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The Choise of Valentines by Thomas Nashe

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The Choise of Valentines

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[Transcriber's Note: Line notes have been moved to the end of each poem from their places on the individual pages to aid in the flow of the poems]

The
Choise of Valentines

*Or the merie ballad of
Nash his dildo*

[By Thomas Nash]

[From MSS. Copies in the Inner Temple (Petyt MS. 538, Vol. 43, f. viii., 295 b, circa 1680) and Bodleian (Rawl. MS. Poet 216, leaves 96-106, circa 1610-20) Libraries]

Edited by
John S. Farmer

London
[PRIVATELY PRINTED FOR SUBSCRIBERS ONLY]
MDCCCXCIX

[Illustration]

Introduction.

Nash's "*Choise of valentines*" has apparently come down to us only in manuscript form. It is extremely doubtful (Oldys notwithstanding[a]), whether the poem was ever before accorded the dignity of print. Nor would it now be deemed worthy of such were the only considerations those of literary merit or intrinsic value: truth to tell there is little of either to recommend it. But, as it has been repeatedly said, and well insisted on, the world cannot afford to lose any "document" whatsoever which bears, or *may* bear, in the slightest degree, on the story of its own growth and development, and out of which its true life has to be written. Especially is even the meanest Elizabethan of importance and value in relation to the re-construction---still far from complete---of the life and times of the immortal bard of Avon. In the most unlikely quarters a quarry may yet be found from which the social historian may obtain a valuable sidelight on manners and customs, the philologist a new lection or gloss, or the antiquary a solution to some, as yet, unsolved problem.

"The Choise of Valentines" claims attention, and is of value principally on two grounds, either of which, it is held, should amply justify the more permanent preservation now accorded this otherwise insignificant production. In the first place, it appears to have been dedicated to the Earl of Southampton, the generous patron of letters, and friend of Shakspeare; and second, it is probably the only example extant of the kind of hackwork to which Nash was frequently reduced by "the keenest pangs of poverty." [b] He confesses he was often obliged "to pen unedifying toys for gentlemen." When Harvey denounced him for "emulating Aretino's licentiousness" he admitted that poverty had occasionally forced him to prostitute his pen "in hope of gain" by penning "amorous Villanellos and Quipasses for new-fangled galiards and newer Fantisticos." In fact, he seems rarely to have known what it was to be otherwise than the subject of distress and need. As an example of these "unedifying toys" the present poem may, without much doubt, be cited, and an instance in penning which his "hope of gain" was realised.

It is a matter of history that Nash sought, and succeeded in obtaining for a time, the patronage of the Earl of Southampton, one of the most liberal men of his day, and a prominent figure in the declining years of Elizabeth. "I once tasted," Nash writes in 1593,[c] "the full spring of the Earl's liberality." Record is also made of a visit paid by him to Lord Southampton and Sir George Carey, while the former was Governor, and the latter Captain-General, of the Isle of Wight.

From internal evidence it would seem that this poem was called forth by the Earl's bounty to its author. "My muse devorst from deeper (the *Rawl. MS.* reads *deepest*) care, presents thee with a wanton elegie;" and further on, the dedication promises "better lines" which should "ere long" be penned in "honour" of his noble patron. This promise is renewed in the epilogue:---

"My mynde once purg'd of such lascivious witt,
With purifide words and hallowed verse,
Thy praises in large volumes shall rehearse,
That better maie thy grauer view befitt."

Does this refer to "The Unfortunate Traveller; or, The Life of Jack Wilton," generally regarded as Nash's most ambitious work, and which he dedicated to Lord Southampton in 1593? If so, and there is no evidence to gainsay the conclusion, we can fix the date of the present poem as, at all events, prior to 17th September of that year, when "The Unfortunate Traveller" was entered on the Stationers' Register.[d] This would make Nash contemporaneous, if not prior to, Shakspeare in offering a tribute to the merits of the young patron (Southampton at that time was barely twenty years old) of the Muses. *Venus and Adonis* was entered on the Register of the Stationers' Company about five months earlier, on the 18th April, 1593, and barely more than two months prior to the registration of "The Terrors of the Night."

It is curious to note that while Shakspeare and Nash both promise "graver work" and "better lines," they alike select amatory themes for their first offerings. The promise in Shakspeare's case was redeemed by the dedication to

Southampton of "The Rape of Lucrece," while it may be assumed, as aforesaid, that Nash followed suit with "The Unfortunate Traveller."

Nash, however, for some cause or other failed to retain the Earl's interest; "indeed," says Mr. Sidney Lee, "he did not retain the favour of any patron long." It is only fair to state, however, that the withdrawal of Lord Southampton's patronage may not have been due to any fault or shortcoming on the part of Nash, for there is likewise no evidence whatever to show that any close intimacy existed between Southampton and Shakspeare after 1594. Probably there was much else to claim Lord Southampton's attention---his marriage, and the Essex rebellion to wit. This, however, leads somewhat wide of the present work.

So much for the circumstances which appear to have called forth "The Choise of Valentines." The next consideration is, Has it ever appeared in print before? Oldys, in his *Ms.* notes to Langbaine's *English Dramatic Poets* (c. 1738) says:---"Tom Nash certainly wrote and published a pamphlet upon Dildos. He is accused of it by his antagonist, Harvey." But he was writing nearly 150 years after the event, and it is certainly very strange that a production which it can be shown was well known should, if printed, have so entirely disappeared. At all events, no copy is at present known to exist.[e] John Davies of Hereford alludes to it, but leaves it uncertain whether its destruction occurred in *Ms.* or in print. In his "Papers Complaint"[f] he writes:---

But O! my soule is vext to thinke how euill It is abus'd to beare suits to the Deuill. *Pierse-Pennilesse* (a *Pies* eat such a patch) Made me (agree) that business once dispatch. And having made me vndergo the shame, Abuse me further, in the Deuills name: And made [me] *Dildo* (dampned Dildo) beare, Till good men's hate did me in peeces teare.

As regards the manuscript copies there are one or two points worthy of note. At present we know of two, more or less incomplete, but each of which supplements, in some degree, the other. These MSS. are respectively in the Bodleian (Rawl. MS. Poet, 216) and the Inner Temple (Petyt MS. 538, vol. 43, p. viii., 295b.) libraries. Both texts are obviously corrupt, the Rawlinson abominably so. Probably the former was written out from memory alone, while the Petyt, if not a transcript direct from the original is, at any rate, very near to it.

