
THE SECOND PART OF THE TRITAMERON OF LOVE

Wherein is set forth a delightful discovery of fortune and friendship, newly adjoined.

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After that the Lady Panthia was returned to Bononia, and all the gentlemen at her entreaty had borne her company, willing to show them both how far she was from ingratitude, although they were desirous particularly to depart to their several mansions, yet challenging a command over their needless affairs, she won them without any great entreaty to try their welcome by their entertainment, especially Silvestro, who was glad of such a restraint sith the virtuous disposition of the Lady Lacena had insinuated so cunningly into the depth of his thoughts that he found the liberty of his mind countermanded with a fore-conceited impression of an after-possessed content.

Well, the gentlemen generally resting at the commandment of the Lady Panthia, Silvestro finding with Scipio that he was never less alone than when he was alone, nor that his business was more great than when he was most idle, feeling with Aeneas that Creusa was in his heart whatsoever was in his head, that although lately he had inveighed against love, yet with the pelican he had drawn blood out of his own breast, taking opportunity at the rebound, lest in dallying with occasion he might find her bald behind, he resolved with himself to bewray that in outward parle which yet he had smothered in secret passions, and to aim at the fruition of his desires by discovering the faithfulness of his deserts. Sundry times he found Lacena at leisure, as one that busied herself more in thought than in action, but still a bashful modesty made such a restraint of his forward motions that although with Apelles he had begun the picture of Venus, yet he durst never attempt to finish it, lest if he got what he gaped after, he might stumble on too sore a charge, and if he missed of the mark, he might be mazed with too open a check. Hovering thus with Bellerophon in the skies, at last all alone he fell into this melancholy meditation:

Hath it not, Silvestro, been used as an old proverb in Italy that an inward sore puts out the physicians' eye, meaning by this allegory that as a secret malady which is hid within the bowels of the patient hardly can be cured for that it overreacheth his skill by being so covered, so a secret sorrow that fretteth the mind without discovery hardly can be redressed unless by revealing the passions? The concealing of Achilles' love was worse to his conscience than his death by unfolding his mind to Polyxena. Diomedes' secret sighs were worse than his open sorrows. It is more pain to keep the fire of Vesta covered than to offer solemn rites to the daughter of Jupiter. And, Silvestro, assure thyself, greater are thy possessions [sic for 'passions'?), smothered, than thy denials shall be grievous, rejected. Fear in love is fault, as long as the worst fault in love is a virtue; blush not to utter that which thou meanest to perform, as long as thy request guardeth her honour. Marriage, Silvestro, is honourable, and suits to such effect may be denied, but not disliked. Try. But as Hymneus [sic for 'Hymenaeus'?) holdeth in one hand a star, so he keepeth in the other a stone. Juno's feasts, as they begin with sweet consorts, so they are intermingled with broken melody. Marriage hath the seat tied to the eye of pleasure with a hair; a husband, stepping to delight, striketh his foot against danger, and in seeking after content, he falleth oft into perilous contention. Plato in his Androgyne was of the mind that a wife, though never so virtuous, yet was an evil; his reason: [Greek phrase], for that she was a woman. Play the wise man, then, Silvestro; bite not at the

fruit that hath only a fair rind. Wear not a garland with Perennus [=Perennis?] when thou has lost the conquest; offer not up on the altar of content nothing but conceits, lest the flame be depressed and thou half stifled. Cleobulus, meeting his son Freon solemnizing the ceremonies of marriage, gave him in hand a branch of hemlock, meaning by this that the virtuous disposition of a wife is never so perfect but it is interlaced with some froward fancies.

Suppose all this is true? Shall the merchant forbear the sweetness of his gain for the roughness of the sea? Shall Apelles cast away his pencil for that his boys take such pains in grinding of colours? Were it not folly to cast away the nut because the shell thereof is so hard? Yes, Silvestro, nothing is found without contrarities; the roundest circle hath his diametron, the favourablest aspects their incident oppositions, and marriage is therefore qualified with many trifling griefs and troubles lest the superfluity of delight should drowned [sic?] the mind in security and contempt.

As thus the poor gentleman sat perplexed, Lacena came by, who seeing him sit so overcharged with dumpish thoughts, wishing him as well as the man whom she meant to match with, did drive his heart from his halfpenny on this manner:

I can but marvel, Signior Silvestro, to see such a strange metamorphosis of your affections, that opposing yourself to your wonted constitution, from a courtier plausible with Aristippus you are become a Stoic satirical with Zeno; that from mirth, the herald of youth, you are fallen to melancholy, the hastener on to old age. These sudden alterations (if credit may be given to Avicen in his aphorisms) as I have heard old physicians allege, proceed from the sundry motions of the mind, as sorrows, cares, desires, want of content, love and suchlike.

Lacena had no sooner named love but Silvestro began to sigh, whereupon she prosecuted her prattle thus pithily:

Have I, Silvestro, so rightly censured of your pain by feeling of your pulse as you do resemble Hipparchion, that could not hear a man talk of music but he must play on his pipe, nor you one name love but you must sigh? Take heed, man, of Ovid's pen in his verses or Zuexis' pencil in his pictures; between the one's writings & the other's paintings proves love to be an unruly lord, for Ovid set down that love in his law observeth neither principle, reason nor circumstance, and Zeuxis, drawing the counterfeit of Venus, presented her tending upon a crown and a sceptre broken in piecemeal, meaning, as I suppose, by this emblem that as love is above law, so she grudgeth to be checked with the title of supremacy. Take heed, then, Silvestro; admit not such an ambitious tenant as will not be thrust out with lawful warning. Sighs are the emblazers of thoughts, and melancholy is the mistress of despair. Love not, but if thou must needs love, hope well, whatsoever thy hap be.

Lacena concluding with a smile that made Silvestro think she did but put a spur on his heel, seeing how cunningly she wished him to attempt the end of his desire, began thus to reply:

I know not, madam, how cunning your Ladyship is in calculating diseases by the causes, for physicians are oft like the gymnosophists, not known by their apparel but by their precepts. Galen was not judged the father of medicine by the colour of his coat but by the skill in his art, and your alleged doctor, Avicen, was better known by his aphorisms than his attire, and you, madam, may have some deep insight into the constitution of complexions though you have not an herbal tied at your girdle, yet Hippocrates, for all his skill, censured amiss, and you, for all your cunning, may misconstrue of my malady by my outward motions. All the maids in Rome that gazed at the temple of Vesta were not virgins. It was a question though [sic for 'thought'?] Democritus ever, whether it was for joy or sorrow. Sighs, madam, proceed not always for love; as well hath grief his passions as fancy, but if I were in love, yet were my disease to be pitied, in that if the sickness be not cured it engendereth either despair or death. Your persuasions (as one wishing by experience) are friendly, and therefore work thanks, wherein you decipher the mysteries and mishaps of love, that aiming at delight, it stumbleth at disquiet.

