

**Gorboduc.****Thomas Norton and Thomas Sackville.**

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Note: this [Renascence Editions](#) text was transcribed and annotated by Leah Allen, Joanne Holland, Gillian Jewison, Elona McGifford, Sharlee Reimer, and Sharanpal Ruprai in June 2003 for a course at the University of Winnipeg called Shakespeare's Rivals, taught by [Dr. Mark Morton](#). The source used was a reproduction of a photostat of the 1565 edition by Thomas Norton and Thomas Sackville located in the Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery. Any errors that have crept into the transcription are the fault of the Publisher. The text is in the public domain. The annotations are copyright © 2003 to the aforementioned transcribers. For nonprofit and educational uses only. Send comments and corrections to the Publisher.

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**THE****TRAGEDY OF GORBODUC;**

Whereof three Acts were written by

*Thomas Nortone*[\[1\]](#), and the two last by*Thomas Sackuyle*[\[2\]](#).

Set forth as the same was shown before the  
Queen's most excellent Majesty, in her highness'  
Court of Whitehall, the xviii day of January,  
*Anno Domini*[\[3\]](#). 1561. By the Gentlemen  
Of Thynner[\[4\]](#) Temple in London.



## Imprinted at London

in Fletestreet<sup>[5]</sup>, at the sign of the  
Falcon by *William Griffith*: And are  
to be sold at his Shop in Saint  
Dunstones Churchyard  
The West of London.

Anno<sup>[6]</sup>, 1565. Septemb. 22. Q 3

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### *The Argument of the Tragedy.*

Gorboduc, king of Britain, divided his Realm in his lifetime to his Sons, Ferrex and Porrex. The Sons fell to division and dissention. The younger killed the elder. The Mother that more dearly loved the elder, for revenge killed the younger. The people moved with the Cruelty of the fact, rose in Rebellion and slew both father and mother. The Nobility assembled and most terribly destroyed the Rebels. And afterwards for want of Issue of the Prince whereby the Succession of the Crown became uncertain. They fell to Civil war in which both they and many of their Issues were slain, and the Land for a long time almost desolate and miserably wasted.

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#### The names of the Speakers.

Gorboduc, king of great Britain.  
Videna, Queen and wife to king Gorboduc.  
Ferrex, Elder son to king Gorboduc.  
Porrex, Younger son to king Gorboduc.  
Clotyn, Duke of Cornwall.  
Fergus, Duke of Albany.  
Mandud, Duke of Leagre.  
Gwenard, Duke of Cumperland.  
Eubulus, Secretary to the king Gorboduc.  
Arostus, A Councilor to king Gorboduc.

Dordan, A Councilor assigned by the king to his Eldest Son Ferrex.  
 Philander, A Councilor assigned by the king to his younger Son Porrex.  
 (Both being of the old king's Counsel before.)  
 Hermon, A Parasite remaining with Ferrex.  
 Tyndar, A Parasite remaining with Porrex.  
 Nuntius, A Messenger of the elder Brother's death.  
 Nuntius, A Messenger of Duke Fergus rising in Arms.  
 Marcella, A Lady of the Queen's privy Chamber.  
 Chorus, Four ancient and Sage men of Britain.

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**The Order of the dumb show[7] before the  
 first Act, and the Signification thereof.**

First the Music of Violins began to play, during which came in upon the Stage six wild men clothed in leaves. Of whom the first bore in his neck a fagot[8] of small sticks, which they all both severally and together assayed[9] with all their strengths to break, but it could not be broken by them. At the length one of them plucked out one of the sticks and broke it: And the rest plucking out all the other sticks one after another did easily break, the same being severed: which being conjoined they had before attempted in vain. After they had this done, they departed the Stage, and the Music ceased Hereby was signified, that a state knit in unity doth continue strong against all force. But being divided, is easily destroyed. As befell upon Duke Gorboduc dividing his Land to his two sons which he before held in Monarchy. And upon the dissention of the Brethren to whom it was divided.

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Viden[11], Ferrex.

Viden

1

The silent night that brings the quiet pause,

From painful travails[12] of the weary Day:

Prolongs my careful thoughts and makes me blame

The slow Aurore[13] that so for love or shame

5 Doth long delay to show her blushing face,

And now the Day renews my grievfull[14] plaint[15]

Ferrex

My gracious Lady and mother dear,

Pardon my grief, for your so grieved mind

To ask what cause so tormenteth your heart.

Viden

10 So great a wrong and so unjust despite,  
Without all cause against all course of kind.

Ferrex

Such causeless wrong and so unjust despite,  
May have redress, or at the least revenge.

Viden

Neither my Son, such is the froward[16] will,  
15 The person such, such my mishap and thine.

Ferrex

Mine know I none, but grief for your distresses.

Viden

Yes: mine for thine my son: A father? no:  
In kind a father, but not in kindliness.

Ferrex

My father: why? I know nothing at all;  
20 Wherein I have misdome[17] unto his Grace.

Viden

Therefore, the more unkind to thee and me.  
For knowing well (my son) the tender love  
That I have ever born and bear to thee,  
He grieved thereat[18], is not content alone,  
25 To spoil thee of my sight my chiefest Joys,  
But thee, of thy birth, right and Heritage  
Causeless, unkindly and in wrongful wise[19],  
Against all Law and right he will bereave,  
Half of his kingdom he will give away.

Ferrex.

30 To whom?

Viden.

Even to Porrex his younger son  
Whose growing pride I do so sore suspect,  
That being raised to equal Rule with thee,  
Me thinks I see his envious heart to swell  
Filled with Disdain and with ambitious Pride  
35 The end the Gods do know, whose Alters I

Full oft have made in vain of Cattle slain,  
 To send the sacred smoke to Heaven's Throne[20],  
 For thee my son if things so succeed,  
 As now my Jealous mind misdeemeth[21] sore.

Ferrex

40 Madam leave care and careful plaint for me;  
 Just hath my Father been to every wight[22],  
 His first injustice he will not extend  
 To me I trust, that give no cause thereof,  
 My brother's pride shall hurt himself, not me.

Viden

45 So grant the Gods: but yet thy father so  
 Hath firmly fixed his unmoved mind  
 That plaints and prayers can no whit[23] avail,  
 For those have I assayed, but even this day,  
 He will endeavor to procure assent  
 50 Of all his Council to his fond device.

Ferrex

Their Ancestors from race to race have borne  
 True faith to my forefathers and their seed,  
 I trust they eke[24] will bear the like to me.

Viden

There resteth all, but if they fail thereof,  
 55 And if the end bring forth an evil success  
 On them and theirs the mischief shall befall,  
 And so I pray the Gods requite[25] it them,  
 And so they will, for so is wont[26] to be  
 When Lords and trusted Rulers under kings  
 60 To please the present fancy of the Prince,  
 With wrong transpose the course of governance  
 Murders, mischief, or civil sword at length,  
 Or mutual treason, or a just revenge,  
 When right succeeding Line returns again  
 65 By Jove's[27] just Judgment and deserved wrath  
 Brings them to civil and reproachful death,  
 And roots[28] their names and kindred's from the earth.

Ferrex

Mother content you, you shall see the end.

Viden

The end? thy end I fear, Jove end me first.

**Actus primus. Scena Secunda.**[\[29\]](#)

Gorboduc, Arostus, Philander, Eubulus.

Gorboduc

- 1 My lords whose grave advice and faithful aid  
Have long upheld my honour and my Realm  
And brought me from this age from tender years,  
Guiding so great estate with great renown;
- 5 Now more importeth[\[30\]](#) me the erst[\[31\]](#) to use  
Your faith and wisdom whereby yet I reign,  
That when by death my life and rule shall cease,  
The kingdom yet may with unbroken course,  
Have certain Prince, by whose undoubted right,
- 10 Your wealth and peace, may stand in quiet stay[\[32\]](#),  
And eke that they whom nature hath prepared,  
In time to take my place in Princely Seat,  
While in their Father's time their pliant youth  
Yields to the frame of skilful governance
- 15 May so be taught and trained in noble Arts,  
As what their father's which have reigned before  
Have with great fame derived down to them  
With honour they may leave unto[\[33\]](#) their seed:  
And not be taught for their unworthy life,
- 20 And for their Lawless swarving[\[34\]](#) out of kind,  
Worthy to lose what law and kind them gave  
But that they may preserve the common peace,  
The cause that first began and still maintains  
The Lineal course of King's inheritance,
- 25 For me, for mine, for you, and for the state  
Whereof both I and you have charge and care.  
Thus do I mean to use your wonted faith  
To me and mine, and to your native Land,  
My Lords be plain without all wry[\[35\]](#) respect
- 30 Or poisonous craft to speak in pleasing wise,  
Lest as the blame of ill succeeding things  
Shall light on you, so light the harms also.

Arostus

Your good acceptance so (most noble king)  
Of such your faithfulness as heretofore[\[36\]](#)

- 35 We have employed in duties to your Grace,

And to this Realm whole worthy head you are,  
 Well proves that neither you mistrust at all,  
 Nor we shall need no boasting to wise to show,  
 Our truth to you, nor yet our wakeful[37] care  
 40 For you, for yours, and for our native Land,  
 Wherefore[38] (O King) I speak for one as all,  
 Sith[39] all as one do bare you equal faith:  
 Doubt not to use their Councils and their aids  
 Whose honours, goods and lives are whole avowed  
 45 To serve, to aid, and to defend your Grace.

## Gorboduc

My lords I thank you all. This is the case  
 Ye know, the Gods, who have the sovereign care  
 For kings, for kingdoms, and for common weals[40],  
 Gave me two sons in my more lusty[41] Age,  
 50 Who now in my deceiving years are grown  
 Well towards riper state of mind and strength,  
 To take in hand some greater Princely charge,  
 As yet they live and spend their hopeful days,  
 With me and with their Mother here in Court  
 55 Their age now asketh other place and trade,  
 And mine also doth ask another change,  
 Theirs to more travail, mine to greater ease:  
 When fatal death shall end my mortal life,  
 My purpose is to leave unto them twaine[42]  
 60 The Realm divided into two sundry[43] parts;  
 The one Ferrex mine elder son shall have,  
 The other shall the other Porrex rule  
 That both my purpose may more firmly stand,  
 And eke that they may better rule their charge,  
 65 I mean forthwith to place them in the same:  
 That in my life they may both learn to rule,  
 And I may Joy to see their ruling well.  
 This is in the sum, what I would have ye weigh[44]:  
 First whether you allow my whole device,  
 70 And think it good for me, for them, for you,  
 And for our Country, mother of us all:  
 And if ye like it and allow it well,  
 Then for their guiding and their governance?  
 Show forth such means of circumstance,  
 75 As ye think meet to be both known and kept:  
 Lo, this is all, now tell me your advice.

## Arostus

- And this is much, and asketh great advice,  
 But for my part my Sovereign Lord and king  
 This do I think your Majesty doth know,  
 80 How under your Justice and in peace,  
 Great wealth and Honour, long we have enjoyed  
 So as we cannot seem with greedy minds  
 To wish for change of Prince and governance,  
 But if ye like your purpose and device,  
 85 Our liking must be deemed to proceed,  
 Of rightful reason, and of heedful care,  
 Not for ourselves, but for our common state:  
 Sith our own state doth need no better change  
 I think in all as erst your Grace has said:  
 90 First when you shall unload your aged mind,  
 Of heavy care and troubles manifold<sup>[45]</sup>,  
 And lay the same upon my Lords your sons  
 Whose growing years may bear the burden long  
 And long I pray the Gods grant it so:  
 95 And in your life while you shall so behold  
 Their rule, their virtues and their noble deeds,  
 Such as their kind behighteth<sup>[46]</sup> to us all,  
 Great be the profits that shall grow thereof,  
 Your age in quiet shall the longer last  
 100 Your lasting age shall be their longer stay,  
 For cares of kings, that rule as you have ruled  
 For public wealth and not for private joy,  
 Do waste man's life and hasten crooked age,  
 With furrowed face and with enfeebled limbs,  
 105 To draw on creeping Death a swifter pace.  
 They two yet young shall bear the party reign  
 With greater ease, than one now old alone  
 Can wield the whole, for whom much harder is  
 With lessened strength and double weight to bear  
 110 Your eye, your Council, and the grave regard  
 Of Fathers, yea of such as father's name,  
 Now at beginning of their sundered reign,  
 When it is hazard of their whole success  
 Shall bridle so their force of youthful heats,  
 115 And so restrain the rage of insolence<sup>[47]</sup>,  
 Which most assails the young and noble minds,  
 And so shall guide and train in tempered stay  
 Their yet green bending wits with reverent awe.



As now inured[48] with virtues at the first.

120 Custom, O king, shall bring delightfulness  
 By use of Virtue, Vice shall grow in hate,  
 But if you so dispose it, that the day  
 Which ends your life shall first begin their reign,  
 Great is the peril, what will be the end,

125 When such beginning of such liberties  
 Void of such stays as in your life do lie,  
 Shall leave them free to randon of their will[49].  
 An open prey to traitorous flattery,  
 The greatest pestilence of noble youth:

130 Which peril shall be past, if in your life,  
 Their tempered youth with aged father's awe  
 Be brought in ure[50] of skillful staidness.  
 And in your life, their lives disposed so,  
 Shall lengthen your noble life in joyfulness.

