

PHILOMELA

THE LADY FITZWATER'S NIGHTINGALE

By Robert Greene

Vtriusque Academiae in Artibus Magister.

Sero sed serio.

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To the right honourable the Lady Bridget Ratcliffe, Lady Fitzwaters, Robert Greene
wisheth increase of honour and virtue.

Right beautiful and bountiful lady, finding myself humbly devoted to the right honourable the Lord Fitzwaters your husband, not only that I am born his, but also for the gracious acceptance of a small pamphlet written by another and presented to him by me, I endeavoured any way and every way that I might to discover my affectionate duty to him by some scholarlike labours, that I began to toss over the first-fruits of my wits, wrapped up, as scholars' treasures be, in loose papers, that I might sift out something worthy his honour, but finding all worthless of his lordship, at last I lighted upon this fiction of Venetian Philomela which I had written long since & kept charily, being penned at the request of a countess in this land to approve women's chastity. As soon as I had read it over and reduced it into form, licking it a little as the bears do their whelps to bring them to perfection, I have resolved to make good my duty to his lordship in doing homage with my simple labours to your ladyship, knowing service done to the wife is gratified in the husband, whereupon I presume to present the dedication of chaste Philomela to your honour and to christen it in your ladyship's name, calling it *The Lady Fitzwater's Nightingale* as if I should insinuate a comparison twixt you and him [sic?] of equal and honourable virtues, imitating herein Master Abraham Fraunce, who titled the lamentations of Amintas under the name of *The Countess of Pembroke's Ivychurch*, for herein your ladyship had far more perfections than years, & more inward excellence than extern beauty, yet so beautiful as few so fair, though none more virtuous, I thought the legend of an honourable and chaste lady would be grateful to your honour, whose mind is wholly delighted in chaste thoughts, keeping herein a perfect decorum to appropriate the nature of the gift to the content of the person. For such as offer incense to Venus burn myrrh mixed with eringion; those that glory Pallas give her a shield; Dian's present, a bow; witty poems are fit for wise heads, and examples of honour for such as triumph in virtue, so that seeing there hath few led more chaste [+lives] than an Italian Philomela, I thought none only more fit to patronize her honours than your ladyship, whose chastity is as far spread as you are either known or spoken of. If then my well-meaning may not be misconstrued, but my presumption pardoned and my labours favoured with your gracious acceptance, I have what I aimed at and what I expected, in the hope of which courtesy setting down my rest, I humbly take my leave.

Your ladyship's in all dutiful service,
Robert Greene

To the gentlemen readers, health.

If the contents of lines could at life discover the colour of the face, you should, gentlemen, see my ruddy cheeks manifest my open follies, but seeing paper cannot blush, I will confess my fault, & so humbly crave pardon. I promised, gentlemen, both in my *Mourning Garment & Farewell To Follies* never to busy myself about any wanton pamphlets again, nor to have my brain counted so addle as to set out any matter that were amorous, but yet am I come, contrary to vow and promise, once again to the press with a labour of love which I hatched long ago, though now brought forth to light. If the printer had not been [], I would have had it thrust out as an orphan without any name to father it, but at his earnest entreaty I was content to subscribe, though I abide your hard censure and angry frowns for a penance. Therefore sith the work was writ afore my vow, and published upon duty to so honourable and beautiful a lady, I humbly sue for favour, and crave that you will bear with this fault and hold me every way excused, which courtesy if you grant me, I have more than I deserve, and as much as my desire every way can wish, and so farewell,

Yours, Robert Greene.

THE LADY FITZWATER'S NIGHTINGALE

There dwelled in the city of Venice near the Rialto an earl of great excellence both for the descent of his parentage and largeness of his patrimony called il conte Philippo Medico, a gentleman every way, not only by birth, as being by the mother's side of the Aemilii, but every way furnished with civil virtues for peace and martial valour for the wars, as politic at home as resolute abroad, revered of all not for his grey hairs, for he was young, but for his many virtues wherein he overwent men of age.

This conte Philippo had by the favour of fortune and his own foresight linked himself to a young gentlewoman in marriage called Philomela Celi, at that time the wonder of Venice, not for her beauty, though Italy afforded none so fair, nor for her dowry, though she were the only daughter of the duke of Milan, but for the admirable honours of her mind, which were so many and matchless that virtue seemed to have planted there the paradise of her perfections. Her age exceeded not 17, yet appeared there such a symmetry of more than womanly excellence in every action of this Venetian paragon that Italy held her life as an instance of all commendable qualities. She was modest without sullenness, and silent, not as a fool, but because she would not be counted a blab; chaste, and yet not coy, for the poorest of all held her courteous. Though she was young, yet she desired neither to gad nor to gaze, nor to have her beauty made common to every bad companion's eye; the veil she used for her face was the covert of her own house, for she never would go abroad but in the company of her husband, and then with such bashfulness that she seemed to hold herself faulty in stepping beyond the shadow of her own mansion. Thus was Philomela famous for her exquisite virtues, and Philippo fortunate for enjoying so virtuous a paramour.

But as there is no antidote so precious but being tempered with antimony is infectious, nor no heart so sovereign good but art can make simply ill, so Philippo was not so commendable for some good parts as afterwards bad thought of for some unworthy qualities. For though he had a wife every way answerable to his own wish, both fair to please his eye and honest to content his humour, yet in seeking to quittance these virtues with love, he so over-loved her that he plagued her more with jealousy than recompensed her with affection, insomuch that with a deep insight entering into the consideration of her beauty and her youth, he began to suspect that such as frequented his house for traffic (for the greatest men in Venice used merchandise) were rather drawn thither by a desire to see his wife than for the special use of any other his commodities. Feeding upon this passion that gnaweth like envy upon her own flesh, he called to mind to which of his friends she showed the most gracious looks, upon whom she glanced the most smiling favours, whose carver she would be at the table, to whom she would drink, and who had most courteous entertainment at her hands; these men he did both suspect and envy, as those to whom he thought his wife for those granted favours most affectionate. Yet when he called to mind her chaste virtues, and did ruminare the particularities of his [sic] loves toward himself, he suppressed the suspicious flame of jealousy with the assured proofs of her invincible chastity; hammering these [sic] betwixt fear and hope, he built castles in the air and reached beyond the moon, one while swearing all women were false and

inconstant, and then again protesting if all were so, yet not all, because Philomela was not so.

In this jealous quandary he used to himself this quaint discourse. If love be a blessing, Philippo, as yet proves in the end most bitter, how blest are they that never make trial of so sour a sweet. A child stung with a bee will fly from the honeycomb; such as are bitten with vipers will fear to sleep on the grass, but men touched with the inconvenience of fancy hunt with sighs to enrich themselves with that passion. What conquest have such as win fair women? Even the like victory that Alexander had in subduing the Scythians, reconciled friends who the more they flattered him, the more he mistrusted. Beauty is like the herb larix, cool in the water but hot in the stomach, precious while it is a blossom but prejudicial grown to a fruit, a gem not to be valued if set in virtue, but, disgraced with a bad foil, like a ring of gold in a swine's snout. Yet what comfort is there in life if man had no solace? But man, women are sweet helps, and those kind creatures that God made to perfect up men's excellence. Truth, Philippo, they be wonders of nature if they wrong not nature, and admirable angels if they would not be drawn with angels to become devils. Oh flatter not thyself in flattering them, for where they find submission, there they proclaim contempt, and if thou makest them thy mate they will give thee such a checkmate that happily thou shalt live by the loss all thy life after. What needs this invective humour against women when thou hast such a wife as every way is absolute both for beauty and virtue? Let such as have been stung with the scorpion be warned; speak thou as thou findest, and then thou wilt say that women are creatures as excellent in mind as they be singular in complexion, as far beyond men in inward virtues as they exceed men in exterior beauties. I grant all this, yet Philippo, the juice of the helchorens [sic?] is poison; the greener the alexanders leaves be, the more bitter is the sap; every outward appearance is not an authentical instance. Women have chaste eyes when they have wanton thoughts, and modest looks when they harbour lascivious wishes. The eagle, when he soareth nearest to the sun, then he hovers for his prey, the salamander is most warm when he lieth furthest from the fire, and then are women most heart-hollow when they are most lip-holy, and by these premises, Philippo, argue of thy wife's preciseness, for though she seem chaste, yet may she secretly delight in change, and though her countenance be coy to all, her conscience may be courteous to some one. When the sun shines most garish, it foreshows a shower; when the birds sing early, there is a storm before night; women's flatteries are no more to be trusted than astronomers' almanacs, that proclaimeth that for a most fair day that proves most cloudy, and so of Philomela.

As thus the county Philippo was jarring with himself about this humour of jealousy, there came to him while he sat (for all this while he was in an arbour in his garden) a familiar friend of his called Signor Giovanni Lutesio, so private unto the earl in all his secret affairs that he concealed nothing from him which came within the compass of his thoughts. This Signor Giovanni, seeing the county in a brown study, wakened him of his muse with a merry greeting, and bade a penny for his thought. The earl, seeing his second self, his only repository of his private passions, entertained him very courteously, and after some familiar speeches used betwixt them Giovan[ni] began to question what the cause was of that melancholy dump that he found him in. The earl, fetching a great

sigh, taking Lutesio by the hand, setting him down by him, began to rehearse from point to point what a jealous suspicion he had of his wife's beauty, and that for all the show of her honesty, he somewhat doubted of her chastity. Giovanni, who with a reverent love favoured the countess, began somewhat sharply to reprove the earl, that he should admit of so foolish a passion as jealousy, and misconstrue of her whose virtuous life was so famous through all Venice. As suspicious heads want not sophistry to supply their mistrust, so Philip[po] at that time was not barren of arguments to prove the subtilties of women, their inconstancy, how they were faced like Janus, having one full of furrows, the other of smiles, swearing he should never be merry at his heart till he had made an assured proof of her chastity, and with that he broke with Signor Giovanni Lutesio that he should be the man to make experience of her honesty. Although the gentleman were very unwilling to take such a task in hand, doubting lest in dallying with the flame he might burn his finger and so injury his friend, yet at the importunate entreaty of Philippo he promised to undertake the matter and by all means possible to assault the invincible fort of her chastity, protesting that if he found her pliant to listen to his passions he would make it manifest to him without dissembling.

Philippo, glad of this, to grant Giovanni opportunity to court his wife would be more often abroad, and that he might drive her the sooner to listen unto his suit he used not that wonted love and familiarity that he was accustomed to do, but quitted all her dutiful favours with uncouth and disdainful frowns, so that poor Philomela, who knew nothing of this compacted treachery, began to wonder what had altered her husband's wonted humour, and like a good wife she began to examine her own conscience wherein she had given him any occasion of offence. Feeling herself guiltless (unless his own conceit deceived him) she imagined that her husband affected some other lady more than herself, which imagination she concealed with patience, and resolved not by revealing it to retrieve him from his new-entertained fancy, but with obedience, love, and silence to recover her Philippo to favour none but his Philomela.

While thus her mind, a little suspicious, began to waver, Lutesio began to lay his baits to betray this silly innocent. Now you must imagine he was a young gentleman of a good house, of no mean wealth, nor any way made infortunate by nature, for he was counted the most fine and courtly gentleman in all Venice. This Lutesio therefore seeking fit opportunity to find Madam Philomela in a merry vein (for time is called that *capillata ministra* that favours lovers in their fortunes), watched so narrowly that he found the countess sitting all alone in her garden playing upon a lute many pretty roundelays, barginets, madrigals, and such pleasant lessons, all as it were amorous love vowed in honour of Venus, singing to her lute many pretty and merry ditties, some of her own composing and some written by some witty gentlemen of Venice. Thinking now time had smiled upon him by putting her in such an humorous vein, at last he heard her warble out this pleasant ode.

