

to have access to gentlewomen, which methinketh in reason cannot be tolerable, knowing that there is nothing more pernicious to either, than love, and that love breedeth by nothing sooner than looks. They that fear water, will come near no wells, they that stand in dread of burning, fly from the fire: and ought not they that would not be entangled with desire to refrain company? If love have the pangs which the passionate set down, why do they not abstain from the cause? If it be pleasant why do they dispraise it?

"We shun the place of pestilence for fear of infection, the eyes of Catoblepas¹ because of diseases, the sight of the basilisk for dread of death, and shall we not eschew the company of them that may entrap us in love, which is more bitter than any destruction?"

"If we fly thieves that steal our goods, shall we follow murderers that cut our throats? If we be heed² to come where wasps be, lest we be stung, shall we hazard to run where Cupid is, where we shall be stifled? Truly, Martius, in my opinion there is nothing either more repugnant to reason, or abhorring from nature, than to seek that we should shun, leaving the clear stream to drink of the muddy ditch, or in the extremity of heat to lie in the parching sun, when he may sleep in the cold shadow, or, being free from fancy, to seek after love, which is as much as to cool a hot liver with strong wine, or to cure a weak stomach with raw flesh. In this I would hear thy sentence, induced the rather to this discourse, for that Surlus and Camilla have begun it, than that I like it: love in me hath neither power to command, nor persuasion to entreat. Which how idle a thing it is, and how pestilent to youth, I partly know, and you I am sure can guess."

Martius not very young to discourse of these matters, yet desirous to utter his mind, whether it were to flatter Surlus in his will, or to make trial of the lady's wit: began thus to frame his answer:

"Madam, there is in Chio the Image of Diana, which to those that enter seemeth sharp and sour, but returning after their suits made, looketh with a merry and pleasant countenance. And it may be that at the entrance of my discourse ye will bend your brows as one displeased, but hearing my proof, be delighted and satisfied.

"The question you move, is whether it be requisite, that gentlemen and gentlewomen

¹ a fabulous animal ² headful

should meet. Truly among lovers it is convenient to augment desire, amongst those that are firm, necessary to maintain society. For to take away all meeting for fear of love, were to kindle amongst all, the fire of hate. There is greater danger, Madam, by absence, which breedeth melancholy, than by presence, which engendereth affection.

"If the sight be so perilous, that the company should be barred, why then admit you those to see banquets that may thereby surfeit, or suffer them to eat their meat by a candle that have sore eyes? To be separated from one I love, would make me more constant, and to keep company with her I love not, would not kindle desire. Love cometh as well in at the ears, by the report of good conditions, as in at the eyes by the amiable countenance, which is the cause, that divers have loved those they never saw, and seen those they never loved.

"You allege that those that fear drowning, come near no wells, nor they that dread burning, near no fire. Why then, let them stand in doubt also to wash their hands in a shallow brook, for that Serapus falling into a channel was drowned: and let him that is cold never warm his hands, for that a spark fell into the eyes of Actine, whereof she died. Let none come into the company of women, for that divers have been allured to love, and being refused, have used violence to themselves.

"Let this be set down for a law, that none walk abroad in the day but men, lest meeting a beautiful woman, he fall in love, and lose his liberty.

"I think, Madam, you will not be so precise, to cut off all conference, because love cometh by often communication, which if you do, let us all now presently depart, lest in seeing the beauty which dazzleth our eyes, and hearing the wisdom which tickleth our ears, we be enflamed with love.

"But you shall never beat the fly from the candle though he burn, nor the quail from hemlock though it be poison, nor the lover from the company of his lady though it be perilous.

"It falleth out sundry times, that company is the cause to shake off love, working the effects of the root rhubarb, which being full of choler, purgeth choler, or of the scorpion's sting, which being full of poison, is a remedy for poison.

"But this I conclude, that to bar one that is in love of the company of his lady, maketh him

rather mad, than mortified, for him to refrain that never knew love, is either to suspect him of folly without cause, or the next way for him to fall into folly when he knoweth the cause.

"A lover is like the herb heliotropium, which always inclineth to that place where the sun shineth, and being deprived of the sun, dieth. For as lunaris herb, as long as the moon waxeth, bringeth forth leaves, and in the waning shaketh them off: so a lover whilst he is in the company of his lady, where all joys increase, uttereth many pleasant conceits, but banished from the sight of his mistress, where all mirth decreaseth, either liveth in melancholy, or dieth with desperation."

The Lady Flavia speaking in his cast,¹ proceeded in this manner:

"Truly, Martius, I had not thought that as yet your colt's tooth stuck in your mouth, or that so old a truant in love, could hitherto remember his lesson. You seem not to infer that it is requisite they should meet, but being in love that it is convenient, lest, falling into a mad mood, they pine in their own peevishness. Why then let it follow, that the drunkard which surfeith with wine be always quaffing, because he liketh it, or the epicure which glutteth himself with meat be ever eating, for that it contenteth him, not seeking at any time the means to redress their vices, but to renew them. But it fareth with the lover as it doth with him that poureth in much wine, who is ever more thirsty, than he that drinketh moderately, for having once tasted the delights of love, he desireth most the thing that hurteth him most, not laying a plaster to the wound, but a corsive.

"I am of this mind, that if it be dangerous, to lay flax to the fire, salt to the eyes, sulphur to the nose, that then it cannot be but perilous to let one lover come in presence of the other." Surlus overhearing the lady, and seeing her so earnest, although he were more earnest in his suit to Camilla, cut her off with these words:

"Good Madam, give me leave either to depart, or to speak, for in truth you gall me more with these terms, than you wist,² in seeming to inveigh so bitterly against the meeting of lovers, which is the only marrow of love, and though I doubt not but that Martius is sufficiently armed to answer you, yet would I not have those reasons refuted,³ which I loathe to have repeated. It may be you utter them not of malice you bear to love, but only

to move controversy where there is no question: for if thou envy to have lovers meet, why did you grant us; if allow it, why seek you to separate us?"

The good lady could not refrain from laughter, when she saw Surlus so angry, who in the midst of his own tale, was troubled with hers, whom she thus again answered.

"I cry you mercy,¹ gentleman, I had not thought to have catched you, when I fished for another, but I perceive now that with one bean it is easy to get two pigeons, and with one bait to have divers bites. I see that others may guess where the shoe wrings, besides him that wears it." "Madam," quoth Surlus, "you have caught a frog, if I be not deceived, and therefore as good it were not to hurt him, as not to eat him, but if all this while you angled to have a bite at a lover, you should have used no bitter medicines, but pleasant baits."

"I cannot tell," answered Flavia, "whether my bait were bitter or not, but sure I am I have the fish by the gill, that doth me good." Camilla not thinking to be silent, put in her spoke as she thought into the best wheel, saying,

"Lady, your cunning may deceive you in fishing with an angle, therefore to catch him you would have, you were best to use a net." "A net!" quoth Flavia, "I need none, for my fish playeth in a net already." With that Surlus began to wince, replying immediately, "So doth many a fish, good lady, that slippeth out, when the fisher thinketh him fast in, and it may be, that either your net is too weak to hold him, or your hand too wet." "A wet hand," quoth Flavia, "will hold a dead herring." "Aye," quoth Surlus, "but eels are no herrings." "But lovers are," said Flavia.

