for me:
But look what love the child doth owe
the father,
The same to you I bear, my gracious Lord.

Gonoril  Here is an answer answerless indeed:
Were you my daughter, I should scarcely brook it.

Ragan  Dost thou not blush, proud Peacock as thou art,
To make our father such a slight reply?

Leir.  Why how now, Minion, are you grown so proud?
Doth our dear love make you thus peremptory?
What, is your love become so small to us,
As that you scorn to tell us what it is?
Do you love us, as every child doth love
Their father? True indeed, as some,
Who by disobedience short their father’s days,
And so would you; some are so father-sick,
That they make means to rid them from the world;
And so would you: some are indifferent,
Whether their aged parents live or die;
And so are you. But, didst thou know, proud girl,
What care I had to foster thee to this,
Ah, then thou wouldst say as thy sisters do:
Our life is less, than love we owe to you.

Cordella  Dear father, do not so mistake my words,

Nor my plain meaning be misconstrued;
My tongue was never used to flattery.

Gonoril  You were not best say I flatter: if you do,
My deeds shall show, I flatter not with you.
I love my father better than thou canst.
Exeunt Leir, Gonoril, Ragan.

Exit.

Enter the Gallian King with Mumford, and three Nobles more.

Cordella
The praise were great, spoke from another’s mouth: But it should seem your neighbors dwell far off.

Ragan
Nay, here is one, that will confirm as much
As she hath said, both for myself and her.
I say, thou dost not wish my father’s good.

Cordella
Dear father. —

Leir
Peace, bastard Imp, no issue of King Leir, I will not hear thee speak one tittle more.
Call not me father, if thou love thy life,
Nor these thy sisters once presume to name: Look for no help henceforth from me nor mine;
Shift as thou wilt, and trust unto thyself:
My Kingdom will I equally divide
’Twixt thy two sisters to their royal dower,
And will bestow them worthy their deserts:
This done, because thou shalt not have the hope,
To have a child’s part in the time to come,
I presently will dispossess myself,
And set up these upon my princely throne.

Gonoril
I ever thought that pride would have a fall.

Ragan
Plain dealing, sister: your beauty is so sheen,
You need no dowry, to make you be a Queen.

Exeunt Leir, Gonoril, Ragan.

Cordella
Now whither, poor forsaken, shall I go,
When mine own sisters triumph in my woe?
But unto him which doth protect the just,
In him will poor Cordella put her trust.
These hands shall labor, for to get my spending;
And so i’ll live until my days have ending.

Perillus
Oh, how I grieve, to see my Lord thus fond,
To dote so much upon vain flattering words.
Ah, if he but with good advice had weighed,
The hidden tenor of her humble speech,

Reason to rage should not have given place,
Nor poor Cordella suffer such disgrace.

Enter the Gallian King with Mumford, and three Nobles more.

King
Dissuade me not, my Lords, I am resolved,
This next fair wind to sail for Brittany,
In some disguise, to see if flying fame
Be not too prodigal in the wondrous praise
Of these three Nymphs, the daughters of King Leir.
If present view do answer absent praise,
And eyes allow of what our ears have heard,
And Venus stand auspicious to my vows,
And Fortune favor what I take in hand;
I will return seized of as rich a prize
As Jason, when he won the golden fleece.
Exeunt.

Enter the King of Cornwall and his man booted and spurred, a riding wand, and a letter in his hand.

Cornwall But how far distant are we from the Court?

Servant Some twenty miles, my Lord, or thereabouts.
Enter the King of Cambria booted and spurred, and his man with a wand and a letter.

Cornwall and Cambria look one upon another, and start to see each other there.

Cornwall It seemeth to me twenty thousand miles:
Yet hope I to be there within this hour.

Servant Then are you like to ride alone for me.
I think, my Lord is weary of his life.

Cornwall Sweet Gonoril, I long to see thy face,
Which hast so kindly gratified my love.

Cambria Get a fresh horse: for by my soul I swear,
I am past patience, longer to forbear
The wished sight of my beloved mistress,
Dear Ragan, stay and comfort of my life.

Servant Now what in God's name doth my Lord intend?
He thinks he ne’er shall come at 's journey’s end.
I would he had old Daedalus' waxen wings,
That he might fly, so I might stay behind:
For ere we get to Troynovant, I see,
He quite will tire himself, his horse and me.

Cornwall and Cambria look one upon another, and start to see each other there.

Cornwall Brother of Cambria, we greet you well,
As one whom here we little did expect.

Cambria Brother of Cornwall, met in happy time:
I thought as much to have met with the Souldan of Persia,
As to have met you in this place, my Lord.
No doubt, it is about some great affairs,
That makes you here so slenderly accompanied.

Cornwall To say the truth, my Lord, it is no less,
And for your part some hasty wind of chance
Hath blown you hither thus upon the sudden.

Cambria My Lord, to break off further circumstances,
For at this time I cannot brook delays:
Tell you your reason, I will tell you mine.

Cornwall In faith content, and therefore to be brief;
For I am sure my haste’s as great as yours:
I am sent for, to come unto King Leir,
Who by these present letters promiseth
His eldest daughter, lovely Gonoril,
To me in marriage, and for present dowry,
The moiety of half his Regiment.
The Lady’s love I long ago possessed:
But until now I never had the father’s.

Cambria You tell me wonders, yet I will relate
Strange news, and henceforth we must brothers call;
Witness these lines: his honorable age,
Being weary of the troubles of his Crown,
His princely daughter Ragan will bestow
On me in marriage, with half his Signories,
Exeunt.

Enter Gonoril and Ragan.

Whom I would gladly have accepted of,
With the third part, her compliments are such.

Cornwall If I have one half, and you have the other,

Then between us we must needs have the whole.

Cambria The hole! how mean you that? ’Sblood, I hope,
We shall have two holes between us.

Cornwall Why, the whole Kingdom.

Cambria Ay, that’s very true.

Cornwall What then is left for his third daughter’s dowry,

Lovely Cordella, whom the world admires?

Cambria ’Tis very strange, I know not what to think,
Unless they mean to make a Nun of her.

Cornwall ’Twere pity such rare beauty should be hid
Within the compass of a Cloister’s wall:
But howsoe’er, if Leir’s words prove true,
It will be good, my Lord, for me and you.

Cambria Then let us haste, all danger to prevent,
For fear delays do alter his intent. 

Exeunt.

Enter Gonoril and Ragan.

Gonoril Sister, when did you see Cordella last,
That pretty piece, that thinks none good enough
To speak to her, because (sir-reverence)
She hath a little beauty extraordinary?

Ragan Since time my father warned her from his presence,
I never saw her, that I can remember.
God give her joy of her surpassing beauty;
I think, her dowry will be small enough.

Gonoril I have incensed my father so against her,
As he will never be reclaimed again.

Ragan I was not much behind to do the like.

Gonoril Faith, sister, what moves you to bear her such good will?

Ragan In truth, I think, the same that moveth you;
Because she doth surpass us both in beauty.

Gonoril Beshrew your fingers, how right you can guess:
I tell you true, it cuts me to the heart.

Ragan But we will keep her low enough, I warrant,
And clip her wings for mounting up too high.

Gonoril Whoever hath her, shall have a rich marriage of her.

Ragan She were right fit to make a Parson’s wife:
For they, men say, do love fair women well,

And many times do marry them with nothing.

Gonoril With nothing! marry God forbid: why, are there any such?

Ragan I mean, no money.

Gonoril I cry you mercy, I mistook you much:
And she is far too stately for the Church;
She’ll lay her husband’s Benefice on her back,
Even in one gown, if she may have her will.
   Ragan   In faith, poor soul, I pity her a little.
   Would she were less fair, or more fortunate.
   Well, I think long until I see my Morgan,
The gallant Prince of Cambria, here arrive.
   Gonoril   And so do I, until the Cornwall King
   Present himself, to consummate my joys.
   Peace, here cometh my father.

   Enter Leir, Perillus and others.

   Leir.   Cease, good my Lords, and sue not to reverse
   Our censure, which is now irrevocable.
   We have dispatched letters of contract
   Unto the Kings of Cambria and of Cornwall;
   Our hand and seal will justify no less:
   Then do not so dishonor me, my Lords,
   As to make shipwreck of our kingly word.
   I am as kind as is the Pelican,
   That kills itself, to save her young ones’ lives:
   And yet as jealous as the princely Eagle,
   That kills her young ones, if they do but dazzle
   Upon the radiant splendor of the Sun.
   Within this two days I expect their coming.
   But in good time, they are arrived already.
   This haste of yours, my Lords, doth testify
   The fervent love you bear unto my daughters:
   And think yourselves as welcome to King Leir,
   As ever Priam’s children were to him.
   Cornwall   My gracious Lord, and father too, I hope,
   Pardon, for that I made no greater haste:
   But were my horse as swift as was my will,
   I long ere this had seen your Majesty.
   Cambria   No other ’scuse of absence can I frame,

   Than what my brother hath informed your Grace:
   For our undeserved welcome, we do vow,
   Perpetually to rest at your command.
   Cornwall   But you, sweet Love, illustrious Gonoril,
   The Regent, and the Sovereign of my soul,
   Is Cornwall welcome to your Excellency?
   Gonoril   As welcome, as Leander was to Hero,
   Or brave Aeneas to the Carthage Queen:
   So and more welcome is your Grace to me.
   Cambria   O, may my fortune prove no worse than his,
   Since heavens do know, my fancy is as much.
   Dear Ragan, say, if welcome unto thee,
   All welcomes else will little comfort me.
   Ragan   As gold is welcome to the covetous eye,
Then they draw lots.

Exeunt omnes, manet Perillus.

Enter the Gallian King, and Mumford, disguised like Pilgrims.

As sleep is welcome to the Traveler,
As is fresh water to sea-beaten men,
Or moistened showers unto the parched ground,
Or any thing more welcomer than this,
So and more welcome lovely Morgan is.

Leir. What resteth then, but that we consummate,
The celebration of these nuptial Rites?
My Kingdom I do equally divide.
Princes, draw lots, and take your chance as falls.

Then they draw lots.

These I resign as freely unto you,
As erst by true succession they were mine.
And here I do freely dispossess myself,
And make you two my true adopted heirs:
Myself will sojourn with my son of Cornwall,
And take me to my prayers and my beads.
I know, my daughter Ragan will be sorry,
Because I do not spend my days with her:
Would I were able to be with both at once;
They are the kindest Girls in Christendom.

Perillus I have been silent all this while, my Lord,
To see if any worthier than myself,
Would once have spoke in poor Cordella’s cause:
But love or fear ties silence to their tongues.

Oh, hear me speak for her, my gracious Lord,
Whose deeds have not deserved this ruthless doom,
As thus to disinherit her of all.

Leir. Urge this no more, and if thou love thy life:
I say, she is no daughter, that doth scorn
To tell her father how she loveth him.
Whoever speaketh hereof to me again,
I will esteem him for my mortal foe.
Come, let us in, to celebrate with joy,
The happy Nuptials of these lovely pairs.

Exeunt omnes, manet Perillus.

Perillus Ah, who so blind, as they that will not see
The near approach of their own misery?
Poor Lady, I extremely pity her:
And whilst I live, each drop of my heart blood,
Will I strain forth, to do her any good.

Enter the Gallian King, and Mumford, disguised like Pilgrims.

Mumford My Lord, how do you brook this British air?
King of Gallia. My Lord? I told you of this foolish humor,
And bound you to the contrary, you know.

