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GREENE'S ORPHARION

Wherein is discovered a musical concord of pleasant histories, many sweet moods graced with such harmonious discords, as, agreeing in a delightful close, they sound both pleasure and profit to the ear.

Herein also as in a diateheron [sic?], the branches of virtue, ascending and descending by degrees, are co-united in the glorious praise of womenkind.

With divers tragical and comical histories presented by Orpheus and Arion, being as full of profit as of pleasure.

*Omne tulit punctum, qui miscuit vile dulci.*

Robertus Greene, *in Artibus Magister.*

At London.

Printed for Edward White, dwelling at the little north door of St. Paul's Church, at the sign of the Gun.

1599.

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To the right worshipful Master Robert Carey, Esquire, Robert Greene wisheth increase of all honourable virtues.

Ennius (right worshipful) had a Maecenas though his verses were rude, & Hippocrates durst present his pictures though they were rough. The blindest Bayard hath a reason to shadow his presumption, for, saith he, will is above skill. Soothing myself (right worshipful) with their humours, having attempted to frame out an *Orpharion*, too harsh to make a concord in any cunning ear, yet with old Ennius dotting in my youth as he did in his age, I do presume to present my rural instrument under the shadow of your patronage, and the rather for that as the poor cobbler durst prefer his chattering pie to Augustus for that the emperor was affable and courteous, so hearing your Worship to be endued with such honourable virtues and plausible qualities as draws men to admire and love such united perfection, I embolden myself to trust upon your Worship's courteous acceptance, which if it be such as others have found, and I hoped for, & that any way this *Orpharion* may agree with the daintiness of your touch and fingering, the end of my labours and the sum of my desire consort in one sympathy, and in that hope I commit your Worship to the Almighty.

Your Worship's humbly to command,  
Ro. Greene.

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To the gentlemen readers, health.

Gentlemen, I have long promised my *Orpharion*, and because I would not frustrate your expectation, at last it is leapt into the stationer's shop, but not from my study, for then might you think I had swelled with the mountains and brought forth a mouse, but the printer had it long since; marry, whether his press were out of tune, paper dear, or some other secret delay drive it off, it hath lien this twelve months in the suds. Now at last it is crept forth in the spring, a slender bud, and easily to be nipped with the least frost of disdain.

Therefore do I entreat, whatsoever melody my *Orpharion* yield, you would favour the blossom with the sunshine of your courteous acceptance, else shall you discourage a gardener for grafting any more, and therefore hoping to find you as ever I have done, farewell.

Rob. Greene.

## GREENE'S ORPHARION.

Cupid having taught me what restless passions are in love, what continual perturbations fancy affords to such as account beauty the principal end of their affects, having received the wound, I sought where to find a salve fit for the easing of my malady; experience, willing that I should not tie my thoughts on delay, told me that such as were envenomed with the scorpion must be healed by the scorpion, that the tarantal's sting could not be pulled out without music, that he which was pierced with Achilles' lance must be healed by his spear, and they which were charmed with love must seek to love, or else lack remedy, whereupon doubtful what I should do, I was willed to sue to Venus as sovereign goddess and patroness of such perplexed patients. I left my home and sailed to Cyprus; there found I men unknown, but not her whom I looked for; there might I see Venus' palace like the gorgeous tower built by Semiramis. Sloth being porter, sleepy, and suffering free passage to all, the gate of entrance was not the way to return, for at the other side was a door to depart where beggary stood, and threatened all, but struck some with his whip of repentance; within I found princes, great lords, and men of mean calling, all prisoners, some fettered by the eyes, others by the ears, some by the tongue, as having more lust in their mouth than love in their minds, none or few chained by the hearts, and such as were, set enthroned in a secret cell; those Venus shrined up as wonders of the world; well, missing what I came for, I passed speedily from thence to Paphos, where Venus had only a temple; thither came multitudes on pilgrimage, making vows, uttering oaths, and protesting promises, if they might enjoy the fruition of their ladies, to be sworn votaries to the goddess; some were favoured, others disgraced, some despaired, some hoped, but all found the end of their pilgrimage was to buy smoke with many perils and dangers, but all these instances were no arguments to dissuade me from my journey, but as Medea, though I saw the best and allowed of it, yet I followed the nearest, & smarted for it, for such as be in love are like the deer which one while strike at the tamarisk tree with their horns, and then greedily burst on it with their mouths, others the people of Mamaca, that surfeit on dates and yet die with them in their maws. Lovers exclaim against Cupid, and yet they go on pilgrimage to Paphos; they call Venus unjust, and yet offer her incense and sacrifice; they foresee misery, and yet run headlong on their own misfortune. So fared it with me, for seeing these men thus deeply passionate and yet so slenderly rewarded, as who carried away the greatest trophy had his ensign stamped with repentance, yet their mishaps could not make me learn to beware, but from Paphos I went to the fountain of Alcydalion, where I heard Venus, to avoid the heat of summer, was kept close prisoner by Mars in a pavilion, but I found the rumour false, yet did I not repent me of my arrival, for there I saw sitting about the bank infinite troops of fair and beautiful ladies, all votaries unto Venus, smiling at the fondness of men and laughing at the passions of their lovers, making true-love knots of rushes, that broke ere they could be twisted; some seemed like saints, those were subtle and perverse; others fawned, and those were flatterers; some wept, and they let fall tears of deceit; some seemed to have many eyes, and those had many fancies; some two hearts, and yet they were very chaste, for some had twenty, measuring their loves by their looks; gazing still upon their countenance and gesture I perceived hard by, separate from the rest, a few ladies sitting passing solitary; their names were engraven in the trees, but so long since as hardly I could read them, yet I found out Hero, Penelope, Thisbe, Artemisia; alas, a small number,

and disdained by the rest; these had their eyes shut against beauty, and their ears open to virtue, their hearts subject to love, but only stamped with one character, resembling the emerald, that never loseth the first impression, nor admitteth any other; well, here I could neither find Venus nor hear of her, but scoffingly those girls told me she was either in Ida or Erycinus; desirous to lose no time I hasted from Alcydalion to Ida, where I could see no steps of a goddess, but only the ancient monument of Troy consumed to cinders; there I noted the end of love, the reward of lust, the trophies of Venus, the folly of women, in Helena, that brought Priamus his sons and so famous a city to confusion. From thence I posted to Erycinus; the mountain was green and pleasant to the eye, the stones that appeared higher than the grass seemed like jacinths, the moss was flowers, the very rubbish below pearls, so that nature seemed to have conquered art, and art nature, and a supernatural glory both; in musing at the gorgeous situation of this divine mount, looking if either there were place or temple dedicate to Venus, I saw none, but casting mine eye into the bordering vale, I saw a shepherd grazing of his flocks. Desirous to learn of the man any news of the goddess, pacing down from the hill I went and saluted him in this manner.

Shepherd, so I name thee for thy flocks, more mayest thou be, for Apollo kept Midas' sheep, and Mercury taken the shape of a herdsman, but measuring thy degree as present thou seemest, I crave so much favour at thy hands as to tell me whether Venus is resident about this mount of Erycinus or no; I have been at all her places of abode, and this is the last of all her earthly mansions; this shepherd, hearing me salute him so courteously, laying down his pipe and his hook, answered thus bluntly.

Friend, what I am it little reckes thee; thou seest my folds, and then why standest thou upon higher titles; in calling me shepherd or swain thou givest me my due; if my degree be greater, my sheep may serve for thy excuse; to thy question, as it savours of folly, so I think best to answer it with silence, yet for I see thy thoughts to be full of passions and thy face the map of sorrows, the two notes of a lover, if I knew my counsel might profit thee or my experience warn thee, I would bestow a little waste time while my sheep graze so hard to hold thee chat.

Hearing the shepherd, beginning so roughly, to conclude so gently, willing to be auditor to his country precepts, I answered him thus.

Shepherd, if thou be no better (for thy talk makes me suspect higher), know that I have told many cares, numbered many passions, felt many sorrows, uttered many sighs, shed many tears since Venus entertained me with roses at the first & afterward beat me with nettles; I have found love to be a labyrinth, a fury, a hell wherein men alive feel worse pains than those ghosts that pay Charon hire for his ferry-boat; grieved thus, yet as one in a lunacy, I never foresaw my miseries. I heard many counsels and read many precepts, but all in vain, yet for that time hath many chances, the fates their canons tied to opportunity, fortune her decrees variable, and love many accidents, I will humbly crave what thou hast offered, promising to be attentive and not ungrateful as far as a stranger's ability may gratify. The shepherd, without further promising or longer delay, began thus.

Thou seest that I sit here feeding my flocks by Erycinus, whither daily resort multitudes of amorous pilgrims suing to Venus for relief of their passions, but how she used these fond and perplexed patients, as it pities me to rehearse, so it will grieve thee to hear. Those youths whose years, more than their minds, are fried with a small flame of ordinary fancy, rather inserted by nature than inferred by love, such she entertaineth most sumptuously as fittest objects for her to work upon, putting oil in the flame, fire to flax, and beauty as the baleful object to youth, for she, knowing the old verse to be too true for her to disprove, *Quod latit ignotum est: ignoti nulla Cupido*, that what is secret from us we never desire, to inveigle them with her charms, she present [sic] beauty excellent by nature, yet far more gorgeous by art; fair faces, smiling looks, alluring gestures, sweet speeches, these are the baits that she lays to entrap, & youth is so fond that he cannot but taste, resembling the poor mouse that feedeth soonest on the most infectious rosalger, respecting the colour not the confection; after once she hath gotten youth limed fast on her twigs, then Cupid useth them as marks, and at every shoot galleth to the quick, that the wounds cannot be cured till either we find remedy by repentance, which oft cometh too late, or have a quittance by death, which they think cometh too soon. Others, that have been stale stayers in her court, spending their time in sighs, tears, and many despairing passions, such she feedeth on with delays, giving them one day an incarnative to heal, and the next day a contrary medicine to fester, choking their senses with perfumes, and straight stifling them with hemlock, suffering their ladies in the morning to wash their temples with rose-water, and at night to quaff to them gall and vinegar, shadowing smiles with frowns, sour looks with wanton actions, fettering them with the wings of hope but hanging despair at their heels, lest soaring too high they should seize & catch their prey; suppose she sets them on the top of her wheel, where, poor man, I know thou desirest to be placed, and for their long travail she gives them with Ixion a cloud, a fair dame I mean, as she bestowed upon Paris, yet shalt thou find that she fetcheth all her virgins from the fountain of Alcydalion (believe me, pilgrim, I will not warrant their maidenheads because thou seest they have many eyes and many hearts, which have many faces and many loves, and trust me, pilgrim, many causes must needs bring out some effects), but leaving these doubts as may not once have entrance into lovers' thoughts, and affirming that all are virgins that come from Venus, for Diana hath so few in her train that she marries not one in seven years, when the lover hath what he long sought for, he finds not the fairest crystal but hath his stain, the brightest topaz but hath his spot, the richest gold but hath his ore, and the purest creature, feminine I mean, but hath her common imperfection, either proud without profit, and that's a purgation for the purse; or fair without wit, and that is to marry a wooden picture with a golden crest; full of favour but flattering, and so he may reap many kisses and little love; shrewish, deceitful, wilful, fond, newfangle, and what not; nay, perhaps, prove so light in the brains that she makes him swell in the brows, that as he hath been in his youth a votary to Venus, so in his age he may prove a companion to Vulcan, and pilgrim, quoth the shepherd, this is to sit on the top of Venus' wheel; these bitter sauces be her chiefest delicates, and these painted sepulchres her richest trophies. Thou seest I sit near Erycinus, and therefore speak by experience; thou sayest to Venus thou art in love, thou wouldst fain have a wife from Alcydalion; look before thou leap, pry into Venus' coffers and see what chaffer she provides for her chapmen; I have counselled; now rests it in thee either to follow it with a momentary sorrowing content, or to forsake it with a perpetual pleasing mistake.