135 Thus think I y[51] your grace hath wisely thought  
 And that your tender care of common weal,  
 Hath bred this thought, so to divide your Land  
 And plant your sons to bear the present rule  
 While you yet live to see their ruling well,

140 That you may longer live by joy therein.  
 What further means behooveful[52] are and meet  
 At greater leisure may your Grace devise  
 When see have said, and when we be agreed  
 If this be best, to part the realm in twain,

145 And place your sons in present government;  
 Whereof, as I have plainly said my mind,  
 So would I hear the rest of all my Lords.

Philander

In part I think as hath been said before,  
 In part again my mind is otherwise.

150 As for dividing of this Realm in twain  
 And lotting out the same in egal[53] parts,  
 To either of my Lords, your Grace's sons,  
 That think I best for this your Realm's behoof[54],  
 For profit and advancement of your sons,

155 And for your comfort and your honour eke:  
 But so to place them while your life do last,  
 To yield to them your Royal governance,  
 To be above them only in the name  
 Of father, not in kingly state also,

- 160 I think not good for you, for them, nor us.  
 This kingdom since the bloody civil field  
 Where Morgan<sup>[55]</sup> slain did yield his conquered part  
 Unto his Cousin's sword in Camberland  
 Containeth all that whilom<sup>[56]</sup> did suffice,
- 165 Three noble sons of your forefather Brute;<sup>[57]</sup>  
 So your two sons, it may also suffice,  
 The moe<sup>[58]</sup> the stronger, if they agree in one:  
 The smaller compass that the realm doth hold  
 The easier is the sway thereof to weld,
- 170 The nearer Justice to the wronged poor,  
 The smaller charge, and yet enough for one.  
 And when the Region is divided so  
 That Brethren be the Lords of either part,  
 Such strength doth nature knit between the both,
- 175 In sundry bodies by conjoined love  
 That not as two, but one of doubled force,  
 Each is to other as a sure defense,  
 The Nobleness and glory of the one  
 Doth sharp the courage of the other's mind
- 180 With virtuous envy to contend for praise,  
 And such an egalness<sup>[59]</sup> hath nature made,  
 Between the Brethren of one Father's seed,  
 As an unkind wrong it seems to be,  
 To throw the other Subject under feet
- 185 Of him, whose Peer he is by course of kind,  
 And nature that did make this egalness,  
 Oft so repineth at so great a wrong,  
 That oft she raiseth by a grudging grief,  
 In younger Brethren at the elder's state:
- 190 Whereby both towns and kingdoms have been razed  
 And famous stocks of Royal blood destroyed:  
 The Brother that should be the Brother's aid  
 And have a wakeful care for his defense,  
 Gapes for his death, and blames the lingering years
- 195 That brings not forth his end with faster course  
 And oft impatient of so long delays,  
 With hateful slaughter he prevents<sup>[60]</sup> the fates  
 And heaps a just reward for Brother's blood,  
 With endless vengeance on his stock for aye:
- 200 Such mischiefs here are wisely met withall:  
 If egal state may nourish egal love,  
 Where none has cause to grudge the other's good,

- But now the head to stoop beneath them both,  
 Ne[61] kind, ne reason, ne good order bears.
- 205 And oft it hath been seen, that where Nature  
 Hath been perverted in disordered wise  
 When Fathers cease to know that they should rule  
 And Children cease to know they should obey,  
 And often our unkindly[62] tenderness,
- 210 Is Mother of unkindly Stubbornness:  
 I speak not this in envy or reproach,  
 As if I grudged the glory of your sons,  
 Whose honour I beseech the Gods to increase:  
 Nor yet as if I thought there did remain,
- 215 So filthy Cankers in their noble breasts,  
 Whom I esteem (which is their greatest praise)  
 Undoubted children of so good a king.  
 Only I mean to show my certain Rules,  
 Which kind hath graft within the mind of man
- 220 That Nature hath her order and her course,  
 Which (being broken) both corrupt the state  
 Of minds and things even in the best of all.  
 My Lords, your sons, may learn to rule of you  
 Your own example in your noble Court
- 225 Is fittest guider of their youthful years,  
 If you desire to seek some present Joy  
 By sight of their well ruling in your life,  
 See them obey, so shall you see them rule,  
 Who so obeyeth not with humbleness
- 230 Will rule with outrage and insolence  
 Long may they rule I do beseech the Gods,  
 But long may they learn ere[63] they begin to rule.  
 If kind and fates would suffer, I would wish  
 Them aged Princes and immortal kings:
- 235 Wherefore, most noble king, I well assent,  
 Between your sons y you divide your Realm.  
 And as in kind, so match them in degree  
 But while the Gods prolong your Royal life  
 Prolong your reign, for thereto live you here,
- 240 And therefore have the Gods so long forborne  
 To join you to themselves, that still you might  
 Be Prince and father of our common weal:  
 They, when they see your children ripe to rule,  
 Will make them room, and will remove you hence,
- 245 That yours in right ensuing of your life  
 May rightly honour your mortal[64] name.

## Eubulus

Your wonted true regard of faithful hearts,  
 Makes me (O king) the bolder to presume  
 To speak what I conceive within my breast,  
 250 Although the same do not agree at all  
 With that which other here my Lords have said  
 Nor which yourself have seemed best to like,  
 Pardon I crave and that my words be deemed  
 To flow from hearty zeal unto your Grace,  
 255 And to the safety of your common weal:  
 To part your Realm unto my Lords your sons  
 I think not good for you, ne yet for them,  
 But worst of all, for this our Native Land:  
 For with[65] one Land, one single rule is best:  
 260 Divided Reigns do make divided hearts,  
 But Peace preserves the Country and the Prince.  
 Such is in man the greedy mind to reign,  
 So great is his desire to climb aloft,  
 In worldly Stage the stateliest parts to bear,  
 265 That faith and Justice and all kindly love,  
 Do yield unto desire of Sovereignty:  
 Where egal state doth raise an egal hope  
 To win the thing that either would attain  
 Your grace remembreth how in past years  
 270 The mighty Brute, first prince of all this Land  
 Possessed the same and ruled it well in one,  
 He thinking that the compass[66] did suffice  
 For his three sons, three kingdoms eke to make  
 Cut it in three, as you would now in twain:  
 275 But how much British blood hath sithence[67] been spilt  
 To join again the sundered[68] unity?  
 What Princes slain before their timely hour?  
 What waste of towns and people in the Land?  
 What Treasons heaped on murders and spoils?  
 280 Whose just revenge even yet is scarcely ceased,  
 Ruthful[69] remembrance is yet had in mind:  
 The Gods forbid the like to chance again  
 And you (O king) give not the cause thereof:  
 My Lord Ferrex your elder son, perhaps,  
 285 Whom kind and custom gives a rightful hope  
 To be your Heir and to succeed your Reign,  
 Shall think that he doth suffer greater wrong

Than he perchance will bear, if power serve.  
 Porrex the younger so upraised in state,  
 290 Perhaps in courage will be raised also,  
 If Flattery then which fails not to assail  
 The tender minds of yet unskillful youth,  
 In one shall kindle and increase distain[70]:  
 And Envy in the other's heart enflame,  
 295 This fire shall waste their love, their lives, their land,  
 And ruthless ruin shall destroy them both,  
 I wish not this (O King) so to befall,  
 But fear the thing, that I do most abhor  
 Give no beginning to so dreadful end,  
 300 Keep them in order and obedience:  
 And let them both by now obeying you  
 Learn such behavior as beseems[71] their state.  
 The Older, mildness in his governance,  
 The younger, a yielding contentedness:  
 305 And keep them near unto your presence still,  
 That they, restrained by the awe of you,  
 May live in compass of well-tempered stay,  
 And pass the perils of their youthful years.  
 Your aged life draws on to feebler time,  
 310 Wherein you shall less able be to bear  
 The travails that in youth you have sustained  
 Both in your person's and your Realm's defense  
 If planting now your sons in further parts,  
 You send them further from your present reach  
 315 Less shall you know how they themselves demean.  
 Traitorous corrupters of their pliant youth  
 Shall have, unspied, a much more free access,  
 And if ambition and inflamed distain  
 Shall arm the one, the other, or them both  
 320 To civil war, or to usurping pride.  
 Late shall you rue that you ne recked[72] before:  
 Good is, I grant, of all to hope the best,  
 But not to live still dreadless of the worst,  
 So trust the one, that the other be forseen,  
 325 Arm not unskilfulness with princely power  
 But you that long have wisely ruled the reins  
 Of royalty within your noble Realm  
 So hold them, while the Gods for our avails  
 Shall stretch the thread of your prolonged days.  
 330 Too soon he climbed into the flaming Cart,  
 Whose want of skill did set the earth on fire.[73]

Time and example of your noble Grace,  
 Shall teach your sons both to obey and rule:  
 When time hath taught them, time shall make them  
 335 The place that now is full: and so I pray  
 Long it remain, to comfort of us all.

Gorboduc

I take your faithful hearts in thankful part  
 But sith I see no cause to draw[74] my mind,  
 To fear the nature of my loving sons,  
 340 Or to misdeem that Envy or distain,  
 Can there work hate, where nature planteth love  
 In one self[75] purpose do I still abide,  
 My love extendeth egally to both,  
 My Land sufficeth for them both also:  
 345 Humber[76] shall part the Marches[77] of their Realms:  
 The Southern part the elder shall possess,  
 The Northern shall Porrex the younger rule,  
 In quiet I will pass mine aged days.  
 Free from the travail and the painful cares  
 350 That hasten age upon the worthiest kings.  
 But lest the fraud that ye do seem to fear  
 Of flattering tongues, corrupt their tender youth  
 And writhe[78] them to the ways of youthful lust[79],  
 To climbing pride, or to revenging hate  
 355 Or to neglecting of their careful charge  
 Lewdly[80] to live in wanton recklessness  
 Or to oppressing of the rightful cause  
 Or not to wreak[81] the wrongs done to the poor  
 To tread down truth, or favor false deceit  
 360 I mean to join either of my sons  
 Some one of those whose long approved faith  
 And wisdom tried may well assure my heart:  
 That mining[82] fraud shall find no way to creep  
 Into their fenced ears with grave advise[83]:  
 365 This is the end, and so I pray you all  
 To bear my sons the love and loyalty  
 That I have found within your faithful breasts.

Arostus

You, nor your sons, our sovereign Lord, shall want  
 Our faith and service while our lives do last.

## Chorus

370 When settled stay doth hold the royal throne  
 In steadfast place by known and doubtless right:  
 And chiefly when descent on one alone  
 Make single and unparted reign to light.  
 Each change of course unjoins the whole estate

375 And yields it thrall to ruin by debate.  
 The strength that knit by fast accord in one  
 Against all foreign power of mighty foes,  
 Could of itself defend itself alone,  
 Disjoined once, the former force doth lose

380 The sticks, that sundered brake so soon in twain  
 In fagot bound attempted were in vain.[\[84\]](#)  
 Oft tender mind that leads the partial eye  
 Of erring parents in their children's love  
 Destroys the wrongly loved child thereby:

385 This doth the proud son of Apollo prove  
 Who, rashly set in the chariot of his sire,  
 Inflamed the parched earth with heaven's fire.[\[85\]](#)  
 And this great king, that doth divide his land  
 And change the course of his descending crown

390 And yields the reign into his children's hand,  
 From blissful state of joy and great renown,  
 A Mirror[\[86\]](#) shall become to Princes all  
 To learn to shun the cause of such a fall.

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**The Order and signification of  
 the dumb show before the second Act.**

First, the Music of Cornets began to play, during which came in upon the Stage a king accompanied with a number of his Nobility and Gentlemen. And after he had placed himself in a Chair of estate prepared for him: there came and kneeled before him a grave and aged Gentleman and offered up a Cup unto him of Wine in a glass, which the king refused. After him comes a brave and lusty young Gentleman and presents the king with a Cup of Gold[\[87\]](#) filled with potion[\[88\]](#), which the king accepted, and drinking the same, immediately fell down dead upon y stage, and so was carried thence away by his Lords and Gentlemen, and then the Musick ceased. Hereby was signified, that as Glass by nature holdeth no poison, but is clear and may easily be seen through, ne boweth[\[89\]](#) by any Art: So a faithful Counsellor holdeth no treason, but is plain and open, ne yieldeth to any undiscreet[\[90\]](#) affection, but giveth wholesome Counsel, which the ill-advised Prince refuseth. The delightful gold filled with poison betokeneth Flattery, which under fair seeming of pleasant words beareth deadly poison, which destroyeth the prince y receiveth it. As befell in the two brethren Ferrex and Porrex who, refusing the wholesome advise of grave Court fellows, credited these young Parasites and brought to

themselves death and destruction thereby.

**Actus secundus. Scena prima.**[\[91\]](#)

Ferrex, Hermon, Dordan.

Ferrex

1

I Marvel much what reason led the king

My father thus without all desert,  
To reave me[\[92\]](#) half y' kingdom which by course  
Of law and nature should remain to me.

