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Early English Dramatists

SIX
ANONYMOUS PLAYS

(SECOND SERIES)

COMPRISING

*Jacob and Esau—Youth—Albion, Knight—Misogonus
—Godly Queen Hester—Tom Tyler and his Wife—
Note-Book and Word-List*

EDITED BY

JOHN S. FARMER

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FEB 17 1950



A newe mery and wittie
 Comedie or Enterlude, newly
 imprinted, treating vpon the Historie of
 Iacob and Esau, taken out of the xxvij.
 Chap. of the first booke of Moses
 entituled Genesis.



*The partes and names of the Players
 who are to be considered to be Hebrewes
 and so should be apparailled with attire.*

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| 1 The Prologe, a Poete. | } | 7 Hanan, a neighbour
to Isaac also. |
| 2 Isaac, an olde man, fa-
ther to Iacob & Esau. | | 8 Ragau, seruant vnto
Esau. |
| 3 Rebecca an olde womā,
wife to Isaac. | | 9 Pido, a little boy,
leading Isaac. |
| 4 Esau, a yong man and a
hunter. | | 10 Debora, the nurse
of Isaacs Lente. |
| 5 Iacob, a yong mā of god-
ly consideration. | | 11 Abia, a little wench,
seraunt to Rebecca. |
| 6 Zethar a neighbour. | | |

Imprinted at London by Henrie
 Byneman, dwelling in Knight rider streete,
 at the signe of the Spermayde.
 Anno Domini. 1568.

[Reduced Facsimile of Title-page of "The History of
 Jacob and Esau," from a Copy in the Bodleian Library.]

A NEW, MERRY, AND WITTY COMEDY OR INTERLUDE, NEWLY IMPRINTED, TREATING UPON THE HISTORY OF JACOB AND ESAU, TAKEN OUT OF THE TWENTY-SEVENTH CHAPTER OF THE FIRST BOOK OF MOSES, ENTITLED GENESIS.

The Parts and Names of the Players

who are to be considered to be Hebrews, and so should be apparelled with attire

1. THE PROLOGUE, A POET
2. ISAAC, AN OLD MAN, FATHER TO JACOB AND ESAU
3. REBECCA, AN OLD WOMAN, WIFE TO ISAAC
4. ESAU, A YOUNG MAN, AND A HUNTER
5. JACOB, A YOUNG MAN OF GODLY CONVERSATION
6. ZETHAR, A NEIGHBOUR
7. HANAN, A NEIGHBOUR TO ISAAC ALSO
8. RAGAN, SERVANT UNTO ESAU
9. MIDO, A LITTLE BOY, LEADING ISAAC
10. DEBORAH, THE NURSE OF ISAAC'S TENT
11. ABRA, A LITTLE WENCH, SERVANT TO REBECCA

Imprinted at London by Henry Bynneman, dwelling in
Knightrider Street, at the sign of the Mermaid.

Anno Domini 1568. 4to.



PROLOGUE OF THE PLAY.

IN the book of Genesis it is expressed,
That when God to Abraham made sure
promise,
That in his seed all nations should be blessed :
To send him a son by Sarah he did not miss.
Then to Isaac (as there recorded it is)
By Rebecca his wife, who had long time been
barren,
When pleased him, at one birth he sent sons
twain.

But before Jacob and Esau yet born were,
Or had either done good, or ill perpetrate :
As the prophet Malachi and Paul witness bear,
Jacob was chosen, and Esau reprobate :
Jacob I love (saith God) and Esau I hate.
For it is not (saith Paul) in man's renewing or
will,
But in God's mercy, who chooseth whom he
will.

But now for our coming we shall exhibit here,
Of Jacob and Esau how the story was ;
Whereby God's adoption may plainly appear :
And also that, whatever God's ordinance
was,
Nothing might defeat, but that it must come
to pass.
That, if this story may your eyes or ears de-
light,
We pray you of patience, while we it recite.

ACTUS PRIMI. SCÆNA PRIMA.

RAGAN, *the servant.*

ESAU, *a young man, his master.*

[*Ragan entereth with his horn at his back and his hunting staff in his hand, and leadeth three greyhounds, or one, as may be gotten.*

Ragan. Now let me see what time it is by the starlight—

God's for his grace, man, why it is not yet midnight!

We might have slept these four hours yet, I dare well say;

But this is our good Esau his common play:

[*Here he counterfeiteth how his master calleth him up in the mornings, and of his answers.*

What the devil aileth him? now truly, I think plain

He hath either some worms or botts in his brain.

He scarcely sleepeth twelve good hours in two weeks.

I wot well his watching maketh me have lean cheeks,

For there is none other life with him day by day,

But, up, Ragan! up, drowsy hogshead! I say: Why, when? up, will it not be? up. I come anon.

Up, or I shall raise you in faith, ye drowsy whoreson.

Why, when? shall I fet you? I come, sir, by and by.

Up, with a wild wanion! how long wilt thou
lie?

Up, I say, up, at once! up, up, let us go
hence:

It is time we were in the forest an hour since.
Now the devil stop that same yalling throat
(think I)

Somewhiles: for from the call farewell all wink
of eye!

Begin he once to call, I sleep no more that
stound,

Though half an hour's sleep were worth ten
thousand pound.

Anon, when I come in, and bid him good
morrow:

Ah, sir, up at last? the devil give thee sorrow!
Now the devil break thy neck (think I by and
by),

That hast no wit to sleep, nor in thy bed to lie.
Then come on at once; take my quiver and my
bow,

Fet Lovel my hound, and my horn to blow.

Then forth go we fasting an hour or two ere
day,

Before we may well see either our hands or
way,

And there range we the wild forest, no crumb
of bread

From morning to stark night coming within
our head;

Sometimes Esau's self will faint for drink and
meat,

So that he would be glad of a dead horse to
eat.

Yet of fresh the next morrow forth he will
again,

And sometime not come home in a whole night
or twain :

Nor no delight he hath, no appetite nor mind,
But to the wild forest, to hunt the hart or hind,
The roebuck, the wild boar, the fallow-deer, or
hare :

But how poor Ragan shall dine, he hath no
care.

Poor I must eat acorns or berries from the tree.
But if I be found slack in the suit following,
Or if I do fail in blowing or hallooing ;
Or if I lack my staff or my horn by my side :
He will be quick enough to fume, chafe, and
chide.

Am I not well at ease such a master to serve,
As must have such service, and yet will let me
starve?

But, in faith, his fashions displease mo than
me,
And will have but a mad end one day, we shall
see.

He passeth nothing on Rebecca his mother,
And much less passeth he on Jacob his brother.
But peace, mum, no more : I see master Esau.

*[Here Esau appeareth in sight, and
bloweth his horn, ere he enter.*

Esau. How now, are we all ready, servant
Ragan?

Art thou up for all day, man? art thou ready
now?

Ragan. I have been here this half-hour, sir,
waiting for you,

Esau. And is all thing ready, as I bad, to
my mind?

Ragan. Ye have no cause, that I know, any
fault to find :

Except that we disease our tent and neighbours
all

With rising over-early each day, when ye call.

Esau. Ah, thou drowsy draffsack, wouldest
thou rise at noon?

Nay, I trow the sixth hour with thee were
over-soon.

Ragan. Nay, I speak of your neighbours,
being men honest,

That labour all the day, and would fain be at
rest :

Whom with blowing your horn ye disease all-
abouts.

Esau. What care I for waking a sort of
clubbish louts?

Ragan. And I speak of Rebecca your
mother, our dame.

Esau. Tut, I pass not, whether she do me
praise or blame.

Ragan. And I speak of your good father,
old Isaac.

Esau. Peace, foolish knave: as for my
father Isaac,

In case he be asleep, I do him not disease,
And if he be waking, I know I do him please,
For he loveth me well from mine nativity,

[*Here Esau bloweth his horn again.*

And never so as now for mine activity.

Therefore have at it: once more will I blow my
horn

To give my neighbour louts an hail-peal in a
morn.

[*Here he speaketh to his dogs.*

Now, my master Lightfoot, how say you to
this gear,

Will you do your duty to red or fallow deer?

And, Swan, mine own good cur, I do think in
my mind

The game shall run apace, if thou come far
behind :

And ha, Takepart, come, Takepart, here : how
say you, child,

Wilt not thou do thy part? yes, else I am be-
guil'd.

But I shrew your cheeks, they have had too
much meat.

Ragan. I blame not dogs to take it, if they
may it get :

But as for my part, they could have, pardè,

A small remnant of that that ye give me.

They may run light enough for ought of me
they got,

I had not a good meal's-meat this week, that I
wot.

Esau. If we have luck this day to kill hare,
teg, or doe,

Thou shalt eat thy bellyful, till thou criest ho.

Ragan. I thank you, when I have it, Master
Esau.

Esau. Well, come on, let us go now,
servant Ragan.

Is there anything more, that I should say or
do?

For perhaps we come not again this day or
two.

Ragan. I know nothing, master, to God I
make a vow,

Except you would take your brother Jacob with
you :

I never yet saw him with you an hunting go,
Shall we prove him once, whether he will go or
no?

Esau. No, no, that were in vain, alas, good simple mome :

Nay, he must tarry and suck mother's dug at home :

Jacob must keep home, I trow, under mother's wing ;

To be from the tents he loveth not of all thing.

Jacob loveth no hunting in the wild forest :

And would fear, if he should there see any wild beast.

Yea, to see the game run, Jacob would be in fear.

Ragan. In good sooth, I ween he would think each hare a bear.

Esau. What, brother mine, what a word call ye that?

Ragan. Sir, I am scarce waked : I spake, ere I wist what.

Esau. Come on your ways, my child, take the law of the game.

I will wake you, I trow, and set your tongue in frame.

Ragan. O, what have you done, Master Esau? God's apes !

Esau. Why can ye not yet refrain from letting such scapes?

Come on, ye must have three jerts for the nonce.

One— [Beats him.

Ragan. O, for God's love, sir, have done, dispatch at once.

Esau. Nay there is no remedy but bide it— there is twain. [Gives him another jerk.

Ragan. O, ye rent my cheverel ; let me be past my pain.

Esau. Take heed of hunting terms fro henceforth!—there is three. [*Jerks him again.*

Ragan. Whoop! now a mischief on all moping fools for me!

Jacob shall keep the tents ten year for Ragan, Ere I move again that he hunt with Esau.

Esau. Come on, now let us go. God send us game and luck,

And if my hand serve me well—

Ragan (aside). Ye will kill a duck.

[*Exeant ambo.*

ACTUS PRIMI, SCÆNA SECUNDA.

HANAN, ZETHAR, *two of Isaac's neighbours.*

Hanan. Ah, sir, I see I am an early man this morn,

I am once more beguil'd with Esau his horn.

But there is no such stirrer as Esau is:

He is up day by day, before the crow piss:

Then maketh he with his horn such tooting and blowing,

And with his wide throat such shouting and halloing,

That no neighbour shall in his tent take any rest,

From Esau addresseth him to the forest.

So that he maketh us, whether we will or no,

Better husbands than we would be, abroad to go

Each of us about our business and our wark.

But whom do I see yonder coming in the dark?

It is my neighbour Zethar, I perceive him now.

Zethar. What, neighbour Hanan, well met, good morrow to you.

I see well now I am not beguiled alone :
But what boot to lie still? for rest we can take
none ;

That I marvel much of old father Isaac,
Being so godly a man, why he is so slack
To bring his son Esau to a better stay.

Hanan. What should he do in the matter,
I you pray?

Zethar. O, it is no small charge to fathers,
afore God,
So to train their children in youth under the
rod
That, when they come to age, they may virtue
ensue,
Wicked pranks abhor, and all lewdness
eschew,

And me-thinketh Isaac, being a man as he is—
A chosen man of God—should not be slack in
this.

