
MAMILLIA

A Mirror or Looking-glass for the Ladies of England

Wherein is deciphered how gentlemen under the perfect substance of pure love are often
inveigled with the shadow of lewd lust, and their firm faith brought asleep by fading fancy
until wit joined with wisdom doth awake it by the help of reason.

By Robert Greene, graduate in Cambridge.

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1583.

To the right Honourable, his very good lord and master, Lord Darcy of the North, Robert Greene wisheth long life, prosperous success, with all increase of honour and virtue.

Aemilius Macedonicus (right Honourable) thinking to gratify Alexander the Great with some curious piece of workmanship, waded so far in the depth of his art as, straining courtesy with cunning, he skipped beyond his skill, not being able to make it perfect. Who, being blamed of Pausanias for striving further than his sleeve would stretch, answered that although art and skill were wanting to beautify the work, yet heart & will did polish that part which lack of cunning had left unperfect, overshadowing the blemish of disability with the veil of sincere affection, whose answer, as one guilty of the like crime, I claim for a sufficient excuse of my folly, that durst enterprise to strive beyond my strength, knowing myself unable both by nature and art to bring such a weighty matter to a wise end. For if the fowler is to be condemned of folly that takes in hand to talk of hunting, or the merchant counted as mad which meddleth with the rules of astronomy, then may I well be dubbed a dolt which dare take in hand to decipher the substance of love that am but a lout, or to show the force of fancy which am but a fool. But as there is not a greater cooling card to a rash wit than want, so there is not a more speedy spur to a willing mind than the force of duty, which drove me into a double doubt either to be counted as bold as blind Bayard in presuming too far, or to incur the prejudice of ingratitude in being too slack, to be thought vainglorious in writing without wit, or a thankless person forgetting my debt, so having free choice of them both, I thought it but a light matter to be counted over venturous if I might do anything which should show some part of my duty unto your Honour, neither did I ever care to be counted bold if that blemish might either pleasure your Lordship or else make manifest my goodwill, which always did wish to be with the foremost of your well-willers. But as wishes are of no value, so his will is as vain that covets to pay his debt with a counterfeit coin, wherein I both find the fault and commit the offence. For being greatly indebted to your Honour by duty, for the first payment I offer a piece of work neither worth the wetting nor wearing, the receiving nor reading, more meet for the apothecary's pots than a nobleman's hand, fitter for the pedlar to rent than gentlemen to read. Yet if the work be weighed with my simple wit, it is down measure, and if my goodwill might serve for a weight, although the stuff be light, yet there are few would be heavier in the balance. So that hoping of your Honour's wonted courtesy, that you will mark the mind and not the matter, the will and not the work, I commit your Honour to the Almighty.

Your Honour's humble servant,
Robert Greene.

To the gentlemen readers.

After that, gentlemen, I had neither well furnished nor finished this imperfect piece of work, but brought it to a bare end, whether it were for imitation or art I have almost forgot, but for one it was, I chanced to read divers epistles of sundry men written to the readers wherein I found the best learned of them all so far drenched in doubt of their disabilities & almost fortified [sic] for fear that want of skill should be a blemish to their works as (thinking a flat confession should have a plain pardon) they call their books vanities, shadows, imperfect patterns, more meet for the pedlar than the printer, toys, trifles, trash, trinkets, some comparing them to cheeses neither worth the tasting nor eating, so their books neither worth the reading or hearing, and yet the worst of them all so perfectly polished with the pumice-stone of eloquence as in them nature and art do strive for supremacy.

If then those learned men do count their works but counterfeit that were carved with such curious cunning, and termed them trash which were merchant ware, what shall I call mine, which is of such simple stuff as it is neither worth the cheaping nor the changing? Surely I will leave the name to the reader's gentle judgment because I cannot find one bad enough, that every one may term it as their fancy leadeth them. For there is no chaffer so chary but some will cheap, no ware so bad but some will buy, no book so ill but some will both read it and praise it, & none again so curious but some will carp at it. Well, so many heads, so man wits. If gentlemen will take my book as a toy to pass away the time, and weigh more of my meaning than of the matter, and more of my will than either of my wit or the work, if, I say, they shall show me this courtesy, it shall be both a spur to prick me forward to attempt further, and a sufficient recompense of my travail.

Robert Greene.

Roger Portington, esquire, in commendation of this book.

If Grecia soil may vaunt her hap and lucky chance
As nurse of Clio's clerkly crew, her state t' advance,
Or Smyrna boast of Homer's skill for hope of fame,
If royal Rome may reap renown by Tully's name,
Or Virgil's country village vaunt that she excel,
Dan Ovid's native land may strive to bear the bell,
Then Britain soil may bravely boast her state in fine
That she a new Parnassus is, the Muses' shrine.
No finer wits in Grecia reigned than Britain breeds,
No braver works in Smyrna wrought than English deeds;
If passing port of poets' praise was ever found
In Mantua, the like is got in Britain ground.
If Tully wan the golden spurs of fame by prose,
And reaped in Rome such rich renown as well as those,
Our author beautifies this Britain soil. For why?
His stately style in English prose doth climb the sky;
His filed phrase deserves in learning's throne to sit,
And his *Mamillia* darkens quite the Frenchman's wit;
Yea, if that any have been crowned with laurel green,
This Greene deserves a laurel-branch, I ween;
For why? His pen hath painted out Dan Cupid's craft,
And set at large the doubtful chance of fancy's draft,
Yea, in such comely colours sure his work's embossed
As he for English phrase may sit amidst the most,
And though he thinks his book too rude to win such fame,
His foes would say that he by right deserves the same.

Roger Portington,

MAMILLIA

The city of Padua, renowned as well for the antiquity of the famous university as also for the notable river now called Po, when the civil wars were most hot and the broils of dissension so rife that the Goths and Hungarians with sudden invasion had subverted the whole state of Italy, was ever so fortified with courageous captains & warlike soldiers, and so well governed by the prudent policy of their magistrate Signior Gonzaga, that they always set out the flag of defiance, and never came so much as once to parle of peace with their enemies, although Venice, Florence, Siena, with many other cities (as Machiavel in his Florentine history maketh report) at the hot skirmishes and fierce assaults of the soldiers accepted conditions of peace willingly, so much prevailed the politic wisdom of the wise ruler, out of whose line by descent issued one Francesco Gonzaga, a gentleman whom fortune did not only endue with wealth, but also beautified with as great wisdom as any of his predecessors, so that it was in doubt whether he wan more favour for his wit or fear for his riches, whether he were better liked for his calling or loved for his courtesy, but sure whether it were, he had gained the hearts of all the people.

And yet for all these golden gifts of nature, he was more bound unto Fortune, which had bestowed upon him one only daughter called Mamillia, of such exquisite perfection and singular beauty as the lineaments of her body, so perfectly portrayed out by nature, did show this gorgeous goddess to be framed by the common consent of all the Graces, or else to purchase nature some great commendation by carving a piece of so curious perfection, for her body was not only beautified with the outward blaze of beauty, but her mind was also endued with the beams of inward bounty, as that men were ravished as much with the wonder of her wisdom as driven into admiration with the form of her feature. But what need I to decipher her excellent perfection, sith nature had so cunningly painted out the portraiture both of her mind and body in such comely colours as it may suffice for me to say she was the flower of all Venice.

This gallant girl by her virtuous qualities had made such a stealth in the heart of one Florion, a young gentleman which served, as she did, in the Duke's court at Venice, that he reposed his only pleasure in her presence, and again her only contentation consisted in his company, that they were two bodies and one soul. Their will and wish was alike, the consent of the one was a constraint to the other, the desire of Mamilla was the delight of Florion, yea, the concord of their nature was such as no sops of suspicion, no mists of distrust, no floods of fickleness could once foil their faith, their friendship was so firmly founded on the rock of virtue.

For this strait league of liking was not fleshly fancy but a mere choice of chastity, whereby we may well note the broad blasphemy of those which think because the tow cannot touch the fire but it must burn, nor the ivy clasp the tree unless it suck out the sap, so likewise the green wood cannot touch the coals but it must flame, nor the vine branch embrace the tender twig but it must consume it, that love and liking cannot be without lust and lasciviousness, that deep desire cannot be without fleshly affection. But this suspicion proceedeth of an evil disposition; this currish misconstruing cometh of a corrupt conscience. They seek others where they have been hid themselves. For we may

see by experience and manifest examples that there have been even lewd lovers which have contented their disordinate desire only with the courteous countenance of their mistress, who although they were caught in the snare of beauty and altogether vowed unto vanity, yet they could so well bridle their affections that the only sight of their lady was sufficient to feed their fancy. If then the wanton wooer, whose stay is but a rotten staff, can so valiantly resist the alarms of lust, may not a faithful friend fry in friendship and freeze in such filthy affection, be servant in goodness and cold in desire? Yes, Amian and Ignatia, Ausicius and Canchia, Amador and his Florinda, are sufficient proofs and precedents of this chaste league of loyal amity, that we may well think and easily perceive this sacred bond of friendship between Florion and Mamillia was altogether founded upon virtue. And the more it is to be credited because he had been deceived by the lightness of one Luminia, and knew very well that there was little constancy in such kites of Cressid's kind, whose minds were as foul within as their faces fair without. He had been burnt in the hand for touching fire without advisement; he had late enough tasted of that bait to be taken in the trap; he had been too fore-canvassed in the nets to strike at every stale, and he had trusted too much the shape of the body to be so soon allured with the view of beauty. Yea, he had been so deeply drenched in the waves of women's wiles that every sudden sight was a sea of suspicion, as he made a vow in the way of marriage to abandon the company of women forever, and to [sic for took?] a solemn oath, since he had won again the fields of his freedom, never by the lewdness of love to entire into bondage.

