
UNIT 4 *THE ALCHEMIST* IN THE THEATRE

Structure

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4.0 OBJECTIVES

The main objective of this unit is to discuss (i) *The Alchemist* in the theatre, and (ii) its performance and stagecraft and to place before you the critical opinions of some of the great critics on *The Alchemist* in the theatre and its performances.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

At the end of the unit of *The Alchemist* in the 1616 folio of Jonson's *Works* is the statement: "This comedy was first acted in the year 1610 by the King's Majesty's Servants". Since then *The Alchemist* became popular and stayed in the repertory until the theatres were closed on the eve of the Civil War. With the Restoration in 1660, it was one of the first plays to be reviewed, and with some minor rises and falls in popularity, it continued to be played for more than three centuries.

4.2 *THE ALCHEMIST* IN THE THEATRE

The enduring popularity of *The Alchemist* is acknowledged by its inclusion in the repertoires of several theatre groups. The first phase of its stage history obviously corresponds to performances during Johnson's life time. The very first performance has been a matter of considerable debate. It was performed in 1610 by the King's Men probably at the Globe, according to Herford and Simpson. The King's Men might have staged the play before July at the Globe; or during the closure of the theatres they might have taken it to the provinces. The possibility of trying at a new play outside London is often discounted. On account of the plague, the theatres in London were closed from July to November. Geoffrey Tillotson discovered evidence of an earlier performance at Oxford in September 1610.

"Since the setting in Blackfriars", Mares avers, "the King's men possibly staged the play at the Blackfrairs theatre". A significant detail that emerges, however, is that Burbage played Face right until his death in 1618. Performance at the court in 1623 has also been recorded. In a telling comment on the dramatis personae, William Gifford hits upon the dominant note of theatricality: "The Puritan neighbours tell Lovewit later that they have been visitors of all classes: "some as brave as lords," Ladies and gentlewomen, "Citizens' wives," knights", 'oyster women'. 'Sailors' wives,' and 'Tobacco men', a good cross - section of the Blackfrairs community. The only absentees are actors, but they are already inside the house, putting on the show."

The second phase is marked by the revival of *The Alchemist* at the Restoration. The influence of *The Alchemist* on the emergence of the new genre, the Comedy of Manners has already been noted. This period is characterised by the appearance of great actors and the play's introduction into the repertoire of major theatres. Mrs. Corey who played Dol Common right after the Restoration, was better known by the nickname, Dol. For nearly 40 years during the first half of the eighteenth century, *The Alchemist* was regularly staged at the Drury Lane theatre. The financial crash, known as the South Sea Bubble, gave a new lease of life to the play in 1720. Jonson's critique of nascent capitalism and of man's acquisitiveness found an echo at that time.

For more than a quarter century Garrick by his sheer histrionic talent, won for the play unrivalled acclaim. Beginning with an appearance as Drugger in 1743, he took up that role from 1746 until his retirement in 1776. Garrick's Drugger was at that time compared only with his own Lear. Observations on how he played Drugger are instructive: "Mr. Garrick has taken that walk to himself, and is ridiculous above all conception. When he first opens his mouth, the features of his face seem, as it were, to drop upon his tongue, it is all caution; it is timorous, stammering, and inexpressible. Another notable actor who made the play enormously popular was Macklin, who played Face in the decade, 1737-1748".

Towards the close of the nineteenth century, a new phenomenon makes its appearance, viz, revival by academic and professional groups. The Elizabethan Stage Society, for instance, staged the play under the direction of William Poel in 1899 and again three years later. After the outbreak of the first World War, the play was performed by the Marlowe Society, the Birmingham Repertory Company, and the Phoenix Society. Further drama festivals were occasions for staging *The Alchemist*. Mention may be made of the Malvern Festivals of 1932 and 1934, and in the U.S. the Oregon Festival of 1961.

