
GREENE'S MOURNING GARMENT

Given him by repentance at the funerals of love, which he presents for a favour to all young gentlemen that wish to wean themselves from wanton desires.

R. Greene.

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To the reader.

That which Jerome said was his condition in publishing of some of his labours do I now expect to fall upon me, i.e. *plurimorum morsibus patere*, to lie open to many censures; I have ever thought myself below envy, which being the daughter of pride (as St. Ambrose said) will not abase herself to look on so small a thing as me, yet because (as St. Chrysostom hath observed) there are some men (like carrion crows that fly over fair meadows and sit on fens, and like flies which pass by sound flesh and seize on ulcers) fly over and pass by men's better parts and feed upon their imperfections, I do therefore implore thy favour in reading these papers, that what accidental defects or errataes thou findest therein thou wouldst reform with thy pen, that the carrion crows and corrupt flies may not find whereon to fall; if there be any erroneous matter, thereof inform me, and I shall reform(?) it, for though I may err, yet I will not be an heretic; if anything thou findest good, that ascribe to the Father of Lights, to whose glory and daily praises I devote myself, craving no retribution but thy prayers for me, that whilst I preach to others, I myself may not be a castaway; so shall I be,

Ever thine in Christ Jesus, F.B.

To the right honourable George Clifford, Earl of Cumberland, Robert Greene wisheth
increase of all honourable virtues.

While wantonness (right honourable) overweened the Ninevites, their surcoats of byss were all polished with gold, but when the threatening of Jonas made a jar in their ears, their finest sendal was turned to sackcloth; the exterior habit of the Jews bewrayed their interior hearts, and such as mourned for their sins were by prescript and peremptory charge commanded to discover it in their garments. Entering (right honourable) with a reaching insight into the strict regard of these rules, having myself overweened with them of Nineveh in publishing sundry wanton pamphlets and setting forth axioms of amorous philosophy, *tandem aliquando* taught with a feeling of my palpable follies, and hearing with the ears of my heart Jonas crying, *Except thou repent*, as I have changed the inward affects of my mind, so I have turned my wanton works to effectual labours, and pulling off their vainglorious titles have called this my *Mourning Garment*, wherein (right honourable) I discover the forwardness of youth to ill, their restless appetites to amorous effects, the prejudice of wanton love, the disparagement that grows from prodigal humours, the discredit that ensues by such inordinate desires, and lastly, the fatal detriment that follows the contempt of grave and advised counsel. Thus (may it please your Honour) have I made my *Mourning Garment* of sundry pieces, but yet of one colour, black, as bewraying the sorrow for my sins, and have joined them with such a sympathy of according seams as they tend altogether to the regard of unfeigned repentance. But here may your Honour bring my presumption in question, why I attempted to shroud it under your Lordship's patronage, as if by this I should infer that it were a persuasive pamphlet to a patron touched with the like passion, which objection I answer. Ovid, after he was banished for his wanton papers written *De Arte Amandi*, and of his amorous elegies between him and Corinna, being amongst the barbarous Getes, and though a pagan yet touched with a repenting passion of the follies of his youth, he sent his *Remedium Amoris* and part of his *Tristibus* to Caesar, not that Augustus was forward in those fancies, or that he sought to reclaim the Emperor from such faults, but as gathering by infallible conjectures that he which severely punished such lascivious livers would be as glad to hear of their repentant labours. Thus (right honourable) you hear the reason of my bold attempt, how I hope your Lordship will be glad with Augustus Caesar to read the reformation of a second Ovid; pardon, my Lord, inferior by a thousand degrees to him in wit or learning, but I fear half as fond in publishing amorous fancies. And if any young gentlemen or scholars shall wear this weed, as I doubt not many will look on it and handle it, and by the virtue thereof wean themselves from wanton desires, and hate the monstrous and deformed shape of vice when it is shaken from under the veil of pretended virtue, let the recovery of such lovesick patients be attributed to your Honour, whose patronage shrouds it from the prejudice of contempt, and if your Honour shall but look on it, and laugh at it, and partly like it, the end of my labours have a condign counterpoise. In which hope I commit your Honour to the Almighty.

Robert Greene.

To the gentlemen scholars of both universities, increase of all virtuous fortunes.

It was hard (courteous love-mates of learning) for Anthony to *captare benevolentiam Senatorum* when his own deeds had proved him a peremptory foe to Rome. The Grecians would not hear Antisthenes dispute of the immortality of the soul because his former philosophy was to the contrary. Sudden changes of men's affects crave great wonder but little belief, and such as alter in a moment win not credit in a month. These premises (gentlemen) drives me into a quandary, fearing I shall hardly insinuate into your favours with changing the titles of my pamphlets, or make you believe the inward metamorphosis of my mind by the exterior show of my works, seeing I have ever professed myself love's philosopher. Yet Diogenes of a coiner of money became a corrector of manners, and Aristotle, that all his life had been an atheist, cried at his death, *Eris entium miserere mei*; what Ovid was in Rome, I refer to his elegies; what he was amongst the Getes, I gather from his *Tristibus*; how he persevered in his repentant sorrows, the discourse of his death doth manifest. The Romans that heard his loves believed his penance. Then, gentlemen, let me find like favour if I that wholly gave myself to the discovering of amours be now applied to better labours; think, though it be *sero*, yet it is *serio*, and though my showers come in autumn, yet think they shall continue the whole year. Hoping you will grace me with your favourable suspense till my deeds prove my doctrine, I present you with my *Mourning Garment*. Wherein (gentlemen) look to see the vanity of youth so perfectly anatomized that you may see every vein, muscle, and artery of her unbridled follies. Look for the discovery of wanton love, wherewith ripe wits are soonest inveigled and scholars of all men deepest entangled. Had Ovid been a dunce, he had never delivered such amorous precepts; had Aristotle had less wit, he had had less love, and Hermia had not ridden him with a snaffle; of all flowers, the rose soonest withereth, the finest lawn hath the largest mole, the most orient pearl soonest blemished, and the most pregnant wit soonest tainted with affection. Scholars have piercing insights, and therefore they overween in their sights, feeding their eyes with fancy that should be peering on the principles of Plato; they read of Venus, and therefore count every fair face a goddess, and grow so religious that they almost forget their God; they count no philosophy like love, no author so good as Ovid, no object so good as beauty, nor no exercise in schools so necessary as courting of a fair woman in a chamber, but please it you (gentlemen) to put on my *Mourning Garment*, and see the effects that grow from such wanton affects, you will leave Ovid's art & fall to his remedy, abjure Avicen and his principles, and with Horace sit down and dine with his satires; you will think women *mala*, although they be to some kind of men *necessaria*; you will hold no heresy like love, no infection like fancy, no object so prejudicial as beauty, and entering into the follies of your youth forepassed, will sigh and say:

Semel insaniuimus omnes.

Ah gentlemen, I wish to you as I would to myself, new loves, not to Venus, but to virtue, not to a painted goddess but to a pitiful God, and therefore, being a member of both Universities, have I presumed to present it to the youth of the two famous Academies, hoping they will as gratefully accept it as I heartily send it. If you enter into the depth of my conceit, and see how I have only with humanity moralized a divine history, and some

odd scoffing companion that hath a commonwealth of self-love in his head say: Every painted cloth is the subject of this pamphlet, I answer him with a common principle of philosophy:

Bonum quo communis eo melius,

and if that will not serve, let him either amend it, or else sit down and blow his fingers till he find his Memento will serve to shape my garment after a new cut. I know (gentlemen) fools will have bolts, and they will shoot them as well at a bush as at a bird, and some will have frumps, if it be but to call their father whoreson, but howsoever, I know *facilus est* [Greek word] *quam* [Greek word], and a dog will have a barking tooth though he be warned; to such I write not; let them be still vain, but to the courteous scholars, whom if I profit with my *Mourning Garment*, and wean them with the sight of it from their wanton desires, I have the full-desired end of my labours, in which hope resting, I commit myself and my book to your favourable censures.

Yours,
Robert Greene.

GREENE'S MOURNING GARMENT

In the city of Callipolis seated in the land of Avilath, compassed with Gihon and Euphrates, two rivers that flow from Eden, there sometimes dwelled a man called Rabbi Bilessi, lineally descend from the seed of holy Sem, aiming in his life to imitate his predecessor's perfection as he was allied unto him in parentage. This Rabbi Bilessi was a man upon whom fortune had poured out the cornucopia of her favours, and prodigally had wrapped him in the vestment of her riches, seeking as far to exceed nature in excellence as nature had overreached herself in cunning, for he was the chief burgomaster of the whole city; aged he was, for the palm tree had displayed her blossoms on his head, and his hairs were as white as the silk that is sold in Tyre; honour had pitched her pavilion in his tresses, and the trammels of his hair were full of reverence; his countenance grave, as became his years, and yet full of lenity, that as the eagle hath talons to strike and wings to shadow, so his looks carried threats to chastise and favours to encourage. This old man, being thus graced by nature and fortune, hath [sic?] the gifts of the mind so interlarded with the excellence of all virtues that if Aristotle had been alive he would have confessed this Rabbi to have attained to the perfection of his *summum bonum*. Thus every way happy, fortune, not content to enrich him with these favours, that he might be the phoenix of all felicity, gave him by one wife two sons, issued of such a tree as might discover the tripartite form of his life.

The Description Of His Eldest Son.

The eldest, whose name was Sophonos, was so beholding unto nature for the lineaments of his body as he could not wrong her with any default of cunning, for she had so curiously levelled every limb as though she would present virtue a subject wherein to flourish. His exterior proportion was not more pleasing to the eye than his inward perfection to the ear, resembling the panther in excellence of hue, and the siren in harmony of virtues; young he was, for as yet the prime of his years was in the flower, and youth sat and basted him calends in his forehead. But as the cinnamon-tree looketh tawny when he is a twig, and the halcyons most black when they are most young, so Sophonos in his tender years carried grave thoughts, and in the spring of his youth such ripe fruits as are found in the autumn of age; yet was he not morosus, tied to austere humours, neither so cynical as Diogenes to mislike Alexander's royalty, nor such a Timonist but he would familiarly converse with his friends; he counted Cato too severe, and Cassius too sullen, and both too fond, not laughing once a year with Apollo, but holding all honest and merry recreation necessary, so it were not blemished with any excess; yet as he was endued with these special qualities, nature was spotted with some little imperfections; the phoenix amongst all her golden plumes may have one sick feather, and yet a phoenix; the purest pomegranates may have one rotten kernel, and the perfectest man is not without some blemish, and so was Sophonus, for as he was grave, wise, virtuous, and affable, yet he had that fault which Tully called *defectum naturae*, and that was cowardice; fearful he was of his flesh, and thought it good sleeping in a whole skin; he preferred the olive before the sword and the dove before the eagle, peace before wars, and therefore giving himself to merchandise, he remained at home with his father.

 The Description Of The Youngest Son.

The youngest, who was called Philador, was so beautified with exterior favour that *natura naturans*, which the philosophers call the exquisite former of features, seemed to set *non ultra* on his lineaments. When nature had cast this curious mould, that she might triumph as the mistress of all perfection, she infused such interior and vital spirits into this carcass that it seemed repolished with the purity of the senses. For Philador had so pregnant a wit, and such a swift inseeing and reaching capacity, as it seemed the Graces in some synod had poured out the plenty of their influence. Quick it was, and pleasant, full of such witty facetiae and affable sentences that those epithetons that Homer assigned to Ulysses might very well have been ascribed to Philador; he was courteous to salute all, counting it commendable prodigality that grew from the bonnet and the tongue, alluding to this old verse of Chaucer,

*Mickle grace wins he,
That's frank of bonnet, tongue, and knee.*

To court amongst the beautiful dames of Callipolis he had such a ready insinuation of present prattle powdered with such merry questions, sharp replies, sweet taunts, and delightful jests that as he was an adamant to every eye for his beauty, so he was a siren to every ear for his eloquence, drawing women desirous of his company as Orpheus the Bacchanals with his melody. Fit he was for all companies, as a man that had wit at will, his countenance at command, and his thoughts in his fist. He could with Cleanthes study with a candle, and with Brutus determine in the night, and yet with Salern say,

*Balnea, vina, Venus, etc.
Haec nocent oculis sed vigilare magis.*

With Diogenes he would eat coleworts, with Aristippus delicates, with Aristotle he would allow *materia prima*, with Moses, that there was no *forma* nor *priuatio*, but *fiat*. To be brief, he could *cretizare cum Cretensibus*, and pay sterling where he had received money that was current; he, contrary to the disposition of his brother, frequented such company as was agreeable both to his years and his thoughts, spending the time as pleasant as his wit could devise and his purse maintain, and would have done more if old Rabbi Bilessi his father had not overlooked him with a careful eye, but as the stork when he sees his young too forward to fly beateth them into the nest, so Bilessi, when he saw his son beginning to soar too high with Icarus, he cried to him *Medium tutissimum* with a fatherly voice, so reclaiming him from proving too ravening. Philador, feeling his father held the reins of his liberty with a hard hand, and that if he bated never so little he was checked to the fist, thought to desire that he might travel and see the world, and not to be brought up at home like a meacock; finding therefore one day his old father sitting alone in an arbour, he began thus.

Philador's Request To Old Rabbi Bilessi.

Sir, quoth he, when I consider with myself what experience Ulysses got by traversing strange countries, what aphorisms the philosophers sought into by seeking far from home, I may either think your fatherly love too tender, that limits me no further than your looks, or mine own folly great, that covet no further travels. Tully said every country is a wise man's native home, and Thales Milesius thought as the sun doth compass the world in a day, so a man should cut through the world in his life, and buy that abroad with travel which at home could be purchased with no treasure. If Plato had lived still in Greece he had never fetched his strange hieroglyphics from the Egyptians; if Aristotle had still like a micher been stewed up in Stagira, he had never written his works *De natura animalium* to Alexander; travel (father) is the mother of experience, and for every penny of expense, it returns home laden with a pound of wisdom. Men are not born to be tied to their cradles, nor ought we with the tortoise to carry our house upon our back; the eagles no sooner see the pens of their young ones able to make wing but they pull their nests asunder and let them fly. What, fortune hateth meacocks, and shutteth her hand to such as fear to seek where she is; here at home I deny not but I shall have wealth, but gotten by your labours, and lands purchased by your travails, so like a drone shall I feed on that honey which others have brought home unto the hive; in Callipolis I may learn to traffic and to take a turn up and down the Exchange; I may for pleasure take a walk about your pastures, and either with the hound course the hart, and with the hawk fly the pheasant; recreations they be, and fit for such as think no smell good but their country's smoke. But in travelling foreign nations and traversing the parallels I shall see the manners of men, the customs of countries, the diversities of languages, and the sundry secrets that mother earth ministereth; I shall be able at my return with the geographers to describe the situation of the earth, with cosmographers to talk of cities, towns, seas, and rivers, to make report what the Chaldees be in Egypt, the gymnosophists in India, the Burgonians in Hetruria, the sophi in Grecia, the Druids in France, to talk as well as Aristotle of the nature of beasts, as well as Pliny of trees and plants, as Gesnerus of minerals and stones; thus wit augmented by experience shall make me a general man, fit any way to profit my commonwealth. Further, shall I have a deep insight into customs of all countries; I shall see how the Grecians prize of learning, how they value chivalry, and practise their youth in both; so shall I taste of a scholar and savour of a soldier, able when I return in peace to apply my book and in war to use my lance. Seeing then (sir) I am in the prime of my youth, living at home only to feed your looks, let me not so idly pass over the flower of mine age, but give me leave to pass abroad that I may return home to your joy and my country's comfort. Old Rabbi Bilessi, hearing his son in this mind, began to wonder what new desire to see strange countries had tickled his son's humour, but knowing young wits were wandering, he began to reclaim him thus.

Rabbi Bilessi's Answer To His Son Philador.

Son, quoth he, thou seest my years are many, and therefore my experience should be much, that age hath furrowed many wrinkles in my face wherein are hidden many actions of deep advice; my white hairs, I tell thee, have seen many winters, and further have I travelled than I either reaped wisdom or profit. Son, as yet thou hast not eaten bread with one tooth, nor hath the black ox trodden upon thy foot; thou hast only fed on the fruits of my labours, and therefore dost thou covet to taste of strange pleasures, but knowest thou,

Philador, what a long harvest thou shouldst reap for a little corn, what high hazards thou shouldst through for little amends, what large prejudice for small profit, thou wouldst say, *Nolo tanti poenitentiam emere*. First (my son), note thou art here in thy native country loved of thy friends and feared of thine enemies; here hast thou plenty at command, and fortune danceth attendance on thy will. If thou wilt be a scholar, thou hast here learned men with whom to converse; if a traveller, and desirous to know the customs and manners of men, here be Jews, Grecians, Arabians, Indians, and men of all nations who may fully decipher to thee the nature of every climate; for the situation of the world, thou hast maps, and mayest wander in them as far with thine eye as thou wouldst repent to travel with thy foot. Seeing then thou mayest learn as much in Callipolis as Ulysses found in all his weary & dangerous journeys, content thee with these helps, and rest at home with thine old father in quiet, for (my son) in travel thou shalt pocket up much disparagement of humour which I know will be grievous to thy patience; thou must fit thine humour to the place and the person, be he never so base. If he wrong thee, thou must either bear his blow or feel the force of his weapon; thou shalt be fain to content thee with the meridional heat that scorcheth, and pass through the septentrional clouds that freeze, oft in danger of thieves, many times of wild beasts, and ever of flatterers. In Crete thou must learn to lie, in Paphos to be a lover, in Greece a dissembler; thou must bring home pride from Spain, lasciviousness from Italy, gluttony from England, and carousing from the Danes. Thus (my son), pack thee forth with as many virtues as thou canst bear, thou shalt disburden them all, and return home with as many vices as thou canst bring. Therefore rest thee from that foolish desire to travel, and content thee at home with thine old father in quiet. All these persuasive principles of the old Rabbi could not dissuade Philador from the intent of his travels but that he replied so cunningly and so importunately that the old man was fain to grant, and bade him provide him all things necessary for his journey. Philador was not slack in this, but with all speed possible did his endeavour, so that within short time he had all things in a readiness; at last the day of his departure came, and then his father bringing forth in coin great store of treasure delivered it unto his son as his portion, and then sitting down with his staff in his hand and his handkerchief at his eyes, for the old man wept, he gave his son this farewell.

Rabbi Bilessi's Farewell To His Son Philador.

Now my son that [sic?] I must take my leave of thee, and say farewell to him that perhaps shall fare ill, yet before we part, mark and note these few precepts which thy father hath bought with many years and great experience.

First (my son), serve God; let him be the author of all thy actions; please him with prayer and penance, lest if he frown he confound all thy fortunes, and thy labours be like the drops of rain in a sandy ground.

Then forward, let thine own safety be thy next care, and in all thy attempts foresee the end, and be wise for thyself.

Be courteous to all, offensive to none, and brook any injury with patience, for revenge is prejudicial to a traveller.

Be secretary to thyself, and hide all thy thoughts in thy heart's bottom, and speak no more to any privately than thou wouldst have published openly.

Trust not him that smiles, for he hath a dagger in his sleeve to kill, and if his words be like honeycombs, hie thee from that man, for he is perilous.

Be not too prodigal, for even they that consume thee laugh at thee, nor too covetous, for sparing oftentimes is dishonour.

Little talk shows much wisdom, but hear what thou canst, for thou hast two ears.

Boast not of thy coin, but feign want, for the prey makes the thief.

Be not overcome with wine, for then thou bewrayest all thy secrets.

Use not dice, for they be fortune's whelps, which consume thy wealth and impair thy patience.

For women, my son, oh for them take heed; they be adamant that draw, panthers that allure, and sirens that entice; they be glorious in show like the apples of Tantalus, but touch them and they be dust; if thou fallest into their beauties, Philador, thou drinkest aconitum, and so dost perish.

Be, Philador, in secrecy like the Arabic tree that yields no gum but in the dark night, be like the curlew, physician to thyself, and as the pyrite stone seems most hot when it is most cold, so ever dissemble thy thoughts to a stranger. Follow, Philador, these principles, and fear no prejudice, but as thou goest out safe, so return home without disparagement to thy father; with this the old man fell a-weeping, and could speak no more, and his son, that had his spurs on his heels, thought his saddle was full of thorns, and therefore shaking his brother Sophonos by the hand, he took his leave of his friends; his father (old man) shook his head, and got him in, and away flings Philador as his thoughts present or his future fortunes would guide him; on he paceth with his men and his footboys towards Assyria, and coasting many countries he showed by his expenses how liberality kept his purse-strings, and that he cared for money no more than for such metal as served only for servile exchange; wheresoever he came, or with whomsoever he did converse, he still obeyed his father's precepts, and these axioms & economical principles that old Rabbi Bilessi delivered to him he observed with such diligence that all men said as he was witty, so he was politic, and though he was sometimes wanton, yet he was always chary lest he might overslip to be found faulty; being amongst the magistrates of any town, why young Philador talked of gravity as though he did only *Catonis lucernam olere*; having the laws of countries for the subject of his chat, somewhere he commended aristocracy, amongst popular men democracy, amongst other oligarchia; thus he fitted his humour to every estate. If he were amongst scholars, then he had Aristotle at his fingers'-end, and every phrase smelled of Cicero, showing his wit in quirks of sophistry and his reading in discursions of philosophy; if amongst courtiers, why he

could brave it out as well as the rest; amongst ladies, there he was in his O, for he could court them with such glances, such looks, such loving and amorous prattle as they thought him oft passionate when he had not once stirred his patience, but were they fairest, the finest, the coyest, the most virtuous, or the most excellent of all, *Caveat emptor* (quoth he), he remembered his father's charge that they were sirens whose harmony, as it was pleasing, so it was prejudicial, and therefore he viewed every face with a smile, and gave the foulest as well as the fairest kind favour, but for his love towards them, it was like to the breath of a man upon steel, which no sooner lighteth on but it leapeth off, holding women as wantons to be played with for awhile, but after to be shaken off as trifles. Being in this humour he passed over many countries, and at last he came into Thessalia, where he found the country a champaign, yet full of fair and pleasant springs, and in diverse places in the valleys replenished with many pleasant groves. In this country travelled Philador in the heat of summer when the sun at the highest showed the strength of his motion, and passed up into the continent almost a whole day without descrying either town, village, hamlet, or house, so that wearied, he lighted and walked afoot down a vale where he descried a shepherd and his wife sitting keeping flocks, he of sheep, she of kids; Philador, glad of this, bade his men be of good cheer, for now (quoth he) I have within ken a country swain, and he shall direct us to some place of rest; with that he paced on easily, and seeing them sit so nigh together, and so lovingly, he thought to steal upon them to see what they were doing, and therefore giving his horse to one of his boys he went afore himself, and found them sitting in this manner.

The Description Of The Shepherd And His Wife.

*It was near a thicky shade
That broad leaves of beech had made,
Joining all their tops so nigh
That scarce Phoebus in could pry
To see if lovers in the thick
Could dally with a wanton trick,
Where sat this swain and his wife,
Sporting in that pleasing life
That Corydon commendeth so
All other lives to overgo;
He and she did sit and keep
Flocks of kids and folds of sheep,
He upon his pipe did play,
She tuned voice unto his lay,
And for you might her housewife know,
Voice did sing and fingers sew;
He was young, his coat was green
With welts of white seamed between,
Turned over with a flap
That breast and bosom in did wrap,
Skirts side and plighted free,*

*Seemly hanging to his knee,
A whittle with a silver chape,
Cloak was russet, and the cape
Served for a bonnet oft
To shroud him from the wet aloft,
A leather scrip of colour red
With a button on the head,
A bottle full of country whig
By the shepherd's side did lie,
And in a little bush hard by,
There the shepherd's dog did lie,
Who while his master gan to sleep
Well could watch both kids and sheep;
The shepherd was a frolic swain,
For though his parel was but plain,
Yet doon the authors soothly say
His colour was both fresh and gay,
And in their writs plain discuss
Fairer was not Tytirus,
Nor Menalcus whom they call
The alderliest swain of all;
Seeming him was his wife
Both in line, and in life,
Fair she was as fair might be
Like the roses on the tree,
Buxom, blithe, and young I ween,
Beauteous like a summer's queen,
For her cheeks were ruddy-hued
As if lilies were imbrued
With drops of blood to make thee [sic] white
Please the eye with more delight;
Love did lie within her eyes
In ambush for some wanton prize,
A liefer lass than this had been
Corydon had never seen,
Nor was Phyllis, that fair may,
Half so gaudy or so gay,
She wore a chaplet on her head,
Her cassock was of scarlet red,
Long and large, as straight as bent,
Her middle was both small and gent,
A neck as white as whale's bone
Compassed with a lace of stone,
Fine she was, and fair she was,
Brighter than the brightest glass,
Such a shepherd's wife as she*

Was not more in Thessaly.

Philador, seeing this couple sitting thus lovingly, noted the concord of country amity, and began to conjecture with himself what a sweet kind of life those men use who were by their birth too low for dignity and by their fortunes too simple for envy; well, he thought to fall in prattle with them had not the shepherd taken his pipe in his hand and began to play, and his wife to sing out this roundelay.

The Shepherd's Wife's Song.