Although, madam, it is the point of a wise man being forewarned to be forearmed, yet let me answer thus to your objections, that Homer, willing to signify unto us that the gods giveth us good or ill hap by property, feigneth that at the gates of great Olympus there are placed two vessels, the one of gall, the other of honey, of which two mingled together Jupiter causeth all men to drink, whereunto Plutarch alluding saith that men can never purely and simply enjoy the ease of any great prosperity, but whether it be fortune, or the envy of destiny, or else the natural necessity of earthly things, their ease is always intermingled in their lifetime with evil among the good, in which predicament I remember Epictetus doth appoint marrying as a state of life interchangeably mixed with frowns and favours. Then, madam, if in love troubles are necessary because consequently incident, your persuasions are but bad philosophy for that no science is perfect that is not grounded on certain and infallible principles, yet like a good physician, not finding the sore but appointing the salve, you will me to relieve my sorrows with hope, herein alluding (as I suppose) to Diodorus the Athenian, who was wont to say that two things are very hurtful to men, love and hope, of the which the one leadeth and the other accompanieth them, the one seeketh out the means to execute their thoughts and the other persuadeth them with good success, and although these two things are not seen with the eye, yet are they worse than visible punishments. So, madam, whether I love or hope, I am perplexe[d] in that both these are passions, yet seeing as Aristotle saith the content of the sense is measured by the delight of the object, give me leave to love, were it never so dangerous, sith I know the thing loved is so virtuous, and hope I will, maugre the envy of despair, sith my desire is so honest and honourable.

Then, quoth Lacena, my supposition is granted; you are in love.

That, madam, quoth Silvestro, is hard for me to affirm, but assure yourself, love is in men, and like an ambitious Caesar, having granted at the first but the rule of a particular province, insinuateth to have the possession of the whole empire. I had read before, madam, though not proved it by experience, that the arrows of Cupid were more dangerous to be seen than to be touched, that he which granted Venus but a corner in his

kitchen should find her (unless he straight thrust her out) to aim at his whole inheritance, against whose encroaching vein had I this principle: Principijs obsta [=Resist the beginnings], and yet was I fain with Medea: Scio meliora, proboq{ue} deteriora sequor [=I know the better course, but follow the worse].

I will take you, quoth Lacena, at your Latin, and sorrow at your chance that you, poor man, have made so bad a choice, that knowing the best, hath stumbled on the worst; before, methought you counted the object virtuous and the desire honourable, and now slip you so far back as fallen with Medea into extreme follies?

Silvestro, seeing that wrong application had almost made Lacena peevish, fearing if he wrested not the pin to a right key his melody would be marred, made this subtle answer:

Madam, I did but herein allow your opinion for an oracle in thinking love, though never so sweet, yet to be tempered with some taste of gold [sic for 'gall'?], meaning by Medea's sentence not the badness of my choice, but thinking I followed the worst, how well soever I had wrought, in that I did love at all, for forewarned by your friendly promise [sic for 'premise'?], I thought I did see the ill which was fancy, and the best, which was abstinence, and yet, forced despite of will to become subject to love, I followed the worst in that I did love.

You men, quoth Lacena, smiling as half satisfied, have your shifts of descant to make sundry points upon one plain-song, and are so cunning in your sophistry that women's wits are half dazzled with your contrary fallations, but taking once (as many ladies have done) cracked coin for payment, yet to make me amends, tell me, Silvestro, by the faith of a gentleman, what is the lady that you love?

Shall this, madam, then suffice, quoth Silvestro, without any further demand or question at this time, and will you promise to answer me another suit?

If it be no greater, quoth Lacena, I agree, and promise to be no further inquisitive.

Silvestro, meaning to be pleasant, made this confused answer:

The lady, madam, by birth honourable, by education virtuous, her country Italy, her beauty great, her virtue more, wise, learned, modest, young; to be brief, madam, every way such a one as nature could present for a perfect counterfeit, or the gods frame as a pattern of supernatural grace, and to give you the greater light, as near as I can conceive the idea of her person in my imagination, thus I may describe her.

The description of Silvestro's lady.

*Her stature like the tall straight cedar trees
Whose stately bulks doth fame th' Arabian groves;
A pace like princely Juno when she braved
The queen of love fore Paris in the vale;*

*A front beset with love and courtesy;
 A face like modest Pallas when she blushed
 A seely shepherd should be beauty's judge;
 A lip sweet ruby red, grac'd with delight;
 A cheek wherein for interchange of hue
 A wrangling strife twixt lily and the rose;
 Her eyes two twinkling stars in winter nights
 When chilling frost doth clear the azured sky;
 Her hair of golden hue doth dim the beams
 That proud Apollo giveth from his coach;
 The Gnydian [=Cnidian] doves, whose white and snowy pens
 Doth stain the silver-streaming ivory,
 May not compare with those two moving hills
 Which, topped with pretty teats, discovers down a vale
 Wherein the god of love may deign to sleep;
 A foot like Thetis when she tripped the launds
 To steal Neptune's favour with his steps;*

To be brief, madam:

*A piece despite of beauty framed
 To show what nature's lineage could afford.*

Thus, madam, I think I have at large made such a discourse of my mistress as your Ladyship herein thinks yourself satisfied.

I am glad, quoth Lacena, you are so pleasant as for an apple to present me an oyster. I craved only her name, and you make a discovery of her qualities.

What the lady was, quoth Silvestro, was the question, and I refer me to all the world if this imports not a description of her substance. Her name, madam, was not named in the demand, and therefore pardon me if at this time she go nameless. But now it rests you resolve me in my question, which is, madam, what the gentleman's name is that most of all you love in the whole world, and unto this, madam, I adjure you by the love of virginity which I know you count a sacrilege to violate.

Lacena, perceiving how pleasant Silvestro had been in his problems, meant to conclude in the same mood and figure, and to show herself as witty as she was politic, told him that although he had subtilly given solution of her demand, yet she meant more curiously and charily to resolve him in his question. *And yet, quoth she, we read that Apollo's oracles which were counted divine had double meanings, and could well brook for the time present sundry interpretations. But sir, before I enter into my solution, let me freely say that your question maketh a double demand in telling his name whom I love best. It craftily maketh inquisition whether I love or no, so that in granting this, I return your demand with usury. Well, because you shall not think I live out of charity, I confess I love, and this is his name:*

Lacena's riddle.

*The man whose method hangeth by the moon,
and rules his diet by geometry,
Whose restless mind rips up his mother's breast
to part her bowels for his family,
And fetcheth Pluto's glee [sic?] in fro the grass
by careless cutting of a goddess' gifts,
That throws his gotten labour to the earth,
as trusting to content for others' shifts,
'Tis he, good sir, that Saturn best did please
when golden world set worldlings all at ease;
His name is Person, and his progeny,
now tell me of what ancient pedigree.*

Now, quoth Lacena, you [+have] heard his name, I pray you tell me whose son his brother was?

As Silvestro was ready to make reply, the Lady Panthia with the rest of the company having heard news that Francesco Sforza, a countryman and kinsman of theirs, was slain in a battle against the Turks, missing the Lady Lacena, went to seek her out that they might make her partaker of his death, found her & Silvestro close at prattle. The old mother, who was willing her daughter might match so well, said nothing, but Aretino, so thinking to set Silvestro in a chafe, gave the onset in this manner:

I am glad, Madam Lacena, to see you so soon this morning at shrift; either no doubt you are become of late very religious, or else you owe some extraordinary devotion to your ghostly father. I cannot conjecture by his complexion but you have stumbled on a learned clerk, and therefore commend your choice, but take heed, for I have heard them say that these Bononians are sore penitentiaries, and pass over their own faults with the strictness of other men's penance. But no doubt they which followed Pythagoras counted his bare diet dainties, and such as like of the tree seldom find fault with the fruit.

Silvestro, willing to strike Aretino in the same vein for that he knew he bore some goodwill to Lacena, made this answer:

I remember that Diogenes the Cynic used to call Pluto [sic for 'Plato'?] proud when the philosopher himself had a self-conceit in his patched cloak, and Phocion wished men to buy shoes, and yet went ever barefoot. Aretino, by naming me a ghostly father, aimeth at that profession he best liketh of, and would with Marcellinus, by praising another man's justice, insinuate himself into the same office, but we see the bravest men have not the best luck, and time and fortune are oft enemies to such as deserve best. Yet Aretino, quoth he, be of good cheer, for as long as your harvest is in the grass and the fruit ungathered, you may with the chameleon live by the air and make an ordinary of hope.

The company, who very well understood this mystical meaning of Silvestro, smiled to see him choleric. Aretino was at this dry cut, which Panthia espying, sorry that the gentlemen should fall out, broke off the jar with these speeches:

No more of this, for it is ill sowing of salt amongst nettles and stirring up the fire with a sword; frumps amongst friends are frivolous, and a word mistaken is half a challenge. Therefore, gentlemen, leave these needless allegories that have such an amphibological equivocation and may admit such diverse construction; let the ghostly father and his novice make what confession they list, for I hope the man is honest sith he hath left this cowl and his hood behind. But to be short, this was not the matter we came for. The cause, daughter Lacena, was to bring you news that a countryman, nay more a kinsman of ours, Francesco Sforza, is lately slain in the broils against the Turks.

Lacena, hearing this tidings, after great commendations given of the man for his virtue, parentage, valour and magnanimity, fetching a deep sigh said: *O fortune, how constant art thou in thy inconstancy!*

Panthia, who seeing that Aretino his choler was not digested, willing with some discourse to bring him out of his memento, took hold of her daughter Lacena's word and said that seeing they were at leisure and dinner not yet ready, she would very gladly have them make manifest what that supposed fortune was. Peratio, desirous to content the old lady, and specially to please Fioretta, to whom he was newly affectionate, undertook the matter, and told the gentlemen that if they would pardon his rashness in attempting such a great enterprise, willingly he would fulfil the Lady Panthia's request. Silvestro made answer for the rest that sith the loss of time was the greatest prodigality, and that such expense might not be valued, he thought it very fit to pass away the morning with such profitable purposes, and therefore entreated Peratio to go forward in his good motion, who began his discourse in this manner:

Peratio his discourse upon fortune.

Aristotle, who by the sharpness of his reason pierced into the depth of many physical and supernatural conclusions, long demanded by his scholar Alexander the Great what fortune was, made this answer, that it is a casual and accidental cause in things which, being purposely done for some certain end, have no apparent cause of their falling out otherwise, so that a man may well say that such a thing came to him by fortune which falleth out besides his thought when he undertaketh any purpose with deliberation. And Plato, who for his theological sentences was called divine, made this definition, that fortune was an accidental cause and a consequence in those things which proceed from the counsel of man, and Epicurus his opinion was that fortune was such a cause as agreed neither to persons, times nor manner, by which reasons we may justly say that all future events subject to casual inconstancy because they hang in suspense and may fall out contrary to deliberation may be comprehended under the word fortune. Theophrastus, speaking of this goddess poetically, aiming at her qualities, saith she looketh not whereat she shooteth, delighting to deprive men of that which with great pain and labour they have attained unto, but especially in overturning those felicities which

men suppose to be most firm and assured, so that Juvenal in his Satires saith that when it pleaseth her, she maketh a consul of a rhetorician, and e contra, as her inconstant pleasure is, having this property to delight greatly in the variety of chances, and in deriding all the devices of man, oftener lifting up into the place of sovereign authority such as are unworthy thereof than those which by desert merit such dignity.

The ancient Romans more honoured fortune than any one people in the world, for they esteemed her, saith Pindarus, as the nurse, upholder and patron of the city of Rome. They erected for her many and sumptuous temples wherein she was adored under sundry names and titles as a goddess of singular power, insomuch that they thought themselves more beholding unto fortune for the greatness and prosperity of their empire than to virtue. Sulla, having attained to the sovereign authority and dignity of a dictator, yielded himself and all his actions to the favour of fortune, boasting that his prosperous success proved him to be fortune's child, and thereupon c[h]allenged unto himself the surname of 'happy'.

Indeed, quoth Silvestro, I remember that Livy maketh report of him in his Decades, that he did so greatly stay himself upon the favour of fortune that, having her to frown, as one armed by fate after many proscriptions, murders and barbarous cruelties, voluntarily and without fraud he dared to resign over the dictatorship and to spend the rest of his years in great assurance and quietness of mine, yea, and as a prince to pass and repass thorough all Italy without any guard, even in the midst of them whom he had so deeply offended.

It is also read of him, quoth Aretino, that when Mithridates, King of Pontus, wrote unto him concerning the war he had undertaken against him, setting down in the contents that he marvelled how Sulla durst buckle with his great fortune, especially knowing that she had not deceived him at any time whereas she never knew Sulla consul, he, scoffing at his bravery, returned this answer: For the selfsame cause, Mithridates, do I attempt the wars against thee in that fortune, having done her duty, and intending to bewray herself, she means to turn her back upon thee, and to sleep in my tent. Likewise Julius Caesar gave a certain argument that he had of the assurance of fortune when, entering upon the sea in a little frigate in a great gust of wind and tempestuous weather, the pilot making some doubt of weighing up the anchor for that the sea was so rough, the monarch encouraged the mariners, saying: Be not afraid, my friend, for thou carriest Caesar and his fortune. Augustus, his successor, sending his nephew to the war, wished that he might be as valiant as Scipio, as well beloved as Pompeius, and as fortunate as himself, attributing to fortune as a principal work the honour of making him so great as he was.

For that, quoth Aretino, you have brought Augustus, that worthy monarch, to memory, give me leave to say thus much of him, that great familiarity and acquaintance growing betwixt him and Anthony, his companion in the empire, they often passed away the time together with sundry sorts of plays and pastimes, wherein Anthony always went away vanquished. Whereupon one of his familiar friends, well seen in the art of divination, took occasion many times to utter his mind unto him in these or the like speeches: Sir, what do you so near this young man? Be not so familiar and conversant with him. Your

fame is greater than his, you are elder than he, you command more than he, you are better exercised in feats of arms, you have greater experience, and every way are his superior. But this let me say, which I have found out by the secrets of my science, that your familiar spirit feareth his, and your fortune, which of itself is great, flattereth his. So that if you sequester not yourself far from him, like a deceitful goddess she will take the garland of honour from your head, and set it upon his. Thus, to confirm Peratio's speech, we see in what great estimation the ancient Romans held fortune; yea, they stood in so great awe of her power that Paulus Aemilius, that great captain, was wont to say how among human things he never feared anyone, but amongst divine things, he always stood in great fear of fortune, as of her in whom there was small trust to be reposed because of her inconstancy and mutable variety, whereby she never useth to gratify men so liberally or to bestow such absolute prosperity upon them but that some envy is mingled in the portions, the consideration whereof moved Demetrius to cry out and say: O deceitful fortune! Thou are easily found, but hardly avoided.

They that laboured most, quoth Peratio, in painting out the properties of this feigned goddess saith that she hath a swift pace, a lofty look, and a haughty hope.

Because you talk of painting, quoth the Lady Panthia, I remember that in the Duke of Florence' chamber I once saw a table whereon was portrayed the picture or counterfeit of fortune, as near as I can guess in this manner. Winged she was, and standing upon a globe, as deciphering her mutability, holding in her right hand the cornucopia or horn of abundance which the poets feign to be full of all such heavenly and earthly things as are exquisite and precious; these she poureth out liberally, when, to whom, and where she pleaseth. In the left hand, a wheel which she turneth about continually, whereby that part which is above is presently turned downward, thereby giving us to understand that from her highest preferment she throweth down in one instant such as are most happy into the gulf of misery. Underneath this picture were written certain verses, thus Englished:

*The fickle seat whereon proud fortune sits,
The restless globe whereon the fury stands,
Bewrays her fond and far inconstant fits;
The fruitful horn she handleth in her hands
Bids all beware to fear her flattering smiles,
That giveth most when most she meaneth guiles;
The wheel that turning never taketh rest,
The top whereof fond worldlings count their bliss,
Within a minute makes a black exchange,
And them [sic for 'then'?] the vild and lowest better is,
Which emblem tell us the inconstant state
Of such as trust to fortune or to fate.*

After I had made consideration of these verses, methought I might rightly compare fortune to a glass, which the brighter it is, the more brickle it is, but leaving you to your discourse, although partly I have made a digression, let us hear, Signior Peratio, her inconstancy proved by evident examples.

Histories, madam, quoth Peratio, the treasure of antiquity and light of time, sets before our eyes innumerable examples of common and contrary effects that are wrought by this inconstant fortune, and those oftentimes practiced upon the same persons, where of small she hath made very great, and afterward taken them down lower, and if I may so speak, made them more miserable than ever they were at the beginning. Hannibal, that renowned captain of the Carthaginians and redoubted enemy of the Romans, whose fame terrified the whole state of Italy, after sundry notable victories obtain against them, was in the end utterly overthrown and compelled to fly hither and thither, to have recourse to foreign princes in whose armies he cast himself for the safety of his person. After long wandering, being old and spent, he settled himself with the King of Bithynia. But Titus Flaminius [=Flaminius], whom the Romans sent ambassador to that king, required to have him that he might put him to death. For, quoth he, as long as he liveth, he will be a fire to the Roman empire which wanteth but some one or other to kindle it; when he was in the rigour and strength of his age, neither his hand nor his body procured so great danger to the Romans as his good understanding and policy in martial discipline, being joined with the secret envy he bare them, which is nothing diminished through old age, neither yet through the alteration of his estate and fortune, because the nature and qualities of manners continueth always. Hannibal, being advertised what Titus did request, steeped poison in a cup of drink, which a long time he had kept against an extremity, but before he drank, he uttered these words: Now will I deliver the people of Rome from their great care, seeing that it lieth so heavy aboard [sic for 'a burden'?] upon them, and the time seemeth over-long to stay for the natural death of this poor old man whom they hate so extremely, and yet Titus shall not glory in any honourable conquest, nor get a victory worthy the ancient Romans, who even then when Pyrrhus, their enemy, warred against them and had won battles of them, yet sent him word of poison that was prepared for him. Thus did that great and virtuous captain finish his days, being utterly overthrown and trodden underfoot by fortune, which for a time had placed him in the highest degree of honour.

Pertinax came to the empire, ascending from a simple soldier to the degree of a captain and afterward governor of Rome, being born of a poor countrywoman, and having only reigned two months, was slain by the soldiers of his guard. Eumenes, a Thracian, one of Alexander's lieutenants, and one that after Alexander's death had great wars and made his party good against Antigonus, King of Macedonia, came to that greatness and authority from a poor potter's son, and afterwards being overcome and taken prisoner, died most miserably of hunger. But such preferment of fortune will not seem very strange unto us if we consider how Aurelius, from the selfsame place, obtained the selfsame dignity. Probus was the son of a gardener, and Maximinus of a blacksmith. Justinus, for his virtue surnamed the Great, from a hogherd in Thracia attained to the empire. Louis, the meek Emperor and King of France, was constrained to give over his estate and to shut himself up in a monastery through the conspiracy of his own children. Calerianus [sic for 'Valerianus'?] had a harder chance of his estate, ending his days while he was prisoner in the hands of Sapor [=Shapur], King of the Parthians, who used the throat of this miserable Emperor whensoever he mounted upon his horse. Mahomet, the first of that name, of a very small and abject place, being enriched by marrying his mistress, and

serving his own turn very fitly with a mutiny raised by the Saracens against Heraclius [=Heraclitus?], the Emperor, he made himself their captain, took Damascus, spoiled Egypt, and finally he subdued the city [sic for 'cities'?] of Arabia, discomfited the Persians, and became a monarch and a prophet.

But what need we draw out this discourse to show the strange dealings and marvellous changes of fortune in particular estates and conditions of men which are to be seen daily amongst us, seeing the sovereign empires of Babylon, of Persia, of Graecia, and of Rome, which in man's judgment seemed immutable and inexpugnable, are fallen from all their glittering show and greatness into utter ruin and subversion, so that of the best of them which surpassed the rest in power, there remaineth only a commandment limited and restrained within the confines of Almain, which then was not the tenth part of the rich provinces subject to this empire. Is there any cause, then, why we should be astonished if little kingdoms, commonwealths and other governments end when they are come to the full point of their greatness, and much less if it fall out so with men, who by nature are subject to chance, and of themselves desire and seek for naught else but alteration? Being assured, therefore, that there is such uncertainty in all human things, let us wisely prepare ourselves, and apply our will to all events whose causes are altogether incomprehensible in respect of our understandings and quite out of our power, for he that is able to say: Fortune, I have prevented thee; I have stopped all thy passages and closed up all thy ways of entrance, that man which dare stand so with fortune in defiance trusteth not in exterior contents but stayeth himself upon philosophical precepts, whereof all they are as capable that employ their wills and industry to such a noble and glorious benefit. He that taketh least care for tomorrow, s[a]ith Epicurus, cometh thereunto with greatest joy. And as Plutarch saith, riches, glory in authority and honour follow them most that stand least in fear of their contraries, for when a man seeketh after any of them with an over-burning desire, whereby too great a fear of deprivation is imprinted into the mind, the pleasure which he hath by enjoying the same is very weak and unstable, much like to a flame blown up and down with the wind. But as for the power of fortune (saith the same philosopher) it only bringeth down those men which of their own nature are of small courage and cowards, not attributing hereby cowards to misfortune, nor valour to prosperity, which is not able to perfect a man without virtue, for what will weapons avail without experience, riches without liberality, victory without bounty and clemency, fighting without valour and boldness? To be brief, all fortune's goods without knowledge how to use them are prejudicial, and the goods of the mind only firm and perpetual.

Peratio having ended his discourse, Aretino, meaning to show that his choler was past, began thus to be pleasant:

Before, sir, you conclude so precisely, I pray you let us hear your opinion about one doubtful point of fortune, and that whether marriage is within the compass of the goddess or no; I mean, whether wives fall by fortune?

Peratio, taking his question at the best, thought to end the discourse with a pleasant clause [sic for 'close?'], and therefore returned him this answer:

By my faith, Signior Aretino, you have found such a knot in a rush as will be so hard to untie as Gordias [=Gordius'] was that hung in the th[e] temple of Jupiter; as a solution, as hard to discuss as ever Sphinx put forth to the passengers. But, Signior Aretino, because I will not be too curious, thus as I can. I told you before that fortune's chances are accidental, contrary to deliberation; now marriage is a friendly uniting of minds with a determined election, making choice of the thing loved either for beauty, riches or virtue, therefore I think hardly brought within the events of fortune for that no marriage is so momentary but that hath some liking with a predetermined choice.

Now, quoth Aretino, what say you then to the marrying of such as know not their wives in the morning, and yet are married before noon? An instance for proof: the Lady Margaret Padilia, our countrywoman, a Florentine, going to church, as she was at her orisons espied a poor Genovese, a traveller, with whom she fell in love, and calling him by one of her maids to her pew, so handled the matter than the same day they both wedded and bedded.

Marry, quoth Peratio, I say whether it came by fortune or no, I must needs say it was the hottest love that ever I heard of, and such an unexpected event that had there been any deliberation, I would have attributed it to fortune, but I have heard them say that marrying comes by destiny, and therefore the poor lady was the more blameless.