Surlus not willing to have the grass mown, whereof he meant to make his hay, began thus to conclude:

"Good Lady, leave off fishing for this time, and though it be Lent, rather break a statute which is but penal, than sew² a pond that may be perpetual." "I am content," quoth Flavia, "rather to fast for once, than to want a pleasure forever: yet, Surlus, betwixt us two, I will at large prove, that there is nothing in love more venomous than meeting, which filleth the mind with grief and the body with diseases: for having the one, he cannot fail of the other. But now, Philautus and niece Francis, since I am cut off, begin you: but be short, because

¹ style, manner ² know ³ refuted

¹ I beg your pardon ² drain, empty

the time is short, and that I was more short than I would."

THOMAS LODGE (1558?-1625)

FROM ROSALYNDE: EUPHUES' GOLDEN LEGACY

They came no sooner nigh the folds, but they might see where their discontented forester was walking in his melancholy. As soon as Aliena saw him, she smiled, and said to Ganymede: "Wipe your eyes, sweeting, for yonder is your sweetheart this morning in deep prayers no doubt to Venus, that she may make you as pitiful as he is passionate. Come on, Ganymede, I pray thee let's have a little sport with him." "Content," quoth Ganymede, and with that, to waken him out of his deep *memento*,¹ he² began thus:

"Forester, good fortune to thy thoughts, and ease to thy passions! What makes you so early abroad this morn, in contemplation, no doubt, of your Rosalynde? Take heed, forester, step not too far; the ford may be deep, and you slip over the shoes. I tell thee, flies have their spleen, the ants choler, the least hairs shadows, and the smallest loves great desires. 'Tis good, forester, to love, but not to overlove, lest, in loving her that likes not thee, thou fold thyself in an endless labyrinth." Rosader seeing the fair shepherdess and her pretty swain, in whose company he felt the greatest ease of his care, he returned them a salute on this manner:

"Gentle shepherds, all hail, and as healthful be your flocks as you happy in content. Love is restless, and my bed is but the cell of my bane, in that there I find busy thoughts and broken slumbers. Here, although everywhere passionate,³ yet I brook love with more patience, in that every object feeds mine eye with variety of fancies. When I lock on Flora's beauteous tapestry, checkered with the pride of all her treasure, I call to mind the fair face of Rosalynde, whose heavenly hue exceeds the rose and the lily in their highest excellence. The brightness of Phoebus' shine puts me in mind to think of the sparkling flames that flew from her eyes and set my heart first on fire; the sweet harmonie of the birds puts me in remembrance of the rare melody of her voice, which like the Syren enchanteth the ears of the hearer. Thus in contemplation I salve my sorrows, with applying the perfection of every object to the excellence of her qualities."

¹ meditation ² he = Rosalynde disguised as Ganymede ³ troubled

"She is much beholding unto you," quoth Aliena, "and so much that I have oft wished with myself that if I should ever prove as amorous as *Ænone*, I might find as faithful a Paris as yourself."

"How say you by this *Item*, forester?" quoth Ganymede. "The fair shepherdess favours you, who is mistress of so many flocks. Leave off, man, the supposition of Rosalynde's love, whenas, watching at her, you rove beyond the moon; and cast your looks upon my mistress, who no doubt is as fair though not so royal. One bird in the hand is worth two in the wood; better possess the love of Aliena, than catch frivolously at the shadow of Rosalynde."

"I'll tell thee, boy," quoth Ganymede; "so is my fancy fixed on my Rosalynde, that were thy mistress as fair as Leda or Danae, whom Jove courted in transformed shapes, mine eyes would not vouch¹ to entertain their beauties; and so hath Love locked me in her perfections, that I had rather only contemplate in her beauties, than absolutely possess the excellence of any other. Venus is to blame, forester, if, having so true a servant of you, she reward you not with Rosalynde, if Rosalynde were more fairer than herself. But leaving this prattle, now I'll put you in mind of your promise, about those sonnets which you said were at home in your lodge." "I have them about me," quoth Rosader; "let us sit down, and then you shall hear what a poetical fury Love will infuse into a man." With that they sat down upon a green bank shadowed with fig trees, and Rosader, fetching a deep sigh, read them this sonnet:

ROSADER'S SONNET

In sorrow's cell I laid me down to sleep,
But waking woes were jealous of mine eyes.
They made them watch, and bend themselves
to weep;
But weeping tears their want could not suffice.
Yet since for her they wept who guides my
heart,
They, weeping, smile and triumph in their
smart.

Of these my tears a fountain fiercely springs,
Where Venus bains² herself incensed with love;
Where Cupid boweth his fair feathered wings.
But I behold what pains I must approve.

Care drinks it dry; but when on her I think,
Love makes me weep it full unto the brink.

¹ condescend

² bathes

Meanwhile my sighs yield truce unto my tears,
By them the winds increased and fiercely
blow;

Yet when I sigh, the flame more plain appears,
And by their force with greater power doth glow.

Amidst these pains all Phoenix-like I thrive,
Since Love that yields me death may life
revive.

Rosader, en esperance.¹

"Now surely, forester," quoth Aliena, "when thou madest this sonnet, thou wert in some amorous quandary, neither too fearful, as despairing of thy mistress' favours, nor too gleeesome, as hoping in thy fortunes." "I can smile," quoth Ganymede, "at the sonnetoes, canzones, madrigals, rounds and roundelays, that these pensive patients pour out, when their eyes are more full of wantonness than their hearts of passions. Then, as the fishers put the sweetest bait to the fairest fish, so these Ovidians,¹ holding *Amo* in their tongues, when their thoughts come at haphazard, write that they be wrapped in an endless labyrinth of sorrow, when, walking in the large lease of liberty, they only have their humours in their inkpot. If they find women so fond,² that they will with such painted lures come to their lust, then they triumph till they be full gorged with pleasures; and then fly they away, like ramage kites, to their own content, leaving the tame fool, their mistress, full of fancy, yet without ever a feather. If they miss (as dealing with some wary wanton, that wants not such a one as themselves, but spies their subtilty), they end their amours with a few feigned sighs; and so their excuse is, their mistress is cruel, and they smother passions with patience. Such, gentle forester, we may deem you to be, that rather pass away the time here in these woods with writing amoretts, than to be deeply enamoured, as you say, of your Rosalynde. If you be such a one, then I pray God, when you think your fortunes at the highest, and your desires to be most excellent, then that you may with Ixion embrace Juno in a cloud, and have nothing but a marble mistress to release your martyrdom; but if you be true and trusty, eye-pained and heart-sick, then accused be Rosalynde if she prove cruel; for, forester, (I flatter not) thou art worthy of as fair as she." Aliena, spying the storm by the wind, smiled to see how Ganymede flew to the fist without any call; but Rosader, who took him flat for a shepherd's swain, made him this answer.