*Ah what is love, it is a pretty thing,
As sweet unto a shepherd as a king,
And sweeter too,
For kings have cares that wait upon a crown,
And cares can make the sweetest love to frown;
Ah then, ah then,
If country loves such sweet desires do gain,
What lady would not love a shepherd swain?*

*His flocks once folded, he comes home at night,
As merry as a king in his delight,
And merrier too,
For kings bethink them what the state require,
Where shepherds careless carol by the fire;
Ah then, ah then,
If country loves such sweet desires gain,
What lady would not love a shepherd swain?*

*He kisseth first, then sits as blithe to eat
His cream and curds as doth the king his meat,
And blither too,
For kings have often fears when they do sup,
Where shepherds dread no poison in their cup;
Ah then, ah then,
If country loves such sweet desires gain,
What lady would not love a shepherd swain?*

*To bed he goes, as wanton then, I ween,
As is a king in dalliance with a queen,
More wanton too,
For kings have many griefs' affects to move
Where shepherds have no greater grief than love;
Ah then, ah then,
If country loves such sweet desires gain,
What lady would not love a shepherd swain?*

*Upon his couch of straw he sleeps as sound
 As doth the king upon his beds of down,
 More sounder too,
 For cares cause kings full oft their sleep to spill
 Where weary shepherds lie and snort their fill;
 Ah then, ah then,
 If country loves such sweet desires gain,
 What lady would not love a shepherd swain?*

*Thus with his wife he spends the year as blithe
 As doth the king at every tide or sithe,
 And blither too,
 For kings have wars and broils to take in hand
 When shepherds laugh and love upon the land;
 Ah then, ah then,
 If country loves such sweet desires gain,
 What lady would not love a shepherd swain?*

The shepherd's wife having thus ended her song, Philador standing by thought to interrupt them, and so began to salute them thus: My friends (quoth he), good fortune to yourselves and welfare to your flocks; being a stranger in this country and uncouth in these plains, I have straggled all this day weary and thirsty, not having descried town or house, only yourselves the first welcome objects to our eyes; may I therefore of courtesy crave your direction to some place of rest; I shall for such kindness requite you with thanks. The shepherd starting up, and seeing he was a gentleman of some calling by his train, put off his bonnet and answered him thus: Sir, quoth he, you are welcome, and such courteous strangers as yourself have such simple swains at command with your looks in greater matters than direction of ways, for to that we are by courtesy bound to every common traveller. I tell you, sir, you struck too much upon the south, and so might have wandered all day and at night have been glad of a thicket, for this way there is no lodging, but whereas methought you said you were weary and thirsty, first take my bottle and taste of my drink; scorn it not, for we shepherds have heard tell that one Darius, a great king, being dry, was glad to swink his fill of a shepherd's bottle; hunger needs no sauce, and thirst turns water into wine; this we earn with our hands-thrift, and this we carouse of to ease our hearts' thirst; spare it not, sir; there's more malt in the floor. Philador, hearing the shepherd in such a liberal kind of phrase, set his bottle to his head and drunk a hearty draught, thinking it as savoury as ever he tasted at home in his father's house; well, he drank, and he gave the shepherd thanks, who still went forward in his prattle thus: Now that you have quenched your thirst, for the way, it is so hard to find as how charely soever I give you direction, yet unless by great fortune, you shall miss of the way, and therefore seeing it is night I will leave my wife and my boy to fold the flocks, and I myself will guide you on to the view of a town. Philador gave him a thousand gramercies, and excepted his gentle proffer, and the shepherd, he telling his wife where to fold, went with Philador, and as they passed down the way there was a pillar erected whereupon stood the picture of a stork, the young one carrying the old, and under was engraven this motto in Greek [Greek word]; Philador demanded of the shepherd what this

picture meant; marry, sir, quoth he, it is the representation of a tomb, for here was buried a lusty young shepherd whose name was Merador, who having a father that was so old as he could not go, was so kind to his old sire that he spent all his labours to relieve his father's wants, nourishing him up with such fare as his flocks could yield or his penny buy, and when the man would covet to take the air, even to this place from his lodge would Merador bring him on his shoulders, resembling they say herein the stork, who where she sees the dam is so old she cannot fly, the young takes him on his back and carries him from place to place for food, and for that Merador did so to his father, after his death they buried him here with this picture. It was well done (quoth Philador), but if I be not grievous in questions, what monument is that which standeth on yonder hill; our way lies by it (quoth the shepherd), and then I will tell you it. In the meantime, look you here, quoth he, and with that he showed him a stone lying upon the ground whereupon was engraven these words:

Non ridet periuria amantum Jupiter.

Here was buried a shepherd who in this place forswearing his love fell mad, and after in this place slew himself and was here buried, whereupon in memory of the fact the shepherds erected this monument as a terror to the rest to beware of the like treachery. By this they were come to the hill where Philador saw a tomb most curiously contrived with stately architecture, as it seemed some cunning carver had discovered the excellence of his workmanship; upon it stood the picture of a woman of wonderful beauty naked, only her hair trussed up in a caul of gold, and one leg crossing another by art to shadow that which nature commands be secret; in her left hand she held a heart whereout issued drops of blood; in her right hand she held a pillar whereon stood a black swan, and the old verse written about:

Rara avis in terris nigroque simillima cigno.

Philador, seeing by the beauty of the tomb that it was some monument of worth, demanded of the shepherd who was buried there; at this the shepherd stayed, and with a great sigh began thus: I will tell you, sir, quoth he; here was entombed the fair Thessalian maid so famous in all writings under the name of Phyllis; for love she died, and sith it is a wonder that women should perish for affection, being as rare a thing as to see a black swan, they have placed her here holding a black swan with the poesy, and sith we have yet a mile and more to the place whither I mean to bring you, I will rehearse you the course of her life and the cause of her death, and so the shepherd began thus.

The Shepherd's Tale.

Here in Thessaly dwelled a shepherd called Sydaris, a man of mean parentage but of good possessions and many virtues, for he was holden the chief of all our shepherds, not only for his wealth but for his honest qualities; this Sydaris lived long without any issue, that he meant to make a sister's son he had his heir, but fortune, that meant to please the old man in his age, even in the winter of his years gave him by a young wife a young daughter called Rosamond, which as she was a joy to the old shepherd at her birth, so she

grew in process of time unto such perfection that she was the only heart's delight that this old man had. Rosamond went with her father's sheep to the field, where she was the queen of all the shepherds, being generally called of them all Diana, as well for her beauty as her chastity; her fame grew so great for the excellency of her feature that all the shepherds made a feast at Tempe to see the beauty of Rosamond, where all the Thessalonian virgins met, decked in the royalty of their excellency, all striving to exceed that day in outward perfection; gallant they were, and glorious, wanting nothing that art could add to nature, filling every eye with admiration, but still they expected the coming of Rosamond, insomuch that one Alexis, a young shepherd who was the paragon of all proportions above the rest, said that when Rosamond came she could not bring more than she should find; as he spake these words in came old Sydaris, and after him his daughter, who seeing such a company of bonny lasses and country swains in their bravery, bewrayed her modesty with such a blush that all the beholders thought that Luna & Titan had justled in her face together for preferment; every eye at her presence stood at gaze as having no power to draw themselves from such an heavenly object, wrapped their looks in the trammels of her locks, and snared them so in the rareness of her face that the men wondered and the women hung down their heads as being eclipsed with the brightness of so glorious a comet. But especially Alexis; he, poor swain, felt in him a new fire, and such uncouth flames as were not wont to broil in his breast, yet were they kindled with such delight that the poor boy lay like the salamander, and though he were never so nigh the blaze of the bavin, yet he did not *Calescere plus quam satis*. As thus all gazed on her, so she glanced her looks on all, surveying them as curiously as they noted her exactly, but at last she set down her period on the face of Alexis, thinking he was the fairest and the featest swain of all the rest. Thus with looks and cheering and much good chat they passed away the day till evening came, and then they all departed, Sydaris home with his Rosamond and every man else to his cottage, all talking as they went by the way of the beauty of Rosamond, especially Alexis, who the more highly commended her by how much the more he was deeply in love with her. The affects of his fancy were restless and his passions peremptory, not to be pacified unless by her persuasive arguments, and therefore did Alexis find sundry occasions to walk into the fields of Sydaris to meet with Rosamond; oft would he feign he had lost one of his ewes to seek amongst the sheepecotes of Sydaris, and if fortune favoured him that he met with Rosamond, then his piteous looks, his glances, were glazed with a blush, his sighs, his silence, and every action bewrayed the depth of his passion, which Rosamond espying, smiled at and pitied, and so far grew into the consideration of his affects that the thoughts thereof waxed in her effectual, for she began to love Alexis, and none but Alexis, and to think that wanton Paris that wooed Oenone was not like to her Alexis, insomuch that on a day Alexis meeting with her saluted her with a blush, and she abashed, yet the swain, emboldened by love, took her by the hand, sat down, and there with sighs and tears bewrayed his loves; she with smiles and pretty hopeful answers did comfort him, yet so as she held him in a longing and doubtful suspense; part they did, she assured of her Alexis, he in hope of his Rosamond, and many of these meetings they had, so secret that none of the shepherds suspected any love between them. Yet Alexis on a day lying on the hill was said to frame these verses by Rosamond.

Hexameter Alexis In Laudem Rosamundi.

*Oft have I heard my lief Corydon report on a loveday,
 When bonny maids do meet with the swains in the valley by Tempe,
 How bright-eyed his Phyllis was, how lovely they glanced
 When fro th' arches ebon-black flew looks as a lightning
 That set afire with piercing flames even hearts adamantine,
 Face rose-hued, cherry-red, with a silver taint [sic?] like a lily,
 Venus' pride might abate, might abash with a blush to behold her,
 Phoebus' wires compared to her hairs unworthy the praising.
 Juno's state and Pallas' wit disgraced with the graces
 That graced her whom poor Corydon did choose for a love-mate;
 Ah, but had Corydon now seen the star that Alexis
 Likes and loves so dear that he melts to sighs when he sees her,
 Did Corydon but see those eyes, those amorous eyelids
 From whence fly holy flames of death or life in a moment,
 Ah, did he see that face, those hairs that Venus, Apollo
 Bashed to behold, and both disgraced, did grieve that a creature
 Should exceed in hue, compare both a god and a goddess,
 Ah, had he seen my sweet paramour, the taint [sic?] of Alexis,
 Then had he said, Phyllis, sit down, surpassed in all points,
 For there is one more fair than thou, beloved of Alexis.*

These verses do the shepherds say Alexis made by Rosamond, for he oft-times sung them on his pipe, and at last they came to the ears of Rosamond, who took them passing kindly, for sweet words and high praises are two great arguments to win women's wills, insomuch that Alexis stood so high in her favour that no other shepherd could have any good look at her hand. At the last, as fame is blab, and beauty is like smoke in the straw that cannot be concealed, the excellency of Rosamond came to the court, where it was set out in such curious manner and deciphered in such quaint phrases that the king himself coveted to see her perfection, and therefore upon a day disguised himself and when to the house of Sydaris, where when he came and saw the proportion of Rosamond he counted fame partial in her prattle, and man's tongue unable to discover that wherein the eye by viewing might surfeit; he that was well-skilled in courting made love to her, and found her so prompt in wit as she was proportioned in body, insomuch that the king himself was in love with her. The noblemen that were with him doted upon her, and each envied other as jealous who should court her with the most glances, but all in vain, her heart was so set upon Alexis as she respected king nor kaiser in respect of her country paragon, insomuch that the king returned home with a flat denial. This caused not his noblemen to cease their suits, but they daily followed the chase, insomuch that the house of Sydaris was a second court; some offered her large possessions for her dowry, other as great revenues, some were cavaliers and men of great value. Thus every way was she haunted with brave men that poor Alexis durst not come near the sight of the smoke that came out of the chimney, past all hope of his Rosamond, thinking women aimed to be supremes, that they prize gold before beauty and wealth before love, yet he hovered afar off while the courtiers fell together by the ears who should have most favour, insomuch that there arose great mutinies. Whereupon the king, fearing some manslaughter would grow upon

these amorous convents and that Rosamond like a second Helena would cause the ruin of Thessaly, thought to prevent it thus: he appointed a day when all the lords, knights, and gentlemen, with the country swains of his land, should meet and there before him take their corporal oath to be content with that verdict Rosamond should set down, which amongst them all to choose for her husband, he to possess her and the rest to depart quiet. Upon this they were resolved and sworn, and Rosamond set upon a scaffold to take view of all, the king charging her to take one and, quoth he, if it be myself (sweetheart), I will not refuse thee. Here Rosamond, dyeing all her face with a vermilion blush, stood and viewed all; the king in his pomp commanded all the realm, and asked her if she would be a queen and wear a crown, but she thought over-high desires had often hard fortunes, and that such as reached at the top stumbled at the root, that inequality in marriage was oft enemy to love, that the lion, howsoever yoked, would overlook all beasts but his fere, and therefore the mean was a merry song. Beauty though she is but a flash, and as soon as that withers the king is out of his bias; I must be loathed, and he must have another leman. Then she looked lower amongst the lords, and considered how sweet a thing wealth was, that as riches was the mother of pleasure, so want and poverty was a hateful thing, yet, quoth she, all is but trash; I shall buy gold too dear in subjecting myself to so high a husband, for if I anger him, then shall he object the baseness of my birth, the newness of my parentage, and perhaps turn me home into my former estate; then the higher was my seat, the sorer shall be my fall, and therefore will I content me with mean desires as I was born to low fortunes. Thus she surveyed them all, seeing many brave youths and lusty cavaliers that were there present for her love. But as she looked round about her, afar off on a hill saw she Alexis sit with his pipe laid down by him, his arms folded as a man overgrown with discontent, and upon his arm hung a willow garland, as one in extreme despair to be forsaken, seeing so many high degrees to snare the thoughts of his Rosamond; his looks were such as Troilus cast towards the Greekish tents to Cressida, suing for favour with tears, and promising constancy with continual glances; so sat poor Alexis, expecting when Rosamond should breathe out the fatal censure of his despairing fortunes. Rosamond, seeing her lover thus passionate, comforted him thus. She told the king that she had taken a general view of all the Thessalians, that love with her alluring baits had presented her with many shows of beauty, and fortune had there sought to inveigle her with the enticing promises of dignities, but sir, quoth she, my parents are base, my birth low, and my thoughts not ambitious; I am neither touched with envy nor disdain, as one that can brook superiors with honour and inferiors with love. I am not eagle-flighted, and therefore fear to fly too nigh the sun; such as will soar with Icarus fall with Phaeton, and desires above fortunes are the forepointers of deep falls. Love, quoth she, is a queasy thing, and great lords hold it in their eyes, not their hearts, and can better draw it with a pencil than a passion. Helena shall be but a hang-by when age sits in her forehead. Beauty is momentary, and such as have only love in their looks let their fancies slip with time, and keep a calendar of their affection, that as age draws on, love runs away. Seeing then high estates have such slippery fancies, let honours and dignities go; Venus holds the [sic?] needful but not necessary, and welcome the mean estate and the shepherds' loves, who count it religion to observe affection, and therefore seeing I must choose one, and of all these but one, yonder sits the lord of my love, and that is the young shepherd Alexis. With that he started up, and the king and all the rest of the company looked on him and saw him the dapperest swain of all Thessalia, being

