

King John

Act I, sc. 1 (line 185)

BASTARD

Brother, adieu: good fortune come to thee!

For thou wast got i' the way of honesty.

Exeunt all but BASTARD

A foot of honour better than I was;

But many a many foot of land the worse.

Well, now can I make any Joan a lady.

'Good den, sir Richard!'--'God-a-mercy, fellow!'--

And if his name be George, I'll call him Peter;

For new-made honour doth forget men's names;

'Tis too respectful and too sociable

For your conversion. Now your traveller,

He and his toothpick at my worship's mess,

And when my knightly stomach is sufficed,

Why then I suck my teeth and catechise

My picked man of countries: 'My dear sir,'

Thus, leaning on mine elbow, I begin,

'I shall beseech you'--that is question now;

And then comes answer like an Absey book:

'O sir,' says answer, 'at your best command;

At your employment; at your service, sir;'

'No, sir,' says question, 'I, sweet sir, at yours:'
And so, ere answer knows what question would,
Saving in dialogue of compliment,
And talking of the Alps and Apennines,
The Pyrenean and the river Po,
It draws toward supper in conclusion so.
But this is worshipful society
And fits the mounting spirit like myself,
For he is but a bastard to the time
That doth not smack of observation;
And so am I, whether I smack or no;
And not alone in habit and device,
Exterior form, outward accoutrement,
But from the inward motion to deliver
Sweet, sweet, sweet poison for the age's tooth:
Which, though I will not practise to deceive,
Yet, to avoid deceit, I mean to learn;
For it shall strew the footsteps of my rising.
But who comes in such haste in riding-robres?
What woman-post is this? hath she no husband
That will take pains to blow a horn before her?

Enter LADY FAULCONBRIDGE and GURNEY

O me! it is my mother. How now, good lady!
What brings you here to court so hastily?