Hermon

5

If you with stubborn and untamed pride

Had stood against him in rebelling wise,  
Or if with grudging mind you had envied  
So slow a sliding of his aging years,  
Or fought before your time to haste the course

10

Of fatal death upon his Royal head,

Or stained your Stock with murder of your kin:  
Some face of reason might perhaps have seemed  
To yield some likely cause to spoil ye thus.

Ferrex

The wreakful[\[93\]](#) Gods pour on my cursed head,

15

Eternal plagues and never dying woes,

The Hellish Prince[\[94\]](#), adjudge my damned ghost  
To Tantalus' thirst[\[95\]](#) or proud Ixion's wheel[\[96\]](#)  
Or cruel Gripe to gnaw my growing heart[\[97\]](#)  
To during torments and unquenched flames

20

If ever I concerned so foul a thought,

To wish his end of life, or yet of reign.

Dordan

Ne yet your father (O most noble Prince)



Did ever think so foul a thing of you  
For he with more than father's tender love

25

While yet the fates do lend him life to rule,

(Who long might live to see your ruling well)  
To you my Lord, and to his other son  
Lo he resigns his Realm and Royalty  
Which never would so wise a Prince have done

30

If he had once misdeemed that in your heart

There ever lodged so unkind a thought.  
But tender love (my Lord) and settled trust  
Of your good nature, and your noble mind  
Made him to place you thus in Royal throne

35

And now to give you half his realm to guide

Yea and that half within abounding store  
Of things that serve to make a wealthy Realm  
In stately Cities and in fruitful soil,  
In temperate breathing of the milder heaven,

40

In things of needful use, which friendly Sea

Transports by traffic from the foreign Ports.  
In flowing wealth, in honour and in force,  
Doth pass the double value of part  
That Porrex hath allotted to his reign,

45

Such is your case, such is your father's love.

Ferrex

Ah love, my friends, love wrongs not whom he loves.

Dordan

Ne yet wrongeth you, that giveth you  
So large a reign ere that the course of time  
Bring you to kingdom by descended right,

50

Which time perhaps might end your time before.

Ferrex

Is this no wrong, say you, to reave from me  
 My native right of half so great a realm,  
 And thus to match his younger son with me  
 In equal power, and in as great a degree?

55

Yea[98] and what son? The son whose swelling pride

Would never yield one point of reverence,  
 When I the Elder and apparent heir  
 Stood in the likelihood to possess the whole  
 Yea and that son which from his childish age

60

Envieth my honour, and doth hate my life,

What will he now do? When his pride, his rage,  
 The mindful malice of his grudging heart  
 Is armed with force, with wealth and kingly state?

Hermon

Was this not wrong? Yea ill advised wrong

65

To give so mad a man so sharp a sword,

To so great peril of so great mishap,  
 Wide open thus to set so large a way.

Dordan

Alas my lord, what grievful thing is this?  
 That of your brother you can think so ill

70

I never saw him utter likely sign

Whereby a man might see or once misdeem  
 Such hate of you, ne such unyielding pride  
 Ill is their council, shameful be their end,  
 That raising such mistrustful fear in you,

75

Sowing the seed of such unkindly hate,

Travail by reason to destroy you both.  
 Wise is your brother and of noble hope,  
 Worthy to wield a large and mighty Realm,  
 So much a stronger friend have you thereby,

80

Whose strength is your strength, if you gree[99] in one.

## Hermon

If nature and the Gods had pinched so  
 Their flowing bounty and their noble gifts  
 Of Princely qualities from you my Lord  
 And poured them all at once in wasteful wise

85

Upon your father's younger son alone:

Perhaps there be that in your prejudice  
 Would say that birth should yield to worthiness:  
 But sith in each good gift and Princely Act,  
 Ye are his match, and in the chief of all

90

In mildness and in sober governance

Ye far surmount: And sith there is in you  
 Sufficing skill and hopeful towardness<sup>[100]</sup>  
 To wield the whole, and match your Elders praise  
 I see no cause why ye should lose the half,

95

Ne would I with you yield to such a loss:

Lest your mild sufferance of so great a wrong  
 Be deemed cowardice and simple dread:  
 Which shall give courage to the fiery head  
 Of your young Brother to invade the whole,

100

Whiles yet therefore sticks in the peoples' mind

The loathed wrong of your disheritance,  
 And ere your Brother have by settled power,  
 By guileful<sup>[101]</sup> cloak of an alluring show,  
 Got him some force and favour in this Realm

105

And while the noble Queen your mother lives,

To work and practice all for your avail  
 Attempt redress by Arms, and wreak yourselves  
 Upon his life, that gaineth by your loss,  
 Who now to shame of you, and grieve of us

110

In your own kingdom triumphs over you:

Show now your courage meet for kingly estate

That they which have avowed to spend their goods  
 Their lands, their lives and honours in your cause,  
 May be the bolder to maintain your part

115

When they do see that coward fear in you,

Shall not betray ne fail their faithful hearts.  
 If once the death of Porrex end the strife,  
 And pay the price of his usurped Reign,  
 Your Mother shall persuade the angry king,

120

The Lords your friends eke shall appeal his rage

For they be wise, and well they can foresee,  
 That ere long time your aged father's death  
 Will bring a time when you shall well requite  
 Their friendly favour, or their hateful spite,

125

Yea, or their slackness to advance your cause

Wise men do not so hang on passing state  
 Of present Princes, chiefly in their age.  
 But they will further cast their reaching eye  
 To view and weigh the times and reigns to come

130

Ne is it likely though the king be wroth

That he yet will, or that the Realm will bear  
 Extreme revenge upon his only son:  
 Or if he would, what one is he that dare  
 Be minister to such an enterprise.

135

And here you be now placed in your own

Amid your friends, your vassals<sup>[102]</sup> and your strength  
 We shall defend and keep your person safe  
 Till either counsel turn his tender mind  
 Or age, or sorrow end his weary days

140

But if the fear of Gods and secret grudge

Of Nature's Law, repining at the fact,  
 Withhold your courage from so great attempt:  
 Know ye that lust of kingdoms hath no Law  
 The Gods do bear and well allow in kings

145

The things they abhor in rascal routs,[\[103\]](#)

When kings on slender quarrels run to wars  
 And then in cruel and unkindly wise,  
 Command thefts, rapes, murder of Innocents  
 To spoil of towns, and reigns of mighty realms

150

Think you such Princes do suppress themselves

Subject to Laws of kind and fear of Gods,  
 Yet none offence, but decked with glorious name  
 Of noble Conquests in the hands of kings,  
 Murders and violent thefts in private men

155

Are heinous crimes and full of foul reproach:

But if you like not yet so hot devise,  
 Ne list to take such vantage of the time.  
 But though with great peril of your state  
 You will not be the first that shall invade,

160

Assemble yet your force for your defense,

And for your safety stand upon your guard.

Dordan

O heaven was there ever heard or known,  
 So wicked council to a noble prince?  
 Let me (my Lord) disclose unto your grace

165

This heinous tale, what mischief it contains:

Your father's death, your brothers and your own  
 Your present murder and eternal shame:  
 Hear me (O king) and suffer not to sink  
 So high a treason in your Princely breast.

Ferrex

170

The mighty Gods forbid that ever I

Should once conceive such mischief in my heart  
 Although my Brother has bereft[\[104\]](#) my Realm  
 And bear perhaps to me an hateful mind  
 Shall I revenge it, with his death therefore?

175

Or shall I so destroy my father's life

That gave me life? The Gods forbid I say,  
Cease you to speak so anymore to me  
Ne you my friend with Answer once repeat  
So foul a tale, in silence let it die:

180

What Lord or Subject shall have hope at all

That under me they safely shall enjoy  
Their goods, their honours, lands and liberties,  
With whom, neither one only brother bears  
Ne father dearer, could enjoy their lives?

185

But sith, I fear my younger brother's rage,

And sith perhaps some other man may give  
Some like advice, to move his grudging head  
At mine estate, which council may perchance  
Take greater force with him, than this with me,

190

I will in secret so prepare myself,

As if his malice of his lust to reign  
Break forth with arms or sudden violence  
I may withstand his rage and keep mine own.

Dordan

I fear the fatal time now draweth on

195

When civil hate shall end the noble line

Of famous Brute and of his Royal seed  
Great Jove defend the mischief's now at hand  
O that the Secretary's wise advice  
Had erst been heard when he besought the king

200

Not to divide his land, nor send his sons

To further parts from presence of his Court  
Ne yet to yield to them his governance  
Lo such are they now in the Royal throne  
As was rash Phaeton[105] in Phoebus' [106] Car

205

Ne then the fiery steeds did draw the flame

With wilder random thought the kindled skies  
 Then traitorous counsel now will whirl about  
 The youthful heads of these unskillful kings,  
 But I hereof their father will inform

210

The reverence of him perhaps shall stay

The growing mischiefs, while they yet are green<sup>[107]</sup>  
 If this help not, then woe unto themselves,  
 The Prince, the people, the divided land.

**Actus secundus. Scena secunda.**<sup>[108]</sup>

Porrex, Tyndar, Philander.

Porrex

1

And is it thus? And doth he so prepare

Against his Brother as his mortal foe?  
 And now while yet his aged father lives:  
 Neither regards he him, nor fears he me?

5

War would he have? And he shall have it so.

Tyndar

I saw myself the great prepared store  
 Of Horse, of Armour and of weapons there,  
 To bring I to my Lord reported tales  
 Without the ground of seen and searched truth

10

Lo secret quarrels run about his Court

To bring the name of you my Lord in hate  
 Each man almost can now debate the cause  
 And ask a reason of so great a wrong,  
 Why he so noble and so wise a Prince,

15

Is as unworthy reft<sup>[109]</sup> his Heritage.

And why the king misled by crafty means  
 Divided thus his land from course of right.  
 The wiser sort hold down their grievfull heads  
 Each man withdraws from talk and company,

20

Of those that have been known to favour you,

To hide the mischief of their meaning there,  
Rumours are spread of your preparing here.  
The Rascal numbers of the unskillful sorts  
Are filled with monstrous tales of you and yours

25

In secret I was counseled by my friends

To haste me thence, and brought you as you know  
Letters from those, that both can truly tell  
And would not write unless they knew it well.

Philander

My Lord, yet ere you move unkindly war,

30

Send to your Brother to demand the cause.

Perhaps some traitorous tales have filled his ears  
With false reports against your noble grace:  
Which once disclosed shall end the growing strife  
That else not stayed with wise foresight in time

35

Shall hazard both your kingdoms and your lives:

Send to your father eke, he shall appease  
Your kindled minds, and rid you of this fear.

Porrex

Rid me of fear? I fear him not at all:  
Ne will to him, ne to my father send

40

If danger were for one to tarry there

Think ye if safety to return again.  
In mischiefs such as Ferrex now intends  
The wonted courteous laws to messengers  
Are not observed, which in just war they use.

45

Shall I so hazard any one of mine?

Shall I betray my trusty friend to him?  
That hath disclosed his treason unto me?  
Let him entreat that fears, I fear him not:  
Or shall I to the king my father send?



50

Yea and send now while such a mother lives

That loves my Brother and that hateth me?  
 Shall I give leisure by my fond delays  
 To Ferrex to oppress me all unaware?  
 I will not, but I will invade his Realm

55

And seek the Traitor Prince within his Court

Mischief for mischief is a due reward.  
 His wretched head shall pay the worthy price  
 Of this his Treason and his hate to me  
 Shall I abide, entreat and send and pray?

60

And hold my yielden[110] throat to Traitor's knife?

While I with valiant mind and conquering force  
 Might rid my self of foes and win a Realm,  
 Yet rather when I have the wretch's head,  
 Than to the king my father will I send,

65

The bootless[111] case may yet appeal his wrath:

If not I will defend me as I may.

Philander

Lo here to the end of these two youthful kings  
 The father's death, the reign of their two realms  
 Do most unhappy state of Counselors

70

That light on so unhappy Lords and times  
 That neither can their good advice be heard,  
 Yet must they bear the blames of ill success  
 But I will to the king their father haste  
 Ere this mischief come to that likely end,

75

That if the mindful wrath of wreakful Gods  
 Since mighty Ilion's[112] fall not yet appeased  
 With these poor remnants of the Trojan[113] name  
 Have not determinedly unmoved fate  
 Out of this realm to raze the British Line

80

By good advice, by awe of father's name  
 By force of wiser Lords, this kindled hate  
 May yet be quenched, ere it consume us all.

Chorus

- When youth not bridled with a guiding stay  
 Is left to rando[n][\[114\]](#) of their own delight
- 85 And welds whole Realms, by force Sovereign sway  
 Great is the danger of unmastered might  
 Lest skills rage throw down with headlong fall  
 Their lands, their states, their lives, themselves and all.  
 When growing pride doth fill the swelling breast
- 90 And greedy lust doth raise the climbing mind  
 Oh hardly may the peril be repressed  
 Ne fear of angry Gods, ne Laws kind,  
 Ne country care can fired hearts restrain  
 When force hath armed Envy and disdain.
- 95 When kings of foreset[\[115\]](#) wills neglect the rede,[\[116\]](#)  
 Of best advise, and yield to pleasing tales  
 That do their fancies noisome[\[117\]](#) humour feed  
 Ne reason, nor regard of right avails  
 Succeeding heaps of plagues shall teach too late
- 100 To learn the mischiefs of misguiding state.  
 Foul fall the Traitor false that undermines  
 The love of Brethren to destroy them both  
 Woe to the Prince, that pliant care inclines,  
 And yields his mind to poisonous tale, and floweth
- 105 From flattering mouth, and woe to wretched land  
 That wastes it self with civil sword in hand.  
 Lo, thus it is poison in gold to take,  
 And wholesome drink in homely cup forsake.

