

## William Painter Biography:

William Painter (1540?–February, 1594, London), English author, was a native of Kent. He matriculated at St John's College, Cambridge, in 1554. In 1561 he became clerk of the ordnance in the Tower of London, a position in which he appears to have amassed a fortune out of the public funds. In 1586 he confessed that he owed the government a thousand pounds, and in the next year further charges of peculation (embezzlement) were brought against him.

In 1591 his son Anthony confessed that he and his father had abused their trust. Nonetheless, Painter retained his public office until his death. The first volume of his *Palace of Pleasure* appeared in 1566, and was dedicated to the earl of Warwick. It included sixty tales, and was followed in the next year by a second volume containing thirty-four new ones. A second improved edition in 1575 contained seven new stories. Painter borrows from Herodotus, Boccaccio, Plutarch, Aulus Gellius, Aelian, Livy, Tacitus, Quintus Curtius; from Giovanni Battista Giraldi, Matteo Bandello, Ser Giovanni Fiorentino, Giovanni Francesco Straparola, Queen Marguerite of Navarre and others.

Joseph Haslewood edited *The Palace of Pleasure* in 1813. In 1890 Joseph Jacobs collated this edition with the British Museum copy of 1575, adding further prefatory matter, including an introduction dealing with the importance of the Italian novella in Elizabethan drama. Below is a lightly edited full version of the Romeo and Juliet story taken from the second volume of *The Palace of Pleasure* (1567; story 25) that Shakespeare is likely to have read; editorial emendations include paragraph insertions for readability, small punctuation fixes, and the odd note to clarify obscure usages.

## Romeo and Julietta

*The goodly history of the true and constant love between Romeo and Julietta, the one of whom died of poison, and the other of sorrow and heaviness: wherein be comprised many adventures of love, and other devices touching the same.*

I am sure that they which measure the greatness of God's works according to the capacity of their rude and simple understanding, will not lightly adhibit [admit] credit unto this history, so well for the variety of strange accidents which be therein described, as for the novelty of so rare and perfect amity. But they that have read Pliny, Valerius Maximus, Plutarch and divers other writers, do find that in old time a great number of men and women have died, some of excessive joy, some of overmuch sorrow, and some of other passions: and amongst the same, love is not the least, which when it seizeth upon any kind and gentle subject, and findeth no resistance to serve for a rampart to stay the violence of his course, by little and little undermineth, melteth and consumeth the virtues of natural powers in such wise as the spirit yielding to the burden, abandoneth the place of life: which is verified by the pitiful and unfortunate death of two lovers that surrendered their last breath in one tomb at Verona, a city of Italy, wherein repose yet to this day (with great marvel) the bones and remnants of their late loving bodies: an history no less wonderful than true.

If then particular affection which of good right every man ought to bear to the place where he was born, do not deceive those that travel, I think they will confess with me, that few cities in Italy can surpass the said city of Verona, as well for the navigable river called Adissa, which passeth almost through the midst of the same, and thereby a great traffic into Almaine, as also for the prospect towards the fertile mountains and pleasant valleys which do environ the same, with a great number of very clear and lively fountains, that serve for the ease and commodity of the place. Omitting (besides many other singularities) four bridges, and an infinite number of other honourable antiquities daily apparent unto those, that be curious to view and look upon them. Which places I have somewhat touched, because this most true history which I purpose hereafter to recite, dependeth thereupon, the memory whereof to this day is so well known at Verona, as

unneths [scarcely] their blubbered eyes be yet dry, that saw and beheld that lamentable sight.

When the Senior Escala was Lord of Verona, there were two families in the city, of far greater fame than the rest, as well for riches as nobility: the one called the Montesches, and the other the Capellets: but like as most commonly there is discord amongst them which be of semblable degree in honour, even so there happened a certain enmity between them: and for so much as the beginning thereof was unlawful and of ill foundation, so likewise in process of time it kindled to such flame, as by divers and sundry devices practised on both sides, many lost their lives. The Lord Bartholomew of Escala (of whom we have already spoken), being Lord of Verona, and seeing such disorder in his commonweal, assayed divers and sundry ways to reconcile those two houses, but all in vain: for their hatred had taken such root, as the same could not be moderated by any wise counsel or good advice: between whom no other thing could be accorded, but giving over armour and weapon for the time, attending some other season more convenient, and with better leisure to appease the rest. In the time that these things were a-doing, one of the family of Montesches called Romeo, of the age of twenty or twenty-one years, the comeliest and best conditioned gentleman that was amongst the Veronian youth, fell in love with a young gentlewoman of Verona, and in few days was attached with her beauty and good behaviour, as he abandoned all other affairs and business, to serve and honour her: and after many letters, ambassades and presents, he determined in the end to speak unto her, and to disclose his passions, which he did without any other practice.

But she which was virtuously brought up, knew how to make him so good answer to cut off his amorous affections, as he had no lust after that time to return any more, and showed herself so austere and sharp of speech, as she vouchsafed not with one look to behold him. But how much the young gentleman saw her whist and silent, the more he was inflamed: and after he had continued certain months in that service without remedy of his grief, he determined in the end to depart Verona, for proof if by change of the place, he might alter his affection, saying to himself: "What do I mean to love one that is so unkind, and thus doth disdain me: I am all her own and yet she flieth from me: I can no longer live except her presence I do enjoy: and she hath no contented mind, but when she is furthest from me: I will then from henceforth estrange myself from her, for it may so come to pass by not

beholding her, that this fire in me which taketh increase and nourishment by her fair eyes, by little and little may die and quench.”

But minding to put in proof what he thought, at one instant he was reduced to the contrary, who not knowing whereupon to resolve, passed days and nights in marvellous plaints and lamentations: for love vexed him so near, and had so well fixed the gentlewoman’s beauty within the bowels of his heart and mind as not able to resist, he fainted with the charge, and consumed by little and little as the snow against the sun: whereof his parents and kindred did marvel greatly, bewailing his misfortune, but above all other, one of his companions of riper age and counsel than he, began sharply to rebuke him: for the love that he bare him was so great as he felt his martyrdom and was partaker of his passion: which caused him by oft viewing his friend’s disquietness in amorous pangs, to say thus unto him: “Romeo, I marvel much that thou spendest the best time of thine age in pursuit of a thing from which thou seest thyself despised and banished, without respect either to thy prodigal dispense, to thine honour, to thy tears, or to thy miserable life, which be able to move the most constant to pity: wherefore I pray thee for the love of our ancient amity and for thine health’s sake, that thou wilt learn to be thine own man, and not to alienate thy liberty to any so ingrate as she is: for so far as I conjecture by things that are passed between you, either she is in love with some other, or else determineth never to love any. Thou art young, rich in goods and fortune, and more excellent in beauty than any gentleman in this city: thou art well learned, and the only son of the house whereof thou comest: what grief would it be to thy poor old father and other thy parents, to see thee so drowned in this dungeon of vice, specially at that age wherein thou oughtest rather to put them in some hope of thy virtue? Begin then from henceforth to acknowledge thine error wherein thou hast hitherto lived, do away that amorous veil or coverture which blindeth thine eyes and letteth thee from following the right path, wherein thine ancestors have walked: or else if thou do feel thyself so subject to thine own will, yield thy heart to some other place, and choose some mistress according to thy worthiness, and henceforth do not sow thy pains in a soil so barren whereof thou reapest no fruit: the time approacheth when all the dames of the city shall assemble, where thou mayst behold such one as shall make thee forget thy former griefs.”

This young gentleman attentively hearing all the persuading reasons of his friend, began somewhat to moderate that heat, and to acknowledge all the exhortations which he had made to be directed to good purpose: and then

determined to put them in proof, and to be present indifferently at all the feasts and assemblies of the city, without bearing affection more to one woman than to another: and continued in this manner of life two or three months, thinking by that means to quench the sparks of ancient flames. It chanced then within few days after, about the feast of Christmas, when feasts and banquets most commonly be used, and masques according to the custom frequented, that Anthony Capellet, being the chief of that family and one of the principal lords of the city too, made a banquet, and for the better solemnization thereof, invited all the noble men and dames, to which feast resorted the most part of the youth of Verona.

The family of the Capellets (as we have declared in the beginning of this history) was at variance with the Montesches, which was the cause that none of that family repaired to that banquet, but only the young gentleman Romeo, who came in a masque after supper with certain other young gentlemen: and after they had remained a certain space with their visards on, at length they did put off the same, and Romeo very shamefast, withdrew himself into a corner of the hall: but by reason of the light of the torches which burned very bright, he was by and by known and looked upon of the whole company, but specially of the ladies, for besides his native beauty wherewith nature had adorned him, they marvelled at his audacity how he durst presume to enter so secretly into the house of that family which had little cause to do him any good.

Notwithstanding, the Capellets dissembling their malice, either for the honour of the company or else for respect of his age, did not misuse him either in word or deed: by means whereof with free liberty he beheld and viewed the ladies at his pleasure, which he did so well and with grace so good, as there was none but did very well like the presence of his person: and after he had particularly given judgment upon the excellency of each one, according to his affection, he saw one gentlewoman amongst the rest of surpassing beauty who (although he had never seen her heretofore) pleased him above the rest, and attributed unto her in heart the chiefest place for all perfection in beauty: and feasting her incessantly with piteous looks, the love which he bare to his first gentlewoman was overcome with this new fire, that took such nourishment and vigour in his heart, as he was not able never to quench the same but by death only: as you may understand by one of the strangest discourses that ever any mortal man devised. The young Romeo then feeling himself thus tossed with this new tempest, could not tell what countenance to use, but was so surprised and changed with these last

flames, as he had almost forgotten himself, in such wise as he had not audacity to enquire what she was, and wholly bent himself to feed his eyes with her sight, wherewith he moistened the sweet amorous venom which did so empoison him as he ended his days with a kind of most cruel death.

