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 Excerpt
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☛ A MIRROR FOR MAGISTRATES.

5 Wherein may be seen by
 example of other with how grie-
 vous plagues vices are punished, and
 how frail and unstable worldly
 prosperity is found, even of
 those whom Fortune see-
 meth most highly to favour.
 *

10 *Foelix quem faciunt aliena pericula cautum*

Anno 1559

Londini,

In aedibus Thomae Marshe.

10. *Foelix quem faciunt aliena pericula cautum*: 'Happy is he who is made wary by the dangers of others', a phrase often ascribed in the medieval and early modern periods to the Roman poet Horace (d. 8 BC). 13–14. *Londini, In aedibus Thomae Marshe*: London, In the house of Thomas Marshe.

[1] 1563: ¶ A [9] 1563: ☛ [11] 1563: Anno. Fleet Street near to Saint Dunstan's Church by
 1563 [13–14] 1563: ¶ Imprinted at London in Thomas Marshe

[Baldwin's Dedication]

Love and Live.

☛ To the nobility and all other in office,
 God grant wisdom and all things needful
 for the preservation
 of their estates.
 Amen.

Plato, among many other of his notable sentences concerning the government of a commonweal, hath this: 'Well is that realm governed, in which the ambitious desire not to bear office'.⁴² Whereby you may perceive, right honourable, what offices are where they be duly executed, not gainful spoils for the greedy to hunt for but painful toils for the heedful to be charged with. You may perceive also by this sentence that there is nothing more necessary in a commonweal than that officers be diligent and trusty in their charges. And sure in whatsoever realm such provision is made that officers be forced to do their duties, there is as hard a matter to get an officer as it is in other places to shift off and put by those that with flattery, bribes, and other shifts sue and press for offices. For the ambitious (that is to say, prowlers for power or gain) seek not for offices to help other, for which cause offices are ordained, but with the undoing of other to prank up themselves. And therefore bar them once of this bait and force them to do their duties, and they will give more to be rid fro their charges than they did at the first to buy them, for they seek only their commodity and ease.

And, therefore, where the ambitious seek no office, there, no doubt, offices are duly ministered, and where offices are duly ministered, it cannot be chosen but the people are good, whereof must needs follow a good

Heading . **Love and Live**: William Baldwin's personal motto. 12. **prowlers**: persons who seek gain by dishonourable means. 13–14. **prank up**: glorify (lit. decorate).

[Heading] 1563: ¶ TO

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20 commonweal, for if the officers be good, the people cannot be ill. Thus,
 the goodness or badness of any realm lieth in the goodness or badness of
 the rulers. And therefore not without great cause do the holy apostles so
 earnestly charge us to pray for the magistrates, for indeed the wealth and
 quiet of every commonweal, the disorder also and miseries of the same,
 25 come specially through them.⁴³

I need not go either to the Romans or Greeks for proof hereof, neither
 yet to the Jews or other nations, whose commonweals have alway flour-
 ished while their officers were good and decayed and ran to ruin when
 naughty men had the regiment. Our own country stories, if we read and
 30 mark them, will show us examples enow: would God we had not seen mo
 than enow! I purpose not to stand here upon the particulars, because they
 be in part set forth in the tragedies, yet by the way this I note, wishing all
 other to do the like, namely, that as good governors have never lacked their
 35 deserved renown, so have not the bad escaped infamy, besides such plagues
 as are horrible to hear of.

For God, the ordainer of offices, although he suffer them for punish-
 ment of the people to be often occupied of such, as are rather spoilers
 and Judases than toilers or justices (whom the scripture therefore calleth
 hypocrites), yet suffereth he them not to scape unpunished, because they
 40 dishonour him, for it is God's own office, yea, his chief office, which they
 bear and abuse.⁴⁴ For as justice is the chief virtue, so is the ministration
 thereof the chiefest office, and therefore hath God established it with the
 chiefest name, honouring and calling kings and all officers under them by
 his own name, gods. Ye be all gods, as many as have in your charge any
 45 ministration of justice. What a foul shame were it for any now to take
 upon them the name and office of God and in their doings to show them-
 selves devils. God cannot of justice but plague such shameless presump-
 tion and hypocrisy, and that with shameful death, diseases, or infamy.⁴⁵

How he hath plagued evil rulers from time to time in other nations, you
 50 may see gathered in Bochas's book intituled *The Fall of Princes*, translated
 into English by Lydgate.⁴⁶ How he hath dealt with some of our coun-
 trymen your ancestors for sundry vices not yet left, this book named *A*

30. **enow**: enough. 50. **Bochas's book**: Giovanni Boccaccio's *De Casibus Virorum Illustrium*, as metrically para-
 phrased and translated by John Lydgate under the title *The Fall of Princes*.

