

## A BALLAD SENT TO KING RICHARD.

SOMETIME this world was so steadfast and stable, That man's word was held obligation; And now it is so false and deceivable,\*  
\*deceitful That word and work, as in conclusion, Be nothing one; for turned up so down Is all this world, through meed\* and wilfulness,  
\*bribery That all is lost for lack of steadfastness.

What makes this world to be so variable, But lust\* that folk have in dissension?                   \*pleasure For now-a-days a man is held unable\*  
\*fit for nothing \*But if\* he can, by some collusion,\*\*                   \*unless\* \*fraud, trick Do his neighbour wrong or oppression. What causeth this but wilful wretchedness, That all is lost for lack of steadfastness?

Truth is put down, reason is holden fable; Virtue hath now no domination; Pity exil'd, no wight is merciable; Through covetise is blent\* discretion;  
\*blinded The worlde hath made permutation From right to wrong, from truth to fickleness, That all is lost for lack of steadfastness.

L'Envoy.

O Prince! desire to be honourable; Cherish thy folk, and hate extortion; Suffer nothing that may be reprobable\*                   \*a subject of reproach To thine estate, done in thy region;\*                   \*kingdom Showforth the sword of castigation; Dread God, do law, love thorough worthiness, And wed thy folk again to steadfastness!