
GREENE'S NEVER TOO LATE

Or

A powder of experience sent to all youthful gentlemen to root out the infectious follies
that overreaching conceits foster in the spring-time of their youth.

Deciphering in a true English history those particular vanities that with their frosty
vapours nip the blossoms of every ripe brain from attaining to his intended perfection.

As pleasant as profitable, being a right pumice-stone apt to race out idleness with delight
and folly with admonition.

Rob. Greene *in artibus Magister*.

Omne tulit punctum.

London.

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To the right worshipful Thomas Burnaby, Esquire, Robert Greene wisheth increase of all honourable virtues.

Such (right worshipful) as coveted to deck the temple of Delphos adorned the shrine either with green bays or curious instruments because Apollo did as well patronize music as poetry. When the Troyans sought to pacify the wrath of Pallas, the people's presents were books and lances to signify her deity as well defended by letters as arms. And they which desired to be in the favour of Alexander brought him either wise philosophers or hardy soldiers, for he sought counsellors like Aristotle and captains like Perdiccas. Seeing then how gifts are the more gratefully accepted by how much the more they fit the humour of the party to whom they are presented, desirous a long time to gratify your worship with something that might signify how in all bounden duty I have for sundry favours been affected to your worship, and finding my ability to be unfit to present you with anything of worth, at last I resolved so far to presume as to trouble your worship with the patronage of this pamphlet, knowing you are such a Maecenas of learning that you will as soon vouch with Augustus a few verses given by a poor Greek as of the Arabian courser presented by Tytinius. The book is little, yet drawn from a large principle, *Nunquam sera est ad bonos mores via*, wherein I have discovered so artificially the fraudulent effects of Venus' trumperies, and so plainly as in a platform laid open the prejudicial pleasures of love, that gentlemen may see that as the diamond is beauteous to the sight and yet deadly poison to the stomach, that as the bacan [sic?] leaf containeth both the antidote and the aconiton, so love (unless grounded upon virtue) breedeth more disparagement to the credit than content to the fancy. If then (right worshipful) out of this confused chaos gentlemen shall gather any principles whereby to direct their actions, and that from rash and resolute maintainers of Venus' heresies they become reformed champions to defend Vesta's philosophies, then all the profit and pleasure that shall redound to them by this pamphlet shall be attributed to your worship, as to the man by whose means this *Nunquam sera* came to light. Hoping therefore your worship will with a favourable insight enter more into the mind of the giver than the worth of the gift, I commit your worship unto the Almighty.

Your worship's humbly to command,

Rob. Greene.

To the gentlemen readers.

Such, gentlemen, as had their ears filled with the harmony of Orpheus' harp could not abide th'arsh music of Hipparchion's pipe, yet the Thessalians would allow the poor fiddler licence to frolic it among the shepherds. Though no pictures could go for current with Alexander but such as passed through Apelles' pencil, yet poor men had their houses shadowed with Phidias' coarse colours. Ennius was called a poet as well as Virgil, and Vulcan with his polt-foot frisked with Venus as well as Mars. Gentlemen, if I presume to present you as hitherto I have done with frivolous toys, yet for that I stretch my strings as high as I can, if you praise me not with Orpheus, hiss me not out with Hipparchion; if I I [sic] paint not with Apelles, yet scrape not out my shadows with disgrace; if I stir my stumps with Vulcan, though it be lamely done, yet think it is a dance; so if my *Nunquam sera est* please not, yet I pray you pass it over with patience, and say 'tis a book. So hoping I shall find you as ever I have done, I end.

Robert Greene.

A Madrigal To Wanton Lovers.

*You that by Alcydalion's silver brooks
Sit and sigh out the passions of your loves,
That on your goddess' beauties feed your looks
And pamper up sweet Venus' wanton doves,
That seek to sit by Cupid's scorching fire
And dally in the fountains of desire,*

*You that account no heaven like Venus' sphere,
That think each dimple in your mistress' chin
Earth's paradise, that deem her golden hair
Tresses of bliss wherein to wander in,
That sigh and court suppliant all to prove
Cupid is God, and there's no heaven but love,*

*Come see the work that Greene hath slyly wrought,
Take but his Nunquam sera in your view;
As in a mirror there is deeply taught
The wanton vices of proud fancy's crew,
There is depainted by most curious art
How love and folly jump in every part.*

*There may you see repentance, all in black,
Scourging the forward [sic?] passions of fond youth,
How fading pleasures end in dismal wrack,
How lovers' joys are tempered all with ruth;
Sith then his Nunquam sera yields such gains,
Read it, and thank the author for his pains.*

Ralph Sidley.

[Greek words]

*If Horace' satires merit mickle praise
For taunting such as lived in Paphos' isle,
If wise Propertius was in elder days
Laureate for figuring out fond Venus' wile,
If Rome applauded Ovid's pleasing verse
That did the salves that medicine love rehearse,*

*Then, English gentles, stoop and gather bays,
Make coronets of Flora's proudest flowers,
As gifts for Greene, for he must have the praise,
And taste the dews that high Parnassus showers,
As having leapt beyond old Horace' strain
In taunting lovers for their fruitless pain.*

*His Nunquam sera more conceits combines
Than wanton Ovid in his art did paint,
And sharper satires are within his lines
Than Martial sung, proud Venus to attain;
Read then his art, and all his actions prove
There is no folly like to foolish love.*

Richard Hake, Gent.

GREENE'S NUNQUAM SERA EST

Being resident in Bergamo, not far distant from Venice, sitting under a cool shade that then shrouded me from the extreme violence of the meriodional heat, having never a book in my hand to beguile time, nor no pathological impression in my head to procure any secret meditation, I had flat fallen into a slumber if I had not espied a traveller weary and desolate to have bended his steps towards me. Desirous to shake off drowsiness with some company I attended his arrival, but as he drew near he seemed so quaint in his attire and so conceited in his countenance as I deemed the man either some penitent pilgrim that was very religious or some despairing lover than had been too too affectionate, for thus take his description.

An Ode.

*Down the valley gan he track,
 Bag and bottle at his back,
 In a surcoat all of grey,
 Such wear palmers on the way
 When with scrip and staff they see
 Jesus' grave on Calvary,
 A hat of straw like a swain,
 Shelter for the sun and rain,
 With a scallop-shell before,
 Sandals on his feet he wore,
 Legs were bare, arms unclad,
 Such attire this palmer had,
 His face was fair, like Titan's shine,
 Grey and buxom were his eyne
 Whereout dropped pearls of sorrow,
 Such sweet tears love doth borrow
 When in outward dews she plains
 Heart's distress that lovers pains;
 Ruby lips, cherry cheeks,
 Such rare mixture Venus seeks
 When to keep her damsels quiet
 Beauty sets them down their diet;
 Adon was not thought more fair,
 Curled locks of amber hair,
 Locks where love did sit and twine
 Nets to snare the gazers' eyne;
 Such a palmer ne'er was seen
 'Less Love himself had palmer been,
 Yet for all he was so quaint
 Sorrow did his visage taint,
 Midst the riches of his face
 Grief deciphred high disgrace,*

*Every step strained a tear,
Sudden sighs showed his fear,
And yet his fear by his sight
Ended in a strange delight,
That his passions did approve
Weeds and sorrow were for love.*

Thus attired in his travelling robes and levelled out in the lineaments of his physiognomy, not seeing me that lay close in the thicket, he sat him down under a beech-tree, where after he had taken up his seat, with a sigh he began thus to point [sic?] out his passions.

Infortunate palmer, whose weeds discovers thy woes, whose looks thy sorrows, whose sighs thy repentance, thou wanderest to bewail thy sin that heretofore hast not wondered at the greatness of sin, and seekest now by the sight of a strange land to satisfy those follies committed in thy native home. Why, is there more grace in the east than in the west; is God more gracious in Jewry than merciful in England, more favourable to palmers for their travel than pitiful to sinners for their penance? No, be not so superstitious, lest thou measuring his favour by circumstance, he punish thy faults in severity. Ah, but the deepest ulcers have the sharpest corrosives; some sores cannot be cured but by sublimatum, and some offences, as they begin in content, so they end in sackcloth; I wear not this palmer's grey to challenge grace, nor seek the Holy Land to countervail the law, nor am a pilgrim to acquittance sin with penance, but I content me in this habit to show the meekness of my heart, and travel through many countries to make other men learn to beware by my harms, for if I come amongst youth I will show them that the finest buds are soonest nipped with frosts, the sweetest flowers sorest eaten with cankers, & the ripest & youngest wits soonest overgrown with follies; if I chance among courtiers I will tell them that as the star Arctophylax is brightest, yet setteth soonest, so their glories being most gorgeous are dashed with suddenest overthrows; if among scholars I will prove that their philosophical axioms, their quiddities of logic, their aphorisms of art are dissolved with this definite period, *Omnia sub sole vanitas*. If amongst lovers -- and with this the tears fell from his eyes and the sighs flew from his heart as if all should split again -- if, quoth he (and he doubled his words with an emphasis) I fall amongst lovers, I will decipher to them that their god is a boy as fond as he is blind, their goddess a woman inconstant, false, flattering, like the winds that rise in the shores of Lepanthus, which in the morning send forth gusts from the north and in the evening calms from the west, that their fancies are like April showers, begun with a sunshine & ended in a storm, their passions deep hells, their pleasures chimeras' portraitures, sudden joys that, appearing like Juno, are nothing when Ixion toucheth them but dusky & fading clouds. Here he stopped and took his scrip from his back and his bottle from his side, and with such cates as he had, as lemons, apricots, and olives, he began a palmer's banquet, which digesting with a cup of wine well tempered with water, after every draught he sighed out this: *Nunquam sera est ad bonos mores via*. When he had taken his repast, casting up his eyes to heaven as being thankful for his benefits and sorrowful for his sins, falling into a deep meditation, after he had awhile lien as a man in a trance, he started up suddenly, and with a half-cheered countenance sung out this ode.

The Palmer's Ode.

*Old Menalcas on a day,
As in field this shepherd lay
Tuning of his oaten pipe
Which he hit with many a stripe,
Said to Corydon that he
Once was young and full of glee,
Blithe and wanton was I then,
Such desires follow men;
As I lay and kept my sheep
Came the god that hateth sleep
Clad in armour all of fire,
Hand in hand with Queen Desire
And with a dart that wounded nigh
Pierced my heart as I did lie,
That when I woke I gan swear
Phyllis' beauty palm did bear;
Up I start, forth went I
With her face to feed mine eye,
There I saw Desire sit,
That my heart with love had hit,
Laying forth bright beauty's hooks
To entrap my gazing looks;
Love I did, and gan to woo,
Pray and sigh, all would not do,
Women when they take the toy
Covet to be counted coy;
Coy she was, and I gan court,
She thought love was but a sport,
Profound hell was in my thought,
Such a pain Desire had wrought
That I sued with sighs and tears,
Still ingrate she stopped her ears
Till my youth I had spent;
Last a passion of repent
Told me flat that Desire
Was a brand of love's fire
Which consumeth men in thrall,
Virtue, youth, wit, and all;
At this saw, back I start,
Bet Desire from my heart,
Shook off love, and made an oath
To be enemy to both;
Old I was when thus I fled
Such fond toys as cloyed my head,*

*But this learned at virtue's gate,
The way to good is never late.*

Nunquam sera est ad bonos mores via.

As soon as he had ended his ode he fell to his old principle, *Nunquam sera est*, and confirming it with a sigh, he rose up and was ready to depart towards Bergamo to take up his lodging, for the sun was declining towards the west.

But I, desirous to search further into this passionate palmer, crossed him the way with this salutation: Palmer (for so thy apparel discovers) and penitent (if thy inward heart agree with thy outward passions), if my questions may not aggravate thy grief nor my demand be tedious to thy travels, let me crave of courtesy whither thou dost bend the end of thy pilgrimage, that if thou beest stepped awry, I may direct thee, or if thou knowest the country, I may wish boon fortune to thy journey, for I have all my lifetime coveted to be faithful to my friends and courteous to strangers. The palmer, amazed at my sudden salutation, stepped back and bent his brows as if he feared some prejudice or were offended at my presence, but when he saw me weaponless and without company, and yet so affable in words and debonair in exterior courtesy as might import a gentleman, he devoutly moved his bonnet of grey and made this reply.

