

Katherine (Eames) Stubbs (1571-1590)

avoid, Satan, avoid, thou Fireband of hell, avoid, thou damned Dog, and tempt
me no more...remoue thy siege, & yield the field won, and get thee packing...

—*A Crystal Glass* (1591), sig. C3r

KATHERINE STUBBS, paragon of Christian womanhood, stars as the heroine of the best-selling pamphlet of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Her father, William Eames, a freeman of the City of London, was a dealer in leather goods. Her mother, Katrien Melcher, a Dutch woman, was the former wife of Reginald Melcher (also Dutch) who died in October 1563, in London. Widow Melcher and William Eames, having fallen in love, could not wait: they obtained their marriage license on 8 November, before Reginald's body had fully cooled and a full four days before Katrien had opportunity to prove Reginald's will.¹

The marriage of William and Katrien produced six children: Alice, William, John, Susan, Katherine, and Anne. The family's main residence was a mansion on Fleet Street. They attended church at St. Dunstan's, where they heard the sermons of Thomas White, who preached against such luxuries as down beds and gourmet cooking, and who spoke well of bubonic plague as the Lord's punishment for the people's sin.

The children were still under age when William Eames wrote his will, dated 26 November 1583. He died a week later. Having amassed considerable wealth, he was able to provide handsomely for his widow, his two sons, and even for his four daughters. (Katherine received as her marriage-portion £400 in cash – roughly equivalent to what a journeyman could gross in 8-10 years at his trade – plus real estate.)

William Eames was buried on 11 December 1583, his will being proved by Katrien Eames on 14 January. Four days later, Widow Eames was granted a marriage license to wed, thirdly, Richard Tompkins of St. Mary-at-Hill, London. Tompkins, as step-father to six children, promptly set out to find a good match for Alice, the eldest stepdaughter: on 6 April 1583, Alice Eames, 16, was given in marriage to George Dumper, 29. Susan was married off a year later, on 14 June, to John Wheatley. And in September 1586, Katherine, the third daughter, was given in marriage to the Puritan pamphleteer, Philip Stubbs, of Cheshire and London.²

From our historical point of view, the union of Katherine Eames and Philip Stubbs looks like a mismatch: She was a rich, beautiful, teenaged virgin (by the masculinist standards of the age, a perfect score). He was a university dropout, more than twice her age, and had no apparent income, trade, or training beyond his earnings as a hack writer. Stubbs always signed himself a gentleman; but no genealogical, heraldic, or even behavioral evidence has ever been discovered in support of that presumption. He owned no real estate (possibly, one tenement in London). His only claim to fame: Philip Stubbs while still in his twenties had acquired notoriety as the author of moralistic pamphlets; most notably, for his *Anatomy of Abuses* (1583) – a virulent but highly readable screed, written dialogue-wise, in which Stubbs inveighed against earthly pleasures and sinful vanities, from football and playing cards, to secular music and stage plays, to starched ruff collars and cork-heeled shoes. At the time of his engagement, Philip's most recent book – hot off the press and white-hot with Calvinist fervor – was entitled *The Theater of the Pope's Monarchy: wherein is described as well the unclean lives of that wicked generation, as also their anti-Christian government and usurped kingdom; together with their horrible superstition and blasphemous religion as it is now used at this present, where Anti-Christ (the Pope) and his members do bear rule* (1585). Books by Philip Stubbs sold briskly, to Puritans.

After the wedding, Philip and Katherine Stubbs removed from London to live in a manor house on Katherine's inherited property in Burton-on-Trent, Staffordshire. For the next five years, Philip published nothing. By his own report he was often "abroad in London or elsewhere," but doing what, he does not say. Virtuous Katherine remained at home.

