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.

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 participable 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,

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 darify:

Miss-mash, driff-draff,

Some was corn and some was chaff,

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.”

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!  

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

**NEW GUISE**  I give no force,* by Saint Tanne!²  

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

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.  

Have thereat then with a merry cheer!  

(Here they dance)  

**MERCY**  Do way,* do way this rule, sirs! Do way!  

**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.  

Come forth, good father, I you pray!  

By a little ye may assay.*  

Anon off with your clothes, if ye will play.  

Go to! For I have had a pretty scotling.*  

**MERCY**  Nay, brother, I will not dance.  

**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.*
NOUGHT Ye, sir, will ye do well,
Trace not with them, by my counsel,
For I have traced somewhat too fell*;
I tell, it is a narrow space.

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

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.*

Therefore, sir, curtly,* greet you well.

MERCY Few words, few and well set!

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

Many words and shortly set,

This is the new guise, every deal.*

MERCY Lady,³ help! How wretches delight in their sinful ways!

NOWADAYS Say not again* the new guise nowadays!

Thou shalt find us shrews at all assays.⁴

Beware! Ye may soon lick a buffet.*

MERCY He was well occupied that brought you, brethren.

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!*

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 conceive 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 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;
And fain* of you I would here tell
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:
Ocularefundamentum!  kiss (my) arse

NOUGHT Lo, master, lo, here is a pardon belly-met.5
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. 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 eyen!* 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,
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
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?°

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°

And say to the transgressors that wickedly have wrought,

“Come forth unto your judge and yield your account”°

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.°

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.°

[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.
Every man for his degree I trust shall be participate,\textsuperscript{11} 

If we will mortify our carnal* condition fleshly

And our voluntary* desires, that ever be pervercionate,* wilful/perverted

To renounce them and yield us under God's provision.

My name is Mankind. I have my composition

Of a body and of a soul, of condition contrary.

Betwyx* them is a great division; between

He that should be subject, now he hath the victory.

This is to me a lamentable story

To see my flesh of my soul to have governance.

Where the good-wife is the master, the good-man may be sorry. 200

I may both sigh and sob, this is a piteous remembrance.

O thou my soul, so subtle in thy substance,

Alas, what was thy fortune and thy chance

To be associate with my flesh, that stinking dunghill?

Lady, help! Sovereigns, it doth my soul much ill

To see the flesh prosperous and the soul trodden under foot.

I shall go to yonder man and assay* hym I will. maketrial of him
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 betwyx the soul and the body:

“Vita hominis est milicia super terram.”

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

Be never a coward against your adversary. If ye will be crowned, ye must needs fight.

Intend well and God will be 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

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
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.14
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 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,

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,

And say as he said in your trouble and adversity:

“Dominus dedit, Dominus abstulit; sicut sibi placiuit, ita factum est; nomen Domini benedictum!”

Moreover, in special I give you in charge,

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.

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:
"Memento, homo, quod cinis es et in cinerem reverteris." 17
Lo, I bear on my breast the badge of my arms. 18

[Enter NEW GUISE]

NEW GUISE The weather is cold, God send us good feres!* companions
"Cum sancto sanctus eris et cum perverso perverteris." 19
"Ecce quam bonum et quam jocundum," quod the devil to the friars,
"Habitare fratres in unum." 20

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,

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

trousers

ALL  Holyke Holyke Holyke! Holyke Holyke Holyke!21

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

350

I must needs labour, it is my living.

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,  
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?  

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, 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.” 24

NOUGHT  No, marry, I beshrew you, it is in spadibus. 25

Therefore Christ’s curse come upon your hadibus 26

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 foes.* 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!
Alas the while, I worse than nought!
Sithen I was here, by him that me bought,
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 been absent,
To fight manly against his fone.

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.
Will ye list? I hear them cry.

[Enter NEW GUISE, NOWADAYS and NOUGHT]
Alas, alas, come hither, I shall be your surety.
Alack, alack! Vien! Come hither with sorrow!
Peace, fair babes, ye shall have an apple tomorrow!
Why greeet ye so, why?

NEW GUISE Alas, master, alas, my privity!

