

The Play  
of  
Wit and Science  
by  
John Redford

Edited by  
Ben Byram-Wigfield

This book is issued by the publisher as an electronic book, to be freely distributed across computer networks and viewed on screen. The contents may be printed for greater legibility and ease of reading, subject to the condition that such printed matter shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, resold, hired out or otherwise circulated without the publisher's consent. This electronic document may only be distributed in its entirety, without alteration, emendation or deletion of the content. No part of the content may be used in any other publication (excepting fair-dealing) without the express permission of the publisher.

*Printed and bound copies are available from the publisher on request.*

First published in the United Kingdom  
by Ben Byram-Wigfield in 2004.

© Ben Byram-Wigfield 2004. All rights reserved.  
Edited, typeset and designed by Ben Byram-Wigfield.

## Preface

**J**OHAN Redford is most noted as a composer of early English keyboard music, but there are very few surviving details of his life. He was already a vicar-choral at St. Paul's Cathedral in 1534, when he signed Henry's VIII's Act of Supremacy. He died in 1547.

The Play of Wit and Science survives, barely, in a manuscript in the British Library, Additional 15233. The book, bound along the short edge, starts with pages of organ music, before being turned on its side to accommodate text in the style of a policeman's notebook. The play is, unfortunately, missing the beginning part; and while a synopsis of the opening can be gleaned from the remainder, it cannot be certain how great a portion has been lost.

It is deeply lamentable that, as well as the beginning of the play, none of the music for the songs survives, and the text of the final song is also missing. That having been said, we are fortunate for having what remains. The Play of Wit and Science is a morality play, with each of the characters being a personification of human characteristics. As with many other allegorical dramas of the era, the story takes the form of a journey, which is only completed after the lead character has undergone a transformation, having grown in experience and understanding along the way.

The drama was written for the choristers of St. Paul's Cathedral to perform at court. The tradition of choristers from St. Paul's (and also the Chapel Royal at Windsor) performing dramatically as well as musically had been established some twenty years earlier and was to continue into the seventeenth century. As the Almoner and Master of the Choristers, Redford was in overall charge of the choristers' education.

This play is a highly important work on two counts: firstly, as a fragmentary morality play of the mid-sixteenth century, to be performed by children. Secondly, it offers a rare example of the literary skill of a musician (there is no record of Redford's having attended University.) The manuscript also contains verse by Redford, including a chorister's lament at the beatings dealt out by, presumably, Redford himself; and the macaronic poem, *Nolo mortem peccatoris*, later set to music by Thomas Morley, Organist at St. Paul's some fifty years later.

## The Play of Wit & Science

### Editorial Treatment

There is almost no punctuation in the original, save for a handful of oblique strokes, which do not adequately represent a coherent punctuation scheme. The spelling is arbitrary, and varies even amongst repetitions of the same word. The handwriting is not the clearest, with many superscript abbreviations, and it uses an alphabet that omits j and u, and also includes an extra symbol for the possessive s, derived from a Latin shorthand. There is a good deal of subsequent insertion and deletion, some of which would suggest that the text was copied from another written source. Many of the stage directions appear to have been written as an afterthought to the text.

Ambiguity is therefore easily incurred in interpreting the dialogue, and different eyes many find alternatives that are equally plausible — or indeed more so than those presented here. All the punctuation, including sentence division, is therefore editorial. Spelling has been standardized. Those stage directions which are either necessary or desirable, but absent, have been added, enclosed by square brackets. The definitions of archaic words have been compiled in a glossary.

### Synopsis

The missing portion has been summarised as follows:

Wit, the son of Reason and Nature, expresses to his mother his affection for Science, the daughter of Reason and Experience. Nature provides him with a servant, Confidence, to help him win the lady. Through this go-between, Science sends Wit a coat, as a token of her affection, and Wit gives Confidence a portrait of himself to send to Science. Wit then presents his case to Reason, and is told that he must first vanquish the monster Tediousness, Science's greatest enemy. To help him in his task, Reason appoints Instruction, Diligence and Study as his guides.

The surviving text continues the story.

Reason further assists Wit with the gift of a mirror, and arranges for Honest Recreation to provide additional assistance. Wit, with Diligence, Study and Instruction, heads off on his journey. Instruction warns Wit not to approach Tediousness without the sword of Comfort, from Science. Wit ignores the advice and continues with the others towards Tediousness. The monster kills Wit, and his companions flee. However, he is soon revived by Honest Recreation, with Comfort, Quickness and Strength, by the singing of a song. Wit then falls into the arms of Idleness, who lulls him to sleep and blackens his face. Honest Recreation de-

## John Redford

parts, leaving the stage for a comic routine in which Idleness tries to school Ignorance, using a contrived aide memoire by which he is taught his own name. Idleness then swaps Wit's coat for that of Ignorance.

Meanwhile, Confidence searches for Wit, whilst Fame, Riches, Favour and Worship sing a song, heralding the arrival of Experience and Science. Wit accosts them, but they do not recognise him, despite having his portrait, because he has on Ignorance's coat and has a face marked by Idleness. He flies into a rage, swearing and insulting the ladies, who leave. He cannot understand their behaviour, until he looks into the mirror of Reason. Reason then appears, with Shame, who whips Wit into contrition. Reason forgives Wit, and return to him his companions, including Instruction. Confidence then gives Wit the sword of Comfort, and takes a heart of gold from him to give to Science. Wit and his companions set off to do battle with Tediousness. This time, they overcome the monster using tactics and teamwork. Wit is given a gown of knowledge in celebration.

Science witnesses the battle from a distance, and rushes to meet Wit. All agree to the marriage, a song is sung, and then Science issues a warning to Wit that he should not mistreat her. In return, he promises that he could not bear to misuse Science, and calls upon Experience and Reason to help him keep this promise. Joy and long life is wished for King Henry and his Queen, and for all people. A song is sung.

### Critical Notes

It has been suggested by Dr. Hillary Nunn that Redford's play contains a thinly disguised re-telling of Henry's rejection of Anne of Cleves. This would date it between 1540 and Redford's death in 1547. If it had been staged at court, the final lines of the play might suggest that it was performed at a celebration for one of Henry's later wives.

There are two major elements of debate: firstly, whether Wit is on stage at the start of the extant text; and secondly, whether the portrait of Wit is a true likeness or not. Most readings conclude that Wit is on stage, and that the portrait does not resemble him. In this light, the play is not only a morality play detailing the correct way to an education, but is also a lesson in the distinction between appearance and inner qualities. At the start, Reason states that Wit's inner graces make him a suitable match for his daughter, almost in spite his outward appearance. Confidence then shows the audience a portrait of Wit, and his speech has much comic value if the portraiture is inaccurate.

## The Play of Wit & Science

Dr. Nunn has shown that this would have an extra resonance for a courtly audience, as they would have been involved in the furore over Holbein's portrait of Anne of Cleves. Henry, having seen the portrait and being assured by his courtiers of its accuracy, consented to marry her; however, he was less than impressed with the reality. By showing the courtiers another false portrait, and asking them for their opinion, Redford is embarrassing his audience for a second time. Alternatively, if the portrait is accurate, then it draws attention to the missing inner qualities of an individual that a painting cannot represent.

Wit's journey of transformation continues, as he ignores Instruction and is killed by Tediousness. Upon his revival, Reason comments on how Wit's personality has changed, and Wit then allows himself to be distracted, firstly by Honest Recreation, and then by Idleness, who transforms Wit by blackening his face and changing his clothes. Next, the comic exchange between Idleness and her pupil, Ignorance, presents a satire upon lazy educators who teach their charges mechanically.

