

MANKIND

The names of the players

MERCY

MISCHIEF

NOUGHT, NEW GUISE, NOWADAYS

MANKIND

TITIVILLUS

Scene 1

MERCY The very founder and beginner of our first creation

Among us sinful wretches he ought to be magnified,

That for our disobedience he made none indignation\* showed no anger

To send his own son to be torn and crucified.

Our obsequious\* service to him should be applied, obedient

Where he was lord of all and made all thing of nought,

For the sinful sinner to have him revived,

And for his redemption, set his own son at nought.

It may be said and verified, mankind was dear bought.\* redeemed

By the piteous death of Jhesu he had his remedy. 10

He was purged of his default that wretchedly had wrought

By his glorious passion, that blessed lavatory.\* cleansing

O sovereigns, I beseech you your conditions\* to rectify manner of life

And with humility and reverence to have a remotion\* recourse

To this blessed prince that our nature doth glorify.

That ye may be partycipable of his retribution.\* participants of his reward

I have been the very mean for your restitution.

Mercy is my name, that mourneth for your offence.

Divert\* not yourselves in time of temptation, distract

That ye may be acceptable to God at your going hence. 20

The great mercy of God, that is of most pre-eminence,

By mediation of Our Lady that is ever abundant

To the sinful creature that will repent his negligence.

I pray God at your most need that mercy be your defendant.\* advocate

In good works I advise you, sovereigns, to be perseverant\* persevering

To purify your souls, that they be not corrupt;

For your ghostly\* enemy will make his avaunt,\* spiritual/boast

Your good conditions if he may interrupt.

O ye sovereigns that sit and ye brethren that stand right up,

Prick\* not your felicities in things transitory. set 30

Behold not the earth, but lift your eye up.

See how the head the members daily do magnify.

Who is the head forsooth\* I shall you certify\*: truly/instruct

I mean our Saviour, that was likened to a lamb;

And his saints be the members that daily he doth satisfy

With the precious river that runneth from his womb.\* stomach, side

There is none such food, by water or by land,

So precious, so glorious, so needful to our intent,\* condition

For it hath dissolved mankind from the bitter bond

Of the mortal enemy, that venomous serpent, 40

From the which God preserve\* you all at the Last Judgement! protect

For sikerly\* there shall be a strait\* examination, certainly/close

The corn shall be saved, the chaff shall be burnt.

I beseech you heartily, have this premeditation.\* forethought

[Enter MISCHIEF]

MISCHIEF I beseech you heartily, leave your calcation.\* threshing

Leave your chaff, leave your corn, leave your daliation.\* chatter

Your wit is little, your head is mykyll,\* ye are full of predication.\*

big/preaching

But, sir, I pray this question to clarify:

Miss-mash, driff-draff,

Some was corn and some was chaff, 50

My dame said my name was Raff;

Unshut your lock and take a halfpenny.

MERCY Why come ye hither, brother? Ye were not desired.

MISCHIEF For a winter corn-thresher, sir, I have not hired,  
And ye said the corn should be saved and the chaff should be fired,  
And he proveth nay, as it showeth by this verse:

“Corn servit bredibus, chaff horsibus, straw firibusque.”<sup>1</sup>

This is as much to say, to your lewd\* understanding, ignorant

As the corn shall serve to bread at the next baking.

“Chaff horsibus et reliqua,”\* and the rest 60

The chaff to horse shall be good provende.\* food

When a man is forcold\* the straw may be brent,\* extremely cold/burnt

And so forth, et cetera.

MERCY: Avoid,\* good brother! Ye been culpable\* go away/at fault

To interrupt thus my talking delectable.\* sweet

MISCHIEF Sir, I have neither horse not saddle,

Therefore I may not ride.

MERCY Have ye forth\* on foot, brother, in God’s name! get you hence

MISCHIEF I say, sir, I am come hither to make you game.

Yet bade\* ye me not go out in the devil’s name ordered 70

And I will abide.

[A leaf is missing from the manuscript here. Enter NEW GUISE and NOWADAYS,  
both whipping NOUGHT to make him dance]

NEW GUISE And how, minstrals, play by the common trace!\* common  
tune

Lay on with thi baleys\* until his belly burst! whip

NOUGHT I put case\* I break my neck: how then? suppose

NEW GUISE I give no force,\* by Saint Tanne!<sup>2</sup> I don't care

NOWADAYS Leap about lively! Thou art a wight\* man. lively

Let us be merry while we be here!

NOUGHT Shall I break my neck to show you sport?

NOWADAYS Therefore ever beware of thy report.

NOUGHT I beshrew\* ye all! Here is a shrewd\* sort. curse/bad 80

Have thereat then with a merry cheer!

(Here they dance)

MERCY Do way,\* do way this rule, sirs! Do way! have done with

NOWADAYS Do way, good Adam? Do way?

This is no part of thy play.

NOUGHT Yes, marry,\* I pray you, for I love not this revelling. indeed

Come forth, good father, I you pray!

By a little ye may assay.\* try

Anon off with your clothes, if ye will play.

Go to! For I have had a pretty scotling.\* enough dancing about

MERCY Nay, brother, I will not dance. 90

NEW GUISE If ye will, sir, my brother will make you to prance.

NOWADAYS With all my heart, sir, if I may you advance.

Ye may assay by a little trace.\* step

NOUGHT Ye, sir, will ye do well,

Trace not with them, by my counsel,

For I have traced somewhat too fell\*; fiercely

I tell, it is a narrow space.

But, sir, I trow\* of us three I heard you speak. believe

NEW GUISE Christ's curse have therefore, for I was in sleep.

NOWADAYS And I had the cup in my hand, ready to go to meat.\* dinner

100

Therefore, sir, curtly,\* greet you well. shortly

MERCY Few words, few and well set!

NEW GUISE Sir, it is the new guise and the new jett.\* fashion

Many words and shortly set,

This is the new guise, every deal.\* part

MERCY Lady,<sup>3</sup> help! How wretches delight in their sinful ways!

NOWADAYS Say not again\* the new guise nowadays! against

Thou shalt find us shrews at all assays.<sup>4</sup>

Beware! Ye may soon lick a buffet.\* feel a blow

MERCY He was well occupied that brought you, brethren. 110

NOUGHT I heard you call "New Guise, Nowadays, Nought," all these three together.

If ye say that I lie, I shall make you to slither.

Lo, I take you here a trippet!\*

trip

MERCY Say me your names, I know you not.

NEW GUISE New Guise, I.

NOWADAYS I, Nowadays.

NOUGHT I, Nought.

MERCY By Jhesu Christ that me dear bought\*

redeemed

Ye betray many men.

NEW GUISE Betray! Nay, nay, sir, nay!

We make them both fresh and gay.\*

smart

But of your name, sir, I you pray,

120

That we may you ken.\*

know

MERCY Mercy is my name by denomination.

I concieve ye have but a little favour in my communication.

NEW GUISE Ay, ay! Your body is full of English Latin.

I am afraid it will burst.

“Pravo te,”\* quod\* the butcher unto me

I curse you/said

When I stole a leg of mutton.

Ye are a strong cunning\* clerk\*.

learned/scholar

NOWADAYS I pray you heartily, worshipful clerk,

To have this English made in Latin:

130

“I have eaten a dishfull of curds,  
And I have shiten your mouth full of turds.”

Now open your satchell with Latin words

And say me this in clerical manner!