The gentlewoman that did put Romeo to such pain was called Julietta, and was the daughter of Capellet, the master of the house where that assembly was, who as her eyes did roll and wander to and fro, by chance espied Romeo, which unto her seemed to be the goodliest personage that ever she saw: and love (which lay in wait never until that time) assailing the tender heart of that young gentlewoman, touched her so at the quick, as for any resistance she could make, was not able to defend his forces, and then began to set at naught the royalties of the feast, and felt no pleasure in her heart, but when she had a glimpse by throwing or receiving some sight or look of Romeo. And after they had contented each other's troubled heart with millions of amorous looks, which oftentimes interchangeably encountered and met together, the burning beams gave sufficient testimony of love's privy onsets. Love having made the heart's breach of those two lovers, as they two sought means to speak together, fortune offered them a very meet and apt occasion. A certain lord of that troop and company took Julietta by the hand to dance, wherein she behaved herself so well and with so excellent grace, as she won that day the prize of honour from all the damsels of Verona.

Romeo having foreseen the place whereunto she minded to retire, approached the same, and so discreetly used the matter, as he found the means at her return to sit beside her: Julietta when the dance was finished, returned to the very place where she was set before, and was placed between Romeo and another gentleman called Mercutio, which was a court-like gentleman, very well beloved of all men, and by reason of his pleasant and courteous behaviour was in every company well entertained. Mercutio that was of audacity among maidens, as a lion is among lambs, seized incontinently upon the hand of Julietta whose hands wontedly were so cold both in winter and summer as the mountain ice, although the fire's heat did warm the same. Romeo which sat upon the left side of Julietta, seeing that Mercutio held her by the right hand, took her by the other that he might not be deceived of his purpose, and straining the same a little, he felt himself so pressed with that new favour, as he remained mute, not able to answer: but she perceiving by his change of colour, that the fault proceeded of the vehemence of love desiring to speak unto him, turned herself towards him,

and with trembling voice joined with virginal shamefastness, intermeddled with a certain bashfulness, said to him: "Blessed be the hour of your near approach:" but minding to proceed in further talk, love had so closed up her mouth, as she was not able to end her tale.

Whereunto the young gentleman all ravished with joy and contentation, sighing, asked her what was the cause of that right fortunate blessing: Julietta, somewhat more emboldened, with pitiful look and smiling countenance, said unto him: "Sir, do not marvel if I do bless your coming hither, because Sir Mercutio a good time with frosty hand hath wholly frozen mine, and you of your courtesy have warmed the same again." Whereunto immediately Romeo replied: "Madam, if the heavens have been so favourable to employ me to do you some agreeable service, being repaired hither by chance amongst other gentlemen, I esteem the same well bestowed, craving no greater benefit for satisfaction of all my contentations received in this world, than to serve, obey and honour you so long as my life doth last, as experience shall yield more ample proof when it shall please you to give further assay: moreover, if you have received any heat by touch of my hand, you may be well assured that those flames be dead in respect of the lively sparks and violent fire which sorteth from your fair eyes, which fire hath so fiercely inflamed all the most sensible parts of my body, as if I be not succoured by the favour of your good graces, I do attend the time to be consumed to dust."

Scarce had he made an end of those last words but the dance of the torch was at an end: whereby Julietta, which wholly burnt in love, straitly clasping her hand with his, had no leisure to make other answer, but softly thus to say: "My dear friend, I know not what other assured witness you desire of love, but that I let you understand that you be no more your own, than I am yours, being ready and disposed to obey you so far as honour shall permit, beseeching you for the present time to content yourself with this answer, until some other season meeter [more appropriate] to communicate more secretly of our affairs." Romeo, seeing himself pressed to part of the company, and for that he knew not by what means he might see her again that was his life and death, demanded of one of his friends what she was, who made answer that she was the daughter of Capellet, the lord of the house, and master of that day's feast (who wroth beyond measure that Fortune had sent him to so dangerous a place, thought it impossible to bring to end his enterprise begun).

Julietta, covetous on the other side, to know what young gentleman he was which had so courteously entertained her that night, and of whom she felt the new wound in her heart, called an old gentlewoman of honour which had nursed her and brought her up, unto whom she said leaning upon her shoulder: "Mother, what two young gentlemen be they which first go forth with the two torches before them?" Unto whom the old gentlewoman told the name of the houses whereof they came. Then she asked her again, what young gentleman that was which holdeth the visard in his hand, with the damask cloak about him. "It is," quoth she, "Romeo Montesche, the son of your father's capital enemy and deadly foe to all your kin." But the maiden at the only name of Montesche was altogether amazed, despairing forever to attain to husband her great affectioned friend Romeo, for the ancient hatreds between those two families.

Nevertheless she knew so well how to dissemble her grief and discontented mind, as the old gentlewoman perceived nothing, who then began to persuade her to retire into her chamber: whom she obeyed, and being in bed, thinking to take her wonted rest, a great tempest of divers thoughts began to environ and trouble her mind, in such wise as she was not able to close her eyes, but turning here and there, fantasied divers things in her thought, sometimes purposed to cut off the whole attempt of that amorous practice, sometimes to continue the same.

Thus was the poor pucelle [a virgin, a woman who wears a mask or a fan] vexed with two contraries, the one comforted her to pursue her intent, the other proposed the imminent peril whereunto indiscreetly she headlong threw herself: and after she had wandered of long time in this amorous labyrinth, she knew not whereupon to resolve, but wept incessantly, and accused herself, saying: "Ah, caitiff and miserable creature, from whence do rise these unaccustomed travails which I feel in mind, provoking me to lose my rest: but unfortunate wretch, what do I know if that young gentleman do love me as he saith? It may be under the veil of sugared words he goeth about to steal away mine honour, to be revenged of my parents which have offended his, and by that means to my everlasting reproach to make me the fable of the Verona people." Afterwards suddenly as she condemned that which she suspected in the beginning, said: "Is it possible that under such beauty and rare comeliness, disloyalty and treason may have their siege and lodging? If it be true that the face is the faithful messenger of the mind's conceit, I may be assured that he doth love me: for I marked so many changed colours in his face in time of his talk with me, and saw him so

transported and beside himself, as I cannot wish any other more certain luck of love, wherein I will persist immutable to the last gasp of life, to the intent I may have him to be my husband: for it may so come to pass, as this new alliance shall engender a perpetual peace and amity between his house and mine.”

Arresting then upon this determination still, as she saw Romeo passing before her father’s gate, she showed herself with merry countenance, and followed him so with look of eye, until she had lost his sight. And continuing this manner of life for certain days, Romeo not able to content himself with looks, daily did behold and mark the situation of the house, and one day amongst others he espied Julietta at her chamber window, bounding upon a narrow lane, right over against which chamber he had a garden which was the cause that Romeo fearing discovery of their love, began the day time to pass no more before the gate, but so soon as the night with his brown mantle had covered the earth, he walked alone up and down that little street: and after he had been there many times, missing the chiefest cause of his coming, Julietta impatient of her evil, one night repaired to her window, and perceived through the brightness of the moon her friend Romeo under her window, no less attended for, than he himself was waiting.

Then she secretly with tears in her eyes and with voice interrupted by sighs, said: “Signor Romeo, methinks that you hazard your person too much, and commit the same into great danger at this time of the night, to protrude yourself to the mercy of them which mean you little good. Who if they had taken would have cut you in pieces, and mine honour (which I esteem dearer than my life) hindered and suspected for ever.” Madam,” answered Romeo, “my life is in the hand of God, who only can dispose the same: howbeit if any man had sought means to bereave me of my life, I should (in the presence of you) have made him known what mine ability had been to defend the same. Notwithstanding life is not so dear, and of such estimation with me, but that I could vouchsafe to sacrifice the same for your sake: and although my mishap had been so great, as to be dispatched in that place, yet had I no cause to be sorry therefore, except it had been by losing the means and way how to make you understand the good will and duty which I bear you, desiring not to conserve the same for any commodity that I hope to have thereby, nor for any other respect, but only to love, serve, and honour you, so long as breath shall remain in me.”

So soon as he had made an end of his talk, love and pity had begun to seize upon the heart of Julietta, and leaning her head upon her hand, having her face all besprent with tears, she said unto Romeo: "Sir Romeo, I pray you not to renew that grief again: for the only memory of such inconvenience, maketh me to counterpoise between death and life, my heart being so united with yours, as you cannot receive the least injury in this world, wherein I shall not be so great a partaker as yourself: beseeching you for conclusion, that if you desire your own health and mine, to declare unto me in few words what your determination is to attain: for if you covet any other secret thing at my hands, more than mine honour can well allow, you are marvellously deceived: but if your desire be godly, and that the friendship which you protest to bear me, be founded upon virtue, and to be concluded by marriage, receiving me for your wife and lawful spouse, you shall have such part in me, as whereof without any regard to the obedience and reverence that I owe to my parents, or to the ancient enmity of our families, I will make you the only lord and master over me, and of all the things that I possess, being prest and ready in all points to follow your commandment: but if your intent be otherwise, and think to reap the fruit of my virginity, under pretence of wanton amity, you be greatly deceived, and do pray you to avoid and suffer me from henceforth to live and rest amongst mine equals." Romeo which looked for none other thing, holding up his hands to the heavens, with incredible joy and contentation, answered: "Madam forasmuch as it hath pleased you to do me that honour to accept me for such a one, I accord and consent to your request, and do offer unto you the best part of my heart, which shall remain with you for gage and sure testimony of my saying, until such time as God shall give me leave to make you the entire owner and possessor of the same. And to the intent I may begin mine enterprise, tomorrow I will to the Friar Lawrence for counsel in the same, who besides that he is my ghostly father is accustomed to give me instruction in all my other secret affairs,' and fail not (if you please) to meet me again in this place at this very hour, to the intent I may give you to understand the device between him and me."

Which she liked very well, and ended their talk for that time. Romeo receiving none other favour at her hands for that night, but only words. This Friar Lawrence, of whom hereafter we shall make more ample mention, was an ancient Doctor of Divinity, of the order of the Friars Minors, who besides the happy profession which he had made in study of holy writ, was very skilful in philosophy, and a great searcher of nature's secrets, and exceeding famous in magic knowledge, and other hidden and secret sciences, which

nothing diminished his reputation, because he did not abuse the same. And this friar through his virtue and piety, had so well won the citizens' hearts of Verona, as he was almost the confessor to them all, and of all men generally revered and beloved: and many times for his great prudence was called by the lords of the city to the hearing of their weighty causes.