---

**The Order and signification of  
 the dumb show before the third Act.**

First the Music of Flutes began to play during which came in upon the stage a company of Mourners all clad in black betokening Death and sorrow to ensue upon the ill-advised misgovernment and dissension of brethren, as befell upon the murder of Ferrex by his younger Brother. After the Mourners had passed thrice about the stage, they departed, and then the Music ceased.

**Actus tertius. Scena prima.**[\[118\]](#)

Gorboduc, Eubulus, Arostus, Philander, Nuntius.

Gorboduc

1 O Cruel fates, O mindful wrath of Gods

- Whose vengeance neither Simois' [119] strained streams  
 Flowing with blood of Trojan Princes slain  
 Nor Phrygian [120] fields made rank with Corpses dead
- 5 Of Asian kings and Lords can yet appease,  
 Ne Slaughter of unhappy Priam's [121] race  
 Nor Ilion's fall made level with the soil,  
 Can yet suffice: but still continued rage,  
 Pursue our lives, and from the farthest Seas
- 10 Doth chase the issues of destroyed Troy:  
 Oh no man happy, till his end be seen  
 If any flowing wealth and seeming joy  
 In present years might make a happy wight,  
 Happy was Hecuba [122] the woofullest wretch
- 15 That ever lived to make a Mirror of  
 And happy Priam with his noble sons  
 And happy I till now, alas I see  
 And feel my most unhappy wretchedness:  
 Behold my lords, read you this letter here
- 20 Lo! It contains the ruin of our Realm  
 If timely speed provide not half the help  
 Yet (O ye Gods) if ever woeful king  
 Might move you kings of kings, wreak it on me  
 And on my sons, not on this guiltless Realm.
- 25 Send down your wasting flames from wrathful skies  
 To reave me and my sons the hateful breath  
 Read, read my Lords: this is the matter why  
 I called you now to have your good advice.

The Letter from Dordan the  
 Counselor of the elder Prince

Eubulus reads the Letter

- My sovereign Lord, what I am loath to write
- 30 But loathe I am see, that I am forced  
 By letters now to make you understand  
 My lord Ferrex, your eldest son, mislead  
 By traitorous fraud of young untempered wits  
 Assembleth forces against your younger son,
- 35 Ne can my Counsel yet withdraw the heat  
 And furious pangs of his enflamed head:  
 Disdain (sayeth he) of his inheritance  
 Arms him to wreak the great pretended wrong  
 With civil sword upon his brother's life,
- 40 If present help does not restrain this rage

This flame will waste your sons, your land, and you

Your Majesties faithful and most  
humble subject Dordan

Arostus

- 45 O King, appeal your grief and stay your plaint  
Great is the matter and a woeful case  
But timely knowledge may bring timely help  
Send for them both unto your presence here  
The reverence of your honour age and state
- 50 Your grave advice, the awe of father's name  
Shall quickly knit again this broken peace  
And if in either of my Lords your sons  
Be such untamed and unyielding pride  
As will not bend unto your noble Hests<sup>[123]</sup>
- 55 If Ferrex the elder son can bear no peace,  
Or Porrex not content, aspires to more  
Than you him gave, above his Native right:  
Join with the juster side, so shall you force  
Them to agree: and hold the Land in stay

Eubulus

- 60 What meaneth this: Lo yonder comes is haste  
Philander from my Lord your younger son.

Gorboduc

The Gods send joyful news.

Philander

The mighty Jove  
Preserve your Majesty, O noble king.

Gorboduc

Philander, welcome: But how doth my son?

Philander

- 65 Your son, sir, lives and healthy I him left:  
But yet (O King) this want of lustful health  
Could not be half so grievall to your Grace,  
As these most wretched tidings that I bring.

Gorboduc

O heavens yet more no end of woes to me.

Philander

70 Tyndar, O King, came lately from the Court  
 Of Ferrex, to my Lord your younger son,  
 And made report of great prepared store  
 Of war, and says that it is wholly meant  
 Against Porrex for high disdain that he  
 75 Lives now a king and equal in degree  
 With him, that claims to succeed the whole  
 As by due title of descending right  
 Porrex is now so set on flaming fire,  
 Partly with kindled rage of cruel wrath,  
 80 Partly with hope to gain a Realm thereby,  
 That he in haste prepares to invade  
 His Brother's Land, and with unkind war  
 Threatens the murder of your elder son  
 Ne could I him persuade that first he should  
 85 Send to his Brother to demand the cause  
 Nor yet to you to stay his hateful strife  
 Wherefore sith there no more I can be heard  
 I come my self now to inform your Grace  
 And to beseech you, as you love the life  
 90 And safety of your Children and your Realm,  
 Now to employ your wisdom and your force  
 To stay this mischief ere it be too late.

Gorboduc

Are they in Arms? would he not send for me?  
 Is this the honour of a Father's name?  
 95 In vain we travail to assuage<sup>[124]</sup> their minds  
 As if their hearts whom neither Brother's love  
 Nor Father's awe, nor kingdom's care can move  
 Our Councils could withdraw from raging heat  
 Jove slay them both, and end the cursed Line  
 100 For though perhaps fear of such mighty force  
 As I my Lords, joined with your noble Aides  
 May yet raise, shall repent their present heat  
 The secret grudge and malice will remain  
 The fire not quenched, but kept in close restraint  
 105 Fed still within, breaks forth with double flame  
 Their death and mine must pease<sup>[125]</sup> the angry gods.

Philander

Yield not, O king, so much to weak despair  
 Your sons yet live, and long I trust, they shall:  
 If fates had taken you from earthly life  
 110 Before beginning of this civil strife  
 Perhaps your sons in their unmastered youth  
 Loose from regard of any living wight  
 Would run on headlong, with unbridled Race  
 To their own death and ruin of this Realm  
 115 But sith the Gods that have the care for kings,  
 Of things and times dispose the order so  
 That in your life this kindled flame breaks forth  
 While yet your life, your wisdom and your power  
 May stay the growing mischief and repress  
 120 The fiery blaze of their enkindled heat  
 It seems, and so ye ought to deem thereof  
 That loving Jove has tempered so the time  
 Of this debate to happen in your days  
 That you yet living may the same appease  
 125 And add it to the glory of your latter age  
 And they your sons may learn to live in peace  
 Beware (O king) the greatest harm of all  
 Lest by your wailful plaints your hastened death  
 Yield larger room unto their growing rage:  
 130 Preserve your life, the only hope of state:  
 And if your highness herein list [126](#) to use  
 Wisdom or force, Council or knightly aid:  
 Lo we our persons, powers and lives are yours  
 Use us till death, O King, we are your own.

Eubulus

135 Lo here the peril that was erst foreseen  
 When you, (O king) did first divide your land  
 And yield your present reign unto your sons,  
 But now (O noble Prince) now is no time  
 To wail and plain, and waste your woeful life,  
 140 Now is the time for present good advice  
 Sorrow doth dark the Judgement of the wit  
 The Heart unbroken and the courage free  
 From feeble faintness of bootless despair  
 Doth either rise to safety or renown  
 145 By noble valour of an unvanquished mind  
 Or yet doth perish in more happy sort  
 Your grace may send to either of your sons  
 Someone both wise and noble personage

Which with good counsel and with weighty name  
 150 Of father shall present before their eyes  
 Your hest, your life, your safety, and their own  
 The present mischief of their deadly strife  
 And in the while, assemble you the force  
 Which your Commandment and the speedy haste  
 155 Of all my Lords here present can prepare:  
 The terror of your mighty power shall stay  
 The rage of both, or yet of one least.

## Nuntius

O King the greatest grief that ever Prince did hear  
 That ever woeful Messenger did tell,  
 160 That ever wretched land hath seen before  
 I bring to you. Porrex your younger son  
 With sudden force, invaded hath the land  
 That you to Ferrex did allot to rule:  
 And with his own most bloody hand he hath  
 165 His brother slain, and doth possess his Realm.

## Gorboduc

O Heavens send down the flames of your revenge,  
 Destroy I say with flash of wreakful fire  
 The Traitor son, and then the wretched sire  
 But let us go, that yet perhaps I may  
 170 Die with revenge, and pease the hateful gods

## Chorus

The lust of the kingdoms knows no sacred faith  
 No rule of Reason, no regard of right  
 No kindly love, no fear of heaven's wrath:  
 But with contempt of Gods, and man's despite  
 175 Through bloody slaughter doth prepare the ways  
 To fatal Scepter and accursed reign  
 The son so loathes the father's lingering days  
 Ne dreads his hand in Brother's blood to stain  
 O wretched Prince, ne dost thou yet record  
 180 The yet fresh Murders done within the Lands  
 Of thy forefathers, when the cruel sword  
 Bereft Morgan his life with cousin's hands?  
 Thus fatal plagues pursue the guilty race  
 Whose murderous hand imbrued[127] with guiltless blood.  
 185 Asks vengeance before the heaven's face,  
 With endless mischiefs on the cursed brood

The wicked child this brings to woeful Sire  
 The mournful plight to waft his weary life:  
 Thus do the cruel flames of Civil fire  
 190 Destroys the parted reign with hateful strife  
 And hence doth spring the well from which doth flow:  
 The dead black streams of mournings, plaints and woe.

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### **The Order and signification of the dumb show before the fourth Act.**

First the Music of Hautboys[128] began to play during which there came forth from under the Stage, as though out of Hell three furies Alecto, Megera and Cisiphone[129] and in black garments sprinkled with blood and flames. Their bodies girt with snakes, their heads spread with Serpents instead of hair, the one bearing in her hand a Snake, the other a whip, & the third a burning Firebrand: each driving before them a king and a Queen, which moved by Furies unnaturally had slain their own Children. The names of kings & Queens were these. Tantalus, Medea[130] Athamas, Ino[131], Cambises[132], Althea [133]. After that the Furies and these had passed about the Stage thrice, they departed and then the Music ceased: hereby was signified the unnatural murders to follow, that is to say. Porrex slain by his own Mother. And king Gorboduc and Queen Viden, killed by their own Subjects.

### **Actus quartus. Scena prima.[134]**

Viden sola[135].

Viden

- 1 Why should I live and linger forth my time  
 In longer life to double my distress?  
 O me most woeful wight whom no mishap  
 Long ere this day could have bereaved hence.
- 5 Mought not these hands by fortune or by fate,  
 Have pierced this breast and life with iron reft  
 Or in this Palace here where I so long  
 Have spent my days, could not that happy hour  
 Once, once have hapt[136] in which these hugy[137] framed
- 10 With death by fall might have oppressed me  
 Or should not this most hard and cruel soil  
 So oft where I have pressed my wretched steps  
 Sometime had ruth[138] of mine accursed life  
 To rend in twain and swallow me therein
- 15 So had my bones possessed now in peace  
 Their happy grave within the closed ground



And greedy worms had gnawed this pined[139] heart  
 Without my feeling pain. So should not now  
 This living breast remain the ruthless tomb  
 20 Wherein my heart yielded to death is graved:  
 Nor dreary thoughts with pangs of pining grief  
 My doleful mind had not afflicted thus,  
 O my beloved son: O my sweet child,  
 My dear Ferrex, my joy, my life's delight.  
 25 Is my well beloved son, is my sweet child,  
 My dear Ferrex, my joy, my life's delight  
 Murdered with cruel death? O hateful wretch,  
 O heinous Traitor both to heaven and earth,  
 Thou Porrex, thou this damned deed hast wrought  
 30 Thou Porrex, thou shall dearly abye[140] the same  
 Traitor to kin and kind, to Sire and me,  
 To thine own flesh, and Traitor to thyself  
 The Gods on thee in hell shall wreak their wrath  
 And here in earth this hand shall take revenge  
 35 On thee Porrex, thou false and caitiff[141] wight  
 If after blood, so eager were thy thirst  
 And murderous mind had so possessed thee,  
 If such hard heart of Rock and stony Flint  
 Lived in thy breast, that nothing else could like  
 40 Thy cruel tyrant's thought but death and blood  
 Wild savage beasts mought not (your) slaughter serve  
 To feed thy greedy will, and in the midst  
 Of their entrails to stain thy deadly hands  
 With blood deserved, and drink thereof thy fill?  
 45 Or if nought else but death and blood of man  
 Mought please thy lust, could none in Britain land  
 Whose heart he torn out of his loving breast  
 With thine own hand, or work what death thou wouldest  
 Suffice to make a Sacrifice pease  
 50 That deadly mind and murderous thought in thee?  
 But he who in the self-same womb was wrapped  
 Where thou in dismal hour received life?  
 Or if needs, needs this hand must slaughter make  
 Moughtest thou not have reached a mortal wound  
 55 And with thy sword have pierced this cursed womb?  
 That thee accursed Porrex brought to light  
 And given me a just reward therefore.  
 So Ferrex, yet sweet life might have enjoyed  
 And to his aged father comfort brought,  
 60 With some young son in whom they both might live

- But whereunto waste I this ruthful speech  
 To thee that hast thy brother's blood thus shed  
 Shall I still think that from this womb thou sprung  
 That I thee bear or take thee for my son
- 65 No traitor, no; I thee refuse for mine,  
 Murderer I thee renounce, thou are not mine:  
 Never, O wretch, this womb conceived thee,  
 Nor never bode I painful throes for thee:  
 Changeling to me thou art, and not my child
- 70 Nor to no wight, that spark of pity knew,  
 Ruthless, unkind, Monster of Nature's work.  
 Thou never sucked the milk of woman's breast  
 But from thy birth the cruel Tiger's teats  
 Have nursed, nor yet of flesh and blood
- 75 Formed is thy heart, but of hard Iron wrought[142].  
 And wild and desert woods bred thee to life:  
 But canst thou hope to scrape my just revenge?  
 Or that these hands will not be wroke[143] on thee  
 Doest thou not know that Ferrex's mother lives
- 80 That loved him more dearly then herself?  
 And doth she live, and is not venged on thee?