Also I have a wife, her name is Rachell;

Betwyx\* her and me was a great battell; between

And fain\* of you I would here tell gladly

Who was the most master.

NOUGHT Thy wife Rachell, I dare lay twenty lice.

NOWADAYS Who spoke to thee, fool? Thou art not wise! 140

Go and do that longeth\* to thy office: pertains

Osculare fundamentum! kiss (my) arse

NOUGHT Lo, master, lo, here is a pardon belly-met.<sup>5</sup>

It is graunted of Pope Pockett,

If ye will put your nose in his wife’s sockett,\* vagina

Ye shall have forty days of pardon.

MERCY This idle language ye shall repent.

Out of this place I would ye went.

NEW GUISE Go we hence all three with one assent.

My father is irk\* of our eloquence. displeased with 150

Therefore I will no longer tarry.\* delay

God bring you, master, and blessed Mary

To the number of the demonical friary!

NOWADAYS Come wind, come rain,

Though I come never again!

The devil put out both your eyes!\* eyes

Follows, go we hence tight.\* quickly

NOUGHT Go we hence, a devil way!

Here is the door, here is the way.

Farewell, gentle Geoffrey, 160

I pray God give you good night!

[They depart together, singing.]

MERCY Thanked be God, we have a fair deliverance\* we are well rid

Of these three unthrifty\* guests. wasteful

They know full little what is their ordinance.\* how to behave

I prove by reason they be worse than beasts:

A beast doth after his natural institution;

Ye may conceive by their disport and behaviour,

Their joy and delight is in derision

Of their own Christ to his dishonour.

This condition of living, it is prejudicial;\* harmful 170

Beware thereof, it is worse than any felony or treason.

How may it be excused before the Justice of all

When for every idle word we must yield a reason?<sup>6</sup>

They have great ease, therefore they will take no thought\*. they are reckless

But how then when the angel of heaven shall blow the trump<sup>7</sup>

And say to the transgressors that wickedly have wrought,

“Come forth unto your Judge and yield your account”?<sup>8</sup>

Then shall I, Mercy, begin sore to weep;

Neither comfort nor counsel there shall be had;

But such as they have sown, such shall they reap.<sup>9</sup>

180

They be wanton\* now, but then shall they be sad. loose in living

The good new guise nowadays I will not disallow.\* forbid

I discommend\* the vicious guise; I pray have me excused, counsel against

I need not to speak of it, your reason will tell it you.

Take that is to be taken and leave that is to be refused.<sup>10</sup>

[Enter MANKIND]

MANKIND Of the earth and of the clay we have our propagation.

By the providence of God thus be we derivate,

To whose mercy I recommend this whole congregation:

I hope unto His bliss ye be all predestinate.



I trust to ghostly\* solace he will be my bote.\* spiritual/remedy

All hail, seemly father! Ye be welcome to this house.

Of the very wisdom ye have participation. 210

My body with my soul is ever querelous.\* in dispute

I pray you, for saint charity, of your supportation.

I beseech you heartily of your ghostly comfort.

I am unsteadfast in living; my name is Mankind.

My ghostly enemy the devil will have a great disport

In sinful guiding if he may see me end.

MERCY Christ send you good comfort! Ye be welcome, my friend.

Stand up on your feet; I pray you arise.

My name is Mercy; ye be to me full hende.\* courteous

To eschew vice I will you advise. 220

MANKIND O Mercy, of all grace and virtue ye are the well,

I have heard tell of right worshipful clerks.

Ye be approximate\* to God and near of his counsel. close

He hath institute you above all his works.

O, your lovely words to my soul are sweeter than honey.

MERCY The temptation of the flesh ye must resist like a man,

Foe there is ever a battle betwix the soul and the body:

“Vita hominis est milicia super terram.”<sup>12</sup>

Oppress your ghostly enemy and be Christ’s own knight.

Be never a coward against your adversary. 230

If ye will be crowned,<sup>13</sup> ye must needs fight.

Intend\* well and God will be you adjutory.\* mean/your ally

Remember, my friend, the time of continuance.\* i.e. the time on earth

So help me God, it is but a cherry time.\* i.e. very brief

Spend it well; serve God with heart’s affiance.\* trust

Distemper not your brain with good ale nor with wine.

Measure is treasure. I forbid you not the use.

Measure yourself ever; beware of excess.

The superfluous guise I will\* ever that ye refuse, desire

When nature is sufficed, anon\* that ye cease. immediately 240

If a man have a horse and keep him not to high,\* luxuriously

He may then rule hym at his own desire.

If he be fed overwell he will disobey

And in hap\* cast his master in the mire. perhaps

[Enter NEW GUISE, NOWADAYS and NOUGHT]

NEW GUISE Ye say true, sir, ye are no faitour\* liar

I have fed my wife so well till she is my master.

I have a great wound on my head, lo! And thereon lieth a plaster,

And another there I piss my peson.<sup>14</sup>

And\* my wife were your horse, she would you all to-bann.\* if/curse

Ye feed your horse in measure, ye are a wise man. 250

I trow, and ye were the king's palfreyman,\* stable man

A good horse should be geson.\* scarce

MANKIND Where speaks this fellow? Will he not come near?

MERCY All too soon, my brother, I fear me for you.

He was here right now, by him that bought\* me dear, redeemed

With other of his fellows; they can\* much sorrow. are familiar with

They will be here right soon, if I out depart.

Think on my doctrine; it shall be your defence.

Learn while I am here, set my words in heart.

Within a short space I must needs hence. 260

NOWADAYS The sooner the lever,\* and it be even anon! better

I trow\* your name is Do Little, ye be so long from home. believe

If ye would go hence, we shall come everychone,\* everyone

More than a good sort.\* more than a large company

Ye have leave, I dare well say,

When ye will,\* go forth your way. desire

Men have little dainty\* of your play pleasure

Because ye make no sport.

NOUGHT Your potage\* shall be for-cold,\* sir; when will ye go dine?

broth/cold

I have seen a man lost twenty nobles in as little time; 270

Yet it was not I, by Saint Quentin,

For I was never worth a potfull a wortes\* since I was born. cabbage

My name is Nought. I love well to make merry.

I have been since with the common tapster\* of Bury\* barmaid/Bury St

Edmund's

And played so long the fool that I am weary.

Yet shall I be there again to -morn.\* tomorrow

[Exit NEW GUISE, NOWADAYS and NOUGHT]

MERCY I have much care for you, my own friend.

Your enemies will be here anon,\* they make their avaunt.\* directly/boast

Think well in your heart, your name is Mankind;

Be not unkind\* to God, I pray you be his servant. unnatural 280

Be steadfast in condition; see ye be not variant.

Lose not through folly that is bought so dear.

God will prove you\* soon; and if that ye be constant,      make trial of you

Of his bliss perpetual ye shall be partener.\*                      partner

Ye may not have your intent at your first desire.

See the great patience of Job in tribulation;

Like as the smith trieth\* iron in the fire,                      tests

So was he tried by God's visitation.

He was of your nature and of your fragility;

Follow the steps of him, my own sweet son,                      290

And say as he said in your trouble and adversity:

“Dominus dedit, Dominus abstulit; sicut sibi placuit, ita factum

est; nomen Domini benedictum!”<sup>15</sup>

Moreover, in special I give you in charge,<sup>16</sup>

Beware of New Guise, Nowadays, and Nought.

Nice\* in their array, in language they be large;\*              foolish/loose

To pervert your conditions all the means shall be sought.