MISCHIEF A, where? Alack! Fair babe, ba* me
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/help it
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.

MISCHIEF  How, now, a minstrell! Know ye any aught?* anything at all

NOUGHT  I can pipe in a Walsingham whistle;27 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 dēlēra.28

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,29 460

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.30

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.  

Ye pay all alike;\textsuperscript{31} well may ye fare!  

NOUGHT I say, New Guise, Nowadays: “Estis vos pecuniatus?”\textsuperscript{32}  
I have cried a fair while, I beshrew your pates!* I curse your heads  

NOWADAYS Ita vère, magister.\textsuperscript{33} Come forth now your gates!* way  
He is a goodly man, sirs; make space and beware!  

[Enter TITIVILLUS]  

TITIVILLUS Ego sum dominandum dominus\textsuperscript{34} 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.\textsuperscript{35} 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;\textsuperscript{36}  
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!\textsuperscript{37} 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\textsuperscript{38} non nobis, by Saint Denny!
The devil may dance in my purse for a penny;
It is as clean as a bird’s arse.

[Titivillus discovers the collected monies.]

TITIVILLUS Now I say yet again, caveatis! 490
Here is an able fellowship to trice them out of your gates.

Now I say, New Guise, Nowadays and Nought,
Go and search the country, anon it be sought,
Some here, some there; what if ye may catch ought?* anything

If ye fail of horse, take what ye may else.

NEW GUISE Then speak to Mankind for the recumbentibus of my jewels.39
NOWADAYS Remember my broken head in the worship of the five vowels.40
NOUGHT Ye, good sir, and the sciatica in my arm.

TITIVILLUS I know full well what Mankind did to you.

Mischief hath informed of all the matter through.

I shall venge your quarrel, I make God avow.* a vow to God
Forth, and espy where ye may do harm.

Take William Fyde,41 if ye will have any mo.* more

I say, New Guise, whither art thou avised* to go? where do you intend

NEW GUISE First I shall begin at Master Huntington of Sawston,
From thence I shall go to William Thurlay of Hauston,
And so forth to Pichard of Trumpington.
I will keep me* to these three.  
\begin{center}
restrict myself
\end{center}
NOWADAYS I shall go to William Baker of Walton,
To Richard Bollman of Gayton;
I shall spare Master Wood of Fulbourn,
He is a noli me tangere\textsuperscript{42}

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\textsuperscript{43} ... qweke!\textsuperscript{44}
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,\textsuperscript{45} that we have not a check.* obstruction

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, unreadily;
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; 46 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

[Enter MANKIND]

In nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti 47 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. 48

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. relieveyourself 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
[Hegoes out]

TITIVILLUS  Mankind was busy in his prayer, yet I did* him arise. made
He is conveyed,* 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.49
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.*
My head is very heavy, I tell you forsooth.*
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 stolen50 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,
Or he hangeth by the neck high upon the gallows.

Adieu,* fair masters! I will haste me to the ale house
And speak with New Guise, Nowadays and Nought.
And get me a lemman with a smattering* face.

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

NEW GUISE Make space, for cock’s body sacred, make space!
Aha! Well overun! 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.
A grace was, the halter burst asunder: ecce signum!
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.
My body gave a swing when I hung upon the case?
Alas, he will hang such a likely* man, and a fierce,
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. 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. 55

[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, fasarde! fool

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

listen! (legal)

To the court of Mischief either come or send!¹⁵⁷

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.⁵⁸

[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
Blottorum blottibus istis.\textsuperscript{59}
I beshrew your ears, a fair hand!

NOWADAYS Ye, it is a good running fist.*
Such an hand may not be missed.

NOUGHT I should have done better, had I wist.*
MISCHIEF Take heed sirs, it stood you on hand.*

Curia tenta generalis
In a place there good ale is
Anno regni regitalis
Edwardi nullateni\textsuperscript{60}
On yestern day in Feverer - the year passeth fully,
As Nought hath written; here is our Tully,\textsuperscript{61}
Anno regni regis nulli\textsuperscript{62}

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

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
Ye shall with us to the ale-house early to go dine
And forbear* mass and matins, hours and prime.63  *skip

“I will,” say ye.