Gentleman (for no less you seem if the flower may be known by smell, or the man by his words), I am a palmer, discovered by my grey, and a penitent, if you note my grief, which sorrow is as effectual as my attire is little counterfeit; the direction of my journey is not to Jerusalem, for my faith tells me Christ can draw as great favour down in England as in Jericho, and prayers are not heard for the place, but in the behalf of the person heartily repentant. My native home is England; the end of my journey is Venice, where I mean to visit an old friend of mine, an Englishman to whom I have been long time indebted, and now mean partly to repay with such store as I have bought with hard experience. This night I will rest in the next village, and thus I hope, sir, you rest satisfied.

This answer of the palmer made me the more desirous to inquire into his state that I entreated him I might be host to such a guest, and seeing I was resident in Bergamo, where that night he meant to harbour, such lodging as a country gentleman could afford and such cheer as such a village might on the sudden yield should be at his command.

Well could this palmer skill of courtesy, and returning me many thanks, vouched of my proffer, and was willing to take my house for his inn. As we passed on the way we chanced to fall into prattle thus. Sir (quoth I), if I might with many questions not be offensive, I would fain be inquisitive to know, as you have passed along France, Germany, the Rhine, and part of Italy, what you have noted worthy of memory. Moving his cap as a man that was passing courteous, he answered thus: I tell you, sir (quoth he), as a foolish question merits silence, so a familiar demand craves a friendly reply of duty, although Zeno the philosopher counted it more honour to be a silent naturalist than an eloquent orator. But as I am not a gymnosophist to jangle at every sophistical objection, so I am not a severe Stoic to answer but by syllables, and therefore thus to your question.

After I had cut from Dover to Calais I remembered what old Homer writ of Ulysses, that he coveted not only to see strange countries, but with a deep insight to have a view into the manners of men; so I thought as I passed through Paris not only to please mine eye which [sic] the curious architecture of the building, but with the diverse disposition of the inhabitants. I found therefore the court (for I aim first at the fairest) to have a king fit for so royal a regiment if he had been as perfect in true religion as politic in martial discipline; the courtiers, they as Aristippus fawned upon Dionysius, turning like to the chameleon into the likeness of every object that the King proffered to their humorous conceits, for if the king smiled, everyone in the court was in his jollity; if he frowned, their plumes fell like the peacock's feathers, so that their outward presence depended on his inward passions. Generally so, but particularly thus: the French gentlemen are amorous, as soon persuaded by the beauty of their mistress to make a brawl as for the maintenance of religion to enter arms; their eyes are like salamander stones that fire at the sight of every flame, their hearts as queasy as the minerals of Aetna that burn at the heat of the sun and are quenched with the puff of every wind. They count it courtlike to spend their youth in courting of ladies and their age in repenting of sins, yet more forward in the one than devout in the other. They bandy glances upon every face, and as though they would approve every passion for a principle, they set down the period with a deep sigh, yet as the breath of a man upon steel no sooner lighteth on but it leapeth off, is the beginning and ending of their loves. Thus much for their amours. Now for their arms, they be hardy soldiers and resolute. For their faith, friendship, religion, or other particular qualities, for there is a league betwixt us & them I will spare to speak, lest in being satirical I should plod too far with Diogenes, or in flattering their faults or their follies I should claw a fool's shoulder with Davus in Terence. Skipping therefore from them to the Germans --. Nay, stay sir (quoth I); before you pass the Alps, give me leave to hold you an hour still in Lyons for though you be a palmer and religious, yet I hope such deep devotion rested not in you but an ounce of Venus' favours hung in your eyes, and when you had spent the morning in orisons, you could in the afternoon lend a glance to a fair lady. The eagle soars not so high in the air but he can spy a little fish in the sea, the sun in Cancer goes retrograde, the coldest clime hath his summer, and Apollo was never so stoical but *semel in anno* he could let fall a smile, and the most severe pilgrim or palmer hath an eye [as] well as a heart, and a look to lend to beauty as a thought to bend to theology. Therefore, I pray you, what think you of the French women? at this question, although his gravity was great, yet with a pleasant countenance he made this reply: Although fire is hot as well in the coldest region of the north as in the furthest southern parallel, the grass of the same colour in Egypt as it is in Jewry, and women, wheresoever they be bred, be *mala necessaria*, yet though their general essence be all one, as coming from Eva, and therefore froward, inconstant, light, amorous, deceitful, and *quid non*, better deciphered by Mantuan that I can make description of, yet as the diamonds in India be more hard than the Cornish stones in England, as the margarites of the west are more orient than the pearls of the south, so women's affections are effected after the disposition of the clime wherein they are born, although Avicen in his aphorisms sets down this conclusion, that thorns nowhere grow without pricks nor nettles without stings, but leaving off these preambles, thus to your question. The women in France generally, as concerning the exterior lineaments of their outward perfection, are beautiful,

as being westernly seated near Great Britain, where nature sits & hatcheth beauteous paramours, yet although natura naturans hath showed her cunning in their portraitures, as women that think nothing perfect that art hath not polished, they have drugs of Alexandria, minerals of Egypt, waters from Tarsus, paintings from Spain, and what to do, forsooth? To make them more beautiful than virtuous, and more pleasing in the eyes of men than delightful in the sight of God; this is but their exterior vanity that blemisheth their inward virtues, if they have any. But more to their interior inclination. Some, as if they were votaries unto Venus, and at their nativities had no other influence, take no pleasure but in amorous passions, no delight but in madrigals of love, wetting Cupid's wings with rose-water, and tricking up his quiver with sweet perfumes; they set out their faces as fowlers do their daring-glasses, that the larks that soar highest may stoop soonest, and as soon as the poor loving fools are wrapped within their nets, then they sue with sighs and plead with sonnets, feign tears, & paint out passions to win her, that seeming to be coy, comes at the first lure, for when they see young novices entrapped, then the French dames are like to the people Hyperborei, that spurning liquorice with their feet, secretly slake their hunger with the juice thereof, so they outwardly seeming to contemn their suitors' motions, stand in deadly fear lest they should leave off their amorous passions, so that they have love in their eyelids so slenderly tacked on by fancy as it drops off with every dream and is shaken off with every vain slumber. Some of them are as Sappho was, subtile to allure & slippery to deceive, having their hearts made of wax ready to receive every impression, not content till they have as many lovers as their hearts have entrance for love, and those are like to pumice-stones that are light & full of holes. Some are as inconstant as Cressida, that be Troilus never so true, yet out of sight out of mind, and as soon as Diomed begins to court, she like Venetian traffic is for his penny, current *a currendo*, sterling coin passable from man to man in way of exchange. Others are as Lydia, cruel, whose hearts are hammered in the forge of pride, thinking themselves too good for all, and none worthy of them, and yet oft-times nestling all day in the sun with the beetle are at night contented with a cow-shard for shelter. These have eyes of basilisks that are prejudicial to every object, and hearts of adamant not any way to be pierced, and yet I think, not dying maids nor leading apes in hell, for Vesta's sacrifice ceased long since in Rome, and virgins are as rare as black swans; opportunity is a sore plea in Venus' court, able, I tell you, to overthrow the coyest she that is; I could infer more particular instances and distinguish more at large of the French gentlewomen, but let me leave them to their humorous vanities, and resolve ourselves that Ireland doth not only bring forth wolves, nor Egypt crocodiles, nor Barbary leopards, nor France such qualified women, but as the earth yields weeds as well in the lowest valleys as in the highest mountains, so women are universally *mala necessaria* wheresoever they be either bred or brought up. With this conclusive period he breathed him, & I could not but smile to see the palmer shake his head at the fondness of women, as a man that had been galled with their ingratitude. Well, after he had paused a little, he left France and began to talk of Germany, and that was thus: After I had left Lyons, I passed up the Alps and coasted into Germany where, as I found the country seated under a cold clime, so I perceived the people high-minded and fuller of words than of courtesy, given more to drink than to devotion, and yet sundry places stuffed with schisms and heresies, as people that delight to be factious; there might you see their interior vanities more than their outward apparel did import, and oft-times their vaunts more than their

manhood; for love, as I saw Venus of no great account, yet she had there a temple, and though they did not beautify it with jewels, they plainly poured forth such orisons as did bewray, though they could not court it as the French did with art, yet their lust was no less nor their lives more honest. Because the people were little affable, I grew not so far inquisitive into their manners and customs, but *sicco pede* passed them over, so that I travelled up as far as Vienna where I saw a thing worthy of memory. In a valley between two high mountains topped with trees of marvellous verdure, whereby ran a fountain pleasant as well for the murmur of the streams as for the sweetness of waters, there was situated a little lodge artificially built, and at the door a man of very great gravity and no less age sat leaning upon his staff, so to take the benefit of the air & the sun; his hairs were as white as the threads of silk in Arabia, or as the palm-trees on the mount Libanus; many years had made furrows in his face where experience sat and seemed to tell forth oracles; devotion appeared in his habit, & his outward cloth discovered his inward heart, that the old hermit seemed in the world a resolute decipherer of the world; standing awhile and wondering at this old man, at last all reverence done that his years did require or my youth was bound unto, after salutations I questioned him of the order of his life, who answered me with such courtesy and humility as I perceived in his words the perfect idea of a mortified man; after sundry questions broken with pro & contra, at last he took me by the hand & carried me into his cell, where I found not those utensilia which Tully says are necessary to be in every cottage, but I found books, and that of theology, a drinking-cup, and that was full of water, a dead man's skull, an hour-glass, and a Bible; thus only was his house garnished. After he had sat down a little, he looked me very earnestly in the face, as a man that had some skill in physiognomy to censure of the inward qualities by the outward appearance; at last in rough High Dutch verse he thus breathed out his opinion, which I drew thus into blank verse.

The Hermit's First Exordium.

*Here look, my son, for no vainglorious shows
Of royal apparition for the eye,
Humble and meek befiteth men of years;
Behold my cell built in a silent shade,
Holding content for poverty and peace,
And in my lodge is fealty and faith,
Labour and love, united in one league;
I want not, for my mind affordeth wealth,
I know not envy, for I climb not high,
Thus do I live, and thus I mean to die.*

Then he stepped to his shelf, and takes down a death's-head, whereon looking as a man that mediated upon some deep matter, he shook his head, and the tears standing in his eyes, he prosecuted his matter thus.

*If that the world presents illusions,
Or Satan seeks to puff me up with pomp,
As man is frail and apt to follow pride,*

*Then see, my son, where I have in my cell
A dead man's skull, which calls this straight to mind,
That as this is, so must my ending be;
When then I see that earth to earth must pass,
I sigh and say all flesh is like to grass.*

After he had thus explained the reason why he kept the dead man's skull in his cell, he reached to his hour-glass, and upon that he began thus to descant.

*If care to live, or sweet delight in life,
As man desires to see out many days,
Draws me to listen to the flattering world,
Then see my glass which swiftly out doth run,
Compared to man, who dies ere he begins;
This tells me time slacks not his posting course,
But as the glass runs out with every hour,
Some in their youth, some in their weakest age,
All sure to die, but no man knows his time;
By this I think how vain a thing is man,
Whose longest life is likened to a span.*

Lastly he took his Bible in his hand, whereupon leaning his arm, he amplified thus.

*When Satan seeks to sift me with his wiles,
Or proudly dares to give a fierce assault
To make a shipwreck of my faith with fears,
Then armed at all points to withstand the foe
With holy armour, here's the martial sword,
This book, this Bible, this two-edged blade,
Whose sweet content pierceth the gates of hell,
Deciphering laws and discipline of war
To overthrow the strength of Satan's jar.*

Thus the hermit discovered to me the secrets of his cell, and after, that I should be privy to all his pathological conceits, he brought forth a few roots and such simple diet as he had, to confirm that he tied nature every way within her limits; wondering at the method he used in his cell, after I had taken my repast with him, as we met courteously we parted friendly, he with exhortations to beware of youth's follies, I with thanks and reverence to his aged years for his grave and fatherly persuasion; so I went from his cell to Vienna, and from thence coasted up into the borders of Italy.

The palmer had scarce named Italy but we were come to my house, where I gave him such entertainment as either the ability of my substance, the plenty of the country, or the shortness of the time could afford, and because I would every way grace him, I brought down my wife to give him a royal welcome, a favour seldom showed in Italy, yet because he was a palmer and his profession valued beauty at a light price, I did him that grace.