Good son, intromit not\* yourself in their company.              don't mix

They heard not a mass this twelvemonth, I dare well say.

Give them none audience;\* they will tell you many a lie. don't listen to them

Do truly your labour and keep your holy day.\* sabbath 300

Beware of Titivillus,\* for he loseth no way, the devil

That goeth invisible and will not be seen.

He will round\* in your ear and cast a net before your eye. whisper

He is worst of them all; God let him never theen!\* prosper

If ye displease God, ask mercy anon,

Else Mischief will be ready to brace\* you in his bridle. fasten

Kiss me now, my dear darling. God shield you from your fon!\* foes

Do truly your labour and be never idle.

The blessing of God be with you and with all these worshipful men!

MANKIND Amen, for saint charity, amen! 310

Now blessed be Jhesu! My soul is well saciate\* satisfied

With the melifluous\* doctrine of this worshipful man. sweet

The rebellion of my flesh now it is superate,\* overcome

Thanking be God of the cunning that I can.\* knowledge I have acquired

Here will I sit and title\* in this paper write

The incomparable estate of my promition.\* quality of what is promised me

Worshipful sovereigns, I have written here

The glorious remembrance of my noble condition.

To have remorse and memory of myself thus written it is,

To defend me from all superstitious charms: 320

“Memento, homo, quod cinis es et in cinerem reverteris.”<sup>17</sup>

Lo, I bear on my breast the badge of my arms.<sup>18</sup>

[Enter NEW GUISE]

NEW GUISE The weather is cold, God send us good feres!\* companions

“Cum sancto sanctus eris et cum perverso perverteris.”<sup>19</sup>

“Ecce quam bonum et quam jocundum,” quod the devil to the friars,

“Habitare fratres in unum.”<sup>20</sup>

MANKIND I hear a fellow speak; with him I will not mell.\* mix

This earth with my spade I shall assay to delf.\* dig

To eschew idleness, I do it myn own self.

I pray God send it his foison!\* plenty 330

[Enter NOWADAYS and NOUGHT, through the audience]

NOWADAYS Make room, sirs, for we have be long!\* been away a long

time

We will come give you a Christmas song.

NOUGHT Now I pray all the yeomanry that is here

To sing with us with a merry cheer:

It is written with a coal, it is written with a coal,

NEW GUISE and NOWADAYS It is written with a coal, it is written with a

coal,

NOUGHT He that shitteth with his hole, he that shitteth with his hole,  
NEW GUISE and NOWADAYS He that shitteth with his hole, he that shitteth  
with his hole,

NOUGHT But\* he wipe his arse clean, but he wipe his arse clean, unless  
NEW GUISE and NOWADAYS But he wipe his arse clean, but he wipe his  
arse clean, 340

NOUGHT On his breech\* it shall be seen, on his breech it shall be seen,  
trousers

NEW GUISE and NOWADAYS On his breech it shall be seen, on his breech  
it shall be seen,

ALL Holyke Holyke Holyke! Holyke Holyke Holyke!<sup>21</sup>

NEW GUISE Ey, Mankind, God speed you\* with your spade! help you  
I shall tell you of a marriage:

I would your mouth and his arse that this made

Were married junctly\* together. jointly

MANKIND Hie you hence, fellows, with braiding. reproach

Leave your derision, and your japing.\* antics

I must needs labour, it is my living. 350

NOWADAYS What, sir, we came but late hither.

Shall all this corn grow here

That ye shall have the next year?

If it be so, corn had need\* be dear, must of necessity

Else ye shall have a poor life.

NOUGHT Alas, good father, this labour fretteth\* you to the bone. wears

But for your crop I take great moan.

Ye shall never spend it\* alone; consume

I shall assay\* to get you a wife. try

How many acres suppose you here by estimation? 360

NEW GUISE Ey, how ye turn the earth up and doun!

I have be in my days in many good town

Yet saw I never such another tilling.

MANKIND Why stand ye idle? It is pity that ye were born!

NOWADAYS We shall bargain with you and neither mock nor scorn.

Take a good cart in harvest and load it with your corn,

And what shall we give you for the leaving?<sup>22</sup>

NOUGHT He is a good stark\* labourer, he would fain\* do well.

strong/gladly

He hath met with the good man Mercy in a shrewd sell.\* a bad time

For all this he may have many a hungry meal. 370

Yet will ye see he is politic.

Here shall be good corn, he may not miss it;

If he will have rain he may overpiss it;

And if he will have compass\* he may overbless it\*      compost/spread it over  
A little with his arse like.

MANKIND    Go and do your labour! God let you never the!\*      prosper

Or with my spade I shall you ding,\* by the Holy Trinity!      hit

Have ye none other man to mock, but ever me?

Ye would have me of your set?

Hie ye forth\* lively, for hence I will you drive.      away with you    380

NEW GUISE    Alas, my jewels!\* I shall be shent of\* my wife

testicles/destroyed by

NOWADAYS    Alas! And I am like never for to thrive,

I have such a buffet.

MANKIND    Hence I say, New Guise, Nowadays, and Nought!

It was said before, all the means should be sought

To pervert my conditions and bring me to nought.

Hence, thieves! Ye have made many a lesing.\*      lie

NOUGHT    Marred\* I was for cold, but now I am warm.      discomforted

Ye are evil advised sir, for ye have done harm.

By cokkes body sacred,<sup>23</sup> I have such a pain in my arm      390

I may not change a man a ferthing.\*      a quarter penny

MANKIND    Now I thank God, kneeling on my knee.

Blessed be his name! He is of high degree.

By the subsidy\* of his grace that he hath sent me help

Three of myn enemies I have put to flight.

Yet this instrument, sovereigns, is not made to defend.

David sayeth, "Nec in hasta, nec in gladio, salvat Dominus."<sup>24</sup>

NOUGHT No, marry, I beshrew you, it is in spadibus.<sup>25</sup>

Therefore Christ's curse come upon your hedibus<sup>26</sup>

To send you less might! 400

[They go out]

MANKIND I promit\* you these fellows will no more come here, promise

For some of them, certainly, were somewhat too near.

My father Mercy advised me to be of a good cheer

And against my enemies manly for to fight.

I shall convict\* them, I hope, everychone.\* conquer/every one

Yet I say amiss, I do it not alone.

With the help of the grace of God I resist my fone.\* foes

And their malicious heart.

With my spade I will depart, my worshipful sovereigns,

And live ever with labour to correct my insolence.\* pride 410

I shall go fetch corn for my land; I pray you of patience.

Right soon I shall revert.\* return

[Exit MANKIND]

Scene 2

MISCHIEF Alas, alas, that ever I was wrought!\* made

Alas the while, I worse than nought!

Sithen\* I was here, by him that me bought,\* since/redeemed

I am utterly undone!

I, Mischief, was here at the beginning of the game

And argued with Mercy, God give him shame!

He hath taught Mankind, while I have be wane,\* been absent

To fight manly against his fone. 420

For with his spade, that was his weapon,

New Guise, Nowadays, Nought he hath all to-beaten.

I have great pity to see them weepen.\* weep

Will ye list?\* I hear them cry. Listen

[Enter NEW GUISE, NOWADAYS and NOUGHT]

Alas, alas, come hither, I shall be your borrow.\* surety

Alack, alack! Vien,\* vien! Come hither with sorrow! (French) come

Peace, fair babes, ye shall have an apple tomorrow!

