

In Praise of the Author and his Book.

In Britain soil there is a garden plat
Which for the air and nature of the place
Both wholesome is, and bravely situate,
Where learning grows, and hath a noble grace.

This plat doth yield unto us divers plants,
Which spread in time this island round about;
Though some of them good juice and moisture wants,
Yet many have both pith and force (no doubt).

Some sharp of taste, but very wholesome are,
Some not so good, yet very toothsome be,
Some toothsome are, and very good (though rare),
Which all excel each other in degree.

Not first nor next do please my fancy much;
The last are best, which pleasant profit brings,
'Mongst whom this plant (whose place and grace is such)
Doth yield a flower, which fair and lively springs.

Greene is the plant, Mamillia the flower,
Cambridge the plat were plant and flower grows,
London the place which brought it first in power,
The court a seat most fit for such a rose.

And to be short (if I true prophet be),
Plat, place and seat this pleasant rose shall see,
If plant doth please court, city and country,
And not displease her noble Majesty.

G.B.

Nomen & ingenium cum debet inesse Poetae.

Omen ita & genium debet habere liber.

Ore placet Grenus, prodest oculisque colore,

Ingenium genium, nomen & omen habet.

Vt virtutis comes invidia, sic

Calami comes calumnia.

To the right worshipful and virtuous gentlewoman, Mary Rogers, wife to Master Hugh Rogers of Everton, increase of worship and virtue.

Praxiteles the painter, being demanded why, in presenting a curious target to Minerva, he did most cunningly portray the picture of her priest Chrisites, answered that Minerva was wise & so was Chrisites, & that being his friend he thought this the best means to gratify him, which saying of Praxiteles I take as a sufficient excuse for my rashness, for if I be demanded why in dedicating my book to others I have inserted your worship's name, I answer that both your constant, virtuous and godly disposition caused me with Praxiteles to engrave your name in a work where gentlewomen's constancy is so stiffly defended, knowing your rare and virtuous qualities to be such as your very enemies (if you have any) shall be forced, maugre their face, to extol your fame with immortal praise, and also your liberal bounty & friendly courtesy (whereof without any desert I have tasted) drave me, though not as I would, yet as I could, to show the dutiful affection wherewith I am bound to be at your command forever.

While thus I wished more evidently to show some sign of my goodwill, a certain letter of Mamillia to the young Lady Modesta chanced to come unto my hands wherein the anatomy of lovers' flatteries is displayed, which I humbly present unto your worshipful patronage, desiring you to accept it, not according to the value of the gift, but to the mind of the giver, and assuring you that none of your well-willers do in heart wish you more prosperity, though my ability be not able in outward show to make it manifest.

Thus ceasing to trouble your worship, I commit you to the Almighty.

Clare Hall the 7 of July.

Yours at command,
Robert Greene.

THE ANATOMY OF LOVERS' FLATTERIES.

Mamillia to the young and virtuous virgin, the Lady Modesta.

I remember, Madam, that whenas my grandfather Louis Gonzaga was newly created Duke of Nevers [=4 March 1565], that divers of his friends, to show their dutiful affection, offered him sundry rich presents most meet for so high a personage, and amongst the rest a certain musician presented unto his hands a scroll wherein were pricked two or three curious points of cunning descant, desiring the Duke to accept of his simple gift sith therein was comprehended all his riches and skill, to attain the which he had passed divers countries and most dangerous perils. The Duke, wisely weighing with himself that nothing was more precious than that which was purchased with danger, accepted the gift as a most precious jewel. Considering which, madam, and finding myself so greatly indebted to your Ladyship for the great courtesy and good entertainment you showed me in Saragossa as my insufficiency shall never be able to requite it, I thought good, lest happily I might be thought ungrateful or counted so oblivious as to forget a good turn, instead of precious gems and rich jewels to present your Ladyship with a casketful of friendly counsel, which so much the more is to be esteemed chary chaffer by how much the more I have bought the proof and experience of the same with pain and peril. And if, Madam, you shall take it as a caveat to avoid the alluring snares of Cupid's flatteries, both I shall be glad my writing took so good effect, & you have cause hereafter to thank me for my counsel.

That lascivious poet Ovid, Madam Modesta, whom justly we may term the foe to womankind, hath not only prescribed in his books *De arte amandi* a most monstrous method to all men whereby they may learn to allure simple women to the fulfilling of their lust and the losing of their own honour, but also hath set down his books *De remedio amoris* to restrain their affections from placing their fancies but for a time upon any dame, which books are so sauced with such blasphemous descriptions of women's infirmities as they show that with the satyr he could out of one mouth blow both hot and old. Yea, Juvenal, Tibullus, Propertius, Callimachus, Phileta[s], Anacreon and many other authors have set down caveats for men as armours of proof to defend themselves from the alluring subtillies of women. But alas, there is none contrariwise which hath set down any prescript rules wherewith women should guide themselves from the feigned assault of men's pretended flattery, but hath left them at discover to be maimed with the glozing gunshot of their protested perjuries, which seemeth repugnant to nature. For if the silly lamb had more need of succour than the lusty lion, if the weak and tender vine standeth in more need of props than the strong oaks, women sure, whom they count the weak vessels, had more need to be counselled than condemned, to be fortified than to be feared, to be defenced than with both nature and art to be assaulted.

But this their injurious dealing were a sufficient caveat, if women were wise, to cause them beware of men's pretended policies, and not to be enticed to that train whereunder they know a most perilous trap to be hidden. The beasts will not come at the panther for all his fair skin because by instinct of nature they know he is a murderer; the fish will not come at the bait, though never so delicate, for fear of the hidden hook. Neither can the

glistening feathers of the bird of Egypt cause the silly lark to keep her company, sith she knew her for her mortal enemy. Yet we simple women, too constant and credulous, God knows, to deal with such trothless Jasons, yield our heart and hand, our love, life and liberties to them whom we know cease not only publicly to appeach us of a thousand guiltless crimes, but also secretly seek with forged flattery to scale the fort and to sack both honour and honesty.

But madam, omitting women's foolish simplicity in trusting too much men's subtle flattery, seeing it is as well given by nature for the woman to love as for the man to lust, I will first define what love is, namely a desire of beauty, and beauty, according to the mind of sundry writers, is of three sorts, of the mind, of the body, and of the speech, which if they concur in one particular person, and especially that of the mind sufficiently furnished with virtues & requisite qualities, such a one ought a gentlewoman to choose, but the chance is as hard as to find out a white Ethiopian. Sith then it is so difficult among infinite scorpions to find out one silly eel, amidst a whole quarry of flint to choose out one precious gem, and amongst a thousand lusting lechers one loyal lover, and so hard to descry the true sterling from the counterfeit coin and the precious medicine from the perilous confection, I will as well as I can point you out the crew of those cogging companions which outwardly profess themselves to be trusty lovers, and inwardly are ravening wolves and trothless lechers.

