

1 Henry IV

3.3

Enter Sir John Oldcastle [with a truncheon at his waist], and Russell

SIR JOHN Russell, am I not fallen away vilely since this last action? Do I not bate? Do I not dwindle? Why, my skin hangs about me like an old lady's loose gown. I am withered like an old apple-john. Well, I'll repent, and that suddenly, while I am in some liking. I shall 5
be out of heart shortly, and then I shall have no strength to repent. An I have not forgotten what the inside of a church is made of, I am a peppercorn, a brewer's horse±±the inside of a church! Company, villainous company, hath been the spoil of me. 10

RUSSELL Sir John, you are so fretful you cannot live long.

SIR JOHN Why, there is it. Come, sing me a bawdy song, make me merry. I was as virtuously given as a gentleman need to be: virtuous enough; swore little; diced not±±above seven times a week; went to a bawdy- 15
house not±±above once in a quarter±±of an hour; paid money that I borrowed±±three or four times; lived well, and in good compass. And now I live out of all order, out of all compass.

RUSSELL Why, you are so fat, Sir John, that you must 20
needs be out of all compass, out of all reasonable compass, Sir John.

SIR JOHN Do thou amend thy face, and I'll amend my life. Thou art our admiral, thou bearest the lantern in the poop±±but 'tis in the nose of thee. Thou art the Knight 25
of the Burning Lamp.

RUSSELL Why, Sir John, my face does you no harm.

SIR JOHN No, I'll be sworn; I make as good use of it as many a man doth of a death's head, or a *memento mori*. I never see thy face but I think upon hell-fire and 30
Dives that lived in purple±±for there he is in his robes, burning, burning. If thou wert any way given to virtue, I would swear by thy face; my oath should be `By this fire that's God's angel!' But thou art altogether given

over, and wert indeed, but for the light in thy face, the 35
son of utter darkness. When thou rannest up Gads Hill
in the night to catch my horse, if I did not think thou
hadst been an *ignis fatuus* or a ball of wildfire, there's
no purchase in money. O, thou art a perpetual triumph,
an everlasting bonfire-light! Thou hast saved me a 40
thousand marks in links and torches, walking with
thee in the night betwixt tavern and tavern±±but the
sack that thou hast drunk me would have bought me
lights as good cheap at the dearest chandler's in Europe.
I have maintained that salamander of yours with fire 45
any time this two-and-thirty years, God reward me
for it.

RUSSELL 'Sblood, I would my face were in your belly!

SIR JOHN God-a-mercy! So should I be sure to be heart-
burnt. 50

Enter Hostess

How now, Dame Partlet the hen, have you enquired
yet who picked my pocket?

HOSTESS Why, Sir John, what do you think, Sir John? Do
you think I keep thieves in my house? I have searched,
I have enquired; so has my husband, man by man, 55
boy by boy, servant by servant. The tithe of a hair was
never lost in my house before.

SIR JOHN Ye lie, Hostess: Russell was shaved and lost
many a hair, and I'll be sworn my pocket was picked.
Go to, you are a woman, go. 60

HOSTESS Who, I? No, I defy thee! God's light, I was never
called so in mine own house before.

SIR JOHN Go to, I know you well enough.

HOSTESS No, Sir John, you do not know me, Sir John; I
know you, Sir John. You owe me money, Sir John, and 65
now you pick a quarrel to beguile me of it. I bought
you a dozen of shirts to your back.

SIR JOHN Dowlas, filthy dowlas. I have given them away
to bakers' wives; they have made bolters of them.

HOSTESS Now as I am a true woman, holland of eight 70
shillings an ell. You owe money here besides, Sir John:
for your diet, and by-drinkings, and money lent you,
four-and-twenty pound.

SIR JOHN (*pointing at Russell*) He had his part of it. Let
him pay. 75

HOSTESS He? Alas, he is poor; he hath nothing.

SIR JOHN How, poor? Look upon his face. What call you
rich? Let them coin his nose, let them coin his cheeks,
I'll not pay a denier. What, will you make a younker
of me? Shall I not take mine ease in mine inn, but I 80
shall have my pocket picked? I have lost a seal-ring of
my grandfather's worth forty mark.

HOSTESS O Jesu, (*to Russell*) I have heard the Prince tell
him, I know not how oft, that that ring was copper.

SIR JOHN How? The Prince is a jack, a sneak-up. [*Raising 85*
his truncheon] 'Sblood, an he were here I would cudgel
him like a dog if he would say so.

*Enter Prince Harry and Harvey, marching; and Sir
John Oldcastle meets them, playing upon his
truncheon like a fife*

How now, lad, is the wind in that door, i'faith? Must
we all march?

RUSSELL Yea, two and two, Newgate fashion. 90

HOSTESS My lord, I pray you hear me.

PRINCE HARRY

What sayst thou, Mistress Quickly? How doth thy
husband?

I love him well; he is an honest man.

HOSTESS Good my lord, hear me!

SIR JOHN Prithee, let her alone, and list to me. 95

PRINCE HARRY What sayst thou, Jack?

SIR JOHN The other night I fell asleep here behind the
arras, and had my pocket picked. This house is turned
bawdy-house: they pick pockets.