Why greet\* ye so, why? weep

NEW GUISE Alas, master, alas, my privity!\* private parts

MISCHIEF A, where? Alack! Fair babe, ba\* me (French) kiss 430

Abide! Too soon I shall it see.

NOWADAYS Here, here, see my head, good master!

MISCHIEF Lady, help! Selly\* darling, vien, vien! poor

I shall help thee of thy pain;

I shall smite off thy head and set it on again!

NOUGHT By our Lady, sir, a fair plaster!\* (ironic): a fair remedy

Will ye off with his head? It is a shrewd charm!\* tough (magical) cure

As for me, I have no harm.

I were loath for to forbear\* mine arm. do without

Ye play in nomine patris, chop! "in the name of the Father" 440

NEW GUISE Ye shall not chop my jewels,\* and I may.\* testicles/if I can  
help it

NOWADAYS Ye, Christ's cross, will ye smite my head away?

There! Where? on and on! Out! Ye shall not assay.

I might be called a fop.\* fool

MISCHIEF I can chop it off and make it again.

NEW GUISE I have a shrewd recumbentibus\* but I feel no pain. knock-out  
blow

NOWADAYS And my head is all safe and whole again.

Now touching\* the matter of Mankind, concerning

Let us have an interlection,\* sithen\* ye be come hither. Discussion/since

It were good to have an end.

450

MISCHIEF How, now, a minstrell! Know ye any aught?\*

anything at all

NOUGHT I can pipe in a Walsingham whistle,<sup>27</sup> I, Nought, Nought.

MISCHIEF Blow apace, and thou shall bring him in with a flute.

TITIVILLUS [Offstage] I come with my legs under me.

MISCHIEF How, New Guise, Nowadays, hark er I go!

When our heads were together I spoke of si dederò.<sup>28</sup>

NEW GUISE Ye, go thy way! We shall gather money unto,

Else there shall no man him see.

Now ghostly to our purpose,\* worshipful sovereigns, down to serious  
business

We intend to gather money, if it please your negligence,<sup>29</sup> 460

For a man with a head that is of great omnipotence.\* power

NOWADAYS Keep your tally, in goodness I pray you, good brother!

He is a worshipful man, sirs, saving your reverence.

He loveth no groats, nor pence of two pence.<sup>30</sup>

Give us red royals if ye will see his abominable presence.

NEW GUISE Not so! Ye that may not pay the tone\*, pay the tother.\*

the one/the other

At the good-man of this house\* first we will assay. inn

God bless you master! Ye say as ill, yet ye will not say nay.

Let us go by and by and do\* them pay. make  
Ye pay all alike;<sup>31</sup> well may ye fare! 470  
NOUGHT I say, New Guise, Nowadays: “Estis vos pecuniatus?”<sup>32</sup>  
I have cried a fair while, I beshrew your pates!\* I curse your heads  
NOWADAYS Ita vere, magister.<sup>33</sup> Come forth now your gates!\* way  
He is a goodly man, sirs; make space and beware!

[Enter TITIVILLUS]

TITIVILLUS Ego sum dominancium dominus<sup>34</sup> and my name is Titivillus.  
Ye that have good horse, to you I say “caveatis!”\* beware  
Here is an able fellowship to trice\* them out at your gates! entice

[He speaks to NEWGUISE]

Ego probo sic:<sup>35</sup> Sir New Guise, lend me a penny!

NEW GUISE I have a great purse, sir, but I have no money.

By the mass, I fail two farthings of an halfpenny;<sup>36</sup> 480

Yet had I ten pound this night that was.\* last night

TITIVILLUS [to NOWADAYS] What is in thy purse? Thou art a stout\*  
fellow. strong

NOWADAYS The devil have the whit!<sup>37</sup> I am a clean\* gentleman.  
penniless

I pray God I be never worse stored than I am.

It shall be otherwise, I hope, ere\* this night pass. before

TITIVILLUS (to NOUGHT) Hark now! I say thou hast many a penny.

NOUGHT Non nobis, domine,<sup>38</sup> non nobis, by Saint Denny!



From thence I shall go to William Thurlay of Hauston,

And so forth to Pichard of Trumpington.

I will keep me\* to these three.

restrict myself

NOWADAYS I shall go to William Baker of Walton,

To Richard Bollman of Gayton;

510

I shall spare Master Wood of Fulbourn,

He is a noli me tangere.<sup>42</sup>

NOUGHT I shall go to William Patrick of Massingham,

I shall spare Master Allington of Botysham

And Hammond of Swaffham,

For dread of in manus tuas<sup>43</sup> ... qweke!<sup>44</sup>.

Fellows, come forth, and go we hence together.

NEW GUISE Since we shall go, let us be well ware wither.

If we may be taken, we come no more hither.

Let us con well our neck verse,<sup>45</sup> that we have not a check.\* obstruction 520

TITIVILLUS Go your way, a devil way, go your way all!

I bless you with my left hand: foul you befall!

Come again, I warn, as soon as I you call,

And bring your advantage into this place.

[All but TITIVILLUS go out]

To speak with Mankind I will tarry\* here this tide\*                      await/time

And assay his good purpose for to set aside.

The good man Mercy shall no longer be his guide.

I shall make him to dance another trace.

Ever I go invisible, it is my jet,\*    fashion

And before his eye thus I will hang my net    530

To blench\* his sight; I hope to have his foot-mett.\*                      deceive/measure

To irk him of his labour I shall make a frame.\*    scheme

This board shall be hid under the earth privily;

His spade shall enter, I hope, unreadyly;

By then\* he hath assayed, he shall be very angry    by the time

And lose his patience, pain of shame.\*    with the pain of shame

I shall meng\* his corn with drawk and with durnell;<sup>46</sup>                      mix

It shall not be like\* to sow nor to sell.    fit

Yonder he cometh; I pray of counsel.\*    pray you keep my secret

He shall ween\* grace were wane.\*    think/absent                      540

[Enter MANKIND]

MANKIND Now God of his mercy send us of his sonde!\*                      plenty

I have brought seed hereof to sow with my londe.\*    land

While I overdelve\* it, here it shall stonde.\*    dig over/stand

[TITIVILLUS takes it]

In nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti<sup>47</sup> now I will begin.

This land is so hard it maketh unlusty and irk.\*   unwilling and  
unenthusiastic

I shall sow my corn at winter and let God work.

Alas, my corn is lost! Here is a foul work!

I see well by tilling little shall I win.

Here I give up my spade for now and for ever.

[Here TITIVILLUS goes out with the spade]

To occupy my body I will not put me in dever.\*   to work   550

I will hear my evensong here or I dissever.\*   go

This place I assign for my kirk.\*   church

Here in my kirk I kneel on my knees.

Pater noster qui es in celis.<sup>48</sup>

TITIVILLUS I promise you I have no lead on my heels.

I am here again to make this fellow irk.

Whist! Peace! I shall go to his ear and tittle\* therein.   whisper

A short prayer thirleth\* heaven; of thy prayer blin.\*   pierces/cease

Thou art holier than ever was any of thy kin.

Arise and avent thee!\* Nature compels.   relieve yourself 560

MANKIND I will into thy yard, sovereigns, and come again soon.

For dread of the colic and eke\* of the stone\*   also/kidney stone

I will go do that needs must be done.