content to brook the choice of Rosamond for that they were bound thereto by oath and promise, all accusing love that had made so fair a creature look so low. Well, home went the king with his train, and Alexis a proud man guarded with the shepherds went towards the house of Sydaris, where with great feasting the match was made up. Alexis remaining thus the possessor of the fairest nymph of Thessaly, went to his cottage determining with himself when the wedding-day should be. As thus he was about to resolve, it chanced that love and fortune armed themselves to give poor Rosamond the frump, and that on this manner. Alexis going one day abroad met with a shepherd's daughter called Phillida, a maid of a homely hue, nut-brown, but of a witty and pleasant disposition; with her he fell in chat, and she, to tell you the truth, with her Alexis fell in love. In love did Alexis fall with this nut-brown Phillida, that he quite forgot his fair Rosamond, and Phillida perceived [sic?] that she had won the fair shepherd, left not to inveigle him with her wit till she had snared him in, that Alexis could not be out of her sight, which at last came to the ears of Rosamond, but she, incredulous, would not believe, nor Alexis confess it, till at last Sydaris espied it and told it to his daughter, wishing her to cast off so inconstant a lover. But love, that was settled in the centre of her heart, made her passionate, but with such patience that she smothered the heat of her sorrow, with inward conceit pining away as a woman forlorn, till on a day Alexis, overdoting in his fancies, stepped to the church and married himself to Phillida, which news for certain brought unto the ears of Rosamond, she cast herself down on her bed and passed away the whole day and night in sighs and tears, but as soon as the sun gave light to the world she leapt from her couch and began to wander up and down the fields mourning for the loss of her Alexis; wearied at last with tracing through the fields, she sat her down by Tempe and there wrote these mournful verses.

Hexametra Rosamundae In Dolorem Amissi Alexis.

*Tempe, the grove where dark Hecate doth keep her abiding,
 Tempe, the grove where poor Rosamond bewails her Alexis,
 Let not a tree nor a shrub be green to show thy rejoicing,
 Let not a leaf once deck thy boughs and branches, O Tempe,
 Let not a bird record her tunes nor chant any sweet notes
 But Philomel, let her bewail the loss of her amours,
 And fill all the wood with doleful tunes to bemoan her,
 Parched leaves fill every spring, fill every fountain,
 All the meads in mourning weed fit them to lamenting,
 Echo sit and sing despair i' the valleys, i' the mountains,
 All Thessaly help poor Rosamond mournful to bemoan her,
 For sh' is quite bereft of her love, and left of Alexis;
 Once was she liked, and once was she loved of wanton Alexis,
 Now is she loathed, and now is she left of trothless Alexis,
 Here did he clip and kiss Rosamond, and vow by Diana
 None so dear to the swain as I, nor none so beloved,
 Here did he deeply swear, and call great Pan for a witness
 That Rosamond was only the rose beloved of Alexis,
 That Thessaly had not such another nymph to delight him;*

*None, quoth he, but Venus fair shall have any kisses,
 Not Phyllis, were Phyllis alive, should have any favours,
 Nor Galate, Galate so fair for beauteous eyebrows,
 Nor Doris, that lass that drew the swains to behold her,
 Not one amongst all these, nor all, should gain any graces
 But Rosamond alone to herself should have her Alexis;
 Now to revenge the perjured vows of faithless Alexis,
 Pan, great Pan, that heard'st his oaths, and mighty Diana,
 You dryads and watery nymphs that sport by the fountains,
 Fair Tempe, the gladsome grove of greatest Apollo,
 Shrubs and dales and neighbouring hills, that heard when he swore him,
 Witness all, and seek to revenge the wrongs of a virgin;
 Had any swain been lief to me but guileful Alexis,
 Had Rosamond twined myrtle boughs or rosemary branches,
 Sweet hollyhock, or else daffodil, or slips of a bay-tree,
 And given them for a gift to any swain but Alexis,
 Well had Alexis done t' have left his rose for a giglet,
 But Galatea ne'er loved more dear her lovely Menalcas
 Than Rosamond did dearly love her trothless Alexis,
 Endymion was ne'er beloved of his Cytherea
 Half so dear as true Rosamond beloved her Alexis;
 Now, seely lass, hie down to the lake, haste down to the willows,
 And with those forsaken twigs go make thee a chaplet,
 Mournful sit and sigh by the springs, by the brooks, by the rivers
 Till thou turn for grief, as did Niobe, to a marble,
 Melt to tears, pour out thy plaints, let Echo reclaim them,
 How Rosamond, that loved so dear, is left of Alexis,
 Now die, die Rosamond, let men engrave o' thy tombstone:
 Here lies she that loved so dear the youngster Alexis,
 Once beloved, forsaken late of faithless Alexis,
 Yet Rosamond did die for love, false-hearted Alexis.*

These verses she wrote, and many days after she did not live, but pined away, and in most pitiful passions gave up the ghost; her death did not only grieve her father Sydaris, but was bruited abroad unto the ear of Alexis, who, when he heard the effectual essence of her loves, and entered into consideration of his wrongs, he went down unto the water-side and in a fury hung himself upon a willow tree. This tragic news came unto the ears of the king, who being certified of the whole truth by circumstance, came down and in mourning attire lamented for the loss of fair Rosamond, and for that he would have the memory of such a virgin to be kept, he erected this tomb, and set up this monument.

The shepherd had scarce ended his tale but they were within ken of a town, which gladdened the heart of young Philador, for had not this history of Rosamond made the way somewhat short, he had been tired long before; well, the town once descried, yonder (quoth the shepherd) sir, is your place of rest; a pretty city it is, and called Saragunta; good lodging you shall find, but the people within it are passing false, especial (if a plain

countryman's counsel might avail) take heed of the sign of the unicorn; there, sir, is a house of great riot and prodigality in youth; it is like rust in iron, that never leaves fretting till it be consumed; besides there be three sisters, all beautiful and witty, but of small honesty; their eyes are hooks that draw men in, and their words bird-lime that tie the feathers of every stranger that none can escape them, for they are as dangerous as the sirens were to Ulysses. Some says they are like Circes riches [sic?], and can turn vainglorious fools into asses, gluttonous fools into swine, pleasant fools into apes, proud fools into peacocks, and when she hath done, with a great whip scourge them out at doors; take heed, master (quoth the shepherd), you come not there unless you have the herb that Ulysses had, lest you return someway transformed. Thus, master, I have brought you to the foot of the hill; now will I take my leave and home to my wife, for the sun will set ere I can get to my little cottage. The gentleman gave the swain hearty thanks both for his pains and his prattle, and rewarded him well, and so sent him away. The shepherd gone, Philador takes his way to the city, and for that he had heard him tell of the three sisters, he went to take up his lodging there, and so make experience of the orders of the house and qualities of the women; in he rode and inquired to the place, and there alighted; these merry minions, seeing such a frolic gallant come riding in, thought that now their purses should be filled if his abiding were long there, and his coffers full of any crowns; his boy no sooner held his stirrup and he leapt from his horse but the eldest of them all, a gallant and stately dame, came and saluted him and gave him a hearty welcome, showing him her own self straight to his chamber where he found all things in such order that he thought he was not come into a common inn but some stately palace. Philador, seeing so fair an hostess and such good lodging, said to himself the old text:

Bonum est nobis esse hic,

and so thought to set up his rest for a week or two; as he was in a quandary what he should do, came in the second sister more brave than the first, a woman of such comely personage and so sweet a countenance that Philador turned his doubt to a peremptory resolution that there he would stay for awhile; this cunning courtesan gave him friendly entertainment and a welcome with a smile, and a cup of wine to wash down, all which Philador took kindly, and desired her they might have good cheer to supper, and to promise that both she and her sisters would be his guests; a little entreaty served, and she made faithful promise, which indeed was performed, for when supper-time came and Philador's servants had served up the meat, in came (for the last dish) the three sisters, very sumptuously attired, but the youngest exceeded them all in excellency, upon whom Philador no sooner cast his eye but he felt himself fettered. He that could his courtesy entertained them all as graciously, and welcomed them on this manner. Fair gentlewomen (quoth he), I would by outward demonstration you could conjecture how kindly I take it that all three of you would vouchsafe so friendly to come and bear a gentleman and a stranger company; now I have no other means to requite you but thanks and such simple cheer as you have taken pains to provide, but wheresoever I come I shall make report what favourable entertainment I have found in this place, and give me leave to seat you. The eldest, straying back a little before she sat, made this reply: I am glad, sir, if anyways we have wrought you content, but sir, I pray you think it not a common favour that we use to every stranger thus to bear him company, for our custom is to attend

below and to be seen little above, especially altogether in such equipage; if your fortune be better than the rest, then say you came in a lucky hour, but we are not so blind but we can discern of colours, and though they be both crystalline, yet discover a diamond from a sapphire, and so, sir, I will take you this night for mine host; with that she and both her sisters sat down to supper. Philador seeing these, thought on the three goddesses that appeared to Paris in the vale of Ida, and though he were passing hungry with long travel, yet had fed his eyes with beauty as well as he did his stomach with delicates, so that every sense for supper-time was occupied. When he had well victualled himself, and that his belly began to be full, he thought to try their wits with chat, and therefore began thus. Now, gentlewomen, do I find the old proverb true, better fill a man's belly than his eye, for your savoury victuals hath stayed my stomach, but mine eye, restless, takes such greedy survey of your beauties as I fear by long looking he will surfeit, but I am in good hope if I should fall love-sick I might find you favourable physicians. It is, sir (quoth the eldest), a dangerous disease, and we have little skill in herbs, yet in what we might we would seek to ease your malady with women's medicines; I pray you, quoth Philador, let me ask you all a question without offence; you may, sir (quoth the eldest), if it be not offensive; and how if it be? (quoth Philador); then pardon, sir (quoth she), if we be as lavish to reply as you to demand. Howsoever you take it (quoth Philador), then this it is: I pray you, fair ladies, are you all maids? at this they blushed, and the eldest made answer they were. And so (quoth Philador), long may you not continue for fear any of you should die with her virginity and lead apes in hell, but it is no matter, maids or not maids:

Bene vixit qui bene latuit, caute si non caste.

The cat may catch a mouse and never have a bell hanged at her ear, & what needs the hand a tabor when he means to catch the hare; I believe and hold it for a principle that you are all maids; now then, let me crave so much favour at your hands as to tell me if you were to choose husbands at your own voluntary, and it stood in your free election, what manner of husbands would you choose; I (quoth the eldest) would have one that were beautiful; the second said, witty; the youngest, valiant. We have nothing to do (quoth Philador) after supper, and therefore may it please you severally to show me the reasons that do induce you to this choice. The gentlewomen agreed to this, and the eldest began thus.

The Discourse Of The Eldest Sister.