[26] 1563: for the proof

Mirror for Magistrates can show, which therefore I humbly offer unto your honours, beseeching you to accept it favourably. For here as in a looking
 55 glass, you shall see (if any vice be in you) how the like hath been punished in other heretofore, whereby admonished, I trust it will be a good occasion to move you to the sooner amendment. This is the chiefest end why it is set forth, which God grant it may attain.

The work was begun and part of it printed four year ago but hindered
 60 by the lord chancellor that then was; nevertheless, through the means of my Lord Stafford, lately perused and licenced.⁴⁷ When I first took it in hand, I had the help of many granted, and offered of some, but of few performed, scarce of any, so that where I intended to have continued it to Queen Mary's time I have been fain to end it much sooner, yet so that it
 65 may stand for a pattern till the rest be ready, which with God's grace (if I may have any help) shall be shortly.⁴⁸

In the meanwhile, my lords and gods (for so I may call you), I most humbly beseech you favourably to accept this rude mirror and diligently to read and consider it. And although you shall find in it that some have
 70 for their virtue been envied and murdered, yet cease not you to be virtuous but do your offices to the uttermost. Punish sin boldly, both in yourselves and other, so shall God (whose lieutenants you are) either so maintain you that no malice shall prevail or, if it do, it shall be for your good and to your eternal glory both here and in heaven, which I beseech God you may covet
 75 and attain. Amen.

Yours most humble,
 William Baldwin

In the 1563 edition, Baldwin replaced the words of the penultimate paragraph (as presented above) of the 1559 dedication with these lines:

80 The work was begun and part of it printed in Queen Mary's time, but hindered by the lord chancellor that then was. Nevertheless, through the means of my Lord Stafford, the first part was licensed and imprinted the first year of the reign of this our most noble and virtuous queen and dedicate

60. **lord chancellor:** Stephen Gardiner (d. 1555). 61. **Lord Stafford:** Henry Stafford (d. 1563), tenth Baron Stafford. 83. **first ... queen:** the first regnal year of Queen Elizabeth I (17 November 1558–16 November 1559).

[59–66] 1563: see the penultimate paragraph of the 1563 dedication, printed in this edition above at the end of the 1559 dedication text [68] 1563:

beseech your honours favourably [71] 1563: uttermost: suppress sin [72] 1563: (whose officers you are) [74] 1563: may both covet

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85 then to your honours with this preface. Since which time, although I have
been called to another trade of life, yet my good Lord Stafford hath not
ceased to call upon me to publish so much as I had gotten at other men's
hands, so that through his lordship's earnest means I have now also set forth
another part containing as little of mine own as the first part doth of other
90 men's, which, in the name of all the authors, I humbly dedicate unto your
honours, instantly wishing that it may so like and delight your minds that
your cheerful receiving thereof may encourage worthy wits into enterprise
and perform the rest.⁴⁹ Which, as soon as I may procure, I intend through
God's leave and your favourable allowance to publish with all expedition.

90. **instantly**: fervently.

[Prose 1]

¶ A brief Memorial
 of sundry unfortunate Englishmen

William Baldwin
 to the Reader

When the printer had purposed with himself to print Lydgate's book of the *Fall of Princes* and had made privy thereto many both honourable and worshipful, he was counselled by divers of them to procure to have the story continued from whereas Bochas left unto this present time, chiefly of such as
 5 Fortune had dallied with here in this island, which might be as a mirror for all men as well noble as others, to show the slippery deceits of the wavering lady and the due reward of all kind of vices. Which advice liked him so well that he required me to take pains therein. But because it was a matter passing my wit and skill and more thankless than gainful to meddle in, I refused
 10 utterly to undertake it, except I might have the help of such as in wit were apt, in learning allowed, and in judgement and estimation able to wield and furnish so weighty an enterprise, thinking even so to shift my hands.

But he, earnest and diligent in his affairs, procured Atlas to set under his shoulder, for, shortly after, divers learned men whose many gifts need
 15 few praises consented to take upon them part of the travail. And when certain of them to the number of seven were through a general assent at an appointed time and place gathered together to devise thereupon, I resorted unto them, bearing with me the book of Bochas, translated by Dan Lydgate, for the better observation of his order, which, although we liked
 20 well, yet would it not comelily serve, seeing that both Bochas and Lydgate were dead, neither were there any alive that meddled with like argument, to whom the unfortunate might make their moan.