Mumford Pardon me for once, my Lord; I did forget.
King of Gallia. My Lord again? then let’s have nothing else,
And so be ta’en for spies, and then ’tis well.
Mumford 'Swounds, I could bite my tongue in two for anger:
For God’s sake name yourself some proper name.
King of Gallia. Call me Tresillus: I’ll call thee Denapoll.
Mumford Might I be made the Monarch of the world,
I could not hit upon these names, I swear.
King of Gallia. Then call me Will, i’ll call thee Jack.
Mumford Well, be it so, for I have well deserved to be called Jack.
King of Gallia. Stand close; for here a British Lady cometh: Enter
A fairer creature ne’er mine eyes beheld. Cordella.
Cordella This is a day of joy unto my sisters,
Wherein they both are married unto Kings;
And I, by birth, as worthy as themselves,
Am turned into the world, to seek my fortune.
How may I blame the fickle Queen of Chance,

That maketh me a pattern of her power?
Ah, poor weak maid, whose imbecility
Is far unable to endure these brunts.
Oh, father Leir, how dost thou wrong thy child,
Who always was obedient to thy will!
But why accuse I fortune and my father?
No, no, it is the pleasure of my God:
And I do willingly embrace the rod.

King of Gallia. It is no Goddess; for she doth complain
On fortune, and th’ unkindness of her father.
Cordella These costly robes ill fitting my estate,
I will exchange for other meaner habit.
Mumford Now if I had a Kingdom in my hands,
I would exchange it for a milkmaid’s smock and petticoat,
That she and I might shift our clothes together.
Cordella I will betake me to my thread and Needle,
And earn my living with my fingers’ ends.
Mumford O brave! God willing, thou shalt have my custom,
By sweet Saint Denis, here I sadly swear,
For all the shirts and night-gear that I wear.
Cordella I will profess and vow a maiden’s life.
Mumford Then I protest thou shalt not have my custom.
King of Gallia. I can forbear no longer for to speak:
For if I do, I think my heart will break.
Mumford 'Sblood, Will, I hope you are not in love with my Sempster.
King of Gallia. I am in such a labyrinth of love,
As that I know not which way to get out.
Mumford You’ll ne’er get out, unless you first get in.
King of Gallia. I prithee Jack, cross not my passions.
Mumford Prithee Will, to her, and try her patience.
King of Gallia. Thou fairest creature, whatsoe’er thou art,
That ever any mortal eyes beheld,
Vouchsafe to me, who have o’erheard thy woes,
To show the cause of these thy sad laments.
Ah Pilgrims, what avails to show the cause,
When there’s no means to find a remedy?
To utter grief, doth ease a heart o’ercharged.

To touch a sore, doth aggravate the pain.

The silly mouse, by virtue of her teeth,
Released the princely Lion from the net.
Kind Palmer, which so much desir’st to hear
The tragic tale of my unhappy youth:
Know this in brief, I am the hapless daughter
Of Leir, sometimes King of Brittany.

Why, who debars his honorable age,
From being still the King of Brittany?
None, but himself hath dispossessed himself,
And given all his Kingdom to the Kings
Of Cornwall and of Cambria, with my sisters.
Hath he given nothing to your lovely self?
Only because I could not flatter him:
And in this day of triumph to my sisters,
Doth Fortune triumph in my overthrow.
Sweet Lady, say there should come a King,
As good as either of your sisters’ husbands,
To crave your love, would you accept of him?
Oh, do not mock with those in misery,
Nor do not think, though fortune have the power,
To spoil mine honor, and debase my state,
That she hath any interest in my mind:
For if the greatest Monarch on the earth,
Should sue to me in this extremity,
Except my heart could love, and heart could like,
Better than any that I ever saw,
His great estate no more should move my mind,
Than mountains move by blast of every wind.
Think not, sweet Nymph, ’tis holy Palmer’s guise,
To grieved souls fresh torments to devise:
Therefore in witness of my true intent,
Let heaven and earth bear record of my words:
There is a young and lusty Gallian King,
So like to me, as I am to myself,
That earnestly doth crave to have thy love,
And join with thee in Hymen’s sacred bonds.
The like to thee did ne’er these eyes behold;
Oh live to add new torments to my grief:
Why didst thou thus entrap me unawares?
Ah Palmer, my estate doth not befit
A kingly marriage, as the case now stands.
Whilom whenas I lived in honor’s height,
A Prince perhaps might postulate my love:
Now misery, dishonor and disgrace,
Hath light on me, and quite reversed the case.
Thy King will hold thee wise, if thou surcease
The suit, whereas no dowry will ensue.
Then be advised, Palmer, what to do:
Cease for thy King, seek for thyself to woo.

King of Gallia. Your birth’s too high for any, but a King.

Cordella. My mind is low enough to love a Palmer,
Rather than any King upon the earth.

King of Gallia. O, but you never can endure their life,
Which is so straight and full of penury.

Cordella. O yes, I can, and happy if I might:
I’ll hold thy Palmer’s staff within my hand,
And think it is the Sceptre of a Queen.
Sometime i’ll set thy Bonnet on my head,
And think I wear a rich imperial Crown.
Sometime i’ll help thee in thy holy prayers,
And think I am with thee in Paradise.
Thus i’ll mock fortune, as she mocketh me,
And never will my lovely choice repent:
For having thee, I shall have all content.

King of Gallia. ‘Twere sin to hold her longer in suspense,
Since that my soul hath vowed she shall be mine.
Ah, dear Cordella, cordial to my heart,
I am no Palmer, as I seem to be,
But hither come in this unknown disguise,
To view th’admired beauty of those eyes.
I am the King of Gallia, gentle maid,
(Although thus slenderly accompanied)
And yet thy vassal by imperious Love,
And sworn to serve thee everlastingly.

Cordella. Whate’er you be, of high or low descent,

All’s one to me, I do request but this:
That as I am, you will accept of me,
And I will have you whatsoe’er you be:
Yet well I know, you come of royal race,
I see such sparks of honor in your face:

Mumford. Have Palmer’s weeds such power to win fair Ladies?

Faith, then I hope the next that falls is mine:
Upon condition I no worse might speed,
I would for ever wear a Palmer’s weed.
I like an honest and plain-dealing wench,
That swears (without exceptions) I will have you.
These foppets, that know not whether to love a man or no, except
they first go ask their mother’s leave, by this hand, I hate
them ten times worse than poison.

King of Gallia.  What resteth then our happiness to procure?

Mumford    Faith, go to Church, to make the matter sure.

King of Gallia.  It shall be so, because the world shall say,
King Leir's three daughters were wedded in one day:
The celebration of this happy chance,
We will defer, until we come to France.

Mumford    I like the wooing, that's not long a-doing.
Well, for her sake, I know what I know:
I'll never marry whilst I live,
Except I have one of these British Ladies,
My humor is alienated from the maids of France.    Exeunt.

Enter Perillus solus.

Perillus    The King hath dispossessed himself of all,
Those to advance, which scarce will give him thanks:
His youngest daughter he hath turned away,
And no man knows what is become of her.
He sojourns now in Cornwall with the eldest,
Who flattered him, until she did obtain
That at his hands, which now she doth possess,
And now she sees he hath no more to give,
It grieves her heart to see her father live.
Oh, whom should man trust in this wicked age,
When children thus against their parents rage?
But he, the mirror of mild patience,

Puts up all wrongs, and never gives reply:
Yet shames she not in most opprobrious sort,
To call him fool and dotard to his face,
And sets her Parasites of purpose oft,
In scoffing wise to offer him disgrace.
Oh iron age! O times! O monstrous, vild,
When parents are contemned of the child!
His pension she hath half restrained from him,
And will, ere long, the other half, I fear:
For she thinks nothing is bestowed in vain,
But that which doth her father's life maintain.
Trust not alliance; but trust strangers rather,
Since daughters prove disloyal to the father.
Well, I will counsel him the best I can:
Would I were able to redress his wrong.
Yet what I can, unto my utmost power,
He shall be sure of to the latest hour.      Exit.

Enter Gonoril, and Skalliger.

Gonoril    I prithee, Skalliger, tell me what thou thinkst:
Could any woman of our dignity
Endure such quips and peremptory taunts,
As I do daily from my doting father?
Doth 't not suffice that I him keep of alms,
Who is not able for to keep himself?
But as if he were our better, he should think
To check and snap me up at every word.
I cannot make me a new-fashioned gown,
And set it forth with more than common cost;
But his old doting doltish withered wit,
Is sure to give a senseless check for it.
I cannot make a banquet extraordinary,
To grace myself, and spread my name abroad,
But he, old fool, is captious by and by,
And saith, the cost would well suffice for twice.
Judge then, I pray, what reason is 't, that I
Should stand alone charged with his vain expense,
And that my sister Ragan should go free,
To whom he gave as much, as unto me?

I prithee, Skalliger, tell me, if thou know,
By any means to rid me of this woe.

Skalliger  Your many favors still bestowed on me,
Bind me in duty to advise your Grace,
How you may soonest remedy this ill.
The large allowance which he hath from you,
Is that which makes him so forget himself:
Therefore abridge it half, and you shall see,
That having less, he will more thankful be:
For why, abundance maketh us forget
The fountains whence the benefits do spring.

Gonoril  Well, Skalliger, for thy kind advice herein,
I will not be ungrateful, if I live:
I have restrained half his portion already,
And I will presently restrain the other,
That having no means to relieve himself,
He may go seek elsewhere for better help.

Skalliger  Go, viperous woman, shame to all thy sex:
The heavens, no doubt, will punish thee for this:
And me a villain, that to curry favor,
Have given the daughter counsel 'gainst the father.
But us the world doth this experience give,
That he that cannot flatter, cannot live.

Enter King of Cornwall, Leir, Perillus and Nobles.

Cornwall  Father, what aileth you to be so sad?
Methinks, you frolic not as you were wont.

Leir.  The nearer we do grow unto our graves,
The less we do delight in worldly joys.

Cornwall  But if a man can frame himself to mirth,
It is a mean for to prolong his life.

Leir.  Then welcome sorrow, Leir's only friend,
Who doth desire his troubled days had end.

Cornwall  Comfort yourself, father, here comes your daughter,
Who much will grieve, I know, to see you sad.

Leir. But more doth grieve, I fear, to see me live.

Cornwall My Gonoril, you come in wished time, To put your father from these pensive dumps. In faith, I fear that all things go not well.

Gonoril What, do you fear, that I have angered him? Hath he complained of me unto my Lord? I’ll provide him a piece of bread and cheese; For in a time he’l practice nothing else, Than carry tales from one unto another. ’Tis all his practice for to kindle strife, ’Twixt you, my Lord, and me your loving wife: But I will take an order, if I can, To cease th’ effect, where first the cause began.

Cornwall Sweet, be not angry in a partial cause, He ne’er complained of thee in all his life. Father, you must not weigh a woman’s words.

Leir. Alas, not I: poor soul, she breeds young bones, And that is it makes her so touchy sure.

Gonoril What, breeds young bones already! you will make An honest woman of me then, belike. O vil old wretch! whoever heard the like, That seeketh thus his own child to defame?

Cornwall I cannot stay to hear this discord sound. Exit.

Gonoril For any one that loves your company, You may go pack, and seek some other place, To sow the seed of discord and disgrace. Exit.

Leir. Thus, say or do the best that e’er I can, ’Tis wrested straight into another sense. This punishment my heavy sins deserve, And more than this ten thousand thousand times: Else aged Leir them could never find Cruel to him, to whom he hath been kind. Why do I overlive myself, to see The course of nature quite reversed in me? Ah, gentle Death, if ever any wight Did wish thy presence with a perfect zeal: Then come, I pray thee, even with all my heart, And end my sorrows with thy fatal dart. He weeps.

Perillus Ah, do not so disconsolate yourself, Nor dew your aged cheeks with wasting tears.

Leir. What man art thou that takest any pity Upon the worthless state of old Leir?

Perillus One, who doth bear as great a share of grief, As if it were my dearest father’s case.
Leir. Ah, good my friend, how ill art thou advised,
For to consort with miserable men:
Go learn to flatter, where thou mayst in time
Get favor ’mongst the mighty, and so climb:
For now I am so poor and full of want.
As that I ne’er can recompense thy love.

Perillus What’s got by flattery, doth not long endure;
And men in favor live not most secure.
My conscience tells me, if I should forsake you,
I were the hateful’st excrement on the earth:
Which well do know, in course of former time,
How good my Lord hath been to me and mine.