To be short, at last we sat down to supper, and there passed the time with such pleasing chat as the pleasant palmer pleased to confer upon. Supper done, I desired the palmer to discourse (if it were not offensive) what reason moved him to direct his pilgrimage only to Venice. Raising himself up with a smiling countenance, he made this reply.

Courteous gentleman (for so much your affable and liberal disposition doth approve), Jupiter when he was entertained by poor Baucis accounted ingratitude so heinous as he turned their cottage to a temple and made them sacrificers at his altars; hospitality is so precious as no price may value; then if I should not grant any lawful demand, I might seem as little pliant to humanity as you liable to courtesy, and therefore if the gentlewoman your wife and you will sit up to hear the discourses of a traveller, I will first rehearse you an English history acted and evented in my country of England, but for that the gentleman is yet living, I will shadow his name although I manifest his follies, and when I have made relation I will show why I directed the course of my pilgrimage only to Venice. My wife by his [sic] countenance seemed to be marvellous content, and myself kept silence, whereupon the palmer began as followeth.

The Palmer's Tale.

In those days when Palmerin reigned king of Great Britain, famous for his deeds of chivalry, there dwelled in the city of Caerbranck a gentleman of an ancient house called Francesco, a man whose parentage, though it were worshipful, yet it was not endued with much wealth, insomuch that his learning was better than his revenues, & 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 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 Daedalus, *Medium tenere tutissimum*, treading his shoe without any slip. He was so generally loved of the citizens that the richest merchant or gravest burgomaster 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 Caerbranck, 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 that her father's consent might be at the knitting up of the match. Francesco, thinking himself cock-sure, 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 *intramuis aurem dormire*, but leaning on his elbow made present answer that her dowry required a greater feoffment 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, huswife, quoth he, are you so idle-tasked that you stand upon thorns while 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, & young gentlewomen that are wooed and won ere they be wise, sorrow and repent before they be old. What seest thou in Francesco, that 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, 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 in the eye and dust in the hand, to the star Arctophylax 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; Demophoon was fair, but how dealt he with Phyllis? Aeneas 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 tun 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 Sisyphus' stone, or to hale a headstrong girl from love is to tie the furies again in fetters. Therefore, huswife, 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 licence, yet at last she so cunningly dissembled that she gat 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 Artie Amandi*, and all the 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 happily begun & fortunately ended thus: it chanced that as he walked thus in his muses, fetching the compass of his conceit 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, & 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 conceited this, that gold was as good as glue to knit her to any practice whatsoever, & therefore out with his purse and clapped her in the hand with a French crown. This unaccustomed reward made made [sic] her more frank of her courtesies 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, & sitting down upon the green grass discoursed unto her from point to point the beginning & 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, & 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, 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, & 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, & yet I tell thee she is full of favour whether thou respects the outward portraiture or inward perfection; her eye like the diamond, & so pointed that it pierceth to 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 tenor 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 but she would further him in his loves, whereupon she followed him to his chamber, & the whiles 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 (as he thinks) thou shouldst 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 Aetna 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 shittim 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 pedetentim 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, and no affection but to thy Francesco. 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' quiddities are most subtile 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 [sic?] 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,
Signor Francesco.*

After he had written the letter and dispatched the messenger, her mind was so fixed on the brace of angels that she stirred her old stumps till she came to the house of Signor 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 paternoster 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, forced to hold the candle. Seeing then the faults of my youth hath forced the fall of mine age, and I am driven in the winter of mine years to abide the brunt of all storms, let the plenty of your youth pity the want of my decrepit state, and the rather because my fortune was once as high as my fall is now low; for proof, sweet mistress, see my passport wherein you shall find many passions and much patience, at which period, making a courtesy, her very rags seemed to give Isabel reverence. She hearing the beggar insinuate with such a sensible preamble thought the woman had had some good parts in her, and therefore took her certificate, which as soon as she had opened, and that she perceived it was Francesco's hand, she smiled, and yet bewrayed a passion with a blush. So that stepping from the woman she went into her chamber where she read it over with such pathological impressions as every motion was entangled with a dilemma, for on the one side the love of Francesco, grounded more on his interior virtues than his exterior beauties, gave such fierce assaults to the bulwark of her affection as the fort was ready to be yielded up but that the fear of her father's displeasure, armed with the instigations of nature, drave her to meditate thus with herself.

Now Isabel, love and fortune hath brought thee into a labyrinth; thy thoughts are like to Janus' pictures, that present both peace and war, and thy mind like Venus' anvil whereon is hammered both fear and hope. Sith then the chance lieth in thine own choice, do not with Medea see and allow of the best and then follow the worst, but of two extremes, if they be *immediata*, choose that may have least prejudice and most profit. Thy father is aged and wise, and many years hath taught him much experience. The old fox is more subtile than the young cub, the buck more skilful to choose his food than the young fawns. Men of age fear and foresee that which youth leapeth at with repentance. If then his grave wisdom exceeds thy green wit, and his ripened fruits thy sprouting blossoms, think if he speak for thy avail, as his principles are perfect, so they are grounded on love and nature. It is a near collop, says he, is cut out of the own flesh, and the stay of thy fortunes is the staff of his life; no doubt he sees with a more piercing judgement into the life of Francesco, for thou, overcome with fancy, censurest of all his actions with partiality. Francesco, though he be young and beautiful, yet his revenues are not

answerable to his favours; the cedar is fair, but unfruitful, the Volgo a bright stream, but without fish; men covet rather to plant the olive for profit than the alder for beauty, and young gentlewomen should rather fancy to live than affect to lust, for love without lands is like to a fire without fuel, that for awhile showeth a bright blaze, and in a moment dieth in his own cinders. Dost thou think this, Isabel, that thine eye may not surfeit so with beauty that thy mind shall vomit up repentance? yes, for the fairest roses have pricks, the purest lawns their moles, the brightest diamonds their cracks, and the most beautiful men of the most imperfect conditions, for nature having care to polish the body so fair, overweens herself in her excellency that she leaves their minds imperfect. Whither now, Isabel; into absurd aphorisms? what, can thy father persuade thee to this, that the most glorious shells have not the most orient margarites, that the purest flowers have not the most perfect savours, that men, as they excel in proportion of body, so they exceed in perfection of mind? Is not nature both curious and absolute, hiding the most virtuous minds in the most beautiful covertures? Why, what of this, fond girl? suppose these premises be granted, yet they infer no conclusion, for suppose he be beautiful and virtuous, and his wit is equal with his parentage, yet he wants wealth to maintain love, and therefore says old Fregose, not worthy of Isabel's love. Shall I then tie my affection to his lands, or to his lineaments? to his riches, or his qualities? are Venus' altars to be filled with gold, or loyalty of hearts? Is the sympathy of Cupid's consistory united in the abundance of coin, or the absolute perfection of constancy? Ah Isabel, think this, that love brooketh no exception of want, that where fancy displays her colours, there always either plenty keeps her court, or else patience so tempers every extreme that all defects are supplied with content. Upon this, as having a farther reach and a deeper insight, she stepped hastily to her standish and writ him this answer.

Isabel to Francesco, health.

Although the nature of a father and the duty of a child might move me resolutely to reject thy letters, yet I received them for that thou art Francesco and I Isabel, who were once private in affection as now we are distant in places. But know my father, whose command to me is a law of constraint, sets down this censure, that love without wealth is like to a cedar tree without fruit, or to corn sown in the sands that withereth for want of moisture, and I have reason, Francesco, to deem of snow by the whiteness and of trees by the blossoms. The old man, whose words are oracles, tells me that love that entereth in a moment flieth out in a minute, that men's affections is like the dew upon a crystal which no sooner lighteth on but it leapeth off; their eyes with every glance make a new choice, and every look can command a sigh, having their hearts like saltpetre that fireth at the first and yet proveth but a flash, their thoughts reaching as high as cedars but as brittle as rods that break with every blast; had Carthage been bereft of so famous a virago if the beauteous Trojan had been as constant as he was comely? Had the queen of poetry been pinched with so many passions if the wanton ferryman had been as faithful as he was fair? No Francesco, and therefore seeing the brightest blossoms are pestered with most caterpillars, the sweetest roses with the sharpest pricks, the fairest cambrics with the foulest stains, and men with the best proportion have commonly least perfection, I may fear to swallow the hook lest I find more bane in the confection than pleasure in the bait. But here let me breathe, and with sighs foresee mine own folly. Women, poor souls, are

like to the harts in Calabria, that knowing dictanum to be deadly yet bruse(?) on it with greediness, resembling the fish mugra, that seeing the hook bare, yet swallows it with delight, so women foresee, yet do not prevent, knowing what is profitable, yet not eschewing the prejudice; so Francesco I see thy beauties, I know thy want, and I fear thy vanities, yet can I not but allow of all, were they the worst of all, because I find in my mind this principle: in love is no lack. What should I, Francesco, covet to dally with the mouse when the cat stands by, or fill my letter full of needless ambages when my father like Argos setteth a hundred eyes to overpry my actions; while I am writing thy messenger stands at the door praying. Therefore lest I should hold her too long in her orisons, or keep the poor man too long in suspense, thus briefly: be upon Thursday next at night hard by the orchard under the greatest oak, where expect my coming, and provide for our safe passage, for stood all the world on the one side and thou on the other, Francesco should be my guide to direct me whither he pleased. Fail not then, unless thou be false to her that would have life fail ere she falsify faith to thee.

*Not herself because thine,
Isabel.*

As soon as she had dispatched her letter she came down and delivered the letter folded in form of a passport to the messenger, giving her after her accustomed manner an alms, and closely clapped her in the fist with a brace of angels; the woman thanking her good master and her good mistress, giving the house her benison, hied her back again to Francesco, whom she found sitting solitary in his chamber; no sooner did he spy her but flinging out of his chair he changed colour as a man in a doubtful ecstasy what should betide, yet conceiving good hope by her countenance, who smiled more at the remembrance of her reward than at any other conceit, he took the letter and read it, wherein he found his humour so fitted that he not only thanked the messenger but gave her all the money in his purse, so that she returned so highly gratified as never after she was found to exercise her old occupation. But leaving her to the hope of her housewifery, again to Francesco, who seeing the constant affection of his mistress, that neither the sour looks of her father nor his hard threats could affright her to make change of her fancy, that no disaster fortune could drive her to make shipwreck of her fixed affection, that the blustering storms of adversity might assault but not sack the fort of her constant resolution, he fell into this pleasing passion: women (quoth he), why as they are heaven's wealth, so they are earth's miracles, framed by nature to despite beauty, adorned with the singularity of proportion to shroud the excellence of all perfection, as far exceeding men in virtues as they excel them in beauties, resembling angels in qualities as they are like to gods in perfectness, being purer in mind than in mould, and yet made of the purity of man; just they are, as giving love her due; constant, as holding loyalty more precious than life, as hardly to be drawn from united affection as the salamanders fro the caverns of Aetna. Tush, quoth Francesco, what should I say; they be women, and therefore the continents of all excellence. In this pleasant humour he passed away the time, not slacking his business for provision against Thursday at night, to the care of which affairs let us leave him and return to Isabel, who after she had sent her letter fell into a great dump, entering into the consideration of men's inconstancy and of the

fickleness of their fancies, but all these meditations did sort to no effect, whereupon sitting down she took her lute in her hand and sung this ode.

Isabel's Ode.

*Sitting by a river-side
Where a silent stream did glide
Banked about with choice flowers
Such as spring from April showers
When fair Iris smiling shows
All her riches in her dews,
Thick-leaved trees so were planted
As nor art nor nature wanted,
Bordering all the brook with shade
As if Venus there had made
By Flora's wile a curious bower
To dally with her paramour;
At this current as I gazed,
Eyes entrapped, mind amazed,
I might see in my ken
Such a flame as fireth men,
Such a fire as doth fry
With one blaze both heart and eye,
Such a heat as doth prove
No heat like to heat of love;
Bright she was, for 'twas a she
That traced her steps towards me,
On her head she ware a bay
To fence Phoebus' light away,
In her face one might descry
The curious beauty of the sky,
Her eyes carried darts of fire,
Feathered all with swift desire,
Yet forth these fiery darts did pass
Pearled tears as bright as glass,
That wonder 'twas in her eyne
Fire and water should combine,
If th'old saw did not borrow
Fire is love, and water sorrow;
Down she sat, pale and sad,
No mirth in her looks she had,
Face and eyes showed distress,
Inward sighs discoursed no less,
Head on hand might I see,
Elbow leaned on her knee,
Last she breathed out this saw,*

*Oh that love hath no law,
 Love enforceth with constraint,
 Love delighteth in complaint,
 Whoso loves hates his life
 For love's peace is mind's strife,
 Love doth feed on beauty's fare,
 Every dish sauced with care,
 Chiefly women, reason why,
 Love is hatched in their eye,
 Thence it steppeth to the heart,
 There it poisoneth every part,
 Mind and heart, eye and thought,
 Till sweet love their woes hath wrought,
 Then repentant they gan cry:
 Oh my heart that trowed mine eye;
 Thus she said, and then she rose,
 Face and mind both full of woes,
 Flinging thence with this saw:
 Fie on love that hath no law.*

Having finished her ode, she heard that her father was come in, and therefore leaving her amorous instruments she fell to her labour to confirm the old proverb in her father's jealous head, *Otia si tollas, periere Cupidinis arcus*, but as wary as she was, yet the old goose could spy the gosling wink, and would not by any means trust her, but used his accustomed manner of restraint, yet as it is impossible for the smoke to be concealed or fire to be suppressed, so Fregoso could by no subtle drifts so warely watch his transformed Io but she found a Mercury to release her. For upon the Thursday lying in her bed with little intent to sleep, she offered many sighs to Venus that she would be oratress to Morpheus that some dead slumber might possess all the house, which fell out accordingly, so that at midnight she rose up, & finding her apparel shut up, she was fain to go without hose, only in her smock and her petticoat with her father's hat and an old cloak. Thus attired like Diana in her night-gear she marcheth down softly, where she found Francesco ready with a private and familiar friend of his to watch her coming forth, who casting his eye aside & seeing one in a hat and a cloak, suspecting some treachery drew his sword, at which Isabel smiling, she encountered him thus.

Gentle sir, if you be as valiant as you seem choleric, or as martial as you would be thought hardy, set not upon a weaponless woman, lest in thinking to triumph in so mean a conquest you be prejudict(?) with the taint of cowardice. 'Twas never yet read that warlike Mars drew his falchion against lovely Venus, were her offence never great, or his choler never so much. Therefore gentleman, if you be the man I take you, Isabel's Francesco, leave off your arms and fall to amours, and let your parley in them be as short as the night is silent and the time dangerous. Francesco, seeing it was the paramour of his affections, let fall his sword and caught her in his arms, ready to fall in a swoon by a sudden ecstasy of joy; at last recovering his senses, he encountered her thus.

Fair Isabel, nature's overmatch in beauty as you are Diana's superior in virtue, at the sight of this attire I drew my sword as fearing some privy foe, but as soon as the view of your perfection glanced as an object to mine eye, I let fall mine arms, trembling as Actaeon did, that he had dared too far in gazing against so gorgeous a goddess, yet ready in the defence of your sweet self, and rather than I would lose so rich a prize, not only to take up my weapons but to encounter hand to hand with the stoutest champion in the world. Sir (quoth she), these protestations are now bootless, and therefore to be brief, thus (and with that the tears trickled down the vermilion of her cheeks, and she blubbered out this passion), O Francesco, thou mayest see by my attire the depth of my fancy, and in these homely robes mayest thou note the recklessness of my fortunes, that for thy love have strained a note too high in love. I offend nature as repugnant to my father, whose displeasure I have purchased to please thee; I have given a final farewell to my friends to be thy familiar; I have lost all hope of preferment to confirm the sympathy of both our desires; ah Francesco, see I come thus poor in apparel to make thee rich in content. Now if hereafter (oh let me sigh at that, lest I be forced to repent too late), when thy eye is glutted with my beauty and thy hot love proved soon cold, thou begin'st to hate her that thus loveth thee, and prove as Demophoon did to Phyllis, or as Aeneas did to Dido, what then may I do rejected but accurse mine own folly that hath brought me to such hard fortunes. Give me leave, Francesco, to fear what may fall, for men are as inconstant in performance as cunning in practices. She could not fully discourse what she was about to utter but he broke off with this protestation: Ah Isabel, although the winds of Lepanthus are ever inconstant, the chryseroll [sic] ever brittle, the polyp ever changeable, yet measure not my mind by others' motions nor the depth of my affection by the fleeting of others' fancies, for as there is a topaz that will yield to every stamp, so there is an emerald that will yield to no impression. The selfsame Troy, as it had an Aeneas that was fickle, so it had a Troilus that was constant. Greece had a Pyramus as it had a Demophoon, and though some have been ingrateful, yet accuse not all to be unthankful, for when Francesco shall let his eye slip from thy beauty, or his thoughts from thy qualities, or his heart from thy virtues, or his whole self from ever honouring thee, then shall heaven cease to have stars, the earth trees, the world elements, and everything reversed shall fall to their former chaos.

Why then (quoth Isabel), to horseback for fear the faith of two such lovers be impeached by my father's wakeful jealousy. And with that (poor woman), half naked as she was, she mounted, and as fast as horse would pace, away they post towards a town in the said country of Britain called Duncastrum, where let us leave them in their false gallop and return to old Fregoso, who rising early in the morning and missing his daughter, asked for her through the whole house, but seeing none could discover where she was, as assured of her escape he cried out as a man half lunatic that he was by Francesco robbed of his only jewel. Whereupon in a despairing fury he caused all his men and his tenants to mount them, and to disperse themselves every one with hue and cry for the recovery of his daughter, he himself being horsed, and riding the ready way to Duncastrum. Where he no sooner came, but fortune, meaning to dally with the old dotard, and to present him a bone to gnaw on, brought it so to pass that as he came riding down the town he met Francesco and his daughter coming from the church, which although it pierced him to the quick, and strained every string of his heart to the highest note of sorrow, yet he

concealed it till he took his inn, and then stumbling as fast as he could to the mayor's house of the town he revealed unto him the whole cause of his distress, requiring his favour for the clapping up of this unruly gentleman, and to make the matter the more heinous, he accused him of felony, that he had not only contrary to the custom bereft him of his daughter against his will, but with his daughter had taken away certain plate. This evidence caused the mayor straight, guarded with his officers, to march down with Fregoso to the place where Isabel and her Francesco were at breakfast, little thinking, poor souls, such a sharp storm should follow so quiet a calm, but fortune would have it so. And therefore as they were carousing each to other in a sweet frolic of hoped-for content, the mayor rushed in and apprehended him of felony, which drove the poor perplexed lovers into such a dump that they stood as the pictures that Perseus with his shield turned into stones. Francesco presently with a sharp insight entered into the cause, and perceived it was the drift of the old fox his father-in-law, wherefore he took it with the more patience. But Isabel, seeing her new husband so handled, fell in a swoon for sorrow, which could not prevail with the serjeants, but they conveyed him to prison, and her to the mayor's house. As soon as this was done, Fregoso, as a man careless what should become of them in a strange country, took horse and rode home, he past melancholy, and these remained sorrowful, especially Isabel, who after she had almost blubbered out her eyes for grief, fell at length into this passion.

Infortunate Isabel, and therefore unfortunate because thy sorrows are more than thy years, and thy distress too heavy for the prime of thy youth. Are the heavens so unjust, the stars so dismal, the planets so injurious that they have more contrary oppositions than favourable aspects, that their influence doth infuse more prejudice than they can infer profit? Then no doubt if their motions be so malign, Saturn conspiring with all his baleful signs calculated the hour of thy birth full of disaster accidents. Ah Isabel, thou mayest see the birds that are hatched in winter are nipped with every storm; such as fly against the sun are either scorched or blinded, & those that repugn again nature are ever crossed by fortune. Thy father foresaw these evils, and warned thee by experience; thou rejected'st his counsel, and therefore art bitten with repentance; such as look not before they leap oft fall into the ditch, and they that scorn their parents cannot avoid punishment. The young tigers follow the braying of their old sire, the tender fawns choose their food by the old buck; these brute beasts, and without reason, stray not from the limits of nature, thou a woman, and endued with reason, art therefore thus sorrowful because thou hast been unnatural.

Whither now, Isabel? What, like the shrubs of India, parched with every storm? Wilt thou resemble the brooks of Carvia, that dry up with every sunshine? Shall one blast of fortune blemish all thy affection, one frown of thy father infringe thy love toward thy husband? Wilt thou be so inconstant at the first, that hast promised to be loyal ever? If thou beest daunted on thy marriage-day, thou wilt be fleeting hereafter. Didst thou not choose him for his virtues, and now wilt thou refuse him for his hard fortunes? Is he not thy husband? yes, and therefore more dear to thee than is thy father. Aye, Isabel, and upon that resolve, lest having so faithful a Troilus thou prove as hateful a Cressida, sorrow Isabel, but not that thou hast followed Francesco, but that Francesco by thee is fallen into such misfortunes; seek to mitigate his maladies by thy patience, not to incense

his grief with thy passions; courage is known in extremities, womanhood in distress, and as the chrysolite is proved in the fire, the diamond by the anvil, so love is tried not by the favour of fortune but by the adversity of time. Therefore Isabel, *Feras, non culpes, quod vitari non potes*, and with Tully resolve thus:

Puto rerum humanarum nihil esse firmum: Ita nec in prosperis laetitia gestes, nec in aduersis dolore concides.

With this she held her peace and rested silent, so behaving herself in the mayor's house with such modesty and patience that as they held her for a paragon of beauty, so they counted her for a spectacle of virtue, thinking her outward proportion was far inferior to her inward perfection, so that generally she won the hearts of the whole house in that they pitied her case and wished her liberty. Insomuch that Francesco was the better used for her sake, who being imprisoned, grieved not at his own sinister mishap, but sorrowed for the fortune of Isabel, passing both day and night with many extreme passions to think on the distress of his beloved paramour. Fortune, who had wrought this tragedy, intending to show that her front is as full of favours as of frowns, and that she holds a dimple in her cheek as she hath a wrinkle in her brow, began thus in a comical vein to be pleasant. After many days were passed, and that the mayor had entered into the good demeanour of them both, noting that it proceeded rather of the displeasure of her father than for any special desert of felony, seeing youth would have his swinge, and that as the minerals of Aetna stove fire, as the leaves in Parthia burn with the sun, so young years are incident to the heat of love, and affection will burst into such amorous parties, he, not as Chremes in Terence measuring the flames of youth by his dead cinders, but thinking of their present fortunes by the follies of his former age, called a conventicle of his brethren, and seeing there was none to give any further evidence, thought to let Francesco loose. Having their free consent, the next day, taking Isabel with him he went to the jail, where they heard such rare reports of the behaviour of Francesco that they sorrowed not so much at his fortunes as they wondered at his virtues, for the jailer discoursed unto them how as he was greatly passionate, so he used great patience, having this verse oft in his mouth:

Fortiter ille facit, qui miser esse potest.

That he was affable and courteous, winning all and offending none, that all his house, as they grieved at his imprisonment would be sorry at his enlargement, not for envy of his person but for sorrow of his absence. The jailer thus commending the gentleman, conducted them to the chamber-door where Francesco lay, whom they found in secret meditation with himself; therefore they stayed, and were silent auditors to his passions. The first word they heard him breathe out with a sigh was this:

Soafrir me plaist, cur l'espoir me conforte,

and with that taking a cittern in his hand, saying this note:

Pour paruenir l'endure,

he warbled out this ode.

Francesco's Ode.

