

**MERRIE CONCEITED IESTS OF GEORGE
PEELE, GENTLEMAN, SOMETIMES
STUDENT IN OXFORD: WHEREIN IS
SHEWED THE COURSE OF HIS LIFE, HOW
HE LIVED, A MAN VERY WELL KNOWNE
IN THE CITY OF LONDON AND ELSEWHERE**

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Merrie conceited iests of George Peele, gentleman, sometimes student in Oxford: wherein is shewed the course of his life, how he lived, a man very well knowne in the city of London and elsewhere by George Peele

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GEORGE PEELE

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M E R R I E
CONCEITED
I E S T S,

OF GEORGE PEELE GEN-
TLEMAN, SOMETIMES STV-
DENT IN OXFORD.

Wherein is shewed the course of his life,
how he liued: a man very well knowne in
the City of LONDON, and elsewhere.

*Buy, reade, and iudge,
The price doe not grudge:
It will doe thee more pleasure,
Than twice so much treasure.*



LONDON,

Printed for *Henry Bell*, dwelling in the Little
Old Baily in *Eliots Court*.

GEORGE PEELE was a Native of Devonshire, from whence being sent to Broadgate's Hall, he was (about the year 1575) made a Student of Christ Church College, Oxford; and in 1579, was admitted to the degree of Master of Arts. After this he removed to London, where he became the City Poet, and had the ordering of the Pageants.

"This person" says Wood "was living in his middle age, in the latter part of Q. Elizabeth's reign, but when or where he died I cannot tell, for so it is and always hath been, that most poets die poor and consequently obscurely, and a hard matter it is to trace them to their Graves." He certainly died in or before the year 1598, as "Meres in the second Part of his *Palladis Tamia, or Wits Treasury*," printed in that year, mentions the Cause. A List of his Poetical Pieces is given in *Ritson's Bibliographia Poetica*.

Nash termed him "the chief supporter of pleasure, the Atlas of Poetrie, and *primum verborum artifex*."

The rarity of his "Merrie Conceited Jests" combined with the great price demanded for it, was the chief Inducement to reprint it in its present Form. The Copy made use of for that purpose had belonged to the Rev. J. BRAND, Secretary to the Antiquarian Society; after the Sale of his Library in 1806, it came into the possession of Mr. STACE, and the present Proprietor purchased it in December 1807.

LONDON:

Reprinted for S. W. SINGER, 13, ST. JAMES'S STREET;

AND

R. TRIPHOOK, 37, ST. JAMES'S STREET.

1809.



The Iests of GEORGE PEELE, with
four of his Companions at *Brainford*.



George, with others of his Associates, being merry together at the Tauerne, hauing more store of Coine than usually they did possesse, although they were as regardelesse of their siluer, as a garden whore is of her honesty, yet they intended for a season to become good husbands, if they knew how to be sparing of that their pockets were then furnisht withall: Five pounds they had amongst them, and a plot must be cast how they might be merry with extraordinary cheare three or foure dayes, and keepe their five pounds whole in stocke: *George Peele* was the man must doe it, or none, and generally they coniurde him by their loues, his owne credit, and the reputation that went on him, that he would but in this shew his wit: and withall he should haue all the furtherance that in them lay. *George* as easie as they earnest to be wonne to such an exploit, consented, and gathered their mony together, and gaue it all to *George*, who should be their Purse-bearer, and the other foure should seeme as seruants to *George Peele*; and the better to colour it, they should goe change their cloaks, the one like the other, so neere as they could possible:

the which at *Belzebubs* brother the Brokers, they might quickly doe: This was soone accomplished, and *George* was furnished with his blacke Sattin suit, and a paire of boots, which were as familiar to his legs, as the Pillory to a Bakers or Colliers necke, and he sufficiently possesse his friends with the whole scope of his intent, as, gentle Reader, the sequell will shew. Instantly they tooke a paire of Oares, whose armes were to make a false gallop no further than *Brainford*, where their fare was paid them so liberally, that each of them the next tide to *London*, purchas'd two new waftcoats, yet should these good benefactors come to their usuall places of trade, and if they spie a better fare than their owne, that haply the Gentleman hath more minde to goe withall, they will not onely fall out with him that is of their owne sweet transporters, as they are: but abuse the faire with foule speeches, as, a Pox, or the Deuill goe with you, as their Godfather *Caron* the Ferry-man of Hell hath taught them. I speake not this of all, but of some that are brought vp in the East, some in the West, some in the North; but most part in the South: but for the rest they are honest compleat men, leauing them to come to my honest *George*, who is now merry at the three Pigeons in *Brainford*, with Sack and Sugar, not any wine wanting, the Musicians playing, my host drinking, my hostis dancing with the worshipfull Justice, for so then he was termed, and his mansion house in *Kent*, who came thither of purpose to be merry with his men, because he could not so conueniently neare home, by reason of a shrewish wife he had: my gentle hostis gaue him all the entertainment her house could afford; for Master *Peele* had paid royally, for all his five pounds was come to ten groats. Now *George Peeles* wit labours to bring in that five pounds there was spent, which was soone begotten. Being set at dinner, My Host, quoth
George,