¹ devotees of Ovid's *Art of Love* ² foolish

"Trust me, swain," quoth Rosader, "but my canzon¹ was written in no such humour; for mine eye and my heart are relatives, the one drawing fancy² by sight, the other entertaining her by sorrow. If thou sawest my Rosalynde, with what beauties Nature hath favoured her, with what perfection the heavens hath graced her, with what qualities the Gods have endued her, then wouldst thou say, there is none so fickle that could be fleeting unto her. If she had been *Æneas' Dido*, had Venus and Juno both scolded him from Carthage, yet her excellence, despite of them, would have detained him at Tyre. If Phyllis had been as beauteous, or Ariadne as virtuous, or both as honourable and excellent as she, neither had the philbert tree sorrowed in the death of despairing Phyllis, nor the stars have been graced with Ariadne, but Demophon and Theseus had been trusty to their paragons. I will tell thee, swain, if with a deep insight thou couldst pierce into the secret of my loves, and see what deep impressions of her idea affection hath made in my heart, then wouldst thou confess I were passing passionate, and no less endued with admirable patience." "Why," quoth Aliena, "needs there patience in Love?" "Or else in nothing," quoth Rosader; "for it is a restless sore that hath no ease, a canker that still frets, a disease that taketh away all hope of sleep. If, then, so many sorrows, sudden joys, momentary pleasures, continual fears, daily griefs, and nightly woes be found in love, then is not he to be accounted patient, that smothers all these passions with silence?" "Thou speakest by experience," quoth Ganymede, "and therefore we hold all thy words for axioms. But is love such a lingering malady?" "It is," quoth he, "either extreme or mean, according to the mind of the party that entertains it; for as the weeds grow longer untouched than the pretty flowers, and the flint lies safe in the quarry, when the emerald is suffering the lapidary's tool, so mean men are freed from Venus' injuries, when kings are environed with a labyrinth of her cares. The whiter the lawn is the deeper is the mole, the more purer the chrysolite the sooner stained; and such as have their hearts full of honour, have their loves full of the greatest sorrows. But in whomsoever," quoth Rosader, "he fixeth his dart, he never leaveth to assault him, till either he hath won him to folly or fancy; for as the moon never goes without the star Luni-sequa,³ so a lover never goeth without the unrest

¹ a kind of song ² love ³ Moon-follower

of his thoughts. For proof you shall hear another fancy of my making." "Now do, gentle forester," quoth Ganimede. And with that he read over this sonetto:

ROSADER'S SECOND SONETTO

Turn I my looks unto the skies,
Love with his arrows wounds mine eyes;
If so I gaze upon the ground,
Love then in every flower is found;
Search I the shade to fly my pain,
He meets me in the shade again;
Wend I to walk in secret grove,
Even there I meet with sacred Love;
If so I bain¹ me in the spring,
Even on the brink I hear him sing;
If so I meditate alone,
He will be partner of my moan;
If so I mourn, he weeps with me;
And where I am, there will he be.
Whenas I talk of Rosalynde,
The God from coyness waxeth kind,
And seems in selfsame flames to fry,
Because he loves as well as I.
Sweet Rosalynde, for pity rue,
For-why² than Love I am more true;
He, if he speed³ will quickly fly,
But in thy love I live and die.

"How like you this sonnet?" quoth Rosader. "Marry," quoth Ganimede, "for the pen well, for the passion ill; for, as I praise the one, I pity the other, in that thou shouldst hunt after a cloud, and love either without reward or regard." "'Tis not her frowardness," quoth Rosader, "but my hard fortunes, whose destinies have crossed me with her absence; for did she feel my loves, she would not let me linger in these sorrows. Women, as they are fair, so they respect faith, and estimate more, if they be honourable, the will than the wealth, having loyalty the object whereat they aim their fancies. But, leaving off these interparleys, you shall hear my last sonetto, and then you have heard all my poetry." And with that he sighed out this:

ROSADER'S THIRD SONNET

Of virtuous love myself may boast alone,
Since no suspect my service may attain;
For perfect fair⁴ she is the only one,
Whom I esteem for my beloved Saint.
Thus for my faith I only bear the bell,⁵
And for her fair⁴ she only doth excell.

¹ bathe ² because ³ succeed ⁴ beauty ⁵ excel all

Then let fond¹ Petrarch shroud² his Laura's
praise,
And Tasso cease to publish his affect,³
Since mine the faith confirmed at all assays,
And hers the fair⁴ which all men do respect.
My lines her fair, her fair my faith assures;
Thus I by Love, and Love by me endures.

"Thus," quoth Rosader, "here is an end of my poems, but for all this no release of my passions; so that I resemble him that in the depth of his distress hath none but the Echo to answer him." Ganimede, pitying her Rosader, thinking to drive him out of this amorous melancholy, said that "Now the sun was in his meridional heat, and that it was high noon, therefore we shepherds say, 'tis time to go to dinner: for the sun and our stomachs, are shepherd's dials. Therefore, forester, if thou wilt take such fare as comes out of our homely scrips, welcome shall answer whatsoever thou wantest in delicacies." Aliena took the entertainment by the end, and told Rosader he should be her guest. He thanked them heartily, and sat with them down to dinner: where they had such cates⁵ as country state did allow them, sauced with such content and such sweet prattle as it seemed far more sweet than all their courtly junkets.⁶

As soon as they had taken their repast, Rosader giving them thanks for his good cheer, would have been gone; but Ganimede, that was loath to let him pass out of her presence, began thus: "Nay, forester," quoth he, "if thy business be not the greater, seeing thou sayest thou art so deeply in love, let me see how thou canst woo. I will represent Rosalynde, and thou shalt be, as thou art, Rosader. See in some amorous Eglogue, how if Rosalynde were present, how thou couldst court her; and while we sing of love, Aliena shall tune her pipe, and play us melody." "Content," quoth Rosader. And Aliena, she to show her willingness, drew forth a recorder, and began to wind⁷ it. Then the loving forester began thus:

THE WOOING EGLOGUE BETWIXT ROSALYNDE AND ROSADER

Rosader

I pray thee, Nymph, by all the working words,
By all the tears and sighs that lovers know,
Or what or thoughts or faltering tongue affords,
I crave for mine in ripping up my woe.

¹ foolish ² cover up ³ love ⁴ beauty ⁵ cakes
⁶ delicacies ⁷ blow

Sweet Rosalynde, my love (would God my
love!),
My life (would God my life!), ay pity me;
Thy lips are kind, and humble like the dove,
And but with beauty pity will not be.
Look on mine eyes, made red with rueful tears,
From whence the rain of true remorse descendeth,
All pale in looks, and I though young in years,
And nought but love or death my days befriendeth.

Oh, let no stormy rigour knit thy brows,
Which Love appointed for his mercy-seat!
The tallest tree by Boreas' breath it bows,
The iron yields with hammer, and to heat;
O Rosalynde, then be thou pitiful;
For Rosalynde is only beautiful.