Leir. Did I e’er raise thee higher than the rest
Of all thy ancestors which were before?
Perillus I ne’er did seek it; but by your good Grace,
I still enjoyed my own with quietness.

Leir. Did I ere give thee living, to increase
The due revenues which thy father left?
Perillus I had enough, my Lord, and having that,
What should you need to give me any more?

Leir. Oh, did I ever dispossess myself,
And give thee half my Kingdom in good will?
Perillus Alas, my Lord, there were no reason, why
You should have such a thought, to give it me.

Leir. Nay, if thou talk of reason, then be mute;
For with good reason I can thee confute.
If they, which first by nature’s sacred law,
Do owe to me the tribute of their lives;
If they to whom I always have been kind,
And bountiful beyond comparison;
If they, for whom I have undone myself,
And brought my age unto this extreme want,
Do now reject, contemn, despise, abhor me,
What reason moveth thee to sorrow for me?

Perillus Where reason fails, let tears confirm my love,
And speak how much your passions do me move.

Ah, good my Lord, condemn not all for one:
You have two daughters left, to whom I know
You shall be welcome, if you please to go.

Leir. Oh, how thy words add sorrow to my soul,
To think of my unkindness to Cordella!
Whom causeless I did dispossess of all,
Upon th’ unkind suggestions of her sisters:
And for her sake, I think this heavy doom
Is fall’n on me, and not without desert:
Yet unto Ragan was I always kind,
And gave to her the half of all I had:
It may be, if I should to her repair,
She would be kinder, and entreat me fair.

Perillus  No doubt she would, and practice ere ’t be long,
By force of Arms for to redress your wrong.

Leir.  Well, since thou dost advise me for to go,
I am resolved to try the worst of woe.  

Exit.

Enter Ragan solus.

Ragan  How may I bless the hour of my nativity,
Which bodeth unto me such happy Stars!
How may I thank kind fortune, that vouchsafes
To all my actions, such desired event!
I rule the King of Cambria as I please:
The States are all obedient to my will;
And look whate’er I say, it shall be so;
Not any one, that dareth answer no.
My eldest sister lives in royal state,
And wanteth nothing fitting her degree:
Yet hath she such a cooling card withal,
As that her honey savoreth much of gall.
My father with her is quartermaster still,
And many times restrains her of her will:
But if he were with me, and served me so,
I’d send him packing somewhere else to go.
I’d entertain him with such slender cost,
That he should quickly wish to change his host.  

Exit.

Enter Cornwall, Gonoril, and attendants.

Cornwall  Ah, Gonoril, what dire unhappy chance
Hath sequestered thy father from our presence,
That no report can yet be heard of him?
Some great unkindness hath been offered him,
Exceeding far the bounds of patience:
Else all the world shall never me persuade,
He would forsake us without notice made.

Gonoril  Alas, my Lord, whom doth it touch so near,
Or who hath interest in this grief, but I,
Whom sorrow had brought to her longest home,
But that I know his qualities so well?
I know, he is but stol’n upon my sister
At unawares, to see her how she fares,
And spend a little time with her, to note
How all things go, and how she likes her choice:
And when occasion serves, he’ll steal from her,
And unawares return to us again.
Therefore, my Lord, be frolic, and resolve
To see my father here again ere long.

Cornwall  I hope so too; but yet to be more sure,
I’ll send a Post immediately to know
Whether he be arrived there or no.  

Exit.

Gonoril  But I will intercept the Messenger,
Enter the Messenger that should go to Cambria,
With a letter in his hand.

She opens them.

And temper him before he doth depart,
With sweet persuasions, and with sound rewards,
That his report shall ratify my speech,
And make my Lord cease further to inquire.
If he be not gone to my sister’s Court,
As sure my mind presageth that he is,
He happily may, by traveling unknown ways,
Fall sick, and as a common passenger,
Be dead and buried: would God it were so well;
For then there were no more to do, but this,
He went away, and none knows where he is,
But say he be in Cambria with the King,
And there exclaim against me, as he will:
I know he is as welcome to my sister,
As water is into a broken ship.
Well, after him I’ll send such thunderclaps
Of slander, scandal, and invented tales,
That all the blame shall be removed from me,
And unperceived rebound upon himself.
Thus with one nail another I’ll expel,
And make the world judge, that I used him well.

Enter the Messenger that should go to Cambria,
with a letter in his hand.

Gonoril My honest friend, whither away so fast?
Messenger To Cambria, Madam, with letters from the king.
Gonoril To whom?
Messenger Unto your father, if he be there.
Gonoril Let me see them.
Messenger Madam, I hope your Grace will stand
Between me and my neck-verse, if I be
Called in question, for opening the King’s letters.

Gonoril ’Twas was I that opened them, it was not thou.
Messenger Ay, but you need not care: and so must I,
A handsome man, be quickly trussed up,
And when a man’s hanged, all the world cannot save him,
Gonoril He that hangs thee, were better hang his father,
Or that but hurts thee in the least degree.
I tell thee, we make great account of thee.
Messenger I am o’erjoyed, I surfeit of sweet words:
Kind Queen, had I a hundred lives, I would
Spend ninety-nine of them for you, for that word.
Gonoril Ay, but thou wouldst keep one life still,
And that’s as many as thou art like to have.

Messenger That one life is not too dear for my good Queen; this
sword, this buckler, this head, this heart, these hands, arms,
legs, tripes, bowels, and all the members else whatsoever, are at
your dispose; use me, trust me, command me: if I fail in any
thing, tie me to a dung cart, and make a Scavenger’s horse of
me, and whip me, so long as I have any skin on my back.

\textit{Gonoril} In token of further employment, take that.

\textit{Flings him a purse.}

\textit{Messenger} A strong Bond, a firm Obligation, good in law, good in law: if I keep not the condition, let my neck be the forfeiture of my negligence.

\textit{Gonoril} I like thee well, thou hast a good tongue.

\textit{Messenger} And as bad a tongue if it be set on it, as any Oyster-wife at Billingsgate hath: why, I have made many of my neighbors forsake their houses with railing upon them, and go dwell elsewhere; and so by my means houses have been good cheap in our parish: My tongue being well whetted with choler, is more sharp than a Razor of Palermo.

\textit{Gonoril} O, thou art a fit man for my purpose.

\textit{Messenger} Commend me not, sweet Queen, before you try me. As my deserts are, so do think of me.

\textit{Gonoril} Well said, then this is thy trial: Instead of carrying the King’s letters to my father, carry thou these letters to my sister, which contain matter quite contrary to the other: there shall she be given to understand, that my father hath detrayed her, given out sland’rous speeches against her; and that he hath most intolerably abused me, set my Lord and me at variance, and made mutinies amongst the commons. These things (although it be not so) Yet thou must affirm them to be true, With oaths and protestations as will serve, To drive my sister out of love with him, And cause my will accomplished to be. This do, thou winn’st my favor for ever, And makest a highway of preferment to thee And all thy friends.

\textit{Messenger} It sufficeth, conceit it is already done: I will so tongue-whip him, that I will Leave him as bare of credit, as a Poulter Leaves a Coney, when she pulls off his skin.

\textit{Gonoril} Yet there is a further matter.

\textit{Messenger} I thirst to hear it.

\textit{Gonoril} If my sister thinketh convenient, as my letters importeth, to make him away, hast thou the heart to effect it?

\textit{Messenger} Few words are best in so small a matter: These are but trifles. By this book I will.

\textit{kiss the paper.}

\textit{Gonoril} About it presently, I long till it be done,
Enter Cordella solus.

Exeunt.

I fly, I fly.

Enter Leir and Perillus faintly.

I have been over-negligent today,
In going to the Temple of my God,
To render thanks for all his benefits,
Which he miraculously hath bestowed on me,
In raising me out of my mean estate,
Whenas I was devoid of worldly friends,
And placing me in such a sweet content,
As far exceeds the reach of my deserts.
My kingly husband, mirror of his time,
For zeal, for justice, kindness, and for care
To God, his subjects, me, and Common weal,
By his appointment was ordained for me.
I cannot wish the thing that I do want;
I cannot want the thing but I may have,
Save only this which I shall ne’er obtain,
My father’s love, oh this I ne’er shall gain.
I would abstain from any nutriment,
And pine my body to the very bones:
Barefoot I would on pilgrimage set forth
Unto the furthest quarters of the earth,
And all my lifetime would I sackcloth wear,
And mourning-wise pour dust upon my head:
So he but to forgive me once would please,
That his gray hairs might go to heaven in peace.
And yet I know not how I him offended,
Or wherein justly I have deserved blame.
Oh sisters! you are much to blame in this,
It was not he, but you that did me wrong.
Yet God forgive both him, and you and me,
Even as I do in perfect charity.
I will to Church, and pray unto my Savior,
That ere I die, I may obtain his favor.

Exit.

Enter Leir and Perillus faintly.

Perillus Rest on me, my Lord, and stay yourself,
The way seems tedious to your aged limbs.

Leir. Nay, rest on me, kind friend, and stay thyself,
Thou art as old as I, but more kind.

Perillus Ah, good my Lord, it ill befits, that I
Should lean upon the person of a King.

Leir. But it fits worse, that I should bring thee forth,
That had no cause to come along with me,
Through these uncouth paths, and tireful ways,
And never ease thy fainting limbs a whit.
Thou hast left all, Ay, all to come with me,
And I, for all, have naught to guerdon thee.

Perillus Cease, good my Lord, to aggravate my woes,
With these kind words, which cuts my heart in two,
To think your will should want the power to do.

_Leir._ Cease, good _Perillus_, for to call me Lord,
And think me but the shadow of myself.

_Perillus_ That honorable title will I give,
Unto my Lord, so long as I do live.
Oh, be of comfort; for I see the place
Whereas your daughter keeps her residence.
And lo, in happy time the Cambrian Prince
Is here arrived, to gratify our coming.

_Enter the Prince of Cambria, Ragan and Nobles: look
upon them, and whisper together._

_Leir._ Were I best speak, or sit me down and die?
I am ashamed to tell this heavy tale.

_Perillus_ Then let me tell it, if you please, my Lord:
’Tis shame for them that were the cause thereof.

_Cambria_ What two old men are those that seem so sad?
Methinks, I should remember well their looks.

_Ragan_ No, I mistake not, sure it is my father:
I must dissemble kindness now of force.

_She runneth to him, and kneels down, saying:_

Father, I bid you welcome, full of grief,
To see your Grace used thus unworthily,
And ill befitting for your reverend age,
To come on foot a journey so indurable.
Oh, what disaster chance hath been the cause,
To make your cheeks so hollow, spare and lean?

He cannot speak for weeping: for God’s love, come,
Let us refresh him with some needful things,
And at more leisure we may better know,
Whence springs the ground of this unlooked-for woe.

_Cambria_ Come, father, ere we any further talk,
You shall refresh you after this weary walk.

_Ragan_ Comes he to me with finger in the eye,
To tell a tale against my sister here?
Whom I do know, he greatly hath abused:
And now like a contentious crafty wretch,
He first begins for to complain himself,
Whenas himself is in the greatest fault.
I’l not be partial in my sister’s cause,
Nor yet believe his doting vain reports:
Who for a trifle (safely) I dare say,
Upon a spleen is stolen thence away:
And here (forsooth) he hopeth to have harbor,
And to be moaned and made on like a child:
But ere ’t be long, his coming he shall curse,
And truly say, he came from bad to worse:
Yet will I make fair weather, to procure
Convenient means, and then i’ll strike it sure.

Exit.

*Enter Messenger solus.*

*Messenger* Now happily I am arrived here,
Before the stately Palace of the Cambrian King:
If *Leir* be here safe-seated, and in rest,
To rouse him from it I will do my best.

*Enter Ragan.*

Now bags of gold, your virtue is (no doubt)
To make me in my message bold and stout.
The King of heaven preserve your Majesty.
And send your Highness everlasting reign.

