

*Cost.* I have a letter from monsieur *Biron*, to one lady *Rosaline*.

*Prin.* O, thy letter, thy letter: he's a good friend of mine.  
Stand aside, good bearer. *Boyet*, you can carve;  
Break up this capon.<sup>a</sup>

*Boyet.* I am bound to serve.  
This letter is mistook, it importeth none here;  
It is writ to *Jaquenetta*.

*Prin.* We will read it, I swear.  
Break the neck of the wax, and every one give ear.

*Boyet reads.*

**B**Y heaven, that thou art fair, is most infallible; true, that thou art beauteous; truth itself, that thou art lovely: more fairer than fair, beautiful than beauteous, truer than truth itself, have commiseration on thy heroical vassal! The magnanimous and most illustrate king *Cophetua* set eye upon the pernicious and indubitate beggar *Zenelophon*; and he it was that might rightly say, *veni, vidi, vici*; which to anatomize in the vulgar, (o base and obscure vulgar!) *videlicet*, he came, saw, and overcame: he came, one; saw, two; overcame, three: who came? the king; why did he come? to see; why did he see? to overcome: to whom came he? to the beggar; what saw he? the beggar; whom overcame he? the beggar: the conclusion is victory; on whose side? the king's: the captive is enrich'd; on whose side? the beggar's: the catastrophe is a nuptial; on whose side? the king's? no; on both in one, or one in both: I am the king, (for so stands the comparifon) thou the beggar, for so witnesseth thy lowliness. Shall I command thy love? I may: shall I enforce thy love? I could: shall I entreat thy love? I will. What shalt thou exchange for rags? robes; for tittles? titles; for thyself? me. Thus, expecting thy reply, I profane my lips on thy foot, my eyes on thy picture, and my heart on thy every part.

*Thine, in the dearest design of industry,*

Don Adriano de Armado.

<sup>a</sup> Meaning the letter, as poulet in French signifies both a chicken and a loveletter.