**Actus quartus. Scena secunda.**[144]

Gorboduc, Arostus, Eubulus, Porrex, Marcella.

- 1 We marvel much whereto this lingering stay  
 Falls out so long: Porrex unto our Court  
 By order of our Letters is returned  
 And Eubulus received from us behest[145]
- 5 At his arrival here to give him charge  
 Before our presence straight to make repair  
 And yet we have no word whereof he stays.

Arostus

Lo where he comes and Eubulus with him.

Eubulus

- According to your highness' hest to me
- 10 Here have I Porrex brought even in such sort  
 As from his wearied Horse he did alight,  
 For that your Grace did will such haste therein.

## Gorboduc

We like and praise this speedy will in you  
 To work the thing that to your charge we gave  
 15 Porrex, if we so far should swerve from kind,  
 And from those bounds which law of Nature sets  
 As thou hast done by vile and wretched deed  
 In cruel murder of thy Brother's life,  
 Our present hand could stay no longer time,  
 20 But straight should bathe this blade in blood of thee  
 As just revenge of thy detested crime.  
 No we should not offend the law of kind,  
 If now this sword of ours did slay thee here:  
 For thou hast murdered him whose heinous death  
 25 Even Nature's force doth move us to revenge  
 By blood again: But Justice forceth us  
 To measure Death for Death, thy due desert,  
 Yet sithens[146] thou art our childe, and sith as yet  
 In this hard case what word thou canst allege  
 30 For thy defense, by us hath not been heard  
 We are content to say our will for that  
 Which justice bids us presently to work:  
 And give thee leave to use thy speech at full  
 If ought thou have to lay for thine excuse.

## Porrex

35 Neither O king, I can or will deny  
 But that this hand from Ferrex life hath reft:  
 Which fact how much my doleful heart doth wail  
 Oh would it might as full appear to sight  
 As inward grief doth pour it forth to me,  
 40 So yet perhaps if ever ruthful heart  
 Melting in tears within a manly breast  
 Through deep repentance of his bloody fact  
 If ever grief, if ever woeful man  
 Might move regret with sorrow of his fault,  
 45 I think the torment of my mournful case  
 Known to your grace, as I do feel the same,  
 Would force even wrath her self to pity me.  
 But as the water troubled with the mud  
 Shows not the face which else the eye should see,  
 50 Even so your Ireful[147] mind with stirred thought,  
 Can not so perfectly discern my cause.  
 But this unhap[148], amongst so many heaps  
 I must content me with, most wretched man,

That to myself I must reserve my woe  
 55 In pining thoughts of mine accursed[149] fact  
 Since I may not show here my smallest grief  
 Such as it is, and as my breast endures,  
 Which I esteem the great misery  
 Of all mishaps that Fortune now can send,  
 60 Not that I rest in hope with plaints and tears  
 Should purchase life: for the Gods I clepe[150]  
 For true record of this faithful speech,  
 Never this heart shall have the thoughtful dread  
 To die the death that by your Grace's doom  
 65 By just desert, shall be pronounced to me:  
 Nor never shall this tongue once spend this speech  
 Pardon to crave, or seek by suit to live:  
 I mean not this as though I were not touched  
 With care of dreadful death, or that I held  
 70 Life in contempt: but that I know, the mind  
 Stoops to no dread, although the flesh be frail,  
 And for my guilt, I yield the same so great  
 As in myself I find a fear so sue  
 For grant of life.

Gorboduc

75 In vain, O wretch thou showest  
 A woeful heart, Ferrex now lies in grave,  
 Slain by thy hand.

Porrex

Yet this, O Father, hear:  
 And then I end: your Majesty well knows,  
 That when my Brother Ferrex and myself  
 By your own hest were joined in governance  
 80 Of this your Grace's Realm of Britain Land  
 I never sought nor travailed for the same,  
 Nor by my self, nor by no friend I wrought.  
 But from your highness' will alone it sprung,  
 Of your most gracious goodness bent to me,  
 85 But how my Brother's heart even than repined[151]  
 With swollen disdain against mine equal rule  
 Seeing that realm, which by descent should grow  
 Wholly to him, allotted half to me;  
 Even in your highness' Court he now remains,  
 90 And with my Brother then in nearest place  
 Who can record, what proof thereof was showed  
 And how my brother's envious heart appeared

Yet I that judged it my part to seek  
 His favor and good will, and loath to make  
 95 Your highness know, the thing which should have brought  
 Grief to your grace, and your offence to him  
 Hoping my earnest suit should soon have won  
 A loving heart within a Brother's breast  
 Wrought in that sort that for a pledge of love  
 100 And faithful heart, he gave to me his hand.  
 This made me think, that he had banished quite  
 All rancour[152] from his thought and bear to me  
 Such hearty love, as I did owe to him:  
 But after once we left your Grace's Court  
 105 And from your highness' presence lived apart  
 This equal rule still, still did grudge him so  
 That now those Envious sparks which erst lay raked  
 In living cinders of dissembling breast,  
 Kindled so far within his heart's distain  
 110 That longer could he not refrain from proof  
 Of secret practice to deprive me life  
 By Poison's force, and had bereft me so.  
 If mine own servant hired to this fact  
 And moved by truth with hate to work the same,  
 115 In time had not betrayed it unto me:  
 When thus I saw the knot of love unknit  
 All honest League and faithful promise broke  
 The Law of kind and truth thus rent[153] in twain  
 His heart on mischief set, and in his breast  
 120 Black treason hid then, then did I despair  
 That ever time could win him friend to me  
 Then saw I how he smiled with slaying knife  
 Wrapped under cloak, then saw I deep deceit  
 Lurk in his face and death prepared for me:  
 125 Even nature moved me then to hold my life  
 More dear to me than his, and bade this hand  
 Since by his life my death must needs ensue,  
 And by his death my life to be preserved:  
 To shed his blood, and seek my safety so,  
 130 And wisdom willed me without protract[154]  
 In speedy wise to put the same in ure.  
 Thus have I told the cause that moved me  
 To work my Brother's death and so I yield  
 My life, my death to judgment of your grace.

Gorboduc

135 Oh cruel wight, should any cause prevail

To make thee stain they hands with brother's blood  
 But what of thee we will resolve to do  
 Shall yet remain unknown: Thou in the mean  
 Shalt from our royal presence banished be  
 140 Until our Princely pleasure further shall  
 To thee be showed, depart therefore our sight  
 Accursed[155] child. What cruel destiny  
 What forward fate hath sorted us this chance  
 That even in those, where we should comfort find  
 145 Where our delight now in our aged days  
 Should rest and be, even there our only grief  
 And deepest sorrows to abridge our life,  
 Most pining cares and deadly thoughts do grow?

Arostus

Your Grace should now in these grave years of yours  
 150 Have found ere this the price of mortal Joys,  
 How short they be, how fading here in earth  
 How full of change, how Brittle our estate,  
 Of nothing sure, save only of the Death,  
 To whom both man and all the world doth owe  
 155 Their end at last, neither shall nature's power  
 In other sort against your heart prevail,  
 Than as the naked hand whose stroke assays  
 The Armed breast where force doth light in vain.

Gorboduc

Many can yield right grave and sage advice  
 160 Of patient spirit to others wrapped in woe,  
 And can in speech both rule and conquer kind,  
 Who if by proof, they might feel nature's force,  
 Would show themselves men as they are indeed,  
 Which now will needs be gods: but what doth mean  
 165 The sorry cheer of her that here doth come?

Marcella

Oh where is ruth? Or where is pity now?  
 Whether is gentle heart and mercy fled?  
 Are they exiled out of our stony breasts  
 Never to make return? Is all the world  
 170 Drowned in blood and sunk in cruelty?  
 If not in women mercy may be found  
 If not (alas) within the mother's breast  
 To her own child, to her own flesh and blood  
 If ruth be banished thence, if pity there  
 175 May have no place, if there no gentle heart

Do live and dwell where should we seek it then?

Gorboduc

Madame (alas) what means your woeful tale?

Marcella

O silly women I, why to this hour,

Have kind and fortune thus deferred my breath

180 That I should live to see this doleful[156] day

Will every wight believe that such hard heart

Could rest within the cruel mother's breast,

With her own hand to slay her only son

But out (alas) these eyes beheld the same,

185 They saw the dreary sight, and are become

Most ruthless records of the bloody fact.

Porrex, (alas) is by his mother slain,

And with her hand a woeful thing to tell,

While slumbering on his careful bed he rests

190 His heart stabbed in with knife is bereft of life.

Gorboduc

O Eubulus, oh draw this sword of ours,

And pierce this heart with speed. O hateful light,

O loathsome life, O sweet and welcome Death,

Dear Eubulus work this we thee beseech.

Eubulus

195 Patience your Grace, perhaps he liveth yet.

With wound received, but not of certain death.

Gorboduc

O let us then repair, unto the place,

And see if Porrex, live or thus be slain.

Marcella

Alas he liveth not, it is too true,

200 That with these eyes of him a peerless[157] Prince,

Son to a king, and in the flower of youth;

Even with a twink[158] a senseless stock[159] I saw.

Arostus

O damned deed.

Marcella

But here this ruthless end.

The noble Prince pierced with the sudden wound

205 Out of his wretched slumber hastily start  
 Whose strength now failing straight he overthrew  
 When in the fall his eyes even new unclosed  
 Beheld the Queen and cried to her for help  
 We then, alas, the Ladies which that time  
 210 Did there attend, seeing that heinous deed  
 And hearing him oft call the wretched name  
 Of mother, and to cry to her for Aid  
 Whose direful[160] hand gave him the mortal wound  
 Pitting, (alas, for naught else could we do)  
 215 His ruthful end, ran to the woeful bed  
 Dispoiled[161] straight his breast, and all we might  
 Wiped in vain with napkins next at hand,  
 The sudden streams of blood that flushed fast  
 Out of the gaping wound: O what a look,  
 220 O what a ruthful steadfast eye me thought  
 He fixed upon my face, which to my death  
 Will never part from me, when with a braid[162]  
 A deep felt sigh he gave and therewithal  
 Claspings his hands, to heaven he cast his sight.  
 225 And straight pale death pressing within his face  
 The flying ghost his mortal corpse forsook.

Arostus

Never did age bring so vile a fate.

Marcella

O, hard and cruel hap[163], that thus assigned  
 Unto so worthy a wight so wretched end  
 230 But most hard cruel heart, that could consent  
 To lend the hateful destinies that hand  
 By which, alas, so heinous crime was wrought,  
 O Queen of Adamant, O marble breast  
 If not the favor of his comely[164] face,  
 235 If not his Princely cheer and countenance,  
 His valiant Active Arms, his manly breast.  
 If not his fair and seemly personage  
 His noble Limbs in such proportion cast  
 As would have rapt a silly woman's thought  
 240 If this might not have moved the bloody heart  
 And that most cruel hand the wretched weapon  
 Even to let fall, and kissed him in the face.  
 With tears for ruth to reave such one by death  
 Should nature yet consent to slay her son  
 245 O mother, thou to murder thus thy child



Even Jove with Justice must with lightening flames  
From heaven send down some strange revenge on thee.

Ah noble Prince, how oft have I beheld  
Thee mounted on thy fierce and trampling steed

250 Shining in Armor bright before the tilt[165]

And with thy Mistress Sleeve tied on thy Healm  
And change thy staff to please thy Lady's eye  
That bowed the head piece of thy friendly foe,  
How oft in Arms on horse to bend the mace

255 How oft in Arms on foot to break the sword,  
Which never now these eyes may see again.

Arostus

Madame, alas, in vain these plaints are shed,  
Rather with me depart and help to assuage,  
The thoughtful griefs that in the aged king

260 Must needs by nature grow by death of this  
His only son, whom he did hold so dear.

Marcella

What wight is that which saw that I did see  
And could refrain to wail with plaint and tears  
Not I, alas, that heart is not in me,

265 But let us go, for I am grieved anew,  
To call to mind the wretched father's woe.

Chorus

When greedy lust in Royal seat to reign  
Hath reft all care of gods and eke of men,  
And cruel heart, wrath, Treason and disdain  
270 Within the ambitious breast are lodged then  
Behold how mischief wide herself displays  
And with the brother's hand the brother slays.  
When blood thus shed, doth stain this heaven's face  
Crying to Jove for vengeance of the deed.

