
ALCIDA

Greene's Metamorphosis

Wherein is discovered a pleasant transformation of bodies into sundry shapes, showing that as virtues beatify the mind, so vanities give greater stains than the perfection of any quality can rase out.

The discourse confirmed with divers merry and delightful histories full of grave principles to content age, and sauced with pleasant parleys and witty answers to satisfy youth; profitable for both, and not offensive to any.

By R.G.

Omne tulit punctum, qui miscuit dulci.

London
Printed by George Purslowe
1617

The Epistle Dedicatory

To the right worshipful Sir Charles Blount, Knight, endued with perfections of learning and titles of nobility, Robert Greene wisheth increase of honour and virtue

Achilles, the great commander of the Myrmidons, had no sooner (right Worshipful) encountered the hardy Troian with his curtal-ax, and registered his valour on the helm of his enemy, but returning to his tents he portrayed with his pen the praise of Polyxena, joining amours with armours and the honour of his learning with the resolution of his lance. In the Olympiads, the laurel strived as well for the pen as the spear, and Pallas had double sacrifice, as well perfumes of torn papers as incense of broken truncheons.

Entering, right Worshipful, with deep insight into these premises, I found [+fame] blazoning your resolute endeavours in deeds of arms, and report figuring out your ever intended favours to good letters. Presuming upon the courteous disposition of your Worship, I adventured to present you, as Lucius did Caesar, who offered him an helmet topped with plumes in wars and a book stuffed with precepts in peace, knowing that Caesar held it as honourable to be counted an orator in the court as a soldier in the field. So, right Worshipful, after your return from the Low Countries (passing over those praiseworthy resolutions executed upon the enemy), seeing absence from arms had transformed Campus Martius to Mount Helicon, I over-boldened myself to trouble your Worship with the sight of my *Metamorphosis*, a pamphlet too simple to patronage under so worthy a Maecenas, and unworthy to be viewed of you, whose thoughts are intended to more serious studies.

Yet Augustus would read poems and write roundelays, rather to purge melancholy with toys than for any delight in such trifles. So I hope your Worship will, after long perusing of great volumes, cast a glance at my poor pamphlet wherein is discovered the anatomy of women's affections, setting out as in a mirror how dangerous his hazard is that sets his rest upon love, whose enemy [sic?] (if it have any) is momentany, and effects variable. If either the method or matter mislike, as wanting scholarism in the one, or gravity in the other, yet if it shall serve your Worship as a trifle to pass away the time, and so slip with patience as a board jest, I shall be less grieved; if any way it please, as to procure your delight, I shall be glad and satisfied, as having gained the end of my labours. But, howsoever, hoping your Worship will pardon my presumption in presenting, and weigh more of the well-affected will than of the bad-laboured work, I wish your Worship such fortunate favours as you can desire, or I imagine.

Your Worship's to command,
Robert Greene

To the gentlemen readers, health.

Falling, gentlemen, by chance amongst a company of no mean gentlewomen, after supposes and such ordinary sports passed, they fell to prattle of the qualities incident to their own sex. One amongst the rest, very indifferent, more addicted to tell the truth than to self-conceit, said that woman [sic for 'women'] that had favours had most commonly contrary faults, *For*, quoth she, *beauty is seldom without pride, and wit without inconstancy*. The gentlewomen began to blush because she spake so broad, be sure [sic for 'censured'?], and blamed her that she would so fondly soil her own nest. She still maintained it, that what she had spoken was true, and more, that she had forgotten their little secrecy. Whereupon there grew arguments, and a sophistical disputation fell out among the gentlewomen about their own qualities. I sat still as a cipher in algorism, and noted what was spoken, which after I had perused in my chamber, and seeing it would be profitable for young gentlemen to know and foresee as well their faults as their favours, I drew into a fiction, the form and method in manner of a metamorphosis, which, gentlemen, I present unto your wonted courtesies, desiring you not to look for any of Ovid's witty inventions, but for bare and rude discourses, hoping to find you, as hitherto I have done, whatsoever in opinion, yet favourable and silent in speech. In which hope setting down my rest, I bide you farewell.

Yours ever, as he is bound,
Robert Greene.

Authoris ad librum suum carmen Ouidianum, cum diutina febris rure laboraret.

Parue (nec inuideo) sine me liber ibis in vrbem:

Hei mihi, quod domino non licet ire tuo.

Et palma tu dignus, & hic, & quisquis in altam,

Pluribus vt profit, doctus descendit arenam.

R.A. Oxon.

In praise of the author

*The busy bee, that riseth with the sun,
Hies forth her hive to end her daily task;
With weary wings she plies into the fields,
And nature's secrets searcheth by her skill;
From flower to flower her careful way doth fly,
To suck her honey from her native sweet;
Loaden, she rich bestirs her to her home,
And there she works and tills within her hive;
Not for herself thus busily she roams,
But for us men, that feed upon her combs;
So GREENE hath sought into the depth of art,
With weary labours toiling at his books
For fruits such as the learned authors yield,
Searching the secrets that their wits have penned,
Tossing amongst their learned principles,
Their rhetoric and deep philosophy,
Gathering the sweet that every science gives
To carry pleasant honey to his hive;
Not for himself alone the author looks,
But for such men as deign to read his books.*

Sic vos non vobis mellificatis apes [=Thus you bees make honey, but not only for yourselves].

Ed. Percy.

To the author, his friend

*Well hast thou painted in thy learned prose
The perfect portraiture of women's works,
How many scapes they shadow with a gloze,
What mortal faults amongst their favours lurks,
How if they have a virtue to entice,
A cooling card comes following with a vice;
Beauty doth grace, and yet is stained with pride,
Fair is abused by being over-coy;
If it is a gem, but if inconstant tried,
Account if for a trifle and a toy;
Constant and kind are virtues that do grace,
But babbling dames such glories do deface;
Virtue thus set opposed unto their vice
Gives us a light to settle safe our loves,
To fear, lest painted shows may us entice;
Subtile are women; then it men behoves
To read, sweet friend, and over-read thy books,
To teach us ware of women's wanton looks.*

Bubb Gent.

In Roberti Greni Metamorphosin carmen enkomiastikon

*Bellica pacificae concedat lancea linguae,
Seu tibi prosa magis, seu tibi metra placent.
Saepe Duces inter laudem meruere Poetae,
Hostibus in medijs arma virosque canunt.
Inter Philosophos laudem meruere Poetae,
Qui leuibus miscent feriora metra iocis.
Bella Ducum, & claros multi scripsere triumphos,
Inter quos primas Maro Poeta tenet.
Sunt qui mutatas studuerunt dicere formas,
Quales quae quondam Naso Poeta dedit,
Post Metamorphosin Nasonis, carmine scriptam,
Mutatas formas carmine nemo dedit.
Grenus adest tandem, rhetor bonus atque Poeta,
Qui sua cum profis carmina iuncta dedit
Si cupis ingratae poenas persolvere amicae,
Hic exempla legas, moribus apta suis.
Orabis Venerem (solet exaudire precantem)
Inque nouam formam vertet amica Venus.
Dura est? in saxum: leuis est? in Chameleontem:
Inque rosam vertet, garrula si fuerit.*

G.B. Cant.

In laudem Roberti Greni Cantab. in Artibus Magistri

*Olim praeclaros scripsit Chaucerus ad Anglos,
Aurea metra suis patrio sermone refundens:
Post hunc Gowerus post hunc sua carmina Lydgate,
Postque alios alij sua metra dedere Britannis.
Multis post annis, coniungens carmina profis,
Florint [sic for 'floruit'] Ascamus, Chekus, Gascoynus, & alter
Tullius Anglorum nunc viuens Lillius, illum
Consequitur Grenus, praeclarus vterque Poeta.*

ALCIDA

Greene's Metamorphosis

Loosing from Tripoli to make for Alexandria, as we thought to cross the seas with a speedy cut, our ship had not long gone under sail, scarce past two hundred leagues upon the main, but whether our unhappy fortune, the frowardness of the fates, the constellation of some contrary aspect, or the particular destiny of some unhappy man had so decreed, when the calm was smoothest, the sea without storm, the sky without clouds, then Neptune, to show he was god of the seas and Aeolus master of the winds, either of them severally and both of them conjointly so conspired that they first drew a foggy veil over Phoebus' face, that the heavens appeared all gloomy, the Tritons danced, as foreshowing a rough sea, and Aeolus, setting his winds at liberty, hurled such a gale into the ocean that every surge was ready to overtake our ship, and the bark ready to founder with every wave. Such and so miserable was our estate that we shook [sic for 'strook'?] all our sails, weighed [sic?] our anchors and let the ship hull at wind and weather, from our handy labours falling to hearty prayers. Thus looking every hour to commit our souls to the gods and our bodies to the seas, after we had floated by the space of five days without hope of life, our bark by chance fell upon the coast of Taprobane, an island situated far south under the pole Antarctic, where Canopus, the fair star, gladdeth the hearts of the inhabitants. There we suffered shipwreck, all perishing in the sea except my infortunate self, who count my misfortune greater in surveying [sic for 'surviving'?] all the rest than if I had been partner with them of their destinies.

Well, the gods would have me live to be more miserable, and despair I would not, lest I should prove guilty of mine own mishap, but taking heart at grass, wet and weary as I was I passed up into the island, which I found inhabited and fruitful, the air passing temperate, the situation pleasant, the soil abounding with trees, herbs and grass, fowls and beasts of all kind, the champian fit for corn and grain, the woodland full of thickets, the meads full of springs and delightful fountains, that the soil and the air equally proportioned, the isle seemed a sacred Eden or paradise, much like that fair England, the flower of Europe, stored with the wealth of all the western world, which as *ex opposito* is contrarily placed far north under the pole Artic.

Well, crept up the cliffs into the main continent of this island, I wandered far and found no village, till at last under a hill I spied a little cottage at the door whereof sat an old woman, decrepit, overworn with years, her hair as white as the down found upon the shrubs of Arabia, her face full of wrinkles, furrowed so with age as in her visage appeared the very map of antiquity, yet might I perceive by the lineaments of her face that she had been beautiful and well-featured, and that she was descended from some good parentage, such sparks of gentility appeared in her countenance. Musing at this old matron that sat passing melancholy, my teeth for cold beating in my head, I saluted her in this manner:

Mother (for this title I may use in respect of your age), craving pardon if I impart not what reverence belongs to your estate, in that I am a stranger, I salute you, wishing as

many good fortunes may end your days as you have passed ill fortunes in the course of your life. My name or countries [sic for 'country'?] little avails now to reveal, time being too short, and my state too miserable; let it suffice I am a stranger that have suffered shipwreck on your coast; my fellow consorts drowned, ending their sorrows, I escaped, reserved to great misfortunes. The weather is cold, and I am wet. Might I crave harbour this night, I should be bound to make such requital as distress can afford, which is thanks, and pray to the gods that you may die as fortunate as the mother of Cleotis [sic for 'Cleobis'?] and Biton.

The old beldam, lifting up her head and seeing me stand shaking for cold, uttered not a word, but taking up her staff, and me by the hand, confirmed my welcome with silence, and led me into her cottage, where stumbling about on her three legs she made me a lusty fire that cheered my half-dead limbs, and revived what the sea had half mortified. After she perceived I began to wax warm, and that my colour grew to be fresh, she began to make me answer in this manner:

Since now that the fire hath made thee frolic, and the warmth of my poor cottage hath been as good as household physic to cure thy weather-beaten loins, let me say as thou shalt find, that thou art welcome, for I hold it a religion to honour strangers, especially distressed, sith comfort in misery is a double gift. I know not thy degree, nor I reck not; suffice I use thee as thou seemest, and entertain thee as my ability can. Thy estate may be great, for the hood makes not the monk, nor the apparel the man. Mercury walked in the shape of a country swain, Apollo kept Midas' sheep, and poor Philemon & Baucis, his wife, entertained Jupiter himself, supped him & lodged him. They honoured an unknown guest; he not ungrateful to so kind an host, for he turned their cottage to a temple, and made them sacrificers at his altars. Thus I may be deceived in thy degree, but howsoever or whosoever, this cottage & what is in it is mine and thine; less thou shalt not find, and more in conscience thou canst not crave.

Son, I speak thus frankly for that I am old, for age hath that privilege to be private & familiar with strangers, for were I as I have been, as beautiful as now I am withered, as young as I am old, I would be less prodigal and more churlish, lest with Phyllis I might entertain Demophon, which did make account of the trothless Troian, or with Ariadne tie myself to the proportion of Theseus. But age hath put water in the flame, & many years turned the glowing sparks to cold winds. Time, son, is like the worm tenedes, which smoothly lying on the bark of the tree, yet eateth out the sap. It stealeth on by minutes, and fareth like the sun, whose shadow hasteth on, yet cannot be perceived.

But letting this parle pass, seeing thou art weary and hungry, two fruits that grow from shipwreck, rest thee till I provide supper, which how homely soever it be, yet must thou account it dainty for that it is my delicates, and accept it as a prodigal banquet, for that every dish shall be sauced with welcome.

With this she rose from her stool and went to provide supper, leaving me amazed at her gracious reply, making me to conjecture by her words that as she was wise, so she had been well brought up, and was descended of no small parentage. I sat in a muse till she

had made ready our cates, which being set on the table, we fell to make trial of our teeth, as before we had done of our tongues, that we began and ended supper without any great chat. Well, our repast taken, the old woman, seeing me fitter for sleep than for prattle, gave me leave to go to bed, where I passed away the night in golden slumbers, lying so long in the morning till Phoebus glimmering on my face bade me good day. Awaked by the summons of the sun, I arose, and found mine old hostess sitting at her door in her melancholy mood, sighing and sorrowful. An interchange of *Salves* passed between her and me, I, with thanks for my great and courteous entertainment, and she with oft repetitions of welcomes, taking a stool and sitting down by [t]his old dame, seeing she fell again to her dumps, I began to be thus inquisitive:

Mother, if I may without offence presume to use a question, I would inquire what I muse at, and be absolved in a dark enigma that I have found in your cottage, but rather had I still hold my thoughts in suspense than be offensive either to your age, or to so courteous an hostess.

The old woman, smiling at my fear or at my folly, bade me say on, and I boldly prosecuted my purpose thus:

Since my arrival in your cottage I have noted your thoughts to be passionate, and your passions to be violent. I have seen care lurking midst the wrinkles of your age, and sorrow breathed out with broken sighs. I do not deny but age is given to melancholy, and many years acquainted with many dumps, but such far-fetched groans, the heralds of griefs, such deep sighs, the ambassadors of sorrow, make me think either you grieve at your sins with repentance, or else recount some great forepassed misfortunes. This is the doubt, and here lies the question.

I had no sooner uttered these words but the old woman, leaning her head against her staff, fell into such bitter tears as did discover a multitude of sorrows and perplexed passions, insomuch as, taking pity of her griefs, I lent her a few lukewarm drops to show how in mind I did participate of her unknown dolours. After she had filled the furrows of her face with the streams of her tears, ending the catastrophe of her passions with a volée [=volley] of sighs, she blubbered out this reply:

Ah, son, ill have those painters deciphered time with a pumice-stone, as rasing out both joys and sorrows with oblivy, seeing experience tells me that deep conceived sorrows are like the sea-ivy, which the older it is, the larger roots it hath, resembling the eagle, which in her oldest age reneweth her bill. Passions, my son, are like the arrows of Cupid, which if they touch lightly prove but toys, but piercing the skin, prove deep wounds, as hardly to be rased out as the spots of the leopard.

I was, son (and with that she entered her narration with a deep sigh) once young and buxom as thou art, beauty discovering her pride where now a tawny hue pulleth down my plumes. The lineaments of my face were levelled with such equal proportion as I was counted full of favour, and of so fair a dye had nature stained my cheeks that I was thought beautiful. Yea, son, give me leave a little to savour of self-love; I tell thee I was

called the Venus of Taprobane. My parentage did no whit disgrace what nature had imparted upon me, for I was the daughter of an earl. To be brief, my son, as well the qualities of my mind as my exterior favours were so honoured in Taprobane that the prince of the island, called Cleomachus, took me to wife and had by me four children, one son and three daughters.

And with this she fell afresh to her tears, pouring forth many passionate plaints, till at last the sorrow of her tears stopping, she went forward in her tale:

My husband in the prime of years died, my son succeeded in the government, and I and my daughters courted it as their youth and my direction would permit. Living thus contentedly, and as I thought armed against fortune in that we foreguarded all our actions with virtue, the fates, if there be any, or the destinies, some star or planet in some infortunate and cursed aspect, calculated such ill hap to all my daughters' nativities as they proved as miserable as I would have wished them happy.

And here multiplying sigh upon sigh with double and treble revies, she ceased, but I, desirous to know the sequel of their misfortunes, asked her the cause and manner of their mishaps. She replied not, but taking me by the hand she led me from her cottage to a valley hard by, where she brought me to a marble pillar, fashioned and portrayed like a woman, which made me remember Pygmalion's picture that he carved with his hand and doted on with his heart. No sooner were we come to the stone but Alcida (for so was the old lady's name), taking it in her arms, kissed it, and washed it with her tears. I, amazed at this strange greeting of Alcida and the stone, drew more nigh, and there I might perceive the image to hold in either hand a table. In the right hand was depainted the portraiture of Venus holding the ball that brought Troy to ruin, and under were written these verses:

*When nature forged the fair unhappy mould
Wherein proud beauty took her matchless shape,
She overslipped her cunning and her skill,
And aimed too far, but drew beyond the mark,
For thinking to have made a heavenly bliss
For wanton gods to dally with in heaven,
And to have framed a precious gem for men
To solace all their dumpish thoughts with glee,
She wrought a plague, a poison, and a hell
For gods, for men; thus no way wrought she well.
Venus was fair, fair was the queen of love,
Fairer than Pallas or the wife of Jove,
Yet did the giglet's beauty grieve the smith,
For that she braved the cripple with a horn;
Mars said her beauty was the star of heaven,
Yet did her beauty stain him with disgrace;
Paris for fair gave her the golden ball,
And brought his and his father's ruin so;*

*Thus nature, making what should far excel,
Lent gods and men a poison and a hell.*

In her left hand was curiously portrayed a peacock clad gloriously in the beauty of his feathers; under was written as followeth:

*The bird of Juno glories in his plumes,
Pride makes the fowl to prune his feathers so;
His spotted train fetched from old Argus' head,
With golden rays like to the brightest sun,
Inserteth self-love in a silly bird,
Till midst his hot an[d] glorious fumes
He spies his feet, and then lets fall his plumes.
Beauty breeds pride, pride hatcheth forth disdain,
Disdain gets hate, and hate calls for revenge,
Revenge with bitter prayers urgeth still;
Thus self-love, nursing up the pomp of pride,
Makes beauty wrack against an ebbing tide.*

After I had viewed the pictures and read the poesies, I grew to be more desirous to know what this image meant. Entreating Alcida to discourse unto me what this portraiture did mean, she, sitting down at the foot of the stone, began to tell her tale in this manner:

Alcida her first history

While I lived in court, honoured of all as mother to the prince, and loved of everyone, as one that laid the method of my son's happy and virtuous government, being princely wedded to the higher, and affable to the lower, a mother to them that were in want, and a nurse to the distressed, I counted my glory the more and my fortune the greater in that I was guarded with my three daughters, virgins adorned so with excellent qualities both of mind and body, I mean as well exterior favours as interior virtues, that fame made report of their honours, not only through all Taprobane, but through all the islands adjacent, especially of my eldest daughter called (for her beauty in her cradle) Fiordespine. Nature had so enriched her with supernatural beauty that she seemed an immortal creature shrouded in a mortal carcass, insomuch that if her times had been equal with Troy, Paris had left Greece, and come to Taprobane for her love.

Living thus loved and admired of all, self-love, the moth that creepeth into young minds, so tickled her with the conceit of her own beauty that she counted no time well spent which she bestowed not in setting out that more glorious by art which nature had made so absolute and excellent. No drugs from Arabia that might clear the skin were unsought for, no herbs nor secrets that any philosopher in physic had found out which might increase beauty but she made experience of, following Venus every way in such vanities and playing the right woman, for to confess the truth, their sex careth more for the tricking of their faces than the teaching of their souls, spending an hour rather in righting the tresses of their hair than a moment in bending their thoughts to devotion. The foulest

must be fair, if not in deed yet in conceit, and she that is fair must venture her soul to keep her beauty inviolate.

But leaving off this digression, my daughter Fiordespine, being thus self-conceited, was more curious than wise, and could sooner afford a pound of pride than an ounce of humility. For divers noblemen resorted from all the bordering islands to be suitors unto her, but her beauty made her so coy that happy was he that might have a glance of her perfection, so that many came joyful in hope to have favour, but departed sorrowful, answered with disdain. For as none pulleth up the barran root but he is stifled with the savour, as none looketh into the pool of Babylon but he hazardeth his health, as none gazeth against the cockatrice but either he loseth his sight or his life, so none took view of the beauty of Fiordespine but they returned either frantic in affection, fond with fancy, or pained with a thousand perplexed passions. Yet she taking delight in their griefs, resembled the chrysolite, which the more it is beaten with hammers, the harder it is, and as the palm-tree can by no means be depressed, nor the margarites of Europe wrought into no other form than nature hath framed them, so no prayers, promise, passions, sighs, sorrows, complaints, tears nor treaties could prevail to make her show some favour to any of her suitors, insomuch that the poor noblemen finding themselves fettered without hope of freedom, seeing their liberties restrained within an endless labyrinth and no courteous Ariadne to give them a clew of thread to draw them out of their miseries, cried out against love, against Venus, against women as merciless monsters hatched to torture the minds of men, and at last spying their own follies, shaking off the shackles of love with disdain, went home, and at their departure pronounced with Demosthenes that they would not *poenitentiam tanti emere* [=buy repentance at so dear a rate].

Cupid, seeing how his scholars flocked from his school, thought he would retain some one with whom to dally, and therefore pulling forth a fierce inflamed arrow, he strook the son of a nobleman here in Taprobane to the quick, that he of all the rest remained fast snared in her beauty. His name was Telegonus, a youth every way equal to Fiordespine except in parentage, and yet he was no meaner man than the son of an earl. This Telegonus (omitting his proportion and qualities, for that it shall suffice to say they were excellent), having had a sight of Fiordespine, stood as the deer at the gaze, swallowing up greedily the envenomed hook that Venus so subtilly had baited for him, for after the idea of her person and perfection had made a deep impression on his mind, and that he had passed three or four days in ruminating her excellency, and debated in his bed with many lewtene [sic for 'a broken'?] slumber how sweet a saint she was, he fell from liking to so deep love that nothing but death did rase it out.

And [sic for 'As'?] thus he marched under the standard of fancy, being but a freshwater soldier, to abide the alarums of affection, feeling a restless passion that fretted his mind as the caterpillar the fruit, he could not tell on which ear to sleep, but builded castles in the air and cast beyond the moon. First he began to consider with himself how many brave noblemen of sundry islands, rich in possessions, honourable in parentage, in qualities rare, in property excellent, had sought her love and yet missed. When he had made comparison between himself and them, despair began with dark persuasions to dissuade him from attempting such high loves, knowing that *Aquila non capit muscas*

[=The eagle catcheth not flies], ladies of great beauty look not at mean personages, that Venus frowned on the smith with a wrinkle on her forehead when she smiled on Mars with a dimple on her chin.

These premises considered, poor Telegonus sad [sic for 'sat'?] nipped on the pate with these new thoughts, resembling the melancholy disposition of Troilus for the inconstancy of Cressida, yet after he had mused awhile, and passed over a few dreaming dumps, hope, clad in purple-suited robes, told him that Cupid had but one string to his bow, one head to one arrow, that Venus' greatest number was an unity, how the heart could harbour but one fancy, and one woman be wedded but to one man. Therefore though they missed, as either infortunate or crossed by some contrary influence, sith love's fee simple was registered in the court of their destinies, there was no cause of his despair, but that he might be the man that should enjoy Fiordespine and set up the trophy of love, maugre all the sinister determinations of Cupid. Floating thus between despair and hope, he passed over three or four days, melancholy and passionate, taking his only content in being solitary, so that at last, finding himself all alone, feeling the fire too great to smother in secrecy, he burst forth into these flames:

Ah, Telegonus, miserable in thy life and infortunate in thy loves, is thy youth blasted with fancy, or the prime of thy years daunted with affection? Canst thou no sooner see Paphos but thou must provide sacrifice for Venus? Canst thou not hear the sirens sing but thou must bend thy course to their music? May not beauty kindle a fire but thou must straight step to the flame? Wilt thou dally with the fly in the candle, sport with the salamander in the heat of Aetna, and with Troilus hazard at that which will breed thy harm? Knowest thou not love is a frantic frenzy that so enforceth the minds of men that under the taste of nurture they are poisoned with the water of Styx, so as he which was charmed by Laon [sic?] sought still to hear her enchantment, or as the deer, after he once browseth on the tamarisk, he will not be driven away until he dieth, so lovers have their senseless senses so besotted with the power of this lascivious god they count not themselves happy but in their supposed unhappiness, being at most ease in disquiet, at greatest rest when they are most troubled, seeking contentation in care, delight in misery, and hunting greedily after that which always breedeth endless harm.

Yea, but Telegonus, beauty is therefore to be obeyed because it is beauty, and love to be feared of men because it is honoured of the gods. Dare reason abide the brunt when beauty bids the battle; can wisdom win the field where love is captain? No, no, love is without law, and therefore above all law, honoured in heaven, feared in earth, and a very terror to the infernal ghosts. Bow then unto that, Telegonus, whereunto lawless necessity doth bend; be not so fond as with Zeuxes [sic for 'Xerxes'?] to bind the ocean in fetters; fight not with the Rascians against the wind; bark not with the wolves against the moon; seek not with them of Scyros [=sic for 'Scyrum'?] to shoot against the stars; strive not with Thesides [sic?] against Venus, for love bring on lewd [sic for 'being once allowed'?] looks to command by power, and to be obeyed by force.

Truth, Telegonus, for Juno strove but once with Venus, and he [sic for 'she'] was vanquished; Jupiter resisted Cupid, but he went by the worst. It is hard for thee with the

crab to strive against the stream, or to wrestle with a fresh wound, lest thou make the sore more dangerous. Well, Telegonus, what of all this prate? Thou dost love. Thou honourest beauty as supernatural; thou saist Venus amongst all the goddesses is most mighty, that there is no island like Paphos, no bird like the doves, no god like Cupid. What of this? But why dost thou love no meaner woman than Fiordespine, the daughter of the prince, the fairest in Taprobane? Ah, Telegonus, derogate not from her beauty -- the fairest in the world. Unhappy man, in recounting her beauty, in reckoning her perfections thou dost emblaze thine own misfortunes, for the more she is excellent, the less will be her love, and the greater her disdain. Can the eagle and the blind [sic for 'bird'?] ossifrage build in one tree? Will the falcon & the dove covet to sit on one perch? Will the ape and the bear be tied in one tether? Will the fox and the lamb be in one den? Or Fiordespine, who thinketh herself fairer than Venus, stoop to the lure of one so base as I? No, for the more beauty, the more pride, and the more pride, the more preciseness. None must play on Ormenes' [sic?] harp but Orpheus, none rule Lucifer but Phoebus, none wear Venus in a tablet but Alexander, nor none enjoy Fiordespine but such a one as far exceedeth thee in person and personage.

Tush, Telegonus, enter not into these doubts. Sappho, a queen, loved Phao, a ferryman, she beautiful and wise, he poor and servile; she holding a sceptre, he an oar; the one to govern, the other to labour. Angelica forsook divers kings and took Medon [sic for Medoro?], a mercenary soldier. Love, Telegonus, hath no lack. Cupid shooteth his shafts at randon; Venus as soon looketh at the sun as at a star. Love feareth a prince as soon as a peasant, and fancy hath no respect of persons. Then, Telegonus, hope the best. Audaces fortuna adiuuat: Love and fortune favoureth them that are resolute. The stone sandastra is not so hard but being heat in the fire it may be wrought, nor ivory so tough but seasoned with zathe [sic?] it may be engraven. The gates of Venus' temple are but half shut. Cupid is a churl, and peremptory, yet to be entreated. Women are wilful, but in some means they may be won, were she as full of beauty as Venus, or as great in majesty as Juno. Hope, then, the best, and be bold, for cowards are admitted to put in no plea at the bar of love.