And amongst other he was greatly favoured by the Lord of Escala, that time the principal governor of Verona, and of all the family of Montesches, and of the Capellets and of many other. The young Romeo (as we have already declared) from his tender age, bare a certain particular amity to Friar Lawrence, and departed to him his secrets, by means whereof so soon as he was gone from Julietta, went straight to the Friars Franciscans, where from point to point he discoursed the success of his love to that good father, and the conclusion of marriage between him and Julietta, adding upon the end of talk, that he would rather choose shameful death, than to fail her of his promise. To whom the good friar after he had debated divers matters, and proposed all the inconveniences of that secret marriage, exhorted him to more mature deliberation of the same: notwithstanding all the alleged persuasions were not able to revoke his promise.

Wherefore the friar vanquished with his stubbornness, and also forecasting in his mind that the marriage might be some means of reconciliation of those two houses, in the end agreed to his request, entreating him that he might have one day's respite for leisure to excogitate what was best to be done. But if Romeo was careful for his part to provide for his affairs, Julietta likewise did her endeavour. For seeing that she had none about her to whom she might discover her passions, she devised to impart the whole to her nurse which lay in her chamber, appointed to wait upon her, to whom she committed the entire secrets of the love between Romeo and her. And although the old woman in the beginning resisted Julietta her intent, yet in the end she knew so well how to persuade and win her, that she promised in all that she was able to do, to be at her commandment. And then she sent her with all diligence to speak to Romeo, and to know of him by what means they might be married, and that he would do her to understand the determination between Friar Lawrence and him. Whom Romeo answered, how the first day wherein he had informed Friar Lawrence of the matter, the said Friar deferred answer until the next, which was the very same, and that it was not past one hour sithence he returned with final resolution, and that Friar Lawrence and he had devised, that she the Saturday following, should crave leave of her mother to go to confession, and to repair to the Church of

St. Francis's, where in a certain chapel secretly they should be married, praying her in any wise not to fail to be there.

Which thing she brought to pass with such discretion, as her mother agreed to her request: and accompanied only with her governess and a young maiden, she repaired thither at the determined day and time. And so soon as she was entered the church, she called for the good Doctor Friar Lawrence, unto whom answer was made that he was in the shriving chapel, and forthwith advertisement was given him of her coming. So soon as Friar Lawrence was certified of Julietta, he went into the body of the church, and willed the old woman and young maiden to go hear service, and that when he had heard the confession of Julietta, he would send for them again. Julietta being entered a little cell with Friar Lawrence, he shut fast the door as he was wont to do, where Romeo and he had been together shut fast in, the space of one whole hour before. Then Friar Lawrence after that he had shrived them, said to Julietta: "Daughter, as Romeo here present has certified me, you be agreed and contented to take him to husband, and he likewise you for his espouse and wife. Do you now still persist and continue in that mind?"

The lovers answered that they desired none other thing. The friar seeing their conformed and agreeable wills, after he had discoursed somewhat upon the commendation of marriage dignity, pronounced the usual words of the Church, and she having received the ring from Romeo, they rose up before the friar, who said unto them: "If you have any other thing to confer together, do the same with speed: for I purpose that Romeo shall go from hence so secretly as he can." Romeo sorry to go from Julietta said secretly unto her, that she should send unto him after dinner the old woman, and that he would cause to be made a corded ladder the same evening, thereby to climb up to her chamber window, where at more leisure they would devise of their affairs. Things determined between them, either of them retired to their house with incredible contentation [satisfaction], attending the happy hour for consummation of their marriage. When Romeo was come home to his house, he declared wholly what had passed between him and Julietta unto a servant of his called Pietro, whose fidelity he had so greatly tried, as he durst have trusted him with his life, and commanded him with expedition to provide a ladder of cords with two strong hooks of iron fastened to both ends, which he easily did, because they were much used in Italy.

Julietta did not forget in the evening about five of the clock, to send the old woman to Romeo, who having prepared all things necessary, caused the ladder to be delivered unto her, and prayed her to require Julietta the same evening not to fail to be at the accustomed place. But if this journey seemed long to these two passionate lovers, let others judge, that have at other times assayed the like: for every minute of an hour seemed to them a thousand years, so that if they had power to command the heavens (as Joshua did the sun) the earth had incontinently been shadowed with darkest clouds. The appointed hour come, Romeo put on the most sumptuous apparel he had, and conducted by good fortune near to the place where his heart took life, was so fully determined of his purpose, as easily he climbed up the garden wall. Being arrived hard to the window, he perceived Julietta, who had already so well fastened the ladder to draw him up, as without any danger at all, he entered her chamber, which was so clear as the day, by reason of the tapers of virgin wax, which Julietta had caused to be lighted, that she might the better behold her Romeo. Julietta for her part was but in her night kerchief: who so soon as she perceived him colled him about the neck, and after she had kissed and rekissed him a million of times, began to embrace him between her arms, having no power to speak unto him but by sighs only, holding her mouth close against his, and being in this trance beheld him with pitiful eye, which made him to live and die together.

And afterwards somewhat come to herself, she said with sighs deeply fetched from the bottom of her heart: “Ah, Romeo, the exemplar of all virtue and gentleness, most heartily welcome to this place, wherein for your lack, and absence, and for fear of your person, I have gushed forth so many tears as the spring is almost dry: but now that I hold you between my arms, let death and fortune do what they list. For I count myself more than satisfied of all my sorrows past, by the favour alone of your presence.” Whom Romeo with weeping eye, giving over silence answered: “Madam, forasmuch as I never received so much of fortune’s grace, as to make you feel by lively experience what power you had over me, and the torment every minute of the day sustained for your occasion, I do assure you the least grief that vexeth me for your absence, is a thousand times more painful than death, which long time ere this had cut off the thread of my life, if the hope of this happy journey had not been, which paying me now the just tribute of my weepings past, maketh me better content, and more glad, than if the whole world were at my commandment, beseeching you (without further memory of ancient grief) to take advice in time to come how we may content our passionate hearts, and to sort our affairs with such wisdom and discretion, as

our enemies without advantage may let us continue the remnant of our days in rest and quiet.”

And as Julietta was about to make answer, the old woman came in the meantime, and said unto them: “He that wasteth time in talk, recovereth the same too late. But forasmuch as either of you hath endured such mutual pains, behold (quoth she) a camp which I have made ready:” (showing them the field bed which she had prepared and furnished,) whereunto they easily agreed, and being then between the sheets in privy bed, after they had gladdened and cherished themselves with all kind of delicate embracements which love was able to devise, Romeo unloosing the holy lines of virginity, took possession of the place, which was not yet besieged with such joy and contentation as they can judge which have assayed like delights. Their marriage thus consummated, Romeo perceiving the morning making hasty approach, took his leave, making promise that he would not fail within a day or two to resort again to the place by like means and at the same time, until Fortune had provided sure occasion unfearfully to manifest their marriage to the whole world.

And thus a month or twain, they continued their joyful minds to their incredible satisfaction, until Lady Fortune envious of their prosperity, turned her wheel to tumble them into such a bottomless pit, as they paid her usury for their pleasures past, by a certain most cruel and pitiful death, as you shall understand hereafter by the discourse that followeth. Now as we have before declared, the Capellets and the Montesches were not so well reconciled by the Lord of Verona, but that there rested in them such sparks of ancient displeasures, as either parties waited but for some light occasion to draw together, which they did in the Easter holy days (as bloody men commonly be most willingly disposed after a good time to commit some nefarious deed) besides the Gate of Boursarie leading to the old castle of Verona, a troop of Capellets rencountered with certain of the Montesches, and without other words began to set upon them. And the Capellets had for chief of their glorious enterprise one called Thibault, cousingerman to Julietta, a young man strongly made and of good experience of arms, who exhorted his companions with stout stomachs to repress the boldness of the Montesches, that there might from that time forth no memory of them be left at all. The rumour of this fray was dispersed throughout all the corners of Verona, that succour might come from all parts of the city to depart the same.

Whereof Romeo advertised, who walked along the city with certain of his companions, hasted him speedily to the place where the slaughter of his parents and allies were committed: and after he had well advised and beholden many wounded and hurt on both sides, he said to his companions: "My friends let us part them, for they be so fleshed one upon another, as will all be hewed to pieces before the game be done." And saying so, he thrust himself amidst the troop, and did no more but part the blows on either side, crying upon them aloud: "My friends, no more, it is time henceforth that our quarrel cease. For besides the provocation of God's just wrath, our two families be slanderous to the whole world, and are the cause that this commonwealth doth grow unto disorder." But they were so eager and furious one against the other, as they gave no heed to Romeo's counsel, and bent themselves to kill, dismember, and tear each other in pieces. And the fight was so cruel and outrageous between them, as they which looked on were amazed to see them endure those blows, for the ground was all covered with arms, legs, thighs and blood, wherein no sign of cowardness appeared, and maintained their fight so long, that none was able to judge who had the better, until that Thibault, cousin to Julietta, inflamed with ire and rage, turned towards Romeo thinking with a prick to run him through. But he was so well armed and defended with a privy coat which he wore ordinarily for the doubt he had of the Capellets, as the prick rebounded: unto whom Romeo made answer: "Thibault, thou mayest know by the patience which I have had until this present time, that I came not hither to fight with thee or thine, but to seek peace and atonement between us, and if thou thinkest that for lack of courage I have failed mine endeavour, thou doest great wrong to my reputation. And impute this my sufferance to some other particular respect, rather than to want of stomach. Wherefore abuse me not, but be content with this great effusion of blood and murders already committed. And provoke me not, I beseech thee, to pass the bounds of my good will and mind."

"Ah, traitor" said Thibault, "thou thinkest to save thyself by the plot of thy pleasant tongue, but see that thou defend thyself, else presently I will make thee feel that thy tongue shall not guard thy corpse, nor yet be the buckler to defend the same from present death." And saying so, he gave him a blow with such fury, as had not other warded the same, he had cut off his head from his shoulders, and the one was no readier to lend, but the other incontinently was able to pay again, for he being not only wroth with the blow that he had received, but offended with the injury which the other had done, began to pursue his enemy with such courage and vivacity, as at the

third blow with his sword he caused him to fall backward stark dead upon the ground with a prick vehemently thrust into his throat, which he followed till his sword appeared through the hinder part of the same, by reason whereof the conflict ceased.