The Bodleian version is written on paper in a small oblong leather-covered book, originally with clasps. The penmanship is early 17th century, probably about 1610-20. It is thus catalogued:--- ..."*E libris* Matt. Postlethwayt, Aug. 1, 1697. Perhaps (earlier) Henry Price owned the book." The volume contains besides an English transcript of Ovid's "Arte Amandis" and some amatory poems.[g] The date of the Petyt text may be about.... It is written in a miscellaneous, folio, commonplace-book, and in the catalogue it is described as "an obscene poem, entitled 'The Choising of Valentines,' by Thomas Nash. The first 17 lines are printed at p. lx. of the Preface to vol i. of Mr. Grosart's edition of Nash's works, as if they formed the whole piece." [h]

Nothing is known of Postlethwayt and Price, who at one time owned the Rawlinson copy, that throws light on its source. In the Petyt, however, we get a suppositional explanation of its manifestly purer text. Petyt, subsequent to his call to the Bar, in 1670, was for many years Keeper of the Records in the Tower of London. Now we know that Lord Essex, an intimate friend and connection of the Earl of Southampton, and like Southampton a generous and discerning patron of letters, was for some time in the "free custody" of the Lord Keeper of the Tower. Further, Southampton, who had joined Essex in his rebellion, had been tried and convicted with his friend, and though the Queen spared his life, he was not released from the Tower until the ascension of James I. It is not unlikely, therefore, that a copy of Nash's manuscript made for Lord Essex passed, on the execution of the latter, with other papers and documents, into the official custody of the Lord Keeper, to be subsequently unearthed by his successor, Petyt, who, with a taste for the "curious," had it copied for his own edification. This supposition is further borne out as follows: The particular commonplace book in which this poem occurs has been written by various hands. In the same handwriting as, and immediately preceding "The Choise of

Valentines," are two poetical effusions dedicated "To the Earl of Essex," both apparently written when he was in prison and under sentence of death. The other contents of the volume are likewise contemporaneous.

All things considered, then, the Petyt text, although transcribed about fifty years later, has weightier claims to attention than the version in the Rawlinson MSS. I have, therefore, adopted the former as a basis, giving the Rawlinson variations in the form of notes. A few of these are obviously better readings than those of the Petyt text: the reader cannot fail to distinguish these. In the main, however, the Inner Temple version will be found consistent with its particular dedication, whilst the Rawlinson variations appear due to an attempt, signally unsuccessful, to adapt the poem for general use.

For the rest I have faithfully adhered to the original in the basic text, and in the variorum readings, except in one particular. The Rawlinson *MS.* is altogether guiltless of punctuation, while the Petyt copy has been carelessly "stopped" by the scribe: I have therefore given modern punctuation.

J. S. F.

FOOTNOTES

[a] See page x. [Transcriber's note: starting "It is curious to note"]

[b] *Have with you to Saffron Walden*, iii., 44.

[c] *Terrors of the Night*.

[d] It is true that Nash, in his dedication of the "Unfortunate Traveller," speaks of it as his "first offering." This, however, must be taken rather as meaning his first *serious* effort in acknowledgment of his patron's bounty, for in "The Terrors of the Night" (registered on the 30th June, 1593), he somewhat effusively acknowledges his indebtedness to Lord Southampton:---"Through him my tender wainscot studie doore is delivered from much assault and battrie: through him I looke into, and am looked on in the world: from whence otherwise I were a wretched banished exile. Through him all my good is conueighed vnto me; and to him all my endeavours shall be contributed as to the ocean." Again, as evidence that Nash had addressed himself to Southampton prior to his dedication of "The Unfortunate Traveller," we glean from his promise ("Terrors of the Night") "to embroyder the rich store of his eternal renoune" in "some longer Tractate."

[e] At the same time it must be stated that the scandal of the controversy between Nash and Harvey became so notorious that in 1599 it was ordered by authority "that all Nashes books and Dr. Harvey's books be taken wheresoever they may be found and that none of the said books be ever printed hereafter" (COOPER, *Athenae Cant.* ii. 306).

[f] Davies [Grosart, *Works* (1888) 1-75, lines 64-72.]

[g] These have been incorporated in "National Ballad and Song" (Section 2, *Merry Songs and Ballads*, Series 1).

[h] This is not quite correct. The title in the MS. runs "The Choise of Valentines," and Dr. Grosart purports to give the first eighteen lines, but in transcription he has omitted line 4.

[Illustration]

TO THE RIGHT
honorable the Lord S.[i]

Pardon, sweete flower of *Matchles* poetrie,
And fairest bud the red rose euer bare;
Although my Muse, devorst from deeper care,
Presents thee with a wanton *Elegie*. 4

Ne blame my verse of loose unchastitie
For painting forth the things that hidden are,
Since all men acte what I in speache declare,
Onlie induced with varietie. 8

Complants and praises euery one can write,
And passion out their pangu's in statlie rimes;
But of loues pleasures none did euer write,
That have succeeded in theis latter times. 12

Accept of it, Deare Lord, in gentle gree,
And better lynes, ere long, shall honor thee._

* * * * *

FOOT- AND LINE NOTES:

[i] Henry Wriothesley, the Earl of Southampton, and Baron of Titchfield. The dedication is absent in the Rawlinson text: *cf. variorum* reading in line 13.

1 *Matchles*, machles.

2 *the red rose euer bare*, that euer red rose bare.

3 *devorst from deeper care*, diuert from deepest care. Nash was notoriously impecunious all through his life, and probably reference is here made to some bounty received at the hands of Lord Southampton (*see* Introduction). What patronage meant at times is gleaned from Florio's dedication of *The Worlde of Wordes* in 1598 to the same nobleman. He says:---"In truth I acknowledge an entire debt, not only of my best knowledge, but of all; yea, of more than I know, or care, to your bounteous lordship, in whose pay and patronage I have lived some years.... But, as to me, and many more, the glorious and gracious sunshine of your honour hath infused light and life." Rowe also tells a story of Lord Southampton's munificence to Shakspeare. It is said that he gave the poet L1,000 (equal to L12,000 now-a-days) to complete a special purchase. Whether this story be true or not, it is certain that Lord Southampton was a most liberal patron of letters.

4 *Presents thee with*, Presentes you with.