Telegonus having by uttering these passions disburdened some part of his pains, and yet not in such sort but his temples were restless, his grief much, his content none at all, his care in his sleep incessant, his mind melancholy, so that his only delight was to be in dumps, insomuch that he gadded solitary up and down the groves as a satyr enamoured of some country nymph. Cupid, seeing his art did well, thought to show him some sport, for on a day as he walked, contemplating the beauty of Fiordespine, being sore athirst with inward sorrow, he went to a fountain hard by to cool his heat, where he found his heart set on fire with a great flame, for there he espied Fiordespine and her other two sisters sitting solacing themselves about the spring, which sudden sight so appalled his senses as if he had been appointed a new judge to the three goddesses in the valley of Ida. Yet seeing before his eyes the mistress of his thoughts, and the saint unto whom he did owe his devotion, he began to take heart at grass, thinking that by this fit opportunity love and fortune began to favour his enterprise. Willing therefore not to omit so good an occasion, he saluted them in this sort:

Muse not, fair creatures, if I stand in a maze, sith the sight of your surpassing beauties makes me doubt whether I should honour you as earthly ladies, or adore you as heavenly goddesses, for no doubt Paris never saw fairer in Ida. But now noting with deep insight the figure of your divine faces, I acknowledge your honours to be sisters to our prince, whom I reverence as allied to my sovereign, and offer my service as a servant ever devoted to such fair and excellent saints.

The ladies, hearing this strange and unlooked for salutation, began to smile, but Fiordespine frowning, as half angry he should presume into her presence, with a coy countenance returned him this answer:

If, Sir Telegonus, for so I suppose is your name, your eyesight be so bad, perhaps with peering too long on your books, or yourself so far beside your senses as to take us for nymphs, I would wish you to read less, or to provide you a good physician, else shall you not judge colours for me, and yet [-since] I would you should know we count our penny good silver, and think our faces, if not excellent, yet such as may boot [sic for 'brook'?] compare.

Telegonus, taking opportunity by the forehead, and thinking to strike the iron at this heat, made reply:

Maiden [sic for 'madam'?], he might be thought either blind or envious that would make a doubt of Venus' beauty, and he be deemed either frantic or foolish that cannot see and say, as you are superior to most, so you are inferior to none. Pardon, madam, if my censure be particular, I mean of your sweet self, whose favours I have ever loved and admired, though unworthy to set my fancy on such glorious excellency.

Fiordespine, hearing herself thus praised, was not greatly displeased, yet passed she over what was spoken as though her ears had been stopped with Ulysses, but Eriphila, the second, who was as wise as her sister was beautiful, desired Telegonus to rest him by them on the grass, and that they would, at their departure, ask him as a guard to the court. Telegonus, as glad of the command as if he had been willed by the gods to have been chamberlain to Venus, sat down with a mind full of passions, having his eye fixed still on the beauty of Fiordespine, which Eriphila espying, thinking to be pleasant with Telegonus, she began thus to prattle:

Your late passionate speech, Telegonus, to my sister Fiordespine, makes me think that Venus is your chief goddess, and that love is the lord whose livery your [sic for 'you'] wear. If it be so, neighbour, take heed, for fancy is a shrew; many like that are never loved. Apollo may cry long after Daphne before she hear him, and Troilus may stand long enough on the walls before Cressida wave her glove for a Salve. I speak Telegonus, against ourselves. Take heed; we be coy and wily. We with our looks can change men, though [sic for 'that'?] Venus will wear the target and Mars the distaff, Omphalo [sic for 'Omphale'] handle the club and Hercules the spindle, Alexander must crouch, and Campaspe look coy. Women will rule in loves, howsoever men be lofty in courage.

Indeed, madam, quoth Telegonus, him whom no mortal creature can control, love can command; no dignity is able to resist Cupid's deity. Achilles was made by his mother Thetis invulnerable, yet wounded by fancy; Hercules, not to be conquered of any, yet quickly conquered by affection; Mars able to resist Jupiter, but not to withstand beauty. Love is not only kindled in the eye by desire, but engraven in the mind by destiny, which neither reason can eschew nor wisdom expel. The more pity, I confess, madam, for poor men, and the greater impiety in the gods, that in giving love free liberty, they grant him a lawless privilege, but since Cupid will be obeyed, I am contented to bow, especially seeing I have chanced to set my affection to so excellent a creature.

And who might that be, I pray you, quoth Fiordespine (taking the matter in dudgeon that Telegonus should make report), that is of such great excellency? Dwelleth she in Taprobane?

In Taprobane, madam, replied Telegonus, but with such a peal of sighs bewraying his loves in silence that Eriphila, smiling, said:

I see fire cannot be hidden in the flax without smoke, nor musk in the bosom without smell, nor love in the breast without suspicion. I perceive, in faith, neighbour, by your lips what lettuce you love. The saint that you account of such excellency, whose perfection hath so snared your senses, is my sister Fiordespine.

I? quoth Fiordespine, filling her ivory brows full of shrewish wrinkles. I hope the young Lord Telegonus knows what suitors I have shaken off, and therefore, not inferring comparisons because they be odious, I may give him his answer with an etc. There are more maids than Malkin, and more birds for the falcon to perch with than the eagle. The lion is a bloody beast for that he knoweth his strength. I will not conclude, but Lord Telegonus, if I be the woman you mean, cease from your suit, for in faith so well I do love you that you cannot more displease me than in seeking to please me, for if I knew not [sic for 'no'] other cause to dislike, yet this might suffice, that I cannot love.

At this flat and peremptory answer Telegonus sat nipped on the pate like to them which taste of the fish mugra, whose operation maketh them for a time senseless, which Eriphila espying, thinking to jump even with the gentleman, pitying his passions in that Fiordespine was so coy to so courteous a youth, said:

You may see now, Telegonus, that Venus hath her frowns as she hath smiles, that Cupid hath arrows headed with lead to procure disdain as well as with gold to increase love. Hear me, that am a virgin, as dutiful to Vesta as reverent to Venus. The pains that lovers take for hunting after loss, if their minds were not confirmed with some secret enchantment, were able to keep their fancies from being inflamed, or else to cool desire already kindled. For the days are spent in thoughts and the nights in dreams, both in danger either of beguiling us of that we had, or promising us that we have not, the head fraught with fantasies, fired with jealousy, troubled with both. Yea, so many inconveniences wait upon love as to reckon them all were infinite, and to taste but one of them were intolerable, being always begun with grief, continued with sorrow, and ended

with death, for it is a pain shadowed with pleasure, and a joy stuffed with misery. So that I conclude that as none ever saw the altars of Busiris [sic?] without sorrow, nor banqueted with Phoebus [sic for Pholus?] without surfeiting, so as impossible it is to deal with Cupid and not either to gain speedy death or endless danger.

As I [sic for 'Telegonus'] was ready in defence of love to make reply, there came a little page from their lady mother to call them home to dinner, whereupon they all rose, and would have taken their leave, but boldly I stood to my tackling, and told them:

Ladies, you pass not so, for construe my meaning how you please, or accept of my repay [sic for 'company'?] how you list, I will not be so discourteous to leave you so slenderly guarded as in the guard of this little page.

And with that I conducted them to the court and there with a loath to depart, took my leave, having a courteous farewell of all but Fiordespine, who fermning [sic for 'frowning?'] like Juno in her majesty, gave me a niggardly *A dio* with a nod, which notwithstanding, love commanded me to take as a prodigal courtesy.

Well, Telegonus thus left alone, fearing too much solitariness might breed intemperate passions, went home musing on the strange qualities of his mistress, where casting himself on his bed he began to consider that as she was beautiful, so she was proud, and that her exterior favour was blemished with an interior disdain, that Venus was as much despised for her lightness as honoured for her deity, that the black violet was more esteemed for her smell than the lily for her whiteness, that the darkest topaz was held more precious than the brightest crystal, and women are to be measured by their virtues, and not by their beauty.

And why dost thou urge this, Telegonus? For that she hath not fawned on thee at the first meeting, given over the fort at the first assault, and consented to thy love at the first motion? Wouldst thou have her so light, fond youth, as to stoop to the lure at the first call? Helena was wanton, yet was she long in wooing; Paris courted her before he caught her. If a straggler made it strange, blame not her that is virtuous and a virgin if she be somewhat coy.

Resting in this hope, he somewhat appeased his passions, driving away his melancholy and despairing humours by setting his rest on this point. But love, that is impatient, was in the day his companion, and in the night his pillow; Venus commanded her son to be beaten with roses, which as they are fair coloured, and savour sweet, so they are full of pricks, and pierce the skin. Love thus hammering in the head of Telegonus, he was doubtful what to do, or how best to prosecute his purpose. To repair to the court and there to court her was to attempt an adventure very perilous and half impossible; to seek means to parle with her was to offer blank papers to Venus. Therefore he resolved to write unto her, and thereupon entering into his study he took pen and paper, and sent unto her in this effect:

Telegonus to Fiordespine, health.

They, honourable Fiordespine, that are envenomed with the hydaspis, if they presently discover not their pain, perish; such as are stung with the tarantula must have music at their ear before the poison come at their heart. Venus' temple is never shut, Cupid's register ever unfolded, and the secrets of love, if they be concealed, breed either danger by silence, or death by secrecy. I speak this by experience, for the deep impression of your divine beauty, co-united with the admiration of your excellent virtues, have printed such a character in my thoughts since first I saw your sweet self, as either must be confirmed with your mercy or I shall be confounded with misery. Where Cupid striketh, there no salves can prevail; where love serveth his writ of command, there a supersedeas of reason is of no avail.

Beauty forceth the gods, and therefore may fetter men. But perhaps your Honour will say that the fox is no fere for the lion, none [sic for 'nor'?] so mean a man as I worthy to gaze at so glorious a personage, so that I may rather be counted impudent than passionate in attempting that which so many my betters have missed. To this objection give me leave to say that Venus respecteth not the robes, but the mind; [-not the parentage, but the mind]; not the parentage, but the person; not the wealth, but the heart; not the honours, but the loyalty. If then faith in fancy, not possessions, are to be respected, I hope, as nature by her secret judgment hath endued all creatures with some perfect quality where want breeds mislike, as the mole, deprived of sight, hath a wonderful hearing; the hare, being very fearful, is most swift; the fish, having no ears, hath most clear eyes; so I, of parentage mean, of wealth little, of wit less, yet have given me by nature such a loyal heart as I hope the perfection of the one shall supply the want of the other, coveting not to rule as a husband, but to live dutiful and loving ever to the Lady Fiordespine.

Blame me not, madam, if I plead with my pen, for ever since I fell into the labyrinth of your looks, I have felt in my heart, as in a little work [sic for 'world'?] all the passions and contrarieties of the elements, for mine eyes (I call the gods to witness I speak without feigning) almost turn into water through the continual streams of tears, and my sighs fly as wind in the air proceeding from the flaming fire which is kindled in my heart, as that without the drops of your pity it will turn my body into dry earth and cinders.

Then, Fiordespine, sith your beauty hath given the wound, let it like Achilles' spear cure the same sore; covet not to set out the trophy of disdain where already you are [sic for 'have'?] conquered. Strive not for life, sith you have any [sic for 'my'?] liberty, but fetch water from the fountain of Alcidalie, simples from the hill Erecius [sic?], conserves from the temple of Venus to appease that passion that otherwise cannot be cured. Render but love for love; yea, madam, such love as time shall never blot out with oblivion, neither any sinister fortune diminish, so that if the world wondered at the loyalty of Petrarch to his Laura, or of Amadis to his Gryance [sic for 'Oriana'?], they shall have more cause to marvel at the love of Telegonus to Fiordespine, whose life and death standeth in your answer, which I hope shall be such as belongeth to the desert of my love and the excellency of your beauty.

Yours, if he be Telegonus of Taprobane.

Telegonus, having finished this letter, caused it to be delivered to Fiordespine with great trustiness and secrecy, who receiving it with a frowning look, as half suspecting the contents, yet unripped the seals and read it, which when she had thoroughly perused, drove her into such a fury that she in a rage rent it and flung it into the fire, saying: *There end his letters and his loves.* But as the sea once hoised with a gale calmeth not till it hath passed with a storm, as the stone pyrites once set on fire burneth in the water, so a woman's stomach once stirred ceaseth not to be discontent till it be glutted with revenge. For Fiordespine, not satisfied with tearing the letter of Telegonus, could take no rest till either she had breathed out some hard speeches with her tongue or set down bitter taunts with her pen. Seeing therefore no fit means for the one, she stepped in great choler to her standish, and wrote to him thus satirically:

Fiordespine to Telegonus.

Though Vulcan with his polt-foot presumed to covet the queen of beauty, though Ixion adventured to attempt the love of Juno, yet, Lord Telegonus, no offence to your person, these paltering precedents are no conclusions that person unworthy should disgrace by their impudent and worthless motions the honours of excellent personages. How I am grieved at your letters guess by my sharp reply; how I like of your lines, examine in my writing; how I disdain them both, time shall put you in evidence. My beauty, you say, hath made an impression in your heart; a man of soft metal, that so soon takes the stamp; a lover of great conceit, that is fixed at the first look. But since it is your gentle nature to be so full of fancy, I would have the gods to make you either Venus' chamberlain or Cupid's chaplain, or both, because being so amorous you should not want offices. You forestalled me in red letters with an objection that many your betters have courted me and missed; then, good lovely Lord Telegonus, think not, if I delighted not to gaze at stars, that I mean to stumble at stones, if I vouchsafe not to smell to most fragrant flowers, that I mean to make me a nosegay of weeds. If honourable princes offered to Venus and could not be heard, and sought for my favours but found them not, [-I think] suppose the rest, for I list not to be tedious, lest I should weary myself, and grace thee with writing so much. For thy loyalty, keep it for thy equals; for thy love, lay it not on me, lest as I disdain thy person, so I revenge thy presumption. And so my hand was weary, my eyes sleepy, and my heart full of contempt, and with that I went to bed.

Her own, Fiordespine of Taprobane.

This letter was no sooner sealed but (as women are impatient of delays) it was conuied [sic for 'conveyed'] with all possible speed to Telegonus, who receiving it, kissed and rekkissed it, as coming from the hands of his goddess, changing colour oft, as one between fear and hope. At last unripping the seals, he read such a corrosive as cut him to the heart. The aspis stingeth not more deadly, the serpent porphirius envenometh not more deeply, neither did ever the sight of Medusa's head more amaze a man that the contents of this satirical letter did Telegonus. Yea, it drove the poor gentleman into so many passions that he became half lunatic, as if he had eaten of the seed of sputanta, that

troubleth the brain with giddiness. He fell to exclaim against Venus and her deity, blaming the gods that would suffer such a giglet to remain in heaven, repeating her lawless loves with Adonis and her scapes with Mavors. Cupid he called a boy, a fondling, blind in his aim, and accursed in hitting the mark; rageth against women, saying they were merciless, cruel, unjust, deceitful, like unto the crocodile in tears; in sight they seem to be carnations; in smelling, roses; in hearing, sirens; in taste, wormwood; in touching, nettles. Thus he railed and raged, casting himself on his bed, and there forging a thousand perplexed passions, one while accusing love as a lunacy, and then again saying beauty was divine, and the richest jewel that ever nature bestowed upon men.

Lingering a day or two in this frenzy, he thought not to give over the castle at the first repulse, or to prove so lewd a huntsman as to give over the chase at the first default. Therefore he once again armed himself with his pen and paper, and gave a fresh alarm to his friendly foe in this manner:

Telegonus to fair Fiordespine of Taprobane.

Honourable lady, the physicians say salves seldom help an once long-suffered sore, and too late it is to plant engines to batter when the walls are already broken. Autumn showers are ever out of season, and too late it is to dislodge love out of the breast when it hath infected every part of the body. The sore, when the festering fistula hath by long continuance made the sound flesh rotten, can neither with lenitive plasters nor cutting corrosives be cured; so love craveth but only time to bring the body and mind to ruin. Your Honour, seeing how deeply I am devoted to your beauty and virtue, hath sent me pills of hard digestion to assuage the force of my love and qualify the flame set on fire by fancy, but as the biting of the viper rankleth till it hath brought the body bitten to bane, so your exquisite perfection hath so pierced every vein with the sting of love that neither your bitter reply nor satirical invective can in any wise prevail; only the mild medicine of your mercy may salve the sore and cut away the cause of my careful disease.

The extremity of my love and the violence of my passions hath forced me to hazard myself on your clemency, for I was never of that mind to count him martial that at the first shoot would yield up the keys of the city, for the more hard the rebut is, the more haughty is the conquest; the more doubtful the fight, the more worthy the victory; the more pain I take about the battery, the more pleasure to win the bulwark of your breast, which if I should obtain, I would count it a more rich prize than ever Scipio or any of the Nine Worthies won by conquest. And that these words be verity and not vanity, troth and not trifling, I appeal to your good grace and favour, minding to be tried by your courtesy, abiding either the sentence of consent unto life, or denial unto death.

Yours, even after death, Telegonus of Taprobane.

This letter finished and sent unto Fiordespine so troubled her patience for that Telegonus was importunate that she fared like the frowns [sic for 'frows'] of Bacchus, half mad at this secret motion, swearing revenge if either herself or her friends could perform it, and in this humour she sent him by her page these few lines:

Fiordespine to Telegonus.

I had scarce read thy letters before I rent them, esteeming thy papers and thy love alike, for as I mislike the one, so I disdain the other. Hath want of manners made thee impudent? Wilt thou brag with Irus the beggar amongst Penelope's suitors, or seek with the smoky Cyclops to kiss Venus' hand? Look on thy feet, and so let fall thy plumes; stretch not so high, unless thy sleeve were longer, for Fiordespine scorneth so much as to look at Telegonus in respect of love, as Juno did to jest with the father of the centaurs.

If I knew thy passions were as great as thou deciphereth thy grief, and thy thoughts as fiery as the hills in Sicily, I would laugh at the one, as joying at thy sorrows, and put oil in the flame, as delighting to aggravate thy miseries. Sith then thou seest my resolution to be so rigorous (over-rash youth), betake thee to thy dumps, and fare how thou list, for know I mislike thy suit, and hate thy person, and will live and die thine enemy, if for no other cause, yet for that thou hast dared to court Fiordespine.

Thy mortal enemy, Fiordespine of Taprobane.

After that Telegonus had read this letter sauced with such peremptory disdain, he fell in a trance, lying in his bed as a dead carcass, but when he was come to himself, he fell into such extreme passions that his father and his friends coming into the chamber thought him possessed with some spirit. The physician felt his pulses and found he had a sound body, whereupon they did conjecture it was love, and to verify the same, after he had raised himself up in his bed, with a ghastly look he cried nothing but Fiordespine, fetching such grievous groans & deep sighs that all the chamber fell into tears, whereupon the old earl, having his hair as white as snow, came himself trudging to the court, telling the extreme passion of his son, entreating Fiordespine that she would so much as vouchsafe to come to this house, only with her presence somewhat to mitigate his son's passions, but such was the pride and disdain of my daughter that neither the tears of the old earl, the entreaty of my son, nor my command could prevail with her, insomuch that the old man returned comfortless and sorrowing.

Well, Telegonus lying thus distressed by the space of a week, at last feigning himself to amend, would needs walk abroad that he might be solitary, and stumbled, weak as he was, into this vale and to this place, where sitting down he fell into these passions:

Infortunate Telegonus, whose stars at thy nativity were in some cursed aspect, why didst thou not perish at thy birth, or how did fortune frown that thou wert not stifled in thy swaddling-clothes? Now grown to ripe years, thou feelest more miseries than thou hast lived moments. Ah love, that labyrinth that leadeth men to worse dangers than the Minotaur in Greece; love that kindlest desire, but allowest no reward. Inconstant Venus, whose sacrifices savour of death, whose laws are tyrannous, whose favours are misfortunes, strumpet as thou art (for I disdain to call thee goddess), thou and the bastard brat thy son, show your power, your deity. Revenge my blasphemies how you can, for how great soever your choler be, my calamity cannot be more. Merciless

women, whose faces are lures, whose beauties are baits, whose looks are nets, whose words are charms, and all to bring men to ruin. But of all, cruel Fiordespine, born of a tiger and nursed of the she-wolves in Syria, whose heart is full of hate, whose thoughts are disdain, whose beauty is overlaid with pride, let Venus, if she have any justice, or Cupid, if he have the equity of a god, make thee love where thou shalt be disliked. Alas, Telegonus, cease not with these prayers, the revenge is too easy, but cry to the bitterness of thy passions that they quit thy revenge against Fiordespine.

And with this his speech ceasing, he beat himself against the ground in such pitiful sort that the gods took compassion, and resolved revenge. But while he lay thus perplexed, his father missed him, and taking some of his gentlemen with him, sought him and found him in this valley, passionate and speechless. The rumour of Telegonus' distress came to the court, whereupon I and my son, with my other two daughters, so entreated Fiordespine that she granted to go see the gentleman. Walking therefore to this place, here we found him accompanied with his friends, all signifying with tears how they grieved at his mishap. Telegonus no sooner saw Fiordespine but, turning himself upon the grass with a bitter look, he first gazed her on the face [sic for 'gazed on her face?'], then lifting up his eyes to heaven gave a great sigh as though his heart-strings had broke[n], which Fiordespine perceiving, triumphing in the passions of her lover, she turned her back and smiled. Scarce had she framed this scornful countenance but Mercury, sent from the gods in a shepherd's attire, shook [sic for 'strook?'] her on the head with his caduceus and turned her into this marble picture, which we amazed at, and Telegonus noting, turning himself on his left side, groaned forth these words: *The gods have revenged, and I am satisfied*, and with that he gave up the ghost. The old earl, grieved at the death of his son, taking up his body, departed; I, sorrowing at the metamorphosis of my daughter, wept, but to small effect, for ever since she hath remained as thou seest, a wonder to the world, and a perpetual grief to me.

Thus, son, hast thou heard the discourse of my daughter's misfortune, which hath not been so delightful for thee to hear as grievous for me to reveal, but seeing I am entered into the discoveries of their ills, no sooner shall we have taken our repast but I will show thee what fortune to her second sister, Eriphila, for I know the nature of men is desirous of novelties. And with that, taking me by the hand, she went home to her cottage.

The second discourse

We had no sooner dined with our homely delicacies, tempering our times with prattle of Fiordespine, but Alcida rose up and walked to a grove hard by, a place interseamed with shrubs, but placed between two hills like the supposed entrance of hell as there seemed that melancholy Saturn had erected an Academy. Entering into this grove, so thick as Phoebus was denied passage, wandering awhile by many uncouth paths, at last we came into a fair place where was a goodly spring, the situation round environed with trees. Hard by this fount stood two cedars, tall and straight, on whose bark was curiously engraven certain hieroglyphical emblems. On the one was carved Mercury throwing feathers into the wind, and under was written these verses:

*The richest gift the wealthy heaven affords,
 The pearl of price sent from immortal Jove,
 The shape wherein we most resemble gods,
 The fire Prometheus stole from lofty skies,
 This gift, this pearl, this shape, this fire is it
 Which makes us men bold by the name of wit.
 By wit we search divine aspect above,
 By wit we learn what secrets science yields,
 By wit we speak, by wit the mind is ruled,
 By wit we govern all our actions;
 Wit is the loadstar of each human thought,
 Wit is the tool by which all things are wrought;
 The brightest jacinth, hot, becometh dark,
 Of little steem is crystal, being cracked,
 Fine heads, that can conceit no good but ill,
 Forge oft that breedeth ruin to themselves;
 Ripe wits abused, that build on bad desire,
 Do burn themselves like flies within the fire.*

On the other cedar was cut very cunningly Cupid blowing bladders in the air. The poesy underwritten was this:

*Love is a lock that linketh noble minds,
 Faith is the key that shuts the spring of love,
 Lightness a wrest that wringeth all awry,
 Lightness a plague that fancy cannot brook;
 Lightness in love so bad and base a thing
 As foul disgrace to greatest states do bring.*

As I was reading these verses, from the thicket there came a bird flittering, of colour grey, which hovered over the head of Alcida as though she had saluted her with her wings. I marvelled at the familiarity of the fowl, and with that she changed colours, from grey to white, and then to red, so to green, and as many sundry shapes as ever Iris blazed in the firmament, so that by the changing of hues I perceived it to be chameleon. As thus I stood musing at the bird, Alcida took me by the hand and sat down at one of the roots of the cedars, bidding me be attentive, and she would discourse the evil fortune of her second daughter, Eriphila, the which I willingly consented unto. She began her tale in this manner.

The second history, of Eriphila of Taprobane

After that my daughter Fiordespine was metamorphosed by the gods in revenge of her cruelty to Telegonus, time having rooted out some part of my sorrows, I began to solace myself with the other two daughters, Eriphila and Marpesia. This Eriphila was as witty as her sister was beautiful, so that she was admired in Taprobane and all the bordering regions about, accounted (though not in years, yet in wit) a Sibyl, being able to answer as

dark an enigma as the subtillest Sphinx was able to propound, and I tell thee, son, as she was favoured by Pallas, so Venus was not behind in her favours, for she was beautiful, insomuch that these gifts co-united made sundry suitors come from sundry coasts to be wooers to such a wily minion.

Amongst the rest, by fortune there arrived in this coast, embarked in a small pinnace, the duke's son of Massilia called Meribates, who coming on shore for fresh water, came to see the court of Taprobane, where being greatly welcomed by my son, falling into talk with my daughter, he found Eriphila so adorned with a supernatural kind of wit as he was snared in the sweetness of her answers, swallowing down the conceit of her wisdom with such greediness that he lay drunk in the remembrance of her qualities, finding several delays to make stay in the country, covertly causing his mariners to crack their tackling, to unrig their ship in the night, that they might have just cause to lie there the most part of that summer. Love, beginning to make this youngster politic, caught him so fast by the heart that Mars was never more featly entangled in Vulcan's net, nor the forerunners of Jason more subtilly wrapped in the labyrinth than Meribates was in the snares of fancy, for what he talked, even amongst the meanest of his mariners, was of Eriphila; his thoughts, his musing, his determinations, his resolutions, his days' watchings, his night slumbers were of the excellent wit of Eriphila, insomuch that love lodged the novice under her canopy, where he breathed out these passions:

Infortunate Meribates, whom the envious fates have scorned to make unfortunate! Hast thou manned thyself in a bark to scour the seas and in this quest art thou like to lose thy senses? Soughtest thou to abide the pleasure of Neptune, and art fain to stand to the courtesy of love? Hast thou found flames amidst the waves, fire in the water, and fancy where no affection was meant? Well, now I see that as the bee that flieth from flower to flower, having free choice to choose at liberty, is at last taken by the wings and so fettered, in like manner my fancy, taking the view of many a face, hath a restraint of his freedom and is brought into bondage with the wit of a stranger. But Meribates, wilt thou love so lightly? Shall fancy give thee the foil at the first dash? Shall thine ears be the cause of thy misery? Wilt thou with Ulysses hear the sirens sing, listen to their melody, and run unto endless misery?

Eriphila is wise. So was Helena, yet she played the wanton with Paris. She answers like the virgin at Delphos and her words are as nectar. Roses are sweet, yet they have pricks; the purest honey-bee is not without his sting. Wit in a woman is like oil in the flame, which either kindleth to great virtue or extreme vanity. Well, Meribates, howsoever it be, wit cannot be placed so bad but it is precious. What is beauty but a colour dashed with every breath, a flower nipped with every frost, a favour that time and age defaceth, whereas wit increaseth by years, and that love continueth longest that is taken by the ear, not by the eye. Yield then, Meribates, when thou must needs consent; run when thou art called by command. Pallas is wise, and will not be ingrateful to her votaries. Say none but Eriphila, for sure if ever thou wilt bestow thy freedom, she is worthy to have thee captive. If thou meanest to marry, thou canst not have a meeter match.

Yea, but how if her heart be placed, and her mind settled upon some gentleman in

Taprobane? Then were I a great deal better to wail at the first than to weep at the last, to be content with a little prick than a deep wound, to resist love at the brim than at the bottom. The scorpion, if he touch never so lightly, envenometh the whole body; the least spark of wildfire will set an whole house on flame; the cockatrice killeth even with his sight. The sting of love woundeth deadly; the flame of fancy sets on fire all the thoughts, and the eyes of a lover are counted incurable. Fearfulness, Meribates, in love is a virtue. Hast thou turned over so many books of philosophy, and hast thou not quoted Phocas' precept to be fruitful [sic?]; that loves should proceed in their suit as the crab, whose pace is ever backward, that though love be like the adamant, which hath virtue to draw, yet thou shouldst be sprinkled with goat's blood, which resisteth his operation? If the wit of some Pallas nymphs [sic for 'nymph'?] have enclosed thy mind, yet thou shouldst take the oil of nenuphar, that cooleth desire.

What, Meribates, wilt thou become a precise Pythagoras in recounting of love? No, let not the precepts of philosophy subject the will of nature. Youth must have his course; he that will not love when he is young shall not be loved when he is old. Say then, Meribates, and never gainsay, that Eriphila is the mark thou shoot at, that her surpassing wit is the siren whose song hath enchanted thee, and the Circe's cup which hath so sotted thy senses as either thou must with Ulysses have a speedy remedy, or else remain transformed. Consider, Meribates the cause of thy love, lest thou fail in the effects. Is the foundation of thy fancy fixed upon her feature? Think with thyself, beauty is but a blossom, whose flower is nipped with every frost. It is like the grass in India, which withereth before it springeth. What is more fair, yet what more fading? What more delightful, yet nothing more deadly. What more pleasant, and yet what is more perilous? Beauty may well be compared to the bath Calycut, whose streams flow as clear as the flood Padus, and whose operation is as pestilent as the river Ormen.

Aye, but Meribates, what more clear than the crystal, and what more precious? What more comely than cloth of Arras, so what more costly? What creature so beautiful as a woman, and what so estimable? Is not the diamond of greatest dignity that is most glistening, and the pearl thought most precious that is most perfect in colour? Aristotle saith they cannot be counted absolutely happy, although they had all the virtues, if they want beauty. Yea, Apollonius, an arch-heretic and a professed enemy against the sacred laws of beauty, is driven both by the laws of nature and nurture to confess that virtue is the more acceptable by how much the more it is placed in a beautiful body.

But what long-digressed discourse is this thou makest of beauty, Meribates? It is not upon such a fickle foundation thou buildest thy love, but upon her wit, which only parteth with death, and therefore whatsoever philosophy or learning wills, I will consent unto nature, for the best clerks are not the wisest men. Whatsoever wisdom wills, I will at this time give the crimes [sic for 'reins'?] of beauty to my amorous passions, for he that makes curiosity in love will so long strain courtesy that either he will be counted a solemn suitor or a witless wooer; therefore whatsoever the chance be, I will cast at all.

Meribates having thus debated with himself, rested on this resolution, that he would moderate his affection until he found opportunity to discourse his mind to Eriphila, who

on the contrary side, noting the perfection of Meribates, was more enamoured of his person and qualities than Phyllis of Demophoon, or Dido of the false and unjust Troian, for he was so courteous in behaviour, so liberal, not only of his purse but his courtesy, that he had won all their hearts in Taprobane.

These considerations so tickled the mind of Eriphila that she fell thus to debate with herself:

What means, Eriphila, these strange and sudden passions? Shall thy stayed life be compared now to the chameleon, that turneth herself into the likeness of every object; to the herb phanaros, whose bud is sweet, and the root bitter; to the ravens in Arabia, which being young have a pleasant voice, but in their age a horrible cry? Wilt thou consent unto lust in hoping to love; shall Cupid claim thee for his captive, who even now wert vowed a vestal virgin? Shall thy tender age be more virtuous than thy ripe years? What, shall the beauty of Meribates enchant thy mind, or his filed speech bewitch thy senses; shall the property of a stranger draw thee on to affection? If thou shouldst hap to like him, would he not think the castle wanted but scaling that yieldeth at the first shot, that the bulwark wanteth but battery that at the first parley yields up the keys? Yes, yes, Eriphila, his beauty argues inconstancy, and his painted phrase deceit, and if he see thee won with a word, he will think thee lost with the wind; he will judge that which is lightly to be gained is as quickly lost. The hawk that cometh at the first call will never prove steadfast on the stand; the nias that will be reclaimed to the fist at the first sight of the lure will bate at every bush. The woman that will love at the first look will never be chary of her choice. Take heed, Eriphila, the finest scabbard hath not ever the bravest blade, not the goodliest chest hath not the most gorgeous treasure. The bell with the best sound hath an iron clapper. The fading apples of Tantalus have a gallant show, but if they be touched, they turn to ashes. So a fair face may have a foul mind; sweet words, a sour heart; yea, rotten bones out of a painted sepulchre, for all is not gold that glisters.

Why, but yet the gem is chosen by his hue, and the cloth by his colour. Condemn not then, Eriphila, before thou hast cause. Accuse not so strictly without trial; search not so narrowly till thou hast occasion of doubt.

Yea, but the mariners sound at the first for fear of a rock; the chirurgeon tenteth betimes, for his surest proof. One fore-wit is worth two after. It is not good to beware when the act is done; too late cometh repentance. What is [sic for 'Is it?'] the beauty of Meribates that kindleth this flame? Who more beautiful than Jason, yet who more false, for after Medea had yielded, he sacked the fort, and in lieu of her love, he killed her with kindness. Is it his wit? Who wiser than Theseus, yet none more traitorous. Beware, Eriphila, I have heard thee [sic?] say she that marries for beauty, for every dram of pleasure shall have a pound of sorrow. Choose by the ear, not by the eye. Meribates is fair; so was Paris, and yet fickle. He is witty; so was Corsiris [sic?], and yet wavering. No man knoweth the nature of the herb by the outward show, but by the inward juice, and the operation consists in the matter, not in the form. The fox wins the favour of the lambs by play, and then devours them; so perhaps Meribates shows himself in outward show a demigod, whereas who tries him inwardly shall find him but a solemn saint. Why, since

his arrival in Taprobane all the island speaks of his virtue and courtesy. But perchance he makes a virtue of his need, and so lays this balmed hook of feigned honesty as a luring bait to trap some simple dame. The cloth is never tried until it come to the wearing, nor the linen never shrinks till it comes to the wetting; so want of liberty to use his will may make a restraint of his nature, and though in a strange place he use faith and honesty to make his marriage, yet she perhaps that shall try him shall either find he never had them, or quite forgot them, for the nature of men (as I have heard say) is like the amber stone, which will burn outwardly and freeze inwardly, and like the bark of the myrtle-trees that grew [sic for 'grow'?] in Armenia, that is as hot as fire in the taste, and as cold as water in the operation. The dog biteth sorest when he doth not bark; the onyx is hottest when it looks white; the sirens mean most mischief when they sing. The tiger then hideth his crabbed countenance when he meaneth to take his prey, and a man doth most dissemble when he speaketh fairest.

Try, then, Eriphila, ere thou trust, especially since he is a stranger; prove ere thou put in practice; cast the water before thou appoint the medicine. Do all things with deliberation; go as the snail, fair and softly. Haste makes waste; the malt is ever sweetest where the fire is softest. Let not wit overcome wisdom, nor the hope of a husband be the hazard of thine honesty. Cast not thy credit on the chance of a stranger, who perchance may prove to thee as Theseus did to Ariadne. Wade not too far where the ford is unknown; rather bridle thy affections with reason, and mortify thy mind with modesty, that as thou hast kept thy virginity inviolate without spot, so thy choice may be without blemish. Know this, it is too late to call again the day past; therefore keep the memory of Meribates as needful, but not necessary. Like him whom thou shalt have occasion to love, and love where thou hast tried him loyal. Until then, remain indifferent.

When Eriphila had uttered these words, she straight, to avoid all dumps that solitariness might breed, came to me and her sister, and there passed away the day in prattle. Thus these two lovers, passionate and yet somewhat patient, for that hope had ministered lenitive plasters to their new wounds, passed over two or three days only with glances and looks, bewraying their thoughts with their eyes which they could not discover with their tongues. Venus, taking pity of her patients, found them out so fit occasion that as Eriphila with her sister Marpesia were walking alone in the garden, gathering of flowers, at that instant, guided by love and fortune, Meribates went into the garden to be solitary, where straight he espied his mistress walking with her sister. Now Meribates was driven into an ecstasy with the extreme pleasure he conceived in the sudden sight of his goddess, insomuch as he stood amazed, for fear and necessity found a deadly combat in the mind of Meribates. He doubted if he should be over-bold to give offence to Eriphila, and so spill his pottage, but the law of necessity, saith Plato, is so hard that the gods themselves are not able to resist it, for as the water that by nature is cold is made hot by the force of fire, and the straight tree pressed down groweth always crooked, so nature is subject to necessity, that kind cannot have his course. And yet if there be anything which is more forcible than necessity, it is the law of love, which so incensed Meribates that casting all fear aside, he offered himself to his mistress with this courteous parle:

Gentlewomen, if my presumption do trouble your muses, yet the cause of my boldness

deserveth pardon, sith where the offence proceedeth of love, there the pardon ensueth of course. I stood in a maze at the first sight, for methought you resembled Pallas and Juno departing away from Venus after she had won the ball, you, madam Eriphila, like the one for wit, and Marpesia like the other for majesty. But howsoever, sweet saints, you grace this garden with your presence as Diana doth the groves, and honour me in admitting so unworthy a man into the company of such excellent personages.

Eriphila, hearing Meribates in these terms, giving a glory to her face by staining her cheeks with a vermilion blush, both sharply and shortly made this reply:

It is never presumption, Lord Meribates, that fortune presents by chance, and therefore no pardon where is no offence. Our musing was not great, only gathering flowers, which we like by the hue but know not by the virtue, herein resembling lovers that, aiming at the fairest, oft stumble on such as are little worth. If you have made us any fault, it is in giving so kind a frump with your unlikely comparison, I being as unlike to Pallas in wit as Vulcan to Mars in property, and she as far different from Juno in majesty as old Baucis was to Venus in beauty. But you gentlemen of Massilia have the habit of jesting, and therefore since it is a fault of nature we brook and bear with it.

Meribates, hearing so courteous and witty an answer, swilled in love as merrily as ever Jupiter did virtue, so that delighting to hear his mistress prattle, he prosecuted his talk thus:

As I am glad, madam, that my rashness was no occasion of offence, so I am sorry you take what I uttered in earnest to be spoken in sport; my comparison as I inferred it, so by your patience I dare maintain it, if not able by reasons, for that I am no scholar, yet by love, for that I shall draw mine arguments from fancy, which hath set on fire a poor stranger's heart that he deems your sweet self not only like Pallas, but Pallas herself, so that had I in this humour been judge for Paris in the vale, wit, not beauty, had gotten what they strove for.

Aye, but, sir, quoth Marpesia, from whence will you draw your arguments to prove me in majesty like Juno? You dare not say from reason, in regard that the persons are without compare, and from love if you argue, you prove yourself double-faced like Janus, and double-hearted like Jupiter, to have two strings to a bow and two loves at one time.

Yes, madam, quoth Meribates, my common place in this enthymema shall be also from love, for in affecting so dearly your sister, I cannot but deeply honour you, if not in love as my paramour, yet in friendly affection as her sister.

You harp still, answered Eriphila, on one string, which is love; if you be in earnest, look for a frown, as I gave you a favour. Believe me, Lord Meribates, there is nothing easier than to fall in love, nor harder than to chance well. Therefore omitting such serious matters as fancy, for that I am vowed to Vesta, tell me, will you provide you, as me, of a nose-gay? And if you be so minded, tell me, of all flowers which like you best?

Those, madam, that best fit with my present humour.

And what be they? quoth Marpesia.

Penses, madam, answered Meribates, for it is a pretty flower, and of sundry colours, feeding the eye with variety, which is the chiefest pleasure to the sight; especially I like it for the agnomination [sic for 'agnomination'], in that the word, coming from France, signifies fancies. Now how I am contented with fancies, I would you could as well see as I feel. One while imagination presents unto me the idea of my mistress' face, which I allow with a fancy; another while a thought of her beauty wakens my senses, which I conform [sic?] with a fancy; straight her virtue says she is most excellent, which I gratify with a fancy; then, to seal up what may be said, her care [sic?] and supernatural wit says her conceits are divine, which, avowed with a catalogue of solemn oaths, I set down as a maxim with a fancy. Thus are my thoughts fed with fancies, and to be brief, my life is lengthened out by fancies. Then, madam, blame me not if I like penses well, and think nothing if I set no other flower in my nosegay.

And truly, Lord Meribates, answered Eriphila, you and I are of one mind, I mean in choice of flowers, but not, sir, as it is called a pense, or as you descant, a fancy, but as we homely housewives call it heart's-ease, I banish (as with a charm) the frowns of fortune and the follies of love, for the party that is touched by the inconstancy of the one or the vanity of the other cannot boast he meaneth heart's-ease. Seeing then it breedeth such rest unto the mind, and such quiet to the thoughts, we will both wear this flower as a favour, you as a pense, but I as a heart's-ease.

As these two lovers were thus merrily descanting upon flowers, I came into the garden and found this young lord and my daughter at chat. No whit displeased, in that I knew the honour of his house, his great possessions and parentage, I winked at their loves, and after a little ordinary parle called them in to dinner, where there was such banding [=bandying] of glances and amorous looks between Meribates and Eriphila as a blind man might have seen the cripples halt.

Well, dinner being ended, as Meribates entered into the consideration of Eriphila's wit, so she more impatient, as the horse that never having felt the spur runneth at the first prick, so she, never having felt before the like flame, was more hot and less weary than if before she had been scorched with affection. Now she called him in her thoughts beautiful, saying that the fairest and greenest herbs have the most secret operation. She said he was well-proportioned, and so the reddest margarites had the most precious virtues; that he was virtuous, and then she called to mind the old verse: *Gratior est pulchro veniens e corpore virtus* [=That virtue is the more lovely that comes from a beautiful body]. But when she weighed his wise and witty arguments that he uttered in the garden, how they not only savoured of wit but of mirth, then *Omnia vincit amor, & nos cedamus amori* [=Love conquers all things; let us too surrender to love], she could not but in her conscience swear that he should be the saint at whose shrine she would offer up her devotion.

These two lovers thus living the more happily for that they rested upon hope, it pleased my son and me to walk abroad into a park hard adjoining to the court, and with us my two daughters, and forget the strangers [sic for 'stranger'?] we could not. Pacing thus abroad to take the air, when we were in the green meads, Meribates and my daughter had singled themselves, and he taking time while she proffered opportunity, began boldly to court her in this manner:

It is an old saying, madam, holden as an oracle, that in many words lieth mistrust, and in painted speech deceit is often covered. Therefore I, sweet mistress, whose acquaintance with you is small and credit less, as being a stranger, dare use no circumstance for fear of mistrust, neither can I tell in what respect to bring a sufficient trial of my goodwill, but only that I wish the end of my love to be such as my faith and loyalty is at this present, which I hope tract of time shall try without spot. Thy wit, Eriphila, hath bought my freedom, and thy wisdom hath made me captive, that as he which is hurt of the scorpion seeketh a salve from whence he received the sore, so you only may minister the medicine which procures the disease. The burning fever is driven out with a hot potion, the shaking palsy with a cold drink; love only is remedied by love, and fancy must be cured by continual affection.

Therefore, Eriphila, I speak with tears outwardly, and with drops of blood inwardly, that unless the mizzling showers of your mercy mitigate the fire of my fancy, I am like to buy love & repentance with death. But perhaps you will object that the beasts which gaze at the panther are guilty of their own death, that the mouse taken in the trap deserveth her chance, that a lover which hath free will deserveth no pity if he fall into any amorous passions. Can the straw resist the virtue of the pure jet, or flax the force of the fire? Can a lover withstand the brunt of beauty, or freeze if he stand by the flame, or prevent the laws of nature? Weigh all things equally, and then I doubt not but to have a just judgment, and though small acquaintance may breed mistrust, and mistrust hinders love, yet tract of time shall infer such trial as I trust shall kindle affection.

And therefore I hope you will not put a doubt till occasion be offered, nor call his credit in question whom neither you have found nor heard to be halting. What though the serpentine powder is quickly kindled and quickly out, yet the salamander stone, once set on fire, can never be quenched. As the sappy myrtle-tree will quickly rot, so the shittim wood will never be eaten with worms; though the polyp changeth colour every hour, yet the sapphire will crack before it will consent to disloyalty. As all things are not made of one mould, so all men are not of one mind, for as there hath been a trothless Jason, so there hath been a trusty Troilus, and as there hath been a dissembling Damocles, so there hath been a loyal Lelius. And sure, Eriphila, I call the gods to witness without feigning that sith thy wit hath so bewitched my heart, my loyalty and love shall be such as thy honour and beauty doth merit. Sith therefore my fancy is such, repay but half so much in recompense, and it shall be sufficient.

Eriphila, hearing this passionate speech of Meribates, made him this answer:

Lord Meribates, it is hard taking the fowl when the net is descried, and ill catching of fish

when the hook is bare, and as impossible to make her believe that will give no credit, and to deceive her that spieth the fetch. When the string is broken, it is hard to hit the white; when a man's credit is called in question, it is hard to persuade one. Blame me not, Meribates, if I urge you so strictly, nor think nothing if I suspect you narrowly; a woman may knit a knot with her tongue that she cannot untie with all her teeth, and when the signet is set on, it is too late to break the bargain. Therefore I had rather mistrust too soon than mislike too late; I had rather fear my choice than rue my chance, for a woman's heat is like the stone in Egypt that will quickly receive a form, but never change without cracking. If then I fear, think me not cruel, nor scrupulous if I be wise for myself. The wolf hath as smooth a skin as the simple sheep; the sour elder hath a fairer bark than the sweet juniper. Where the sea is calmest, there it is deepest, and where the greatest colour of honesty is, there oftentimes is the most want, for Venus' vessels have the loudest sound when they are most empty, and a dissembling heart hath more eloquence than a faithful mind, for truth is ever naked. I will not, Lord Meribates, run for my [sic for 'infer any'?] particular comparison.

Thus I cast all these doubts, and others have tried them true. Yet am I forced by fancy to take some remorse of thy passions. Medea knew the best, but yet followed the worst in choosing Jason, but I hope not to find thee so wavering. Well, Meribates, to be short and plain, thou hast won the castle that many have besieged, and hast obtained that which others have sought to gain. It is not the shape of thy beauty but the hope of thy loyalty which enticeth me; not thy fair face but thy faithful heart; not thy parentage, but thy manners; not thy possessions, but thy virtues, for she that builds her love upon beauty means to fancy but for awhile. Would God I might find thee such a one as I will try myself to be, for whereas thou dost protest such loyalty which, suppose it be true, yet shall it be but counterfeit respecting mine. Be thou but Admetus, and I will be Alcest; no torments, no travail, no, only the loss of life shall diminish my love. In lieu thereof remain thou but constant, and in pledge of my protested goodwill, have here my heart and hand to be thine in dust and ashes.

Here, son, mayest thou judge into what quandary Meribates was driven when he heard the answer of his mistress so correspondent to his suit; the prisoner being condemned hearing the rumour of his pardon never rejoiced more than Meribates did at this pronouncing of his happiness. Well, these lovers thus agreeing, broke off from their parle for fear of suspicion, and joined with company, where falling into other talk, we passed away the afternoon in many pleasant devices.

Eriphila and Meribates, thus satisfied, living in most happy content, honouring no deity but Venus, determined as well as opportunity would minister occasion to break the matter to me and her [+brother?] betime, but in the meanwhile my son proclaimed for his delight certain jousts and tourneys, whither resorted all the bravest noblemen and gentlemen in Taprobane, where they performed many worthy and honourable deeds of chivalry. The jousts ended, my son bade them all to a banquet, where to grace the board and to honour the company was placed my daughters Eriphila and Marpesia; gazed on they were for their beauties, and admired for their honourable behaviour.

Eriphila, whose eye walked about the troop of these lusty gallants, espied a young gentleman midst the rest called Lucidor, the son of an esquire, a man of personage tall and well-proportioned, of face passing amiable, of behaviour well nurtured. This gallant, furnished with these singular qualities, so set on fire Eriphila's fancy that as if she had drunk of the fountain of Ardenia [sic?], her hot love was turned to a cold liking. Now her heart was set upon Lucidor which of late was vowed to Meribates, in such sort that her stomach lost the wonted appetite to feed the eyes with the beauty of her new lover, as that she seemed to have eaten of the herb sputania, which shutteth up the stomach for a long season. Yea, so impatient was her affection as she could not forbear to give him such looks that the gentleman perceived she was either resolved to outface him or else affected towards him. Well, the dinner ended, and the gentlemen all departed, Eriphila getting secretly to her closet, began to fall into these terms:

Infortunate Eriphila, what a contrariety of passions breeds a confused discontent in thy mind! What a war dost thou feel between the constant resolution of a lover and the inconstant determination of a lecher, between fancy and faith, love and loyalty. Wilt thou prove, Eriphila, as false as Venus, who for every effeminate face hath a new fancy; as trothless as Cressida, that changed her thoughts with her years; as inconstant as Helena, whose heart had more lovers than the chameleon colours? Wilt thou vow thy loyalty to one, and not prove steadfast to any? The turtle chooseth, but never changeth; the lion, after that he hath entered league with his mate, doth never covet a new choice. These have but nature for their guide, and yet are constant; thou hast both nature and nurture and yet art moveable, breaking thine oath without compulsion, and thy faith without constraint, whereas nothing is so hated as perjury, and a woman having cracked her loyalty is half hanged. Civilia, being betrothed to Horatius Secundus, chose rather to be racked to death than to falsify her constancy. Lamia, a concubine, could by no torments be haled from the love of Aristogiton. What perils suffered Cariclia for Theagines? Let these examples, Eriphila, move thee to be constant to Meribates. Be thou steadfast, and no doubt thou shalt not find him stragglng. Caustana [sic?], when she came into the court to swear that she never loved Sudalus [sic?], became dumb, and after fell mad; beware of the like reward if thou commit the like offence.

Tush, they that would refrain from drink because they heard Anacreon died with the pot at his head, or that hateth an egg because Appeyus Sanleyus [sic] died in eating of one, would be noted for persons half mad; so if I should stand to my pennyworth, having made my market like a fool and may change for the better, because other in like case have had ill hap, I may either be counted faint-hearted or foolish.

What, Eriphila, Jupiter laughed at the perjury of lovers. Meribates is fair, but not second to Lucidor; he is witty, but the other more wise. Well, what of this, but how wilt thou answer Meribates? Tush, cannot the cat catch mice but she must have a bell hanged at her ear? He that is afraid to venture on the buck for that he is wrapped in the briers shall never have hunter's hap, and he that puts a doubt in love at every chance shall never have lover's luck. Well, howsoever it be, Lucidor shall be mine; he shall have my heart and I his, or else I will sit beside the saddle.

And thus having debated with herself, she rested perplexed till she might have a sight of her new lover, which was not long, for Lucidor no sooner got home, but calling to mind the amorous glances of Eriphila, and noting both her beauty and her wit, although her honour was far beyond his parentage, yet presuming upon her favours shown him at the banquet, he boldly, as love's champion, ventured to win what Cupid had set as a prize, so that he began to frequent the court and become a courtier, first braving it amongst the lords, then by degrees creeping into favour with the ladies, where in time he found opportunity to parle with Eriphila, whom for fashion's sake at the first he found somewhat strange, but in short time became so tractable that there was but one heart in two bodies, insomuch that not only Meribates and my son, but all the court saw how Eriphila doted on Lucidor, whereat my son began to frown, but Meribates would not see it, lest his mistress should think him jealous, but smothered up the grief in secrecy, and thought either time or the persuasion of her friends or his continued affection would dissuade her from her follies.

Well, Eriphila had not favoured Lucidor long but there came to the court another young gentleman called Perecius, who likewise was enamoured of Eriphila, and she of him, that she proved more light of love than she was witty, yet she excelled in wit all the virgins of Taprobane.

To be brief, so many faces, so many fancies, that she became as variable in her loves as the polyp in colours, which so perplexed the mind of Meribates that, falling into melancholy and grievous passions, he exclaimed against the inconstancy of women, who like fortune stood upon a globe and were winged with the feathers of fickleness. Yet not willing to rage too far till he had talked with Eriphila, he would not stay till opportunity would serve, but early in a morning stepped into her bedchamber, where finding her between half sleeping and waking, he saluted with great courtesy. Being resaluted again of Eriphila with the like private kind of familiarity, after a few ordinary speeches, Meribates, taking Eriphila by the hand, began to utter his mind in these words:

Sweet mistress, I feel in my mind a perilous and mortal conflict between fear and love, by the one doubting, in discovering my mind, to purchase your disfavour, by the other forced to bewray what I think, lest I perish through my own secrecy. Hoping therefore you will take that comes from me as from your second self, give me leave to say that grieves me to repeat, how I doubt madam, of your constancy. What vows there have passed between us, what protestations, what promises, I refer to your own conscience. What unseemly favours you have showed to Lucidor, what extreme fancy to Perecius, all Taprobane wonders at with sorrow, that so witty a lady should prove so light, and I especially, whom the cause toucheth at the quick and paineth at the heart, feel more miserable passions for your disloyalty than I did receive joys in hope of your constancy.

As Meribates was ready to have prosecuted his parle, my daughter broke off his discourse in this manner:

And what of this, Lord Meribates? May not a woman look but she must love? Are you jealous, forsooth, before the wedding? Well, suppose I favoured Lucidor and Perecius;

Si natura hominum sit nouitatis auida, give women leave to have more fancies than one, if not as we are lovers, yet as we are women. Venus' temple hath many entrances; Cupid hath more arrows than one in his quiver, and sundry strings to his bow; women have many looks, and so they may have many loves. What, Lord Meribates, think you to have a woman's whole heart? No, unless you can procure Venus to make her blind, or some other deity deaf, for if either she see beauty or gold, or hear promises or passions, I think she will keep a corner for a friend, and so will I.

But madam, the glorious frame of the world consists in unity, so we see that in the firmament there is but one sun.

Yea, quoth Eriphila, but there be many stars.

The Iris or rainbow, madam, quod he, hath but one quality.

Truth, answered my daughter, but it hath many colours.

But to come to a familiar example, replied Meribates, the heart hath but one string.

Yea, but, quoth Eriphila, it hath many thoughts, and from these thoughts spring passions, and from passions, not love but loves; therefore content you, sir, for if you love me you must have rivals.

And so turning her face, as in choler, to ye other side of the bed, she bade him good morning. He, passing away out of the chamber in great melancholy, began as soon as he was alone to exclaim against the inconstancy of women, saying they were like marigolds, whose form turneth round with the sun; as wavering as weathercocks, that move with every wind; as fleeting as the north-west islands, that float with every gale; witty but in wiles, conceited but in inconstancy; as brittle as glass, having their hearts framed of the polyp-stones, their faces of the nature of adamants, and in quality like the jacinth, which when it seemeth most hot, is then as cold as iron,; carrying frowns in their foreheads and dimples in their cheeks; having their eyes framed of jet, that draw every beauty in a minute, and let them fall in a moment. Thus he exclaimed against women, but such was his fervent affection towards Eriphila that he would neither rage against her openly nor secretly, but smothered his passions in silence, which growing to the extreme, brought him into a fever wherein lingering, he died, but in such sort that all Taprobane said it was for the inconstancy of Eriphila,

Well, his gentlemen and mariners mourned and sorrowed in that their pinnace should bring him home dead whom they brought forth alive, all jointly praying that the gods would be revenged on Eriphila, who as she was then attending with me and her brother on the dead corps to the ship, suddenly before all our sights was turned into this bird, a chameleon, whereupon the mariners rejoiced. Hoising up sails and thrusting into the main, we scoured and [sic for 'they scoured, and we?'] returned home to the court.

Thus, son, thou hast heard the misfortune of my two daughters, the one for her pride, the

other for her inconstancy. It is late, and the setting of the sun calleth us home with the bee to our poor hive; therefore we will now to our cottage, and tomorrow at thy breakfast I will satisfy thee with the hard fortune of Marpesia. With that I gave the Countess Alcida great thanks, and accompanied my courteous hostess to her cottage.

The third discourse, of Marpesia

No sooner was the day up, and Phoebus had marched out the greatest gates of heaven, lighting the world with the sparkling wreath circled about his head, but old Alcida got up and called me from my bed. Ashamed that old age should be more early than youth, I start up to wait upon mine hostess, who being ready with her staff in her hand, carried me forth into the fields hard adjoining to the sea-side, where we came to a tomb on which lay the picture of a gentleman very artificially carved. By him hung two tables without any symbol, emblem, imprest [sic for 'imprese'?] or other hieroglyphical character; only there were written certain verses to this effect:

*The Graces in their glory never gave
A rich or greater good to womankind
That more impales their honours with the palm
Of high renown than matchless constancy;
Beauty is vain, accounted but a flower
Whose painted hue fades with the summer sun;
Wit oft hath wrack by self-conceit of pride;
Riches is trash that fortune boasteth on;
Constant in love, who tries a woman's mind,
Wealth, beauty, wit and all in her doth find.;*

In the other table were set down these verses:

*The fairest gem oft blemished with a crack
Loseth his beauty and his virtue too,
The fairest flower nipped with the winter's frost
In show seems worsen than the basest weed;
Virtues are oft far over-stained with faults;
Were she as fair as Phoebe in her sphere,
Or brighter than the paramour of Mars,
Wiser than Pallas, daughter unto Jove,
Of greater majesty than Juno was,
More chaste than Vesta, goddess of the maids,
Of greater faith than fair Lucretia,
Be she a blab, and tattles what she hears,
Want to be secret gives far greater stains
Than virtues' glory which in her remains.*

After I had read over the verses, Alcida said:

Son, I perceive thou dost muse at this tomb set in so uncouth a place, hard by the steep-down cliffs of the sea, especially furnished with enigmatical posies, yet hast thou not considered what after thou shalt find, and therefore let us sit down under the shadow of this rose-tree which thou seest flourished in this barren place so fair and beautiful, and I will drive thee out of these doubts by discovering the fortune of my daughter Marpesia.

I, desirous to hear what the meaning of this monument, seated so prospective to Neptune, should be, sat me down very orderly under the rose-tree, and began to settle myself very attentive to hear what old Alcida would say, who began in this manner.

The third history, of Marpesia of Taprobane

My two daughters being thus metamorphosed and transformed for their follies into strange shapes, I had left me only my youngest daughter, Marpesia, in face little inferior to her eldest sister Fiordespine, for she was passing beautiful. Wise she was, as not second to Eriphila, but other special virtues she had that made her famous through all Taprobane, and as the burnt child dreads the fire, and other men's harms learn us to beware, so my daughter Marpesia by the misfortune of Fiordespine feared to be proud, and by the sinister chance of Eriphila hated to be inconstant, insomuch that, fearing their nativities to be fatal, and that hers being rightly calculated would prove as bad as the rest, she kept such a strict method of her life and manners, and so foreguarded all her actions with virtue, that she thought she might despise both the fates and fortune.

Living thus warily, I and her brother conceived great content in her modesty and virtue, thinking though the gods had made us infortunate by the mishap of the other two, yet in the fortunate success of Marpesia's life, amends should be made for the other [sic for 'others'?] mishap. Persuaded thus, it fortuned that my son entertained into his service the son of a gentleman, a bordering neighbour by, a youth of greater beauty than birth, for he was of comely personage, of face lovely, and though but meanly brought up, as nuzzled in his father's house, yet his nature discovered that he was hardy in his resolution touching courage, and courteous in disposition as concerning his manners.

This youth, called Eurimachus, was so diligent and dutiful towards his lord, so affable to his fellows, and so gentle to everyone that he was not only well thought on by some, but generally liked and loved of all. Continuing in this method of life, he so behaved himself that in recompense of his service my son promoted him not only to higher office and some small pension, but admitted him into his secret and private familiarity. Living thus in great credit, it chanced that Venus, seeing how my daughter Marpesia lived careless of her loves and never sent so much as one sigh to Paphos for a sacrifice, she called Cupid, complaining that she was atheist to her deity, and one opposed to her principles, whereupon the boy, at his mother's beck, drew out an envenomed arrow, and levelling at Marpesia, hit her under the right pap so nigh the heart that, giving a groan, she felt she was wounded, but how or with what she knew not, as one little skilful in any amorous passions. Yet she felt thoughts unfitting with her wonted humour, for noting the person of Eurimachus, which she found in property excellent, and admiring the qualities of his mind co-united with many rare and precious virtues which she perceived to be

extraordinary, she fell to conceive a liking, which for the baseness of his birth she passeth over for a toy. But the blinded wag, that suffers not his wounds to be cured with easy salves, nor permitteth any lenitive plasters to prevail where he pierceth with his arrows, put oil in the flame and set fire to the fax, that she felt her fancy, scarce warm, to grow to such a scalding heat as every vein of her heart [+felt?] sweet passions. Feeling this new lord, called love, to be so imperious, she stooped a little, and entered into deeper consideration of Eurimachus' perfection, and so deep by degrees that, although she coveted with the snail to have her pace slow, yet at length she waded so far that she was over her shoes. So that feeling herself passing into an unknown form, she fell into this doubtful meditation:

What flame is this, Marpesia, that overheath thy heart? What strange fire hath Venus sent from Cyprus that scorseth thee here in Taprobane? Hath Cupid's bow such strength, or his arrows such flight, as being loosed in heaven, he can strike here upon earth? A mighty goddess is Venus, and great is Cupid, that work effects of such strange operation. Make not a doubt, Marpesia, of that is palpable; dream not at that which thou seest with thine eyes, nor muse not at that which thou feelest with thy heart. Then confess and say thou art in love, and love in thee [sic for 'entered'] so deeply as pumice-stones of reason will hardly raze out the characters. In love? Thou art young, Marpesia; so is Cupid a very child. A maid; so was Venus before she lost her virginity, and yet for her lightness she was the goddess of love. But with whom art thou in love? With Eurimachus? One of base birth and small living, of no credit, a mean gentleman, and thy brother's servant?

Consider, Marpesia, that love hath his reasons and his rules to settle fancy and govern affections; honour ought not to look lower in dignity, nor the thoughts of ladies gaze at worthless persons. Better is it for thee to perish in high desires than in low disdain; oppose thyself to Venus unless her presents be more precious. Say love is folly except her gifts be more rich; count rather to die in despising so mean a choice than live in liking so unlikely a chance. What will thy mother, thy brother, thy friends, nay all Taprobane say but that thou art vain, careless and amorous? But note this, Marpesia, love is a league that lasteth while life. Thou art in this to feed thine eye, not thine [sic for 'their'] humour; to satisfy the desire of thy heart, not the consideration of their thoughts, for in marrying, either a perpetual content or a general mislike is like to fall to thyself. What though he be poor, yet he is of comely personage; though he be base of birth, yet he is wise. What he wanteth in gifts of fortune he hath in the mind, and the defect of honours is supplied with virtues. Venus herself loved Adonis; Phoebe stooped from heaven to kiss a poor shepherd; Aenone [sic for 'Oenone'] loved Paris as he was a swain, not as the son of Priamus. Love is not always companion to dignity, nor fancy ever lodged in kings' palaces. Then, Marpesia, look at Eurimachus for he is courteous, and love him as he is virtuous; supply thou his want with thy wealth, and increase his credit with thy countenance. But how dare he motion love, that is so low, or enterprise to attempt so great an assault? Never stand in doubt, Marpesia; give him thou but favour, and love and fortune will make him bold.

Marpesia, having thus meditated with herself, sought by all means possible how to make

him privy to her affections. She used in her salutations affable courtesy, and somewhat more than ordinary. Her looks were full of favours, her glances many and mild. He used no exercise but she did commend, nor performed anything which she said not to be excellent. The young Eurimachus was not such a novice but he could espy a pad in the straw, and discern a glowing coal from cold cinders. He noted her glances, her looks, her gestures, her words, examining every particular action in the depth of his thoughts, finding by the touchstone that all tended unto mere love or extreme dissimulation, for whatsoever she did was in extremes. Well, hope put him in comfort that she was too virtuous to dissemble, and fear that she was too honourable to love so base a man, yet supposing the best, he took her passions for love, & had a desire to return a liking with affection, but the consideration of his parentage, of his small possessions, of her honour, his lord's disfavour, and the impossibility of his suit was a cooling card to quench the hottest flame that Cupid could set on fire with his enchanted brand. But Venus [-had] pitied the fondling, gave him such precious comfortives to encourage her champion that he resolved to attempt, whatsoever his fortune were. Thus in suspense, he began to debate with himself:

It hath been an old saying, Eurimachus, sucked from his mother's teat, that it is good to look before thou leap, and to sound the ford before thou venture to wade, sith time past cannot be recalled, nor actions performed revoked, but repented. Gaze not at stars, lest thou stumble at stones; look not into the lion's den, lest for thy presumption thy skin be pulled over thine ears. In loves, thoughts are to be measured by fortunes, not by desires, for Venus' tables are to be gazed at with the eye, not to be reached at with the hand. In love, Eurimachus? Why it fitteth not with thy present estate. Fancy is to attend on high lords, not on such as are servile. It were meeter for thee to sweat at thy labours than to sigh at thy passions, to please thy lord than to dote on thy mistress. Busy then thy hands to free thy heart; be not idle, and Venus' charms are to a deaf adder: Cedit amor rebus, res age tutus eris [=Love yields to business; be busy, and you will be safe].

But Eurimachus, Phidias painteth love young, and her garlands are made with the buds of roses, not with withered flowers. Youth holdeth the fire, and fancy puts in the oil, but age carries the cold cinders, now that heat of young years hath yielded. Therefore if thou refuse to love, when wilt thou find time to fancy? Wrinkles in the face are spells against Cupid, and Venus starteth back from white hairs. Then now or else never. Love is a greater lord than thy master, for he hath deity to countervail his dignity. Thou tattlest, Eurimachus, of love, but say who is the object. Thy thoughts aim at no less nor no lower than Marpesia, sister to thy lord, a princess by birth, fair and beautiful, full of honourable and virtuous qualities, sought by men of high parentage; to say all in one word, the flower of Taprobane. Fond fool, thinkest thou the kite and the eagle will perch on one tree, the lion and the wolf lie in one den; ladies of great worth look on such worthless peasants? No, think her disdain will be greater than thy desire, and assure thee this: if thou presume, she will revenge.

Why, is Cupid blind, and shoots he not one shaft at random? May he not as soon hit a princess as a milkmaid? Truth, but his arrows are matches; he shoots not high with the one and low with the other. He joins not the mouse and the elephant, the lamb and the

tiger, the fly and the falcon, nor sets not honour in any servile room. Yet Omphita [sic?], the queen of the Indians, loved a barber; Angelica Medes [sic for 'Medoro?'], a mercenary soldier. Yea, Venus herself chose a blacksmith. Women oft resemble in their loves the apothecaries in their art; they choose the weed for their shop when they leave the fairest flower in the garden. They oft respect the person more than the parentage, and the qualities of the man more than his honours, feeding the eye with the shape, and the heart with the virtues, howsoever they live discontent for want of riches.

But build not, Eurimachus, on these uncertain instances, nor conclude on such premises, lest thy foundation fail and thy logic prove not worth a louse. What reason hast thou to persuade thee once to aim a thought at Marpesia, such as Venus, if she heard them pleaded, would allow for aphorisms? If favours be a sign of fancy, what glances have I had that have pieced deep; what looks, as discovering love; what courteous speeches to my face; what praise behind my back; nay, what hath Marpesia done of late but talk of Eurimachus and honour Eurimachus? What of this, young novice? Are not women arch-practisers of flattery and dissimulation? Lay they not their looks to entrap when they mean to keep the fowl for tame fools? Have they not desire in their faces when they have disdain in their hearts? Did not Helena kiss Menelaus when she winked at Paris; did not Cressida wring Troilus by the hand when her heart was in the tents of the Grecians? Every look that women lend is not love; every smile in their face is not a prick in their bosom. They present roses, and beat men with nettles; burn perfumes, and yet stifle them with the black; speak fair and affable, when, God wot, they mean nothing less. If then, Eurimachus, thou knowest their wiles, fear to make experience of their wits. Rest thee as thou art. Let Marpesia use favours, cast glances, praise and dispraise how she list. Think all is wanton dissimulation, and so rest.

In this melancholy humour he left his loves, and went to his labours. Love, espying how in the day he withstood her face with diligence, she caused Morpheus to present him in his sleeps with the shape of his mistress, which recording in the day, he found that where fancy had pierced deep, there no salve would serve to appease the malady, that from these light pains he fell into extreme passions. As he could take no rest, he sought always to be solitary, so to feed his thoughts with imaginations, that like Cephalus he delighted to walk in the groves, and there with Philomela to bewail his loves.

Cupid, pitying his complaints, sent opportunity to find her, who brought it so to pass that as on a day he walked into a place hard adjoining to the park, having his lute in his hand, playing certain melancholy dumps to mitigate his pinching humour, Marpesia, with one of her gentlewomen being abroad in the lanes, espied him thus solitary. Stealing therefore behind him to hear what humour the man was in, heard him sing to his lute this mournful madrigal:

*Rest thee, desire, gaze not at such a star;
Sweet fancy, sleep; love, take a nap awhile;
My busy thoughts that reach and roam so far
With pleasant dreams the length of time beguile;
Fair Venus, cool my overheated breast,*

And let my fancy take her wonted rest.