For besides that Thibault was the chief of his company he was also born of one of the noblest houses within the city, which caused the potestate to assemble his soldiers with diligence for the apprehension and imprisonment of Romeo, who seeing ill fortune at hand, in secret wise conveyed himself to Friar Lawrence at the Friars Franciscans. And the friar understanding of his fact, kept him in a certain secret place of his convent until fortune did otherwise provide for his safe going abroad. The bruit spread throughout the city, of this chance done upon the Lord Thibault, the Capellets in mourning weeds caused the dead body to be carried before the seigniory of Verona, so well to move them to pity as to demand justice for the murder: before whom came also the Montesches declaring the innocency of Romeo and the wilful assault of the other. The council assembled and witnesses heard on both parts, a strait commandment was given by the lord of the city to give over their weapons, and touching the offence of Romeo, because he had killed the other in his own defence, he was banished Verona for ever.

This common misfortune published throughout the city was generally sorrowed and lamented. Some complaineth the death of the Lord Thibault, so well for his dexterity in arms as for the hope of his great good service in time to come, if he had not been prevented by such cruel death. Others bewailed (especially the ladies and gentlewomen) the overthrow of young Romeo, who besides his beauty and good grace wherewith he was enriched, had a certain natural allurements, by virtue whereof he drew unto him the hearts of each man, like as the stony adamant doth the cankered iron, in such wise as the whole nation and people of Verona lamented his mischance: but above all unfortunate Julietta, who advertised both of the death of her cousin Thibault, and of the banishment of her husband, made the air sound with infinite number of mournful complaints and miserable lamentations. Then feeling herself too much outraged with extreme passion, she went into her chamber, and overcome with sorrow threw herself upon her bed, where she began to reinforce her dolour after so strange fashion, as the most constant would have been moved to pity.

Then like one out of her wits, she gazed here and there, and by fortune beholding the window whereat Romeo was wont to enter into her chamber,

cried out: "Oh, unhappy window, oh entry most unlucky, wherein were woven the bitter toil of my former mishaps, if by thy means I have received at other times some light pleasure or transitory contentation, thou now makest me pay a tribute so rigorous and painful, as my tender body not able any longer to support the same, shall henceforth open the gate to that life, where the ghost discharged from this mortal burden shall seek in some place else more assured rest. Ah Romeo, Romeo, when acquaintance first began between us, and reclined mine ears unto thy suborned promises, confirmed with so many oaths, I would never have believed that in place of our continued amity, and in appeasing of the hatred of our houses, thou wouldest have sought occasion to break the same by an act so shameful, whereby thy fame shall be spotted for ever, and I, miserable wretch, desolate of spouse and companion. But if thou hadst been so greedy after the Capellets' blood, wherefore didst thou spare the dear blood of mine own heart, when so many times and in such secret place the same was at the mercy of thy cruel hands? The victory which thou shouldest have gotten over me, had it not been glorious enough for thine ambitious mind, but for more triumphant solemnity to be crowned with the blood of my dearest kinsman? Now get thee hence therefore into some other place to deceive some other, so unhappy as myself. Never come again in place where I am, for no excuse shall hereafter take hold to assuage mine offended mind: in the meantime I shall lament the rest of my heavy life, with such store of tears, as my body dried up from all humidity, shall shortly search relief in earth." And having made an end of those her words, her heart was so grievously strained as she could neither weep nor speak, and stood so immovable as if she had been in a trance.

Then being somewhat come again unto herself, with feeble voice she said: "Ah, murderous tongue of other men's honour, how darest thou so infamously to speak of him whom his very enemies do commend and praise? How presumest thou to impute the blame upon Romeo, whose unguiltiness and innocent deed every man alloweth? Where from henceforth shall be his refuge, sith she, which ought to be the only bulwark and assured rampire of his distress, doth pursue and defame him? Receive, receive then Romeo the satisfaction of mine ingratitude by the sacrifice which I shall make of my proper life, and so the fault which I have committed against thy loyalty shall be made open to the world, thou being revenged and myself punished." And thinking to use some further talk, all the powers of her body failed her with signs of present death. But the good old woman which could not imagine the cause of Julietta her long absence, doubted very much that

she suffered some passion, and sought her up and down in every place within her father's palace until at length she found her lying along upon her bed, all the outward parts of her body so cold as marble. But the good old woman which thought her to be dead, began to cry like one out of her wits, saying: "Ah dear daughter and nurse-child, how much cloth thy death now grieve me at the very heart!"

And as she was feeling all the parts of her body, she perceived some spark of life to be yet within the same, which caused her to call her many times by her name, till at length she brought her out of her swoon, then said unto her: "Why, Julietta, mine own dear darling, what mean you by this turmoiling of yourself? I cannot tell from whence this your behaviour and that immoderate heaviness do proceed, but well I wot [understand] that within this hour I thought to have accompanied you to the grave." "Alas, good mother," (answered woeful Julietta) "do you not most plainly perceive and see what just cause I have to sorrow and complain, losing at one instant two persons of the world which were unto me most dear?"

"Methinks," answered the good woman, "that it is not seemly for a gentlewoman of your degree to fall into such extremity: for in time of tribulation wisdom should most prevail. And if the Lord Thibault be dead do you think to get him again by tears? What is he that doth not accuse his overmuch presumption? Would you that Romeo had done that wrong to him and his house, to suffer himself outraged and assailed by one to whom in manhood and prowess he is not inferior? Sufficeth you that Romeo is alive, and his affairs in such estate who in time may be called home again from banishment, for he is a great lord, and as you know, well allied and favoured of all men, wherefore arm yourself from henceforth with patience: for albeit Fortune doth estrange him from you for a time, yet sure I am that hereafter she will restore him unto you again with greater joy and contentation than before. And to the end that we be better assured in what state he is, if you will promise me to give over your heaviness, I will to-day know of Friar Lawrence whither he is gone."

To which request Julietta agreed, and then the good woman repaired to St. Francis's, where she found Friar Lawrence who told her that the same night Romeo would not fail at his accustomed hour to visit Julietta, and there to do her to understand what he purposed to do in time to come. This journey then fared like the voyages of mariners, who after they had been tossed by great and troublous tempests, seeing some sunbeam pierce the heavens to lighten

the land, assure themselves again, and thinking to have avoided shipwreck, and suddenly the seas begin to swell, the waves do roar with such vehemence and noise, as if they were fallen again into greater danger than before. The assigned hour come, Romeo failed not according to his promise to be in his garden, where he found his furniture prest to mount the chamber of Julietta, who with displayed arms, began so straitly to embrace him, as it seemed that the soul would have abandoned her body. And they two more than a large quarter of an hour were in such agony as they were not able to pronounce one word, and wetting each other's faces fast closed together, the tears trickled down in such abundance as they seemed to be thoroughly bathed therein, which Romeo perceiving, thinking to stay those immoderate tears, said unto her: "Mine own dearest friend Julietta, I am not now determined to recite the particulars of the strange haps of frail and inconstant Fortune, who in a moment hoisteth a man up to the highest degree of her wheel, and by and by, in less space than the twinkling of an eye, she throweth him down again so low, as more misery is prepared for him in one day, than favour in one hundred years: which I now prove and have experience in myself, which have been nourished delicately amongst my friends, and maintained in such prosperous state, as you do little know, hoping for the full perfection of my felicity by means of our marriage to have reconciled our parents and friends, and to conduct the residue of my life according to the scope and lot determined by Almighty God: and nevertheless all mine enterprises be put back, and my purposes turned clean contrary, in such wise that from henceforth I must wander like a vagabond through divers provinces, and sequestrate myself from my friends, without assured place of mine abode, which I desire to let you weet [know], to the intent you may be exhorted in time to come, patiently to bear so well mine absence, as that which it shall please God to appoint."

But Julietta, all affrighted with tears and mortal agonies, would not suffer him to pass any further, but interrupting his purpose said unto him: "Romeo, how canst thou be so hard-hearted and void of all pity to leave me here alone, besieged with so many deadly miseries? There is neither hour nor minute wherein death doth not appear a thousand times before me, and yet my mishap is such as I cannot die, and therefore do manifestly perceive that the same death preserveth my life, of purpose to delight in my griefs and triumph over my evils. And thou like the minister and tyrant of her cruelty, dost make no conscience (for aught that I can see) having achieved the sum of thy desires and pleasures on me, to abandon and forsake me: whereby I well perceive that all the laws of amity are dead and utterly extinguished,

forasmuch as he in whom I had greatest hope and confidence, and for whose sake I am become an enemy to myself, doth disdain and contemn me. No, no, Romeo, thou must fully resolve thyself upon one of these two points, either to see me incontinently thrown down headlong from this high window after thee: or else to suffer me to accompany thee into that country or place whither fortune shall guide thee: for my heart is so much transformed into thine, that so soon as I hear of thy departure, presently my life will depart this woeful body: the continuance whereof I do not desire for any other purpose, but only to delight myself in thy presence, to be partaker of thy misfortunes: and therefore if ever there lodged any pity in the heart of gentleman, I beseech thee Romeo with all humility, that it may now find place in thee, and that thou wilt vouchsafe to receive me for thy servant and the faithful companion of thy mishaps: and if thou think that thou canst not conveniently receive me in the estate and habit of a wife, who shall let me to change mine apparel? Shall I be the first that have used like shifts to escape the tyranny of parents? Dost thou doubt that my service will not be so good unto thee as that of Pietro thy servant? Will my loyalty and fidelity be less than his? My beauty, which at other times thou hast so greatly commended, it is not esteemed of thee? My tears, my love and the ancient pleasures and delights that you have taken in me shall they be in oblivion?"