MANKIND I will, sir.

MISCHIEF Ye must have by your side a long da pacem.64
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 GUIS E  It is a good jake-of-fence for a man’s body.

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

A tapster, a tapster! Stow, statt, stow  

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

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

NEW GUIS E  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.

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

Without rude behaviour I can not express this inconvenience.*  
Weeping, sighing, and sobbing were my sufficience;

All natural nutriment to me as carrion is odible.*

My inward affliction yieldeth me* tedious unto your presence.  

I can not bear it evenly* that Mankind is so flexible.*

Man unkind, wherever thou be! For all this world was not apprehensible
To discharge thine original offence,68 thraldom and captivity,
Till God’s own well beloved son was obedient and passible.*

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

I discommend and disallow thine often* mutability.*

To every creature thou art dispectuous* and odiable.*

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;
Thy perversous* ingratitude I can not rehearse.* corrupt/recount
To God and to all the holy court of heaven thou art despicable,* detestable
As a noble versifier maketh mention in his verse:
“Lex et natura, Christus et omnia jura
Damnant ingratum, lugent eum fore natum,”69

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 reprovable 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,70 all is but a vanity.
Mercy shall never be convict of his uncourteous condition.71

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.72 Most powerful

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

Will ye hear? He crieth ever “Mankind, ubi es?”

NEW GUIDE 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!73

Ye must speak to the sheriff for a cape corpus,74 780

Else ye must be fain*, to return with non est inventus.75 prepared

How say ye, sir? My bolt is shot.76

NOUGHT I am doing of my needings;77 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! 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.79

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.80

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.  

NEW GUISE Queck, queck, queck! Alas, my throat! I beshrew you, marry!

A, Mercy, Christ’s copped* curse go with you, and Saint Davy!  

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

[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.  

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

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

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

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

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

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

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.*  

It is so abominable to rehearse my iterat* transgression,  

I am not worthy to have mercy by no possibility.

MERCY O Mankind, my singular solace*, this is a lamentable excuse.
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 hæc est mutatio dextre Excelsi; vertit impios et non sunt.83

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.84
Yet for my love open thy lips and say “Misereremi, Deus!”85 830

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,86 if he will be redusible.* reformed

MANKIND Then mercy, good Mercy! What is a man without mercy?
Little is our part of paradise where mercy ne were.87
Good Mercy, excuse the inevitable objection* of my ghostly enemy.

opposition

The proverb sayth “The truth trieth the self.”88 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 but that Mercy shall rule the matter without controversy.

Arise now and go with me in this deambulatory. Incline your capacity; my doctrine is convenient. Sin not in hope of mercy; that is a crime notorious. To trust overmuch in a prince it is not expedient.

In hope, when ye sin, ye think to have mercy, beware of that aventure. 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.”

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. While a wound is fresh it is proved curable by surgery, That if it proceed overlong, it is cause of great grevaunce.
MANKIND To ask mercy and to have: this is a liberal possession.

Shall this expeditious petition ever be allowed, as ye have insight?

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

But when ye be go, usque ad minimum quadrans 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."  

All the virtue in the world if ye might comprehend possess

Your merits were not premiable 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.

MANKIND O Mercy, my suavious solas and singular recreatory.

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

For without desert and means supplicatory desiring/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." 95

Ye have three adversaries and he is master of them all:
That is to say, the Devil, the World, the Flesh and the Fell. 96
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 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!

MERCY  Dominius custodit te ab omni malo
In nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti.* Amen!

[Here MANKIND goes out]
Worshipful sovereigns, I have done my property:* natural office
Mankind is delivered by my favorable patrocinium.* 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
That ye may be playfellowes* with the angels above

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

Finis

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.