275 The mighty God even moveth from his place  
With wrath to wreak, then sends he forth with speed  
The dreadful furies, daughters of the night  
With Serpents girt[166], carrying the whip of Ire[167],  
With hair of stinging snakes and shinning bright

280 With flames and blood, and with a brand of fire:  
These for revenge of wretched Murder done  
Do make the Mother kill her only son  
Blood asketh blood[168], and death must death require  
Jove by his just and everlasting doom

285 Justly hath ever so required it  
 These times before record, and times to come,  
 Shall find it true, and so doth present proof,  
 Present before our eyes for our behoof.  
 O happy wight that suffers not the snare  
 290 Of murderous mind to tangle him in blood:  
 And happy he that can in time beware  
 By others harms and turn it to his good  
 But woe to him that fearing not to offend  
 Doth serve his lust, and will not see the end.

### **The Order and signification of the dumb show before the fifth Act.**

First the Drums and Flutes, began to sound, during which there came forth upon the Stage a company of Harquebusiers[169] and of Armed men all in order of Battle. These after their Pieces discharged, and that the Armed men had three times marched about the Stage, departed, and then the Drums and Flutes did cease. Hereby was signified tumults[170], rebellions, Arms, and civil wars to follow, as fell in the Realm of great Britain, which by the space of fifty years and more continued in civil war between the Nobility after the Death of king Gorboduc, and of his Issues, for want of certain limitation in the Succession of the Crown, till the time of Dunwallo Molmutius[171], who reduced[172] the Land to Monarchy.

### **Actus quintus. Scena prima.[173]**

Clotyn, Mandud, Gwenard, Fergus, Eubulus.

Clotyn

1 Did ever age bring forth such Tyrant's hearts?  
 The Brother hath bereft the Brother's life;  
 The mother she hath died her cruel hands  
 In blood of her own son, and now at last  
 5 The people lo forgetting trouble and love,  
 Contemning quite both Law and loyal heart  
 Even they have slain their sovereign Lord and Queen.

Mandud

Shall this their traitorous crime be unpunished rest?  
 Even yet they cease not, carried out with rage,  
 10 In their rebellious routes, to threaten still  
 A new bloodshed unto the prince's kin  
 To slain them all, and to uproot the race  
 Both the king and Queen, so are they moved

With Porrex's death, wherein they falsely charge  
 15 The guiltless king without desert at all  
 And traitorously have murdered him therefore,  
 And eke the Queen.

Gwenard

Shall Subjects dare with force  
 To invoke revenge upon their Prince's fact?  
 Admit the worst that may; as sure in this  
 20 The deed was foul, the Queen to slay her son  
 Shall yet the Subject seek to take the sword  
 Arise against his Lord, and slay his king?  
 O wretched state, where those rebellious hearts  
 Are not rent out even from their lying breasts  
 25 And with the body thrown onto the fowls  
 As Carrion[174] food, for terror of the rest.

Fergus.

There can no punishment be thought too great  
 For this so grievous crime: let speed therefore  
 Be used therein for it behooveth[175] so.

Eubulus.

30 Ye all my Lords I see consent in one  
 And I as one consent with ye in all:  
 I hold it more than need with the sharpest Law  
 To punish the tumultuous bloody rage.  
 For nothing more may shake the common sate  
 35 Than sufferance of Uproars without redress  
 Whereby how soon kingdoms of mighty power,  
 After great Conquests made, and flourishing  
 In fame and wealth have been to ruin brought  
 I pray to Jove, that we may rather wail  
 40 Such hap in them than witness in ourselves  
 Eke fully with the Duke my mind agrees  
 That no cause serves, whereby the Subject may,  
 Call to account the doings of his Prince,  
 Much less in blood by sword to work revenge  
 45 No more then may the hand cut off the head,  
 In act nor speech, no: not in secret thought  
 The Subject may rebel against his Lord  
 Or Judge of him that sits in Cesar's Seat.  
 With grudging mind be damn those he mislikes.  
 50 Though kings forget to govern as they ought,  
 Yet Subjects must obey as they are bound:  
 But now my Lords before ye farder[176] wade

- Or spend your speech, what sharp revenge shall fall  
 By justice plague on these rebellious weights
- 55 Methinks ye rather should first search the ways  
 By which in time the rage of this uproar  
 Might be repressed, and these great tumults ceased  
 Even yet the life of Britain Land doth hang,  
 In Traitors Balance of unequal weight.
- 60 Think not my Lords the death of Gorboduc  
 Nor yet Videna's blood will cease their rage:  
 Even our own lives, our wives and children,  
 Our Country dearest of all in danger stands,  
 Now to be spoiled, now, now made desolate
- 65 And by ourselves a conquest to ensue:  
 Forgive once sway unto the peoples' lusts,  
 To rush forth on, and stay them not in time,  
 And as the Stream that rolleth down the hill,  
 So will the headlong run with raging thoughts.
- 70 From blood to blood, from mischief unto moe,  
 To ruin of the Realm, themselves and all  
 So giddy are the common people's minds,  
 So glad of change, more wavering than the Sea.  
 Ye see (my Lords) what Strength these Rebels have,
- 75 What huge number is assembled still,  
 For though the traitorous fact, for which their rose  
 Be wrought and done, yet lodge they Still in fields  
 So that how far their furies yet will stretch  
 Great cause we have to dread, that we may seek
- 80 By present Battle to repress their power.  
 Speed must we use to levy force therefore  
 For either they forthwith will mischief work  
 Or their rebellious roars forthwith will cease:  
 These violent things may have no lasting long
- 85 Let us therefore use this for present help  
 Persuade by gentle speech, and offer grace  
 With gift of pardon save unto the chief,  
 And that upon condition that forthwith  
 They yield the Captains of their enterprise
- 90 To bear such guerdon[177] of their traitorous fact  
 As may be both due vengeance to themselves,  
 And wholesome terror to posterity.  
 This shall I think: scatter the greatest part  
 That now are holden[178] with desire of home,
- 95 Wearied in field with cold of Winter's nights,  
 And some (no doubt) stricken with dread of Law

When this is once proclaimed, it shall make  
 The Captains to mistrust the multitude  
 Whose safety bids them to betray their heads  
 100 And so much more because the rascal routes.  
 In things of great and perilous[179] attempts,  
 Are never trusty to the noble race.  
 And while we treat and stand on terms of grace,  
 We that both stay their furies rage the while,  
 105 And eke gain time, whose only help sufficeth  
 Without war to vanquish Rebel's power  
 In the meanwhile, make you in readiness  
 Such band of Horsemen as ye may prepare:  
 Horsemen (you know) are not the Common's strength  
 110 But are the force and store of noble men  
 Whereby the unchosen and unarmed sort  
 Of skillless Rebels, whom none other power  
 But number makes to be of dreadful force  
 With sudden brunt may quickly be oppressed  
 115 And if this gentle means of proffered grace  
 With stubborn hearts cannot so far avail  
 As to assuage their desperate courages.  
 Than do I wish such slaughter to be made.  
 As present age and eke posterity  
 120 May be adrad[180] with horror of revenge  
 That justly than shall on these rebels fall  
 This is my Lords the sum of mine advice.

Clotyn.

Neither this case admits debate at large,  
 And though it did: this speech that hath been said  
 125 Hath well abridged the tale I would have told:  
 Fully with Eubulus do I consent  
 In all that he hath said: and if the same  
 To you my Lord, may seem for best advice,  
 I wish that it should straight be put in ure.

Mandud

130 My Lords than let us presently depart  
 And follow this that liketh us so well.

Fergus

If ever time to gain a kingdom here  
 Were offered man, now it is offered me:  
 The realm is reft both of their king & Queen  
 135 The offspring of the Prince is slain and dead  
 No issue now remains, the Heir unknown,  
 The people are in Arms and mutinies

The Nobles they are busied how to cease  
 These great rebellious tumults and uproars  
 140 And Britain Land now deserted left alone  
 Amid these broils uncertain where to rest  
 Offers herself unto that noble heart  
 That will or dare pursue to bear her Crown:  
 Shall I that am the Duke of Albany  
 145 Descended from that Line of noble blood,  
 Which hath so long flourished in worthy fame  
 Of valiant hearts, such as in noble Breasts  
 Of right should rest above the baser sort,  
 Refuse to adventure life to win a Crown  
 150 Whom Shall I find enemies that will withstand  
 My fact herein, if I attempt by Arms  
 To seek the Same now in these times of broil  
 These Dukes poor power can hardly well appease  
 The people that already are in Arms.  
 155 But if perhaps my force be once in field  
 Is not my strength in power above the best  
 Of all these Lords now left in Britain Land?  
 And though they should match me with power of men  
 Yet doubtful is the chance of Battles joined  
 160 If Victors of the field we may depart,  
 Ours is the Scepter than of great Britain,  
 If slain amid the plain this body be  
 Mine enemies yet shall not deny me this,  
 But that I died giving the noble charge  
 165 To hazard life for conquest of a Crown.  
 Forthwith therefore will I in post depart  
 To Albany and raise in Armour there  
 All power I can: and here my secret friends,  
 By secret practice shall solicit<sup>[181]</sup> still,  
 170 To seek to win to me the peoples hearts.

**Actus quintus. Scena secunda.**<sup>[182]</sup>

Eubulus, Clotyn, Mandud, Gwenard, Arostus, Nuntius.

Eubulus

1 O Jove, How are these peoples hearts abused  
 What blind fury, thus headlong carries them?  
 That though so many books, so many rolls  
 Of Ancient time record what grievous plagues,  
 5 Light on these Rebels eye and though so often

- Their ears have heard their aged fathers tell  
 What just reward these Traitors still receive.  
 Yea though themselves have seen deep death and blood  
 By strangling cord and slaughter of the sword
- 10 To such assigned, yet can they not beware:  
 Yet cannot stay their lewd[183] rebellious hands,  
 But suffering to foul treason to distain  
 Their wretched minds, forget their loyal heart,  
 Reject all truth and rise against their Prince,
- 15 A ruthless case that those, whom duties bond  
 Whom grafted Law by nature truth and faith  
 Bound to preserve their Country and their king  
 Born to defend their Commonwealth and Prince,  
 Even they should give consent thus to subvert
- 20 The Britain Land, and from the womb should spring  
 (O native soil) those, that will needs destroy  
 And ruin thee and eke themselves in fine:  
 For lo, when ones the Duke had offered Grace  
 Of pardon sweet (the multitude mislead
- 25 By traitorous fraud of their ungracious heads)  
 One sort that saw the dangerous success  
 Of stubborn standing in rebellious war  
 And knew the difference of Prince's power  
 From headless number of tumultuous routes,
- 30 Whom common Countries care and private fear  
 Taught to repent the terror of their rage  
 Laid hands upon the Captains of their band,  
 And brought them bound unto the mighty Dukes  
 Another sort not trusting yet so well
- 35 The truth of Pardon or mistrusting more  
 Their own offense than that they could conceive  
 Such hope of pardon for so foul misdeed:  
 Or for that they their captains could not yield  
 Who fearing to be yielded, fled before,
- 40 Stole[184] home by silence of the secret night,  
 The third unhappy and enraged sort  
 Of desperate hearts, who stained in Prince's blood  
 From traitorous furor could not be withdrawn  
 By love, by law, by grace, nay yet by fear,
- 45 By proffered life, nay yet by threatened Death,  
 With minds hopeless of life, dreadless of Death,  
 Careless of Country and aweless of God:  
 Stood bent as to fight as furies did them move  
 With violent death to close their traitorous life:

- 50 These all by power of Horsemen were oppressed  
 And with revenging sword slain in the field,  
 Or with the strangling Cord hanged on the trees  
 Where yet the carrion Carcasses do preach  
 The fruits that Rebels reap of their uproars,  
 55 And of the murder of their sacred Prince,  
 But lo, where do approach the noble Dukes,  
 By whom these tumults have been thus appeased.

## Clotyn

I think the world will now at length beware  
 And fear to put on arms against their Prince.

## Mandud

- 60 If not: those treacherous hearts that dare rebel  
 Let them behold the wide and huge fields  
 With blood and body spread with rebels slain,  
 The lofty tress clothed with corpses dead  
 That strangled with the cord do hang thereon.

## Arostus

- 65 A just reward such as all times before  
 Have ever lotted to those wretched folks.

## Gwenard

But what means he that cometh here so fast.

## Nunitius

- My Lords, as duty and my truth doth move  
 And of my Country work and care in me  
 70 That if the spending of my breath avail  
 To do the Service that my heart desires,  
 I would not shun to embrace a present death,  
 So have I now in that wherein I thought  
 My travail might perform some good effects  
 75 Ventured my life to bring these tidings here,  
 Fergus, the mighty Duke of Albany  
 Is now in arms and lodgeth in the fields  
 With twenty thousand men, hither he bends  
 His speedy march, and minds to invade the Crown  
 80 Daily he gathereth strength and spreads abroad  
 That to this Realm no certain Heir remains,  
 That Britain Land is left without a guide,  
 That be the scepter seeks for nothing else



But to preserve the people and the Land  
 85 Which now remains as ship without a Stern  
 Lo, this is that which I have here to say.