Hanan. Alack, good man, what should he
do more than he hath done?

I dare say no father hath better taught his son,
Nor no two have given better example of life
Unto their children than both he and his wife :
As by their younger son Jacob it doth appear.
He liveth no loose life : he doth God love and
fear.

He keepeth here in the tents, like a quiet man :
He giveth not himself to wildness any when.
But Esau evermore from his young childhood
Hath been like to prove ill, and never to be
good.

Young it pricketh (folks do say), that will be a
thorn,

Esau hath been naught, ever since he was born.
And whereof cometh this? of education?

Nay, it is of his own ill inclination.
 They were brought up both under one tuition;
 But they be not both of one disposition.
 Esau is given to loose and lewd living.

Zethar. In faith, I warrant him [to] have
 but shrewd thriving.

Hanan. Neither see I any hope that he will
 amend.

Zethar. Then let him even look to come to
 an ill end.

For youth that will follow none but their own
 bridle,

That leadeth a dissolute life and an idle:
 Youth, that refuseth wholesome documents,
 Or to take example of their godly parents:
 Youth, that is retchless, and taketh no regard
 What become of themselves, nor which end go
 forward:

It is great marvel and a special grace
 If ever they come to goodness all their life
 space.

But why do we consume this whole morning in
 talk

Of one that hath no reck ne care what way he
 walk?—

We had been as good to have kept our bed
 still.

Hanan. O, it is our part to lament them
 that do ill.

Like as very nature a godly heart doth move
 Others' good proceedings to tender and to
 love:

So such as in no wise to goodness will be
 brought,

What good man but will mourn, since God us
 all hath wrought?

But ye have some business, and so have I.

Zethar. And we have been long; farewell,
neighbour, heartily.

ACTUS PRIMI, SCÆNA TERTIA.

REBECCA, *the mother.* JACOB, *the son.*

Rebecca. Come forth, son Jacob, why
tarriest thou behind?

Jacob. Forsooth, mother, I thought ye had
said all your mind.

Rebecca. Nay, come, I have yet a word or
two more to say.

Jacob. Whatsoever pleaseth you, speak to
me ye may.

Rebecca. Seeing thy brother Esau is such
an one,

Why rebukest thou him not, when ye are
alone?

Why dost thou not give him some good sad
wise counsel?

Jacob. He lacketh not that, mother, if it
would avail.

But when I do him any thing of his fault[s] tell,
He calleth me foolish proud boy, with him to
mell.

He will sometime demand, by what authority
I presume to teach them which mine elders be?
He will sometime ask, if I learn of my mother
To take on me teaching of mine elder brother?
Sometime, when I tell him of his lewd be-
haviour,

He will lend me a mock or twain for my
labour:

And sometime for anger he will out with his
purse,

And call me, as please him, and swear he will do worse.

Rebecca. O Lord, that to bear such a son it was my chance!

Jacob. Mother, we must be content with God's ordinance.

Rebecca. Or, if I should need have Esau to my son,
Would God thou, Jacob, haddest the eldership won.

Jacob. Mother, it is too late to wish; for that is pass'd;
It will not be done now, wish ye never so fast.
And I would not have you to wish against God's will:

For both it is in vain, and also it is ill.

Rebecca. Why did it not please God, that thou shouldest as well
Tread upon his crown, as hold him fast by the heel?

Jacob. Whatsoever mystery the Lord therein meant
Must be referred to his unsearched judgment.
And whatsoever he hath 'ppointed me unto,
I am his own vessel, his will with me to do.

Rebecca. Well, some strange thing therein of God intended was.

Jacob. And what he hath decreed, must sure come to pass.

Rebecca. I remember, when I had you both conceived,
A voice thus saying from the Lord I received:
Rebecca, in thy womb are now two nations
Of unlike natures and contrary fashions.
The one shall be a mightier people elect:
And the elder to the younger shall be subject.

I know this voice came not to me of nothing :
Therefore thou shalt follow my counsel in one
thing.

Jacob. So it be not displeasing to the Lord,
I must.

Rebecca. I fear the Lorde eke, who is merci-
ful and just :

And loth would I be his majesty to offend ;
But by me (I doubt not) to work he doth intend.
Assay, if thou canst at some one time or other,
To buy the right of eldership from thy brother :
Do thou buy the birthright, that to him doth
belong,

So may'st thou have the blessing, and do him
no wrong.

What thou hast once bought, is thine own of
due right.

Jacob. Mother Rebecca, if withouten fraud
I might,

I would your advice put in ure with all my
heart,

But I may not attempt any such guileful part.
To buy my brother's eldership and his birth-
right,

I fear, would be a great offence in God's sight.
Which thing, if I wist to redeem, I ne would
Though I might get thereby ten millions of
gold.

Rebecca. God who, by his word and al-
mighty decree,

Hath appointed thee Esau his lord to be,
Hath appointed some way to have it brought
about ;

And that is this way, my sprite doth not doubt.

Jacob. Upon your word, mother, I will
assay ere long ;

Yet it grudgeth my heart to do my brother wrong.

Rebecca. Thou shalt do no wrong, son Jacob, on my peril.

Jacob. Then, by God's leave, once assay I will.

Rebecca. Then farewell, dear son, God's blessing and mine with thee.

Jacob. I will again to the tent. Well you be! [*Exeat Jacob.*]

Rebecca. Ah, my sweet son Jacob, good fortune God thee send!

The most gentle young man alive, as God me mend!

And the most natural to father and mother :
O, that such a meek spirit were in thy brother ;
Or thy sire loved thee, as thou hast merited,
And then should Esau soon be disinherited.

ACTUS PRIMI, SCÆNA QUARTA.

ISAAC, *the husband.* REBECCA, *the wife.* MIDO, *the lad that leadeth blind Isaac.*

Isaac. Where art thou, my boy Mido, when I do thee lack?

Mido. Who calleth Mido? here, good master Isaac.

Isaac. Come, lead me forth of doors a little, I thee pray.

Mido. Lay your hand on my shoulder, and come on this way.

Rebecca. Now, O Lord of heaven, the fountain of all grace,
If it be thy good will, that my will shall take place :

Send success to Jacob, according to thy word,
That his elder brother may serve him as his
lord.

Mido. Sir, whither would ye go, now that
abroad ye be?

Isaac. To wife Rebecca.

Mido. Yonder I do her see.

Rebecca. Lord, thou knowest Jacob to be
thy servant true,
And Esau all froward thy ways to ensue.

Mido. Yonder she is speaking, whatever she
doth say :

By holding up her hands, it seemeth she doth
pray.

Isaac. Where be ye, wife Rebecca? where
be ye, woman?

Rebecca. Who is that calleth? Isaac, my
good man?

Isaac. Where be ye, wife Rebecca, let me
understand?

Mido. She cometh to you apace.

Rebecca. Here, my lord, at hand.

Isaac. Saving that whatsoever God doth is
all right,
No small grief it were for a man to lack his
sight.

But what the Lord doth send or work by his
high will—

Rebecca. Cannot but be the best, no such
thing can be ill.

Isaac. All bodily punishment or infirmity,
With all maims of nature, whatever they be,
Yea, and all other afflictions temporal :
As loss, persecution, or troubles mortal,
Are nothing but a trial or probation.
And what is he that firmly trusteth in the Lord,

Or steadfastly believeth his promise and word,
 And knoweth him to be the God omnipotent,
 That feedeth and governeth all that he hath
 sent :

Protecting his faithful in every degree,
 And them to relieve in all their necessity?
 What creature (I say) that doth this under-
 stand,

Will not take all thing in good part at God's
 hand?

Shall we at God's hand receive prosperity,
 And not be content likewise with adversity?
 We ought to be thankful whatever God doth
 send,

And ourselves wholly to his will to commend.

Rebecca. So should it be, and I thank my
 lord Isaac,

Such daily lessons at your hand I do not lack.

Isaac. Why, then, should not I thank the
 Lord, if it please him,

That I shall now be blind, and my sight wax all
 dim?

For whoso to old age will here live and endure,
 Must of force abide all such defaults of nature.

Mido. Why, must I be blind too, if I be an
 old man?

How shall I grope the way, or who shall lead
 me then?

Isaac. If the Lord have appointed thee such
 old days to see,

He will also provide that shall be meet for
 thee.

Mido. I trow, if I were blind, I could go
 well enou',

I could grope the way thus, and go as I do
 now.

I have done so ere now both by day and by
night,

As I see you grope the way, and have hit it
right.

Rebecca. Yea, sir boy, will ye play any such
childish knack

As to counterfeit your blind master Isaac?

That is but to mock him for his impediment.

Mido. Nay, I never did it in any such in-
tent.

Rebecca. Nay, it is to tempt God, before
thou have need,

Whereby thou may'st provoke him, in very
deed,

With some great misfortune or plague to
punish thee.

Mido. Then will I never more do so, while
I may see :

But against I be blind, I will be so perfit

That, though no man lead me, I will go at mid-
night.

Isaac. Now, wife, touching the purpose
that I sought for you.

Rebecca. What say'st my lord Isaac to his
handmaid now?

Isaac. Ye have oft in covert words been
right earnest

To have me grant unto you a boon and request :

But ye never told me yet plainly what it was ;

Therefore I have ever yet let the matter pass.

And now of late, by oft being from me absent,

I have half suspected you to be scarce content.

But, wife Rebecca, I would not have you to
mourn,

As though I did your honest petition wourne.

For I never meant to deny in all my life

Any lawful or honest request to my wife.
 But in case it be a thing unreasonable,
 Then must I needs be to you untractable.
 Now therefore say on, and tell me what is your
 case.

Rebecca. I would, if I were sure in your
 heart to find grace;
 Else, sir, I would be loth.

Isaac. To speak do not refrain,
 And if it be reasonable, ye shall obtain:
 Otherwise, ye must pardon me, gentle sweet
 wife.

Rebecca. Sir, ye know your son Esau, and
 see his life,
 How loose it is, and how stiff he is and stub-
 born,
 How retchlessly he doth himself misgovern:
 He giveth himself to hunting out of reason,
 And serveth the Lord and us at no time or
 season.

These conditions cannot be acceptable
 In the sight of God, nor to men allowable.
 Now his brother Jacob, your younger son and
 mine,
 Doth more apply his heart to seek the ways
 divine.

He liveth here quietly at home in the tent,
 There is no man nor child but is with him con-
 tent.

Isaac. O wife, I perceive ye speak of affec-
 tion;
 To Jacob ye bear love, and to his brother none.

Rebecca. Indeed, sir, I cannot love Esau so
 well

As I do Jacob, the plain truth to you to tell.
 For I have no comfort of Esau, God wot:

I scarce know whe'r I have a son of him or not.

He goeth abroad so early before daylight,
And returneth home again so late in the night;
And unneth I set eye on him in the whole week :

No, sometime not in twain, though I do for him seek.

And all the neighbours see him as seldom as I;
But when they would take rest, they hear him blow and cry.

Some see him so seldom, they ask if he be sick :

Sometimes some demand, whether he be dead or quick.

But, to make short tale, such his conditions be,
That I wish of God he had ne'er been born of me.

Isaac. Well, wife, I love Esau, and must for causes twain.

Rebecca. Surely your love is bestowed on him in vain?

Isaac. First, active he is, as any young man can be,

And many a good morsel he bringeth home to me.

Then he is mine eldest and first-begotten son.

Rebecca. If God were so pleased, I would that were foredone. [*Aside.*

Isaac. And the eldest son is called the father's might.