My beads\* shall be here for whomsoever will else.   prayer beads

[He goes out]

TITIVILLUS Mankind was busy in his prayer, yet I did\* him arise.      made

He is convayed,\* by Christ, from his divine service.      distracted

Whether is he, trow\* ye? Iwiss\* I am wonder wise;      think/indeed

I have sent him forth to shit lesings.\*      lies

If ye have any silver, in hap\* pure brass,      perhaps

Take a little powder of Paris and cast over its face,      570

And even in the owl-flight let it pass.<sup>49</sup>

Titivillus can learn\* you many pretty\* things.      teach/clever little

I trow\* Mankind will come again soon,      believe

Or else I fear me evensong will be done.

His beads shall be triced\* aside, and that anon.      cast

Ye shall\* a good sport if ye will abide.      shall have

Mankind cometh again, well fare he!

I shall answer him ad omnia quare.      (Latin) to every question

There shall be set abroach\* a clerical matter.      in action

I hope of his purpose to set him aside.      580

[Enter MANKIND]

MANKIND Evensong hath been in the saying, I trow, a fair while.

I am irk of it; it is too long by one mile.

Do way! I will no more so oft over the church stile.\*      step though fence

Be as be may, I shall do another.

Of labour and prayer, I am irk of both;

I will no more of it, though Mercy be wrath.\*                      angry

My head is very heavy, I tell you forsooth.\*                      truly

I shall sleep full my belly and he\* were my brother.      even if he (i.e. Mercy)

TITIVILLUS    And\* ever ye did, for me keep now your silence.      if

Not a word, I charge you, pain of forty pence.                      590

A pretty game shall be showed you ere\* you go hence.              before

Ye may hear him snore; he is sad\* asleep.                      sound

Whist! Peace! The devil is dead. I shall go round\* in his ear.      whisper

Alas, Mankind, alas! Mercy has stolen<sup>50</sup> a mare.

He is run away from his master, there wot\* no man where;              knows

Moreover, he stole both horse and a neet.\*                      cow

But yet I heard say he broke his neck as he rode in France;

But I think he rideth on the gallows, for to learn for to dance,

Because of his theft; that is his governance.

Trust no more on him, he is a marred\* man.                      ruined              600

Mickle\* sorrow with thy spade before\* thou hast wrought.      great/earlier

Arise and ask mercy of New Guise, Nowadays, and Nought.

They can advise thee for the best; let their good will be sought,

And thine own wife brethel,\* and take thee a lemman.\*              abandon/lover

[Addresses the audience]

Farewell, everyone! For I have done my game,  
For I have brought Mankind to mischief and to shame.

MANKIND Whoop! Ho!?! Mercy hath broken his neck-kercher, avows,<sup>51</sup>

Or he hangeth by the neck high upon the gallows.

Adieu,\* fair masters! I will haste me to the ale house      farewell

And speak with New Guise, Nowadays and Nought.      610

And get me a lemman with a smattering\* face.      Attractive

[Enter NEW GUISE, with a halter round his neck]

NEW GUISE Make space, for cock's body sacred, make space!

Aha! Well overrun! God give him evil grace!

We were near Saint Patrick's way, by him that me bought.

I was twitched\* by the neck; the game was begun.      pulled

A grace was, the halter burst asunder: ecce signum!<sup>52</sup>

The half is about my neck; we had a near run!

"Beware," quoth the good-wife when she smote off her husband's head,

"Beware"!

Mischief is a convict, for he could his neck-verse.<sup>53</sup>

My body gave a swing when I hung upon the case?      gibbet      620

Alas, he will hang such a likely\* man, and a fierce,      attractive

For stealing of an horse, I pray God give him care!

Do way\* this halter! What devil doth Mankind here, with sorrow! off with  
Alas, how my neck is sore, I make avow!

MANKIND Ye be welcome, New Guise! Sir, what cheer with you?

NEW GUISE Well, sir, I have no cause to mourn.

MANKIND What was that about your neck, so God you amend?\* reform

NEW GUISE In faith, Saint Audrey's holy band.<sup>54</sup>

I have a little disease, as it please God to send,

With a running ringworm. 630

[Enter NOWADAYS]

NOWADAYS Stand aroom, I pray thee, brother mine!

I have laboured all this night; when shall we go dine?

A church here beside shall pay for the ale, bread and wine.

Lo, here is stuff will serve.

NEW GUISE Now by the holy Mary, thou art better merchant than I!

[Enter NOUGHT]

NOUGHT Avant,\* knaves, let me go by! out of the way

I can not get and I should starve.<sup>55</sup>

[Enter MISCHIEF, with broken shackles]

MISCHIEF Here comes a man of arms! Why stand ye so still?

Of murder and manslaughter I have my belly-full.

NOWADAYS What, Mischief, have ye been in prison? And\* it be your will,

Me seemeth ye have scored a pair of fetters

MISCHIEF I was chained by the arms: lo, I have them here.

The chains I burst asunder and killed the gaoler,

Ye, and his fair wife halsed\* in a corner;                      embraced

Ah, how sweetly I kissed the sweet mouth of hers!

When I had do, I was mine own butler;

I brought away with me both dish and dubler.\*                      plate

Here is enough for me; be of good cheer!

Yet well fare the new chesance!\*                                      business

MANKIND I ask mercy of New Guise, Nowadays and Nought.                      650

Once with my spade I remember that I faught.

I will make you amends if I hurt you aught\*                                      at all

Or did any grevance.

NEW GUISE What a devil liketh thee\* to be of this disposition?                      pleases you

MANKIND I dreamed Mercy was hanged, this was my vision,

And that to you three I should have recourse and remotion.\*                      resort

Now I pray you heartily of your good will.

I cry you mercy of all that I did amiss.

NOWADAYS I say, New Guise, Nought, Titivillus made all this:

As sekyr\* as God is in heaven, so it is.                                      surely                      660

NOUGHT Stand up on your feet! Why stand ye so still?

NEW GUISE Master Mischief, we will you exhort

Mankind's name in your book for to report.

MISCHIEF I will not so; I will set a court.

Nowadays, make proclamation,

And do it sub forma iuris,<sup>56</sup> dasarde!\* fool

NOWADAYS Oyez!\* Oyez! Oyez! All manner of men and common women

listen! (legal)

To the court of Mischief either come or send!<sup>57</sup>

Mankind shall return; he is of our men.

MISCHIEF Nought, come forth, thou shall be steward. 670

NEW GUISE Master Mischief, his side gown may be told.

He may have a jacket thereof, and money told.<sup>58</sup>

[NOUGHT writes]

MANKIND I will do for the best, so\* I have no cold. as long as

Hold, I pray you, and take it with you.

And let me have it again in any wise.

NEW GUISE I promit you a fresh jacket after the new guise.\* fashion

MANKIND Go and do that longeth\* to your office, pertains

And spare that ye mow!\* save what you are able

[Exit NEW GUISE]

NOUGHT Hold, master Mischief, and read this.

MISCHIEF Here is blottibus in blottis 680

Blottorum blottibus istis.<sup>59</sup>

I beshrew your ears, a fair hand!

NOWADAYS Ye, it is a good running fist.\* cursive script

Such an hand may not be missed.

NOUGHT I should have done better, had I wist.\* known

MISCHIEF Take heed sirs, it stood you on hand.\* concerned you

Curia tenta generalis

In a place there good ale is

Anno regni regitalis

Edwardi nullateni<sup>60</sup> 690

On yestern day in Feverer - the year passeth fully,

As Nought hath written; here is our Tully,<sup>61</sup>

Anno regni regis nulli!<sup>62</sup>

NOWADAYS What how, New Guise! Thou makest much tarrying.\* delay

That jacket shall not be worth a farthing.

