
MORANDO

THE TRITAMERON OF LOVE

The first and second part.

Wherein certain pleasant conceits uttered by divers worthy personages are perfectly discoursed, and three doubtful questions of love most pithily and pleasantly discussed, showing to the wise how to use love, and to the fond how to eschew lust, and yielding to all both pleasure and profit.

By Robert Greene, Master of Arts in Cambridge.

London.

Printed by John Wolfe for Edward White, and are to be sold at his shop at the little north door of Paul's at the sign of the Gun.

1587.

To the right honourable Philip, Earl of Arundel, Robert Greene wisheth increase of honour, with the full fruition of perfect felicity.

The Emperor Domitian (right honourable) made him nets to catch flies lest happily he might be found idle. Caligula being wearied with weighty affairs would, to pass away the time, gather cockles. The Persian kings sometimes shaved sticks. Virgil chose rather to read rude Ennius than to be found without a book in his hand. Time wisheth rather to be spent in vain toys than in idle thoughts; the one driveth away fantasies, the other breedeth melancholy. Mercury vouchsafed once to drink of Philemon's earthen pot. Apollo gave oracles at Delphos as well to the poor man for his mite as to the rich man for his treasure. Philip thought well of the water which a poor shepherd offered to him in a greasy bottle; duty binds the subject to present, and courtesy the prince to accept; in the one, will is an excuse, in the other, courtesy a bountiful reward. Apelles (right honourable) presented Alexander with the counterfeit of Campaspe, the face not fully finished, because he liked the picture, and I offer this pamphlet unto your Lordship, not well furnished, because you are a lover of learning.

Zeuxis, painting Triton, drew only his face; the rest he hid with the tumbling waves of the sea. And I, setting forth Morando's discourse, show only his bare talk; the rest I rudely shadow with an imperfect tale. The Persians caused their apes always to mask in cloth of gold to cover their deformity. Timocles caused his popinjay to perk under a dragon of brass that the portraiture might defend her from the vultures' tyranny, and I seek to shroud my simple work under your Honour's wings, thinking one dram of your Lordship's favour sufficient to fence me from the venomous teeth of those biting vipers who seek to discredit all, having themselves no credit at all. Achilles made it not strange to take a view of Phidias' clownish work because it was the image of Mars, and I hope your Honour will vouchsafe to cast a glance on this silly book for that it represents the discourse of divers worthy personages, although of itself it is like Zeuxis' counterfeits which seemed at a blush to be grapes, but being thoroughly viewed were but shadowed colours. The physicians prescribe in their diet that sometimes bitter pills do as much profit the stomach as sweet potions. Augustus sometimes would solace himself as well with Ennius' dross as with Maro's gold, and it may be your Honour, passing over many learned works, will at the last stumble at this fond toy, and laugh at [+it] as Sigismond did at the pomegranate, not that he smiled [+at] the fruit but at the simple meaning of the man which presented him with so small gift. Resting upon this point, I commit your Lordship to the Almighty.

Your Honour's to command, Robert Greene.

To the gentlemen readers, health.

Demosthenes (gentlemen) always sought to win the goodwill of the senate by unfolding the equity of the case, and I seek to obtain your favour by appealing to your courtesy, hoping to find you as ready to grant me the one as the senate to grant him the other. Protagenes [=sic for Protogenes?] found the more favour in setting forth his simple pictures in that he did what he could, and I hope to find the more friendship at your hands for this imperfect work in that I do what I can. Yet I know I shall be compared of some to Damides' [=Demades?] parrot, which prated nothing but that she heard her master speak. Well, though some be savage all are not satyrs; though divers be sturdy, all are not Stoics. Let fleering sycophants carp at my want, yet I doubt not but courteous gentlemen will account of will, and as it is folly to reject the favour of the one, so it is fondness to respect the friendship of the other. But to them that shall pardon my offence and spare to spite at my fault, I wish them such prosperous hap as they can desire or I imagine. To the rest, I will to them as they wish to me, and yet I bid them both farewell.

THE TRITAMERON OF LOVE

There dwelled in Bononia a certain knight called Signior Bonfadio whose prowess in martial exploits did not only win him wealth to maintain his worship, but also honour to countenance and countervail his substance, and immortal glory as the only guerdon due for such a doughty champion, so that he was generally honoured of all for his valorous magnanimity and particular[ly] loved of each one for his bountiful courtesy, being no less liberal to the poor to defend them from want than courageous for his country to maintain them in weal. This Bonfadio, shrouded thus under fortune and shrined up by fame, tried at last by proof which long before he had heard by report, that the stiffest metal yieldeth to the stamp, the strongest oak to the carpenter's axe, the hard steel to the file, and the stoutest heart doth bow when nature bids him bend, that there is no adamant such which the blood of a goat cannot make soft, no tree so sound which the scarab fly will not pierce, no iron so hard which rust will not fret, no mortal thing so sure which time will not consume, nor no man so valiant which cometh not without excuse when death doth call. The phoenix hath black pens as well as glistening fathers, the purest wine hath his lees, the luckliest year hath his canicular days. Venus had a mole in her face and Adonis a scar upon his chin; there was sometime thunder heard in the temple of peace, and fortune is never so favourable but she is as fickle. Her prosperity is ever sauced with the sour sops of adversity, being constant in nothing but in inconstancy. Scipio escaped many foreign broils, but returning home in triumph was slain with a tile. Caesar conquered the whole world, yet cowardly slain in the senate. So Bonfadio, having by his prowess long prevailed against his foes, was at last most unluckily slain by his supposed friends. For as in an evening he passed through a blind lane of the city, he was suddenly shot through with a pistol, which murder was so secretly committed that ye performer of so devilish a fact could never be detected.

But the report of this ruthless tragedy being come to the ears of Lady Panthia (for so was his wife called), she forthwith fell into such perplexed passions, and was so surprised by sudden sorrow, that before the tale could be half told she fell down in a trance, being hardly brought again to life by the company. Yet at last being come to herself, after she had wept so long that the very fountain of her tears was dried up with continual pouring out of sorrowful plaints, she then (womanlike) began somewhat to listen to the comfortable counsel of her friends, and to apply to her sore that salve that might soonest mitigate her malady. For through their friendly persuasions very shortly she began to consider that as to wish for an impossible thing was but a sign of small wit, so to sorrow without ceasing for that which could not be redressed did import but mere folly, the one being a foe to desire, & the other a friend to death. She therefore, resting upon this point, thought with most solemn obsequies to celebrate her husband's funerals, that both the sequel of her works might confirm her former words, and her tears be thought to come more of care than of custom. Whereupon she framed a very sumptuous sepulchre, entombing her husband's bones with such pompous magnificence that all Italy thought Bonfadio happy for so good a wife, and her worthy of so good a husband.

The funeral finished, Panthia for a time lived more sorrowfully being a widow than merrily being a wife, till at last, seeing her mourning weed began to wax bare, she

thought best both to cast away her outward coat and her inward care, wisely weighing with herself that it is in vain to water the plant when ye root is dead, to ask counsel when the case is distrust [sic for dismissed?], to wish for rain when the corn is ripe, and to sigh when no sorrow can prevail. The cedar-tree remaineth without leaves but twelve days, and the date-trees but seven. Circe's love never continued above one year, and the tapers in the temple of Janus burned only but nine nights. The call of a quail continueth but one quarter, and a widow's sorrow only two months, in the one sad for her old mate, and in the other careful for a new match.

Panthia in this state having passed this term (I do not say with like affection), thought now she had a greater care and more charge being a widow than a wife. For she had by Signior Bonfadio three daughters, the eldest named Lacena, the second Sostrata, and the youngest Fioretta, all so adorned with beauty and endowed with bounty, so framed in body and formed in mind, each of them being both in outward complexion and inward constitution so singular as hard it was to judge which held the supremacy. Panthia, placing all her felicity in the exquisite perfection of her three daughters, sought to bring them up so charily and chastely that all men might like them for their beauty & love them for their virtue, imitating the good lapidaries which in the purest gold set the most precious stone.