To make therefore a state meet for the matter, they all agreed that I should usurp Bochas's room and the wretched princes complain unto me,
 25 and took upon themselves every man for his part to be sundry personages

1. the printer: John Wayland (d. c. 1571). **1–2. Lydgate's book of the *Fall of Princes*:** John Lydgate's *Fall of Princes* (c. 1431–9). **4. Bochas:** Giovanni Boccaccio (d. 1375), author of the Latin prose work that Lydgate paraphrased, translated, and put into metre as *The Fall of Princes*. **12. shift my hands:** evade fulfilment of my charge. **13–14: procured Atlas to set under his shoulder:** i.e., he induced me to take on this weighty task. **18. Dan:** an honorific title. **19. order:** arrangement; practice. **20. comelily:** properly. **24. room:** role.

and in their behalves to bewail unto me their grievous chances, heavy destinies, and woeful misfortunes.

This done, we opened such books of chronicles as we had there present, and Master Ferrers, after he had found where Bochas left, which was about
 30 the end of King Edward III's reign, to begin the matter, said thus:⁵⁰

'I marvel what Bochas meaneth to forget among his miserable princes such as were of our nation, whose number is as great as their adventures wonderful. For to let pass all both Britons, Danes, and Saxons and to come
 35 to the last conquest, what a sort are they and some even in his own time? As, for example, King Richard I, slain with a quarrel in his chief prosperity, also King John his brother, as some say, poisoned – are not their histories rueful and of rare example?⁵¹ But as it should appear, he being an Italian, minded most the Roman and Italic story, or else perhaps he wanted our
 40 country chronicles. It were therefore a goodly and a notable matter to search and discourse our whole story from the first beginning of the inhabiting of the isle.

'But seeing the printer's mind is to have us follow where Lydgate left, we will leave that great labour to other that may intend it and, as blind Bayard is alway boldest, I will begin at the time of Richard II, a time as
 45 unfortunate as the ruler therein.⁵² And forasmuch, friend Baldwin, as it shall be your charge to note and pen orderly the whole process, I will so far as my memory and judgement serveth, somewhat further you in the truth of the story.⁵³ And therefore, omitting the ruffle made by Jack Straw and his meiny, and the murder of many notable men which thereby happened
 50 (for Jack, as ye know, was but a poor prince),⁵⁴ I will begin with a notable example which within a while after ensued. And although he be no great prince, yet sithens he had a princely office, I will take upon me the miserable person of Sir Robert Tresilian, chief justice of England, and of other which suffered with him, thereby to warn all of his authority and profes-
 55 sion to take heed of wrong judgements, misconstruing of laws, or wresting the same to serve the prince's turns, which rightfully brought them to a miserable end, which they may justly lament in the manner ensuing.'

29. **Master Ferrers**: George Ferrers (d. 1579). 33–4. **For ... time**: 'For passing over all of the fallen Britons, Danes and Saxons in English history in order to consider only those who have suffered since the last conquest [the Norman invasion], how numerous they are, and some of them lived and died even in Boccaccio's own time!' 35. **quarrel**: arrow. 43–4. **blind Bayard**: the impetuous bay horse ('bayard') of the proverbial phrase 'as bold as blind Bayard', which was applied to those inclined to act without considering the consequences. 48. **ruffle**: commotion; **Jack Straw**: one of the leaders of the 1381 Peasants' Revolt. 49. **meiny**: rabble. 52. **sithens**: since.

[Tragedy 1]

The Fall of Robert Tresilian, Chief Justice of England, and Other
 his Fellows, for Misconstruing the Laws and Expounding Them to
 Serve the Prince's Affections

In the rueful register of mischief and mishap,
 Baldwin we beseech thee with our names to begin,
 Whom unfriendly Fortune did train unto a trap,
 When we thought our state most stable to have been,
 So lightly leese they all which all do ween to win. [5]
 Learn by us, ye lawyers and judges of the land,
 Uncorrupt and upright in doom alway to stand.

And print it for a precedent to remain forever,
 Enrol and record it in tables made of brass,
 Engrave it in marble that may be razed never, ⁵⁵ [10]
 Where judges and justicers may see as in a glass
 What fee is for falsehood and what our wages was
 Who, for our prince's pleasure, corrupt with meed and awe,
 Wittingly and wretchedly did wrest the sense of law.⁵⁶

A change more new or strange seldom hath be seen, [15]
 Than from the bench above to come down to the bar;
 Was never state so turned in no time as I ween,
 As they to become clients that counsellors erst were.
 But such is Fortune's play, which featly can prefer
 The judge that sat above full low beneath to stand [20]
 At the bar a prisoner holding up his hand.