*Ragan* Thanks, good my friend; but what imports thy message?

*Messenger* Kind greetings from the Cornwall Queen:
The residue these letters will declare.

*She opens the letters.*

*Ragan* How fares our royal sister?

*Messenger* I did leave her at my parting, in good health.

*She reads the letter, frowns and stamps.*

See how her color comes and goes again,
Now red as scarlet, now as pale as ash:
She how she knits her brow, and bites her lips,
And stamps, and makes a dumb show of disdain,
Mixed with revenge, and violent extremes.
Here will be more work and more crowns for me.

*Ragan* Alas, poor soul, and hath he used her thus?
And is he now come hither, with intent
To set divorce betwixt my Lord and me?
Doth he give out, that he doth hear report,
That I do rule my husband as I list,
And therefore means to alter so the case,
That I shall know my Lord to be my head?
Well, it were best for him to take good heed,
Or I will make him hop without a head,
For his presumption, dotard that he is.
In Cornwall he hath made such mutinies,
First, setting of the King against the Queen;
Then stirring up the Commons ’gainst the King;
That had he there continued any longer,
He had been called in question for his fact.
So upon that occasion thence he fled,
And comes thus slyly stealing unto us:
And now already since his coming hither,
My Lord and he are grown in such a league,
That I can have no conference with his Grace:
I fear, he doth already intimate
Some forged cavillations ’gainst my state:
’Tis therefore best to cut him off in time,
Lest slanderous rumors once abroad dispersed,
It is too late for them to be reversed.
Friend, as the tenor of these letters shows,
My sister puts great confidence in thee.

    Messenger    She never yet committed trust to me,
But that (I hope) she found me always faithful:
So will I be to any friend of hers,
That hath occasion to employ my help.

    Ragan    Hast thou the heart to act a stratagem,
And give a stab or two, if need require?

    Messenger    I have a heart compact of Adamant,
Which never knew what melting pity meant.
I weigh no more the murd’ring of a man,
Than I respect the cracking of a Flea,
When I do catch her biting on my skin.
If you will have your husband or your father,
Or both of them sent to another world,
Do but command me do ’t, it shall be done.

    Ragan    It is enough, we make no doubt of thee:
Meet us tomorrow here, at nine o’clock:
Meanwhile, farewell, and drink that for my sake.

    Messenger    Ay, this is it will make me do the deed:
Oh, had I every day such customers,
This were the gainful’st trade in Christendom!
A purse of gold given for a paltry stab!
Why, here’s a wench that longs to have a stab.
Well, I could give it her, and ne’er hurt her neither.

    Enter the Gallian King, and Cordella.

    King of Gallia    When will these clouds of sorrow once disperse,
And smiling joy triumph upon thy brow?
When will this Scene of sadness have an end,
And pleasant acts ensue, to move delight?
When will my lovely Queen cease to lament,
And take some comfort to her grieved thoughts?
If of thyself thou deign’st to have no care,
Yet pity me, whom thy grief makes despair.

    Cordella    O, grieve not you, my Lord, you have no cause.
Let not my passions move your mind a whit:
For I am bound by nature, to lament
For his ill will, that life to me first lent.
If so the stock be dried with disdain,
Withered and sere the branch must needs remain.

    King of Gallia    But thou art now graft in another stock;
I am the stock, and thou the lovely branch:
And from my root continual sap shall flow,
To make thee flourish with perpetual spring.
Forget thy father and thy kindred now,
Since they forsake thee like inhuman beasts,
Think they are dead, since all their kindness dies,
And bury them, where black oblivion lies.
Think not thou art the daughter of old Leir,
Who did unkindly disinherit thee:
But think thou art the noble Gallian Queen,
And wife to him that dearly loveth thee:
Embrace the joys that present with thee dwell,
Let sorrow pack and hide herself in hell.

Cordella  Not that I miss my country or my kin,
My old acquaintance or my ancient friends,
Doth any whit distemperate my mind,
Knowing you, which are more dear to me,
Than Country, kin, and all things else can be.
Yet pardon me, my gracious Lord, in this:
For what can stop the course of nature's power?
As easy is it for fourfooted beasts,
To stay themselves upon the liquid air,
And mount aloft into the element,
And overstrip the feathered Fowls in flight:
As easy is it for the slimy Fish,
To live and thrive without the help of water:
As easy is it for the Blackamoor,
To wash the tawny color from his skin,
Which all oppose against the course of nature,
As I am able to forget my father.

King of Gallia  Mirror of virtue, Phoenix of our age!
Too kind a daughter for an unkind father,
Be of good comfort; for I will dispatch
Ambassadors immediately for Britain,
Unto the King of Cornwall's Court, whereas
Your father keepeth now his residence,
And in the kindest manner him entreat,
That setting former grievances apart,
He will be pleased to come and visit us.
If no entreaty will suffice the turn,
I'll offer him the half of all my Crown:
If that moves not, we'll furnish out a Fleet,

And sail to Cornwall for to visit him;
And there you shall be firmly reconciled
In perfect love, as erst you were before.

Cordella  Where tongue cannot sufficient thanks afford,
The King of heaven remunerate my Lord.

King of Gallia  Only be blithe, and frolic (sweet) with me:
This and much more i'll do to comfort thee.

Enter Messenger solus.

Messenger  It is a world to see now I am flush,
How many friends I purchase everywhere!
Enter Ragan.

Ragan  My friend, I see thou mind'st thy promise well,
And art before me here, methinks, today.

Messenger  I am a poor man, and it like your Grace;
But yet I always love to keep my word.

Ragan  Well, keep thy word with me, and thou shalt see,
That of a poor man I will make thee rich.

Messenger  I long to hear it, it might have been dispatched,
If you had told me of it yesternight.

Ragan  It is a thing of right strange consequence,
And well I cannot utter it in words.

Messenger  It is more strange, that I am not by this
Beside myself, with longing for to hear it.
Were it to meet the Devil in his den,
And try a bout with him for a scratched face,
I’d undertake it, if you would but bid me.

Ragan  Ah, good my friend, that I should have thee do,
Is such a thing, as I do shame to speak;
Yet it must needs be done.

Messenger  I’ll speak it for thee, Queen: shall I kill thy father?
I know ’tis that, and if it be so, say.  Ragan  Ay.

Messenger  Why, that’s enough.

Ragan  And yet that is not all.

Messenger  What else?

Ragan  Thou must kill that old man that came with him.

Messenger  Here are two hands, for each of them is one.

Ragan  And for each hand here is a recompense
Give him two purses.

Messenger  Oh, that I had ten hands by miracle,
I could tear ten in pieces with my teeth,
So in my mouth you’d put a purse of gold.
But in what manner must it be effected?

Ragan  Tomorrow morning ere the break of day,
I by a wile will send them to the thicket,
That is about some two miles from the Court,
And promise them to meet them there myself,
Because I must have private conference,
About some news I have received from Cornwall.
This is enough, I know, they will not fail,
And then be ready for to play thy part:
Which done, thou mayst right easily escape,
And no man once mistrust thee for the fact:
But yet, before thou prosecute the act,
Show him the letter, which my sister sent,
There let him read his own indictment first,
And then proceed to execution:
But see thou faint not; for they will speak fair.

_Messenger_ Could he speak words as pleasing as the pipe
Of _Mercury_, which charmed the hundred eyes
Of watchful _Argos_, and enforced him sleep:
Yet here are words so pleasing to my thoughts,
As quite shall take away the sound of his.

_Ragan_ About it then, and when thou hast dispatched,
I'll find a means to send thee after him.

_Enter Cornwall and Gonoril._

_Cornwall_ I wonder that the Messenger doth stay,
Whom we dispatched for Cambria so long since:
If that his answer do not please us well,
And he do show good reason for delay,
I'll teach him how to dally with his King,
And to detain us in such long suspense.

_Gonoril_ My Lord, I think the reason may be this:
My father means to come along with him,

And therefore 'tis his pleasure he shall stay,
For to attend upon him on the way.

_Cornwall_ It may be so, and therefore till I know
The truth thereof, I will suspend my judgement.

_Enter Servant._

_Servant_ An 't like your Grace, there is an Ambassador
Arrived from Gallia, and craves admittance to your Majesty.

_Cornwall_ From Gallia? what should his message
Hither import? is not your father haply
Gone thither? well, whatsoe’er it be,
Bid him come in, he shall have audience.

_Enter Ambassador._

_ Ambassador_ The noble King and Queen of Gallia first salutes,
By me, their honorable father, my Lord _Leir_:
Next, they commend them kindly to your Graces,
As those whose welfare they entirely wish,
Letters I have to deliver to my Lord _Leir_,
And presents too, if I might speak with him.

_Gonoril_ If you might speak with him? why, do you think,
We are afraid that you should speak with him?

_Ambassador_ Pardon me, Madam; for I think not so,
But say so only, 'cause he is not here.

_Cornwall_ Indeed, my friend, upon some urgent cause,
He is at this time absent from the Court:
But if a day or two you here repose.
'Tis very likely you shall have him here,
Or else have certain notice where he is.

_Gonoril_ Are not we worthy to receive your message?

_Ambassador_ I had in charge to do it to himself.
Gonoril. It may be then 'twill not be done in haste. to herself.

How doth my sister brook the air of France?

Ambassador. Exceeding well, and never sick one hour,

Since first she set her foot upon the shore.

Gonoril. I am the more sorry.

Ambassador. I hope, not so, Madam.

Gonoril. Didst thou not say, that she was ever sick,

Since the first hour that she arrived there?

Ambassador. No, Madam, I said quite contrary.

Gonoril. Then I mistook thee.

Cornwall. Then she is merry, if she have her health.

Ambassador. Oh no, her grief exceeds, until the time,

That she be reconciled unto her father.

Gonoril. God continue it.

Ambassador. What, Madam?

Gonoril. Why, her health.

Ambassador. Amen to that: but God release her grief,

And send her father in a better mind,

Than to continue always so unkind.

Cornwall. I'll be a mediator in her cause,

And seek all means to expiate his wrath.

Ambassador. Madam, I hope your Grace will do the like.

Gonoril. Should I be a mean to exasperate his wrath

Against my sister, whom I love so dear? no, no.

Ambassador. To expiate or mitigate his wrath:

For he hath misconceived without a cause.

Gonoril. O, Ay, what else?

Ambassador. 'Tis pity it should be so, would it were otherwise.

Gonoril. It were great pity it should be otherwise.

Ambassador. Then how, Madam?

Gonoril. Then that they should be reconciled again.

Ambassador. It shows you bear an honorable mind.

Gonoril. It shows thy understanding to be blind, Speaks to herself.

And that thou hadst need of an Interpreter:

Well, I will know thy message ere 't be long,

And find a mean to cross it, if I can.

Cornwall. Come in, my friend, and frolic in our Court,

Till certain notice of my father come. Exeunt.

Enter Leir and Perillus.

Perillus. My Lord, you are up today before your hour,

'Tis news to you to be abroad so rathe.

Leir. 'Tis news indeed, I am so extreme heavy,

That I can scarcely keep my eyelids open.

Perillus. And so am I, but I impute the cause

To rising sooner than we use to do.

Leir. Hither my daughter means to come disguised:
I'll sit me down, and read until she come.

*Pull out a book and sit down.*

Perillus She’ll not be long, I warrant you, my Lord:
But say, a couple of these they call good fellows,
Should step out of a hedge, and set upon us,
We were in good case for to answer them.

Leir. Twere not for us to stand upon our hands.

Perillus I fear, we scant should stand upon our legs.
But how should we do to defend ourselves?

Leir. Even pray to God, to bless us from their hands:
For fervent prayer much ill hap withstands.

Perillus I’ll sit and pray with you for company;
Yet was I ne’er so heavy in my life.

They fall both asleep.