5 "Ne" = Nor, A.S.; *unchastitie*, in chastitye.

6 *painting*, paynting; *things*, thinges; *hidden are*, hidden be.

7 & 8 In Rawl. MS. these lines are transposed. *Since all men act*, sith most men marke; *speache declare*, speech descrie; *Onlie*, only; *varietie*, varyetye.

9 *Complants and praises euery one*, Complayntes & prayses every man.

10 *passion out*, passion forth; *their pangu's*, there loue; *statlie rimes*, statly rime.

11 *pleasures none*, pleasure non; *euer write*, e're indite.

12 *theis latter times*, this latter time.

13 *Deare Lord*, deare loue. A significant reading in view of the absence of the dedication in the Rawl. MS. "*Accept ... in gentle gree*," to take kindly.

14 *And better lynes ere long*, And better farr, ere long (*see* Introduction).

[Illustration]

THE CHOOSING OF VALENTINES.

It was the merie moneth of Februarie,
When yong men, in their iollie roguerie,
Rose earelie in the morne fore breake of daie,
To seeke them valentines soe trimme and gaie; 4

With whom they maie consorte in summer sheene,
And dance the haidegaies on our toune-greene,
As alas at Easter, or at Pentecost,
Perambulate the fields that flourish most; 8

And goe to som village abbordring neere,
To taste the creame and cakes and such good cheere;
Or see a playe of strange moralitie,
Shewen by Bachelrie of Maningtree. 12

Where to, the contrie franklins flock-meale swarme,
And Jhon and Jone com marching arme in arme.
Euen on the hallowes of that blessed Saint
That doeth true louers with those ioyes acquaint, 16

I went, poore pilgrime, to my ladies shrine,
To see if she would be my valentine;
But woe, alass, she was not to be found,
For she was shifted to an upper ground: 20

Good Justice Dudgeon-haft, and crab-tree face,
With bills and staues had scar'd hir from the place;
And now she was compel'd, for Sanctuarie,
To flye unto a house of venerie. 24

Thither went I, and bouldie made enquire
If they had hackneis to lett-out to hire,
And what they crau'd, by order of their trade,
To lett one ride a iournie on a iade. 28

Therwith out stept a foggy three-chinnd dame,
That us'd to take yong wenches for to tame,
And ask't me if I ment as I profest,
Or onelie ask't a question but in iest. 32

"In iest?" quoth I; "that terme it as you will;
I com for game, therefore give me my Jill."
"Why Sir," quoth shee, "if that be your demande,
Com, laye me a Gods-pennie in my hand; 36

For, in our oratorie siccarlie,
None enters heere, to doe his nicarie,
But he must paye his offertorie first,
And then, perhaps, wee'le ease him of his thirst." 40

I, hearing hir so earnest for the box,
Gave hir hir due, and she the dore unlocks.
In am I entered: "venus be my speede!
But where's this female that must do this deed"? 44

By blinde meanders, and by crankled wayes,
Shee leades me onward, (as my Aucthor saies),
Vntill we came within a shadie loft
Where venus bousing vestalls skirmish oft; 48

And there shee sett me in a leather chaire,
And brought me forth, of prettie Trulls, a paire,
To chuse of them which might content myne eye;
But hir I sought, I could nowhere espie. 52

I spake them faire, and wisht them well to fare---
"Yet soe yt is, I must haue fresher ware;
Wherefore, dame Bawde, as daintie as you bee,
Fetch gentle mistris Francis forth to me." 56

"By Halliedame," quoth she, "and Gods oune mother,
I well perceaeue you are a wylie brother;
For if there be a morsell of more price,
You'll smell it out, though I be nare so nice. 60

As you desire, so shall you swiue with hir,
But think, your purse-strings shall abye-it deare;
For, he that will eate quailles must lauish crounes,

And Mistris Francis, in her veluett gounes, 64

And ruffs and perwigs as fresh as Maye,
Can not be kept with half a croune a daye."
"Of price, good hostess, we will not debate,
Though you assize me at the highest rate; 68

Onelie conduct me to this bonnie bell.
And tenne good gobbs I will unto thee tell,
Of golde or siluer, which shall lyke thee best,
So much doe I hir companie request." 72

Awaie she went: so sweete a thing is golde,
That (mauger) will inuade the strongest holde.
"Hey-ho! she coms, that hath my hearte in keepe
Sing Lullabie, my cares, and falle a-sleepe." 76

Sweeping she coms, as she would brush the ground;
Hir ratling silkes my sences doe confound.
"Oh, I am rauisht: voide the chamber streight;
For I must neede's upon hir with my weight." 80

"My Tomalin," quoth shee, and then she smilde.
"I, I," quoth I, "soe more men are beguild
With smiles, with flatt'ring wordes, and fained cheere,
When in their deedes their falsehood doeth appeare." 84

"As how, my lambkin," blushing, she replide,
"Because I in this dancing schoole abide?
If that it be, that breede's this discontent,
We will remoue the camp incontinent: 88

For shelter onelie, sweete heart, came I hither,
And to auoide the troblous stormie weather;
But now the coaste is cleare, we will be gonne,
Since, but thy self, true loue I haue none." 92

With that she sprung full lightlie to my lips,
And fast about the neck me colle's, and clips;
She wanton faints, and falle's vpon hir bedd,
And often tosseth too and fro hir head; 96

She shutts hir eyes, and waggles with her tongue:
"Oh, who is able to abstaine so long?"
"I com! I com! sweete lyming be thy leaue:"
Softlie my fingers up theis curtaine heaue, 100

And make me happie, stealing by degreese.
First bare hir leggs, then creepe up to hir kneese;
From thence ascend unto her mannely thigh---
(A pox on lingring when I am so nighe!). 104

Smock, climbe a-pace, that I maie see my ioyes;
Oh heauen and paradize are all but toyes
Compar'd with this sight I now behould,
Which well might keepe a man from being olde. 108

A prettie rysing wombe without a weame,
That shone as bright as anie siluer streame;
And bare out like the bending of an hill,
At whose decline a fountaine dwelleth still; 112

That hath his mouth besett with uglie bryers,
Resembling much a duskie nett of wyres;
A loftie buttock, barrd with azure veines,
Whose comelie swelling, when my hand distreines, 116

