TOUCHSTONE

Touch. God 'ild you, sir; I desire you of the like. I press in here, sir, amongst the rest of the country copulatives, to swear, and to forswear, according as marriage binds and blood breaks. A poor virgin, sir, an ill-favoured thing, sir, but mine own: a poor humour of mine, sir, to take that no man else will. Rich honesty dwells like a miser, sir, in a poor house, as your pearl in your foul oyster.

Duke S. By my faith, he is very swift and sententious.

Touch. According to the fool's bolt, sir, and such dulcet diseases.

Jaq. But, for the seventh cause; how did you find the quarrel on the seventh cause?

Touch. Upon a lie seven times removed: 'bear your body more seeming, Audrey:' as thus, sir. I did dislike the cut of a certain courtier's beard: he sent me word, if I said his beard was not cut well, he was in the mind it was: this is called 'the retort courteous.' If I sent him word again, it was not well cut, he would send me word, he cut it to please himself: this is called the 'quip modest.' If again, it was not well cut, he disabled my judgment: this is called the 'reply churlish.' If again, it was not well cut, he would answer, I spake not true: this is called the 'reproof valiant:' if again, it was not well cut, he would say, I lie: this is called the 'countercheck quarrelsone': and so to the 'lie circumstantial,' and the 'lie direct.'

Jaq. And how oft did you say his beard was not well cut?

Touch. I durst go no further than the 'lie circumstantial,' nor he durst not give me the 'lie direct;' and so we measured swords and parted.

Jaq. Can you nominate in order now the degrees of the lie?
**Touch.** O sir, we quarrel in print; by the book, as you have books for good manners: I will name you the degrees. The first, the 'retort courteous;' the second, the 'quip modest;' the third, the 'reply churlish;' the fourth, the 'reproof valiant;' the fifth, the 'countercheck quarrelsome;' the sixth, the 'lie with circumstance;' the seventh, the 'lie direct.' All these you may avoid but the lie direct; and you may avoid that too, with an 'if.' I knew when seven justices could not take up a quarrel; but when the parties were met themselves, one of them thought but of an 'if,' as 'If you said so, then I said so;' and they shook hands and swore brothers. Your 'if' is the only peace-maker; much virtue in 'if.'