Among modern experimental productions, mention needs to be made of Tyrone Guthrie's at the Liverpool House in 1944-45 and at the Old Vic in 1947. Reviewing the latter production, Arthur Colby Sprague contrasts the acting style of Alac Guinness with reports on Garrick's performance: "Both actors, it is curious to note, were at their best in moments of invented by-play. Garrick was particularly admired for 'the bottle and boxing scenes'.....As for Guinness, his Abel Drugger, having been sent to fetch the Spanish hat and cloak, returned wearing the showy things, and as he waited outside the house, did a little dance of self - admiration." Jonson's sense of the theatre is a marvel.

The actors appeared in modern dress because costumes of Jonson's day and disguises did not convey social rank or degree of formality to the audience three centuries after the first production. At the Old Vic production attempt was made to further modernise certain details: the plague is replaced by a flu epidemic, and in the opening scene Subtle threatens Face not with a magical vial but with a chamberpot. *The Alchemist* was staged for the BBC, over the TV, and by several dramatic societies of universities.

The appeal of *The Alchemist* is partly because of the impression of crowded action. As Dol plays the distracted gentlewoman and the Queen of Fairies, Face too assumes the role of Jeremy, Captain Face, Lungs, and Ulen Spiegel. The gulls, all eight of them, Dapper, Drugger, Mammon, Surly, Ananias, Tribulation, Kastril, and Dame Pliant, have to cope with an equal number of cozeners. Improvisation and the capacity for quick change of disguises makes the performance spirited and lively.

The offshoots of *The Alchemist* bring out elements in the play which have great histrionic potential and relevance. In the seventeenth century form of entertainment known as droll originated. These are farces based upon well-known comic scenes, and depended for their success on the improvisation the actor could display. These performances had a special vogue during the interregnum, and *Bartholomew Fair* and

similar festive occasions were preferred. In 1672 a droll was performed adapting two scenes with Drugger and another with Ananias. Drugger was the favourite of several leading actors beginning with Armin, followed by Garrick, Cedric Harwicke and Alec Guinness. Assessing the importance of Garrick's acting, Robert Gale Noyes rightly concludes: "The history of *The Alchemist* was virtually the history of the role of Abel Drugger."

Another offshoot was "The Tobacconist," Francis Gentleman's prose farce produced in 1770 with revivals in 1782, 1787, and 1800. Edmund Kean's performance as Drugger was much applauded. A recent adaptation of *The Alchemist* is Eric Linklater's *The Mortimer Touch* produced in 1950 during the Edinburgh Festival. The power and appeal of the play is noted by Steane:

"Certainly the relevance of *The Alchemist* to the modern world should be clear enough. Our own acquisitive society is quite as susceptible to exploitation as were the Londoners of 1610. The prospect of big and easy money makes knaves and fools now as it did then," and one of the chief pleasures of the audience is laughing with the rogues. Jonson is modern too in demanding judgement rather than empathy, in being critical and unsentimental.

It is true that on the stage, Jonson's use of a variety of jargons acquires a rare force. The encounter between Subtle and the Puritans is an example. Surly's feigning ignorance of English when he disguises himself as a Spanish grandee and the cozeners' acceptance of the disguise bring out the talent of the actors. Echoing Una Ellis-Fermor's estimate of the play, John J. Enck comments: "It is true that *The Alchemist*' is a stunning comedy and nothing else quite equals it in English".

The relation of the script to the action is an aspect of the play that surfaces in the course of performance. *The Alchemist* was entered in the Stationer's Register in October 1610. Franz Fricker rightly infers that the Quarto edition was "printed from a prompt-book." The stage directions, then, "can be interpreted as makeshift notes added to the text." Jonson's use of knocks, and implied exists and entrances confirm the need for reflexive mirror passages. The actors' clues to one another in such passages as Dol's question "Will you have/The neighbours hear you?" and Face's admonition, "Speak lower, rough," re-create mutual responses theatrically. In supplementing voice, gesture, and mood, the mirror passages have a theatrical function. As sophisticated aids to the actor, the passages reveal Jonson's vision of the comic action.