[Enter NEW GUISE]

NEW GUISE Out of my way, sirs, for dread of fighting!

Lo, here is a feat tail\*, light\* to leap about!\* neat cut/easy

NOUGHT It is not shapen worth a morsell of bread;

There is too much cloth, it weighs as any lead.

I shall go and mend it, else I will lose my head.

700

Make space, sirs, let me go out.

[Exit NOUGHT]

MISCHIEF Mankind, come hither! God send you the gout!

Ye shall go to all the good fellows in the country about;

Unto the good-wife when the good-man is out.

“I will,” say ye.

MANKIND I will, sir.

NOWADAYS There are but six deadly sins, lechery is none,

As it may be verified by us brethelis\* everychone.                      villains

Ye shall go rob, steal, and kill, as fast as ye may gon.

“I will,” say ye.

MANKIND I will, sir.

NOWADAYS On Sundays on the morrow early betime\*    in good time 710

Ye shall with us to the ale-house early to go dine

And forbear\* mass and matins, hours and prime.<sup>63</sup>                      skip

“I will,” say ye.

MANKIND I will, sir.

MISCHIEF Ye must have by your side a long da pacem,<sup>64</sup>

As true men ride by the way for to unbrace\* them,                      carve

Take their money, cut their throats; thus overface\* them.                      overcome

“I will,” say ye.

MANKIND I will, sir.

[Enter NOUGHT]

NOUGHT Here is a jolly jacket! How say ye?

NEW GUISE It is a good jake-of-fence<sup>65</sup> for a man’s body.

Hey, dog, hay! Whoop, hoo! Go your way lightly! 720

Ye are well made for to run.

MISCHIEF Tidings, tidings! I have espied one!\* someone

Hence with your stuff, fast we were gone!

I beshrew\* the last shall come to his home. curse

ALL Amen!

[Enter MERCY]

MERCY What ho, Mankind! Flee that fellowship, I you pray!

MANKIND I shall speak with thee another time, tomorn, or the next day.

We shall go forth together to keep my father’s year day.<sup>66</sup>

A tapster, a tapster! Stow, statt, stow!<sup>67</sup>

MISCHIEF A mischief go with thee! Here I have a foul fall. 730

Hence, away from me, or I shall beshit you all.

NEW GUISE What how, ostler!, ostler! Lend us a football!

Whoop, how! Anow, anow, anow, anow!

Scene 3

MERCY My mind is dispersed, my body trembleth as the aspen leaf.

The tears should trickle down my cheeks, were\* not your reverence.

were it not for

It were to me solace, the cruel visitation of death.

Without rude behaviour I can not express this inconvenience.\* distress

Weeping, sighing, and sobbing were my sufficiency;

All natural nutriment to me as carrion is odible.\* hateful

My inward affliction yieldeth me\* tedious unto your presence. 740

renders me

I can not bear it evenly\* that Mankind is so flexible.\* calmly/mutable

Man unkind, wherever thou be! For all this world was not apprehensible

To discharge thine original offence,<sup>68</sup> thralldom and captivity,

Till God's own well beloved son was obedient and passible.\* able to suffer

Every drop of His blood was shed to purge thine iniquity.

I discommend and disallow thine often\* mutability. frequent

To every creature thou art disrespectuous\* and odiable.\* despised/hateful

Why art thou so uncourteous, so inconsiderate? Alas, and wo is me!

As the vane that turneth with the wind, so art thou convertible.

In trust is treason; thy promise is not credible; 750

Thy perversyous\* ingratitude I can not rehearse.\* corrupt/recount

To God and to all the holy court of heaven thou art despectable,\* detestable

As a noble versifier maketh mention in his verse:

“Lex et natura, Christus et omnia jura

Damnant ingratum, lugent eum fore natum,”<sup>69</sup>

O good Lady and Mother of Mercy, have pity and compassion

Of the wretchedness of Mankind, that is so wanton and so frail!

Let mercy exceed justice, dear Mother, admit\* this supplication,\*

concede/prayer

Equity to be laid on party\* and mercy to prevail. aside

Too sensual living is reprovably that is nowadays, 760

As by the comprehence\* of this matter it may be specified. understanding

New Guise, Nowadays, Nought with their allectuous\* ways alluring

They have perverted Mankind, my sweet son, I have well espied.

A, with these cursed caitiffs,\* and I may,\* he shall not long endure.

wretches/if I may prevent it

I, Mercy, his father ghostly, will proceed forth and do my property.\* natural

office

Lady, help! This manner of living is a detestable pleasure.

Vanitas vanitatum,<sup>70</sup> all is but a vanity.

Mercy shall never be convict of his uncourteous condition.<sup>71</sup>

With weeping tears by night and by day I will go and never cease.

Shall I not find him? Yes, I hope. Now God be my protection! 770

My predilect\* son, where be ye? Mankind, ubi es\*? beloved/where are you?

MISCHIEF My prepotent\* father, when ye sup, sup out your mess.<sup>72</sup> Most

powerful

Ye are all to-gloried in your terms; ye make many a lease.\* lie

Will ye hear? He crieth ever "Mankind, ubi es?"

NEW GUISE Hic\* hic, hic hic, hic hic, hic hic! (Latin) here

That is to say, here, here, here! Nigh dead in the creek.

If ye will have him, go and seek, seek, seek!

Seek not overlong, for losing of your mind!

[Enter NOWADAYS and NOUGHT]

NOWADAYS If ye will have Mankind, ho domine, domine, dominus!<sup>73</sup>

Ye must speak to the sheriff for a cape corpus,<sup>74</sup> 780

Else ye must be fain\*, to return with non est inventus.<sup>75</sup> prepared

How say ye, sir? My bolt is shot.<sup>76</sup>

NOUGHT I am doing of my needings;<sup>77</sup> beware how ye shot!

Fie, fie, fie! I have foul arrayed my foot.

Be wise for shooting with your tackles, for God wot\* knows

My foot is fouly overshot.

MISCHIEF A parlement, a parlement! Come forth, NOUGHT, behind.

A council belive!\* I am afraid Mercy will him find. quickly

How say ye, and what say ye? How shall we do with Mankind?

NEW GUISE Tush! A fly's wing!<sup>78</sup> Will ye do well? 790

He weneth\* Mercy were hanged for stealing of a mare. thinks

Mischief, go say to him that Mercy seeketh everywhere.

He will hang himself, I undertake,\* for fear. guarantee

MISCHIEF I assent thereto; it is wittily said and well.

NOWADAYS Whip it in thy coat; anon it were done.<sup>79</sup>

Now Saint Gabriell's mother save the cloths of thy shoon!\* shoes

All the books in the world, if they had been undone,\* opened

Could not have counselled us bet.\* better

[Here MISCHIEF goes out, and returns with MANKIND]

MISCHIEF How, Mankind! Come and speak with Mercy, he is here fast by.\*

close by

MANKIND A rope, a rope, a rope! I am not worthy. 800

MISCHIEF Anon, anon, anon! I have it here ready,

With a tree also that I have get.<sup>80</sup>

Hold the tree, Nowadays, Nought! Take heed and be wise!

NEW GUISE Lo, Mankind! Do as I do; this is the new guise.

Give the rope just to thy neck; this is my advice.