Hearing the cunning experienced swain to discourse so roundly of the matter, I imagined either he had been in love, or an enemy to Venus, so that I demanded of him if he would not have men love at all?

Yes, quoth he, so they court Diana's virgins, not Venus' wantons; I replied she had very few or none; he answered, had she more suitors, she would provide more maids, but Venus, spying them pass towards her palace, layeth such snares to entangle, such traps to entice, such charms to bewitch, such dangers to prejudice, that none or very few arrive at Diana's mansion, and such as do, come thither half maimed.

Then, quoth I, you conclude peremptorily against Venus and her crew, and very hardly against women. Hearing me say so, he took me by the hand & softly whispering in mine ear: Pilgrim, I may say to thee, wives, be they never so watched, they will; maids, be they never so bashful, they wish, and widows, be they never so coy, they would; take me not generally, pilgrim, quoth he, and with that sitting down he took his pipe in his hand and played so sweetly that like Argus at Mercury's melody, I fell on sleep.

No sooner had Morpheus shut mine eyes but I fell into a dream; methought I was led from Erycinus by Mercury amongst the galupin(?) or silver-paved way of heaven to the high-built house of Jove; there would I have gazed at the gorgeous buildings but my guide was in haste, and conducted me into the great hall where Jupiter and the rest of the gods were at a banquet; no sooner was I entered amongst them but Mercury sprinkled me with water, which made me capable [sic] of their divine presence, so that I sat still, looking on their persons and listening to their parle; at last methought blunt Vulcan, that sat at the lower end of the board, although Venus, above, sat opposite to Mars, began thus roughly to break silence: I cannot, mighty gods, but smile to think that when my wife and her blind son, the one with her box of beauties, the other with his quiver of arrows, pass abroad to show their deities, what number of poor perplexed men as patients come to have cure of their hurts; some in their eyes, that have gazed with the philosopher against too bright a sun, and such are blind; some that with Ulysses have not stopped their ears, but have listened the siren, and they complain of their hearing; some in their hearts, and those bewrays their passions by their groans; none comes without grief, nor return throughly cured, so that I suppose either the wounds are very perilous, or my wife a bad surgeon. Tush (quoth Jupiter), but what number of women come hither? Multitudes (quoth Vulcan). Apollo smoothly, and yet with a smile, demanded if they were as bad to cure as men; no (quoth Vulcan), for be the wound never so deep, 'tis perfectly cured in twelve hours; either my wife is more friendly to women, or their sores more easy to salve. No (quoth Mercury), it is because their loves are like a man's breath against bright steel, which scarce lighteth on before it leapeth off, or like wood wet in alum-water, which lieth in the fire and waxeth hot, but never burneth; their hearts resemble a pumice-stone, light, & which way soever you turn it, full of starting-holes, that if fancy steal in at the one he can step out at the other; or else (quoth Jupiter), their hearts have no holes at all, but as firm as flint, that neither fancy nor love can enter, for Venus teacheth them extremities, either to fawn & be too fond, or to be too coy and too stubborn, which causeth so many to put up invectives against her. Least of all (quoth the goddess in a great chafe) hath

Jupiter cause to accuse women of cruelty; if not, I appeal to Juno; at this all the company smiled, and Jove was silent; well (quoth Apollo), leaving these quips, seeing we have met to be merry, if it please you to allow of my motion, to make us some music I will raise up the ghosts of Orpheus and Arion, two famous in their times for their instruments, and greatly experienced in love, as being great travellers, and with that conversing the greatest potentates in the world, who often are as full of loves as they are of dignities; these shall please us with harmony, and discourse either what they think, or what they have heard, of women's loves; to this all the gods gladly agreed, and Mercury was sent in post to Pluto for these two musicians; scarce had I thought Mercury had been out of the hall before I saw enter with this winged god the ghosts of Orpheus and Arion, so lively to the eye and so well trussed in their apparel as they seemed perfectly such as they were when they lived upon earth; Orpheus, after that he had done due reverence to the gods, especially to Apollo, tuning his instrument without any more command, as if his service should be salvery [sic], he daintily touched the cords with a sweet stroke, and to a melodious tune sung this ditty.

Orpheus' Song.

*He that did sing the motions of the stars,  
Pale-coloured Phaebus [sic] borrowing of her light,  
Aspects of planets oft opposed in jars,  
Of Hesper, henchman to the day and night,  
Sings now of love, as taugh [sic] by proof to sing:  
Women are false, and love a bitter thing.*

*I loved Eurydice, the brightest lass,  
More fond to like so fair a nymph as she,  
In Thessaly, so bright none ever was,  
But fair and constant hardly may agree;  
False-hearted wife to him that loved thee well,  
To leave thy love, and choose the prince of hell.*

*Theseus did help, and I in haste did hie  
To Pluto for the lass I loved so,  
The god made grant, and who so glad as I?  
I tuned my harp, and she and I gan go;  
Glad that my love was left to me alone,  
I looked back; Eurydice was gone.*

*She slipped aside, back to her latest love;  
Unkind, she wronged her first and truest fere,  
Thus women's loves delights, as trial proves  
By false Eurydice I loved so dear,  
To change and fleet, and every way to shrink,  
To take in love, and lose it with a wink.*

Scarce had Orpheus ended his song but Jupiter, thinking not to let so fair a ball fall to the ground, took opportunity thus by the hand.

This present ditty of Orpheus tendeth to our forepassed discourse as though the fates had fore-pointed our talk, and this arrival, consequence of their infallible decrees; sith then the unkindness of Eurydice discovers the inconstancy of women, & that Orpheus hath by his sundry passions made an anatomy of love, let us hear his opinion how he censures of beauty. Apollo, at Jupiter's motion, commanded Orpheus, who not amazed (as a ghost come from hell) began thus. The question, right mighty gods, is easy, for that commonly all gaze at beauty as the fairest object that flattereth the eye, yet a thing perilous, howsoever it seems precious, seeing the fairest lawns soonest take the deepest stains, the brightest beryls the greatest flaws, and oftentimes the fairest faces with intolerable faults; Greece vaunted not so much of her beautiful paragon as Troy lamented of their incestuous strumpet; men came to Rome to see Messaline's beauty, but Rome sorrowed that she was counted a harlot; Thessaly sung of Eurydice's proportion, but Thessaly shamed, and Orpheus grieved, at her bad condition, and yet, forsooth, though we find beauty thus prejudicial, yet we must leap at it, though to our utter ruin we light in the ditch; but as the fish remora listening to the sound of the trumpet is caught of the fishers, as the porcupine standeth staring at the glimmering of the stars and is overtaken with dogs, as the leopard looking at the panther's painted skin is caught as a prey, so he which taketh too much delight to gaze upon beauty is oft-times galled with grief and misery; yea, his pleasure shall infer such profit, and his goodwill such gains, as if he reaped the beautiful apples of Tantalus, which are no sooner touched but they turn to ashes. Beauty no sooner flourisheth but it fadeth, and it is not fully ripe but it beginneth to rot; it no sooner blossometh but it withereth and scarcely being touched, it staineth like the guaiacum leaf, that hath the one halp [sic] parched before the other half be perfect, to the bird acanthis, which hatched white, yet turneth black at the first storm, or like to the stone astites, that changeth colour with the only breath of man; this (right mighty gods) is my censure of beauty, that unless joined with virtue, it is like the feathers of the phoenix placed in the carcass of a crow, but where faith and feature are relatives, that beauty I call divine and metaphysica [sic], for beauty *gratior est pulchro veniens e corpore virtus*. This discourse of Orpheus all the gods applauded except Venus; Juno brooked it, as having lost the ball, and Venus thought it was best to pocket up whatsoever a ghost out of hell did tattle, and so I would have all fair gentlewomen to take it; well, so well did the gods like and allow of this talk that Jupiter questioned him what he thought generally of women; Orpheus, neither fearing Juno nor Venus, as one that could but go to hell, boldly made answer that their general sex stood upon two extremes, either too courteous or too cruel, and that he had made experience of both; and which, quoth Jupiter, are the worst? I note (quoth Orpheus) if your question tends towards men [sic?], because my particular instance may be no general example, but this well I wot: cruelty hath the greatest punishment appointed for it in hell, which, may it please you and the rest of the gods to be attentive, I will prove with a known history. The gods settling themselves in their seats showed by their silence how they liked of his motion, whereupon Orpheus began thus.

Orpheus' Tale.

Since the mad frows of Bacchus (in that I was sworn an enemy to women through the unkindness of Eurydice) stoned me to death while I sat playing music to the rocks, which seemed to move at my melody, my soul sent to Pluto, I found favour at his hands for that he wronged me of my wife, that I had free liberty to pass unto every several mansion, whereupon one day with my harp I walked through several places and heard several complaints, but at the last I came to a thick fog, the smoke and stench so deadly and pestilent as all the ghosts in hell, respecting this dungeon, seemed to live in Elysium; out of this mist I heard the voice of a woman uttering pitiful shrieks; having remorse of her passions, I touched my harp and played, thinking while my music lasted to make her forget her torments, as I had done the other ghosts in hell, but she told me all was in vain sith as her fault exceeded all, so her torture was more than they all, for here, quoth she, I hang by the hair of the head in so thick a smoke and stinking a fog as no tongue can express, nor imagination conceive it. Desirous to hear the cause of this strange extreme, I asked her name, and the offence; she wished me half angerly to cease my fiddling, and she would discourse at large; I put up my pipes at such a dry blow, and she murmured out of the fog thus.

I am Lydia, that renowned princess whose never-matched beauty seemed like the gorgeous pomp of Phoebus, too bright for the day, rung so strongly out of the trump of fame as it filled every ear with wonder, daughter to Astolpho, the king of Lydia, who thought himself not so fortunate for his diadem, sith other kings could boast of crowns, nor for his great possessions, although endued with large territories, as happy that he had a daughter whose excellency in favour stained Venus, whose austere chastity set Diana to silence with a blush; know, whatsoever thou art that standest attentive to my tale, that the ruddiest rose in all Damasco, the whitest lilies in the creeks of Danuby, might not, if they had united their native colours, but have bashed at the vermilion stain flourished upon the pure crystal of my face; the margarites of the western Indies, counted more bright and rich than that which Cleopatra quaffed to Anthony, the coral highest in his pride upon the Afric shore, might well be graced to resemble my teeth and lips, but never honoured to overreach my pureness. Remaining thus the mirror of the world, and nature's strangest miracle, there arrived in our court a Thracian knight, of personage tall, proportioned in most exquisite form, his face but too fair for his qualities, for he was a brave and resolute soldier. This cavalier, coming amongst divers others to see the royalty [sic] of the state of Lydia, no sooner had a glance of my beauty but he set down his staff, resolving either to perish in so sweet a labyrinth, or in time happily to stumble out with Theseus. He had not stayed long in my father's court but he showed such knightly deeds of chivalry amongst the nobility, lightened with the extraordinary sparks of a courageous mind, that not only he was liked and loved of all the chief peers of the realms [sic], but the report of his valour coming to my father's ears, he was highly honoured of him, & placed in short time as general of his warlike forces by land; resting in this estimation with the king, preferment was no means to quiet his mind, for love had wounded so deep as honour by no means might remedy, that as the elephants [sic?] can hardly be haled from the sight of the wast(?), or the roebuck from gazing at red cloth, so there was no object that could so much allure the wavering eyes of this Thracian called Acestes as the surpassing beauty of the Princess Lydia; yea, so deeply he doted that as the chameleon gorgeth herself with

gazing into the air, so he fed his fancy with staring on the heavenly face of his goddess, so long dallying in the flame that he scorched his wings, & in time consumed his whole body. Being thus passionate, having none so familiar as he durst make [sic?], he fell thus to debate with himself.

Is it, Alcestes [sic], love that troubles thee? Why, thou art a soldier, sworn to arms, not to armour [sic], to encounter foes in the field, not to court ladies in the chamber; Hercules had almost performed his twelve labours ere he durst find leisure to love, and thou art scarce acquainted with Mars but thou seekest to be private friend to Venus; away, fond fool, to the spear and shield; manage thy horse, though here in a peaceable country; let not bees hive in thy helmet, rust emblaze the figure of sloth on thy armour, or love call thee her milksop, by [sic?] whom war itself hath approved martial; hast thou forgot that which thou suckest out of thy nurse's teat, that to love is to lose, and fancy, be it never so chary, is mere folly; for love, howsoever it be, is but a chaos of cares, and fancy, though never so fortunate, hath her crosses; for if thou enjoy the beauty of Venus, thou shalt find it small vantage; if thou get one as nice as Minerva, thou mayest put thy winnings in thine eye; if as gorgeous as Juno, thy account being cast, thy sums will be rated with loss; yea, be she chaste, be she virtuous, be she courteous, constant, rich, renowned, honest, honourable, yet if thou be wedded to a woman, think thou shalt find in her sufficient vanity to countervail her virtue; assure thyself never to live less without disquiet, nor die before thou have cause to repent, which Craterus the emperor noted when, wishing that some sinister misfortune might befall his foe, he prayed unto the gods he might be married in his youth and die without issue in his age, accounting marriage by this wish far more full of prejudice than of pleasure. This, yea, all this, Acestes, thou knowest to be true, but suppose it were not; is there not sufficient to dissuade beside? Seest thou not, or hath fancy cast such a mask before thine eyes that thou wilt not see, that her beauty, as it is excellent, so it is high sealed(?), both in the dignity of her parentage & the self-conceit of her mind, to be gazed at, and so honoured, not to be reached at, and so enjoyed; thou seest she is little liberal of her looks, much less prodigal of her love; she covets rather a god than a man; then amongst men think she will aim at the highest, or sit still as she is; pride in her greatest pomp sits enthroned in her eyes, and disdain in her looks, that if she glance to so low as Acestes, it is rather to grace him with a smile than to show him any favour; beside, fortune hath opposed herself to thy aspiring thoughts in that thy goodwill hath not yet deserved any such guerdon; thy desire is far above thy desert, and the poor stay of a wandering knight far unfit for the princely state of worthy Lydia, but suppose she were pricked in the same vein, and that Venus would friendly instil some drops of her enchanted water to mollify her heart, yet the duke [sic] her father will neither condescend to her mind nor consent to my motion; nay, if he should but hear of such reckless folly, as he hath wrought my promotion so he would work my confusion, and in troth, Acestes, not without cause, for art thou so void of virtue or vowed to vice as to requite his liberality with such disloyalty, to return the trust which he reposes in thee with such treachery; tush, love is above lord or law, friend or faith; where love buddeth no master is made account of, no king cared for, no friend feared of, no duty respected, but all things done according to the quality that is predominant. Hast thou been a soldier, and dreamest thou of such doubts; are the courtings of Venus more perilous than the encounters of Mars, or the denial of a lady worse than the daunt of a foe? No, Acestes,

be not faint-hearted; as the North Islands where the people Iberi dwell foster no venomous beast, nor the sea called *Mare mortuum* feedeth no fish, so are there no cowards suffered to arrive at Paphos; she is but a woman, and therefore to be won; then sound on the march; ask not of what degree she is, but where she is; these words, Acestes, carry emphasis, and are more fit for a soldier than for a lover, for love is queasy, and if it be overstrained, cracketh at the first wrest; enduring in this doubt he sat down deeply overcharged with melancholy passions, that as he which eateth of the gourd nut loseth his memory, and as the elephant feeding on the heliotrope becometh sleepy, so Acestes fell into a drowsy kind of contemplature, that to avoid such cogitations as cumbered his mind he got himself into a gallery which was built between the turrets of the house, and there set himself down as half in a trance; love, that took pity of this patient, so favoured him that he had not sat long in his dumps but that Lydia came thither all alone to be solitary, who seeing Acestes sitting thus sadly slumbering, determined for her own recreation to be a little pleasant with him, and therefore awakened him thus.

Why, how now, Acestes, is it your custom in Thracia to use slumbers after meat for physic, or is it some melancholy impression that thus amateth your senses? Trust me, at the first I called to remembrance the picture that Zerxes [sic] drew of Endymion lying upon the mount of Erycinus, who leaning his head on his hand, his eyes shut as one in a dream, yet had his face so bedewed with distilling tears as his outward complaints did sufficiently bewray his inward passions, and so, Acestes, in this thy solitary dump didst thou resemble Endymion both in countenance and colour, that had tears fallen from thine eyes as thou wert in a trance, I had happily demanded how Phoebe had used thee; so appalled was Acestes at this sudden presence of Lydia that he sat still as a man deprived of his senses, till at the last, gathering of his wits together, he start up, and his due reverence done, he made this answer.

I think, madam, that melancholy is not particular either to person or place, but that being exa complion [sic], it followeth oft-times the quality of the affection, so that the mind any way distressed, the body must yield in effect to the most precious part; I confess therefore that being disquiet at my heart, I felt mine eyes heavy, as they which were the chiefest procurers of my malady, but when I awoke and saw your excellency, both your presence and courtesy greatly daunted my mind, your presence in dazzling mine eyes so suddenly with so solemn an object, your courtesy in that your Ladyship without curiosity would vouchsafe to talk with so mean a gentleman, but I see the best fruit hath the bravest blossoms, the most precious stone is chosen by the most glistering hue, and the best conditions by the sweetest countenance, so that where beauty reigneth, there virtue remaineth, and under a fair face resteth a faithful heart, but whereas you say you had taken me for Endymion by my penetrature [sic] and countenance, but that I wanted tears to decipher my sorrow, I answer that the hottest thunders are not ever quenched with rain, nor the deepest griefs ever discovered by tears; the stone caratides [sic?] fryeth without, and is cold within; the germander least [sic], when it is most full of moisture, looketh then most dry; where the sea is most deep, there it is most calm; & where is the smallest show of tears, there oft are the greatest effect [sic] of sorrow. For trust me, madam, I think Endymion, sighing for the absence of his lady Luna, never felt more bitter passions on the mount Erycinus than I suffered in this half-waking slumber; why (quoth Lydia),

are you in love? Acestes at this question fetched a deep sigh, as it seemed his heart-strings should have cracked in sunder; he stood as one in an ecstasy, doubting whether now he should take time by the forehead, or to defer it till afterward; well, seeing opportunity so fit, he boldly took heart at grace [sic], and began to give this encounter.

They (madam) that seek to stop the swift-running Volgo, a river that leadeth into Persia, by staying the stream maketh the flood flow more fiercely; to repress the fire is to increase the flame, and to conceal love is to smother smoke in the nostril, which either will out, or else stiflith; wounds fed of(?) with delays fester, and oft prove incurable; fancy long held in the grass seldom proves a timely harvest, which makes me to set my hazard on the dice, and either presently to hear the courteous sentence of my life, or the cruel doom of my death. Since, most excellent princess, I arrived at the court of Lydia, so hath mine eyes fed on the beauty of your face, mine ears rapt in admiration of your divine wit, my mind enchanted with the consideration of your virtues, and my heart, as the receptacle of all these excellencies, so devoted to the substance that contrives such supernatural qualities, that the exceeding pleasure which so long held me in delight at length sunk so deep that they grew to grievous passions; to say all (which I could at large discourse) in one word, so long did I gaze at your beauty that I was snared, and so long did I admire your virtue that now I rest your captive, so far, madam, entered the labyrinth that either I must perish with the Minotaur, or else humbly crave your aid that the clue of your mercy may hale me forth of such an intricate danger.

Lydia, who swelled in choler at these speeches, could not brook to hear up [sic?] the end of his discourse, but faring like angry Jove who in his rage covereth the beautiful sky with a world of storms, so she, incensed with disdain, filled her sweet countenance with a shadow of bitter frowns, & knitting her brows, she began thus to reply.

Why, gentle master knight, hath too much familiarity bred contempt; are you such a good physiognomer that you have insight into my wrinkle in the brow and dimple in the cheeks? I see well if Apelles, that cunning painter, suffer the greasy souter to take a view of his curious work, he will grow so malapert as to meddle with his picture, that he must be thrust into his shop with *Ne sutor ultra crepidum* [sic?]; if the proud centaur Ixion be bidden to the feast of the gods, no less than Juno herself will suffice him for his choice.

Set a beggar on horseback and they say he will never light; extol one of base stock to any degree of dignity, and who so proud and haughty; I speak this, Acestes, to thy reproof; for that my father hath made thee general of his forces, seekest thou to master him in fortune; will no diet down but my father's own dish, no meaner mate suffice unless thou marry with a prince? Did my father prefer thee, and now wilt thou presume to be his better; have my looks been so loving, my glances so full of goodwill, as to promise so much as thou dost presume; no, but the least countenance of familiarity to a servile mind procureth great encouragement; hast thou ever noted any of my actions so base that thou mightest think I would match with a man of thy calling? Have I wantoned it so ever in thy sight as thou mightest think me fit for Venus? But suppose my mind were so fond as I would (soaring so high as ever I have done) stoop now so low; thinkest thou my father could afford thee his daughter Lydia, whom he far prizeth above his crown; hopest thou

to compass his consent? No, but if he knew of thy daring presumption, he would repay thy folly with such punishments as thy aspiring thoughts do merit; he would unplume thee of all thy feathers, and like Aesop's crow turn thee naked to the world, that they which grudged at thy haughty promotion might laugh at thy sudden fall; if therefore thou love thine own welfare, keep thyself within thy bounds, lest in soaring with the hobby, to [sic?] fall to the ground with the lark, and in daring with Phaeton, thou fall headlong into such infirmity as thou shalt never be able to creep out of, and with that she flung away in a great rage and left Acestes passing passionate, so that he sat him down again more melancholy than he was before, musing and meditating upon the cruel resolution of Lydia; thinking thus on his hard fortune, upon a sudden he fell into these terms.

But by the sweet, how should we know the sour; the white seemeth most silver-hued when it is adjoined to black, and prosperity is most sweetest when it hath been forecrossed with adversity. This principle perhaps Lydia means to make me try by experience, thinking to feed me first with bitter broths, that after, dainty fare may more delight me, for the chiding [sic?] cold of winter make the summer's sun more pleasant, and the frowning looks of Lydia will cause her smiles to seem more cheerful.

Thus like a valiant champion Acestes never feared that mislike hung in women's brows, and into their hearts he could not pry, but hoped the best, and sought for opportunity to iterate his suit in this distress. But fortune, meaning pleasantly to sport with this young novice, would not minister such fit occasion that he might have sole and solitary access to his goddess, for Lydia, upon pretended purpose, so warily avoided his company, and with such disdainful looks rewarded his proffered duty, that Acestes was fain to aim his course by a new compass, and therefore getting into his chamber, stepping to his standish, he wrote her a letter to this effect.

*Acestes to the beautiful Princess Lydia, wisheth what she desires.*

*Such as take surfeit by feeding too greedily on the honeycombs of Hybla seek cure by tasting overmuch of the sweet sugar-canes of Candi. The phalanga stingeth deadly, and his venom can be drawn out only by rubbing over the place with gold. They which fall sick of love must have potions ministered by fancy, & charms from Venus to tie about their temples, or else come Apollo with all his drugs, the patient will return him this answer: Nullis amor est medicabilis herbis. I speak this, sweet princess, as a patient troubled with the same passions, for so deeply have I imprinted the rich characters of your exquisite perfections in the closet of my thoughts that neither mine own endeavour, feeling I have aspired too high, nor your rigour, checking me I am born too low, serveth any way to race out those ideas which so firmly I have conceived; I seek to suppress love with reason, and I find that I quench fire with flax; I use absence, that is oil in the flame; I frequent company, their talk is tedious unto me; I seek to be solitary, oh then, as in visions, your sweet self is present as that celestial object whereon mine eye coveteth to gaze, and my mind to meditate. Sith then, madam, your beauty hath made me surfeit, let your courteous bounty cure my disease; reject him not so rigorously that regardeth you with such reverence; poor knights have their loves not in their own wills, but as love and fortune pleaseth to allot; some gaze high and stumble not, as Vulcan when he courted*

*Venus; some look low and gain not, as Eumenides, that married a farmer's daughter that proved unchaste; sure I am, howsoever I shall speed, it will be more honour for me to perish in her [sic?] desires than live in base fortunes. Then, madam, seeing my love is like to the stone lincostis [sic?], which the louder the wind bloweth and the deeper they are drenched in the water, the more they burn and blaze; so the more you seek to cool my fancy with disdain, the more my affection is kindled with desire; the greater despair you drive me into by denials, the greater hope, encouraged by constancy, I have to obtain my request, in which fervent affection I mean to remain without change, craving in lieu of this my loyalty that I may be admitted by degrees into your favour, even as my deserts in love shall merit, which shall be as the bliss of heaven to him that pineth away, and as [sic?] yours only and ever,*

*Still in hope,  
Acestes.*

This letter conveyed with great speed and no less secrecy to Lydia, being then solitary in her chamber, who receiving them [sic?], unripping the seals, saw no sooner the name of Acestes but she perceived he was importunate in his old suit, which drove her into such a fury as at the first she flung away his letter in great disdain, upbraiding him of immoderate presumption that durst attempt the love of such a paragon, so that throughly inflamed with choler she stepped hastily to the letter and read it, which after she had perused, falling into a satirical scoffing kind of vein, she rudely returned him this answer.

*To her new-found lover Acestes, the great knight of Thracia, health.*

*Sweet sir, I received your passionate letters, and pity them as the inhabitants of Labia [sic?] Labyrinth do the passengers that perish on their shelves, whom they gaze on, but never relieve; your witty invention tells me that you are stung with the phalanga, and so are in love; take it the more patiently, for no doubt the serpent was Venus' messenger, else had she not fancy instead of infection; but alas, your malady cannot be cured but by my means; know then, brave cavalier of Thracia, that my cunning is too small to enterprise the composition of any secret simples, and my calling too great to become a physician to such a paltering patient, so that I neither can nor will cure any other man's disease by being prejudicial to mine own safety; but gentle sir, think me not cruel, for it is the influence of the stars & the effects of nature that maketh these contrarities, as having opposed us in the calculation of our nativity, for as the panther cannot abide the company of the ounce, as the vulture is mortal enemy to the eagle, and the blood of a lion and a wolf can never be mixed in one bowl, so as impossible it is by requests, be they never so ruthless, to become thy friend which by the destinies and instinct of nature am thy mortal foe. Cease then to accuse me of cruelty, and leave off to appeal to my courtesy, for thou shalt always be sure to find the one, and never to feel the other; yet lest thou should condemn Lydia of ingratitude, who ever was bountiful to her greatest foes, though I cannot inwardly mitigate thy misery, yet I will outwardly teach thee to apply such plasters as if the experience of them approve true, shall greatly appease thy pain; it is reported that he which drinketh of the river Averna cooleth and mortifieth his affections, but if the water be touched by any means before it be drunk, the virtue thereof is of no*

*value. He that weareth the feathers of the bird esalon about him shall ever be fortunate in his love, but if they be not pulled when the sun is eclipsed they are of no force, and to be brief, there is nothing that sooner driveth away amorous conceits than to rub the temples of thy head with the sweat of an ass, which if you can perform, as no doubt you may put in practice, fear not but you shall count my physic authentical. Thus, gentle knight of Thracia, you have heard my mind, and so I warn you to wade no further, lest I have cause to laugh and you to repent.*

*Lydia of Lydia, resolved to mislike of Acestes of Thracia.*

This letter she sent by one of her gentlewomen to Acestes, who no sooner read the contents but the disdain of his goddess struck such a cold dump to his heart that he sat as the picture of Pygmalion when the poor carver leaned with great passion on his marble mistress; his thoughts were on despair, his musings on despair, the objects to his eyes sounded(?) the ugly shadow of despair, that as one lunatic, he said Venus was the strumpet of Mars, the bawd of Jupiter, the patroness of lechers, and that in all her kingdom there was neither love nor virtue, but lust and vanity; I grant (quoth he) she hath beauty to bestow, but so it is tempered with pride as he that buys it doth *penetentiam emere*; she hath many such trulls as Helena to sell, but they were either so froward or so frolic as fear may persuade them from the one, or turn them from the other; she is goddess of women's hearts, but she tricks them up with such false colours, and engraves so many principles of her philosophy in the very centre of it, that they are as expert in coining of deceits, forging of tears, feigning of sighs, casting of looks, lending of fawning smiles, and such prejudicial policies to bewitch men as ever the Chaldees were in their divinations, but this is [sic?] sufficeth not to revenge me on her words; would she were mortal, then would she were Mars, that I might with my arming-sword pierce their [sic?] disdain and ingratitude in single combat.

As thus he was half in a frenzy, one came to him from the king with letters, the contents whereof were that he should make him ready with all possible speed to pass into Pamphilia to make invasion with fire and sword; this news come to Acestes' view, as a man revived from the dead he burst from his former complaints, and began thus to frolic with himself: now, despite of Venus, hath fortune sworn to join me in friendship with opportunity, now time proffers the full cup, and the devil take me if I carouse it not; now Lydia shall be mine if ever she shall be to any; women are won with honours; the fame of prowess challengeth more than eloquence; a soldier's sword prevaieth more with a princess than a coward's pen; when news shall come to Lydia that Acestes hath made a conquest of Pamphilia, when he sends the king's crown as a token to the fair and matchless Lydia, then no doubt but she will be as courteous as now she is cruel; her looks will lighten love where now they drop hate, her words will be welcome where now they threaten revenge; conquerors carry commands in their foreheads, and love kneels to them where others bow to love; then, Acestes, ply thee, marshal thy soldiers in haste to Pamphilia and there fight both for honour and love, which either resolve to get, or to miss of both with death; having thus comforted himself, he provided all things necessary for his voyage into Pamphilia, both of soldiers, money, victuals and munition, which being

ready, taking his leave only of the king (for Lydia would not to [sic?] be seen), then marched forward towards Pamphilia.

No sooner was he arrived within the territories but with fire and sword he made such furious invasion that the poor inhabitants thought Mars had been sent to fill the country with stratagems; the king hearing of this martial Acestes, understanding what a warlike knight he was, how hardy to attempt, how politic in placing the squadrons of his men not only for advantage of troops but of ground, further being fourscore thousand strong in footmen at arms and horse, he found his own strength unable to withstand him, that he sent to the kings of Cilicia and Caria for aid, who, united with him in a league, brought down with as great speed as might be their forces, and generally setting them in troops, divided them into three several battalions whereof the kings in person were conducts, and so marching to meet Acestes they encountered him in the great plain Resena; there both camps lay entrenched by the space of three days; at last Acestes sent out a few horse to dare them from their fortifications, which the kings seeing, ashamed that one man of so base account should surpass such princes in magnanimity and valour, issued out, and ordering their battles bravely, gave the charge; Acestes, seeing more than he looked for, doubled courage and received them with such resolution that the Cilicians and kings of Caria [sic] wished they had kept safe in their kingdoms, yet making no sign of doubt they encouraged their men and renewed the charge, but in vain, for Acestes with a cornet of demi-lance and men-at-arms had broken into their main battle, that the troops disordered, they began to fly; they of Pamphilia brought in fresh men, but Acestes matched them with his spare squadrons, that utterly discomfited them; then [the] Lydians began pursuit, and made great slaughter, and many were slain; the kings of Caria and Cilicia escaped, he of Pamphilia was slain, as fighting more venturously for that 'twas for his own. Acestes, having the victory, sounded the retrait, gave his soldiers the spoil to encourage them and one day rest to ease them; the next he marched up into the country, possessed himself of the kingdom to his king's use, took the noblemen sworn to allegiance, and in every town of any strength he placed garrisons; this done, he dispatched letters to his sovereign of his conquest, and sent the crown of the king of Pamphilia to Lydia for a present; the messenger dispatched, he resolved on revenge, and beside his commission went into Caria and Cilicia, where he set up the like trophies, for he made conquest of both the kingdoms, and brought the two kings, much treasure, and many prisoners to Lydia. But while he was in the wars, and journeying homeward, the letters came to the king and the crown to his daughter; he received the one, she scornfully rejected the other, but her father was glad of such news, looking daily for the honouring of Acestes, who was the longer for his victories.

Well, the day came; Acestes was entered Lydia, and the king, as for his credit he could do no less, did summon the peers of his realm to meet at his court, which then he held in Ragusa, the principal city of his dominions, whither they all repaired, and prepared jousts, tourneys, and barriers in triumph of Acestes' victories. It was not long but this lusty warrior came to the city with his spoil, and entered the gates, where he was received of the citizens with great signs of joy; passing through the streets as the ancient Roman dictators did in their triumphs, crowned with a laurel garland, seated in a triumphing chariot, he rode richly through the streets with great shouts and shows to their [sic?]

palace, where dismounting, he marched like Mars or Hercules, attended on with two kings, in such portly and magnificent order that the king and the nobles, seeing him enter the hall where the king on a rich throne was seated and his daughter on his right hand, were amazed, as noting in his face some extraordinary sparks of chivalry; Acestes pacing up to the steps that descended from the king's seat, placing on either hand a king, began to deliver his tale.

Right mighty sovereign, executing the charge of the general of thy force against Pamphilia, as thy command and my allegiance bade me, I entered with fire and sword, and by the help of fortune made conquest of the country; the king is slain, his crown I sent to thy daughter, the kingdom is garrisoned to thy use; his confederates, these two kings of Caria & Cilicia, for that they united their supplies to his forces, I invaded, conquered, and brought hither captive; their crowns, their kingdoms, the treasure, the bondslaves, for that they were without thy commission, I not present to thee, but to the princess Lydia, with all the honour I won in the field, ever vowing to devote all my thoughts, my actions, and my sword and life as pressed to execute her command and service; with that, rising up, he led the kings to the princess and delivered them her as her captives; she could not for shame in such a presence but feign a good countenance and accept them gratefully, whom she forthwith presented to her father, who entertained them as belonged to such kingly prisoners; all the nobles casting their eyes on Acestes, as honouring the man for his virtues, the king starting up gave him great thanks and bade him demand somewhat before that honourable assembly with the gift whereof he might gratify him, swearing whatsoever he craved, as he was true king he would perform it; Acestes hearing this happy motion, casting his eye on the Lady Lydia, boldly began his request thus.

Although, right mighty sovereign, crowns and kingdoms be sweet, and your Grace hath willed me to ask anything without acception, yet for that I pawned my life & honour for the achieving of these conquests with my blood, which a soldier holdeth far dearer than diadems, I little make account of such pelf, but rather make choice of that which I prefer before honour, life, and land, or all the world if it should be presented to me, and that is the fair and virtuous Princess Lydia. Scarce had Acestes uttered this word *Lydia* but the king, starting from his seat, turned to his daughter and asked what love was passed betwixt her & Acestes? Such (quoth she) with a frowning countenance as passed betwixt Juno and the centaur Ixion; I not deny but before his journey to Pamphilia he courted and made great suit by words and letters, but how I disdained the motion of so base a companion let the answer of his letters manifest, and now before this royal & honourable assembly I protest if Acestes were featured like Narcissus, as courageous as Hercules, having as many heroical virtues as ever had any, and could present me every day two kings for captives till he made me empress of the world, yet would I disdain him as one unworthy the Princess Lydia. At this answer all the assembly abashed, as counting the princess discourteous and ingrate; the king, as a man inflamed with fury, began to prosecute his daughter's speech in this manner: Presumptuous Thracian, unfit with [sic?] these late conquests rather obtained by the ill fortune of these kings than thy prowess, for thou hast done me service I grant thee life, but for thine aspiring thoughts to demand the Princess Lydia, I discharge thee of the generalship, and absolutely of my service,

commanding thee upon pain of death within ten days to depart out of all my dominions, and never to approach my confines or land. This said, the king in great choler rose up ready to to [sic] depart; the nobles were amazed and grieved, yea, and grudged secretly at Acestes' wrong, but for fear of the king were silent; Acestes, howsoever inwardly vexed, yet showed no discontent in his countenance, but with a soldier's courage, pulling off his garland, said: I am not dismayed at this doom for that I never grieved at the overthwarts of fortune; what I have got in thy court I leave, as disdainng aught that is thine; the honour I have won is mine own, and that thou canst not deprive me of, and so committing my fortunes to my deserts, I leave thee and thy court, and so soon as may be, thy country, where if ever I arrive, I dare thee to do thy worst, and with that Acestes went away, and the king with the two kings and the lords passed in to dinner.

No sooner was Acestes alone but the ingratitude of the king, the disdain of his daughter, the disgrace offered by both, so pierced him to the heart that as such as drink of Lethe become oblivious, so he, forgetting the beauty of Lydia, fell to such deep thoughts of hate and revenge that he enjoined himself for a great space to be solitary, that Nemesis and he might consult together how to bring both the father and the daughter to confusion; at last he resolved to go to Armenia to Sertorius, there [sic?] great potentate of that country, whom he knew to be mortal enemy to the king of Lydia, and in this resolution he took his journey. No sooner was he arrived in the Armenian court but word was brought to Sertorius that Acestes, the martial Thracian that conquered Pamphilia, Caria, and Cilicia was come disguised and as a stranger into his court; the king hearing this took one or two of his chief lords and went to salute Acestes, and to give him honourable entertainment such as belonged to so mighty a conqueror; Acestes perceiving himself to be known, after due reverence done to the king, began at large to discourse to him what service he had done to the king of Lydia, and how he was rewarded, craving succour and supply of his Majesty that he might revenge with his sword. The king, amazed at such monstrous ingratitude, wondering how such base resolutions could harbour in the heart of a prince, he promised Acestes not only to aid him with an army of approved soldiers, but in person to hazard himself, both to requite old injuries and to reprove in justice such an abuse offered without desert. This answer of Sertorius so contented Acestes that after great thanks he rested in the court, passing frolic, till the forces were furnishing, which no sooner were ready but without delay Sertorius and Acestes marched merrily forward towards the confines of Lydia; as soon as Acestes had set his foot within the ground of the ingrateful king, drawing his sword he swore not to sheathe it till he had made it drunk with the blood of Lydians, commanding his soldiers (for Sertorius had given him the ordering of the battles) that they should use all extremities of [sic?] martial, burn, sack, spoil cities, towns, and castles, to cast all to the ground, to take no captives of whatsoever degree or sex, but to put all to the sword, men as they were subjects in Lydia, women as the worms that he most hated, children as the issue of them both; the pillage of all should be theirs, only the king of Armenia should have the kingdom, and he would content himself with revenge; this oration ended, he furiously marched forward, and where he came, left the country desolate; the king of Lydia hearing this was driven into a great agony, but dissembling his grief for fear of discouraging his soldiers he levied a mighty army and hasted forward to buckle with Acestes, whom he met half at advantage, as having most of his men at pillage, whereupon the Lydians, taking opportunity, set upon

the Armenians, but Acestes so ranged those that he had in such warlike sort that he not only abode the brave of his enemy, but entered his battle, disordered his ranks, and put them to the flight; many were slain in that present place; such as escaped and fled were met by the pillages [sic?] and harriers of the Armenians and all put to the sword, so that of forty thousand Lydians there scarce remained thirty with the king, who passing up into the country, ensconced himself within a strong castle with his daughter Lydia, a few faint-hearted soldiers, and all the treasure he could get; Acestes followed his fortunes, and leaving Sertorius behind with the main battle, took with him ten thousand horse and six thousand foot, and made after the king of Lydia as fast as his men were able to march; coming at last to the castle where he was ensconced, first he entrenched a siege round about, and leaguered it on every side; then he dammed up all such springs, wells, and conduits as served the castle with fresh water; this done, he resolved not to lose a man at the assault, but to make them yield by famine. The Princess Lydia, looking over the walls, seeing how her mortal enemy had girt the castle with soldiers, Armenians, men there [sic?] thirsted after blood and hated both her and her father, she fell from thoughts to passions, from passions to tears, insomuch that she sat her down and wept bitterly; her father coming up the battlements, seeing his daughter in such perplexed estate, finding want of victuals and that of force he must be famished, grief stopping his speech he sat him down and bare her company in her passions, and after consulted how to prevent ensuing misery; many conjectures cast, at last they resolved to submit themselves to his mercy, whereupon Lydia, decking herself in most gorgeous attire, accompanied only with two of her ladies, passed out of the castle gate & went toward the leaguer; the sentinel no sooner had them in hold but they were honourably conveyed to the pavilion of Acestes, who being certified that the Princess Lydia was attended to speak with him, leapt from his seat and went to entertain her; Lydia no sooner saw him but she fell down at his feet; Acestes courteously took her up, and setting her in his seat demanded her what she craved; Lydia, all blubbered with tears, falling down on her knees, began thus. Mighty Acestes, if repentance were any satisfaction for offences, or sorrow any salve to cover ingratitude, if tears might wipe away disdain, if a virgin's blood would pay ransom for them which have done amiss, I would present all these to pacify the fury of thy conquering sword, but I know such deep hate of my father's ingratitude, such desire to revenge my reckless disdain, and the disgrace proffered by both, hath set afire the heart of Acestes as nothing may serve to quench such an overheated flame; oh yet might I find so much favour that my death might redeem the old man my father, if not for the loss of kingdom, yet of life, and from falling into the hands of his ancient enemy Sertorius, I should account Acestes as merciful as he is valiant; if my treaties may not prevail, as it little behoveth Acestes any way to favour Lydia, yet grant me this, that I may die upon thine own sword, that my blood vanishing on thy blade, though mayest be satisfied, and I, slaughtered by the hand of Acestes, so brave a soldier, might die contented.

No sooner had she uttered these words but she poured forth such streams of tears as made the Armenians to take pity of the distressed princess; Acestes, taking her up again, called for his sword, and unsheathing, falling down at her feet began thus to make reply.

Such deep impression of grief, sweet goddess, hath pierced the heart of Acestes in that he hath lifted his sword against that lord [sic?] that harboureth Lydia, such sorrow, such

repentance, such remorse in that I have done anything that might offend the Princess Lydia, whose divine presence hath raced out all intent to revenge, and so captivated again her Acestes that here frankly he offereth his conquering sword (that hath achieved so many battles) into the hand of his mistress to chastise either [sic?] with death, if she please, that daring knight that hath so deeply offended, and with that he sat as a man in a trance; Lydia, seeing she had brought the bear to the stake, thought now so cunningly to muzzle as she would keep him hereafter for [sic] biting; following therefore her enchantment, she fell about his neck, and wet his cheeks with her tears in such sort that at last from weeping they fell to kissing, yea, so did Acestes comfort Lydia that from melancholy she grew to be somewhat pleasant; the knight possessed thus of his lady (as he thought), after he had banqueted her with such delicacies as soldiers can afford, taking only her hand for pawn of his safety, he went with her to the castle, where they were no sooner entered but the king of Lydia, with his crown in his hand, met Acestes, and submitting himself, offered both his diadem and daughter as due to so victorious a champion. Acestes refused his dignities, but accepting of his daughter, embraced her and entered into private and familiar parle, insomuch that, choler past upon both sides, they began to treat of the marriage, which was concluded when the king of Armenia returned out of his kingdom, whereupon without delay (so fervent was the love of Acestes) he took leave of Lydia and her father, and going down to the leaguer, raised the siege, to the great admiration of all his soldiers, and from thence marched to the camp where Sertorius lay, to whom Acestes revealed what had passed, and craved that he would depart out of Lydia with sufficient coin answerable for his cost; Sertorius with a frowning look told him that in battle he never played in jest, and what he had won with the blood of his soldiers and danger of his own person he would not deliver up but by battle; Acestes, whose mind was too haughty to entreat, said nothing, but secretly stole from the camp, and traversing through Lydia, got up of horse and footmen the number of six and thirty thousand, with whom, trusting to his fortunes, he marched closely and secretly to the camp of Sertorius, where he arrived about midnight, using new policy, that before had conquered with prowess, so that killing the watch and sentinel he passed the court of guard and set upon the soldiers, making a great slaughter of such men as were sleepy and amazed; yet Sertorius escaped, but Acestes pressed forward and followed him into Armenia, where his fortunes so served him that he conquered Armenia and brought the king himself captive to Lydia. Coming this in triumph to my father's court, seating him in greater pomp and possessions than ever he had, he began to use his late familiarity toward me, but I, as a woman changed in calling and condition, shook him off with more disdain than before; he challenged my father's promise, who presently commanded he should be apprehended and put in close prison; we having thus caught the lion in the snare, my father questioned me how I would have him used. I would not resolve on any less penalty than death; my reason, lest in letting him abroad, he should fall to his fortunes; the manner of his martyrdom I devised to be famine, as he intended to us by his leaguer; my father yielding him absolutely into my hands, I prosecuted the matter, causing every day for his greater torment a course or two of dainty viands to be carried before the window that looked into his chamber, and myself, to aggravate his sorrows, would pass often by his lodging in most pleasant humour. Acestes, seeing himself thus overtaken in his own folly by trusting too much the tears of a woman, would not exclaim against the sex, but seeing no way but death, no kind but famine, he resolved to show an

honourable mind in great patience, & so remained there four days, when, pinched with extreme hunger almost even to death, as Lydia passed by he fell into these passions.

Meat, meat, oh for want of meat I perish; ah hunger, hunger, the extremest of all extremities; were I amongst men, men would pity me; amongst beasts, beasts should feed me or feed upon me. Amidst the pikes would I venturously escape or valiantly perish; on the land I could shift; in the sea I could swim; no place so barren, no people so barbarous that would not relieve me or soon rid me; everywhere more help, nowhere less hope; ah hunger, hunger, the extremest of all extremities. Thrice cruel Lydia, no worse I will term thee for that once I loved thee, not suffering me to live, nor simply to die; my head is giddy, mine eyes dazzle, fallen are my cheeks, and [on] my tongue die my words; my sinews shrink, my blood consumeth, all my limbs faint, and my heart fails me; every minute I die, and I wish I did but die; too long am I out of the way to be well out of the way; ah hunger, hunger, the extremest of all extremities.

Ah Livia [sic], have I deserved thus to be done unto; I gave thee crowns, and thou wilt not give me a crumb; I bestowed kingdoms on thy father, and he presents me with famine; thus love wrought the train, and fortune, nay, mine own folly performed the treason, yet this hope I have, that he that hath found [sic?] me is he that hath fashioned me, who though he scourge me, will yet save me, howbeit, my God, I cannot but cry, ah hunger, hunger, the extremest of all extremities.

What is it I would rather be, than thus be; than thus, ah than thus in pined walls to attend so bitter a death? I faint, alas I faint; my heart's anguish commandeth my tongue's silence; then, Acestes, silently be patient, patiently be penitent, penitently perish, and that last martyrdom will be thy least misery because longer thou shalt not cry, ah hunger, hunger, the extremest of all extremities.