As thus they were ready to prostrate [sic for 'prosecute'?] this pleasant purpose, one came to desire the Lady Panthia to come in to dinner, which message broke off this prattle, and so all friendly went to their repast.

The afternoon's discourse.

After that they had passed away the dinner-time with pleasant discourses, Silvestro, who still had a flea in his ear and could not take any rest, thought covertly to discover that which openly he could not so well manifest, and therefore determined to send her a letter, which she found [sic for 'he framed'?] so artificially as if by hap his intent might be intercepted, or she by chance lose it, yet no great vantage or suspicion might be had of their affections. The contents were these.

Silvestro to himself.

Requests betwixt friends are commands; performance in amity is duty; promise is debt; too much curiosity savoureth of self-love, and such as are too familiar run into contempt. Aristides counted all demands bad that pretended not good. Lawful wishes are signs of honesty; denial ought not to be named where the request is both necessary and honourable. Thoughts are not seen, but the face is the herald of the mind; faith bideth no perfect trial but by time. They which sigh either are troubled with too much sorrow, or else want the end of their desires; death is sweeter than fear of death, yet continual grief is above all fear. Epictetus was wont to say that love, when it was denied, was feigned; being counted a friend, the fruits of lust and sorrow. True love savoureth not of poetry,

but is a desire of that which is good. The Athenians placed virtue above fortune, and held riches in less estimation than beauty, and both less precious than honesty. As affection is restless, so, being perfect, it is endless. Justice is to give every one his due; a good mind harboureth not ingratitude. Pliny in his natural histories saith the salamander delighteth in the fire, and Socrates, a virtuous man, in the equity of his thoughts. Tully thought nothing profitable that was not honest. Say what thou thinkest, saith Periander, in necessary matters, for dissimulation ought not to come to the altars. Delay is prejudicial to desires; time tarrieth not, but passeth without recalling. If all these be true, let me conclude with the censure of Thales Milesius [=Miletus], that answereth every demand distinctly within one day.

Silvestro's notes to quicken a suspending memory.

After that he had framed this chaos of confused precepts, and like an obscure Paracelsian thrust a multitude of contrary simples into one confection, desirous to make a clerkly conveyance without suspicion, seeing half [sic for 'how?'] unmannerly he had left the company, he came down from his chamber in haste & found them so hard at chat that they perceived not his absence. But Lacena amongst the rest (for time favoured his attempts) was solitary standing at the window, so that unespied of any, but not unfelt of her, he closely conveyed the letter into her pocket, which done, he began to break off her musing in this manner:

It is an old saying, madam, that Consulenti nunquam caput doluit, the physician giveth best counsel when his head is most quiet, which old axiom willeth me to be so bold as to trouble you in this dump, for myself being the other day sore charged with melancholy, it pleased you pleasantly to attribute it either unto sorrow or love, and now, seeing you are in the like passion, my physic is so simple that by your own verdict I must set down my censure, for I cannot but think that women's diseases, being like unto men's in effect, proceed from the same causes. Then, madam, blame me not if I conclude as peremptorily, and say it is either grief or affection that breedeth this unaccustomed sadness. To apply the like medicine for the same malady were, as the logicians say, to prove idem per idem; therefore in this cause this is my advice, that the perfection of nature standing upon contrarieties sets down to us that the saturnine temperature is necessary to dry up the superfluities of the sanguine constitution, which reason argues that melancholy is oft as expedient for health as mirth, of which consequent I may infer that if love procure that cold and dry humour, it is not only profitable but most necessary. Then, madam, sith the year is dangerous and diseases are incident, and most diseases are rheumatic, use love as a mean of health and as an exercise of the mind; so may you please yourself with secret conceits and imaginations, and the better pity them whom you see to languish in such passions.

Lacena, hearing how Silvestro had absurdly by an induction enforced a conclusion, feeling by his pulse where his pain lay, thought to try how he could be a good patient in brooking a bitter potion, made him this answer:

I see, sir, quoth she, that your physic is rather the experience of a few drugs than the knowledge of any principles in that you confound causes in sundry constitutions, but it is no matter. Imagine what you please, and suppose what you list; if the worst be love, doubt not but my disease may be curable. Marry, I never mean by your advice to apply the medicine. If affection, as it is not a fault in women to fancy, hath tied my liberty a little shorter, take you no care for such harms as are voluntary. I am resolved to be patient, knowing it the best salve against love and fortune, but whatsoever the success be, you are the man that shall least know of it.

And with that she flung from him, as half in choler, leaving Silvestro so nipped on the pate with this last clause that he stood like one transformed by Medusa's head into a stone. The poor soul no sooner got into her chamber but she shut the door and fell to perusing the contents, which at the first reading she found so confused that she took it either for some prophetic enigma or else for a bare jest.

But leaving her in view of the letter, again to Silvestro, who (that the company by his countenance should not aim at his grief), seeing them still so hard in disputation, demanded of the Lady Panthia what was the effect of their discourse. She, willing to hear the question they had in hand throughly decided, told him they were setting down what a true friend was, now wanted his opinion, *Which*, quoth Panthia, *I enjoin you to set down*. Silvestro, not curious, and the rather willing for that he would drive away other fancies, requested the gentlemen to bear with him sith they could not deny the Lady Panthia's command, who enjoining with him [sic for 'her'?] in entreaty, Silvestro settled to discourse in this manner:

Silvestro's discourse of friendship.

Socrates, whom Apollo himself noted for a wise man, said that friendship is a communion of a perpetual will, the end whereof is fellowship of life, and it is framed by the perfect habit of a long-continued love, whereby we may perceive that there is a difference betwixt love and friendship because love is a desire of the thing loved and the beginning of friendship, but friendship is an ancient and inveterate love wherein is more pleasure than desire. To love, saith Cicero, is nothing else but to be desirous to profit and pleasure another without hope of recompense, for otherwise friendship would be a mere merchandise, which otherwise would be as free as charity. Socrates also said that the end of friendship was that, of two souls, one should be made in will and affection, and that none should love himself better than his friend. For there is a mean to be kept in all things, but in conversing with a friend, in regard of whom this ought to be resolved upon, that he is either wholly to be forsaken, or wholly to be trusted. What shall I hide from my friend, saith Homer, or what letteth that I may not think myself alone when I am with him? Whereby it appeareth unto us that a friend is the same self, and that whosoever would take upon him this title in regard of another, he must transform himself into his nature whom he purposeth to love, and that with a steadfast and settled mind, so to continue forever. Hereof one of the seven songs [sic for 'sages'?], speaking of him that loveth perfectly, saith that a friend liveth in another man's body. Friends therefore ought of necessity to have a sympathy, a condition and a conformity of manners, of desire, of

passions, of speech, of studies, of pleasures, of inclinations, of intermissions, if they mind to profess perfect friendship, whereby we may easily guess that he which entertaineth many friends depriveth himself of the name of a true and steadfast friend because it is altogether impossible for a man to fashion himself to all patterns, and to apply himself to all natures so divers in every one, especially that he shall find himself very hardly like affected in all things to one alone.

Now after we have found out such a disposition and conformity in him that offereth himself to be our friend, we must enter further into the knowledge of him, and sound the very depth of his heart, that we may be certain and sure of his good disposition. For to see outwardly a resemblance of our manners and conditions in another is not to prove them such indeed without dissimulation, unless they be grounded upon a good and virtuous nature which is simple, upright and unfeigned. For otherwise we see that many, like to Proteus taking divers shapes, are so subtile that when they would curry favour with any man to deceive him, they disguise themselves as chameleons fit for every humour. This is practiced chiefly by flatterers towards great men, who will counterfeit rather than they will not imitate the natural vice of the prince, so that as soon as they ever see him laugh, they straight fall into a pleasant and merry vein. I remember we read that Alexander the Great and Alphonsus, King of Aragon, having each of them somewhat a wry neck, this by nature, the other through reason, the sycophants and flatterers held their necks on the one side to counterfeit the imperfection.

To the end, therefore, that the sugared poison of such feigned friends deceive us not, we must make choice of an honest, prudent and wise man whose fidelity, integrity, constancy and liberality, as Cicero saith, is approved of everyone, and whom we shall perceive to be led and possessed with the same zeal to virtue that we ourselves are, to the end we may be aided and furthered by them to all good and laudable actions. For as Plato saith, friendship is given by nature for a help to virtue, not for a companion of vices. To this effect Pythagoras saith it is not good to join hands with everyone. Dicaearchus would also give us the same to understand when he saith that we must make all men our well-willers if it be possible, but only good men our friends, who are not obtained but after a long time, and that by virtue. And as when we pass by a bramble and a burr that catcheth fast hold of us, we cast it far from us, but contrariwise seek for the olive and grape, so we ought to seek after their friendship that deserve it, whose minds have sufficient matter in them to cause them to be loved, but to forsake, yea to reject, such as are unworthy, vicious, sensual and deformed, although they frown [sic for 'fawn'?] upon us, because their convers[at]ion corrupteth every good nature. There Bias said very well that a wise man receiveth not everyone into his friendship.

Having thus chosen him whom we desire to entertain for our friend, and laid the chief foundations of friendship upon his agreement of manners with us and upon his good disposition which by diligent enquiry before we can assure ourselves or boast that we have a true friend, we must prove his steadfastness and constancy, and not trust to offers and promises, whereof men are prodigal now-a-days. But this is clean contrary to the duty of a true friend, whose property is to be sparing in speech and prodigal in deeds, because great proffers are meet to be used to strangers, and good deeds towards true

friends. Nor to prove a friend we must not stay till need and necessity urge us, lest such trial be not only unprofitable and without fruit but also hurtful and prejudicial because at such a time as necessarily requireth friends we make trial of him who in truth is no such man, but we are rather to govern ourselves wholly with foresight, as we do in the receipt of gold and silver, for before we have need to employ it we consider if it be current, that we may be sure it will serve the time when necessity requireth. To this effect Theophrastus said we must prove strangers to love them, not love them to prove them. Therefore, albeit the true and right trial of a friend is in adversity, as of fine gold in a furnace, yet that is to be understood of him that is such a one indeed. For if we should expect the first trial upon ourself in time of certain danger, thereby to be assured and out of doubt, if then he should fail us it would bring us in great peril, so that we were better to try him when we stand not in need, pretending to him notwithstanding a matter of some great importance. If then he go forward with a sound zeal and ready affection, we are assured of him against another time, but if he stagger and do it coldly, or turn away his face and refuse it, besides that we have no hurt and hindrance, we shall also gain much by withdrawing such a friend gently and by little & little from our table and from our prosperity, always wisely observed that his friendship be simply forsaken and no enmity purchased, for it is not good or seemly to quarrel with him with whom we have lived beforetime familiarly.

Moreover we must note here that trial is to be made in an honest, not in a wicked matter, for we must not do as we read Alcibiades did, who being desirous to know whether he had so many friends as he thought he had, called them upon a day, one of them after another, into a dark place and showed unto them the image of a dead lady, saying that it was a man whom he had killed, requesting their secrecy for the close coverance [sic for 'conveyance'?] of the carcass. But amongst them all, he found none but Callias that would consent to his entreaty. This kind of proving a friend maketh us unworthy of such a name, and occasioneth every good man to withdraw himself out of our friendship. If we do all things both good and bad for our friends, saith Cicero, suth [sic] friendship may be called more truly a conspiracy of evil men than a confederacy of good men. But as we have said, we must gain another man's friendship by virtue, and not by vice, as also try a friend in just and reasonable causes, as if one be oppressed unjustly, if affliction and adversity follow hard at our heels, if need, poverty or any other human accident betide us, into which the best men commonly fall.

After we are sure we have a friend (which is very great riches), there is nothing that we ought to desire more than to preserve and keep him, and first the mutual opinion which ought to be in every friend of the virtue of his companion serveth very much for this purpose. For as Cicero saith, the opinion of virtue is the fountain of friendship, and it is proper to virtue to make a conquest of men's hearts to draw them unto itself and to preserve their friendship. Next the conjunction of manners and wills keepeth back all riots and contentions, whenas the will and mind of the one shall be declared, but the other presently putteth to his helping hand to bring it to pass. Thirdly, we are to observe this first law of friendship inviolable, not to require our friend to do anything that is not just or not in his power to perform, but to content ourselves with the use and service of that which he hath without seeking his hindrance, after the example of the industrious

and painful bee, which draweth honey out of flowers, and hurteth not the fruit. And above all things we must hold this for a general rule, that true and perfect friendship ought to be free as charity is, from whence she hath her beginning. I mean that it ought to exercise itself not for hire or for recompense, but only for his love that is beloved of us. For the one is proper to a friend, the other savoureth of a hireling. True it is that friends in these days resemble crows, which fly not but towards those places where there is something to feed upon; even so, commonly they visit not men's houses except it be for profit, neither reverence a friend longer than they see him in prosperity or may reap some gain or commodity by him. But we must shun such parasites that are but saluting and table-friends.

Moreover we must delight in the company and conversation of our friend, as in that wherein the most pleasant and sweetest fruit of friendship consisteth, and for want of this benefit hindered by distance of place, friends must communicate often by letters, thereby to show that they live in remembrance one of another. For by the letter of a true friend the spirit is refreshed, the eye delighted as with a most pleasing object, friendship is confirmed, and the mind satisfied and contented. Besides, we must have our virtues, spirits and acquaintance so common together that nothing be hidden or secret betwixt us. Lastly, we must yield to our friend all duties and services of sincere friendship, and that in all honest and profitable things, according to right and justice, which are the bonds and benefits of an holy love, desiring the like of him towards us. Above all things, his affliction, his adversity, his mishap, and every injury whatsoever offered unto him, either by envy or fortune, ought to be common to us with him, wherein we are to assist and help him with all succour and sweet consolation, which is as sovereign and fit a remedy as can be applied unto him, to mitigate his grief and passions. Hereof Phalareus [=Phaleris?] confessed very well that he had good experience when he was banished from his kingdom, seeing that his meeting with Crates, the wise man, had taken from him all care and thought of his misery; then if friendship can greatly diminish the grief that cometh by adversity, no doubt but it can add as much grace & pleasure to prosperity. We may affect, saith Terence, the comical poet, all duty whatsoever we owe to our friend by succouring him with four things: with our person, with our goods, with comfort, and with counsel, which we may more strictly comprehend under these two duties, of relieving the necessity of our friend, and of comforting him in his tribulation.

Now because what perfection soever is in our friend, as likewise in ourselves, it cannot be but there will be always some imperfection mingled therewith (men's doings being never without some evil), we must not presume to build such a perfect friendship as shall be free of all vice. Therefore we must gently bear all wants & discommodities of our friend, & oftentimes frame ourselves to many passions, so they be not directly but such as proceed from the imbecility and frailty of nature. Nevertheless against such imperfections we must, in time convenient, and to purpose, use free & gentle admonitions which are so necessary in friendship, and worthy of such consideration that in my opinion nothing is more profitable.