In her fifth year of marriage, still in Staffordshire, Katherine at last conceived. Philip headed for London. Katherine did not accompany him, which is just as well: it was during her pregnancy that Thomas Nash reviewed Stubbs's book, *The Anatomy of Abuses*, applauding it as a dish of noodles that "will serve very fitly for an antipasta before one of Egerton's Sermons." In his assessment of the man himself, Nash was less generous. He wonders why the nation should credit an author who "pronounced his words like a bragout, and

¹ *of good account ... modesty*] P. Stubbs, *Crystall Glasse* (1591), A2r, ed. DWF

² Marriage license, Bishop of London: "1586, Sep. 6, Philip Stubbes Gentleman of St. Mary at Hill, London, and Katherine Emmes, spinster, of the same parish, daughter of William Emmes, late of St. Dunstan in the West, London, Cordwainer, deceased—To marry at at any church or chapel in the idocese of London"; *spinster*] not an old maid, but a woman who earned income by spinning flax and wool; *cordwainer*] more strictly, a leatherworker.

held up his head like a malt-horse, and could talk against bishops and wish very mannerly the discipline of the Primitive Church were restored," yet was known to be a flaming hypocrite with a taste for women and dice.¹

By way of illustration, Nash reports two stories of Master Stubbs, the one concerning his secret vice of gambling at cards and backgammon; and the other, a more damning anecdote of Stubbs's alleged behavior when he was dispatched as a man of God to court a London widow in behalf of his friend, Mr. Clark. Arriving at the woman's lodging, Stubbs is said to have begun his wooing assignment with a homily on the blessings of marriage. Finding the merry widow willing to make sport *without* holy matrimony – if the price were right – Stubbs became distracted; neglected his friend Clark's lovesuit; and offered the widow a new Geneva Bible by way of compensation if she would permit him to get there first. The widow having a cash-only policy and Stubbs having no coin in his pocket, she sent him packing. Thomas Nash, reporting:

DID NOT he behave himself like a true Christian, when he went a-wooing for his friend Clark? – I warrant you, he said not, "God save you," or "God speed you," with "Good even" or "Good morrow" (as our *profane* wooers are wont); but stepped close to her, with "Peace be with you" – very demurely – and then told her a long tale: that insomuch as widowhood was "an unclean life and subject to many te) a good Sabbath's Day work was lost."²

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In the first week of November, Katherine gave birth to a boy. The baptism had to be delayed for four weeks until the father returned from London; but on November 17th, the Stubbs child was at last christened (named John, after Philip's father and elder brother. Both mother and baby seemed fine. But Katherine during the delivery had contracted a puerperal infection (a common and usually fatal complication, arising from unsanitary handling of the birth canal). If she felt woozy at the baptism, Philip did not notice; but in the days following, her body became racked with chills, high fever, soreness, and raging thirst. Katherine held out for nearly a month, her child being fed by a wetnurse. She received visits from neighbors and friends. But at last, on 14 December, she succumbed. If the parish records of Burton-upon-Trent can be trusted, Katherine Stubbs was buried on the same day she died (in which case, Philip must have paid for a sanctuary vault in the parish church while sparing himself the time and expense of having her body embalmed and wrapped in lead).

Meanwhile – in anticipation of his wife's death – Philip had begun working on his next book: he had the foresight to record all that Katherine said while on her deathbed, "word for word, as she spake it." By 15 June 1591, Philip Stubbs was back in London, with a new manuscript ready to be printed for his Puritan readership.

A Crystal Glass for Christian Women °

The godly life and Christian death of Mistress Katherine Stubbs, who departed this life in Burton-upon-Trent, in Staffordshire, the 14th day of December. [...] As also a most wonderful combat betwixt Satan and her soul. Worthy to be imprinted in letters of gold, and to be engraven in the tables of every Christian hart. Set down word for word as she spake it, as near as could be gathered. By Philip Stubbs, gent.

CALLING TO REMEMBRANCE (most Christian reader) the final end of man's creation, which is to glorify God, and to edify one another in the way of true godliness, I thought it my duty – as well in respect of the one, as in regard of the other – to publish this rare and wonderful example of the virtuous life and Christian death of Mistress Katherine Stubbs; who whilst she lived was a mirror of womanhood; and now, being dead, is a perfect pattern of true Christianity.