While thus solitarily she passed away the time amongst her children, Signior Morando, a knight who in his lifetime had oft served in the wars with Bonfadio, between whom there had long been a perfect league of amity, willing to show in the brood how well he loved the old bird, was so friendly to Panthia as familiar with Bonfadio, comforting her as a desolate widow and counselling her as his friend's wife, driven to the one by conscience and to the other by courtesy. Seeing therefore she did wholly absent herself from company, which made her dream on sundry melancholy motions, he did invite her and her three daughters to a grange house of his seven miles distant from Bononia, whither also divers gentlemen were bidden, thinking this the fittest means to drive her from her sorrowful dumps. Panthia, desirous to let Signior Morando understand how greatly she did account of his courtesy, came at the day appointed to his house, where both she and her daughters were not only well welcome to Morando but to all the rest of the company, amongst whom was Signior Peratio, Messire Aretino, and Signior Don Silvestro, with others, who sitting down to dinner and passing away the time with pleasant parle, it chanced after dinner as they sat talking, that Signior Peratio spied hanging in the parlour a table most curiously painted wherein both the sea and land was most perfectly portrayed. The picture was of Europa, the sea of the Phoenicians, and the land of Sidon. On the shore was a beautiful meadow wherein stood a troop of dainty damosels; in the sea, a bull upon whose back sat a dame of surpassing beauty sailing towards Candy, but looking to the crew of her companions from whom by sinister means she was separated. The painter by secret skill had perfectly with his pencil deciphered the feature of their faces as their countenance did seem to import both fear and hope, for seeing their peerless princess a prey to such a prowling pirate they rushed into the seas (as willing to be partakers of their mistress' misery) as far as fear of such fearful surges would permit them, but pushed back with the dread of present danger they stood viewing how cunningly & carefully the bull transported his charge, how Europa, arrayed in purple

robes sat securely and safely holding in her right hand his horn and in her left his tail. About him the dolphins seemed to leap, the sirens to sing, and Triton himself to triumph. Cupid also, in the form of a little boy, was there most curiously painted, having the wings spread, a quiver by his side, in one hand a flame of fire, in the other a chain of gold wherewith he drew the bull as by constraint, and turning his head towards Jupiter, seemed to smile at his folly and to despise his deity, that by this means he had made such a strange metamorphosis. Signior Peratio, having long gazed on this gorgeous picture, both praised his perfect skill that had so cunningly made a counterfeit of nature by art, and also mused at the force of love that had by conquest caught so worthy a captive, that at length, as one forced by affection, he sighing said: *O gods, that a child should rule both the heaven, the sea, and the land.*

Don Silvestro, seeing Peratio so suddenly passionate with the view of a simple picture, taking occasion hereupon to enter into further parle, began to cross him on this manner:

Why, how now, Peratio, quoth he, do you sigh to see Jupiter so fond as for lust to abase his deity, or Cupid so presumptuous as by love to increase his dignity, the one showing himself worse than a man for his folly, the other more than a god for his power?

No, sir, quoth Morando, you mistake his meaning, for it fares with him as with Narcissus, that was never in love but when he looked into the water, or like the fish mugra, which only leapeth at the sight of the North star. Hyparchion never saw any musical instrument but he would sing, nor he any amorous picture but he must sigh, the one showing thereby his affection to music, the other bewraying his passions in love.

*Indeed, sir, quoth Peratio, I remember Silenus would always lead his ass in a string, that when he waxed weary he might ride, and Amphion played ever best on his harp when he heard poor Sthenus blow on his oaten pipe; so, sir, you keep me for a plain-song whereupon to descant, showing your fine wit always to be most sharp when you find my dull head to be most gross. But Calchas never prophesied dearth to the Grecians but when his own lands were barren, nor Tiresias had never given a verdict against Juno but that he himself had been once a woman. Thraso's age could not bereave him of his parasitical affections, neither was Battus a less blab being old than in his youth. The whiter the leek's head is, the greener is the blade. The angelica beareth seed always when it begins to wither; dry sticks are soonest consumed with fire, and doting age soonest caught with fancy, divining that of others whereof they themselves do most dream, but they follow the old proverb: *Similes habent labra lactucas* [=Like lips, like lettuce].*

By my faith, Signior Morando, quoth Madam Panthia, if you have pushed Peratio with ye pike, he hath hit you with the lance, but it seems he hath been burnt in the hand that cannot abide to hear of fire. Apollo would never willingly abide the noise of the crow because he had believed her too lightly. Silenus was ever most angry when any told him of good wine because he would oft be drunk. Peratio likes not to be touched where he is galled, nor to be accused so strictly when his conscience feels the crime. And yet I go too far, for it is no offence to love.

Yes, Madam, quoth Aretino, as Jupiter loved Europa, craving only to crop the bud of her beauty and to spoil the fruit of her honesty, seeking for the gain of his fading pleasure to procure her lasting pain. Is not such fancy a fault, when it springeth up without honest affection?

Truth, sir, quoth Panthia, but I count liking without law no love, but lust. Was Scipio thought a friend to Numantia when he fought to spoil the city, or Chronis [=Cronus?] to Ceres, who robbed her temple of her treasure? The turkey, having lost his colour, is of no value. The fairest flower without his smell is counted but a weed, and the maid that by mischance loseth her virginity, though never so fair, is most unfortunate; her chiefest treasure is then but trash, like the ore in the Isle Choos, which is pure in the minge [sic for mine?], but dross in the furnace, for beauty without honesty is like deadly poison preserved in a box of gold. Considering this, Aretino, do you count him to love that wisheth his lady such loss?

Madam, quoth Morando, you misconstrue of his mind, for Aretino counts that whatsoever is fancy, that is love.

'Tis good, then, quoth she, to bring him from his heresy, for fancy is vox equiuoca, which either may be taken for honest love or fond affection, for fancy oft-times cometh of wealth or beauty, but perfect love ever springeth from virtue and honesty.

Marry, quoth Peratio, that is the cause that women love so much & men so little, wherein by your own judgment they are altogether blameless, for women find in us honesty without wealth, & we in them beauty without virtue.

Sir, quoth she, your censure is no sentence, neither can this broken coin stand for sterling, for to excuse yourself before you be accused is to find a foul crack in a false conscience. 'Tis hard to cover a great rent with a small piece, or to hide Vulcan's polt-foot with pulling on a straight shoe. Honesty is always painted like a woman, as signifying that it is most predominant in that sex. And, sir, to give you a veny with your own weapon, as you said before, Like lips, like lettuce; as the man is, so is his manners. Cat always goeth after kind, and it is hard to find men without small honesty and great deceit.

Do you speak by experience? quoth Morando. Was your husband in the number of those that are cumbered with this consumption?

He was, quoth she, by nature, but that he did amend it by nurture, and yet, quoth she, my husband's honesty cannot conclude generally but that there must be large exceptions.

I am glad, Madam Panthia, that you are so pleasant, and all the rest of my good guests so merrily disposed, I hope you will not deny me of a request that generally I shall crave of you all.

If it be reasonable, quoth Panthia, I dare promise for the gentlewomen.

And I, quoth Silvestro, for the men.

Why, then, I will have you tell me your opinions whether this our country proverb be true or no which is commonly spoken: Amor fa molto, ma argento fa tutto; Love doth much, but money doth all.

In men, quoth Panthia, and that we will prove.

In women, quoth Peratio, and that I shall defend.

Two fit champions, quoth Morando, to try such a doubtful combat.

Nay, sir, quoth Panthia, I myself refuse this proffer, but my daughter Lacena shall perform my challenge, for it is not a mourner's part to discourse of such pleasant points.

A fit match, quoth Peratio, for so honest a man, and to put you out of doubt, I had rather sip with your daughter than sup with you, for an inch of a kid is worth an ell of a cat. But to leave these cutting blows, how say you, Lacena? Are you content to defend so false an heresy?

Sir, quoth she, where duty drives, there denial is a fault, & where nature inferreth obedience, there to resist is to war against the gods. The young lamb cometh at the bleating of ye old sheep; the cygnet at ye call of the swan. The fawn followeth fast after the doe; creatures without reason and brute beasts by mere instinct of nature follow their dams, & should not I then obey my parents? Yes, no doubt, or else I might be counted more brute than a beast, or else less natural than a reasonable creature. This considered, if I adventure rashly to discuss so hard a case, being unfit by nature & art, the duty, I hope, that I owe unto her who hath power to command me shall be sufficient to excuse my small skill & great enterprise, and the common saying so generally used here in our country doth somewhat encourage me: A sure truth, quoth they, need[s] no subtile glose, nor a clear case a shifting counsellor.