Yet he would not altogether (although he had cause with Euripides to proclaim himself open enemy to womankind) seem so absurd a sophister to infer a general conclusion of a particular proposition, nor be counted so injurious to condemn all of lightness for one's lewdness, nor to show himself such a modeless Aminius to say all were cripples because he found one halting. No, no, he knew all herbs were not as bitter as coloquintida, that all water was not infectious though some were pestilent, that as there is a changeable polyp so there is a steadfast emerald, that there was as well a Lucrece as a Lais, as well Cornelia as Corinna, as constant a Penelope as a fleeting Phania, and as virtuous a Mamillia as a vicious Luminia, so that as he detested ye one for her folly, he embraced the other for her virtue, insomuch that having himself escaped the seas of trouble and care, yet he thought his mind not fully quiet until he might cause his friend Mamillia to cast her anchor in the port of tranquility.

For after that he had made a metamorphosis of himself from a courtier of Venice to a countryman in Siena, from the waves of wickedness to the calm seas of security, from the castle of care to the palace of pleasure, from the heath of heaviness to the haven of happiness, yea, as he thought, from hell to heaven, yet he could not have a quiet conscience till he might see her of the same sect, & as deadly to hate it as he did loathe it, so that he wrote her a letter wherein he counselled her to follow his example, which she having received and read, the force of his friendship on the one side so persuaded her, & the rule of reason on the other side so constrained her, that she concluded to abandon the Duke's court forever, and so eschew the bait wherein was hid such a deadly hook, to abstain from ye pleasure which in time would turn to poison, to gave a final farewell to that condition of life which at length would breed her confusion, and therefore having

obtained leave of the Duchess, came home in haste to her father's house in Padua, where she had not remained long before divers young gentlemen, drawn by the passing praise of her perfection which was bruited abroad through all the city, repaired thither all in general, hoping to get the goal, & every one particularly persuading himself to have as much as any wherewith to deserve her love, so that there was no feather, no fangle, gem nor jewel, ouch nor ring left behind which might make them seemly in her sight. Yea, some were so curious, no doubt as many Italian gentlemen are, which would even correct nature where they thought she was faulty in defect, for their narrow shoulders must have a quilted doublet of a large size, their thin belly must have a coat of the Spanish cut, their crooked legs a side slop, their small shanks a bombast hose, and their dissembling mind two faces in a hood, to war with the moon and ebb with the sea, to bear both fire and water, to laugh and weep all with one wind.

Now amongst all this courtly crew which resorted to the house of Gonzaga there was a gentleman called Pharicles, a youth of wonderful wit and no less wealth, whom both nature and experience had taught the old proverb as perfect as his paternoster, *He that cannot dissemble cannot live*, which sentence is so surely settled in the minds of men as it may very well be called in question whether it belong unto them as an inseparable accident or else is engrafted by nature, and so fast bred by the bone as it will never out, for they will have the cloth to be good though the lining be rotten rags, and a fine dye though a coarse thread; their words must be as smooth as oil though their hearts be as rough as a rock, and a smiling countenance in a frowning mind.

This Pharicles, I say, fair enough but not faithful enough, a disease in men I will not say incurable, craving altogether to crop the buds of her outward beauty and not the fruits of her inward bounty, forced rather by the lust of the body than enticed by the love of her virtue, thought by the gloze of his painted show to win the substance of her perfect mind, under his side clothes to cover his claws, with the cloak of courtesy to conceal his curiosity. For as the birds cannot be enticed to the trap but by a stale of the same kind, so he knew well enough that she, whose mind was surely defenced with the rampire of honesty, must of necessity have the onset given by civility. He therefore framing a sheep's skin for his wolf's back, and putting on a smooth hide over his panther's paunch, used first a great gravity in his apparel, and no less demureness in his countenance and gesture, with such a civil government of his affection as that he seemed rather to court unto Diana than vow his service unto Venus. This gentleman, being thus set in order, wanted nothing but opportunity to reveal his mind to his new mistress, hoping that if time would minister place and occasion he would so reclaim her with his feigned eloquence as she should seize upon his lure, & so cunningly cloak her with his counterfeit call as she should come to his fist, for he thought himself not to have on all his armour unless he had tears at command, sighs, sobs, prayers, protestations, vows, pilgrimages, and a thousand false oaths to bind every promise.

While thus he made his train, Gonzaga, as his custom was, once a year invited all the youth of Padua to a banquet, where after they had taken repast there was no talk but of the beauty of Mamillia, until every man took his mistress to tread the measures. But she, knowing idleness to be the nurse of love, and thinking him half mad who fearing fire

would put tow into the flame, or that doubting of drowning would swim in the sea, conveyed herself closely from that wanton company alone into a garden, intending by solitariness to avoid all inconvenience as her presence among the lusty brutes might have procured. Pharicles, who now thought time and place convenient to discover his mind, sat quite beside the saddle, for perceiving the absence of his mistress his heart was in his hose, and he stood as if he had with Medusa's head been turned to a stone. Thus nipped on the pate with this new mischance, he determined to return home in haste to bewail his hap, but as nothing violent is permanent, so his sudden sore had a new salve. For as he passed through the court he espied Mamillia reading alone in the garden, whose sudden sight so revived his daunted mind as that he paced unto her, and after he had courteously given her the *Salve*, interrupted her on this manner:

Mistress Mamillia, although my rashness merit blame in presuming so far to trouble your study, yet the cause of my boldness deserveth pardon sith it cometh of goodwill and affection, for where the offence proceedeth of love, there the pardon ensueth of course, but if you think the fault so great as remission cannot so easily be granted, I am here willing that the heart which committed the crime shall suffer the punishment due, and yield to be your slave forever, to kneel at your shrine as a true servant in part of amends.

Mamillia, hearing the gentleman in such terms, although somewhat abashed, paid him his debt in the same coin:

Master Pharicles, although your sudden arrival did not greatly hinder my study, I think it did not greatly profit yourself, so that your absence might have more pleased you and better contented me. And where you say the offence proceedeth of goodwill and affection, I am not so mad to think that the herb sisymbrium will sprout and sprig to a great branch in a moment, that the cold iron will burn at the sight of the fire, but he that will juggle must play his feats under the board or else his halting will be spied. And where in recompense of your fault you proffer your service, I will have no gentlemen my servants unless for their livery I should give them a changeable suit, and therefore if your market be ended and your devotion done, you have as good leave to go as to come.

Pharicles, perceiving the frump, as one that was master of his occupation served her again of the same sauce:

Gentlewoman, in that my arrival did not greatly hinder your muses, I think my fault so much the less, although proceeding of your courtesy rather than of my good hap, but if I had known my absence might have pleased you, my presence should not have troubled your patience, and though the herb sisymbrium grows not to a great branch in a moment, yet the tallest blade of spattania hath his full height in one moment, and if the iron burneth not at the sight of the fire, yet the hard stone calcir, which can be bruised with no metal, melteth with the heat of the sun, and is resolved into liquor. As for my juggling, if it may be spied it argueth the more goodwill and less deceit, so that if I halt I am a stark lame lazar and not a counterfeit cripple. For my livery, if I may be your servant I pass not what colour it be, so it cometh of your proffer and not of my desert. Thus, as I have now begun my market with buying my bondage and selling my freedom, finding the ware I looked for

but the choice so chary that no price will be set, hoping the champion [sic for chapman?] will in time make a change of his chaffer for my coin, I humbly take my leave.

