

PERIMEDES THE BLACKSMITH

A golden method how to use the mind in pleasant and profitable exercise,

Wherein is contained special principles fit for the highest to imitate and the meanest to put in practice how best to spend the weary winter's nights or the longest summer's evenings in honest and delightful recreation,

Wherein we may learn to avoid idleness and wanton scurrility, which divers appoint as the end of their pastimes.

Herein are interlaced three merry and necessary discourses fit for our time, with certain pleasant histories and tragical tales which may breed delight to all and offence to none.

Omne tulit punctum qui miscuit vile dulci.

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To the right worshipful Gervase Clifton, esquire, Robert Greene wisheth increase of worship and virtue.

No sooner, right worshipful, was Alexander come to ripe years but his father Philip presented him a book and a horse, the one to signify his delight in letters, the other his desire to martial endeavours. Pallas had her spear and her pen, counted as well the patroness of scholars as of soldiers, and Alexander forenamed no sooner laid off his helmet but he took in hand Homer's Iliads, scarce come from handling his weapon with his master Parmenio but he fell to parley of study with his tutor Aristotle, counting the profit that he reaped by philosophy little less than the gains he got by his great conquest. These premises considered, hearing how your worship in the prime of your youth not only delighted in martial activity but favoured the study of good letters as a Maecenas and patron of such virtuous labours, I resolved if I could not hang at the shrine of Apollo beautiful instruments, yet to deck his altars with bay garlands, and if my want hindered me from offering to Minerva great volumes, yet I adventured to strew her temple with loose papers. Though my ability was not sufficient to present your worship with any work worth the viewing, yet I presumed, as spurred forward by the report of your courtesy and fame of your virtues, to dedicate this little pamphlet to your worship containing the tattle between a smith and his wife, full of divers precepts interlaced with delightful histories, which if they profit some and please others, let them return the end of both to your worship for whom this work was first taken in hand. But howsoever it delights or discontents, so it fit your humour and pass with your gracious acceptance I shall hit the mark I aimed at, and so lest I should shape Hercules' shoe for a child's foot, I commit your worship to the Almighty.

Your worship's to command,
Robert Greene

To the gentlemen readers, health.

Gentlemen, I dare not step awry from my wonted method, first to appeal to your favourable courtesies which ever I have found (howsoever plausible) yet smothered with a mild silence. The small pamphlets that I have thrust forth how you have regarded them I know not, but that they have been badly rewarded with any ill terms I never found, which makes me the more bold to trouble you, and more bound to rest yours every way, as ever I have done. I keep my old course, to palter up something in prose, using mine old poesy still, *Omne tulit punctum*, although lately two gentlemen poets made two madmen of Rome beat it out of their paper bucklers, & had it is derision for that I could not make my verses jet upon the stage in tragical buskins, every word filling the mouth like the fabunden of Bow-bell, daring God out of heaven with that atheist Tamburlaine, or blaspheming with the mad priest of the sun. But let me rather openly pocket up the ass at Diogenes' hand than wantonly set out such impious instances of intolerable poetry, such mad and scoffing poets that have prophetic spirits, as bred of Merlin's race. If there be any in England that set the end of scholarism in an English blank verse, I think either it is the humour of a novice that tickles them with self-love, or too much frequenting the hothouse (to use the German proverb) hath sweat out all the greatest part of their wits, which wastes gradatim, as the Italians say, *poco a poco*. If I speak darkly, gentlemen, and offend with this digression, I crave pardon in that I but answer in print what they have offered on the stage. But leaving these fantastical scholars, as judging him that is not able to make choice of his chaffer but a peddling chapman, at last to Perimedes the blacksmith, who sitting in his holiday suit to enter parley with his wife, smugged up in her best apparel, I present to your favours. If he please, I have my desire; if he but pass, I shall be glad. If neither, I vow to make amends in my Oeopharion [sic], which I promise to make you merry with the next term. And thus resting on your wonted courtesies, I bid you farewell.

Yours as ever he hath been,
R. Greene

Au R. Greene, Gentilhomme,
Sonnet.

*Evphues qui a bien connu fils-aisné d' Eloquence,
Son propre frere puisné te pourroit reconnoistre
Par tes beaux escrits, GREENE, tu fais apparoistre
Que de la docte Soeur tu as pris ta naissance.
Marot & de-Mornay pour le langage Francois:
Pour l' Espagnol Gueuare, Boccace pour le Toscan:
Et le gentil Sleidan refait l' Allemand:
GREENE & Lylli tous deux raffineurs de l' Anglois.
GREENE a son Mareschal monstrant son arte diuine,
Moulé d' vne belle Idée: sa plume essorée
Vole viste & haute en parole empennée;
Son stile d' vn beau discours portant la vraie mine.
Courage, donc ie-dis, mon amy GREENE, courage,
Mesprise des chiens, corbeaux & chathuans la rage:
Et (glorieux) endure leur malignante furie,
Zoyle arriere, arriere Momus chien enragé,
Furieux mastin hurlant au croissant argenté,
A GREENE iamais nuyre sauroit ta calomnie.*

I. Eliote

[TRANSLATION]

Euphues, who well knew the elder son of Eloquence,
Could recognize you his own younger brother;
By your beautiful writings, GREENE, you make it seem
That you took your birth from the learned sister.
Marot and de Mornay for the French language;
For Spanish, Guevara; Boccaccio for Tuscan;
And the gentle Sleidan renewed German.
GREENE and Lyly, both refiners of English.
GREENE has his marshal showing his divine art
Molded of a beautiful idea: his soaring pen
Flies fast and high on quilled word,
His style bearing the true mien of a beautiful discourse.
Courage then, I say, my friend GREENE, courage,
Scorn the rage of dogs, crows, and kittens,
And, glorious, endure their malignant fury.
Back Zoilus, back Momus, furious dog,
Furious mastiff howling at the silvery crescent,
Your calumny never knew how to harm GREENE.

PERIMEDES

There dwelled, as the annual records of Egypt makes mention, in the city of Memphis a poor man called Perimedes, whom fortune, envying from his infancy, had so thwarted with contrary constellation that although he had but his wife and himself to relieve by his manual labours, yet want had so wrung him by the finger that oft the greatest cheer they had was hunger, and their sweetest sauce content, yet fame, willing to supply what fortune had faulted with defect, so rewarded poor Perimedes with the glory of report that he was not only loved and liked of all his neighbours but known for his contented poverty through all the confines of Egypt. The man, coveting though he were poor to be counted virtuous, first eschewed idleness, the moth that sorest and soonest infecteth the mind with many mischiefs, and applied himself so to his work, being a smith, that he thought no victuals to have their taste which were not purchased by his own sweat. Proud he was not, as one whom poverty had checked with too great disgrace, and yet we see that self-love hangs in the heart, not in the habit, that Plato durst say *Calco fastidium Diogenis*, meaning that the poor Cynic was as insolent in his patched cloak as Alexander the Great in all his royalty. Envy, of all other vices, he did eschew as a canker so pestilent to an honest mind that it suffereth quiet not so much as to pry into the motions of the heart. Covetous he was not, as one that sought by his hands' thrift to satisfy his own necessity, and if any surplusage were granted by good luck, he slept not soundly on Saturday at night till he, his wife, and his neighbours had merrily and honestly spent it at a homely banquet. He wanted nothing, as one that against all spite of fortune opposed patience, and against necessity, content. And yet fortune, that she might not be thought too injurious, in lieu of all her other disfavours lent him a wife of his own conditions whom he loved more than himself, for the poor woman, although she was barren and had no children, yet was she of a very pure and perfect complexion, and withal of such good behaviour, first in love and duty to her husband, and then in friendly and familiar conversation with her neighbours, that she was thought a wife fit for so honest a husband.

These two thus beloved of all the inhabitants of Memphis prescribed themselves such an order of life as divers men of great calling sought to be careful imitators of their method, for suffering no private jars to come within their poor cottage, as a thing most prejudicial to an economical estate, no sooner had these two passed away the day, he at his hammers and she at the bellows, for boy they had none, but that sitting themselves to supper they satisfied nature with that their labour did get and their calling allow, and no sooner had they taken their repast but to pass the rest of the evening merrily they fell to pleasant chats between themselves, sometime discoursing of what came first in their heads, with pro & contra as their natural logic would grant them leave, otherwise with merry tales, honest and tending to some good end without either lasciviousness or scurrility. Thus ever they passed away the night, and for that the Egyptians as a great monument kept divers of their discourses which some by chance had overheard and put down as a jewel in their library, I mean as their records do rehearse to set down in brief two of their nights' prattle, which although homely told, yet being honest and pleasant I thought they would breed some conceited delight to the hearers, and therefore thus.

The first night's discourse.

No sooner had Perimedes and his wife Delia, for so was her name, ended their day's work and taken their repast, but sitting safely in their simple cottage by a little fire, Perimedes began thus solemnly and sadly to enter into a discourse. I cannot think, wife, but if we measure all our actions with a true proportion, that we have supped as daintily as the proudest in all the city of Memphis, for the end of delicates is but to satisfy nature, which is so partial in her desires that were not our vicious minds drowned in gluttony, content would seal up her request with a very small pittance, but such is the course of the world now-a-days that every man seeks with Philoxenus to have his neck as long as a crane, that he may with more pleasure swill in the sweet taste of their superfluous dainties. But wife, since I can remember here in Memphis, Psammetichus, our king, was of so sparing a diet that being demanded by an ambassador what caters he had for his household, made answer, his cook and his stomach, enseeming by this that his cook bought no more in the shambles than would satisfy what his stomach desired. But now, wife, every mean man must be so curious in his fare that we are rather to be counted Epicureans than Egyptians, and our Chaldees have more skill in a cup of wine than in a library, which superfluity breedeth both beggary to many, and diseases to all. For so they drown themselves in the bottomless sea of gluttony as at last they make their bodies a subject for the physician, thinking that the temperature of their complexions can never be well affected unless their stomachs be made a very apothecary's shop by receiving a multitude of simples and drugs so to settle their wavering constitution. Those men that wed themselves to such inordinate excess find divers and sundry passions to torment the stomach and all the body, which no sooner pains them but straight, as experience is a great mistress, they calculate the nature of the disease and straight fly to purging, to phlebotomy, to fomentations & such medicinal decretals according to the interior or exterior nature of the disease, whereas perhaps some slender fault is the efficient cause of such a momentary passion, better to be cured by time than physic. But excess in diet, wife, breedeth this restless desire, and so many are the diseases incident by our own superfluities that every one had need to have an herbal tied at his girdle. Well, I have heard my father say that he was but one day sick in all his lifetime, being then also through overmuch labour fallen into a fever. And this perfect temperature of the body did not proceed from the diversities of potions and dainty delicates, but by a true proportion of exercise and diet, which Zeno the philosopher noted well to be true, who being of a very weak and tender constitution, subject oft to sickness, yet never kept his bed. Being demanded of a Lacedaemonian what preservatives he did use, Zeno, willing to be brief in his answers, showed then a piece of bread & a dish of water, with a strong bow of steel, meaning by this enigma to discover unto them that he raced out his disease by exercise and fasting, as two especial points necessary for the perfecting of man's health.