*When I look about the place
Where sorrow nurseth up disgrace,
Wrapped within a fold of cares
Whose distress no heart spares,
Eyes might look, but see no light,
Heart might think but on despite,
Sun did shine, but not on me,
Sorrow said it may not be
That heart or eye should once possess
Any salve to cure distress,
For men in prison must suppose
Their couches are the beds of woes;
Seeing this I sighed then
Fortune thus should punish men,
But when I called to mind her face
For whose love I brook this place,
Starry eyes whereat my sight
Did eclipse with much delight,
Eyes that lighten and do shine,
Beams of love that are divine,
Lily cheeks whereon beside
Buds of roses show their pride,
Cherry lips which did speak
Words that made all hearts to break,
Words most sweet, for breath was sweet,
Such perfume for love is meet,
Precious words, as hard to tell
Which more pleased, wit or smell,
When I saw my greatest pains
Grow for her that beauty stains,
Fortune thus I did reprove:
Nothing grievous grows from love.*

Having thus chanted over his ode, he heard the chamber-door open, whereupon he grew melancholy, but when he saw the goddess of his affection on whose constant loyalty depended the essence of his happiness, he started up as when lovesick Mars saw Venus entering his pavilion in triumph, entertaining them all generally with such affability, & her particularly with such courtesy, that he showed himself as full of nurture as of nature. Interchange of entertainment thus passed between these two lovers, as well with emphasis of words as ecstasy of minds, concluding with streams of pathetical tears. The mayor at last entered parley, & told Francesco, though his father-in-law had alleged felony against him, yet because he perceived that it rather proceeded of some secret

revenge than any manifest truth, and that no further evidence came to censure the allegation, he was content to set him at liberty, conditionally Francesco should give his hand to be answerable to what hereafter in that behalf might be objected against him. These conditions accepted, Francesco was set at liberty, and he and Isabel jointly together taking themselves to a little cottage began to be as economical as they were amorous, with their hands-thrift coveting to satisfy their hearts' thirst, and to be as diligent in labours as they were affectionate in loves, so that the parish wherein they lived so affected them for the course of their life that they were counted the very mirrors of a democratical method, for he being a scholar, and nursed up in the universities, resolved rather to live by his wit than any way to be pinched with want, thinking this old sentence to be true, that wishers and woulders were never good householders; therefore he applied himself to teaching of a school, where by his industry he had not only great favour but got wealth to withstand fortune. Isabel, that she might seem no less profitable than her husband careful, fell to her needle, and with her work sought to prevent the injury of necessity. Thus they laboured to maintain their loves, being as busy as bees and as true as turtles, as desirous to satisfy the world with their desert as to feed the humours of their own desires. Living thus in a league of united virtues, out of this mutual concord of confirmed perfection they had a son answerable to their own proportion, which did increase their amity, so as the sight of their young infant was a double ratifying of their affection. Fortune and love thus joining in league to make these parties to forget the storms that had nipped the blossoms of their former years, addicted to the content of their loves this conclusion of bliss. After the term of five years, Signor Fregoso, hearing by sundry reports the fame of their forwardness, how Francesco coveted(?) to be most loving to his daughter, and she most dutiful to him, and both strive to exceed one another in loyalty, glad at this mutual agreement he fell from the fury of his former melancholy passions, and satisfied himself with a contented patience, that at last he directed letters to his son-in-law that he should make repair to his house with his daughter. Which news was no sooner come to the ears of this married couple, but providing for all things necessary for the furniture of their voyage, they posted as fast as they could towards Caerbranck, where speedily arriving at their father's house they found such friendly entertainment at the old man's hand that they counted this smile of fortune able to countervail all the contrary storms that the adverse planets had inflicted upon them. Seated thus, as they thought, so surely as no sinister chance or dismal influence might remove, she that is constant in nothing but inconstancy began in fair sky to produce a tempest thus.

It so chanced that Francesco had necessary business to dispatch certain his urgent affairs at the chief city of that island called Troynovant; thither with leave of his father and farewell to his wife he departed after they were married seven years, where after he was arrived, knowing that he should make his abode there for the space of some nine weeks, he sold his horse and hired him a chamber, earnestly endeavouring to make speedy dispatch of his affairs that he might the sooner enjoy the sight of his desired Isabel, for did he see any woman beautiful, he viewed her with a sigh, thinking how far his wife did surpass her in excellence; were the modesty of any woman well noted by her qualities, it grieved him he was not at home with his Isabel, who did excel them all in virtues.

Thus he construed all to her perfection, having no vacant time neither day nor night wherein he did not ruminare on the perfection of his Isabel. As thus his thoughts were divided on his business and on his wife, looking one day out at his chamber-window he espied a young gentlewoman which looked out at a casement right opposite against his prospect, who fixed her eyes upon him with such cunning and artificial glances as she showed in them a chaste disdain and yet a modest desire. Where (by the way, gentlemen) let me say this much, that our courtesans of Troynovant are far superior in artificial allurements to them of all the world, for although they have not the painting of Italy nor the charms of France nor the jewels of Spain, yet they have in their eyes adamant that will draw youth as the jet the straw, or the sight of the panther the ermy; their looks are like lures that will reclaim, and like Circes' apparitions, that can represent in them all motions; they contain modesty, mirth, chastity, wantonness, and what not, and she that holdeth in her eye most civility hath oft in her heart most dishonesty, being like the pyrite stone that is fire without and frost within. Such a one was this merry minion, whose honesty was as choice as Venus' chastity, being as fair as Helena and as faithless, as well-featured as Cressida and as crafty, having an eye for every passenger, a sigh for every lover, a smile for everyone that veiled his bonnet, and because she loved the game well, a quiver for every woodman's arrow. This courtesan, seeing this country Francesco was no other but a mere novice, & that so newly that, to use the old proverb, he had scarce seen the lions, she thought to entrap him and so arrest him with her amorous glances that she would wring him by the purse, whereupon every day she would out at her casement stand, and there discover her beauties. Francesco, who was like the fly that delighted in the flame, and coveted to feed his eye on this beauteous courtesan, tilted at her with interchange of glances, and on a day, to try the finesse of his wit, with a poetical fury began thus to make a canzone.

Canzone.

*As then the sun sat lordly in his pride,
 Not shadowed with the veil of any cloud,
 The welkin had no rack that seemed to glide,
 No dusky vapour did bright Phoebus shroud,
 No blemish did eclipse the beauteous sky
 From setting forth heaven's secret searching eye,
 No blustering wind did shake the shady trees,
 Each leaf lay still and silent in the wood,
 The birds were musical, the labouring bees
 That in the summer heaps their winter's good
 Plied to their hives sweet honey from those flowers
 Whereout the serpent strengthens all his powers,
 The lion laid and stretched him in the lawns,
 No storm did hold the leopard fro his prey,
 The fallow fields were full of wanton fawns,
 The plow-swains never saw a fairer day,
 For every beast and bird did take delight
 To see the quiet heavens to shine so bright.*

When thus the winds lay sleeping in the caves,
 The air was silent in her concave sphere,
 And Neptune with a calm did please his slaves
 Ready to wash the never-drenched bear,
 Then did the change of my affects begin,
 And wanton love assayed to snare me in.
 Learning my back against a lofty pine
 Whose top did check the pride of all the air,
 Fixing my thoughts, and with my thoughts mine eyne
 Upon the sun, the fairest of all fair,
 What thing made God so fair as this, quoth I,
 And thus I mused until I darked mine eye.
 Finding the sun too glorious for my sight,
 I glanced my look to shun so bright a lamp,
 With that appear [sic?] an object twice as bright,
 So gorgeous as my senses all were damped,
 In Ida richer beauty did not win
 When lovely Venus showed her silver skin,
 Her pace was like to Juno's pompous strains
 Whenas she sweeps through heaven's brass-paved way,
 Her front was powdered through with azured veins
 That twixt sweet roses and fair lilies lay,
 Reflecting such a mixture from her face
 As tainted Venus' beauty with disgrace,
 Arctophylax, the brightest of the stars,
 Was not so orient as her crystal eyes
 Wherein triumphant sat both peace and wars,
 From out whose arches such sweet favours flies
 As might reclaim Mars in his highest rage
 At beauty's charge his fury to assuage,
 The diamond gleams not more reflecting lights
 Painted [sic?] with fiery pyramids to shine
 Than are those flames that burnish in our sights,
 Darting fire out the crystal of her eyne,
 Able to set Narcissus' thoughts on fire,
 Although he swore him foe to sweet desire.
 Gazing upon this leman with mine eye,
 I felt my sight vail bonnet to her looks,
 So deep a passion to my heart did fly
 As I was trapped within her luring looks,
 Forced to confess, before that I had done,
 Her beauty far more brighter than the sun.

Francesco having thus in a poetical humour pleased his fancy, when his leisure served him would, to make proof of his constancy, interchange amorous glances with this fair courtesan, whose name was Infida, thinking his inward affections were so surely

grounded on the virtues of his Isabel that no exterior proportion could effect any passion to the contrary, but at last he found by experience that the fairest blossoms are soonest nipped with frost, the best fruit soonest touched with caterpillars, and the ripest wits most apt to be overthrown by love. Infida taught him with her looks to learn this, that the eye of the basilisk pierceth with prejudice, that the juice of celidony is sweet but it fretteth deadly, that Circes' cups were too strong for all antidotes, and women's flatteries too forcible to resist at voluntary, for she so snared him in the favours of her face that his eye began to censure partially of her perfection, insomuch that he thought her second to Isabel, if not superior. Dallying thus with beauty as the fly in the flame, Venus, willing to show how forcible her influence was, so tempered with opportunity that as Francesco walked abroad to take the air, he met with Infida gadding abroad with certain her companions who like blazing stars showed the marks of inconstant minions, for she no sooner drew near Francesco, but dyeing her face with a vermilion blush, and in a wanton eye hiding a feigned modesty, she saluted him with a low courtesy. Signor Francesco, that could well skill to court all kind of degrees, lest he might then be thought to have little manners, returned not only her courtesies with his bonnet, but taking Infida by the hand began thus. Fair mistress, and if mine eye be not deceived in so bright an object, mine overthwart neighbour, having often seen with delight and coveted with desire to be acquainted with your sweet self, I cannot now but gratulate fortune with many thanks that hath offered such fit opportunity to bring me to your presence, hoping I shall find you so friendly as to crave that we may be more familiar. She, that knew how to entertain such a young novice, made him this cunning reply. Indeed sir, neighbourhood craves charity, and such affable gentlemen as yourself deserves rather to be entertained with courtesy that rejected with disdain. Therefore, sir, what private friendship mine honour or honesty may afford, you (above all that hitherto I have known) shall command. Then mistress (quoth he), for that every man counts it credit to have a patroness of his fortunes, and I am a mere stranger in this city, let me find such favour that all my actions may be shrouded under your excellence, and carry the name of your servant ready, for requital of such gracious countenance, to unsheath my sword in the defence of my patroness forever. She that had her humour fitted with this motion answered thus, with a look that had been able to have forced Troilus to have been trothless to his Cressida: How kindly I take it, Signor Francesco, for so I understand your name, that you proffer your service to so mean a mistress; the effectual favours that shall to my poor ability gratify your courtesy shall manifest how I account of such a friend. Therefore from henceforth Infida entertains Francesco for her servant; & I (quoth he) accept of the beauteous Infida as my mistress. Upon this they fell into other amorous prattle which I leave off, and walked abroad while it was dinner-time, Francesco still having his eye upon his new mistress, whose beauties he thought, if they were equally tempered with virtues, to exceed all that yet his eye had made survey of. Doting thus on this new face with a new fancy, he often wrung her by the hand and brake off his sentences with such deeps sighs that she perceived by the weathercock where the wind blew, returning such amorous passions as she seemed as much entangled as he was enamoured. Well, thinking now that she had baited her hook she would not cease while she had fully caught the fish, she began thus to lay the train. When they were come near to the city-gates she stayed on a sudden, and straining him hard by the hand and glancing a look from her eyes as if she would both show favour and crave affection, she began thus smilingly to assault him.

Servant, the lawyers say the assumpsit is never good where the party gives not somewhat in consideration; that service is void where it is not made fast by some fee. Lest therefore your eye should make your mind variable, as men's thoughts follow their sights, and their looks waver at the excellence of new objects, and so I lose such a servant, to tie you to the stake with an earnest, you shall this day be my guest at dinner. Then if hereafter you forget your mistress, I shall appeal at the bar of loyalty, and so condemn you of lightness. Francesco, that was tied by the eyes & had his heart on his halfpenny, could not deny her, but with many thanks accepted of her motion, so that agreed they went all to Infida's house to dinner, where they had such cheer as could upon the sudden be provided, Infida giving him such friendly & familiar entertainment at his repast, as well with sweet prattle as with amorous glances, that he rested captive within the labyrinth of her flatteries. After dinner was done, that she might tie him from starting, she thought to set all her wits upon ela. Therefore she took a lute in her hand, and in an angelical harmony warbled out this conceited ditty.

Infida's Song.