There are some, madam, of this dissembling troop which rightly may be termed masquers, some hypocrites, some poets, some crocodiles, some scorpions, and the genus to all these forepassed species is flatterers.

The masquers are they, madam, which covertly under the colour of courtesy shroud a pestilent and peevish kind of curiosity. Their countenance shall be grave, though their conditions be without grace, and when they see any gentlewoman addicted to be courteous, honest, wise and virtuous, they will straight with the polyp change themselves into the likeness of every object, knowing that it is impossible to entice the birds to the trap but by a stale of the same kind. They carry in outward show the shadow of love, but inwardly the substance of lust. They have a fine dye, though a coarse thread, and though at the first they shrink not in the wetting, yet that poor gentlewoman shall have cause to curse her pennyworth which tries them in the wearing. She shall find them whom she thought to be saints to be serpents; that those who in wooing are doves, in wedding to be devils; that in the fairest grass lies hid the foulest snake, in the bravest tomb the most rotten bones, & in the fairest countenance the foulest conditions.

Those whom I term to be hypocrites are they who, pricked forward with lust to fix their fleeting fancy upon some silly dame whom nature hath beautified both with the shape of beauty and substance of virtue, judging that it is naturally given to women to be desirous of praise, seek to call them to the lure with recounting their singular qualities and extolling their perfections even above the skies, flourishing over their flattery with a rhetorical gloze of feigned dissimulation. The poor maid whom they call their mistress, they, like counterfeits, canonize for an earthly goddess, comparing her for her beauty to Venus, for her wit to Minerva, for her chastity to Diana, & yet this virtue the chiefest

thing they seek to spoil her of. Her eyes are twinkling stars, her teeth pearls, her lips coral, her throat ivory, her voice most musical harmony; yea, she is so perfect in all points as they marvel how so heavenly a creature is shrouded under the shape of mortality. These, I say, have honey in their mouth and gall in their heart, are such hypocritical flatterers as they seek with sugared words and filed speech to inveigle the silly eyes of well-meaning gentlewomen, whenas inwardly they scoff at the poor maids which are so blind as not to see their extreme folly and gross flattery.

Prattling poets I call those who, having authority with painters to feign, lie and dissemble, seek with sirens' songs and enchanting charms of devilish invention to bewitch the minds of young and tender virgins, under the colour of love to draw them to lust, painting out in songs and sonnets their great affection, and deciphering in feigned rimes their forged fancy. They be taken in the beams of her beauty as the bee in the cobweb; they are singed at the sight of her fair face as the fly at the candle; they suffer worse pains than Sisyphus, more torments than Tantalus, more grief than Ixion; they are plunged in Pluto's pit, and so drowned in distress that, unless the silly maid by selling her freedom and losing both honour and honesty give a salve to their surmised sore, they shall end their days in hellish misery. Yea, to decipher their sorrows more narrowly, they are so overgrown with grief as in all their body they have no place whole but their heart, nothing at quiet but their mind, nor nothing free but their affection. They are indeed so passionate in their pen, and such ink-pot lovers, that the poor maid which by trusting too much is charmed with their magical enchantments shall find their firmest fancy was but forged folly, their love was but tickling lust, and that the hotness in their chase was but to make shipwreck of her chastity.

The nature of the crocodile, madam, is with grievous groans and trickling tears to crave help as one in distress, but whoso cometh to succour him is presently devoured. So, madam, those kind of lovers whom I term crocodiles are they which when neither flattery can prevail nor supposed courtesies is of force to scale the fort of their invincible honesty, then (knowing that gentlewomen are pitiful, and wholly framed of the mould of mercy), they fall with the crocodile to their feigned tears, seeking with dissembled sighs and sobs, with weeping and wailing, with distressed cry and pitiful exclamations, to move her to take pity of their plaint, whom after with greedy gripes they bring to utter decay and ruin. But, madam, as the juice of the herb baaran drieth faster than it can be pressed out, and as the water of the fountain Sibia can no faster be poured into brass but it turneth into metal, so there is nothing in the world that drieth sooner than a lover's tears, nor no sickness sooner inwardly salved than a lover's sorrow. Their care may soon be cured because it cometh not from the heart, and their mourning soon amended sith it no whit moveth the mind, yet they can so cunningly counterfeit the shadow of a perplexed patient, and have trickling tears and far-fetched sighs so at their command, that few well-meaning and pitiful maids can escape the train of their alluring subtilties.

Scorpions, madam, are they which sting with their tail, and seek with despiteful terms to abuse the credit of gentlewomen. These be those kind of lovers which having neither comeliness of person nor conditions of mind, neither wit, wisdom, beauty or learning, nor any other good quality to purchase them credit or win them the favour of women, but are

utterly rejected as unsavoury salting neither worth the tasting nor eating, seek then with blasphemous reproaches and injurious railing to call the fame of honest gentlewomen in question. Then they condemn them of inconstancy, comparing them to chameleons, polyps and weathercocks, affirming their fancies to be fleeting, their love to be light, and their choice wholly settled in change, that they be malicious, deceitful, enchanting sirens, crafty Calypsos, as subtle as serpents, as cruel as tigers, and what not? And the cause of this their unjust accusing cometh not through any misery offered them by gentlewomen, but that they themselves are so imperfect both in mind and body that both by nature and art they may justly be appeached of want.

Having now, madam, though not eloquently, yet truly, set down before your face in plain colour the anatomy of such licentious lovers as seek with alluring baits to entrap the minds of chaste maidens, sith love is the labyrinth which leadeth us to be devoured of these incestuous monsters, let us learn to fly it as warily as wise Ulysses did the mermaids. Anacreon, who spake by experience and writ by proof, calleth love a tyrant, mischievous, cruel, hardy, unkind, foul, ungracious, cursed, wicked, and the cause of all mischief. Love of beauty, saith he, is the forgetting of reason, the father of frenzy, the disturber of the mind, the enemy to health, the sink of sorrow, the garden of grief, and to conclude, a confused chaos of misery, so that if it might be seen with bodily eyes, or be an object to our exterior sense, the basilisk is not more feared, nor the cockatrice more avoided, than loathsome love would be eschewed and detested.