4.3 PERFORMANCE AND STAGECRAFT

In Unit III we have discussed that *The Alchemist* is the most circumscribed play that Ben Jonson wrote. The whole action is confined within or immediately outside Lovewit's house in Blackfriars. The nineteenth century editor, Gifford designated 'a room in Lovewit's house,' 'an outerroom....', 'the lane before Lovewit's house,' 'another room in the same' (three times), 'before Lovewit's door, and finally returned to 'the room' and 'the outer room', again for the last two scenes of his last act. Discerning students will understand that this method of location is novelistic rather than theatrical; that the two outside scenes are the same, and that it is hardly necessary to suppose two locations inside the house, certainly not five. Further, if there were a door to be approached from the 'street' side before entry into a realistic Lovewit's house, there would be no need for Jonson to inform his audience, with the last words of Act I, III, and IV, and at the end of several other scenes, who is going to come on the stage next, and where they are. In the first two acts, not only is the action of the play continuous, but it can easily be seen as taking place in a single location - a quite generalised 'room in Lovewit's house.' Also, it is easy to show that this 'room' requires three entrances - a requirement that could be met by most of the conjectured reconstructions that have been made of the Globe or Blackfriars theatre.

The play opens with an explosion; through the central entrance, Subtle and Face rush on to the stage quarreling, which Dol tries to part them. By means of this quarrel, both the pretensions and the true nature of these three are made clear, and a good deal of expositions managed quickly, excitingly and with dramatic probability. The hardly whole-hearted reconciliations provide the motive for the action, and its limitations in time.

The rest of the act serves to demonstrate the methods of the partnership in dealings with Dapper and Drugger, and to establish firmly the significance of the right and left doors. One is to the outside, through which the customers are admitted - or not: 'good wives, I pray you forbear me, now' (i, iii) - and through which Captain Face enters following Abel Drugger, after he has conveyed Dapper 'by the back way' - through the exit on the other side of the stage.

Act II introduces Mammon and Surly, and the first scene is set by Gifford in 'an outer room of Lovewit's house! There is no need for this as it is clear from the text that there is no break in the action during the whole of the act, and certain scenes are plainly inside the house and clearly related to the laboratory. Further, Jonson's intention is to attach certain plain significances to certain areas of a non-representational stage:

"Come on, Sir. Now, you set your foot on shore
In novu orbe; here's the rich pern;
And there within, Sir, are the golden mines,
Great Solomon's Ophir! (IV, I,1-4)",

says Mammon to Surly. If we analyse his metaphor, we perceive that when Surly sets his foot on shore in novu orbe, he learns the ocean of the street and enters the house - i.e. through the stage - right door that leads to the street in an arbitrary disposition of the stage. When Mammon points to the golden mines 'there within, Sir' he means the laboratory, the alchemical apparatus, and he points to the central entrance to the stage's through all the act, and particularly in the third scene, the attention of the audience is concentrated on this central entrance. You must note that when Jonson prepared his tent for the printer of the folio, he did not write in all the details of stage-business, especially if they were clear from the dialogue.

Moreover, when - at the end of Mammon's hyperbolic outburst on the life of sensual pleasure he will lead when has the stone, Face says:

"Sir, I'll go look"

A little, how it heightens (II,ii,87-88) and leaves the stage by the central entrance that leads to the laboratory. Strictly afterwards, Subtle enters through the same door at the beginning of scene iii. In the long discussion of alchemy that follows, Face - now Ulen Spiegel - is reportedly called on to give a report on the progress of the works - must repeatedly pass into and out of the laboratory. He may sometimes call out from within, or perhaps the curtains of the "discoverable space" were drawn back, revealing an elaborate piece of apparatus set up and the stage locations of the dream factory is firmly established for future reference.

Also,

"What a brave language here is, next to country!"

says Surly of the discussions of alchemy, but the point of the scene is not only to ridicule the grotesque impropriety of the alchemical language which at the same time establishing the pervasiveness of Subtle and the obsession of Mammon; it is also to establish in terms of stage geography the location of the 'golden mines' in Mammon's rich pern'

In a production in a *proscenium - arch* theatre, the scene that opens Act III, the conversation between Ananias and Tribulation in the lane outside Love wit's house, would probably be presented in front of the stage curtains.