George, how fals the Tide out for *London*? Not till the evening, quoth mine Host, haue you any bufinesse fir? Yes marry, quoth *George*, I intend not to go home this two dayes: Therefore my Host saddle my man a horse for *London*, if you be so well furnished, for I must send him for one bag more, quoth *George*, ten pounds hath seene no Sunne this six moneths. I am ill furnished if I cannot furnish you with that, quoth my Host, and presently saddled him a good Nag, and away rides one of *Georges* men to *London*, attending the good houre of his Master *Peele* in *London*. In the meane time *George* bespeaks great cheare to supper, saying, he expected some of his friends from *London*. Now you must imagine there was not a penny owing in the house, for he had paid as liberally as *Cæsar*, as farre as *Cæsar*'s wealth went. For indeed most of the mony was one *Cæsar*'s an honest man yet liuing in *London*. But to the Catastrophe. All the day before, had one of the other men of *George Peele* beene a great solicer to my Hostis, she would beg leaue of his Master he might goe see a maid, a sweet heart of his so farre as *Kingstone*, and before his Master went to bed he would returne againe: saying, he was sure she might command it at his Masters hands. My kinde Hostis willing to pleasure the young fellow, knowing in her time what belonged to such matters, went to Master *Peele*, and moued him in it, which he angerly refused: but she was so earnest in it, that she swore he should not deny her, protesting he went but to see an Uncle of his some five miles off: Marie I thanke you, quoth *George*, my good Hostis, would you so discredit me, or hath the knaue no more wit, than at this time to goe, knowing I haue no horse here, and would the base cullian goe a foot? Nay, good fir, quoth mine Hostis, be not angry, it is not his intent to goe a foot: for he shall haue my Mare, and I will assure you Sir,
upon

upon my word he shall be here againe to haue you to bed; well, quoth *George*, Hostis, Ile take you at your word, let him go, his negligence shall light upon you. So be it, quoth mine Hostis: so downe goeth she, and sends away ciuill *Thomas*, for so she cald him, to his sweet heart backt upon her Mare: which *Thomas* in stead of riding to *Kingstone*, tooke *London* in his way, where meeting with my other horseman, attended the arriual of *George Peele*, which was not long after: they are at *London*, *George* in his chamber at *Brainford*, accompanied with none but one *Anthony Nit* a Barber, who din'd and sup't with him continually, of whom he had borrowed a Lute to passe away the melancholy afternoone, of which he could play as well as *Banckes* his horse. The Barber very modestly takes his leaue, *George* obsequiously bids him to supper, who (God willing) would not faile. *George* being left alone with his two supposed men, gaue them the meane how to escape, and walking in the court, *George* found fault with the weather, saying it was rawish and cold: which word mine Hostis hearing, my kinde Hostis fetched her husbands holiday gowne, which *George* thankfully put about him, and withall called for a cup of Sacke, after which he would walke into the Meddowes and practise upon his Lute. 'Tis good for your worship to do so, quoth mine Hostis: which walke *George* tooke directly to *Sion*, where hauing the aduantage of a paire of Oares at hand, made this iourney for *London*, his two Associates behind had the plot in their heads by *Georges* instruction for their escape: for they knew he was gone, my Hostis she was in the market buying of prouision for supper: mine Host he was at Tables, and my two masterlesse men desired the maids to excuse them if their Master came, for, quoth they, we will goe drinke two pots with my Smug Smiths wife at old *Brainford*. I warrant you, quoth the Maids.

So

The Iests of *George Peele*.

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So away went my men to the Smiths at old *Brainford*, from thence to *London*; where they all met, and sold the Horse and the Mare, the Gowne and the Lute, which mony was as badly spent, as it was lewdly got. How my Host and my Hostis lookt when they saw the cuent of this; gos but to the three Pigeons at *Brainford*, you shall know.

The Iests of *George* and the *Barber*.

GEORGE was not so merry at *London* with his Capons and Claret, as poore *Anthony* the Barber was sorrowfull at *Brainford* for the losse of his Lute, and therefore determined to come to *London* to seeke out *George Peele*, which by the meanes of a kinsman that *Anthony* Nit had in *London*, his name was *Cuts* or *Feats*, a fellow that had good skill in tricks on the Cards, and he was well acquainted with the place where *Georges* common abode was: and for kindred sake he directed the Barber where he should haue him, which was at a blinde Alehouse in Sea-coale lane. There he found *George* in a greene Jerkin, a Spanissh platter fashioned hat, all alone at a peck of Oysters. The Barbers heart danc't within him for ioy he had so happily found him, he gaue him the time of the day: *George* not a little abashed at the sight of the Barber, yet went not to discouer it openly, he that at all times had a quick inuention, was not now behind hand to entertaine my Barber, who knew for what his comming was: *George* thus saluted him, My honest Barber, quoth *George*, welcome to *London*, I partly know your businesse, you come for your Lute, doe you not? Indeed Sir, quoth the Barber, for that is my comming. And belieue me, quoth *George*, you shall not lose your labour; I pray you stand to and eat an Oyster, and Ile goe with you presently: