BEATRICE, MESSENGER,

BEATRICE
I pray you, how many hath he
killed and eaten in these wars?
For indeed I promised to eat all of his killing.
MESSENGER
He hath done good service, lady, in these wars.
BEATRICE
You had musty victual, and he hath holp to eat it:
he is a very valiant trencherman; he hath an
excellent stomach.
MESSENGER
And a good soldier too, lady.
BEATRICE
And a good soldier to a lady: but what is he to a lord?
MESSENGER
A lord to a lord, a man to a man; stuffed with all
honourable virtues.
BEATRICE
It is so, indeed; he is no less than a stuffed man.
Alas! he gets nothing by that. In our last
conflict four of his five wits went halting off, and
now is the whole man governed with one. Who is his
companion now? He hath every month a new sworn brother. He wears his faith but as
the fashion of his hat; it ever changes with the
next block.
MESSENGER
I see, lady, the gentleman is not in your books.
BEATRICE
No; an he were, I would burn my study. But, I pray
you, who is his companion? Is there no young
squerer now that will make a voyage with him to the devil?
MESSENGER
He is most in the company of the right noble Claudio.
BEATRICE
O Lord, he will hang upon him like a disease: he
is sooner caught than the pestilence, and the taker
runs presently mad. God help the noble Claudio! if
he have caught the Benedick, it will cost him a
thousand pound ere he be cured.
MESSENGER
I will hold friends with you, lady.
BEATRICE
Do, good friend.