

WESTWARD FOR SMELTS

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649318988

Westward for smelts by Kinde Kit

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
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KINDE KIT

**WESTWARD
FOR SMELTS**

W E S T W A R D

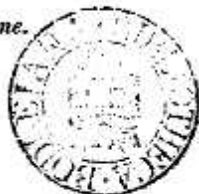
FOR

S M E L T S,

OR,

The Water-man's fare of mad merry Western wenches
whose tongues, albeit like Bell-clappers they neuer
leave ringing, yet their tales are sweet, and
will much content you.

Written by Kinde Kit of Kingstone.



LONDON,

Printed for JOHN TRUNDLE, and are to be sold at his shop in Barbican,
at the signe of the No-body.

1620.

TO THE READER.

Reader, for thy pleasure have I (this once) left my oare and stretcher, and stretched my wit, to set downe the honest mirth of my merry fare fishwives : if I have pleased thee, I am fully contented, and aske no more for my fare : if not, I have lost both my labour, and the reward I hoped for from thee, and do vow never more to trouble you with any other words than, " Will you have a paire of oares?" But my hopes are better, cause you (looking at my hands) for no other then freshwater poetry, shall not be deceived, and therefore not offended. So without any fawning tricks (which are things used too much in these times) I take my leave, wishing thee health ; and if thou sit hard, my boat's cushions. Farewell.

Yours to command,

Kinde Kit of Kingstone.

WESTWARD FOR SMELTS.

IN that selected time of the yeere, when no man is suffered to be a mutton-monger, without a speciall priviledge from those in authoritie: and no man is licensed to enjoy a flesh-bit, but those who are so weake, that the very sight contents their appetite: yet every man desireth flesh, that is no whore-master. When butchers goe to beare-baytings on Thursdayes, leaving their wives and prentises making pricks in shops halfe shut up, like houses infected of the plague: when at the same time fishmongers are in the height of pride, dashing water in their ill-sented street, like a troop of porposes at Flushing Head. When the cookes spits are hung up like pikes in a court of gard, and their dripping-pans (like targets in a country justice's hall) bee mouldie for want of use. At this time of the yeere, the pudding-house at Brooke's wharfe is watched by the Hollanders celes-ships, lest the inhabitants, contrarie to the law, should spill the bloud of innocents, which would be greatly to the hinderance of these butter-boxes.* In briefe, it is the kitchin-stuffe wives vacation, which makes them runne to the hedge for

* A cant term for Dutchmen. See Miede, in v.

better maintenance. Every one knowes this was Lent time, a time profitable onely for those that deale with liquid commodities : for none but fish must be eaten, which never doth digest well (as some physicions of this time hold opinion) except it swimme twice after it comes forth the water : that is, first in butter, so to be eaten : then in wine or beere after it is eaten. Now how chargeable this last liquor is, aske in prisons of prodigals, who have paid well for it : and how profitable to the sellers, aske of those aldermen that have had their beginning by it.

In this time of Lent, I being in the waterman's garrison of Queen-hive (whereof I am a souldier) and having no imploiment, I went with an intent to incounter with that most valiant and hardy champion of Queen-hive, commonly called by the name of Red Knight;* one who hath overthrowne many, yet never was himselfe dismounted, or had the least foyle : yet doth hee deny to grapple with none, but continually standeth ready to oppose himselfe against any that dare be his opposite, against whom he hath alway the better : for if they yeeld to him in the right of his conquest, he taketh from them a certaine summe of money, according to the time that they have held out : but if they scorne to yeeld, hee not onely taketh from them their goods, but likewise with his sore blowes he taketh from them their sences, making them often to

* The Red Knight is an ale-house signe at Queen-hive, where the watermen use to tipple. [Mar. note in Orig.]

fall at his castle gate for dead, voiding at the mouth abundance of filth caused by his strokes.

I had not long held combate with this knight, but my man came running in, telling mee he had a fare West-ward. This newes made me give over the combate, but with some small losse, for hee would not lose his ancient priviledge; so I giving him twopence, had free liberty to passe his gates, where I found my fare, which were a company of Westerno fishwives, who, having made a good market, with their heads full of wine, and their purses ful of coine, were desirous to go homeward. We agreed quickly, and the boy layd the cushions: I put them in the boat, and we lanced into the deepe, Neptune bee our speed, WESTWARD FOR SMELTS. Having passed the troublesome places of the Thames (wherc the wherries runne to and fro like weavers shuttles) and being at Lambeth, I might perceive all my fishwives begin to nod. I, fearing they were in a sound,* with my oare sprinkled a little coole water in their faces, which made them all to awake: which I perceiving, bid them rowze themselves up, and to continue their mirth, and keepe them from melancholy sleepe, and I would straine the best voice I had. They prayed me so to doe, but yet not to cloy their eares with an old fidler's song, as *Riding to Rumford*, or, *All in a garden greene*. I said I scorned so to do, for I would give them a new one, which neither punke, fidler, or ballad-singer had ever polluted with their

* Swoon. A common archaism.

unsavorie breath : the subject was, I told them, of a serving-man and his mistris. They liked the subject well, and intreated me to proceed, promising that each of them would requite my song with a tale. I said I was content, and would thinke well of their requitals. So they being all still, I began in this manner ;

Fairer than the fairest,
 Brighter than the rarest,
 Was the comely creature which I saw.
 Her lookes they were attractive,
 And her body active,
 All beholders' senses for to draw.
 I honour still this comely creature,
 And ever will doe while I live :
 And for her grace and goodly feature,
 All honours due to her I'll give.

When I first beheld her,
 O had Cupid wil'd her,
 For to favour him that lov'd her best !
 Joyes had me possessed,
 Sorrowes had not pressed,
 On my grieved heart that takes no rest.
 I thinke on her with adoration,
 I musing set upon her beauty :
 On her is all my meditation,
 Yet were to her were but my duty.

She herselfe is witty,
 All her parts are pretty,
 Nature in her forme hath showed her skill :
 Her bright beauty maz'd me,
 All her parts well pleas'd me :
 For of pleasant sights I had my fill.

Then 'gan her hand for to uncover
 Her whitest neck, and soundest pap :
 Than gan I farder to discover
 Most pleasing sights, yet wayl'd my hap.

Still I stood obscured,
 And these sights indured :
 Yet I to this goddesse durst not speake.
 Had I made a tryall,
 Her most sad denall,
 My observant heart, oh ! it would breake.
 Therefore will I rest contented,
 With private pleasures that I viewed ;
 And never with love will be tormented,
 Yet love I her for that she shewed.

Having thus ended, I asked them how they liked my song : they said little to it. At last, Well, quoth a venerable matron, or rather a matron of venery, that sate on a cushion at the upper end of the boat, let us now performe our promises to him in telling every one her tale : and since I shall land first, I will begin first : so the waterman shall be sure of his requittall promised by us, which shall be fishwives tales, that are wholesome, though but homely : so set merrily to Brainford, my master. I liked this well, and cause I would heare them all out, I made but slow haste : And cause you shall have some knowledge what rare piece this fishwife of Brainford was, I will describe her best and outward parts.*

* *Outward parts.* An expression used by Shakespeare in his *Merchant of Venice*, act iii. sc. 2.