Rebecca. If yours rest in Esau, God give us good night !

Isaac. A prerogative he hath in every thing.

Rebecca. More pity he should have it without deserving.

Isaac. Of all the goods his portion is greater.

Rebecca. That the worthy should have it, I think much better.

Isaac. Among his brethren he hath the pre-eminence.

Rebecca. Where Esau is chief, there is a gay presence!

Isaac. Over his brethren he is sovereign and lord.

Rebecca. Such dignity in Esau doth ill accord.

Isaac. He is the head of the father's succession.

Rebecca. I would Esau had lost that possession.

Isaac. And he hath the chief title of inheritance.

Rebecca. Wisdom would in Esau change that ordinance.

Isaac. To the eldest son is due the father's blessing.

Rebecca. That should be Jacob's, if I might have my wishing. [*Aside.*

Isaac. And the chief endowment of the father's substance.

Rebecca. Which will thrive well in Esau his governance.

Isaac. By title of eldership he hath his birthright.

Rebecca. And that would I remove to Jacob, if I might. [*Aside.*

Isaac. He must have double portion to another.

Rebecca. That were more fit for Jacob his younger brother.

Isaac. In all manner of things divided by a rate.

Rebecca. Well given goods to him, that the Lord doth hate!

Isaac. Why say ye so of Esau, mine eldest son?

Rebecca. I say true, if he proceed as he hath begun.

Isaac. Is he not your son too, as well as he is mine?

Wherefore do ye then against him thus sore repine?

Rebecca. Because that in my spirit verily I know,

God will set up Jacob, and Esau down throw.

I have showed you many a time ere this day,
What the Lord of them being in my womb did say.

I use not for to lie, and I believe certain,
That the Lord spake not these words to me in vain.

And Jacob it is (I know), in whom the Lord will

His promises to you made and to your seed fulfil.

Isaac. I doubt not his promise made to me and my seed,

Leaving to his conveyance how it shall proceed.

The Lord after his way may change th'inheritance;

But I may not wittingly break our ordinance.

Rebecca. Now would God I could persuade my lord Isaac

Jacob to prefer, and Esau to put back.

Isaac. I may not do it, wife, I pray you be content :

The title of birthright, that cometh by descent,
Or the place of eldership coming by due course,
I may not change nor shift for better nor for worse.

Nature's law it is, the eldest son to knowledge,
And in no wise to bar him of his heritage :
And ye shall of Esau one day have comfort.

Rebecca. Set a good long day then, or else we shall come short.

Isaac. I warrant you, he will do well enough at length.

Rebecca. You must needs commend him, being your might and strength.

Isaac. Well, now go we hence ; little Mido, where art thou ?

Mido. I have stood here all this while, list'ning, how you

And my dame Rebecca have been laying the law ;

But she hath as quick answers as ever I saw.
Ye could not speak anything unto her so thick,
But she had her answer as ready and as quick.

Isaac. Yea, women's answers are but few times to seek.

Mido. But I did not see Esau neither all this same week.

Nor do I love your son Esau so well,
As I do love your son Jacob by a great deal.

Isaac. No, doest thou, Mido ? and tell me the cause why.

Mido. Why ? for I do not : And none other cause know I.

But everybody, as well one as other,
Do wish that Jacob had been the elder brother.

Isaac. Well, come on, let us go.

Mido. And who shall lead you? I?

Rebecca. No, it is my office as long as I am by.

And I would all wives, as the world this day is,
Would unto their husbands likewise do their
office.

Mido. Why, dame Rebecca, then all wedded
men should be blind.

Rebecca. What, thou foolish lad, no such
thing was in my mind.

ACTUS SECUNDI, SCÆNA PRIMA.

RAGAN, the servant of Esau.

Ragan. I have heard it oft, but now I feel
a wonder,

In what grievous pain they die, that die for
hunger.

O my greedy stomach, how it doth bite and
gnaw?

If I were at a rack, I could eat hay or straw.

Mine empty guts do fret, my maw doth even
tear,

Would God I had a piece of some horsebread
here.

Yet is master Esau in worse case than I.

If he have not some meat, the sooner he will
die:

He hath sunk for faintness twice or thrice by
the way,

And not one seely bit we got since yesterday.

All that ever he hath, he would have given
to-day

To have had but three morsels his hunger to
allay.

Or in the field to have met with some hogs ;
I could scarcely keep him from eating of these
dogs.

He hath sent me afore some meat for to provide,

And cometh creeping after, scarce able to stride.

But if I know where to get of any man,
For to ease mine own self, as hungry as I am,
I pray God I stink ; but if any come to me,
Die who die will ; for sure I will first served be.
I will see if any be ready here at home,
Or whether Jacob have any, that peakish mome.

But first I must put all my dogs up,
And lay up this gear, and then God send us the cup.

ACTUS SECUNDI, SCÆNA SECUNDA.

ESAU, *the master.* RAGAN, *the servant.*

[*Esau cometh in so faint, that he can scarce go.*

Esau. O, what a grievous pain is hunger to a man !

Take all that I have for meat, help who that can.

O Lord, some good body, for God's sake, give me meat.

I force not what it were, so that I had to eat.
Meat or drink, save my life—or bread, I reckon not what :

If there be nothing else, some man give me a cat.

If any good body on me will do so much cost,

I will tear and eat her raw, she shall ne'er be
rost;

I promise of honesty I will eat her raw.

And what a noddy was I, and a whoreson
daw,

To let Ragan go with all my dogs at once:

A shoulder of a dog were now meat for the
nonce.

O, what shall I do? my teeth I can scarcely
charm

From gnawing away the brawn of my very
arm.

I can no longer stand for faint, I must needs
lie,

And except meat come soon, remediless I die.

And where art thou, Ragan, whom I sent
before?

Unless thou come at once, I never see thee
more.

Where art thou, Ragan? I hear not of thee
yet.

Ragan. Here, as fast as I can, but no meat
can I get.

Not one draught of drink, not one poor morsel
of bread,

Not one bit or crumb, though I should straight-
way be dead.

Therefore ye may now see, how much ye are to
blame,

That will thus starve yourself for following
your game.

Esau. Ah, thou villain, tellest thou me this
now?

If [I] had thee, I would eat thee, to God I vow.

Ah, meat, thou whoreson, why hast thou not
brought me meat?

Ragan. Would you have me bring you that
I can nowhere get?

Esau. Come hither, let me tell thee a word
in thine ear.

Ragan. Nay, speak out aloud: I will not
come a foot near.

Fall ye to snatching at folks? adieu, I am
gone.

Esau. Nay, for God's love, *Ragan*, leave
me not alone:

I will not eat thee, *Ragan*, so God me help.

Ragan. No, I shall desire you to choose
some other whelp.

Being in your best lust, I would topple with ye,
And pluck a good crow, ere ye brake your fast
with me.

What! are you mankin now? I reckon it best,
I,

To bind your hands behind you, even as ye
lie.

Esau. Nay, have mercy on me, and let me
not perish.

Ragan. In faith, nought could I get, where-
with you to cherish.

Esau. Was there nothing to be had among
so many?

Ragan. I could not find one but *Jacob* that
had any,

And no grant would he make for ought that I
could say,

Yet no man alive with fairer words could him
pray.

But the best red pottage he hath, that ever
was.

Esau. Go, pray him, I may speak with him
once, ere I pass.

Ragan. That message, by God's grace,
shall not long be undone.

Esau. Hie thee, go apace, and return again
soon.

If Jacob have due brotherly compassion,
He will not see me faint after this fashion;
But I daresay, the wretch had rather see me
throstr,

Than he would find in his heart to do so much
cost.

For where is, between one fremman and
another,

Less love found than now between brother and
brother?

Will Jacob come forth to shew comfort unto
me?

The whoreson hypocrite will as soon hanged
be.

Yet, peace, methinketh Jacob is coming in-
deed:

And my mind giveth me at his hand I shall
speed,

For he is as gentle and loving as can be,
As full of compassion and pity.

But let me see, doth he come? no, I warrant
you.

He come, quod I? tush, he come? then hang
Esau!

For there is not this day in all the world round
Such another hodypeak wretch to be found,

And Ragan my man, is not that a fine knave?

Have any mo masters such a man as I
have?

So idle, so loit'ring, so trifling, so toying?

So prattling, so trattling, so chiding, so boy-
ing?

So jesting, so wresting, so mocking, so mowing?
ing?

So nipping, so tripping, so cocking, so crowing?
ing?

So knappish, so snappish, so elvish, so forward?

So crabbed, so wrabbed, so stiff, so untoward?

In play or in pastime so jocund, so merry?

In work or in labour so dead or so weary?

O, that I had his ear between my teeth now,
I should shake him, even as a dog that lulleth
a sow.

But in faith, if ever I recover myself,
There was never none trounced, as I shall
trounce that elf.

He and Jacob are agreed, I daresay, I,
Not to come at all, but to suffer me here to die.
Which if they do, they shall find this same
word true

That, after I am dead, my soul shall them
pursue.

I will be avenged on all foes, till I die :
Yea, and take vengeance, when I am dead too,
I.

For, I mistrust, against me agreed they have :
For th'one is but a fool, and th'other a stark
knave.

Enter RAGAN and JACOB behind, conversing.

Ragan. I assure you, Jacob, the man is
very weak.

Esau. But hark once again, methink I hear
them speak !

Ragan. I promise you, I fear his life be
already pass'd.

Jacob. Marry, God forbid !

Esau. Lo, now they come at last.

Ragan. If ye believe not me, see yourself,
where he is.

Jacob. Fie, brother Esau, what a folly is
this?

About vain pastime to wander abroad and
peak,
Till with hunger you make yourself thus faint
and weak.

Esau. Brother Jacob, I pray you chide now
no longer,
But give me somewhat, wherewith to slake
mine hunger.

Jacob. Alack, brother, I have in my little
cottage
Nothing but a mess of gross and homely
pottage.

Esau. Refresh me therewithal, and boldly
ask of me
The best thing that I have, whatsoever it be.
I were a very beast, when thou my life doth
save,
If I should stick with thee for the best thing I
have.

Jacob. Can ye be content to sell your birth-
right to me?

Esau. Hold, here is my hand, I do sell it
here to thee.
With all the profits thereof henceforth to be
thine,
As free, as full, as large, as ever it was mine.

Jacob. Then swear thou hand in hand before
the living Lord
This bargain to fulfil, and to stand by thy
word.

Esau. Before the Lord I swear, to whom
each heart is known,

That my birthright that was from henceforth
is thine own.

Jacob. Thou shalt also with me by this
promise indent,
With this bargain and sale to hold thyself content.

Esau. If each penny thereof might be worth
twenty pound,
I willingly to thee surrender it this stound.
And if each cicle might be worth a whole
talent,

I promise with this sale to hold me content.

Jacob. Come, let us set him on foot, that
he may go sup.

Ragan. Nay, first I will know a thing, ere
I help him up,
Sirrah, will ye eat folk, when ye are long fast-
ing?

Esau. No, I pray thee help me up, and leave
thy jesting.

Ragan. No, trow, eat your brother Jacob
now, if you lust;
For you shall not eat me, I tell you, that is
just.

Jacob. Come, that with my pottage thou
may'st refreshed be.

Esau. There is no meat on earth that so
well liketh me.

Ragan. Yet I may tell you, it is pottage
dearly bought.

Esau. No, not a whit, for my bargain take
thou no thought.
I defy that birthright that should be of more
price
Than helping of one's self: I am not so un-
wise.

Ragan. And how then, sir, shall poor Ragan have no meat?

Esau. Yes, and if thou canst my brother Jacob intreat.

Jacob. God grant I have enough for Esau alone.

Ragan. Why then I perceive poor Ragan shall have none.

[*Esau, entering into Jacob's tent, shaketh Ragan off.*

Well, much good do it you with your pottage of rice :

I would fast and fare ill, ere I ate of that price. Would I sell my birthright, being an eldest son?

Forsooth then were it a fair thread that I had spun.

And then to let it go for a mess of pottage !

What is that but both unthriftiness and dotage?

Alack, alack, good blessed father Isaac, That ever son of thine should play such a lewd knack !

And yet I do not think but God this thing hath wrought,

For Jacob is as good, as Esau is nought.

But forth cometh Mido, as fast as he can trot :

For a cicle, whether to call me in or not?

ACTUS SECUNDI, SCÆNA TERTIA.

MIDO, *the boy.* RAGAN.

[*Mido cometh in clapping his hands and laughing.*

Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha,

Now who saw e'er such another as Esau?

By my truth, I will not lie to thee, Ragan—
 Since I was born, I never see any man
 So greedily eat rice out of a pot or pan.
 He would not have a dish, but take the pot and
 sup.

Ye never saw hungry dog so stab pottage up.

Ragan. Why, how did he sup it? I pray
 thee, tell me, how?

Mido. Marry, even thus, as thou shalt see
 me do now.

*[Here he counterfeiteth supping out of
 the pot.]*

O, I thank you, Jacob: with all my heart,
 Jacob.

Gently done, Jacob: a friendly part, Jacob!

I can sup so, Jacob!

Yea, then will I sup too, Jacob.

Here is good meat, Jacob!

Ragan. As ere was eat, Jacob!

Mido. As e'er I saw, Jacob!

Ragan. Esau a daw, Jacob!

Mido. Sweet rice pottage, Jacob!

Ragan. By Esau's dotage, Jacob.

Mido. Jolly good cheer, Jacob!

Ragan. But bought full dear, Jacob!

Mido. I was hungry, Jacob.

Ragan. I was an unthrift, Jacob.

Mido. Ye will none now, Jacob.

Ragan. I cannot for you, Jacob.

Mido. I will eat all, Jacob.

Ragan. The devil go with all, Jacob.

Mido. Thou art a good son, Jacob.

Ragan. And would he never have done,
 Jacob?

Mido. No, but still coggl'd in, like Jack-
 daw that cries *ka kob!*

That to be kill'd I could not laughing forbear :
And therefore I came out, I durst not abide
there.

Ragan. Is there any pottage left for me,
that thou wot?

Mido. No, I left Esau about to lick the pot.

Ragan. Lick, quod thou? now a shame take
him that can all lick.

Mido. The pot shall need no washing, he
will it so lick;

And by this he is sitting down to bread and
drink.

Ragan. And shall I have no part with him,
dost thou think?

Mido. No, for he pray'd Jacob, ere he did
begin,

To shut the tent fast, that no mo guests come
in.

Ragan. And made he no mention of me his
servant?

Mido. He said thou were a knave, and bad
thee hence avaunt :

Go shift, where thou couldest, thou gottest
nothing there.

Ragan. God yield you, Esau, with all my
stomach cheer !

Mido. I must in again, lest perhaps I be
shent,

For I asked nobody licence, when I went.

[*Exeat.*

Ragan. Nay, it is his nature, do what ye
can for him,

No thank at his hand; but choose you, sink or
swim.

Then reason it with him in a meet time and
place,

And he shall be ready to flee straight in your face.

This proverb in Esau may be understand :
Claw a churl by the tail, and he will file your hand.

Well i-wis, Esau, ye did know well enou',
That I had as much need to be meated as you.
Have I trotted and trudged all night and all day,

And now leave me without door, and so go your way?

Have I spent so much labour for you to provide,

And you nothing regard what of me may be-tide?

Have I run with you while I was able to go,
And now you purchase food for yourself and no mo?

Have I taken so long pain you truly to serve,
And can ye be content, that I famish and starve?

I must lacquey and come lugging greyhound and hound,

And carry the weight, I dare say, of twenty pound,

And to help his hunger purchase grace and favour,

And now to be shut out fasting for my labour !
By my faith, I may say I serve a good master—
Nay, nay, I serve an ill husband and a waster
That neither profit regardeth nor honesty—

What marvel I then, if he pass so light on me?
But, Esau, now that ye have sold your birth-right,

I commend me to you, and God give you good night.

And let a friend tell him his fau't at any time,
Ye shall hear him chafe beyond all reason or
rhyme.

Except it were a friend or a very hell-hound,
Ye never saw the match of him in any ground.
When I shew him of good-will, what others do
say,

He will fall out with me, and offer me a fray.
And what can there be a worsen condition,
Than to do ill, and refuse admonition?
Can such a one prosper, or come to a good
end?

Then I care not how many children God me
send.

Once Esau shall not beguile me, I can tell :
Except he shall fortune to amend, or do well.
Therefore why do I about him waste thus
much talk,

Whom no man can induce ordinally to walk?
But some man perchance doth not a little
wonder,

How I, who but right now did roar out for
hunger,

Have now so much vacant and void time of
leisure,

To walk and to talk, and discourse all of
pleasure.

I told you at the first, I would provide for one :
My mother taught me that lesson a good while
agone.

When I came to Jacob, his friendship to re-
quire,

I drew near and near till I came to the fire :
There hard beside me stood the pottage-pot,
Even as God would have it, neither cold nor
hot ;

Good simple Jacob could not turn his back so
 thick,
 But I at the ladle got a gulp or a lick;
 So that, ere I went, I made a very good meal,
 And din'd better cheap than Esau a good deal.
 But here cometh now master Esau forth.

ACTUS SECUNDI, SCÆNA QUARTA.

ESAU *and* RAGAN.

Ah, sir, when one is hungry, good meat is
 much worth.

And well fare a good brother yet in time of
 need,

[Esau cometh forth, wiping his mouth.

The world is now meetly well amended indeed.

Esau. By my truth, if I had bidden from
 meat any longer,

I think my very maw would have fret asunder.

Then had I been dead and gone, I make God a
 vow.

Ragan. Surely then the world had had a
 great loss of you;

For where should we have had your fellow in
 your place? *[Aside.*

Esau. What should I have done with my
 birthright in this case?

Ragan. Kept it still, and you had not been
 a very ass. *[Aside.*

Esau. But the best pottage it was yet, that
 ever was.

It were sin not to sell one's soul for such gear.

Ragan. Ye have done no less in my con-
 science, I fear. *[Aside.*

Esau. Who is this that standeth clattering
 at my back?

Ragan. A poor man of yours, sir, that doth his dinner lack.

Esau. Dinner, whoreson knave? dinner at this time a' day?

Nothing with thee but dinner and munching
always.

Why, thou whoreson villain slave, who is
hungry now?

Ragan. Indeed, sir (as seemeth by your words), not you.

Esau. A man were better fill the bellies of
some twelfe,

Than to fill the gut of one such whoreson elf;
That doth none other good but eat, and drink,
and sleep.

Ragan. He shall do something else, whom
ye shall have to keep. [Aside.

Esau. And that maketh thee so slothful and
so lither,

I dare say he was six hours coming hither,
When I sent him to make provision afore,
Not passing a mile hence or very little more.
And yet being so far pass'd the hour of dining,
See, and the knave be not for his dinner whin-
ing!

Fast a while, fast with a mischief, greedy
slave,

Must I provide meat for every glutton knave?

Ragan. I may fast, for any meat that of
you I have. [Aside.

Esau. Or deserve thy dinner, before thou
do't crave.

Ragan. If I have not deserved it at this
season,

I shall never deserve it in mine own reason.
Ye promised I should eat till I cried ho.

Esau. Yea, that was if we took either hare,
teg, or doe.

Ragan. But when yourself were hungry, ye
said, I wot what——

Esau. What, thou villain slave, tellest thou
me now of that?

Ragan. Then, help, run apace, Ragan, my
good servant.

Esau. Yea, then was then, now is it other-
wise: avaunt!

Have I nothing to do but provide meat for
you?

Ragan. Ye might have given me some
part, when ye had enough.

Esau. What, of the red rice pottage with
Jacob I had?

Why, the crow would not give it her bird—thou
art mad,

Is that meat for you? nay, it would make you
too rank.

Nay, soft, brother mine, I must keep you more
lank.

It hath made me ever since so lusty and fresh,
As though I had eaten all delicates of flesh.

I feel no manner faintness whereof to com-
plain.

Ragan. Yet to-morrow ye must be as
hungry again,

Then must ye and will ye wish again for good
cheer:

And repent you, that ever ye bought this so
dear.

Esau. Repent me? wherefore? then the
Lord give me sorrow;

If it were to do, I would do it to-morrow.

For, thou foolish knave, what hath Jacob of me bought?

Ragan. But a matter of a straw and a thing of nought!

Esau. My birthright and whole title of mine eldership,

Marry, sir, I pray God much good do it his maship,

If I die to-morrow, what good would it do me?

If he die to-morrow, what benefit hath he?

And for a thing hanging on such casuality,

Better a mess of pottage than nothing, pardy!

If my father live long, when should I it enjoy?

If my father die soon, then it is but a toy.

For if the time were come, thinkest thou that Jacob

Should find Esau such a lout or such a lob

To suffer him to enjoy my birthright in rest?

Nay, I will first toss him and trounce him of the best;

I think to find it a matter of conscience,

And Jacob first to have a fart, sir reverence.

When my father Isaac shall the matter know,

He will not let Jacob have my birthright, I trow.

Or if he should keep it as his own, I pray you,

Might not I live without it, and do well enou?"

Do none but men's eldest sons prosper well?

How live younger brethren then, I beseech you, tell?

Once, if anything be by the sword to be got,

This falchion and I will have part to our lot.

But now come on, go we abroad awhile and walk;

Let my birthright go, and of other matters talk.

Ragan. Who—I, walk? nay, I trow not, till
I have better din'd.

It is more time to seek where I may some
meat find.

Esau. What say'st thou, drawlatch? come
forth, with a mischief!

Wilt thou not go with me? on, forward, whore-
son thief!

Shall it be as pleaseth you, or as pleaseth me?

Ragan. Nay, as pleaseth you, sir, methink
it must be.

Esau. And where be my dogs and my
hound? be they all well?

Ragan. Better than your man, for they be
in their kennel.

Esau. Then go see all be well in my part
of the tent.

Ragan. With a right good will, sir, I go in-
continent.

Esau. And I will to my field, the which I
cleansed last,

To see what hope there is, that it will yield
fruit fast.

ACTUS SECUNDI, SCÆNA QUARTA. ^{*Five*}

JACOB. MIDO. REBECCA. ABRA, *the handmaid.*

Jacob. Thou knowest, little Mido, where
my mother is.

Mido. I can go to her as straight as a
thread, and not miss.

Jacob. Go call her, and come again with her
thine own self.

Mido. Yes, ye shall see me scud like a little
elf.

Jacob. Where I have, by the enticement of my mother,
Bargained and bought the birthright of my brother.

Turn it all to good, O Lord, if it be thy will :
Thou knowest my heart, Lord, I did it for no ill.

And whatever shall please thee to work or to do,

Thou shalt find me prest and obedient thereto.
But here is my mother Rebecca now in place.

Mido. How say you, master Jacob, ran not I apace?

Jacob. Yes, and a good son to go quick on your errand.

Rebecca. Son, how goeth the matter? let me understand.

Jacob. Forsooth, mother, I did so, as ye me bad,

Esau to sell me all his birthright persuade.

Rebecca. Hast thou bought it indeed, and he therewith content?

Jacob. Yea, and have his promise, that he will never repent.