Philomela's Ode That She Sung In Her Arbour

*Sitting by a river-side
Where a silent stream did glide,*

*Muse I did of many things
 That the mind in quiet brings.
 I can think how some men deem
 Gold their god, and some esteem
 Honour is the chief content
 That to man in life is lent,
 And some others do contend
 Quiet none like to a friend;
 Others hold there is no wealth
 Compared to a perfect health;
 Some man's mind in quiet stands
 When he is lord of many lands.
 But I did sigh, and said all this
 Was but a shade of perfect bliss,
 And in my thoughts I did approve
 Naught so sweet as is true love.
 Love twixt lovers passeth these
 When mouth kisseth and heart grees,
 With folded arms and lips' meeting,
 Each soul another sweetly greeting,
 For by the breath the soul fleeteth,
 And soul with soul in kissing meeteth.
 If love be so sweet a thing
 That such happy bliss doth bring,
 Happy is love's sugared thrall,
 But unhappy maidens all
 Who esteem your virgins' blisses
 Sweeter than a wife's sweet kisses;
 No such quiet to the mind
 As true love with kisses kind,
 But if a kiss prove unchaste,
 Then is true love quite disgraced;
 Though love be sweet, learn this of me:
 No love sweet but honesty.*

As soon as Philomela had ended her ode, Signor Lutesio stepped to her and half marred her melody with this unlooked for motion. I am glad, madam, to find you so full of glee; women's minds set on mirth shows their thoughts are at quiet. When birds sing early, there hath been a sweet dew; so your morning's anthem shows your night's content. The subject of your song and the censure of my thoughts argue upon conclusion, for likely it is you have found kissing sweet that so highly commend it, but as the old proverb is, such laugh as win, and such as Venus favours may afford her incense. Love is precious to such as possess their love, but there is no hell if love be not hell to such as dare not express their passions.

Philomela, seeing Lutesio took her napping in singing so merry an ode, showed in the blush of her cheeks the bashfulness of her thoughts, yet knowing he was her husband's familiar she cared the less, and smiling made him this pleasant answer. Signor Lutesio, as I relished a wanton song at random, so I little looked your ears should have been troubled with my music, but since you are a hearer of my hoarse ditty, take it as you find it, and construe of it as you please; I know mine own meaning best. In that I commend kissing, it argues me the more kind, and my husband the more loving in that I find lip-love so sweet; women may be wantons in their husbands, yet not immodest, & wives are allowed to sport, so their dallying be not dishonest. Yet had I known you had been so nigh I would have been more silent, and at this word she blushed again, discovering by her looks it grieved her any man (though never so familiar) should hear her so extraordinary pleasant. But to find fish in Signor Lutesio's fingers because he glanced at disdain in love she followed her reply thus. Yet since, sir, what is past cannot be recalled, I will overslip the conceit of mine own folly, and be so bold as to have you under confession. What is the reason, Lutesio, you diversly descant of the fruition of love; hath that divine passion crept into your brains?

Giovanni, hearing her harp on that string, strained it a pin higher thus. Divine passion call you it, madam? Nay, rather a fury fetched from hell, a madness brewed in the bosom of Tisiphone, an unbridled desire, a restless agony, a continual anguish; thus do I value love because my life is at an end by the wrongs of love. Such as are poisoned with rugwort count it fatal, yet such as have the pleurisy drink it in potions. The mercurial moti was very much commended of Ulysses, though condemned of Cyres [sic?]. Men's poems follow their passions, and they conclude as they are contented. Then, madam, if all the world say love is a heaven, yet must I say desire is a hell, not that the beauteous saint whom mnie [sic] eye doth worship and my heart doth honour hath quitted my affection with disdain, but that in not daring discover my passions I am put to a triple tormenting penance.

At this he fetched such a feigned sigh that simple-meaning Philomela imagined the gentleman was full of sorrow, and therefore began to comfort him thus. Why Signor Lutesio, have you soared so high that you doubt the scorching of your feathers? Hath your desires taken flight so far above your degree that you fear a fall? Is the lady whom you love so great of birth that you dare not be your own broker? Love, Lutesio, if honest, is lawful and may reap disdain, but not disgrace. Desire is the daughter of destiny, and the sympathy of affections is fore-pointed by the stars. Women's eyes are not tied to high personages but to exquisite perfections, and the greater oft-times they be in degrees, the lower they prove in loves. Be she then, Lutesio, the stateliest, the richest, the fairest in all Italy, fear not to court her, for happily she may grant, and she at the worst can but say no. When I entered [sic] into thy wonted humours, how honestly wanton thou hast been amongst women of high account, when I think of thy wealth, of thy virtues, of thy parentage, of thy person, I flatter not, Lutesio, for in my opinion a frump amongst friends is petty treason in effect, I cannot but wonder what she is that Lutesio dares not tell he loves. If without offence I may crave it, tell me her name that I may censure of her qualities.

Lutesio, with a face full of discontent, made her this answer. Madam, as I dare not discourse my loves, so I will not discover her name; I regard her honour as my life, and therefore only suffice it I am as far unworthy of her as she is beyond my reach to compass. Philomela, who straight found the knot in the rush, began to imagine that it was some married wife that Lutesio aimed at, and therefore charged him by the love that he bare to Filippo Medico that he would tell her whether it was a wife or a maid that he thus earnestly affected. Lutesio briefly told her that she was not only a wife, but maid [sic] to one whom she almost as tenderly loved as he did the earl her husband, a lady of honour and virtue, yet a woman, and therefore he hoped might be won if his heart would serve him to be a wooer.

Philomela hearing this began to find a knot in the rush, and to deem that it was some familiar of his that he was affected to, and therefore with a gentle frown, as if she loved him and yet misliked of his fondness in fancy, taking him by the hand she began thus to school him. Lutesio, now I see the strongest oak hath his sap and his worms, that ravens will breed in the fairest ash, and that the musked angelica bears a dew that, shining like pearl, being tasted is most prejudicial, that the holiest men in show are oft the hollowest men in substance, and where there is the greatest flourish of virtue there in time appeareth the greatest blemish of vanity. I speak this by all, but apply it to them who seeming every way absolute will prove every way dissolute. Hath not Venice held thee more famous for thy good parts than for thy parentage, and yet well born, and valued thee more for living well than wealthily, and yet thy patrimony is not small? Oh Lutesio, darken not these honours with dishonesty, nor for the foolish and fading passion of lust reach not at an everlasting penance of infamy. As I mislike of thy choice, so I can but wonder at thy change, to see thee altered in manners that wert erst so modest. Who was esteemed amongst ladies for his civil conceits as Lutesio? Thou wert wished for amongst the chastest for thy choice qualities, amongst youth for thy wit, amongst age for thy honest behaviour, desired of all because offensive to none, and now if thou prosecute this bad purpose, intend this base love to violate the honour of a Venetian lady, look to be hated of all that are virtuous because thou art grown so suddenly vicious, and to be banished out of the company of all that are honest because thou seekest to make one dishonest. Then as thou lovest thy fame, leave off this love, and as thou valuest thine honour, so vail the appetite of thy dishonest thoughts.

Besides, Lutesio, enter into the consideration of the fault, and by that measure what will be the sequel of thy folly. Thou attemptest to dishonour a wife, nay the wife of thy friend. In doing this thou shalt lose a sweet companion and purchase thyself a fatal enemy; thou shalt displease God and grow odious to men, hazard the hope of thy grace and assure thyself of the reward of sin. Adultery, Lutesio, is commended in none, condemned in all, and punished in the end either with this world's infamy or heaven's anger. It is a desire without regard of honesty and a gain with greater reward of misery, a pleasure bought with pain, a delight hatched with disquiet, a content possessed with fear, and a sin finished with sorrow. Barbarous nations punish it with death; mere atheists in religion avoid it by instinct of nature. Such as glory God with no honour covet to glorify themselves with honesty, and wilt thou that art a Christian then crucify Christ anew by making the harbour of thy soul the habitation of Satan? Oh Lutesio, as thou blushest at

my words, so banish thy bad thoughts, and being created by God, seek not to despise thy Creator in abusing his creatures. A woman's honesty is her honour, and her honour the chiefest essence of her life; then in seeking to blemish her virtues with lust thou aimest at no less disgrace than her death.

And yet Lutesio this is not all, for in winning her love thou lovest a friend, than which there is nothing more precious as there is nothing more rare; as *Corruptio vnus est generatio alterius*, so the loss of a friend is the purchase of an enemy, and such a mortal foe as will apply all his wits to thy wrack, intrude all his thoughts to thy ruin, and pass away his days' cares and nights' slumbers in dreaming of thy destruction. For if brute beasts will revenge such brutish wrongs as adultery, then imagine no man to be so patient that will overpass so gross an injury. Assure thyself of this, Lutesio, if her husband hear of your loves he will aim at your lives; he will leave no confection untempered, no poison unsearched, no mineral untried, no aconiton unbruised, no herb, tree, root, stone, simple, or secret unsought till revenge hath satisfied the burning thirst of his hate. So shalt thou fear with whom to drink, with whom to converse, when to walk, how to perform thy affairs, only for doubt of her revenging husband and thy protested enemy. If such unlawful lust, such unkind desires, such unchaste love procure so great loss and so many perils, revert it, Lutesio, as a passion most pernicious, as a shine [sic] most odious, and a gain most full of deadly sorrows.

Though this be much, Lutesio, yet this is not all, for many love that are never liked, and everyone that woos is not a winner; divers desire with hope, and yet their wishes are to small effect. Suppose the lady whom thou lovest is honest; then is thy love as unlikely as Ixion's was to Juno, who aiming at the substance was made a fool with a shadow. I tell thee, it is more easy to cut a diamond with a glass, to pierce steel with a feather, to tie an elephant with a thread of silk, than to alienate an honest woman's love from her husband. Their hearts be harbours of one love, closets of one contents, cells whereinto no amorous idea but one can enter, as hard to be pierced with newfangled affection as the adamant to be made soft with fire. A lady, Lutesio, that regardeth her honour will die with Lucrece before she agree to lust; she will eat coals with Portia before she prove unchaste; she will think every misery sweet, every mishap content, before she condescend to the allurements of any wanton lecher. Imagine then her whom thou lovest to be such a one; then will it qualify thy hope, cool thy desires, and quench those unbridled thoughts that leads thee on to such follies. For if she be a wanton, what dost thou win her that many hath worn and more than thyself may vanquish, a light housewife and a lewd minion, that after she hath yielded the flower of her love [+to] Theseus will marry with Menelaus and then run away with Paris, amorous to everyone because she is humorous to all. Then, Lutesio, seeing if thou likest an honest lady thy love is past hope, and if thou woost a wanton thou shalt gain but what others have left, leave both and become as hitherto thou hast been, an honest gentleman in all men's opinions; so shalt thou live well thought of and die honourably.

And with that, smiling, she asked him if she had not played the preacher well. But Lutesio, wondering at her virtues, made no answer he was so amazed, but rested silent,

which Philomela perceiving, to waken him out of his dump she took again her lute in her hand and began to sing this following ode.

Philomelo's [sic] Second Ode.