Well, quoth Peratio, I doubt your feigned simplicity will prove to be shrewish sophistry, and therefore thus to the purpose. The case, quoth he, which we have to discuss is a maxim holden as true as a holy oracle, but the doubt is whether it is to be averred in men or verified in women. If the perfection of the body and the constitution of the mind forceth men to love more than the greedy desire to gain, then we have won the field and you lost the combat, and if women love more for beauty and virtue than for wealth and riches, we have taken the foil and you won the conquest.

But it was hard for Achelous with his shifts to prevail against Hercules because of his strength, and it will be as hard for you to resist my reason because they be true. Whoso readeth the Romish records and Grecian histories and turneth over the volumes filled with the report of passionate lovers shall find sundry sonnets sauced with sorrowful

passions, divers ditties declaring their dumps, careful complaints, woeful wailings, and a thousand sundry hapless motions where the poor perplexed lovers do paint out how the beauty of their mistress hath amazed their minds; how their fancy is fettered with their exquisite perfection; how they are snared with the form of her feature; how the gifts of nature so bountifully bestowed upon her hath entangled their minds and bewitched their senses; that her excellent virtue and singular bounty hath so charmed their affections and her rare qualities hath so drowned them in desire as they esteem her courtesy more than Caesar's kingdoms, her love more than lordships, and her goodwill more than all worldly wealth. Tush, all treasure is but trash in respect of her person. Yea, they prefer the enjoying of her perfection before all the riches of fortunate Croesus. Thus the poor passionate lovers whose life hangeth on their mistress' love crave only to feed their fancies with her beauty, and to please their minds with her virtue. But let the most injurious dame who hath best skill to breathe out slanderous speeches against men say (if she can), that she hath ever heard or read of any lover that hath deciphered in his ditties the earnest desire he had to enjoy his mistress or painted out his passions that he suffered to gain his lady's possessions.

Now it is a fault committed of most, and omitted of few, that men in their love look [+not] before they leap, and therefore oft-times fall in the ditch, never gaping after the desire of greedy gain, nor building their fancy upon the fading goods of fortune, so that oft they win such a wife as he may put her dowry in his eye for hurting his sight, and her wealth may be cast without any great count, whereby it is evident that if a man once fix his fancy upon any dame, no want of wealth, no lack of living can impair his love, but he remaineth faithful in despite of fortune, wearing this posy in his shield: Non aurum sed amor [=Not gold, but love].

In troth, quoth Silvestro, if I had a case in the law thou shouldst be my counsellor, for I doubt thou hast put in such a plea as it will be hard for Lacena to answer.

*Tush, sir, quoth she, though the castle be sharply assaulted, it is not straight won, and the field is not lost at the first alarum. Ajax' valour was not [sic for no] whit the less for Ulysses' vain babbling, and though by his words he won the prize, yet all men knew it was more by prating than by prowess. So if you foil me by your subtile fallations, everyone shall perceive that it is not because I defend the wrong, but because I cannot wrangle. Boethius, in his books *De consolatione*, noting the sundry affections which force the mind either to dislike greatly or to love fervently, saith that in making a choice of their love women do most err in that they suffer their minds soonest to be subdued by the gifts of nature, wherein although I confess they offend by fixing their fancies on such a fickle subject, yet it is evident that they more respect the person than his purse, and rather like his perfection than his lands and livings. For if women in their choice were more wedded unto wealth than to wit, and respected more their lover's possessions than his person, no doubt an infinite number of damosels should lead their lives in more plenty and less penury. But as the softest wax soonest receivest impression, as the tender twig is most easy to bend, and the finest glass most brittle, so the pure complexion of women is most subject unto love, being quickly inflamed by the force of affection but never quenched, like to the abeston stone which once set on fire can never be put out.*

For whenas Cupid assayeth to allure the mind of a seely maid to offer incense at his altar & so become his subject, he seeketh not to draw her with worldly trash or treasure, nor to persuade her with the gift of gems or jewels, but covereth his hook with the sugared bait of beauty, wherewith she being once blinded, he carrieth her away into perpetual captivity. The affection of women is always fettered either with outward beauty or inward bounty, either builded on the perfect complexion of the body or pure constitution of the mind. They always weigh his worthiness and not his wealth, his comeliness and not his coin, and rather seek to settle their minds upon his virtue than on such fading pelf as is not permanent. For after that they have imprinted in their minds the form of their lover's feature, and that beauty hath so bewitched their senses as they are wholly at her beck, then they carefully, poor souls, consider the condition of their lovers, and as they have viewed their outward substance, so they divine of their inward qualities. If he be valiant, they love to hear of his martial exploits. His prowess pleaseth them, his manly deeds drowneth them in delight; yea, they are so besotted in this fond imagination that they think no man so able to achieve any enterprises as he, vaunting of his victories as if she herself had won the conquest. If he be wise, his wit setteth them more on fire; if eloquent, his sugared speech enchanteth them; if learned, his secret skill draweth them into an endless labyrinth, so that they wholly feed their fancies with his beauty or delight their minds with his qualities, never respecting his riches nor weighing his wealth, whereby oft-times, when poverty pincheth them, they cry peccaui.

*But Signior Peratio, to come more nearer to the purpose, tell me but what you would think of her that would carefully covet that which she cannot at her own will enjoy, or seek greedily to gain that thing which another properly shall possess? Were it not to seem either fond or frantic? In the same case should women consist if they liked more for living than for love. For after they be once married, is not her husband's wealth his own to bestow? May he not either wisely keep it or wilfully consume it, either spare or spend at his own pleasure? Yes, no doubt, her dowry is then grown to be his due, & her patrimony wholly his proper possessions, so that it may consequently be concluded that women are not so witless as to wish for that which if they get, yet their gain shall be nothing, but they observe this rule as a principle: *Omnia vincit amor, et nos cedamus amori* [=Love conquers all things; let us too surrender to love].*

How now, quoth Panthia, hath not my daughter said prettily well to the purpose? Did she not as well play the defendant as he the plaintiff?

Indeed, quoth Peratio, she hath done prettily, but not pithily. For to conclude upon supposes is but slender sophistry, and to calculate upon conjectures is bad astrology. For though Boethius doth find women faulty for fixing their fancies on the outward shape of beauty, yet he denieth not but that wealth may be the final cause which kindleth their fond desire. As he doth blame them for gazing too much on the gifts of nature, so he doth not excuse them from gaping too greatly after the gifts of fortune, so that to use this reason in this case is to pull on Hercules' hose on a child's foot. What the natural cause is of women's unnatural covetousness I know not, sith I am not skilful in such secret philosophy, but this I am sure, that they are so deeply addicted to this dross, and so

greedily given to the gain of gold, that there is no love such which coin cannot change, no affection such which fading pelf cannot infringe; nay, almost no chastity so chary which desire of wealth cannot wrack, which Virgil, wisely weighing, said: Auri sacra fames quid non muliebria pectora cogis [=What does accursed greed for gold not drive women to do?].

And to prove these my premises by a manifest instance, how was Danae, the daughter of Acrisius, sought and sued to by divers and sundry suitors whose parentage and progeny, whose beauty and bounty, whose singular feature and famous qualities deserved to be mates to the bravest dames of ye world, and yet because their comeliness was without coin, their worship without wealth, and their singular perfection without sumptuous possessions, although she had sufficient wealth of a poor peasant to make a mighty prince, yet she was so greedy after the desire of gain that she esteemed more fading pelf than all the beauty & virtue in the world; yea, such was her covetous mind that although Jupiter himself sought to sack the castle of her chastity and to crop the bud of her beauty, yet she despised his deity until to obtain his desire he was fain to fall into her lap in the shape of a shower of gold. Procris, whose fervent affection was such toward Cephalus as her parents were constrained unwillingly to marry her, as they thought, to an unfit match because her senses were besotted with the beauty of this Cephalus, and his worthy qualities had so bewitched her mind that he was the only saint whom in heart she desired to serve, after that they long had led a happy life, Cephalus, intending to make a trial of his wife's constancy, absenting himself for a while, and coming in disguised apparel made suit unto her that in her husband's absence he might have the fruition of her person, but such was her settled faith & affection that neither sighs, sorrow, sobs, complaints, prayers, promises nor protestations could prevail until he gave the last assault with the proffer of many precious jewels, whereat she was forced to give over the fort, and so courtesan-like make a sale of her constancy. What should I speak of that golden girl Eriphile, who being the mistress of many rich possessions was notwithstanding so addicted to the desire of pelf that she rejected poor passionate Infortunio, and chose that doting old peasant Amphiarus, whom after she betrayed to the Greeks for an ounce of gold. Beauty nor virtue could not win the love of Tarpeia, but for a bracelet she betrayed the capitol.