At the end of the scene they would go off, the curtains would open, and they would promptly enter once more. Once the action is back in Subtle's consulting room, the locations so firmly established at the beginning of the play become operational once more. Subtle at once refers to the apparatus within, and could move angrily towards the laboratory entrance, restrained by Tribulation, to set about the threatened work of destruction when Ananias chips in with his protests. When these locations are established they are put to excellent comic use. The pace of the play gets faster as the customers arrive one after another and have to be prevented from meeting.

Act IV begins at the point of Mammon's entrance because this is the beginning of the crisis. It leads to the explosion of the laboratory in scene V. Dol 'in her file of talking' and Mammon could use the 'upper stage' (if there was one) in this scene, but there is no need for them to do so! The scene could with more convenience be managed on the main stage.

Act V begins in the street outside the house and remains there for the first three scenes., while Face is finally forced to telling his master the truth - or some of it. As scene iii ends, and Love wit and Face go into the house through one door, Dol and Subtle bring Dapper out through the other - soon followed by Face - and we are back inside the house again. The loose ends of the plot are tied up one by one. Face blows up one by one - reversing the expectations of Dol and Subtle. The dupes return with officers to search, and are out faced by Lovewit, and the play ends.

You must note that the laboratory - though it is never seen, or need not be - is the symbol at the centre of the play. It is the dream factory - the most potent instrument of delusions, and its presence and locations are firmly established early in the play. This one fixed point in space obliged Jonson to have others; the two doors, right and left - one to the outside world and one to the 'back way'. Jonson the scholar was no doubt pleased to construct a play that fitted so neatly the neo-classical prescriptions of the unities of time, place, and action; Jonson the man of the theatre turned these strict limitations to brilliant account - in contriving comic stage-business-comings and goings quick changes unexpected entries, double takes, and so on. But scholar and theatre craftsman are but subservient to the imaginative artist, who saw the apparatus for making gold - the get-rich quick machine - as the central symbol of a play about human greed and credulity, and their inevitable consequence in disappointment and loss.

4.4 CRITICAL EXTRACTS

J.B. Steane

The Alchemist is one of the best comedies in English, but many conscripted readers may be forgiven if they do not think so. They will have met the play in a schoolroom and read it 'in class'. They will have looked ahead to try to make some sense of their own next speech, lending one ear meanwhile to Subtle who is only just able to keep pace with his script, casting one eye at the notes to see if they have anything to say about a line that might possibly be amusing if it could be understood, and wishing perhaps that they had listened to their teacher's symposia of what was happening 'last period'.

Michael Jamieson

When Sir Tyrone Guthrie directed *The Alchemist* at London's Old Vic in 1962, the play was performed in modern dress. In part this was because the desire for wealth

still makes people gullible today, Guthrie gave a further reason in his programme – note: modern dress gives more point to the frequent disguises and impersonations used by the trio of rogues. In Jacobean dress, who would know when Face was a Captain or House Servant? But because Jonson used contemporary idiom and place-reference so vividly, some obscurity is nowadays unavoidable, and a director may well want to make cuts.

L.C. Knights (1937)

Recent revivals of *Volpone* and *The Alchemist* occasioned some surprise – surprise that they were such good ‘theatre’. Certainly the reception given to those plays implied a still widespread misconception both of Jonson’s intrinsic merits and of the extent and kind of his indebtedness to the Classics.

M.C. Bradbrook.

Jonson’s Dickensian comedies of the London underworld, *The Alchemist* and *Bartholomew Fair*, have proved much the most popular with modern audiences; the literary as distinct from the theatrical popularity of Jonson has grown. In the universities, where in many cases social and interdisciplinary features of literary history are stressed, Jonson’s plays take a central place.

S. Musgrove

The staging, like the play, is highly concentrated... A problem arises in those scenes where some characters are inside and others outside the house. H.S. and E.K. Chambers visualise a wall built out on to the stage containing a door practicable from both sides, used by Face talking to Mammon in III. V... If this is so, then every character entering from the street must be seen by the audience well before they enter was implied in the text. Lovewit and the Neighbours, for instance, must appear, with nothing to say, before the end of IV. vii; and there are other difficulties. I have therefore followed the traditional editorial view by which the stage turned itself into the exterior of the house for V. i-iii, and probably III. i, but otherwise remains an interior, with the characters in the street heard, but not seen, “within”.

