

THE VESTAL VIRGIN

danger. One said that the earth had crack'd
on his master's farm. Some say that 'tis to
a judgment on us for the trial and the work
do. Fine justice when master escapes and
man suffers. Fall to thy labor. The aedile
comes anon with the birds for our cages. Plutarch
'tis as black as thy kingdom!

SECOND SLAVE. Ay, and smacks of clay, and
newts, and lizards, and dead men's bones, and
what not!

FIRST SLAVE. 'Twere fit company for that Egyptian
priest. I would he were prisoner and the poor
lamb free! To leer at her, as one may say, with
the death rattling in her throat! Heigh ho!
'tis an odd day when treachery goes and justice
recks not.

SECOND SLAVE. There again with thy thoughts
'Tis beyond me. An the pot boils o' the hearth
and the suckling squeals i' the shed, 'tis no
well for poverty to squint at master's doings
or addle its wits over why the tide loves the
moon.

FIRST SLAVE. Thou dost most wittily make denial
of thine own wit. But voices are near us
To work, 'tis the badge of our calling!

*Enter AEDILE, with followers, and guard leading
prisoners.*

AEDILE. (*To slaves*) Stand aside! (*To guard*)
Lead forth the erring Vestal to her doom.