Tush, whom beauty cannot bend, riches will break; whom virtue cannot obtain, wealth will win, for it is not the man that women respect, but money; nor [sic for not?] his person, but his purse; not his lineage, but his living, that as the serpents hydaspes, the more they drink the more they thirst, and so are never satisfied, so women, the more coin they have, the more they covet without satiety. So that I conclude, were I as mighty as Alexander, as beautiful as Paris, as valiant as Hector, as wise as Ulysses, as trusty as Troilus, yet I shall see the sentence of Ovid stand for an oracle: Si nihil attuleris ibis Homere foras [=If, Homer, you do not bring anything, you will go outside].

Morando and the rest of the gentlemen, hearing how cunningly Peratio did prattle, laughed to see how stoutly he stuck to his tackling, saying that they thought his reasons were as forcible as they could not be infringed, and that it were best for Lacena to give

over the fight in the plain field, which dry frump drive [sic] her into such a fuming choler that she made Peratio this sharp reply:

Sir, quoth she, it were hard for Vulcan to call any man cripple because himself had a polt-foot, and Venus should be thought impudent to condemn any of lightness sith she herself was so lewd, and as unfit for you to condemn me of folly sith your own reasons are so fond, for as you say it is bad astrology to calculate upon conjecture, so I say it is worse philosophy to prove a general axiom by a particular instance. Whereas you aver that women are naturally covetous, and know not the cause, your affection seemeth to proceed rather of rancour than of reason, & of wilful spite more than of due proof, for wanting a sure author to uphold your heresy, you are fain yourself to bring in the verdict, but in this Ipse dixit shall stand for no pay, neither shall your censure be set down for a sentence. We will not allow you to be a coiner of conclusions unless your premises had been of more puissance.

*But I remember very well that Horace, noting the fond affections of men, and wisely describing the greedy desire they have to gain, did cunningly carp at their covetousness, saying: *Quaerenda pecunia primum, post nummos virtus* [=Money is to be sought first of all; virtue after wealth], meaning that in all their actions they first seek to prey upon pelf, counting such fading trash their only treasure, preferring wealth before wisdom and riches before virtue, gaping greedily after gold as the only guerdon they desire for their deserts. Yea, in their love they always aim more at ye money than at the maid, and count her dowry the best saint that deserveth their deepest devotion, although they can cunningly counterfeit that they are drowned in the desire of her person when in heart they mean her purse, playing like the elephant, that rather chooseth to lean against the strong oak than against the sweet briar, or like the tiger that chooseth his prey, not by the fairness of the skin, but by the fatness of the flesh, whereas poor gentlewomen either only respect the outward property of [sic for or?] his inward perfection, either the comeliness of his person or the courtesy of his mind, detesting that filthy dross as a thing not so greedily to be desired.*

For was it the wealth of Aeneas that Dido so much doted on, or his worthiness, who came to Carthage as a poor stragglng stranger, being ready to take of all and being able to give to none? Was it the pelf of Demophon or his person that Phyllis so deeply desired? Was it the riches of Paris that Oenone wished, or his beauty, when she knew him for no other but a poor shepherd? Was it the wealth of Ulysses or his wisdom that Circes [=Circe] sought after when she saw him to be but a wandering pirate? Did not Campaspe prefer poor Apelles before mighty Alexander, and that lovely lady Euphinia choose Acharisto, her father's bondman? Tush, who seeth not, if he be not either senseless or sotted with self-will, that women respect goodwill and not gain, courtesy and not coin, yea, love only, and not lands or livings.

And, sir, whereas you bring in Danae as an instance to prove women's covetous desire, if you wrest not the sense, it is small to the purpose, for Jupiter changed not into gold to obtain her chastity, but to corrupt her keepers that so he might make a rape of her virginity, neither was Tarpeia persuaded to love for gold, but to betray the capitol for

gain. And although Eriphile did amiss, and Procris offend, will these two examples infer a general conclusion? No, for as one swallow maketh not summer, nor as one withered tree proveth not winter, so one woman's offence is not sufficient to prove all faulty. Your rash reasons, therefore, are like Tantalus' apples, which are fair to the eye, but being touched, they turn to ashes, or like Apelles' grapes, that seemed to be such till they were narrowly viewed. So your subtile arguments import great force till they be sifted, and then they are like Cornelius' shadows, which seemed like men that were none. Retire, therefore, before you come at the trench sith you have followed the sound of a wrong march, for it is proper to a man to be deceived, but to persist in an error is the sign of an impudent mind, and upon this condition, although you have broadly blasphemed against women, you shall escape unpunished and fully pardoned.

Morando, hearing how cunningly Lacena had resisted Peratio's reasons, began to be half blank [sic?] because Panthia, pulling him by the sleeve, said:

Sir, quoth she, although my daughter hath concluded in an imperfect mood, yet it is hard to reduce it but per impossible. Your champion is chafed, and seeketh revenge, but he plays like Phineus that sought to meet his foe in the field, and yet he himself took the first foil, but as it is no shame for him that gazeth against the sun to wink, so Peratio, that strives against the truth, may take the mate and yet have good skill at the chess.

Why, quoth Aretino, is he always the best man that gives the last stroke, or she won the victory that speaks the last word? Peratio hath but yet played his quarters; he now means to be at his ward, and I believe so warely that Lacena shall have good luck if she scape without a loss.

Tush, gentlemen, quoth Peratio, Madam Panthia thinks that where Venus sits, there Mars must lay down his helmet, that no birds can sing where the peacock displays her golden feathers, but I am not so fond as with Hercules to become a slave to Omphale, nor with Mars to tie myself to Venus' will. Lacena's fair looks or her painted speech shall not charm me as I shall so lightly give other [sic for over?] the challenge, for I am not in love, and therefore may speak at liberty.

Truly, quoth Morando, sith the controversy is such as it cannot without a long discourse be decided, I will at this time become a mediator and yield my verdict because time calls us away. Upon this sentence this therefore is my censure, that as Philip of Macedon said there was no city so surely defenced whereinto an ass laden with gold might not enter, so the temple of Vesta is never so well shut but a key of gold will speedily unloose the lock.

Sir, quoth Panthia, and I by your leave will conclude to your premises with the picture which Phidias the painter drew of Mars and Venus in this form, representing Mars tied unto Venus by the eye, his breast open, wherein appeared a heart all of gold, but Venus having her sight veiled, her heart pierced through with an arrow, & chained unto Mars with a silver thread wherein was written this parody, Sans aultre.

Well, quoth Morando, it was hard to find Diana without her bow, or Apollo without his harp, or a woman's crafty wit without a clerkly shift. But when Hercules had conquered Onithia [sic?] he could not vaunt of the victory because she was a woman, so therefore I will not strive to confute Madam Panthia, sith in getting the conquest I should rather reap discredit than purchase praise or honour. We will therefore now end our discourse and sit down to supper, where whatsoever your cheer be, yet I pray you, think yourselves heartily welcome.

The gentlemen and gentlewomen finding their fare no worse than their welcome was, gave Morando great thanks for his courtesy, and being all pleasantly disposed, they passed away the supper with many pretty parleys, Don Silvestro only excepted, who was in his dumps, for the beauty of Lacena had already so battered the bulwark of his breast and had so quatted his stomach with her excellent qualities that he only fed his eyes in noting the exquisite perfection of her person, which Aretino partly perceiving, he began to pluck him from his passions in this manner:

I have often marveled, and cannot yet cease to muse, gentlemen, quoth he, at the madness of those momentary lovers whose minds are like the state of Minerva's owl, that how heavy soever her head was, would ever prune herself at the sight of Pallas, or like Narcissus, that had scarcely looked into the water but was in love with his own shadow, but I think these violent passions are nothing permanent; their sparkling heat never proves to perfect coals, much like to Jason's warriors, that faded before they were fully formed.

What moves you, quoth Morando, to pop forth so suddenly this dark problem? Do you think there is any man here that is pinched with such passions, or would you see by the measure of another man's foot where your own shoe wrings you?

No sir, quoth he, the picture of Andromeda and Perseus which hangs here before mine eyes brought this to my remembrance, for methink either Andromeda was passing beautiful or Perseus very amorous, that soaring aloft in the air he did firmly love before he did fully look; his eyes were scarcely fixed ere his heart was fettered. And how think you, Signior Silvestro? Is not this strange?

