Cant. VII.
Of King _Edward_ the second, being poysoned.

The Argument.

How the King was poisoned, and yet escaped and afterward, how when they saw that thereby he was not dispatched of life, they locked him in a most noysome filthie place: that with the stinke thereof he might be choaked, and when that preuailed not, how they thrust a hot burning spit into his fundament, till they had burnt his bowels within his bodie, whereof he dyed.

Or how can the tree:

The Kings curst keepers ayming at reward,
hoping for fauour of the furious Queene:
On wretched _Edward_ had they no regard,
far from their hearts is mercie mooued cleene
Wherefore they mingle poyson with his meate,
which made the man most fearefull for to eate.

For by the taste he oftentimes suspected,
the venome couched in a daintie dishe:
Yet his faire bodie was full sore infected,
so ill they spiced both his fleshe and fishe:
But his strong nature all their craft beguiles,
the poyson breaking foorth in blaines and byles.

An vgly scabbe ore spreds his Lyllie skinne,
foule botches breake vpon his manly face,
Thus sore without and sorrowfull within:
the dispisde man doth liue in loathsome case:
Like to a Lazer did he then abide,
that shewes his sores along the hiewaies side:

But when this practise prooued not to their minde,
and that they saw he liu'd in their dispight:
Another dam'd deuice then they finde,
by stinking sauours for to choake him quight.
In an od corner did they locke him fast,
hard by the which their carrion they did cast.

The stinch whereof might be compared well nie,
to that foule lake where cursed _Sodome_ stood:
That poysoned birdes which ouer it did flie,
euen by the sauour of that filthie mud:
Euen so the smell of that corrupted den,
was able for to choake ten thousand men.

But all in vaine, it would not doe God wot,
his good complexion still droue out the same:
Like to the boyling of a seething pot.
that castes the scumme into the fierce flame:
Thus still he liu'd, and liuing still they sought,
his death, whose downefall was alreadie wrought.

Loathing his life at last his keepers came,
into his chamber in the dead of night:
And without noise they entred soone the same,
with weapons drawne & torches burning bright,
Where the poore prisoner fast asleepe in bed
lay on his belly, nothing vnder his head.

The which aduantage when the murderers saw
a heauie table on him they did throw:
Wherewith awakt, his breath he scant could drawe,
with waight thereof they kept him vnder so,
Then turning vp the cloathes aboue his hips.
to hold his legges, a couple quickly skips.

Then came the murtherers, one a horne had got,
which far into his fundament downe he thrust:
Another with a spit all burning hot,
the same quite through ye horne he strongly pusht.
Among his intrels in most cruell wise,
forcing hereby most lamentable cries.

And while within his body they did keepe,
the burning spit still rolling vp and downe:
Most mournefully the murthered man did weepe,
whose wailefull noise wakt many in the towne,
Who gessing by his cries his death drew neere,
tooke great compassion on that noble Peere.

And at each bitter skreeke which he did make,
they praide to God for to receiue his soule:
His gastly grones inforst their harts to ake,
yet none durst goe to cause the bell to towle:
Ha me poore man alacke, alacke he cried,
and long it was before the time he dyed.

Strong was his heart, & long it was God knowes
ear it would stoope vnto the stroke of death:
First was it wounded with a thousand woes,
before he did resigne his vitall breath:
And being murdered thus as you doe heare,
no outward hurt vpon him did appeare.

This cruell murder being brought to passe,
the Lord _Matreuers_ to the Court doth hie
To shew the Queene her will performed was,
great recompence he thought to get thereby.
But when the Queene the sequell vnderstands,
dissemblingly shee weepes and wrings her hands.

Ah cursed traytor hast thou slaine (quoth shee)
my noble weded Lord in such a sort:
Shame and confusion euer light on thee,
O how I griefe to heare this vile report:
Hence cursed catiue from my sight (shee said)
that hath of me a wofull widdow made.

Then all abasht _Matreuers_ goes his way,
the saddest man that euer life did beare:
And to Sir _Thomas Gurney_ did bewray,
what bitter speech the Queene did giue him there:
Then did the Queene out-law them both together,
and banisht them faire _Englands_ bounds for euer.

Thus the dissembling Queene did seeke to hide,
the heinous act by her owne meanes effected:
The knowledge of the deed shee still denied,
that shee of murder might not be suspected:
But yet for all the subtiltie shee wrought,
the truth vnto the world was after brought.