Rosalynde

Love's wantons arm their trait'rous suits with
tears,
With vows, with oaths, with looks, with
showers of gold;
But when the fruit of their affects¹ appears,
The simple heart by subtil sleights is sold.
Thus sucks the yielding ear the poisoned bait,
Thus feeds the heart upon his endless harms,
Thus glut the thoughts themselves on self-deceit,
Thus blind the eyes their sight by subtil charms.
The lovely looks, the sighs that storm so sore,
The dew of deep dissembled doubleness,—
These may attempt, but are of power no more,
Where beauty leans to wit and soothfastness.²
O Rosader, then be thou wittiful;
For Rosalynde scorns foolish pitiful.

Rosader

I pray thee, Rosalynde, by those sweet eyes
That stain³ the sun in shine, the morn in
clear;⁴
By those sweet cheeks where Love encamped
lies
To kiss the roses of the springing year;
I tempt thee, Rosalynde, by ruthless plaints,
Not seasoned with deceit or fraudulent guile,
But firm in pain, far more than tongue depaints,
Sweet nymph, be kind, and grace me with a
smile.
So may the heavens preserve from hurtful
food
Thy harmless flocks, so may the summer yield
The pride of all her riches and her good,
To fat thy sheep, the citizens of field.

¹ affections ² truth ³ excel ⁴ clearness

Oh, leave to arm thy lovely brows with scorn!
The birds their beak, the lion hath his tail;
And lovers nought but sighs and bitter mourn,¹
The spotless fort of fancy² to assail.
O Rosalynde, then be thou pitiful;
For Rosalynde is only beautiful.

Rosalynde

The hardened steel by fire is brought in frame:

Rosader

And Rosalynde my love than any wool more
softer;
And shall not sighs her tender heart enflame?

Rosalynde

Were lovers true, maids would believe them
ofter.

Rosader

Truth and regard and honour guide my love!

Rosalynde

Fain would I trust, but yet I dare not try.

Rosader

Oh, pity me, sweet Nymph, and do but prove.

Rosalynde

I would resist, but yet I know not why.

Rosader

O Rosalynde, be kind, for times will change;
Thy looks aye nill³ be fair as now they be,
Thine age from beauty may thy looks estrange:
Ah, yield in time, sweet Nymph, and pity me.

Rosalynde

O Rosalynde, thou must be pitiful;
For Rosader is young and beautiful.

Rosader

Oh, gain more great than kingdoms or a crown!

Rosalynde

Oh, trust betrayed if Rosader abuse me!

¹ mourning ² love ³ will not

Rosader

First let the heavens conspire to pull me down,
And heaven and earth as abject quite refuse
me;
Let sorrows stream about my hateful bower,
And restless horror hatch within my breast;
Let beauty's eye afflict me with a lour;
Let deep despair pursue me without rest;
Ere Rosalynde my loyalty disprove,
Ere Rosalynde accuse me for unkind.

Rosalynde

Then Rosalynde will grace thee with her love,
Then Rosalynde will have thee still in mind.

Rosader

Then let me triumph more than Tithon's
dear,
Since Rosalynde will Rosader respect:
Then let my face exile his sorry cheer,
And frolic in the comfort of affect;¹
And say that Rosalynde is only pitiful,
Since Rosalynde is only beautiful.

When thus they had finished their courting
eglogue in such a familiar clause,² Ganimede as
augur of some good fortunes to light upon their
affections, began to be thus pleasant: "How
now, forester, have I not fitted your turn?
Have I not played the woman handsomely, and
showed myself as coy in grants, as courteous in
desires, and been as full of suspicion as men of
flattery? And yet to salve all, jumped³ I not
all up with the sweet union of love? Did not
Rosalynde content her Rosader?" The fore-
ster at this smiling, shook his head, and folding
his arms made this merry reply:

"Truth, gentle swain, Rosader hath his
Rosalynde; but as Ixion had Juno, who,
thinking to possess a goddess, only embraced a
cloud. In these imaginary fruitions of fancy,
I resemble the birds that fed themselves with
Zeuxis' painted grapes; but they grew so lean
with pecking at shadows that they were glad
with Æsop's cock to scrape for a barley cornel;⁴
so fareth it with me, who to feed myself with the
hope of my mistress' favours, soothe myself in
thy suits, and only in conceit reap a wished-for
content. But if my food be no better than such
amorous dreams, Venus at the year's end shall
find me but a lean lover. Yet do I take these
follies for high fortunes, and hope these feigned
affections do divine some unfeigned end of
ensuing fancies." "And thereupon," quoth

¹ love ² expression ³ closed ⁴ kernel

Aliena, "I'll play the priest. From this day
forth Ganimede shall call thee husband, and
thou shalt call Ganimede wife, and so we'll
have a marriage." "Content," quoth Rosader,
and laughed. "Content," quoth Ganimede,
and changed as red as a rose. And so with a
smile and a blush they made up this jesting
match, that after proved to a marriage in ear-
nest; Rosader full little thinking he had wooed
and won his Rosalynde. . . .

ROBERT GREENE (1560?-1592)

FROM A GROAT'S WORTH OF WIT, BOUGHT
WITH A MILLION OF REPENTANCE

On the other side of the hedge sat one that
heard his sorrow, who getting over, came tow-
ards him, and brake off his passion. When
he approached, he saluted Roberto in this sort.
"Gentleman," quoth he, "(for so you seem)
I have by chance heard you discourse some part
of your grief; which appeareth to be more than
you will discover, or I can conceit.¹ But if
you vouchsafe² such simple comfort as my
ability will yield, assure yourself that I will en-
deavour to do the best, that either may pro-
cure your profit, or bring you pleasure: the
rather, for that I suppose you are a scholar,
and pity it is men of learning should live in
lack."

Roberto wondering to hear such good words,
for that this iron age affords few that esteem
of virtue, returned him thankful congratulations,
and (urged by necessity) uttered his present
grief, beseeching his advice how he might be
employed. "Why, easily," quoth he, "and
greatly to your benefit: for men of my profes-
sion get by scholars their whole living." "What
is your profession?" said Roberto. "Truly,
sir," said he, "I am a player." "A player,"
quoth Roberto, "I took you rather for a gen-
tleman of great living, for if by outward habit
men should be censured, I tell you you would be
taken for a substantial man." "So am I, where
I dwell (quoth the player), reputed able at my
proper cost to build a windmill. What though
the world once went hard with me, when I
was fain to carry my playing fardel a footback;
Tempora mutantur,³ I know you know the mean-
ing of it better than I, but I thus construe
it; it is otherwise now; for my very share in
playing apparel will not be sold for two hun-
dred pounds." "Truly (said Roberto) it is

¹ conceive ² condescend to accept ³ times change

strange, that you should so prosper in that vain
practice, for that it seems to me your voice
is nothing gracious." "Nay then," said the
player, "I mislike your judgment: why, I am
as famous for Delphrigus, and the King of
Fairies, as ever was any of my time. The
Twelve Labours of Hercules have I terribly
thundered on the stage, and placed three scenes
of the Devil on the Highway to Heaven." "Have
ye so? (said Roberto) then I pray you pardon
me." "Nay, more (quoth the player), I can
serve to make a pretty speech, for I was a
country author; passing at a moral,¹ for it was
I that penned the Moral of Man's Wit, the
Dialogue of Dives, and for seven years space
was absolute interpreter of the puppets. But
now my almanac is out of date.