Pharicles, presently departing into his chamber, left Mamillia still in the garden musing on the gentleman's sudden motion, doubting whether his words were faithful or flattering, in earnest or jest, so that somewhat scorched with the fire of fancy she entered with herself into this mediation:

Ah Mamillia, what strange alteration is this? What sudden change, what rare chance? Shall they who deemed thee a mirror of modesty count thee a pattern of lightness? Shall thy stayed life be now compared to the chameleon that turneth himself into the likeness of every object, or likened to the fuller's mill which ever waxeth worse and worse, to the herb phanaces, whose bud is sweet and the fruit bitter, to the ravens in Arabia, which being young have a pleasant voice, and in their age a horrible cry? Wilt thou consent unto lust in hoping to love? Shall Cupid claim thee for his captive, who even now wert vowed a vestal virgin? Shall thy tender age be more virtuous than thy ripe years? Wilt thou verify the proverb, A young saint, an old devil? What, shall the beauty of Pharicles enchant thy mind, or his filed speech bewitch thy senses? Will not he think the castle wanteth but scaling that yieldeth at the first shot, and that the bulwark wanted but battery that at the first parle becomes prisoners? Yes, yes, Mamillia, his beauty argues inconstancy, and his filed phrases deceit, and if he see thee won with a word he will think thee lost with a wind; he will judge that is lightly to be gained is as quickly lost. The hawk that cometh at the first call will never be steadfast on the stond; the nyas that will be reclaimed to the fist at ye first sight of the lure will bate at every bush; the woman that will love at the first look will never be chary of her choice. Take heed, Mamillia, the finest scabbard hath not ever the bravest blade, nor the goodliest chest hath not ye most gorgeous treasure, the bell with the best sound hath an iron clapper, the fading apples of Tantalus have a gallant show, but if they be touched they turn to ashes; so a fair face may have a foul mind, sweet words a sour heart, yea, rotten bones out of a painted sepulcher, for all is not gold that glisters.

Why, but yet the gem is chosen by his hue and the cloth by his colour. Condemn not then, Mamillia, before thou hast cause, accuse not so strictly without trial, search not so narrowly till thou hast occasion of doubt.

Yea, but the mariners sound at the first for fear of a rock, the surgeon searcheth betimes for his surest proof, one fore-wit is worth two after. It is good to beware; when the act is done, too late cometh repentance. What, is it the beauty of Pharicles that kindleth this flame? Who more beautiful than Jason, yet who more false? For after Medea had yielded, he sacked the fort, and in lieu of her love, killed her with kindness. Is it his wit? Who wiser than Theseus, yet none so traitorous. Beware, Mamillia, I have heard them say she that marries for beauty, for every dram of pleasure shall have a pound of sorrow. Choose by the ear, and not by the eye. Pharicles is fair; so was Paris, and yet fickle. He is witty; so was Corsiris, and yet wavering. No man knows the nature of the herb by the outward show, but by the inward juice, & the operation consists in the matter, and not in the form.

Yea, but why do I stay at a straw, & skip over a block? Why am I curious at a gnat, and let pass an elephant? His beauty is not it that moveth me, nor his wit ye captain which shall catch the castle, sith the one is momentary and the other may be impaired by sickness. Thy faith and honesty, Pharicles, whereof all Padua speaketh, hath won my heart, and so shall wear it; thy civility without dissimulation, thy faith without feigning, have made their breach by love, and shall have entrance by law.

Well, Mamillia, the common people may err, and that which is spoken of many is not ever true. Who so praised in Rome of the common people & senate as Jugurth, yet a rebel? Who had more voices in Carthage than Aeneas, yet tried a straggler? Who in more credit with the Romans than Scipio Africanus the Great, yet at length found halting? The fox wins the favour of the lambs by play, and then devours them. So perhaps Pharicles shows himself in outward show a demigod, whereas who tries him inwardly shall find him but a solemn saint.

Why, all Padua speaks of his honesty. Yea, but perchance he makes a virtue of his need, and so lays this balmed hook of feigned honesty as a luring bait to trap some simple dame.

Why, can he be faithless to one that have been faithful to all? The cloth is never tried till it come to the wearing, and the linen never shrinks till it comes to the wetting; so want of liberty to use his will may make a restraint of his nature, and though he use faith and honesty to make his marriage, yet she perhaps that shall try him shall either find he never had them, or quite forgot them. For the nature of men, as I have heard say, is like the amber stone, which will burn outwardly and freeze inwardly, and like the bark of the myrtle-tree which grows in the mountains in Armenia that is as hot as fire in the taste and as cold as water in the operation. The dog bitest sorest when he doth not bark, the onyx is hottest when it looks white, the sirens mean most mischief when they sing, the tiger then hideth his crabbed countenance when he meaneth to take his prey, and a man doth most dissemble when he speaks fairest. Try then, Mamillia, ere thou trust; prove ere thou put in practice; cast the water ere thou appoint the medicine. Do all things with deliberation; go as the snail, fair and softly. Haste makes waste; the malt is ever sweetest where the fire is softest. Let no wit overcome wisdom, nor fancy be repugnant to faith. Let not the hope of an husband be the hazard of thine honesty; cast not thy credit in the chance of another man; wade not too far where the ford is unknown. Rather bridle thy affections with reason, and mortify thy mind with modesty, that as thou hast kept thy virginity inviolate without spot, so thy choice may be without blemish. Know this: it is too late to call again yesterday. Therefore keep the memory of Pharicles as needful and yet not necessary. Like him when thou shalt have occasion to love, and love when thou hast tried him loyal. Until then, remain indifferent.

When Mamillia had uttered these word[s] she went out of the garden privily into her closet, and there, to avoid the inconvenience which might have ensued of those foolish cogitations, called an old gentlewoman which was her nurse named Madam Castilla to bear her company, a gentlewoman whose life and years were so correspondent as for her honesty she might have tried the danger of Diana's cave. So they two together pass[ed]

the time in honest and merry talk until all the guests of Gonzaga had taken their leave and departed.

But Pharicles, who all this while had a flea in his ear & his comb cut with the taunting quips of his mistress, as his fire was the more, his flame was the greater, and not being able so well to rule his lust as she to bridle her love, used himself for a secretary with whom to participate his passions, knowing that it were a point of mere folly to trust a friend in love, sith Ovid in his book *De arte amandi* had forbidden that as principle, and perceiving very well that in such matters two might best keep counsel where one was away, entered into these terms with himself:

O Pharicles, Pharicles, now thou findest it true which erst thou countest for a fable, that so long the fly dallies in the flame that at length she is burnt, that the birds halcyons venture so long in the waves that at last they are drowned, that so long the pitcher goeth to the brook as in time it comes broken home. So thou, which warming thy fancy at every flame and venturing thyself at every wave, art at last burnt with beauty and drowning in desire as it stands in hazard that either thou return home broken, or half crazed. Now thou seest venturing, if it be token of wit, yet is no sign of wisdom, and that timidity in love is a virtue. Now hast thou found Phocas' precept to be fruitful, that a lover should proceed in his suit as the crab, whose pace is ever backward; that though love be like the adamant, which hath virtue to draw, yet thou shouldst be sprinkled with goat's blood, which resisteth his operation; that though the face of some fair dame hath power to incense thy mind, yet thou shouldst take the herb lupinar to cool desire.

But Pharicles, if thou beest taken, it is no marvel; if thou beest hurt, it is no pity. For the minnow that is ever nibbling and never biting will at length be hanged on the hook. Thou which didst accuse so currishly all women of lightness in love shalt perhaps now condemn thyself of lewdness in life, and thou which in thy choice wert counted captious shall try thyself not to be so curious. What gentlewoman in all Padua was there either so fair or honest whose beauty or virtue thou didst not deem light, esteeming them either unmeet for thee, or thyself unfit for them, so that either thou couldst soothe her with a frump, or else lay a loading card on her back should weigh a scoff, and now thou art like to be served of the same sauce, which if it happen, think thou didst not know thy descant, or else cross thee for a fool.

Why Pharicles, wilt thou be a preacher? Who is so guilty as he that accuseth himself? If thou hast committed the crime, yet let another find the fault. It is a foul bird defilest the own nest. Construe all things to the best, turn the stern the best way. Yea, and if thou hast trodden thy shoe awry, it is but a point of youth. Leave such foolish examinations of thy crazed conscience. Mamillia, yea, Mamillia, Pharicles, is the mark thou must shoot at, her beauty is the goal thou must seek to get, her fair face, her golden locks, her coral cheeks, to conclude, her crystal corps shadowed over with a heavenly glass. Surpassing beauty is the siren whose song hath enchanted thee and the Circe's cup which hath so sotted thy senses as either thou must with Ulysses have a speedy remedy or else remain transformed. She hath the power to bind and loose, her comeliness is the comfortable

cullis to cure thy care, her perfection is the lenitive plaster must mitigate thy pain, her beauty is like the herb phanaces, which reviveth the dead carcass.

Ah Pharicles, is the foundation of thy faith fixed upon her feature? Consider with thyself, beauty is but a blossom whose flower is nipped with every frost. It is like ye grass in India, which is withered before it springeth. What is more fair, yet what more fading? What more delightful, yet nothing more deadly? What more pleasant, and what more perilous? Beauty may well be compared to the baths in Calicut, whose streams flow as clear as the floods of Padus, and whose operation is as pestilent as the river Orme.

What, Pharicles, wilt thou become a precise Pythagoras in renouncing of love, or a testy Tyanaeus in dispraising of beauty? What more clear than the crystal, and what more precious? What more comely than cloth of Arras, so what more costly? What creature so beautiful as a woman, and what more estimable? Is not the diamond of greatest dignity that is most glistening? And the pearl thought most precious that is most perfect in colour? Aristotle saith he cannot be counted happy, although he had all the virtues, if he want beauty. Yea, Apollonius, arch-heretic and professed enemy against the sacred laws of beauty, is driven both by the laws of nature and nurture to confess that virtue is so much the more acceptable by how much the more it is placed in a beautiful body. Therefore, Pharicles, recant, as perceiving thine own folly, and make amends to beauty, as guilty of blasphemy, for by dispraise thou shalt reap revenge, and by praise in hazard to achieve thy purpose. Cineas the philosopher was of this opinion, that when the gods framed beauty they went beyond their skill in that the maker was subject to the thing made, for none so wise but beauty hath bewitched, none so sober but beauty hath besotted, none so valiant but beauty hath been victor. Yea, even the gods themselves have given beauty the superiority as a thing of more force than they were able to resist.

Well, Pharicles, sith beauty is the price for which thou meanest to venture, use no delay, for fear of danger. Let no fond reasons persuade thy settled mind; let not the precepts of philosophy subvert the will of nature. Youth must have his course; he that will not love when he is young shall not be loved when he is old. Spare no cost, nor be not afraid of words, for they are as wind. They which are most coy at the first are most constant at the last. What a cold confect had the Lord Mendoza at ye Duchess of Savoy's hand, Prictor at his Colvida, & Horatius at his Curiatia? So though Mamillia were something short in her answers, it signifieth the greater affection; though she made it strange at the first, she will not be strait at the last; ye greatest offer hath but a small denial. Well, to conclude, I am fully resolved in myself either to win the spurs or lose the horse, to have ye blossom or lose ye fruit, to enjoy the beauty of Mamillia or else to jeopard a joint. And therefore whatsoever learning will, I will consent unto nature, for the best clerks are not ever the wisest men; whatsoever the laws of philosophy persuade me, I will at this time give the reins of liberty to my amorous passions, for he that makes curiosity in love will so long strain courtesy that either he will be counted a solemn suitor or a witless wooer. Therefore, whatsoever the chance be, I will cast at all.

Pharicles having thus made an end stood in a maze with himself, not that it did proceed from any sincere affection enforced by her virtue, but that his mind was set upon lust,

inflamed by her beauty, which disease I doubt nowadays reigns in many Italian gentlemen. Whether it be that Mercury is lord of their birth or some other peevish planet predominant in the calculation of their nativity I know not, but this I am sure, that their ripe wits are so soon overshadowed with vice, and their senses so blinded with self-love, that they make their choice so far without skill as they prove themselves but evil chapmen, for if she be fair, they think her faithful, if her body be endued with beauty, they judge she cannot but be virtuous. They are so blinded with the vizard of Venus and conceit of Cupid as they think all birds with white feathers to be simple doves, every seemly Sappho to be a civil Salona, every Lais to be a loyal Lucrece, every chatting maid to be a chaste matron. These are such as choose for lust and not for love, as marry the body and not the mind, so that as soon as the beauty of their mistress be vaded, their love is also quite extinguished.

But again to the purpose. As thus, I say, Pharicles had well eased his mind with this last meditation, because his love was but a loose kind of liking, and the fire of his fancy such a slender flame as the least misliking shower of shrewd Fortune would quite quench it, therefore he had neither care of his choice nor fear of his change, but only fed his fancy with the hope of having Mamillia, and rested upon this point till either occasion or place should serve to offer his service.

In the meantime Gonzaga, perceiving his daughter to be marriageable, knowing by skill and experience that the graff being ready for the scythe would wither if it were not cut, and the apples being ripe, for want of plucking would rot on the tree, that his daughter being at the age of twenty years would either fall into the green sickness for want of a husband, or else if she scaped that disease incur a farther inconvenience, so that like a wise father he thought to foresee such dangers, and devising with himself where he might have a meet match for his daughter, thought none so fit as Pharicles, who, I say, by his crafty cloaking had won the hearts of all the gentlemen of Padua. Therefore first intending to know whether his daughter could fancy the gentleman before he should break the matter unto him, & yet doubting if he should move the question she might conceive some hope of liberty and so strain upon her own choice, went unto Madam Castilla, her nurse, desiring her to move the motion to his daughter as concerning Pharicles, & that the next day she should tell him her answer. Madam Castilla easily granted, and departing from Gonzaga went into the chamber of Mamillia, where she found her solemnly sitting in secret meditation upon the contents of a letter which not half an hour before was sent unto her from her old friend Florion, the tenor whereof was this:

Dan Florion of Siena to Mamillia in Padua.

Mistress Mamillia, the extreme pleasure I conceive of your sudden and certain departure from the Duke's court unto Padua forced me to send you this letter as a perfect token of my joy and your good hap, both thinking myself in some credit with you that my persuasions prevailed, and likewise judging you to be wise in that you both avoid danger and provide for a storm, for it is a great virtue, saith the poet, to abstain from pleasure. The courtly life, saith Agrippa, is a glistering misery, for what more pleasant outwardly and what more perilous inwardly; what more delightful to the body, what more deadly to

the mind? Where is the substance of vice with the veil of virtue, there is bondage in the shape of licentious liberty, and care clad in a masquing coat. Happy, yea thrice happy art thou, Mamillia, whose wisdom hath not been inveigled by wit nor whose will hath not been enforced by wilfulness, for in obeying the one thou hast scaped danger, & in resisting of the other thou hast won fame. Yea, but the gold, saith some, is tried in the fire, and the ore is put into the furnace. It is more honour to keep the fort being assailed than not besieged, so the credit of a gentlewoman is more to be honest in the court than in the country, and it purchaseth more fame to kneel with a chaste mind at the shrine of Venus than at the altar of Vesta. Mamillia, so many heads, so many wits. I speak by experience. The house is more in danger of fire that is thatched with straw than that which is covered with stone; he is more in danger of drowning that sails in the sea than he which rides on the land. What maketh the thief but his prey, what enticeth the fish but the bait, what calleth the bird but the scrap, what reclaimeth the hawk but the lure? The court, Mamillia, is ye whetstone of lust, the bait of vanity, the call of Cupid, yea, the utter enemy to virginity, so that inasmuch as virginity is to be esteemed, so much the Duke's court is to be eschewed.

But I hear thou art at home with thy father in Padua, & that there is great resort of gentlemen to crave thee in marriage. Take counsel, Mamillia, at him which hath bought it. If thou hast taken care to keep thy virginity inviolable as thy greatest treasure, so take both heed and time in bestowing the same as a most precious jewel. Respect not his beauty without virtue, for it is like a ring in a swine's snout; esteem not his wealth without wit, nor his riches without reason, for then thou shalt either choose a fair inn with a foul hostess, or wed thyself to a wooden picture with a golden coat. Regard not his birth without bounty, for it will ever procure stateliness. Beware of hot love, Mamillia, for the greatest flow hath the soonest ebb, the sorest tempest hath the most sudden calm, ye hottest love hath the coldest end, and of the deepest desire oftentimes ensueth the deadliest hate.

But why do I deal so doltishly to exhort thee, which hast no need of such persuasion, & sith I both have heard & I myself know thy mind so grafted in virtue that thou wilt neither like so lightly nor waver so lewdly, but either make thy match well or else stand to thy choice, for she that will falsify her faith to one will crack her credit for all. Therefore lest I should be tedious, or urge that which is not needful, I refer the rest to your discretion, desiring you to do my commendations to the rest of my friends. And so farewell.

Yours in a chaste mind,

Dan Florion.

After that Mamillia had read this letter to Madam Castilla, they fell in discourse of the virtuous disposition of Florion, who being of tender years, which are subject unto lust, was ever a professed enemy to love, yea, the painted face of beauty could never have power to enchant his virtue. He had already well tied himself to the mast of modesty to keep him from the sirens' songs of beastly vanity, and had sufficiently defenced his mind with the rampire of honesty against the lascivious cup of Circe's sorcery, that as other gentlemen of Italy had sworn themselves true subjects to the crown of Cupid, so he had vowed himself a professed soldier to march under the ensign of virtue.

These few words passed between them of the good and godly nature of the gentleman, Madam Castilla, as the mistress of her art, began to take occasion of talk with Mamillia by the contents of Florion's behest. If she should have abruptly sifted her, her devise should be spied, & so perchance not have an answer agreeable to his demand. Therefore she tried her on this manner:

Mistress Mamillia, the contents of your friend Florion's letter shows that either the constellation of the stars, the disposition of the planets, or ye decree of the destinies or force of the fates were contrary in ye hour of his birth, or else it is not always true that youth is prone unto vice or that tender years cannot be without wanton conditions, for there is none more witty, and yet few less wilful, none so courteous, yet few less curious, as his nature seems very precious and yet very perilous, even like the patient which by overmuch blood falleth into the pleurisy. The glass, the more fine it is, the more brittle; the smoothest silk, though it last the winding, will scarce abide the wearing. The margarite is of great valure, yet soonest broken; ye musk is most strong in savour, yet endureth but a small time. So the nature of Florion, by how much the more it is precious, by so much ye more it is to be doubted. And yet the birds that breed in Bohemia are of the same colour in their age that they were hatched in their shell, the finest crystal never changeth colour, and the clear diamond remaineth always in one state. So Florion, having settled the foundation of his youth in honesty, may end his life in virtue.