1 Mostly English words with Latin endings: “Corn serves for bread, chaff for horses, and straw for fires.”
2 A corruption of Saint Anne, with possible reference to the “tanning” received from whipping.
3 I.e. The Virgin Mary.
4 “You will find us to be rogues in every circumstance.”
5 “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.”
7 A reference to the Last Judgement.
10 Cf. 1 Thessalonians 5.21.
11 “I trust that each man shall have his share according to his qualities.”
12 Job 7.1.
13 I.e. with the crown of salvation.
14 A weighing instrument with staff and balls; metaphorically, “penis.”
15 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.”
16 “I particularly command you.”
17 Cf. Job 34.15. “Remember, O man, that you are dust, and to dust you will return.”
18 Heraldic arms; here, presumably, a cross.
19 Cf. Ps. 17.26-7, AV 18.26-7. “With the holy you will be holy, and with the corrupt you will be corrupted.”
20 “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.
21 In this parody of a Christmas song, “Holyke” evokes both “holy” and “hole.”
I.e. what remains after the principal crop has been carted away (i.e. nothing).

Corruption of “God’s sacred body.”

I Kings 17.47. “The Lord saves not with sword or spear” (David’s words to Goliath).

Latin ending: “with spades.”

Latin ending: “heads.”

Walsingham was the site of a famous pilgrimage shrine dedicated to the Virgin Mary; the “whistle” is probably a souvenir of the shrine.

“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.

Parodic distortion of “your sovereigns.”

Coins of little worth.

“You’re all paying up.”

“Are you in the money?”

“So indeed, master.”

“I am the Lord of Lords.” Cf. Deuteronomy 10.17 and Apocalypse 19.16.

“I prove it thus.”

“I’m two quarter pennies short of a half penny”; i.e. I have nothing.

“The nothing that I have.”

“Not to us, Lord.” Cf Ps. 113.1; AV 115.1.

“Knock out blow on my testicles.”

A distorted reference to the five wounds of Christ.

The persons mentioned were people of importance in towns around Cambridge.

“Don’t touch me.” John 20.17. Christ’s words to Mary Magdalene in the garden after the Resurrection.

“Into your hands [I commend my spirit]”. Luke 23.46. Christ’s last words.

“Queck” imitates the sound of strangulation at the point of hanging. Hammond was presumably a judge.

“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.

Drawk and durnell: names of noxious weeds.

“In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”

“Our father who is in heaven.” The opening of the Lord’s Prayer.

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.

MS “stown”.

“Broken his necktie (i.e. neck), it is said.”


See note to line 520.

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.
“I’m unable to steal, even if I should starve.”

“In due legal form.”

MS “Sen.”

Mankind’s sober gown is to be cut and shortened to an immoderate brevity, leaving spare cloth to be sold.

Nonsense Latin, evoking legal formulae.

(Latin) “A general court having been held…in the regnal year of Edward the no-one.”

Marcus Tullius Cicero, the model of Latin style, ironically applied to Nought.

“In the year of no king.”

The “canonical hours” were the fixed times each day set aside in monasteries for prayers; they included matins and prime.

“Give peace”; here a reference to a dagger.

Protective jacket.

“The anniversary of my father’s death.”

“Here, woman, here!”

“Unkind man, wherever you are! For all this world was not capable of perceiving how to repay for your original sin…”

“Law and Nature, Christ and every law / Damn the ingrate, and grieve that he was born.”

“Vanity of vanities”. Ecclesiastes 1.2.

Defeated by [Mankind’s] ungratious way of life.

“When you drink, drink up your meal” (nonsense).

“Lord, Lord, Lord.”

“Seize the body”, referring to a legal warrant for arrest.

“He is not found.” Another legal term, used if the person to be arrested is not found.

“My arrow is shot.” I.e. I’ve finished.

Nought is urinating; the references that follow refer to inaccurate aim in male urination.

“Quiet! A matter of no consequence!”

Meaning uncertain; apparently: “Over to you; it’ll be resolved immediately.”

I.e. A ready-prepared gallows.

The sound of strangulation. Cf. line 516.

Saint David.

“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.

I.e. of salvation.

“I have mercy upon me, God.” The opening words of Ps. 50, 55, 56; AV 51, 56, 57.

“I do not wish the death of a sinner, he said…”. Cf. Ezechiel 33.11.

“If mercy were not to exist.”

“The truth tests itself.”

“Beware of this risk: to sin in the hope of receiving mercy.”
90 “Go forth, and now sin no more.” John 8.11.
91 “Shall this directly-made petition ever be accepted, in your judgement?”
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.”