She was descended of honest and wealthy parents. Her father had borne divers offices of worship in his company, amongst whom he lived in good account, credit and estimation all his days. He was zealous in the Truth, and of a sound religion. Her mother was a Dutch woman, both discreet and wise, of singular good grace and modesty; and, which did most of all adorn her: she was both religious and also zealous. This couple living together in the City of London certain years, it pleased God to bless them with children, of whom this Katherine was youngest save one. But as she was youngest save one by course of nature, so was she not inferior to any of the rest – or rather, far excelled them all, without comparison, by many degrees, in the endowments and qualities of the mind.

¹ *bragout*] braggart; *Egerton's sermons*] Stephen Egerton (1555-1621) was the leading Puritan divine.

² *what need...work was lost*] Thomas Nash, *An Almond for a Parrat* (1590), C4v-D1r, ed. DWF. It's doubtful that Nash invented the anecdote. In the latter sixteenth century, libel was the single most dealt-with action by the King's Court. No lawsuit or duel followed, nor did Stubbs respond to Nash's allegations, even in his own ensuing pamphlets.

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At fifteen years of age (her father being dead), her mother bestowed her in marriage to one Master Philip Stubbs; with whom she lived four years and almost a half, very honestly and godly, with rare commendations of all that knew her, as well for her singular wisdom as also for her modesty, courtesy, gentleness, affability, and good government; and above all, for her fervent zeal which she bare to the Truth [...] You could seldom or never have come into her house, and have found her without a Bible or some other good book in her hands. And when she was not reading, she would spend the time in conferring, talking and reasoning with her husband of the Word of God, and of religion; asking him, *What is the sense of this place, and what is the sense of that? How expound you this place, and how expound you that? What observe you of this place, and what observe you of that?* – so that she seemed to be, as it were, ravished with the same spirit that David was, when he said: “The zeal of Thy house hath eaten me up.”

She followed the commandment of our Savior Christ, who biddeth us to “Search the Scriptures, for in them ye hope to have eternal life”: she obeyed the commandment of the Apostle, who biddeth women to be silent, and to learn of their husbands at home. She would suffer no disorder or abuse in her house to be either unproved, or unreformed. And so gentle was she, and courteous of nature, that she was never heard to give any[one] the lie in all her life, nor so much as to “Thou – !” any, in anger. She was never known to fall out with any of her neighbors, nor with the least child that lived, much less to scold or brawl (as many will nowadays for every trifle, or rather for no cause at all!). And so solitary was she given, that she would very seldom or never (and that, not without great constraint; and then not, neither, except her husband were in company) go abroad with any[one], either to banquet or feast, to gossip or make merry. [...] When her husband was abroad in London or elsewhere, there was not the dearest friend she had in the world that could get her abroad to dinner or supper, or to any disports, plays, interludes, or pastimes whatsoever. Neither was she given to pamper her body with delicate meats, wines, or strong drinks, but rather refrained them altogether, saying that “We should eat to live, and not live to eat.” And as she excelled in the gift of sobriety, so she surpassed in the virtue of humility. For it is well known, to divers yet living, that she utterly abhorred all kind of pride, both in apparel, and otherwise.

She could never abide to hear any filthy or unseemly talk of scurrility, bawdry, or uncleanness, neither swearing or blaspheming, cursing or banning, but would reprove them sharply, showing them the vengeance of God due for such deserts. And which is more, there was never one filthy, unclean, undecent, or unseemly word heard to come forth of her mouth; nor ever once to curse or ban, to swear, or blaspheme God any manner of way; but always, her speeches were such as both might “glorify God and minister grace to the hearers” (as the Apostle speaketh). And for her conversation, there was never any man or woman that ever opened their mouths against her, or that ever either did or could once accuse her of the least shadow of dishonesty, so continently she lived, and so circumspectly she walked, eschewing even the very outward appearance or show of evil.