Romeo, seeing her in these alterations, fearing that worse inconvenience would chance, took her again between his arms, and kissing her amorously, said: "Julietta, the only mistress of my heart, I pray thee in the name of God, and for the fervent love which thou bearest me, to do away those vain cogitations, except thou mean to seek and hazard the destruction of us both: for if thou persevere in this purpose, there is no remedy but we must both perish: for so soon as thine absence shall be known, thy father will make such earnest pursuit after us, that we cannot choose but be descried and taken, and in the end cruelly punished, I as a thief and stealer of thee, and thou as a disobedient daughter to thy father: and so instead of pleasant and quiet life, our days shall be abridged by most shameful death. But if thou wilt recline thyself to reason, (the right rule of human life,) and for the time abandon our mutual delights, I will take such order in the time of my banishment, as within three or four months without any delay I shall be revoked home again: but if it fall out otherwise (as I trust not) howsoever it happen, I will come again unto thee, and with the help of my friends will fetch thee from Verona by strong hand, not in counterfeit apparel as a stranger, but like my spouse and perpetual companion: in the meantime quiet

yourself and be sure that nothing else but death shall divide and put us asunder.”

The reasons of Romeo so much prevailed with Julietta, as she made him this answer: “My dear friend, I will do nothing contrary to your will and pleasure: and to what place so ever you repair, my heart shall be your own, in like sort as you have given yours to be mine: in the meanwhile I pray you not to fail oftentimes to advertise me by Friar Lawrence, in what state your affairs be, and specially of the place of your abode.” Thus these two poor lovers passed the night together, until the day began to appear which did divide them, to their extreme sorrow and grief. Romeo having taken leave of Julietta, went to St. Francis’s, and after he had advertised Friar Lawrence of his affairs, departed from Verona in the habit of a merchant stranger, and used such expedition as without hurt he arrived at Mantuona (accompanied only with Pietro his servant, whom he hastily sent back again to Verona to serve his father) where he took a house: and living in honourable company, assayed certain months to Put away the grief which so tormented him. But during the time of his absence, miserable Julietta could not so cloak her sorrow, but that through the evil colour of her face, her inward passion was descried: by reason whereof her mother, who heard her oftentimes sighing and incessantly complaining, could not forbear to say unto her: “Daughter, if you continue long after this sort, you will hasten the death of your good father and me, who love you so dearly as our own lives: wherefore henceforth moderate your heaviness, and endeavour yourself to be merry: think no more upon the death of your cousin Thibault, whom (sith it pleased God to call away) do you think to revoke with tears, and so withstand His almighty will?”

But the poor gentlewoman not able to dissemble her grief said unto her: “Madam, long time it is sithence the last tears for Thibault were poured forth, and I believe that the fountain is so well sucked and dried up, as no more will spring in that place.” The mother, which could not tell to what effect those words were spoken, held her peace, for fear she should trouble her daughter: and certain days after, seeing her to continue in heaviness and continual griefs, assayed by all means possible to know, as well of her, as of other the household servants, the occasion of their sorrow, but all in vain: wherewith the poor mother, vexed beyond measure, purposed to let the Lord Antonio her husband to understand the case of her daughter: and upon a day seeing him at convenient leisure, she said unto him: “My lord, if you have marked the countenance of our daughter, and her kind of behaviour sithence

the death of the Lord Thibault her cousin, you shall perceive so strange mutation in her, as it will make you to marvel, for she is not only contented to forgo meat, drink and sleep, but she spendeth her time in nothing else than in weeping and lamentation, delighting to keep herself solitary within her chamber, where she tormenteth herself so outrageously as if we take not heed, her life is to be doubted, and not able to know the origin of her pain, the more difficult shall be the remedy: for albeit that I have sought means by all extremity, yet cannot I learn the cause of her sickness: and where I thought in the beginning that it proceeded upon the death of her cousin, now I do manifestly perceive the contrary, specially when she herself did assure me that she had already wept and shed the last tears for him that she was minded to do: and uncertain whereupon to resolve, I do think verily that she mourneth for some despite, to see the most part of her companions married, and she yet unprovided, persuading with herself (it may be) that we her parents do not care for her: wherefore dear husband, I heartily beseech you for our rest and her quiet, that hereafter ye be careful to provide for her some marriage worthy of our state.”

Whereunto the Lord Antonio willingly agreed, saying unto her: “Wife, I have many times thought upon that whereof you speak, notwithstanding sith as yet she is not attained to the age of eighteen years, I thought to provide a husband at leisure: nevertheless things being come to these terms, and knowing the virgin’s chastity is a dangerous treasure, I will be mindful of the same to your contentation, and she matched in such wise, as she shall think the time hitherto well delayed. In the meanwhile mark diligently whether she be in love with any, to the end that we have not so great regard to goods or the nobility of the house wherein we mean to bestow her, as to the life and health of our daughter, who is to me so dear as I had rather die a beggar without lands or goods, than to bestow her upon one which shall use and treat her ill.” Certain days after that the Lord Antonio had bruited the marriage of his daughter, many gentlemen were suitors, so well for the excellency of her beauty, as for her great riches and revenue. But above all others, the alliance of a young earl named Paris, the Count of Lodronne, liked the Lord Antonio: unto whom liberally he gave his consent, and told his wife the party upon whom he did mean to bestow his daughter.

The mother very joyful that they had found so honest a gentleman for their daughter, caused her secretly to be called before her, doing her to understand what things had passed between her father and the Count Paris, discoursing unto her the beauty and good grace of the young count, the virtues for which

he was commended of all men, joining thereunto for conclusion the great riches and favour which he had in the goods of fortune, by means whereof she and her friends should live in eternal honour: but Julietta which had rather to have been torn in pieces than to agree to that marriage, answered her mother with a more than accustomed stoutness: “Madam, I much marvel, and therewithal am astonied [astonished] that you being a lady discreet and honourable, will be so liberal over your daughter as to commit her to the pleasure and will of another, before you do know how her mind is bent: you may do as it pleaseth you, but of one thing I do well assure you, that if you bring it to pass, it shall be against my will: and touching the regard and estimation of Count Paris, I shall first lose my life before he shall have power to touch any part of my body: which being done, it is you that shall be counted the murderer by delivering me into the hands of him, whom I neither can, will, or know which way to love: wherefore I pray you to suffer me henceforth thus to live, without taking any further care of me, for as much as my cruel fortune hath otherwise disposed of me.”

The dolorous mother which knew not what judgment to fix upon her daughter’s answer, like a woman confused and besides herself went to seek the Lord Antonio, unto whom without concealing any part of her daughter’s answer, she did him understand the whole. The good old man, offended beyond measure, commanded her incontinently by force to be brought before him, if of her own good will she would not come: so soon as she came before her father, her eyes full of tears, fell down at his feet, which she bathed with the lukewarm drops that distilled from her eyes in great abundance, and thinking to open her mouth to cry him mercy, the sobs and sighs many times stopped her speech, that she remained dumb, not able to frame a word.

But the old man, nothing moved with his daughter’s tears, said unto her in great rage: “Come hither, thou unkind and disobedient daughter, hast thou forgotten how many times thou hast heard spoken at the table, of the puissance and authority our ancient Roman fathers had over their children, unto whom it was not only lawful to sell, gage and otherwise dispose them (in their necessity) at their pleasure, but also, which is more, they had absolute power over their death and life? With what irons, with what torments, with what racks would those good fathers chasten and correct thee if they were alive again, to see that ingratitude, misbehaviour and disobedience which thou usest towards thy father, who with many prayers and requests hath provided one of the greatest lords of this province to be

thy husband, a gentleman of best renown, and endued with all kind of virtues, of whom thou and I be unworthy, both for the notable mass of goods and substance wherewith he is enriched, as also for the honour and generosity of the house whereof he is descended, and yet thou playest the part of an obstinate and rebellious child against thy father's will. I take the omnipotency of that Almighty God to witness, which hath vouchsafed to bring thee forth into this world, that if upon Tuesday next thou failest to prepare thyself to be at my Castle of Villafranco, where the Count Paris purposeth to meet us, and there give thy consent to that which thy mother and I have agreed upon, I will not only deprive thee of my worldly goods, but also will make thee espouse and marry a prison so strait and sharp, as a thousand times thou shalt curse the day and time wherein thou wast born: wherefore from henceforth take advisement what thou doest for except the promise be kept which I have made to the Count Paris, I will make thee feel how great the just choler of an offended father is against a child unkind."

And without staying for other answer of his daughter, the old man departed the chamber, and left her upon her knees. Julietta, knowing the fury of her father, fearing to incur his indignation or to provoke his further wrath retired for the day into her chamber, and contrived that whole night more in weeping than sleeping. And the next morning, feigning to go hear service, she went forth with the woman of her chamber to the Friar's, where she caused Father Lawrence to be called unto her, and prayed him to hear her confession: and when she was upon her knees before him, she began her confession with tears, telling him the great mischief that was prepared for her, by the marriage accorded between her father and the Count Paris: and for conclusion said unto him: "Sir, forasmuch as you know I cannot by God's law be married twice, and that I have but one God, one husband and one faith, I am determined when I am from hence, with these two hands which you see joined before you, this day to end my sorrowful life, that my soul may bear witness in the heavens, and my blood upon the earth of my faith and loyalty preserved."

Then having ended her talk, she looked about her, and seemed by her wild countenance as though she had devised some sinister purpose: wherefore Friar Lawrence, astonied beyond measure, fearing lest she would have executed that which she was determined, said unto her: "Mistress Julietta, I pray you in the name of God by little and little to moderate your conceived grief, and to content yourself whilst you be here, until I have provided what is best for you to do, for before you part from hence, I will give you such

consolation and remedy for your afflictions, as you shall remain satisfied and contented.” And resolved upon this good mind, he speedily went out of the church unto his chamber, where he began to consider of many things, his conscience being moved to hinder the marriage between the Count Paris and her, knowing by his means she had espoused another, and calling to remembrance what a dangerous enterprise he had begun by committing himself to the mercy of a simple damsel, and that if she failed to be wise and secret, all their doings should be descried, he defamed, and Romeo her spouse punished.

He then after he had well debated upon infinite number of devices, was in the end overcome with pity, and determined rather to hazard his honour, than to suffer the adultery of the Count Paris with Julietta: and being determined hereupon, opened his closet and taking a vial in his hand, returned again to Julietta, whom he found like one that was in a trance, waiting for news either of life or death: of whom the good old father demanded upon what day her marriage was appointed. “The first day of that appointment (quoth she) is upon Wednesday, which is the day ordained for my consent of marriage accorded between my father and Count Paris, but the nuptial solemnity is not before the tenth day of September.”