Now if it happen that some jar or displeasure fall betwixt us, then is the time wherein we ought most of all to study and labour how we may do some profitable and honourable

thing to our friend, and not hearken to slanderous tongues which watch for some small and light occasion to pour out the poison of discord, thereby to rent and break asunder our good and true friendship. To such parasites and scrap-gather[er]s at free-cost feasts, who seek for nothing but their own gain by the disagreement of others, one must never give ear, but drive them as far from us as they think to come near us.

And to the end we may be the better affected and disposed hereunto, we must often call to remembrance what benefit and happiness cometh to such men as are linked together by true and unfeigned friendship, as namely in those affairs at which we cannot be present ourselves, the fidelity of a true friend supplieth the place. From whence we will draw this conclusion, that he which violateth friendship, opposeth himself against the common succour and aid of all men, and as much as in him lieth, overthroweth human society. For we cannot do all things ourselves, and therefore friendships are joined together that by natural duties one may profit another.

Now considering that all the forenamed premises are necessary, and yet very hard and difficult to be observed and kept in true friendship, a man may easily judge that this so excellent a sympathy and fellow-feeling of two friends is very rare and not easily found, and by a more forcible reason it followeth that it is altogether impossible that many such friends should be linked together, so that whosoever goeth about plurality of friends cannot ever attain to a certain and durable friendship, for it is a necessary consequence that he which entertaineth a new friend cannot but diminish and wax faint in affection in regard of his old, wherein he was settled. Yea, how can he observe all dutiful points of a steadfast friend, as well in mutual conversation and communication of all things as in helping his friend in all his affairs, if he have many friends to look unto, who may all stand in need of him at the same time? It is certain that in serving one, he would be wanting to the other, and peradventure to both, whilst he doubteth which to help first.

But there is yet a further matter in it. Do we not take him for our enemy who is enemy to our friend? It is most certainly so, as the wise man Chilon very fitly signified so much to one who boasted that he had never a foe. Then hast thou never a friend, quoth Chilon, seeing it is impossible by reason of the wickedness of men that two persons should live in the world without enemies. Whereupon Plutarch saith: If thou seekest for a swarm of friends, thou considerest not thou fallest into a wasp's nest of enemies.

Hereof it is that histories, when they set before us examples of true and excellent friends, make mention only of two persons, as of Orestes and Pylades, both of them calling themselves by the name of Orestes, who was condemned to die, thereby to save the life of his companion. Neither was there any more than one Ephemus and Eueritius [sic for 'Ephenus and Everitus'], and one Damon and Pythias, two of which, being condemned to die by Dionysius, the tyrant of Syracuse, had their pardon granted them by reason of the constancy and stability of friendship that was betwixt them and their companions, whereof they showed this proof. The two condemned persons besought Dionysius to licence them to go into the country that they might take some order for their household affairs before they died. The tyrant, scorning this, asked what pledges they would pawn for their return, whereupon the two other willingly offered themselves by pledges, and so

six months' space being granted, they were set at liberty. When the end of this time drew nigh, many mocked these poor caitiffs, but they nothing astonished, made answer that they were certain and sure their friends would not in any case fail of their promise, and indeed they arrived the last day that was granted unto them, whereat the tyrant wondering, forgave the condemned persons, and prayed them to receive him for a third man into their friendship, so great force had virtue that it could pacify choler and cruelty in his heart whose virtue consisted only in the daily habit of vice.

We read of a letter written by Pisistratus, prince of [t]he Athenians, serving for a notable example of the force of friendship, which oftentimes is greater than all consanguinity. For having intelligence that his nephew Thrasyllus was of a conspiracy against him, he wrote unto him in those words: Nephew Thrasyllus, thou shouldst have called to remembrance not that I brought thee up in my house, that thou art come of my blood, that I have communicated my secrets with thee, that I have given thee my daughter to wife with the half of my goods, but above all things, that I loved thee as a friend. Thou art become a traitor towards me, which I would never have suspected, considering that I never deserved any such thing at thy hands, and therefore I would gladly I had so much authority over myself that, as I can shake off thy alliance, so I could also falsify our friendship, which I can neither do nor determine of, my fidelity saved. For the consanguinity I have with thee may be separated, as being but within the veins, but the love I bear thee cannot, seeing it is within my heart.

A thousand other examples of couples joined in friendship are to be found in histories. In the meantime, we have to note that although we measure friendship here by the number of two, yet our meaning is not to exclude others altogether. For we know that true charity extendeth itself unto everyone, that we are bound even to love & like our enemies, and to do good to all, yet amongst the rest we may choose our friend to love and to be beloved of in perfection, always provided we must labour by a thousand means and good duties to get the love of all men, and to follow the counsel of Polybius given to Scipio Africanus, that he should never depart from the public place of authority before he had gotten unto himself some new friend and well-willer.

We have hereof famous examples amongst the ancients. That great Roman captain and consul Titus Flavius, who delivered and freed all Graecia from bondage and in battle ranged discomfited Philip of Macedonia, is exceedingly commended of historiographers, not only because he was ready to pleasure everyone, but also because he took such delight therein that he would always remain well affected even to those whom he had once pleased, as if he himself had received the benefit, insomuch that he was always ready to do them more good, whereby he showed himself truly zealous of virtue, which is never inflamed with the hope of any earthly recompense, seeing the price and reward of a virtuous deed ought only to be the doing thereof. Therefore Cicero said very well that friendship is so excellent a thing that it far excelleth all other transitory contents.

Aretino, seeing that Silvestro meant thus abruptly to break off his discourse, prosecuted it in this manner:

A little to intermeddle myself with this matter, by your patience, gentlemen, give me leave to say that a friendly admonition is an especial point in friendship, for Agesilaus, King of Sparta, was wont to say that he liked very well to be praised of those friends that would not spare to reprehend him when he was blameworthy, whom the Emperor Trajan did seem to imitate, who wrote to his master Plutarch a letter to this effect: I advertise thee, quoth he, that henceforward I will not use thy service to any other thing than to counsel me what I have to do, and to forewarn me of those faults whereinto I may fall, for if Rome take me for a defender of her commonwealth, I make account of thee as of the beholder of my life, and therefore if at any time I grudge or take displeasure at thy reprehension, take it not in ill part, for such choler proceedeth not of envy, but of shame. But if we will admonish a friend, we must do it with advice, and observe those circumstances that Aristotle setteth down in his Ethics, not to be bitter in reprehending, but with Plato to correct his friend Spensippus by the example of his own virtue, or by familiar speech as Zenocrates [=Xenocrates] did to Polemon. For although, saith Cicero, an austere gravity is available in admonition, yet it is not fit to be used in friendship, that admitteth not one angry frown.

As thus they were forward to prosecute their discourse, the company missed Lacena, whereupon, half wearied with sitting so long after dinner, they broke off abruptly, and went to seek her in the garden, but the poor soul, gotten secretly into her closet, was musing upon the contents of Silvestro's letter, finding it full of certain precepts but not conjecturing the certainty of his mystical enigmas, so that at last she fell with herself into these passions:

Do physicians, Lacena, use to prescribe one danger for their patients to avoid, and wilfully fall into the peril thereof themselves? The apothecary that knoweth the force of the confection feareth to meddle with envenomed potions. It is hard when the goat feedeth upon mint, or the deer of the briar-leaf; these brute beasts, only guided by force, yet are taught by nature to avoid what is prejudicial, and yet we which have reason to limit our actions run headlong into those mishaps which we see imminent. Alate I delivered precepts to Silvestro to take heed of love, and now, fondling that I am, I fear not to parley with affection; my censure was contrary to Venus, and yet I seek to burn sacrifice at her altars. Remember, Lacena, that those ancient philosophers whose experience vouched their sayings for oracles have in all precepts coveted to beat down in man that rebellious appetite which is commonly called fancy, foreseeing so many perils to ensue by such an unruly passion, insomuch that Philoxenus, wishing some plague might betide or fall upon the Messenians, prayed unto the gods that their young men might become vicious, and their virgins fall in love. The greatest revenge Venus could do to Diana was to force her companion Callisto to fall in affection with Jupiter, and the first overthrow that fell upon the temple of Vesta was an amorous desire of liberty. The senators of Rome, whose gravity forced [sic?] the English knight Brennus, made a law for the honour of virginity when the good Emperor banished Ovid amongst the barbarous Getes of [sic for 'for?'] his wantonness.