I hope, sir (quoth she), you expect no rhetorical insinuation nor no curious circumquaque to fetch my exordium in with figures; only you consider I am a woman, therefore look for no more but bare reasons without sophistry or eloquence. Such philosophers generally as have written *de sensu*, as Aristotle and other naturalists, or such physicians as by anatomizing have particularly set down the parts of man, affirm that the sight is the most pure, quickest, and busiest of all the senses, and therefore most curious in the choice of his object, and so precious a sense it is that nature, to comfort it, made all things upon the face of the [earth] green because the sight above all delighteth in that colour. The eye, being the surveyor of all exterior objects, pleaseth himself in those that are most beautiful, and coveteth that every superficies be fair and pleasing, commending it straight

to the fantasy as a thing of worth. For in flowers it alloweth with favour of the fairest, as the carnation, the rose, the lily, and the hyacinth. In trees the eye liketh of the tall cedar before the low beech, and praiseth the stature of the oak before the smallness of other plants. So in stones the diamond is preferred before the flint, the emerald before the marble, and the sapphire highlier esteemed for the hue than the porphyry for his hugeness, and so by consequence in human creatures, love being of all the passions in man the most excellent, allotteth herself to the eye, of all the parts the most pure, thinking that the sight will be soonest inveigled with the fairest, and what fairer thing can there be than beauty, so that love bringing a beautiful creature presents it to the eye, and that, liking it for the property, conveys the affect thereof to the heart, and there is knit up the sympathy of desires. By these premises, sir, then I infer that the eye is love's cater, and whoso pleaseth his eye contenteth his affects; then why should not I choose a beautiful man to my husband whose exquisite perfection every way may content my fancy, for if the eye find any blemish in deformity, straight love begins to wax cold and affection to take his farewell. A beautiful man, why he is a pearl in a woman's eye, that the lineaments of his feature makes her surfeit with delight, and there can be no greater content than to enjoy a beautiful and comely personage, and in my opinion by so much the more are well-proportioned men to be loved by how much the more they excel the deformed. In all things the perfection of the inward qualities is known by the exterior excellence; the rose, being the fairest of flowers, hath the most precious savour, the brightest diamond the most deepest operation, the greenest herb the most secret virtue; nature hath ever with a provident foresight harboured the most excellent qualities in the most beautiful carcass; Diogenes had a deformed body, so had he a crooked mind; Paris well-favoured and full of courtesy. Thersites ill-shapen, and none (saith) Homer) full of more bad conditions; Achilles comely and courteous; then, sir, the more a man be beautiful, the more he is virtuous:

Gratior est pulchro veniens e corpore virtus.

Let me have for my husband such a one as may content mine eye with his beauty, and satisfy my sight with his proportion.

The Discourse Of The Second Sister.

I cannot deny (quoth the second), but beauty is a precious thing, and metaphysical, as being divinely infused upon man from above, but yet he that commended it most writ upon it this *distichon*:

*Forma bonum fragile est quantumque accedit ad annos,
Fit minor & spatio carpitur ipsa suo.*

The fairest rose hath his canker, the bravest branch his caterpillars, the brightest sun his cloud, and the greatest beauty his blemish. Helena had a scar, Leda a wen, Lais a spot in her brow, and none so fair but there is some fault, but grant all these be graces, as Paris called Helen's scar *cos amoris*, yet at length she looking in a glass sight [sic?] to see age triumphant in her forehead. There is none so fair but the sun will parch, the frost nip, the

least sickness will change, or the least exterior prejudice blemish, and then where is love that grows from the pleasure of the eye? vaded and vanished and turned to a cold mislike. But give me that which is permanent, that feedeth the ear with delight and increaseth with age, and that is wit, far excelling beauty, for by how much the more the interior senses are more precious and the gifts of the mind more excellent than the exterior organs and instruments of the body, by so much the more is wit to be preferred before the outward proportion of lineaments; wit is a sympathy of those perfections that grows from the mind, and what can delight a woman more than to have a man full of pleasant conceits, witty answers, and eloquent devises; were not the philosophers for their wits fellow-companions to kings? Ovid, that was the grand-master of love, wan he not Corinna more with his wit than his beauty? yes, we find that as the herbs are more estimated by the inward virtue than the outward colour, so the glories of the mind are more than the glosses of the body; the cedar is beautiful, yet less valued than the crooked cinnamon for that men measure the profit more than the proportion; weeds are gathered for their operation, not for their outward excellence, and such stones whose secret nature worketh most are worth most, and so in men; Cicero was not so amiable, but he was eloquent, and that pleased Terentia; Ulysses, whom Homer so highly commends in his *Odysee*, wounded Circes not with his beauty but with his wisdom, insomuch that he is called *facundus Vlysses*. How sweet a thing is it when every word shall as a harmony fall in a cadence to please the ear, every syllable weighed with a pleasant wit, either turned to a grave sentence or a pleasant jest, having that *salem ingenii* which entangleth more than all the curious features in the world; Pallas helped Paris more than Venus, or else Helena had still remained in Greece; Mercury was fain in all amours to be Jupiter's messenger, & to witch more with his wit than he could do with his deity. Therefore seeing wisdom is so pleasing a thing, if ever I marry, God send me a witty husband.

The Discourse Of The Third Sister.

You have said well, sisters, quoth the youngest, to have made a good choice both to please the ear and the eye in electing wit and beauty as two objects fit for such excellent senses, but yet to feed my fancy, give me a man of valour, a soldier, a cavalier, one that with his sword dare maintain right and revenge wrong. What is it for me to pin a fair meacock and a witty milksop on my sleeve who dare not answer with their swords in the face of the enemy? Shall I brave mine enemy with beauty, or threaten him with wit; he will then either think I bring him a fair fool or a wise coward. Was it the wit of Alexander that won him so much fame, or his courage? Was it Caesar's pen, or his sword, that installed him emperor? Paris got Helena, but who defended her? Hector. When the Greeks lay before Troy, might not Andromache stand on the walls and see Hector beating Achilles to his tent with more honour than Helena Paris jetting in his silks? Yes, and therefore she rested her whole estate in his prowess, and said:

Tu dominus, tu vir, tu mihi frater eris.

The oak is called *arbor Iouis* for the strength, the eagle king of birds for his courage, the lion for his valour; the diamond is esteemed for the hardness, and men esteemed for their magnanimity and prowess. Hercules was neither famed for his beauty nor his wit, but

his valiant resolution made him lord of the world and lover of fair Deianira. Thesus [sic] was a soldier, and therefore Leda's daughter first liked him, and rewarded him with her virginity. Tush, Venus will have Mars to be her paramour. Love careth not for cowards; faint heart never won fair lady; a man is the mark all we aim at, and who is a man without valour? Therefore a soldier for my money, or else none.

Philador, hearing them discourse so wittily, began to smile, and jumped in with them thus. Gentlewomen, so many heads so many censures; every fancy liketh a sundry friend, and what is an antidote to one is an aconiton to another; you like a fair man, you a wise, you a valiant, but tell me, what if there came in a man endued with wealth who like to Midas could turn all to gold with a touch; should he be thrust out for a wrangler, or might he not rather displace beauty, disgrace wit, and put down valour; I speak this for that I have hear them say that women's eyes are of the nature of chrysocoll, that wheresoever it meeteth with gold it mingleth with it, and their hearts like the herb aurifolium, that if it be not rubbed with gold once a year, it dieth. I know, sir, quoth the youngest, the conclusion of this induction; you would with these enigmatical allusions prove that women are covetous, and care more for an ounce of *give me* than a pound of *hear me*. I deny it not, sir, but wealth and women would be relatives, and therefore, sir, in our choice, *Quod subintelligitur non deest*, when my sister chose a beautiful man, she meant he should be rich, and when the second spake of wit, she understood wealth, and think you me so simple, sir, that I would have a beggarly soldier? no, no, sir, whether he be beautiful, wise, or valiant, let this stand for a principle:

Si nihil attuleris ibis Homere foras

Gramercy for that, sweet wench, quoth Philador; give us one cup of claret more; *in vino veritas*. I see women are no liars; they will tell truth in those matters that require no conceited secrecy; so he drunk to them all, and for that it was late in the night they all took their leave of him and went to bed. Philador once being alone began to commend his fortune that had brought him to so good a lodging where with three such witty wenches he might make his dinners and suppers with pleasant chat *philosophica conuiuia*, but especially he highly had in his thought the excellency of the youngest, being already over the shoes in a little love, forsooth, taking but a little sleep for his new-entertained fancy. The next morning he up very early and bade the gentlewomen good morrow with a cup of hippocras, and after, calling the youngest aside where he courted her a great while, and at the first found her coy, but at the last they ended with such a courteous close that he commanded his horses to be put to grass, intending for a time there to make his residence. The gentlewomen, seeing the fool caught, thought to be quick barbers, and therefore spared for no good cheer, and the more daintily they fared, the more he thanked them, so it might content his young mistress on whose favour depended his whole felicity; he was not content in gluttony to spend his patrimony, but sent for such copesmates as they pleased who with their false dice were oft sharers with him of his crowns. Thus sought they every way to disburden him of that store with which he was so sore cumbered. Tush, his purse was well-lined and might abide the shaking, and therefore as yet he felt it not. The young courtesan his paramour, thinking all too little for herself, began as though she had taken care of his profit to wish him, seeing he

meant there to make some abode, to live with a less charge and cashier some of his men, which Philador, seeing it would spare him somewhat, and to please his mistress' fancy, and for his own profit, put them all out of service but one boy. The serving-men, seeing the vein of their young master, were sorry that he took that course of life, to be over-ruled with women, but his will stood for a law, and though it were never so prejudicial, yet would he be peremptory, and therefore they brooked their discharge with patience, but one of them that beforetime had served his father, hearing what farewell old Rabbi Bilessi gave him, thought to take his leave with the like adieu, and so being solitary with his mistress [sic] at his departure, he told him thus: Sir (quoth he), I see well if Ulysses stops not his ears, the sirens will put him to shipwreck; if he carry not moly about him, Circes will enchant him, and youth, if he bush not at beauty, and carry antidotes of wisdom against flattery, folly will be the next haven he shall be in. I speak this by experience, as seeing the sirens of this house following your ears with harmony that will bring you to split upon a rock, and here I find be such Circes as will not only transform you, but so enchant you that you will at last buy repentance with too dear a price. Ah master, do you not remember the precepts that your father gave you, especially against women, nay chiefly against such women as these, whose eyes are snares, whose words are charms, whose hands are bird-lime, whose deceit is much, whose desires are insatiable, whose covetousness is like the hidaspis, that the more it drinks, the more thirsty it is, whose conscience is like a pumice-stone, light and full of holes, whose love is for lucre, whose heart is light on your person, whose hand heavy on your purse, being vultures that will eat men alive. Ah master, be not blinded with a courtesan; there are more maids than malkin; if you will needs be in love, love one and marry; so shall you have profit and credit; if not, lie not here in a consuming labyrinth; the idle life is the mother of all mischief; it fretteth as rust doth iron, and eateth as a worm in the wood till all perish; live not here, master, without doing somewhat; Mars himself hateth to be ever on Venus' lap; he scorneth to lie at rack and manger. Consider how the Chaldees have set down in their writings that from the first creation of the world idleness was had in hatred, and man was commanded to satisfy his thirst with his hands-thrift. Adam tilled the earth, and fed himself with his labours; Iubal exercised music, and spent his time in practicing the sympathy of sundry sounds; Tubalcain did work in metals and was a graver in brass; Noah having the world before him for his inheritance yet planted vineyards; tush, all the holy Israelites lived by their labours, and men hated to have an hour idly spent; Trajan numbered not that day amongst the date of his life which he had wholly consumed in idleness. If then this lascivious kind of life be so odious, shake off these Calypses, travel with Ulysses, see countries, and you shall as he did return to Ithaca with credit. Be a soldier; win honour by arms; a courtier, win favour of some king with service; a scholar, get to some university and for awhile apply your book; sit not here like Sardanapalus amongst women; be not bewitched with Hercules to spin by Omphale's side; leave all; yet may ye stop before you come to the bottom, but if you be so besotted that no counsel shall prevail, I am glad that I may not see your future misfortunes. Although these words of his man drive him into a dump and made him call to remembrance his father's farewell, yet did he so dote on his young love that he bade his man be jogging, and so went down into the parlour to shake off melancholy with company. Thus did Philador lie in the fire and dally in the flame, and yet like the salamander not feel the fire, for this is an old theological action:

Consuetudo peccandi tollit sensum peccati.

He counted fornication no sin, and lust, why he shadowed that with love; he had a veil for every vanity, till that he might see daylight at every hole. While thus he lived in his jollity, there fell a great dearth in the land; corn was scant, and the poor were oppressed with extreme penury, and in such sort that they died in the streets. Philador heard by the chapmen how the market went, and might perceive by the cry of the poor what famine was spread throughout the whole country, but he had gold, and want could not wring him by the finger; the black ox could not tread on his foot, and therefore he stopped his ears and proved half merciless; only his care was to spend the day as deliciously as he thought the night delightful, having ever his paramour in his presence, whose finger was never far from his purse; tush, all went upon wheels, till on a day looking into his coffers he found a great want, and saw that his store was in the waning, whereupon he put away his boy and sold his horses; he had enough of himself, and too many by one. This youngster's purse drew low, but as long as he let angels fly, so long they honoured him as a god. But as all things must have an end, so at last his coffers waxed empty, and then the post began to be painted with chalk. The score grew great, and they waxed weary of such a beggarly guest. Whereupon on a day the eldest of them told him that either he must provide money or else to furnish him of a new lodging, for there was a great dearth throughout the whole country, victuals were dear, and they could not pay the baker and the brewer with chalk. Upon this he went unto his trunk, and all his rich apparel and jewels walked to the broker's and for that time he cleared the score. Which, when he had done, he got him into his chamber, and sitting down, began to call to remembrance the precepts of his old father, but as soon as his young mistress was in sight, she banished all such thoughts out of his remembrance. Long it was not before he grew deeply indebted again in the house, and so far that he had not wherewithal to discharge it, and then very early in the morning the three sisters came up into his chamber, seized of his trunk and that apparel that was left; yea, so near they went him that they took his doublet that was on his back. Philador, seeing the cruelty of his hostess, and especially how forward his mistress was to wrong him, rose out of his bed, and putting on his hose, sitting on the bed-side, began thus.