What folly is it for that woman which is free to become captive, which is at liberty to become a perpetual slave to another man, who having the choice in her own hand to live at her own lust will willingly yield herself subject to be directed at another man's pleasure? But this affection of love naturally traineth & entrappeth young minds, and especially of women, wherefore they had need to take the more heed lest happily it stealeth upon them, for commonly it cometh upon such as will not seek means to prevent, but carelessly receive it as a sweet & pleasant thing, not knowing what and how perilous a poison lies hid under that pleasant face. Let her, therefore, that will avoid this frantic & foolish affection give no more ear unto ye alluring charms of ye feigned lover than unto the song of an enchanted sorcerer; let her consider that as it is proper to the chameleon to change, to the fox to be wily, to the lion to be haughty, and to the hyena to be guileful, so it is the property of lovers to dissemble, that when he doth most fry in fancy, then he doth most freeze in affection; when he feigneth Aetna, he proveth Caucasus; when he complaineth of care, then is he most secure; when he waileth outwardly, then he laugheth inwardly, like to the stone ceraunon, which when it burneth most fervently, being broken, distilleth most cold liquor.

The end also of these lovers' affection is to be considered, which is not for her virtue, wisdom or honesty, but either allured by her beauty which she enjoyeth, or her riches that she possesseth. The skin of the ermelin is desired, and the carcass despised; the horn of the unicorn most precious received, and his flesh rejected; the hoof of the leopard is the thing that hunters seeks or else he is contemned, so the beauty and riches of a woman is highly regarded, but her virtue and honesty lightly esteemed, that as the taste, being once glutted, thinketh the sweet wine sour, or as the finest delicates to a full stomach seemeth

but coarse cates, so he that buildeth his love upon beauty of the body and only regardeth riches when the beauty is faded, his love decreaseth, or being satiate with pleasure, loatheth the plenty, or if wealth want, his love pineth with extreme penury.

But put case the mind is already caught in the snares of Cupid, and hath yielded herself as a vassal unto Venus, let us find a remedy to draw her out of this perilous labyrinth. I remember the saying of Dant[e], that love cannot roughly be thrust out, but it must easily creep, and a woman must seek by little and little to recover her former liberty, wading in love like the crab, whose pace is always backward, calling to her remembrance that if her lover be fair, he will be proud of his person; if rich, his substance procureth stateliness; if of noble parentage, it maketh him disdainful; that the stone echites is most pleasant to the eye, but most infectious to be handled; that the herb called *flos solis* is beautiful to behold, but deadly to be tasted; that the fairest face hath oft-times the falsest heart, and the comeliest creature most currish conditions.

Who more fair than Paris, yet a trothless traitor to his love, Oenone. Ulysses was wise, yet wavering; Aeneas a pleasant tongue, yet proved a parasitical flatterer; Demophoon demure, and yet a dissembler; Jason promiseth much, yet performed little, and Theseus addeth a thousand oaths to Ariadne, yet never a one proved true. Consider the herb of India is of pleasant smell, but whoso cometh to it feeleth present smart; the goorde leaf profitable, the seed poison; the rind of the tree tillia most sweet, and the fruit most bitter; the outward show of such flattering lovers full of delight, but the inward substance sauced with despite. Call also to mind their often perjuries, their vain oaths, falsified promises and inconstancy, their protestations, pilgrimages, & a thousand dissembled flatteries. If thy lover be infected with any particular fault, let that be the subject whereon to muse, knowing that many vices are hidden under the coloured shape of virtue. If he be liberal, think him prodigal; if eloquent, a babbler; if he be well backed, think it is the tailor's art & not nature's workmanship; if a good waist, attribute it to his coat that is shaped with the Spanish cut; if well legged, think he hath a bombast hose to cover his deformity. Yea, drive all his perfections out of thy mind and muse upon his infirmities. So shalt thou lead a quiet life in liberty and never buy repentance too dear, and though he counts thee cruel because thou art constant and dost refuse to yield to thine own lust, think it no discredit, for musty casks are fit for rotten grapes; a poisoned barrel for infectious liquor, and cruelty is too mild a medicine for flattering lovers.

Thus, madam, you have heard my counsel which I have learned by proof, and speak by experience, which if you willingly accept, I shall think my labour well bestowed, and if you wisely use, you shall think your time not ill spent. But if you do neither, my well-wishing is never the worse, and so fare you well.

Yours to command, Mamillia.

Modesta to her beloved Mamillia.

It is too late, Madam Mamillia, to sound the retrait, the battle being already fought; to dry the malt, the kill being on fire; to wish for rain when the shower is past; to apply the salve, the sore being remediless; & to give counsel, the case being past cure, for before the corrosive came, the sore was grown to a festered fistula, & ere your comfortable confect was presented to my hand, I was fallen into a strange fever.

Thou didst, Mamillia, counsel me to beware of love, and I was before in the lash(?). Thou didst wish me to beware of fancy, and alas, I was fast fettered. I have chosen, Mamillia -- What do I say? Have I chosen? Yea, but so, poor soul, as all my friends do wish me to change, and yet I have satisfied myself, though not contented them. My friends regarded the money, and I respected the man; they wealth, and I wisdom; they lands and lordships, and I beauty and good bringing up, so that either I must choose one rich whom I did hate, and so content them, or take one poor whom I did love, and so satisfy myself.

Driven, Mamillia, into this dilemma, I am to ask thine advice what I should do, whether I should lead my life with abundance of wealth in loath, or spend my days with no riches in love. In this, if thou shalt stand my friend to give me thy counsel, I will, if ever I be able, requite thy courtesy. From Saragossa in haste.

Thine assuredly, doubtful Modesta.

Mamillia, having received this letter, returned her a speedily as might be an answer to this effect:

Mamillia to the Lady Modesta.

Madam Modesta, I have received your letters & have viewed your doubtful demand, whereunto thus I answer, that to live we must follow the advice of our friends, but to love, our own fancy, for to another man's living they may give precepts, but to fix fancy in love they can prescribe no certain principles. Then, Madam, sith you have riches which may of a poor wooer make a wealthy speeder, wed not for wealth, lest repentance cast the accounts, nor match not with a fool, lest afterward thou repent thine own folly, but choose one whose beauty may content thine eye, and whose virtuous wisdom may satisfy thy mind. So shalt thou have neither cause to repent nor occasion to mislike thy choice, and that thou mayest perceive my meaning more plainly, read the following history with good advisement.