*Enter the Messenger or murderer with two daggers in his hands.*

Perillus Were it not a mad jest, if two or three of my profession
should meet me, and lay me down in a ditch, and play rob
thief with me, and perforce take my gold away from me, whilst
I act this stratagem, and by this means the gray beards should
escape? Faith, when I were at liberty again, I would make no
more to do, but go to the next tree, and there hang myself.

See them and start.

But stay, methinks, my youths are here already,
And with pure zeal have prayed themselves asleep.
I think, they know to what intent they came,
And are provided for another world.

He takes their books away.

Now could I stab them bravely, while they sleep,
And in a manner put them to no pain;
And doing so, I showed them mighty friendship:
For fear of death is worse than death itself:
But that my sweet Queen willed me for to show
This letter to them, ere I did the deed.
Mass, they begin to stir: i’ll stand aside;
So shall I come upon them unawares.

They wake and rise.

Leir. I marvel, that my daughter stays so long.

Perillus I fear, we did mistake the place, my Lord.

Leir. God grant we do not miscarry in the place:
I had a short nap, but so full of dread,
As much amazeth me to think thereof.

Perillus Fear not, my Lord, dreams are but fantasies,
And slight imaginations of the brain.

Messenger Persuade him so; but i’ll make him and you
Confess, that dreams do often prove too true.
Perillus  I pray, my Lord, what was the effect of it?
I may go near to guess what it pretends.

Messenger  Leave that to me, I will expound the dream.

Leir.  Methought, my daughters, Gonoril and Ragan,
Stood both before me with such grim aspects,
Each brandishing a Falchion in their hand,
Ready to lop a limb off where it fell,
And in their other hands a naked poniard,
Wherewith they stabbed me in a hundred places,
And to their thinking left me there for dead:
But then my youngest daughter, fair Cordella,
Came with a box of Balsam in her hand,
And poured it into my bleeding wounds,
By whose good means I was recovered well,
In perfect health, as erst I was before:
And with the fear of this I did awake,
And yet for fear my feeble joints do quake.

Messenger  I’ll make you quake for something presently.

Stand, Stand.  They reel.

Leir.  We do, my friend, although with much ado.

Messenger  Deliver, deliver.

Perillus  Deliver us, good Lord, from such as he.

Messenger  You should have prayed before, while it was time,
And then perhaps, you might have scape my hands:
But you, like faithful watchmen, fell asleep,
The whilst I came and took your Halberds from you.

Show their Books.

And now you want your weapons of defense,
How have you any hope to be delivered?
This comes, because you have no better stay,

But fall asleep, when you should watch and pray.

Leir.  My friend, thou seem’st to be a proper man.

Messenger  ’Sblood, how the old slave claws me by the elbow?
He thinks, belike, to scape by scraping thus.

Perillus  And it may be, are in some need of money.

Messenger  That to be false, behold my evidence.

Shows his purses.

Leir.  If that I have will do thee any good,
I give it thee, even with a right good will.

Perillus  Here, take mine too, and wish with all my heart,
To do thee pleasure, it were twice as much.

Take his, and weigh them both in his hands.

Messenger  I’ll none of them, they are too light for me.

Puts them in his pocket.

Leir.  Why then farewell: and if thou have occasion
In any thing, to use me to the Queen,
’Tis like enough that I can pleasure thee.

They proffer to go.
Proffer to go.

Proffer to go out.

Leir.  Ay, any thing that lies within my power.  Here is my hand upon it, so farewell.

Messenger  Hear you sir, hear you? pray, a word with you.

Methinks, a comely honest ancient man
Should not dissemble with one for a vantage.
I know, when I shall come to try this gear,
You will recant from all that you have said.

Perillus  Mistrust not him, but try him when thou wilt:
He is her father, therefore may do much.

Messenger  I know he is, and therefore mean to try him:
You are his friend too, I must try you both.

Ambo.  Prithee do, prithee do.  Proffer to go out.

Messenger  Stay gray-beards then, and prove men of your words:
The Queen hath tied me by a solemn oath,
Here in this place to see you both dispatched:
Now for the safeguard of my conscience,
Do me the pleasure for to kill yourselves:

So shall you save me labor for to do it,
And prove yourselves true old men of your words.
And here I vow in sight of all the world,
I ne’er will trouble you whilst I live again.

Leir.  Affright us not with terror, good my friend,
Nor strike such fear into our aged hearts.
Play not the Cat, which dallieth with the mouse;
And on a sudden maketh her a prey:
But if thou art marked for the man of death
To me and to my Damon, tell me plain,
That we may be prepared for the stroke,
And make ourselves fit for the world to come.

Messenger  I am the last of any mortal race,
That e’er your eyes are likely to behold,
And hither sent of purpose to this place,
To give a final period to your days,
Which are so wicked, and have lived so long,
That your own children seek to short your life.

Leir.  Cam’st thou from France, of purpose to do this?

Messenger  From France? ’zoons, do I look like a Frenchman?
Sure I have not mine own face on; somebody hath changed
faces with me, and I know not of it: But I am sure, my apparel
is all English. Sirrah, what meanest thou to ask that question?
I could spoil the fashion of this face for anger. A French face!

Leir.  Because my daughter, whom I have offended,
And at whose hands I have deserved as ill,
As ever any father did of child,
Is Queen of France, no thanks at all to me,
But unto God, who my injustice see.
If it be so, that she doth seek revenge,
As with good reason she may justly do,
I will most willingly resign my life,
A sacrifice to mitigate her ire:
I never will entreat thee to forgive,
Because I am unworthy for to live.
Therefore speak soon, and I will soon make speed:
Whether Cordella willed thee do this deed?

    Messenger       As I am a perfect gentleman, thou speak’st French to me:

I never heard Cordella’s name before,
Nor never was in France in all my life:
I never knew thou hadst a daughter there,
To whom thou didst prove so unkind a churl:
But thy own tongue declares that thou hast been
A vile old wretch, and full of heinous sin.

    Leir.        Ah no, my friend, thou art deceived much:
For her except, whom I confess I wronged,
Through doting frenzy, and o’er-jealous love.
There lives not any under heaven’s bright eye,
That can convict me of impiety.
And therefore sure thou dost mistake the mark:
For I am in true peace with all the world.

    Messenger       You are the fitter for the King of heaven:
And therefore, for to rid thee of suspense,
Know thou, the Queens of Cambria and Cornwall,
Thy own two daughters, Gonoril and Ragan,
Appointed me to massacre thee here.
Why wouldst thou then persuade me, that thou art
In charity with all the world? but now
When thy own issue hold thee in such hate,
That they have hired me t’ abridge thy fate,
Oh, fie upon such vile dissembling breath,
That would deceive, even at the point of death.

    Perillus       Am I awake, or is it but a dream?
    Messenger       Fear nothing, man, thou art but in a dream,
And thou shalt never wake until doomsday,
By then, I hope, thou wilt have slept enough.

    Leir.        Yet, gentle friend, grant one thing ere I die.
    Messenger       I’ll grant you any thing, except your lives.

    Leir.        Oh, but assure me by some certain token,
That my two daughters hired thee to this deed:
If I were once resolved of that, then I
Would wish no longer life, but crave to die.

    Messenger       That to be true, in sight of heaven I swear.

    Leir.        Swear not by heaven, for fear of punishment:
The heavens are guiltless of such heinous acts.

    Messenger       I swear by earth, the mother of us all.
Leir.  Swear not by earth; for she abhors to bear
Such bastards, as are murderers of her sons.

Messenger  Why then, by hell, and all the devils I swear.
Leir.  Swear not by hell; for that stands gaping wide,
To swallow thee, and if thou do this deed.

Thunder and lightning.

Messenger  I would that word were in his belly again,
It hath frightened me even to the very heart:
This old man is some strong Magician:
His words have turned my mind from this exploit.
Then neither heaven, earth, nor hell be witness;
But let this paper witness for them all.

Shows Gonoril's letter.

Shall I relent, or shall I prosecute?
Shall I resolve, or were I best recant?
I will not crack my credit with two Queens,
To whom I have already passed my word.
Oh, but my conscience for this act doth tell,
I get heaven’s hate, earth’s scorn, and pains of hell.

They bless themselves.

Perillus  Oh just Jehovah, whose almighty power
Doth govern all things in this spacious world,
How canst thou suffer such outrageous acts
To be committed without just revenge?
O viperous generation and accursed,
To seek his blood, whose blood did make them first!

Leir.  Ah, my true friend in all extremity,
Let us submit us to the will of God:
Things past all sense, let us not seek to know;
It is God's will, and therefore must be so.
My friend, I am prepared for the stroke:
Strike when thou wilt, and I forgive thee here,
Even from the very bottom of my heart.

Messenger  But I am not prepared for to strike.

Leir.  Farewell, Perillus, even the truest friend,
That ever lived in adversity:
The latest kindness i'll request of thee,
Is that thou go unto my daughter Cordella,

And carry her her father’s latest blessing:
Withal desire her, that she will forgive me;
For I have wronged her without any cause.
Now, Lord, receive me, for I come to thee,
And die, I hope, in perfect charity.
Dispatch, I pray thee, I have lived too long.

Messenger  Ay, but you are unwise, to send an errand
By him that never meaneth to deliver it:
Why, he must go along with you to heaven:
It were not good you should go all alone.

Leir. No doubt, he shall, when by the course of nature,
He must surrender up his due to death:
But that time shall not come, till God permit.

Messenger Nay, presently, to bear you company.
I have a Passport for him in my pocket,
Already sealed, and he must needs ride Post.

Show a bag of money.

Leir. The letter which I read, imports not so,
It only toucheth me, no word of him.

Messenger Ay, but the Queen commands it must be so,
And I am paid for him, as well as you.

Perillus I, who have borne you company in life,
Most willingly will bear a share in death.
It skilleth not for me, my friend, a whit,
Nor for a hundred such as thou and I.

Messenger Marry, but it doth, sir, by your leave; your good days
are past: though it be no matter for you, ’tis a matter for me,
proper men are not so rife.

Perillus Oh, but beware, how thou dost lay thy hand
Upon the high anointed of the Lord:
O, be advised ere thou dost begin:
Dispatch me straight, but meddle not with him.

Leir. Friend, thy commission is to deal with me,
And I am he that hath deserved all:
The plot was laid to take away my life:
And here it is, I do entreat thee take it:
Yet for my sake, and as thou art a man,
Spare this my friend, that hither with me came:

I brought him forth, whereas he had not been,
But for good will to bear me company.
He left his friends, his country and his goods,
And came with me in most extremity.
Oh, if he should miscarry here and die,
Who is the cause of it, but only I?

Messenger Why that am I, let that ne’er trouble thee.

Leir. O no, ’tis I. O, had I now to give thee
The monarchy of all the spacious world
To save his life, I would bestow it on thee:
But I have nothing but these tears and prayer,
And the submission of a bended knee.

Messenger I am as hard to be moved as another, and yet
methinks the strength of their persuasions stirs me
a little.
It thunders. He quakes, and lets fall the Dagger next to Perillus.

He lets fall the other dagger.

Perillus Oh, happy sight! He means to save my Lord.
The King of heaven continue this good mind.
Leir Why stay’st thou to do execution?

Perillus Ah, now I see thou hast some spark of grace.

Messenger Beshrew you for it, you have put it in me:
The parlouuest old men, that e’er I heard.
Well, to be flat, i’ll not meddle with you:
Here I found you, and here i’ll leave you:
If any ask you why the case so stands?
Say that your tongues were better than your hands.

Perillus Farewell. If ever we together meet,

Exit.

Leir Thou art deceived; for I am past the best,
And know not whither for to go from hence:
Death had been better welcome unto me,
Than longer life to add more misery.

Perillus It were not good to return from whence we came,
Unto your daughter Ragan back again.
Now let us go to France, unto Cordella,
Your youngest daughter, doubtless she will succor you.

Leir Oh, how can I persuade myself of that,
Since the other two are quite devoid of love;
To whom I was so kind, as that my gifts,
Might make them love me, if ’twere nothing else?