J. B. Bamborough

His technique of accumulation, of heaping one absurdity or humorous clause on another until the audience is almost battered into laughter, works well in the theatre, but is difficult to demonstrate in a lecture-room, and because even his shorter comic passages depend so much for their effect on the context in which they occur they cannot easily be detached by the critic. We do not swap quotations from Jonson as we do from Shakespeare or Wilde, and this perhaps may have contributed to the belief that he is a slow and ponderous writer... A visit to a production of *The Alchemist* should prove an adequate corrective to this belief. It is the most energetic and fast-moving of all Jonson’s robust and vigorous comedies, a non-stop display of ingenuity and invention, centering flawlessly in the quick-change artistry of Face, Subtle, and Dol Common *The Alchemist*, and like all Jonson’s comedy it demands to be played quickly and without pause.

F. H. Mares (1967)

This play is the most circumscribed that Jonson wrote. The whole action is confined within or immediately outside Lovewit’s house in Blackfriars... E.K. Chambers seems to have thought of some kind of permanent set for this play, for he mentions the need for a ‘practicable’ door and seems to suggest that, for example, at the beginning of Act III the Anabaptists would approach this door from one side and talk outside it in the first scene, then knock and go through the door (all the while fully visible to the audience) to meet Subtle for III, ii inside the house... In the theatre this

illusionism is given its visual counterpart in the rapid assumption of different roles-
The Alchemist presents a different personality to each of his customers-or infrequent changes of costume: Abel Drugger was one of Garrick's most famous and successful parts, and his performance in it was regularly contrasted with his Lear as a measure of his range and versatility... In 1770 an Irish actor, Francis Gentleman, provided a farce called *The Tobacconist*, crudely from Jonson's play, with Thomas Weston in the part of Drugger...

Arthur Colby Sprague

The happiest period enjoyed by this most popular of Jonson's plays began in 1721 and ended, with the retirement of David Garrick, in 1776... Something like an Elizabethan upper stage is useful in certain scenes, most clearly, I should say, at Lovewit's homecoming, when the action takes place outside his house and Face at last appears in answer to the repeated knocking.

Franz Fricker

The large mass of stage directions are, as in *Volpone* and *Epicoene*, additions for the sake of the reader. They are concerned mainly with sound and stage business. Half dozen reflect exits and entrances, the rest deal with disguise and ways of speaking... first, there is the simple kind defining walk-ons and walk-offs in an incidental way such as by means of short reflexive mirror passages... The second kind is much more elaborate, often developing into a dramatic scene invariably created as the careful preparation of a dupe's walk-on... The possibility of observing visitors from the window conveniently lends itself to the discussion of characters before their walk-ons. The device used is frequently that of the transitive mirror passage.... Summarizing the results of our examination of the mirror passages in *The Alchemist*, we can say that

They are concerned mainly with sound, disguise, and deception;

An allusive quality of the speeches often replaces possible straightforward dramatic control, related to a tendency to prefer colloquial language to rhetoric;

Clear-cut mirror passages tend to occur in satirized rhetoric;

Their function is frequently to express irony;

The playful, often sophisticated, technique offers less guidance to the actor than the straightforward method known from *Volpone*;

The author found it necessary to add stage directions to restore the balance between implicit and explicit theatrical guidance.

Herford And Simpson

Jonson's setting of the scene and careful dovetailing of the events of the plot are exceptionally well thought out, even for him. There is no change of scene. Everything takes place in a single room of Lovewit's house or in front of the door that opens on the lane outside. The house has a window which commands a view of the lane; The doors were in an interior wall built on the stage, 'for action Jonson here is a clear innovator, so far as the English public theatre is concerned; no other play of our period reproduces this type of permanent interior setting... The time-sequence is worked out with exceptional fullness.