*Sweet Adon dar'st not glance thine eye,
N'oserez vous, mon bel ami,
Upon thy Venus that must die,
Je vous en prie, pity me,
N'oserez vous, mon bel, mon bel,
N'oserez vous, mon bel ami.*

*See how sad thy Venus lies,
N'oserez vous, mon bel ami,
Love in heart and tears in eyes,
Je vous en prie, pity me,
N'oserez vous, mon bel, mon bel,
N'oserez vous, mon bel ami.*

*Thy face as fair as Paphos' brooks,
N'oserez vous, mon bel ami,
Wherein fancy baits her hooks,
Je vous en prie, pity me,
N'oserez vous, mon bel, mon bel,
N'oserez vous, mon bel ami.*

*Thy cheeks like cherries that do grow,
N'oserez vous, mon bel ami,
Amongst the western mounts of snow,
Je vous en prie, pity me,
N'oserez vous, mon bel, mon bel,
N'oserez vous, mon bel ami.*

*Thy lips vermilion, full of love,
N'oserez vous, mon bel ami,
Thy neck as silver-white as dove,
Je vous en prie, pity me,
N'oserez vous, mon bel, mon bel,
N'oserez vous, mon bel ami.*

*Thine eyes like flames of holy fires,
N'oserez vous, mon bel ami,
Burns all my thoughts with sweet desires,
Je vous en prie, pity me,
N'oserez vous, mon bel, mon bel,
N'oserez vous, mon bel ami.*

*All thy beauties sting my heart,
N'oserez vous, mon bel ami,
I must die through Cupid's dart,
Je vous en prie, pity me,
N'oserez vous, mon bel, mon bel,
N'oserez vous, mon bel ami.*

*Wilt thou let thy Venus die,
N'oserez vous, mon bel ami,
Adon were unkind, say I,
Je vous en prie, pity me,
N'oserez vous, mon bel, mon bel,
N'oserez vous, mon bel ami.*

*To let fair Venus die for woe,
N'oserez vous, mon bel ami.
That doth love sweet Adon so,
Je vous en prie, pity me,
N'oserez vous, mon bel, mon bel,
N'oserez vous, mon bel ami.*

While thus Infida sung her song, Francesco sat as if with Orpheus' melody he had been enchanted, having his eyes fixed on her face and his ears attendant on her music, so that he yielded to that siren which after forced him to a fatal shipwreck; Infida laying away her lute after fell to other prattle. But because it grew late in the afternoon, Francesco, that was called way by his urgent affairs, took his leave, whereat Infida seemed very melancholy, which made our young scholar half mad, yet with a solemn congee departing, he went about his business, whereas our cunning courtesan, seeing her novice gone, began to smile, and said to her companions that she had made a good market that had caught such a tame fool. Alas, poor young gentleman (quoth she), he is like to the leaves in Egypt, that as they spring without rain, so they burn at the sight of the fire, or to the swallows, that think every sunshine a summer's day. He was never long waiter in

Venus' court that counts every smile a favour and every laugh to be true love; but 'tis no matter; he hath store of pence, & I will sell him many passions until I leave him as empty of coin as myself is void of fancy. And thus leaving her jesting at her new-entertained servant, again to Francesco, who after he had made dispatch of his business got him home to his lodging, where sitting solitary in his chamber he began to call to remembrance the perfections of his new mistress, the excellent proportion of her physiognomy, her stature, voice, gesture, virtues (as he thought), ruminating upon very part with a plaudite. At last, as he was in this pleasing suppose, he remembered his sweet Isabel whose beauty and virtue was once so precious, that between his old love and his new fancy he fell into these passions. Ah Francesco, whither art thou carried with new conceits; shall thy fruits be more subjects to the northern blasts than thy blossoms; shall thy middle age be more full of folly than thy tender years; wilt thou love in thy youth, and lust when thy days are half spent? Men say that the cedar, the elder it is, the straighter it grows, that Narcissus' flowers, the higher they spring, the more glorious is their hue, and so should gentlemen as they exceed in years excel in virtues, but thou, Francesco, are like to the halcyons, which being hatched white as milk, grow to be as black as jet; the young storks have a musical voice, but the old a fearful sound. When thou wert of small age, men honoured thee for thy qualities, & now in years shall they hate thee for thy vices? But to what end tends this large preamble? to check thy fondness, that must leave to love and learn to lust. What, leave to love Isabel, whose beauty is divine, whose virtues rare, whose chastity loyal, whose constancy untainted? And for whom? for the love of some unknown courtesan. Consider this, Francesco, Isabel for thy sake hath left her parents, forsaken her friends, rejected the world, and was content rather to brook poverty with thee than possess wealth with her father. Is she not fair to content thine eye, virtuous to allure thy mind; nay, is she not thy wife, to whom thou art bound by law, love, and conscience, and yet wilt thou start from her? what, from Isabel? Didst thou not vow that the heavens should be without lamps, the earth without beasts, the world without elements before Isabel should be forsaken of her Francesco? And wilt thou prove as false as she is faithful? Shall she like Dido cry out against Aeneas, like Phyllis against Demophoon, like Ariadne against Theseus, and thou be canonized in the chronicles for a man full of perjury? Oh consider, Francesco, whom thou shalt lose if thou lovest Isabel, and what thou shalt gain if thou winnest Infida, the one being a loving wife, the other a flattering courtesan. Hast thou read Aristotle, and findest thou not in his philosophy this sentence set down:

Omne animal irrationale ad sui similem diligendum natura dirigitur.

And wilt thou, that art a creature endued with reason as thou art, excelling them in wisdom, exceed them in vanities? Hast thou turned over the liberal sciences as a scholar, and amongst them all hast not found this general principle, that unity is the essence of amity, and yet wilt thou make a division in the greatest sympathy of all loves? Nay, Francesco, art thou a Christian, and hast tasted of the sweet fruits of theology, and hast not read this in Holy Writ, penned down by that miracle of wisdom, Solomon, that he which is wise should reject the strange woman, and not regard not the sweetness of her flattery:

Desire not the beauty of a strange woman in thy heart, nor be not entrapped in her eyelids.

For through a whorish woman a man is brought to a morsel of bread, and a woman will hunt for the precious life of a man.

Can a man take fire in his bosom & not be burnt? or can a man tread upon coals and not be scorched?

So he that goeth to his neighbour's wife shall not be innocent, whosoever toucheth her.

Men do not despise a thief when he stealeth to satisfy his soul, but if he be found he shall restore sevenfold or give all the substance of his house.

But he that committeth adultery with a woman, he is destitute of understanding; he that doth it destroyeth his own soul.

He shall find a wound and dishonour, and his reproach shall never be put away.

If then, Francesco, theology tells thee such axioms, wilt thou strive against the stream, and with the deer feed against the wind? Wilt thou swallow up sin with greediness that thou mayest be punished without repentance? No, Francesco, home to the wife of thy youth, and drink the pleasant waters of thine own well. And what of all these frivolous circumstances? Wilt thou measure every action with philosophy, or every thought with divinity? Then shalt thou live in the world as a man hated in the world. What, Francesco, he that is afraid of every bush shall never prove good huntsman, and he that at every gust puts to the lee shall never be good navigator. Thou art now, Francesco, to be a lover, not a divine, to measure thy affections by Ovid's principles, not by rules of theology, and time present wills thee to love Infida when thou canst not look on Isabel; distance of place is a discharge of duty, and men have their faults, as they are full of fancies. What, the blind eats many a fly, and much water runs by the mill that the miller never knows of; the evil that the eye sees not the heart rues not, *Caste si non caute*. Tush, Francesco, Isabel hath not Lynceus' eyes to see so far. Therefore while thou art resident in London, enjoy the beauty of Infida, and when thou art at home only content thee with Isabel; so with a small fault shalt thou fully satisfy thine own affection. Thus Francesco soothed himself, and did *in vtramuīs aurem dormire*, caring little for his good as long as he might please his new goddess, and making no exception of a wife, so he might be accepted of his paramour. To effect therefore the desired end of his affects, he made himself as neat and quaint as might be, and hied him to his new mistress' house to put in practice that which himself had purposed, whither in the afternoon arriving, he understood by her chambermaid that she was at home and solitary; by her therefore he was conducted to Infida's closet, where he found her seeming melancholy, and thus awaked her from her dumps.

Fair mistress, hail to your person, quiet to your thoughts, and content to your desires. At my first coming into your chamber, seeing you sit so melancholy, I thought either Diana

sat musing on the principles of her modesty, or Venus malcontent dumping on her amours, for the show of your virtues represents the one, & the excellence of your beauties discovers the other, but at last, when the glister of your beauty surpassing them both reflected like the pride of Phoebus on my face, I perceived it was my good mistress that discontented sat in her dumps, wherefore as your bounden servant, if either my word or sword may free you from these passions I am here ready in all actions, howsoever prejudicial, to show the effect of my affection. Infida, glad to see her lover in this labyrinth, wherein to bind him sure, she taking him by the hand made this wily answer.

Sweet servant, how discontent soever I seem, dismay not you, for your welcome is such as you can wish or the sincerity of my heart afford; women's dumps grow not ever of a prejudicial mishap, but oft-times of some superficial melancholy enforced with a frown and shaken off with a smile, having sorrow in their faces and pleasure in their heart, resembling the leaves of the liquorice, that when they are most full of dew without, are then most dry within. I tell you, servant, women are wily cattle, & therefore have I chosen so good a herdsman as yourself, that what our wantonness offends, your wisdom may amend. But trust me, Francesco, were I wronged by fortune, or injured by any foe, the promise of such a champion were sufficient to arm me with disdain against both, but rest satisfied, your presence hath banished all passions, and therefore you may see, servant, you are the loadstone by whose virtue my thoughts take all their direction. Being thus pleasant, she sat Francesco down by her, & hand in hand interchanged amorous glances. But he that was abashed to discover his mind, in that some sparks of honesty still remained in his heart, sat tormented with love and fear, pricked forward by the one to discourse his desires, kept back by the other from uttering his affections. Thus in a quandary he sat like one of Medusa's changelings till Infida, seeing him in this sudden amaze, began thus to shake him out of his passions.

Now Signor Francesco, I see the old adage is not always true, *Consulenti nunquam caput doluit*, for you that erst alleged persuasions of mirth are now overgrown with melancholy. When a extreme storm follows a pleasant calm, then the effects are metaphysical, and where such a violent dump of cares is sequence to such an ecstasy of joys, either I must attribute it to some apoplexy of senses or some strange alteration of passions. Francesco, the oven damped up hath the greatest heat; fire suppressed is most forcible, the streams stopped either break through or overflow, and sorrows concealed, as they are most passionate, so they are most peremptory.

What, Francesco, spit on thy hand and lay hold on thy heart, one pound of care pays not an ounce of debt; a friend to reveal is a medicine to relieve; discover thy grief, and if I be not able to redress with wealth, although what I have is at thy command, yet I will attempt with counsel either to persuade thee from passions or entreat thee to patience; say, Francesco, and fear not, for as I will be a friendly counsellor, so I will be a faithful concealer. Our young gentleman, hearing Infida apply such lenitive plasters to his cutting corrosives, thought the patient had great hope when the physician was so friendly; he therefore with a demure countenance, beginning loverlike his preamble with a deep sigh, courted her thus.

Fair mistress (quoth he), if I fail in my speeches, think it is because I faint in my passions, being as timorous to offend as I am amorous to attempt; when the object is offered to the sense, the sight is hindered, *Sensibile sensui oppositum, nulla sit sensatio*; Mars could never play the orator when he wrung Venus by the hands, nor Tully tell his tale when his thoughts were in Terentia's eyes; lovers are like to the heban blossoms that open with the dew and shut with the sun; so they in presence of their mistress have their tongues tied and their eyes open, pleading with the one and being silent in the other, which one describeth thus:

*Alter in alterius iactantes lumina vultus,
Quaerebant taciti noster vbi esset amor.*

Therefore, sweet Infida, what my tongue utters not, think conceited in my heart, and then thus: since first my good fortune, if thou favourest me, or my adverse destinies, if I find the contrary, brought me to Troynovant, and that these over-daring eyes were entertained into those gorgeous objects, know that Cupid, lying at advantage, so snared me in thy perfections that ever since every sense hath rested imperfect. For when I marked thy face, more beauteous than Venus, I surveyed it with a sigh and mine eye portrayed it with a passion; when I noted thy virtues, then my mind rested captive; when I heard thy wit, I did not only wonder, but I was so wrapped in the labyrinth of thine excellence that no star but Infida could be the guide whereby to direct my course. Sith then, fair mistress, you, and none but you, have robbed me of my affections, harbour not in such a sweet body a hard heart, but do me justice, let me have love for love, lest I complain my destinies not to be equivalent to my desires, and think my fortunes to be sharper than my loves. Think, Infida, faults in affections are but slight follies; Venus hath shrines to shadow her truants, and Cupid's wings are shelters for such as venture far to content their thoughts. Sins unseen are half pardoned, and love requires not chastity, but that her soldiers be chary. Then think (sweet Infida), if thou grant my desire, how careful I will be of thy honour, rather ready to bide the prejudice of life than to brook the disparagement of thy fame; in lieu therefore of my loyal service, grant me that sweet gift which as it begins in amity, can no way take end but in death; otherwise I shall be forced to accurse my fortunes, accuse thy frowardness, and expect no other hap but a life full of miseries, or a death full of martyrdom. With this passion ending his plea, he dissolved into such sighs that it discovered his inward affection not to be less than his outward protestation. Infida, noting the perplexity of her lover, conceited his grief with great joy, yet that she might not be thought too forward, she seemed thus froward, and although her thoughts were more than his desires, and that her mind was no less than his motion, yet pulling her hand from his she made this frowning reply.

What, Francesco, when the tiger hunteth for his prey doth he then hide his claws? Is the pyrite stone then most hot when it looketh most cold? Are men so subtile that when they seem most holy they are farthest from God; can they under the shadow of virtue cover the substance of vanity, & like Janus be double-faced to present both faith & flattery? I had thought (servant) when I entertained thee for thy courtesie I should not have had occasion to shake thee off for thy boldness, nor when I liked thee for thy affable simplicity I should have disliked thee for thy secret subtilty; what, Francesco, to desire such a grant

as may, if thou wert wise, neither stand with thy honesty to intend nor with my honour to effect. Tell me, Francesco, hath either my countenance been so over-courteous that it might promise such small curiosity, or my looks so lascivious that thou mightest hope to find me so lavish, or my actions so wavering, or my disposition so full of vanity, that my honour might seem soon to be assaulted, & soon sacked? If I have (Francesco) been faulty in these follies, then will I seek to amend wherein thou sayest I have made offence; if not, but that thou thinkest for that I am a woman, I am easy to be won with promises of love and protestations of loyalty, thou art (sweet servant) in a wrong box, and sittest far beside the cushion, for I pass of my honour more than life, & covet rather to have the title of honesty than the dignity of a diadem; cease then, unless thou wilt surcease to have my favour, and content thee with this, that Infida allows of thee for love, not for lust, & yet if she should tread her shoe awry, would rather yield the spoil of her honour to her servant than to the greatest prince of the world. Francesco, though he was a novice in these affairs, and was nipped on the head with this sharp repulse, yet he was not so [] to take the shower for the first storm nor so ill a woodman to give over the chase at the first default but that he prosecuted his purpose thus. I am sorry (fair goddess of my devotion) if my presumption hath given any offence to my sweet mistress, for rather than I should but procure a frown in her forehead I would have a deep wound in my own heart, coveting rather to suppress my passions with death than to disparage my credit with so good a patroness. Therefore although my destinies be extreme, my affection great, and my loves such as can take no end but in your favours, yet I rest upon this: Infida hath commanded me to cease, and I will not dare so much as to prosecute my suit although every passion should be a purgatory and every day's denial a month's punishment in hell; with that he set down his period with such a sigh that, as the mariners say, a man would have thought all would have split again. This cunning courtesan, being afraid with this check to have quatted the queasy stomach of her lover, desirous to draw to her that with both hands which she had thrust away with her little finger, began to be pleasant with Francesco thus.

What, servant, are you such a freshwater soldier that you faint at the first skirmish; fear not, man, you have not to deal with Mars, but with Venus, and her darts of denial, as they prick sharp, so they pierce little, and her thunderbolts do affright, not prejudice. Fear not, man, a woman's heart and her tongue are not relatives; 'tis not ever true that what the heart thinketh, the tongue clacketh. Venus' storms are tempered with rose-water, and when she hath the greatest wrinkle in her brow, then she hath the sweetest dimple in her chin; be blithe, man, a faint heart never won fair lady. Francesco, hearing his mistress thus pleasant, took opportunity by the forehead, and dealt so with his Infida that before he went all was well; she blushed not, nor he bashed, but both made up their market with a fair of kisses, which sympathy of affections bred the poor gentleman's overthrow, for he was so snared in the wily trammels of her alluring flattery that neither the remembrance of his Isabel, the care of his child, the favour of his friends, or the fear of his discredit could in any wise hale him from that hell whereinto through his own folly he was fallen.

Where by the way (gentlemen) let us note the subtilty of these sirens that with their false harmony persuade and then prejudice, who bewitch like Calypso and enchant like Circes, carrying a show as if they were vestals and could with Amulia carry water in a sieve,

when they are flat courtesans, as far from honesty as they are from devotion. At the first, they carry a fair show, resembling Calisto, who hid her vanities with Diana's veil, having in their looks a coy disdain, but in their hearts a hot desire, denying with the tongue and enticing with their looks, rejecting in words, and alluring in gestures, and such a one (gentlemen) was Infida, who so plied Francesco with her flattering fawns that as the iron follows the adamant, the straw the jet, and the heliotropion the beams of the sun, so his actions were directed after her eye, and what she said stood for a principle, insomuch that he was not only ready in all submiss humours to please her fancies, but willing for the least word of offence to draw his weapon against the stoutest champion in all Troynovant. Thus seated in her beauty he lived a long while, forgetting his return to Caerbranck till on a day, sitting musing with himself, he fell into a deep consideration of his former fortunes and present follies, whereupon taking his lute in his hand he sung this roundelay.

Francesco's Roundelay.

*Sitting and sighing in my secret muse,
As once Apollo did, surprised with love,
Noting the slippery ways young years do use,
What fond affects the prime of youth doth move,
 With bitter tears despairing I do cry:
 Woe worth the faults and follies of mine eye.*

*When wanton age, the blossoms of my time,
Drew me to gaze upon the gorgeous sight
That beauty, pompous in her highest prime,
Presents to tangle men with sweet delight,
 Then with despairing tears my thoughts do cry:
 Woe worth the faults and follies of mine eye.*

*When I surveyed the riches of her looks
Whereout flew flames of never-quenched desire,
Wherein lay baits that Venus snares with hooks,
Oh where proud Cupid sat all armed with fire,
 Then touched with love, my inward soul did cry:
 Woe worth the faults and follies of mine eye.*

*The milk-white galaxia of her brow
Where love doth dance lavoltas of his skill,
Like to the temple where true lovers vow
To follow what shall please their mistress' will,
 Noting her ivory front, now do I cry:
 Woe worth the faults and follies of mine eye.*

*Her face like silver Luna in her shine,
All tainted through with bright vermilion strains,*

*Like lilies dipped in Bacchus' choicest wine,
Powdered and interseamed with azured veins,
Delighting in their pride now may I cry:
Woe worth the faults and follies of mine eye.*

*The golden wires that chequers in the day
Inferior to the tresses of her hair,
Her amber trammels did my heart dismay,
That when I looked I durst not over-dare,
Proud of her pride, now am I forced to cry:
Woe worth the faults and follies of mine eye.*

*These fading beauties drew me on to sin,
Nature's great riches framed my bitter ruth,
These were the traps that love did snare me in,
Oh these and none but these have wracked my youth,
Misled by them I may despairing cry:
Woe worth the faults and follies of mine eye.*

*By these I slipped from virtue's holy track
That leads unto the highest crystal sphere,
By these I fell to vanity and wrack,
And as a man forlorn with sin and fear,
Despair and sorrow doth constrain me cry:
Woe worth the faults and follies of mine eye.*

Although this sonnet was of his ready invention, and that he uttered it in bitterness of mind, yet after he had passed over his melancholy, and from his solitary was fallen into company, he forgot this pathological impression of virtue, and like the dog did *redire ad vomitum*, and fell to his own vomit, resembling those Grecians that with Ulysses drinking of Circes' drugs lost both form and memory; well his affairs were done, his horse sold, and no other business now rested to hinder him from hieing home but his mistress, which was such a violent detainer of his person and thoughts that there is no heaven but Infida's house, where although he pleasantly entered in with delight, yet cowardly he slipped away with repentance. Well, leaving him to his new loves, at last to Isabel, who daily expected the coming home of her best-beloved Francesco, thinking every hour a year till she might see him in whom rested all her content. But when (poor soul) she could neither feed her sight with his presence, nor her ears with his letters, she began to lour, and grew so discontent that she fell into a fever. Fortune, that meant to try her patience, thought to prove her with these tragical news: it was told her by certain gentlemen her friends, who were her husband's private familiars, that he meant to sojourn most part of the year in Troynovant; one blunt fellow amongst the rest, that was plain and without falsehood, told her the whole cause of his residence, how he was in love with a most beautiful gentlewoman called Infida, and that so deeply that no persuasion might revoke him from that alluring courtesan. At this Isabel made no account, but took it as a frivolous tale, and thought the worse of such as buzzed such fantastical follies into her ears, but when the

general report of his misdemeanours were bruited abroad throughout all Caerbranck, then with blushing cheeks she hid her head, & grieving at his follies and her own fortunes, smothered the flames of her sorrows with inward conceit, but outwardly withstood such in satirical terms as did inveigh against the honesty of Francesco, so that she won great commendations of all for her loyalty and constancy, yet when she was gotten secret by herself, her heart full of sorrowful passions and her eyes full of tears, she began to meditate with herself of the prime of her youth vowed to Francesco, how she forsook father, friends, and country to be paramour unto her heart's paragon, the vows he made when he carried her away in the night, the solemn promises and protestations that were uttered. When she had pondered all these things, then she called to mind Aeneas, Demophoon, and Theseus, and matched them with Dido, Phyllis, and Ariadne, and at last sighed thus: and shall it be so between Isabel and Francesco? No, think not so (fond woman); let not jealousy blind thee whom love hath endned [sic] with such a piercing insight, for as there is no content to the sweetness of love, so there is no despair to the prejudice of jealousy; whereupon to shake off all fancies, she took her cittern in her hand and sung this verse out of Ariosto:

*Che piu felice e pui iocondo stato,
 Che viuer piu dolce e pui beato
 Sarui diseruire vno amoroso cuore,
 Che d'esser in seruitu d' amore,
 Se non fusse huomo sempre stimolato,
 Da quella rio timore, da quella frenezia,
 Da quella rabbia, della ielozia.*

Yet as women are constant, so they are easy to believe, especially truth, and so it fell out with Isabel, for she (poor soul) could take no rest, so was her hand [sic] troubled with these news, hammering a thousand humours in her brain how she might know the certainty of his follies, and how she might reclaim him for [sic?] his new-entertained affection. She considered with herself that men allure doves by the beauty of the house, and reclaim hawks by the fairness of the lure, and that love joined with virtue were able to recall the most straggling Aeneas to make sails again to Carthage. Tush, quoth she to herself, suppose he be fallen in love with a courtesan, and that beauty hath given him the brave; what, shall I utterly condemn him? No, as he was not the first, so he shall not be the last; what, youth will have his swinge, the brier will be full of prickles, the nettle will have his sting, and youth his amours; men must love, and will love, though it be both against law and reason; a crooked scion will prove a straight tree; the juniper is sour when it is a twig and sweet when it is a tree; time changeth manners, and Francesco, when he entereth into the conditions of a flattering courtesan, will forsake her and return penitent and more loving to his Isabel. Thus like a good wife she construed all to the best, yet she thought to put him in mind of his return, and therefore she writ him a letter to this effect.

Isabel to Francesco, health.