*It was frosty winter's season,
And fair Flora's wealth was geason,
Meads that erst with green were spread,
With choice flowers diapered,
Had tawny veils; cold had scanted
What the springs [sic?] and nature planted.
Leaveless boughs there might you see,
All except fair Daphne's tree;
On their twigs no birds perched,
Warmer coverts none [sic] they searched,
And by nature's secret reason
Framed their voices to the season,
With their feeble tunes bewraying
How they grieved the spring's decaying.
Frosty winter thus had gloomed
Each fair thing that summer bloomed,
Fields were bare and trees unclad,
Flowers withered, birds were had [sic],
When I saw a shepherd fold
Sheep in cote to shun the cold,
Himself sitting on the grass
That with frost withered was,
Sighing deeply thus gan say:
Love is folly when astray,
Like to love no passion such,
For his [sic] madness if too much;
If too little, then despair;
If too high, he beats the air
With bootless [+cries]; if too low,
An eagle matcheth with a crow.
Thence grows jars; thus I find
Love is folly if unkind,
Yet do men most desire
To be heated with this fire
Whose flame is so pleasing hot
That they burn yet feel it now [sic].
Yet hath love another kind,
Worse than these unto the mind,
That is when a wanton's eye
Leads desire clead [sic] awry,
And with the bee doth rejoice*

*Every minute to change choice,
Counting he were then in bliss
If that each fair fall [sic] were his.
Highly thus in [sic] love disgraced
When the lover is unchaste,
And would taste of fruit forbidden
Cause the scape is easily hidden;
Though such love be sweet in brewing,
Bitter is the end ensuing,
For the humour [sic] of love he shameth,
And himself with lust defameth,
For a minute's pleasure gaining
Fame and honour ever staining.
Gazing thus so far awry,
Last the chip falls in his eye,
Then it burns that erst but heat him
And his own rod gins to beat him,
His choicest sweets turns to gall,
He finds lust is sin's thrall,
That wanton women in their eyes
Men's deceivings do comprise,
That homage done to fair faces
Doth dishonour other graces.
If lawless love be such a sin,
Curst is he that lives therein,
For the gain of Venus' game
Is the downfall unto shame.
Here he paused, and did stay,
Sighed and rose, and went away.*

As soon as Philomela had ended her ode, she smiled on Lutesio and said, Hoping then that this private conference shall be a conclusion of your passions, and a final resolution to reverse your thoughts from this disordinate folly of love, I will at this time cease to speak any more because I hope you will rest from your motion, and so taking him by the hand she led him into the parlour where amongst other company they passed away the day in pleasant chat till that Lutesio found convenient opportunity to discover to Philippo the resolution of his wife, who thought every minute a month till he had heard what answer she had made to Lutesio. At last they went both together walking into a garden that adjoined to the house of Philippo, and there Lutesio who [sic] revealed from point to point what he had motioned afar off to Philomela, and how honourably and honestly she replied, rehearsing what a cooling card of good counsel she gave him, able to have quailed the hottest stomach or quenched the most eager flame that fancy could fire the mind of man withal, entering into a large and high commendation of the chastity, wisdom, and general virtues of Philomela, averring that he thought there was not a woman of more absolute qualities nor honourable disposition in all Italy.

Philippo, the more he drunk the more he thirsted, and the more he was persuaded to trust in her honesty, the more he was suspicious, and doubted of her virtue, for he replied still in his jealous humour that women's words were no warrants of their truth, that as the onyx is inwardly most cold when it is outwardly most hot, so women's words are like the cries of lapwings, farthest from their thoughts as they are from their nests; they proclaim silence with their tongues, modesty with their eyes, chastity with their actions, when in their hearts they are plotting how to grant an amorous pleasure to their lovers. Tush, says, Philippo, women's tongues are tipped with deceit; they can sing with the nightingale, though they have a prick at their breasts; they can lend him a cherry lip whom they heartily loathe, and fawn upon her husband's neck when she gives her lover a wink. Though my wife hath made a fair show of virtue, it is no authentical proof of her honesty; either she mistrusted or misdoubted of your sorcery [sic], or else she would seem hard in the winning, that her chastity might be holden the more chary, for be she never so wanton, she will seem modest, and the most common courtesan will to a novice seem the most coy matron. They have their countenance at command, their words at will, their oaths at pleasure, and all to shadow their scapes with the masks of virtue. Rhodope seemed coy to Psamnetichus, else had a courtesan never conquered a king, Hermia, chaste to Aristotle, else had she not bewitched a philosopher, Plato's overworn trull true to him, else had she not been mistress of his thoughts. I tell thee, Lutesio, they have more wiles than the sun hath beams to betray the simple meaning of besotted lovers. Therefore though she uttered a legend of good lessons, believe her not. Though the hare take squat she is not lost at the first default; apply thy wits, try her by letters, write passionately and hear her answer, and assure thyself if thou cunningly cast forth the lure she will soon be reclaimed to the fist.

Thus importunate was Philippo upon his friend Lutesio that at the last he craved licence to depart for awhile, leaving Philippo mediating of his melancholy while he went into his chamber, where taking pen and paper he wrote Philomela this cunning letter.

Lutesio to the fairest Philomela, wisheth what he wants himself.

It is no wonder, Philomela, if men's minds be subject to love when their eyes are the instruments of desire, nor is any blameworthy for affecting whenas the sight of man is a sense that, viewing everything, must of force allow of something. I speak not, sweet lady, philosophically as a scholar but passionately as a lover whose eyes hath been so lavish in over-high looks that either they must have their longing or else I die through their over-liking, for as too sweet perfumes makes the sense to surfeit, and the most bright colours soonest blemish the sight, so I in gazing on the choice perfections of beauty have dazzled mine eyes and fired my heart with desire that none but the fruition of that blessed object can save me from being love's cursed abject. Now, madam, the rare idea that thus through the applause of mine eye hath bewitched my heart is the beauteous image of your sweet self. Pardon me if I presume when the extremity of love pricks me forward. Faults that grow by affection ought to be forgiven because they come of constraint; then, madam, read with favour and censure with mercy, for so long I dallied with the fly about the candle that I began to feel overmuch heat would breed my harm; I have played so long with the minnow at the bait that I am stricken with the hook; I have viewed your

beauty with such delight, and considered of your virtues with such desire, that in your gracious looks lies the only hope of my life. Ah Philomela, were not my love extreme, my passions passing all measure, my affection too full of anguish, I would have concealed my thoughts with silence and have smothered my griefs with patience, but either I must live by revealing it or die by repressing it. I fear thou wilt here object Philippo is my friend, and then I am of little faith to proffer him this wrong. I confess this is a truth and were worthy of blame were I not bewitched by love, who neither admitteth exceptions of faith or friendship; if it be a passion that controlleth the gods, no wonder at all if it conquer and command men. If sons disobey their fathers to have their desires, it is more tolerable to crack friendship for the conquest of love. Why then did nature frame beauty to be so excellent if she had tied the winning of it within exceptions? If that a friend may fault with his friend for a kingdom, no doubt faith may be broken for love, that is a great deal more puissant than kings and much more precious than diadems, chiefly if that the party be chary to have regard of his mistress' honour. What the eye sees not, Philomela, never hurteth the heart; a secret love impeacheth not chastity. Juno never frowned when Jupiter made his scape in a cloud. Private pleasures have never enjoined unto them any penance, and she is always counted chaste enough that is chary enough; then, madam, let him not die for love whom if you please you may bless with love.

It may be you will reply that Philippo is a conte, and a great deal my superior, and the supreme of your heart, therefore not to be wronged with an arrival [sic]. Consider, madam, kings do brook many unknown scapes; love will play the wanton amongst the greatest lords; women are not made such chaste nuns but they may let much water slip by the mill that the miller knoweth not of; they may love their husband with one of their eyes and favour a friend with the other. Since, then, madam, I have been stung with the scorpion, and cannot be helped or healed by none but by the scorpion, that I am wounded with Achilles' lance and I must be healed with his truncheon, that I am entangled and snared in your beauty and must be set at liberty only by your love, look upon my passions and pity them. Let me not die for desiring your sweet self, but rather grant me favour and enjoy such a lover as will prize your honour before his life, and at all times be yours in all dutiful service whilst he lives. Expecting such an answer as is agreeing to such divine beauty, which cannot be cruel, or according unto my destiny, which be it sinister will be my death, farewell.

*Yours ever, though never yours,
Giovanni Lutesio.*

Having finished his letter thus amorously, he remembered himself, and although Philippo stayed for him in the garden, yet he stepped once again to his standish and wrote under this following sonnet.

Natura Nihil Frustra.

*On women nature did bestow two eyes
Like hemian's [sic] bright lamps in matchless beauty shining,
Whose beams do soonest captivate the wise*

*And wary heads made rare by art's refining.
But why did nature in her choice combining
Plant two fair eyes within a beauteous face?
That they might favour two with equal grace.*

*Venus did soothe up Vulcan with one eye,
With thother granted Mars his wished glee,
If she did so, whom Hymen's [sic?] did defy,
Think love no sin, but grant an eye to me;
In vain else nature gave two stars to thee.
If then two eyes may well two friends maintain,
Allow of two, and prove not nature vain.*

Natura repugnare belluinum.

After he had ended this sonnet he went and showed them to Signor Philippo, who liked well of his passionate humour and desired nothing more than to hear what answer his wife would make to these amorous poems. Therefore that he might grant Lutesio the fitter opportunity to deliver them, he took a skiff and went with sundry other gentlemen his familiars to solace himself upon the waters. In the meanwhile Lutesio, who was left alone by himself, began to enter into the least disposition of a jealous man that would hazard the honour of his wife to content his own suspicious humour, and whet on a friend to a feigned fancy which in time might grow to an unfeigned affection, so that smiling to himself he began thus to murmur in his mind. Is not he worthy to find that seeks, and deserveth he not many blows that craves to be beaten? Sith Philippo will buy the buck's head, is he not worthy to have the horns, and seeing he will needs have me court his wife in jest, were it not well if he might have the cuckoo in earnest? Knows he not that frumps amongst friends grow at last to open anger, that pretty sportings in love end oftentimes in pretty bargains, that it is ill jesting with edge-tools, and of all cattle worst cavilling with fair women, for beauty is a bait that will not be dallied with? But I love him too well and I honour the lady too much to motion such a thought in earnest; though he be foolish, I know her too honest to grant love to the greatest monarch of the world.

While thus he was musing with himself, Philomela came into the garden with two of her waiting-women, who seeing Lutesio in a dump thought he was devising of his new love, whereupon she stepped to him and began to ask him if he proceeded in his purpose. Aye, madam, quoth he, if I mean to persevere in life, and with that the water stood in his eyes. Whether it was that he had an onion in his napkin to make him weep or that he had sucked that special quality from his mother to let fall tears when he list, I know not, but she perceiving he watered his plants began somewhat to pity his passions and asked him if yet he had made the motion. No madam, quoth Lutesio, but here I have written her my mind, and please it you, you shall be my secretary both to read my letter and see her name, for I know you will conceal it. Philomela, desirous to see what lady it was Lutesio was in love withal, as *Natura mulierum nouitatis auida*, took it very kindly at Lutesio's hands that he would participate his secrets unto her, and promised not only to be silent

but to yield her opinion of the hope of his success, so she took the letter and promised the next morning to give it him again.

And so they fell into other chat, talking of sundry matters as their present occasions did minister, till at last Philomela, with child to see the contents of the letter, took her leave and went into her closet, where unripping the seals she found lines far unfitting to her expectation. As soon as she saw Lutesio's love was meant to her, she rent the paper in a thousand pieces and exclaimed against him in most bitter terms, vowing her lord should be revenged upon him for this intended villainy or else he should refuse her for his wife. Thus alone while she breathed out most hard invectives against him, yet at last, that she might aggravate her husband's displeasure the more against him, she gathered up the pieces and laying them together read them over, where perceiving his passions and thinking them to grow from a mind full of fancy, having somewhat cooled her choler she resolved not to tell her husband, lest if he should kill Lutesio she might be thought the occasion of the murder and so bring her unblemished honour in question, and therefore she took paper and ink and wrote him this sharp reply.

Philomela to the most false Lutesio wisheth what he wants himself.

If thou wonderest what I wish thee, Lutesio, enter into thine own want and thou shalt find. I desire thou mightest have more honour and less dishonesty, else a short life and a long repentance. I see now that hemlock, wheresoever it be planted, will be pestilent, that the serpent with the brightest scales shroudeth the most fatal venom, that the ruby, whatsoever foil it hath, will show red, that when nature hatcheth vicious, nurture will never make virtuous.

Thou art like, Lutesio, unto the hyssop growing in America that is liked of strangers for the smell and hated of the inhabitants for the operation, being as prejudicial in the one as delightsome in the other; so thou in voice art holden honest and therefore liked, but being once looked into and found lascivious, thou wilt grow into as great contempt with thy familiars as now thou art honoured amongst strangers. Hadst thou none answerable to thine appetite but Philomela, nor none to wrong but Philipppo? Canst thou wish me so much harm, or owe him so little friendship? I honouring thee so kindly, and he loving thee so dearly, how canst thou love the wife that betrayest the husband, or how shall I deem thou wilt prove constant in love that art false in thy faith, and to such a friend who next myself counteth thee second in his secrets? Base man that harbours so bad a thought, ransack thy thoughts and rip up the end of thy attempt, and then, if that shame hath not utterly abandoned thee, thou wilt for fear of shame leave off thy lust and grow into more grace.