PRINCE HARRY What didst thou lose, Jack? 100

SIR JOHN Wilt thou believe me, Hal, three or four bonds
of forty pound apiece, and a seal-ring of my grand-
father's.

PRINCE HARRY A trifle, some eightpenny matter.

HOSTESS So I told him, my lord; and I said I heard your 105
grace say so; and, my lord, he speaks most vilely of
you, like a foul-mouthed man as he is, and said he
would cudgel you.

PRINCE HARRY What? He did not!

HOSTESS There's neither faith, truth, nor womanhood in
me else. 110

SIR JOHN There's no more faith in thee than in a stewed
prune, nor no more truth in thee than in a drawn fox;
and, for womanhood, Maid Marian may be the deputy's
wife of the ward to thee. Go, you thing, go! 115

HOSTESS Say, what thing, what thing?

SIR JOHN What thing? Why, a thing to thank God on.

HOSTESS I am no thing to thank God on. I would thou
shouldst know it, I am an honest man's wife; and
setting thy knighthood aside, thou art a knave to call
me so. 120

SIR JOHN Setting thy womanhood aside, thou art a beast
to say otherwise.

HOSTESS Say, what beast, thou knave, thou?

SIR JOHN What beast? Why, an otter. 125

PRINCE HARRY An otter, Sir John? Why an otter?

SIR JOHN Why? She's neither fish nor flesh; a man knows
not where to have her.

HOSTESS Thou art an unjust man in saying so. Thou or
any man knows where to have me, thou knave, thou. 130

PRINCE HARRY Thou sayst true, Hostess, and he slanders
thee most grossly.

HOSTESS So he doth you, my lord, and said this other day
you owed him a thousand pound.

PRINCE HARRY (*to Sir John*) Sirrah, do I owe you a thousand
pound? 135

SIR JOHN A thousand pound, Hal? A million! Thy love is
worth a million; thou owest me thy love.

HOSTESS Nay, my lord, he called you 'jack' and said he
would cudgel you. 140

SIR JOHN Did I, Russell?

RUSSELL Indeed, Sir John, you said so.

SIR JOHN Yea, if he said my ring was copper.

PRINCE HARRY I say 'tis copper; darest thou be as good
as thy word now? 145

SIR JOHN Why, Hal, thou knowest as thou art but man I
dare, but as thou art prince, I fear thee as I fear the
roaring of the lion's whelp.

PRINCE HARRY And why not as the lion?

SIR JOHN The King himself is to be feared as the lion. Dost 150
thou think I'll fear thee as I fear thy father? Nay, an I
do, I pray God my girdle break.

PRINCE HARRY O, if it should, how would thy guts fall
about thy knees! But sirrah, there's no room for faith,
truth, nor honesty in this bosom of thine; it is all filled 155
up with guts and midriff. Charge an honest woman
with picking thy pocket? Why, thou whoreson
impudent embossed rascal, if there were anything in
thy pocket but tavern reckonings, memorandums of
bawdy-houses, and one poor pennyworth of sugar- 160
candy to make thee long-winded±±if thy pocket were
enriched with any other injuries but these, I am a
villain. And yet you will stand to it, you will not pocket
up wrong. Art thou not ashamed?

SIR JOHN Dost thou hear, Hal? Thou knowest in the state 165
of innocency Adam fell, and what should poor Jack
Oldcastle do in the days of villainy? Thou seest I have
more flesh than another man, and therefore more
frailty. You confess, then, you picked my pocket.

PRINCE HARRY It appears so by the story. 170

SIR JOHN Hostess, I forgive thee. Go make ready breakfast.
Love thy husband, look to thy servants, cherish thy
guests. Thou shalt find me tractable to any honest
reason; thou seest I am pacified still. Nay, prithee, be
gone. 175

Exit Hostess

Now, Hal, to the news at court. For the robbery, lad,
how is that answered?

PRINCE HARRY O, my sweet beef, I must still be good angel
to thee. The money is paid back again.

SIR JOHN O, I do not like that paying back; 'tis a double 180
labour.

PRINCE HARRY I am good friends with my father, and may
do anything.

SIR JOHN Rob me the exchequer the first thing thou dost,
and do it with unwashed hands too. 185

RUSSELL Do, my lord.

PRINCE HARRY I have procured thee, Jack, a charge of

foot.

SIR JOHN I would it had been of horse! Where shall I find
one that can steal well? O, for a fine thief of the age 190
of two-and-twenty or thereabouts! I am heinously
unprovided. Well, God be thanked for these rebels±±
they offend none but the virtuous. I laud them, I praise
them.

PRINCE HARRY Russell.

195

RUSSELL My lord?

PRINCE HARRY (*giving letters*)

Go bear this letter to Lord John of Lancaster,
To my brother John; this to my lord of Westmorland.

Exit Russell

Go, Harvey, to horse, to horse, for thou and I
Have thirty miles to ride yet ere dinner time. 200

Exit Harvey

Jack, meet me tomorrow in the Temple Hall
At two o'clock in the afternoon.

There shalt thou know thy charge, and there receive
Money and order for their furniture.

The land is burning, Percy stands on high, 205
And either we or they must lower lie.

Exit

SIR JOHN

Rare words! Brave world! (*Calling*) Hostess, my
breakfast, come!±±

O, I could wish this tavern were my drum!

Exit