The people make no estimation,
Of Morals teaching education.

Was not this pretty for a plain rhyme ex-
tempore? if ye will, ye shall have more."
"Nay it is enough," said Roberto, "but how
mean you to use me?" "Why sir, in making
plays," said the other, "for which you shall be
well paid, if you will take the pains."

Roberto perceiving no remedy, thought best
in respect of his present necessity, to try his
wit, and went with him willingly: who lodged
him at the town's end in a house of retail,
where what happened our poet you shall here-
after hear. There, by conversing with bad
company, he grew *A malo in peius*,² falling
from one vice to another, and so having found
a vein³ to finger crowns he grew cranker⁴ than
Lucanio, who by this time began to droop,
being thus dealt withal by Lamilia. She hav-
ing bewitched him with her enticing wiles,
caused him to consume, in less than two years,
that infinite treasure gathered by his father with
so many a poor man's curse. His lands sold,
his jewels pawned, his money wasted, he was
cashiered by Lamilia that had cozened him of
all. Then walked he, like one of Duke Hum-
frey's squires, in a threadbare cloak, his hose
drawn out with his heels, his shoes unseamed,
lest his feet should sweat with heat: now (as
witless as he was) he remembered his father's
words, his kindness to his brother, his careles-
sness of himself. In this sorrow he sat down on
penniless bench; where, when Opus and Usus⁵
told him by the chimes in his stomach it was
time to fall unto meat, he was fain with the

camelion to feed upon the air, and make
patience his best repast.

While he was at his feast, Lamilia came
flaunting by, garnished with the jewels whereof
she beguiled him: which sight served to close
his stomach after his cold cheer. Roberto,
hearing of his brother's beggery, albeit he had
little remorse¹ of his miserable state, yet did
he seek him out, to use him as a property,²
whereby Lucanio was somewhat provided for.
But being of simple nature, he served but for
a block to whet Roberto's wit on; which the
poor fool perceiving, he forsook all other hopes
of life, and fell to be a notorious pandar: in
which detested course he continued till death.
But, Roberto, now famed for an arch play-
making poet, his purse like the sea sometime
swelled, anon like the same sea fell to a low ebb;
yet seldom he wanted, his labours were so well
esteemed. Marry, this rule he kept, whatever
he fingered aforehand was the certain means
to unbind a bargain, and, being asked why he
so slightly dealt with them that did him good,
"It becomes me," saith he, "to be contrary to
the world, for commonly when vulgar men
receive earnest, they do perform, when I am
paid anything aforehand I break my promise."
He had shift of lodgings, where in every place
his hostess writ up the woeful remembrance of
him, his laundress, and his boy; for they were
ever his in household, beside retainers in sundry
other places. His company were lightly³ the
lowest persons in the land, apt for pilefrey,
perjury, forgery, or any villany. Of these
he knew the casts to cog⁴ at cards, cozen at dice:
by these he learned the legerdemains of nips,
foisters, cony-catchers, crossbiters, lifts, high
lawyers,⁵ and all the rabble of that unclean
generation of vipers: and pithily could he paint
out their whole courses of craft: So cunning he
was in all crafts, as nothing rested in him almost
but craftiness. How often the gentlewoman
his wife laboured vainly to recall him, is lament-
able to note: but as one given over to all lewd-
ness, he communicated her sorrowful lines
among his loose trulls, that jested at her boot-
less laments. If he could any way get credit
on scores, he would then brag his creditors
carried stones, comparing every round circle
to a groaning O, procured by a painful burden.
The shameful end of sundry his consorts,⁶
deservedly punished for their amiss,⁷ wrought

¹ pity ² tool ³ easily ⁴ cheat ⁵ different
kinds of pickpockets and thieves ⁶ companions
⁷ crime

¹ Morality Play ² from bad to worse ³ inclination
⁴ worse ⁵ need and custom

no compunction in his heart: of which one, brother to a brothel¹ he kept, was trussed under a tree² as round as a ball.³

To some of his swearing companions thus it happened: A crew of them sitting in a tavern carousing, it fortun'd an honest gentleman, and his friend, to enter their room: some of them being acquainted with him, in their domineering drunken vein, would have no nay, but down he must needs sit with them; being placed, no remedy there was, but he must needs keep even compass with their unseemly carousing. Which he refusing, they fell from high words to sound strokes, so that with much ado the gentleman saved his own, and shifted from their company. Being gone, one of these tiplers forsooth lacked a gold ring, the other sware they see⁴ the gentleman take it from his hand. Upon this the gentleman was indicted before a judge: these honest men are deposed: whose⁵ wisdom weighing the time of the brawl, gave light to the jury what power wine-washing poison had: they, according unto conscience, found the gentleman not guilty, and God released by that verdict the innocent.

With his accusers thus it fared: one of them never since prospered: the third, sitting not long after upon a lusty horse, the beast suddenly died under him: God amend the man!

Roberto every day acquainted with these examples, was notwithstanding nothing bettered, but rather hardened in wickedness. At last was that place⁶ justified, "God warneth men by dreams and visions in the night, and by known examples in the day, but if he return not, he comes upon him with judgment that shall be felt." For now when the number of deceits caused Roberto to be hateful almost to all men, his immeasurable drinking had made him the perfect image of the dropsy, and the loathsome scourge of lust tyrannised in his loves: living in extreme poverty, and having nothing to pay but chalk,⁷ which now his host accepted not for current, this miserable man lay comfortlessly languishing, having but one groat left (the just⁸ proportion of his father's legacy) which looking on, he cried: "Oh now it is too late! too late to buy wit with thee: and therefore will I see if I can sell to careless youth what I negligently forgot to buy."

¹ trull ² hanged ³ A poor pun; the man's name was Ball. ⁴ saw ⁵ i.e. the judge ⁶ scriptural passage ⁷ Chalk was used to keep a record of small debts. ⁸ exact

Here (gentlemen) break I off Roberto's speech; whose life in most parts agreeing with mine, found one self punishment as I have done. Hereafter suppose me the said Roberto, and I will go on with that he promised: Greene will send you now his groatsworth of wit, that¹ never showed a mitesworth in his life: and though no man now be by to do me good, yet, ere I die, I will by my repentance endeavour to do all men good.

* * * * *

And therefore (while life gives leave) will send warning to my old consorts,² which have lived as loosely as myself, albeit weakness will scarce suffer me to write, yet to my fellow scholars about this City, will I direct these few ensuing lines.