Tell me, Lutesio, and if thou speakest not what thou knowest, I defy thee, wherein hast thou seen me so light or have my gestures been so lewd that thou shouldst gather hope to gain thy love? Hath Venice suspected me for a wanton, hath Italy deemed me dissolute, have I granted unto thee or to any other extraordinary favours, have I been froward to my lord, or by any wanton tricks showed the wrack of my chastity? If any of these blemishes have disgraced me, speak it and I will call for grace and amend them, but

never a whit the more befriend them, for whereas I honourably thought of Lutesio, unless I find thine humour changed I will aim at thy dishonour and proclaim thee an enemy to ladies cause thou art a friend to lust. Ah Lutesio, I would sooner have deemed the seas should have become dry, the earth barren, and the sun without light than thou wouldst have sought to violate the honesty of Philomela or blemish the honour of Philippo. Philippo's wealth is at thy will, his sword at thy command, his heart placed in thy bosom, he reserveth of all that he hath for thee save only me to himself, and canst thou be so unkind to rob him of his only love that owes thee so much love? I judge the best, & I hope that I imagine truth, thou dost it but to try me. If it be so, I brook it with the more patience, yet discontent thou shouldst trouble mine eyes with a wanton line, but if thy passionate humour be in earnest, it contents me not to deny thee, but to defy thee; I proclaim myself enemy to thy life, as thou art envious of mine and my husband's honour. I will incense Philippo to revenge with his sword what I cannot requite with words, and never live in quiet till I see thee die, infamous traitor as thou art. Unless thy grace be such to cease from thy treachery, come no more in my husband's house lest thou look for a dagger in thy bosom; feed not at my table lest thou quaff with Alexander thy fatal draught. To be brief, love not Philomela if thou mean to live, but look up to heaven, become penitent for thy fond and foolish passions. Let me see repentance in thine eyes and remorse in thine actions; be as thou hast been, a friend to Philippo and a favourer of mine honour, and though thou hast deserved but meanly yet thou shalt be welcome heartily, and whatsoever is past, upon thy penitence I will pardon, and for this time conceal it from the knowledge of the conte; otherwise set down thy rest, we will not both live together in Italy. Farewell.

*Never thine, though she were not Philippo's,
Philomela Media [sic].*

Having ended her letter, she resolved to answer his sonnet, as well to show her wit as to choke his wantonness, and therefore she writ this poem.

Quot Corda Tot Amores.

*Nature, foreseeing how men would devise
More wiles than Proteus, women to entice,
Granted them two, and those bright-shining, eyes
To pierce into man's faults if they were wise,
For they with show of virtue mask their vice.
Therefore to women's eyes belongs these gifts,
The one must love, the other see men's shifts.*

*Both these await upon one simple heart,
And what they choose, it hides up without change,
The emerald will not with his portrait part,
Nor will a woman's thoughts delight to range;
They hold it bad to have so base exchange.
One heart, one friend, though that two eyes do chose him,*

No more but one, and heart will never lose him.

Cor unum amor unus.

As soon as she had sealed up her letter, she brooked no delay but sent it straight by one of her waiting-women to Lutesio, whom she found sitting alone in his chamber reading upon a book. Interrupting his study, she delivered him the letter and the message of her lady. Lutesio, kind, gave the gentlewoman a kiss, for he thought she valued a lip-favour more than a piece of gold, and with great courtesy gave her leave to depart. She was scarce out of the chamber but he opened the letter and found what he expected, the resolution of a chaste countess, too worthy of so jealous a husband. Praising in himself the honourable mind of Philomela, he went abroad to find out Philipppo, whom at last he met near unto the Arsenale. Walking together to Lutesio's house, there he showed Philipppo his wife's letter and did comment upon every line, commending greatly her chastity and deeply condemning his suspicion. Tush, says Philipppo, all this wind shakes no corn; Helena writ as sharply to Paris, yet she ran away with him. Try her once again, Lutesio, and for my life thou shalt find calmer words and sweeter lines.

Lutesio, with his eyes full of choler, made him this answer. Philipppo, if thou beest so sottish with Cephalus to betray thy wife's honour, perhaps with him prove the first that repent thy treachery. When the wild boar is not chafed thou mayest chasten him with a wand, but being once endamaged with the dogs, he is dismal. Women that are chaste while they are trusted prove wantons being suspected causeless; jealousy is a spur to revenge. Beware Philomela hear not of this practice lest she make thee eat with the blind man many a fly. Canst thou not, Philipppo, content thyself that thy lady is honest, but thou must plot the means to make her a harlot? If thou likest hunters' fees so well, seek another woodman, for I will not play an apple-squire to feed thy humours. If Venice knew as much as I am privy to, they would hold thee worthy of that thou hast not, and her a fool if she gave thee not what thou seekest for. I am sorry I have wronged her virtues by so bad a motion, but henceforth, Philipppo, hope never to get me in the like vein. And more, if thou leavest not from being so vain, I will abandon thy company and renounce thy friendship forever. Philipppo, hearing his friend Lutesio so short, desired him to be content, patient, and silent, and he would race out the suspicious conceit that haunted him, and forever after grace his good wife with more love and honour. And with that Philipppo and he walked to the Rialto, but Lutesio would not for that night go to the house of Philipppo lest his presence might be offensive to Philomela, and so drive him [sic?] into some dumpish choler.

Philipppo coming home was welcome to his lady, and being somewhat late, they sat down lovingly to supper. The first course was no sooner come in but Philipppo said he marvelled that all that day he had not seen Lutesio; this he spake with his eyes on Philomela's face, to see what countenance she would hold at his name. She, little suspecting her husband had been privy to her new-found lover, blushed and kept herself silent. Philipppo took no knowledge of anything but passed it over smoothly, and used his former wonted familiarity to his wife.

The next day going abroad, Lutesio came to his house and went not in as his custom was boldly, but walking in the hall asked one of the earl's gentlemen if the countess were stirring; he, marvelling at Lutesio's strangeness, smiled and said, Sir, what needs this question? my lady is alone at her book; go up, sir, and help her in her muses. I pray you, quoth Lutesio, go to the countess and tell her I am here, and would if her leisure served her gladly have a word with her. The gentleman, though he wondered at these uncouth words of Lutesio, yet he went up and told his lady the message, who presently leaving her book and company all to avoid out of the chamber, sent for him up, who no sooner came into her presence but she saluted him with such a frown that he stood as mortified as if he had been stricken with the eye of a basilisk. Philomela, seeing him in this passionate agony, began with him thus. I cannot tell, Lutesio, how to salute thee either with looks or speeches, seeing thou art not as thou seemedst once, my well-wisher and my husband's friend. The lapidaries value the stones no longer than they hold their virtues, nor I prize a gentleman no longer than he regards his honour. For as a diamond with a cloud is cast into the goldsmith's dust, so a gentleman without credit is carelessly holden for refuse. I read thy letter and I answered it, but tell me, how shall I take it? As thou repliest, so will I entertain; if to try me, thou shalt find the more favour; if to betray me, hope for nothing but revenge.

Lutesio, hearing Philomela so honourably peremptory, with blushing cheeks made him [sic] this answer. Madam, as my face bewrays my folly, and my ruddy hue my reckless show, so let my words be holden for witnesses of my truth, and think whatsoever I say is sooth. By the faith of a gentleman, then, assure yourself mine eye hath ever loved you, but never unlawfully, and what humble duty I have shown you hath been to honour you, not to dishonest you. This letter was but to make trial how you liked Philippo, to whom I owe such faith that it would grieve me he should have a wife false. I know not, madam, what humour drew me on to it. I am sure neither your wanton looks nor light demeanours, but a kind of passion destined to breed mine own prejudice if your favour exceeds not my deserts; if therefore your ladyship shall forget and forgive this folly, and conceal it from the earl, who perhaps may take it meant in earnest, enjoin me any penance, madam, and I will perform it with patience.

Philomela, hearing Lutesio thus penitent, began to clear up her countenance, and said to him thus. It is folly to rub the scar when the wound is almost whole, or to renew quarrels when the matter is put in compromise; therefore omitting all, Lutesio, I pardon thee, and promise neither to remember thy folly myself, nor yet to reveal it to my husband, but thou shalt be every way as heartily welcome to me as thou wert wont; only this shall be thy penance, to swear upon this bible never hereafter to motion me of any dishonesty. To this Lutesio willingly granted, and took his oath; so were they reconciled, and the countess called for a cup of wine and drunk to him, and after to pass away the afternoon they fell to chess. After a mate or two, the countess was called aside by one Margareta Stromia, a Venetian lady that came to visit her, and Lutesio went down to walk in the garden. By chance, as he was striking through the parlour he met the duke [sic] whom he took by the arm and led him into one of the privy walks, & there recounted unto him what reconciliation was grown between him and the countess his wife, which highly pleased the duke, so that without any more cross humours they passed a long time in all

contented pleasures, till fortune, whose envy is to subvert content, and whose delight is to turn comic mirth into tragic sorrows, enter [sic] into the theatre of Philomela's life, and began to act a baleful scene in this manner.

Philippo, who had not quite extinguished suspicion, but covered up in the cinders of melancholy the glowing sparks of jealousy, began afresh to kindle the flame & to conceit a new insight into his wife's actions, & whereas generally he mistrusted her before, and only thought her a wanton as she was a woman, now he suspected that there was too much familiarity between her & Lutesio, and flatly that between them both he wore the horns, yet accuse her he durst not because her parentage was great, her friends many, and her honesty most of all, neither had he any probable articles to object against her, and therefore was silent, but ever murmuring with himself to this effect.

Philippo thou wert too fond to plot Lutesio a means of his love, granting him opportunity to woo, which is the sweetest friend to love; men cannot dally with fire, nor sport with affection, for he that is a suitor in jest may be a speeder in earnest. Have not such a thought in thy mind, Philippo, for as Lutesio is thy friend, so is he faithful, and as Philomela is thy wife, so she is honest. And yet both may join issue and prove dissemblous; lovers have Argus' eyes to be wary in their doings, and angels' tongues to talk of holiness when their hearts are most lascivious. Though my wife returned a taunting letter to him openly, yet she might send him sweet lines secretly. Her satiable answer was but a cloak for the rain, for ever since they have been more familiar and less asunder, nor she is never merry if Lutesio begin not the mirth; if Lutesio be not at table her stomach is queasy. As when the halcyons hatch the sea is calm, and the phoenix never spreads her wings but when the sunbeams shines on her nest, so Philomela is never frolic but when she is matched in the company of Lutesio; this courtesy grows of some private kindness, which if I can find out by just proof and circumstance, let me alone to revenge to the uttermost.

In this jealous passion he passed away many days and many months till one day, Lutesio being alone in the chamber whith [sic] Philomela, the Earl coming in and hearing they were together went charily up the stairs, & peeping in at the lock-hole saw them two standing at a bay-window hand in hand, talking very familiarly, which sight struck such a suspicious fury into his head that he was half frantic, yet did he smother what he thought in silence, and going down into the garden left them two still together. Being there alone by himself he cast a thousand suspicious doubts in his head of Lutesio and his wife's dishonesty, intending to watch more narrowly to take them in a trap, while they, poor souls, little mistrusted his jealousy.

He had not stayed in the garden long ere Lutesio and the countess went down together to walk, where they found the earl in his dumps, but they two wakened him from his drowsy melancholy with the pleasant devices of Signor Lutesio, Philippo making at all no show of his suspicion, but entertained his friend with all accustomed familiarity, so that they passed away that day with all contented pleasures till night, the infortunate breeder of Philomela's misfortunes grew on, when she and the earl went to bed together. For as she lay talking she started, being new quickened with child, & feeling the unperfect infant

stir, Philippo asking the cause, she, ready to weep for joy, said, Good news, my lord, you shall have a young son. At this his heart waxed cold, and he questioned her if she were with child. She, taking his hand, laying it on her side, said, Feel, my lord, you may perceive it move. With that it leapt against his hand, when she, creeping into his bosom, began amorously to kiss him and commend him, that though for the space of four years that they had been married she had had no child, yet at last he had played the man's part and gotten her a boy.