Wit remains sleeping on the stage while Confidence searches for him; Experience and Science are unable to recognise him, even by comparing him to his portrait. This is the first time that the audience can compare the portrait and the subject at one time. Science and Experience both deny any comparison, as Wit is both outwardly different, and also inwardly changed with his constant swearing and foolish behaviour. Science then gives an accurate assessment of Wit's appearance and character, which astounds Wit.

Wit checks himself in Reason's mirror, which he condemns as faulty until he turns it on the audience, and sees them as "fair and clear". Only then does he realise what he has become. But Wit's comments on the audience's reflection can also be seen in the context of outward appearance and true nature: Redford is again asking the audience to make a judgment, but this time it is self-judgment.

Wit, now duly contrite and once more transformed by a coat of knowledge, kills Tediousness, and celebrates his union with Science. He has now become the idealised Wit whose qualities have been spoken about by Reason, Confidence and Science throughout the play. At the very end of the celebration, Science gives a dark warning to Wit against her ill-treatment. This is a strange and risky comment to make if the play was indeed performed in front of Henry VIII; however, if it was at a wedding celebration, then perhaps the voice of Experience reassures the bride that her husband has learned from past errors.

## John Redford

### Notes for Performance

The play requires a cast of twenty, though eight of the minor rôles could be doubled-up, reducing the number to only sixteen. Originally, boys would have performed all the parts, but four of the rôles are female, nine are male, and seven are of unspecified gender, though in classical mythology, Fame, Riches, Favour and Worship are represented as female. (The rôle of Nature, if it existed, has been lost.)

### Prop List

The following items are necessary, being mentioned in the text.

- I hand mirror of Reason
- I portrait of Wit
- I sword of Comfort
- I sword
- I mall (hammer) of Tediousness
- I garment of Science
- I gown of knowledge
- I fool's coat
- I heart of gold
- I helmet / monster's head
- I whistle

# The Play of Wit & Science

## Dramatis Personae *in order of appearance*

Reason  
Instruction  
Confidence  
Wit  
Diligence  
Study  
Tediousness  
Honest Recreation  
Comfort  
Quickness  
Strength  
Idleness  
Ignorance  
Fame  
Favour  
Riches  
Fame  
Experience  
Science  
Shame



## The Play of Wit & Science

To love each other — straw for the patches  
Of worldly muck! Science hath enow 25  
For them both to live. If Wit be through  
Stricken in love, as he signs hath showed,  
I doubt not my daughter well bestowed.  
The end of his journey will prove all:  
If Wit hold out, no more proof can fall; 30  
And, that the better hold out ye may,  
To refresh my son<sup>1</sup>, Wit, now by the way,  
some solace for him I will provide:  
An honest woman dwelleth here beside,  
whose name is Honest Recreation. 35  
As men report, for Wit's consolation  
She hath no peer — if Wit were half dead  
She could revive him, thus it is said.  
Wherefore, if money or love can hire her,  
To hie after Wit I will desire her. [Exit.] 40

*(Confidence comes in, with a picture of Wit.)*

CONFIDENCE. Ah, Sir! What time of day is't? Who can tell?  
The day is not far past, I wot well.  
For I have gone fast, and yet I see  
I am far from where as I would be.  
Well! I have day enough yet, I spy. 45  
Wherefore, e'er<sup>2</sup> I pass hence, now must I  
See this same token here — a plain case—  
What Wit hath sent to my good lady's grace.  
Now, will ye see a goodly picture  
Of Wit himself? His own image sure: 50  
Face, body, arms, legs, both limb and joint  
As like him as can be, in every point.  
It lacketh but life; well I can him thank:  
This token indeed shall make some crank!  
For what with this picture, so well favour'd, 55  
And what with those sweet words, so well savour'd,  
Distilling from the mouth of Confidence,  
Shall not this appease the heart of Science?

John Redford

Yes, I thank God I am of that nature,  
Able to compass this matter sure, 60  
As ye shall see now, who list to mark it,  
How neatly and featly I shall work it.

[*Exit Confidence.*]

(*Wit cometh in without Instruction, with Study and Diligence.*)

WIT. Now, sirs, come on! Which is the way now?  
This way or that way? Study, how say you?  
Speak, Diligence, while he hath bethought him. 65

DILIGENCE. That way, belike, most usage hath wrought him.

STUDY. Ye hold your peace! Best we here now stay

For Instruction: I like not that way.

WIT. Instruction? Study, I ween we have lost him.

(*Instruction cometh in.*)

INSTRUCTION. Indeed, full gently about ye have tossed him! 70

What mean you, Wit, still to delight

Running before, thus still out of sight;

And thereby out of your way now quite?

What do ye here except ye would fight?

Come back again, Wit! For I must choose ye 75

An easier way than this, or else lose ye.

WIT. What aileth this way? Peril here is none.

INSTRUCTION. But as much as your life standeth upon;

Your enemy, man, lieth here before ye:

Tediousness, to brain or to gore ye. 80

WIT. Tediousness? Doth that tyrant rest

In my way now? Lord, how am I blest,

That occasion so near me stirs,

For my dear heart's sake to win my spurs?

Sir, would ye fear me with that foul thief 85

With whom to meet my desire is chief?

INSTRUCTION. And what would ye do, you having nought

For your defence? For though ye have caught

Garments of Science upon your back

Yet weapons of Science ye do lack. 90

WIT. What weapons of Science should I have?

## The Play of Wit & Science

INSTRUCTION.	Such as all lovers of their loves crave: A token from Lady Science, whereby Hope of her favour may spring, and thereby Comfort, which is the weapon doubtless That must serve you against Tediousness.	95
WIT.	If hope or comfort may be my weapon, Then never with Tediousness me threaten: For as for hope of my dear heart's favour —and thereby comfort— enough I gather.	100
INSTRUCTION.	Wit, hear me! Till I see Confidence Have brought some token from Lady Science, That I may feel that she fav'reth you, Ye pass not this way, I tell you true.	
WIT.	Which way then?	
INSTRUCTION.	A plainer way, I told ye; Out of danger from your foe to hold ye.	105
WIT.	Instruction, hear me! Or my sweetheart Shall hear that Wit from that wretch shall start One foot, this body and all shall crack! Forth I will, sure, whatever I lack.	110
DILIGENCE.	If ye lack weapon, sir, here is one.	
WIT.	Well said, Diligence — thou art alone! How say ye, sir, is not here a weapon?	
INSTRUCTION.	With that weapon your enemy never threaten: For without the return of Confidence, Ye may be slain, sure, for all Diligence.	115
DILIGENCE.	Good sir! And Diligence, I tell you plain, Will play the man or my master be slain.	
INSTRUCTION.	Yea, but what saith Study? No word to this?	
WIT.	No sir! Ye know Study's office is Meet for the chamber, not for the field. But tell me, Study, wilt thou now yield?	120
STUDY.	My head acheth sore; I would we returned.	
WIT.	Thy head ache now? I would it were burned! Come on, walking may hap to ease thee.	125
INSTRUCTION.	And will ye be gone then — without me?	