Or wanton checketh with a harmlesse stype,
It makes the fruites of loue oftsoone be rype,
And pleasure pluckt too tymelie from the stemme
To dye ere it hath seene Jerusalem. 120

O Gods! that euer anie thing so sweete,
So suddenlie should fade awaie, and fleete!
Hir armes are spread, and I am all unarm'd,
Lyke one with Ouid's cursed hemlocke charm'd; 124

So are my Limms unwealdlie for the fight
That spend their strength in thought of hir delight.
What shall I doe to shewe my self a man?
It will not be for ought that beawtie can. 128

I kisse, I clap, I feele, I view at will,
Yett dead he lyes, not thinking good or ill.
"Unhappie me," quoth shee, "and wilt' not stand?
Com, lett me rubb and chafe it with my hand! 132

Perhaps the sillie worme is labour'd sore,
And wearied that it can doe noe more;
If it be so, as I am greate a-dread,
I wish tenne thousand times that I were dead. 136

How ere it is, no meanes shall want in me,
That maie auaille to his recouerie."
Which saide, she tooke and rould it on hir thigh,

And when she look't on't, she would weepe and sighe; 140

She dandled it, and dancet it up and doune,
Not ceasing till she rais'd it from his swoune.
And then he flue on hir as he were wood,
And on hir breeche did hack and foyne a-good; 144

He rub'd, and prickt, and pierst her to the bones,
Digging as farre as eath he might for stones;
Now high, now lowe, now stryking shorte and thicke;
Now dyuing deepe, he toucht hir to the quicke; 148

Now with a gird he would his course rebate,
Straite would he take him to a statlie gate;
Plaie while him list, and thrust he neare so hard,
Poore pacient Grissill lyeth at hir warde, 152

And giue's, and takes, as blythe and free as Maye,
And ere-more meete's him in the midle waye.
On him hir eyes continually were fixt;
With hir eye-beames his melting looke's were mixt, 156

Which, like the Sunne, that twixt two glasses plaies,
From one to th' other cast's rebounding rayes.
He, lyke a starre that, to reguild his beames
Sucks-in the influence of Phebus streames, 160

Imbathes the lynes of his descending light
In the bright fountaines of hir clearest sight.
She, faire as fairest Planet in the skye,
Hir puritie to noe man doeth denye; 164

The verie chamber that enclouds her shine
Lookes lyke the pallace of that God deuine,
Who leades the daie about the Zodiake,
And euerie euen discends to th'oceane lake; 168

So fierce and feruent is her radiance,
Such fyrie stakes she darts at euerie glance
As might enflame the icie limmes of age,
And make pale death his seignedrie to aswage; 172

To stand and gaze upon her orient lamps,
Where Cupid all his chiefest ioyes encamps,
And sits, and playes with euery atomie
That in hir Sunne-beames swarme aboundantlie. 176

Thus gazing, and thus striuing, we perseuer:
But what so firme that maie continue euer?
"Oh not so fast," my rausht Mistriss cryes,
"Leaste my content, that on thy life relyes, 180

Be brought too-soone from his delightfull seate,
And me unwares of hoped bliss defeate.
Together lett us marche unto content,
And be consumed with one blandishment." 184

As she prescrib'd so kept we crotchet-time,
And euerie stroake in ordre lyke a chyme,
Whilst she, that had preseru'd me by hir pittie,
Unto our musike fram'd a groaning dittie. 188

"Alass! alass! that loue should be a sinne!
Euen now my blisse and sorrowe doeth beginne.
Hould wyde thy lapp, my louelie Danae,
And entretaine the golden shoure so free, 192

That triking falles into thy tresurie.
As Aprill-drops not half so pleasant be,
Nor Nilus overflowe to AEgypt plaines
As this sweet-streames that all hir ioints imbaynes. 196

With "Oh!" and "Oh!" she itching moues hir hipps,
And to and fro full lightlie starts and skips:
She ierkes hir leggs, and spraueth with hir heeles;
No tongue maie tell the solace that she feeles, 200

"I faint! I yeald! Oh, death! rock me a-sleepe!
Sleepe! sleepe desire! entombed in the deepe!"
"Not so, my deare," my dearest saint replyde,
"For, from us yett, thy spirit maie not glide 204

Untill the sinnowie channels of our blood
Without their source from this imprisoned flood;
And then will we (that then will com too soone),
Dissolued lye, as though our dayes were donne." 208

The whilst I speake, my soule is fleeting hence,
And life forsakes his fleshie residence.
Staie, staie sweete ioye, and leaue me not forlorne
Why shouldst thou fade that art but newelie borne? 212

"Staie but an houre, an houre is not so much:
But half an houre; if that thy haste is such,
Naie, but a quarter---I will aske no more---

That thy departure (which torments me sore), 216

Maie be alightned with a little pause,
And take awaie this passions sudden cause."
He heare's me not; hard-harted as he is,
He is the sonne of Time, and hates my blisse. 220

Time nere looke's backe, the riuers nere returne;
A second springe must help me or I burne.
No, no, the well is drye that should refresh me,
The glasse is runne of all my destinie: 224

Nature of winter learneth nigardize
Who, as he ouer-beares the streame with ice
That man nor beaste maie of their pleasance taste,
So shutts she up hir conduit all in haste, 228

And will not let hir Nectar ouer-flowe,
Least mortall man immortall ioyes should knowe.
Adieu! unconstant loue, to thy disporte
Adieu! false mirth, and melodie too short; 232

Adieu! faint-hearted instrument of lust;
That falselie hath betrayde our equale trust.
Hence-forth no more will I implore thine ayde,
Or thee, or man of cowardize upbrayde. 236

My little dilldo shall suply their kinde:
A knaue, that moues as light as leaues by winde;
That bendeth not, nor fouldeth anie deale,
But stands as stiff as he were made of steele; 240

And playes at peacock twixt my leggs right blythe,
And doeth my tickling swage with manie a sighe.
For, by saint Runnion! he'le refresh me well;
And neuer make my tender bellie swell. 244

Poore Priapus! whose triumph now must falle,
Except thou thrust this weakeling to the walle.
Behould! how he usurps, in bed and bowre
And undermines thy kingdom euerie howre; 248

How slye he creepes betwixt the barke and tree,
And sucks the sap, whilst sleepe detaineth thee.
He is my Mistris page at euerie stound,
And soone will tent a deepe intrrenched wound. 252