This touched Philippo at the quick and doubled the flame of his jealousy, that as a man half lunatic he leapt out of the bed, and drawing his rapier, began thus to menace poor Philomela. Incestuous strumpet, more wanton than Lamia, more lascivious than Lais, and more shameless than Pasophane [sic], whose life, as it hath been shadowed with painted holiness, so it hath been full of pestilent villainies. Thou hast sucked subtilty from thy mother, thou hast learned with Circes to enchant, with Calypso to charm, with the Sirens to sing, and all these to breed my destruction, yet at last thy concealed vices are burst open into manifest abuses. Now is thy lust grown to light, thy whoredoms to be acted in the theatres of Venice, thy palpable dissolutions to be proclaimed in the provinces of Italy; time is the mother of truth, and now hath laid open thy life to the world. Thou art with Venus taken in a net by Vulcan, and though thou hast long gone to the water, yet at last thou art come broken home. I mistrusted this of long, and have found it out at last, I mean the loves between thee and that traitor Lutesio, which although I smothered with silence, yet I hid up for revenge. I have seen with grief and passed over with sorrow many odd pranks, thinking still time would have altered thy thoughts, but now thou hast sported thy belly-ful, and gotten a bastard & wouldst fop me off to be the father. No, though I be blind, I will not swallow such a fly, for the time of thy quickening & his fresh acquaintance jumps in an even date; this four year I have been thy husband and could not raise up thy belly, and Lutesio no sooner grew familiar with thee but he got thee with child, and were it not, base strumpet, that I reserve thee to further infamy, I would presently butcher thee and the brat both with one stab.

And with that he flung out of the chamber, leaving poor Philomela in a great maze to hear this unlooked for discourse, insomuch that after she had lien awhile in a trance, coming to herself she burst forth into abundance of tears, and passed away the night in bitter complaints whilst Philippo, mad with the frantic humour of jealousy, sat in his study hammering how he might bring both Lutesio and her to confusion. One while he resolved to provide galleys ready for his passage, & then to murder both his wife & Lutesio and so to flee away into some foreign country. Then he determined to accuse them before the duke, his near kinsman, and have them openly punished with the extremity of the law, but he wanted witnesses to confirm his jealous allegations. Being thus in a quandary, at last he called up two Genoways, his servants, slaves that neither regarded God, religion, nor conscience, and them he suborned with sweet persuasions and large promises to swear that he and they did take Lutesio and Philomela in an adulterous action. Although the base villains had at all no sparks of honesty in their minds, yet the honour of their lady, her courtesy to all, her known virtues and special good qualities did so prevail that they were passing unwilling to blemish her good name with their perjuries, yet at last the county cloyed them so with the hope of gold that they

gave free consent to confirm by oath whatsoever he should plot down to them. Whereupon the next morning the earl gat him early to the duke of Venice, who was his cousin-german, and made solemn complaint of the dishonour offered him by his wife and Signor Lutesio, craving justice that he might have such a manifest injury redressed with the rigour of the law. The duke, whose name was Lorenzo Medici, grieved that his kinsman was vexed with such a cross, and sorrowed that Philomela, that was so famous in Italy for her beauty and virtue, should dishonour herself and her husband by yielding her love to lascivious Lutesio, swearing a present dispatch of revenge, and thereupon granted out warrants to bring them both presently before him.

Philippo, glad of this, went his way to the house of Lutesio, well armed and every way appointed as if he had gone to sack the strongest hold in all Italy, carrying with him a crew of his friends & familiars, furnished at all points to apprehend the guiltless gentleman. As soon as they came to his house they found one of his servants sitting at the door, who seeing the earl, saluted him reverently & marvelled what the reason should be he was accompanied with such a multitude. Philippo demanded of him where his master was. Walking, may it please your honour (quoth he), in his garden. Then, says the earl, if he be no more busy, I will be so bold as to go speak with him, and therefore follow me, saith he to the crew, who pressing in after the earl encountered Lutesio coming from his garden to go into his chamber. As soon as he spied Philippo, with a merry look, as if his heart had commanded his eyes to bid him welcome, he saluted the earl most graciously, but highly was astonished to see such a troop at his heels.

Philippo (contrary, as Lutesio offered to embrace him with his best hand) took him fast by the bosom, and pulling forth his poniard said, Traitor, were it not I regard mine honour and were loath to be blemished with the blood of so base a companion, I would rip out that false heart that hath violated the faith once united betwixt us, but the extremity of the law shall revenge thy villainy, and therefore, officers, take him into your custody and carry him presently to the duke, whither I will bring straight the strumpet his paramour, that they may receive condign punishment for their heinous and detestable treachery.

Poor Lutesio, who little looked for such a greeting of the earl, wondered whence this bitter speech should grow, so deeply amazed that he stood as a man in a trance, till at last, gathering his wits together, he began humbly and fearfully to have replied, when the earl commanded the officers to carry him away, and would not hear him utter any word. He speeding him home to his own house to fetch his sorrowful and faultless wife to hear the baleful verdict of her appeached innocency, coming up into the bedchamber, he found her sitting by her bedside on her knees in most hearty and devout prayer that it would please God to clear her husband from his jealousy and protect her from any open reproach or slander, uttering her orisons with such heart-breaking sighs and abundance of tears that the base catchpoles that came in with him took pity and did compassionate the extremity of her passions. But Philippo, as if he had participated his nature with the bloodthirsty cannibal, or eaten of the shittim root that maketh a man to be as cruel in heart as it is hard in the rind, stepped to her, & casting her backward bade her arise, strumpet, and hastily make her ready, for the duke stayed for her coming, and had sent his officers to fetch her.

Perplexed Philomela, casting up her eye and seeing such a crew of rake-hells ready to attend upon him [sic] was so surcharged with grief that she fell down in a passion; Philippo let her lie, but the ministers stepped unto her and received [sic] her again. As soon as she was come to herself, she desired Philippo that for all the love of their youth he would grant her but only this one favour, that she might not be carried before the duke with that common attendance, but that she and he might go together without any further open discredit, and then if she could not prove herself innocent, let her without favour abide the penalty of the law. Although she craved this boon with abundance of tears, yet Philippo would have no remorse, but compelled her to attire herself, and then conveyed her with this crew to the duke's palace where there was gathered together all the consiliadori and chief magistrates of the city. Her passing through the streets drave a great wonder to the Venetians what the cause of her trouble should be, so that infinite number of citizens followed her, and as many as could thrust into the common hall to hear what should be objected against Philomela.

At last, when the judges were set, and Lutesio and Philomela brought to the bar, the duke commanded Philippo to discourse what articles he had to object against his wife and Lutesio. Philippo, with his eyes full of jealousy and heart armed with revenge, looking on them both, fetching a deep sigh, began thus. It is not unknown to the Venetians (right famous duke and honourable magistrates of this so worthy a city) how ever since I married this Philomela I have yielded her such love with reverence, such affection with care, such devoted favours with affected duties, that I did rather honour her as a saint than regard her as a wife, so that the Venetians counted me rather to dote on her extremely than to love her ordinarily. Neither can I deny, mighty Lorenzo, but Philomela returned all these my favours with gentle loves and obedient amours, being as dutiful a wife as I was a loving husband, until this traitor Lutesio, this ingrateful monster, that living hath drunk of the river Lethe which maketh men forgetful of what is past, so he, oblivious of all honour I did him, was the first actor in this tragic overthrow of the fame of the house of Philippo. I appeal to the Venetians, even from the magistrate to the meanest man, what honourable parts of friendship I have shown to Lutesio, how he was my second self, except Philomela. His bosom was the cell wherein I hid up my secrets, his mouth was the oracle whereby I directed my actions; as I could not be without his presence, so I never would do anything without his counsels. Committing thus myself, my soul, my goods, mine honour, nay, my wife, to his honour, only reserving her from him of all that I have private to myself, the traitor (oh, listen to a tale of ruth, Venetians), neither regarding God nor respecting his friend, neither moved with fear nor touched with faith, forgetting all friendship, became amorously to woo my wife and at last dishonestly won her, and now of long time lasciviously hath used her, which I suspected as little as I trusted and affected them both deeply. How long they have continued in their adulterous loves I know not, but as time hatcheth truth and revealeth the very entrails of hidden secrets, so yesterday, oh the baleful day of my dishonour, Lutesio and my wife, being suspected of too much familiarity by my servants, though never mistrusted by me, were watched by these Genoways, who seeing them in the chamber together, shameless as they were, having little regard of any privy priers into their actions, fell to these [sic?] amorous sports so openly that through a chink of the door these were eye-witnesses of their adultery. I being then in the garden, coming up and finding these two peeping in at

the door, stole secretly up, and with these poor slaves was a beholder of mine own dishonour. My shame was so great, and my sorrow so extreme, to see my wife so inconstant and my friend so false, that I stepped back again into the garden, calling away these varlets and leaving them still agents of these unkind villainies. When I came into the garden, such was the love to Philomela and so great the friendship I bore to Lutesio that, trust me, Venetians, had myself only been a witness of their follies, I would have smothered the fault with silence. But knowing that such base rascals would at one time or other be blabs, and so blemish mine honour and so accuse me for a wittol to my own wife, I resolved to have them punished by law that hath so perversely requited my love; therefore have I here produced them in open court, that my dishonour may end in their revenge, calling for justice with extremity against two persons of such treacherous ingratitude.

And here Philippo ceased, driving all the hearers into a great maze, that the duke sat astonished, the consiliadori musing, and the common people murmuring at the discourse of Signor Philippo, and bending their envious eyes against the two innocents for wronging so honourable a county. To be brief, Lutesio and Philomela were examined, & no doubt they told sundry tales to clear themselves, but in vain, for the oath of the two slaves found them guilty, whereupon a quest of choice citizens went upon them, and both as guilty condemned to death. When the fatal sentence should have been pronounced against them, Philippo, with a counterfeit countenance full of sorrow, kneeling down, desired that they might not die because it would grieve him to be blemished with the blood of his wife whom he had loved or of his friend whom he had honoured, at whose humble entreaty judgment was given that Philippo & Philomela should be divorced, and be at free liberty to marry whom he list, and Lutesio forever to be banished, not only out of Venice but of all the dukedom and territories of the same.

As soon as sentence was given, Lutesio fetched a great sigh, and laying his hand on his bosom said, This breast, Philippo, did never harbour any disloyal thought against thee, nor once imagine or contrive any dishonour against thy wife. Whatsoever thou hast wrongly averred, or the duke hardly conceived, for witness I appeal to none but God, who knoweth me guiltless, and to thine own conscience, whose worm for this wrong will ever be restless. My banishment I brook with patience in that I know time will discover any truth in my absence; smoke cannot be hidden, nor the wrong of innocents scape without revenge. I only grieve for Philomela, whose chastity is no less than her virtues are many, & her honours as far from lust as thou and thy perjured slaves from truth. It boots not use many words; only this I will say, men of Venice, [+Philippo] hath lost a friend which he will miss, and a wife that he will sorrow for. And so he went out of the council-house home to his own lodging, having the term of twenty-one days appointed for his departure.

Philomela, poor soul, knowing what was in record could not be reversed, that her credit was cracked, her honour utterly blemished, and her name brought in contempt, for all this abashed not outwardly, whatsoever she conceited inwardly, but seemed in her far more full of favour and beauty than ever she was before, and her looks so modest and grave that chastity seemed to sit in her eyes and to proclaim the wrong was offered unto her by these perjured persons. With this assured and constant countenance, first looking on the

duke, on the consiliadori, on the common people, and then on her husband, she used these words.