“Well then” (quoth the religious father) “be of good cheer, daughter, for our Lord God hath opened a way unto me both to deliver you and Romeo from the prepared thralldom [state of servitude]. I have known your husband from his cradle, and he hath daily committed unto me the greatest secrets of his conscience, and I have so dearly loved him in turn, as if he had been my own son: wherefore my heart cannot abide that any man should do him wrong in that specially wherein my counsel may stand him in stead. And forasmuch as you are his wife, I ought likewise to love you, and seek means to deliver you from the martyrdom and anguish wherewith I see your heart besieged: understand then, good daughter, of a secret which I purpose to manifest unto you, and take heed above all things that you declare it to no living creature, for therein consisteth your life and death. Ye be not ignorant by the common report of the citizens of this city, and by the same published of me, that I have travelled through all the provinces of the habitable earth, whereby during the continual time of twenty years I have sought no rest for my wearied body, but rather have many times protruded the same to the mercy of brute beasts in the wilderness, and many times also to the merciless waves of the seas, and to the pity of common pirates together with a thousand other dangers and shipwrecks upon sea and land.

So it is, good daughter, that all my wandering voyages have not been altogether unprofitable. For besides the incredible contentation received ordinarily in mind, I have gathered some particular fruit, whereof by the grace of God you shall shortly feel some experience. I have proved the secret properties of stones, of plants, metals, and other things hidden within the bowels of the earth, wherewith I am able to help myself against the common law of men, when necessity cloth serve: specially in things wherein I know mine eternal God to be least offended. For as thou knowest, I being approached as it were, even to the brim of my grave, and that the time draweth near for yielding of mine account before the Auditor of all Auditors, I ought therefore to have some deep knowledge and apprehension of God's judgment more than I had when the heat of inconsiderate youth did boil within my lusty body. Know you, therefore, good daughter, that with those graces and favours which the heavens prodigally have bestowed upon me, I have learned and proved of long time the composition of a certain paste, which I make of divers soporiferous simples, which beaten afterwards to powder and drunk with a quantity of water, within a quarter of an hour after, bringeth the receiver into such a sleep, and burieth so deeply the senses and other spirits of life, that the cunningest physician will judge the party dead: and besides that, it hath a more marvellous effect, for the person which useth the same feeleth no kind of grief, and according to the quantity of the dough, the patient remaineth in a sweet sleep, but when the operation is wrought and done, he returneth into his first estate.

Now then, Julietta, receive mine instruction, put off all feminine affection by taking upon you a manly stomach for by the only courage of your mind consisteth the hap or mishap of your affairs. Behold, here I give you a vial, which you shall keep as your own proper heart, and the night before your marriage, or in the morning before day, you shall fill the same up with water, and drink so much as is contained therein. And then you shall feel a certain kind of pleasant sleep which encroaching by little and little all the parts of your body, will constrain them in such wise, as immovable they shall remain: and by not doing their accustomed duties, shall lose their natural feelings, and you abide in such ecstasy the space of forty hours at the least, without any beating of pulse or other perceptible motion, which shall so astonie them that come to see you, as they will judge you to be dead, and according to the custom of our city, you shall be carried to the churchyard hard by our church, where you shall be entombed in the common monument of the Capellets, your ancestors, and in the meantime we will send word to

Lord Romeo by a special messenger of the effect of our device, who now abideth at Mantua. And the night following I am sure he will not fail to be here, then he and I together will open the grave, and lift up your body, and after the operation of the powder is past, he shall convey you secretly to Mantua, unknown to all your parents and friends. Afterwards (it may be), Time, the mother of Truth shall cause concord between the offended city of Verona and Romeo. At which time your common cause may be made open to the general contentation of all your friends.”

The words of the good father ended, new joy surprised the heart of Julietta, who was so attentive to his talk as she forgot no one point of her lesson. Then she said unto him: “Father, doubt not at all that my heart shall fail in performance of your commandment: for were it the strongest poison or most pestiferous venom, rather would I thrust it into my body than to consent to fall in the hands of him whom I utterly dislike: with a right strong reason then may I fortify myself, and offer my body to any kind of mortal danger to approach and draw near to him, upon whom wholly dependeth my life and all the solace I have in this world.” “Go your ways then, my daughter” (quoth the Friar) “the mighty hand of God keep you, and His surpassing power defend you and confirm that will and good mind of yours, for the accomplishment of this work.” Julietta departed from Friar Lawrence and returned home to her father’s palace about two of the clock, where she found her mother at the gate attending for her, and in good devotion demanded if she continued still in those former follies. But Julietta with more gladsome cheer than she was wont to use, not suffering her mother to ask again, said unto her: “Madam, I come from St. Francis’s Church, where I have tarried longer peradventure than my duty requireth: howbeit not without fruit and great rest to my afflicted conscience, by reason of the godly persuasions of our ghostly father Friar Lawrence, unto whom I have made a large declaration of my life. And chiefly have communicated unto him in confession, that which hath passed between my lord my father and you, upon the marriage of Count Paris and me. But the good man hath reconciled me by his holy words and commendable exhortations, that where I had mind never to marry, now I am well disposed to obey your pleasure and commandment. Wherefore, madam, I beseech you, to recover the favour and good will of my father, ask pardon in my behalf, and say unto him (if it please you) that by obeying his fatherly request, I am ready to meet the Count Paris at Villafranco, and there in your presence to accept him for my lord and husband: in assurance whereof, by your patience, I mean to repair into my closet, to make choice of my most precious jewels, that I being

richly adorned and decked, may appear before him more agreeable to his mind and pleasure.

The good mother rapt with exceeding much joy, was not able to answer a word, but rather made speed to seek out her husband the Lord Antonio, unto whom she reported the good will of her daughter, and how by means of Friar Lawrence her mind was changed. Whereof the good old man marvellous joyful, praised God in heart, saying: "Wife, this is not the first good turn which we have received of that holy man, unto whom every citizen of this commonwealth is dearly bound. I would to God that I had redeemed twenty of his years with the third part of my goods, so grievous is to me his extreme old age." The self same hour the Lord Antonio went to seek the Count Paris, whom he thought to persuade to go to Villafranco. But the Count told him again that the charge would be too great, and that better it were to reserve that cost to the marriage day, for the better celebration of the same. Notwithstanding, if it were his pleasure, he would himself go visit Julietta: and so they went together. The mother advertised of his coming, caused her daughter to make herself ready, and to spare no costly jewels for adorning of her beauty against the Count's coming, which she bestowed so well for garnishing of her personage, that before the Count parted from the house, she had so stolen away his heart, as he lived not from that time forth but upon meditation of her beauty, and slacked no time for acceleration of the marriage day, ceasing not to be importunate upon father and mother, for the end and consummation thereof.

And thus with joy enough passed forth this day and many others until the day before the marriage, against which time the mother of Julietta did so well provide that there wanted nothing to set forth the magnificence and nobility of their house. Villafranco whereof we have made mention was a place of pleasure, where the Lord Antonio was wont many times to recreate himself a mile or two from Verona, there the dinner was prepared, forasmuch as the ordinary solemnity of necessity must be done at Verona. Julietta perceiving her time to approach dissembled the matter so well as she could: and when time forced her to retire to her chamber, her woman would have waited upon her, and have lain in her chamber, as her custom was: but Julietta said unto her: "Good and faithful mother, you know that tomorrow is my marriage day, and for that I would spend the most part of the night in prayer, I pray you for this time to let me alone, and tomorrow in the morning about six of the clock come to me again to help make me ready." The good

old woman, willing to follow her mind, suffered her alone, and doubted nothing of that which she did mean to do.

Julietta being within her chamber having an ewer full of water standing upon the table, filled the vial which the friar gave her: and after she had made the mixture, she set it by her bedside, and went to bed. And being laid, new thoughts began to assail her, with a conceit of grievous death, which brought her into such case as she could not tell what to do, but plaining incessantly, said: “Am not I the most unhappy and desperate creature that ever was born of woman? For me there is nothing left in this wretched world but mishap, misery and mortal woe, my distress hath brought me to such extremity, as to save mine honour and conscience, I am forced to devour the drink whereof I know not the virtue: but what know I, (said she) whether the operation of this powder will be too soon or too late, or not correspondent to the due time, and that my fault being discovered, I shall remain a fable to the people? What know I moreover, if the serpents and other venomous and crawling worms, which commonly frequent the graves and pits of the earth will hurt me, thinking that I am dead? But how shall I endure the stench of so many carrions and bones of my ancestors which rest in the grave, if by fortune I do awake before Romeo and Friar Lawrence do come to help me?”

And as she was thus plunged in the deep contemplation of things, she thought that she saw a certain vision or fancy of her cousin Thibault, in the very same sort as she saw him wounded and imbrued with blood, and musing how that she must be buried quick amongst so many dead carcasses and deadly naked bones, her tender and delicate body began to shake and tremble, and her yellow locks to stare for fear, in such wise as frightened with terror, a cold sweat began to pierce her heart and bedew the rest of all her members, in such wise as she thought an hundred thousand deaths did stand about her, haling her about on every side, and plucking her in pieces, and feeling that her forces diminished by little and little, fearing that through too great debility she was not able to do her enterprise, like a furious and insensate woman, without further care gulped up the water within the vial, then crossing her arms upon her stomach, she lost at that instant all the powers of her body, resting in a trance.

And when the morning light began to thrust his head out of his orient, her chamber woman which had locked her in with the key, did open the door, and thinking to awake her, called her many times, and said unto her: “Mistress, you sleep too long, the Count Paris will come to raise you.” The

poor old woman spake unto the wall and sang a song unto the deaf. For if all the horrible and tempestuous sounds of the world had been cannoned forth out of the greatest bombards and sounded through her delicate ears, her spirits of life were so fast bound and stopped as she by no means could awake, wherewith the poor old woman amazed, began to shake her by the arms and hands, which she found so cold as marble stone. Then putting hand unto her mouth, suddenly perceived that she was dead, for she perceived no breath in her.