Rebecca. Is the bargain through? hast thou paid him his price?

Jacob. Yea, that I have, a mess of red pot-tage of rice,

And he ate it up every whit, well I wot.

Mido. When he had supp'd up all, I saw him lick the pot;

Thus he licked, and thus he licked, and this way :

I thought to have lick'd the pot myself once to-day;

But Esau beguil'd me, I shrew him for that,

And left not so much as a lick for puss our cat.

Rebecca. Son Jacob, forasmuch as thou
hast so well sped,
With an hymn or psalm let the Lord be praised.
Sing we all together, and give thanks to the
Lord,
Whose promise and performance do so well accord.

Mido. Shall we sing the same hymn that
all our house doth sing?
For Abraham and his seed to give God praising.

Rebecca. Yea, the very same.

Mido. Then must we all kneel down thus,
And Abra, our maid, here must also sing with
us—

Kneel down, Abra; what, I say, will ye not
kneel down?

Kneel, when I bid you, the slackest wench in
this town!

[*Here they kneel down to sing all four,
saving that Abra is slackest, and Mido
is quickest.*]

THE FIRST SONG.

*Blessed be thou, O the God of Abraham,
For thou art the Lord our God, and none but
thou:*

*What thou workest to the glory of thy name,
Passeth man's reason to search what way or
how.*

*Thy promise it was Abraham should have seed
More than the stars of the sky to be told;*

He believed, and had Isaac indeed,

When both he and Sara seemed very old.

Isaac many years longed for a son,

Rebecca, thy handmaid, long time was barren,

*By prayer in thy sight such favour he won,
That at one birth she brought him forth sons twain,*

*Wherefore, O Lord, we do confess and believe,
That both thou canst and wilt thy promise fulfil:*

*But how it shall come, we can no reason give,
Save all to be wrought according to thy will.*

Blessed be thou, O God of Abraham, &c.

Rebecca. Now, doubt not, Jacob, but God hath appointed thee

As the eldest son unto Isaac to be :

And now have no doubt, but thou art sure elected,

And that unthrift Esau of God is rejected.

And to sell thee his birthright since he was so mad,

I warrant thee the blessing that he should have had.

Jacob. Yea? how may that be wrought?

Rebecca. Yes, yes, let me alone.

Our good old Isaac is blind, and cannot see,

So that by policy he may beguiled be,

I shall devise how for no ill intent ne thought,

But to bring to pass that I know God will have wrought,

And I charge you twain, Abra and little Mido.

Mido. Nay, ye should have set Mido before Abra, [I] trow,

For I am a man toward, and so is not she.

Abra. No, but yet I am more woman toward than ye.

Rebecca. I charge you both that, whatever hath been spoken,

Ye do not to any living body open.

Abra. For my part it shall to no body uttered be.

Mido. And slit my tongue, if ever it come out for me :

But if any tell, *Abra* here will be prattling.

For they say, women will ever be clattering.

Abra. There is none here that prattleth so much as you.

Rebecca. No mo words, but hence we altogether now. [*Exeunt omnes.*]

ACTUS TERTIJ, SCÆNA PRIMA.

ESAU. ISAAC. MIDO.

Esau. Now, since I last saw mine old father Isaac,

Both I do think it long, and he will judge me slack—

But he cometh forth ; I will here listen and see Whether he shall chance to speak any word of me. [*Steps aside.*]

Isaac. On, lead me forth, *Mido*, to the bench on this hand,

That I may sit me down, for I cannot long stand.

Mido. Here, sir, this same way, and ye be at the bench now, Where ye may sit down in God's name, if please you.

Isaac. I marvel, where *Esau* my son doth become, That he doth now of days visit me so seldom. But it is oft seen, whom fathers do best favour, Of them they have least love again for their labour.

I think, since I saw him, it is a whole week.
In faith, little Mido, I would thou wouldest
him seek.

Mido. Forsooth, Master Isaac, and I knew
it where,

It should not be very long ere I would be there.
But shall I at adventure go seek where he is?

Esau. Seek no farther, Mido : already here
he is.

Isaac. Methinketh, I have Esau his voice
perceived.

Esau. Ye guess truly, father, ye are not de-
ceived.

Mido. Here he is come now invisible, by my
soul :

For I saw him not, till he spake hard at my
poll !

Isaac. Now, go thou in, Mido, let us two
here alone.

Mido. Sir, if ye command me, full quickly
I am gone.

Isaac. Yet, and if I call thee, see thou be
not slack.

Mido. I come at the first call, good Master
Isaac.

Isaac. Son Esau.

Esau. Here, father.

Isaac. Is none here but we?

Esau. None to harken our talk, father, that
I do see.

[*Rebecca entereth behind unseen, and
listens.*]

Isaac. Son Esau, why hast thou been from
me so long?

Esau. I cry you mercy, father, if I have
done wrong,

But I am loth to trouble you, having nothing
To present you withal, nor venison to bring.

Isaac. Son Esau, thou knowest that I do
thee love.

Esau. I thank you for it, father, as doth me
behave.

Isaac. And now thou seest my days draw
towards an end.

Esau. That is to me great ruth, if I could
it amend.

Isaac. I must go the way of all mortal flesh,
Therefore, while my memory and wit is yet
fresh,

I would thee endow mine heritage to succeed :
And bless thee, as I ought, to multiply my
seed.

The God of my father Abraham and of me
Hath promised, that our seed as the sand shall
be.

He is a God of truth, and in his words just,
Therefore in my working shall be no fault, I
trust.

Now, therefore, son Esau, get thee forth to
hunt,

With thy bow and quiver, as erst thou hast
been wont ;

[And] bring me of thy venison that is good.

Esau. Ye shall have of the best that
runneth in the wood.

Isaac. When thou comest home, to dress it
it shall behave,

And to make for mine own tooth such meat as
I love.

Thus do, mine own dear son, and then I shall
thee kiss

With the kiss of peace, and thee for ever bless.

Esau. Your will t' accomplish, most dear
father Isaac,
With all good haste and speed I shall not be
found slack.

Isaac. Then help lead me home in my tent
that I were set,
And then go, when thou wilt.

Esau. I shall withouten let.

ACTUS TERTIJ, SCÆNA SECUNDA.

REBECCA.

Rebecca. This talk of Isaac in secret have
I heard,
And what end it should come to my heart is
afeard.

Ne'er had I so much ado to forbear to speak.
But the Lord, I trust, will Isaac's purpose
break.

[Here she kneeleth down and prayeth.

O God of Abraham, make it of none effect :
Let Jacob have the blessing, whom thou hast
elect.

I for my part shall work what may be wrought,
That it may to Jacob from Esau be brought,
And in will I go to see what I can devise,
That Isaac's intent may fail in any wise.

ACTUS TERTIJ, SCÆNA TERTIA.

RAGAN. ESAU.

Ragan. Nay, we must on hunting go yet
once more again,

*[Here he cometh forth with his hunting
staff and other things, and a bag of
victuals.*

ACTUS QUARTI, SCÆNA PRIMA.

REBECCA. JACOB.

Rebecca. Son Jacob, even now is come the
very hour
That, if thou have any grace, or heart, or
power,
To play thy part well, and stick unto it
throughout,
Esau his blessing will be thine without doubt.

Jacob. Mother, I know your good-will to
be unfeigned;
But I see not which way the thing may be at-
tained.

Rebecca. I have it contrived, how all
things shall be done,
Do thou as I shall bid thee, and it will be won.

Jacob. Mother, in me shall be no fault or
negligence.

Rebecca. Then harken very well unto this
my sentence.

I heard old Isaac, in a long, solemn talk,
Bid thy brother Esau to the field to walk,
And there with his bow to kill him some
venison,

Which brought and dressed, he [is] to have his
benison.

For I am aged (said Isaac truly),
And would bless thee, dear son, before that I
die.

Now is Esau gone to do it even so;
But while he is away, I would have thee to go
Abroad unto the flock, and fetch me kids twain,
Of which I shall with a trice make such meat
certain,

As shall say, *Come, eat me*, and shall make old
Isaac

Lick his lips thereat, so toothsome shall it
smack.

I shall make him thereof such as he doth love,
Which in thy brother's stead to bless thee shall
him move.

Jacob. O sweet and dear mother, this de-
vice is but vain,

For Esau is rough, and I am smooth certain.

And so, when I shall to my father bring this
meat,

Perchance he will feel me, before that he will
eat.

Old men be mistrustful: he shall the matter
take,

That I went about my father a fool to make.

Mother, by such a prank the matter will be
worse:

And I instead of blessing shall purchase me his
curse.

Rebecca. On me be thy curse, my son, let
it light on me:

Only fetch thou the kids hither, as I bid thee,
Do thou thy true devoir, and let God work
therein.

Jacob. Upon your word, mother, I will the
thing begin,

Send me little Mido to help me bear a kid.

Rebecca. He shall come by and by, for so
I shall him bid.

Now, Lord, and if thou please that this thing
shall take place,

Further this our enterprise, helping with thy
grace. [Exit.]

ACTUS QUARTI, SCÆNA SECUNDA.

JACOB *and* MIDO.

Mido. Are ye here, master Jacob? I came
you to look,
And here dame Rebecca hath sent you your
sheep-crook;
And hath commanded me to wait on you this
day,
But wherefore or why, she would nothing to
me say.

Jacob. Come on then, follow me, Mido, a
little ways.

Mido. Whither ye shall lead me; I am at
all assays.

Jacob. And art thou able to bear a kid on
thy back?

Mido. I am able, I trow, to bear a quarter-
sack.

How say you to this corpse? is it not fat and
round?

How say ye to these legs? come they not to
the ground?

And be not here arms able your matter to
speed?

Be not here likely shoulders to do such a deed?
Therefore come, master Jacob, if this your
doubt be

For bringing home of kids, lay the biggest on
me,

So that if we make a feast, I may have some
part.

Jacob. Yes, that shalt thou, Mido; right
worthy thou art.

ACTUS QUARTI, SCÆNA TERTIA.

REBECCA. ABRA.

Rebecca. I come to see if Jacob be gone
a-field yet;

A little slacking may all our purpose let.

But now that he is gone, he will be here at
once,

Therefore I will call my maid Abra for the
nonce,

That all thing within may be in a readiness.

Abra, where be ye, Abra?

Abra. Here within, mistress.

Rebecca. Come forth: when, Abra? what,
Abra, I say!

Abra. Anon.

Rebecca. Must I call so oft? why come ye
not by and by?

Abra. I was washing my vessel forsooth,
mistress, I.

Rebecca. And in very deed, look that all
your vessels be clean.

Abra. There is not one foul piece in all our
tent, I ween.

Rebecca. Then make a great fire, and make
ready your pot,

And see there be plenty of water, cold and hot;
And see the spit be scoured as clean as any
pearl.

Abra. If this be not quickly done, call me
naughty girl.

Rebecca. Nay, soft, whither away? I have
not yet all done.

Abra. I thought ye would have had me as
quick to be gone,

As when ye call Abra, ye would have me to come.

Rebecca. Then see ye have made ready cloves, mace, and cinnamon :

Pepper and saffron ; then fet herbs for the pot ;

Abra. We will have the best that by me can be got.

Rebecca. And let no foul corner be about all the tent.

Abra. If ye find any fault, hardly let me be shent.

Is there anything else but that I may go now ?

Rebecca. Nought but that, when I come, I find no fault in you.

Abra. No, I warrant you, I will not let my matters sleep.

Rebecca. Any good wench will at her dame's bidding take keep.

Now, God of Abraham, as I trust in thy grace, Send Jacob the blessing in Esau his place.

As thou hast ordained, right so must all thing be :

Perform thine own words, Lord, which thou spakest to me.