This complaint highly contented Lydia, so that she departed and told it to her father, rejoicing that her devised form of death sorted to so bitter events; well, another day passed; so hungry grew Acestes that he greedily fed on the flesh on his arms, spilling that blood with his own teeth which before he had so prized in many battles, which when he had done, ready to give up the ghost, seeing the bare bones of his arms he fell into this last complaint: Miserable wretch, even in the highest degree, miserably with my teeth have I tired on mine own flesh, till now, bloodless and famished, my latest gasp hardly gives passage to a few, and my farewell, words; Lydia, ah Lydia, whereof is thy hard heart formed that the sting of such diress [sic] cannot pierce it; hast thou the ears of a woman to hear my cries, and not the heart of a woman to pity my case? Ah Lydia, he that loved thee, for that he loved thee must die; he that sounded thy praises in sundry provinces, him hast thou pinned and pined up, till those arms are bare from flesh that in so many battles bruted thy fame; I will not curse thou art Lydia, nor exclaim at my last date thou wert my love, nor pray for revenge sith at my death my patience shall give my soul the better passage. But fondly, how short a time have I to speak, and how foolishly I speak, to name my earthly goddess when I should pray to my heavenly God; the one hath consumed me, the other must save me; now comes the touch; my heart yields to him that

framed it; now the last bitter-sweet pang of death ends what the malice of man hath inflicted, and so falling down he died.

As soon as I perceived he was dead, not yet content with revenge, I caused his body to be hanged in chains, that the world might see the trophy of my cruelty.

The manner of his death being known, the nobles, and specially the commons, began to murmur that so brave a warrior who had made four kingdoms tributories to Lydia should so ingratfully perish through the malicious disdain of a woman, yea, so far it pierced into the heart of Selidon, great duke of our realm, that suddenly causing a mutiny he summoned most of the nobles & told them such a tyrant was too heavy for them to bear; to be short, the nobles agreed, the commons of their free will came in flocks to revenge, so that he had quickly levied an army of an hundred thousand men, and entered into the castle took me and my father prisoners, whom he commanded to be famished in the same place where Acestes ended his life; there without remorse we died; they took down the body of Acestes, and buried him with princely funerals, and over his tomb, for that he attempted the revenge, they crowned Solydor [sic] king of Lydia.

As soon as she had ended her tale she fell to her wonted cries and shrieks, not answering to any question, so that I left the place and returned back with my harp.

Orpheus having thus discoursed, Jupiter asked Venus how she liked of the tale; marry, quoth she, as of one that Orpheus tells, coming out of hell, nothing prejudicial to my deity sith she was enemy to my love and of so austere chastity; it rather toucheth Juno or Diana, the one stately in her looks, the other too chary in her thoughts; for my part so I dislike of her disdainful cruelty as, if I might have censured, if possible it might have been she should have had a more bitter death upon earth, and a more pinching pain in hell; truth, quoth Mercury, for perhaps the pain is not so great to remain in the fog as the remembrance how fair once she was, and now to have all smeared with the smoke; I think when Venus was a maid she was more chary of her face than her maidenhead, and more wary of her beauty than her honesty. These quips, quoth Mars, are digressions, but leave Venus, and talk of Lydia, whose life was so strict, whose heart so opposed to love, whose thoughts so full of pride and disdain as her instance serveth rather to be produced for a wonder than for example to condemn women, sith the world I think contains not one so bad; Apollo, smiling, said: Well taken, Mars, for you [sic] own advantage; women must be pleased, and Venus will frown if she be not flattered; Vulcan sits fast asleep, or else I would not have spoke so broad before, but to drink down all the [sic?] frumps, Ganymede (quoth he), fill in nectar; so the gods from disputing fell to carousing, and then Arion, tuning his instrument, began to warble out this ditty.

The Song of Arion.

*Seated upon the crooked dolphin's back,  
Scudding amidst the purple-coloured waves,  
Gazing aloof for land, Neptune in black,  
Attended with the Tritons as his slaves,*

*Threw forth such storms as made the air thick  
For grief his lady Thetis was so sick.*

*Such plaints he throbbed as made the dolphin stay;  
Women (quoth he) are harbours of man's health,  
Pleasures for night and comforts for the day,  
What are fair women but rich nature's wealth?  
Thetis is such, and more if more may be;  
Thetis is sick, then what may comfort me?*

*Women are sweets that salve men's sourest ills,  
Women are saints, their virtues are so rare,  
Obedient souls that seek to please men's wills,  
Such love with faith, such jewels women are,  
Thetis is such, and more if more may be;  
Thetis is sick, then what may comfort me?*

*With that he dived into the coral waves  
To see his love, with all his wat'ry slaves;  
The dolphin swam, yet this I learned then:  
Fair women are rich jewels unto men.*

Arion having ended his ditty, Apollo said: This falls out fit, for Orpheus having made the division of a woman's nature to be either too cruel or too courteous, Arion standeth in his song as well to defend as he to oppose, accounting women the wealth of nature and far more profitable than Orpheus says they are prejudicial; therefore if it please the rest of the gods, we'll hear what Arion censures of that sex; they gladly agreed, and Apollo commanded him to show his opinion, whereupon Arion began thus.

No sooner, right mighty gods, had nature in her curious mould formed the counterfeit of beauty, but looking upon her workmanship, she fell in love with that metaphysical excellency as Pygmalion did with the perfection of his own art, which may assure us that it is most exquisite wherein curious nature takes such extreme delight; this glorious idea drawn out from the secret temper of the graces, nature bestowed more prodigally upon women than men, as creatures more worthy and excellent; the richest gold hath the rarest colour, the purest stones are most clear, the sweetest flowers most pleasing to the eye, and women, as the purest quintessence circulated from all other living things, are therefore the most beautiful and fair; yea, in their own sex, beauty is the touchstone of virtue, and the fairer a woman is, the fuller of good conditions, for such as nature hath either slipped over with negligence, or made in her melancholy, so that they are ill-favoured and deformed either in face or body, such I hold as a principle to be counted stigmatical, as noted by nature to be of a bad constitution; then must we confess that beauty is excellent, as the pride of nature; divine, as fetched from the gods; glorious, as the delight of the eye; pleasing, as the content of the heart; and to be esteemed above all things as the very cover and superficies under which virtue lies hid; if then men, seeing such heavenly objects, such sweet saints, have their eyes fixed, their minds fettered, their

thoughts enchanted with their loves, are they to be blamed, or not rather to be thought of heroical conceit that place their liking on the foundation of beauty, and to be counted men of great judgement that in their desires seek to co-unite themselves to such an excellency, for may not he which enjoyeth a beautiful lady boast that he possesseth at command; by spending a few years in wooing, some part of his living in expenses, his days' quiet in sighs, his nights' sleep in tears, by these toys and a few other passions he possesseth himself of that creature which the graces and nature had studied many ages to make excellent; yet there be some such satirical copesmates that spare not to rail against them, calling them the imperfection of nature, saying beauty is vanity and the sign of little honesty, noting women as waspish, froward, deceitful, toyish, light, sullen, proud, inconstant, discourteous, cruel, and what not; such as can afford them no better speeches I would have either made eunuchs or Esseni or plain asses, never to be favoured of women, but to be accounted as stoical companions unfit to attend on such beautiful and virtuous creatures, for in my opinion, sweet and simple souls, they be pleasant, open-hearted, far from deceit, God wot, as bearing all their own secrets; both grave and yet having many mad and merry tricks to pleasure men; humble & lowly, submitting themselves to what their friends will lay upon them; constant, as never to be turned from their opinions; kind enough, and, to be short, as full of excellent qualities as the precious stone silex is full of secret virtue, and this, right mighty gods, is my opinion of women; the gods smiled at this censure of Arion, and wished him, if he could, to prove it with an instance as Orpheus did the contrary; Arion laying by his instrument, and the gods being silent, he told his tale to this effect.

#### Arion's Tale.

After that, right mighty gods, the pirates had heaved me overboard, & that being received upon a dolphin's back I was safely transported to Loyath [sic?], the king, glad of my arrival, as honouring me for that I was counted the most perfect musician in Thrace, and musing at the strangeness of my fortunes, to make his peers and princes of his land partakers not only of my melody but of the wonder, he proclaimed a general feast, not of voluntary but upon command, that all dukes, earls, barons, knights, and other gentlemen should with their wives and children, for the more magnificence, be present, which strict edict was so straightly obeyed of all that at the day appointed none failed to be present; there appeared in the king's palace such troops of lords and ladies as might with their glorious bravery overcharge the eye with pleasure. To these the king presented me, clad in my rich robe with mine instrument, even as I sat on the dolphin's back, with the whole discourse of my fortunes, whereat they were all driven into a wondering admiration; after long gazing on me, as at a man reserved to some higher or more hateful destiny, they sat down in the great hall to dinner, being placed by the king himself and his son, who then played the marshal of the hall; the young prince, whose name was Philomenes, giving greatest attendance where he saw the fairest ladies, as having his eye drawn rather with beauty than chivalry, at last he espied a lamp that lightened all the rest, or rather disgraced them as Phoebe doth the little fixed stars, for so far she surpassed the other ladies in excellency as she did in dignity, and by birth she was daughter to Pelopidas the duke and great commander in Corinth; this lady, whose name was Argentina, was so fair, as touching the faultless mixture of vermilion flourished upon ivory, & so full of favour

for the perfect proportion of the lineaments whereupon this native colour was over-dashed, that nature had made beauty absolute, and beauty made Argentina the most excellent; Philomenes, seeing so heavenly a nymph, stood staring on her face as at a wonder, gazing so long that Venus, seeing Ceres and Bacchus honoured all the rest, thought to arrest the young prince for her attendant, so that levelling Cupid's arrow aright, and wishing the boy to draw home, she pierced Philomenes so deep that he shrunk & start at the sudden prick which this envenomed arrow had tainted him with; feeding thus his eye, his fancy, & his thoughts with contemplation, he lost his stomach to gorge with the chameleon on the air; sure was that mess where Argentina sat to have what attendance the prince could grace them with, but their service was so broken and so ill-sewed that either they must conjecture the prince to be no cunning servitor, or else that his heart was on his halfpenny; well, dinner being done and the tables taken up, Arion fell to his music, and the chief ladies to the measures; Philomenes, ringleader of the rout, singled out the Lady Argentina, who blushing to see the young prince make choice of her above the rest, gave such a glory to her face that Philomenes, all on fire at the sight, had almost forgot the time of the measure, but calling his wits together he led foremost till the music ceased, & then wringing her by the hand he whispered to her thus: I see, madam, that all these lords and ladies present frolic themselves as fitting the time and feeding my father's delightful humour, my silly self only excepted, who this day giving mine eyes leave to banquet on your beauty, commanded my stomach to fast and pray, that my heart, which had surfeited on the excellency of love, might find a courteous physician; now, sweet saint, it resteth in your favour whether I shall triumph as the most happiest, or sorrow as the most miserable. The music called on to another measure, so that Philomenes was interrupted, & forced to tread his task, but as soon as the music gave breathing-time, Argentina, beginning her exordium with a blush, made Philomenes this answer.