He wayte's on Courtlie Nimphs that be so coye,
And bids them skorne the blynd-alluring boye.
He giues yong guirls their gamesome sustenance,
And euerie gaping mouth his full sufficeance. 256

He fortifies disdaine with forraine artes,
And wanton-chaste deludes all loving hartes.
If anie wight a cruell mistris serue's,
Or, in dispaire, (unhappie) pines and staru's, 260

Curse Eunuke dilldo, senceless counterfet
Who sooth maie fill, but never can begett.
But, if revenge enraged with dispaire,
That such a dwarf his wellfare should empaire, 264

Would faine this womans secretarie knowe,
Lett him attend the markes that I shall showe:
He is a youth almost two handfulls highe,
Streight, round, and plumb, yett hauing but one eye, 268

Wherein the rhewme so feruentlie doeth raigne,
That Stigian gulph maie scarce his teares containe;
Attired in white veluet, or in silk,
And nourisht with whott water, or with milk, 272

Arm'd otherwhile in thick congealed glasse,
When he, more glib, to hell be lowe would passe.
Vpon a charriot of five wheeles he rydes,
The which an arme strong driuer stedfast guides, 276

And often alters pace as wayes growe deepe,
(For who, in pathes unknowne, one gate can keepe?)
Sometimes he smoothlie slideth doune the hill;
Another while, the stones his feete doe kill; 280

In clammie waies he treaddeth by and by,
And plasheth and sprayeth all that be him nye.
So fares this iollie rider in his race,
Plunging and sousing forward in lyke case, 284

He dasht, and spurted, and he plodded foule,
God giue thee shame, thou blinde mischappen owle!
Fy-fy, for grief: a ladies chamberlaine,
And canst not thou thy tatling tongue refraine? 288

I reade thee beardles blab, beware of stripes,
And be aduised what thou vainelie pipes;
Thou wilt be whipt with nettles for this geare

If Cicelie shewe but of thy knauerie heere. 292

Saint Denis shield me from such female sprites!
Regarde not, Dames, what Cupids Poete writes:
I pennd this storie onelie for my selfe,
Who, giuing suck unto a childish Elfe, 296

And quitte discourag'd in my nurserie,
Since all my store seemes to hir penurie.
I am not as was Hercules the stout,
That to the seaventh iournie could hould out; 300

I want those hearbe's and rootes of Indian soile,
That strengthen wearie members in their toile---
Drugs and Electuaries of new devise,
Doe shunne my purse, that trembles at the price. 304

Sufficeth all I haue, I yeald hir hole
Which, for a poore man, is a princelie dole,
I paie our hostess scott and lott at moste,
And looke as leane and lank as anie ghoste; 308

What can be added more to my renowne?
She lyeth breathlesse; I am taken doune;
The waves doe swell, the tydes climbe or'e the banks;
Judge, gentlemen! if I deserue not thanks? 312

And so, good night! unto you euer'ie one;
For loe, our thread is spunne, our plaie is donne.

Claudito iam vinos Priapa, sat prata biberunt [sic[j]].

Tho. Nash.

[Illustration]

Thus[k] hath my penne presum'd to please my friend---
Oh mightst thou lykewise please Apollo's eye.
No, Honor brooke's no such impietie,
Yett Ouids wanton Muse did not offend.

He is the fountaine whence my streames doe flowe---
Forgive me if I speake as I was taught,
A lyke to women, utter all I knowe,
As longing to unlade so bad a fraught.

My mynde once purg'd of such lasciuious witt,
With purifide words and hallowed verse,

Thy praises in large volumes shall rehearse,
That better maie thy grauer view befit.

Meanwhile yett rests, you smile at what I write;
Or, for attempting, banish me your sight._

Thomas Nash.

FOOT- AND LINE NOTES

[k] Quite detached, on page 94 of the Rawl. MS. (the text commences on page 96), are a few lines entitled "The Epilogue," which are obviously part of the above, albeit more than usually imperfectly copied. Why so placed does not appear, especially as several blank pages immediately follow the conclusion of the Bodleian copy.

Title, *The Choosing of Valentines*, Nashes Dildo.

2 *yong*, younge; *their iollie roguerie*, their brauery; *iollie*, Fr. *joli*, pretty, fine. *Bravery*, finery; Cf. Holinshed's *Chron. of Eng.*, 55---The ancient Britons painted their bodies "which they esteemed a great braverie."

3 *Rose earelie in the morne fore*, Rose in the morning before; *daie*, daye.

4 *soe trimme and gaie*, soe fresh and gaye.

5 *summer sheene*, somers shene.

6 *haidegaies on*, high degree in.

7 *alas at Easter, or*, allso at Ester and.

8 *Perambulate*, preambulate.

9 *to som*, into some; *abbordring*, bordering.

10 *taste the creame and cakes*, tast the cakes and creame.

11 *Or, To*.

12 *by Bachelrie of Maningtree*, by the bachelours of magnanimity. "Manningtree, in Essex, formerly enjoyed the privilege of fairs, by the tenure of exhibiting a certain number of stage plays yearly. It appears also, from other intimations, that there were great festivities there, and much good eating, at Whitsun ales, and other times."---*Nares*.

13 *Where to, the contrie franklins*, Whether our Country Franklins.

14 *Jhon and Jone com*, John and Joane come.

15 *Euen*, Even; *hallowes*, Hallowes; *Saint*, Sainct.

16 *doeth*, doth; *louers*, lovers; *those*, omitted in Rawlinson.

17 *ladies*, Ladyes.

18 *she*, shee; *valentine*, valentyne.

19 *woe*, *alass*, out, alas.

20 *an upper*, another.

21 *-haft and crab-tree face*, with his crabbed face.

22 *scar'd hir*, scard her; *the*, that.

23 *And now she was compel'd for Sanctuarie*, And she, poore wench, compeld for Sanctuary.

24 *unto*, into; *venery*, Venery.

25 *bouldlie*, bouldly; *enquire*, inquire.

26 *hackneis*, hackneyes. Hackney, a person or thing let out for promiscuous use, *e.g.*, a horse, a whore, a literary drudge. Cf. "The hobby-horse is but a colt, and your love perhaps a hackney."---*Love's Labour Lost*, iii., 1.

27 *crau'd*, craud.

29 *Therwith out stept*, With that, stept forth; *three chinnd*, three-chinde. Foggie = fat, bloated, having hanging flesh. Cf. "Some three chind foggie dame."---Dolarney, *Primrose*.

