II.3 Enter Edgar.

EDGAR
I heard myself proclaimed,
And by the happy hollow of a tree
Escaped the hunt. No port is free, no place
That guard and most unusual vigilance
Does not attend my taking. While I may scape,
I will preserve myself; and am bethought
To take the basest and most poorest shape
That ever penury, in contempt of man,
Brought near to beast: my face I’ll grime with filth,
Blanket my loins, elf all my hairs in knots,
And with presented nakedness outface
The winds and persecutions of the sky.
The country gives me proof and precedent
Of Bedlam beggars, who, with roaring voices,
Strike in their numbed and mortified bare arms
Pins, wooden pricks, nails, sprigs of rosemary;
And with this horrible object, from low farms,
Poor pelting villages, sheepcotes, and mills,
Sometimes with lunatic bans, sometime with prayers,
Enforce their charity. Poor Turlygod, poor Tom,
That’s something yet: Edgar I nothing am.

*  

Exit.

[EDGAR
When we our betters see bearing our woes,
We scarcely think our miseries our foes.
Who alone suffers most i’ th’ mind,
Leaving free things and happy shows behind;
But then the mind much sufferance doth o’erskip
When grief hath mates, and bearing fellowship.
How light and portable my pain seems now,
When that which makes me bend makes the king bow.
He childed as I fathered. Tom, away.
Mark the high noises, and thyself bewray
When false opinion, whose wrong thoughts defile thee,
In thy just proof repeals and reconciles thee.
What will hap more tonight, safe scape the king!
Lurk, lurk.]  

*  

Exit.  

II.3 s.d. Kent remains on stage in the stocks, asleep, but he and Edgar are clearly not part of the same scene.

1 proclaimed i.e., as an outlaw 2 happy hollow i.e., lucky hiding place 5 attend . . . taking prepare to arrest me 6 am bethought have a plan 8 of for 10 elf tangle (into “elf locks”) 11 presented the show of 13 proof experience 14 Bedlam beggar (see I.2.136) 15 strike stick; mortified dead to pain 17 object spectacle 18 pelting pultry 19 how curses 20 Turlygod (unexplained, but evidently another name for a Bedlam beggar) 21 Edgar i.e., as Edgar 101 bearing . . . woes enduring the same suffering as we do 104 free carefree; shows scenes 106 bearing fellowship endurance has company 107 portable bearable 109 He he is 110 Mark . . . noises follow the news of those in power; beware reveal 111–12 When . . . twists when proof of your innocence vindicates 113 What . . . more whatever more happens