Again, for true love and loyalty to her husband and his friends, she was (let me speak it without offense), I think, the rarest paragon in the world: for she was so far off from dissuading her husband to be beneficial to his friends, that she would rather persuade him to be *more* beneficial to them. If she saw her husband merry, then she was merry. If he were sad, she was sad. If he were heavy or passionate, she would endeavour to make him glad. If he were angry, she would quickly please him, so wisely she demeaned herself towards him. She would never contrary him, in anything. [...]

Thus, the godly young gentlewoman held on her course three or four years after she was married: at which time it pleased God that she conceived (with a manchild); after which conception, she would say to her husband, and many other her good neighbors and friends yet living – not once, nor twice, but many times – that she should never bear more children, that that child should be her death; and that she should live but to bring that child into the world – which thing (no doubt) was revealed unto her by the Spirit of God, for according to her prophecy, so it came to pass.

The time of her account being come, she was delivered of a goodly manchild, with as much speed, and as safely in all women's judgements, as any could be. And after her delivery, she grew so strong that she was able within four or five days to sit up in her bed, and to walk up and down her chamber; and within a fortnight to go abroad in the house, being th'roughly well, and past all danger (as everyone thought). But presently upon this so sudden recovery, it pleased God to visit her again, with an extreme hot and burning quotidian ague; in which sickness she languished for the space of six weeks, or thereabouts. [...]¹

¹ *quotidian ague*] fever, day after day; *fortnight*] two weeks; Stubbs's timetable (two weeks of health following delivery, followed by six weeks of suffering until her death) indicates that the christening

She was accustomed many times as she lay, very suddenly, to fall into a sweet smiling, and sometimes into a most hearty laughter; her face appearing right fair, red, amiable, and lovely. And her countenance seemed as though she greatly rejoiced at some glorious sight. And when her husband would ask her why she smiled and laughed so, she would say, "If you saw such glorious visions and heavenly sights as I see, you would rejoice and laugh with me: for I see a vision of the joys of Heaven, and the glory that I shall go to. And I see infinite millions of angels attendant upon me, and watching over me, ready to carry my soul into the Kingdom of Heaven. In regard whereof, she was willing to forsake herself, her husband, her child and all the world besides. And so calling for her child, which the nurse brought unto her, she took it in her arms and, kissing it, said, "God bless thee, my sweet babe, and make thee an heir of the Kingdom of Heaven; and kissing it again, delivered it to the nurse, with these words to her husband standing by: "Beloved Husband, I bequeath this my child unto you. He is no longer mine. He is the Lord's, and yours. I forsake him, you, and all the world, yea, and mine own self, and esteem all things dung, that I may win Jesus Christ. And I pray you, sweet Husband, bring up this child in good letters, in learning and discipline, and above all things, see that he be brought up and instructed in the exercise of true religion.

The child being taken away, she espied a little puppy or bitch (which in her lifetime she loved well) lying upon her bed. She had no sooner espied her, but she beat her away! – and calling her husband to her, said, "Good husband, you and I have offended God grievously in receiving this bitch many a time into our bed. We would have been loath to have received a Christian soul, purchased with the precious blood of Jesus Christ, into our bed, and to have nourished him in our bosoms, and fed him at our table, as we have done this filthy cur, many a time. The Lord give us grace to repent for it, and all other vanities." And afterward could she never abide to look upon the bitch any more.

Having thus godly disposed of all things, she fell into an ecstasy, or into a trance or swoon, for the space almost of a quarter of an hour – so as everyone thought she had been dead. But afterward, she coming to herself spake to them that were present (as there were many, both worshipful and others), saying, "Right worshipful and my good neighbors and friends, I thank you all for the great pains you have taken with me, in this bed of my sickness. And whereas I am not able to requite you, I beseech the Lord to reward you in the Kingdom of Heaven. [...]"