You say truth, husband, quoth Delia, for oft have I heard my mother say that three things are the chiefest delicates, which whoso useth shall live long and happily: hunger, quiet, and mirth, but to aver your sayings to be true, everyone seeks to attain the contrary, which causeth such sudden death & perilous diseases. More perish by gluttony than by the sword, for instead of hunger men seek to satisfy nature with excess; for quiet, envy at

others' happiness presents a stratagem; for mirth, melancholy and covetous humours how most greedily to gain. Thus everyone seeks that time and experience proves most prejudicial, but the time hath been, yea, Perimedes, and within my remembrance, when the inhabitants of Memphis knew not what riot and ill diet meant, but every man applying himself to frugality coveted to be thought honest and virtuous, whereas now-a-days the meanest doth desire to be thought proud and sumptuous. While Numa Pompilius banished excess out of Rome there was no drugs brought to the city from Africa; while Romulus drunk no wine, excess was not noted amongst his subjects, neither had a physician any palm in his dominions till his successors Caligula, Nero, and the rest assigned trophies and triumphs for such as best could play the part of epicures. And because, my good Perimedes, we be set alone by the fire (and with this she reached him a friendly *beso les labros*), and none here but ourselves, thou shalt see what long I have kept close in my chest, certain precepts of physic that long since were given by one of the Chaldees to Pharaoh, the last king of Memphis of that surname, which for that they were precious, as well for the doctrine as the method, I have kept them as dear as I did my virginity before I met thee, and with that she hied her to her hutch where she set out an old piece of parchment where was written as followeth.

Certain precepts of household physic given by Rabbi Bendezzar, one of the Chaldees, to Pharaoh, the king of Memphis.

Considering, right mighty sovereign, that duty brooketh not exceptions of time, but that the reverent service of an honest mind is tied to his lord as carefully in sickness as in health, although want, the enemy to desire, hath not stored my library with Galen, Avicen, nor Hippocrates, yet dutiful affection, willing to make supply, presented from the garden of my thoughts certain receipts compounded of sundry simples which I beseech your Highness to apply as shall best stand with your favourable opinion.

First, to present an aphorism which Avicen grudged to pen down, as an enemy to that science, receive twenty ounces of merry conceits pounded in the mortar of a quiet resolution; use this powder in your morning and evening potions, forbearing too much exercise of mind as prejudicial to the body, sith the world, the paymistress of virtuous endeavours, hath all her coffers filled with forgetful ingratitude.

The world the worst paymaster.

And since sickness desires company, and sundry sorts presents themselves to a solitary man, use a charm so precious as Galen feared to bewray amidst his principles: write over your chamber-door in silver letters: *Neque medicus si morosus*. By this spell you shall forbid melancholy entrance, the sorest enemy to man's health, whose operations, as they are secret, so they are mortal. If this should fail, receive an experiment confirmed with *Probatum est*. Take the sweet herb called pleasant content; with that make a perfume about your bedchamber, and where you dine, the savour of this is as sure a repulse to exile melancholy as the ostracism was to the noble of Athens.

Melancholy the sorest enemy to man's health.

Science, a monster that waiteth upon opportunity, presents by herself to a sick person in sundry shapes, some breeding profit, others prejudice. To avoid her illusion, note this: when she comes with a plausible speech, her attire black in damask or velvet, a side

The description of a physician.

The marks of a good physician.

gown, a large cape, holding in the one hand a glass of goat's-milk to restore, in the other some secret drug to purge, suspect and grant no admittance unless you see about her three marks: in her forehead the figure of mirth, in her bosom the portraiture of conscience, and the mouth of her purse sealed with the signet of content. Marked thus, use her as a friend, and send her away rewarded.

Patience a precious simple.

In that sickness is passionate, and choleric, the herald of melancholy, inflicteth many griefs by overflowing of the gall, to suppress his envious fury take an herb of a mild savour, yet very precious, called patience; his virtue is restrictive & expulsive, knitting content to the mind, and driving out disquiet from the thoughts.

Hope a singular preservative.

The ancient alchemists reposed great trust in their philosopher's stone as the most necessary jewel to draw out quintessences for restoratives, but our late physicians have found out a singular mineral called hope; apply this to your stomach as a sovereign simple against disquiet & fear, two passions incident to many patients.

Heart's-ease a defensory against grief.

Albertus Magnus in his secrets sets down the nature of sundry herbs, some to procure mirth, other sleep, according to their particular virtues, but our late practitioners have found a root whose operation comprehendeth all those properties which they call heart's-ease; this apply to your left side both day and night, in sickness and in health, as a defensory against ensuing griefs, a preserver of present quiet, and a medicine general for any passionate disease. Thus, right mighty sovereign, though not as a physician, for that our times & diets brook not her axioms, yet as a poor and dutiful well-willer, I have set down sundry simples fit for receipts, which if it shall stand with your Highness' good liking to apply, I shall rest as ever I have been, an earnest suitor to the Almighty that their operation may take wished effect, as well for recovery as for preserving your health.

Rabbi Bendezzar

They had no sooner scanned over this writing but Perimedes began to accuse the iniquity of their time that had made such difference in medicinal precepts, & therefore burst forth into these terms. Well, wife, thus fares the course of the world, to decline ever to the worst, for when Rabbi Bendezzar set down these principles to Pharaoh, no doubt epicures had not yet erected any academy in Egypt, but since his time excess hath taken such an interest in the minds of men that his reasons would be counted follies in that every axiom showeth not the art of an apothecary. But leaving such to their follies, how happy are we that eat to live and live not to eat, who count it a banquet to suffice nature with anything, having our health when greater potentates are pained with surfeits.

The husband's will a law to an honest wife.

Well, husband, quoth Delia, seeing we are content with our poverty, and make a virtue of necessity, let us not (*nimis altum sapere*) not [sic] stretch our strings so high as to meddle with our superiors, but rest quiet at the delight of our own estate. And therefore, seeing the night is yet long and our fire is like to last, and this discourse sufficiently discussed, say, husband, how shall we spend the rest of the evening, for what you set down I hold for law. Indeed, wife, quoth Perimedes, it is ill meddling further than the latchet. The fox had his skin pulled over his ears for prying into the lions' dens; poor men should look

no higher than their feet, lest in staring at stars they stumble. If others offend and become vicious that are rich, it little booteth us that are poor to reproach them, for it reapeth often revenge, but the best reward is envy. Clitus, who was a mighty lord, and friend to Alexander, was slain for his good admonition; mighty men cannot brook the touch of their ill, and therefore, wife, we will this night pass away the time in telling some pleasant and merry tale. So shall we beguile the evening with some pleasure, eschew idleness, the well-spring of many mischiefs, and banish vain thoughts that breed disquiet and discontent. Myself will tell one, and thou shalt tell another. Delia, by being silent, seemed to consent, and so Perimedes began his tale in this manner.

Perimedes' tale.

In the kingdom of Tyre, while Eurybates reigned as sovereign, there governed under him as his lieutenant one Prestines, a nobleman better beloved for his justice than favoured by fortune, who having a lady of no less parentage than virtue, and yet accounted the most honourable matron in all the east parts, lived peaceably in his province till Voltarus, king of Sidon, attempted the invasion of Tyre, & finding fortune favourable to his desires made a conquest of the land, killing Eurybates and leading Prestines prisoner to Sidon, which news no sooner came to the ears of his wife Mariana, for so was her name, but fearing the violent hands of the enemy, being big with child and having another of two years of age, she with a few jewels which she had kept secret in a casket embarked herself in a little frigate, intending her course to Lipari where her friends dwelt. But fortune, who meant to make her a mirror of her inconstancy, as it were entering a league with Neptune, drove her upon the coast of Decapolis, where perforce she was forced to land, not remaining on shore three days before, in the company of another gentlewoman that was nurse to her son, she was brought to bed of a man-child, whom she called Infortunio. Distressed thus she passed away many days till a fair wind might serve to transport her to Lipari, which coming about according to the mariners' mind, they caused the lady to send her two infants aboard with their nurse, she herself solitarily walking by the shore till the cock-boat came again to fetch her. But the destinies, who are impartial in their resolutions, having intended a worse mishap, gave her a sorer mate in this manner. No sooner had they shipped the seely babes but that a bark of corsairs and pirates came by, who seeing this ship not greatly manned for defence, bare towards it and boarded it, carrying away both vessel and mariners as a prize, which Mariana seeing, she sent forth shrieks as entreaties to persuade them to return, & most pitiful renting of her hair made signs of her sorrows, but in vain, for she gat nothing but doleful echoes of her complaints, which strake such a grief into her mind that she fell down in a sound, till at last, coming to herself, finding she was deprived of husband, children, country, friends, yea, and left all alone in a desert, surcharged with grief she sat her down by the shore and fell into these piteous passions.

Infortunate Mariana, whom fortune or some contrary fate above fortune hath sought to make a special object of hapless and distressed misery, seest thou not a dismal influence to inflict a despairing chaos of confused mishaps? Art thou not first by the unjust destinies bereft of Prestines, thy husband, exiled thy country, a place as precious as life, separated from thy friends, the sweetest comfort, but now deprived of thy children, in

**Friends & country
dear to a man.**

**The description of
fortune.**

whose company there did consist the salve for all the forenamed miseries? Ah Mariana, sigh and sob at these sorrows, but what avails showers when the harvest is past, or grief when actions cannot be amended by passions? Now, Mariana, dost thou see that fortune, that fiend and graceless monster, the double-faced daughter of Janus, whose pleasure is inconstancy, whose thoughts are variable, whose temples are strewed with roses and nettles, and whose sacrifices savour of most infectious incense. Are not all her gifts perilous, seem they never so precious? Doth she enrich thee with treasure? Fear that in the other hand she holds poverty to check thy presumption. Doth she advance thee with honour and dignity? Know such favours are brittle and her bravest seats are made of glass. If with friends, alas, she presents amidst their troops feigned affections and flattery. Thus every way her favours are mortal, and the more glistening the more prejudicial. Too late, poor lady, hast thou tried these premises for truth, thyself an instance of her inconstancy. What then shalt thou do, being thus infortunate? Hope thou canst not, sith thy present mishap tells thee fortune hath resolved thine overthrow. Despair, then, Mariana, despair and die; so shalt thou glut the ruthless destinies with a most baleful stratagem. Since thy husband, thy children, have been the first actors, end thou desperately such a doleful tragedy. Let fortune see how thou scorns to be infortunate; fear not death which is the end of sorrow and beginning of bliss but [sic?] to thee, Mariana, that lying [sic?] in distress yet die happy. Let not despair ever enter within thy thoughts; grace not fortune so much in her wilfulness. Be patient, and so spite her with content, for her greatest grief is to see her crosses borne with an indifferent mind. Time, Mariana, is the nurse of hope, and oft thwarteth fortune in her decrees; then cheer up thyself, and lead here a solitary life in this desert with such patience as, making a virtue of necessity, then drown all despairing conceits with content. Aye, but alas, my children, my poor babes, scarce known to fortune before envied by fortune, and with that casting her eye to the sea, she was so overpressed with sorrow as she could not utter any word more, but melting into tears sat a long time in secret and sorrowful meditation, till at last with a deep sigh she groaned forth these words, hope and patience, and with that she rose and resolved to live as a savage woman till death or some better destiny might mitigate some part of her martyrdom. In this resolution she went and sought her out a cave which she trimmed up with boughs, making her instead of her beds of down a couch of moss and leaves. Her sauce was hunger; her food, the fruits of the earth. And thus she lay there by the space of two or three year, unseen or unknown of anybody.

**Patience the best
salve against fortune.**

**A comfortable
meditation.**

Fortune, not brooking her own bitterness, seeing how patient the lady was in her miseries, determined to add some relief to her passions, which she brought to pass in this manner. The despot of Decapolis and his wife for solace' sake being one day rode on hunting, by chance in pursuit of a stag which they had in chase lost their way and happened into that desert, where they had not wandered long but they met Mariana in savage manner, almost naked, her hair of amber colour hanging down to her feet, her face shriveled and parched with the sun, insomuch as thus disguised and deformed, as well with her ill diet and the weather as with her sorrow, she seemed some satyr born and bred in that desert. The despot and his wife, amazed at this sudden sight, stood still, narrowly marking the gesture of Mariana, who was playing with a little fawn which she had nursed up, till at last, she casting up her eyes and seeing them there, arose hastily & was ready to depart, but the despot, who desired to know what she might be, drawing more nigh, perceived by the

lineament [sic?] of her face that she had been a woman of good proportion, began to salute her in this manner. Woman, satyr, nymph, or whatsoever thou be that livest thus as a savage creature in the [sic?] deserts, tell me of courtesy, as to a stranger that pities thy estate, whether thou be bred here, and so naturally wedded to this brutish kind of life, or if some misfortune hath led thee to this extreme mishap, that so either I may marvel at such a strange breed, or else both pity and seek to relieve thy misery.

