

**THE ROGUES AND VAGABONDS  
OF SHAKESPEARE'S YOUTH:  
AWDELEY'S "FRATERNITYE OF  
VACABONDES" AND HARMAN'S  
"CAVEAT"**

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The rogues and vagabonds of Shakespeare's youth: Awdeley's "Fraternitey of vacabondes" and Harman's "Caveat" by Edward Viles & F. J. Furnivall

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**EDWARD VILES & F. J. FURNIVALL**

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'CAVEAT': EDITED WITH AN  
INTRODUCTION BY EDWARD  
VILES AND F. J. FURNIVALL



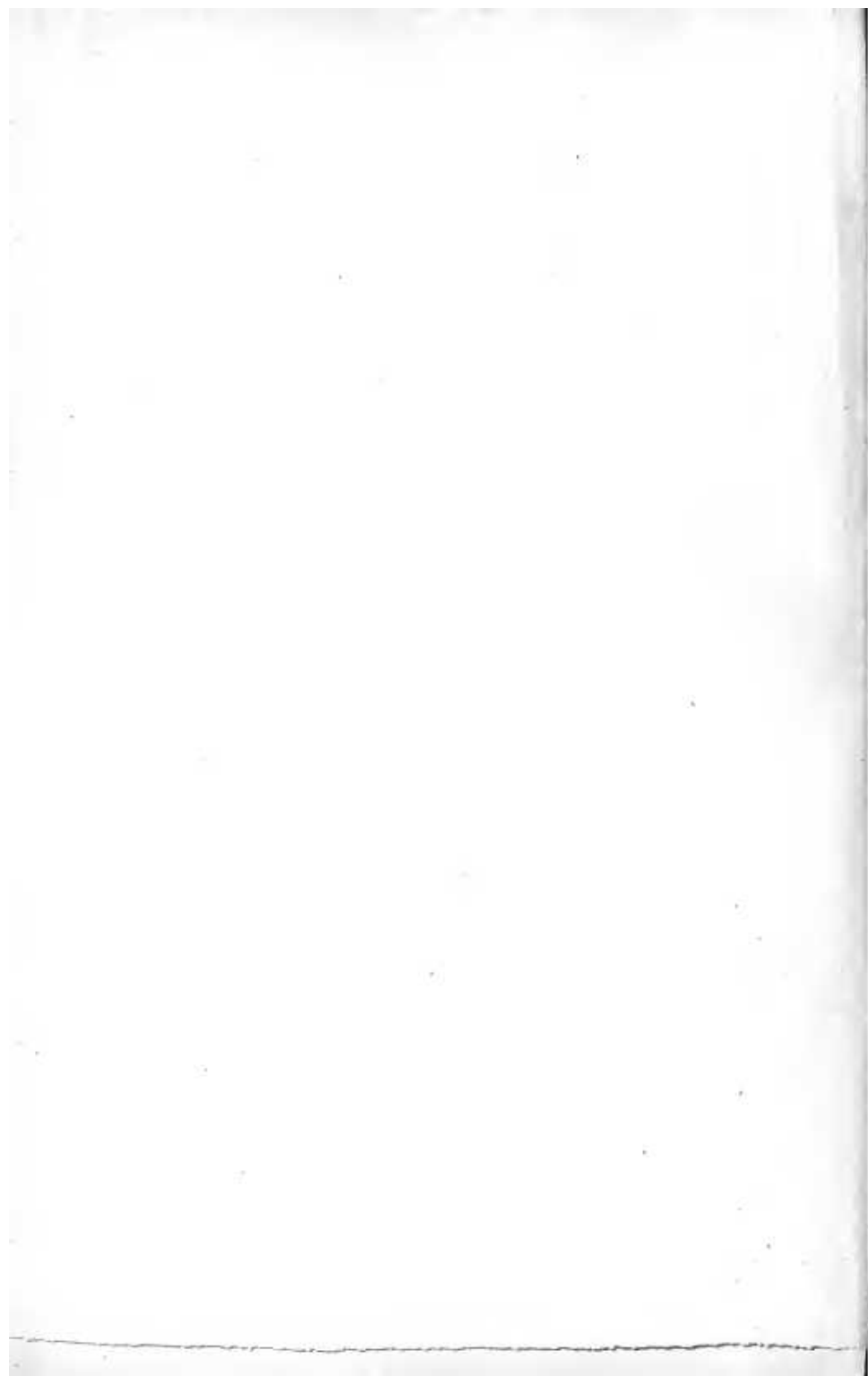
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## PREFACE.

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IF the ways and slang of Vagabonds and Beggars interested Martin Luther enough to make him write a preface to the *Liber Vagatorum*<sup>1</sup> in 1528, two of the ungodly may be excused for caring, in 1869, for the old Rogues of their English land, and for putting together three of the earliest tracts about them. Moreover, these tracts are part of the illustrative matter that we want round our great book on Elizabethan England, Harrison's *Description of Britain*, and the chief of them is quoted by the excellent parson who wrote that book.

The first of these three tracts, Awdeley's *Fraternite of Vagabondes*, has been treated by many hasty bibliographers, who can never have taken the trouble to read the first three leaves of Harman's book, as later than, and a mere pilfering from, Harman's *Caueat*. No such accusation, however, did Harman himself bring against the worthy printer-author (herein like printer-author Crowley, though he was preacher too,) who preceded him. In his Epistle dedicatory to the Countes of Shrewsbury, p. 20, below, Harman, after speaking of 'these wyly wanderers,' vagabonds, says in 1566 or 1567,

There was a *fewe yeares since* a small bréefe setforth of some zelous man to his country,—of whom I knowe not,—that made a lytle shewe of there names and vsage, and gaue a glynsinge lyghte, not sufficient to perswade of ther peuishe peltinge and pickinge practyces, but well worthy of prayse.

