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A PENNY WORTH OF WIT.

P A R T I.

HERE is a penny worth of wit,
for those that never went astray;
If warning they will take by it,
'twill do them good another day.
It is a touch stone of true love,
between a Harlot and a Wife.
The former doth destruction prove,
the latter yields the joys of life.
As in this book, you may behold,
set forth by famous William Lane;
A wealth merchant brave and bold,
who did a harlot long maintain;
Although a virtuous wife he had,
likewise a youthful daughter dear,
Which might have made his heart full glad,
yet seldom would he them come near.
The treasure which he traded for,
on the tempestuous ocean wide,
His harlot had, he brought it her,
but nothing to his virtuous bride.
The finest silks that could be bought,
na, jewels, robes, diamonds, rings,
He to his wanton harlot brought,
with many other costly things.
She still receiv'd him with a smile,
when he came from the raging seas,
And said with words as smooth as oil,
my dearest come and take thy ease,
To thy soft bed of linen sie,
thou art welcome, love, said she,
Both I and all that e'er was mine,
shall sin at thy devotion be.
He brought two hundred pounds of gold,
and after that two hundred more,

With chains and jewels many fold,
 and bid her lay them up in store
 Aye that I will, thou need not fear,
 and so embrac'd him with a kiss,
 Then took the wealth, and said my dear,
 I'll have a special care of this.
 Then they did banquet many days,
 feasting on delicious fare,
 Thus by her false deluding words,
 she drew him in a fatal snare.
 When he had liv'd some time on shore,
 he must go to the sea again,
 With traffic to increase his store,
 the wanton harlot to maintain.
 To whom he said, My joy, my dear,
 with me what venture wilt thou send?
 A good return thou need not fear,
 I'll be thy factor and thy friend.
 In goods, my dear, I'll send above
 ten pound, which thou shalt take on board
 I know that unto me, my love,
 a triple gain thou wilt afford.
 This said next to his wife he goes
 and ask'd her, in a scornful way,
 What venture she would now propose,
 to send with him for merchandise.
 I'll send a penny, love, by thee:
 be sure you take good care of it,
 When you're in foreign parts, said she,
 pray buy a penny worth of wit.
 She laid the penny in his hand,
 and said, I pray now don't forget,
 When you are in a foreign land,
 to buy a penny worth of wit.
 He put the penny up secure,
 and said, I'll take a special care,
 To lay it out you may be sure,
 so to his Miss he did repair,

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And told her what he was to say,
at which she laugh'd his wife to scorn;
On board he went immediately
and sail'd to sea that very morn.

PART I.

NOW they are gone with merry hearts,
the merchant and his jovial crew,
From port to port, in foreign parts,
to trade as they were wont to do,
At length when he had well bestow'd,
the cargo, which was outward bound,
He did his trading vessel load,
with richer treasure which he found,
As he his merchandise did vend,
they turn'd to gems and golden ore,
Which crown'd his labours with content,
he never was so rich before.
The wanton Harlot's venture then,
did run to great account likewise,
For every pound she would have ten,
such was their lucky merchandise,
For joy of which the merchant cried,
one merry bout my lads shall have;
A splendid supper I'll provide,
of all the dainties you can crave;
Before you set to sea again.
this said, they to a tavern went,
Where they did feast and drink amain,
till many crowns and pounds were spent.
The merchant then with laughter mov'd,
said he for wit had never sought,
My Harlot's venture is improv'd,
but of my Wife's I never thought.
One single penny and no more,
she has a venture sent with me,
I was to lay it out therefore,
in what you'll call a rarity.
She bid me use my utmost skill;

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to buy a penny-worth of wit,
 But I have kept the penny still,
 and ne'er so much as thought of it.
 Where shall I go to lay it out?
 true wit is scarce and hard to find;
 But come my lads let's drink about,
 my wife's small venture we'll not mind.
 There is a proverb often us'd,
 wit's never good till brought too dear,
 Where I right well may be excus'd,
 there's little for a penny here,
 An aged Father sitting by,
 whose venerable locks were gray,
 Straight made the merchant this reply,
 hear me a word or two I pray.
 Thy Harlot in prosperity,
 she will embrace for thy gold,
 But if in want and misery,
 you'll nought but frowns from her behold.
 And ready to betray thy life,
 when wretched, naked, poor and low
 But thy true hearted faithful wife,
 will stand by thee in well or woe;
 If thou wilt prove the truth of this,
 strip off thy gaudy rich array,
 And to return to thy proud Miss,
 declare that thou was cast away.
 Thy riches buried in the main;
 besides, as you pass'd through a wood,
 One of your servants you had slain,
 for which your life in danger stood.
 Beseech her for to shelter thee,
 declare on her you do depend:
 And then, alas! full soon you'll see,
 how far she'd prov'd a faithful friend.
 Then if the frowns go to thy Wife;
 tell her this melancholy thing.
 Who labours most to save thy life,