Mariana, hearing the despot speak thus honourably and friendly, made no answer at all, but staring in his face called to remembrance her former estate, and shamed at her present wretchedness, so that the tears standing in her eyes, the burden of overmuch sorrow made her a long while silent, yet at last, coming more near, she made him this answer. Courteous stranger, if I overslip either duty or reverence due to thy calling, think my savage life leads me to such ignorance, and therefore the more worthy of pardon, but whatsoever thou be, king or kaiser, know this, I am no satyr, but a woman distressed, and placed here by the envy of fortune, where time and patience hath learned me to live content. For thy pity I return thanks, as one who these woods have not yet pierced with ingratitude. For thy relief, I refuse it as a thing contrary to my resolution, for in this life I mean to die. No sooner had she made this reply but she was turning her back, had not the despot's wife entreated her to tell the course of her abode in these deserts, and of what parentage she was. Mariana, hearing the lady pitiful, though importunate, began to resolve her in this manner. Madam, for no less your countenance and behaviour imports, long it were to discourse of my former estate, & a task worse than death to recount my misfortunes sith the rubbing of half healed scars would but renew old sores which should grieve me greatly to rehearse and would little profit you to hear. Yet somewhat to satisfy your demand, know I once tasted of honour, as descended from noble parents, and as you and [sic?] felt myself seated in pleasure. Wealth I had, as favoured with rich possessions, but now fates, that cannot be avoided, and fortune, that will be mistress of her decrees, taught me honour was brittle, and riches as blossoms that every frost of fortune can cause to wither, so that both dishonoured and poor, yet I live more happy for that I have opposed my mind against all mishaps, not caring for fortune because too low for fortune. Thus, madam, you have heard what I have been, and see what presently I am.

The despot, seeing she would fain be gone, hearing she was of honourable parentage, stepped more nigh & took her by the hand, adjuring by the love she ever bare to him she liked best that she would tell her name, her country, and the cause of her abode in these deserts. Mariana, a long while unwilling, and yet at last overcome with their importunacy, discoursed unto them whose wife she was, and from point to point discovered the fore-rehearsed premises. The despot and his wife, who knew very well Prestines, hearing such a tragical catastrophe, took such compassion of the lady that sitting down by her they fell into tears, which overpast, they sought by persuasions to drive her from that miserable resolution, the despot's wife offering her to be second lady and mistress in her house, where she should be entertained, not as a friend only, but as her own sister. Mariana was thankful, but not to be entreated, till at last, won with such earnest protestations, she granted to go with them, which greatly contented the despot, so that casting his mantle about her and taking her up behind him he rode forward to seek

Ingratitude ought never to be used.

Inevitable fatum.

Riches not permanent.

Courtesy is honourable.

his company, whom when he had found, leaving all his sport he hied home to his house, a joyful man of such an encounter.

Where we leave him, and return to the corsairs and pirates, who coming at last with their prey to Japhet, a promontory seated by the sea, they sold the nurse and the two children to the governor of the city, who was called Lamoraq, being brother to the despot of Decapolis, who when they came to age kept them up as slaves, setting them to all kind of drudgery. The nurse, although of mean parentage yet passing wise, feared to bewray from whence the children were issued, and therefore called them her own sons, naming the eldest, whose named was Castriot, Procidor, but the youngest she suffered to retain his surname. The children, thus kept servile and miserable, being come to some years of discretion their nurse told the eldest whose son he was, charging him upon his life not to bewray his progeny lest it might be greatly prejudicial to his estate, but to content himself with hope till time did allow better fortune.

Poverty hinders not wisdom.

Procidor, for so we will now call him, as he grew in years so he grew in wisdom, that he covertly concealed what his nurse gave him in charge, and as the palm-tree cannot be brought from his height by pressing down, nor the diamond bereaved of his virtue though he be set in brass, so Procidor, although he was in the state of a slave, poor, miserable, and acquainted with labours, yet his mind reaching at honour began to be impatient of command, so that in a day, finding fit opportunity, without taking his leave of his nurse he shipped himself in a bark of Alexandria to seek his fortune, where passing away three or four years at the seas and getting little or no preferment, hearing also that his father (whom he supposed to be dead) was yet living and prisoner in Sidon, as one in despair and past hope he travelled many strange countries till at last he came to Decapolis, where he had not long been resident but the despot, seeing him a young youth, very well-proportioned, of good grace and of a resolute disposition, entertained him into his service, so that he lived in the house with his mother unknown for the space of a year, in which time Marcella, the daughter of the despot, noting the perfection of Procidor, began at the altars of Vesta to offer smoking thoughts at the shrine of Venus, for women's eyes delight in the variety of objects. The maid, seeing that the sharpness of his wit (a spark that soonest inflameth desire) was answerable to the shape of his body, and that his mind was adorned with so many sundry good qualities that if his fortune had been equal to his face his deserts might have made him a prince, she began so far to enter into the considerations of his virtues that, hazarding too rashly into so dangerous a labyrinth, she felt her mind begin to alter and her affections to stoop to such a state as repent she might, but recall she could not. But taking these thoughts for passionate joys that might be thrust out at pleasure, cursing love that attempted such a change, and blaming the baseness of her mind that would make such a choice, to avoid the siren that enchanted her with such deceitful melody she called to her bedfellow Mariana for a lute, whereupon warbling a merry galliard she thought to beguile such unacquainted passions. But finding that music was but to quench the flame with oil, feeling the assaults to be so sharp as her mind was ready to yield as vanquished, she began with divers considerations to suppress the [sic?] frantic affections, calling to mind that Procidor was her father's servant, a man of mean and base parentage, for his birth not to be looked at of the daughter of a despot much less to be loved of one of her degree, thinking what a discredit it were to herself,

Love a perilous labyrinth.

Music mitigates not love.

what a grief to her parents, what sorrow to her friends, yea, what a mighty shame should be guerdon to such a monstrous fault, blaming fortune and accursing her own folly that should be so fond as but once to harbour such a thought as to stoop so low as to her father's hireling. As thus she was raging against herself, love, feared if she dallied long to lose her champion, and therefore stepping more nigh, gave her such a fresh wound as pierced her at the very heart that she was fain to yield, maugre her former considerations, and forsaking all company to get her in her closet, where being solemnly set, she burst forth into these passionate terms.

Unhappy Marcella, hath fame hitherto feared to speak ill of thy thoughts, and shall report dare to misconstrue of thine actions? Hath Decapolis honoured thee for thy virtues, and shall now all the world wonder at thee for thy vanities? Hast thou vowed thyself to Vesta and wilt thou run after Venus? Wilt thou be counted a precedent of virginity and yet subject thyself to unbridled fancy? No, Marcella, there is no sweeter friend than liberty, nor no worse enemy than inconsiderate affection. The thoughts of ladies, Marcella, as they are worthy, so ought they to look no lower than honour; blush then at thy fortunes, thy choice, thy love, sith thy thoughts cannot be contrived without secret shame nor thy affections uttered without open discredit. Far are these fancies, or rather follies, unfit for thy birth. Hast thou not heard, Marcella, as an oracle from Apollo, that it is better to perish with high desire than to live in base thoughts? And yet Procidor is beautiful. A favour, fond fool, framed to feed the eye, not to fret the heart. He is wise. Truth, but poor, and want is an enemy to fancy. Tush, being both beautiful and wise, why should he not be loved? Wilt thou so far forget thyself as to suffer affection to entangle thee with such bad conjectures? No, consider how such a match will be most dismal to thy father, most grievous to thy friends, prejudicial to thyself, and most gladsome to thy foes, the greatest grief of all sith the smile of a foe that proceedeth from envy is worse than the tear of a friend that cometh of pity. These premises then duly considered, prefer not a barley-corn before a precious jewel, set not a fading content before a perpetual dishonour; suppress thy affections, and cease to love him whom thou couldst not love unless blinded with too much love.

As thus she was perplexed with sundry passions, Mariana came to seek her in her closet, whereupon she ceased her complaints, hoping that time would wear out that which fond love and fortune had wrought, but all was in vain, for so did the remembrance of her late conceived love alienate her thoughts from her wonted disposition that shame and dishonour, the greatest preventers of mishap, were no means to dissuade her from her determined affection, insomuch that, not possible to hide fire in the straw, nor to smother up fancy in youth, she bore such a favourable countenance to Procidor that not only herself but the rest of the house marvelled at her submiss familiarity, yet in that she had hitherto trodden her shoe so even as no step was so much as thought awry, they construed all to the best and thought her favours toward Procidor proceeded as a reward for his virtues, not from a regard to his beauty, but at last, being Venus' scholar and therefore daring with her to dance in a net, played not so close but Procidor could judge of colours and espy of the half what the whole meant. Puffed up therefore a little in conceit with the favour of his master's daughter, seeing opportunity laid her hairy forehead on his lap he began somewhat pertly to pry into the exquisiteness of her perfection, noting that she was

**Impossible to conceal
love.**

passing beautiful and young, and that virtue added a grace unto nature, and that being of noble parentage, beauty decked nature with dignity. This interchange considered so charmed the poor gentleman's affections that fain he would have made requital of her favours with like courtesy if her honourable estate had not quatted his presumption with fear; hovering thus between two streams, at last he burst forth into these complaints.

Dost thou not know, poor Procidor, that actions wrought against nature reap despite, and thoughts above fortune, disdain; that what bird gazeth against the sun but the eagle becometh blind, and that such as step to dignity if unfit, fall; that thoughts are to be measured by fortunes, not by desires; how falls come not by stooping low, but by climbing too high? Shall therefore all fear to aspire because some hap to fall? No, Procidor, though thou art in rags yet thou art noble born; thou art not inferior to Marcella in birth, though in riches; then dare to attempt sith she shows thee such manifest favours. Ah novice in love, dost thou count every dimple in the cheek a decree in the heart, every lims [sic] a warrant of love. Venus, fond man, looked on more than she loved or else she [+was] passing amorous; women's smiles are oft more of custom than of courtesy, and passing prodigal they be with their eyes when they are niggards in their hearts, for think not, fond man, that eagles will catch at flies, cedars stoops to brambles, nor such honourable dames at such homely peasants. No, no, think her disdain is greater than thy desire, for accounting thee but a slave and her father's mercenary man she doth but repay thy labours with affability; therefore cease not only to say but to think she loves thee. Procidor with these pithy persuasions somewhat appeasing the sparkling flames of love that already were kindled in his breast applied himself to his wonted labour, suppressing his affections with the due consideration of her honour and his own mean estate, and counting it frenzy, not fancy, to covet that which the very destinies would deny him to obtain.

These two, thwarted thus with fear and shame, lingereth forth the time till at last, fortune willing to present in a sweet fig bitter wormwood, found such fit opportunity that Procidor and Marcella met at such leisure that not long after Marcella was known to be with child, which news no sooner came to the ears of the despot but as a man in raged [sic?] fury and revenge, driving reason out of conceit, he presently caused Procidor to be apprehended and his daughter Marcella, resolving that according to the law of the country they should die. The mother, more pitiful, considering the follies of her own youth, began to entreat her husband to spare their lives and assign what punishment else, though the torture were never so grievous, which by long persuasion he consented unto, committing them unto strait prison where they lay in great distress the space of ten weeks before ever the despot made any question of their imprisonment.

While thus Procidor lay sorrowing, more for the mishap of Marcella than for his own misfortune, news was brought to Decapolis that Eurybates' son had gathered an host and sought to drive Voltarus out of the confines of Tyre, which Procidor hearing, he began thus to meditate with himself. Unhappy Procidor, see how fortune, intending thy good, the hapless fates seek to frustrate such success. Hast thou these fourteen years gone as a vagabond about the world unknown and despised, hoping for this day, that Eurybates' son should seek revenge on Voltarus, and art thou now in prison when opportunity

offered such good fortune, yea, and in such a place as naught but death can redeem thee? The jailer, overhearing Procidor, asked him what he had to do with the peace or wars of princes. Ah, my good friend, quoth he, when I consider in what estate my father whilom lived in that country, as I have heard and am able almost to remember, I cannot but groan to see my present ill hap. And who was thy father? quoth the jailer. Seeing, answered Procidor, that time hath set the sun of Eurybates almost in his kingdom, I fear not to discover what I am. My father's name is Prestines, lieutenant of Tyre under Eurybates, & my name not Procidor but Castriot, and I doubt not but if I were there, for my father's sake to reap credit and authority.

Without further questioning, the jailer went presently and told the despot what he had heard, who making small account of the matter, yet presently considered with himself if it were true how greatly he should, by making such a marriage, avoid the shame like to befall to his daughter; therefore he went & asked of Mariana what her eldest son's name was, who made answer Castriot, & that if he lived he was about twenty years of age. The despot, suspecting it was he, went secretly to the prison, where examining Procidor of all his life past, found by probable circumstances that he was Prestines' son, whereupon he began to recount unto him how he took him into his service, placing him in his favour, then the injury he offered him by infringing his daughter's honour, yet for all this craving no other amends but that he would take her to wife. Procidor made answer, what he had done was the faults of his youth, and that he was both sorrowful and repentant, and that he might think it firm love and not fading fancy that forced him to commit such a fault [+and] he was ready at his pleasure to take Marcella to his wife. The despot, seeing sparks of his father's courage in his resolutions, embraced him, and sending for his daughter into the same prison, there secretly betrothed each to other, then took them out and sent them to a grange place of his in the country; within short time they recovered their former complexions, greatly impaired by their close imprisonment.

In the mean space the depot, providing all things necessary for the marriage, seeing they were returned into the former form, carried his wife and madam Mariana to his grange, where by the way he demanded of her how happy it would be unto her if he did marry his daughter to her eldest son, Castriot. Madam Mariana, smiling, told him it was impossible, sith she thought him dead. Being well arrived at his farm, he brought his wife & the lady into the chamber where the two lovers sat, very richly appareled, unto whom at large he discovered what had happened. When Mariana knew her son Castriot, noting very well the lineaments of his face, she fell in a sound for joy, but being at last revived, after many and hearty embracings and joy on all parts they sat down to dinner, Castriot desiring the despot that he would send to Japhet where was one Lamoraq, governor of the town, that held his younger brother & his nurse as slaves. This motion was greatly agreeable to the despot, so that he presently sent a messenger to Japhet, and another to Tyre to hear of the estate of Prestines.

The messengers, making as much speed as winds and weather would permit, arrived fortunately at their desired place, where no sooner the one was arrived but he delivered his embassage to Lamoraq, who musing to hear such news from his brother the despot went to confirm his doubt the more, and subtly examined the nurse, who confessed as

before, whereupon to satisfy his brother and requite the great injury he had proffered to young Infortunio, having but only one daughter of the age of fourteen years, he gave her with a great dowry to the poor gentleman, and withal shipping himself in a frigate with his daughter, his son-in-law, and the nurse, he sailed to Decapolis, at whose arrival great joy being made between Mariana and her two sons, the marriage of the gentleman was solemnized the next week after, and to increase therein content, news was brought that Eurybates' son, having subdued Voltarus and recovered his kingdom, he had set Prestines in former place and authority. This news greatly delighting the company, when the marriage feast was ended the lady and her two sons with their wives taking leave of the despot and Lamoraq sailed to Tyre where they were most loving entertained by Prestines.

Perimedes having ended his tale, his wife Delia, raging against fortune that was most envious to them that were most honourable, said that poor men were like little shrubs that by their baseness escaped many blasts when high and tall cedars were shaken with every tempest, concluding therefore that *mediocria* were most *firma*. Seeing her fire was out and the night somewhat cold, they both hied themselves to bed.

The second night's discourse.

The day was no sooner spent in labour but the poor smith and his wife, according to their accustomed manner, after supper would not be idle, but sitting close by the fire Delia brought out an old pair of cards to pass away the time at play, whereupon Perimedes taking occasion began to discourse in this manner. These cards, wife, may rightly be termed *glucupilica* [sic], sweet & sour, double-faced, bearing in their foreheads pleasures and peace, & in their backs sorrows & stratagems, presenting us with delicacies which in the mouth taste like honey but in the maw more bitter than gall, for although we use them for recreation to pass away the time, yet other aim at two ends, lucre and covetousness, and yet their gains but loss of time. And the effects of gaming here now-a-days in Memphis, as they are many, so they are monstrous, as quarrels, murders, blasphemies, swearing, and cozenage, yea, the overthrow of houses and families testifying the infamous name thereof. Chilon the Lacedaemonian, being sent in ambassage to Corinth to treat of a league betwixt those two cities, finding the rulers playing at dice, returned back without once speaking of his commission, saying that he would not eclipse the glory of the Spartans with so great an ignomy as to join them in society with dice-players. Delia, hearing her husband envying so much against playing, thinking he did it to check her desire to play at cards, began thus to defend it.

And would you have us, husband, so far from recreation in Memphis as to be Stoics or Cynics? Well had I allowed, husband, of your speeches, if they had savoured of any exception, but so strict an invective deserves some apology, and therefore by your favour, husband, thus. I deny not but those effects which you repeated as fruits of gaming are greatly prejudicial both to the mind and body, but they proceed not of necessity, as *causa sine qua non*, but as infections that flow from the abuse being grown into an extremity. For we see that many things which of themselves are good, by excess grow into the nature of evil, and so of this, for Solomon, whose divine wisdom was without comparison, set down his censure of time, that as there were days of sorrow, so were

there hours of mirth, that the mind had as well pastimes to recreate as serious affairs to fatigate. Cato, the most severe censor that was ever in Rome, amongst all his strait edicts did not utterly abolish gaming, but allowed the *purpurati* to spend certain hours at such pastimes as they thought necessary, saying that moderate sport was a whetstone to the memory. I have heard the Chaldees say that the Lydians were the first inventors of cards and dice and other games, and by them preserved a long time the estate of their commonwealth, which otherwise should have been ruined and subjected.

Perimedes, hearing his wife to allege such sound reasons for gamesters, thought to join action with her in this manner. You resemble, wife, those subtile lawyers that only allege that clause in their evidence which best serves for the proof of their plea, leaving out all other provisos that are hurtful indeed. I remember that I have heard that the country of Lydia, being oppressed with a great dearth and scarcity of victuals, had almost subverted their estate with famine, but that to resist and sustain hunger the better they invented plays and gaming, spending every other day in such sport without any meat, which they continued for the space of twenty and eight years, by that policy preserving their country from a general famine by sparing so carefully their provision. But wife, the case is altered in us; we are so far from recompensing the fault of so vile an occupation by fasting that, contrariwise, we foster it up with all kind of dissoluteness, gluttony, riot, and superfluity, insomuch that we are not ashamed now-a-days to use this proverb, that a man had better lose than to be idle. But if those lewd philosophers which set down this principle knew their inestimable loss, not of money which they abuse but of the riches [sic] and most precious thing that may be spent and which can never be recovered, I mean time, they would be ashamed of their doctrine that to lose is worse than to be idle, because it is joined with so bad an action as of necessity redoundeth to the detriment of himself or of his neighbour, yea, and oftentimes of both. And yet because the nature of man is not able to abide continual labour, & occasion of business is not always offered, we may with our Chaldees in their academies follow this precept, that time spent in honest pastime or game of moderate pleasure may be set down in the register of happy days as hours not greatly dissonant from virtuous endeavours; neither, saith Scipio, is gaming blameworthy if we use it as rest and sleep, after we have ended & dispatched our business. I am glad, quoth Delia, that you allow us any time to play. I am not so strict, quoth Perimedes. But this discourse, wife, is far from the purpose; therefore seeing we have yet half the evening to spend and I have no delight to play at cards, let me hear thee tell a tale to requite yesternight's chat. Delia, nothing dainty with her husband, taking the tongs in her hand to keep the fire in reparations, began in this manner.

Delia her tale.

In the isle of Lipari there dwelled sometime a gentleman of good parentage, as descended from worshipful and honest parents; learned by education, as trained up amongst the philosophers in their academies; virtuous in his actions, as putting in practice those principles which he heard in their shools [sic] as axioms; generally well nurtured, insomuch that he lived in very good account in the island. This gentleman, called Alcimedes, although favoured thus with sundry good qualities, yet was greatly envied by

love and fortune, for his want was such as his revenues were nothing answerable to his mind, but lived poorly and yet contentedly in mean estate. Fancy, seeing fortune frown, to fill up the tragedy presented him with the sight of a young gentlewoman called Constance, who being both wise and beautiful, two persuasions sufficient to induce affection, was so narrowly marked of Alcimedes as he thought no object to fit his eye but her person, nor no melody to please his ear but the sound of her modest and grave communication. Snared thus with the consideration of this young gentlewoman at the first, he found ways to proffer her roses and perfumes, but at the last pills and hemlock, for the young virgin, hearing of the virtuous disposition of Alcimedes, and seeing his mind was as well garnished with good qualities as his body with proportion, used *lex talionis* and repaid him love for love so far as his honesty might desire & her honour admit, insomuch that nothing was wanting in the accomplishment of their thoughts but her father's consent, who being moved by Alcimedes in the matter flatly denied, and made this objection, that he was too poor to make his daughter any sufficient jointure, which answer so mazed Alcimedes that in a desperate mood, acquainting certain friends with this purpose, he rigged forth a ship to sea with full resolution either to return rich or to leave his lover [sic] and himself in the bosom of Neptune. Upon which determination resting, he loosed with his companions from Lipari, & in manner of mart made havoc on the coast of Barbary, so that in short time he became very rich, but insatiate covetise, that like the serpent hidaspis is ever a thief, so haled him to the hope of more rich purchase that at last he and all his men were taken by the Saracens and carried away prisoners into Tunis.

The news of this mishap, as report must ever be prattling, came flying to the isle of Lipari that the ship wherein Alcimedes and his soldiers was embarked was drowned in the coast of Barbary. Constance no sooner heard of this cursed stratagem but she determined to end these miseries with death, and that in the sea, that she might imitate Alcimedes, who was reported to perish in the same element. To the end therefore her purpose might the more easily be brought to pass, Constance, walking down to the shore, found a little fisher-boat ready furnished with mast, sails, & other provisions floating in the haven, which Constance espying, taking this for good occasion, she speedily went into the boat, and as well as she could, as the women of that island are most skilful in navigation, haled forth into the main and there committed herself to the mercy of the wave [sic] and winding [sic], thinking by this means to procure soonest her fatal end, sith so many accidents were ready, as death & danger every minute, [+and] passed thus two or three days amongst the coast till at last a south-east wind drive the ship upon the shore of Barbary.