Robert Gale Noyes

Of all the comedies of Jonson, *The Alchemist* had the most brilliant stage-history... If was acted oftener than any other Jonsonian play, it held the stage the most steadily, almost exclusively as a Drury Lane piece; always there was a curiously false emphasis in considering the most important acting role neither Subtle, *The Alchemist*,

nor the wonderfully imaginative Sir Epicure Mammon, but the pusillanimous tobacco-boy, Abel Drugger... The history of *The Alchemist* was virtually the history of the role of Abel Drugger, Garrick's problem in altering *The Alchemist*, a play very long and highly wrought technically, was to reduce the bulk without changing the progress of events, because once the sequence was tampered with, the carefully graded continuity was almost irreparably destroyed and suspense was ruined. The acting version, therefore, consists of a great number of minor cuts, but no characters are wholly eliminated as in *Volpone*, and no scenes are expanded as in *Every Man in His Humour*.

D.V.K. Raghavacharyulu

One wonders whether *The Alchemist* as a language experiment, does not attain the quality of such plays as Beckett's *Endgame*, Ionesco's *The Chairs* and O'Neill's *Hughie*. In many ways indeed the author of the play is our cousin, Mr. Ben Jonson.

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4.6 QUESTIONS

1. Keeping the stage craft used in *The Alchemist*, discuss the problems, with possible solution, that might arise in trying to make *The Alchemist* acceptable to a modern audience.
2. Write a short note on *The Alchemist* in the theatre.
3. What were the contributions of Jonson the scholar, Jonson the theatre craftsman, and Jonson the imaginative artist to the making of the play, *The Alchemist*.

4.7 ANNOTATION PASSAGES

Annotate the following passages with reference to context:

- i) How scrupulous he is, and violent,
'Gainst the least act of sin. Physic, or mathematics,
Poetry, state, or bawdry (as I told you)
She will endure, and never startle; but
No word of controversy.
- ii) Rain her as many showers as Jove did drops
Unto his Danae; show the god a miser
Compared with Mammon. What? The stone will do't.
She shall feel gold, taste gold, hear gold, sleep gold:
Nay, we will *concumere* gold.
- iii) Nature
Never bestowed upon mortality,
A more unblamed, a more harmonious feature;
She played the stepdame in all faces, else.
- iv) Above the art of Aesculapius,
That drew the envy of the Thunderer!^o
I know all this, and more.
- v) It is noble humour. But this form
Was not intended to so dark a use!
Had you been crooked, foul, of some coarse mould,
A cloister had one well; but such a feature
That might stand up the glory of a kingdom,
To live recluse! Is a mere solecism,^o
Though in a nunnery.
- vi) I'm pleased the glory of her sex should know
This nook, here, of the Friars, is no climate
For her to live obscurely in, to learn
Physic and surgery for the constable's wife
Of some odd hundred in Essex; but come forth,
And taste the air of palaces; eat, drink
The toils of emp'rics, and their boasted practice;
Tincture of pearl, and coral, gold, and amber;
- vii) Be seen at feasts, and triumphs; have it asked,
What miracle she is? Set all the eyes
Of court afire, like a burning glass,
And work'em into cinders, when the jewels
Of twenty states adorn thee, and the light
Strikes out the stars; that, when thy name is mentioned,
Queens may look pale; and we but showing our love,
Nero's Poppaea may be lost in story!^o
Thus will we have it.
- viii) We'll therefore go with all, my girl, and live
In a free state, where we will eat our mullets^o
Soused in high-country wines, sup pheasants' eggs,
And have our cockles boiled in silver shells,
Our shrimps to swim again, as when they lived,
In a rare butter made of dolphins' milk,

Whose cream does look like opals; and with these
Delicate meats, set ourselves high for pleasure,
And take us down again, and then renew

Our youth and strength with drinking the elixir,
And so enjoy a perpetuity
Of life and lust.