John Redford

- WIT. Yea, by my faith, except ye hie after,  
Reason shall know ye are but an hafter.  
*(Exeunt Wit, Study and Diligence.)*
- INSTRUCTION. Well, go your way! When you father, Reason,  
Heareth how ye obey me at this season, 130  
I think he will think his daughter now  
May marry another man for you.  
When wits stand so in their own conceit,  
Best lest them go; till pride, at his height,  
Turn and cast them down headlong again; 135  
As ye shall see proved by this Wit plain.  
If Reason hap not to come, the rather  
His own destruction he will sure gather.  
Wherefore to Reason will I now get me,  
Leaving that charge whereabout he set me. 140  
*(Exit Instruction. Tediousness cometh in, with a visor over his head.)*
- TEDIOUSNESS. O, the body of me!  
What catiffs be those  
That will not once flee  
From Tediousness' nose;  
But thus disease me 145  
Out of my nest,  
When I should ease me,  
This body to rest?  
That Wit, that villain,  
That wretch — a shame take him! 150  
It is he plain  
That thus bold doth make him  
Without my licence  
To stalk by my door,  
To that drab, Science, 155  
To wed that whore!  
But I defy her  
And for that drab's sake,  
E'er Wit come nigh her,  
The knave's head shall ache! 160

## The Play of Wit & Science

These bones, this mall  
Shall beat him to dust,  
E'er that drab shall  
Once quench that knave's lust.  
But hah! Methinks 165  
I am not half lusty;  
These joints, these links  
Be rough and half rusty;  
I must go shake them,  
Supple to make them. 170  
Stand back, ye wretches!  
Beware the fetches  
Of Tediousness,  
These caitiffs to bless.  
Make room! I say, 175  
Round every way:  
This way! That way!  
What care I what way?  
Before me, behind me,  
Round about wind me! 180  
Now I begin  
To sweat in my skin;  
Now I am nimble  
To make them tremble.  
Pash head, pash brain, 185  
The knaves are slain.  
All that I hit!  
Where are thou, Wit?  
Thou are but dead:  
Off goeth thy head 190  
At the first blow!  
Ho! Ho! Ho! Ho!

*(Wit speaketh at the door.)*

WIT.

Study?

STUDY.

Here off!

WIT.

How doth thy head ache?



## The Play of Wit & Science

Now lie still, caitiff, and take thy rest,  
while I take mine in mine own nest.

*(Exit Tediousness.*

*Here cometh in Honest Recreation,*

*Comfort, Quickness and Strength, and go about Wit...<sup>3</sup>*

HONEST RECREATION, COMFORT, QUICKNESS, AND STRENGTH.

Give place, give place to Honest Recreation; 225  
Give place, we say now for thy consolation.

When travels great, in matters thick  
Have dulled your wits and made them sick,  
What medicine then, your wits to quick?  
If ye will know, the best physic 230  
Is to give place to Honest Recreation;  
Give place, we say now for thy consolation.

Where is that Wit that we seek, then?  
Alas, he lieth here, pale and wan;  
Help him at once now, if we can. 235  
O wit, how dost thou? Look up, man!  
O Wit, give place to Honest Recreation;  
Give place, we say now for thy consolation.

After place given, let ear obey.  
Give an ear, O Wit, now we thee pray. 240  
Give an ear to that we sing and say;  
Give an ear and help will come straightway!  
Give an ear to Honest Recreation;  
Give an ear now for thy consolation.

After ear given, now give an eye. 245  
Behold! Thy friends about thee lie:  
Recreation I, and Comfort I,  
Quickness am I, and Strength, hereby.  
Give an eye to Honest Recreation;  
Give an eye now for thy consolation. 250

John Redford

After eye given, an hand give ye!  
Give an hand, O Wit, feel that ye see!  
Recreation feel; feel Comfort free;  
Feel Quickness here; feel Strength to thee.  
Give an hand to Honest Recreation; 255  
Give an hand now for thy consolation.

Upon his feet, would God he were!  
To raise him now we need not fear.  
Stay you his hands, while we him bear;  
Now, all at once, upright him rear. 260  
O Wit, give place to Honest Recreation;  
Give place we say now for thy consolation.

*...and at the last verse, raiseth him up upon his feet, and so make an end.*

*And then Honest Recreation saith as followeth:)*

HONEST REC. Now, Wit, how do ye? Will ye be lusty?  
WIT. The lustier for you, needs be must I.  
HONEST REC. Be ye all whole yet, after your fall? 265  
WIT. As ever I was, thanks to you all.

*(Reason cometh in, and saith as followeth.)*

REASON. Ye might thank Reason that sent them to ye;  
But since they have done that they should do ye,  
Send them home soon, and get ye forward.  
WIT. O Father Reason! I had an hard 270  
Chance since ye saw me.

REASON. I wot well that,  
The more to blame ye, when ye would not  
Obey Instruction, as Reason willed ye.  
What marvel though Tediousness had killed ye?  
But let us pass. Now, since ye are well again, 275  
Set forward again, Science to attain.

WIT. Good Father Reason, be not too hasty.  
In honest company no time waste I.  
I shall to your daughter all at leisure.

REASON. Yea? Wit, is that the great love ye raise her? 280

## The Play of Wit & Science

I say if ye love my daughter, Science,  
Get ye forth at once, and get ye hence!  
*(Here all go out, save Honest Recreation, Reason and Wit.)*

WIT. Nay, by Saint George! They go not all yet!  
REASON. No? Will ye disobey Reason, Wit?  
WIT. Father Reason, I pray ye, content ye: 285  
For we part not yet.

REASON. Well, Wit, I went ye  
Had been no such man as now I see.  
Farewell. *(Exit.)*

HONEST REC. He is angry.

WIT. Yea, let him be!  
I do not pass!  
Come now, a bass! 290

HONEST REC. Nay sir: as for basses,  
From hence none passes  
But in a gage  
Of marri-age.

WIT. Marry, even so! 295  
A bargain, lo!

HONEST REC. What, without licence  
Of Lady Science?

WIT. Shall I tell you truth?  
I never loved her. 300

HONEST REC. The common voice go'th  
That marriage ye moved her.  
WIT. Promise hath she none  
If we shall be one;  
Without more words, grant! 305

HONEST REC. What, upon this sudden?  
Then might ye plain  
Bid me avaunt.  
Nay, let me see  
In honesty 310  
What ye can do  
To win Recreation:

John Redford

Upon that probation  
 I grant thereto.  
 WIT. Small be my doings, 315  
 But apt to all things  
 I am, I trust.  
 HONEST REC. Can ye dance then?  
 WIT. Even as I can.  
 Prove me, ye must. 320  
 HONEST REC. Then for a while  
 Ye must exile  
 This garment cumb'ring.  
 WIT. Indeed, as ye say,  
 This cumbrous array 325  
 Would make Wit slumb'ring.  
 HONEST REC. It is gay gear  
 Of Science, clear —  
 It seemeth her array.  
 WIT. Whose ever it were, it lieth now there. 330  
 [Taketh off his gown.]  
 HONEST REC. Go to, my men! Play!  
*Here they dance, and in the meanwhile, Idleness cometh in and sitteth down.  
 And when the galliard is done, Wit saith as followeth,  
 and so falleth down in Idleness' lap.*  
 WIT. Sweet heart, grammercys!  
 HONEST REC. Why, whether now have ye done since?  
 WIT. Yea, in faith! With weary bones ye have possessed me;  
 Among these damsels now will I rest me. 335  
 HONEST REC. What, there?  
 WIT. Yea, here: I will be so bold.  
 IDLENESS. Yea; and welcome, by him that God sold.  
 HONEST REC. It is an harlot, may ye not see?  
 IDLENESS. As honest a woman as ye be!  
 HONEST REC. Her name is Idleness, Wit. What mean you? 340  
 WIT. There, go to. Lo, now for the best game:  
 While I take my ease, your tongues now frame.  
 HONEST REC. Yea, Wit, by your faith is that your fashion?