There dwelt in Toledo a certain Castilian named Valasco, by parentage a gentleman, by profession a merchant, of more wealth than worship, and yet issued of such parents as did bear both great countenance and credit in the country. This Valasco, after the decease of his father, was a ward to the Duke of Zamorra, who seeing him endued with great wealth and large possessions, having the disposition of his marriage in his hands, married him to a kinswoman of his named Sylandra, a gentlewoman neither endued with wit nor adorned with beauty, and yet not so witless but she was wilful, nor so deformed but she was proud, insomuch as her inward vices and outward vanities did in tract of time so quat the queasy stomach of her husband Valasco that although in his childish years he did not mislike of her folly, yet in his ripe years, when reason was rule to direct his judgment, he so detested the infirmities of her nature and the infections of her nurture as she was the only woman his crazy stomach could not digest.

Valasco being thus cumbered with such a cross as the burthen thereof was to him more heavy than the weight of the heavens to the shoulders of Atlas, and knowing by experience what a misery it was to marry without love or make his choice without skill, and how loathsome it was to live without liking, or to be wedded to her whom neither his fancy nor affection did desire to enjoy, having by his wife Sylandra one only daughter named Sylvia, determined with Themistocles to marry her rather to a man than to money, and never to match her with any whom she did not both entirely love and like.

While he was in this determination, Sylandra died, leaving Valasco a diligent husband for the finishing of his wife's funerals, and a careful father for the well bringing up of his daughter Sylvia, who now was about the age of sixteen years, so beautified with the gifts of nature and adorned with sundry virtues and exquisite qualities as the citizens of Toledo were in doubt whether her beauty or virtue deserved greater commendation. Sylvia, flourishing thus in the prime of her youth, and proving daily more excellent as well in the complexion of the body as in the perfection of her mind, grew so renowned for her famous feature almost throughout all Europe that as they which came to Memphis thought they had seen nothing unless they had viewed the pyramids built by Rhodope, so

the strangers which arrived at Toledo thought their affairs not fully finished until they had obtained the sight of Sylvia, so that as the most chary chaffer hath ever most choice of chapmen, and as the richest gem hath ever most resort to view it and buy it, so by the means of Sylvia the house of Valasco was so frequented with a noble train of worthy suitors as if it had been a common bourse for exchange of merchandise. Yet all their wooing proved small speeding, sith Sylvia kept aloof from seizing on the lure. For although there were divers of most noble parentage and great possessions which required her in marriage, offering for her feoffment great lands and lordships, yet Valasco would neither condescend without her consent, nor constrain her to consent to his commandment.

Well, Sylvia thus glorying in her freedom, and taking pleasure to trace in the large lease of liberty, was not suffered so quietly to fortify the bulwark of her chastity but she had sundry assaults and daily canvazadoes to force her yield the fort to some of her importunate suitors, amongst whom there repaired by mere chance at one time and in one day three gentlemen of sundry nations and divers dispositions, the first an Italian called Signor Gradasso, the second a Frenchman named Monsieur de Vaste, the third an Englishman called Master Petronius. Signor Gradasso was very old, but of great wealth, Monsieur de Vaste of surpassing beauty, but somewhat foolish, and Master Petronius of great wit, but of very small wealth. These gentlemen were very courteously entertained by Signor Valasco, whom they requited with sundry salutations to this effect:

The renown, sir, quoth Signor Gradasso, not only of your daughter's beauty but also of her singular virtue, is so blown abroad by fame in every place and in every man's ears as there hath been no talk for a time in Italy but of the perfection of Sylvia, which forced me, being now old and stricken in years, to repair hither as one desirous not only to see your daughter, but also to take her to wife, and to endue her with such feoffments and large possessions as she shall be satisfied and you sufficiently contented.

Gradasso having said his mind, Monsieur de Vaste, not being the wisest man of the world in telling a tale, let a man of his called Jacques be his interpreter, feigning that he was utterly ignorant in the Spanish tongue, who in his master's behalf framed his tale to this effect:

Sir, quoth he, my master being the only son and heir to his parents, and being left the only pillar of all his parentage, hath ever since the decease of his father been very careful to match himself with such a one in marriage as might content him for her beauty, and be his countenance and credit for her virtue & honesty. Hearing therefore of your daughter's singular perfection as well in the one as in the other, he was enforced by an inward affection to come as one very desirous to match himself with so good a mate, offering all his lands in dower as a perfect pledge of his unfeigned goodwill.

Jacques had no sooner made an end of his parle but poor Petronius offered his suit very ruefully:

Sir, quoth Petronius, as it is a sign of folly to cheap that chaffer for the which there is far more offered than he is able to afford, so the beauty, virtue and parentage of your daughter Sylvia, the great dowries and large feoffments offered by sundry suitors, had daunted my fervent affection, sith being a poor scholar by profession, & yet a gentleman by birth, far unfit by the means of want to be a wooer, had I not heard that you have given the reins of liberty to your daughter to be mistress of her own choice, neither respecting the defect of want nor the superfluity of wealth, so your daughter like and love the party. Encouraged with this her free liberty in choice, I am come to offer her neither lands nor lordships, but my silly self, ready in what I may and she please to pleasure her.

Signor Valasco, having heard and diligently marked the effect of their talk, smiling and marveling at their strange adventure, that three gentlemen so far distant in place and divers in condition should so fitly meet at one instant, yea, and framing their suits all to one effect, returned them this friendly and courteous answer:

Gentlemen, quoth he, you are not come in more haste than welcome with a good heart, and for my part I conceive such good-liking of you all in general as I could be content to bestow my daughter upon any of you in particular. For neither thy old age, Signor Gradasso, nor your want of learning, Monsieur de Vaste, nor thy lack of wealth, Master Petronius, do breed in me any such misliking but that if it please my daughter to consent, I will willingly condescend, for in her and not in me consisteth your denial. Therefore follow me, and I will bring you where every man shall prefer his suit, and have a speedy answer.

And with that he carried them to Sylvia's chamber, whom they found sitting solitary at her muses. Who espying her father accompanied with these three gentlemen, entertained every one of them so courteously with a kiss, her countenance notwithstanding importing such gravity as they perceived she was neither infected with curiosity nor devoid of surpassing modesty, which so astonished the passionate hearts of these three patients that as the deer with the sight of a fair apple standeth at gaze, so they were with her beauty & virtue driven into such a maze that Signor Valasco was fain to break silence in this manner:

Sylvia, quoth he, these three gentlemen, enforced by affection & drawn by the report of thy beauty (as they say) are come from foreign countries to crave thee in marriage, which, sith it consisteth not in my power to grant without thy consent, I have brought them to thy chamber that both they may speak for themselves, and thou give them such an answer as fancy or affection shall command thee. This gentleman, being old, is of great riches to maintain thy estate. The other is, as thou seest, very fair, but not very wise. The last is learned and wise, but not of any wealth. Now, Sylvia, the choice is in thine own hands. If thou love one of them, I shall like him; if thou refuse them all, I am still contented.

Sylvia, yielding most dutiful thanks to her father for his natural affection, returned him soberly this solemn answer:

Sir, quoth she, I now see by experience that dreams are not always vain illusions and fond fantasies, but that sometime they prognosticate & foreshow what afterward shall happen. For Julius Caesar, a little before he was ye monarch of the world, dreamed that he had overcome Mars in plain battle. Penelope, the night before her long looked for Ulysses came home, saw in her sleep Cupid pricking an olive branch at her bed's head. And this night last past I did see in a dream Venus standing in a most brave and delicate garden wherein were but only three trees, the one a very old and withered oak, yet laden with acorns; the other a fair and beautiful cedar tree, and yet the root decayed and rotten; the third a green bay-tree flourishing and yielding forth an odoriferous smell, but being barren and without berries. And methought as I thus stood taking the view of the trees, Venus changed me into a turtle-dove, and bade me build my nest in one of these trees which best pleased my fancy. And as I was ready to yield her an answer, I suddenly awoke, and Venus lost her verdict. To divine of this dream, it passeth my skill, but I conjecture the three trees did represent these three gentlemen, and the turtle myself, but what either Venus or the building of the nest do signify, it passeth my skill to conjecture. But omitting my dream and the signification thereof till tract of time shall divine it, sith you are gentlemen of sundry countries and divers dispositions, and yet all shoot at one mark, let me hear what every one of you can say in commendation of his own estate, and then as fortune shall favour you, and fancy force me, you shall receive an answer.

Sylvia had no sooner ended her talk but the gentlemen began to divine of the dream very devoutly, descanting diversly of the building of the nest, and applying the interpretation to their particular preferment.

The turtle always or most commonly, quoth Gradasso, buildeth on the tall and strong oak, honouring it because it is arbor Jovis, the tree of Jupiter, and delighting to build in it by a secret motion of nature, and therefore I have cause, if the dream prove true, to count my part the best portion.

Nay, sir, quoth Jacques in his master's behalf, you have least hope & greatest cause to doubt, for the oak was old & withered, & the turtle naturally delighteth in green & flourishing trees, and especially in the tall and beautiful cedar, and therefore you are exempted. As for the bay-tree, although it be green, yet Pliny reporteth it is the only tree which the turtle-dove abhorreth, and therefore of these premises I infer this conclusion, that by the divination of this dream my master shall obtain the prize at this tourney.

Well, masters, quoth Petronius, though you thrust me out for a wrangler, and count me as a cipher in algorism, yet I say that neither I have occasion to doubt nor you cause to hope. For though by the means of Venus there chanced such a metamorphosis, yet though her body was transformed, her heart, mind & understanding was not changed; though she were a turtle in show, yet she was Sylvia in sense, not having so base a mind as either to build her nest in a withered oak, where it were more meet for a miry sow to feed than so gallant a bird to build, or on a fair cedar, sith the root was rotten and ready to fall, but would rather make her choice of a fair and flourishing bay-tree, which may both profit herself and pleasure her senses. So that if we have part, I hope and assure myself mine to be the best.

Tush, gentlemen, quoth Sylvia, fish not before the net, nor make not your accounts without your host's(?), lest happily your gains be small and your shot uncertain. But if your please to have my company, leave off all circumstances and go to the matter.

Signor Gradasso, hearing Sylvia to grow so short, began the assault with this march:

It is necessary, saith Callimachus, for him which will be a perfect lover to have experience in his wooing and constancy in his wedding, lest by want of skill he lose his labour, and his mistress, though his inconstancy, repent the bargain. For where experience wanteth, there commonly the choice hath an ill chance, and where constancy bears no sway, there the match is always marred. Now these two so commendable qualities are always found in old age, and never seen in young years. The old buck maketh better choice of his food than the little fawn, the old lion chooseth always a better prey than the young whelp, the bird acanthis in her age buildeth her nest with most discretion, and an old man hath more experience to make a perfect choice than a young man's skill to gain a happy chance. Age directs all his doings by wisdom, and youth doteth upon his own will. Age, having bought wit with pain and peril, foreseeth dangers and escheweth the same, but youth, following wanton wit too wilfully, never preventeth perils while they be past, nor dreadeth danger while he be half drowned. Yea, there is such a difference between an old man and a young stripling, between hoary hairs and flourishing youth, that the one is followed as a friend to others, and the other eschewed as an enemy to himself.

The Brachmans [=Brahmins] & Gymnosophists made a law that none under the age of forty should marry without the consent of the senior, lest in making their choice without skill the man in process of time should begin to loathe, or the woman not to love. For youth fireth his fancy with the flame of lust, and old age fixeth his affection with the heat of love; young years make no account but upon the glittering show of beauty, and hoary hairs respecteth only the perfect substance of virtue. Age seeketh not with subtilties to enchant the mind, nor with sleights to entrap the maid; he wareth not a velvet scabbard and a rusty blade, nor a golden bell with a leaden clapper. He frameth not his affection in the forge of flattery, nor draweth not a false colour with the pencil of dissimulation; he doth not coin his passions with a counterfeit stamp, nor feign his love with a coloured lie. He beareth not honey in his mouth & gall in his heart; he hath not an olive branch in his bosom and a sword at his back. He carrieth not bread in his hand and a dagger in his sleeve, but if he fancy, 'tis with faith, and if he tell his tale, it is tempered with truth, which shineth in a lover as a polished gem set in most glistening gold. So that old men are oft envied for their virtue, and young men pitied for their vice.

The herb carisnum, being newly sprung up, hath a most sour juice, but being come to his growth, a most delicate sap. The old fir hath the sweetest smell, the aged panther the purest breath, and the oldest man the most perfect conditions, so that as it is natural for the palm-tree to be straight, for the coral to be red, for the tiger to be fierce, for the serpent to be subtle, and the camel to have a crooked back, so is it proper to old men to be endued with virtue and young men imbrued with vice, for hoary age to be entangled

with love, and stayless youth to be entrapped with lust, that as the bravest sepulchre cannot make the dead carcass to smell sweet, or the most delicate gems make a deformed face fair, so the richest attire or most costly apparel cannot make a young mind savour of virtue. The old pine-tree is more esteemed for the profit than the flourishing buds of the trees in the Isle of Colchos for their poison; the old serpents serapie(?) are of greater account for their virtuous skin than the young and glistening efts for their envenomed hides.

Age is always more esteemed for his stayed mind than youth for his stayless mood. That flourishing and beautiful dame Rhodope which married old Psamnetichus, the King of Memphis, was wont to say that she had rather be an old man's darling than a young man's drudge, that she had rather content herself with an old man in pleasure than feed her fancy with a young man in penury, that she had rather be loved of an old man ever than liked of a young man for a while. The mind of a young man is momentary, his fancy fading, his affection fickle, his love uncertain, and his liking as light as the wind, his fancy fired with every new face, and his mind moved with a thousand sundry motions, loathing that which alate he did love, & liking that for which his longing mind doth lust, frying at the first and freezing at the last, not sooner inflamed than quickly cold, as little permanent as violent, and like the melting wax which receiveth every impression, whereas age is constant like to the emerald, which having received a form, never taketh other stamp without cracking. The mind of an old man is not mutable, his fancy fixed, and his affection not fleeting. He chooseth not intending to change, nor changeth not till death maketh the challenge. The old oak never falleth but by the carpenter's axe, nor the affection of age but by the dint of death. The old cedar-tree is less shaken with wind than the young bramble, and age far more stayed than youth. Yea, though an old man be withered in age, yet he flourisheth in affection; though he want the beauty of body, yet he hath the bounty of the mind; though age had diminished his colour, yet it hath augmented his virtue; though youth excelleth in strength, yet age surpasseth in steadfastness, so that I conclude by how much the more the virtues of the mind are to be preferred before the beauty of the body, by so much the more ought an old lover to be preferred before a young lecher.

You have heard, Sylvia, what I have said, and you know I have spoken nothing but truth. If then it please you to think well of my part, and accept of my person, to requite my loyal love with lawful liking, and my fixed fancy with fervent affection, assure yourself you shall have Signor Gradasso so at your command as you in every respect can wish, and in the pledge of this my goodwill, I will make your feoffment a thousand crowns of yearly revenues.

Signor Gradasso had no sooner ended, but Jacques, in his master's behalf, framed his talk to this effect:

There is nothing, quoth he, which among mortal creatures is more detested than deformity, nor nothing more embraced than beauty, which above all the gifts both of nature and fortune doth make us most resemble the gods. So that where the body is adorned with beauty and perfection of nature, there it seemeth the gods show most favour

and affection, sith that they took such care in carving a piece of so curious perfection. Insomuch that they say when the gods made beauty, they skipped beyond their skill in that the maker is subject to the thing made. For what made Thetis be inconstant but beauty, what forced Venus to be in love with Anchises but beauty, what caused Luna to like Endymion but beauty? Yea, it is said to be of so great force that it bewitcheth the wise and enchanteth them that made it. There is none so addicted to chastity whom beauty hath not changed, none so vowed to virginity whom beauty hath not charmed, none so severe whom beauty hath not besotted, nor none so senseless whom the name of beauty cannot either break or bend.

Love cometh in at the eye, not at the ears, by seeing nature's works, not by hearing sugared words, and fancy is fed by the fairness of the face, not by the fineness of the speech. Beauty is the siren which will draw the most adamant heart by force, and such a charm as have constrained even the vestal virgins to forsake their cells. Yea, it inveigleth the sight and bewitcheth the senses. It so troubleth the mind and disturbeth the brain, yea it bringeth such extreme delight to the heart, so that as the viper, being tied to a beech-tree, falleth into a slumber, so divers beholding beautiful persons have stood as though with Medusa's head they had been turned to a stone.

Anacharsis, being demanded what he thought was the greatest gift that ever the gods bestowed upon man, answered: Beauty, for that it both delighteth the eye, contenteth the mind, and winneth goodwill and favour of all men. Pygmalion for beauty loved the image of ivory, and Apelles the counterfeit which he coloured with his own skill, & the picture Ganymedes greatly astonished the ladies of Cyprus. What made Aeneas so beloved of the Carthaginians but beauty? What gained Theseus the goodwill of Ariadne but beauty? What won Demophoon the love of Phyllis but beauty? And what forced the sylvan nymph Oenone to leave the lawns but the incomparable beauty of Paris?

The gentlewoman which hath a husband that is endued with beauty & adorned with the gifts of nature shall have ever wherewith to be satisfied and never whereof to mislike, whereas contrary, the deformed man is such a monster in nature, and such a sorrow to a woman's heart as she bewails her chance to have chosen one that everyone doth loathe. The foulest serpent is ever most venomous, the tree with a withered rind hath never a sugared sap, the dirty puddle hath never good fish, and a deformed body seldom a reformed mind. The wise lapidaries say that the precious stone with the most glistering hue hath always the most secret virtue. The pure gold is chose by the perfect colour, the best fruit by the bravest blossoms, and the best conditions by the sweetest countenance.

But perhaps, Mistress Sylvia, you will say: His fair face inflameth my fancy, and his beauty bewitched my senses; his shape indeed doth persuade me to requite his goodwill with mutual affection, but then his folly again quaileth my stomach, and is a cooling card to quench the fire of fancy. To which I answer, Sylvia, that his folly is not so prejudicial as profitable, not so much hurtful as commodious. Aspasia, the lover of Socrates, being demanded what thing a woman in the world chiefly desired, answered: To rule, thinking that sovereignty was the thing that women most desire, and men most fear to grant them. If then it be a woman's wish to have her own will, and as the common proverb saith, to

rule the roost after her own diet, you shall, in taking my master to your mate, have so much your heart's-ease as either you can desire or imagine, for my master will wholly be led by your line, and you shall be the star by whose aspect he will direct his course; your yea shall be his yea, and your nay his denial.

Thus, although his folly be prejudicial in one respect, it shall be most profitable in another, so that his incomparable beauty shall sufficiently delight your fancy, and his folly be a means that without restraint you may enjoy free will and liberty. Thus, Mistress Sylvia, you have heard what I in my master's behalf can allege. If therefore you mean to repay his goodwill with love, he promiseth not only to make you sole mistress of his heart, but of all his lands and lordships.

Jacques having finished this tale, Master Petronius, as one betwixt fear & hope, gave the fort the sorest assault with this alarm:

Plato, the wise and grave philosopher, was wont to say that as man differeth from brute beasts in reason, so one man excelleth another by wisdom and learning, esteeming him that wanted knowledge, science and nurture but the shape of a man, though never so well beautified with ye gifts of nature, supposing that although he were endued with the outward shadow of beauty as justly he might compare with Paris, or so stored with treasure and riches as he might cast his counts with Croesus, yet if he wanted learning to enlarge his beauty, or wisdom to direct his wealth, he was to be counted no other but a beautiful picture burnished with gold.

