

~~healthy; but whilst I live, forget to drink after thee.~~

~~1 GENTLEMAN I think I have done myself wrong, have I not?~~

~~2 GENTLEMAN Yes, that thou hast, whether thou art tainted or free.~~

Enter [MISTRESS OVERDONE, a] Bawd

LUCIO Behold, behold, where Madam Mitigation comes. I have 35
purchased as many diseases under her roof as come to –

2 GENTLEMAN To what, I pray?

LUCIO Judge.

2 GENTLEMAN To three thousand dolours a year.

1 GENTLEMAN Ay, and more. 40

LUCIO A French crown more.

1 GENTLEMAN Thou art always figuring diseases in me, but thou art
full of error: I am sound.

LUCIO Nay, not, as one would say, healthy, but so sound as things 45
that are hollow. Thy bones are hollow. Impiety has made a feast
of thee.

1 GENTLEMAN How now, which of your hips has the most profound
sciatica?

MISTRESS OVERDONE Well, well: there's one yonder arrested and 50
carried to prison was worth five thousand of you all.

2 GENTLEMAN Who's that, I pray thee?

MISTRESS OVERDONE Marry, sir, that's Claudio, Signior Claudio.

34 SD MISTRESS OVERDONE.] *Dyce: Bawde. F (throughout) 35-6 | As prose. Capell: perhaps as verse, F; Behold . . . comes. / I . . . Roofe, / As come to 49 SH | Dyce: Bawd. F (throughout, with variation of spelling)*

32 **drink after thee** Hart cites Montaigne, Book I, ch. 40: 'hee would not drinke after him, for feare hee should take the pox of him'.

34 **whether . . . free** i.e. whether diseased or not, since he has made himself vulnerable to Lucio's wit if not to disease's inroads on his body.

35 **Mitigation** So called because she provides means to appease or mitigate lust.

36 In F there is a space after 'Roofe' and 'As' is upper-case, but the lines are not metrical.

39 **dolours** diseases. There is a pun on 'dollars' (apparently pronounced the same), the name of a silver coin (German 'Thaler') and also the word used for the Spanish coin, the 'peso' (which, being worth eight 'reales', was also called a 'piece of eight').

41 **French crown** Punning on the coin, on the crown of a Frenchman's head, and on the baldness caused by syphilis, the 'French disease'.

42 **figuring** Evans suggests 'reckoning' (with reference to the preceding puns on money) and 'imagining'.

43 **sound** i.e. giving off the resounding noise of hollow things, as in the proverb 'sound as a bell'. The bones are affected in the secondary and tertiary stages of syphilis. In *Tro.* 2.3.18-19 syphilis is 'the Neapolitan bone-ache', and *Tim.* 4.3.151-2 associates money and syphilis: 'Consumptions sow / In hollow bones of men.'

45 **Impiety** Wickedness.

47-8 Addressed to Overdone, as her response indicates.

47 **profound** deep-seated.

48 **sciatica** hip-gout. Considered as a symptom of syphilis in *Tro.* 5.1.21, where Thersites is listing the 'rotten diseases of the south'.

49 **yonder** *OED* says it usually refers to objects at a distance but in view. Overdone is evidently referring to Claudio, who is yet to make his entrance. In this instance 'yonder' evidently does not imply that 'that man back there' is in view.

50 **carried** taken forcibly.

52 **Marry** Indeed. A mild oath, originally using the name of the Virgin Mary.

1 GENTLEMAN Claudio to prison? 'Tis not so.

MISTRESS OVERDONE Nay, but I know 'tis so. I saw him arrested,
saw him carried away, and, which is more, within these three
days his head to be chopped off!

55

LUCIO But, after all this fooling, I would not have it so. Art thou sure
of this?

MISTRESS OVERDONE I am too sure of it: and it is for getting
Madam Julietta with child.

60

LUCIO Believe me, this may be. He promised to meet me two hours
since, and he was ever precise in promise-keeping.

2 GENTLEMAN Besides, you know, it draws something near to the
speech we had to such a purpose.

1 GENTLEMAN But most of all agreeing with the proclamation.

65

LUCIO Away. Let's go learn the truth of it.

Exeunt Lucio [and Gentlemen]

MISTRESS OVERDONE Thus, what with the war, what with the sweat,
what with the gallows, and what with poverty, I am custom-
shrunk.

Enter [POMPEY]

~~How now? What's the news with you?~~

70

~~POMPEY Yonder man is carried to prison.~~

~~MISTRESS OVERDONE Well, what has he done?~~

66 SD and Gentlemen] Capell; not in F 69 SD POMPEY] Dyce; Clowne F (throughout) 71 SH] Dyce; Clo. F (throughout)

62 *precise . . . keeping* The word 'precise' is later associated with Angelo, promise-breaker.

63-4 *it . . . purpose* it corresponds somewhat to the conversation we had on the subject (either of Claudio and Juliet, or of the newly severe law enforcement).

67 *the sweat* Johnson probably rightly suggests an allusion to the sweating sickness, a disease inducing fever, often fatally, of which there were epidemics in the sixteenth century (*OED* Sweat *sb* 3b), but thinks more probable an allusion to the treatment of venereal disease, in which patients were induced to sweat in sweating tubs (see 3.2.50 and n.). Capell suggests that 'the sweat' is plague, but offers no other instances of the word's use in this sense. Nashe, *The Unfortunate Traveller* (1594), distinguishes sweating sickness, a fatal plague he describes unforgettably, from venereal disease: 'This sweating sickness was a disease that a man then might catch and never go to a hothouse.'

68 *the gallows* Although Lever suggests an allusion to treason trials and executions at Winch-

ester in connection with the plots of Raleigh and others, Mistress Overdone may simply be bemoaning the routine depletion of her customers drawn from the criminal classes, or the new proclamation's threat to her trade. On the treason trials, see pp. 22-3 above.

68-9 *I am custom-shrunk* i.e. the number of my customers has shrunk.

71-7 *POMPEY Yonder . . . maid by him Lever* (p. xx) suggests this passage was marked in the MS. for omission: the compositor found he was crowded for space in this column (b on FIV, set by Compositor D or C) because the casting-off did not allow for the printing of these lines. See the Textual Analysis, pp. 207-8 below.

71 *Yonder man* Referring to Claudio, though he has not yet appeared. Mistress Overdone's ignorance of Claudio's situation contradicts what she says in 49 ff. above.

72-3 Pompey takes the slang sense of 'done' = 'copulate', as in the name Overdone.