John Redford

What unthriftiness therein is twiddling? 380  
Search the taverns, and ye shall hear clear  
Such bawdry as best would spew to here!  
And yet this is called Honest Recreation;  
And I, poor Idleness, abomination.  
But which is worst of us twain? Now judge, Wit! 385  
WIT. By our lady! Not thou, wench, I judge yet.  
HONEST REC. No? Is your judgment such then, that ye  
Can neither perceive that beast, how she  
Go'th about to deceive you? Nor yet  
Remember how I saved your life, Wit? 390  
Think you her meet with me to compare  
By whom so many curèd are?  
When will she do such an act as I did,  
Saving your life, when I you revivèd?  
And, as I saved you, so save I all 395  
That in like jeopardy change to fall.  
When Tediousness to ground hath smitten them,  
Honest Recreation up doth quicken them  
With such honest pastimes, sports or games  
As unto mine honest nature frames; 400  
And not, as she saith, with pastimes such  
As to be abused, little or much:  
For where honest pastimes be abused,  
Honest Recreation is refused.  
Honest Recreation is present never 405  
But where honest pastimes be well-used ever.  
But indeed, Idleness: she is cause  
Of all such abuses. She, lo, draws  
Her sort to abuse mine honest games,  
And thereby full falsely my name defames. 410  
Under the name of Honest Recreation  
She brings in all her abomination;  
Destroying all wits that her embrace  
As your self shall see within short space.  
She will bring you to shameful end, Wit, 415

## The Play of Wit & Science

Except the sooner from her ye flit.

Wherefore come away, Wit, out of her paws.

Hence, drab! Let him go out of thy claws!

IDLENESS.

Will you get ye hence? Or, by the mace!

These claws shall claw you by your drab's face!

420

HONEST REC.

It shall not need, since Wit lieth as one

That neither heareth nor seeth. I am gone.

*(Exit.)*

IDLENESS.

Yea, so? Farewell! And well fare thou, tongue

Of a short peal! This peal was well-rung

To ring her hence, and him fast asleep:

425

As full of sloth as the knave can creep.

How, Wit, awake! How doth my baby?

*neque vox neque sensus,*<sup>5</sup> by'r lady!

A meet man for Idleness, no doubt.

Hark my pig! How the knave doth rout!

430

Well, while he sleepeth in Idleness' lap,

Idleness' mark on him shall I clap!

Some say that Idleness cannot work,

But those that so say, now let them mark.

I trow they shall see that Idleness

435

Can set herself about some business;

Or, at least, ye shall see her tried

Neither idle, nor yet well-occupied.

Lo, sir, yet ye lack another toy:

Where is my whistle to call my boy?

440

*(Here she whistleth and Ignorance cometh in.)*

IGNORANCE.<sup>6</sup>

I come! I come!

IDLENESS.

Come on, ye fool!

All this day e'er ye can come to school.

IGNORANCE.

Umm. Mother will not let me come.

IDLENESS.

I would thy mother had kissed thy bum!

She will never let thee thrive, I trow.

445

Come on, goose! Now lo, men shall know

That Idleness can do somewhat; yea,

And play the schoolmistress too, if need be.

Mark what doctrine by Idleness comes:



## The Play of Wit & Science

IDLENESS.	Ran.	
IGNORANCE.	Ran.	
IDLENESS.	Forth, now. What saith the goose?	485
IGNORANCE.	Lag, lag.	
IDLENESS.	Hiss, whoreson! Hiss.	
IGNORANCE.	Hiss! Hissssss!	
IDLENESS.	Go to: Put together: Ing.	
IGNORANCE.	Ing.	490
IDLENESS.	No.	
IGNORANCE.	No.	
IDLENESS.	Ran.	
IGNORANCE.	Ran.	
IDLENESS.	Hiss.	495
IGNORANCE.	Hissssss!	
IDLENESS.	Now, who is a good boy?	
IGNORANCE.	! ! ! ! ! ! ! !	
IDLENESS.	Go to. Put together: Ing.	
IGNORANCE.	Ing.	500
IDLENESS.	No.	
IGNORANCE.	No.	
IDLENESS.	Ran.	
IGNORANCE.	Ran.	
IDLENESS.	Hiss.	505
IGNORANCE.	Hissssss!	
IDLENESS.	I.	
IGNORANCE.	I.	
IDLENESS.	Ing, no, ran, hiss, I.	
IGNORANCE.	Ing, no, ran, hiss.	510
IDLENESS.	I.	
IGNORANCE.	I.	
IDLENESS.	Ing.	
IGNORANCE.	Ing.	
IDLENESS.	Forth.	515
IGNORANCE.	Hissssss!	
IDLENESS.	Yea? No! Whoreson, No!	
IGNORANCE.	No! No! No! No!	

John Redford

IDLENESS. Ing, no.  
 IGNORANCE. Ing, no. 520  
 IDLENESS. Forth now.  
 IGNORANCE. Hisssss!  
 IDLENESS. Yet again: ran, whoreson! Ran! Ran!  
 IGNORANCE. Ran, whoreson, ran, ran.  
 IDLENESS. Ran, whoreson! 525  
 IGNORANCE. Ran, whoreson.  
 IDLENESS. Ran.  
 IGNORANCE. Ran.  
 IDLENESS. Ing, no, ran.  
 IGNORANCE. Ing, no, ran. 530  
 IDLENESS. Forth now, what said the goose?  
 IGNORANCE. Dog bark?  
 IDLENESS. Dog bark. Hiss, whoreson! Hiss!  
 IGNORANCE. Hisssss!  
 IDLENESS. I. 535  
 IGNORANCE. I.  
 IDLENESS. Ing, no, ran, hiss, I.  
 IGNORANCE. Ing, no, ran, hisssss!  
 IDLENESS. I.  
 IGNORANCE. I. 540  
 IDLENESS. How sayst now, fool? Is not there thy name?  
 IGNORANCE. Yea.  
 IDLENESS. Well then, come me that same  
 Which thou hast learned.  
 IGNORANCE. Ich can not tell.  
 IDLENESS. "Ich can not tell"! Thou sayst even very well:  
 For if thou couldst tell, then had not I well 545  
 Taught thee thy lesson, which must be taught  
 To tell all, when thou canst tell right naught.  
 IGNORANCE. Ich can my lesson.  
 IDLENESS. Yea, and therefore  
 Shalt have a new coat, by God I swore.  
 IGNORANCE. A new coat?  
 IDLENESS. Yea, a new coat, by and by. 550

## The Play of Wit & Science

Off with this coat: a new coat, cry!  
IGNORANCE. A new coat ! A new coat! A new coat!  
IDLENESS. Peace! Whoreson, fool!  
Wilt thou wake him now? Unbutton thy coat.  
Fool, canst thou do nothing?

IGNORANCE. I note how choold be. 555  
IDLENESS. "I note how choold be"! A fool betide thee!  
So wisely it speaketh. Come on now! When?  
Put back thine arm, fool.

IGNORANCE. Put back?  
IDLENESS. So. Lo. Now let me see how this gear  
Will trim this gentleman that lieth here. 560  
Ah, God save it! So sweetly it doth sleep!  
While on your back, this gay coat can creep  
As feat as can be for this one arm.  
*[Putteth Wit's garment upon Ignorance.]*

IGNORANCE. Oh, ch'am a cold!  
IDLENESS. Hold fool! Keep thee warm  
And come hither! Hold this head here. Soft now, for 565  
[waking!  
Ye shall see one here, brought in such taking  
That he shall soon scanty know himself.  
Here is a coat, as fit for this elf  
As it had been made even for this body;  
So it beginneth to look like a noddy! 570

IGNORANCE. Ummmmmmmm.  
IDLENESS. What ailest now, fool!