Why (gentlewomen), have I been so ill a guest that I deserve such extremity, or so bad a pay-master that so hardly you hold Bayard in the stable? Are these the favours that I was promised at my first welcome? Are women's courtesies such sharp showers? Now I do see, although too late, that all is not gold that doth glister, that every orient stone is not a diamond, all drugs that are dear are not precious, nor every woman that can flatter is not faithful. Did you at the first deck me with roses, and now do you beat me with nettles? Did you present me with perfumes, and now do you stifle me with hemlock? Did you say I should never want, and now do you wrong me when I do want? Then must I brook it with patience, and accuse you of perjury. I have spent my portion in this house, my revenues are all fallen into your purses, and now for a few pence will you seek my prejudice? Be not (and with that he looked on the youngest sweet mistress) so cruel; if you cannot relieve me, yet entreat for me to your sisters that they bereave me not of my clothes to the disparagement of my credit; remember the favours I have showed you in

my prosperity, and requite them with some courtesies in my adversities; think what promises and protestations have passed between us. No sooner had he spoken these words but she cried out: What a beggarly knave is this, quoth she, so to challenge promises at my hands, and for to tell me of favours; if thou hast spent thy money, thou hast had meat and pennyworths for thy pence. Couldst thou not (like a prodigal patch) have looked better into thine own life but thou must strain further than thy sleeve would reach? Repentance is a whip for such fools, and therefore were thy hose off, thou shouldst go in thy shirt unless that thou dost pay the uttermost farthing. Philador, hearing this, fetched a very great sigh and said: Is there any grief to a troubled soul or any mischief unto the mischief of a woman? Why, insatiable are her fetches. You have had here my blood; will you have my heart? My living you have amongst you, and now do you aim at my life? Fie upon such gripes as cease not to prey upon poor Prometheus until they have eaten his very entrails. What, sister, quoth the youngest, shall we suffer this rascal for to rail against us, and be in our debts? Come, let us beat him out at the doors; with that they do call up the servants, and so thrust him out of the chamber, naked as he was, and beat him sore, insomuch that they did shut him out comfortless and wounded. Being ashamed of himself, he durst not tarry in the city where he was known, but in all the haste he got him out of the gates and hied him far from the city, lest that he should be discovered by some of his acquaintance. In the meanwhile the three sisters began for to count what gains they had gotten by their novice, and as they did smile at his pelf, so they laughed at his penury, and wished that they might have many such guests. Thus were they very pleasant whilst Philador like unto a poor pilgrim wandered on still upon his way, going now naked that erst came riding with such pomp, and seeing himself to be in the depth of misery that thought no frown of fortune could shake him from felicity; after that he had wandered a long while, being weary, hungry, and thirsty, with grief he sat him down by a brook's-side where he did drink his fill, and for very sorrow he fell asleep, and when he awaked and entered into the consideration of his present misfortune, looking upon himself he melted into tears, and at last burst forth into these passions.

Infortunate Philador, and therefore unfortunate because thou wouldst neither be directed by advice nor reclaimed by counsel. Thy father, whose years had reaped much experience, whose white hairs were instances of grave insight, whose age contained a multitude of reverent advertisements, foretold these misfortunes, and with forepointing actions gave thee caveats of these most bitter crosses. The fawn doth choose his food by the lay of the old buck, the lion doth teach his young whelps, and the young eagles make not flight but as the old ones do learn them to carry wing, yet I, instructed by my father, both fly from nature as a haggard, and refuse nurture as one that would ever prove ravening. Self-love is a fault that follows youth, and like the sting of the tarantula fretteth inwardly before it paineth outwardly; I thought my father's counsel to be good, but too grave for my young years; quoth I, these precepts are too severe for the calends of my youth. What, he doth measure my quick coals by his dead cinders, and thinketh that I should be in the prime as he is in the wane. No, his aphorisms are too far-fetched for me, and therefore *Quae supra nos nihil ad nos*; what, I can see what is good for myself, and also prevent a prejudice if it be imminent. Thus did I flatter myself until such time as, too late, repentance hath given me a mourning garment. Oh now I do plainly see when my

father gave unto me precepts he gave me more than pence, for counsel is more worth than coin, but I did then lightly regard it, and therefore do I now heavily repent it. Ah Philador, thou wert warned not to be prodigal, and who more riotous? Not for to strain above thy reach, and yet thou wouldst needs beyond the moon. Now dost thou sorrow at thy loss, and they do smile that have gained; whilst that thou hadst crowns crammed in thy coffers, thou hadst friends enow at commandment, and wert able to take many flatterers with trencher-flies; thou hadst such as soothed thee in thy follies and fed upon thy fortune, that did ordinarily pay thee with a cap and a knee, and that could trick thee up with titles of honour. But now (Philador), now that thou art in want, they are all vanished like unto an empty cloud; now that there is no wealth left, they are all lost; thy gold is flown, and they are fled; thus (poor man) sittest thou comfortless and friendless, having bought wit too dear, and only gotten this verse for all thy gold:

Nullus ad amissas ibit amicus opes.

Thus as Philador sat debating with himself of his former fortunes and present misery, such melancholy entered into his thoughts that he feared to fall in despair, and therefore rose up and went travelling into the country, passing over three or four days without any food that he was almost famished, till at last it was his good hap to meet a citizen that had a farm in the country; him Philador humbly saluted, and desired him of service; the citizen, looking earnestly upon him, seeing he had a good face, pitied the extremity of the poor young man, and answered him thus: My friend (quoth he), thou seest there is a general dearth over the whole country, and many perish through penury; food is so scant that our servants are ready to famish, and therefore every man coveteth to make his charge less, yet for that I pity thy youth and favour thy personage, I will place thee in a farm-house of mine hard by adjoining where thy labour shall be to feed my swine, wherein if thou showest thyself dutiful, thy recompense shall be the greater. Philador, glad of this, with tears in his eyes for joy, made this answer: Master (quoth he), penury is a sore pinch, and I think there is no sharper sting than necessity; therefore doubt not of my labour, for I will take any pains to please and brook any toil to content, and so I beseech you to favour me as you shall find me dutiful. With that the citizen took him into service, and sent him to his farm-house where Philador kept the swine, but himself had very hard fare, insomuch that for extreme hunger he eat the husks with the hogs, & yet had not enough to satisfy his stomach. Sitting down at last, and seeing the hogs feed, having a husk in his hand, he wept and blubbered out these passionate complaints.

Ah hunger, hunger, the extremest of all extremes; now do I see that high desires have low fortunes, that thoughts which reach at stars stumble at stones, that such as gaze at the heavens fall on the earth, that pride will have a fall, and every fault is punished with the contrary. Ah Philador, thou that of late didst swim in gluttony art now pinched with penury, thou that didst invent what to eat hast not now anything to eat; thine eye could not be contented with mean cates that now demisheth [sic?] for want of any fare; where be thy dainties, thy excess, thy wines, thy delicates; all passed with Philexenus through thy throat, and thou left to eat husks with swine in the deepest extremity of hunger; ah miserable Philador, how art thou metamorphosed; where be thy costly habiliments, thy rich robes, thy gorgeous attire, thy chains & thy rings; *Omnia vanitas*, they are fallen to

the Lombard, left at the broker's, and thou here sittest poor and naked, brooking this misery as patiently as thou didst spend thy goods riotously. But now Philador, enter into consideration of thy hard hap and see into the cause of thy froward fortunes. What, shall I attribute it to my nativity, and say the planets did calculate as much at my birth: no, there is no necessity in their influence; the stars determine, but God disposeth; thus,

Sapiens dominabitur astris.

What then shalt thou accuse? ah nothing but the folly of my youth, that would neither accept of advice nor vouchsafe of counsel. Love, Philador, love; ah no; shadow not vanity with the veil of virtue; not love but lust brought me to this bane; wanton affects forced me to this fall, and the pleasure of mine eye procured these bitter passions. Beauty, ah beauty, the bane that poisoneth worse than the juice of the baaran. Beauty, the serpent that infecteth worse than the basilisk. Beauty, the siren that draweth unto death. Beauty, that leadeth youth captive into the labyrinth where resteth that merciless Minotaur. But rather fond man, that delightest in such a fading flower, in such a manifest poison, in such an open prejudice. The deer knoweth tamarisk to be deadly, and will not browse on the branches; the mouse hateth the trap, the bee hemlock, the serpent the oliphant, but man runneth greedily after that which worketh his fatal disparagement. Ah Philador, did not thy father forewarn thee of women's beauty, did he not say they were adamants that drew, panthers that with their painted skins do allure? if, my son (quoth he), thou surfeitest with their beauty, thou drinkest aconitum, and so dost perish. Tush, but I little regarded his precepts, but now have I bought his axioms with deep repentance, now do I find that their faces are painted sepulchres whereas their minds are tombs full of rotten bones and serpents, their brows contain, like the diamant, virtue to relieve and poison to kill, their looks are like calends that can determine no certainty, but as the leaf of the liquonico, when it looks most moist is then most dry, so when they smile they imagine deceit, & their laughters are tempered with envy and revenge. Ah Philador, what are women's vows? words written in the wind; what are their promises? characters figured in the air; what are their flatteries? figures graven in the snow which are blown with the wind or melted with the sun; what are their loves? like the passage of a serpent over a stone, which once past can never be seen. They will promise mountains and perform molehills, say they love with Dido when they feign with Cressida, and follow Demophoon with Phyllis when they are more straggling than Luna; they have tears at command as the crocodile to betray, and smiles at voluntary to bewitch; as long as thou hast gold they are horse-leeches and will not out of thy bosom, but they hate an empty purse as the hyena doth the sight of a man, and will fly from thee when thou art poor as the fowl from the falcon. Ah Philador, mightest thou be the last who were entrapped by their love, it were well, & happy wert thou to be an instance to all other gentlemen; nay, might young youth bridle their follies by thy fall, they would ere [sic?] day say to themselves:

Foelix quem faciunt aliena pericula cautum.

But alas, Philador, Troilus' fortunes could not make others fear the like foolish end. Though Theseus bought Helen's love dear, yet Paris would not be warned, but brought

her home to Troy; so thou art but one swallow, and maketh not summer, and young gentlemen will say thy folly will not be every man's fortune, but when repentance shall cover them with a mourning garment, then they will say had-I-wist is a little too late. But Philador, why sittest thou here discoursing against love, against women, against beauty? leave them as refuse & things too low for thy looks, and provide for thy body, for thou art here almost famished, and sittest eating of husks with the hogs whereas the meanest of thy father's servants, his hind mercenaries, hath bread enough to eat, and thou sittest and feelest the extremity of hunger. What shall I do, shall I home; will my father vouchsafe of such a prodigal son who in so short a time hath consumed so large a portion; can he look on him with favour that hath committed such folly, or receive him into his house that hath despised his counsel? Ah, why not, Philador; love is more vehement in descent than in ascent; nature will plead for me if nurture condemn me; fathers, as they have frowns to chastise, so they have smiles to pardon; as they can lout, so they can laugh, and they are as ready to forgive as thou to be penitent. Then will I home to my father, and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee; I am no more worthy to be called thy son; make me as one of thy hired servants; with this he fell into bitter tears, and in this resolution continued, and taking leave of his master hied him home towards the land of Havelath; by the way traversing many countries and noting the manners of men, he saw how folly had wrapped many in the snares of women's beauties; amongst the rest one day as he lay in a thick to shroud him from the heat of the sun, hearing a great noise, he heard the complaint of a forsaken lover who exclaimed against the cruelty of women that denied to grant love for love, and grew so far into passions that pulling forth his rapier there he resolved both to end his love and his life. As he was ready to have fallen on his sword, Philador stepped out of the thick and caught hold of him; the gentleman, turning his head and seeing such a poor snake to hinder his attempt, thought to check him with a frown, but Philador used these speeches unto him. Sir, marvel not that so mean a man hath dared to stay you from so bad a deed, for to this I am compelled by manhood; desperation is a double sin, and final impenitence hath no remission. There is no hap past hope, and therefore bewray your grief; perhaps I may persuade with reason or relieve with counsel; measure me not by my rags, ne estimate not my present fortunes, but think as the foulest weeds hath oft the most virtuous operation, so the hood makes not the monk nor the apparel the man, but I may sooner apply a medicine for your malady than a seemlier physician. The gentleman, hearing such a sensible induction, did straight conjecture that whatsoever his present estate was, his nurture had been good, and there looking him in the face and learning on his rapier he began to discourse unto him how long time he had been a votary unto Venus and a servant unto love, that he was snared in the beauty of a young damsel who the more she perceived him passionate the less she was pitiful, and by how much the more he sought to show manifest signs of his affection, by so much the more she made little regard of his fancy, insomuch that wearied with love and seeing no hope of favour he thought with a momentary death to end those passions wherein still to linger were worse than any death. At this Philador fell into great laughter, and after into these terms: What (quoth he), art thou so mad to die for love, or so fond as to grieve thyself at the frown of a woman? I tell thee, sir (quoth he), if thou knewest how fortune favours thee, and how the stars agree to make thee happy, thou wouldst count thyself not the most miserablest but the most fortunate of all men; ah, my

friend, didst thou as well as I know the effects of love and the wiles of women, thou wouldst say:

O me felicem quantis me periculis fortuna mea eripuit.