He that enjoyeth wealth without wisdom, saith Anaxagoras, possesseth care for himself, envy for his neighbours, spurs for his enemies, a prey for thieves, travail for his person, anguish for his spirit, a scruple for his conscience, peril for his love, sorrow for his children, and a curse for his heirs, because although he knows how to gather, he wanteth skill to dispose. Alexander the Great made so great account of knowledge and wisdom that he was oft wont to say he was more bound to Aristotle for giving him learning than to his father Philip for his life, sith the one was momentary and the other never to be blotted out with oblivion. Nestor was more honoured and esteemed for his learning and wisdom at the siege of Troy than either Achilles for his strength, Ajax for his valour, or Agamemnon for his stout courage. Circes [=Circe] was not enamoured with the beauty of Ulysses, but entangled with his wisdom. Aeneas, whenas Dido sat in parliament, told his tale with such wit and discretion, so seasoned with the salt of learning and sweet sap of science, that not only she was snared in his love, but also said: Surely thou art come of the offspring of the gods, alluding to this saying of Empedocles, that as we in nothing more differ from the gods than when we are fools, so in nothing we do come near them so much as when we are wise. Socrates thanked the gods only for three things: first, that they made him a man and not a woman, that he was born a Grecian and not a barbarian, thirdly that he was a philosopher and not unlearned, esteeming the gifts of nature and fortune of no value unless they be beautified with the gifts of the mind. Bias the philosopher, being reprov'd by a certain injurious person that he was poor and ill-favoured, answered that he was greatly deceived both in his beauty and his riches, for, quoth he, How can I be poor when I am wise, hard-favoured when I am learned, thinking

it the chieftest beauty to be endued with learning, & the greatest treasure to be enriched with wisdom. The philosopher Critolaus, being very deformed, as having a crooked back, and very poor, as begging with a staff & a wallet, was notwithstanding so well beloved of a certain gentlewoman of great wealth and worshipful parentage as she would willingly have accepted him for her husband, which Critolaus perceiving, laid down his staff and his wallet and put off his cloak, the more to show his crooked back, wishing her with more diligence to mark his deformed shoulders, to whom she answered: O, Critolaus, thy deformity cannot quench that which thy wisdom and learning hath set on fire.

It is learning indeed which allureth when every word shall have his weight, when nothing shall proceed but either it shall savour of a sharp conceit or a secret conclusion. It is wisdom that flourisheth when beauty fadeth, that waxeth young when age approacheth, resembling the sea-hulver leaf, which although it be dead, still continueth green. Beauty withereth with age, and is impaired with sickness; be the face never so beautiful, the least scar or mole maketh it most deformed, but learning and knowledge increaseth like to the cygnets, which being young are very black, but in their age most perfectly white; like the birds that build in the rocks of the sea, whose feathers grow most glistening in their age. As for riches, it is momentary, subject to the chance of inconstant fortune; it may be consumed with fire, spent with folly, wasted with riot, and stolen away by thieves, but wisdom is a treasure so certain as no mishap can diminish, neither be impaired by any sinister frown of fortune.

Artemesia the Queen, being demanded by a certain gentlewoman what choice she should use in love: Marry, quoth she, imitate the good lapidaries who measure not the value of the stone by the outward hue but by the secret virtue, so choose not a husband for the shape of the body but for the qualities of his mind, not for his outward perfectness, but for his inward perfection. For if thou like one that hath nothing but a little beauty, thou shalt seem to be in love with the counterfeit of Ganymedes, and if thou fancy only riches, thou chooseth a wooden picture with a golden coat.

Learning is the gem which so decketh a man, and wisdom the jewel which so adorneth the mind, that she which chooseth a wise man to her mate, though never so poor, saith Themistocles, maketh a good match. Thus, Mistress Sylvia, you have heard my opinion, though not so wisely as I would, yet as learnedly as I could, not daring to be too bold, lest in wading too far in an unknown ford I suddenly slip over my shoes. Lands I have none to offer you large feoffments, nor livings to assign you a great dowry, but if it please you to accept of a poor gentleman, I shall be bound by debt & duty to be yours forever.

Sylvia, having given attentive heed to these three gentlemen, as one of a very quick wit and sharp conceit, returned them these answers:

Signor Gradasso, quoth she, it was a law among the Caspians that he which married after he had passed fifty years should at the common assemblies and feasts sit in the lowest and vilest place, as one that had committed a fact repugnant to the law of nature, calling him which was well stricken in years, & yet enamoured, that would fry in

affection when he was wholly frozen in complexion, not an old lover but a filthy fool and a doting old lecher, and in my judgment they had great reason so to term him. For old rotten straws are more fit for dung than for the chamber, withered flowers to be cast way than to be placed in a brave nosegay, old sticks more meet for the fire than for sumptuous building, and aged men are more fit for the grave than to spend their time in love. Cupid, Signor Gradasso, alloweth none in his court but young men that can serve, fresh and beautiful to delight, wise that can talk, secret to keep silence, faithful to gratify, and valiant to revenge his mistress' injuries. He that is not endued & privileged with these conditions may well love, but never be liked.

How can a young woman fix her affection upon an old man who in ye night-time, instead of talk, telleth the clock, crieth out of the gout, complaineth of the sciatica, is cumbered with cramps and troubled with the cough, having neither health to joy himself nor youth to enjoy her. To the end that love be fixed sure, perpetual and true, there must be equality between the enamoured. For if the lover be old and she be young, he overgrown with age and she in flourishing youth, assure yourself that of feigned lovers they shall be ever professed and unfeigned enemies. For it is not love but sorrow, not mirth but displeasure, not taste but torment, not delight but despite, not joy but annoy, not recreation but confusion, when in the lover there is not both youth and liberty. Yea, & the withered straw is soon set on fire and easily quenched, the old and dry wood easily inflamed and quickly put out; age soon doteth and soon detesteth, now swimming in love and presently sinking in hate, like to ye stone draconites, that no sooner cometh out of the flame but it is vehemently cold.