O Filippo Medici, once the lover of Philomela though now the wreck of her honours and the blemish of her high fortunes, how canst thou look to heaven and not tremble? How canst thou behold me, and not blush? How canst thou think there is a God without fear, or a hell without horror? Canst thou blind the divine Majesty [sic] as thou hast led these magistrates into a false opinion of thine own dishonour and my dishonesty? *Mille testes conscientia*, if these slaves, the ministers of thy jealous envy, should grow dumb, and all the world silent, yet will thine own conscience daily cry out in thine ears that thou hast wronged Philomela. I am the daughter of a duke as thou art the son of an earl; my virtues in Venice have been as great as thine honours; my fortunes and my friends more than thine; all these will search into this cause, and if they find out mine innocency, think Filippo worthy of great penance. But in vain, I use charms to a deaf adder; therefore Filippo, I leave thee to the choice of a new love and the fortune of a fair wife, who if she prove as honestly amorous towards thee as Philomela, then wrong her not with suspicion as thou hast done me with jealousy lest she prove too liberal, and pay my debts. Yet Filippo, hast thou lost more in losing Lutesio than in forsaking me, for thou mayest have many honest wives, but never so faithful a friend; therefore though I be divorced, be thou and he reconciled, lest at last the horrors of thy conscience draw thee into despair, and pain thee with too late repentance. So, Filippo, ever wishing thee well, I will ever entreat that neither God may lay the wrong of mine innocency to thy charge nor my friends triumph in thy infortunate revenge, and so farewell. With this she stepped forth of the hall, leaving Filippo greatly tormented in his conscience, and the duke and all the rest wondering at her patience, saying it was pity she was drawn on to wantonness by Lutesio.

The rumours of this spread through all Venice, of the lascivious life of Philomela. Some said all was not gold that glistered, that the fairest faces have oft-times the falsest hearts, & the smoothest looks the most treacherous thoughts, that as the agate, be it never so white without, yet it is full of black strokes within, & that the most shining sun breedeth the most sharp showers, so women, the more chastity they profess openly, the less chary they are in secret of their honesty. Others said it might be a compacted matter by the earl to be rid of his wife. Some said that the matter might be mistaken, and made worse than it was. Thus diversly they did descant, while poor Philomela, being gotten to a gentleman's house, a friend of hers, sat sorrowfully resolving how she might best salve this blemish. One while she thought to go home to the duke, her father, and incense him to revenge; that again she misliked, for by open jars and civil dissension, were she never so innocent, yet her name should by such open brawls grow more infamous. Another while she thought to persuade Lutesio against him, and that he might procure the slaves by torture to bewray the subornation of perjury, and so bring her husband within the compass of open treachery. Thus [sic] the secret love she bare still to Filippo would not suffice [sic], for she had rather bear guiltless shame than bring her husband to perpetual infamy. Thus did she plot in her mind sundry ways of revenge, but at last this was her resolution: sith her honour, so famous through Italy, was now so highly stained, she would neither stay in Italy nor yet return to her father, but go into some strange country

and there die unknown, that being absent from the rumour of her bad report, she might live, though poorly, yet quiet. Upon this determination she set down her rest, and gathered all her clothes & jewels together, for the earl sent her all whatsoever he had of her, and she returned him by the messenger a ring with a diamond whererein [sic] was written these words: *Olim meminisse dolebit*. The earl took it and put it on his finger, which after bred his further misery.

But leaving him a contented man, though with a troubled conscience for the satisfying of his jealous revenge, again to Philomela, who having packed up all her jewels and treasures listened for a ship, and heard of one that made to Palermo in Sicilia. As the poor countess was careless of herself, as a woman half in despair, so she little regarded to what port of Christendom the bark made, and therefore hired passage in the ship so secretly that none but her own self and a page did know when or whither she meant to make her voyage, so that on a sudden, having certain intelligence at what hour the ship would warp out of the haven, she slipped away, and her page with her, and getting aboard under sail, commit herself to God, the mercy of the seas, and to the husband [sic?] of many hard fortunes.

The ship had not gone a league upon the seas but Philomela began to be sick, whereupon the master of the ship, coming in to comfort her, found her in his eye one of the fairest creatures that ever he saw, and though her colour were something pale through her present sickness, yet he could compare it to no worse show than the glister of the moon in a silent night and a clear sky, so that the poor shipper's conscience began to be pricked, and love began to shake him by the sleeve, that he sat down by her and after his blunt fashion gave her such sweet comfort as such a swain could afford. Philomela thanked him, and told him it was nothing but a passion that the roughness of the seas had wrought in her, who heretofore was unacquainted with any others waters than the river Po, and such small creeks as watered Italy. Whereupon the master departed, but with a flea in his ear and love in his eye, for he had almost forgot his compass he was so far out of compass with thinking how to compass Philomela.

In this amorous humour he began to visit often the cabin wherein Philomela lay, which was a means rather to increase his fury than to qualify the fire of love that began to heat him, for as he that playeth with a bee may sooner feel her sting than taste of her honey, so he that acquainteth himself with love may more easily repent him than content him, and sooner enthrall himself in a labyrinth than get an hour of quiet liberty. So it fell out with Tebaldo, for so was the master of the ship called, for he by conversing privately and familiarly with Philomela became so far in love that he held no happiness like the obtaining of this love. He noted the excellency of her beauty, the exquisiteness of her qualities, and measured every part with such precise judgment that the small heat of desire grew to a glowing fire of affection. But for all this he durst not reveal his mind unto her, lest happily by his motion she should be moved unto displeasure. But as by time small sparks grow into great flames, so at last he waxed so passionate that there was no way with him but death or despair if he did not manifest his thought unto her, resolving thus damnably with himself, that howsoever love or fortune dealt with him he would have his mind satisfied, for if she granted then he would keep her in Palermo as his

paramour; if she denied, seeing he had her within the compass of his bark, he would have his purpose by force, and so become lord of his content by conquest.

Thus resolute he went towards the cabin of Philomela to bewray his affection unto her, when drawing near the door he heard her playing most cunningly upon a lute certain lessons of curious descant. Staying awhile, lest he might interrupt so sweet music, at last she left off, & fell from the lute to this lamentable complaint. Oh poor woman, worthy so termed being brought to thy woe by a man, now dost thou see that as such as are stung by the tarantula are best cured by music, so such minds as are vexed by sorrow find no better relief than a sweet relish of comforting melody. Ah Abstemia, for so she now called her name, the more to disguise herself, if music should be answerable to thy martyrdom or the excellency of descant conformable to the intent of the distresser, then must Apollo be fetched from heaven, Orpheus from his grave, Amphion from his rest, the Sirens from their rocks, to qualify thy musings with their musics, for though they excel in degrees of sounds, thou exceedest in diversities of sorrows, being far more miserable than musical, and yet they the rarest of all others. Once, Abstemia, thou wert counted the fairest in Italy, and now thou art holden the falsest; thy virtues were thought many, now thy dishonours are counted numberless; thou wert the glory of thy parents, the hope of thy friends, the fame of thy country, the wonder of thy time of modesty, the paragon of Italy for honourable grace, & the pattern whereby women did measure their perfections, for she that was holden less modest was counted a wanton, and she that would seem more virtuous was esteemed too precise. But now thou art valued worthless of all thy former honours by the stain of one undeserved blemish. Ah, had I been false to my husband perhaps I had been more fortunate, though not in mine own conscience, yet to the eyes of the world less suspected and so not detected, but innocency to God is the sweetest incense, & a conscience without guilt is a sacrifice of the purest savour. What though I be blamed? If my life be lent me, my honour will be recovered, for as God will not suffer a murder to escape without punishment, so he will not let the wrong of the innocent go to his grave without revenge. Though thou be banished, Abstemia, yet comfort thyself, account each country thine own, and every honest man thy neighbour. Let thy life be mean, so shalt thou not be looked into, for envy creepeth not so low as cottages; reeds bend with the wind when cedars fall with a blast; poor men rely lightly of fortune because they are too weak for fortune, when higher states feel her force because they nuzzle in her bosom. Acquaint not thyself with many lest thou fall into the hands of flatterers, for the popular sorts have more eyes and longer tongues than the rich; seem courteous to all, but converse with few, and let thy virtues be much spoken though thyself live never so private. Hold honesty more dear than thy life, & be thou never so poor, yet be chaste & choose rather to starve in the streets than live daintily at a lecher's table; if as thou art beautiful, Abstemia, any fall in love with thy favour, and what he cannot win by suits will seek to get by force, and so ravish thee of thy richest glory, choose rather to be without breath than live with such a blemish. Thou art fraudless [sic] in Sicilia, and though thou complainest, thou shalt not be heard; might overcomes right, and the weakest are still thrust to the wall. To prevent, therefore, constraint in love in the greatest prince, I have provided (quoth she) a poison in the seal of my ring as deadly as it is little, resolving as stoutly as Hannibal did, who held the like in the pommel of his sword and choose [sic] rather to die free than fall into the hands of Scipio, so before any lecher shall force to

satisfy his passion, I will end my life with this fatal poison. So, Abstemia, shalt thou die more honourably, which is more dear than to live disgraced.

Enough is a feast, poor wench, what needs these solemn preachings? Leave these secret dumps and fall to thy lute, for thou shalt have time enough to think of sorrow, and with that she tuned her strings, and in a merry vein played three or four pleasant lessons and at last sung to herself this conceited ditty.

An Ode

*What is love, once disgraced,
 But a wanton thought ill placed
 Which do blemish whom it paineth
 And dishonours whom it deigneth,
 Seen in higher powers most,
 Though some fools do fondly boast
 That whoso is high of kin
 Sanctifies his lover's sin?
 Jove could not hide Io's scape
 Nor conceal Calisto's rape;
 Both did fault and both were famed
 Light of loves whom lust had shamed.
 Let not women trust to men;
 They can flatter now and then
 And tell them many wanton tales
 Which do breed their after-bales.
 Sin in kings is sin, we see,
 And greater sin, cause great of gree.
 Maius peccatum, this I read,
 If he be high that doth the deed;
 Mars for all his deity
 Could not Venus dignify,
 But Vulcan trap [sic] her, and her blame
 Was punished with an open shame.
 All the gods laughed them to scorn
 For dubbing Vulcan with the horn.
 Whereon may a woman boast
 If her chastity be lost?
 Shame await'h upon her face,
 Blushing cheeks and foul disgrace;
 Report will blab, this is she
 That with her lust wins infamy.
 If lusting love be so disgraced,
 Die before you live unchaste,
 For better die with honest fame
 Than lead a wanton life with shame.*

As soon as Philomela had ended her ditty, she laid down her lute and fell to her book, but Tebaldo, having heard all her secret meditation, was driven in such a maze with the conceit of her incomparable excellency that he stood as much astonished to hear her chaste speeches as Actaeon to see Diana's naked beauties. Entering with a piercing insight into her virtues, & perceiving she was some greater personage than he at the first took her for, his love was so quailed with the rareness of her qualities that he rather endeavoured to honour her as a saint than to love her as a paramour. Desire now began to change to reverence, and affection to an honest devotion, that he shamed he once thought any way lust towards so virtuous a creature. Thus metamorphosed, he stepped into her cabin and found her reading, to whom he did show more than accustomed reverence, which Philomela returned with equal courtesy. At last he told her how he had heard her lamentable discourse of her misfortune and the honourable resolution of her honesty, which did so tie him to be devoted towards her that if when she came into Palermo his poor house might serve her for a lodging, it and all therein, with himself and his wife, should be at her command. Philomela thanked him heartily for his kind and courteous proffer, and promised to her ability not to be ungrateful.

Well, leaving her under sail towards Palermo, to S. Ganami [sic] Lutesio, who harbouring a hateful intent of revenge in his mind against the county Philipppo, thought to pay him home pat in his lap, and therefore making as speedy a dispatch as might be of his affairs, he takes his journey from Venice towards the duke of Milan's court, the father of Philomela, to whom he had recounted what had happened to his daughter, what had chanced to him, and how great dishonour was offered to him by her husband. The duke, although these news touched him at the quick, yet dissembled the matter, and began in great choler to upbraid Lutesio, that no doubt the earl did it upon just cause, or else neither would he have wronged a wife whom so tenderly he loved, neither rejected a friend whom he so dearly honoured, nor yet the duke & senate of Venice would have yielded so peremptory & hard a sentence as either banishment to him or divorce to her.