If she be fair whom thou lovest, first consider that beauty is a flower today fit for the eye, tomorrow withered and to be cast into the furnace, that love which grows from such a fading object is momentary and subject to every accident; besides, beauty brings with it suspicion, fear, and jealousy, seeing every man's eye will feed on a fair face and every man's thought will seek to be partner in thy fancies, and how weak vessels women be, especially if they be beautiful, I refer thee to Helena and Cressida. But thou sayest she is coy; ah, my friend, women's faces are not the crystals of truth nor their words gospel; what she hates in [sic?] outwardly she likes inwardly, and what she thrusts away with one finger she will pull again with both her hands, but as long as thou fawnest upon her she will be froward, but be but a little absent and she will wish thy presence; women's thoughts are like babies' fancies that will and will not; proffer them meat and they refuse it; offer it to another and they cry after it, so wean thou thyself but from her for awhile, and frequent the company of some other as fair as she, and so either shalt thou draw her on to be fond, or else by such absence shake off thine own folly. But suppose love and fortune favour thee that thou hast her love, didst thou know what a world of woes thou dost enter into by taking a wife thou wouldst say: Fie on love, and farewell to women. Be she never so fair, thou shalt find faults enough in her face shortly to dislike, and beside, the fairest flower hath oft the most infectious savour; the cedar is beautiful but bears no fruit, the chrysolite of an orient hue yet of a deadly operation, and so in the fairest proportion shalt thou find oft the least perfection, and the sweetest face, the most prejudicial qualities. Who was fairer than Venus, but such a wanton as she would never want one. Clytemnestra beautiful, but a giglet. I tell thee, sir, they are sullen, and be morosae, as was Zenia, the wife of Antisthenes, or scolds, as she that over-ruled Socrates, or froward, as Marpesia, deceitful, flattering, contentious, sick with the puff of every wind, and luring at the show of every storm. These vices are insident by nature, though they seem never so virtuous by nurture. Penelope had furrows in her brow as well as she had dimples in her chin, Artemesia could frown as well as she could smile, and Lucrece, though she were chaste, yet she could chide. Sir, believe me, I speak it by experience; if thou marry one fair and dishonest, thou weddest thyself to a world of miseries; if thou marriest one beautiful & never so virtuous, yet think this, thou shalt have a woman, & therefore in despite of fortune, a necessary evil. At this period the passionate gentleman put up his rapier into his sheath and told Philador his medicine had somewhat eased his malady, and his counsel mitigate [sic] the force of his despairing passions, insomuch that his hot love was waxen a little cold, and the heat of his fancy was qualified with the lenitive plasters that grew from his experience [sic] advice. Therefore sir (quoth he), as the date-tree is not known by the bark but by the blooms, and the precious balm not by his colour but by the operation, so the outward show did not always manifest the inward man, but the effects of his virtues, and therefore not measuring your parentage by your present estate nor your calling by your adverse fortune, I first (as one that coveteth not to be ungrateful) render thanks for your pathological precepts, and seeing you have kindly relieved me with your counsel, as Terence wisheth:

Re mea te adiuuabo,

I will supply your want with my wealth, and change your fortunes with my possessions, so that what I have in treasure shall be parted between us with a friendly proportion. Philador gave him great thanks for his courteous proffer, and told him that such urgent haste of his journey called him away as no alteration of his fortune, how beneficial soever, might stay him. My way (quoth he) is long, and my weariness great; I have many places [sic?] to tread, and many thoughts to meditate upon; I go laden with much sorrow and little hope, yet despair I must not, for though my miseries be many and my friends few, yet do say in myself, to salve my passion:

O passi grauiora? dabit Deus his quoque finem.

Therefore, sir, if my counsel have done you any comfort, or my words been so effectual as to mitigate your affects, think love hath brought me to these fortunes, and therefore beware of the like follies, for he that shuns Scylla and falls into Charybdis, that will accuse Circes for an enchantress and yet wed himself to Calypso, that thinks he may shake off fancy for a moment and entertain love for a month, shall tread upon glass and work himself into a labyrinth of overweening fooleries. The sun waxeth low, and my inn is far hence; therefore must I leave you, and yet, quoth he, because I see you are willing to learn, take this scroll as a precedent how to eschew much prejudice; the only favour that I request is that you will be as ready to deliver precepts of virtue as I have been to set down axioms to you; with that he gave him a paper folded up, and shaking him by the hand, bade him farewell. The gentleman with great courtesy bade him adieu, and so they parted, Philador towards his father's, and he towards his lodging, yet longing to see what was in the scroll he sat him down and unfolded it, where he found these strange aphorisms.

The Contents Of Philador's Scroll.

Ouidius.

Hei mihi quod nullis amor est medicabilis herbis.

Love is a thing I know not of what it cometh, I know not from whence; it groweth, but unknown whereof, goeth we know not whither, and beginneth and endeth I know not which way, yet a passion full of martyrdom, misery, grief, and discontent, having pleasures, but tempered with pains, and a short delight mixed with a long repentance.

The hidaspis hath a fair skin and a sweet breath, but his sting is fatal; gaze not too much lest thou attempt to touch, and so perish.

The crocodile weeps, but then she worketh wiles, for her tears pretend relief but intend destruction; rue not her sorrows lest when she rejoiceth, thou repentest.

The sirens sits and sings in a calm bay, but her seat is environed with rocks; beware of her melody, for if it please the ear, it pincheth the heart.

When the tiger hideth her claws, then she menaceth for her prey; see either her claw open, or hold her at thy rapier's point.

The eye of a basilisk is as bright as a stone [sic?], but as prejudicial as a thunderbolt; whilst thou lookest with delight, it woundeth with death; hold thine eyes from such objects lest thou become an abject.

Circes amongst all her potions had one most sweet, and that turned men to asses; taste not of that without before thou chaw on moly.

The hyena will fawn on thee and smile, but if thou follow her, she leads thee to a den full of serpents; either shun her flatteries, or wear the horn of a hart, that drives away infectious vermin.

There are no hawks sooner manned than they of India; none eat more and fly less; while she is full gorged she keeps the fist, but keep her low and she proves ravening; either be not a falconer, or beware of such fowls.

Give a camel store of provender and she will strike thee with her foot; beat her, and she will kneel till thou gettest upon her back; for such a beast wear a cudgel; then when thou seest her lift her heel, thou mayest strike.

If these aphorisms be too enigmatical, become a lover and experience will quickly set thee down a comment, but if thou canst, find them out, and be philosopher to thyself.

The gentleman read these obscure principles and perceived they all tended to the discovery of women's qualities, wherefore he held them most precious, but looking upon the page, there he perceived certain verses, which were these.

Philador's Ode That He Left With The Despairing Lover.

*When merry autumn in her prime,
Fruitful mother of swift time,
Had filled Ceres' lap with store
Of vines and corn and mickle more,
Such needful fruits as do grow
From Terra's bosom here below,
Tytirus did sigh and see
With heart's grief and eyes' gree,
Eyes and heart both full of woes,
Where Galate, his lover, goes;
Her mantle was vermilion red,
A gaudy chaplet on her head,*

*A chaplet that did shroud the beams
That Phoebus on her beauty streams,
For sun itself desired to see
So fair a nymph as was she,
For viewing from the east to west
Fair Galate did like him best,
Her face was like to welkin's shine,
Crystal brooks, such were her eyne,
And yet within those brooks were fires
That scorched youth and his desires;
Galate did much impair
Venus' honour for her fair,
For stately stepping, Juno's pace
By Galate did take disgrace,
And Pallas' wisdom bare no prize
Where Galate would show her wise;
This gallant girl thus passeth by
Where Tytirus did sighing lie,
Sighing sore, for love strains
More than sighs from lovers' veins,
Tears in eye, thought in heart,
Thus his grief he did impart:
Fair Galate, but glance thine eye,
Here lies he that here must die,
For love is death if love not gain
Lover's salve for lover's pain,
Winters seven and more are past
Since on thy face my thoughts I cast,
When Galate did haunt the plains
And fed her sheep amongst the swains,
When every shepherd left his flocks
To gaze on Galate's fair locks,
When every eye did stand at gaze,
When heart and thought did both amaze,
When heart from body would asunder
On Galate's fair face to wonder,
Then amongst them all did I
Catch such a wound as I must die
If Galate oft say not thus:
I love the shepherd Tytirus;
'Tis love (fair nymph) that doth pain
Tytirus, thy truest swain,
True, for none more true can be
Than still to love, and none but thee;
Say Galate, oft smile and say:
'Twere pity love should have a nay,*

*But such a word of comfort give,
 And Tytirus thy love shall live,
 Or with a piercing frown reply:
 I cannot love, and then I die,
 For lover's nay is lover's death,
 And heart-break frowns doth stop the breath;
 Galate at this arose
 And with a smile away she goes,
 As one that little cared to ease
 Tytir, pained with love's disease;
 At her parting Tytirus
 Sighed amain, and said thus:
 Oh that women are so fair
 To trap men's eyes in their hair,
 With beauteous eyes, lovers' fires,
 Venus' sparks that heats desires,
 But oh that women have such hearts,
 Such thoughts and such deep-piercing darts
 As in the beauty of their eye
 Harbour naught but flattery,
 Their tears are drawn [sic?] that drop deceit,
 Their faces calends of all sleight,
 Their smiles are lures, their looks guile,
 And all their love is but a wile,
 Then Tytir, leave, leave, Tytirus,
 To love such as scorns you thus,
 And say to love and women both:
 What I liked now I do loathe;
 With that he hied him to the flocks
 And counted love but Venus' mocks.*

The gentleman, having read over this ode, held it as a treasure, and went home as free from love as Tytirus was from affection, wondering what this poor pilgrim should be that had given him such enigmatical precepts, and praying that his fortune might be answerable to his qualities. Well, leaving him thus free from his passion, again to Philador, who wandering homewards met with many adventures and saw many sights that had made him for to wonder at the follies of the world; at the last he came within the sight of his father's house, the which he no sooner saw but it was such a piercing object to his eye, striking such remorse to his heart, that he sat him down and melted into tears, thinking on the prosperity of his former estate and the misery of his present fortunes; as thus he sat in a deep passion, lifting up his eyes he saw where his aged father was walking in the pastures to take the air; although his adverse fall were a means to make him bashful, yet the sight of his father kindled so the fuel of nature in him that, emboldened, he arose up and went towards him in those robes of distress that he was banished out of his inn. And when he came near, naked and poor, he went to his father and falling flat upon the ground said: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against

thee; I am no more worthy to be called thy son. Old Rabbi Bilessi, looking in his visage and seeing it was his son, nature, that hath never such dead cinders but there be *quaedam scintillulae*, certain sparks of secret affection, began to draw remorse into his face, pity into his heart, and tears into his eyes, that throwing down his staff he stepped to his son and fell on his neck, weeping bitterly and yet with such an ecstasy as the storm pretended both joy and sorrow, the one for his hard fortunes, the other for his happy recovery. Philador, seeing his father thus passionate, took heart a grass, and on his knee began thus.

Philador's Submission To His Father At His Return.

I know not (sir) what insinuation to use for your favour, so many & so monstrous are the number of my follies, nor can I plead any excuse, the distress of my present fortunes are so manifest; only submission must sue to nature for a pardon, and my repentant sorrows put in plea for some fatherly remorse. Ah, the wanton desires of youth, why they be like to the giddiness of ravening hawks that bate at the sight of every bush, and the prime of young age is as the flowers of the pine-tree that are glorious to the sight but unsavoury and without smell. Vanity is the mask wherein it marcheth, and folly is the page that waits attendance upon the actions of youth, so that all his affects are slipperness, and the effects full of prejudicial disparagement; had I regarded the grave aphorisms of your advised counsel on [sic?] the golden precepts delivered from the experience of your years, or the sweet actions that drop as balm from the silver tresses of your hair, neither had my fall been such, my distress so great, nor my fortune so miserable; fools are they which say bought wit is best, especially if it be rated at my price. Counsel is the sweet conserve, and advice the purest antidote; happiest is he that is ware by other men's harms, and such most miserable that are wise by their own woes.

Piscator ictus sapit.