Now will I go in to see, that mine old husband May of my secret working nothing understand.

Or in case he smell what we have thus far begun,

He may think it all for Esau to be done.

ACTUS QUARTI, SCÆNA QUARTA.

ABRA, *the maid.* DEBORAH, *the nurse.*

Abra. He, that were now within, should
 find all thing, I ween,
 As trim as a trencher, as trick, as sweet, as
 clean.
 And seeing that my dame prepareth such a
 feast,
 I will not, I trow, be found such a sluttish
 beast,
 That there shall any filth about our tent be
 kept,
 But that both within and without it shall be
 swept.

[*Then let her sweep with a broom, and
 while she doth it, sing this song, and
 when she hath sung, let her say thus :*

THE SECOND SONG.

*It hath been a proverb, before I was born,
 Young doth it prick, that will be a thorn.
 Who will be evil, or who will be good ;
 Who given to truth, or who to falsehood.
 Each body's youth showeth a great likelihood.
 For young doth it prick, that will be a thorn.*

*Who so in youth will no goodness embrace,
 But follow pleasure, and not virtue's trace,
 Great marvel it is, if such come to grace.
 For young doth it prick, that will be a thorn.*

*Such as in youth will refuse to be taught,
 Or will be slack to work, as he ought,
 When they come to age, their proof will be
 nought.
 For young doth it prick, that will be a thorn.*

*If a child have been given to any vice,
Except he be guided by such as be wise,
He will thereof all his life have a spice.
For young doth it prick, that will be a thorn.*

It hath been a proverb, &c.

Abra. Now have I done, and, as it should
be for the nonce,
My sweeping and my song are ended both at
once.
Now but for fetting mine herbs I might go
play.
Deborah, nurse *Deborah,* a word, I you pray.

Enter DEBORAH.

Deborah. What is the matter? who calleth
me *Deborah*?

Abra. Forsooth, gentle nurse, even I, little
Abra,
I pray you, sweet *Deborah,* take in this same
broom,
And look well to all thing, till I return home :
I must to the garden as fast as I can trot,
As I was commanded, to fet herbs for the pot.
But, in the meantime, I pray you, nurse, look
about,
And see well to the fire, that it go not out ;
I will amble so fast, that I will soon be there,
And here again, I trow, ere an horse lick his
ear. [Exit.

Deborah. There is not a prettier girl within
this mile,
Than this *Abra* will be within this little while.
As true as any steel, ye may trust her with
gold
Though it were a bushel, and not a penny told.

As quick about her work, that must be quickly
 sped,
 As any wench in twenty mile; about her head
 As fine a piece it is as I know but a few,
 Yet perchance her husband of her may have a
 shrew.
 Cat after kind (say'th the proverb) sweet milk
 will lap;
 If the mother be a shrew, the daughter cannot
 'scape.
 Once our mark she hath: I marvel, if she slip:
 For her nose is growing above her over lip.
 But it is time that I into the tent be gone,
 Lest she come and chide me; she will come now
 anon.

ACTUS QUARTI, SCÆNA QUINTA.

ABRA.

Abra. How say ye? have not I despatched
 me quickly?
 A straw for that wench that doth not somewhat
 likely!
 I have brought here good herbs, and of them
 plenty,
 To make both broth and farcing, and that full
 dainty.
 I trust to make such broth that, when all things
 are in,
 God Almighty self may wet his finger therein.
 Here is thyme and parsley, spinach and rose-
 mary.
 Endive, succory, lacture, violet, clary,
 Liverwort, marigold, sorrel, hart's-tongue, and
 sage:

Pennyroyal, purslane, bugloss, and borage,
With many very good herbs, mo than I do
name.

But to tarry here thus long I am much to
blame.

For if Jacob should come, I not in readiness,
I must of covenant be shent of our mistress.
And I would not for twenty pound, I tell ye,
That any point of default should be found in
me. [Exit.

ACTUS QUARTI, SCÆNA SEXTA.

REBECCA. MIDO. JACOB.

Rebecca. I come to see if Jacob do not
return yet.

I cannot marvel enough what should be his let,
And greatly wonder he is away thus long.
I fear much of his absence lest something be
wrong.

As well as heart can wish, all thing is ready
here;

And now to me each moment seemeth a whole
year.

But hark, methinketh I hear a young kid blea !
It is so indeed; I see Jacob; well is me !

Mido. Hark, master Jacob, heard ye ever
kid blea so?

I ween she knoweth aforehand whereto she
shall go.

Jacob. I would not my father Isaac should
hear :

Mido. Nay, she will scarcely be still when
she is dead, I do fear.

Jacob. But lo, I see my mother stand before the tent.

Enter JACOB and MIDO.

Rebecca. O Lord, methinketh long, son Jacob, since thou went.

Jacob. And methinketh, mother, we have hied us well.

Mido. I have made many feet to follow, I can tell.

Rebecca. Give me thy kid, my son, and now let me alone,
Bring thou in thine, Mido, and see thou be a stone.

Mido. A stone? how should that be, mistress? I am a lad,
And a boy alive, as good as e'er ye had:
And now, in bringing home this kid, I have, I trow,
Tried myself a man and a pretty fellow.

Rebecca. I meant thou shouldest nothing say.

Mido. One warning is enough; ye bad us so last day.

Rebecca. Well, let me go in, and venison hereof make.

Jacob. And hearest thou, Mido? see that good heed thou take
In any wise to come in my father's sight.

Mido. Why, he seeth no better at noon than at midnight.
Is he not blind long since, and doth his eyes lack?

Therefore go in, dame, I bear an heavy pack.

Rebecca. I leave you here, Jacob, and heartily you pray

That, when need shall require, you be not far
away.

Jacob. I shall be ready, mother, whensoever
you call. [Exit Rebecca.]

ACTUS QUARTI, SCÆNA SEPTIMA.

JACOB. MIDO.

Jacob. O, how happy is that same daughter
or that son,

Whom the parents love with hearty affection!
And among all others how fortunate am I,
Whom my mother Rebecca tend'reth so
greatly?

If it lay in her to do any good, ye see,
She would do her earnest devoir to prefer me.
But as for this matter, which she doth now in-
tend,

Without thy aid, O Lord, how should it come
to end?

Nevertheless, forasmuch as my said mother
Worketh upon thy word, O Lord, and none
other,

It shall become me to show mine obedience,
And to thy promise, O Lord, to give due cre-
dence.

For what is so impossible to man's judgment,
Which thou canst not with a beck perform
incontinent?

Therefore thy will, O Lord, be done for ever-
more.

Mido. O Jacob, I was never so afeard afore.

Jacob. Why, what new thing is chanced,
Mido, I pray thee?

Mido. Old Isaac, your father, heard your young kid blea.

He asked what it was : I said, a kid.

Who brought it from the fold? I said you did.

For what purpose? forsooth, sir, said I,

There is some matter that Jacob would remedy.

And where has thou been so long, little Mido,
quod he,

That all this whole hour thou wert not once
with me?

Forsooth (quod I), when I went from you last
of all,

You bad me be no more, but be ready at your
call.

Jacob. But of the kid's bleaing he did speak
no more?

Mido. No; but, and if he had called me
afore,

I must have told him all, or else I must have
made a lie,

Which would not have been a good boy's part
truly.

But I will to him, and no longer here remain,

Lest he should happen to call for Mido again.

[*Exit Mido.*]

ACTUS QUARTI, SCÆNA OCTAVA.

JACOB. REBECCA. DEBORAH.

Jacob. I were best also to get me into the
tent,

That, if my mother need me, I may be present.

But I see her come forth, and nurse Deborah
also,

And bring gear with them, whatsoe'er it shall
do.

Rebecca. Where is my son Jacob? I do him
now espy.

Come apace, Deborah, I pray thee let us hie,
That all thing were dispatched somewhat to my
mind.

Deborah. It is happy that Jacob ready here
ye find.

Jacob. Mother, what have ye brought, and
what things are those?

Rebecca. Gear that I have prepared to
serve our purpose;

And because that Esau is so rough with hair,
I have brought sleeves of kid next to thy skin
to wear.

They be made glovelike, and for each finger a
stall:

So that thy father's feeling soon beguile they
shall.

Then have I brought a collar of rough kid's
hair,

Fast unto the skin round about thy neck to
wear.

Come, let me do it on, and if Isaac feel,
He shall therewith be beguiled wondrous well.

*[Here she doth the sleeves upon Jacob's
arms.]*

Jacob. And what shall this gear do that
ye have brought?

Rebecca. It shall serve anon, I warrant you,
take no thought.

Now, thoroughly to ravish thy father Isaac,
Thou shalt here incontinent put upon thy back
Esau his best apparel, whose fragrant flavour
Shall conjure Isaac to bear thee his favour.

Deborah. Marry, sir, now is master Jacob
trim indeed,

That is all tricksy and gallant, so God me speed!

Now I see apparel setteth out a man.

Doth it become Esau so? nay, beshrew me then.

Rebecca. Ye may now go in, nurse, and leave looking on him.

Deborah. I go; marry, sir, Jacob is now gay and trim.

[*Jacob standeth looking on himself.*]

Jacob. No, forsooth, mother, this raiment liketh not me.

I could with mine own gear better contented be.

And, but for satisfying of your mind and will, I would not wear it, to have it for mine own still.

I love not to wear another bird's feathers: Mine own poor homely gear will serve for all weathers.

Rebecca. Well, content thyself, and follow my mind this day.

Now the meat by this time is ready, I dare say. Before that with too much *enough* it be all spilt,

Take thy time, and assail thy father, when thou wilt.

Jacob. Yea, but have ye provided, mother, I you pray,

That nobody within may your counsel bewray?

Rebecca. I warrant the matter all safe from uttering,

I have stopped all mouths fro once muttering. Therefore, while the time serveth, I thee warn; To slack, when all things are ready, may do harm.

Jacob. Go before, and I follow: but my
cheeks will blush red
To be seen among our folk thus appareled.

ACTUS QUARTI, SCÆNA NONA.

ISAAC. MIDO. JACOB.

Isaac. Come, Mido, for without thee I can
nothing do.

Mido. What is it, sir, that ye would have
my help unto?

Isaac. Nothing but to sit abroad, and take
th' open air.

Mido. That shall be well done; the weather
is very fair.

Isaac. Praised be the God of my father
Abraham,
Who sendeth all thing needful for the use of
man,
And most tenderly provideth he for me Isaac,
Better than I can feel or perceive what I lack.

Enter JACOB disguised.

Jacob. Where is my most dear father? as I
would have it;
Taking the open air, here I see him sit.

O my most dear father Isaac, well thou be!

Isaac. Here I am, my sweet son, and who
art thou, tell me?

Jacob. Dear father, I am Esau, thine eldest
son,
According as thou badest me, so have I done.
Come in, dear father, and eat of my venison,
That thy soul may give unto me thy benison.

Isaac. But how hast thou sped so soon? let me understand.

Jacob. The Lord thy God at the first brought it to my hand.

Isaac. And art thou Esau, mine elder son indeed?

Jacob. To ask that question, father, what doth it need?

Isaac. Come near, that I may feel, whether thou be he or not,

For Esau is rough of hair as any goat.

Let me feel thy hand; right! Esau, by the hair:

And yet the voice of Jacob souneth in mine ear.

God bless thee, my son, and so will I do anon,
As soon as I have tasted of thy venison.

Come on, lead me in; I will eat a pittance:

A little thing, God wot, to me in suffisance.

[*They go in.*]

Mido. I may now go play; Jacob leadeth Isaac.

But I never saw such a pretty knack,
How Jacob beguiled his father, how sleightly:
Now I see it true, the blind eat many a fly!