- ix) And thou shalt ha' thy wardrobe,
Richer than Nature's, still, to change thyself,
And very oft'ner, for the pride, than she,
Or Art, her wise and almost-equal servant
- x) O, this's no true grammar^o
And as ill logic! You must render causes, child,^o
Your first and second intentions, know your canons
And your divisions, modes, degrees and differences,
Your predicaments, substance and accident,
Series extern and intern, with their causes
Efficient, material, formal, final,
And ha' your elements perfect—
- xiv) O, your linea fortunae makes it plain^o
And stella, here, in monte Veneris:^o
But, most of all, junctura anularis.^o
He is a soldier, or a man of art, lady,
But shall have some great honour shortly.
- xiv) I'll ha' you to my chamber of demonstrations,
Where I'll show you both the grammar and logic
And rhetoric of quarrelling; my whole method
Drawn out in tables; and my instrument,
That hath the several scale upon't, shall make you
Able to quarrel at a straw's breadth by moonlight.
- xiii) Now lies upon't. It is but one man more,
Which on's chance to have her; and, beside,^o
There is no maidenhead to be feared or lost.
- xiv) Your Spanish jennet is the best horse; your Spanish
Stoup is the best grab; your Spanish beard^o
Is the best cut, your Spanish ruffs are the best
Wear; your Spanish pavan the best dance.
Your Spanish titillation in a glove
The best perfume; and for your Spanish pike,
And Spanish blade, let your poor Captain speak.
- xv) And so we may arrive by Talmud skill,^o
And profane Greek, to raise the building up.
Of Heber's house, against the Ismaelite,^o
King of Togarma, and his habergions^o
Brimstony, blue, and fiery; and the force
Of King Abaddon, and the Beast of Cittim,^o
Which Rabbi David Kimchi, Onkelos,^o
And Aben-Ezra do interpret Rome.^o
- xvi) O sir, we are defeated! All the works
Are flown in fumo; every glass is burst.^o
Furnace, and all rent down, as if a bolt
Of thunder had been driven through the house.
Retorts, receivers, pelicans, bolt-heads,
All struck in shivers!

- xvii) Lady, you see into what hands you are fallen;
'Mongst what a nest of villains! And how near
Your honour was to have caught a certain clap
(Through your credulity) had I but been
So punctually forward, as place, time,
And other circumstance would ha'made a man;
- xviii) For you're a handsome woman: would yo' were wise, too.
I am gentleman, come here disguised,
Only to find the knaveries of this citadel,
And where I might have wronged your honour, and have not,
I claim some interest in your love. You are,
They say, a widow, rich; and I am a bachelor,
Worth nought. Your fortunes may make me a man,
As mine ha' preserved you a woman. Think upon it,
And whether I have deserved you, or no.
- xix) Ther'es no such thing intended. A good cart
And a clean whip shall ease you of that fear.^o
I am the Spanish Don that should be cozened.
- xx) O, make your approach, good Captain.
I've found from whence your copper rings and spoons
Come, now, wherewith you cheat abroad in taverns.^o
'Twas here, you learned t' anoint your boot with brimstone,
Then rub men's gold on't, for a kind of touch,
And say 'twas nought, when you had changed the colour,
That you might ha't for nothing? And this Doctor,
Your sooty, smoky-beared compeer, he
Will close you so much gold in a bolt's-head,
And, on a turn, convey I'the stead another
With sublimed mercury, that shall burst I' the heat,
- xxi) Then weeps Mammon;
Then swoons his worship. Or he is the Faustus^o
That casteth figures and can conjure, cures
Plague, piles, and pox, by the ephemerides,
And holds intelligence with all the bawds,
And midwives of three shires? While you send in—
Captain—what, is he gone?—damsels with child,
Wives that are barren, or the waiting-maid
With the green-sickness? [Seizing Subtle] Nay, sir, you must tarry
Though he be 'scaped, and answer by the ears, sir.^o
- i) This cheater would ha' cozened thee o'the widow.—
He owes'this honest Druggier, here, here, seven pound,
He has had on him, in two-penny'orths of tobacco.
- ii) Thou art not of the light. That ruff of pride
About thy neck betrays thee, and is the same
With that, which the unclean birds, in seventy-seven,
Were seen to prank it with on divers coasts.^o
Thou look'st like Antichrist in the lewd hat.^o
- iii) The Spaniard hates the brethren, and hath spite
Upon their actions; and that this was one
I make no scruple. But the holy synod
Have been in prayer and meditation of it.
And 'tis revealed no less to them than me,
That casting of money is most lawful.