Wherefore like a woman out of her wits, she ran to tell her mother, who so mad as a tiger bereft of her fawns, hied herself into her daughter's chamber, and in that pitiful state beholding her daughter, thinking her to be dead, cried out: "Ah, cruel death, which hast ended all my joy and bliss, use the last scourge of thy wrathful ire against me, lest by suffering me to live the rest of my woeful days, my torment do increase." Then she began to fetch such straining sighs, as her heart did seem to cleave in pieces. And as her cries began to increase, behold the father, the Count Paris, and a great troop of gentlemen and ladies which were come to honour the feast, hearing no sooner tell of that which chanced, were struck into such sorrowful dumps, as he which had beheld their faces would easily have judged that the same had been a day of ire and pity, specially the Lord Antonio's, whose heart was frapped with such surpassing woe as neither tear nor word could issue forth, and knowing not what to do, straightway sent to seek the most expert physicians of the town, who after they had enquired of the life passed of Julietta, deemed by common report that melancholy was the cause of that sudden death, and then their sorrows began to renew afresh.

And if ever day was lamentable, piteous, unhappy and fatal, truly it was that wherein Julietta her death was published in Verona: for she was so bewailed of great and small, that by the common complaints the commonwealth seemed to be in danger, and not without cause: for besides her natural beauty (accompanied with many virtues wherewith nature had enriched her) she was else so humble, wise and debonair, as for that humility and courtesy she had stolen away the hearts of every wight [intelligent being], and there was none but did lament her misfortune. And whilst these things were in this lamented state, Friar Lawrence with diligence dispatched a friar of his convent, named Friar Anselm, whom he trusted as himself, and delivered him a letter written with his own hand, commanding him expressly not to give the same to any other but to Romeo, wherein was contained the chance which had passed between him and Julietta, specially the virtue of the

powder, and commanded him the next ensuing night to speed himself to Verona, for that the operation of the powder that time would take end, and that he should carry with him back again to Mantua his beloved Julietta in dissembled apparel, until Fortune had otherwise provided for them. The friar made such haste as too late he arrived at Mantua, within a while after.

And because the manner of Italy is, that the friar travelling abroad ought to take a companion of his convent to do his affairs within the city, the friar went into his convent, and for that he was within, it was not lawful for him to come out again that day, because that certain days before, one religious of that convent as it was said did die of the plague: wherefore the magistrates appointed for the health and visitation of the sick, commanded the warden of the house that no friars should wander abroad the city, or talk with any citizen, until they were licensed by the officers in that behalf appointed, which was the cause of the great mishap which you shall hear hereafter. The friar being in this perplexity, not able to go forth and not knowing what was contained in the letter, deferred his journey for that day. Whilst things were in this plight, preparation was made at Verona to do the obsequies of Julietta.

There is a custom also (which is common in Italy) to lay all the best of one lineage and family in one tomb, whereupon Julietta was entombed in the ordinary grave of the Capellets, in a churchyard hard by the church of the friars, where also the Lord Thibault was interred, whose obsequies honourably done, every man returned: whereunto Pietro, the servant of Romeo, gave his assistance: for as we have before declared, his master sent him back again from Mantua to Verona, to do his father service, and to advertise him of that which should happen in his absence there: who seeing the body of Julietta enclosed in tomb, thinking with the rest that she had been dead indeed, incontinently took post-horse, and with diligence rode to Mantua, where he found his master in his wonted house, to whom he said with his eyes full of tears: "Sir, there is chanced unto you so strange a matter, as if so be you do not arm yourself with constancy, I am afraid that I shall be the cruel minister of your death: be it known unto you, sir, that yesterday morning my mistress Julietta left her life in this world to seek rest in another: and with these eyes I saw her buried in the churchyard of St. Francis's."

At the sound of which heavy message, Romeo began woefully to lament, as though his spirits, grieved with the torment of his passion, at that instant

would have abandoned his body. But strong love, which would not permit him to faint until the extremity, framed a thought in his fantasy, that if it were possible for him to die beside her, his death should be more glorious, and she (as he thought) better contented: by reason whereof, after he had washed his face for fear to discover his sorrow, he went out of his chamber, and commanded his man to tarry behind him, that he might walk throughout all the corners of the city, to find proper remedy (if it were possible) for his grief.

And amongst others, beholding an apothecary's shop of little furniture and less store of boxes and other things requisite for that science, thought that the very poverty of the master apothecary would make him willingly yield to that which he pretended to demand: and after he had taken him aside, secretly said unto him: "Sir, if you be the master of the house, as I think you be, behold here fifty ducats, which I give you to the intent you deliver me some strong and violent poison, that within a quarter of an hour is able to procure death unto him that shall use it."

The covetous apothecary enticed by gain, agreed to his request, and feigning to give him some other medicine before the people's face, he speedily made ready a strong and cruel poison: afterwards he said unto him softly: "Sir, I give you more than is needful, for the one half is able to destroy the strongest man of the world:" who after he had received the poison, returned home, where he commanded his man to depart with diligence to Verona, and that he should make provision of candles, a tinder box and other instruments meet for the opening of the grave of Julietta, and that above all things, he should not fail to await his coming besides the churchyard of St. Francis's, and upon pain of life to keep his intent in silence. Which Pietro obeyed in order as his master had required, and made therein such expedition as he arrived in good time to Verona, taking order for all things that were commanded of him. Romeo in the meanwhile being solicited with mortal thoughts caused ink and paper to be brought unto him, and in few words put in writing all the discourse of his love, the marriage of him and Julietta, the mean observed for consummation of the same, the help that he had of Friar Lawrence, the buying of his poison, and last of all his death.

Afterwards, having finished his heavy tragedy, he closed the letters and sealed the same with his seal, and directed the superscription thereof to his father: and putting the letters into his purse, he mounted on horseback, and used such diligence as he arrived upon dark night at the city of Verona,

before the gates were shut, where he found his servant tarrying for him with a lantern and instruments, as is before said, meet for the opening of the grave, unto whom he said: "Pietro, help me to open this tomb, and so soon as it is open, I command thee upon pain of thy life not to come near me, nor to stay me from the thing I purpose to do. Behold, there is a letter which thou shalt present tomorrow in the morning to my father at his uprising, which peradventure shall please him better than thou thinkest."

Pietro not able to imagine what was his master's intent, stood somewhat aloof to behold his master's gesticulations and countenance. And when they had opened the vault, Romeo descended down two steps, holding the candle in his hand, and began to behold with pitiful eye, the body of her, which was the organ of his eyes, and kissed it tenderly, holding it hard between his arms, and not able to satisfy himself with her sight, put his fearful hands upon the cold stomach of Julietta. And after he had touched her in many places, and not able to feel any certain judgment of life, he drew the poison out of his box, and swallowing down a great quantity of the same, cried out: "O Julietta, of whom the world was unworthy, what death is it possible my heart could choose out more agreeable than that which it suffereth hard by thee? What grave more glorious than to be buried in thy tomb? What more worthy or excellent epitaph can be vowed for memory than the mutual and pitiful sacrifice of our lives?"

And thinking to renew his sorrow, his heart began to fret through the violence of the poison, which by little and little assailed the same, and looking about him, espied the body of the Lord Thibault lying next unto Julietta, which as yet was not altogether putrified, and speaking to the body as though it had been alive, said: "In what place so ever thou art, O cousin Thibault, I most heartily do cry thee mercy for the offence which I have done by depriving of thy life: and if thy ghost do wish and cry out for vengeance upon me, what greater or more cruel satisfaction canst thou desire to have, or henceforth hope for, than to see him which murdered thee, to be poisoned with his own hands and buried by thy side?" Then ending his talk, feeling by little and little that his life began to fail, falling prostrate upon his knees, with feeble voice he softly said: "O my Lord God, which to redeem me didst descend from the bosom of Thy Father, and tookest human flesh in the womb of the Virgin, I acknowledge and confess that this body of mine is nothing else but earth and dust."

Then seized upon with desperate sorrow, he fell down upon the body of Julietta with such vehemence as the heart, faint and attenuated with too great torments, not able to bear so hard a violence, was abandoned of all his sense and natural powers, in such sort as the siege of his soul failed him at that instant, and his members stretched forth remained stiff and cold. Friar Lawrence which knew the certain time of the powder's operation, marvelled that he had no answer of the letter which he sent to Romeo by his fellow Friar Anselm, departed from St. Francis's and with instruments for the purpose, determined to open the grave to let in air to Julietta which was ready to wake: and approaching the place, he espied a light within, which made him afraid until that Pietro which was hard by, had certified him that Romeo was within, and had not ceased there to lament and complain the space of half an hour: and when they two were entered into the grave and finding Romeo without life, made such sorrow as they can well conceive which love their dear friend with like perfection. And as they were making their complaints, Julietta rising out of her trance and beholding light within the tomb, uncertain whether it were a dream or fantasy that appeared before her eyes, coming again to herself, knew Friar Lawrence, unto whom she said: "Father, I pray thee in the name of God to perform thy promise, for I am almost dead."

And then Friar Lawrence, concealing nothing from her, (because he feared to be taken through his too long abode in that place) faithfully rehearsed unto her how he had sent Friar Anselm to Romeo at Mantua, from whom as yet he had received no answer. Notwithstanding, he found Romeo dead in the grave, whose body he pointed unto, lying hard by her, praying her sith it was so, patiently to bear that sudden misfortune, and that if it pleased her, he would convey her into some monastery of women where she might in time moderate her sorrow and give rest unto her mind. Julietta had no sooner cast eye upon the dead corpse of Romeo, but began to break the fountain pipes of gushing tears, which ran forth in such abundance, as not able to support the furor of her grief, she breathed without ceasing upon his mouth, and then throwing herself upon his body and embracing it very hard, seemed that by force of sighs and sobs, she would have revived and brought him again to life, and after she had kissed and re-kissed him a million of times, she cried out: "Ah, the sweet rest of my cares and the only port of all my pleasures and pastimes, hadst thou so sure a heart to choose thy churchyard in this place between the arms of thy perfect lover, and to end the course of thy life for my sake in the flower of thy youth when life to thee should have been most dear and delectable? How had this tender body power to resist the

furious combat of death, very death itself here present? How could thy tender and delicate youth willingly permit that thou shouldst approach into this filthy and infected place, where from henceforth thou shalt be the pasture of worms unworthy of thee? Alas, alas, by what means shall I now renew my plaints, which time and long patience ought to have buried and clearly quenched? Ah, I, miserable and caitiff wretch, thinking to find remedy for my griefs, have sharpened the knife that hath given me this cruel blow, whereof I receive the cause of mortal wound. Ah, happy and fortunate grave which shalt serve in world to come for witness of the most perfect alliance that ever was between two most unfortunate lovers, receive now the last sobbing sighs and entertainment of the most cruel of all the cruel subjects of ire and death.”