A Most Wonderful Conflict betwixt Satan and her Soul, and of her Valiant Conquest °

SATAN WAS READY to bid her the combat, whom she mightily repulsed and vanquished by the power of our Lord Jesus, on whom she constantly believed. And whereas before she looked with a sweet, lovely and amiable countenance, red as the rose, and most beautiful to behold, now upon the sudden she bent the brows, she frowned, and looking as it were with an angry, stern, and fierce countenance (as though she saw some filthy, ugly and displeasing thing), she burst forth into these speeches following, pronouncing her words as it were scornfully and disdainfully, in contempt of him to whom she spake:

HOW NOW, SATAN? What makest thou here? Art thou come to tempt the Lord's servant? I tell thee, thou Hell-hound, thou hast no part nor portion in *me!* – nor, by the grace of God, never shalt have. I was, now am, and shall be the Lord's, forever. Yea, Satan, I was chosen and elected in Christ to everlasting salvation before the foundations of the world were laid; and therefore thou mayst get thee packing, thou damned dog, and go shake thine ears, for in me thou hast naught. But what dost thou lay to my charge, thou foul fiend? Oh – that I am a sinner, and therefore shall be damned! I confess indeed that I am a sinner, and a grievous sinner, both by original sin and actual sin – and that, I may thank *thee* for. And therefore, Satan, I bequeath my *sin* to thee, from whom it first came! – and I appeal to the mercy of God in Christ Jesus: 'Christ came to save sinners,' as he sayeth Himself, 'and not the righteous.' 'Behold the Lamb of God,' sayeth John, 'that taketh away the sins of the world.' And in another place he crieth out, 'The blood of Jesus Christ doth cleanse us from all sin.' And therefore, Satan, I constantly believe that my sins are washed way in the precious blood of Jesus Christ, and shall never be imputed unto me any more.

"But what say'st thou more, Satan? Dost thou ask me how I dare come to Him for mercy, He being a righteous God, and I a miserable sinner? I tell thee, Satan, I am bold through *Christ* to come unto Him, being assured and certain of pardon and remission of all my sins for His name's sake. For doth not the Lord bid all that be heavy-laden with the burthen of sin to come unto Him, and he will ease them? Christ's arms were spread wide open, Satan, upon the cross (*with that, she spread her own arms*) to embrace me, and all penitent sinners; and therefore, Satan, I will not fear to present myself before His footstool, in full assurance of His mercy for Christ's sake.

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“What more, Satan? Dost thou say, it is written that God will reward every one according to his works, or according to his deserts? But it is written again, thou deceitful devil, that Christ’s righteousness is my righteousness: His works, my works. His deserts, my deserts. His merits, my merits. And His precious blood, a full satisfaction for all my sins.

“Oh, but God is a just God, thou say’st, and therefore must needs in justice condemn me. I grant, Satan, that He is a just God, and therefore He cannot in justice punish me for my sins, which He hath punished already in his Son. It is against the law of justice to punish one fault twice. I was, and am, a great debtor unto God the Father, but Christ Jesus hath paid the debt for me; and therefore it standeth not with the justice of God to require it again. And therefore: Avoid, Satan!

“Avoid, thou firebrand of Hell! Avoid, thou damned dog! And tempt me no more, for He that is with me is mightier than thou – even the mighty and victorious Lion of the tribe of Judah, who hath bruised thy head and hath promised to be with His children to the end of the world. Avoid therefore, thou dastard! Avoid, thou cowardly soldier – remove thy siege, and yield the field won! And get thee packing, or else I will call upon my grand-captain Christ Jesus, that valiant Michael who beat thee in Heaven and threw thee down to Hell, with all thy hellish train and devilish crew.”¹