To this Lutesio made reply that the earl, to prove his surmised articles true, had suborned two slaves that were Genoways to perjure themselves. He showed the duke the letter that passed between him and his daughter, and the reason why he wrote them [sic], but all this could not satisfy the duke's opinion, but he charged his gentlemen to lay hands on Lutesio and to carry him to prison until he had further trial of the matter, swearing if he found him to have played false with his daughter, neither should his banishment excuse him nor her divorce, for he would have both their lives for offering dishonour to the house of Milan.

Upon this censure of the duke, Lutesio was carried to prison, and the duke left mightily perplexed [sic], who began to cast in his mind many doubts of this strange chance, vowing in his heart a fatal revenge upon Philipppo for blemishing his daughter's honour with such open infamy. When thus the duke was in a heavy suspicion, one of the Genoways, whose conscience tormented him, ran away from Venice and came to Milan, where coming to the duke's palace, he desired to speak with his grace from the county Philipppo. Being brought straight unto him, as soon as he came into his presence he

kneeled down trembling, and besought him of mercy. The duke, astonished at the strange terror of the man, demanded of him what he was, and from whence he came. The slave told him that he was born at Geneva [sic] and had been servant to that infortunate earl, the county Philippo Medici, and one of those perjured traitors that had borne false witness against his daughter, Philomela. At this the duke started out of his seat, and taking the fellow courteously up, bade him not to fear nor doubt for if he spake nothing but the truth he should not only be freely pardoned but highly rewarded.

Upon this the poor slave discoursed from point to point, first the singular chastity of his lady and mistress, and then the deep jealousy of Philippo, who first, as he had learned, caused his dear friend Signor Grevani [sic] Lutesio to try her, who finding her wise, virtuous, and constant, fell out with the earl that he would wrong his wife with such causeless suspicion. After he rehearsed how the county grew jealous that Philomela favoured Lutesio, and because he had no proof to confirm his mistrust but his own doubting head, he suborned him and a fellow of his to swear that they saw Lutesio and the countess even in the very act of adultery, which in them was perjury and in him lechery, for both the gentleman and their lady was innocent, and with that falling down on his knees and melting into tears he craved pardon of his life.

The duke, whose eyes were full of fire, as sparking revenge and hate, bade him be of good cheer, and pulling his purse out of his pocket, and [sic] gave it to him for an earnest-penny of further friendship, and charged his gentlemen to give the Genoway good entertainment, and with that sent for Signor Lutesio out of prison, & sorrowful that he had wronged him so much, told him how one of the Genoways was come that gave false witness against his daughter, & had revealed all, which joyed Lutesio at the very heart, so that humbly & with watery cheeks he desired the duke to revenge his daughter's wrongs. But as little booting his entreaty as spurs to a swift horse, for the duke, gathering a mighty army, made as much speed as might be towards Venice, intending to quit the wrong proffered to Philomela by suspicious Philippo, who then lived [sic] in all desired content in that his jealous humour was satisfied was determining where to make a new choice for favour when time chere [sic] this change of fortune, that news was brought into Venice that not only the Milan duke was come down to waste and spoil the cities belonging unto the signory of Venice, but also meant to gather all the forces of his friends in Christendom to revenge the abuse offered to his daughter Philomela.

This news being come unto the ears of Philippo made him forget his wooing and begin to wonder how he should shift off the misfortune ready to light upon him if anything were proved of his suborning treachery. He now began to enter into consideration with himself that if Lutesio were gotten to Milan, he would not only lay the plot of all mischief against him but also discover his treason & incense the duke to revenge, and upon this, he thought, grew the occasion of his men in arms. Then did he fear lest the Genoway that was run away from him should come to the duke's court & there confirm by authentical proof what Lutesio upon his honour did affirm. Thus diversly perplexed he remained in great dumps while the duke and consiliadori of Venice, gathering into their senate-house, began to consult what reason the Milonians had to invade their territories. And therefore to be fully satisfied in the cause, they sent ambassadors to inquire the reason why he rose

in arms against them, whether it were for the sentence offered against Philomela or no, and if it were, that he should herein rest satisfied that as she was exiled by law, so she was justly condemned for lechery.

The ambassadors having their charge came to the duke, lying then not far off from Bergamo, and did their message unto him which he reanswered thus, that he was not come as an enemy against them, but as a private foe to Philipppo, and therefore required to approve his daughter's innoceny not by arms but by witnesses in the senate-house of Venice, and if she were found guiltless, to have condign punishment enjoined and executed against Philipppo. This if they did deny, he was come with his own blade and his soldiers to plague the Venetians for the partial judgments of their magistrates, and if they meant to have him come into Venice, he craved for his assurance sufficient hostages.

The ambassadors returned with this answer to the duke and the consiliadori, who held his request passing reasonable, and thought it would be dishonour to them and their estate if they should stand in denial of so equal a demand, and therefore the duke not only sent him his only son but six young sons more, all the sons of men of honour, for hostage, upon whose arrival the duke of Milan, only accompanied with Lutesio, the Genoway, and ten other noblemen went to the city and was magnificently entertained by the duke and the citizens, where feasting that day, the next morning they resolved to meet in the senate-house to hear what could be alleged against Philipppo, whom they cited peremptorily to appear to answer to such objections as should be laid against him.

The guilty earl now began to feel remorse of conscience and to doubt of the issue of his treachery, and therefore getting into his closet he called the Genoway to him and there began to persuade him that although both Signor Lutesio and his fellow did bewray the subornation of perjury, yet he should deny it unto the death, and for his reward he bade him take half his treasure and his freedom. The Genoway made solemn protestation that he would perform no less than he commanded him, and thereupon, as an assumpsit, took the signet of the earl for performance of all covenants.

Thus armed, as he thought, in that he rested safely in the secrecy of his slave, the next day he appeared in the senate-house, whither the dukes of Milan and of Venice came with all the consiliadori and chief citizens of the town to hear how this matter should be debated. At last the duke of Milan arose amongst them all and began thus to discourse. I come not, Venetians, to enlarge my territories with the sword, though I have burdened your borders with the weight of armed men. I rise not in arms to seek martial honours, but civil justice, not to claim other men's right, but mine own due, which is revenge upon false Philipppo for his treachery against my innocent daughter, Philomela. Innocent I term her, though injury hath wronged her, and yet I accuse not your duke or consiliadori of injustice because their censure passed according to the false evidence propounded by perjured Philipppo, but I claim justice without partiality against him, which if it be granted I shall highly praise your senate and be ever professed your friend; if it be denied, I am come in arms to defend my daughter's innoceny, and with my blood to paint revenge upon the gates of Venice. If I speak sharply, blame me not sith mine honour is touched with such a blemish. The discredit of the daughter is a spot in the parent's brow, and

therefore if I seek to excuse her, accuse not me; I do but what honour commands and nature binds me to. For proof that I come not to sanctify sin in my daughter or shadow her scapes with my countenance I have brought here not only Lutesio but one of their slaves which was by Philippo induced to give false evidence to affirm as much as I aver; therefore I only crave they may be examined with equity, and I be satisfied only in justice. Thus with his face full of wrath he sat down silent.

When the consiliadori, amazed at this brief and sharp speech of the Milanese, began to examine the Genoway, who confessed all the treachery, they hearing this demanded of Philippo how he could answer the confession of his slave, he smilingly made this scornful reply. I hope, worthy duke and honourable senate of Venice, you will not be dashed out of countenance with the sight of weapons, nor be driven from justice by the noise of armour, that though I be an earl and am not able to equal the duke of Milan in multitudes yet I shall have as high favours as he with equity, in hope whereof I answer that I think there is none so simple here but sees how Lutesio, constrained through envy, and the duke, compelled by nature, have suborned this poor slave, either by gold or promises, to receive [sic] what before by solemn oath he here protested. He, to recover his former credit and liberty in his country, this to salve the blemish of his daughter's honour, but as such slaves' minds are to be wrought like wax with every fair word, so I assure myself little belief shall be given to such a base and servile person that cometh to depose against his own conscience. This was partner with him in his evidence (pointing to the other Genoway), and this can affirm what I testify, and therefore I appeal to your equities, for by the verdict of this slave will I be tried.

At this the duke of Venice called the Genoway forth and bade him speak his mind, when Lutesio, rising up, charged him that as he was a Christian and hoped to be saved by his merits he should impartially pronounce what he knew. At this the Genoway, feeling a horror, a second hell in his conscience, trembling as a man amazed and touched with the sting of God's judgment in his heart stood awhile mute, but at last, gathering his spirits together and getting the liberty of his speech, falling down upon his knees with his eyes full of tears he confessed and discoursed the whole circumstance of the earl's villainy intended against Philomela, whereat there was a great shout in the senate-house and clapping of hands amongst the common people, they all for joy crying Philomela, innocent Philomela.

At this the senators sat silent, and the duke of Milan vexed, and the county Philippo, now feeling a dreadful remorse in his conscience uttered these words with great resolution. Now do I prove that true by experience which erst I held only for a bare proverb, that truth is the daughter of time, and there is nothing so secret but the date of many days will reveal it, that as oil, though it be moist, quencheth not fire, so time, though never so long, is no sure covert for sin, but as a spark raked up in cinders will at last begin to glow and manifest a flame, so treachery hidden in silence will burst forth and cry for revenge. Whatsoever villainy the heart doth work, in process of time the worm of conscience will bewray; oh senators, this may be applied to myself, whose jealous head compassed this treason to Philomela and this treachery to Lutesio, the one a most honest wife, the other a most faithful friend. It booteth little by circumstance to discover the sorrow I conceive,

or little need I show my wife's innocence when these base slaves whom I suborned to perjure themselves have proclaimed her chastity and my dishonour; suffice it then that I repent, though too late, & would make amends, but I have sinned beyond satisfaction, for there is no sufficient recompense for unjust slander. Therefore in penalty of my perjury towards Philomela I crave myself justice against myself, that you would enjoy a penance but no less than the extremity of death.

At these words of Philippo the people murmured, and the senate sat awhile consulting with themselves what were best to do. At last they referred it to the duke of Milan to give sentence and censure against Philippo, seeing the wrong was his daughter's and the dishonour his, who being a man of a mild nature and full of royal honour in his thoughts, rising up with a countenance discovering a kind of satisfaction by the submissive repentance of Philippo, pronounced that the earl should abide that penalty was enjoined to his daughter, which was that he should be banished, that both the Genoways should have their liberty and a thousand ducats apiece, and that Lutesio should have his judgment reversed and be restored to his former freedom.

At this censure of the duke they all gave a general applause, and Philippo there with tears in his eyes took leave, protesting to spend his exile contentedly in seeking out of Philomela, and when he had found her, then in her presence to sacrifice his blood as a satisfaction for his lechery. Lutesio likewise swore to make a quest for her, and so did the Genoways, and the duke her father was as forward, and the senate broke up and the duke of Milan forthwith departed home to his own country, where leaving him going homeward, and Philippo, Lutesio, and the Genoways seeking for Philomela, once again to the innocent lady, who being arrived in Palermo was not only courteously entertained of the master of the ship but also of his wife, who noting her modesty, virtue, silence, and other good properties & rare qualities was so far in love with her that she would not by any means let her depart out of her house, but with a sympathy of sweet affections did love like two sisters, insomuch that Philomela was brought to bed and had a young son called Infortunatus because he was born in the extremity of his mother's misery, the master of the ship and his wife being pledges of his christendom. Living thus obscure, and yet famous in Palermo for her virtues, she found that of all music the mean was the merriest, that quiet rested in low thoughts and the safest content in the poorest cottages, that the highest trees abide the sharpest storms and the greatest personages the sorest frowns of fortune; therefore with patience she brooked her homely course of life, and had more quiet sleeps now in the shipmaster's house in Palermo than she had in her palace in Venice, only her discontent was when she thought on Philippo, that he had proved so unkind, and on Lutesio, that for her sake he was so deeply injured, yet as well as she might she salved these sores, and covered her hard fortunes with the shadow of her innocence.