I quaked once for fear, that Jacob would be caught,

But, as hap was, he had his lesson well taught.

But what will Esau say, when he cometh home?

Choose him; but for me to go in it is wisdom.

[*Exit.*]

ACTUS QUARTI, SCÆNA DECIMA.

REBECCA. ABRA.

Rebecca. Now I beseech the Lord prosper
Jacob my son
In our hardy enterprise, which we have begun.
Isaac is eating such meat as he doth love,
Which thing to bless Jacob, I doubt not, will
him move :
If he obtain the blessing, as I trust he shall,
Then shall my soul give to God laud perpetual.
But I will in to harken, how the thing doth
frame.

Abra. Come in, dame Rebecca.

Rebecca. Who is it, that doth me name?

Abra. My master Isaac is coming forth
straightway.

Rebecca. He shall not find me here in no
wise, if I may.

ACTUS QUARTI, SCÆNA VNDECIMA.

ISAAC. JACOB.

Isaac. Set me down on the bench, where
thou didst me first find :
Now forsooth I have ate meat even to my
mind.

It hath refreshed my soul wonderfully well.
Nor never drank I better wine that I can tell.

Jacob. If it were to your liking I am very
glad.

Isaac. It was the best meat and wine that
ever I had.
Come kiss me, son Esau, with the kiss of
peace,

*[Jacob kisseth Isaac; and then kneeleth
down to have his blessing.]*

That my love towards thee may the more in-
crease.

I bless thee here for ever, my son, in this place,
The Lord my God of might endue thee with
his grace.

What sweet flavour my son's raiment doth
yield!

Even the fragrant smell that cometh from a
field

Which the Lord hath blessed, and the same
Lord bless thee

With the dew of heaven! the Lord thy ground
increase,

That the fatness of the earth may never cease!
The Lord send thee abundance of corn and
wine,

And prosper continually all thing that is thine!
The Lord make great people servants unto
thee:

And nations to do homage and fealty!
And here, to succeed my place, mine heir I thee
make,

Of all things that I have possession to take.
Lord and ruler be thou over thy brethren all,
And bow to thee as head thy mother's children
shall!

Cursed be that man that shall thee curse or
missay,

And who that blesseth thee, blessed be he for
aye!

Thus here have I made my last will and testa-
ment,

Which the Lord God ratify never to repent.

Serve the Lord our God, and then well shalt
thou speed,

And he shall keep promise to multiply thy seed.

My day draweth on, for old and feeble I am;

When I die, put me to my father Abraham.

Now kiss me once again, my son, and then
depart,

And enter upon all whereof now lord thou art.

Jacob. The Lord God reward your fatherly
tenderness,

Which ye have here showed me of your mere
goodness.

Isaac. Go in peace, my dear son, leaving
me here alone :

And send little Mido to lead me in anon.

[*Exeat Jacob.*

Lord God, when thou shalt see time, as thou
thinkest best,

Dissolve this feeble carcase, and take me to
thy rest.

Enter Mido.

Mido. How do ye, master Isaac? I am here
now.

For my master Jacob did bid me come to you.

Isaac. Nay, boy, it was not Jacob, I dare
well say so.

Mido. Forsooth, it was Jacob, if my name
be Mido.

Isaac. If that be a true tale, somebody is
come slack,

But, Lord, that I have done I will not now call
back.

But yet I will go see if I be deceived :

For indeed methought Jacob's voice I per-
ceived.

[*Exeunt.*

ACTUS QUARTI, SCÆNA DUODECIMA.

REBECCA.

[Then she speaketh kneeling, and holding up her hands.

Rebecca. O Lord, the God of Isaac and Abraham,
I render thanks to thee, though a sinful woman,
Because of thy word and promise true art thou,
In sending Jacob the blessing of Esau;
And for thus regarding a sinner, as I am,
I eftsoons thank thee, O Lord God of Abraham.
Thy mercy and wisdom shall I sing evermore:
And magnify thy name, for God's there is no more.
But I will to my husband Isaac, and see
That for this matter he take no grief at me.

ACTUS QUINTI, SCÆNA PRIMA.

RAGAN.

[Ragan bringeth venison at his back.
Nay, now at last we have well sped, I warrant you:
Good luck is not evermore against Esau.
He cursed and cursed again with his dogs here:
But they could at no time take either hare or deer.
At last he killed this with his bow, as God would.
And to say that it is fat venison [I] be bold.
But dressed it must be at once in all the haste,

ACTUS QUINTI, SCÆNA TERTIA.

ESAU.

Esau. I trow I have now won my spurs for ever;
 For once better venison killed I never,
 And though it were somewhat long, ere I could
 it take,
 Yet the goodness thereof doth some recom-
 pense make.
 My father Isaac shall thereof have such meat
 As in all his life he hath not the better eat.
 Whereupon, I doubt not, after tender kissing,
 To be straight endowed with his godly bless-
 ing :
 As his full and true heir in his place to succeed,
 And t' enjoy the promise that God made to his
 seed.
 And when I am once in my place of succession,
 And have all manner things in full possession :
 I shall wring all louts and make them stoop
 (I trow);
 I shall make the slaves couch as low as dog
 to bow.
 I shall ruffle among them of another sort
 Than Isaac hath done, and with another port.
 But now will I go see, what haste within they
 make,
 That part of my hunting my old father may
 take.

[Exit.]

ACTUS QUINTI, SCÆNA QUARTA.

ISAAC. MIDO. ESAU.

Isaac. Mido, come, Mido, where art thou,
little Mido?

Mido. Here ready, master Isaac, what shall
I do?

Isaac. Come, lead me to mine old place,
that I may sit down.

Mido. That can I as well as any boy in this
town.

Isaac. O Lord my God, how deep and un-
searchable

Are all thy judgments, and how immutable?
Of thy justice, whom it pleaseth thee, thou dost
reject;

Of thy mercy, whom [it] pleaseth thee, thou dost
elect.

In my two sons, O Lord, thou hast wrought
thy will,

And as thy pleasure hath wrought, so shall it
stand still.

Since thou hast set Jacob in Esau his place,
I commit him to the governance of thy grace.

Enter ESAU.

Esau. Now where is Isaac, that he may
come and eat?

Lo, where he is sitting abroad upon his seat.

Dear father Isaac, the Lord thy God thee save.

Isaac. Who art thou, my son? what thing
wouldest thou have?

Esau. I am your eldest son, Esau by my
name,

New come home from hunting, where I had
joyly game,

I have made meat thereof for your own appetite,
 Meat for your own tooth, wherein ye will
 much delight.
 Come, eat your part, dear father, that, when ye
 have done,
 Your soul may bless me as your heir and eldest
 son.

Isaac. Ah Esau, Esau, thou comest too
 late!

Another to thy blessing was predestinate,
 And clean gone it is from thee, Esau.

Esau. Alas!

Then am I the unhappiest that ever was,
 I would the savage beasts had my body torn.

Isaac. The blessing that thou shouldst
 have had, another hath.

Esau. Alas, what wretched villain hath done
 me such scath?

Isaac. Thy brother Jacob came to me by
 subtlety,
 And brought me venison, and so prevented
 thee.

I ate with him, ere thou cam'st, and with my
 goodwill
 Blessed him I have, and blessed he shall be
 still.

Esau. Ah Jacob, Jacob, well may he be
 called so :

For he hath undermined me times two.
 For first mine heritage he took away me fro,
 And see, now hath he away my blessing also.
 Ah father, father, though Jacob hath done this
 thing :

Yet let me, Esau, also have thy blessing.
 Shall all my good huntings for thee be in vain?

Isaac. That is done and passed, cannot be called again.

Mine act must now stand in force of necessity.

Esau. And hast thou never a blessing then left for me?

Isaac. Behold, I have made thy brother Jacob thy lord.

Esau. A most poignant sword unto my heart is that word.

Isaac. All his mother's children his servants have I made.

Esau. That word is to me sharper than a razor's blade.

Isaac. I have also 'stablished him with wine and corn.

Esau. Woe be the day and hour that ever I was born!

Isaac. What am I able to do for thee, my son?

Esau. Ah Jacob, Jacob, that thou hast me thus undone!

O unhappy hap: O misfortune! well away!
That ever I should live to see this woful day.
But hast thou one blessing and no mo, my father?

Let me also have some blessing, good sweet father.

Isaac. Well, nature pricketh me some remorse on thee to have.

Behold, thy dwelling-place the earth's fatness shall have,

And the dew of heaven, which down from above shall fall:

And with dint of sword thy living get thou shall,

And to thy brother Jacob thou shalt be servant.

Esau. O, to my younger brother must I be servant?

O, that ever a man should be so oppressed!

Isaac. Thine own fault it is that thou art dispossessed.

Esau. Father, change that piece of thy sentence and judgment.

Isaac. Things done cannot be undone; therefore be content,

Let me be in quiet, and trouble me no more.

Come, Mido, in God's name, lead me in at the door.

[*Exeunt Isaac and Mido.*]

Esau. O, would not this chafe a man, and fret his guts out,

To live as an underling under such a lout?

Ah hypocrite, Ah hedgecreeper, Ah 'sembling wretch!

I will be even with thee for this subtle fetch.

O God of Abraham, what reason is herein,

That to sle one's enemy it should be made sin?

Were not one as good his part of heaven forego,

As not to be revenged on his deadly foe?

God was angry with Cain for killing Abel:

Else might I kill Jacob marvellously well.

I may fortune one day him to dispatch and rid:

The Lord will not see all things; something may be hid.

But as for these misers within my father's tent,

Which to the supplanting of me put their consent,

Not one but I shall coil them till they stink for pain,

And then for their stinking coil them off fresh again.

I will take no days; but, while the matter is
hot,
Not one of them shall 'scape, but they shall to
the pot.

ACTUS QUINTI, SCÆNA QUINTA.

RAGAN.

Where are we now become? marry, sir, here is
array!
With Esau, my master, this is a black day.
I told you Esau one day would shit a rag.
Have we not well hunted, of blessing to come
lag?
Nay, I thought ever it would come to such a
pass,
Since he sold his heritage like a very ass.
But, in faith, some of them, I dare jeopard a
groat,
If he may reach them, will have on the petti-
coat.

ACTUS QUINTI, SCÆNA SEXTA.

ESAU. RAGAN. ABRA. MIDO. DEBORAH.

*[Ragan and the others must be supposed
to be at the back of the stage, out of
Esau's sight; but they come forward
severally, and plead for themselves.]*

Esau. Come out, whores and thieves; come
out, come out, I say!

Ragan. I told you, did I not, that there
would be a fray? *[Aside.*

Esau. Come out, little whoreson ape, come
out of thy den.

Mido. Take my life for a penny, whither shall I ren?

Esau. Come out, thou little fiend, come out, thou skittish gill.

Abra. Out, alas, alas! Esau will us all kill.

Esau. And come out, thou mother Mab; out, old rotten witch!

As white as midnight's arsehole or virgin pitch.
Where be ye? come together in a cluster.

Ragan. In faith, and these three will make a noble muster.

Esau. Ere ye escape my fingers, ye shall all be taught,

For these be they which have all this against me wrought.

Mido. I wrought not a stroke this day, but led Isaac:

If I wrought one stroke to-day, lay me on the jack.

Esau. Hence then, get thee in, and do against me no more.

Mido. I care as much for you now, as I did before.

Esau. What sayest thou, little thief? if I may thee catch.

Mido. Ye shall run apace then, I ween, so God me snatch.

Ragan. Now to go, Mido, ere thou art caught in a trip.

Esau. Nay, for his sake, Abra, ye shall drink of the whip.