The bark thus beaten up, there was at that present in the same place a poor woman who made clean the fishermen's nets, which seeing the ship so roughly arrived, thought the mariners had been asleep. To warn them therefore of their landing, she went up the hatches and found none, insomuch that seeking further she found this young gentlewoman fast asleep, as one secure and careless of her misfortune, whom the poor fisher-wife waking, perceiving by her apparel that she was a Christian, demanded in the Latin tongue of whence she was and the cause of her so strange embarking. Constance, risen as it were from a dream, hearing one speak Latin, thought she had been driven back

again to Lipari, but casting her eye about and seeing herself in an unknown coast, she craved of the woman the name of the country, who told her she was in Barbary near a city called Susa, which greatly grieved Constance, that her death was prolonged by such a luckless adventure, so that fearing some dishonour in so barbarous a country might befall her virgin's estate, she sat her down and wept.

The poor woman, taking pity of her passions, carried her home to her little cottage and there, as well as she might, so comforted the distressed maid that she told her from point to point the sum of this hapless accident, and grew so far in familiarity that Constance demanded of her what she was, who made answer that she was of Trapani, a servant to certain fishers, her name Mawdleyne. Constance, seeing she was a Christian and could speak Latin very perfectly, began to entreat her that she would for the love of their religion and faith tell her what course she had best take that she remain for a time safe without prejudice either of honour or honesty. Mawdleyne, a woman of good and virtuous disposition, told her that there was a Saracen widow in the city of virtuous life and good conscience whose house was oft a sanctuary for the distressed. There she durst assure herself she might for a time remain till time and opportunity should better provide for her estate. Constance, glad of this news, desired Mawdleyne to favour her with the benefit of that service, who, willing to pleasure her, before two days were past, setting all things to her mind in order, went with Constance to the widow's house, where having heard before of Mawdleyne of this maid, gave her very good entertainment, & and as one pitying her distress, heard her sorrow with tears and remorse.

Well, Constance, thus placed, being in the company of sundry other maids that wrought needlework, so applied herself to her labour that not only by her diligence she procured her mistress' favour, but by her courtesy the general love & good liking of all her fellows. Remaining thus quiet, though not satisfied, fortune willing after so sharp a catastrophe to induce a comical conclusion, tempered her storm with this pleasant calm. Alcimedes, lying thus in prison, having no hope to recover his freedom, but looking every day to be condemned perpetual slave to the galleys, news came that a nobleman of great reputation, dignity, & power had made claim to the kingdom of Thimes [sic] as his own, and meant by the sword to take it from Martucio, that then presently possessed it. This report coming to the ears of the prisoners, Alcimedes, who knew very well to speak the Barbarian tongue, told his keeper that, might it please him to bring him to the king's presence, he would take such order with his grace as he should in despite of fortune remain conqueror. The jailer, seeing the request was of importance, told it presently to his Highness, who in great haste sent for Alcimedes, who gathering the king and his nobles together, discovered unto them such a piece of politic service that they all consented to let Alcimedes have the leading of the vaward, who undertaking the charge, as a man greatly experienced in martial discipline, carried his men in squadrons and troops so artificially as his warlike skill did greatly encourage the soldiers. Having thus set his men in array marching forward to meet the enemy, when the battles were within view and ready to join, Alcimedes taking the king by the hand presented him to the face of all his army and then began to encourage them on this manner.

I need not, worthy gentlemen and soldiers of Barbary, seek to encourage you with a long discourse unless, putting oil in the flame, I should put a spur to a free horse. Your former valiant resolutions manifested in many battles, the honour whereof still glories your name with renown, assures me, were the enemy like the sands of the sea, and Mars himself opposed against our forces, yet the quarrel good and our minds armed with invincible fortitude (the virtue that dareth fortune in her face), maugre fates and destinies you shall, as ever you have done, return with an honourable conquest. And for that the cause toucheth your king, who counteth himself a fellow-partner in your fortunes, see he presents himself as the first man in the battle and last man in the field unless death give him a princely quittance of his kingdom. Let him be a mirror this day of your magnanimity; let his actions be your precedents; press but as far as your general & courage, gentlemen, the victory is ours. See how your sorrowful countrymen, only animated by the rebellious persuasion of a traitor, stands to receive us, whose cowardice scarce dare march a foot to meet us. I see, yea, I see in their very faces the portraiture of fear, and therefore, gentlemen, God and our right! And with that he put spurs to his horse and gave a furious and valiant onset upon the enemy.

The king, ashamed to perform any less than Alcimedes had promised, taking a strong lance in his hand, pulling down his beaver, rushed most furiously upon the enemy. His soldiers, noting the unlooked for courage of their king, followed with such a desperate resolution that the enemy, amazed at the valour of Martucio, who like a lion, massacring whom he met, ran without stop through the troops, they laid down their weapons without any great slaughter. But Martucio, forgetting they were his native countrymen and his subjects, still raged, till meeting him that made claim to the crown in single combat he slew him princely in the field. Stayed at last by one of his lords, who told him the battle was ended by the submission of his subjects, who were ashamed that they had been so forgetful of their allegiance, causing the retreat to be sounded he peaceably marched on toward Susa, where putting certain of the chief offenders to the sword he sent the rest home in quiet.

The victory ended, the king presently summoned a parliament, where with the consent of all his commons & nobility he proclaimed poor and distressed Alcimedes duke of Tunis, and caused him to ride through the city with a garland of bays on his head and princely robes in great and sumptuous magnificence. Being thus advanced, the report thereof came unto the ears of Constance, who now knowing him alive & in great authority whom long since she held for dead, she conceived such inward joy that she could not but outwardly commit the sum of her mind to the gentlewoman with whom she dwelt, who pitying her complaints promised as soon as opportunity would give her leave to manifest the matter to Alcimedes. Constance, impatient of delays, would not let the old gentlewoman take no rest till one morning she went to Alcimedes and told him that a certain gentlewoman was come from Lipari who desired to speak with him in secret. Alcimedes, courteous, as one whom honour had not made proud, thanked the widow for her pains and went home to her house, where she presented him with the sight of Constance. Alcimedes, hearing long before that she was dead, stood amazed at the sudden adventure, but she, poor fool, whom love stung at the very heart, could not abstain, but blushing, leapt about his neck, bewraying her joy in tears.

Alcimedès, the most joyful man alive for so happy an encounter, after many sweet embracings passed, demanded the cause & means how she came into Barbary, who recounting the fore-rehearsed discourse, greatly gladdened Alcimedès for the finding of so trusty and true a friend. Long he stayed not but that he revealed this comical history to the king, who desirous to see the maid, entertained her with great and princely courtesy, and with all speed, to both their contents, solemnized the marriage, which past, he sent them according to their calling rich home to their friends in Lipari.

Delia having ended her tale, Perimedes began to take occasion to talk of the inconstancy of fortune, who only coveted to be counted variable in all her actions. For, quoth he, I tell thee, wife, I have seen in my time many rich men who lived secure in the abundance of their wealth driven to such extreme poverty that their superfluity was not more than their ensuing want, & many base peasants by her flattery be so hoisted up to the top of her wavering wheel as they be potentates and mighty men of the earth, but her favours are such as they include misfortune, and when she presents the most comical shows, then she intends the most baleful and dismal stratagems, as the instance of Alexander the Great may serve for a precedent, who in twelve years making a conquest of the whole world, and so flattered by fortune as he seemed to hold her favours in his own hand, amidst his most glee and greatest glory was cowardly poisoned in Babylon.

At this Perimedes was ready to enter into a long discourse; his wife Delia told him the night was far spent, whereupon taking his wife's motion for warning, commanding her to *couvre le feu*, the poor smith and his wife went to bed.

The third night's exercise.

The next day being a solemn day of sacrifice observed amongst the Egyptians, Perimedes, shutting up his shop as one that feared to give the least occasion of offence, tying his devotion to the gods, his obedience to his king, his love to his neighbours, and his will to the law, causing his wife to honour the festival rites with her best raiment, himself jetting in his holiday cassock went to the temple, where offering up his orisons after the Egyptian manner, the flamens & rabbins having expounded their laws, the poor smith and his wife returned home to dinner, where having taken such repast as fitted their diet & was agreeable to their poor preparation, Perimedes, to digest his great cheer with a little chat began on this manner.

Noting today, wife, quoth he, at the temple certain of our great lords of Egypt whose beds are framed of Arabian bisse, whose houses stuffed within with plate and outwardly decked & adorned with such curious work of porphyry as nature in them seemeth to be over-laboured with art, their ports glistening like the palace of the sun, show to all passengers wonders to be written in the registers of their memories, but wife, when these great potentates of the earth came to discover their inward devotion at their offertory in giving to the gods and the poor, I perceived them miserable, & so corrupted in the conceit of their own wealth that I cried out in my thoughts, these men are poorer than Perimedes.

For I tell thee, Delia, this have I heard of the ancient Chaldees, whose books were burned with their bones, that he only is rich which, abandoning all superfluties, resteth contented with what fortune hath favoured him, his estate not pinched with such poverty but he may live honestly and virtuously. Whoso resolute in this content maketh not his thoughts and passions subject to the restless desire of gain *Is vere habetur diues*, for wife, the mind is the touchstone of content, and holdeth the balance that protortioneth [sic] quiet or disquiet to kings, for Pharaoh, our great prince, is not therefore fortunate for that he is invested with the diadem, for his crown resteth in the lap of Lachesis, and the destinies may deprive him of his dignity this night. Kings, as they have crowns, so they have cares, and in passing unto pleasure they step upon thorns and run over a sea of glass; not therefore rich for that they are kings unless content with his annual revenues & satisfied with such limits as are left to the Pharaohs. Resting thus he is both a king and rich, in that seated amidst the glories of the world, the sundry objects of delights draws not away his eyes, nor as [sic?] the sirens with their enchanting melody, nor gold nor glories can hale him with any pleasing sorceries from the quiet castle of content. Thus minded, Delia, I tell thee I call him rich, and therefore hold myself one of the wealthiest subjects in all Egypt in that all my desires have rested themselves in a peaceable concord. For my estate I desire to be no higher than a smith, as thus spiting fortune by my occupation, having my tongs in my hand as a sceptre to rule in my shop and a Mercury's caduceus to charm the inconstancy of the vain goddess. Her greatest frown can be but want of a little work, and that I overpass with patience, and if she smile, then begin I to laugh, that fortune is glad to become friends with a poor smith. Now for riches and treasure I have plenty in that I want none, but count my poverty the very storehouse of abundance.

Delia, hearing her husband thus solemnly deliver such Stoical paradoxes, joined issue with him in the same plea, and began to prosecute the matter in this manner. Indeed, husband, quoth she, the minds of men are so fired with the restless heat of covetise as they beat out hotter flames than Enceladus doth from under Etna, and are like the serpent hidaspis, which the more she drinketh the more she is pinched with thirst, insomuch that they count great gifts little goods [sic], caring not, if they may gain, what means they use to get, counting all things honest that are profitable, and thinking gall most sweet if tempered with gold. These men that have no mean I think most miserable, could they with Nimrod build up Babel or with Ninus lay the foundation of Babylon. For I tell thee, Perimedes, it is not the coin but the conscience, not the coffers stuffed with store but a mind lulled asleep with pleasing content that maketh a man rich. For he that defraudeth his neighbour with undermining policies or circumventeth him with any intricate deceit, exacting unreasonable tasks and customs, wrapping his friends as if in Daedalus' labyrinth in the quiddities of prejudicial bargains, prying into the state of the common treasury so to endamage the commonwealth for his own commodity, gaping as vultures after the testaments of the dead, not ceasing with the ravens to prey on lifeless carcasses, such as these husband, quoth Delia, are not wealthy in that as miserably they want, but are poor in that they leave no unlawful means to covet.