While thus she lived honourably in Palermo, not [sic] for her excellent behaviour and good quality, it fortuned that the Duke of Milan and Lutesio, both disguised like two palmers, had passed through many places to seek Philomela and to reduce her from banishment, and at last arrived in Palermo, intending to sojourn there for awhile and then

to pass up to Samagossa [sic?] and so through all Sicilia to have intelligence of the distressed countess.

While thus they stayed inquiring diligently of her, and not hearing any news sith she was seldom seen abroad and beside that her name changed and called Abstemia, it chanced that either by fortune or destiny there arrived at the same time in Palermo the county Philippo Medici, who having travelled through divers countries to find out his innocent countess, wearied at last, not so much with travel as with the gnawing worm of a guilty conscience that still tormented him, he began more and more to enter into despair and to think his life loathsome unto him, wishing daily for death so it might not come through the guilt of his own hand, & yet resolving rather to be the murderer of himself than thus to linger out his days in despair. In this perplexed passion he gat him into a thick grove, there the better to communicate in his melancholy, vowing if he heard not of Philomela in that city to make that grove the monument of his grave.

Thus desirous of death or of the recovery of his wife, it fortun'd that Arnol'do Frozzo [sic], son and heir to the duke of Palermo, being in love with a young gentlewoman whose lodging was distant some three leagues from the city, pricked forward by the extremity of affection thought to go visit her. Although he was not only forbidden by his father but watched lest privily he might steal unto her, yet as love can find starting-holes he devised this policy: he carried a slave that remained in his father's house abroad to the grove with him where Philippo lay lurking, and there changing apparel with him, he got him to his desired mistress and had the slave return covertly into the city and meet him the next day at the same place. Parting thus, as he was going homeward he was met by a young Sicilian gentleman named Petro Salino, who bearing a mortal grudge to the duke's son in that he affected the gentlewoman whom he so tenderly loved, seeing him alone, and thinking him to be Arnol'do Strozso by his apparel, and deeming he came now from his beloved mistress, set upon him and slew him, and with his rapier so mangled his face that by no means he could be discerned, and thereupon fled.

Arnol'do's page, missing his master, seeking abroad for him in the fields for that he desired oft-times to be solitary, light upon the dead body of the slave, and judging it to be his master because he was in his apparel, cried out & ran home and carried news thereof to the duke his father, who as a man distraught of his wits commanded strait search to be made to find out the actor of the tragedy, causing the dead corpse to be convey'd with much grief and many tears.

All the courtiers, gentlemen, and others sought abroad to seek out the author of this murder, and not far off where the slave was slain found Philippo walking up & down untrussed, his hat lying by him and his rapier in his hand. The courtiers, seeing a man thus suspicious, made inquiry what he was. Why, quoth the county, I am the man you look for. Art thou then, said the cousin of Arnol'do, that bloody traitor that hast slain the duke's son? The county, glad he had so sweet an occasion to be rid of his life, resolute [sic] and briefly said, Aye, marry, am I, and I will kill his father too, if ever I reach him. With that they laid hold upon him and carried him to prison, and as he went by the way they examined what he was, but that by no means he would reveal unto them; only he

said he was an Italian purposely come from Venice to act it. News straight was carried to the duke that the murderer was taken, who was highly glad thereof, and resolved the next day with the states of the country to sit in judgment. As fame and report cannot be silent, so it was straight noised abroad through Palermo that the duke's son was slain by a Venetian, and how he was taken and should the next day be arraigned and executed.

Philomela, hearing that he was a Venetian that had done the deed, desirous to see him, took the master of the ship's wife with her and went to the prison, and there by favour of the jailer saw him through a window. As soon as Philomela had a view of him she saw it was Philippo Medici, her husband, disguised, & having in his face the very signs of despair. This sight of her husband drove her into a maze, yet to conceal the matter to herself she said she knew not the man. As thus she was standing talking with the jailer there came a Venetian that was a resident in Palermo and desired that he might see the gentleman that had done the murder, but the jailer would not suffer him, but inquired what countryman he was. He answered, A Venetian, and that is the reason, quoth he, that I am desirous to have a sight of him. Philomela, hearing that he was a Venetian, asked what news from Venice. The sailor, for so he was, discoursed unto her what late had chanced, and amongst the rest he discovered the fortunes of Philomela and how she was wrongfully accused by her husband the earl, how her father came to Venice, and having her accuser's two slaves examined, they confessed the earl suborned them to the perjury, whereupon Philippo was banished, and now as a man in despair sought about to find out his wife.

Philomela, hearing these news, thanking him took her leave of the sailor and went home, where getting alone into her chamber she began thus to meditate with herself. Now, Philomela, thou mayest see heavens are just and God impartial, that though he defers, he doth not acquit, that though he suffer the innocent to be wronged, yet at last he persecuteth the malicious with revenge, that time hatcheth truth and that true honour may be blemished with envy but never utterly defaced with extremity. Now is thy life laid open in Venice and thy fame revived in spite of fortune; now mayest thou triumph in the fall of thy jealous husband and write thy chastity in the characters of his blood; so shall he die disgraced and thou return to Venice as a wonder. Now shall thine eye see his end that hath sought to ruate thee, and thou live content and satisfied in the just revenge of a perjured husband.

Oh Philomela, that word husband is a high term, easily pronounced in the mouth but never to be banished from the heart. Knoweth thou not that the love of a wife must not end but by death, that the term of marriage is dated in the grave, that wives should so long love and obey as they live and draw breath, that they should prefer their husband's honour before their own life and chose rather to die than see him wronged? Why else did Alcest die for Admetus, why did Portia eat coals for the love of Brutus if it were not that wives ought to end their lives with their loves?

Truth, Philomela, but Philippo is a traitor. He hath emblemished thy fame, sought to ruin thine honour, aimed at thy life, condemned thee both to divorce and banishment, and lastly hath stained the high honours of thy father's house.

And what of all this, Philomela? Hath not every man his fault? Is there any offence so great that may not be forgiven? Philipppo did not work thee this wrong because he loved some other, but because he over-loved thee. 'Twas jealousy, not lasciviousness that forced him to that folly, and suspicion is incident only to such as are kind-hearted lovers. Hath not God revenged thy injury and thy father punished him with the like penalty that thyself dost suffer, and wilt thou now glory in his misery? No, Philomela, show thyself virtuous, as ere thou hast been honourable, and heap coals on his head by showing him favour in extremity. If he hath slain the duke's son it is through despair, and if he had not come hither to seek thee he had not fallen into this misfortune. The palm-tree, the more it is pressed down, the more it sprouteth up; the camomile, the more it is trodden, the sweeter smell it yieldeth; even so ought a good wife to be kind to her husband midst his greatest discourtesies, and rather to venture her life than suffer him incur any prejudice, and so will I do by Philipppo, for rather than he shall die in the sight of Philomela, I will justify him with mine own death. So shall my end be honourable as my life hath been wonderful.

With this she ceased and went to her rest, till the next day morning that the dukes and the states gathered together to sit in judgment, whither came Lutesio and the duke of Milan disguised to see what he was that, being a Venetian, committed the murder, & there also was Philomela and the sailor's wife. At last the county Philipppo was brought forth, whom when the duke of Milan saw, jogging Lutesio with his hand, he whispered and said, See, Lutesio, where man favours, yet God doth in extremity revenge. Now shall we see the fall of our enemy, yet not touched with his blood, whispering thus amongst themselves.

At last the duke of Palermo began to examine him if he were he that slew his son. He answered that he was the man, & would with his blood answer it. What moved you, says the duke, to do the murder? An old grudge, quoth he, that hath been between him and me ever since he was in Venice, and for that cause revenge was so restless in my mind that I came from thence purposely to act the tragedy, and am not sorry that I have contented my thoughts with his blood. At this his manifest confession the duke, full of wrath, arose and said it was bootless further to empanel any jury, & therefore upon his words he would pronounce sentence against him.

Then Philomela, calling to the duke and desiring she might be heard, began thus to plead. O mighty duke, stay the censure lest thy verdict wrong the innocent & thou condemn an earl through his own despairing evidence. I see, and with trembling I feel, that a guilty conscience is a thousand witnesses, that as it is impossible to cover the light of the sun with a curtain, so the remorse of murder cannot be concealed in the closet of the most secret conspirator. For standing by, and hearing thee ready to pronounce sentence against the innocent, I, even I, that committed the deed, though to the exigent of mine own death, could not but burst forth into these exclamations to save the sackless. Know therefore that he which standeth here before the judgment seat is an earl, though banished. His name is county Philipppo Medici, my husband, and once famous in Italy, though here he be blemished by fortune.

At this all the company looked upon her. Philippo, as a man amazed, stood staring on her face, the tears trickling down his cheeks to see the kindness of his wife whom so deeply he had injured, and the duke of Milan, her father, with Lutesio were in as great a wonder. Last she prosecuted her purpose thus. It were too long, worthy Sicilians, to repeat the wrongs this Philippo hath used against me, distressed countess, through his extreme jealousy, only let this briefly suffice, he suborned his slaves to swear I was seen in the act of adultery. They were believed, I divorced and banished, and here ever since I have lived in contented patience. But since my exile, time that is the revealer of truth hath made the slaves bewray the effect of the matter, so that this present earl is found guilty, mine honour saved, he banished, and now extremely distressed. Consider then, Sicilians, if this county, my husband, hath offered me such wrong, what reason I had to plead for his life were it not the guilt of mine own conscience forceth to save the innocent, who in a despairing humour, weary of his life, confesseth himself author of that murder which these hands did execute. I am the woman, the infortunate countess, Sicilians, who suborned by a Sicilian gentleman whom by no tortures I will name, first practised by witchcraft Arnoldo's death, but seeing that would not prevail, I sought to meet him alone, which I did yesterday by the grove, and there offering him a humble supplication, and he stooping to take it courteously, I stabbed him, and after mangled him in that sort you found him. This is truth, this is my conscience, and this I am by God informed to confess. Then, worthy duke, save the innocent earl, and pronounce sentence against me, the offender. I speak not this in that I love the county, but that I am forced unto it by the remorse of mine own conscience.

Here she ended, and all they stood amazed, and Philippo began again to reply against her, that she did it to save him, but in vain were his words for she laboured such probable reasons against herself that the duke was ready to pronounce sentence against her, and the duke her father at the point to bewray himself, had it not been that Arnoldo Strozco, the duke's son, coming home, and meeting certain plain countrymen heard this news, how the duke was sitting in judgment against one that had murdered his son, which news, as it drove him into a wonder, so it made him haste speedily to the place to know the effect of the matter, and he came thither just at the beginning of Philomela's oration. Seeing therefore two pleading thus for death, he himself being alive, and his father ready to condemn the innocent, he commanded the company to give way, came and showed himself, and said, May it please your grace, I am here, whom these confess they have slain.

At this the duke start up, and all the standers-by were in a maze. At last, to drive them out of their dumps, he told them that he thought that the man that was murdered and taken for him was a slave with whom the day before he had changed apparel.

The duke, for joy to see his son, was a great while mute. At last he began to examine the matter, why these two did plead themselves guilty. Philippo answered, for despair, as weary of his life. Philomela said, for the safety of her husband, choosing rather to die than he any ways should suffer prejudice.

The Sicilians at this, looking Philomela in the face, shouted at her wondrous virtues, and Philippo, in a sound between grief and joy, was carried away half dead to his lodging, where he had not lien two hours but in an ecstasy he ended his life. The duke of Milan discovered himself, who by the duke of Palermo was highly entertained.

But Philomela, hearing of the death of her husband, fell into extreme passions, and although Arnolfo Strozzi desired her in marriage, yet she returned home to Venice and there lived the desolate widow of Philippo Medici all her life, which constant chastity made her so famous that in her life she was honoured as the paragon of virtue, and after her death solemnly and with wonderful honour entombed in St. Mark's church, and her fame holden canonized until this day in Venice.

FINIS.

At London

Printed by E.A. for Edward White, dwelling at the little north door of Paul's Church, at the sign of the gun.

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