*To those Gentlemen his Quondam acquaintance,
that spend their wits in making Plays,
R. G. wisheth a better exercise, and
wisdom to prevent his extremities.*

If woeful experience may move you (gentlemen) to beware, or unheard-of wretchedness entreat you to take heed, I doubt not but you will look back with sorrow on your time past, and endeavour with repentance to spend that which is to come. Wonder not (for with thee will I first begin), thou famous gracer of tragedians, that Greene, who hath said with thee like the fool in his heart, "There is no God," should now give glory unto his greatness: for penetrating is his power, his hand lies heavy upon me, he hath spoken unto me with a voice of thunder, and I have felt he is a God that can punish enemies. Why should thy excellent wit, his gift, be so blinded, that thou shouldst give no glory to the giver? Is it pestilent Machiavellian policy that thou hast studied? O Punish³ folly! What are his rules but mere confused mockeries, able to extirpate in small time the generation of mankind. For if *Sic volo, sic jubeo*,⁴ hold in those that are able to command: and if it be lawful *Fas et nefas*⁵ to do anything that is beneficial, only tyrants should possess the earth, and they striving to exceed in tyranny, should each to other be a slaughter man; till the mightiest outliving all, one stroke were left for Death, that in one age man's life should end. The brother⁶ of this Diabolical Atheism is dead, and in his life had never the felicity he aimed at: but as he began in craft, lived in

¹ who, i.e. Greene ² companions ³ Punish, deceitful ⁴ so I wish, so I command ⁵ lawful or unlawful ⁶ ? brocher = beginner

fear and ended in despair. *Quam inscrutabilia sunt Dei judicia?*¹ This murderer of many brethren had his conscience seared like Cain: this betrayer of Him that gave his life for him inherited the portion of Judas: this apostata perished as ill as Julian: and wilt thou, my friend, be his disciple? Look unto me, by him persuaded to that liberty, and thou shalt find it an infernal bondage. I know the least of my demerits merit this miserable death, but willful striving against known truth, exceedeth all the terrors of my soul. Defer not (with me) till this last point of extremity; for little knowest thou how in the end thou shalt be visited.

With thee I join young Juvenal, that biting satirist, that lastly with me together writ a comedy. Sweet boy, might I advise thee, be advised, and get not many enemies by bitter words: inveigh against vain men, for thou canst do it, no man better, no man so well: thou hast a liberty to reprove all, and none more; for, one being spoken to, all are offended; none being blamed, no man is injured. Stop shallow water still running, it will rage; tread on a worm and it will turn: then blame not scholars vexed with sharp lines, if they reprove thy too much liberty of reproof.

And thou no less deserving than the other two, in some things rarer, in nothing inferior; driven (as myself) to extreme shifts, a little have I to say to thee: and were it not an idolatrous oath, I would swear by sweet S. George, thou art unworthy better hap, sith² thou dependest on so mean a stay. Base minded men all three of you, if by my misery ye be not warned: for unto none of you, like me, sought those burrs to cleave: those puppets, I mean, that speak from our mouths, those antics garnished in our colours. Is it not strange that I, to whom they all have been beholding: is it not like that you, to whom they all have been beholding, shall, were ye in that case that I am now, be both at once of them forsaken? Yes, trust them not: for there is an upstart Crow, beautified with our feathers, that with his *Tiger's heart wrapped in a Player's hide*, supposes he is as well able to bombast out a blank verse as the best of you: and being an absolute *Johannes fac totum*, is in his own conceit the only Shake-scene in a country. O that I might entreat your rare wits to be employed in more profitable courses: and let those Apes imitate your past excellence, and never more

acquaint them with your admired inventions. I know the best husband of you all will never prove an usurer, and the kindest of them all will never prove a kind nurse: yet whilst you may, seek you better masters; for it is pity men of such rare wits, should be subject to the pleasures of such rude grooms.

In this I might insert two more, that both have writ against these buckram gentlemen: but let their own works serve to witness against their own wickedness, if they persevere to maintain any more such peasants. For other new comers, I leave them to the mercy of these painted monsters, who (I doubt not) will drive the best minded to despise them: for the rest, it skills not though they make a jest at them.

But now return I again to you three, knowing my misery is to you no news: and let me heartily entreat you to be warned by my harms. Delight not, as I have done, in irreligious oaths; for from the blasphemer's house a curse shall not depart. Despise drunkenness, which wasteth the wit, and maketh men all equal unto beasts. Fly lust, as the deathsman of the soul, and defile not the temple of the Holy Ghost. Abhor those epicures, whose loose life hath made religion loathsome to your ears: and when they sooth you with terms of mastership, remember Robert Greene, whom they have so often flattered, perishes now for want of comfort. Remember, gentlemen, your lives are like so many lighted tapers, that are with care delivered to all of you to maintain; these with wind-puffed wrath may be extinguished, which drunkenness put out, which negligence let fall: for man's time of itself is not so short, but it is more shortened by sin. The fire of my light is now at the last snuff, and the want of wherewith to sustain it, there is no substance left for life to feed on. Trust not then, I beseech ye, to such weak stays: for they are as changeable in mind, as in many attires. Well, my hand is tired, and I am forced to leave where I would begin; for a whole book cannot contain these wrongs, which I am forced to knit up in some few lines of words.

*Desirous that you should live, though
himself be dying,
Robert Greene.*

FROM THE ART OF CONY-CATCHING¹

There be requisite effectually to act the Art of Cony-catching, three several parties: the setter, the verser, and the barnacle. The

¹ How inscrutable are the judgments of God
² since

¹ bunco-steering

nature of the setter, is to draw any person familiarly to drink with him, which person they call the cony, and their method is according to the man they aim at: if a gentleman, merchant, or apprentice, the cony is the more easily caught, in that they are soon induced to play, and therefore I omit the circumstance which they use in catching of them. And for because the poor country farmer or yeoman is the mark which they most of all shoot at, who they know comes not empty to the term,¹ I will discover the means they put in practice to bring in some honest, simple and ignorant men to their purpose. The cony-catchers, appareled like honest civil gentlemen, or good fellows, with a smooth face, as if butter would not melt in their mouths, after dinner when the clients are come from Westminster Hall, and are at leisure to walk up and down Paul's, Fleet-street, Holborn, the Strand, and such common haunted places, where these cozening companions attend only to spy out a prey: who as soon as they see a plain country fellow well and cleanly appareled, either in a coat of homespun russet, or of frieze, as the time requires, and a side² pouch at his side, "There is a cony," saith one. At that word out flies the setter, and overtaking the man, begins to salute him thus: "Sir, God save you, you are welcome to London, how doth all our good friends in the country, I hope they be all in health?" The country-man seeing a man so courteous he knows not, half in a brown study at this strange salutation, perhaps makes him this answer: "Sir, all our friends in the country are well, thanks be to God, but truly I know you not, you must pardon me." "Why, sir," saith the setter, guessing by his tongue what country man he is, "are you not such a country man?" If he says yes, then he creeps upon him closely. If he say no, then straight the setter comes over him thus: "In good sooth, sir, I know you by your face and have been in your company before, I pray you, if without offence, let me crave your name, and the place of your abode." The simple man straight tells him where he dwells, his name, and who be his next neighbours, and what gentlemen dwell about him. After he hath learned all of him, then he comes over his fellow kindly: "Sir, though I have been somewhat bold to be inquisitive of your name, yet hold me excused, for I took you for a friend of mine, but since by mistaking I have made you slack your business, we'll drink a

¹ session of court ² wide

quart of wine, or a pot of ale together." If the fool be so ready as to go, then the cony is caught; but if he smack the setter, and smells a rat by his clawing, and will not drink with him, then away goes the setter, and discourseth to the verser the name of the man, the parish he dwells in, and what gentlemen are his near neighbours. With that away goes he, and crossing the man at some turning, meets him full in the face, and greets him thus:

"What, Goodman Barton, how fare all our friends about you? You are well met, I have the wine for you, you are welcome to town." The poor countryman hearing himself named by a man he knows not, marvels, and answers that he knows him not, and craves pardon. "Not me, Goodman Barton, have you forgot me? Why I am such a man's kinsman, your neighbour not far off; how doth this or that good gentleman my friend? Good Lord that I should be out of your remembrance, I have been at your house divers times." "Indeed sir," saith the farmer, "are you such a man's kinsman? Surely, sir, if you had not challenged acquaintance of me, I should never have known you. I have clean forgot you, but I know the good gentleman your cousin well, he is my very good neighbour." "And for his sake," saith the verser, "we'll drink afore we part." Haply the man thanks him, and to the wine or ale they go. Then ere they part, they make him a cony, and so ferret-claw¹ him at cards, that they leave him as bare of money, as an ape of a tail. Thus have the filthy fellows their subtle fetches to draw on poor men to fall into their cozening practices. Thus like consuming moths of the commonwealth, they prey upon the ignorance of such plain souls as measure all by their own honesty, not regarding either conscience, or the fatal revenge that's threatened for such idle and licentious persons, but do employ all their wits to overthrow such as with their handy-thrift satisfy their hearty thirst, they preferring cozenage before labour, and choosing an idle practice before any honest form of good living. Well, to the method again of taking up their conies. If the poor countryman smoke them still, and will not stoop unto either of their lures, then one, either the verser, or the setter, or some of their crew, for there is a general fraternity betwixt them, steppeth before the cony as he goeth, and letteth drop twelve pence in the highway, that of force² the cony must see it. The countryman spying the shilling,

¹ cheat ² necessarily

maketh not dainty, for *quis nisi mentis inops oblatum respuit aurum*,¹ but stoopeth very manly and taketh it up. Then one of the cony catchers behind, crieth half part, and so challengeth half of his finding. The countryman content, offereth to change the money. "Nay faith, friend," saith the verser, "'tis ill luck to keep found money, we'll go spend it in a pottle of wine (or in a breakfast, dinner or supper, as the time of day requires)." If the cony say he will not, then answers the verser, "Spend my part." If still the cony refuse, he taketh half and away. If they spy the countryman to be of a having and covetous mind, then have they a further policy to draw him on: another that knoweth the place of his abode, meeteth him and saith, "Sir, well met, I have run hastily to overtake you, I pray you, dwell you not in Darbyshire, in such a village?" "Yes, marry, do I, friend," saith the cony. Then replies the verser, "Truly, sir, I have a suit to you, I am going out of town, and must send a letter to the parson of your parish. You shall not refuse to do a stranger such a favour as to carry it him. Haply, as men may in time meet, it may lie in my lot to do you as good a turn, and for your pains I will give you twelve pence." The poor cony in mere simplicity saith, "Sir, I'll do so much for you with all my heart; where is your letter?" "I have it not, good sir, ready written, but may I entreat you to step into some tavern or alehouse? We'll drink the while, and I will write but a line or two." At this the cony stoops, and for greediness of the money, and upon courtesy goes with the setter into the tavern. As they walk, they meet the verser, and then they all three go into the tavern together. . . .

GREENE'S NEVER TOO LATE

FROM THE PALMER'S TALE

In those days wherein Palmerin reigned king of Great Britain, famous for his deeds of chivalry, there dwelled in the city of Cærbranck a gentleman of an ancient house, called Francesco, a man whose parentage though it were worshipful, yet it was not indued with much wealth, insomuch that his learning was better than his revenues, and his wit more beneficial than his substance. This Signor Francesco, desirous to bend the course of his compass to some peaceable port, spread no more cloth in the wind than might make easy sail, lest hoisting

¹ Who but a fool refuses offered gold?

up too hastily above the main yard, some sudden gust might make him founder in the deep. Though he were young, yet he was not rash with Icarus to soar into the sky, but to cry out with old Dedalus, *Medium tenere tutissimum*,¹ treading his shoe without any slip. He was so generally loved of the citizens, that the richest merchant or gravest burghmaster would not refuse to grant him his daughter in marriage, hoping more of his ensuing fortunes, than of his present substance. At last, casting his eye on a gentleman's daughter that dwelt not far from Cærbranck, he fell in love, and prosecuted his suit with such affable courtesy as the maid, considering the virtue and wit of the man, was content to set up her rest with him, so that² her father's consent might be at the knitting up of the match. Francesco, thinking himself cocksure, as a man that hoped his credit in the city might carry away more than a country gentleman's daughter, finding her father on a day at fit opportunity, he made the motion about the grant of his daughter's marriage. The old churl, that listened with both ears to such a question, did not in this *in utramvis aurem dormire*,³ but leaning on his elbow, made present answer, that her dowry required a greater feofment than his lands were able to afford. And upon that, without farther debating of the matter, he rose up, and hied him home. Whither as soon as he came, he called his daughter before him, whose name was Isabel, to whom he uttered these words: "Why, housewife,"⁴ quoth he, "are you so idle tasked, that you stand upon thorns while⁵ you have a husband? Are you no sooner hatched with the Lapwing but you will run away with the shell on your head? Soon pricks the tree that will prove a thorn, and a girl that loves too soon will repent too late. What, a husband? Why, the maids in Rome durst not look at Venus' temple till they were thirty, nor went they unmasked till they were married; that neither their beauties might allure other, nor they glance their eyes on every wanton. I tell thee, fond girl, when Nilus overfloweth before his time, Egypt is plagued with a dearth; the trees that blossom in February are nipped with the frosts in May; untimely fruits had never good fortune; and young gentlewomen that are wooed and won ere they be wise, sorrow and repent before they be old. What seest thou in Francesco that

¹ It is safest to keep the middle way. ² provided
³ sleep on either ear ⁴ huzzy ⁵ until

thine eye must choose, and thy heart must fancy? Is he beautiful? Why, fond girl, what the eye liketh at morn, it hateth at night. Love is, like a bavin,¹ but a blaze; and beauty, why how can I better compare it than to the gorgeous cedar, that is only for show and nothing for profit; to the apples of Tantalus, that are precious to the eye, and dust in the hand; to the star Artophilex, that is most bright, but fitteth not for any compass; so young men that stand upon their outward portraiture, I tell thee they are prejudicial. Demophon was fair, but how dealt he with Phillis? Æneas was a brave man but a dissembler. Fond girl, all are but little worth, if they be not wealthy. And I pray thee, what substance hath Francesco to endue thee with? Hast thou not heard, that want breaks amity, that love beginneth in gold and endeth in beggary; that such as marry but to a fair face, tie themselves oft to a foul bargain? And what wilt thou do with a husband that is not able to maintain thee? Buy, forsooth, a dram of pleasure with a pound of sorrow, and a pint of content with a whole ton of prejudicial displeasures? But why do I cast stones into the air, or breathe my words into the wind; when to persuade a woman from her will is to roll Sisiphus' stone; or to hale a headstrong girl from love, is to tie the Furies again in fetters. Therefore, housewife, to prevent all misfortunes I will be your jailer." And with that, he carried her in and shut her up in his own chamber, not giving her leave to depart but when his key gave her license; yet at last she so cunningly dissembled, that she got thus far liberty, not to be close prisoner, but to walk about the house. Yet every night he shut up her clothes, that no nightly fear of her escape might hinder his broken slumbers.