IGNORANCE. New coat is gone.  
IDLENESS. And why is it gone?

IGNORANCE. Twool not bide on. 575  
IDLENESS. "Twool not bide on"? 'Twould if it could.  
But marvel it were, that bide it should:  
Science's garment on Ignorance's back.  
But now, let's see, sir, what ye do lack.  
Nothing but even to buckle here this throat; 580  
So well this Wit's becometh a fool's coat.

John Redford

IGNORANCE: He is I now.  
IDLENESS: Yea! How lik'st him now?  
Is he not a fool as well as thou?  
IGNORANCE: Yes.  
IDLENESS: Well then, one fool keep another;  
Give me this, and take thou that brother. 585  
IGNORANCE: Ummmmm....  
IDLENESS: Pike thee home! Go!  
IGNORANCE: Chy'll tell my mother. (Exit.)  
IDLENESS: Yea, do!  
But yet to take my leave of my dear, lo,  
With a skip or twain here, lo, and here, lo,  
And here again. And now this heel 590  
To bless this weak brain, now are ye weel  
By virtue of Idleness' blessing tool,  
Conjured from Wit unto a stark fool! (Exit.)  
(Confidence cometh in, with a sword by his side and saith as followeth:)  
CONFIDENCE: I seek and seek, as one on no ground  
Can rest, but like a masterless hound, 595  
Wand'ring all about seeking his master.  
Alas, gentle Wit, I fear the faster  
That my true service cleaveth unto thee,  
The slacker thy mind cleaveth unto me.  
I have done thy message in such sort 600  
That I, not only for thy comfort  
To vanquish thine enemy, have brought here  
A sword of comfort from thy love dear;  
But also further, I have so inclined her,  
In her own person, halfway to meet thee; 605  
And hitherward she came for to greet thee.  
And sure, except she be turned again,  
Hither will she come, or be long plain  
To seek to meet thee here in this coast.  
But now, alas, thyself thou hast lost; 610  
Or, at the least, thou wilt not be found.  
Alas, gentle Wit, how dost thou wound

## The Play of Wit & Science

Thy trusty and true servant, Confidence?  
To leese my credence to Lady Science,  
Thou leeseest me too: for if I cannot 615  
Find thee shortly, longer live I may not,  
But shortly get me even into a corner,  
And die for sorrow through such a scorner. (*Exit.*)  
(*Here Fame, Favour, Riches and Worship come in with viols.*)

FAME. Come, sirs! Let us not disdain to do  
That the world hath appointed us to. 620

FAVOUR. Since, to serve Science, the world hath sent us,  
As the world willeth us, let us content us.

RICHES. Content us we may, since we be assigned  
To the fairest lady that liveth, in my mind.

WORSHIP. Then let us not stay mute and mum, 625  
But taste we these instruments till she come.  
(*Here they sing Exceeding Measure.*)

ALL. Exceeding measure, with pains continual,  
Languishing in absence. Alas, what shall I do?  
Unfortunate wretch! Devoid of joys all. 630  
Sighs upon sighs, redoubling my woe;  
And tears down falling from mine eyes too.  
Beauty with truth so doth me constrain  
Ever to serve where I may not attain.

Truth bindeth me ever to be true,  
Howso that fortune favoureth my chance? 635  
During my life, none other but you  
Of my true heart shall have the governance.  
O, good sweet heart, have you remembrance  
Now of your own, which for no smart  
Exile shall you from my true heart? 640

[*Experience and Science enter while they sing.*]

EXPERIENCE. Daughter, what meaneth that ye did not sing?

SCIENCE. Oh Mother, for here remaineth a thing.  
Friends, we thank you for these your pleasures,

John Redford

Taken on us as chance to us measures.  
 WORSHIP. Lady, these our pleasures, and persons too, 645  
 Are sent to you, your service to do.  
 FAME. Lady Science, to set forth your name,  
 The world, to wait on you, hath sent me, Fame.  
 FAVOUR. Lady Science, for your virtues most plenty,  
 The world, to cherish you, Favour hath sent ye. 650  
 RICHES. Lady Science, for your benefits known,  
 The world, to maintain you, Riches hath thrown.  
 WORSHIP. And, as the world hath sent you these three,  
 So he sendeth me, Worship, to advance your degree.  
 SCIENCE. I thank the world, but chiefly God be praised 655  
 That in the world such love to Science hath raised.  
 But yet to tell you plain: ye four are such  
 As Science looketh for little nor much:  
 For being as I am, a lone woman,  
 Need of your service I neither have nor can. 660  
 But, thanking the world and you for your pain,  
 I send ye to the world even now again.  
 WORSHIP. Why, lady, set ye no more store by me,  
 Worship? Ye set nought by yourself I see.  
 FAME. She setteth nought by Fame; whereby I spy her, 665  
 She careth not what the world saith by her.  
 FAVOUR. She setteth nought by Favour; whereby I try her,  
 She careth not what the world saith or doeth by her.  
 RICHES. She setteth nought by Riches, which doth show,  
 She careth not for the world. Come, let us go. 670  
 [*exeunt Fame, Favour, Riches and Worship.*]  
 SCIENCE. Indeed, small cause given to care for the world's favouring,  
 Seeing the wits of the world be so wavering.  
 EXPERIENCE. What is the matter, daughter, that ye  
 Be so sad? Open your mind to me.  
 SCIENCE. My marvel is no less, my good mother, 675  
 Than my grief is great. To see, of all other,  
 The proud scorn of Wit, son to Dame Nature,  
 Who sent me a picture of his stature

## The Play of Wit & Science

- With all the shape of himself there opening,  
His amorous love thereby betokening, 680  
Borne toward me in abundant fashion,  
And also further to make right relation  
Of this his love, he put in comission  
Such a messenger as no suspicion  
Could grow in me of him, Confidence. 685
- EXPERIENCE. Um.
- SCIENCE. Who, I ensure ye, with such vehemence  
And faithful behaviour in his moving  
Set forth the pith of his master's loving  
That no living creature could conject  
But that pure love did that Wit direct. 690
- EXPERIENCE. So?
- SCIENCE. Now, this being since the space  
Of three times, sending from place to place  
Between Wit and his man, I hear no more,  
Neither of Wit nor his love so sore.  
How do you think by this, my own dear mother? 695
- EXPERIENCE. Daughter, in this I can think none other  
But that it is true this proverb old:  
"Hasty love is soon hot and soon cold".  
Take heed, daughter, how you put your trust  
To light lovers, too hot at the first. 700  
For had this love of Wit been grounded,  
And on a sure foundation founded,  
Little void time would have sent or seen ye.
- SCIENCE. I think so.
- EXPERIENCE. Ye think so, or no?  
Your mother, Experience, proof shall show 705  
That Wit hath set his love, I dare say,  
And make ye warrantise another way.
- WIT. But your warrantise warrant no troth!  
Fair Lady, I pray you be not wroth  
Till you hear more. For, dear Lady Science, 710
- (Wit cometh before.)*