She had scarcely pronounced these last words but she fell suddenly into a sweet smiling laughter, saying: “Now is he gone, now is he gone: do ye not see him fly like a coward, and run away like a beaten cock? He hath lost the field, and I have won the victory, even the garland and crown of everlasting life; and that, not by my own power and strength, but by the power and might of Jesus Christ, who hath sent His holy angels to keep me.” And speaking to them that were by, she said, “Oh, would God you saw but what I see! For do you not see infinite millions of most glorious angels stand about me, with fiery chariots ready to defend me, as they did the good prophet Elizeus? These holy angels, these ministering spirits, are appointed by God to carry my soul into the Kingdom of Heaven, where I shall behold the Lord face to face – and shall see Him, not with other, but with these same eyes. Now am I happy and blessed for ever, for I have fought the good fight, and by the might of Christ have won the victory. Now from henceforth shall I never taste neither of hunger nor cold, pain nor woe, misery nor affliction, vexation or trouble, fear nor dread, nor of any other calamity or adversity whatsoever. From henceforth is laid up for me a crown of life, which Christ shall give to those that love Him. And as I am now in possession thereof by hope, so shall I be anon in full fruition thereof by presence of my soul – and hereafter of my body also, when the Lord shall please.”²

Then she spake softly to herself as followeth: “Come, Lord Jesus. Come, my love! Jesus, oh, send Thy pursuivant, sweet Jesus, to fetch me! Oh, sweet Jesus, strengthen Thy servant, and keep Thy promise!”³

Then sang she certain psalms most sweetly, and with a cheerful voice; which done, she desired her husband that the 133rd Psalm might be sung before her, to the church. And further, she desired him that he would not mourn for her, alleging the apostle Paul, where he saith, “Brethren, I would not have you to mourn, as men without hope, for them that die in the Lord”; affirming that she was not in case to be mourned for, but rather to be rejoiced of, for that she should pass (she said) “from Earth to Heaven, from men to holy angels, to cherubins and seraphins, to holy saints, patriarchs and fathers, yea, to God Himself.” After which words, very suddenly she seemed as it were greatly to rejoice, and look very cheerfully, as though she had seen some glorious sight; and lifting up her whole body, and stretching forth both her arms (as though she would embrace some glorious and pleasant thing), said: “I thank my God, through Jesus Christ, He is come, He is come! My good jailer is come to let my soul out of prison. Oh, sweet Death, thou art welcome! Welcome, sweet Death – never was there any guest so welcome to me as thou art. Welcome, the messenger of everlasting life! Welcome, the door and entrance into everlasting glory! Welcome, I say, and thrice welcome, my good jailer! Do thy office quickly, and set my soul at liberty. Strike, sweet Death! Strike my heart! I fear not thy stroke. Now it is done. Father, into Thy blessed hands I commit my spirit. Sweet Jesus, into Thy blessed hands I commend my spirit. Blessed Spirit of God, I commit my soul into Thy hands. Oh most holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity, three persons and one true and everlasting God, into Thy blessed hands I commit both my soul and my body!” – at which words her breath stayed. And so, neither moving hand nor foot, she slept sweetly in the Lord.

¹ *dastard*] coward.

² *my body also*] Catholic orthodoxy held that the soul “slept” until the Last Judgment; Puritans imagined the soul going straight to Heaven or Hell at the moment of death, and remaining there as disembodied consciousness until being reunited with the body at the Second Coming of Christ, when there will be a general resurrection of the flesh.

³ *pursuivant*] messenger or warrant-officer.

Thus hast thou heard, gentle reader, the discourse of the virtuous life and Christian death of this blessed and faithful servant of God, Mistress Katherine Stubbs; which is so much the more wonderful in that she was but young and tender of years, not half a year above the number of nineteen when she departed this life. The Lord give us grace to follow her good example, that we may come to those unspeakable joys wherein she now resteth, through Jesus Christ our Lord; to whom, with the Father and the holy Ghost, be all honor, glory, praise, dominion, and thanksgiving, both now and forevermore. Amen.