Where leaving her, let us return to Francesco; who to his sorrow heard of all these hard fortunes, and being pensive was full of many passions, but almost in despair, as a man that durst not come nigh her father's door, nor send any letters whereby to comfort his mistress, or to lay any plot of her liberty. For no sooner any stranger came thither, but he, suspicious they came from Francesco, first sent up his daughter into her chamber; then as watchful as Argus with all his eyes, he pried into every particular gesture and behaviour of the party; and if any jealous humour took him in the head, he would not only be very inquisitive with

cutting questions, but would strain courtesies and search them very narrowly, whether they had any letters or no to his daughter Isabel.

This narrow inquisition made the poor gentleman almost frantic, that he turned over Anacreon, Ovid *de Arte amandi*, and all books that might teach him any sleights of love; but, for all their principles, his own wit served him for the best shift, and that was haply¹ begun and fortunately ended thus. It chanced that as he walked thus in his musings, fetching the compass of his conceit² beyond the moon, he met with a poor woman that from door to door sought her living by charity. The woman, as her custom was, began her *exordium* with "I pray, good master," and so forth, hoping to find the gentleman as liberal, as he was full of gracious favours. Neither did she miss of her imagination; for he, that thought her likely to be drawn on to the executing of his purpose, conceived³ this, that gold was as good as glue to knit her to any practice whatsoever, and therefore out with his purse, and clapped her in the hand with a French crown. This unaccustomed reward made her more frank of her curtsies, that every rag reached the gentleman a reverence with promise of many prayers for his health. He, that harped on another string, took the woman by the hand, and sitting down upon the green grass, discoursed unto her from point to point the beginning and sequel of his loves, and how by no means, except by her, he could convey any letter. The beggar, desirous to do the gentleman any pleasure, said she was ready to take any pains that might redound to his content. Whereupon he replied thus; "Then, mother, thou shalt go to yonder abbey, which is her father's house; and when thou comest thither, use thy wonted eloquence to entreat for thine alms. If the master of the house be present, show thy passport, and seem very passionate;⁴ but if he be absent or out of the way, then, oh then, mother, look about if thou seest Diana masking in the shape of a virgin, if thou spiest Venus, nay, one more beautiful than love's goddess, and I tell thee she is my love, fair Isabel, whom thou shalt discern from her other sister, thus: her visage is fair, containing as great resemblance of virtue as lineaments of beauty, and yet I tell thee she is full of favour,⁵ whether thou respects the outward portraiture or inward perfection; her eye like the diamond, and so pointed that it pierceth to

¹ by chance ² range of his fancy ³ reasoned
⁴ sorrowful ⁵ beauty

¹ a dry twig

the quick, yet so chaste in the motion as therein is seen as in a mirror courtesy tempered with a virtuous disdain; her countenance is the very map of modesty, and, to give thee a more near mark, if thou findest her in the way, thou shalt see her more liberal to bestow, than thou pitiful to demand; her name is Isabel; to her from me shalt thou carry a letter, folded up every way like thy passport, with a greasy backside, and a great seal. If cunningly and closely thou canst thus convey unto her the tenure¹ of my mind, when thou bringest me an answer, I will give thee a brace of angels." The poor woman was glad of this proffer, and thereupon promised to venture a joint,² but she would further him in his loves; whereupon she followed him to his chamber, and the whiles³ he writ a letter to this effect.

Signor Francesco to Fair Isabel:

When I note, fair Isabel, the extremity of thy fortunes, and measure the passions of my love, I find that Venus hath made thee constant to requite my miseries; and that where the greatest onset is given by fortune, there is strongest defence made by affection; for I heard that thy father, suspicious, or rather jealous, of our late-united sympathy, doth watch like Argus over Io, not suffering thee to pass beyond the reach of his eye, unless,⁴ as he thinks, thou shouldest overreach thyself. His mind is like the tapers in Janus' temple, that, set once on fire, burn till they consume themselves; his thoughts like the sunbeams, that search every secret. Thus watching thee he overwaketh himself; and yet I hope profiteth as little as they which gaze on the flames of Ætna, which vanish out of their sight in smoke.

I have heard them say, fair Isabel, that, as the diamonds are tried by cutting of glass, the topaz by biding the force of the anvil, the sapphire wood by the hardness, so women's excellence is discovered in their constancy. Then, if the period of all their virtues consist in this, that they take in love by months, and let it slip by minutes, that, as the tortoise, they creep *pedentim*,⁵ and, when they come to their rest, will hardly be removed, I hope thou wilt confirm in thy loves the very pattern of feminine loyalty, having no motion in thy thoughts, but fancy,⁶ and no affection, but to thy Fran-

¹ tenor ² a slang phrase ³ meanwhile ⁴ lest
⁵ cautiously ⁶ love

cesco. In that I am stopped from thy sight, I am deprived of the chiefest organ of my life, having no sense in myself perfect, in that I want the view of thy perfection, ready with sorrow to perish in despair, if, resolved of thy constancy, I did not triumph in hope. Therefore now rests it in thee to salve all these sores, and provide medicines for these dangerous maladies, that, our passions appeased, we may end our harmony in the faithful union of two hearts. Thou seest love hath his shifts, and Venus' quiddities¹ are most subtle sophistry; that he which is touched with beauty, is ever in league with opportunity. These principles are proved by the messenger, whose state discovers my restless thoughts, impatient of any longer repulse. I have therefore sought to overmatch thy father in policy, as he overstrains us in jealousy, and seeing he seeks it, to let him find a knot in a rush. As therefore I have sent thee the sum of my passions in the form of a passport, so return me a reply wrapped in the same paper, that as we are forced to cover our deceits in one shift, so hereafter we may unite our loves in one sympathy: Appoint what I shall do to compass a private conference. Think I will account of the seas as Leander, of the wars as Troilus, of all dangers as a man resolved to attempt any peril, or break any prejudice for thy sake. Say when and where I shall meet thee; and so, as I begun passionately, I break off abruptly. Farewell.

Thine in fatal resolution,
Seigneur Francesco.

After he had written the letter, and despatched the messenger, her mind was so fixed on the brace of angels² that she stirred her old stumps till she came to the house of Seigneur Fregoso, who at that instant was walked abroad to take view of his pastures. She no sooner began her method of begging with a solemn prayer and a pater noster but Isabel, whose devotion was ever bent to pity the poor, came to the door, to see the necessity of the party, who began to salute her thus: "Fair mistress, whose virtues exceed your beauties (and yet I doubt not but you deem your perfection equivalent with the rarest paragons in Britain), as your eye receives the object of my misery, so let your heart have an insight into my extremities, who once was young, and then favoured by fortunes, now old and crossed by the destinies, driven, when I am weakest, to the wall, and, when I am worst,

¹ subtleties ² gold coins worth 13s. 4d. each