John Redford

Had your lover, Wit —yea, or Confidence  
His man— been in health all this time spent  
Long e'er this time Wit had come or sent;  
But the truth is they have been both sick,  
Wit and his man; yea, and with pains thick 715  
Both stayed by the way, so that your lover  
Could neither come, nor send by none other.  
Wherefore blame him not, but chance of sickness.  
Who is this?  
SCIENCE.  
EXPERIENCE. Ignorance, or his likeness.  
SCIENCE. What, the common fool?  
EXPERIENCE. It is much like him. 720  
SCIENCE. By my sooth! His tongue serveth him now trim!  
What sayst thou, Ignorance? Speak again!  
WIT. Nay, lady, I am not Ignorance, plain,  
But I am your own dear lover, Wit,  
That hath long loved you and loveth you yet. 725  
Wherefore I pray thee now, mine own sweeting,  
Let me have a kiss at this our meeting.  
SCIENCE. Yea, so ye shall anon, but not yet!  
Ah sir! This fool here hath got some wit.  
Fall you to kissing, sir, nowadays? 730  
Your mother shall charm you: go your ways.  
WIT. What needeth this, my love of long grown?  
Will ye be so strange to me, your own?  
Your acquaintance to me was thought easy,  
But now your words make my heart all queasy; 735  
Your darts at me so strangely be shot.  
SCIENCE. Hear ye what terms this fool hath got!  
WIT. Well, I perceive my foolishness now.  
Indeed, ladies, no dastards allow!  
I will be bold with mine own darling: 740  
Come now, a bass, my own proper sparring!  
SCIENCE. What wilt thou, arrant fool?  
WIT. Nay, by the mass!  
I will have a bass, e'er I hence pass.

## The Play of Wit & Science

SCIENCE.	What wilt thou, arrant fool? <sup>7</sup> Hence, fool, I say!	
WIT.	What? Nothing but fool, and fool all this day?	745
	By the mass, Madam! Ye can no good!	
SCIENCE.	Art a-swearing too! Now by my hood,	
	Your foolish knave's breech six stripes shall bear!	
WIT.	Yea? God's bones! 'Fool' and 'knave' to be? Ye there!	
	By the mass! Madam, call me fool once again,	750
	And thou shalt sure call a blow or twain!	
EXPERIENCE.	Come away, daughter: the fool is mad.	
WIT.	Nay, not yet, neither hence ye shall gad;	
	We will gree better, e'er ye pass hence.	
	I pray thee now, good sweet Lady Science,	755
	All this strange manner now hide and cover,	
	And play the goodfellow with thy lover.	
SCIENCE.	What good fellowship would ye of me,	
	Whom ye know not, neither yet I know ye?	
WIT.	Know ye not me?	
SCIENCE.	No. How should I know ye?	760
WIT.	Doth not my picture my person show ye?	
SCIENCE.	Your picture?	
WIT.	Yea, my picture, lady,	
	That ye spake of — who sent it but I?	
SCIENCE.	If that be your picture, then shall we	
	Soon see how you and your picture agree.	765
	Lo, here the picture that I named is this.	
WIT.	Yea! Marry, mine own likeness this is.	
	You, having this, lady; and so loath	
	To know me, which this so plain show'th.	
SCIENCE.	Why, you are nothing like, in mine eye!	770
WIT.	No? How say ye?	
EXPERIENCE.	As she saith, so say I.	
WIT.	By the mass! Then are ye both stark blind!	
	What difference between this and this can ye find?	
EXPERIENCE.	Marry! This is fair, pleasant and godly;	
	And ye are foul, displeasent and ugly.	775
WIT.	Marry! Avaunt thou, foul, ugly whore!	

John Redford

SCIENCE. So, lo? Now I perceive ye more and more.  
WIT. What? Perceive you me as ye would make me,  
A natural fool?  
SCIENCE. Nay, ye mistake me. 780  
I take ye for no fool natural;  
But take ye thus — shall I tell all?  
WIT. Yea. Marry, tell me your mind, I pray ye,  
Whereto I shall trust, no more delay ye.  
SCIENCE. I take ye for no natural fool,  
Brought up amongst the innocent's school; 785  
But for a naughty, vicious fool,  
Brought up with Idleness in her school:  
Of all arrogant fools, thou art one.  
WIT. Yea? Gog's body!  
EXPERIENCE. Come, let us be gone.  
[Exit Science and Experience.]  
WIT. My sword! Is it gone? A vengeance on them! 790  
Be they gone too, and their heads upon them?  
But, proud queens, the devil go with you both!  
Not one point of courtesy in them go'th.  
A man is well at ease by suit to pain him.  
So mocked, so louted, so made a sot — 795  
Never was I erst, since I was begot!  
Am I so foul as those drabs would make me?  
Where is my glass that Reason did take me?  
Now shall this glass of Reason soon try me  
As fair as those drabs that so doth belie me. 800  
Ha! Gog's soul! What have we here? A devil?  
This glass, I see well, hath been kept evil.  
Gog's soul! A fool, a fool, by the mass!  
What — a very vengeance — aileth this glass?  
Either this glass is shamefully spotted, 805  
Or else am I too shamefully blotted!  
Nay, by Gog's arms! I am so, no doubt.  
How look their faces here round about?  
All fair and clear they, everyone;

## The Play of Wit & Science

And I, by the mass, a fool alone, 810  
Decked, by Gog's bones, like a very ass!  
Ignorance's coat, hood, ears, — yea, by the mass!  
Cockscomb and all: I lack but a bauble!  
And as for this face, it is abominable:  
As black as the devil! God, for his passion! 815  
Where have I been rayed after this fashion?  
This same is Idleness — a shame take her!  
This same is her work — the devil in hell rake her!  
The whore hath shamed me forever, I trow!  
I trow? Nay, verily, I know. 820  
Now it is so, the stark fool I play  
Before all people; now see it I may.  
Every man I see laugh me to scorn.  
Alas, alas, that ever I was born!  
It was not for nought, now well I see, 825  
That those two ladies disdainéd me.  
Alas! Lady Science, of all other —  
How have I railed on her and her mother!  
Alas! That lady I have now lost  
Whom all the world loveth and honoureth most! 830  
And those four gifts which the World gave her  
I had won too, had I kept her favour.  
Where now, instead of that lady bright,  
With all those gallants seen in my sight  
—Favour, Riches, yea, Worship and Fame— 835  
I have won Hatred, Beggary and Open Shame!  
*(Shame cometh in, with a whip. Reason followeth him.)*  
Out upon thee, Shame! What dost thou here?  
Marry! I, Reason, bade him here appear.  
Upon him, Shame! With stripes enow smitten  
While I rehearse his faults herein written. 840  
First, he hath broken his promise formerly  
Made to me, Reason, my daughter to marry;  
Next, he hath broken his promise promised  
To obey Intruction, and him despised.

REASON.

John Redford

Thirdly, my daughter, Science, to reprove, 845  
Upon Idleness he hath set his love.  
Fourthly, he hath followed Idleness' school  
Till she hath made him a very stark fool.  
Lastly, offending both God and man,  
Swearing great oaths as any man can, 850  
He hath abused himself, to the great shame  
Of all his kindred and loss of his good name.  
Wherefore, spare him not, Shame! Beat him well there!  
He hath deserved more than he can bear.

*(Wit kneeleth down.)*

WIT. Oh, Father Reason, be good unto me! 855

Alas, these stripes of Shame will undo me!

REASON. Be still awhile, Shame! Wit, what sayst thou?

WIT. Oh sir, forgive me, I beseech you!

REASON. If I forgive thee thy punishment,  
Wilt thou then follow thy first intent 860

And promise made, my daughter to marry?

WIT. Oh, sir! I am not worthy to carry  
The dust out where your daughter should sit.

REASON. I wot well that; but if I admit  
Thee, unworthy, again to her wooer, 865

Wilt thou then follow thy suit unto her?