Perillus  No worldly gifts, but grace from God on high,
Doth nourish virtue and true charity.
Remember well what words Cordella spoke,
What time you asked her, how she loved your Grace.
She said, her love unto you was as much,
As ought a child to bear unto her father.

Leir.  But she did find, my love was not to her,
As should a father bear unto a child.

Perillus  That makes not her love to be any less,

If she do love you as a child should do:
You have tried two, try one more for my sake,
I’ll ne’er entreat you further trial make.
Remember well the dream you had of late,
And think what comfort it foretells to us.

Leir.  Come, truest friend, that ever man possessed,
I know thou counsel’st all things for the best:
If this third daughter play a kinder part,
It comes of God, and not of my desert.

Exeunt.

Enter the Gallian Ambassador solus.

Ambassador  There is of late news come unto the Court,
That old Lord Leir remains in Cambria:
I’ll hie me thither presently, to impart
My letters and my message unto him.
I never was less welcome to a place
In all my life time, than I have been hither,
Especially unto the stately Queen,
Who would not cast one gracious look on me,
But still with louring and suspicious eyes,
Would take exceptions at each word I spake,
And fain she would have undermined me,
To know what my Ambassage did import:
But she is like to hop without her hope,
And in this matter for to want her will,
Though (by report) she’ll have ’t in all things else.
Well, I will post away for Cambria:
Within these few days I hope to be there,

Exit.

Enter the King and Queen of Gallia, and Mumford.

King of Gallia.  By this, our father understands our mind,
And our kind greetings sent to him of late;
Therefore my mind presageth ere ’t be long,
We shall receive from Britain happy news.

Cordella  I fear, my sister will dissuade his mind;
For she to me hath always been unkind.

King of Gallia.  Fear not, my love, since that we know the worst,
The last means helps, if that we miss the first:
If he’ll not come to Gallia unto us,
Then we will sail to Britain unto him.

Mumford    Well, if I once see Britain again,  
I have sworn, i’l ne’er come home without my wench,  
And i’l not be forsworn,  
I’ll rather never come home while I live.

Cordella   Are you sure, Mumford, she is a maid still?  
Mumford    Nay, i’ll not swear she is a maid, but she goes for one:  
I’ll take her at all adventures, if I can get her.

Cordella   Ay, that’s well put in.

Mumford    Well put in? nay, it was ill put in; for had it  
Been as well put in, as e’re I put in, in my days,  
I would have made her follow me to France.

Cordella   Nay, you’d have been so kind, as take her with you,  
Or else, were I as she,  
I would have been so loving, as i’d stay behind you:  
Yet I must confess, you are a very proper man,  
And able to make a wench do more than she would do.

Mumford    Well, I have a pair of slops for the nonce,  
Will hold all your mocks.

King of Gallia.    Nay, we see you have a handsome hose.

Cordella   Ay, and of the newest fashion.

Mumford    More bobs, more: put them in still,  
They’ll serve instead of bombast, yet put not in too many,  
lest the seams crack, and they fly out amongst you again:  
you must not think to outface me so easily in my mistress’ quarrel,  
who if I see once again, ten team of horses shall  
not draw me away, till I have full and whole possession.

King of Gallia.    Ay, but one team and a cart will serve the turn.

Cordella   Not only for him, but also for his wench.

Mumford    Well, you are two to one, i’l give you over:  
And since I see you so pleasantly disposed,  
Which indeed is but seldom seen, i’l claim  
A promise of you, which you shall not deny me:  
For promise is debt, and by this hand you promised it me.  
Therefore you owe it me, and you shall pay it me,  
Or i’l sue you upon an action of unkindness.

King of Gallia.    Prithee, Lord Mumford, what promise did I make thee?  
Mumford    Faith, nothing but this,  
That the next fair weather, which is very now,

You would go in progress down to the seaside,  
Which is very near.

King of Gallia.    Faith, in this motion I will join with thee,  
And be a mediator to my Queen.  
Prithee, my Love, let this match go forward,  
My mind foretells, ’twill be a lucky voyage.
Cordella  Entreaty needs not, where you may command,
So you be pleased, I am right well content:
Yet, as the Sea I much desire to see;
So am I most unwilling to be seen.

King of Gallia.  We’ll go disguised, all unknown to any.

Cordella  Howsoever you make one, I’ll make another.

Mumford  and I the third: oh, I am overjoyed!

See what love is, which getteth with a word,
What all the world besides could ne’er obtain!
But what disguises shall we have, my Lord?

King of Gallia.  Faith thus: my Queen and I will be disguised,
Like a plain country couple, and you shall be Roger
Our man, and wait upon us: or if you will,
You shall go first, and we will wait on you.

Mumford  ’Twere more than time; this device is excellent.

Come le us about it.

Enter Cambria and Ragan, with Nobles.

Cambria  What strange mischance or unexpected hap
Hath thus deprived us of our father’s presence?
Can no man tell us what’s become of him,
With whom we did converse not two days since?
My Lords, let everywhere light horse be sent,
To scour about through all our Regiment.
Dispatch a Post immediately to Cornwall,
To see if any news be of him there;
Myself will make a strict inquiry here,
And all about our Cities near at hand,
Till certain news of his abode be brought.

Ragan  All sorrow is but counterfeit to mine,
Whose lips are almost sealed up with grief:
Mine is the substance, whilst they do but seem
To weep the less, which tears cannot redeem.

O, ne’er was heard so strange a misadventure,
A thing so far beyond the reach of sense,
Since no man’s reason in the cause can enter.
What hath removed my father thus from hence?
O, I do fear some charm or invocation
Of wicked spirits, or infernal fiends,
Stirred by Cordella, moves this innovation,
And brings my father timeless to his end.
But might I know, that the detested Witch
Were certain cause of this uncertain ill,
Myself to France would go in some disguise,
And with these nails scratch out her hateful eyes:
For since I am deprived of my father,
I loathe my life, and wish my death the rather.

Cambria  The heavens are just, and hate impiety,
And will (no doubt) reveal such heinous crimes:
Enter the Gallian Ambassador.

Ragan O, but my grief, like to a swelling tide,
Exceeds the bounds of common patience:
Nor can I moderate my tongue so much,
To conceal them, whom I hold in suspect.

Cambria This matter shall be sifted: if it be she,
A thousand Frances shall not harbor her.

Ambassador All happiness unto the Cambrian King.

Cambria Welcome, my friend, from whence is thy Ambassage?

Ambassador I came from Gallia, unto Cornwall sent,
With letters to your honorable father,
Whom there not finding, as I did expect,
I was directed hither to repair.

Ragan Frenchman, what is thy message to my father?

Ambassador My letters, Madam, will import the same,
Which my Commission is for to deliver.

Ragan In his absence you may trust us with your letters.

Ambassador I must perform my charge in such a manner,
As I have strict commandment from the King.

Ragan There is good packing twixt your King and you:

You need not hither come to ask for him,
You know where he is better than ourselves.

Ambassador Madam, I hope, not far off.

Ragan Hath the young murd’ress, your outrageous Queen,
No means to color her detested deeds,
In finishing my guiltless father’s days,
(Because he gave her nothing to her dower)
But by the color of a feigned Ambassage,
To send him letters hither to our Court?
Go carry them to them that sent them hither,
And bid them keep their scrolls unto themselves,
They cannot blind us with such slight excuse,
To smother up so monstrous wild abuse.
And were it not, it is ’gainst law of Arms,
To offer violence to a Messenger,
We would inflict such torments on thyself,
As should enforce thee to reveal the truth.

Ambassador Madam, your threats no whit appall my mind,
I know my conscience guiltless of this act;
My King and Queen, I dare be sworn, are free
From any thought of such impiety:
And therefore, Madam, you have done them wrong,
And ill beseeming with a sister’s love,
Who in mere duty tender him as much,
As ever you respected him for dower.
The King your husband will not say as much.
Cambria  I will suspend my judgement for a time,
Till more appearance give us further light:
Yet to be plain, your coming doth enforce
A great suspicion to our doubtful mind,
And that you do resemble, to be brief,
Him that first robs, and then cries, Stop the thief.

Ambassador  Pray God some near you have not done the like.

Ragan  Hence, saucy mate, reply no more to us;  
For law of Arms shall not protect thy tongue.

Ambassador  Ne’er was I offered such discourtesy;
God and my King, I trust, ere it be long,
Will find a mean to remedy this wrong,

Exit Ambassador

Ragan  How shall I live, to suffer this disgrace,
At every base and vulgar peasant’s hands?
It ill befitteth my imperial state,
To be thus used, and no man take my part.

Cambria  What should I do? infringe the law of Arms,
Were to my everlasting obloquy:
But I will take revenge upon his master,
Which sent him hither, to delude us thus.

Ragan  Nay, if you put up this, be sure, ere long,
Now that my father thus is made away.
She’ll come and claim a third part of your Crown,
As due unto her by inheritance.

Cambria  But I will prove her title to be naught
But shame, and the reward of Parricide,
And make her an example to the world,
For after-ages to admire her penance.
This will I do, as I am Cambria’s King,
Or lose my life, to prosecute revenge.
Come, first let’s learn what news is of our father,
And then proceed, as best occasion fits.

Enter Leir, Perillus, and two Mariners, in sea-gowns
and sea-caps.

Perillus  My honest friends, we are ashamed to show
The great extremity of our present state,
In that at this time we are brought so low,
That we want money for to pay our passage.
The truth is so, we met with some good fellows,
A little before we came aboard your ship,
Which stripped us quite of all the coin we had,
And left us not a penny in our purses:
Yet wanting money, we will use the mean,
To see you satisfied to the uttermost.

1. Mariner  Here’s a good gown, ‘twould become me passing well,
I should be fine in it.

Look on Leir.

2. Mariner  Here’s a good cloak, I marvel how I should look in it.

Look on Perillus.

Leir.  Faith, had we others to supply their room,
Though ne’er so mean, you willingly should have them.

1. Mariner  Do you hear, sir? you look like an honest man;

I’ll not stand to do you a pleasure: here’s a good strong motley gaberline, cost me fourteen good shillings at Billingsgate, give me your gown for it, and your cap for mine, and i’ll forgive your passage.

Leir.  With all my heart, and twenty thanks. Leir and he changeth.

2. Mariner  Do you hear, sir? you shall have a better match than he, because you are my friend: here is a good sheep’s russet sea-gown, will bide more stress, I warrant you, than two of his, yet for you seem to be an honest gentleman, I am content to change it for your cloak, and ask you nothing for your passage more.

Pull off Perillus’ cloak.

Perillus  My own I willingly would change with thee, And think myself indebted to thy kindness: But would my friend might keep his garment still. My friend, i’ll give thee this new doublet, if thou wilt Restore his gown unto him back again.

1. Mariner  Nay, if I do, would I might ne’er eat powdered beef and mustard more, nor drink Can of good liquor whilst I live. My friend, you have small reason to seek to hinder me of my bargain: but the best is, a bargain’s a bargain.

Leir.  Kind friend, it is much better as it is;  Leir to Perillus. For by this means we may escape unknown; Till time and opportunity do fit.

2. Mariner  Hark, hark, they are laying their heads together, They’ll repent them of their bargain anon, ’Twere best for us to go while we are well.

1. Mariner  God be with you, sir, for your passage back again, I’ll use you as unreasonable as another.

Leir.  I know thou wilt; but we hope to bring ready money With us, when we come back again.  Exeunt Mariners.

Were ever men in this extremity, In a strange country, and devoid of friends, And not a penny for to help ourselves? Kind friend, what think’st thou will become of us?

Perillus  Be of good cheer, my Lord, I have a doublet, Will yield us money enough to serve our turns, Until we come unto your daughter’s Court: And then, I hope, we shall find friends enough.