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Katherine Stubbs's deathbed altercation with the Devil became a smash hit – a bigger cultural sensation, by far, than Philip Stubbs's sin-thumping best-seller, *The Anatomy of Abuses*. From 1591 to 1700, *A Crystal Glass for Christian Women* passed through an astonishing thirty-four editions. A dead nineteen-year-old housewife thus became the quintessential ideal of feminine virtue for the entire English-speaking world, New and Old. Katherine Stubbs held that position, unchallenged, for more than a century.¹

But when first published, *A Crystal Glass* met with a cold reception from at least one reader. Philip Stubbs hath “put an English she-saint in the *Legend*, for the holiness of her life,” observed Robert Green, “and forgot not so much as her dog”; but Green – having known the author for several years – was unimpressed. He considered Stubbs a “learned hypocrite”; an arrogant Puritan who “could brook no abuses in the Commonwealth” except his own; and, most damnably, a cozened who won his trophy teen-wife with monstrous lies, and with a prank drawn straight out of Plautine comedy.

Robert Green did not let *A Crystal Glass* go unanswered. Writing as Cuthbert Cunny-Catcher, Green in his *Defence of Cunny-Catching* (1592) unfolded the mystery of Katherine Stubbs's 1586 marriage to England's most infamous curmudgeon, Philip Stubbs. The *Dictionary of National Biography* alludes obliquely to this story, only to dismiss it as “unsubstantiated and probably slanderous” – but the imputation that Robert Green lied is itself unsubstantiated and probably slanderous. Allowing for narrative flourishes, it cannot be shown that Green makes even one substantive error in his statements of fact.

Robert Green's reply to *A Crystal Glass for Christian Women* bears inclusion here because it illuminates courtship-rituals as practiced in sixteenth century England; but more importantly, Green's history of the wooing of Katherine Stubbs illuminates how the Puritan ideal of feminine virtue was subject to exploitation by the very men who helped to construct and maintain the discourse.²

A Pleasant Tale How a Holy Brother Cunny-Catched for a Wife °³

By Robert Green

FIRST you must understand, that he was a kind of scholastical panion, nursed up only at grammar school (lest, going to the university, through his nimble wit, too much learning should make him mad). [...] Now, Sir, this “gentleman” had espied (I dare not say: “about Fleet Street”) a proper maid who had (given her, by the decease of her father) £400 in money, besides certain fair houses in the city.⁴

To this girl goeth this proper Greek a-wooing, naming himself to be a “gentleman of Cheshire,” and “only son and heir” to his father, who was “a man of great revenues.” And to make the matter more plausible, he had attired his own [elder] brother very orderly in a bluecoat, and made him his servingman; who, though he were eldest, yet to advance his younger brother to so good a marriage, was content to lie, cog, and flatter, and to take any servile pains, to sooth-up the matter. Insomuch that when her father-in-law (for her mother was married again, to an honest, virtuous, and substantial man in Fleet Street (or thereabouts) heard how this young gentleman was a suitor to his daughter-in-law, [and being] careful she should do well, [he] called the servingman aside (which by his outward behavior seemed to be an honest and discreet man), and began to question with him what his master was, of what parentage, of what possibility of living after his father's decease, and how many children [his father°] had beside him.⁵

¹ *Legend*] i.e., *The Golden Legend*, a collection of fanciful hagiographies by Jacobus de Voragine, a medieval best-seller, surviving in more than one thousand manuscript copies; *put...her dog*] R. G[reen,] *The Defence of Cunny-Catching or a Confutation* (1592), C4v.

² *learned hypocrite*, etc.] Green, *ibid.*, C4v.

³ *Cunny-Catched*] *literally*, caught rabbits; *fig.*, swindled, cozened, a gull; *but primarily*, street talk for snatched cunt.

⁴ *scholastical panion*] a common mate of scholars (such as Green and Nash); a hanger-on.

⁵ *bluecoat*] domestic servants wore blue jackets that denoted their occupation and social standing; *cog*] use trickery, as at dice-play; *father-in-law*] i.e., step-father (Richard Tompkins); *daughter-in-law*] step-daughter (Katherine); *possibility of living*] earning power, sources of revenue;

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This fellow, well-instructed by his holy brother (without [causing] distrust to the man; simply, as he thought), said that [Philip°] was the son and heir of one Master (Et cetera), dwelling in Cheshire at the manor of (Et cetera); and that he had a younger brother, but this [gentleman] was heir to all. And [he] rehearsed a proper living of some five hundred marks a year. [...]