Then, quoth Perimedes, of these former inferred premises we may conclude that poorly content is better than richly covetous, which the ancient Romans averred in their censures, for whether shall we estimate the money that King Pyrrhus sent to Fabritius, or

else the continency of Fabritius, which made denial of the same, being proffered frankly by so great a potentate? And did not the answer of Marcus Curius more glory him & his family with immortal renown in rejecting the mass of gold sent him by the Samnites than all the treasure they brought in such pomp to Rome? Was not the liberality of Africanus, who parted his small farm with his brother Quintus Maximus, registered in Rome as a thing deserving perpetual memory when the great wealth and possessions of Lucius Paulus perished at his funerals, leaving behind him no monument but that the Romans did account him poor and miserable? These glorious instances of Roman excellency prove that the true riches consisteth not in the abundance of wealth but in the perfect habit of virtue, for riches is causal and momentary, subject to the frown of fortune, as brittle as glass, standing upon a globe that is never permanent, like to the trees amongst the Natolians, that being covered with flowers in the morning are tawny & withered before night, resembling the fruit in the garden Pesparades [sic] which glistering like gold, touched, presently turneth to ashes, whereas virtue is not accidental but sets out her flag of defiance against fortune, opposing himself against all the conspiring chances of this world, like Aeneas' armour not to be pierced with contrary constellation, so insorted [sic] into the minds of men as neither can perish by shipwreck, which made Bias, escaping from the sea, boldly and merrily to say in his greatest want, *Omnia mea mecum porto*, and the son of Anchises, carrying his father on his back through the flames of Troy, looking behind him to say, *Animus infractus remanet & virtus inter hostes & ignes viget*.

Then, wife, thou seest they only are rich that covet nothing, that want nothing, but living in content, enrich themselves with virtue. Then, Delia, let me boldly say (and with that the smith set his hands by his side) that I am rich as the proudest in all Egypt. But now, that I may not be too tedious in my discourse, I will, to temper mirth with melancholy and to sing the satires of Horace to the lute, rehearse thee a pleasant tale tending somewhat to this effect. And thus the smith began.

Perimedes' tale.

Hereby in the confines of Babylon dwelled a duke called Gradasso, a man whose many years had by long experience learned that to trust sundry men was to seek for an eel amongst many scorpions, and therefore hardly granting his right hand to any man, he admitted none into familiarity unless he might sell his courtesy for profit, and they buy his favour with repentance. But in private and secret counsels he used no friend but himself, fearing to find that in others which he found wanted [sic] in his own cankered stomach, so skilful to shadow his spiteful practices with glossing colours, as resembling the pyrite stone, he burned sorest when he was thought most cold. To trust any he thought was to despise security and to desire mishap, and therefore known more for his authority than by his manners, he carried his thoughts sealed up with silence, pained with that which he most liked, namely fearful mistrust.

This Gradasso, although despited by the gods and nature for placing such odious qualities in such an old carcass, yet was he favoured by fortune in possessing large and sumptuous revenues, and not only advanced with the title of honour and dignities but also, wherein he most joyed, he had one only child called Melissa, a lady so furnished with outward

shape of body and inward qualities of the mind, so decked with the gifts of nature and adorned with sundry exquisite virtues as Egypt did not so much despise her father for his vicious disposition as they did extol her fame for her virtuous sincerity, for she, although to her great grief, seeing her into her father's lawless actions, how with pretended flattery like to the hyena he had snared some to their utter mishap and that under colour of law with exacted extortion he had oppressed the poor, sought not only as far as she durst to pull her father from such inordinate gains but also secretly made recompense to such as her father unjustly had almost brought to ruin.

This Melissa flourishing thus in happy fame, the old miser her father, casting beyond the moon, knew by experience that as the herb spattania no sooner sprouteth above the ground but it bloometh, and the eggs of the lapwing are scarce hatched before the young ones can run, so women, resembling the apples of the tree pala, are scarce ripe before they desire to be plucked, and their years not able to discern love before they be half drowned in love. These considerations moved old Gradasso to prevent had-I-wist with taking opportunity by the forehead, & therefore sought out amongst the bordering neighbours a young gentleman, the son and heir of a baron, whose revenues, as they were great, so they adjoined fitly to his possessions, which made the doting duke to endeavour to buy him a son-in-law answerable to his own opinion.

Finding his daughter therefore in fit time and place, he brake with her in this manner. Thou knowest, Melissa, quoth he, how careful I have been since thy mother's death not only secretly to provide for thy welfare but openly so to grace thee with exterior favours as all Egypt have judged me a father worthy such a child, and thee, for thy obedience, deserving what my liberality hath so carefully imparted. In thine nonage I endeavoured to instruct thee in modesty and manners, by such virtues to seem gracious in the eye of every man. Now that thou art grown to riper years and art famous for the method of thy life through all the country, seeing thou art fit for marriage, I have sought thee such an husband as shall honour thee with his birth and enrich thee with his possessions, a man though not so exquisitely formed by nature as he may seem a second Paris, yet of such wealth as he may countenance and credit with the abundance of his revenues. And to be brief, daughter, it is Rosilius son to the Lord Rosilius lately deceased.

After he had named the man, he ceased, to hear his daughter's reply. Melissa, noting with a secret mislike her father's motion, yet for fear durst not oppose herself against his determination, but told him that as she was his daughter, so she was bound by the law of nature to obey him as her father, and his will should be to her as a law which by no means she dared to infringe. This answer pleased the old covetous duke, that with as convenient speed as might be he brake the matter to Rosilius, who having no more wit than he well could occupy, noting how fair a lady he should possess, condescended with great thanks to the duke's motion, and thereupon frequenting the house of Gradasso began after his homely fashion to court the young Lady Melissa, as fit to woo so brave a gentlewoman as Pan to be sent from Troy in ambassage to Helena.

Well, these two discords of descanting, to make a concord, it fortun'd that a gentleman, next neighbour to the duke, had a young son called Bradamant, a man so sufficiently

graced with external favours of nature to beautify his body and with inward qualities and virtues to advance his mind as he was generally liked and loved of all the country. This young gentleman, passing by the court of Gradasso, espied Melissa looking out of a window. Bradamant, amazed at the sight of such a heavenly creature, stood a long while astonished at her excellent beauty, insomuch that Melissa, casting her eye aside, espied him, and with that shut the casements, which somewhat daunted the mind of the young gentleman to be so suddenly deprived of that object which so greatly pleased his eyes, but taking this her modest discourtesy in good part, he passed forward to take a view of his father's grounds, where as he solemnly & solitarily walked, he felt in his mind a sparkling heat of affection which he took as a toy of youth, rather to be laughed at for the sudden passion than to be prevented for an ensuing danger.

As thus he rested a little perplexed but not greatly pained, Cupid, that grudged to lose such a novice, having his wings plumed with time's feathers lest he might let slip occasion, seeing this young gentleman at discover, thought to strike while the iron was hot, and so drew a bolt to the head and struck Bradamant at the very heart, which pierced so deep that no physic could cure, for the fame of Melissa's life began to allure him, the report which all Egypt made of her courtesy was a chain to entangle his freedom, her honour, birth, parentage, and incomparable beauty gave such fierce assaults to his perplexed fancy as no defense of reason was able to withstand those violent impressions.

Bradamant, seeing himself pained with these unacquainted fits, was driven into a quandary whether he should valiantly resist the enchanting tunes of Cupid's sorcery, and so stand to the chance whatsoever the main were, or else yield to the alluring call of beauty, and so spend his youth in seeking and suing for doubtful though desired favours. Tossed awhile in these contrary thoughts, and pinched with the consideration of his own estate, he began to think that to fix his fancy upon Melissa was with the young griffins to peck against the stars and with the wolves to bark against the moon, seeing the baseness of his birth and such a rich rival as Resilius [sic] was would greatly prejudice his intended sate [sic]. These considerations began somewhat to repress his doting fancies, but Cupid, not willing to take so slender a repulse, thought straight to race out these despairing thoughts with the comfortable conserves of hope, and to draw Bradamant out of the labyrinth of distrusting fear with the assured possibilities of achieving his enterprise. He therefore began to encourage his champion with these plausible contraries, that Melissa was a woman, and therefore to be won; if beautiful, with praises; if coy, with prayers; if proud, with gifts; if covetous, with promises. To conclude, that as there is no stone so hard which cannot be cut, no hawk so ramage that cannot be manned, no tiger so fierce which cannot be tamed, so there is no woman so infected with the bitter passion of self-will, none so spotted with the stain of hellish cruelty nor so wedded unto wilful frowardness but they may be drawn to the lure by some of the forenamed practices. Bradamant, pricked forward with these pithy persuasions and yet driven back with the fear of some hapless denial, stood diversly perplexed whether he should with a momentary content sue after loss, or with a long disquiet search after gain. Remaining awhile in these doubts, half frantic with such unaccustomed fits, he fell into these passionate complaints.

Oh Bradamant, how art thou diversly perplexed, driven either to purchase hapless content with fading pleasures, or to gain a happy disquiet with ensuing profits; if thou choose the first, thou art like to repent at the last; if the second, sure with Hercules after painful labours to obtain fame and quiet. The Caspians, fearing to be stifled with sweet savours, wear in their bosoms bands of hemlock; the people Pharusii, doubting to surfeit with drinking the juice of liquorice, prevent such perils with chewing rhubarb. It is better to be pained with the sting of a snake, and recover, than be tickled with the venom of tarantula and die laughing. Hard, yea, hard it is, Bradamant, to ride on Sejanus' horse for his beauty and then perish, or to gain the gold of Thalessa [sic?] with assured mishap; better it is for a time with sorrow to prevent dangers than to buy fading pleasures with repentance. Why Bradamant, what cause shalt thou have to repent? Is pain always a companion to pleasure? Is danger the handmaid to love? Is fancy never painted but treading upon thorns? Yes, no doubt as Cupid hath arrows that do pierce, so they make sweet wounds. Venus, I grant, hath a wrinkle in her brow, but two dimples in her cheeks; she frowns not upon them that sacrifice at Paphos, but pains such as despise her deity. Love, Bradamant? Why, dost thou love? Yea, alas, and therefore unhappy because in love, a passion so unfit for thy young years as if thou yield to Cupid's allurements thou shalt have cause either to curse the destinies for appointing him a god, or accuse the gods for creating thee a man, for love, whatsoever the luck be, is always tempered with loss. If thou win, thy gain shall be like theirs who buy honey mixed with gall, the sweetness not half so much pleasing the taste as the bitterness infecteth the stomach. Parrhasius, drawing the counterfeit of love, painteth her tickling youth on the left side with a feather and stinging him on the right with a scorpion, meaning that they which are sotted with the sorceries of Cupid reap for a dram of gold a pound of dross, and for a pint of pure oil a whole tun of infectious poison, being a fading pleasure mixed with bitter passions and a misery tempered with a few momentary delights. It is for youth, Bradamant, to spend their flourishing years in virtues, not in vanities; to delight in hard armours, not in delicate and effeminate amours; not to dally in the chamber with Paris, but to march in the field with Hector; to wish they could love, not to repent they have loved. Hercules won his fame not with recounting his lawless and licentious loves but by achieving strange and invincible labours, the one winning him endless renown, the other untimely death. Seek then to bridle fancy with reason and to restrain dotting affections with due counsel. Quench the flame of appetite with wisdom, and reaching at honour, spurn at beauty. So mayest thou say Venus' flames are but flashes, and call Cupid a despised boy, not a redoubted god.

Bradamant, thinking thus with blaspheming curses to shake off fancy's shackles, went out of his chamber to sport himself with his companions, where he passed away the day in playing at chess, but although he gave the check, he was fain at last to take the mate, for Venus, hearing with what despicable terms he abused her deity, thought, seeing he despised love, to make him yield unto love, and with panting sighs to crave pardon where with bitter speeches he had railed. She therefore, seeing he began to make a rampire against fancy, thought to give a fresh assault to his half defended fortress, and to send desire as a herald to make the challenge, that beauty as a champion might perform the charge. Which done, Bradamant, willing to withstand her power, passed three or four days in perplexed passions, counting love as a toy which being taken in a minute might

be left off at a moment, but he fond [sic] as the abenstone [sic] once kindled can neither be quenched, as the griffin if he once soar into the air will never come down without his prey, so if Venus give the assault it is impossible to escape without sacking. If love display her flag, she never returns without victory, which forced Bradamant to present them with prayers whom he had plagued with curses, and where he had shed blood, there to offer the sacrifice, for the remembrance of Melissa's beauty so fired his affections that as the fly pirulus cannot live out of the flame, nor the bird trochilus keep from the infectious crocodile, so unless he might enjoy what he feared to possess, no means but death could cure his malady.

Bradamant, pining a long while in these doubtful thoughts, began once again to debate with himself, but all in vain, yet maugre his own mind he burst forth into these speeches. Alas, poor Bradamant, thou reachest at that with thy hand which thy heart would fain refuse, playing with the bird ibis which hateth serpents yet feedeth on their eggs. Consider, Bradamant, thou art the son of a poor gentleman, and she the daughter of a mighty duke; the disdain of thy parentage, thy living, thy patrimony is a sufficient cooling to thee; think not eagles will catch at flies, or such mighty potentates stoop to such poor peasants. The bull and the hyena cannot be fed together in one stall; the elephant eateth not where the mouse hath crept; the eagle & the dove perk not on one branch. These brute beasts, moved only by sense; thou a man, and not to be persuaded by reason? Cease then, Bradamant, to love her who soars so far above thy reach as look at her thou mayest, but obtain her thou canst not. Play like the tree cytissus, that suffereth no fly to light upon his flower; let thy mind be like Hercules' temple whereinto no dog can enter. Suffer not love to scale the fort wherein freedom hath taken charge; so shalt thou both escape ensuing dangers and prove thyself more wise than amorous. Ah Bradamant, what dost thou mean to measure the heavens with a line, or to furrow the seas with a plough? Seekest thou to extinguish love by force, or to prevent fancy by counsel? Dost thou mean to quench fire with a sword, or to stop the wind with a feather? Thou knowest love is to be feared of men because honoured of the gods; Jupiter could not resist fancy, nor Apollo withstand affection; they gods, and yet in love, thou a man, and appointed to love. It is an impression, Bradamant, not to be suppressed by wisdom because not to be comprehended by reason; without law, and therefore must needs be above all law. Strive not then against the stream; feed not with the deer against the wind; seek not to appease Venus with slanders, but with sacrifice. Melissa is beautiful and virtuous, to be won with entreaty if thou fear not to attempt. What though Gradasso frown: may not she favour, he stifled with covetise, and therefore must hate; she stirred by Venus, and therefore must love? If Melissa like, pass not if he lour; yea, let both your parents dislike, so you two rest in contented quiet.

Bradamant had no sooner uttered these words but he felt his mind half eased with flattering himself thus in his follies, so that from doubting if he might love, he fell to devising how to obtain his love. Resting thus diversly passionate, Melissa, of the contrary part, began greatly to affect young Bradamant, and though his mean birth, his parentage and living, did dissuade her from liking so base a youth, yet a restless desire, a secret idea and contemplation of his virtues and beauty made him [sic] think if Gradasso

would grant, she could prefer Bradamant before Resilius [sic], so that, hindered in a dilemma, she began thus doubtfully to debate with herself.

Oh unhappy Melissa, whose mind is pained with unacquainted passions and whose head is troubled with unequal thoughts, shall thy virgin's state be stained with fond desires, or thy young years darkened with Cupid's shadow? 'Tis fit for thee, Melissa, to spend thy youth in labours, not in loves; to pace solemnly after Vesta, not to gad wantonly after Venus. Maids must have denial in their mouth and disdain in their hearts; so shall they safely remain free, and securely despise fancy. Diana is painted kissing virtue and spotting beauty's face with a pencil. Virgins must delight in ancient counsels, not amorous conceits, lest in smelling upon sweet violets they stumble over bitter rue. Truth, Melissa, thou givest good precepts if thou canst follow thine own principle. Thou art persuaded by Bradamant to love, but take heed of such baleful allurements. Arm thyself against his charming desire with a chaste disdain. So shalt thou be sure. As he which weareth laurel cannot be hurt with lightning, or he that carrieth the pen of an eagle perish with thunder; so shall neither love nor fancy pain thee with hapless passions. Think this, Bradamant is a man, and therefore inconstant, and as he saith, a lover, and therefore a flatterer, as fickle as the wolves of Syria which forget their prey ere they be half satisfied, & as dissembling as Jupiter, who feedeth Semele for a while with nectar, and then killeth her with fire. Sith then, Melissa, to love is to lose, fear not Venus as a goddess, but despise her as a wanton; entreat not Cupid with prayers, but with curses; tell fancy thou wilt reject her as a vassal, not regard her as a virtue. For Bradamant, rail at him as a peasant too low for thy passions; instead of courtesy, present him with Medea's enchanted casket. Doth Bradamant love Melissa? No, he hateth Melissa; he feigneth love to procure thy loss, he flattereth to try thy folly, and if he find thee too fond he will bring thee asleep with melody and then strike off thy head with Mercury. Oh Melissa, condemn not Bradamant without cause. If thou meanest not to love him, delight not to lack him. Proffer him not nettles sith he presents thee with roses; if he yield thee honey, rub not his hive with gall. Answer him friendly, though thou strain courtesy to flatter, for sweet promises please more than sour gifts, and pleasant potions are better taken, though infectious, than bitter pills, though most wholesome. And know this, Melissa, that the flame of the hill Chimaera is to be quenched with hay, not with water; the mountain in Harpasa to be removed with one's finger, not with the whole strength, and love to be driven out with reason, not to be thrust out with force, lest in striving against Venus, she play the woman and seek to revenge.

Melissa had no sooner uttered these words, but going into her closet she passed away the time two or three days perplexed. Her sweet love Rosilius could not with all his clownish courting drive her from her dumps, but still all her thoughts and imaginations were fixed on the wit and personage of young Bradamant, so that both the lovers sought by walking in the wood to meet there to discover those fiery passions which secretly smothered within their breasts. Bradamant, knowing the course that his love used to keep, taking his lute in his hand repaired to a ground whither Melissa presently resorted, & seeing the saint whom in heart she did reverence, stealing secretly amidst the thicket she determined to hear some part of his passions. Bradamant, full of melancholy dumps, tuning his lute began to warble out this madrigal.

*The swans whose pens as white as ivory
 Eclipsing fair Endymion's silver love,
 Floating like snow down by the banks of Po,
 Ne'er tuned their notes like Leda once forlorn
 With more despairing sorts of madrigals
 Than I, whom wanton love hath with his gad
 Pricked to the court of deep and restless thoughts.
 The frolic youngsters Bacchus' liquor mads
 Run not about the wood of Thessaly
 With more enchanted fits of lunacy
 Than I whom love, whom sweet and bitter love,
 Fires infects with sundry passions,
 Now lorn with liking overmuch my love,
 Frozen with fearing if I step too far,
 Fired with gazing at such glimmering stars
 As, stealing light from Phoebus' brightest rays,
 Sparkles and sets aflame within my breast.
 Rest, restless love; fond baby, be content;
 Child, hold thy darts within thy quiver close,
 And if thou wilt be roving with thy bow,
 Aim at those hearts that may attend on love.
 Let country swains and silly swads be still;
 To court, young wag, and wanton there thy fill.*

After that Bradamant had recorded this ditty he heard a great rushing in the bushes, whereupon, desirous to see what it might be, he espied Melissa, at whose sight he stood so amazed as if with Medusa's head he had been turned to a stone. The lady as much aghast, having a cousin of hers with her called Angelica, uttered not a word, but the lovers, made mute with love, stood as persons in a trance till Bradamant, discoursing his loves and making open his privy passions, fell down at her feet and craved mercy. The lady, as deeply pained as he was passionate, could not conceal fire in the straw nor dissemble love in her looks, but flatly told him that both the proportions of his body and the virtues of his mind had made such a conquest in her affections that, were it not [+for] the crabbed and covetous disposition of the duke, she could find in her heart to make him her only paramour, but her father Gradasso had provided her a marriage whom she durst not refuse, a man able with his wealth to maintain her, with his parentage to credit her, and that his possessions were great gifts to content and little gods to command, even Vesta herself to leave her virginity, but, quoth she, how I rest discontent with the match I appeal to the gods and mine own conscience. Bradamant, hearing her so willing to be won, told her that policies in love were not deceits but wisdom, that to dissemble in affection was to offer Venus her rights, and therefore if her fancy were such as she did protest, it were easy to enjoy the fruition of their loves. Not so, quoth Melissa, for rather had I marry Rosilius and so wed myself to continual discontent and repentance than, by being loose in my loves and wanton in my thoughts, disobeying my father's command, to disparage mine honour and become a byword throughout all Egypt, for ladies' honours

are like white lawns, which soon are stained with every mole. Men in their loves have liberties that, soar they never so high nor stoop they never so low, yet their choice is little noted, but women are more glorious objects, and therefore have all men's eyes attentively bent upon them. Yet, quoth she, how I mislike of my father's command, and how malcontent I am, lend me your lute and you shall hear my opinion. Bradamant, glad that his mistress would vouchsafe to grace him with a song, delivered her the instrument whereupon Melissa, being very skilful, warbled out this ditty.

*Obscure and dark is all the gloomy air,
The curtain of the night is overspread,
The silent mistress of the lowest sphere
Puts on her sable-coloured veil and lour;
Nor star nor milk-white circle of the sky
Appears where discontent doth hold her lodge.
She sits shrined in a canopy of clouds
Whose massy darkness mazeth every sense,
Wan is her looks, her cheeks of azure hue,
Her hairs as Gorgon's foul retorting snakes;
Envy the glass wherein the hag doth gaze,
Restless the clock that chimes her fast asleep,
Disquiet thoughts the minutes of her watch.
Forth from her cave the fiend full oft doth fly;
To kings she goes, and troubles them with crowns,
Setting those high-aspiring brands on fire
That flame from earth unto the seat of Jove;
To such as Midas, men that dote on wealth,
And rent the bowels of the middle earth
For coin, who gape, as did fair Danae,
For showers of gold, there discontent in black
Throws forth the vials of her restless cares;
To such as sit at Paphos for relief,
And offer Venus many solemn vows;
To such as Hymen in his saffron robe
Hath knit a Gordian knot of passions;
To these, to all, parting the gloomy air
Black discontent doth make her bad repair.*

No sooner had Melissa ended this sonnet but for fear the two lovers, though most unwilling, parted, determining when occasion would serve they would meet again. Yet was not their meeting so in secret but old Gradasso knew of their conference, whereupon he not only blamed his daughter and in bitter and railing terms misused the father of Bradamant, but sought with all possible speed to dispatch the marriage. Melissa, passing the days in melancholy and the night in passionate dumps that her nuptials were so nigh, though men determine the gods do dispose, and oft-times many things fall out between the cup and the lip, for the day being appointed, certain tenants, as well gentleman as others that were under the duke went to Pharaoh with general complaints of his covetous

and barbarous cruelty. Pharaoh, whose thoughts aimed at excessive desire of coin, took opportunity by the hand, & thought by these complaints to possess himself of all his possessions and treasure, whereupon he sent for the duke & Rosilius and after he had heard the complaints, he banished him and Rosilius, his son-in-law, with his daughter Melissa, out of all the confines of Egypt. Gradasso, willing to answer to his accusers, could not be suffered by the king to make any reply, but within three days they must depart, which so daunted the duke and young Rosilius that they stood like those men that Perseus turned to stones, and poor Melissa, sorrowing at the hard censure of the king, and weeping at the mishap of her father, cried out against fortune, that was so fickle, and the stars, that had so badly dealt in the configuration of their nativity, seeing [sic?] her sorrow with tears and her fortunes with wailings.