Leir.  Ah, kind Perillus, that is it I fear,

And makes me faint, or ever I come there.
Can kindness spring out of ingratitude? Or love be reaped, where hatred hath been sown? Can Henbane join in league with Mithridate? Or Sugar grow in Wormwood’s bitter stalk?
Exeunt.

Enter the Gallian King and Queen, and Mumford, with a basket, disguised like Country folk.

King of Gallia. This tedious journey all on foot, sweet Love, Cannot be pleasing to your tender joints, Which ne’er were used to these toilsome walks.

Cordella I never in my life took more delight In any journey, than I do in this: It did me good, whenas we happed to light Amongst the merry crew of country folk,

It cannot be, they are too opposite: And so am I to any kindness here.

I have thrown Wormwood on the sugared youth, And like to Henbane poisoned the Fount,

Whence flowed the Mithridate of a child’s goodwill: I, like an envious thorn, have pricked the heart, And turned sweet Grapes, to sour unrelished Sloes:

The causeless ire of my respectless breast, Hath soured the sweet milk of dame Nature’s paps:

My bitter words have galled her honey thoughts, And weeds of rancor choked the flower of grace. Then what remainder is of any hope, But all our fortunes will go quite aslope?

Perillus Fear not, my Lord, the perfect good indeed, Can never be corrupted by the bad:

A new fresh vessel still retains the taste Of that which first is poured into the same:

And therefore, though you name yourself the thorn, The weed, the gall, the henbane and the wormwood; Yet she’ll continue in her former state, The honey, milk, Grape, Sugar, Mithridate.

Leir Thou pleasing Orator unto me in woe, Cease to beguile me with thy hopeful speeches:

O join with me, and think of naught but crosses, And then we’ll one lament another’s losses.

Perillus Why, say the worst, the worst can be but death, And death is better than for to despair:

Then hazard death, which may convert to life; Banish despair, which brings a thousand deaths.

Leir O’ercome with thy strong arguments, I yield, To be directed by thee, as thou wilt:

As thou yield’st comfort to my crazed thoughts, Would I could yield the like unto thy body, Which is full weak, I know, and ill apaid,

For want of fresh meat and due sustenance.

Perillus Alack, my Lord, my heart doth bleed, to think That you should be in such extremity.

Leir Come, let us go, and see what God will send; When all means fail, he is the surest friend.

Enter the Gallian King and Queen, and Mumford, with a basket, disguised like Country folk.

Exeunt.
To see what industry and pains they took,
To win them commendations 'mongst their friends.
Lord, how they labor to bestir themselves,
And in their quirks to go beyond the Moon,
And so take on them with such antic fits,
That one would think they were beside their wits!
Come away, Roger, with your basket.

Mumford Soft, Dame, here comes a couple of old youths,
I must needs make myself fat with jesting at them.

Cordella Nay, prithee do not, they do seem to be
Men much o'ergone with grief and misery.
Let's stand aside, and harken what they say.

Leir. Ah, my Perillus, now I see we both
Shall end our days in this untrustful soil.
Oh, I do faint for want of sustenance:
And thou, I know, in little better case.
No gentle tree affords one taste of fruit,
To comfort us, until we meet with men:
No lucky path conducts our luckless steps
Unto a place where any comfort dwells.
Sweet rest betide unto our happy souls;
For here I see our bodies must have end.

Perillus Ah, my dear Lord, how doth my heart lament,
To see you brought to this extremity!
O, if you love me, as you do profess,
Or ever thought well of me in my life,
Feed on this flesh, whose veins are not so dry,
But there is virtue left to comfort you.
O, feed on this, if this will do you good,
I'll smile for joy, to see you suck my blood.

Leir. I am no Cannibal, that I should delight
To slake my hungry jaws with human flesh:
I am no devil, or ten times worse than so,
To suck the blood of such a peerless friend.
O, do not think that I respect my life
So dearly, as I do thy loyal love.
Ah, Britain, I shall never see thee more,
That hast unkindly banished thy King:
And yet not thou dost make me to complain,
But they which were more near to me than thou.

Cordella What do I hear: this lamentable voice,
Methinks, ere now I oftentimes have heard.

Leir. Ah, Gonoril, was half my Kingdom's gift
The cause that thou didst seek to have my life?
Ah, cruel Ragan, did I give thee all,
And all could not suffice without my blood?
Ah, poor Cordella, did I give thee naught,
Nor never shall be able for to give?
O, let me warn all ages that ensueth,
How they trust flattery, and reject the truth.
Well, unkind Girls, I here forgive you both,
Yet the just heavens will hardly do the like;
And only crave forgiveness at the end
Of good Cordella, and of thee, my friend;
Of God, whose Majesty I have offended,
By my transgression many thousand ways:
Of her, dear heart, whom I for no occasion
Turned out of all, through flatterers’ persuasion:
Of thee, kind friend, who but for me, I know,
Hadst never come unto this place of woe.

Cordella  Alack, that ever I should live to see
My noble father in this misery.

King of Gallia.  Sweet Love, reveal not what thou art as yet,
Until we know the ground of all this ill.

Cordella  O, but some meat, some meat: do you not see,
How near they are to death for want of food?

Perillus  Lord, which didst help they servants at their need,
Or now or never send us help with speed.
Oh comfort, comfort! yonder is a banquet,
And men and women, my Lord: be of good cheer;
For I see comfort coming very near.
O my Lord, a banquet, and men and women!

Leir.  O, let kind pity mollify their hearts,
That they may help us in our great extremes.

Perillus  God save you, friends; and if this blessed banquet
Affordeth any food or sustenance,
Even for his sake that saved us all from death,
Vouchsafe to save us from the gripe of famine.  She bringeth him
to the table

Cordella  Here father, sit and eat, here, sit and drink:
And would it were far better for your sakes.

Perillus takes Leir by the hand to the table.

Perillus  I’ll give you thanks anon: my friend doth faint,
And needeth present comfort.

Mumford  I warrant, he ne’er stays to say grace:
O, there’s no sauce to a good stomach.

Perillus  The blessed God of heaven hath thought upon us.

Leir.  The thanks be his, and these kind courteous folk,
By whose humanity we are preserved.

Cordella  And may that draught be unto him, as was drinks.

That which old Aeson drank, which did renew
His withered age, and made him young again.
And may that meat be unto him, as was
That which Elias ate, in strength whereof
He walked forty days, and never fainted.
Shall I conceal me longer from my father?
Or shall I manifest myself to him?
King of Gallia.  Forbear a while, until his strength return,
Lest being overjoyed with seeing thee,
His poor weak senses should forsake their office,
And so our cause of joy be turned to sorrow.

Perillus  What cheer, my Lord? how do you feel yourself?

Leir.  Methinks, I never ate such savory meat:
It is as pleasant as the blessed Manna,

That rained from heaven amongst the Israelites:
It hath recalled my spirits home again,
And made me fresh, as erst I was before.
But how shall we congratulate their kindness?

Perillus  In faith, I know not how sufficiently;
But the best mean that I can think on, is this:
I’ll offer them my doublet in requital;
For we have nothing else to spare.

Leir.  Nay, stay, Perillus, for they shall have mine.

Perillus  Pardon, my Lord, I swear they shall have mine.

Perillus proffers his doublet: they will not take it.

Leir.  Ah, who would think such kindness should remain
Among such strange and unacquainted men:
And that such hate should harbor in the breast
Of those, which have occasion to be best?

Cordella  Ah, good old father, tell to me thy grief,
I’ll sorrow with thee, if not add relief.

Leir.  Ah, good young daughter, I may call thee so;
For thou art like a daughter I did owe.

Cordella  Do you not owe her still? what, is she dead?

Leir.  No, God forbid: but all my interest’s gone,
By showing myself too much unnatural:
So have I lost the title of a father,
and may be called a stranger to her rather.

Cordella  Your title’s good still; for ’tis always known,
A man may do as him list with his own.
But have you but one daughter then in all?

Leir.  Yes, I have more by two, than would I had.

Cordella  O, say not so, but rather see the end:
They that are bad, may have the grace to mend:
But how have they offended you so much?

Leir.  If from the first I should relate the cause,
’Twould make a heart of Adamant to weep;
And thou, poor soul, kind-hearted as thou art,
Dost weep already, ere I do begin.

Cordella  For God’s love tell it, and when you have done,
I’ll tell the reason why I weep so soon.

Leir.  Then know this first, I am a Briton born,
and had three daughters by one loving wife:
And though I say it, of beauty they were sped;  
Especially the youngest of the three,  
For her perfections hardly matched could be:  
On these I doted with a jealous love,  
And thought to try which of them loved me best,  
By asking them, which would do most for me?  
The first and second flattered me with words,  
And vowed they loved me better than their lives:  
The youngest said, she loved me as a child  
Might do: her answer I esteemed most vild,  
And presently in an outrageous mood,  
I turned her from me to go sink or swim:  
And all I had, even to the very clothes,  
I gave in dowry with the other two:  
And she that best deserved the greatest share,  
I gave her nothing, but disgrace and care.

Now mark the sequel: When I had done thus,  
I sojourned in my eldest daughter’s house,  
Where for a time I was entreated well,  
And lived in state sufficing my content:  
But every day her kindness did grow cold,  
Which I with patience put up well enough,  
And seemed not to see the things I saw:  
But at the last she grew so far incensed  
With moody fury, and with causeless hate,  
That in most vild and contumelious terms,  
She bade me pack, and harbor somewhere else.

Then was I fain for refuge to repair  
Unto my other daughter for relief,  
Who gave me pleasing and most courteous words;  
But in her actions showed herself so sore,  
As never any daughter did before:  
She prayed me in a morning out betime,  
To go to a thicket two miles from the Court,  
Pointing that there she would come talk with me:  
There she had set a shag-haired murd’ring wretch,  
To massacre my honest friend and me.

Then judge yourself, although my tale be brief,  
If ever man had greater cause of grief.

\textit{King of Gallia.}   Nor never like impiety was done,  
Since the creation of the world begun.  
\textit{Leir.}   And now I am constrained to seek relief  
Of her, to whom I have been so unkind;  
Whose censure, if it do award me death,  
I must confess she pays me but my due:  
But if she show a loving daughter’s part,  
It comes of God and her, not my desert.
Cordella. No doubt she will, I dare be sworn she will.
Leir. How know you that, not knowing what she is?
Cordella. Myself a father have a great way hence,
Used me as ill as ever you did her;
Yet, that his reverend age I once might see,
I’d creep along, to meet him on my knee.
Leir. O, no men’s children are unkind but mine.
Cordella. Condemn not all, because of others’ crime:
But look, dear father, look, behold and see
Thy loving daughter speaketh unto thee.
Leir. O, stand thou up, it is my part to kneel,
And ask forgiveness for my former faults.
Cordella. O, if you wish I should enjoy my breath,
Dear father rise, or I receive my death.
Leir. Then I will rise, to satisfy your mind,
But kneel again, till pardon be resigned.
Cordella. I pardon you: the word beseems not me:
But I do say so, for to ease your knee.
You gave me life, you were the cause that I
Am what I am, who else had never been.
Leir. But you gave life to me and to my friend,
Whose days had else, had an untimely end.
Cordella. You brought me up, whenas I was but young,
And far unable for to help myself.
Leir. I cast thee forth, whenas thou wast but young,
And far unable for to help thyself.
Cordella. God, world and nature say I do you wrong,
That can endure to see you kneel so long.
King of Gallia. Let me break off this loving controversy,
Which doth rejoice my very soul to see.
Good father, rise, she is your loving daughter,

And honors you with as respective duty,
As if you were the Monarch of the world.
Cordella. But I will never rise from off my knee,
Until I have your blessing, and your pardon
Of all my faults committed any way,
From my first birth unto this present day.
Leir. The blessing, which the God of Abraham gave
Unto the tribe of Judah, light on thee,
And multiply thy days, that thou mayst see
Thy children’s children prosper after thee.
Thy faults, which are just none that I do know,
God pardon on high, and I forgive below.
Cordella. Now is my heart at quiet, and doth leap
Within my breast, for joy of this good hap:
And now (dear father) welcome to our Court,
And welcome (kind Perillus) unto me,
Mirror of virtue and true honesty.
Leir. O, he hath been the kindest friend to me,
That ever man had in adversity.