[Enter MERCY carrying a whip]

MISCHIEF Help thiself, Nought! Lo, Mercy is here!

He scareth us with a baleys\*; we may no longer tarry. whip

NEW GUISE Queck,<sup>81</sup> queck, queck! Alas, my throat! I beshrew you, marry!

A, Mercy, Christ's copped\* curse go with you, and Saint Davy!<sup>82</sup> heaped

Alas, my wesant!\* Ye were somewhat too near. throat 810

[They go out, except MERCY and MANKIND]

MERCY Arise, my precious redeemed son! Ye be to me full dear.

He is so timorous,\* me seemeth his vital spirit doth expire. frightened

MANKIND Alas, I have be so bestially disposed, I dare not appear.

To see your solacious\* face I am not worthy to desire. comforting

MERCY Your criminous\* complaint woundeth my heart as a lance. guilty

Dispose yourself meekly to ask mercy, and I will assent.

Yield me neither gold not treasure, but your humble obeisance,\* obedience

The voluntary\* subjection of your heart, and I am content. willing

MANKIND What, ask mercy yet once again? Alas, it were a vile petition.

Ever to offend and ever to ask mercy, it is a puerility.\* childish practice 820

It is so abominable to rehearse my iterat\* transgression, repeated

I am not worthy to have mercy by no possibility.

MERCY O Mankind, my singular solace\*, this is a lamentable excuse.

comfort

The dolorous\* tears of my heart, how they begin to amount!\* grievous/rise up

O pierced Jhesu, help thou this sinful sinner to reduce!\* return (to grace)

Nam hec est mutacio dextre Excelsi; vertit impios et non sunt.<sup>83</sup>

Arise and ask mercy, Mankind, and be associate to me.

Thy death shall be my heaviness; alas, 'tis pity it should be thus.

Thy obstinacy will exclude thee from the glorious perpetuity.<sup>84</sup>

Yet for my love open thy lips and say "Miserere mei, Deus!"<sup>85</sup> 830

MANKIND The equal justice of God will not permit such a sinful wretch

To be revived and restored again; it were\* impossible. would be

MERCY The justice of God will as I will, as Himself doth precise:\* make clear

Nolo mortem peccatoris, inquit,<sup>86</sup> if he will be redusable.\* reformed

MANKIND Then mercy, good Mercy! What is a man without mercy?

Little is our part of paradise where mercy ne were.<sup>87</sup>

Good Mercy, excuse the inevitable objection\* of my ghostly enemy.

opposition

The proverb sayth "The truth trieth the self."<sup>88</sup> Alas, I have much care.

MERCY God will not make you privy unto\* his Last Judgement.

a confidant with regard to

Justice and Equity shall be fortified,\* I will not deny. strengthened 840

Truth may not so cruelly proceed in his strait\* argument      exacting

But that Mercy shall rule the matter without controversy.

Arise now and go with me in this deambulatory.\*      covered walk

Incline your capacity;\* my doctrine is convenient.\*      listen carefully/pertinent

Sin not in hope of mercy; that is a crime notary.\*      notorious

To trust overmuch in a prince it is not expedient.\*      appropriate

In hope, when ye sin, ye think to have mercy, beware of that aventure.<sup>89</sup>

The good Lord said to the lecherous woman of Canan,

The holy gospel is the authority, as we read in Scripture:

“Vade et iam amplius noli peccare.”<sup>90</sup>

850

Christ preserved this sinful woman taken in adultery;

He said to her these words, “Go and sin no more.”

So to you, go and sin no more. Beware of vain confidence of mercy;

Offend not a prince on trust of his favour, as I said before.

If ye feel yourself trapped in the snare of your ghostly enemy,

Ask mercy anon; beware of the continuance.\*      persisting in sin

While a wound is fresh it is proved curable by surgery,

That\* if it proceed overlong, it is cause of great grevaunce.      whereas

MANKIND To ask mercy and to have: this is a liberal possession.

Shall this expeditious petition ever be allowed, as ye have insight?<sup>91</sup> 860

MERCY In this present life mercy is plenty, till death maketh his division;

But when ye be go, usque ad minimum quadrantem<sup>92</sup> ye shall reckon your  
right.

Ask mercy and have, while the body with the soul hath his annection;\* are  
joined

If ye tarry\* till your decease, ye may hap\* of your desire to miss. wait/chance

Be repentant here, trust not the hour of death; think on this lesson:

“Ecce nunc tempus acceptabile, ecce nunc dies salutis.”<sup>93</sup>

All the virtue in the world if ye might comprehend\* possess

Your merits were not premissible\* to the bliss above, necessarily deserving

Not to the least joy of heaven, of your proper\* effort to ascend. own

With mercy ye may; I tell you no fable, scripture doth prove. 870

MANKIND O Mercy, my suavious solas and singular recreatory,<sup>94</sup>

My predilect special,\* ye are worthy to have my love; particular beloved

For without desert\* and means supplicatory\* deserving/prayerful

Ye be compatient\* to my inexcusable reprove.\* sympathetic/guilt

A, it swemeth\* my heart to think how unwisely I have wrought. grieves

Titivillus, that goth invisible, hung his net before my eye  
And by his fantastical visions seditiously sought,  
To New Guise, Nowadays, Nought caused me to obey.

MERCY Mankind, ye were oblivious of my doctrine monitory.\* admonitory

I said before, Titivillus would assay you a brunt.\* assault 880

Beware from henceforth of his fables delusory.

The proverb saith, "Jacula prestita minus ledunt."<sup>95</sup>

Ye have three adversaries and he is master of them all:

That is to say, the Devil, the World, the Flesh and the Fell.<sup>96</sup>

The New Guise, Nowadays, Nought, the World we may them call;

And properly Titivillus signifieth the fiend of Hell;

The Flesh, that is the unclean\* concupiscence of your body. lecherous

These be your three ghostly enemies, in whom ye have put your confidence.

They brought you to Mischief to conclude your temporal glory,

As it hath be showed before this worshipful audience. 890

Remember how ready I was to help you; from such I was not dangerous;\*

haughty

Wherefore, good son, abstain from sin evermore after this.

Ye may both save and spill\* your soul that is so precious. damn

Libere welle, libere nolle<sup>97</sup> God may not deny iwis.\* certainly

Beware of Titivillus with his net and of all enemies' will,

Of your sinful delectation\* that grieveth your ghostly substance. pleasure

Your body is your enemy; let him not have his will.

Take your leave when ye will.\* God send you good perseverance! desire

MANKIND Since I shall depart, bless me, father, here; then I go.

God send us all plenty of his great mercy! 900

MERCY Dominus custodit te ab omni malo

In nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti.<sup>98</sup> Amen!

[Here MANKIND goes out]

Worshipful sovereigns, I have done my property.\* natural office

Mankind is delivered by my favorable patrociny.\* patronage

God preserve him from all wicked captivity

And send him grace his sensual conditions to mortify!\* extinguish

Now for his love that for us received his humanity,

Search your conditions with due examination.

Think and remember the world is but a vanity,

As it is proved daily by diverse transmutation.\* changes 910

Mankind is wretched, he hath sufficient proof.