*Cupid abroad was lated in the night,
His wings were wet with ranging in the rain,
Harbour he sought; to me he took his flight
To dry his plumes; I heard the boy complain,
My door I oped to grant him his desire,
And rose myself to make the wag a fire.*

*Looking more narrow by the fire's flame,
I spied his quiver hanging at his back;
I feared the child might my misfortune frame,
I would have gone for fear of further wrack,
But what I drad, poor man, did me betide,
For forth he drew an arrow from his side.*

*He pierced the quick, that I began to start,
The wound was sweet, but that it was too high,
And yet the pleasure had a pleasing smart;
This done, he flies away, his wings were dry
But left his arrow still within my breast,
That now I grieved I welcomed such a guest.*

He had no sooner ended his sonnet but Marpesia, perceiving by the contents that it was meant of her, stepped to him and drave him thus abruptly from his passions:

If you grieve, Eurimachus, for entertaining such a guest, your sorrow is like the rain that came too late, to believe love is such an unruly tenant that, having his entrance upon courtesy, he will not be thrust out by force. You make me call to mind the counterfeit of Paris when he was Oenone's darling, for Phidias drew him sitting under a beech-tree playing on his pipe, and yet tears dropping from his eyes, as mixing his greatest melody with passions. But I see the comparison will not hold in you, for though your instrument be answerable to his, yet you want his lukewarm drops, which showeth, though your music be as good, yet your thoughts are not so passionate. But leaving these ambages, say to me, Eurimachus, what may she be that is your mistress?

Eurimachus, amazed at the sight of his lady more than Priamus' son was at the view of the three goddesses, sat still like the picture of Niobe turned into marble, as if some strange apoplexy had taken all his senses. Gaze on her face he did; speak he could not, insomuch that Marpesia, smiling at the extremity of his loves, wakened him out of this trance thus:

What cheer, man, hath love witched thy heart as all thy senses have left their powers? Is thy tongue tied as thy heart is fettered, or hath the fear of your mistress' cruelty driven you into a cold palsy? If this be the worst, comfort yourself, for women will be true, and if she be too hard-hearted, let me but know her, and you shall see how I will prattle on

your behalf. What say you to me; what makes you thus mute?

By this Eurimachus had gathered his senses together, that rising up and doing reverence to Marpesia, he thus replied:

Madam, it is a principle in philosophy that Sensibile sensui superpositu{m} nulla sit sensasio [sic for 'sensatio'?]; the colour clapped to the eye hindereth the sight, the flower put in the nostril hindereth the smell.

And what of this philosophical enigma? quoth Marpesia.

I dare not, madam, quoth Eurimachus, infer what I would, but to answer more plainly, Endymion waking and feeling Phoebe grace him with a kiss was not more amazed than I at your heavenly presence, fearing, if not Actaeons' fall, yet that I had committed the like fault, for at the first blush, your excellency drave me into such a maze that I dreamed not of the Lady Marpesia, but of some goddess that had solaced in these woods, which supposition made me so mute.

You fly still, quoth Marpesia, from my demand, playing like the lapwing that crieth farthest from her nest. I asked who it was that you loved so as to honour her with such a sonnet.

It was, madam, to keep accord to my lute, not to discover any passions, for all the amordelays [sic for 'roundelays'?] Orpheus played on his harp were not amorous, nor every sonnet that Arion warbled on his instrument vowed unto Venus. I am too young to love, for fear my youth be overbidden, fancy being so heavy a burden that Hercules, who could on his shoulder sustain the heavens, groaned to bear so weighty a load. If then, madam, I strive above my strength, I shall but with the giants heap Pelion upon Ossa, passions upon passions, so long till I be stricken to death with love's thundering bolt; therefore, madam, I dare not love.

Marpesia, who determined to sound the depth of his thoughts, took him before he fell to the ground, and made this reply:

Trust me, Eurimachus, your looks, your actions, your sighs and gesture argues no less than a lover; therefore seeing we are alone, none but we three, I'll have you once in shrift, and therefore I conjure you by your mistress' favour and beauty to tell me whether you be in love or no.

You strain me so hard, madam, quoth Eurimachus, that I am in love, and love so far in me as neither time nor fortune can raze out. The name of my mistress, madam, pardon, for in naming her I discover mine own presumption, having aimed so by the means of aspiring love as her excellency crosseth all my thoughts with disdain, for madam, give me leave to say (making no compare) that the Graces at her birth did agree to make her absolute. I having soared so high as the sun hath half melted my feathers, I fear with Icarus to fall into the ocean of endless miseries, for be her disdain never so great, yet my

desire will never be less; scorn she I should look so high, affection will not bate an ounce of his main, but seeing the dice be in his hands, will throw at all. But madam, so far I am out of conceit to have but one favour at her hands, as I pass every day and hour in as deep perplexed estate as the ghosts grieved by the infernal furies.

And with this the water stood in his eyes, which Marpesia, not able to brook, began to salve thus:

I will not, Eurimachus, be inquisitive of your mistress' name sith you have yielded a reason to conceal it, but for your loves that are lodged so high, fear not, man; the blacksmith dared to covet fair Venus; the little sparrow pecketh sometimes wheat [sic for 'where'?] the eagle taketh stand, and the little mouse feedeth where the elephant hath eaten hay. Love as soon stoopeth to visit a poor cottage as a palace. To dare, I tell thee, Eurimachus, in love is the first principle, and Helen told Paris: Nemo succenset amanti. Thou must then to Paphos, and not use bashfulness in Venus' temple; sacrifices serve at her altars as a thing unfit for lovers, and be she as high of degree as any in Taprobane, court her, Eurimachus, and if thou miss, it is but the hap that lovers have.

As she should have prosecuted her talk, her brother, who was stalking to kill a deer, came by, and espying them at so private and familiar chat, frowned, commanding Eurimachus (as half in anger) to get him home; he, leaving his sport, accompanied my daughter to the court.

These lovers thus parted, were not long ere they met, where Eurimachus, following the precepts of Marpesia, began very boldly to give the assault, she very faintly, for fashion' sake, making a woman's resistance, but the battery was so freshly renewed that Marpesia yielded, and there they plighted a constant promise of their loves, vowing such faith and loyalty as the troth of two lovers' hearts might afford.

In this happy content they lived a long while, till Marpesia, blabbing the contract out to a gentleman of the court, it came to her brother's and her mother's ear, who taking the matter grievously, had her strictly in examination. Marpesia confessed her loves, and maintained them. On the contrary side, they persuaded with promises and threatened with bitter speeches, but in vain, for Marpesia was resolved, and told for a flat conclusion Eurimachus was the man, and none but he, whereupon my son, seeing no means could prevail to remove her affection, he thought by taking away the cause to raze out the effects, and therefore he sent for Eurimachus, whom after he had nipped up with bitter taunts, he banished from the court.

This being grievous to the two lovers, yet the assurance of each other' constancy, and the hope in time to have the prince reconciled, mitigated some part of their martyrdom, and Marpesia, to show to the world she was not fleeting, whatsoever her friends said, discovered the grief she conceived by his absence openly, for she went apparelled in mourning attire. Well, Eurimachus thus banished, went home to his father, who for fear of ye prince durst not entertain him, which unkindness had doubled his grief, that he fell almost frantic, and began to leave the company of men as a flat Timonist, in which

humour, meeting with the gentleman that bewrayed their loves, he fought with him and slew him, and buried him so secretly as the care of his own life could devise.

Well, Cleander was missed, but hear of him they could not. Posts were sent out, messengers through all Taprobane, but no news, so that divers did descant diversly of his departure. Some said he was, upon secret displeasure between him and the prince, passed out of the land; others that he was slain by thieves; some that he was devoured by wild beasts. Thus debating of his absence, he was generally lamented of all the court.

But leaving the supposition of his death, again to Marpesia, who taking the exile of Eurimachus to her heart, began to grow into great and extreme passions, and for grief of the mind, to bodily disease, that she fell into a quartan, which so tormented her as the physicians said there was no hope of life nor no art to cure her disease unless her mind were at quiet, whereupon her brother, fearing his sister's life, recalled home Eurimachus, admitted him into great favour, and gave free grant of his goodwill to their marriage.

Upon this, Marpesia growing into a content, in short time amended. After she had recovered her health, she daily used the company of Eurimachus very privately and familiarly, but she found him not the man he was before, for before he was exiled, no man more pleasant nor more merrily conceited, now none more melancholy nor fuller of dumps, uttering far-fetched sighs and uncertain answers, so that it discovered a mind greatly perplexed. Marpesia noting this, being on a day all alone with Eurimachus in his chamber, she sought with fair entreaties and sweet dalliance to wring out the cause of his sorrows, protesting, if she could, even with the hazard of her life redress it; if not, to participate in grief some part of his distress.

Eurimachus, that loved her more than his life, although he knew women's tongues were like the leaves of the aspe [sic for 'aspen?'] tree, yet thinking her to be wise, after a multitude of mortal sighs he discoursed unto her how he had slain Cleander, and that the remembrance of his death bred this horror in his conscience.

Marpesia, hearing this, made light of the matter to comfort Eurimachus, promising and protesting to keep it as secret as hitherto she had been constant, but she no sooner was parted from her best-beloved but she was with child of this late and dangerous news, labouring with great pains till she might utter it to her gossips, where we may note, son, (I speak against myself) that the closets of women's thoughts are ever open, that the depth of their heart hath a string that stretcheth to the tongue's end, that with Semele they conceive and bring forth oft before their time, which Marpesia tried true, for sitting one day solitary with a lady in the court called Celia, she fetched many pinching sighs, which Celia marking, desired her to tell her the cause of that late conceived grief, as to a friend in whose secrecy she might repose her life. Marpesia made it somewhat coy and chary a great while, insomuch that Celia began to long, and therefore urged her extremely. Marpesia could keep no longer, and therefore using this preamble, began to play the blab:

If I did not, Madam Celia, take you for my second self, and think you to be wise and secret, I would not reveal a matter of so great importance, which toucheth me as much as

my life to conceal. Women, you know, having anything in their stomach, long while they have discoursed it to some friend. Taking you therefore for my chiefest, and hoping all shall be trodden underfoot, know, madam, that Eurimachus hath slain Cleander, and that is the cause that makes him thus melancholy.

Marry, God forbid, quoth Celia.

It is true, madam, quoth Marpesia, and therefore let whatsoever I have said be buried in this place.

With that I came into place, and they broke off their talk. Celia, longing to be out of the chamber that she might participate this news to her gossips, as soon as opportunity gave her leave went abroad, & meeting by chance another gentlewoman of the court, calling her aside, told her if she would be secret and swear not to reveal it to anyone, she would tell her strange news. The other promising, with great protestation, to be as close as a woman could be, Celia told her how Eurimachus was the man that slew Cleander, and that her author was Marpesia.

They were no sooner parted but this news was told to another, that before night it was through the whole court that Eurimachus had slain Cleander, whereupon the prince could do no less (thought very loath for his sister's sake) but cause him to be apprehended and cast into prison, then, assembling his lords and commons, produced Eurimachus, who after strict examination was found guilty, the greatest witness against him being the confession of Marpesia. The verdict given up, the prince could not but give judgment, which was that within one month, in the place where he killed Cleander, he should be beheaded. Sentence given, Eurimachus took his misfortune with patience. News coming to Marpesia of this tragical event, she fell down in a sound, and grew into bitter passions, but in vain.

My son, to show how he loved Eurimachus, caused a carver to cut out this sumptuous tomb in this form, wherein after his death he resolved to bury him, so to grace him with extraordinary honour. All things provided, and the day of his death being come, Eurimachus, clad all in black velvet, came forth, mourning in his apparel, but merry in his countenance, as one that sorrowed for the fault, but was not daunted with death. After him followed my son, the earls, lords and barons of the land, all in black, and I and my daughter Marpesia and the ladies of the court covered with sable veils, attending on this condemned Eurimachus. Being come to the place, the deathsman having laid the block, and holding the axe in his hand, Eurimachus, before his death, uttered these words:

Lords of Taprobane, here I slew Cleander, & here must I offer my blood as amends to the soul of the dead gentleman, which I repent with more sorrow than I performed the deed with fury. The cause of his death and my misfortune is all one, he slain for bewraying my loves, I executed for discovering his death, but infortunate I, to bewray so private a matter to the secrecy of a woman, whose hearts are full of holes, apt to receive but not to retain, whose tongues are trumpets that set open to the world what they know. Foolish is he that commits his life into their laps, or ties his thoughts in their beauties. Such is the

nature of these fondlings that they cannot cover their own scapes, nor strain a veil over their greatest faults, their hearts are so great, their thoughts so many, their wits so fickle, and their tongues so slippery. The heart and the tongue are relatives, and if time serves they cannot paint out their passions in talk, yet they will discover them with their looks, so that if they be not blabs in their tongues, they will be tattlers with eyes. The gods have greatly revenged this fault in men, letting it overslip in women because it is so common amongst that sex. Mercury for his babbling turned Battus to an index or touchstone, whose nature is to bewray any metal it toucheth, and Tantalus, for his little secrecy in bewraying that Proserpina ate a grain of pomegranate, is placed in hell, up to the chin in water, with continual thirst, and hath apples hang over his head, with extreme hunger, whereof the poet saith:

*Quaerit aquas in aquis, & poma fugatia captat
Tantalus: hoc ille garrula lingua dedit.*

But why do I delay death with these frivolous discourses of women? Suffice they are blabs.

And so turning to the deathsman, laying his neck on the block, his head was smitten off. The execution done, his death was lamented, and his body solemnly entombed as thou seest, all exclaiming against my daughter Marpesia's little secrecy, who in penance of her fault used once a day to visit the tomb, and here to her lover['s] soul sacrifice many sighs and tears. At length Venus taking pity of her complaints, thinking to ease her of her sorrow and to inflict a gentle and meek revenge, turned her into this rose-tree.

As Alcida had uttered these words, there was a ship within ken, whose streamers hanging out, I judged by their colours they were of Alexandria, whereupon I waved them to leeward. The mariners (more than ordinary courteous) struck sails, & sent their cock-boats ashore. The shippers were no sooner aland but I knew them to be of Alexandria, and for all my misfortunes, basely attired as I was, the poor knaves called me to remembrance, and their reverence done, asked if I would to Alexandria. I told them it was mine intent, whereupon, taking leave of my old hostess, the Countess Alcida, with many thanks for my courteous entertainment, she very loath to leave me, went with the mariners towards the boat.

The poor lady, seeing herself alone, fell to her wonted tears, which the gods taking pity on, before my face turned to a fountain. I, wondering at their deities, entered the boat, and went to the ship, where welcomed and revered of the master and the rest, hoising up all our sails, we made for Alexandria.