<sup>1</sup> *Liber Vagatorum: Der Bettler Orden*: First printed about 1514. Its first section gives a special account of the several orders of the 'Fraternity of Vagabonds'; the 2nd, sundry *notabilia* relating to them; the 3rd consists of a 'Rotwelsche Vocabulary,' or 'Canting Dictionary.' See a long notice in the *Wiemarisches Jahrbuch*, vol. 10; 1856. *Hotten's Slang Dictionary*: Bibliography.

This description of the 'small bréefe,' and the 'lytle shewe' of the 'names and vsage,' exactly suits Awdeley's tract; and the 'fewe yeares since' also suits the date of what may be safely assumed to be the first edition of the *Fraternitye*, by John Awdeley or John Sampson, or Sampson Awdeley,—for by all these names, says Mr Payne Collier, was our one man known:—

It may be disputed whether this printer's name were really Sampson, or Awdeley: he was made free of the Stationers' Company as Sampson, and so he is most frequently termed towards the commencement of the Register; but he certainly wrote and printed his name Awdeley or Awdelay; now and then it stands in the Register 'Sampson Awdeley.' It is the more important to settle the point, because . . . he was not only a printer, but a versifier,<sup>1</sup> and ought to have been included by Ritson in his *Bibliographica Poetica*. (Registers of the Stationers' Company, A.D. 1848, vol. i. p. 23.)

These verses of Awdeley's, or Sampson's, no doubt led to his 'small bréefe' being entered in the Stationers' Register as a 'ballett':

"1560-1. Rd. of John Sampson, for his lycense for pryntinge of a ballett called the description of vakaboundes . . . . iiij<sup>d</sup>.

" [This entry seems to refer to an early edition of a very curious work, printed again by Sampson, alias Awdeley, in 1565, when it bore the following title, 'The fraternitie of vacabondes, as well of ruffing vacabones as of beggerly, <sup>2</sup>as well of women as of men, <sup>2</sup>and as well of gyrls as of boycs, with their proper names and qualities. Also the xxv. orders of knaves, otherwise called a quartten of knawes. Confirmed this yere by Cocke Lorel.' The edition without date mentioned by Dibdin (iv. 564) may have been that of the entry. Another impression by Awdeley, dated 1575 [which we reprint] is reviewed in the *British Bibliographer*, ii. 12, where it is asserted (as is very probable, though we are without distinct evidence of the fact) that the printer was the compiler of the book, and he certainly introduces it by three six-line stanzae. If this work came out originally in 1561, according to the entry, there is no doubt that it was the precursor of a very singular series of tracts on the same subject, which will be noticed in their proper places.]"—J. P. Collier, *Registers*, i. 42.

As above said, I take Harman's 'fewe yeares'—in 1566 or 7—to point to the 1561 edition of Awdeley, and not the 1565 ed. And as to Awdeley's authorship,—what can be more express than his own words,

<sup>1</sup> See the back of his title-page, p. 2, below.

<sup>2</sup> *as well* and *and as well* not in the title of the 1575 edition.

p. 2, below, that what the Vagabond caught at a Session confest as to 'both names and states of most and least of this their Vacabondes brotherhood,' *that,—*' at the request of a worshipful man, I ['The Printer,' that is, John Awdeley] have set it forth as well as I can.'

But if a doubt on Awdeley's priority to Harman exists in any reader's mind, let him consider this second reference by Harman to Awdeley (p. 60, below), not noticed by the bibliographers: "Foras-much as these two names, a Iarkeman and a Patrico, bée in *the old briefe of vacabonds*, and set forth as two kyndes of euil doers, you shall vnderstande that a Iarkeman hath his name of a *Iarke*, which is a *seale in their Language*, as one should *make writings and set seales for lycences and pasporte*," and then turn to Awdeley's *Fraternity of Vacabondes*, and there see, at page 5, below:

## ¶ A IACK MAN.

A Iackeman is he that can write and roade, and sometime speake latin. He vseth to *make counterfaiite lycences* which they call Gybes, and sets to *Seales, in their language called Iarkes*. (See also 'A Whipiacke,' p. 4.)

Let the reader then compare Harman's own description of a *Patrico*, p. 60, with that in 'the old *Briefe of Vacabonds*,' Awdeley, p. 6:

Awdeley.

Harman.

¶ A PATRIARKE Co.

there is a PATRICO . . .

A Patriarke Co doth *make mariages*, & that is *untill death depart* the married folke.

whiche in their language is a priest, that should *make mariages tyll death dyd depart*.

And surely no doubt on the point will remain in his mind, though, if needed, a few more confirmations could be got, as

Awdeley (p. 4).

Harman (p. 44).

¶ A PALLIARD.

¶ A Pallyard.

A Palliard is he that goeth in a patched cloke, and hys Doxy goeth in like apparell.

These Palliardes . . go with patched clokes, and haue their Morts with them.

We may conclude, then, certainly, that Awdeley did not plagiarize Harman; and probably, that he first published his *Fraternity* in 1561. The tract is a mere sketch, as compared with Harman's *Caveat*, though in its descriptions (p. 6—11) of 'A Curtesy Mau,'