But what need we enter so far into the state of another man's life? The beginning we see is as good as the end, we cannot foresee it [sic?]. But whether it happen to be good or bad, you may account of him as your friend. Yet one thing maketh me much to marvel, & that is this: that he being in Venice so far off should hear more than I, which am not only in Padua, but in your father's house, nay more, your nurse and bedfellow, of the resort of suitors, I mean, which although I marvel at for the looseness, yet I am glad of it if they be worth the welcoming. Mamillia, my grey hairs which in respect to my reverend age should somewhat prevail to procure some countenance and credit with you, my long continuance and familiarity in your company, my pains I took with you in your swaddling-clothes, my care in your youth to nourish you in virtue, and my joy in your ripe age to see you addicted to the same, are of force sufficient, I hope, to procure you to be somewhat ruled by my talk, which if you shall do, I shall think my labour well bestowed, and my time and travail well spent.

Florion, Mamillia, writeth to you of marriage, which if it cometh of his own conjecture and no report, he proveth himself a subtle sophister, meaning under the colour of an uncertain rumour to persuade you to a most stayed and steadfast state of life, as one knowing very well that as nothing is more commendable than virginity, so nothing is more honourable than matrimony. And I myself, Mamillia, which once a wife and now a widow, do speak by experience, that though virginity is pleasant, yet marriage is more delightful. For in the first creation of the world God made not Adam and Eva single virgins, but joined couples, so that virginity is profitable to one, but marriage is profitable to many. Whether is ye vine more regarded that beareth grapes, or ye ash that hath nothing but leaves? The deer

that increaseth the park, or the barren doe? Whether is the hop-tree more esteemed that rots on the ground than that which, clasping the pole, creepeth up & bringeth forth fruit?

What, Mamillia, as virginity is fair and beautiful, so what by course of kind is more unseemly than an old wrinkled maid? What is more pleasant to the sight than a smaragd, yet what less profitable if it be not used? What more delightful to the eyes than the colour of good wine, yet what of less value if it cannot be tasted? There is nothing more fair than the phoenix, yet nothing less necessary because she is single. Yea, even the law of nature, Mamillia, wisheth society, and detesteth solitariness. Whether even in thine own judgment, Mamillia, if thou hadst a goodly orchard, wouldst thou wish nothing but blossoms to grow continually, or the blossoms to fade and the trees to be fraught with pleasant fruit? Whether does thou think the ruddy rose which withereth in the hand of a man, delighting both sight and smelling, more happy than that which fadeth on the stalk without profit? Whether hath the wine better luck which is drunken than that which, standing still, is turned to vinegar? And yet, Mamillia, I grant too much, for a woman's beauty decays not with marriage, but rather cometh then to the flower and perfection. But as I do persuade thee to marriage, so would I wish thee to change for the better or else keep thy chance still. I mean, I would have him that should match with thee to be such a one in whose society thou shouldst not count marriage a bondage but a freedom, not a knot of restraint but a band of liberty, one whom thou shouldst like for his beauty and love for his virtue. I would have him to want no wealth, and yet to be wise, and with his wisdom to have all kind of civility.

Now, Mamillia, as I have spoken in general, so I will touch the particular. I mean to show thereof one which I would wish to be thy husband, and thee to be his wife. Pharicles it is, to be flat with thee, whose beauty & honesty hath amazed all Venice, whose order of living may be, and hath been, a perfect platform and method of civil dealing and honest behaviour. Thee, Mamillia, I wish to be his mate for his courtesy, and him to be thy match but in constancy. The gem which is gallant in colour and perfect in virtue is the more precious; the herb which hath a fair bark and a sweet sap is the more to be esteemed. The panther with his painted skin and his sweet breath is the more delighted [+in]; so Pharicles, fair in face and faithful in his heart, pleasant in his countenance and perfect in his mind, is so much the more to be embraced. If ye ore, Mamillia, which is dross outwardly and gold inwardly, be of great price, what then is the pure metal? If the rough stone with a secret virtue is of value, what is it then, being polished? If a smooth & learned style in an ill print imports some credit, what doth that which cometh out of a perfect press? So, Mamillia, if a man which is deformed in body and reformed in mind may deserve great liking, what deserves he which is both bountiful and beautiful? If a crooked carcass and an honest nature merit commendation, what doth he then which is both fair & faithful? If a disfigured body with honest conditions wins favour, what then doth a comely countenance with a courteous mind? All these perfections by nature, Mamillia, are incident to Pharicles, so that he can neither be appeached of want nor condemned of lack, neither his person nor mind in any wise misliked.

Now, Mamillia, construe of my words as you please, & like where you love, so that I may neither repent my talk nor you curse my counsel.

Mamillia, gentlemen, was driven into such a maze with this sudden motion of Madam Castilla that she stood as though her heart had been on her halfpenny, fearing the fetch of her old nurse, doubting what a sleeve she should shape for the coat lest she should be overtaken in misliking so lightly or (though not very chary of her choice) in choosing so quickly. Therefore she framed her answer between both on this manner:

Madam, if I stand in a maze which have the harm, think it not strange sith you marvel, which are not touched. For I may more muse of the rumour which know it contrary than you, which do but call it in question. But if Florion have heard a lie and you believe it, it is not my fault but your lightness of credit, and therefore construe of it how you can, for I am at a good point. Old women will quickly conceive & soon believe, for age is as credulous as suspicious. The dried oak will sooner fire than the green ash, & old rags will sooner burn than new linen. The green apple is hard to pierce when the old fruit will quickly bruise. So age, though they be slow in hearing, yet they are swifter in believing than youth, that the least spark of suspiciousness will fire their whole brain. And therefore he that knoweth their fault & will not bear with it is much to blame. Whereas you draw your persuasions for my credit of your talk from your grey hairs, it showeth surely but a green wit, not so full of gravity as either your age or years requires. For then your reasons would have tended to civility & not to sensuality, to virtue & not to vanity. Your pains you took with me in my swaddling-clothes, your care in my youth to nurse me in virtue, and your joy in my ripe years to see me addicted to the same shows by the end that your care was but slender, & your joy feigned. The cow which giveth good store of milk & spilleth it with her foot is as much to be blamed for the loss as to be commended for the gift. The water which for at time beareth ye vessel, & at last with the waves overwhelmeth the same, doth more harm in drowning the bark than good in bearing it. The hunter which traineth the hound, being young, truly to call upon the scent is much to blame to beat him from it being old. So you, madam, are more to be blamed for persuading me to matrimony than you were before to be commended for exhorting me to virginity, for in my tender age my infancy was not able to receive your counsel, and then you told me how greatly I ought to esteem virginity, and now in my ripe years when I can conceive your meaning, you wish me utterly to forsake it. Either then sure you were in a wrong opinion, or else now in an error, but howsoever it was, my mind is settled. Virginity you say is delightful, yet matrimony more pleasant. Virginity you put in the positive, but matrimony in the superlative. Well, I pray God you make not marriage so far to exceed in comparison that at last it grow to an extremity.

But as your age is much given to the shaking palsy, so I think your arguments have a spice of the same disease, for their foundation is but fickle, & therefore the less worth to be taken at ye hardest. The tall cedar that beareth only bare blossoms is of more value than the apple-tree that is laden with fruit; the keeper (for all your saying) makes more account of a barren doe than of a bearing hind. Diana shall obtain more fame for her chastity in hunting ye woods than Venus for her lascivious honesty in playing with Mars in her bed. Virginity shall be esteemed as a rare & precious jewel when marriage shall be counted but a custom. The bay-tree growing single by itself flourisheth green, whereas being clasped with the ivy it withereth. Ye gold of itself hath a gallant hue, but being touched it changeth

colour. The sapphire stone clasped in metal loseth his virtue. So a virgin, being once married, withereth straight, changeth colour, and loseth her chiefest treasure. And though you say by course of kind that nothing is more unseemly than an old wrinkled maid, yet experience teacheth us that nothing is more unlikely than an old withered wife. The rose, dying on the stalk, seemeth in better state than that which fadeth, being plucked. The grass looketh better, being uncut, than that which withereth with the scythe, for the one fadeth by course of nature, and the other by kind of imperfection. The phoenix, being seldom seen, the more desired; the rarer the gem is, the more esteemed. The stones of Arabia, because they be strange, are of greatest price; so virginity, by so much the more is to be regarded by how much it is more rare than marriage, for the one cometh by special grace, and the other by common course. Virginity among the Romans was had in such admiration and estimation that if by chance the vestal virgins walked abroad, the senators would give them the upper hand, and all the officers show them due reverence. Cybel, the mother of the gods, was a virgin, and Minerva was famous for three things: strength, wisdom, and virginity. The wise woman which gave oracles at Delphos was a virgin, being always called Pythia. Virginity alters the nature of wild beasts, for the lions never hurt a pure virgin, and Pliny reporteth that a unicorn will sleep on a virgin's lap.

