

## Oi5 There was a man, & hee was Semper idem

*Notes.* The original target of this poem is unclear. While most sources frame it as an attack on a nameless merchant, at least one presents it more specifically, as being concerned with “the late Lord Treasurer, Sir Lionel Cranfield, Earl of Middlesex, disgraced, imprisoned, and putt from his office by the Parliament in anno 1624, much against King James will” (Bodleian MS Don. c.54).

“In Mercatorem quendam”<sup>1</sup>

There was a man & hee was Semper idem,<sup>2</sup>

And for his life, hee was Mercator quidam,<sup>3</sup>

Hee had a Wife<sup>4</sup> was neither tall nor Brevis<sup>5</sup>

Yet in her carriage was accounted Levis<sup>6</sup>

Hee to content her, gave her all things Satis<sup>7</sup>

Shee to requite him made him Cuckold Gratis.<sup>8</sup>

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**Source.** BL Add. MS 15227, fol. 42v

**Other known sources.** Bodleian MS Don. c.54, fol. 29r; Bodleian MS Don. f.39, fol. 24r; BL Add. MS 44963, fol. 40v; Brotherton MS Lt. 31, fol. 38v; Folger MS V.a.262, p. 103

Oi5

<sup>1</sup> *In Mercatorem quendam*: “quendam” seems to be incorrect; perhaps a better reading would be “In Meractorem quidam” (“Upon a Certain Merchant”), or “In Mercatorem quondam” (“Upon a former Merchant”).

<sup>2</sup> *Semper idem*: “always the same”.

<sup>3</sup> *Mercator quidam*: “a certain merchant”. “Quidem” might fit the rhyme scheme better, which would make him a “Mercator quidem” (“merchant indeed”).

<sup>4</sup> *a Wife*: Cranfield married as his second wife Anne Brett, the favourite Buckingham’s cousin on his mother’s side. The libel “Heaven blesse King James our joy”, alleges that Cranfield’s wife had an affair with Thomas Howard, Earl of Arundel.

<sup>5</sup> *Brevis*: short.

<sup>6</sup> *Levis*: light, immoral.

<sup>7</sup> *Satis*: enough, sufficient.

<sup>8</sup> *Gratis*: for free.