Abra. Nay, for God's love, good sweet master Esau,

Hurt not me for Mido: speak for me, Ragan.

Ragan. Sir, spare little Abra, she hath done none evil.

- Esau.* A little fiend it is, and will be a right devil,
And she is one of them that love not me a deal.
- Abra.* If ye let me go, I will love you very well.
- Esau.* And never any more ado against me make?
- Abra.* Ragan shall be surety.
- Ragan.* Sir, I undertake.
- Esau.* Then hence, out of my sight at once, and get thee in.
- Abra.* Adieu, I set not a straw by you nor a pin.
- Esau.* What sayest thou, thou fib? once ye shall have a rap.
- Ragan.* The best end of suretyship is to get a clap. [*Aside.*
- Esau.* Now, come on, thou old hag, what shall I say to thee?
- Deborah.* Say what ye lust, so ye do not touch me.
- Esau.* Yes, and make powder of thee, for I dare say thou
Hast been the cause of all this feast to Esau.
- Deborah.* No, it was Jacob's feast that I did help to dress.
- Esau.* Nay, I thought such a witch would do such business.
- Deborah.* But, by my truth, if I should die incontinent,
I knew not of the purpose wherefore it was meant.
- Esau.* But wilt thou tell me truth if I do forgive thee?
- Deborah.* Yea, if I can, Master Esau, believe me.

Esau. Is it true that, when I and my brother
were first born,
And I by God's ordinance came forth him be-
forne,
Jacob came forthwith, holding me fast by the
heel?

Deborah. It is true; I was there, and saw
it very well.

Esau. Is it true? well, Jacob, I pray God I
be dead,
But for my heel's sake, I will have thee by the
head.

What devil was in me, that I had not the grace,
With kicking back my heel, to mar his mopish
face?

But my father Isaac will not long live now;
If he were gone, Jacob, I would soon meet with
you.

For my soul hateth Jacob even to the death,
And I will ne'er but hate him while I shall have
breath.

I may well dissemble until I see a day,
But trust me, Jacob, I will pay thee when I
may.

But if ever I hear that thou speak word of this,
I shall cut out thy tongue, I will not miss.

[*This he speaketh to Deborah.*

But come on, Ragan, with me: so mote I
thrive,

I will get a good sword, for thereby must I
live.

Ragan. Live, quod you? we are like to live,
God knoweth how.

Esau. What, ye saucy merchant, are ye a
prater now? [*Exeunt ESAU and RAGAN.*

ACTUS QUINTI, SCÆNA SEPTIMA.

DEBORAH. REBECCA.

Deborah. I am glad that Esau is now gone,
certès.

For an evil-disposed man he is, doubtless.
Yet am I no gladder of his departure hence,
Than I am that Rebecca is come in presence.

Enter REBECCA.

Rebecca. Deborah, what doest thou, tarry-
ing here so long?

I came full ill afeard, lest something had been
wrong;

For Mido and Abra told me of Esau.

Deborah. Indeed here he was, and departed
hence but now:

And one thing I tell you, dame: let Jacob
beware,

For Esau to mischief Jacob doth prepare.

Rebecca. Call Jacob hither, that I may show
him my mind.

Send him hither quickly, and tarry ye behind.

That he give place awhile, it is expedient,

And how he may be sure, I will the way invent.

ACTUS QUINTI, SCÆNA OCTAVA.

JACOB. REBECCA.

Jacob. Mother Rebecca, did ye send for me
hither?

Rebecca. Yea, and the cause is this: thou
must go somewhither,

To hide thee from thy brother Esau a space.

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Jacob. Indeed, to men's malice we must sometime give place.

Rebecca. He lieth in await to slae thee, if he can :

Thou shalt therefore, by my rede, fle hence to Haran :

And lie with my brother Laban, a man aged,
Till Esau's wrath be somewhat assuaged.

When all things are forgotten, and his fury passed,

I shall send for thee again in all goodly haste.

Jacob. Yea, but how will my father here-with be content?

Rebecca. Thou shalt see me win him there-to incontinent.

And here he cometh happily : Jacob, hear me ;
Make a sign to Mido, that he do not name thee,
Then get thee in privily, till I do thee call.

Jacob. As ye command me, mother Rebecca,
I shall.

ACTUS QUINTI, SCÆNA NONA.

ISAAC. MIDO. REBECCA. JACOB.

Isaac. Where be ye, good wife?

Mido. My dame Rebecca is here.

Rebecca. I am glad, sweet husband, that I see you appear,

For I have a word or two unto you to say.

Isaac. Whatsoever it be, tell it me, I you pray.

Rebecca. Sir, ye know that now our life-days are but short,

And we had never so great need of comfort.

Now Esau his wives being Hittites both,

Ye know, to please us are much unwilling and loth.

That if Jacob eke would take any Hittite to wife,

Small joy should we both have or comfort of our life.

Isaac. Wife, ye speak this well, and I will provide therefor.

Call Jacob quickly, that he appear me before.

Mido. I can run apace for him, if ye bid me go.

Rebecca. Go, hie thee at once, then, like a good son, Mido.

[Exit Mido, but returns directly with Jacob.]

Isaac. O Lord, save thou my son from mis-carrying.

Mido. Come, master Jacob, ye must make no tarrying,

For I it is that shall be shent, if you be slack.

Here is your son Jacob now, master Isaac.

Isaac. Son Jacob, make thee ready, as fast [as] thou can,

And in all haste possible get thee unto Laban;

He is thine own uncle, and a right godly man,

Marry of his daughters, and not of Canaan.

In Mesopotamia shalt thou lead thy life.

The Lord prosper thee there without debate or strife;

And the God of Abraham prosper thee in peace;

He multiply thy seed, and make it to increase!

Now kiss me, dear son Jacob, and so go thy way.

Rebecca. Kiss me also, sweet son, and hence without delay.

Rebecca. That thou dost thy brother Jacob
deadly hate.

Esau. Hate Jacob? I hate him, and will do,
till I die,
For he hath done me both great wrong and
villainy;
And that shall he well know, if the Lord give
me life.

Rebecca. Fie upon thee, to speak so, like a
lewd caitiff!

Ragan. My master Esau is of nature much
hot,
But he will be better than he saith, fear not.

Esau. My birthright to sell did he not make
me consent?

Rebecca. But the same to do were not thy-
self content?
There is no man to blame for it but thine own
self.

Esau. Yea, mother, [I] see that ye hold with
that mopish elf.

It is your dainty darling, your prinkox, your
golpol;

He can never be praised enough of your soul;

He must ever be extolled above the moon:

It is never amiss that he hath said or done.

I would he were rocked or dandled in your lap;

Or I would with this falchion I might give him
pap.

I marvel why ye should so love him, and me
not?

Ye groaned as well for the one as th'other, I
wot.

But Jacob must be advanced in any wise:

But I shall one day handle him of the new
guise.

Rebecca. Both on thy father's blessing and mine, I charge thee
That thy soul intend never such iniquity;
Beware by the example of Cain, I thee rede,
That thou bring not the Lord's curse upon thy head.

Esau. And what, should I take all this wrong at Jacob's hand?

Rebecca. Forgive, and the Lord shall prosper thee on the land.

My son Esau, hear me; I am thy mother:
For my sake, let pass this grudge against thy brother.

Ragan. Sir, your mother's request is but reasonable,
Which for you to grant shall be much commendable.

Esau. Mother, though it be a great thing that ye require:
Yet must all malice pass at your desire;
And for your cause, mother, this mine anger shall slake.

Rebecca. I thank thee, my son, that thou dost it for my sake.

Esau. For your sake, with Jacob I will be at accord.

Rebecca. And shall I call thy father to be as record?

Esau. As pleaseth you, mother, I can be well content.

Rebecca. Then will I go call him hither incontinent.

And where he doth already love thee very well,
This will make him to love thee better a great deal.

Ragan. Truly, sir, this is of you a right gentle part :

At least, if it come from the bottom of your heart.

Esau. It must now be thus ; but when I shall Jacob find,
I shall then do as God shall put into my mind.

Enter ISAAC and MIDO with REBECCA.

Rebecca. He hath at my word remitted all his quarrel.

Isaac. Forsooth, I love him the better a great deal.

And if he be here, I would commend his doing.

Esau. All prest here, father, to tarry on your coming.

Isaac. Son Esau, thou hast thyself well acquitted,

That all quarrel to Jacob thou hast remitted.

It was the Lord's pleasure that it should thus be,

Against whose ordinance to stand is not for thee :

But now, to the intent it may please the Lord,
To knit your hearts one day in a perfect concord,

We shall first in a song give laud unto His name,

And then with all gladness within confirm the same.

Rebecca. As ye think best, dear husband, I agree thereto.

Esau. Me ye may command to what ye will have me to do :

And so may ye do also Ragan my man.

Isaac. I see none; but praise we the Lord
the best we can.

Call forth all our household, that with one
accord

We may all with one voice sing unto the Lord.

[*Ragan calleth all to sing.*]

This song must be sung after the prayer.

*O Lord, the God of our father Abraham,
How deep and unsearchable are thy judgments!
Thy almighty hand did create and frame
Both heaven and earth, and all the elements.
Man of the earth thou hast formed and create;
Some do thee worship, and some stray awry,
Whom pleaseth thee, thou dost choose or re-
probate,*

*And no flesh can ask thee wherefore or why?
Of thine own will thou didst Abraham elect,
Promising him seed as stars of the sky,
And them as thy chosen people to protect,
That they might thy mercies praise and mag-
nify.*

*Perform thou, O Lord, thine eternal decree
To me and my seed, the sons of Abraham;
And whom thou hast chosen thine own people
to be,*

Guide and defend to the glory of thy name.

FINIS.

[*Then entereth the Poet, and the rest
stand still till he have done.*]

The Poet. When Adam, for breaking God's
commandment,
Had sentence of death, and all his posterity:
Yet the Lord our God, who is omnipotent,

Had in his own self by his eternal decree
Appointed to restore man, and to make him
free.

He purposed to save mankind by his mercy,
Whom he once had created unto his glory.
Yet not all flesh did he then predestinate,
But only the adopted children of promise :
For he foreknew that many would degenerate,
And wilfully give cause to be put from that
bliss,

So on God's behalf no manner default there is ;
But where he chooseth, he showeth his great
mercy :

And where he refuseth, he doth none injury,
But thus far surmounteth man's intellection,
To attain or conceive, and (much more) to dis-
cuss :

All must be referred to God's election
And to his sacred judgment. It is meet for us,
With Paul the apostle, to confess, and say
thus :

O, the deepness of the riches of God's wisdom !
How unsearchable are his ways to man's
reason ?

Our part therefore is first to believe God's
word,

Not doubting but that he will his elected save :
Then to put full trust in the goodness of the
Lord,

That we be of the number, which shall mercy
have :

Thirdly, so to live, as we may his promise
crave.

Thus if we do, we shall Abraham's children be,
And come with Jacob to endless felicity.

[All the rest of the actors answer, Amen.]

Then followeth the prayer.

Isaac. Now unto God let us pray for all the
whole clergy,
To give them grace to advance God's honour
and glory.

Rebecca. Then for the Queen's majesty let
us pray
Unto God to keep her in health and wealth
night and day,
And that, of his mere mercy and great be-
nignity,
He will defend and maintain her estate and
dignity;
That she, being grieved with any outward hos-
tility,
May against her enemies always have victory.

Jacob. God save the Queen's councillors
most noble and true,
And with all godliness their noble hearts endue.

Esau. Lord save the nobility and preserve
them all:
And prosper the Queen's subjects universal.

AMEN.

*Thus endeth this Comedy or Interlude of
Jacob and Esau.*