Clotyn

Is this his faith? and shall he falsely thus  
 Abuse the vantage of unhappy times?  
 O wretched Land, if his outrageous pride,  
 90 His cruel and untempered wilfulness  
 His deep dissembling shows of false pretence  
 Should once attain the Crown of Britain land  
 Let us my Lords, with timely force resist  
 The news attempt of this our common foe  
 95 As we would quench the flames of common fire.

Mandud

Though we remain without a certain Prince  
 To weld the Realm or guide the wandering rule  
 Yet now the common Mother of us all,  
 Our Native Land, our Country that contains  
 100 Our wives, children, kindred, ourselves and all  
 That ever is or may be dear to man  
 Cries unto us to help ourselves and her:  
 Let us advance our powers to repress  
 This growing foe of all our liberties.

Gwenard

105 Yea let us to my Lord's with hasty speed,  
 And ye (O Gods) send us the welcome death,  
 To shed our blood in fields and leave us not,  
 In loathsome life to linger out our lives  
 To see the huge heaps of these unhaps,  
 110 That now roll down upon the wretched Land  
 Where empty place of Princely Governance  
 No certain stay now left of doubtless heir,  
 Thus leave this guideless Realm an open prey.  
 Thus endless storms and waste of civil war.

Arostus

115 That ye (my Lords) do so agree in one  
 To save your Country from the violent reign  
 And wrongfully usurped Tyranny  
 Of him that threatens conquest of you all  
 To save your realm, and in this realm yourselves  
 120 From foreign thraldom[185] of so proud a Prince,  
 Much do I praise and I beseech the Gods,

- With happy honour to requite it you.  
 But (O my Lords) sith now the Heaven's wrath  
 Hath reft this land the issue of their Prince:  
 125 Sith of the body of our late Sovereign Lord  
 Remains no more since the young kings be slain  
 And of the Title of descended Crown,  
 Uncertainly the diverse minds do think  
 Even of the learned sort and more uncertainly  
 130 Will partial fancy and affection deem:  
 But most uncertainly will climbing pride  
 And hope of reign withdraw to sundry parts  
 The doubtful right and hopeful lust to reign  
 When once this noble service is achieved  
 135 For Britain land the Mother of ye all,  
 When once ye have with armed force repressed,  
 The proud attempts of this Albanian[186] Prince  
 That threatens thraldom to your Native Land  
 When ye shall vanquishers return from field  
 140 And find the Princely state an open prey.  
 To greedy lust and to usurping power,  
 Then, then (my Lords) if ever kindly care  
 Of ancient honour of your ancestors,  
 Of present wealth and noblest of your stocks  
 145 Yea of the lives and safety yet to come  
 Of your dear wives your children and yourselves,  
 Might move your noble hearts with gentle ruth,  
 Then, then, have pity on the torn estate,  
 Then help to salve the well-near hopeless sore  
 150 Which ye shall do, if ye yourselves withhold  
 The slaying knife from your own mother's throat  
 Her shall you save, and you, and yours in her  
 If ye shall all with one assent forbear  
 Once to lay hand or take unto yourselves  
 155 The Crown by colour of pretended right,  
 Or by what other means so ever it be  
 Till first by common counsel of you all  
 In Parliament the Regal Diadem[187].  
 Be set in certain place in governance,  
 160 In which your Parliament and in your choice,  
 Prefer the right (my Lords) without respect  
 Of strength or friends, or whatsoever cause  
 That may set forward, any other's part,  
 For right will last, and wrong cannot endure,  
 165 Right mean I his or hers, upon whose name

The people rest by mean of Native line,  
 Or by the virtue of some former Law,  
 Already made their title to advance:  
 Such one (my Lords) let be your chosen king  
 170 Such one so born within your Native Land  
 Such one prefer and in no wise admit  
 The heavy yoke of foreign governance,  
 Let foreign Titles yield to Public wealth,  
 And with that heart wherewith[188] ye now prepare  
 175 Thus to withstand the proud invading foe,  
 With that same heart (my Lords) keep out also  
 Unnatural thralldom of stranger's reign,  
 Ne suffer you against the rules of kind  
 Your Mother Land to serve a Foreign Prince.

Eubulus

180 Lo here the end of Brutus' royal Line,  
 And lo the entry to the woeful wreck  
 And utter ruin of this noble Realm.  
 The royal king, and eke his sons are slain,  
 No ruler rests within the Regal Seat:  
 185 The Heir, to whom the Scepter longs[189], unknown  
 That to each force of Foreign Prince's power  
 Whom vantage of your wretched state  
 By sudden Arms to gain so rich a Realm  
 And to the proud and greedy mind at home  
 190 Whom blinded lust to reign leads to aspire.  
 Lo Britain Realm is left an open prey,  
 A present spoil by Conquest to ensue,  
 Who seeth not now how many rising minds  
 Do feed their thoughts, with hope to reach a Realm  
 195 And who will not by force attempt to win  
 So great a gain that hope persuades to have  
 A simple colour shall for title serve.  
 Who wins the Royal crown will want no right  
 Nor such as shall display by long descent  
 200 A lineal race to prove himself a king,  
 In the meanwhile these civil arms shall rage,  
 And thus a thousand mischiefs shall unfold  
 And far and near spread thee (O Britain Land)  
 All right and Law shall cease, and he that had  
 205 Nothing today, tomorrow shall enjoy  
 Great heaps of good, and he that flowed in wealth

Lo he shall be reft of life and all,  
 And happiest he that than possesseth least.  
 The wives shall suffer rape, the maids deflowered  
 210 And children fatherless shall weep and wail:  
 With fire and sword thy Native folk shall perish.  
 One kinsman shall bereave another life,  
 The father shall unwitting slay the son  
 The son shall slay the sire and know it not:  
 215 Women and maids the cruel Soldier's sword  
 Shall pierce to death, and silly[190] children lo  
 That playing in the streets and fields are found  
 By violent hand shall close their latter day.  
 Whom shall the fierce and bloody Soldier  
 220 Reserve to life, whom shall he spare from death  
 Even thou (O wretched mother) half alive  
 Thou shall behold thy dear and only child  
 Slain with the sword while he yet sucks thy breast:  
 Lo, guiltless blood shall thus everywhere be shed:  
 225 Thus shall the wasted soil yield forth no fruit  
 But death[191] and famine shall possess the Land.  
 The Towns shall be consumed and burnt with fire,  
 The peopled Cities shall wax[192] desolate,  
 And thou (O Britain Land) whilom in renown  
 230 Whilom in wealth and fame shalt thus be torn.  
 Dismembered thus, and thus be rent in twain,  
 Thus wasted and defaced, spoiled and destroyed:  
 These be the fruits: your civil wars will bring.  
 Hereto it comes when kings will not consent,  
 235 To grave advice, but follow willful will:  
 This is the end, when in young Princes' hearts  
 Flattery prevails, and sage[193] rede hath no place:  
 These are the plagues when murder is the mean  
 To make new Heirs unto the Royal Crown.  
 240 Thus wreak the Gods, when the mother's wrath  
 Nought[194] but blood of her own child may 'suage[195].  
 These mischiefs springs with Rebels will arise,  
 To work revenge and judge their Prince's fact:  
 This, this ensues when noble men do fail  
 245 In loyal truth, and subjects will be kings.  
 And this doth grow when lo unto the Prince,  
 Whom death or sudden hap of life bereaves,  
 No certain Heir remains, such certainty  
 As not all only is the rightful Heir,

250 But to the Realm is so made unknown to be  
 And truth thereby vested in Subjects hearts,  
 To owe faith there, where right is known to rest  
 Alas, in Parliament what hope can be,  
 When is of Parliament no hope at all,  
 255 Which though it be assembled by consent,  
 Yet is it not likely with consent to end:  
 While each one for himself, or for his friend  
 Against his foe, shall travail what he may,  
 While now the state left open to the man,  
 260 That shall with greatest force invade the same,  
 Shall fill ambitious minds with gaping hope:  
 When will they ones with yielding hearts agree?  
 Or in the while, how shall the Realm be used?  
 No, no: then Parliament should have been holden<sup>[196]</sup>  
 265 And certain Heirs appointed to the Crown  
 To stay their title of established right:  
 And plant the people in obedience  
 While yet the Prince did live, whose name and power  
 By lawful Summons and authority  
 270 Might make a Parliament to be of force,  
 And might have set the state in quiet stay:  
 But now (O happy man) whom speedy death  
 Deprives of life, ne is enforced to see  
 These hugy mischiefs and these miseries,  
 These civil wars, these murders and these wrongs  
 Of Justice, yet must Jove in fine restore  
 This noble Crown unto the lawful Heir:  
 For right will always live, and rise at length,  
 But wrong can never take deep root to last.

### The end of the Tragedy of King Gorboduc

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[1] Nortone: Norton

[2] Sackuyle :Sackville

[3] Anno Domini: Latin phrase meaning “The year of the Lord”

[4] Thynner: abbreviation for “The Inner”

[5] Fletestreet: Fleet Street

[6] Anno: year (Latin)

[7] dumb show: a mimed show, usually prior to each act, which demonstrates the main actions of that act

[8] fagot: bundle

[9] assayed: tried

[10] Actus primus, Scena Prima: Act I, Scene I

[11] Viden: shortened form of Videna

[12] travails: work or tasks

[13] Aurore: Roman Goddess Aurora, who is the personification of dawn. Her siblings are the sun and the moon. Four of her sons are the winds coming from the four directions and she causes dew when she weeps for a dead son. She is not very well-known.

[14] grievall: grievous

[15] plaint: verbal expression of sorrow, or a lament

[16] froward: contrary

[17] misdone: done wrong to or harmed

[18] thereat: at that

[19] wise: way

[20] send the sacred smoke to Heaven's Throne: reference to a sacrifice

[21] misdeemeth: falsely judging

[22] wight: person (pronounced "white")

[23] whit: none at all

[24] eke: also

[25] requite: repay

[26] wont: habitual

[27] Jove: the poetic equivalent of Jupiter, the highest deity of the ancient Romans

[28] roots: uproots

[29] Actus primus, Scena Secunda: Act I, Scene II

[30] importeth: communicate

[31] erst: first or before

[32] stay: stability

[33] unto: to

[34] swarving: to repay or avenge

[35] wry: distorted

[36] heretofore: previously

[37] wakeful: vigilant

[38] Wherefore: because (also used as "why?" depending on the context)

[39] Sith: equivalent to our "since"; also spelled "sithe" and "sithen"

[40] weals: common wealth, welfare

[41] lusty: vigorous, energetic (unlike the present day meaning)

[42] twaine: two

[43] sundry: separate

[44] This is... ye weigh: as in advice

[45] troubles manifold: many troubles

[46] behighteth: promise

[47] rage of insolence: outbreak of arrogance or disrespect for authority

[48] inured: trained, accustomed

[49] to randon of their will: to go wildly astray

[50] ure: use

[51] y: that

- [52] behooveful: necessary
- [53] egal: equal
- [54] behoof: benefit, advantage
- [55] Morgan: Morgan and his cousin Cunedag mounted a successful rebellion to take Britain from their aunt Cordelia, but when Morgan, the elder, tried to gain control of the full island, he was killed and his cousin reigned
- [56] whilhom: at some past time; once upon a time
- [57] Brute: Trojan Brutus, mythical first king of Britain, who divided the kingdom among his three sons
- [58] moe: more
- [59] egalness: equality
- [60] prevents: anticipates
- [61] Ne: neither, nor
- [62] unkindly: overkindly (in this instance)
- [63] ere: before
- [64] mortal: immortal
- [65] with: within
- [66] compass: extent
- [67] sithence: since then
- [68] sundered: divided into parts, severed
- [69] ruthful: compassionate
- [70] distain: stain, sully, or dishonour
- [71] beseems: is fitting to
- [72] ne recked: did not take heed
- [73] Too soon... on fire: a reference to Phaeton, son of Apollo the sun god. Phaeton convinced his unwilling father to let him drive the sun-chariot for one day, but due to his inexperience, the sun nearly burnt the earth
- [74] draw: influence, change
- [75] self: sole, single
- [76] Humber: the modern county of Humbrria; divides Northern and Southern England
- [77] Marches: boundaries
- [78] writhe: divert, twist
- [79] lust: ambition
- [80] Lewdly: basely, wickedly
- [81] wreak: avenge, put right
- [82] mining: undermining
- [83] advise: advice
- [84] The sticks... in vain: a direct reference to the dumb show of the first act
- [85] This doth... heaven's fire: another reference to Phaeton (see note 77)
- [86] mirror: show, be an example
- [87] Cup of Gold: in legend, poison was commonly administered from golden cups rather than glasses
- [88] potion: poison
- [89] boweth: yields, submits
- [90] undiscree: indiscreet
- [91] Actus secundus. Scena prima: Act II, Scene I