Perillus My tongue doth fail, to say what heart doth think,
I am so ravished with exceeding joy.

King of Gallia. All you have spoke: now let me speak my mind,
And in few words much matter here conclude: he kneels.
If e’re my heart do harbor any joy,
Or true content repose within my breast,
Till I have rooted out this viperous sect,
And repossessed my father of his Crown,
Let me be counted for the perjured’st man,
That ever spake word since the world began. rise.

Mumford Let me pray too, that never prayed before; Mumford kneels.
If e’re I resalute the British earth,
(As (ere ’t be long) I do presume I shall)
And do return from thence without my wench,
Let me be gelded for my recompense. rise.

King of Gallia. Come, let’s to arms for to redress this wrong:
Till I am there, methinks, the time seems long. Exeunt.

Ragan I feel a hell of conscience in my breast,
Tormenting me with horror for my fact,

And makes me in an agony of doubt,
For fear the world should find my dealing out.
The slave whom I appointed for the act,
I ne’er set eye upon the peasant since:
O, could I get him for to make him sure,
My doubts would cease, and I should rest secure.
But if the old men, with persuasive words,
Have saved their lives, and made him to relent;
Then are they fled unto the Court of France,
And like a Trumpet manifest my shame.
A shame on these white-livered slaves, say I,
That with fair words so soon are overcome.
O God, that I had been but made a man;
Or that my strength were equal with my will!
These foolish men are nothing but mere pity,
And melt as butter doth against the Sun.
Why should they have pre-eminence over us,
Since we are creatures of more brave resolve?
I swear, I am quite out of charity
With all the heartless men in Christendom.
A pox upon them, when they are afraid
To give a stab, or slit a paltry Windpipe,
Which are so easy matters to be done.
Well, had I thought the slave would serve me so,
Myself would have been executioner:
’Tis now undone, and if that it be known,
I’ll make as good shift as I can for one.
He that repines at me, howe’er it stands,
’Twere best for him to keep him from my hands.  

   Sound Drums and Trumpets: Enter the Gallian King,
   Leir, Munford and the army.

   King of Gallia. Thus have we brought our army to the sea,
Whereas our ships are ready to receive us:
The wind stands fair, and we in four hours’ sail,
May easily arrive on British shore,
Where unexpected we may them surprise,
And gain a glorious victory with ease.
Wherefore, my loving Countrymen, resolve,
Since truth and justice fighteth on our sides,

That we shall march with conquest where we go.
Myself will be as forward as the first,
And step-by-step march with the hardiest wight:
And not the meanest soldier in our Camp
Shall be in danger, but i’ll second him.
To you, my Lord, we give the whole command
Of all the army, next unto ourself,
Not doubting of you, but you will extend
Your wonted valor in this needful case,
Encouraging the rest to do the like,
By your approved magnanimity.

   Munford   My Liege, ’tis needless to spur a willing horse,
That’s apt enough to run himself to death:
For here I swear by that sweet Saint’s bright eye,
Which are the stars, which guide me to good hap,
Either to see my old Lord crowned anew,
Or in his cause to bid the world adieu.

   Leir.   Thanks, good Lord Munford, ’tis more of your good will,
Than any merit or desert in me.

   Munford   And now to you, my worthy Countrymen,
Ye valiant race of Genovestan Gauls,
Surnamed Redshanks, for your chivalry,
Because you fight up to the shanks in blood;
Show yourselves now to be right Gauls indeed,
And be so bitter on your enemies,
That they may say, you are as bitter as Gall.
Gall them, brave Shot, with your Artillery:
Gall them, brave Halberds, with your sharp-point Bills,
Each in their pointed place, not one, but all,
Fight for the credit of yourselves and Gaul.

   King of Gallia. Then what should more persuasion need to those,
That rather wish to deal, than hear of blows?
Let’s to our ships, and if that God permit,
In four hours’ sail, I hope we shall be there.

   Munford   And in five hours more, I make no doubt,
Enter a Captain of the watch, and two watchmen.

Captain My honest friends, it is your turn tonight,
To watch in this place, near about the Beacon.

And vigilantly have regard,
If any fleet of ships pass hitherward:
Which it you do, your office is to fire
The beacon presently, and raise the town.

1. Watchman Ay, Ay, Ay, fear nothing; we know our charge, I warrant:
I have been a watchman about this Beacon this thirty year, and
yet I ne’er see it stir, but stood as quietly as might be.

2. Watchman Faith neighbor, and you’ll follow my ’vice, instead of
watching the Beacon, we’ll go to goodman Jennings, and watch
a pot of Ale and a rashrer of Bacon: and if we do not drink ourselves
drunk, then so; I warrant, the Beacon will see us when
we come out again.

1. Watchman Ay, but how if somebody excuse us to the Captain?

2. Watchman ’Tis no matter, i’ll prove by good reason that we watch
the Beacon: as for example.

1. Watchman I hope you do not call me ass by craft, neighbor.

2. Watchman No, no, but for example: Say here stands the pot of ale,
that’s the Beacon. 1. Watchman Ay, Ay, ’tis a very good Beacon.

2. Watchman Well, say here stands your nose, that’s the fire.

1. Watchman Indeed I must confess, ’tis somewhat red.

2. Watchman I see come marching in a dish, half a score pieces of salt
Bacon. 1. Watchman I understand your meaning, that’s as much to say,
half a score ships. 2 Watchman True, you conster right; presently, like
a faithful watchman, I fire the Beacon, and call up the town.

1. Watchman Ay, that’s as much as to say, you set your nose to the pot, and
drink up the drink.  2. Watchman You are in the right; come, let’s go
fire the Beacon. Exeunt.

Enter the King of Gallia with a still march, Mumford and soldiers.

King of Gallia Now march our ensigns on the British earth,
And we are near approaching to the town:
Then look about you, valiant Countrymen,
And we shall finish this exploit with ease.
Th’ inhabitants of this mistrustful place,
Are dead asleep, as men that are secure:
Here shall we skirmish but with naked men,
Devoid of sense, new waked from a dream,
That know not what our coming doth pretend,
Till they do feel our meaning on their skins:
Therefore assail: God and our right for us. Exeunt.

Alarum, with men and women half-naked: Enter two
Captains without doublets, with swords.
Enter the watchmen drunk, with each a pot.

He drinks. draw to stab them.

Enter Mumford, Captains run away. He kicks down their pots.

Exit. Exeunt.

Alarum, excursions, Mumford after them, and some half-naked, Enter the Gallian King, Leir, Mumford, Cordella, Perillus, and soldiers, with the chief of the town bound.

King of Gallia. Fear not, my friends, you shall receive no hurt, If you’ll subscribe unto your lawful King, And quite revoke your fealty from Cambria, And from aspiring Cornwall too, whose wives Have practiced treason ’gainst their father’s life. We come in justice of your wronged King, And do intend no harm at all to you, So you submit unto your lawful King.

Leir. Kind Countrymen, it grieves me, that perforce, I am constrained to use extremities.

Noble. Long have you here been looked for, good my Lord, And wished for by a general consent: And had we known your Highness had arrived, We had not made resistance to your Grace: And now, my gracious Lord, you need not doubt, But all the Country will yield presently, Which since your absence have been greatly taxed,
Enter Cornwall, Cambria, Gonoril, Ragan, and the army.

For to maintain their overswelling pride.
We’ll presently send word to all our friends;
When they have notice, they will come apace.

Leir. Thanks, loving subjects; and thanks, worthy son,
Thanks, my kind daughter, thanks to you, my Lord,
Who willingly adventured have your blood,
(Without desert) to do me so much good.

Mumford O, say not so:
I have been much beholding to your Grace:
I must confess, I have been in some skirmishes,
But I was never in the like to this:
For where I was wont to meet with armed men,
I was now encountered with naked women,

Cordella We that are feeble, and want use of Arms,
Will pray to God, to shield you from all harms.

Leir. The while your hands do manage ceaseless toil,
Our hearts shall pray, the foes may have the foil.

Perillus We’ll fast and pray, whilst you for us do fight,
That victory may prosecute the right.

King of Gallia. Methinks, your words do amplify (my friends)
And add fresh vigor to my willing limbs:
But hark, I hear the adverse Drum approach.
God and our right, Saint Denis, and Saint George,

Enter Cornwall, Cambria, Gonoril, Ragan, and the army.

Cornwall Presumptuous King of Gauls, how darest thou
Presume to enter on our British shore?
And more than that, to take our towns perforce,
And draw our subjects’ hearts from their true King?

Be sure to buy it at as dear a price,
As e’re you bought presumption in your lives.

King of Gallia. O’erdaring Cornwall, know, we came in right,
And just reversion of the wronged King,
Whose daughters there, fell vipers as they are,
Have sought to murder and deprive of life:
But God protected him from all their spite,
And we are come in justice of his right.

Cambria Nor he nor thou have any interest here,
But what you win and purchase with the sword.
Thy slanders to our noble virtuous Queens,
We’ll in the battle thrust them down thy throat,
Except for fear of our revenging hands,
Thou fly to sea, as not secure on lands.

Mumford Welshman, i’ll so ferret you ere night for that word,
That you shall have no mind to crake so well this twelvemonth.

Gonoril They lie, that say, we sought our father’s death.

Ragan ’Tis merely forged for a color’s sake,
To set a gloss on your invasion.

Methinks, an old man ready for to die,
She snatches them and tears them.

Exeunt both armies.

Sound alarum: excursions. Mumford must chase Cambria away: then cease. Enter Cornwall.

Cornwall The day is lost, our friends do all revolt,
And join against us with the adverse part:
There is no means of safety but by flight,
And therefore i’ll to Cornwall with my Queen. Exit.

Enter Cambria.

Cambria I think, there is a devil in the Camp hath haunted
me today: he hath so tired me, that in a manner I can fight no
more.                      Enter Mumford.
Zounds, here he comes, I’ll take me to my horse.              Exit.

  Mumford  Farewell (Welshman) give thee but thy due,
Thou hast a light and nimble pair of legs:
Thou are more in debt to them than to thy hands:
But if I meet thee once again today,
I’ll cut them off, and set them to a better heart.        Exit.

Alarums and excursions, then sound victory. Enter Leir, Perillus,
King, Cordella, and Mumford.

    King of Gallia.  Thanks be to God, your foes are overcome,
And you again possessed of your right.
    Leir.  First to the heavens, next, thanks to you, my son,
By whose good means I repossess the same:
Which if it please you to accept yourself,
With all my heart I will resign to you:
For it is yours by right, and none of mine.
First, have you raised, at your own charge, a power
Of valiant Soldiers; (this comes all from you)
Next have you ventured your own person’s scathe.
And lastly, (worthy Gallia never stained)
My kingly title I by thee have gained.
    King of Gallia.  Thank heavens, not me, my zeal to you is such,
Command my utmost, I will never grutch.
    Cordella  He that with all kind love entreats his Queen,
Will not be to her father unkind seen.
    Leir.  Ah, my Cordella, now I call to mind,
The modest answer, which I took unkind:
But now I see, I am no whit beguiled,
Thou loved’st me dearly, and as ought a child.
And thou (Perillus) partner once in woe,
Thee to requite, the best I can, I’ll do:
Yet all I can, Ay, were it ne’er so much,
Were not sufficient, thy true love is such.
Thanks (worthy Mumford) to thee last of all,
Not greeted last, ’cause thy desert was small;
No, thou hast Lion-like laid on today,
Chasing the Cornwall King and Cambria;
Who with my daughters, daughters did I say?
To save their lives, the fugitives did play.
Come, son and daughter, who did me advance,
Repose with me awhile, and then for France.

    Sound Drums and Trumpets. Exeunt.

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