WIT. Yea sir! I promise you, while life endureth!

REASON. Come near, masters! Here is one ensureth  
*(Here cometh Instruction, Study, and Diligence in.)*

In words to become an honest man!  
Take him, Instruction: do what ye can. 870

INSTRUCTION. What, to the purpose he went before?

REASON. Yea, to my daughter prove him once more!  
Take him and trim him in his new apparel,  
And give that to Shame there to his farewell.

*[Exit Shame.]*

INSTRUCTION. Come, on your way, Wit! Be of good cheer!  
After stormy clouds cometh weather clear. 875

*(Instruction, Study, Wit and Diligence go out.)*

## The Play of Wit & Science

REASON. Who list to mark now this chance here done,  
May see what Wit is without Reason.  
What was this Wit better than an ass,  
Being from Reason strayed, as he was? 880  
But, let pass now, since he is well punished;  
And thereby, I trust, meetly well monished.  
Yea, and I like him never the worse, I,  
Though Shame hath handled him shamefully;  
For like as if Wit had proudly bent him 885  
To resist Shame, to make Shame absent him,  
I would have thought then that Wit had been  
—as the saying is, and daily seen—  
“Past Shame once, and past all amendment”.  
So, contrary, since he did relent 890  
To Shame, when Shame punished him even ill,  
I have, I say, good hope in him still.  
I think, as I thought —if join they can—  
My daughter well bestowed on this man.  
But all the doubt now is to think how 895  
My daughter taketh this: for I may tell you  
I think she knew this Wit, even as well  
As she seemed here to know him no deal:  
For lack of knowledge in Science there is none.  
Wherefore, she knew him and thereupon 900  
His behaviour, perchance even striking  
Her heart against him, she, now misliking  
—as women oft-times will be hard-hearted—  
Will be the stranger to be reverted.  
This must I help; Reason must now walk, 905  
On Wit’s part with my Science to talk.  
A near way to her know I, whereby  
My son’s coming prevent now must I.  
Perchance, I may bring my daughter hither;  
If so, I doubt not to join them together. 910

*(Exit Reason. Confidence cometh in.)*

CONFIDENCE. I thank God, yet at last I have found him!

John Redford

I was afraid some mischance had drowned him,  
My master, Wit, with whom I have spoken,  
Yea, and deliveréd token for token,  
And have another to Science again — 915  
A heart of gold, signifying plain  
That Science hath won Wit's heart forever;  
Whereby, I trust, by my good endeavour,  
To that good lady, so sweet and so sortly,  
A marriage between them ye shall see shortly. 920  
*(Exit Confidence. Instruction cometh in, with Wit, Study, and Diligence.)*

INSTRUCTION. Lo, sir! Now ye be entered again  
Toward that passage where doth remain  
Tediousness, your mortal enemy.  
Now may ye choose whether ye will try  
Your hands again on that tyrant stout, 925  
Or else walking a little about.

WIT. Nay! For God's passion, sir, let me meet him.  
Ye see I am able now for to greet him.  
This sword of comfort, sent from my love,  
Upon her enemy needs must I prove! 930

INSTRUCTION. Then forth there! And turn on your right hand  
Up that mount, before ye shall see stand.  
But hear ye! If your enemy chance to rise,  
Follow my counsel in anywise.  
Let Study and Diligence flee their touch 935  
—the stroke of Tediousness— and then couch  
Themselves as I told ye: ye wot how.

WIT. Yea sir! For that how, mark the proof now.

INSTRUCTION. To mark it, indeed, here will I abide,  
To see what chance of them will betide: 940  
For here cometh the pith, lo, of this journey.  
That mountain, before which they must assay,  
Is called in Latin *Mons Parnassus*;  
Which mountain, as old authors discuss,  
Who attaineth once to sleep on that mount, 945  
Lady Science his own he may count.

## The Play of Wit & Science

But, e'er he come there, ye shall see fought  
A fight with no less policy wrought  
Than strength, I trow, if that may be praised.

TEDIOUSNESS. Oh! ho! ho!

INSTRUCTION. Hark!

TEDIOUSNESS. [*Entering.*] Out, ye caitiffs!

INSTRUCTION. The fiend is raised! 950

TEDIOUSNESS. Out, ye villains! Be ye come again?  
Have at ye, wretches!

WIT. Flee, sirs, ye twain!

TEDIOUSNESS. They flee not far hence!

DILIGENCE. Turn again, Study!

STUDY. Now, Diligence!

INSTRUCTION. Well said! Hold fast now!

STUDY. He fleeth!

DILIGENCE. Then follow! 955

[*Exeunt Tediousness and Wit.*]

INSTRUCTION. With his own weapons, now work him sorrow!  
Wit lieth at receipt!

TEDIOUSNESS. (*dieth*) Oh! ho! ho!

INSTRUCTION. Hark! he dieth!

Where strength lacketh, policy supplieth.

(*Here Wit cometh in, and bringeth in the head upon his sword,  
and saith as followeth:*)

WIT. I can ye thank, sirs! This was well done!

STUDY. Nay, yours is the deed. 960

DILIGENCE. To you is the thank.

INSTRUCTION. I can ye thank all; this was well done.

(*Confidence cometh running in.*)

WIT. How say ye, man? Is this field well won?

CONFIDENCE. Yea, by my faith, so saith your dear heart.

WIT. Why, where is she, that here now thou art? 965

CONFIDENCE. Upon yonder mountain, on high,  
She saw ye strike that head from the body;  
Whereby ye have won her, body and all;  
In token whereof, receive here ye shall

John Redford

A gown of knowledge, wherein you must  
Receive her here straight. 970

WIT. But sayst thou just?

CONFIDENCE. So just I say that, except ye hie ye,  
E'er ye be ready, she will be by ye.

WIT. Hold! Present unto her this head here,  
And give me warning when she cometh near. 975

*(Exit Confidence.)*

Instruction! Will ye help to devise  
To trim this gear now in the best wise?

INSTRUCTION. Give me that gown, and come with me all.

DILIGENCE. Oh, how this gear to the purpose doth fall!

*(Confidence cometh running in.)*

CONFIDENCE. How, master! Master! Where be ye now? 980

WIT. Here, Confidence! What tidings bring'st thou?

CONFIDENCE. My lady at hand doth abide ye.  
Bid her welcome! What, do you hide ye?

*Here Wit, Instruction, Study, and Diligence sing "Welcome mine own", and Science, Experience, Reason and Confidence come in at Left, and answer every second verse.*

WIT AND HIS COMPANY.

Welcome, mine own! Welcome mine own!

O lady dear, 985

Be ye so near  
to be known?

My heart you cheer,

Your voice to hear:

Welcome, mine own! 990

SCIENCE AND HER COMPANY.

As ye rejoice

to hear my voice

from me thus blown;

## The Play of Wit & Science

So in my choice,  
I show my voice  
to be your own. 995

WIT AND HIS COMPANY.

Then draw we near,  
to see and hear  
my love long grown. 1000  
Where is my dear?  
Here I appear,  
to see mine own.

SCIENCE AND HER COMPANY.

To see and try  
your love truly, 1005  
till death be flown.  
Lo, I am here,  
that ye may spy  
I am your own.

WIT AND HIS COMPANY.

Then let us meet, 1010  
my love so sweet,  
half-way here thrown.

SCIENCE AND HER COMPANY.

I will not fleet  
my love to greet  
Welcome, mine own. 1015

*And when the song is done, Reason sendeth Instruction, Study, and Diligence and Comfort out, and then, standing in the middle of the place, Wit sayst as followeth:*

WIT. Welcome, mine own! With all my whole heart  
Which shall be your own, till death us depart.  
I trust, lady, this knot even since knit.