Silvestro, doubting that Aretino shot at another mark than this talk did pretend, thought to shadow his fault with a false colour, & with the lapwing to cry farthest off from her nest. He framed him therefore this answer:

Truly, Aretino, quoth he, it were folly to question with Pygmalion about Aesculapius' secrets, or to demand of Polydemon what solemnity Hymenaeus observed in his sacrifices, because the one was unskilful in physic and the other as ignorant in marriage, and mere fondness it is for thee to ask my opinion of fancy when I cannot by experience yield a verdict of affection. It is hard for him to give a censure of painting that hath but looked into Apelles' shop, and as difficult for me to set down my sentence of love which am but newly entered into Cupid's school. For I confess I am not of Tyanaeus' opinion to despise beauty, nor so dogged as Diogenes to condemn women, sith the one shows a

crabbed nature and the other an ill nurture. But it may be you guess another man's bow by your own bent, and play like Euritius, that accused Andraemon of love when he himself was before fettered with lust.

What, quoth Aretino, shall Pygmalion be angry with him that said he was a carver, seeing it was his profession by art, or shall a young gentleman take offence for being named a lover, sith it is proper to him by age? But I leave with your melancholy humour, Silvestro, sith I see that it is hard to find a suspicious man without jealousy, and a lingering lover without dumps.

Gentlemen, quoth Peratio, methinks it is folly to talk about so fond a trifle as love, which I can rightly compare to Perseus' wings, which being given him by Jupiter, carried him always into perilous dangers, or to Midas' gold, which he counting his bliss, proved at last to be his bale. Let not then such a frivolous question cause friends to give such biting quips.

Tush, quoth Aretino, these cuts cannot cause Silvestro and me to jar; every blow draws not blood, nor every word inferreth not wrath. That friendship is of a brickle mould that a little table-talk will crack.

In troth, quoth Silvestro, I take not such offence at Aretino's folly as I do, Peratio, at thy extreme fondness, that maketh so light account of love. But Proteus never remained long in one shape, neither was Iola seen to wear one garment twice. The star Cassiopeia remaineth in one sign but ten days, and thou in one mind but ten hours, being now hot, now cold, first as courteous as Trajan, and then as currish as Timon, one while a defender of lust, and another time a contemner of love. But as it is hard to catch the polyp fish because she turneth into the likeness of every object, so it is folly to credit thee which framest thy talk after every new fantasy.

Stay, then, Silvestro, quoth Signior Morando, lest you prove yourself more fond in taking such small occasion of anger than they in ministering the cause; we met as friends, and loath I were we should part as foes. Therefore for this night I commend [sic for command?] you all as my guests to keep silence, and tomorrow, if you please, in close field to try the combat. Madam Panthia and I will sit as judges to assign the conquest. The question shall be whether it be good to love or no, and in the meantime, sith it is far in the night, I commit you to God.

Madam Panthia and the rest, giving their good host the *A dieu*, parted quietly without any more quips to their lodging.

 The Second Day's Discourse.

The night being past, and the glittering beams of Phoebus calling these countries [sic?] from their drowsy beds, Signior Silvestro, who all this night had slept with a flea in his ear, being pinched with ye quips of Aretino, but more passionate with ye exquisite qualities of Lacena, rose before all the rest, and walking alone into the garden began there to muse on the painful passions which so diversly perplexed him, feeling the force of love so furiously to assail him as either the mercy of his new mistress must mitigate his malady, or else his care must be ended by untimely death; the one he doubted of as being in fear, the other he dreaded not as one in most hapless distress. Wavering thus between two waves as he sat in his dumps, Morando, Madam Panthia, and all the rest of the company missing Silvestro, went to seek him, whom they found as a solitary saint sitting in a sorrowful plight, which they espying, began to laugh at his folly, that upon so small case (as they surmised) had entered into such choler. But as their aim was ill, so they missed the mark, for Silvestro was offering his sighs to another saint than they could conjecture, yet whatsoever the cause of his care was, Panthia thought to drive him out of his dumps on this manner:

Signior Silvestro, quoth she, you accused yesternight Peratio of sickness, and I allow it better because I see by this chance you yourself will be no changeling; you went to bed in choler and rise full of melancholy, resembling the bird osyphaga [=ossifraga?], who if she perketh at night chatting, checketh all the morning till the sun be up. But I cannot blame you, sith Aretino and his fellow came over your fallows with such cutting blows.

I see, Madam, quoth Peratio, you are no cunning astrologer that can by calculation conjecture no better of Silvestro's disease. Would you have Zetus [=Zethus] merry as long as he heareth Amphion harp? Can poor Polypheme play on his pipe as long as Galatea frowns, or Apollo laugh when Dryope lowers? No, Apelles must be sad as long as Campaspe is coy. It is good reason that lovers should be solitary to bewray their sorrow, and full of dumps to signify their dolour; accuse not Silvestro then if he be not pleasant, being troubled with such amorous passions, for the poor gentleman is in love, I see by his look.

Silvestro, hearing with what bitter taunts Peratio began to bob the fool, and how he sought like a sycophant to play with his nose, entering somewhat into choler, shaked him up with this sharp reply:

I remember, Peratio, quoth he, that Cadmus for his contumelious mind was turned into a serpent, and Arachne for her proud presumption was transformed into a spider. I marvel, if the gods to wreck their wrath would use their old metamorphosis, whether they would turn thee into an ass or an ape, for by the one they might typically figure forth thy blockish reasons, & by the other paint out thy apish qualities. Did Apollo never lower but when he was in love, nor was Apelles never sad but when he was suitor? No doubt, then, the god was very gamesome before he knew Daphne, and the painter passing pleasant before he saw Campaspe. Surely your astrological reasons be of small force in that they have force, I mean not to prove me a lover, but thyself a fondling. Well, if I

love, it is the sign of good nature; if I love not, of a cynical nurture, but whether I love or no, it cannot profit thee nor displeasure me, and yet not to love is the sign of a discourteous peasant.

Morando, hearing what bitter blows were given between these two gentlemen, parted them with this parole:

If, quoth he, Hercules and Achelous had not fallen out, the nymphs had never gotten their cornucopia. Had not Circes [=Circe] and Ulysses jarred, his men had never returned to their shapes. 'Tis an ill flaw that bringeth up no wrack, and a bad wind that breedeth no man's profit. Had not Silvestro & Peratio fallen out about love, we had never brought it in question whether it be good to love or no, but now we will have it tried out in the plain field to see the event of the battle, for truly I am of Silvestro's opinion, that to live without love is not to live at all.

Sostrata, who from her birth was vowed unto Vesta, offered her sacrifice at the shrine of Diana, hearing Morando take Silvestro's part, with blushing face made this maidenly answer:

Sir, quoth she, although I may seem impudent in my mother's presence to enter parole, and may be thought half immodest without command to come to council, yet I hope the equity of the cause and the necessity of the defence will excuse me to the one and clear me from the other. To have fond love honoured as a god were gross idolatry; to consent to such schismatical opinions were palpable heresy; therefore if it please my mother to give me leave, I will prove that the worst course of life is to love.

Daughter, quoth Panthia, if you think yourself strong enough to withstand so stout an heresy, my goodwill shall be quickly granted, but take heed lest in venturing in an unknown ford you slip over the shoes.

Tush, quoth Peratio, it was easy for Achilles to conquer Hector when he himself by the means of Thetis was invulnerable, and as easily may Sostrata withstand Silvestro, sith she is armed with the truth, which may well be assaulted, but never utterly sacked.

Your good word, quoth Silvestro, is never wanting, but if Sostrata would be ruled by mine advice, she should not yield her verdict against Venus, but for my part let her do as she please, for I am sure prattle she may, but prevail she cannot.