Therefore, Madam, your arguments rather import rule than reason, and seems to come from a green wit, not from a grey head. But though the fowl have fair feathers, he may have rank flesh; the fish may have glistering scales without, and yet be rotten within; so your outward show of gravity may inwardly be addicted to vanity, and old folk are twice children, and perhaps though your face be wrinkled, your mind is youthful. Though your years and calling argue chastity, yet you had as lief have a husband as wish me married, and I promise you for my part I had rather you should eat of the meat than I taste of the sauce. If it be not a knot of bondage, but a bond of liberty, I would have you once again try that freedom. But sure either you know more than all, or else say more than you know, for not only the common people, but also the most learned hath thought marriage to be such a restraint of liberty as it feeleth no spark of freedom, for both the body is given as a slave unto the will of another man, and the mind is subject to sorrow and bound in the cave of care, so that even the name of a wife imports a thousand troubles. If you call this liberty, I know not what bondage is. Whoso is addicted to marriage findeth it easy but in one respect, and that is, if she chance on a good husband, which indeed you bravely set out in his colours. But so did Aristotle his happy man, Tully his orator, Plato his commonwealth, and in our country here, one of my kinsmen sets out the lively image of a courtier.

But as these spoke of such but could never find them, so you have described such a husband as can never be heard of. Yet, Madam, you go further, for the others spoke in general, and you, for the better confirmation of your reason, infer a particular, and that is Pharicles, whom indeed I confess to have in outward show as good qualities as any in all Italy. But the herb, though it have a fair hue and a sweet sap, yet being tasted it may be infectious. The panther with his painted skin and sweet breath hath a tyrannous heart. So Pharicles may be as foul within as fair without, and if he be not, he digresseth from his kind, for these gentlewomen which have trusted to the beauty of the face have been deceived with the deformity of the mind. Theseus, Demophoon, Aeneas, Jason and

Hercules were both famous for their feature and fortitude and renowned for their invincible valure, and yet they wan not so much fame for their prowess in war as shame for their inconstancy in love. He that chooseth an apple by the skin and a man by his face may be deceived in the one and overshot in the other. Therefore, Madam, sith marriage is troublesome, and the choice so doubtful, I mean not to prove the care not try the chance, but remain a virgin still. Yet thus much to your question: if my mind should change to try such hap, I would welcome Pharicles as well as any other.

Madam Castilla, hearing the overthwartness of Mamillia, was driven into a great maze to see the gentlewoman so hot with her, insomuch that as old women are soon angry, she took pepper in the nose at the sharp reply, and therefore framed her as quick an answer:

Mamillia, quoth she, if the physicians rub the sore, the patient must needs stir. Touch a galled horse and he will winch. So your hot answer shows my question touched you in the quick, and that though you make so strange with marriage, yet if your choice were in your own hands you would give a final farewell to virginity. But the fox will eat no grapes, and you will not marry because you may or perhaps do love where your friends will not like, and your wish should be contrary to their will. Sirichia, the daughter of Smald, King of the Danes, could not be persuaded by her father to forsake her virginity, but the third day after his death she was betrothed but to a mean squire. Manlia, daughter of Mauritius, was so scrupulous of her virginity that she altogether abandoned the company of wives and widows, and yet at length she took an husband, and was so kind-hearted that she would not stick to sell large pennyworths of her honesty. Mamillia, I will not make comparisons because they be odious, nor infer any conclusions for fear of farther danger, but take this by the way, that he which covers a small spark in the ashes will procure a great flame.

And with this she departed, as half angry, leaving Mamillia very sorrowful that she had displeased her old nurse and very careful for the issue of her new love, yet as much as she could dissembling the matter, she passed away the day in merry company.

But all this while Pharicles had a flea in his ear and a thorn in his foot which procured him little rest. For as the wounded deer stays in no place, so the passionate lover stays but without steadfastness, never having a quiet mind. For if he sail, love is his pilot; if he walk, love is his companion; if he sleep, love is his pillow. So that always he hath the spur in his side to procure his disquiet, having no salve for his sore unless he reap remedy at ye hands of his adversary, which Pharicles tried true, for there passed no hour after his departure from Mamillia in which a thousand cares did not clog his cumbered mind. For the thought of her sharp answer was hard to digest in his crazed stomach; then, that her father and he was of no great acquaintance, which was a cause of his long absence; how if fortune so favoured that he gained her goodwill, yet he lost his own freedom, that was but a sign of an ill chapman; how oftentimes they which sued to marry in haste did find sufficient time to repent them at leisure.

And surely, gentlemen, if Pharicles had rested on this point, in my judgment he had hit the mark, for there is no such hindrance to a man as a wife. If respecting war, Darius and

Mithridates are witnesses; of learning and philosophy, Socrates comes in as plaintiff; so in my opinion, if men would never marry they should never be marred, and if they would never have a wife, they should always want strife. For she is the burden that Christ only refused to take from men's shoulders. Yea, some have called a wife a heavy cross, as a merry jesting gentleman of Venice did, who hearing the preacher command every man to take up his cross and follow him, hastily took his wife on his shoulders & said he was ready with the foremost.

But lest in talking of crosses I be crossed for a fool in going beyond my commission, again to Pharicles, who though perhaps he read these or suchlike examples, yet his hot love warmed his affection, so whatsoever he mused in his mind, it would not abate his devotion, but still sought sundry means to break to his saint. And yet the farther he went, the more he was from his purpose, that he had passed the cave of care, ready to enter into the dungeon of despair, if fortune had not favoured his chance. For flinging out of his study to avoid this melancholy, he went to take air in the fields, where by good hap he espied his mistress walking with her nurse to a grange place a mile's distance from Padua to bear certain gentlewomen company which resorted thither to visit a sick patient, at which place was also Signior Gonzaga, with other gentlemen.

Now if Pharicles was driven into an ecstasy with the extreme pleasure he conceived by the sudden sight of his goddess it is no marvel, sith her absence was the hazard of his life and her presence his only pleasure. And I think, if I may enter into a woman's thought without offence, Mamillia would not have wished a fitter companion to shorten her journey, yet she passed on without any semblance of his sight, whereas fear and necessity had a deadly combat in the mind of Pharicles. He doubted if he should be overbold, he might spill his potage. But the law of necessity, saith Plato, is so hard that ye gods themselves are not able to resist it. For as the water, by nature cold, is made hot by the force of the fire, the straight tree pressed down grows always crooked, so nature is subject to necessity that kind cannot have his course. The little mouse, by nature fearful, in danger is desperate; the boar in safety is timorous, in peril without fear; the coward in peace dreadeth the sight of the weapon, whereas being urged by necessity he passeth the pikes. Ormaus, the son of King Cyrus, by nature was born dumb, yet when the city Suzes was taken, seeing a soldier ready to kill his own father, cried out, *Villain, save the crown*, so that necessity in him supplied a want of nature. And if there be anything which is more forcible than necessity, it is the law of love, which so incensed Pharicles that, casting all fear aside, he offered himself to his mistress with this courteous parle:

Gentlewoman, if I boldly offer myself as a copartner of your voyage, which am a companion far unfit for such a company, pardon my fault sith it cometh of force, and condemn not my nature of want of nurture, but let your beauty bear the blame as the spur of my rash enterprise, for the adamant draws by virtue, though iron strive by nature; where force is, there the fault is forgiven. But if in any wise my service might pleasure you, or rather not offend you, I would proffer it if I knew it would be but half so well accepted as heartily offered, but perhaps it will not be worth the wearing because proffered chaffer stinks.

Madam Castilla, hearing the courtesy of the gentleman, and perceiving what saint he served, to encourage him the more gave him this gentle answer fit for his friendly offer:

Gentleman, quoth she, we neither can think ill of your nurture nor yet mislike your nature, since the one argues courtesy and the other small curiosity, unless it be in making your arrival so strange, & accusing your conscience as guilty which no man finds fault with. For my part, sir, & I think I may speak for Mamillia, you are not so soon come as welcome, nor your service is not more heartily offered than willingly accepted, & therefore if you be content with your hap, we are very well pleased with the chance.