Therefore God grant you all per suam misericordiam<sup>99</sup>

That ye may be playferes\* with the angels above                      play-fellows

And have to your portion vitam eternam.\* Amen!            (Latin) life eternal

### Finis

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The text is drawn from *The Macro Plays*, edited by M. Eccles, EETS 262 (London: Oxford University Press, 1969). Spelling has been modernised wherever rhyme and meter permit. Some editorial emendations have been taken from *Three Late Medieval Morality Plays*, edited by G. A. Lester (New York: Norton, 1981). This text has been prepared by James Simpson.

<sup>1</sup> Mostly English words with Latin endings: “Corn serves for bread, chaff for horses, and straw for fires.”

<sup>2</sup> A corruption of Saint Anne, with possible reference to the “tanning” received from whipping.

<sup>3</sup> I.e. The Virgin Mary.

<sup>4</sup> “You will find us to be rogues in every circumstance.”

<sup>5</sup> “Here is a satisfying pardon.” Pardons remitted the punishment due for sins committed, but were subject to abuse. “Bely-met”: probably “measured to the belly/gross appetite.”

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Matthew 12.36-7.

<sup>7</sup> A reference to the Last Judgement.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Luke 16.2.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Galatians 6.8.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. 1 Thessalonians 5.21.

<sup>11</sup> “I trust that each man shall have his share according to his qualities.”

<sup>12</sup> Job 7.1.

<sup>13</sup> I.e. with the crown of salvation.

<sup>14</sup> A weighing instrument with staff and balls; metaphorically, “penis.”

<sup>15</sup> Job 1.21. “The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away. As it pleased Him, so it is done. Blessed be the name of the Lord.”

<sup>16</sup> “I particularly command you.”

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Job 34.15. “Remember, O man, that you are dust, and to dust you will return.”

<sup>18</sup> Heraldic arms; here, presumably, a cross.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Ps. 17.26-7, AV 18.26-7. “With the holy you will be holy, and with the corrupt you will be corrupted.”

<sup>20</sup> “Behold, how good and how agreeable, said the devil to the friars, that brothers should dwell together in unity.” A mocking reference to the friars (*fratres*). Cf. Ps. 132.1, AV 133.1.

<sup>21</sup> In this parody of a Christmas song, “Holyke” evokes both “holy” and “hole.”

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- 22 I.e. what remains after the principal crop has been carted away (i.e. nothing).
- 23 Corruption of “God’s sacred body.”
- 24 I Kings 17.47. “The Lord saves not with sword or spear” (David’s words to Goliath).
- 25 Latin ending: “with spades.”
- 26 Latin ending: “heads.”
- 27 Walsingham was the site of a famous pilgrimage shrine dedicated to the Virgin Mary; the “whistle” is probably a souvenir of the shrine.
- 28 “If I will give.” A reference (the first in English theatrical history) to an audience paying. The audience are being asked to pay in order to see the Devil.
- 29 Parodic distortion of “your sovereigns.”
- 30 Coins of little worth.
- 31 “You’re all paying up.”
- 32 “Are you in the money?”
- 33 “So indeed, master.”
- 34 “I am the Lord of Lords.” Cf. Deuteronomy 10.17 and Apocalypse 19.16.
- 35 “I prove it thus.”
- 36 “I’m two quarter pennies short of a half penny”; i.e. I have nothing.
- 37 “The nothing that I have.”
- 38 “Not to us, Lord.” Cf. Ps. 113.1; AV 115.1.
- 39 “Knock out blow on my testicles.”
- 40 A distorted reference to the five wounds of Christ.
- 41 The persons mentioned were people of importance in towns around Cambridge.
- 42 “Don’t touch me.” John 20.17. Christ’s words to Mary Magdalene in the garden after the Resurrection.
- 43 “Into your hands [I commend my spirit]”. Luke 23.46. Christ’s last words.
- 44 “Queck” imitates the sound of strangulation at the point of hanging. Hammond was presumably a judge.
- 45 “Know well our neck verse.” If a man sentenced to death by hanging knew how to read a passage from the Psalms in Latin, he might escape hanging.
- 46 Drawk and durnell: names of noxious weeds.
- 47 “In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”
- 48 “Our father who is in heaven.” The opening of the Lord’s Prayer.
- 49 Titivillus suggests the application of a powder to a brass coin, in order to produce the appearance, in twilight (“in the owl-flight”), of silver.
- 50 MS “stown”.
- 51 “Broken his necktie (i.e. neck), it is said.”
- 52 “Behold a sign!” Cf. Isaiah 7.13.
- 53 See note to line 520.
- 54 St Audrey was reputed to have worn splendid neckscarves in her youth, for which, by her own estimation, she died of a neck tumor. New Guise in fact wears a hangman’s halter.

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- 55 "I'm unable to steal, even if I should starve."  
56 "In due legal form."  
57 MS "Sen."  
58 Mankind's sober gown is to be cut and shortened to an immoderate brevity, leaving spare cloth to be sold.  
59 Nonsense Latin, evoking legal formulae.  
60 (Latin) "A general court having been held...in the regnal year of Edward the no-one."  
61 Marcus Tullius Cicero, the model of Latin style, ironically applied to Nought.  
62 "In the year of no king."  
63 The "canonical hours" were the fixed times each day set aside in monasteries for prayers; they included matins and prime.  
64 "Give peace"; here a reference to a dagger.  
65 Protective jacket.  
66 "The anniversary of my father's death."  
67 "Here, woman, here!"  
68 "Unkind man, wherever you are! For all this world was not capable of perceiving how to repay for your original sin..."  
69 "Law and Nature, Christ and every law / Damn the ingrate, and grieve that he was born."  
70 "Vanity of vanities". Ecclesiastes 1.2.  
71 Defeated by [Mankind's] ungratious way of life.  
72 "When you drink, drink up your meal" (nonsense).  
73 "Lord, Lord, Lord."  
74 "Seize the body", referring to a legal warrant for arrest.  
75 "He is not found." Another legal term, used if the person to be arrested is not found.  
76 "My arrow is shot." I.e. I've finished.  
77 Nought is urinating; the references that follow refer to inaccurate aim in male urination.  
78 "Quiet! A matter of no consequence!"  
79 Meaning uncertain; apparently: "Over to you; it'll be resolved immediately."  
80 I.e. A ready-prepared gallows.  
81 The sound of strangulation. Cf. line 516.  
82 Saint David.  
83 "For this is the change of the right hand of the Most High; he overturns the impious, and they are no more." Cf. Ps 76.11; AV 77.10, and Proverbs 12.7.  
84 I.e. of salvation.  
85 "Have mercy upon me, God." The opening words of Ps. 50, 55, 56; AV 51, 56, 57.  
86 "I do not wish the death of a sinner, he said...". Cf. Ezechiel 33.11.  
87 "If mercy were not to exist."  
88 "The truth tests itself."  
89 "Beware of this risk: to sin in the hope of receiving mercy."

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- 90 “Go forth, and now sin no more.” John 8.11.
- 91 “Shall this directly-made petition ever be accepted, in your judgement?”
- 92 “Even to the last farthing”. Cf. Matthew 5.26.
- 93 “Behold, now is the acceptable time; now the day of salvation.” 2  
Corinthians 6.2.
- 94 “Delightful comfort and unique source of relief.”
- 95 “Foreseen darts wound less.”
- 96 The three enemies of mankind: the World, the Flesh, and the Devil. “Fell”  
 (“skin”) here merely adds nuance to “flesh.”
- 97 “Freely to choose, freely to refuse.”
- 98 “The Lord keep you from all evil [Ps. 120.7; AV 121.7]; in the name of the  
Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.”
- 99 “Through his mercy.”