Sostrata, hearing the short censure of Silvestro, began to defend the walls with this rampire:

Ovid, quoth she, the master of this art, who busily beat his brain about setting down of amorous principles, being demanded what love was, answered that it was such a vain and inconstant thing, such a fickle & fond affectionate passion, that he knew not what it was, from whence it came, nor to what end it tended, only this he was assured of by experience, that to the unhappy it was a hell, and to the most fortunate (at the least) the

loss of freedom. Anacreon said that it was the forgetting of a man's self, whereby his senses are so besotted and his wits inveigled, he is so snared with vanity and so fettered with folly, as he greedily seeketh to gain that thing which at last turneth to his extreme loss, for whoso yieldeth himself as a slave to love bindeth himself in fetters of gold, and if his suit have good success, yet he leadeth his life in glistering misery. For love, according to the definition of the philosophers, is nothing else but the desire of beauty, so that the beginning, midst and end of love is to crop the bitter-sweet bud of beauty, which how pleasant soever it be in the mouth, yet so perilous in the maw that he never or seldom digesteth it without danger both of his purse and person. Beauty, the only jewel which lovers desire to enjoy (although you may object against me that it is a foul bird defiles their own nest, yet conscience constrains me to aver the truth) is like to the baaran flower, which is most pleasant to the eye, but whoso toucheth it feeleth present smart. None ever rid on Sejanus' horse but he came to ruin. Whoso possessed but one dram of the gold of Tholossa [=Tolosa] perished. He that with unwashed hands touched the altar of Janus fell down presently dead, and few or none which only fix their fancy upon beauty escape without mishap or misery, so that I conclude the lover in lieu of his toil getteth such gain as he that reapeth the beautiful apples of Tantalus, which are no sooner touched but they turn to ashes.

If this trash then be the treasure which lovers desire so greedily to gain, no doubt their winnings shall be much like to his which, supposing to embrace Juno, caught nothing but a vain vanishing cloud. This considered, he hath either his senses besotted or else is blinded with self-will which seeth not the abuses in love and folly of lovers, whose life is so pestered with continual passions and cumbered with such hapless care as it is to be counted nothing but a very mass of misery. They spend the day in dumps and the night in dolour, seeking much and finding little, gaping after that which they seldom gain, and which if they get, proveth at length but loss.

*'Tis true in troth, quoth Peratio, for of all follies, love is the greatest fondness, and especially in those which are counted truest lovers, who if they want of their will and miss of their wish pine away in hellish penury, and though their mistress reward them with hate, yet they never make an end of their love but by death. Such love, in my opinion, no wise man either will or can commend, for if to love were good, as is now in question, yet it is [+a] proved principle *Omne nimium vertitur in vitium* [=Every excess develops into a vice]; therefore if ever I love, I will keep a mean, neither too high, lest I suspect with Cephalus, nor too low, lest I mislike with Minos, and especially I would not exceed, for I think of lovers as Diogenes did of dancers, who being asked how he liked them, answered: *The better, the worse.**

This pleasant conceit of Peratio made Morando and all the company to laugh, seeing how bitterly he began to bob Silvestro on the thumbs, who, throughly chafed, burst forth into these terms:

Peratio, quoth he, you come to council before you be called, and set down your sentence before any man craves your censure; your verdict is of less valure. Your slender opinion is not to be taken for a principle, and therefore learn thus much of me, that so apishly to

carp at every cause is a sign of great immodesty and small manners. But leaving you to your folly, thus much to the purpose. The philosophers who have sought precisely to set out the perfect anatomy of pure love, who set down by pen that which before they tried by experience, weighing wisely the strange affects and force of love, and feeling in themselves the puissance of his power, justly canonized that sacred essence for a god, attributing unto it the title of deity, as a thing worthy of such supernatural dignity. For it doth infuse into the minds of men such virtuous and valorous motions, kindling in men's hearts such glowing coals of natural affection (which before the force of love had touched them lay buried in the dead cinders of hate) that it doth knit the minds of friends together with such perfect and perpetual amity as we may justly say with Socrates, they be two bodies and one soul. Yea, the common people, although their minds be sotted and almost senseless, yet they have had love in such sacred estimation that they carefully rewarded them with the title of honour and dignity which have excelled in that holy affection, esteeming this only virtue (if so basely it may be termed) sufficient of a man to make one a god. But to aim more near the mark, if we rightly consider the force of love, we shall find that there is nothing which so pleasureth a man and profiteth the commonwealth as love. Tully, being demanded why the commonwealth of Rome did oft fall into many calamities at that time, especially when Sulla and Marius tyrannously shed so much innocent blood, answered, because the temple of love was defaced, and being demanded what caused the commonwealth so to flourish in prosperous estate, answered: Love, alleging too an old Italian proverb Amor e la madre del buon citta [=Love is the mother of a good city].

What causeth virtue to reign and vice to come to ruin but love? What delighteth in good and despiteth ill but love? Yea, what causeth a man to be honoured for a god but love? It maketh the valiant to venture amongst most perilous dangers, neither to be feared with the loss of life nor to respect the dint of death, thinking no adventure hard to be achieved, no encounter cumbersome, no danger perilous, so he be fully armed with the shield of love to defend him from the furious force of his enemies. So many Grecians had never been slain of Hector had not Andromache looked over the walls. Troilus had never made such a massacre among his foes had not Cressid buckled on his helmet. Nay, Achilles had never slain them both had not Briseida [=Briseis] been the mistress of his thoughts. To conclude, in all ages chivalry had never so bravely flourished if love had not been the guerdon for their deserts.

Love maketh a man which is naturally addicted unto vice to be endued with virtue, to apply himself to all laudable exercises, that thereby he may obtain his lover's favour. He coveteth to be skilful in good letters, that by his learning he may allure her; to excel in music, that by his melody he may entice her; to frame his speech in a perfect phrase, that his eloquence may persuade her, yea, what nature wanteth he seeketh to amend by nurture, and the only cause of this virtuous disposition is love. And to prove these premises with a particular instance, I remember that our countryman Boccace in his Decameron bringeth in one Chimon [=Cymon], a Lacedaemonian, who was more wealthy than witty, and of greater possessions than good qualities, given from his birth to a servile drudge by nature, and could not by his friends be haled from his clownish state by nurture. His delight was to toil at the plough, although a nobleman born, and civil

courtesy was the only thing he contemned. This Chimon, who by no art could be brought to have any wit, by chance as he passed through the streets cast his eye on the glittering beauty of a lady in Lacedaemonia, whose singular perfection so deeply imprinted into the heart of this witless Chimon as he felt the flame of fancy to fire within his entrails. Yea, the force of affection had so furiously assaulted him as, perplexed with these unacquainted passions, love drive [sic] him to his shifts, that he, seeking to obtain his mistress' favour, he began to apply himself to all virtuous exercises, that within short time, his love being his loadstone, of a witless fool he became a wise philosopher, of a clown to become a courtier. Yea, love made such a strange metamorphosis of her new novice that in prowess and courtesy he exceeded all the courtiers of Lacedaemonia. Tush, who rightly can deny that love is not the cause of glory, honour, profit and pleasure which happeneth to man, and that without it he cannot conveniently live, but shall run into a thousand enormities? Whereof I conclude that not to love is not to live, or else to lead a life repugnant to all virtuous qualities.

Well said, Silvestro, quoth Morando, thy reason is good, for in truth he that is an enemy to love is a foe to nature; there is nothing which is either so requested of men or desired of brute beasts more than mutual society, which neither the one can gain nor the other attain without love. Is not he then more senseless than a beast or less natural than a reasonable creature which would despise it? Yes, no doubt, I would count him like to Aparmantus [=sic for Apemantus], that had no other reason to hate men but for that they were men, he himself being like a man, but in nature a very monster.

Sir, quoth Sostrata, if you weighed well what love were, you would yield another verdict. Is there anything which man esteemeth more than liberty? Nay, doth he not account it dearer than life, and is not love the loss thereof, and the means to lead him into an endless labyrinth? Doth it not fetter him that is free, and thrall the quiet mind in perpetual bondage? Is there anything to be found in love but lowering, care, calamity, sorrow, sighs, woe, wailings, complaints & misery? What breedeth frenzy and bringeth fury but love? What maketh the wise foolish and fools more fond but love? What besotteth the senses, what bruise the brain, what weakeneth the wit, what dulleth the memory, what fadeth the strength, nay, what leadeth a man to ruth and ruin but love? And yet, forsooth, no less than a god. Dido had ended her golden days with joy in gallant Carthage; Phyllis had never desperately procured her own death; Ariadne had not miserably died in the solitary deserts; Medea had reigned royally as Queen of Colchos; yea, innumerable others had enjoyed more felicity or tasted less misery if this cruel monster love had not wrought their mishap. For as soon as it once inveigleth the wit and bewitcheth the senses, it maketh straight a metamorphosis of the poor lover's mind; he then rageth as though he were haunted with some hellish hag or possessed with some frantic fury, like one enchanted with some magical charm or charmed with some bewitching sorcery. Yea, he is perplexed with a thousand sundry passions; first free, and then fettered; alate swimming in rest, & now sinking in care; erewhile in security, and then in captivity; yea, turned from mirth to mourning, from pleasure to pain, from delight to despite, hating themselves and loving others who are the chief cause of this their calamity, fulfilling the saying of Propertius that to love, howsoever it be, is to lose, and to fancy, how chary soever the choice be, is to have an ill chance, for love, though never so

faithful, is but a chaos of care, and fancy, though never so fortunate, is but a mass of misery. Whereof I conclude that whoso is entangled with the snares of love or besotted with the beams of baleful beauty enjoyeth more care than commodity, more pain than profit, more cost than comfort, more grief than good, yea, reapeth a tun of dross for every dram of perfect gold.