It seemeth, sir, that 'tis a merry time, your Honour is so well disposed to be pleasant, singling out [like] a cunning musician the simplest plain-song, that your descant might seem the more refined. It behoveth such as myself to brook the frumps of a prince & to take them for favours, for kings' words may not offend, if in wrath, much less in jest; might your handmaid dare to reply, in my opinion, howsoever your eyes have banqueted, your sight is never the worse, nor they the more satisfied; for your heart's surfeit, I will be beads-woman with your stomach, not in fasting, but pray that your physician may prove such as would fit your desires, but my Lord, to your last clause, it is unlikely your mirth dependeth of my favour, whose favour cannot profit, nor disfavour prejudice, but taking it in jest as your Honour proffered it, I pray you, for my part, my Lord, to be as merry as you please. The instruments sounded, and forward must Philomenes, who wished Arion's strings might crack, that his melody ended, he might proceed in his prattle. As soon as the music stopped again, the prince began thus. Believe me, lady, if you take my talk for a jest you have a deeper insight in my thoughts than myself, for by your divine beauty (the oath that for the whole world I would not infringe), so deeply in earnest did I break into my first passion that my heart feeleth far more than my tongue uttered, so strongly and strangely hath love on a sudden *vi et armis*, as they say, made entrance there where fancy before could have no passage, so that rightly hast thou said, Argentina, that though mine eyes & heart surfeited, yet they are not satisfied, as vowing

themselves ever devoted to so excellent a choice, which if they may possess, as it lies in your power, nature by no means may minister them greater content; as Philomenes was ready to wade further in his discourse, the dance, I know not upon what occasion, brake off, and the old man, calling his son, told the noblemen they should hear one of Arion's scholars, whereupon he commanded his son to take the instrument in his hand, who very nigh as skilful as his master, obeyed his father's charge, and glad that time had given him opportunity to show his cunning before this [sic?] goddess, he began to play, and sung a sonnet to this effect.

*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,  
I oped the door, and granted his desire,  
I rose myself, and made the wag a fire.*

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

*He pierced the quick, and I began to start,  
A pleasing wound, but that it was too high.  
His shaft procured a sharp yet sugared smart,  
Away he flew, for why, his wings were dry,  
But left the arrow sticking in my breast,  
That sore I grieved I welcomed such a guest.*

Philomenes having ended his song, they all generally commended the skill of the young prince, but especially Argentina, who hearing him sing both sweetly and passionately, was charmed as if she had heard the sirens, that while all the other walked abroad, she feigned herself not well, and withdrew solitary into her chamber, where alone she began to ruminare in her memory all the perfections of Philomenes, as well the sweeness [sic] of his face, the proportion of his body, as the virtue & qualities of the mind, his courage, his comeliness, his dignities, but there she stopped & gave a sigh, as being a prince too high for her to gaze at; meditating thus, she so swallowed up the potions that Venus had tempered with her sorcery, as drunk with his beauty, she began to fall with herself into this parle.

Unhappy Argentina, whose youth virtue hath bridled with chaste thoughts, whose years beauty enchanteth with fond looks, resembling the nettle, which may be handled in the bud but stingeth in the flower, do thy virtues increase like the pace of a crab, backward? Hast thou in thy cradle been continent, and wilt thou in thy saddle be impudent; art thou come to this feast to buy folly; knowest thou not that Venus stands by the wine-press of

Bacchus, and breathes her venom upon his liquor; sattetst thou down pleasant, & must thou rise passionate; aye, and in love, Argentina? And why not in love; was I not framed for love; are not women's hearts the exchequer where fancy yields up his accounts? Yes, Argentina, and fear not to love, for if thy choice be right made, there can nothing come for [sic?] marriage but honour. But with whom art thou in love; with Philomenes, the king's son, and heir apparent to the diadem of Corinth, a step higher, Argentina, than it becometh thee to tread, a degree far above thy fortunes, a star too high for thee to gaze at. Kings as they are men before the gods, so are they gods before men, such high personages as we must honour with our looks, not attempt with our loves. Why, but Argentina, he loves thee, he is enamoured of thy beauty, he sues with words, and entreats with his eyes. What then? Cannot such great princes be sooner pen-sick than passionate, wear favour in their mouths when they have flattery in their hearts? Doth not love hang in their eyelids, which as it is taken in with every look, so 'tis shaken off with every wink; is not their fancies like the summer's dew, which scarce wetteth the grass before it be dried up with the sun? Take heed, Argentina, princes have liberties and privileges, they can laugh at faults which we must pay with penalties; we hold Venus for a goddess; they never offer her incense nor sacrifice, and yet they no sooner crave but she is ready to grant. Yea, but hath sworn; ah, fond fool, *Periuria ridet Amantum Iupiter*, lovers' oaths are like fetters made of glass, that glister fair, but couple in restraint; if swearing had made love perfect, Carthage had possessed Aeneas for their king, Phyllis had not hanged herself, nor Medea said *Deteriora sequor*; yet men must be credited, else shall love be a shadow, talked of but not put in execution; all are not sons to Anchises, nor brothers to Jason, nor traitors like Demophoon; Philomenes' face bewrays his faith, & methinks his looks contain loyalty; thus, poor wench, do I persuade myself to the best, whereas perhaps he means but to sport with me, to make trial of my wit; well, if it be so, I will endeavour to love him less than I do, but if he mean truth, I will labour to love him more than I have done, and with this she rested content, & went abroad to find out the rest of the ladies. Argentina had not served herself thus in secret but Philomenes was as solitary, for getting himself up into his study, then setting down his head on his hand & his elbow on his book, he began thus to debate with himself. Philomenes, thou hast read much & reaped little, that at one look hast learned more than in seven years' study thou couldst discover; Hermes told thee that beauty was a star whose influence had sundry effects; this was allegorical, & thou didst only pass it over for a principle. Avicen said that love was a fury; how didst thou esteem of this but as an axiom? Epictetus called Venus the restless planet; thou tookest this for a dart [sic] & amphibological aphorism; comments thou hadst none, and conceive thou couldst not, but now if Hermes, Avicen, or Epictetus want interpreters, let amorous scholars be auditors to my precepts, for I have found beauty a star, and have gazed against it; love is a fury, for it is full of passions, & Venus a restless star, for since the goddess distilled into my thoughts her precious balms, the operation hath been so mighty as my greatest rest hath been restless disquiet; what need these ambigues, this scholarism, this foolery; thou art in love with Argentina, the commander's daughter of Corinth, a duke, but thy subject; why then dost thou use preambles & protestations; canst thou not say flatly: I am in love; Venus' coffers, when they have the greatest sound, are always most empty, & lovers, when they prattle most, are thought either great talkers or deep flatterers; then Philomenes, discover thy mind; Argentina is a woman, & therefore to be wooed, and so to be won; kings may command where poor

men cannot entreat; 'tis better to name a crown than to write a letter; an ounce of *give me* is worth a pound of *hear me*; the name of queen is a great argument, & therefore fear not; thou hast as much to be liked as she to be loved. Thus far well, Philomenes, but suppose she hath already settled her affection, & hath made choice of some other; seek not to divert her, for she that is faithless to one will be constant to none; if thou love her, wish her not to be disloyal, but rather pawn thy life than disparage her honour, & wrestle with love, whom if thou subdue thou esteemest a glorious conquest. In this resolution he flung out of his chamber, and passing into the privy garden, there he found all the ladies sparselled(?) about in sundry borders, some gathering flowers, others in discourses of the excellency of the place, some in prattle with the birds, all busy, none idle; taking thus a superficial view of them all, as having his eye wandering for a fairer object, he passed forward to find out if it might be the Lady Argentina whom he spied with her mother in a shady walk of the garden; seeing none but these two, thither went Philomenes, & saluted them in this manner: Honourable duchess, well accompanied with your fair daughter, the mother happy for bearing so sweet a creature, & Argentina fortunate in coming from such a parent, your walking in this shady arbour resembles Latona tripping with her train [sic?] Diana in the lawns, where having herself tried the forwardness of Esculapius her husband, she schooled her daughter so that Diana vowed perpetual chastity; I hope, lady, that Duke Pelopidas brooks not company with Esculais [sic], & therefore you need not nuzzle up your daughter in such heresy; the duchess, hearing the young prince so pleasant, being herself a lady of merry disposition, made him this answer: Lord Pilomenes [sic], were I Latona indeed, & as waspish in mind, as ready as she to revenge, I would cause Phoebus to chastise your frumps, as he did the sons of Mobae [sic?], in loading my back with such reverence & my daughter with such beauty; to your strange supposition, as far as Pelopidas differs from Esculapius, so far was mine from Latona's persuasion; so believe me, sir, if roses be not gathered in the bud, they either wither or prove windfalls; maids must be married, lest they be marred; if they be coy, & swear chastity, they oft wish and will with secrecy; youth is the subject of love, & scions that are grafted young have the surest joints; therefore so far am I from that austere perverseness of some mothers, that as young as Argentina is, if there were a man whom she could love, & me like of, they should never break off for years. Philomenes, hearing how the duchess dissembled not, began thus to reply: & what manner of man should he be that might both content you & please your daughter, the one measuring by age, the other by youth; I would have him, quoth the duchess, to be of age answerable to my daughter's years, and his parentage proportioned to her parentage, lest inequality of time or birth might breed mischief; his personage such as might feed her eye, his virtues such as might please us both, his living answerable to all these, & him would I count a fit husband for Argentina. A right conclusion, quoth Philomenes, for there is no match that is right made if pelf conclude not the premises; if he had the age of Adon, the honours of Hercules, the proportion of Theseus, the virtues of the boy [sic?], yet *si nil attuleris ibis Homere foras*, if he have not living, all his love is laid in the dust; but what say you, Argentina; in faith, let me, as your ghostly father, have you at shrift, before your mother, tell me you were never in love; Argentina blushed & was silent, as one that durst not be bold before her mother, whereupon Philomenes said: See madam, 'tis your presence makes your daughter so squeamish; I pray you, prattle with some other of the ladies & give us leave a little to be secret here in this walk; perhaps I will be a suitor to your

daughter; what say you, madam, shall I have your goodwill? Aye, & my good word, my Lord, quoth she, if you mean earnestly, & with that, smiling, she went her way & left them to themselves; Philomenes, seeing himself thus alone with his goddess, thought to take hold of her mother's words, & from them to drive his insinuation thus.

You hear, sweet saint, how favourably your mother speaks; now, madam, what censure shall I have at your hands? I cannot paint out many passions nor tell tales with such large periods as many use to do, but I will court thee and woo thee in one word, & that is, Argentina, I love thee; more I cannot promise, and so much I will perform by the faith of a prince; Argentina, seeing Philomenes speak so plainly, & therefore as she thought so faithfully, made this answer: My Lord, you take the antecedent of my mother's answer for a favour, but you leave out the consequent, and that is, *if you mean in earnest*, for I cannot think your Grace would look so low as upon Argentina, but rather gaze at some glorious princess whose majesty might match Juno, whose worthiness Pallas, whose beauty Venus, & with these might bring for her dowry a diadem, but . . . , & with that Argentina stayed & blushed, which Philomenes espied, & therefore wringing her by the hand said, But what, madam? Nay, forward with the rest, or you proffer me great wrong; why then, my Lord, quoth she, and with that she galled him with a glance, but if your Honour would vouchsafe to favour such a simple maid as from a mean lady to make her a queen, for other than marriage I dare swear your Lordship doth not intend, your father gracing our loves with his kingly consent, though I could not with love sufficient requite love, as in person & parentage unfit for your Highness, yet would I with obedience and humility make supply of these defects which otherwise were wanting. This answer of Argentina so contented Philomenes as that he stood as a man in a trance; at last he took her hand in his and swore that before the feast were ended he would make her princess of Corinth; let this suffice, Argentina, qd. he, & with that he sealed up the bargain with a kiss, and walked towards her mother, to whom he delivered Argentina thus: Madam, here I deliver your daughter as safe as I received in outward appearance, but how I have schooled her, time will make trial; perhaps we have struck the match, and therefore let the Lord Pelopidas provide a good dowry, and with that he went his way; when the matter comes to that effect, my Lord, you shall have a dukedom with her; at that the prince turned back and said: That's mine already, and her father is like to be my subject, and so to hold his living in chief; the duchess smiled, & thus the [sic] parted. But leaving Philomenes, to the king his father, who having noted as narrowly as his son the beauty of Argentina, had great liking of the lady so that he made inquiry of those which were Pelopidas' nearest neighbours what disposition the virgin was of; they all affirmed to the king that she was so virtuous, humble, courteous, and adorned with such excellent qualities as the form of her life was a method whereby other gentlewomen did direct their actions. The king, hearing this, resolved in his mind there could not be a fitter match for his son, whereupon determining to break with the young prince as he was in this humour, he met Philomenes, whom he took aside and began to question him as concerning Argentina, whether he could fancy the lady or no? Philomenes, afraid the king had espied their loves, made answer that he never took such narrow view of her that he could yield his judgement with affection; then do, qd. the king, and give me within two days an answer, and so he departed. Philomenes, joyful of this, no sooner met Argentina but he told what motion his father had made, but to make a small harvest of a little crop,

