

CORIN

And how like you this shepherd's life, Master Touchstone?

TOUCHSTONE

Truly, shepherd, in respect of itself, it is a good life, but in respect that it is a shepherd's life, it is naught. In respect that it is solitary, I like it very well; but in respect that it is private, it is a very vile life. Now, in respect it is in the fields, it pleaseth me well; but in respect it is not in the court, it is tedious. As is it a spare life, look you, it fits my humour well; but as there is no more plenty in it, it goes much against my stomach. Hast any philosophy in thee, shepherd?

CORIN

No more but that I know the more one sickens the worse at ease he is; and that he that wants money, means and content is without three good friends; that the property of rain is to wet and fire to burn; that good pasture makes fat sheep, and that a great cause of the night is lack of the sun; that he that hath learned no wit by nature nor art may complain of good breeding or comes of a very dull kindred.

TOUCHSTONE

Such a one is a natural philosopher. Wast ever in court, shepherd?

CORIN

No, truly.

TOUCHSTONE

Then thou art damned.

CORIN

Nay, I hope.

TOUCHSTONE

Truly, thou art damned like an ill-roasted egg, all on one side.

CORIN

For not being at court? Your reason.

TOUCHSTONE

Why, if thou never wast at court, thou never saw'st good manners; if thou never saw'st good manners, then thy manners must be wicked; and wickedness is sin, and sin is damnation. Thou art in a parlous state, shepherd.

CORIN

Not a whit, Touchstone: those that are good manners at the court are as ridiculous in the country as the behavior of the country is most mockable at the court. You told me you salute not at the court, but you kiss your hands: that courtesy would be uncleanly, if courtiers were shepherds.

TOUCHSTONE

Instance, briefly; come, instance.

CORIN

Why, we are still handling our ewes, and their fells, you know, are greasy.

TOUCHSTONE

Why, do not your courtier's hands sweat? and is not the grease of a mutton as wholesome as the sweat of a man? Shallow, shallow. A better instance, I say; come.

CORIN

Besides, our hands are hard.

TOUCHSTONE

Your lips will feel them the sooner. Shallow again. A more sounder instance, come.

CORIN

And they are often tarred over with the surgery of our sheep: and would you have us kiss tar? The courtier's hands are perfumed with civet.

TOUCHSTONE

Most shallow man! thou worms-meat, in respect of a good piece of flesh indeed! Learn of the wise, and perpend: civet is of a baser birth than tar, the very uncleanly flux of a cat. Mend the instance, shepherd.

CORIN

You have too courtly a wit for me: I'll rest.

TOUCHSTONE

Wilt thou rest damned? God help thee, shallow man!
God make incision in thee! thou art raw.

CORIN

Sir, I am a true labourer: I earn that I eat, get
that I wear, owe no man hate, envy no man's
happiness, glad of other men's good, content with my
harm, and the greatest of my pride is to see my ewes
graze and my lambs suck.

TOUCHSTONE

That is another simple sin in you, to bring the ewes
and the rams together and to offer to get your
living by the copulation of cattle; to be bawd to a
bell-wether, and to betray a she-lamb of a
twelvemonth to a crooked-pated, old, cuckoldly ram,
out of all reasonable match. If thou be'st not
damned for this, the devil himself will have no
shepherds; I cannot see else how thou shouldst
'scape.