And as she thought to continue her complaints, Pietro advertised Friar Lawrence that he heard a noise beside the citadel, wherewith being afraid, they speedily departed, fearing to be taken: and then Julietta, seeing herself alone and in full liberty, took again Romeo between her arms, kissing him with such affection as she seemed to be more attainted with love than death, and drawing out the dagger which Romeo wore by his side, she pricked herself with many blows against the heart, saying with feeble and pitiful voice: “Ah death, the end of sorrow and beginning of felicity, thou art most heartily welcome: fear not at this time to sharpen thy dart: give no longer delay of life, for fear that my spirit travail not to find Romeo’s ghost amongst such number of carrion corpses: and thou, my dear lord and loyal husband Romeo, if there rest in thee any knowledge, receive her whom thou hast so faithfully loved, the only cause of thy violent death, which frankly offereth up her soul that none but thou shalt joy the love whereof thou hast made so lawful conquest, and that our souls passing from this light, may eternally live together in the place of everlasting joy.”

And when she had ended those words she yielded up her ghost. While these things thus were done, the guard and watch of the city by chance passed by, and seeing light within the grave, suspected straight that there were some necromancers which had opened the tomb to abuse the dead bodies for aid of their art: and desirous to know what it meant, went down into the vault where they found Romeo and Julietta, with their arms embracing each other’s neck, as though there had been some token of life.

And after they had well viewed them at leisure, they perceived in what case they were: and then all amazed they sought for the thieves which (as they

thought) had done the murder, and in the end found the good father Friar Lawrence, and Pietro the servant of dead Romeo (which had hid themselves under a stall) whom they carried to prison, and advertised the Lord of Escala and the magistrates of Verona of the horrible murder, which by and by was published throughout the city.

Then flocked together all the citizens, women and children, leaving their houses to look upon that pitiful sight, and to the end that in presence of the whole city the murder should be known, the magistrates ordained that the two dead bodies should be erected upon a stage to the view and sight of the whole world, in such sort and manner as they were found within the grave, and that Pietro and Friar Lawrence should publicly be examined, that afterwards there might be no murmur or other pretended cause of ignorance. And this good old friar, being upon the scaffold, having a white beard all wet and bathed with tears, the judges commanded him to declare unto them who were the authors of that murder, sith at an untimely hour, he was apprehended with certain irons beside the grave.

Friar Lawrence, a round and frank man of talk, nothing moved with that accusation, answered them with stout and bold voice: "My masters, there is none of you all (if you have respect unto my forepassed life and to my aged years, and therewithal have consideration of this heavy spectacle, whereunto unhappy fortune hath presently brought me) but doth greatly marvel of so sudden mutation and change unlooked for so much as these three score and ten or twelve years sithence I came into this world and began to prove the vanities thereof, I was never suspected, touched or found guilty of any crime which was able to make me blush, or hide my face, although (before God) I do confess myself to be the greatest and most abominable sinner of all the redeemed flock of Christ. So it is notwithstanding, that sith I am prest and ready to render mine account, and that death, the grave and worms do daily summon this wretched corpse of mine to appear before the justice seat of God, still waiting and attending to be carried to my hoped grave, this is the hour I say, as you likewise may think wherein I am fallen to the greatest damage and prejudice of my life and honest port, and that which hath engendered this sinister opinion of me may peradventure be these great tears which in abundance trickle down my face, as though the Holy Scriptures do not witness that Jesus Christ moved with human and compassion, did weep and pour forth tears, and that many times tears be the faithful messengers of a man's innocency. Or else the most likely evidence and presumption is the suspected hour which (as the magistrate doth say) doth make me culpable of

the murder, as though all hours were not indifferently made equal by God their Creator, who in his own person declareth unto us that there be twelve hours in the day, showing thereby that there is no exception of hours nor of minutes, but that one may do either good or ill at all times indifferently, as the party is guided or forsaken by the spirit of God: touching the irons which were found about me, needful it is not now to let you understand for what use iron was first made, and that of itself it is not able to increase in man either good or evil, if not by the mischievous mind of him which doth abuse it. Thus much I have thought good to tell you, to the intent that neither tears nor iron, ne yet suspected hour are able to make me guilty of the murder or make me otherwise than I am, but only the witness of mine own conscience, which alone if I were guilty should be the accuser, the witness and the hangman, which, by reason of mine age and the reputation I have had amongst you, and the little time that I have to live in this world should more torment me within, than all the mortal pains that could be devised: but (thanks be to mine eternal God) I feel no worm that gnaweth nor any remorse, that pricketh me touching that fact, for which I see you all troubled and amazed: and to set your hearts at rest, and to remove the doubts which hereafter may torment your consciences, I swear unto you by all the heavenly parts wherein I hope to be, that forthwith I will disclose from first to last the entire discourse of this pitiful tragedy, which peradventure shall drive you into no less wonder and amaze, than those two poor passionate lovers were strong and patient to expone themselves to the mercy of death for the fervent and indissoluble love between them.”

Then the fatherly Friar began to repeat the beginning of the love between Julietta and Romeo which by certain space of time confirmed, was prosecuted by words at the first, then by mutual promise of marriage, unknown to the world. And as within few days after, the two lovers feeling themselves sharpened and incited with stronger onset, repaired unto him under colour of confession, protesting by oath that they were both married, and that if he would not solemnise that marriage in the face of the Church, they should be constrained to offend God to live in disordered lust: in consideration whereof, and specially seeing their alliance to be good and comfortable in dignity, riches, and nobility on both sides, hoping by that means perchance to reconcile the Montesches and Capellets, and that by doing such an acceptable work to God, he gave them the Church’s blessing in a certain chapel of the Friars’ Church whereof the night following they did consummate the marriage fruits in the palace of the Capellets. For testimony of which copulation, the woman of Julietta’s chamber was able to

depose: adding moreover, the murder of Thibault which was cousin to Julietta: by reason whereof the banishment of Romeo did follow, and how in the absence of the said Romeo, the marriage being kept secret between them, a new matrimony was entreated with the Count Paris, which misliked by Julietta, she fell prostrate at his feet in a chapel of St. Francis's Church, with full determination to have killed herself with her own hands, if he gave her not counsel how she should avoid the marriage agreed between her father and the Count Paris.

For conclusion he said that although he was resolved by reason of his age and nearness of death to abhor all secret sciences wherein in his younger years he had delight, notwithstanding, pressed with importunity and moved with pity, fearing lest Julietta should do some cruelty against herself, he strained his conscience and chose rather with some little fault to grieve his mind, than to suffer the young gentlewoman to destroy her body and hazard the danger of her soul: and therefore he opened some part of his ancient cunning and gave her a certain powder to make her sleep, by means whereof she was thought to be dead.

Then he told them how he had sent Friar Anselm to carry letters to Romeo of their enterprise, whereof hitherto he had no answer. Then briefly he concluded how he found Romeo dead within the grave who as it is most likely did empoison himself, or was otherwise smothered or suffocated with sorrow by finding Julietta in that state, thinking she had been dead. Then he told them how Julietta did kill herself with the dagger of Romeo to bear him company after his death, and how it was impossible for them to save her for the noise of the watch which forced them to flee from thence. And for more ample approbation of his saying he humbly besought the Lord of Verona and the magistrates to send to Mantua for Friar Anselm to know the cause of his slack return, that the content of the letter sent to Romeo might be seen: to examine the woman of the chamber of Julietta, and Pietro the servant of Romeo, who not attending for a further request, said unto them: "My lords, when Romeo entered the grave, he gave me this packet written as I suppose with his own hand, who gave me express commandment to deliver it to his father."

The packet opened, they found the whole effect of this story, specially the apothecary's name which sold him the poison, the price, and the cause wherefore he used it, and all appeared to be so clear and evident, as there rested nothing for the further verification of the same, but their presence at

the doing of the particulars thereof, for the whole was so well declared in order, as they were out of doubt that the same was true: and then the Lord Bartholomew of Escala, after he had debated with the magistrates of these events, decreed that the woman of Julietta her chamber should be banished, because she did conceal that privy marriage from the father of Romeo, which if it had been known in time, had bred to the whole' city an universal benefit. Pietro, because he obeyed his master's commandment, and kept close his lawful secrets according to the well-conditioned nature of a trusty servant, was set at liberty. The apothecary taken, racked, and found guilty, was hanged.

The good old man Friar Lawrence, as well for respect of his ancient service, which he had done to the commonwealth of Verona, as also for his virtuous life (for the which he was specially recommended) was let go in peace without any note of infamy. Notwithstanding, by reason of his age he voluntarily gave over the world and closed himself in an hermitage two miles from Verona, where he lived five or six years, and spent his time in continual prayer until he was called out of this transitory world into the blissful state of everlasting joy.

And for the compassion of so strange a misfortune, the Montesches and the Capellets poured forth such abundance of tears, as with the same they did evacuate their ancient grudge and choler, whereby they were then reconciled: and they which could not be brought to atonement by any wisdom or human counsel, were in the end vanquished and made friends by pity: and to immortalise the memory of so entire and perfect amity, the Lord of Verona ordained that the two bodies of those miraculous lovers should be fast entombed in the grave where they ended their lives, in which place was erected a high marble pillar honoured with an infinite number of excellent epitaphs which to this day be apparent, with such noble memory, as amongst all the rare excellencies wherewith that city is furnished, there is none more famous than the monument of Romeo and Julietta.