Philomenes at the two days' end so answered his father that the king breaking with the duke, it was concluded that the end of the feast should be the beginning of the marriage, which was such a joy to the nobles, to see their young prince allied in his own land, that they devised new jousts and pastimes, continuing the feast many days to their great joy and the lovers' most happy content; the marriage and the feast thus finished, the nobles departed; Pelopidas leaving his daughter thus honourably espoused, took his leave, the married couple staying still with the old king in his court, who being of great age lived not long after, but paid his debt unto nature, so that Philomenes was crowned king of Corinth; living thus happily with his wife Argentina, thinking his degree too high for fortune to prejudice, it so fell out that Marcion, the king of Sicilia, hearing that his ancient enemy Philomenes' father was dead, thought to try what metal was in the son, to prove if he were as valiant and fortunate as his father; therefore he levied a great army & provided a great fleet to sail to Corinth, which was no sooner rigged but he embarked his men, and as soon as wind & weather would permit, sailed toward Corinth, where arriving in a desert place, as politic to land without any great resistance, he unshipped his men and all his furniture for war, and letting his navy ride in the road he marched forward into the mainland, using, as one that intended a conquest, fire & sword. Philomenes, hearing by posts how Marcion was landed with a mighty host and had spoiled many of his provinces, started up, & summoning his lords about him raised a mighty host such as never king of Corinth did before him, and with them marched to meet with Marcion, whom he encountered by the river that runneth by the great plain called the Corinth downs; then pitching his pavilion he entrenched his army, and so had Marcion fortified his; lying thus awhile, at last by heralds they resolved upon a day of battle, which once come, & both the armies ranged, they joined battle so furiously, the one to conquer, the other to defend, Philomenes' heart made one with equity, the other with despair, that a long while the fight was doubtful, till at last fortune allotted the best to Marcion in such sort that the field was his, the Corinthians most slain, some fled, the king, valiantly fighting, taken prisoner; Marcion, triumphing in the victory, marched forwards to the city, leading Philomenes as his captive; coming to the gate, the citizens yielded up the keys, & he as a valiant conqueror entered, & passing into the palace found there the queen all blubbered with tears, as a woman almost senseless, whom he comforted and committed to the custody of one of his duke [sic]; seated thus victoriously in Corinth, he not only disgraded the king from all dignity, but disrobing him, commanded that he should be turned out of the palace, and that he should not be relieved upon pain of death, but if he would have anything to satisfy his thirst, he should get it with his handythrift; Philomenes, not abashed at this doom, entreated the king to be good to his wife, and so went and became a labourer for day-wages, contented with this fortune; Marcion the next day sent for the queen, who although forlorn with tears, yet noting her narrowly he found her the fairest creature that ever yet in his life he had viewed, so that he fell extremely in love with her, and offered her what liberty or pleasure she would have, courting her with many fair promises and amorous conceits, but all in vain, for she was resolved whatsoever fell, life or death, that none to her but her love Philomenes; Marcion, captivated in her beauty, was restless, feeling such strange & uncouth passions that at last he fell into these terms.

What fond motions, Marcion, are these that disturb thy mind, what childish thoughts unfit for a king, a soldier, nay, for one that hath conquered both a crown and kingdom; thou camest from Sicilia to be victor, & here thou art arrived & art vanquished; thou hast beaten Philomenes in battle, & art brought under by his wife in love; thy resolution was to terrify thy foes with thy sword; so thou hast done, but fain to please a woman with thy tongue; by this fond foolery I may note that Venus' frown is of more force than the weapons of Mars, that affections are harder to be suppressed than enemies to subdue, that love is above king and kaiser; where Cupid commands, there dignity hath no privilege to withstand; then Marcion, yield, sue, and entreat; but whom; the wife of Philomenes, thy captive; rather command her, and what she will not yield by entreaty, take by constraint; in so doing should I reap infamy, and forced love is never sweet; no, Marcion, allure her with wealth; promise she shall be thy paramour, to seat her next thyself in thy kingdom; women are won with favours, and there is none so chaste but time and gifts may entice. In this resolution he sent for Argentina, & began thus to deliver his mind unto her. Thou seest, Argentina, how I have favoured thee, not like a princess that were captive, but even as a queen that is sole mistress and sovereign of my affections; thy beauty hath conquered that heart which had made conquest of thy country, & subdued him who before woman's feature never vanquished; then Argentina, take pity of him that for thy love is so passionate; consent that I may enjoy thee as my paramour, and thou shalt be honoured as she that is best loved of the king of Sicilia. I could, Argentina, thou seest, obtain by force what I sue for by entreaty, but I covet rather to possess myself of thy lovely consent than by constraint; yield therefore what I request, and here before the lords of Sicilia I promise to grant whatsoever thou shalt command, so it touch not my crown nor thy husband, though to the danger of my person, freely without exception; Argentina, as one nothing dismayed, returned him this answer: I not deny, Marcion, thou hast subdued Corinth, and deposed the king, which I attribute rather to his bad fortunes than thy prowess or chivalry, but in all thy conquest thou shalt never boast thou hast conquered either Philomenes or his wife Argentina, seeing we are only overcome, not vanquished, in that both of us remain contented, and keep our minds untouched; thou art enchanted with my love; no, Marcion, but perhaps thou art fed with lust, & never hope that Argentina will minister any means to appease the flame although thou shouldst enforce her to consent by the most extreme torments; Philomenes lives, & so long will I love, not thee, but him whom I vowed to be true unto forever, yet thy last condition hath somewhat persuaded me, that if thou grant what I request, I will consent not only to be thy paramour but thine forever; the king was so glad of this that he iterated with an oath to perform her demand; then this it is, quoth Argentina: tomorrow morning thou shalt shut thyself into a secret place whereof myself will keep the key, & there for three days thou shalt fast without tasting anything to assuage hunger or thirst; this time thou shalt pray to the gods for the remission of our sins which we shall offend in by breach of matrimony; then at the term of three days thou shalt freely take the use of my body before thou eat any meat; otherwise, if thou fail but as much as Proserpina to taste a grain of the pomegranate, thou shalt never after question me of love; thus do, and I grant to like thee, or else here is my head, let that pay my ransom; Marcion was so settled in her beauty that he thought it nothing to undertake this task, and therefore promised before his lords to fast three days, and then to lie with her before he eat any meat, or else never to motion her any more of love, whereupon the next day the princess shut him up until the date was expired, in

which three days he felt such torments, such pinching hunger and extreme thirst, that he cursed love, and exclaimed against beauty as a charm that made men senseless, willing to give for one crumb the diadem of Corinth; well, the term expired, all the nobles were assembled & sat in the great hall expecting what event should fall either of the king's fast, or of Argentina's request; at last Argentina sent the key to one of the lords that the king might come into the hall whither she presently would repair; the lord went to the chamber-door and no sooner put the key to the lock but Marcion started up and cried for meat; the lord unlocked, and saw the king glance at him with such a fierce look that he was afraid and started back; villain, quoth Marcion, hast thou brought me any meat, and with that, running as a madman into the hall, flinging in fury among the lords: Why, gentles (quoth he), sit you here without meat; why are not the tables spread, do I allow such niggardly allowance, or will you famish him that fostereth you all? At this he was in a rage; Argentina, apparelled in her richest robes, came pacing, that she looked more like an angel than a mortal creature, insomuch that every eye directed their glances at so heavenly an object except Marcion, who at her sight sat as a man greatly amated; having her maid follow her with a dish of meat crumbed, Argentina with a smiling countenance, taking him by the hand, said thus.

Redoubted conqueror, according to promise, I am come in the presence of these lords to offer myself subject to your Highness' pleasure, ready to go whither your Grace shall conduct me; Marcion at this cried out: & thinkest thou, Argentina, that famished men have mind on beauty, or is hunger to be satisfied with love; no, no, 'tis true, Marcion, *Sine Cerere & baco friget Venus*, reason could not subdue lust, but fasting hath set it on a nonplus; but what is that the maid carries; meat, my Lord, quoth she, for your Honour after, and with that she blushed; Marcion no sooner heard her name meat but he leapt to the maid, pulled away the dish, saying: Farewell, fond love, and welcome that whereof one morsel is worth a monarchy; Argentina, give me leave to eat, for thou hast conquered Marcion in his own folly, and with that he fell to his meat, wherewith after he had somewhat appeased his hunger, setting him in his seat royal he began to parle with his lords of Argentina's policy, highly extolling the constancy of so true a wife, and so far entered into consideration of the chance of fortune and fall of princes, that rising from his throne he went and embraced and kissed Argentina, not only praising her for her ready invention to persuade him from his vanity, but for her sake sent for her husband and yielded him his crown and his kingdom, and living his sworn friend, returned home into Sicilia.

No sooner had Arion ended his tale but Mars, taking opportunity, said: We see by this event that as women have their vanities whereby to be checked, so they have their virtues redounding greatly to their praise, being both affable and constant, although that single instance of Orpheus his Lydia did infer the contrary; and so quoth Apollo, would Venus serve for an instance if you mean of constancy, for no doubt if you may be judge, all beauty shall be virtue, & all women shall be saints; & now, quoth Jupiter, Apollo, by your leave, to take Mars his part, we ought rightly to think of women, seeing so oft we seek their favours & speak to them by entreaties for their loves; otherwise we should prove ourselves very ingrate, to beat them with rods that feast us with banquets, to proffer them scorpions that gives us no worse than their own selves; lively spoken, quoth

Mercury, but Juno likes you never the better for this flattery, as supposing you have sued to more than contented her or becomed you, but in my opinion Arion's tale paints out a paragon, a matchless mirror as well for constancy as the other for cruelty; these extremes therefore infer no certain conclusions, for they leave a mean between both wherein I think the nature of women do consist, neither so cruel but they will grant, nor so constant but they will yield, & rather oft-times prove too courteous than too unkind; see, quoth Mars, how peevisly you conclude, to taunt them still of unconstancy; well, Mercury, quoth he, thou art subtile, & canst by thy fallations prove what thou wilt, but yet this I set down for mine own opinion that women, the more beautiful they are, the more courteous; the more constant, the fuller of excellent qualities, and rather virtues; and by the river of Styx I swear – and with that he rose in choler – -this I will approve against him that dare maintain the contrary, though not with my pen, yet my sword; at this the gods smiled, and Mars in such a rage clapped his hand on the board that I awoke, not knowing what became of the gods or of Arion's soul; only I remembered their tales.

Being thus awaked, I looked about me, and still sat my shepherd; how now, good fellow, quoth I, have I not taken a lusty nap, thy pipe sounded so sweetly, and there I had such a dream as I would not have lost for much, for I hope it will after more profit me than all my journey I have passed to Erycinus; I am glad, quoth the shepherd, my pipe did thee so much pleasure, and if thy slumber hath presented thee any visions, note them, for all dreams that men see in Erycinus prove true, and with that standing up, methought he had wings on his head, shoulders, and feet; he bade me farewell, & took his flight; then I knew it was Mercury. Whereupon calling to mind the occasion of my journey, I found that either I had lost love, or love lost me, for my passions were eased; I left Erycinus, and hasted away as fast as I could, glad that one dream had rid me of fancy, which so long had fettered me, yet could I not hie so fast but ere I could get home, I was overtaken with repentance.

Robert. Greene.

FINIS.