3. **train**: lure. 5. **leese**: lose. 11. **justicers**: high-court judges. 13. **meed**: corrupt gains; **awe**: submissive reverence (for King Richard). 16. **bar**: the wooden rail before the judicial bench at which prisoners stood during arraignment, trial, or sentencing. 19. **featly can prefer**: neatly can promote (used ironically).

[21] 1563: bar as prisoner

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Which in others' cause could stoutly speak and plead,
 Both in court and country, careless of the trial,
 Stand mute like mummers without advice or rede,
 Unable to utter a true plea of denial,⁵⁷ [25]
 Which have seen the day when that for half a rial
 We could by very art have made the black seem white
 And matters of most wrong to have appeared most right.

Behold me unfortunate foreman of this flock,
 Tresilian sometime chief justice of this land, [30]
 By descent a gentleman; no stain was in my stock.
 Lockton, Holt, and Bealknap, with other of my band⁸
 Which the law and justice had wholly in our hand,
 Under the second Richard, a prince of great estate,
 To whom froward fortune gave a foul checkmate. [35]

In the common laws our skill was so profound,
 Our credit and authority such and so esteemed,
 That whatso we concluded was taken for a ground,
 Allowed was for law whatso to us best seemed.
 Life, death, lands, goods, and all by us was deemed, [40]
 Whereby with easy pain so great gain we did get,
 That everything was fish that came unto our net.

At sessions and at sizes we bare the stroke and sway,
 In patents and commissions of quorum always chief,
 So that to whether side soever we did weigh, [45]
 Were it right or wrong it passed without reproof:
 We let hang the true man somewhiles to save a thief.
 Of gold and silver our hands were never empty;
 Offices, farms, and fees fell to us in great plenty.

22. **Which**: Those who. 24. **mummers**: persons unable to speak. 26. **rial**: coin worth fifteen shillings. 29. **foreman**: leader (with an echo of the chief man of a jury). 42. **everything ... net**: everything that came to us was for our profit (a proverbial saying). 43. **At ... sway**: At trials and at assizes we held chief authority and power (**assizes**: legal sessions held periodically in English counties by judges of the higher courts). 44. **In ... chief**: In the letters patent and official documents designating the quorum, our names took the most important places (**quorum**: a group of eminent judges, the presence of one or more of whose members on shire peace commissions was necessary to make rulings valid). 46. **reproof**: reproof. 49. **farms**: annual payments; **fees**: rewards; bribes.

[26] 1563; when for half

But what thing may suffice unto the greedy man? [50]
 The more he hath in hold, the more he doth desire.
 Happy and twice happy is he that wisely can
 Content himself with that which reason doth require
 And moileth for no more than for his needful hire,
 But greediness of mind doth never keep the size, [55]
 Which, though it have enough, yet doth it not suffice.

For like as dropsy patients drink and still be dry,
 Whose unstaunched thirst no liquor can allay,
 And drink they never so much, yet still for more they cry,
 So covetous catchers toil both night and day, [60]
 Greedy and ever needy, prowling for their prey.
 Oh endless thirst of gold, corruptor of all laws,
 What mischief is on mould whereof thou are not cause?

Thou madest us forget the faith of our profession,
 When serjeants we were sworn to serve the common law, [65]
 Which was that in no point we should make digression
 From approved principles in sentence nor in saw.⁵⁹
 But we unhappy wretches without all dread and awe
 Of the judge eternal, for world's vain promotion,
 More to man than God did bear our whole devotion. [70]

The laws we interpreted and statutes of the land
 Not truly by the text but nully by a gloze,
 And words that were most plain when they by us were scanned
 We turned by construction like a Welshman's hose,⁶⁰
 Whereby many one both life and land did lose, [75]
 Yet this we made a mean to mount aloft on mules:
 To serve kings in all points, men must somewhile break rules.⁶¹

Thus climbing and contending alway to the top,
 From high unto higher and then to be most high,
 The honeydew of Fortune so fast on us did drop [80]
 That of King Richard's counsel we came to be full nigh,

54. **moileth**: strives. 55. **size**: proper limits. 58. **liquor**: liquid. 63. **mould**: earth. 67. **sentence nor in saw**: neither in judicial rulings nor decrees. 72. **nully**: incorrectly, in a legally invalid manner (evidently a nonce coined on the model of 'null', meaning without legal force); **gloze**: false exposition. 80. **honeydew**: manna.