To be brief: wedded they were, and bedded they had been three or four nights; and yet, for all this fair show, the father was a little jealous, and smoked him, but durst say nothing. But at last, after the marriage had been past over three or four days, it chanced that her father and this "servingman" went abroad, and passed through St. Paul's Churchyard amongst the stationers. A 'prentice amongst the rest (that was a Cheshire man, and knew this counterfeit servingman and his brother, as being born in the same parish where his father dwelt, called to him, and said, "What, J[ohn]! How doth your brother P[hilip]? How doth your father – lives he still?"¹

The fellow answered him all were well, and (loath his brother's wife's father should hear anything) made no stay, but departed.

His suspicions giving way to outright alarm, Richard Tompkins is reported to have made further inquiries, only to learn that the Stubbs brothers of Cheshire had "an honest poor man to father," a man who was "well beloved of his neighbors" but dependent on charity (under the Poor Law, which granted relief to elderly and disabled paupers). "Hearing this, although it grieved him that he was thus cozened by a palliard, yet seeing no means to amend it," Tompkins is said to have confronted his son-in-law at the dinner table, and exposed the fraud:²

"Sir," he said to Philip, "know: I have learned your pedigree"; and to Katherine: "Alas, daughter," quoth he, "you are well-married! – for his father lives off the alms of the parish, and this poor fellow which he hath made his slave, is his eldest brother!"

"At this" (writes Green) "his wife began to weep. All was dashed! (and what she thought, God knows). Her mother cried out. But all was bootless: Master P[hilip] confessed the truth [...] and for all that, he had the wench. I pray you: Was not *this* a cunny-catcher?"

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SOME five months after writing those words, Robert Green was dead. In August 1592 he attended a London party at which Thomas Nash was also present. Rhenish wine and pickled herrings were served. If the hostile account of Gabriel Harvey can be trusted, Green indulged himself to excess. Falling ill, he never recovered from the hangover and died three weeks later, being buried 4 September, "in the new churchyard, near Bedlam" (as Harvey gleefully reports). Green died nearly destitute, possibly an alcoholic. Having abandoned his wife years before, he is said to have sent her his last remaining nest egg, a bond for £10, with a note for her to redeem it, thereby to pay the back-rent he owed to his landlord, a poor cordwainer.

And yet, Robert Green despite his flaws may have done more good for women's culture than Philip Stubbs. He was the first English novelist to address his work directly to women readers (as in his *Mamillia*, parts 1 and 2). Writing *as a woman*, he produced one of the century's most persuasive defenses of women's rights (*Jane Anger her Protection for Women*, sometimes mistaken, even today, as a woman's work). But his most valuable contribution to the discourse of gender may have been that warning he issued to readers (male and female, saint or sinner), that they should not pick up *A Crystal Glass* of Philip Stubbs without seeing right through it, as a pious scoundrel's five-star review of a valued commodity, repackaged in quarto for Stubbs's readership. The "real" Katherine, whoever she was, cannot easily be discerned in Stubbs's text; the report of her remarks about her beloved dog, and neglect of the poor, may be as close as we come to hearing her authentic voice.

Green in his last days is said to have been forsaken by all of his friends except his affectionate mistress, Em Ball (the sister of the criminal Cutting Ball), a sometime prostitute by whom he fathered a son, christened Fortunatus Green (Harvey calls him "Infortunatus"). Unlike Philip Stubbs's ideal, Em Ball was not a good girl, but one wishes she had written a book; she may have been as good a woman, in her way, as Katherine Stubbs.

¹ *jealous, and smoked him*] suspicious or doubtful, and tried to smoke him out; *durst*] dared; *John*] Philip's elder brother has been mistaken in scholarship for the John Stubbs who write *The Gaping Gulf*, but they were unrelated.

² *palliard*] penniless scoundrel.