How dangerous this furious conceit of affliction [sic for 'affection?'] hath been to all, let general examples make manifest. Ariadne, placed quietly as a prince on a royal throne

of majesty, was overthrown by gazing too narrowly on the beauty of Theseus. Phyllis had still possessed a crown and a diadem had not the wandering stranger Demophoon unfortunately arrived within their territories, whose courteous but dissimuled favours brought the poor princess to confusion. How glorious and fortunate was the reign of Dido, that famous Queen of Carthage, until Aeneas, the Trojan exile, allured her by sugared promises to consent to the ruin of herself & her kingdom?

If then such mishaps proceed from love, sweet Lacena, to withstand such a passion as draweth the mind into a labyrinth of confused miseries, yet consider with thyself that where Venus obtains no glory, Hymenaeus is honoured with feasts and triumphs; though love be, as it is misconstrued, found prejudicial, yet the end, which is marriage, is honourable.

Truth, Lacena, but as it is full of honour, so is it pestered with infinite discommodities to countervail every content. Pythagoras, whose precepts have ever been holden for infallible censures, being requested to be at ye marriage of a kinswoman of his, excused himself in this manner: I was never desirous to go to such a feast, nor to go to such a funeral, judging that it was all one for a woman to marry a husband and to wed a coffin, that the hour of her marriage was the first step to grief and misery, which Marcia, the daughter of Metellus, wisely considered, who being demanded by her father why she would not marry Junius Secundus, his neighbour, sith the young gentleman was beautiful in body, valiant in feats of arms and martial discipline, eloquent in speech, of honourable parentage, while [sic for 'wealthy?'] in possessions, happy for a good name, yea, every way adorned with sundry virtues, I know, quoth Marcia, all this, yet I had rather be mine own than his. The wise Hypsicratea, in her widowhood, had oft this saying in her mouth, that although the name of a wife were sweet and honourable, yet whosoever by experience did enter into the consideration of such a suppose should find it full of many great and intolerable burdens, that the uses of pleasures are set amongst the sharp pricking thorns of care and disquiet. The multitude of children and the fear of their welfare, the imperfections of servants, toil in domestical affairs, are grievous, but above [+all], saith Macrina, the wife of Torquatus, the insolent arrogancy of a foolish and unruly husband is intolerable. Hysponactes, entering into the thought of these premises, saith that of one marriage only two good days are to be hoped for, namely the marriage-day and the day of death, to whose opinion alludeth the saying of Alexandreides [=Alexandrides?] that ye wedding-day is the beginning of many evils, that in no estate fortune showeth herself more inconstant in observing her promises than in marriage, because, saith Polyhistor, there is not one man to be found wherein is not some deceit or occasion of complaint given to the woman. Therefore, merrily saith Diphilus, there are three naughty beasts: a good mule, a good goat, and a good husband. Hereupon, as I may lawfully conjecture, came the verdict given by Salonina, the wife of Cethegus, who being demanded by some of her friends and acquaintance why she was so overcharged with continual sorrows sith her husband was so honourably descended, so wealthy, so well-allied, and prosperous in his fortunes, she only showing her foot, made this answer: Ladies, you see that my shoe is very new & well-made, but none of you can tell whereabouts it pincheth me.

Well, said Lacena, thou hast made a pretty invective against marriage and love, and yet, fond fool, art like to fall into both. Dost thou think if marriage were so great a mischief that Augustus Caesar would, when he was censor, have made so strict a law against such as kept themselves unmarried after twenty-five years? How can it be, saith Ulpianus, but marriage is pleasant sith so many wise women have entered into it with desire, and ended it with content? Zenobia, Queen of Armenia, and wife to Radamisius [sic for 'Rhadamistus'], being demanded by Tiridates, the king and vanquisher of her husband, what kind of life she liked best, answered: Marriage, for in that, quoth she, may a woman win fame by obeying and living chaste. The Princess Panthea [sic for 'Pantheia'], wife to Abadatus [sic for 'Abradatas'], so well-beloved of King Cyrus, had oft this saying in her mouth, that there could no husband be so bad but would be an honour and content to a good wife. Then, Lacena, sith in marriage there are contents sufficient to countervail disquiets, and that the sweetness of such a rose is as delightful as the pricks are noisome, resolve with thyself to crop the fruit of such a tree, and in this resolution let nothing sink in thy heart nor sound in thine ear but Silvestro.

And with that, as one in an ecstasy with the joy of her own conceit, flinging out of her closet she went into the garden, where to seal up her desires with an ominous object, he was ye first she saw in the company, who, saluting her, said that her mother & the rest, missing her presence, were tracing through the arbours to find her. *And, quoth he, whether I may attribute to fortune as a thing by happy chance, or to fate as a thing growing of necessity, I know not, my eye is the first that hath discovered that they seek, and that myself above all other jewels desire most to find.*

Lacena, whose affection was such as she meant to be plain, made answer that she was glad that either fortune or fate was so favourable as to present him so fit to the quiet of his thoughts. *For sir, quoth she, your letter received, and found so enigmatical as hardly I conjecture the contents, yet love hath made me so good a scholar to pry into your precepts that I answer as your conclusion required, if your inward intent follow your outward attempt, that, my honour safe, Lacena remains the assured friend of Silvestro.* The gentleman, hearing the sum of his desires granted, taking her by the hand, made promise to perform the deeds whatsoever he had protested in words, and with that Panthia & the rest took them napping, whereupon Peratio at the first sight began thus to descant:

You may see, Madam Panthia, that love is a loadstone by the keeping of Silvestro's course, for we, having sought Lacena, missed of our purpose, and he, parting from us in a melancholy vein, hath, as directed by destiny, chanced on her company, a thing forepointed and therefore not to be prevented, for love is such a lord as may not be resisted with armours, but entertained with amours.

Then, quoth Panthia, you suppose Silvestro and my daughter Lacena are in love?

Suppose, madam? quoth Peratio. Why, have you so ill an insight into affection that you see not their fancies, which, poor souls, they keep as secret as fire in the straw?

At this, Panthia, looking earnestly upon her daughter, Lacena blushed, her sisters and the rest began to laugh, which Silvestro seeing, made answer that Peratio's conjecture was not greatly amiss, and therefore, seeing that the company was so fitly met and the matter so happily motioned, he would entreat her goodwill he might have her in marriage. Panthia, who was passing glad of this request, asked her daughter if she had made any promise to Silvestro. Lacena, who meant to sta[n]d to her tackling, answer she had, conditionally she might have her consent.

Then, quoth Panthia, as one well contented with your choice, tomorrow shall be ye marriage-day because the gentlemen shall be witnesses at your wedding.

Silvestro upon this made promise, & ye next morning, accompanied with the rest of his friends, was solemnly married to Lacena.

FINIS.