30 *us'd*, vsd; *yong*, younge.

31 *ask't*, askt; *I ment as I profest*, soothe were my request.

32 *onelie ask't*, onely moud.

33 *it*, yt.

34 *com*, come; *giue*, giue; *Jill*, Gill.

35 "*Why, Sir.*" *quoth shee*, "*if that be your demande*," "If that yt be," *quoth she*, "that you demaunde."

36 *Com laye me a God's-pennie*, then giue me first a godes peny. "God's-pennie, an earnest-pennie."---Florio, p. 36.

37 *oratorie siccarlie*, oratory, siccarly. "Oratory," properly a private chapel or closet for prayer; here a canting term for brothel: cf. *abbess* = bawd; *nun* = whore, and so forth. "Siccarly," certainly, surely "Thou art here, sykerlye, Thys churche to robb with felonye," MS. Cantab Ff. ii., 38, f. 240.

38 *heere*, in; *nicarie*, deuory. "Nick," female *pudendum*: hence nickery, copulation. Deuory may either be Fr. *devoir*, duty; or *devoire*, to ravish, to deflower.

39 *offertorie*, affidavit.

40 *wee'le*, Ile.

41 *hearing hir so earnest*, seeing her soe earnest.

42 *Gave hir hir*, I gaue her her; *and she the dore unlocks*, and she the doare vnlockes.

43 *In am I entered*, Nowe I am entered; *venus*, sweet Venus.

44 *where's this female*, where's the female; *do this*, do the.

45 *By*, through; *meanders and by crankled*, meander and through crooked.

46 *Shee leades*, Shee leads; *Aucthor saies*, author sayes.

47 *we came within*, I came vnto; *shadie*, shady.

48 *bounsing vestalls*, bouncing vestures; *skirmish*, skymish; *oft*, omitted.

49 *shee*, she; *leather chaire*, Lether chayre.

50 *prettie Trulls*, wenches straight.

51 *To chuse of them*, And bad me choose; *myne*, my.

52 *hir*, she; *no where espie*, noe waye espye.

53 *them*, her; *them* her.

54 *Yet*, But.

55 *Bawde*, baud; *as daintie*, soe dainty; *bee*, be.

56 *forth to*, vnto.

57 *Halliedame*, Holy Dame; *she*, shee; *Gods oune*, gods one.

58 *wylie*, wyly.

59 *more*, better.

60 *You'l smell*, youle find; *nare so*, now soe.

61 *hir*, her.

62 *think*, look; *purse-strings*, purse-stringes; *abye it deare*, abide yt deere.

63 *that will eate quayles*, whoole feed on quayles; *crounes*, crownes.

64 *Mistris Francis*, Mistres Fraunces; *veluett gounes*, velvett gownes.

65 *And ruffs*, Her ruffe; *perwigs*, perriwigge; *as, soe*; *Maye*, May.

66 *with half a crowne*, for half a crowne.

67 *hostess*, hostes; *we*, wee.

68 *Though*, although.

69 *bonnie*, bonny.

70 *tenne*, tenn; *gobbs I will unto thee tell*, goblets vnto thee Ile tell. "Gob, a portion" (H).

71 *lyke thee*, like you.

72 *doe I hir companie*, I doe her company.

73 *Awaie*, Awaye; *thing*, worde.

74 *That (mauger) will inuade*, it makes invasion in.

75 *Hey-ho*, Loe! here; *hearte*, harte; *keepe*, keeping.

76 *Lullabie*, lullaby; *and falle a sleepe*, fall a sleeping.

77 *coms*, comes; *ground*, ground.

78 *Hir*, her; *silkes*, silcke; *confound*, Confound.

79 *Oh*, Awaye; *rauisht*, ravisht; *voide*, voyd; *chamber*, Chamber; *streight*, straight.

80 *For I must neede's be on hir*, I must be straight vppon her.

81 *smilde*, smiled.

82 *beguilde*, beguiled.

83 *With smiles, with flatt'ring wordes, and fained cheere*, With sighes and flattering woordes and teares.

84 *their*, your; *their*, much; *doeth appeare*, still apeares.

85 *how*, How; *lambkin*, Tomalyn; *replide*, replied.

86 *dancing*, dauncing.

87 *it be*, be it; *this*, thy.

88 *camp*, campe.

89 *oneli*, only; *sweete heart*, sweete harte; *came*, cam.

90 *auoide*, avoyd; *troublous and stormie*, troublesome, stormye.

91 *But now*, And since; *coaste*, coast; *we wil*, I will.

92 *Since*, for; *louer*, louers.

93 *sprung*, sprunge; *lips*, lippes.

94 *And fast about the neck me colle's and clips*, and about my neck she hugges, she calles, she clippes. "Coll" or "cull," to kiss, to embrace; so also "clip."

95 *faints*, faynes; *vpon hir*, vppon the.

96 *tosseth*, tosses; *and fro hir*, and froe her.

97 *shutts hir eyes*, shakes her feete.

98 *who*, whoe; *abstaine*, forbear; *long*, longe.

99 *I com*, *I com*, I come, I come; *lyning*, Ladye; *be*, by.

100 *Softlie my fingers up this curtaine heaue*, softly my curtaines lett my fingers heaue.

101 *make*, send; *happie*, happye; *stealing*, sailing; *degreese*, degrees.

102 *First bare hir leggs, then creepe up to hir kneese*, First vnto the feete, and then vnto the kneese.

103 *From thence*, And soe; *unto*, vnto; *mannely*, manly.

104 *lingring*, lingering; *am so*, come soe.

105 *Smock*, Smocke; *climbe*, clime.

106 *Oh heaven and paradise are all*, all earthly pleasures seeme to this.

107 *Compar'd with this sight I now*, Compar'd be these delightes which I.

109 *prettye rysing*, prettye rising; *weame*, wenne. "Wem," spot or blemish.

110 *shone*, shine(s); *anie siluer streame*, any christall gemme.

111 *bare*, beares; *bending*, riseing; *an*, a.

112 *a fountaine dwelleth still*, the(r) runnes a fountayne still.