But hard is his hap that flies from the viper for her sting, that hateth the tarantula for that he hath felt her venom, and infortunate is that man that can anatomize misery by his own distress; ah father, had I revered my God as I honoured my goddess, and offered as many orisons to his deity as I poured out passions for her beauty, then had I been graced with as many favours as I am crossed with misfortunes. But I thought he had not seen my faults, and therefore went forward; in hue I thought their faces to be adamant, their beauties to be like the spots of devouring panthers; had I deemed them to be prejudicial sirens, had I believed what I was foretold, Philador had been less miserable & more fortunate. But I counted their beauties metaphysical, their qualities divine, their proportions heavenly, themselves angels; I thought as the phoenix had none but precious feathers, as the myrrh-tree hath no caterpillars, as the topaz hath no operation but excellent, so I thought women to be such perfect creatures as had nothing in them but supernatural. But at last I found the precepts of Rabbi Bilessi to be authentical, that as the cinnamon-tree, though it hath a sweet bark, yet it hath bitter leaves, & the pyrite stone, though it have one virtue, hath twenty prejudicial operations, so women, though they were never so beautiful, yet were they the painted continents of flattery, of deceit, inconstancy, and the very guides that lead men unto the pernicious labyrinth of endless distress. Had I thought prodigality superfluous excess, my coffers had been full of

crowns and my heart void of cares, but I counted expense the empress of a gentleman, and gifts the thing that graced a traveller; as Trajan numbered not that day amongst the date of his life wherein he had not done something worthy of memory, so I did hold that *nefanda dies* wherein I did not triumph in magnificent prodigality. Tush, I did think coin to be called current *a currendo*; gold, why I held it as dross, and counted it the deepest dishonour to be counted frugal; *parsimonia*, why, quoth I, it is paltry, and sparing, it is the badge of a peasant. The Chaldees in their hieroglyphics described a gentleman with his hand always open, meaning that to give was heroic. And Titus the emperor said: Give, if thou wilt be worthy the world's monarchy; I counted Cincinnatus the dictator a fool for his frugality; I discommended the small diet of Caius Fabricius, and said Agathocles was base-minded that drunk in earthen vessels. But for Lucullus, I commended his sumptuous fare, and the prodigal thoughts of Julinus. Thus did I glory in excess, and thought not that measure was a merry mean. While thus I flowed in the conceit of my folly, I had many that like trencher-flies waited upon my person, more for the hope of my purse than for any perfect love. And as the doves flock where the house is fair, so where the carrion is, thither such hungry eagles resort. I can best compare them unto empty vessels that have loud sounds, to painted sheaths that have rusty blades, unto glorious flowers that have no smell, and so they pretend much friendship and contain nothing but superficial flattery. For as soon as by drawing too oft the well waxed dry, that my purse began with so many purging glisters to wax not only laxative but quite empty, then these insinuating hang-bies flew away like vapours, and left me unto the deep fall of my fortunes. This experience hath poor Philador bought with much sorrow, and this wit hath he purchased with great repentance, insomuch that the loathsomeness of my faults is more than the pleasure of my follies, and the hate of such vanities is greater than the desire of such vices; oh then grant pardon unto him that is penitent; have remorse upon him that groaneth under the burden of his sins; let thine eye behold me, and thy heart pity the extremity of my distress. And if my offences be so great that thou wilt not entertain me as a son, yet make me as one of thy hired servants.

Rabbi Bilessi, hearing the penitent passion of his son, felt nature pleading for the reconciliation of so sorrowful a pilgrim, and therefore folding his arms about his neck, and wetting his cheeks with tears, he made this fatherly reply.

Rabbi Bilessi His Comfortable Answer To His Son.

I tell thee, Philador, quoth he, though I have tears in mine eyes, yet I have joy in my heart; these drops are not signs of sorrows, but instances of content; I conceive as much pleasure in thy penitence as I reaped grief at thy disobedience. Ah Philador, hadst thou followed thy father's counsel thou hadst not tasted of this care, and my precepts sunk into thy heart, these misfortunes had not been rewards of thy follies. But to rub the sore afresh by recounting thy offences is but to make thee more passionate and me deeper perplexed. Therefore omitting all matters that are past, hoping these protestations are not present sorrows but continual penitence, I admit thee into former favour, forgiving and forgetting the follies of thy youth. With that lifting up Philador, he embraced him afresh, covered him in a new robe, but with a garment of black, as a man mourning at his high faults and low fortunes, and so carried him home to his house where he commanded all

his servants to make preparation for a solemn feast, which was done with all diligence. Sophonos being from home, and at his return hearing of this, had his face full of frowns and his heart of grief that such a prodigal unthrift should so soon be reconciled and so boldly entertained, insomuch that, discontent, he sat him down at the door and would not come in. News was brought unto Rabbi Bilessi that Sophonos was malcontent. With that the old man stumbled out of the doors, and coming to his son, persuaded him to think nothing if he graciously accepted of his penitent brother. Sophonos with a louring countenance made him this answer.

Sophonos To Old Rabbi Bilessi.

Why sir, quoth he, have I not reason to frown when I see you so fond, and to be deeply discontent when I see you so divers in your actions, one while with Diogenes to exclaim against pride, and straight with Aristippus to jet in surcoats of gold? aged thoughts should have but one period, and the resolution of grey hairs ought always to be peremptory; hath not Rabbi Bilessi inveighed against the follies of youth, and doth he not now maintain it in his own son, hath he not said that a prodigal man is like to a flood that overfloweth which enforceth prejudice to the whole plains, and now he welcomes him with feasting that hath spent all in riotous expense? What is this but to foster folly and to nurse up vice? I speak not this as envying my brother's reconciliation, but that Sophonos hath deserved more grace, and yet hath found less favour. Ah son, quoth Rabbi Bilessi, hast thou not heard that unexpected chances are most welcome, that losses recovered are most sweet, that nature likes best seldom seen? Ah Sophonos, and art thou angry then with thine old father for entertaining his son that was lost and is found, that was dead and is alive again, for welcoming home of Philador that returns back poor but penitent, crossed with ill fortunes but careful for his faults, distressed, but vowed to devotion? his mind hath altered with a strange metamorphosis; he hath (Sophonos) bought wit, and now will beware; better late than never: *Nunquam sera est ad bonos mores via*. Then (my son) if thou be son to Rabbi Bilessi, and beest as kind as I am natural, come and welcome home with me thy brother Philador; greet him with favours, as I have done with tears; be as glad to see him come home as thou wert sorry to see him depart, and for thy courtesy thou shalt have his brotherly love and my fatherly blessing. With that Sophonos was content and his old father carried him in, and then Sophonos as kindly as his stomach would suffer entertained Philador, and then frolicly they went to feasting, old Rabbi rejoicing at the great change of his son's manners in that he went forth full of vanity and returned home tempered with gravity; all the company were pleasant, and a feast it could not be without music; the shepherds, they came in with their timbrels and cymbals, and played such melody as the country then required; amongst them all one swain stepped forth, and as they sat, revived them with this song.

The Song Of A Country Swain At The Return Of Philador.

*The silent shade had shadowed every tree,
And Phoebus in the west was shrouded low,
Each hive had home her busy labouring bee,
Each bird the harbour of the night did know,*

Even then,
 When thus
 All things did from their weary labour lin,
 Menalcas sat and thought him of his sin.

His head on hand, his elbow on his knee,
 And tears like dew bedrenched upon his face,
 His face as sad as any swain's might be,
 His thoughts and dumps befitting well the place,

Even then,
 When thus
 Menalcas sat in passions all alone,
 He sighed then, and thus he gan to moan.

I that fed flocks upon Thessalia plains,
 And bid my lambs to feed on daffodil,
 That lived on milk and curds, poor shepherd's gains,
 And merry sat and piped upon a pleasant hill,

Even then,
 When thus
 I sat secure and feared not fortune's ire,
 Mine eyes eclipsed, fast blinded by desire.

Then lofty thoughts began to lift my mind,
 I grudged, and thought my fortune was too low,
 A shepherd's life, 'twas base and out of kind,
 The tallest cedars have the fairest grow;

Even then,
 When thus
 Pride did intend the sequel of my ruth
 Began the faults and follies of my youth.

I left the fields and took me to the town,
 Fold sheep who list, the hook was cast away,
 Menalcas would not be a country clown,
 Nor shepherd's weeds, but garments far more gay;

Even then,
 When thus
 Aspiring thoughts did follow after ruth,
 Began the faults and follies of my youth.

My suits were silk, my talk was all of state,
 I stretched beyond the compass of my sleeve,
 The bravest courtier was Menalcas' mate,
 Spend what I could, I never thought on grief;

Even then,

*When thus
I lashed out lavish, then began my ruth,
And then I felt the follies of my youth.*

*I cast mine eye on every wanton face,
And straight desire did hale me on to love,
Then loverlike I prayed for Venus' grace,
That she my mistress' deep affects might move;*

Even then,

When thus

*Love trapped me in the fatal bands of ruth,
Began the faults and follies of my youth.*

*No cost I spared to please my mistress' eye,
No time ill-spent in presence of her sight,
Yet oft we [sic?] frowned, and then her love must die,
But when she smiled, oh than a happy wight;*

Even then,

When thus

*Desire did draw me on to deem of ruth,
Began the faults and follies of my youth.*

*The day in poems often did I pass,
The night in sighs and sorrows for her grace,
And she as fickle as the brittle glass
Held sunshine showers within her flattering face;*

Even then,

When thus

*I spied the woes that women's loves ensueth,
I saw and loathe [sic?] the follies of my youth.*

*I noted oft that beauty was a blaze,
I saw that love was but a heap of cares,
That such as stood as deer do at the gaze,
And sought their wealth amongst affectionous thares [sic],*

Even such

I saw,

*Which [sic?] hot pursuit did follow after ruth,
And fostered up the follies of their youth.*

*Thus clogged with love, with passions, and with grief,
I saw the country life had least molest,
I felt a wound, and pain would have relief,
And thus resolved, I thought would fall out best;*

Even then,

When thus

*I felt my senses almost sold to ruth,
I thought to leave the follies of my youth.*

*To flocks again, away the wanton town,
Fond pride, avaunt, give me the shepherd's hook,
A coat of grey, I'll be a country clown,
Mine eye shall scorn on beauty for to look;
 No more
 Ado,
Both pride and love are ever pained with ruth,
And therefore farewell the follies of my youth.*

When the swain had made an end of his song, Philador fetched a sigh, and being demanded by old Rabbi Bilessi why this sonnet did drive him into a passion, he made answer that it rubbed the scar afresh, and made him call to mind how he had vainly passed over the prime of his years, and suffered the caterpillars of time to consume the blossoms of his young thoughts.

How sweet soever (quoth he) desire seems at the first, it hath a most bitter taste at the last, resembling the juice of the India apples, that are most precious in the mouth and most pernicious in the maw. Son (quoth his father), leave off these dumps; penance is enough for youth's follies, and repentance satisfies the deepest offences. Let us therefore fit ourselves to the time and be merry, I for the recovery of thy person, thou for the change of thy qualities, and all the rest as welcome guests to such homely fare. And so as Rabbi Bilessi willed, there was nothing all dinner-time but witty mirth and country melody.

The Conclusion.

Thus (gentleman) have I presented you with my *Mourning Garment*, though a rough thread and a coarse dye, yet the wool is good. If any gentleman wear it, and find it so warm that it make him sweat out of all wanton desires, then:

O me foelicem & fortunatum.

It may be, though the shape seem bad, yet the operation may be better, and seem [sic?] secret virtue may be hidden in so ragged a garment. Diogenes' cloak would make a man a Cynic, and if my robe could make a man civil, what care I though I sat with him and delivered precepts out of a tub; scorn it not; Elias' garment was but a mantle, and yet it doubled the spirit upon Elizeus; reject not this, be it never so base; it is a mourning suit; if you make the worst of it, wear it as the Ninevites did their sackcloth, and repent with them, and I have played the good tailor. I hope there will be none so fond as to measure the matter by the man, or to proportion the contents of my pamphlet by the former course of my fond life; that were as extreme folly as to refuse the rose because of the prickles, or to make light esteem of honey because the bee hath a sting. What, Horace writ wanton poems, yet the gravest embraced his odes and his satires. Martial had many lascivious verses, yet none rejected his honest sentences. So I hope if I have been thought as wanton as Horace or as full of amours as Ovid, yet you will vouchsafe of my *Mourning Garment* for that it is the first-fruits of my new labours and the last farewell to my fond desires. I know Momus will look at it narrowly, and say there is too little cloth; Zoilus with his squint eyes will find fault with the shape; so shall I be bitten both for matter and method. Well, I care not though they be crabbed if I find other gentlemen courteous; let an ass strike me, I will never lift my heel, and if Diogenes by cynical, I will shake off his frumps with Aristippus. Because that gentlemen have passed over my works with silence, and have rid me without a spur, I have (like blind Bayard) plodded forward, and set forth many pamphlets full of much love and little scholarism; well, though Hipanchian [sic?] could not warble like Orpheus, yet he could pipe, and though Ennius wrote a rough style, yet he was a poet; the flint is a stone as well as the diamond, and I may term myself a writer though an unskillful inditer. What, everyone dips not his finger with Homer in the basin, nor all men's works cannot be excellent. Howsoever, I have pleased some, and so I pass it over. But henceforth I mean to offend few, for as this is the first of my reformed passions, so this is the last of my trifling pamphlets, and so farewell.

Robert Greene.

FINIS.