Nay, stay, quoth Silvestro, conclude not so readily before the premises be granted, for though you have, Sostrata, shadowed the table, yet till colours be laid on with a perfect pencil, it is no certain picture. Zeuxis deceived birds with painted grapes, and yet they were not perfect fruit, and though ye fill their ears with your fond reasons, yet after I have pulled back the veil, everyone shall see they are but mere shadows. You reason first of the definition of love, saying that it is no other thing but the desire of beauty, which if I grant, what then, forsooth? By an odd induction you conclude that beauty is the breeder of mishap, and therefore love the bringer of misery, but I neither affirm the one nor grant unto the other. For Plato, being demanded in what things we most resemble the gods, answered, in wisdom and beauty, esteeming wisdom the only gem which enricheth the mind, and beauty the only jewel that adorneth the body. Yea, severe Socrates said that the gods in framing of beauty skipped beyond their skill in that the maker was subject to the thing made, for the gods themselves have been so subject to the glittering hue of beauty as they have been forced to forsake their celestial spheres for to enjoy so precious a treasure, yea, to make a metamorphosis of their deity into human shape, as Jupiter did by turning into a bull to crop the beauty of Europa. And think you then, Sostrata, you have not both committed an heinous offence in blasphem[e]ming so divine a thing, & also been greatly deceived in thinking light of love, which tendeth to none other end but to the obtaining of so divine a treasure?

Further, you count every virtue in love to be vanity, every straw to be a stumbling-stock, every little molehill to be a great mountain, concluding because it is fraught with care, therefore it is to be contemned, because it is subject to trouble and mishap, therefore to be utterly disliked, but your opinion is vain, and therefore your reasons are of no value; they carry small sense in that you are so subject to self-will. For did not Pythagoras compare virtue to the letter Y, which is small at the foot but broad at the top, meaning that to obtain virtue is very painful, but the possession thereof passing pleasant? Yea, do not the wise philosophers endeavour much travail to attain virtue? Do not martial minds, who gape after glory, sleep little and labour much, hazard their limbs and venture their lives to attain honour? Do not merchants yield themselves to the mercy of the furious seas and try the rage of stormy tempests, suffer perils by the sea and post by land to possess riches? Shall therefore the philosopher's life be contemned because it is fraught with trouble? Shall the merchant's stay or the martial state be despised because the one is subject to danger and the other to death? No, if this may be concluded, it will breed a confusion in all estates. Shall then love be thought lewd because poor passionate lovers be ready to bear the burden of all misfortune to the end to achieve so royal a reward as beauty? No, for he is to be thought a fearful dastard whom any worldly muck doth deceive, whom any hard attempt doth withdraw, or any humble prayer doth withhold from attaining the top of his desire. Cease, then, Sostrata, to blaspheme against beauty, sith it is divine; leave to inveigh against love, since it is a labour fit for the gods.

Otherwise thou shall be thought to be more wilful than wise, and to spit out these bitter speeches more of cankered spite than of any just cause.

Well, quoth Aretino, if that testy Tyanaeus were alive, who was the contemner of beauty, the dispraiser of love, despiser of fancy and the detester of all such amorous society, and heard Silvestro tell this tale, no doubt he would not only turn his tippet, recant his heretical opinion and persuade others to honour beauty, but he himself would become a lover.

Truly, quoth Panthia, for my part I confess that Silvestro hath so cunningly confuted my daughter's reasons as I must needs say he is worthy to have the verdict to go on his side, for though Diana hath reaped renown by her chastity, yet Juno hath gained more honour by her marriage.

Why, Madam Panthia, quoth Peratio, will you bring Silvestro into a fool's paradise by allowing his opinion? I can but smile to see how cunningly you can claw him where he itcheth, but he knows you do but flatter, & thinks that women's thoughts and their tongues runs not always together.

Truly, quoth Aretino, that is the cause that Silvestro bears so much with Lacena's folly, for he thinks she plays like the consul Attilius, that was wont to cover the picture of his concubine with a curtain wherein was embroidered the story of Diana and Actaeon.

What Lacena doth, quoth Silvestro, I know not, but I am sure Peratio speaks more of crabbedness than of conscience, resembling herein Apollo (I mean not in pure complexion, but in peevish condition), who inveighing greatly gainst Venus and Cupid, did himself the next night ravish poor Clymene.

Well, quoth Morando, Madam Panthia, sith you have heard this doubtful question so thoroughly discoursed, give your censure, and your verdict shall stand for a sentence.

Sir, quoth she, if I should pass against Silvestro, then all might think I either never loved my husband or else that I spoke of affection; therefore that I be not accused of the one nor condemned of the other, this is my opinion, that Silvestro, speaking of those loyal lovers which fix their fancy and place their affection first upon the virtue of the mind and then upon the beauty of the body, defendeth the right in saying that to love is a virtue, and that my daughter Lacena, in touching the excessive love, nay rather lust, of those fond and fantastical lovers who only respect the complexion of the body and not the perfection of the mind, having their fancy so fickle as they are fired with every new face, respecting pleasure more than profit and yet refusing no pains to satisfy their fleshly desires, saith well that such love is a vice.

Panthia, having yielded her judgment, was greatly praised of all the company for giving so wise a verdict. Indeed, quoth Aretino, it made me to marvel when I heard Lacena so far out of square, sith that by natural constitution women are more subject unto love than men.

Not so, quoth Panthia. You speak by contraries, for women are hard to be snared in love, like the stone ceraunon, which will hardly receive any stamp, but being once printed never loseth the form. Marry, if I might be so bold, I could aptly compare men to spaniels, that will fawn on everyone that carrieth bread in his fist.

Stay there, quoth Morando. It is now dinnertime, and this question asketh a long discourse. We will now dine, and the rest of the day, to exercise ourselves, we will spend in hunting, but tomorrow we will have this doubt debated of Aretino and Fioretta. I will be the plaintiff, quoth Aretino. And my daughter shall be the defendant, quoth Panthia. Why then, quoth Morando, let us ply our teeth as we have done our tongues. And with that they all sat down to dinner.

The Third Day's Discourse.

Panthia and the rest of the company having pleasantly passed away the day in sport and quietly spent the night in sleep, no sooner saw that Aurora had forsaken the watery bed of her lover Titan but they, remembering that Aretino and Fioretta were to perform their challenge, hasted to be hearers of this doubtful discourse. But seeing Morando was not stirring, they walked into the garden to take the fresh and fragrant air, where Flora presented unto them a paradise of odoriferous flowers, greatly pleasing the eye and sweetly delighting the smell. Enticed with the verdure of these flourishing plants, they all rested them in an arbour made of roses, whereby Peratio, taking occasion to be pleasant, entered into this parle:

I now, quoth he, see by experience Mantuan's principle to be true, that weal is never without woe, no bliss without bale, each sweet hath his sour, every commodity hath his discommodity annexed, for you see by proof the sweetest rose hath his prickles.

And what of this? quoth Panthia. What infer ye of these principles?

Marry, quoth he, I can aptly compare a woman to a rose, for as we cannot enjoy the fragrant smell of the one without sharp prickles, so we cannot possess the virtues of the other without shrewish conditions, & yet neither the one nor the other can well be forborne, for they are necessary evils.

O sir, quoth Panthia, you are very pleasant. Poor women must be content to suffer the reproof, though men merit the reproach, but if they were as little virtuous as men are greatly vicious, no doubt then you would write volumes of their vanity. But, quoth she, as bad as they be, when you sue to obtain their favour, then you account them as heavenly creatures and canonize them for saints, commending their chastity and extolling their virtues, whereof I conclude that either they are faultless, or you flatterers.