What a foolish motion, nay, what a frantic madness is it for him whom nature denieth any longer to live to entangle himself in the snares of love, whose natural heat is turned to frost, with the match of fancy to kindle a new fire when sickness summons him and age warns him that death draweth nigh, than to become a client unto Cupid, to plead for bounty at the cruel bar of beauty, knowing that ye herb adiaton cannot abide to touch the withered grass, that the trees in the Mount Vernese detest to be clasped of the old ivy, and that youth greatly abhorreth to be coupled with age.

Further, whosoever being young, fair and beautiful matcheth her with a doting old lover, be she as chaste as Lucretia, as trusty as Penelope, as honest as Turia, as faithful as Artemesia, as constant as Cornelia, yet her honour, honesty and good name shall not only be suspended but greatly suspected, yea, insomuch that the old man himself, to keep his doting wits warm, will cover his head with a jealous cap, being very credulous to believe each flying tale, and suspicious evermore to judge the worst. If his young wife be merry, she is immodest; if sober, sullen, and thinks of some lover whom she likes best; if pleasant, inconstant. If she laugh, it is lewdly, if she look, it is lightly; yea, he casteth beyond the moon & judgeth that which neither she would nor could imagine, restraining her from all liberty, & watching as the crafty cat over the silly mouse.

Should I then, Gradasso, seeing the trap, follow the train; spying the hook, swallow the bait; and seeing the mischief, run wholly into misery? No, no, I mean not to be so foolish as the birds of Colchos, which although they see the nets, yet willingly strike at the stale,

or like the tortoise, which desireth the heat of the sun that notwithstanding breedeth his destruction, nor so sottish as with free consent to cross myself with perpetual calamity. Sith, then, Signor Gradasso, I count you, being so old, not a fit match for my tender youth, I pray you at this time be content to take my nay for an answer.

And as for you, Jacques, which have said so well in your master's behalf, I commend you for a faithful servant, though your reasons were to small effect. I confess, Jacques, that nothing sooner delighteth the eye, contenteth the sense, or allureth the mind of a young maid than beauty, but as the stone topason is not more loved for the outward hue than hated for the poison which secretly is hid within it, or as the herb nepenthes is not more liked for the pleasant shape than loathed for the poisoned sap, so beauty cannot inflame the fancy so much in a month as ridiculous folly can quench in a moment. Nay, as of all things wit soonest setteth the fancy on edge & sharpeneth affection, so folly cooleth desire, and forceth love in the loudest gale to strike sail and be quiet.

What joy can that gentlewoman have whose husband hath neither modesty to moderate his affection nor manner to behave himself well in company, who can neither be constant because he is a fool nor secret sith he is without sense, but as the dolphin hath nothing to cover his deformity but a few glistening scales, or as the clownish poet Choerillus had nothing to be praised in his verses but the name of Alexander, so he hath nothing to shadow his folly but a fair face, nor nothing to be commended but a little fading beauty.

Whereas you alleged that Venus was entangled with the beauty of Anchises, and Luna with the feature of Endymion, & Dido with the brave shape of Aeneas, I answer that Anchises was neither a fool, Endymion a sot, nor Aeneas witless, for if they had, they might as soon have persuaded old Silenus to despise the rites of god Bacchus as have procured any of these three to yield to their allurements sith they knew that beauty in a fool is as a ring of gold in a swine's snout. We read that a consul in Rome married a daughter of his to a fair fool because he was endued with great possessions, who was not long married to his wife Julia, for so was the consul's daughter called, but for want of wit and lack of wisdom he so burned in jealousy and surged in the seas of suspicious folly that as the poor gentlewoman was stooping to pull on her shoe, he, espying her fair and crystal neck, entered into such a suspicious fury that presently he thrust her through with his sword, verifying the saying of Castymachus that a fool deprived of reason is no other but a madman bereaved of his sense.

Whereas you say that sovereignty and rule is the chiefest thing a woman doth desire, and that by marrying a fool I shall have the ready means to attain it, put case I grant the antecedent, yet I deny the consequent, for if I were as greedy to bear sway as Semiramis, that craved of her husband Ninus to rule the kingdom three days, or as Cleopatra, that coveted only to be master of Marcus Antonius, yet a fool is so obstinate in his senseless opinion, and so perverse to be persuaded, that he will not only deny me the superiority, but he will himself rule the roost though it be to his utter ruin. So that, Jacques, I conclude that your master, being somewhat foolish, and I myself none of the wisest, it were no good match, for two fools in one bed are too many.

But now, Master Petronius, no longer to feed you with hope, I give you this A dio, that although I confess wisdom to be the most precious gem wherewith the mind may be adorned, and learning one of the most famous qualities wherefore a man may be praised, yet if you were as wise as Solomon, as learned as Aristotle, as skilful as Plato, as sensible as Socrates, as eloquent as Ulysses, Si nihil attuleris ibis Homere foras, for wit doth not more fry than want can freeze, nor wisdom heateth not so sore as poverty cooleth, & rather had I in wealth content myself with folly than, wedding myself to a poor wise man, pine in poverty.

But sith I hope, Petronius, thou wilt prove like the stone sandastra, which outwardly is rough, but inwardly full of glistering beams, and that thou wilt try thyself so good a husband as thy vow, learning, and wisdom promiseth, I will not only supply thy wants with my wealth and thy poverty with my plenty, but I will repay thy fancy with affection and thy love with loyalty, hoping that although my friends will count me a fool for making my choice, yet I myself shall never have cause to repent my chance, & in pledge of this my plighted troth, have here my heart and hand forever at thy command.

How Gradasso and Monsieur de Vaste liked of this verdict I need not relate, nor what their answers were I know not, and if I knew to recount them it availeth not, but I am sure Petronius thought he had made a fortunate journey.

Well, Signor Valasco, hearing the determination of his daughter, was as well contented with the chance as she satisfied with the choice, and ever after made as great account of his son-in-law Petronius, and liked as well of the match as though she had married the richest duke in Europe.

Madam Modesta, I have recounted this history that your doubtful question might be thoroughly debated & fully decided. You see that Sylvia, who was wise, fair and virtuous, would not be allured with the golden show of riches because she loathed the person, nor be enchanted with the charm of beauty sith she detested his folly, but chose poor Petronius who might both comfort and counsel her with his wisdom and be her credit and countenance of his learning. If then your lover be both fair and wise, though without wealth, why should you mislike your choice sith you are able to apply to his sore the like salve with Sylvia, and of a poor scholar make him a wealthy gentleman? Choose not, Modesta, so that thy friends shall like thy choice and thou mislike the chance, lest time and trial make thee account rue a most bitter herb.

Thus wishing thy love prosperous success, howsoever the matter happen, I bid thee heartily farewell.

Thine to her power contented, Mamillia.

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