let her be most in thy esteem,
 Father, the merchant then replied,
 you must this single penny take;
 When I have pass't the ocean wide,
 a proof of this I mean to make.
 And loving friend, for ought I know,
 I may this single penny prize,
 As being the best I did bestow,
 in all my wealthy merchandize.
 Taking his leave, away they came,
 both he and his brave hearts of gold,
 To whom he said, I'll prove the same,
 when I my native land behold.

P A R T III.

W I T H full spread sail to sea they went,
 Neptune the golden cargo bore,
 Through foaming waves to their content,
 at last they reach'd the British shore.
 The merchant put on poor array;
 the very worst of ragged clothes,
 And then without the least delay,
 he to his wanton harlot goes.
 When she beheld him in distress,
 she cried, what is the matter now?
 He said I'm poor and penny-less,
 with that he made a courteous bow.
 Crying no man was e'er so cross'd
 as I have been my sweet heart's delight,
 My ship and all I had is lost,
 without thy help I'm ruin'd quite.
 My loss is great, yet that's not all,
 one of my servants I have slain,
 As we did both at variance fall;
 some shelter let me here obtain.
 I dare not now go to my wife,
 whom I have wrong'd for many a year,
 Into thy hands I'll put my life,
 take pity on my melting tear.

Ye bloody villain! she replied,
 don't on me the least depend.
 Begone! or as I live she cry'd,
 I for an officer will send,
 I'll give you neither meat nor drink,
 nor any shelter shall you have,
 Of musty; lousy rags you stink,
 begone you base perfidious slave.
 Don't think that I'll your counsel keep,
 or harbour any such as you.
 He turn'd away and seem'd to weep,
 and bid the wanton jilt adieu.
 Then to his loving wife he came,
 both poor and naked in distress,
 He told her all the very same,
 yet she reliev'd him ne'ertheless.
 My dear, she cry'd, since it is so,
 take comfort in thy loving wife,
 All that I have shall freely go,
 to gain a pardon for thy life.
 I'll lodge thee in a place secure,
 where I shall daily nourish thee;
 Believe me, love, you may be sure,
 to find a faithful friend in me.
 When he this perfect proof had made,
 which of them two did love him best,
 Unto his virtuous he said,
 my jewel let thy hear at rest;
 Behold I have no servant slain!
 nor have I suffer'd any loss,
 Enough I have us to maintain,
 the ocean seas I'll no more cross;
 My loaded ship lies near the shore,
 with gold & jewels richly fraught,
 So much I never had before:
 thy petty worth of I've bought.
 Once more he to his harlot goes,
 with fourteen sailors brave and bold;

All cloth'd with new and costly clothes,
 of rich embroider'd silk and gold.
 The Miss when she this pomp beheld,
 did offer him a kind embrace,
 But he with wrath and anger fill'd,
 did straight upbraid her to her face.
 But she with smiles, these words express'd,
 I have a faithful love love for thee,
 Whate'er I said, was but a jest,
 why did'st thou go soon from me,
 It was full time to go from thee,
 you have another love in store,
 Whom you have furnish'd with my gold
 and jewels, which I have brought on shore.
 'Tis false, she said, I have them all;
 with that the merchant straight replied,
 Lay them before me, then I shall
 be soon convinc'd and satisfy'd.
 Then up she ran and fetch'd them down,
 the jewels, gold and rubies bright,
 He seiz'd them all, and with a frown,
 he bid the wanton jilt good night.
 When he had seiz'd the golden purse,
 and sweep'd up every precious stone,
 She cried, what, will you rob me thus?
 yes that I will of what's my own.
 You wanted to betray my life,
 but thanks to God, there's no such fear,
 These jewels shall adorn my wife,
 henceforth your house I'll not come near.
 Home he return'd to his sweet wife,
 and told her all that he had done,
 Ever since they live a happy life,
 as he'll to harlots' no more run.
 Thus he the wanton harlot bit,
 who long had his destruction sought,
 This was a PENNY-WORTH of WIT,
 the best that e'er a merchant bought.

F I N I S.