SCIENCE. I trust the same: for since ye have smit  
Down my great enemy, Tediousness, 1020

John Redford

Ye have won me forever, doubtless,  
Although ye have won a clog withal.  
WIT. A clog, sweetheart? What?  
SCIENCE. Such as doth fall  
To all men that join themselves in marriage,  
In keeping their wives: a careful carriage! 1025  
WIT. Careful? Nay, lady. That care shall employ  
No clog, but a key of my most joy.  
To keep you, sweetheart, as shall be fit  
Shall be no more care, but most joy to Wit.  
SCIENCE. Well, yet I say —mark well what I say!— 1030  
My presence bringeth you a clog, no nay!  
Not in the keeping of me only,  
But in the use of Science chiefly:  
For I, Science, am in this degree  
As all, or most part, of woman be: 1035  
If ye use me well, in a good sort,  
Then shall I be your joy and comfort.  
But if you use me not well, then doubt me,  
For sure ye were better then without me.  
WIT. Why, lady! Think you me such a wit, 1040  
As being affianced by you, and yet  
Would misuse ye? Nay, if ye doubt that,  
Here is one loveth thee more than somewhat:  
If Wit misuse ye at any season,  
Correçt me then your own father, Reason. 1045  
REASON. Ho, daughter! Can ye desire any more?  
What need these doubts? Avoid them, therefore!  
EXPERIENCE. By'r Lakin, sir! But under your favour,  
This doubt our daughter doth well to gather:  
For a good warning now, at beginning, 1050  
What Wit, in the end, shall look for in winning;  
Which shall be this, sir: if Science here,  
Which is God's gift, be used mere  
Unto God's honour and profit both  
Of you and your neighbour, which go'th 1055

## The Play of Wit & Science

In her, of kind, to do good to all:  
This seen to, Experience, I, shall  
Set you forth, Wit, by her to employ  
Double increase to your double joy.  
But if you use her contrariwise 1060  
To her good nature, and so devise  
To evil effect to wrest and to wry her,  
Yea, and cast her off and set nought by her,  
Be sure I, Experience, shall then  
Declare you so before God and man: 1065  
That this talent from you shall be taken  
And you punish'd for your gain forsaken.  
WIT. "Once warned, half-armed," folk say. Namely, when  
Experience shall warn a man, then  
Time to take heed. Mother Experience! 1070  
Touching your daughter, my dear heart, Science:  
As I am certain that to abuse her  
I breed mine own sorrow, and well to use her  
I increase my joy; and so to make it  
God's grace is ready if I will take it: 1075  
Then —but ye count me no wit at all—  
Let never these doubts into your head fall;  
But, as yourself, Experience, clearing  
All doubts at length; so, till time appearing,  
Trust ye with me in God. And, sweetheart, 1080  
While your father, Reason, taketh with part  
To receive God's grace as God shall send it,  
Doubt ye not our joy till life's end [end]<sup>8</sup> it.  
SCIENCE. Well, then, for the end of all doubts past,  
And to that end which ye spake of last 1085  
Among our wedding matters here rend'ring,  
Th'end of our lives would be in rememb'ring;  
Which remembrance, Wit, shall sure defend ye  
From the misuse of Science, and send ye  
The gain my mother to mind did call: 1090  
Joy without end — that wish I to all!

John Redford

REASON.

Well said! And as ye, daughter, wish  
That joy to all folk in general,  
So wish I, Reason, the same. But yet,  
First in this life, wish I here to fall  
To our most noble King and Queen in especial,  
To their honourable Council, and then to all the rest,  
Such joy as long may rejoice them all best!

1095

ALL.

Amen.

*Here cometh in four with viols and sing "Remembrance",  
and at the last quire, all make curtsey and so go forth singing.<sup>9</sup>*

Thus endeth the play of Wit and Science  
made by Master John Redford.

Finis

## Endnotes

1. Written *me soon* in the ms.
2. Spelt *or* wherever the word appears in the ms. Whether the word is represented as *or* or *e'er* has been decided editorially by context.
3. The lyrics for the songs appear after the play. They have been inserted into the text for the sake of continuity.
4. Written *dam<sup>n</sup>* in the ms.
5. Neither voice, nor sense.
6. The character's name is originally spelt *Ignorance* throughout, in order to match the contrived method by which he is taught his name. It has been altered for the sake of idiomatic conformity.
7. The line *What wilt thou, arrant fool?* appears here in the ms, but it could possibly be a copyist's error, as it is identical to Science's previous line.
8. The second instance of the word *end* is not in the ms.
9. The text of the final song, *Remembrance*, is missing.

## Glossary

- avaunt*: (v.) to go away  
*ax*: (v.) archaic form of ask  
*bass*: (n.) kiss  
*belike*: (adv.) perhaps  
*betide*: (v.) to happen (to)  
*by'r Lakin*: an oath on the Virgin Mary: by our Lady-kin.  
*caitiff*: (n.) mean, despicable person  
*callet*: (n.) lewd woman  
*capax*: (adj.) capacious  
*clog*: (n.) burden, impediment  
*concupiscence*: (n.) lust  
*conject*: (v.) conclude  
*crank*: (n.) deceit, wile; whim or caprice  
*cuff*: (n.) blow  
*cumber*: (v.) to hamper, hinder  
*dam*: (n.) woman  
*daſtard*: (n.) malicious coward  
*deal*: (n.) amount, part  
*drab*: (n.) slut, strumpet  
*erſt*: (adv.) formerly, before (in time)  
*feat*: (adj.) becoming; graceful; proper; apt  
*featly*: (adv.) deftly  
*fetch*: (n.) contrivance, trick  
*fleet*: (v.) to move quickly  
*fray*: (v.) to be afraid  
*gad*: (v.) to rove, wander, go about idly  
*gage*: (n.) pledge  
*gobbet*: (n.) fragment, broken piece, cut of meat  
*gree*: (v.) to reconcile, come into accord  
*hafter*: (n.) wrangler, dodger, haggler  
*leese*: (v.) to lose  
*liſt*: (v.) to desire, want, wish  
*lout*: (v.) to mock, treat with contempt

## The Play of Wit & Science

*by the mace*: said by the House of Commons Searjeant of Arms, as his warrant for demanding obedience.

*mall*: (n.) mallet, club

*noddy*: (n.) fool, simpleton

*painful*: (adj.) careful, considerate

*pash*: (v.) to bludgeon, bash

*pike*: (v.) to go away quickly

*policy*: (n.) prudence; cunning

*poppet*: (n.) false idol; puppet

*prevent*: (v.) to act in anticipation

*prove*: (v.) to try, test

*ray*: (v.) to array

*rout*: (v.) to snore

*sortly*: (adv.) appropriate, suitable

*sparling*: (n.) a small fish. (The OED cites this play as the only example of the word as a term of endearment.)

*taking*: (n.) fright, dilemma

*taste*: (v.) to attempt, try

*tractable*: (adj.) easily influenced; not stubborn

*trick*: (adj.) clever, smart

*trim*: (v.) to dress, adorn

*troth*: (n.) truth, confidence, good faith

*trow*: (v.) to hold as true, believe, trust

*twiddle*: (v.) to pursue trifling matters

*warrantise*: (v.) to guarantee, give assurance

*weel*: (adv.) archaic form of well

*ween*: (v.) to suppose

*wend*: (v.) to think, suppose

*wise*: (n.) way, manner

*wot*: (v.) to know