- [92] reave me: violently rob me of
- [93] wreakful: vengeful
- [94] The Hellish Prince: Hades, prince of Hell
- [95] Tantalus' thirst: In mythology, Tantalus was the son of Zeus who, in turn, fed his son Pelops to the gods. Tantalus was sentenced to an eternity of standing up to his neck in water that receded every time he tried to take a drink, and to stand below succulent fruit trees that were blown out of his grasp whenever he tried to reach them
- [96] proud Ixion's wheel: Another mythological reference, wherein Ixion was banished to Hades and strapped to a fiery wheel that turned endlessly
- [97] Gripe to gnaw my growing heart: Allusion to the punishment of Tityus: vultures (gripes) eternally ate his liver, which constantly grew back, only to be eaten again
- [98] Yea: expresses agreement, "yes"
- [99] gree: agree, come to terms with
- [100] towardness: forwardness, forward-thinking
- [101] guileful: sly, crafty
- [102] vassals: servants
- [103] routs: a common or vulgar person
- [104] bereft: stolen, robbed
- [105] Phaeton: in Greek mythology, Phaeton, son of the sun-god Helios, persuaded his father to allow him to drive the sun-chariot, but swerved out of control, coming close to burning the earth. Seeing this, Zeus sent a thunderbolt to kill Phaeton instantly.
- [106] Phoebus: in Greek mythology, the sun is also known as "the lamp of Phoebus," whose name literally means "the radiant one"
- [107] green: inexperienced or not sullied by battle
- [108] Actus Secundus, Scena Secunda: Act II, Scene II
- [109] reft: divided, cleft, split
- [110] yieliden: submissive
- [111] bootless: without help or remedy; incurable, remediless, helpless
- [112] Illion: the citadel of Troy, used as name of city
- [113] Trojans: inhabitants of the city of Troy, who were conquered after a ten-year siege when a Greek army entered the walls of their city concealed inside an ostensible peace offering of a giant wooden horse
- [114] randon: to fly at random.
- [115] foreset: predetermined
- [116] rede: counsel, advice
- [117] noisome: noxious, foul
- [118] Actus tertius, Scena prima: Act III, Scene I
- [119] Simois: river god of Greek mythology
- [120] Phrygian: pertaining to Phrygia, an ancient country of Asia Minor, or its inhabitants who were known for their war-like behavior
- [121] Priam: King of Troy during the Trojan war, father of Hector, Paris, Troilus and Cassandra
- [122] Hecuba: wife of Priam, Queen of Troy
- [123] Hests: requests (noun)
- [124] assuage: to calm or appease
- [125] pease: to make peace or reconcile with



- [126] list: desire, choose
- [127] imbrued: stained
- [128] Hautboys: A wooden double-reed wind instrument of high pitch.
- [129] Alecto, Megera, Cisiphone: three Furies in Greek mythology; Alecto symbolized constant anger, Megaera, jealousy, and Tisiphone was the avenger of murder
- [130] Medea: daughter of King Aeetes, Medea aided Jason on his quest for the Golden Fleece: after she was betrayed by her lover, Medusa extracted revenge by killing their two children
- [131] Athama, Ino: Athamas and Ino married and in order to save their country from drought they attempted to sacrifice Athamas's two children from his previous marriage. Though they were thwarted, Athamas went mad and killed one their children. Ino fled with their other son but both drowned
- [132] Cambises: a Persian king who murdered first his brother, and then his cousin, who he had married, before he accidentally fell on his own sword
- [133] Athea: mother of Meleager, Althea preserved a brand that was linked to her son's life. When he killed her two brothers she threw the brand in the fire and Meleager instantly died
- [134] Actus quartus, Scena prima: Act IV, Scene I
- [135] sola: alone; therefore, Videna, alone
- [136] hapt: happened
- [137] hugy: huge
- [138] ruth: compassion, pity
- [139] pined: exhausted by suffering
- [140] abye: purchase, buy
- [141] caitiff: wretched, wicked, miserable
- [142] wrought: formed, twisted
- [143] wroke: to drive, press, force to move
- [144] Actus quartus, Scena secunda: Act IV, Scene II
- [145] behest: a vow, a promise
- [146] sithens: since
- [147] Ireful: full of ire; angry, wrathful
- [148] unhap: misfortune, mishap
- [149] accursed: lying under a curse or anathema; anathematized; doomed to perdition or misery
- [150] clepe: to proclaim, to cry , to call
- [151] repined: to feel or manifest discontent or dissatisfaction; to fret, murmur, or complain
- [152] rancour: inveterate and bitter ill-feeling, grudge, or animosity; malignant hatred or spitefulness
- [153] rent: a separation of parts produced by tearing or similar violence
- [154] without protract: to extend in duration; to prolong to cause to continue or last longer
- [155] accursed: worthy of the curse, or bringing a curse along with it; execrable, damnable; detestable, hateful
- [156] doleful: fraught with, accompanied by, or causing grief, sorrow; distressful, gloomy, dreary, dismal
- [157] peerless: without peer; unequalled, matchless
- [158] twink: a winking of the eye
- [159] senseless stock: senseless or stupid person
- [160] direful: dreadful
- [161] dispoiled: stripped
- [162] braid: a sudden movement
- [163] hap: chance or fortune

- [164] comely: handsome
- [165] tilt: a combat or encounter (for exercise or sport) between two armed men on horseback, with lances or similar weapons, the aim of each being to throw his opponent from the saddle
- [166] girt: saddle
- [167] ire: anger; wrath
- [168] Blood asketh blood: a reference to the Biblical saying “an eye for an eye”
- [169] Harquebusiers: a soldier armed with a harquebus, an early type of portable gun, which was supported upon a tripod or trestle in the field, and afterwards upon a forked ‘rest’. The name literally means “hook-gun” in German and Finnish. See [Harquebusiers of St. George](#)
- [170] tumults: commotion of a multitude, usually with confused speech or uproar; public disturbance; disorderly or riotous proceeding
- [171] Mulmutius: son of Cloten, King of Cornwall, who reduced Great Britain to a single monarchy.
- [172] Reduced: Recall, bring back
- [173] Actus quintus, Scena prima: Act V Scene I
- [174] Carrion: dead putrefying flesh of human or beast; flesh unfit for food.
- [175] behooveth: a contract by deed
- [176] farder: farther
- [177] guerdon: reward for
- [178] holden: possessed
- [179] perilous: full of risk and danger
- [180] adrad: frightened
- [181] solicit: persuade
- [182] Actus quintus, Scenda secundus: Act V, Scene II
- [183] lewd: ignorant
- [184] stole: secretly made their way
- [185] thralldom: captivity
- [186] Albanian: Scottish
- [187] Regal Diadem: A distinction or adornment conferring glory or dignity; symbolic of a crown
- [188] werewith: with which
- [189] longs: wants
- [190] silly: innocent
- [191] derth: scarcity of food
- [192] wax: become increasingly
- [193] sage: wise, sound judgment
- [194] nought: nothing
- [195] ‘suage: assuage (to calm or appease)
- [196] should have been holden: should have ruled



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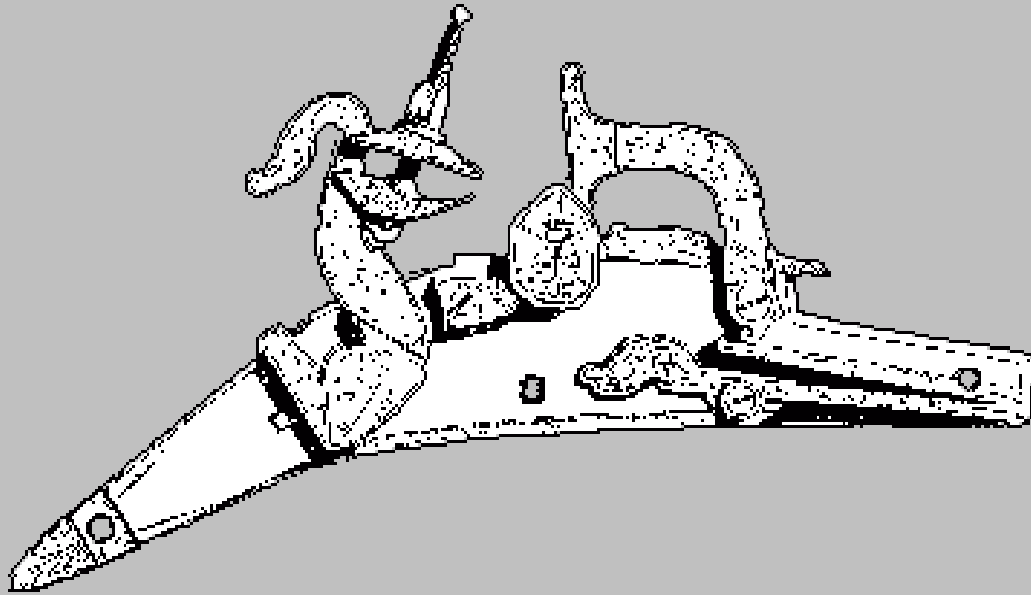
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The glorious company from 1400 to the present day  
**The Harquebusiers of St. George**  
**Muzzle-loading in the story of target shooting in Pinerolo**

**T**he earliest reference to gunpowder in Pinerolo dates back to 1347. A war was being waged against the Lords of Milan and Monferrato and, in the town's tax records, expenses for the equipment included "pulverem scloporum" proving that fire arms had already been known in the region for some time. The particular skill required to use these weapons favoured competitions and contests, and the Princes' benevolence towards the "Abazie degli Stolti", the youthful companies with military-religious ends, which thrived in many Piedmontese cities, grew. In 1405 there were two in Pinerolo, "of the mountain" for the San Maurizio district and "of the plain" around San Donato. When the enemy attacked, these men, armed with guns and crossbows, would be the first to run to the walls. A map dating back to April 25, 1489 informs us of a "Company of St. George" founded by the consortium of Pinerolo wool merchants. They had their headquarters in the church of San Domenico with an altar dedicated to their patron saint. In 1337, there was already a chapel named for St. George, patron saint of soldiers and knights in the old castle belonging to the Acaja Princes. This manuscript does not however specify whether the woollen merchants were already dabbling with the Harquebus at that time. This art, that had long been fashionable, linked duty with pleasure and, in those turbulent times, everybody had to be able to defend the city and, by extension, their own property. Training especially of young people was vital

and the company of harquebusiers was very widespread. Almost certainly, our harquebusiers sprang from these early groups but there are no known documents to prove it. The company quickly grew in importance: in 1504 it was legally recognised with an Abbot or Abbà with four syndics. Later it took the title of "Venerable Fraternal Consortium and Holy Century of the Harquebusiers of St. George" and in 1515 this was reconfirmed by the Duke of Savoy, Charles III. In 1553 there were new regulations governing the offer that the wool merchants had to pay to maintain the company : two florins and two grosses for each centre. In 1575 it obtained the same privileges as the Turin company from Emanuel Filbert. The Harquebusiers met on Sundays on the public square in front of their church where they shot at the "tavolazzo" a round wooden target painted with concentric circles and with a nail in the middle, the size of a harquebuse ball. Another target was the "parrot" whose green image was placed on a perch the due distance away. The contest was held annually on St. Donato's day and many people flooded in from the nearby villages. The best shot became king of the Harquebusiers, privileged and exempt from taxes and duty until the contest the next year. In 1630 the French troops of Cardinal Richelieu occupied Pinerolo and brought the plague with them. Over the next two years the city lost more than half its population and the "corporation of woollen merchants" declined but the Harquebusiers of St. George survived in their sentiments of piety and religion, in their attention to succouring the infirm or putting out fires, in their joyful character, in appearing at celebrations and religious occasions, in putting themselves at disposal of the authorities whatever the emergency. They were one of the last "Societies of the People" standing in for the town militia and it was above all for these qualities that they are remembered by the city, in the name of a street to this day. In 1682 the game of the Harquebusier was active in the city since the French conquerors evidently permitted it. In 1696, Pinerolo returned to Savoy rule, the next year permission for the target shooting was denied ; a dark period followed that ended in 1732 when permission was once more granted by Charles Emanuel III and was renewed in 1759 and 1818 by Victor Emanuel who renewed the permission to play the "tavolazzo" game. Many people from the nearby villages joined and the number of members grew to such an extent that a new practice area had to be bought in 1827, the present target range. The affiliates of the "Brotherhood of the Holy Sacrament and Rosary" based at the monastery at Cantalupa also came to shoot in Pinerolo. Through royal patents Victor Amadeus had given permission to this brotherhood to practice the game of Harquebuse in that place. In 1836 the Pinerolo Company had become famous, the Duke and Duchess of Genoa presented them with a standard and the state-of-the art model of carbine. The archives of the Association were given to the City Council in 1851. On April 26, 1896 the Company of the Harquebusiers of St. George merged with the National Target Association thus

reaching the end of the road. A contest with ancient weapons was organised for the commemoration of the Battle of Marseilles (October 4,1693). The success of the event induced a number of enthusiasts to found a muzzle-loading target shooting section dedicated to the St. George Harquebusiers. Nowadays the shooters of the company take part in a number of national competitions and contents and they have been in the National muzzle-loading championships on several occasions. In Pisa, Milan and Turin they have given good account of themselves winning recognition from the National Association of Harquebusiers.

The ancient weapons thus return to make themselves heard in Pinerolo "Target Shooting", something about which they boast a very old and honoured tradition.