And with that she fell in talk with the rest of the company to the end Pharicles might use some speeches to Mamillia, who now seeing the coast clear, and time and place fit for the purpose, gave her the onset in this manner:

Mistress Mamillia, it hath been a saying more common than true that love makes all men orators, yet I myself find it contrary by experience, insomuch that I think the perfect lover wants not only eloquence, but hath a restraint of his nature. The water-pot, being filled to the brim, yields no liquor, though having a hundred holes. The wine vessel, being full, lets pass no wine, though never so well vented. The colour joined hard to the sight hindereth the sense. The flower, put into ye nostril, stoppeth ye smelling. The lover in ye presence of his lady, at ye first is either driven into an ecstasy for joy, or else into a quaking trance for fear, so that when he should plead his cause his wits are either bewitched, or else not at home, & if it happen his tongue be not tied, in many words lies mistrust, and in painted speech deceit is most often covered, & specially where either acquaintance or long continuance hath bred no credit. Therefore I, Mistress Mamillia, whose acquaintance with you is small, & credit less, dare use no circumstance for fear of mistrust, neither can I tell in what respect to bring a sufficient trial or proof of my goodwill, but only that I wish the end of my love to be such as my faith and loyalty is at this present, which I hope tract of time shall try without spot.

In the meantime, requesting you to think that the force of love hath constrained me to yield as a slave, ready at beauty's command to hazard my life for your pleasure, I must needs confess ye gifts of nature so abundantly bestowed upon you have so bewitched my senses that for my last refuge I am forced to appeal unto your courtesy as a sovereign medicine for my incurable disease, incurable I may term it unless ye drops of your favour quench the flame, or else death with his deadly dart decide ye cause. But I hope it is impossible that such a crystal breast should lodge an heart of adamant, that such a sugared face should have a bitter mind, that your divine beauty should be overgrown with hellish cruelty, to torment them who for your love sustains a thousand miseries. Misery I may well call it, for as there is nothing more pleasant than beauty, so nothing is more irksome than bondage, & yet my restraint of liberty is so much the more acceptable by how much the more it is desired. For although ye fly willingly fries in the flame, yet she is blameless; although the ermine loves her mortal enemy, yet she is not faulty, sith the one comes of affection and the other by course of nature.

Ah, Mamillia, thy beauty hath bought my freedom, & thy heavenly face hath made me captive, that as he which is hurt of ye scorpion seeketh a salve from whence he received ye sore, so you only may minister ye medicine which procures the disease. The burning fever is driven out with a hot potion, and the shaking palsy with a cold drink. Love only is remedied by love, and fancy must be cured by mutual affection. Therefore, Mamillia, I speak with tears outwardly, & with drops of blood inwardly, that unless ye mizzling showers of your mercy mitigate the fire of my fancy, & give a sovereign plaster for my secret sore, I am like to pass my life in greater misery than if I had tasted the infernal torments, for Sophocles being demanded what harm he would wish to his enemy answered that he might love where he was not liked, & that such misfortune might have long lasting. But perhaps you will say, Mamillia, that the beasts which gaze at ye panther are guilty of their own death, that the mouse taken in the trap deserveth her chance, that a lover which hath free will deserveth no pity if he make not his choice right.

Ah, Mamillia, can the straw resist the virtue of the pure jet? Can flare [sic for flax?] resist the force of the fire? Can a lover withstand the brunt of beauty, or freeze if he stand by the flame, or pervert the laws of nature? Weigh all things in the balance of equity, and then I doubt not but to have a just judgment. But this I assure myself, if you knew the strength of my love or the force of my loyalty, though my person and birth be far unfit for such a mate, yet you would deem my love to deserve no less, for Leander to his Hero, or Pyramus to his Thisbe was never more faithful than Pharicles will try himself to Mamillia, that although small acquaintance breeds mistrust, and mistrust hinders love, yet tract of time shall infer such a trial as trust shall kindle affection.

And therefore I hope that your noble heart will not put a doubt till occasion be offered, nor call his credit in question whom neither you have found nor heard to be halting. What though the serpentine powder is quickly kindled and quickly out, yet the salamander stone, once set on fire, can never be quenched. As the sappy myrtle-tree will quickly rot, so the hard oak will never be eaten with worms. Though the free-stone is apt for every impression, yet the emerald will sooner break than receive any new form; though the polyp changeth colour every hour, yet the sapphire will crack before it consent to disloyalty. As all things are not made of one mould, so all men are not of one mind, for as there hath been a trothless Jason, so hath there been a trusty Troilus, and as there hath been a dissembling Damocles, so was there a loyal Laelius. And sure, Mamillia, I call the gods to witnesses I speak without feigning, that sith thy beauty either by fate or fortune is shrined in my heart, my loyalty shall be such as the betrothed faith of Erasto to his Persida shall not compare with the love of Pharicles to Mamillia. Sith therefore my love is such, repay but half so much in part of recompense, and it will be sufficient to release my sorrow. But alas, who can lay their love where there is no desert, and where want breeds a flat denial?

Ah, Mamillia, nature by her secret judgment hath endued all creatures with some perfect qualities where want breeds misliking. The mole, deprived of sight, hath a wonderful hearing; the hare, being very fearful, is most swift; the fish, having no ears, hath most clear eyes; so I, of mean wealth and less wit, have given me by nature such a loyal heart as I hope the perfection of the one will supply the want of the other. And if the choice had

been in my hands it should have been as it is, and therefore sith in you only consists my safety, and that your beauty hath gained the chiefest place in my heart, whereof I hope when time shall be favourable to my desire to make sufficient trial, I humbly beseech you to take pity upon him whose life & death consists in your answer, and to let it be such as you may have a faithful servant forever.

Although these words of Pharicles, gentlemen, did not greatly displease Mamillia because it is very hard to anger a woman with praising her, and especially if she think as much of herself as others speak, yet she would have hid fire in the straw and have danced in a net, striving as much as she could with a discontented countenance to cover a contented mind, and to seem as cruel as a tiger though as meek as a lamb. Lest either by outward show or words he might conjecture some hope of good hap, she gave him this cold confect for his hot stomach:

Sir, quoth she, although the common proverb saith that the city which comes to parle and the woman that lends an attentive ear, the one is soon sacked and the other is easily gained, yet I would wish you not to conceive any hope or spend any travail, for your hope shall be void and your labour lost. For although I was so foolish to lend you mine ear, I am wary enough in letting of my heart, for as you found me prodigal in the one, you shall find me as niggardly in the other. But as fables are good enough to pass away the time, so your talk will seem to shorten the way, and so I take it. For it is ill halting before a cripple, and a burnt child will fear the fire. And though I need not doubt because I was never burnt, yet is it good to beware by another man's harm. The mouse that seeth her fellow taken in the trap, and ventureth herself, deserveth not pity if she be caught; the fox, seeing his marrow almost killed with the dogs, is a fool if he take not squat. It is hard taking of fowl when the net is descried, and ill catching of fish when the hook is bare. It is hard, Pharicles, to make her believe that will give no credit, & to deceive her that spieth the fetch. When the string is broken it is hard to hit the white; when a man's credit is called in question, it is hard to persuade one.

Blame me not, Pharicles, if I urge you so strictly, nor think nothing if I suspect you narrowly. A woman may knit a knot with her tongue she cannot untie with all her teeth, and when the signet is set on, it is too late to break the bargain. Therefore I had rather mistrust too soon than mislike too late. I had rather fear my choice than rue my chance. I had rather stop at the brim than at the bottom. A woman's heart is like the stone in Egypt that will quickly receive a form, but never change without cracking. Therefore if I receive any, it shall be such a one as I shall not repent me. I put an 'if' in it because I do not mean to change virginity with marriage, for it would be too hard a bargain, for we see those women which have been counted most wise have been most chaste, and so fearful to match that they durst not once call it in question. Faza, the princess of Gaul, when she knew her father had promised her in marriage, wept so long till she became blind. Parthenia, after she was married, and had tried by childbirth the difference between virginity and marriage, she would never after company with her husband, saying that a lasting virtue was to be preferred before a fading vanity. Sith therefore the most wise have feared and eschewed, think me not cruel if I be wise for myself, nor judge me not scrupulous, though I put a doubt before I have cause, or be in dread to buy repentance at an unreasonable rate,

for if I were minded to marry, I should hardly find one fish among so many scorpions, or one beryl among so many broken glasses. The wolf hath as smooth a skin as ye simple sheep; the sour elder hath a fairer bark than the sweet juniper. Where the water is calmest, there it is deepest, and where the sea is most quiet, there it is most dangerous. Where is the greatest colour of honesty, there oftentimes is the most want, for an empty vessel hath a louder sound than a full barrel, and a dissembling mind hath more eloquence than a faithful heart, for truth is ever naked. I will not apply the comparison, Pharicles, to any particular, but in general, yet if the propositions be universal, they may infer in the conclusion a particular person.