Well, to be brief, the day came of their departure. The duke, with Rosilius and Melissa, were embarked in a little ship, and so transported into Libya, where when they arrived, the duke, for that he had small acquaintance or none in the country, lived obscurely and in poor estate. The clown Rosilius, having no qualities of the mind, only at home relying upon his revenues, & now abroad driven to satisfy his thirst with his hands and to relieve his hunger with applying himself to any servile kind of drudgery. Melissa, she got herself into the service of a rich merchant, where with such courtesy she behaved herself that she was generally liked of all the household.

While thus these three pilgrims lived in this penance, Bradamant, hearing of this strange accident, fell into divers and sundry perplexed passions. First, the fervent affection he bare unto Melissa told him that fortune may not part lovers, nor the inconstant constellation of the planets dissever that which fancy had united with such a band, that the vows of Venus are not to be violated, that love must resemble a circle whose motion never ceaseth in that round; therefore he was bound by love and duty to sail after them into Libya, and there to give what relief he could to these exiles.

But to these resolutions came strange and contrary motions. First, the forsaking of his father, whom he most reverently honoured; secondly, his friends, whom in all duty he did reverence, but that which pained him most was to leave Egypt, his country, which he loved more than his life, insomuch that with Ulysses he counted the smoke of Ithaca sweeter than the fires of Troy. These considerations drew him from his resolution of departure, so that he stayed for two or three days passionate in Egypt. But love, that is restless, suffered him to take no rest, but in his dreams presented him with the shape of Melissa, and waking, fancy set so plainly the idea of her person and perfection before his eyes that as one tormented with a second hell, neither respecting father, country, nor friends, as soon as wind and weather did serve, rigging a bonny bark to the sea he passed into Libya, where he was no sooner arrived but straight he hied him to the court where then Sacrapant, the king of that land, kept his palace royal.

Bradamant, living there for a space as a courtier, won such favour for his excellent wit and rare qualities that the king held him as one of this chief gentlemen, and promoted him with great gifts, insomuch that who but Bradamant in all the court of Libya? Flourished thus in great credit, he sought about to find out the duke and his daughter. Him on a day

as he passed down to the sea-cliffs he found gathering of cockles, professing the state of a fisherman, with whom, after he had parted a little he bewrayed what he was, & in what estimation he was with Sacrapant. The duke, glad to see one of his countrymen and neighbours in so strange a land, embraced him, to whom Bradamant briefly discoursed his mind as concerning the imperfections of Rosilius, how his wealth only respected, whereof now he was deprived, he was a mere peasant and slave of nature, not able, being exiled, though noble born, to show any sparks of honour, seeing then the duke was tied to extremities he would now marry his daughter and make her live as her calling deserved in the court. Gradasso no sooner heard his mind but he granted to his motion, so that Bradamant breaking the matter to the king, Sacrapant with all his lords, seeing the damsel so fair, condescended, and with great pomp solemnized the nuptials, where Bradamant maintained his wife and his father very richly until, Pharaoh dying, the duke, Bradamant, and his wife Melissa with the clownish Lord Rosilius passed home to their former possessions.

Perimedes having told his tale, he burst forth into these speeches. Thou seest, Delia, how far wit is preferred before wealth, and in what estimation the qualities of the mind are in respect of worldly possessions. Archimedes, having suffered shipwreck on the sea, being cast ashore, all the rest of the passengers sorrowing because their goods were lost, he, espying certain geometrical characters, merrily and cheerfully said unto them: Fear not, fellow mates in misfortune, for I see the steps of men, and so passed. But when he was known among them, the philosophers relieved them all. Lest Perimedes should have gone forward in his discourse, one of his neighbours came in to bear him company, and so he ceased from his prattle.

If the rest of their discourse happen into my hands, then gentlemen, look for news.

William Bubb, gentleman, to his friend the author.

After that, friend Robin, you had finished Perimedes and vouchsafed to commit it to my view, liking the work, and so much the rather for that you bestowed the dedication on my very good friend, Master Gervase Clifton, whose deserts merit it (and one of more worth when your labour shall be employed more seriously), the last sheet hanging in the press, coming into your study I found in your desk certain sonnets feigned to be written by the Chaldees what time the poor smith and his wife lived so contentedly, which she having kept as jewels in her chest and you as relics in your chamber, not letting any but your familiars to peruse them for that you feared to discover your little skill in verse, these sonnets, for that they fit my humour and will content others, or else my judgment fails, I charge thee by that familiar conversing that hath passed between us that thou annex them to the end of this pamphlet, which if you grant, we still rest as ever we have been; if not, *Actum est de amicitia*, and so farewell.

Thine, William Bubb.

The Author.

Being, gentlemen, thus strictly conjured by mine especial good friend, I dare not but rather hazard my credit on your courtesies than lose for so small a trifle his friendship whom I have ever found as faithful as familiar, and so familiar as can come within the compass of amity. Then I humbly entreat, if my verse be harse [sic] or want the grace that poems should have, that you will overshadow them with your favours and pardon all, the rather for that I present them upon constraint. If in this your courtesies shall friend me, I will either labour to have better skill in poetry, or else swear never to write any more. And so I heartily bid you farewell.

R.G.

When the Chaldees ruled in Egypt, as the gymnosophists did in India and the sophi in Greece, they used to endeavour, as far as their grave counsels could prevail, to suppress all wanton affections, respecting not the degrees of persons to whom they delivered their satirical exhortations. It chanced therefore that Psammetichus' youngest son, addicted too much to wanton desires and to sot himself in the beauty of women, one of the Chaldees having an insight into his lascivious life persuaded him to desist from such fading pleasures whose momentary delights did breed lasting reproach and infamy. The young prince, making light account of his words, went into his study and writ him an answer sonnet-wise, to this effect:

I am but young, and may be wanton yet.

*In Cypress sat fair Venus by a fount,
Wanton Adonis toying on her knee.
She kissed the wag, her darling of account;
The boy gan blush, which when his lover see,
She smiled and told him love might challenge debt,
And he was young, and might be wanton yet.*

*The boy waxed bold, fired by fond desire,
That woo he could, and court her with conceit;
Reason spied this, and sought to quench the fire
With cold disdain, but wily Adon straight
Cheered up the flame, and said Good sir, what let?
I am but young, and may be wanton yet.*

*Reason replied that beauty was a bane
To such as feed their fancy with fond love,
That when sweet youth with lust is overta'en
He rues in age; this could not Adon move,
For Venus taught him still this rest to set,
That he was young, and might be wanton yet.*

*Where Venus strikes with beauty to the quick,
It little vails sage reason to reply;
Few are the cures for such as are lovesick
But love; then though I wanton it awry,
And play the wag, from Adon this I get:
I am but young, and may be wanton yet.*

After the young prince had ended his sonnet and given it, as it were in derision, to the Chaldee, the old man, willing to give him a sop of the same sauce, called together his wits and refelled his reason thus, after his own method.

*The siren Venus nourished in her lap
Fair Adon, swearing while he was a youth
He might be wanton; note his after-hap,
The guerdon that such lawless lust ensueth:
So long he followed flattering Venus' lore,
Till, seely lad, he perished by a boar.*

*Mars in his youth did court this lusty dame;
He won his love; what might his fancy let?
He was but young; at last unto his shame
Vulcan entrapped them slyly in a net,
And called the gods to witness as a truth
A lecher's fault was not excused by youth.*

*If crooked age accounteth youth his spring,
The spring, the fairest season of the year,
Enriched with flowers and sweets and many a thing
That fair and gorgeous to the eyes appear,
It fits that youth, the spring of man, should be
Riched with such flowers as virtue yieldeth thee.*

After that the Chaldee had penned this poem he presented it to the young prince, but how it took effect I little know, and leave you to suppose, but this I am sure, Delia kept it in her casket as a relic, and therefore as I had it, I present it.

This sonnet had no name prefixed, so that I know not whose invention it was, but Delia held it more dear than all the others, so that before she drew it out of her box she praised it with many protestations. But as the argument may infer conjecture, it was done by a lover whose mistress was hard-hearted, which he discovered metaphorically and mildly thus.

*Fair is my love for April in her face,
Her lovely breasts September claims his part,
And lordly July in her eyes takes place,*

*But cold December dwelleth in her heart;
Blest be the months that sets my thoughts on fire;
Accurst that month that hind'reth my desire.*

*Like Phoebus' fire, so sparkles both her eyes,
As air perfumed with amber is her breath,
Like swelling waves her lovely teats do rise,
As earth her heart, cold, dateth me to death;
Aye me, poor man, that on the earth do live
When unkind earth death and despair doth give.*

*In pomp sits Mercy seated in her face,
Love twixt her breasts his trophies doth imprint,
Her eyes shines favour, courtesy, and grace,
But touch her heart, ah that is famed of flint,
That fore my harvest in the grass bears grain
The rock will wear, washed with a winter's rain.*

This read over, she clapped it into her casket and brought out an old rusty paper, and with that she smiled on her husband, and spake to her neighbour sitting by. I will tell you, gossip, quoth she, as precisely as my husband sits he hath been a wag, but now age hath plucked out all his colt's teeth, for when he and I made love one to another he got a learned clerk to writ this ditty, subtilly contrived as though it had been between shepherds, but he meant it of me and himself. Perimedes laughed at this, and so the sonnet was read thus.

*Phyllis kept sheep along the western plains,
And Corydon did feed his flocks hard by;
This shepherd was the flower of all the swains
That traced the downs of fruitful Thessaly,
And Phyllis, that did far her flocks surpass
In silver hue was thought a bonny lass.*

*A bonny lass, quaint in her country tire,
Was lovely Phyllis; Corydon swore so.
Her locks, her looks, did set the swain on fire;
He left his lambs, and he began to woo;
He looked, he sithed, he courted with a kiss;
No better could the silly swad than this.*

*He little knew to paint a tale of love;
Shepherds can fancy but they cannot say.
Phyllis gan smile, and wily, thought to prove
What uncouth grief poor Corydon did pay;
She asked him how his flocks, or he, did fare,
Yet [sic?] pensive thus his sighs did tell his care.*

*The shepherd blushed when Phyllis questioned so,
And swore by Pan it was not for his flock.
'Tis love, fair Phyllis, breedeth all this woe;
My thoughts are trapped within thy lovely locks;
Thine eye hath pierced, thy face hath set on fire;
Fair Phyllis kindleth Corydon's desire.*

*Can shepherds love? said Phyllis to the swain.
Such saints as Phyllis, Corydon replied.
Men when they lust can many fancies feign,
Said Phyllis; this not Corydon denied,
That lust had lies, but love, quoth he, says truth;
Thy shepherd loves, then, Phyllis, what ensueth?*

*Phyllis was wan; she blushed and hug the head;
The swain stepped to, and cheered her with a kiss;
With faith, with troth, they struck the matter dead,
So used they when men thought not amiss.
This love begun and ended both in one.
Phyllis was loved, and she liked Corydon.*

And thus, gentlemen, at my friend's request I have put in print those bad sonnets which otherwise I had resolved to have made obscure, like the pictures that Phidias drew in his prenticehood, which he painted in the night and blotted out in the day. If they pass but with silence, howsoever you smile at them secretly, I care not if they be so ill that you cannot but murmur openly at such trash. I run to the last clause of my friend's letter; do this: *Aut actum est de amicitiae*. And so I bid you farewell.

FINIS.

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