

When it is born in high authority ;
 When vice makes mercy, mercy's so extended,
 That for the fault's love, is th' offender friended.
 Now, fir, what news ?

Prov. I told you : lord *Angelo*, belike, thinking me remiss
 in mine office, awakens me with this unwonted putting on,
 methinks, strangely, for he hath not us'd it before.

Duke. Pray you, let's hear.

Provost reads the letter.

*Whatsoever you may hear to the contrary, let Claudio be executed
 by four of the clock, and, in the afternoon, Barnardine : for my
 better satisfaction, let me have Claudio's head sent me by five.
 Let this be duly performed, with a thought that more depends on
 it than we must yet deliver. Thus fail not to do your office, as
 you will answer it at your peril.*

What say you to this, fir ?

Duke. What is that *Barnardine*, who is to be executed in the
 afternoon ?

Prov. A *Bobemian* born, but here nurs'd up and bred ; one
 that is a prisoner nine years old.

Duke. How came it, that the absent duke had not either
 deliver'd him to his liberty, or executed him ? I have heard, it
 was ever his manner to do so.

Prov. His friends still wrought reprieves for him ; and, indeed,
 his fact, 'till now in the government of lord *Angelo*, came not to
 an undoubtful proof.

Duke. Is it now apparent ?

Prov. Most manifest, and not deny'd by himself.

Duke. Hath he born himself penitently in prison ? how seems
 he to be touch'd ?

Prov. A man that apprehends death no more dreadfully, but
 as a drunken sleep ; careless, reckless, and fearless of what's
 pass'd, present, or to come ; insensible of mortality, and mortally
 desperate.

Duke.