# An Epitaph / of Master Fraunces Benison /

Citizene and Marchant of London, and of the Haberdashers Company.

¶ Death this Coffyn beare,

Therfore yelyuing prepare.

For you desire lyuing are:

The dead are vew thy feare.

Lacke of health be such a let,
as doth diminish store:
And losse of goods doth rare procure,
with sobs and sighings sore.
Much more is losse of frendly friend,
whom GOD hath cald by death,
But vnto vs the losse redoundes,
which liue by vitall breath.
Man may to health restored be,
if Gods good wyll be so:
And wealth again may grow in time
eyll hap to ouerthrow.
But friendly friend whom God by
death, hath cald to liue in ioy:
Cannot agayne to vs returne,
but rest with out anoy.
Faith being fixed firme in hart, and hope of Heauens blisse:
Sure then in happy state they rest, this sequel cannot misse.
¶ Oh Fraunces Benison (I say) Gods Benison no doubt:
Thou wast the blessing sure of GOD, to wyfe, and all the rout
Of thy good friendes and kinred to, GOD blessed them in thee:
And blessed twise wast thou of GOD, such happy dayes to see
Of Marchauntes all he was the floure, for wysdome and good skill:
And right experte in euery trade, delightyng therein still.
This three and twenty yeares, or more, in traffike he did toyle:
Hys wyll and skyll was alwaies such, he thought it no turmoyle.
With forecast he and diligence did comprehend no doubt,
The vnderstanding of all trades, nere Christendome throughout.
And hauyng opportunitie, no tyme he would omit:
Hys full pretence to byyng to passe, and purpose for to hit.
When wynde and tyde dyd spede require, all one was night or noone:
His watchyngs he did nothing way, tyl his attemptes were done.
He oft would say that Diligence, good Fortunes Mother was:
Which brought his enterprises all, more luckely to pas.
Full quicke and ready with hys pen, and cunning to like wise:
Of right good skyll for to endight, to serue eche enterprise.
As well for frend, as for him selfe, when neede the same did craue:
Whether it were in Marchaunts trade, or other matters graue
Besides his natiue English tong, the French and Dutch he spake:
With pen and speeche in pleasant stile, he arguments could make.
And for his tyme his trade hath bene, as ample I am sure
As any Marchant of thys Land, whylest here he dyd endure.
The Quenes reuenues of her crowne, he thereby did enlarge:
With great preferment of all youth committed to his charge.
Beneficiall eke he was, to eche sorte and degree:
He traded so by Sea and land, it could none other bee.
¶ These past, he with good name and fame, to eche mans contentation:
That with him dealt in any trade, to his great commendation.
And though besides his propper stocke, he vsed credite large:
Yet eche contract in traffike done, right well he did discharge.
And hys courragious attemptes, by forecast so did frame:
That diuers men did muse therat, and some maligned the same.
Which to him knowne, full wysely he, could temper Nature so:
That he vnquiet would not be, but let all malice go.
And leaue to GOD the whole reuenge, still seeking quietnes:
So his affaires they framed well, and better had successe.
To taste the sower with the swete, hym selfe so did prepare:
When any losse he did sustaine, that patience conquerd care.
Citizen lyke in euery point, hym selfe he did behaue:
With comely gesture and attire, right decent, sad, and graue.
With cheerefull salutacions, right curteous to all men:
And how to vse audacitie, he knew place, tyme and when.
To noble and to worshipfull, sure knowne he was as well,
As vnto the inferiour sorte, this must reporte can tell.
And also knowne in Princes Court, by his solicitation:
As well for causes of his own, as others of hys nation.
He left behinde hym worldly goodes, all men to satisfie:
And for to comfort wyfe and frendes also aboundantly.
And where he was a Gouernour, for thimpotentes defence:
He charitably vnto them, gaue his beneuolence.
Hys Will long time lay by him made, which he from yeare to yeare:
Dyd ouersee and order so, as Death were euer neare.
Sickines so sharply did him take, all hope it did expell:
No way there was Death to escape, which he perceiued well.
Straight therupon he did commit, to persons of great skyll:
The ordering of hys temporall goods, according to hys Will.
And gaue himselfe cleane from the world, and onely dyd depend:
On Christes death to be his lyfe, and so he made an end.
Whose soule no doubt remaynes in ioy, with Abraham and the rest:
Of good and faythfull Patriarkes, who sure of God are blest.
His good example to ensue, graunt Lord we thee desire:
And that we may them immitate, we humbly thee require,
Thus I conclude, yelding to GOD, all honour, laud and prayse:
With thanks for this our brother deare, I wish to walke his waies.

FINIS.


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