- 113 *his*, her; *uglie bryers*, rugged briers.
- 114 *duskie*, duskye; *wyres*, wires.
- 115 *loftie*, lusty; *veines*, vaines.
- 116 *comelie*, comely; *distreines*, restraines. "Distreines," to seize, to touch.
- 117 *wanton*, harmles; *harmlesse stype*, wanton gripe.
- 118 *fruites of loue oftsoone*, fruite thereof too soone
- 119 *And, A*; *too tymelie*, to tymely; *the stemme*, his springe.
- 120 *To dye ere it hath seene Jerusalem*, it is, dyes ere it can enioye the vsed thinge.
- 121 *Gods*, Godes; *euer anie*, ever any; *so*, soe.
- 122 *So suddenlie*, soe suddenly; *awaie*, awaye.
- 123 *Hir*, Her; *are spread and I am all unarm'd*, and legges and all were spredd, But I was all vnarmed.
- 124 *Lyke*, like; *with*, that; *charm'd*, charmd.
- 125 Omitted in Rawl. MS.
- 126 *spend their*, spent there; *hir*, your.
- 128 *It*, Yt; *beawtie cann*, beauty can.
- 129 *clap*, clipp; *I feele*, *I view*, I wincke, I feele.
- 130 *dead he lyes*, lyes he dead; *thinking*, feeling.
- 131 *Unhappie me*, By Holly dame; *stand*, staund.
- 132 *Com*, now; *rubb*, roule; *chafe*, rub; *with*, in.
- 133 *Perhaps*, perhapps; *sillie*, seely; *is labour'd*, hath laboured.
- 134 *wearied that it can*, worked soe that it cann.
- 135 *If it be so*, Which if it be; *am greate a-dread*, doe greatly dread.
- 136 *tenne*, ten; *were*, weare.
- 137 *How ere it is*, What ere it be; *no*, noe; *want*, lacke.

- 138 *maie auaille to*, maye avayle for; *recouerie*, recoverye.
- 139 *saide*, said; *and rould*, & rowld; *hir thigh*, her thighe.
- 140 *And when she look't on't she would weepe and sighe*, and looking downe on it, did groane and sighe.
- 141 *dandled*, haundled; *dancet*, daunced; *up*, vpp; *doune*, downe.
- 142 *she rais'd*, shee raisd; *his swoune*, her sound.
- 143 *he flue*, it flewe; *hir*, her; *he*, it.
- 144 *hir breeche did hack and fayne*, her breech laboured & foam'd.
- 145 *prickt, and pierst her*, peirct her euer.
- 146 *farre*, deepe; *might*, could digg; "eath," easy.
- 147 *stryking*, stricking; *and*, &.
- 148 *Now dyuing deepe he toucht hir*, And diving deeper, peircte her.
- 149 *gird*, girde.
- 150 *Straite*, then; *statlie*, stately.
- 151 *him*, he; *so*, soe.
- 152 *pacient Grissill*, patient Grissell; *hir warde*, his ward.
- 153 *blythe*, blith; *free*, fresh.
- 154 *ere-more*, euer; *midle*, middle of the.
- 155 *him hir eyes continually*, her his eyes Continually.
- 156 *hir eye-beames his*, his eye-browes her; *looke's*, eyes.
- 157 *twixt*, betwixt; *plaies*, playes.
- 158 *one*, the one; *th'other cast's rebounding*, the other casting redounding.
- 159 *He lyke*, She like; *reguild*, requite.
- 160 *Sucks-in*, suckes; *of Phebus*, of sweete Phebus.
- 161 *lynes*, beames: *descending*, discending.

- 162 *bright*, deepest; *hir dearest sight*, the purest light.
- 163 *Planet*, plannet.
- 164 *Hir puritie*, her puritye.
- 165 *verie chamber*, verye Chamber; *enclouds*, includes.
- 166 *Lookes lyke*, seemes as; *that God deuine*, the gods devine.
- 167 *Who*, Whoe; *daie*, daye; *Zodiake*, Zodiacke.
- 168 *euerie euen discends to th'oceane*, in the even, settes of the ocean.
- 169 *So fierce*, soe feirce; *is hir radiance*, in her radiaunce.
- 170 *fyrie stakes*, flyeing breath; *darts*, dartes; *euerie glance*, every glaunce.
- 171 *enflame*, inflame; *icie limmes*, verry mappes.
- 172 *make*, cause; *his seignedrie to aswage*, him suddenly tasswage.
- 173 *To*, and; *upon her*, vppon those; *lamps*, lampes.
- 174 *his chiefest ioyes encamps*, his ioyes incampes.
- 175-6 Omitted in Rawl. MS.
- 177 *Thus gazing, and thus striuing, we perseuer*, Thus striking, thus gazeing, we perseuere.
- 178 *what so firme*, nought soe sure; *maie*, will; *euer*, ever.
- 179 *Oh! Fleete*; *rauisht Mistris cryes*, ravisht senses cries.
- 180 *Leaste*, sith; *content that on*, Content vppon.
- 181 *Be*, Which; *too*, soe; *seat*, seates.
- 182 *And me unwares of hoped bliss defeat*, me vnawares of blissefull hope defeates. Here occur two lines in the Rawl. MS. which do not appear in the Petyt MS., as follows:
- Togeather lett our equall motions stirr,
Togeather lett vs liue and dye, my deare;
- 183 *Together lett us marche unto content*, Togeather let vs march with one contente.
- 184 *consumed with one blandishment*, Consum(e)d without languishmente.

185 *prescrib'd, so kept we crochet*, prescribed so keepe we clocke and.

186 *lyke*, like; *chyme*, chime.

187 *Whilst she*, soe shee; *had preseru'd*, here preferd; *pittie*, pittye.

188 *Unto*, vnto; *musike*, musicke; *dittie*, dittye.

190 *Euen*, even; *blisse and sorrowe doeth*, ioyes and sorrowes doe.

191 *lapp*, lappe; *louelie*, louely.

192 *entretaine the*, entretaine this; *shoure so free*, showry see.

193 *trikling falles*, drisling fall(es); *treasurie*, treasurye.

194 *As Aprill-drops*, Sweete Aprill flowers; *half so*, halfe soe.

195 *overflowe to AEgypt-plaines*, overfloweinge Egipt playne.

196 *As this sweet-streames*, as is the balme; *hir ioints imbaynes*, her woombe destreynes.

197 *With Oh! and Oh! she itching moues hir hipps*, Now! oh now! she trickling moues her lippes.