Tush, quoth Peratio, what others think I know not, but I was never of that mind, for truly this is my verdict, be she virtuous, be she chaste, be she courteous, be she constant, be she rich, be she renowned, be she honest, be she honourable, yet if she be a woman, she hath sufficient vanities to countervail her virtues.

Truly, quoth Silvestro, as the inhabitants of Lemnos were turned into frogs for railing against Lantona, so, Peratio, thou deservedst to be changed into a cur for barking out such currish blasphemous speeches against women. Niobe inveighed against Venus for her lightness, and yet she herself more lewd, and thou railest against women for their vanity, thou thyself being thrice more vicious, but as it was impossible to tell a tale to a Cretian [sic for Cretan] and not to talk to a liar, so it is impossible, Peratio, to speak of thee and not to name a slanderer.

With that Morando, being newly risen, and missing his guests, went into the garden, & hearing these bitter blows, thought quickly to part the fray. He severed them therefore with this *Salve*:

Gentlemen and gentlewomen, quoth he, in that I will not be tedious, in one word I bid you all good day. The achieving of yesterday's challenge between Aretino & Fioretta hath made me rise thus early. Cease off, therefore, from your supposes, for I enjoin you all to silence, and let us hear what a plea our plaintiff will put in to aver his doubtful problem.

The company, first requiting Morando with the like courtesy and then returning his *Salve* with the like salutation, held their peace to hear Aretino parle, who seeing they listened attentively to hear his talk, began his tale in this manner:

It is a principle, quoth he, amongst the natural philosophers that men by their constitution are endued with a more perfect and stronger complexion than women, being more apt to endure labour and travail, and less subject to effeminate pleasure and pastime, having their hearts hardened to withstand any kind of passion, and less mollified to receive any pathetical impression, whereof I infer that men, having their hearts indurate by natural constitution, are more able to withstand the force of love than women, whose effeminate minds are enclosed within a more tender and delicate complexion. For as the perfect gold which is of a pure substance receiveth any form sooner than the sturdy steel which is of a gross & massy mould, so women's effeminate minds are more subject to sudden affection and are sooner fettered with the snare of fancy than the hard hearts of men, which being rubbed with the adamant stone are apt to withstand any violent passions. Tiresias, who had by hard hap the proof of both natures, and Scython, who at his pleasure was either a man or a woman, the one being demanded by Jupiter and the other by Bacchus whether men or women were most subject unto love, framed this answer, that the arms which Venus gave on her shield were sufficient to discuss the doubt, meaning that as doves, who are Venus' darlings, are more prone unto lust than any other fowls, so women are more subject unto love than any other moral creatures.

*Truly, sir, quoth Fioretta, you seem by your sentences to be a subtile and secret philosopher, for I think you bring in such dark problems as you scarce understand your own reasons. Is this your skill in natural philosophy, to bring in natural principles? Or think you by sophistry to shadow the truth? No, words are but wind, and a few dry blows shall not carry away the conquest. Aristotle and Albertus both set down this infallible axiom, that the natural constitution of men is choleric, hot and dry, having of all the four elements fire most predominant in their complexions, so that as Galen affirmeth in his book *De partibus corporis humani*, this fiery constitution doth make them full of passions, soon hot, soon cold, easily inflamed and quickly quenched, whereas women be phlegmatic, cool and moist, having water most predominant in their constitution, and therefore less subject unto fiery affections. Whereof I infer that the minds of men, which are hot & dry, are sooner scorched with the heat of Venus and fired with the flame of fancy; yea, love hath more power to set on fire their affections, being already of a hot constitution, than to scorch or scald the hearts of women, which naturally are of so moist and cold a complexion. The dry balm is sooner set on fire than the watery beech; the withered hay sooner burneth than the moist grass, and the fiery heart of Mars sooner scorched than the cold mind of Diana.*

Nay, Mistress Fioretta, quoth he, seeing you urge me so strictly, I will prove my premises with most approved instances. Was not Dido almost consumed in the flame before Aeneas touched the fire? Was not she fettered at the first sight, whereas Venus could hardly induce her son to love? Demophoon was not so soon drowned in desire as Phyllis, for he no sooner set foot on land but she was over shoes in love, whereas (God knows) all her flattering allurements could hardly train him to the court of Cupid. The nymph Echo no sooner saw Narcissus but she was inflamed, whereas he neither by tears, prayers, promises nor protestations could be allured to yield himself a subject unto Venus. Tush, what should I recount the passionate love of Salmacis, Circe, Byblis, Hylonome, and of infinite other whose lives are sufficient proofs and precedents to confirm my former reasons. Cupid, intending to revenge himself upon Apollo for discovering the adultery between his mother and Mars, was fain to spend many of his chiefest darts ere he could strike him in love with Daphne, but as the blind boy pleasantly sported with his mother, by chance he raced her breast with the tip of his arrow, which no sooner touched her but she was deeply in love with her darling Adonis. In fine, all ages and estates have yielded sufficient proofs to confirm my premises, so that I need not allege any more reasons, but conclude with the saying of Martial which affirmeth three things never to be parted: mulier, amor, & inconstantia.

Tush, quoth Fioretta, all this wind shakes no corn; your antecedent infers no necessary consequent, for if I grant that divers dames have been suddenly surprised with fancy, may you therefore conclude that women are more subject unto affection than men? This were, Aretino, too absurd an argument. But to confirm my reasons with a plain proof which we both see and know by daily experience, are not men fain, being themselves once fired with fancy, to seek and sue, to watch and ward, to parle, to pray, to protest, to swear, to forswear, yea, to use a thousand sundry shifts to allure a simple maid unto love? Do they not seek to hale her unto their hook with divers new devises? Some practise music to inveigle their minds, playing in the night under their windows with lutes, citterns and bandoras. Some tourney and just, that by their manhood they may allure them to love. Some paint out their passions in songs and sonnets to move them unto mercy, none saying they are too pitiful, but all exclaiming of their cruelty. The poor woman notwithstanding is so unwilling to yield unto love that she is hardly induced to fancy by all these flattering allurements, whereas the man is fired with every new face, fettered with every new fancy, in love at every look. Yea, they cannot Accedere ad ignem but they do straight Calescere plus quam satis, so that it is hard to find a man but he is either fraught with love or flattery.

Not so, Fioretta, quoth Silvestro. Conclude not so strictly, for to love, I grant, is proper to men, but to flatter belongeth to women.

Why, quoth Peratio, dare you blaspheme so broadly against that noble sex? Take heed if your mistress hear of this fond censure she hang not the lip.

This is small to the purpose, quoth Morando. Whether men feign or women flatter, it is not the mark we shoot at. Sith, Madam Panthia, these two champions have so manfully

behaved themselves within the lists that as yet the combat hangeth in suspense, to which of them shall we judges of this quarrel assign the conquest?

Truly, sir, quoth Panthia, to speak my mind freely without affection in this case, this is my opinion, that love, being no mortal passion, but a supernatural influence allotted unto every man by destiny, charmeth & enchanteth the minds of mortal creatures, not according to their wills, but as the decree of the fates shall determine. For some are in love at ye first look, as was Perseus with Andromeda; some never to be reclaimed, as was Narcissus; others scorched at the first sight, as Venus herself was of Adonis; some always proclaim open wars to Cupid, as did Daphne. Thus I conclude that men or women are no more or less subject unto love respecting their natural constitution, but by the secret influence of a certain supernatural constellation.

Then, Madam, quoth Peratio, you will appoint love to be some metaphysical impression that exceedeth nature, and that affection is not limited by the motions of the mind according to the complexion when [sic?] it is incident, Aristotle in his Physics being of this mind, that the interior senses are tied to the elementary constitution of the external temperature, whereof I remember that Epictetus merrily jesteth in his works with the ladies of Messina that therefore they were inconstant because phlegmatic, in that that complexion resembleth the water, which of all elements is most movable.

Morando and the rest of the company smiled, but yet greatly praised and allowed the wise verdict of Panthia, commending the mother for her perfect modesty and the daughters for their passing chastity. The discourse thus ended, and the sentence set down, Morando and his guests went to dinner, which being ended as well with pithy devises as pleasant dainties, Panthia, constrained by certain urgent affairs, yielding Morando great thanks for his courteous entertainment, went home to Bononia accompanied with the three gentlemen, who likewise, leaving Morando in his dumps for the loss of such good companions, departed, and for a time stayed with Panthia at Bononia, where what success Silvestro had in his love I know not, but if I learn, look for news.

FINIS.

Robert Greene.