If Penelope longed for her Ulysses, think Isabel wisheth for her Francesco, as loyal to thee as she was constant to the wily Greek, and no less desirous to see thee in Caerbranck than she to enjoy his presence in Ithaca, watering my cheeks with as many tears as she her face with plaints, yet, my Francesco, hoping I have no such cause as she to increase her cares, for I have such resolution in thy constancy that no Circes with all her enchantments, no Calypso with all her sorceries, no siren with all their melodies could pervert thee from thinking on thine Isabel; I know, Francesco, so deeply hath the faithful promise and loyal vows made & interchanged between us taken place in thy thoughts that no time, how long soever, no distance of place, howsoever different, may alter that impression. But why do I infer this needless insinuation to him that no vanity can alienate from virtue? let me, Francesco, persuade thee with other circumstances. First, my sweet, think how thine Isabel lies alone, measuring the time with sighs & thine absence with passions, counting the day dismal and the night full of sorrows, being every way discontent because she is not content with her Francesco. The only comfort that I have in thine absence is thy child, who lies on his mother's knee and smiles as wantonly as his father when he was a wooer. But when the boy says: Mam, where is my dad; when will he come home, then the calm of my content turneth to a present storm of piercing sorrow that I am forced sometime to say: Unkind Francesco, that forgets his Isabel. I hope, Francesco, it is thine affairs, not my faults, that procureth this long delay. For if I knew my follies did any way offend thee to rest thus long absent, I would punish myself both with outward and inward penance. But howsoever, I pray for thy health and thy speedy return, and so Francesco, farewell.

*Thine more than her own,
Isabel.*

She having thus finished her letters conveyed them speedily to Troynovant, where they were delivered to Francesco, who receiving them with a blush, went into his study and there unripped the seals with a sigh, perceiving by the contents that Isabel had an inkling of his unkind loves, which drive him into a great quandary, that deeply entering into the insight of his lascivious life he began to feel a remorse in his conscience, how grievously he hath offended her that had so faithfully loved him. Oh, quoth he, shall I be so ingrate as to quittance affection with fraud? So unkind as to weigh down love with discourtesy, to give her a weed that presents me a flower, and to beat her with nettles that perfumes me with roses? consider with thyself, Francesco, how deeply thou dost sin; first, thou offendest thy God in choosing so wanton a goddess; then, thou dost wrong thy wife in preferring an inconstant courtesan before so faithful a paramour; yet, Francesco, thy harvest is in the grass; thou mayest stop at the brim because thou hast never touched the bottom. What, men may fall, but to wallow in wickedness is a double fault. Therefore recall thyself, reclaim thy affections; is not thine Isabel as fair? Oh, if she be not, yet she is more virtuous. Is not Isabel so witty as Infida? Oh, but she is more constant, and then art thou so mad to prefer dross before gold, a common flint before a choice diamond, vice before virtue, fading beauty before the excellence of inward qualities [sic]? no, shake off these follies and say, both in mouth & in heart: none like Isabel; this he said by himself, but when he went forth of his chamber and spied but his mistress looking out of her window, all this gear changed, and the case was altered; she called, and in he must, and

there in a jest scoffed at his wife's letters, taking his Infida in his arms and saying: I will not leave this Troy for the chastest Penelope in the world.

Thus he soothed himself in the sweetness of his sin, resembling the leopards that feed on marjoram while they die, or the people Hyperborei, that sit so long and gaze against the sun till they become blind; so he doted on the perfection of Infida till it grew to his utter prejudice, for no reason could divert him from his damned intent, so had he drowned himself in the dregs of lust, insomuch that he counted it no sin to offend with so fair a saint, alluding to the saying of the holy Father:

Consuetudo peccandi, tollit sensum peccati.

Thus did these two continue in the sympathy of their sins while poor Isabel rested her at home content in this, that at last he would be reclaimed, and till then she would use patience, seeing *Nunquam sera est ad bonos mores via*. Wallowing thus in the folds of their own follies, fortune, that meant to experience the force of love, dealt thus conceitedly: after these two lovers had by the space of three years securely slumbered in the sweetness of their pleasures, and drunk with the surfeit of content, thought no other heaven but their own supposed happiness, as every storm hath his calm and the greatest spring tide the deadest ebb, so fared it with Francesco, for so long went the pot to the water that at last it came broken home, and so long put he his hand into his purse that at last the empty bottom returned him a writ of *Non est inventus*, for well might the devil dance there for ever a cross to keep him back.

Well, this lover fuller of passions than of pence began (when he entered into the consideration of his own estate) to mourn of the chin, and to hang the lip as one that for want of sounding had struck himself upon the sands, yet he covered his inward sorrow with outward smiles, and like Janus presented his mistress with a merry look when the other side of his visage was full of sorrows. But she that was as good as a touchstone to try metals could straight spy by the last where the shoe wringed him, and seeing her Francesco was almost foundered, thought to see if a skilful farrier might mend him; if not, like an unthankful hackney-man she meant to turn him into the bare leas, and set him as a tired jade to pick a salad.

Upon which determination, that she might do nothing rashly, she made inquiry into his estate, what livings he had, what lands to sell, how they were either tied by statute or entailed. At last, through her secret and subtile inquisition, she found that all his corn was on the floor, that his sheep were clipped and the wool sold; to be short, that what he had by his wife could neither be sold nor mortgaged, and what he had of his own was spent upon her, that nothing was left for him to live upon but his wits. This news was such a cooling card to this courtesan that the extreme heat of her love was already grown to be lukewarm, which Francesco might easily perceive, for at his arrival his welcome was more strange, her looks more coy, his fare more slender, her glances less amorous, and she seemed to be Infida in proportion but not in wonted passions.

This uncouth disdain made Francesco marvel, who yet had not entered into her deceits, nor (being simple of himself) had ever yet experienced a strumpet's subtilty; he imputed therefore his mistress' coyness to the distemperature of her body, and thought that being not well, it was no wonder though she gave him the less welcome.

Thus, poor novice, did he construe everything to the best until time presented him with the truth of the worst, for in short time his hostess called for money, his creditors threatened him with an arrest, his clothes waxed threadbare, and there was no more coin in the mint to amend them. Whereupon on a day, sitting in a great dump by his Infida, who was as solemn as he was sorrowful, he burst forth into these speeches.

I have read, sweet love, in the aphorisms of philosophers that heat suppressed is more violent, the stream stopped makes the greater deluge, and passions concealed procure the deeper sorrows. Then if *Contrariorum contraria est ratio*, there is nothing better than a bosom friend with whom to confer upon the injury of fortune. Finding myself (my Infida) full of pathemas as sting to the quick, envenomed with the tarantula of heart-sick torments, I think no medicine fitter for my malady than to be cured by the musical harmony of thy friendly counsel. Know then, Infida, that Troynovant is a place of great expense, like the serpent hidaspis, that the more it sucks, the more it is athirst, eating men alive as the crocodile, and being a place of as dangerous allurements as the seat where the sirens sit and chant their prejudicial melody. It is to young gentlemen like the labyrinth whereout Theseus could not get without a thread, but here be such monstrous Minotaurs as first devour the thread, and then the person. The inns are like hothouses which by little and little sweat a man into a consumption; the host he carries a pint of wine in the one hand to welcome, but a poniard in the other to stab, and the hostess, she hath smiles in her forehead and provides good meat for her guests, but the sauce is costly, for it far exceeds the cates. If coin want, then either to Limbo, or else clap up a commodity (if so much credit be left) where he shall find such knots as he will never be able without his utter prejudice to untie. Brokers, I leave them off, as too coarse ware to be mouthed with a honest man's tongue. These Minotaurs, fair Infida, have so eaten me up in this labyrinth as, to be plain with thee that art my second self, I want, and am so far indebted to the mercer and mine hostess as either thou must stand my friend to disburse so much money for me, or else I must depart from Troynovant, and so from thy sight, which how precious it is to me, I refer to thine own conscience, or for an *ultimum vale* take up my lodging in the Counter, which I know, as it would be uncouth to me, so it would be grievous to thee, and therefore now hangs my welfare in thy will. How loath I was to utter unto thee my want and sorrow, measure by my love, who wish rather death than thy discontent.

Infida could scarce suffer him in so long a period, and therefore with her forehead full of furrows she made him this answer. And would you have me (sir) buy an ounce of pleasure with a tun of mishaps, or reach after repentance with so high a rate; have I lent thee the blossoms of my youth and delighted thee with the prime of my years, hast thou had the spoil of my virginity, and now wouldst thou have the sack of my substance; when thou hast withered my person, aimest thou at my wealth? No sir, no; know that for the love of thee I have cracked my credit, that never before was stained. I cannot look

abroad without a blush, nor go with my neighbours without a frump; thou and thy name is ever cast in my dish; my foes laugh and my friends sorrow to see my follies; wherefore seeing thou beginnest to pick a quarrel, and hereafter when thine own base fortunes have brought thee to beggary wilt say that Infida cost thee so many crowns and was thine overthrow, avaunt, novice, home to thine own wife, who (poor gentlewoman) sits and wants what thou consumest at taverns. Thou hast had my despoil, and I fear I bear in my belly the token of too much love I ought thee. Yet content with this discredit, rather than to run into further extremity, get thee out of my doors, for from henceforth thou shalt never be welcome to Infida. And with that she flung up and went into her chamber; Francesco would have made a reply, but she would not hear him, nor hold him any more chat, whereupon with a flea in his ear he went to his lodging. There ruminating on the number of his follies and the hardness of his fortunes, seeing his score great, his coin little, his credit less, weighing how hardly he had used his Isabel, at last leaning his head on his hand, with tears in his eyes, he began to be thus extremely passionate. Now, Francesco, *piscator ictus sapit*, experience is a true mistress, but she maketh her scholars tread upon thorns; hast thou not leaped into the ditch which thou hast long foreseen, and bought that with repentance which thou hast so greedily desired to reap? Oh now thou seest the difference between love and lust, the one full of contented pleasure, the other of pleasing miseries; thy thoughts were feathered with fancy, and whither did they fly? so far that they freed themselves, and thou rests consumed. Oh Francesco, what are women? If they be honest, saints, the purity of nature, the excellence of virtue, the perfection of earthly content. But if they be courtesans and strumpets? Oh let me breathe before I can utter the depth of such a monstrous description. They be in shape angels, but in qualities devils, painted sepulchres with rotten bones; their foreheads are calendars of misfortunes, their eyes like comets, that when they sparkle foretell some fatal disparagement; they allure with amorous glances of lust, and kill with bitter looks of hate; they have dimples in their cheeks to deceive, and wrinkles in their brows to betray; their lips are like honeycombs, but who tasteth the drops is empoisoned; they are as clear as crystal, but bruise them and they are as infectious as the diamond; their tears are like the aconiton that the hydra wept; they present, as Deianira, shirts for presents, but whoso puts them on consumes like Hercules; they lay out the folds of their hair, and entangle men in their tresses, playing the horse-leech that sucketh while they burst; between their breasts is the vale of destruction, and in their beds, oh there is sorrow, repentance, hell, & despair. They consume man alive, and aim at his substance, not his perfection; like eagles that only fly thither where the carrion is, they lead men to hell and leave him at the gates. To be brief, they are ingrateful, perjured, untrue, inconstant, fleeting, full of fraud, deceitful, and to conclude in one word, they be the very refuse of nature's excrements. Oh Francesco, what a satirical invective hast thou uttered. I may best, quoth he, for I have bought every principle with a pound; what now rests for thee, poor infortunate man? Thou hast yet left a means to end all these miseries, and that is this: draw thy rapier and so die, that with a manly resolution thou mayest prevent thy further misfortunes. Oh, although thou hast sinned, yet despair not, though thou art anathema, yet prove not an atheist; the mercy of God is above all his works, and repentance is a precious balm. Home to thy wife, to the wife of thy youth, Francesco, to Isabel, who with her patience will cover all thy follies; remember this, man: *Nunquam sera est ad bonos mores via.*

Thus he ended, and with very grief fell in a slumber. At this the palmer breathed, and made a stop and a long period. His host, desirous to hear out the end of Francesco's fortunes, wished him to go forward in his discourse. Pardon me, sir, quoth the palmer; the night is late, and I have travelled all the day; my belly is full, and my bones would be at rest. Therefore for this time let thus much suffice, and tomorrow at our uprising, which shall be with the sun, I will not only discourse unto you the end of Francesco's amours, of his return home to his wife, and his repentance, but manifest unto you the reason why I aimed my pilgrimage to Venice.

The gentleman and his wife, very loath to be tedious to the good palmer, were content with his promise, and so taking up the candle, lighted him to bed, where we leave him. And therefore as soon as may be, gentlemen, look for Francesco's further fortunes, and after that my *Farewell To Folly*, and then adieu to all amorous pamphlets.

FINIS.

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