198 *And*, and often; *full lightlie starts and skips*, she lightly startes and skippes.

199 *ierkes*, yerkes; *leggs*, legges; *sprauleth*, fresketh.

200 *No*, noe; *maie*, can; *solace*, pleasures.

201 *I faint! I yeald! Oh death, rock me*, I come! I come! sweete death, rocke mee.

202 *entombed*, intombe me.

203 *my deare, my dearest saint*, my deare, and dearest she.

204 *For, from us yett, thy spirit maie*, from us two (yett) this pleasure must.

205 *Untill*, Vntill; *channels*, Chambers.

206 *Without their source*, Withould themselues; *imprisoned*, newe prisoned.

207 *will we*, we will; *com too*, come soe.

209 *whilst*, whilest; *speake*, speke; *is fleeting*, in stealing.

210 *fleshie*, earthly.

213 *but an houre*, but one houre; *an houre is*, one houre is; *so*, soe

214 *But*, nay; *if that*, and if.

217 *Maie be alightned with a little pause*, Maye now be lengthened by a litle pawse.

218 *awaie*, awaye; *sudden*, suddaine.

221 *riuers nere returne*, riuier nere returns.

222 *springe*, spring; *must helpe me or*, must helpe, or elles.

223-34 Omitted in Rawl. MS.

235 *Hence-forth no more will I implore thine*, Hensforth I will noe more implore thine.

236 *or man of cowardize upbrayde*, for ever of Cowardise shall vpprayd.

237 *dilldo*, dildoe; *suply their*, supplye your.

238 *knaue*, youth; *moues*, is; *by*, in.

239 *That, He*; *anie*, any.

241-42 Omitted in Rawl. MS.

243 *For, by saint Runnion, he'le*, And when I will he doth.

244 *make*, makes; *bellie*, belly.

245 *whose triumph now*, thy kingdome needes; *falle*, fall.

246 *Except*, except; *walle*, wall.

247 *usurps*, vsurpes; *boure*, bower.

248 *undermines*, vndermines; *euerie howre*, euery hower.

249 *sly he*, slyly; *betwixt*, betwene.

250 *sucks*, suckes; *whilst*, while; *detaineth*, deteyneth.

251 *page*, lake; *stound*, sound. "Stound," a moment.

252 "tent," to search out.

253 *Courtlie Nymphs*, courtly nymphs; *be so*, are full.

254 *blynd-alluring*, blind-alluring.

255-6 Omitted in Rawl. MS.

257 *fortifies disdaine*, fortifies disdayne; *forraine*, foraigne.

258 *And wanton-chaste deludes*, while wantons chast delude.

259 *anie*, any; *Mistris serue's*, Mistres serve.

260 *Or*, and; (*unhappie*) *pinas and staru's*, full deeply pyne and sterue.

261-64 Omitted in Rawl. MS.

265 *womans secretarie*, woemans secretary.

266 *Lett*, let.

267 *handfulls highe*, handfulles high.

268 *plumb*, plump; *yett hauing*, and having.

269 *rheume so feruentlie doeth raigne*, rheume soe fervently doth raine.

270 *That*, the; *gulph maie*, gulfe can; *containe*, conteyne. Here follow, in the Rawl. MS., lines 290-93 of the Petyt; lines 292-3 being also reversed in the Rawl. text.

271 *Attired*, attird; *veluet*, velvet.

272 *nourisht*, norisht; *hott*, warme; *milk*, milke. "Whott," hot.

273 *Arm'd otherwhile*, Running sometymes.

274 *more glib*, more like; *to hell be lowe*, downe into hell.

275 *charriot*, chariot; *rydes*, rides.

276 *The which an arme strong driuer stedfast*, An arme strong guider steadfastly him.

278 *who*, whoe; *pathes unknowne*, places vnknowne; *gate*, pace.

279 *Sometimes*, sometymes; *smoothlie slideth doune a*, smoothly slippeth downe a.

280 *Another while*, some other tymes.

281 *clammie waies*, clayey wayes; *treaddeth*, treadeth.

282 *plasheth and sprayeth*, placeth himself &; *be him nye*, standeth by.

- 283 *So, soe; iollie rider, royall rider.*
- 284 *Plunging and sousing, Plungeing & sowsing; lyke, like.*
- 285 *He dasht, and spurted, and he plodded, Bedasht, bespotted, and beplotted.*
- 286 *blinde, foule.*
- 287 *Fy-fy, for grief, But free from greife; ladies chamberlaine, ladyes chamberlayne.*
- 288 *not thou, thou not: refraine, refrayne.*
- 289 *reade thee, tell the; blab, blabb. "Reade," warn.*
- 290 *aduised, advisd; thou vainelie, thou soe vainely.*
- 291 Transposed in Rawl. MS. with line 292; *wilt, shouldst.*
- 292 *Cicelie shewe but, Illian queene knowe; knauerie, bravery.*
- 293 *Denis shield, Dennis sheild; female sprites, femall sprighes.*
- 294 *Dames, dames; Cupid's Poet, Cupid's poett.*
- 295 *pennd, pen; storie onelie, story onely.*
- 296 *Who giuing suck unto a childish Elfe, And, giving yt to such an actuall Elfe.*
- 297 *And, am; discourag'd, discouraged; nurserie, mistery.*
- 298 *hir, her; penurie, misery.*
- 300 *seaventh iournie, seauenth Iourny.*
- 301 *want, wantes; hearbe's, omitted; and, &; soile, soyle.*
- 302 *wearie, weary; toile, toyle.*
- 303 *Druggs or Electuaries of new devise, Or drugges or electuaries of newe devises.*
- 304 *Doe shunne, that shame; that trembles, & tremble; the, thie; price, prices. In the Rawl. MS., lines 307-8 of the Petyt MS. follow here.*
- 305 *Sufficeth all I haue, I yeald hir hole, For that I allwayes had, I payd the wole.*
- 307 *I paie our hostess, I paid of both the; and, &; at moste, allmost.*
- 308 *And, yet; and, &; anie, any.*

309 *can*, *cann*.

310 *doune*, *downe*.

311 *climbe*, *clims*; *banks*, *bankes*.

312 *gentlemen*, *if I*, *gentleweomen* doth this; *not thanks*, no thanks.

313 *so*, *soe*: *unto*, *vnto*.

314 *thread*, *thred*; *plaie is donne*, *playes done*.