The poets and painters, representing the love of men, bring in Cupid with a pair of wings; deciphering the love of women, a tortoise under the feet of Venus, showing that as the love of men is moveable and unconstant as a bird, so the fancy of women is as firm & fixed as a steadfast tortoise. And with great reason, for neither the Romish records nor Grecian histories have made any, or at the least so oft, mention of the disloyalty of women, but only how their simplicity hath been beguiled by the flattery of feigned lovers, of whom the most renowned may bear sufficient witness (as Theseus, Jason, Hercules, Aeneas and Demophoon) that the love of men hath ever been inconstant, yet they so rejoiced at their infamous deeds that the poets canonized them, not only for saints, but placed them among the gods, so that others of base estate, taking example by them, do vaunt of their disloyalty as of some glorious conquest, and as Herostratus fired the temple of Diana to be spoken of, so they falsify their faith to be famous. Yet it is a world to see how the deepest dissembler of them all can have tears at command to deceive a simple maid. What sighs, what sobs, what prayers, what protestations! Their talk burns as hot as the mount Aetna, whenas their affection is as cold as a clock. It is not the love of ye maid but ye lust of their mind, not her bounty but her beauty, so that every face sets them on fire, every lady, be she lovely, must be their mistress. But no marvel, for if men are choleric, hot in their love and dry in their faith, soon set on fire and soon quenched, their love is even as lasting as the flame in the straw, which is as little permanent as it is violent, or like the apples in Arabia which begin to rot ere they be halfripe.

Well, Pharicles, although I cast all these doubts, and others have tried them true, yet I am forced by fancy to take some remorse of thy torments. Medea knew the best, and followed the worst in choosing Jason, but I hope not to find thee so wavering.

Ah, Pharicles, I have been brought up in the court, and although my beauty be small and witless, yet I have been deared [sic for desired?] of many, and could never fancy any. Thou hast won the castle that many have besieged, and hast obtained that which others have sought to gain. It is not the shape of thy beauty but the hope of thy loyalty which enticeth me, not thy fair face but thy faithful heart, not thy comely countenance but thy courteous manners, not thy words but thy virtues, for she that builds her love upon beauty means to fancy but for a while, for where the subject is fading, the cause cannot be lasting. Would God, Pharicles, I might find thee but such a one as I will try myself to be, for whereas thou dost protest such loyalty, and put case it be as true as it may be, yet it shall be but counterfeit respecting mine. Be thou but Theagines, and I will try myself to be more constant than Caniclia [sic for Cariclia?]. No torments, no travail, no, only the loss of life

shall diminish my love. In lieu thereof remain thou but constant, and in pledge of my protested goodwill, have here my heart and hand to be thine in dust and ashes.

Mamillia having thus ended her talk, I leave you to judge, gentlemen, in what a quandary Pharicles was brought, seeing the answer of his mistress to be so correspondent with his demand, & that fortune was so favourable to his desire as she seemed to will that he did wish. For if the condemned man rejoiceth when he heareth his pardon pronounced, or the prisoner his freedom, no doubt Pharicles' joy could be no less, sith denial was his death, and consent the conserve to heal his wound. The greater care, the greater joy; the more doubt, the more pleasure; so his unlooked for hap brought such an inspeakable contentation as, forced through the extremity of his passions and incensed by the constraint of his affection, he burst forth into this talk:

Mamillia, if where the water standeth most still there it is the deepest, and when the wind is lowest, then the greatest tempest is imminent, so where the mind with overmuch joy or too much pain is surcharged, there the tongue is both tied and the countenance restrained, so that as the heart is not able to conceive it, the tongue is not able to express it, as the water-pot which, being full, voideth no liquor. Publius Metellius, hearing his son had subdued the Equiars, died for joy. Cassinatus conceived such a pleasure in seeing his father win a garland in Olympus that he killed himself with inward laughter. If I infer the similitude, perhaps it will breed doubt, for deeds in love are to be required, and not words. Therefore for fear I incur the suspicion of flattery, I will leave you to conjecture of that which I think.

But this by the way, assure yourself, Mistress Mamillia, that your beauty hath so blinded me as I shall never see any which so well shall content my mind, and your bounty hath bound me never to like any other. Thus inveigled with the one, and fettered with the other, I remain your true servant forever.

While they were in these terms, Madam Castilla thought Pharicles had given the fort a sufficient battery for this time. Therefore joining to them with the rest of the company, she interrupted them on this manner:

Mistress Mamillia, I believe you will go with a clean soul to visit the sick patient, for if you have been all this while at shrift, you might both have confessed a great many of faults, and received full absolution. But I pray God your ghostly father be as holy for the soul as wholesome for the body, & if he be, surely you have heard good counsel; if not, it is Saint Francis' fault he wants his hood.

Madam, quoth Mamillia, if you think so well of my ghostly father and his shrift, I pray you let him have you in confession as long, for you are eldest, and therefore had need of a longer examination and larger absolution. If he be holy for the soul, he hath enough to take care of his own. As for mine, I will take charge of myself. If wholesome for the body, the more fit for your purpose, sith old women are full of diseases and had need have a physician tied by their girdle. As for Saint Francis' fault, as you term it, if that be a hindrance of his coming, I am sure to pleasure you he will take the pains to fetch it.

Pharicles, hearing the taunts of the gentlewomen, and seeing that he was come to the gentleman's place, because he was not well acquainted, though against his will, thought best for that time to take his leave, and therefore offered them the farewell with this privy quip:

Madam, if my keeping the gentlewoman so long at shrift hath been in any respect offensive to you, I am very sorry, but if I may stand you as long in stead of a ghostly father, and so pleasure you, I am at command. Marry, my commission is neither for word nor deed, and therefore I doubt your confession will be too large for me to deal withal. But sith I have brought you thus far, and am altogether unacquainted with the gentleman, I will take my leave to depart home, although against my will.

Nay, surely, quoth Madam Castilla, your haste shall make waste, and your small acquaintance shall be no hindrance, for at this time you shall be my guest.

And with that they entered into the place, where after they had saluted the company and visited the sick person, Madam Castilla requested the gentleman to welcome the stranger for her sake, who both had taken pains to bear them company, and through his pleasant conceits procured the way to seem shorter.

Signior Gonzaga, taking occasion to show his goodwill to Pharicles, answered that sith the master of the house was not well, he would say the gentleman was welcome in his behalf, and so taking him by the hand, welcomed him very friendly, which courtesy of Gonzaga was no less pleasure unto Pharicles than contentation unto Mamillia, to see him whom they most doubted to show such a friendly countenance, that they both hoped to have a prosperous success in their enterprise.

Now this sick gentleman, called Gostino, had one only daughter named Publia, about the age of sixteen years, whose beauty and bringing up showed that she was in no respect second unto Mamillia, but rather more perfect in the gifts of nature. This young gentlewoman, being by the mother's side cousin-german to Mamillia, after her duty done to the company, requested them to take such a simple dinner as her father in so short a time could provide, giving them also to understand by her behaviour that the influence of the heavens had denied her nothing, but that nurture had forced herself to augment the grace of nature, and that comeliness of body and courtesy of the mind had a continual war which should have the superiority.

This gorgeous goddess furnished with these singular qualities in every respect so set on fire Pharicles' fancy that, as if he had drunk of the fountains of Ardenia, his hot love was turned to as cold a liking. Now his heart was set on Publia, which of late was vowed to Mamillia, in such a sort that his stomach lost the wonted appetite to feed the eyes with the beauty of his new goddess as that he seemed to have eaten of the herb spattania, which shutteth up the stomach for a long season. And Publia, on the contrary side, noting the feature of Pharicles, the comeliness of his person, and the rareness of his qualities, was so scorched with the beauty of this new guest, as finding occasion to

convey herself into her closet under the colour of some serious business, she poured forth her complaints in this order:

O unhappy fortune! O luckless destiny! Hath Publia prepared a banquet to entrap herself with a more dainty delicate? Hath she laid the net, and is taken in the snare? Hath she welcomed him that hath caught her captive? Well, now I see that as the bee that flieth from flower to flower, having free choice to choose at liberty, is at last taken by the wings and so fettered, in like manner my fancy, taking the view of every face, hath a restraint of her freedom, and is brought in bondage with the beauty of this stranger.

Alas, what shall I do? Shall I love so lightly? Shall fancy give me the foil at the first dash? Shall mine eyes be the cause of my misery? Would God they had lost their sight in the cradle! Shall my heart be so tender to yield at the first call? Would God nature had framed it of adamant, to resist the force of such foolish cogitations!

Ah, Publia, consider thy state. What hath he more to be beloved than other thy suitors have had to be liked? What, fool! Dost thou ask a question of love, or a reason of fancy? Strive not against the stream; if thou resist love, thou are overmatched. For even the gods are tributaries unto Venus, as confessing the superiorities of beauty's kingdoms; then be not thou ashamed, being but a simple maid. Venus loved a blacksmith with a polt-foot, and thou a gentleman of singular perfection, yet as there is a difference between thee and Venus in beauty, so is there a greater distance between Vulcan and him in deformity. Then, Publia, yield when thou must needs consent; run when thou art called by command, for sure if ever thou wilt bestow thy freedom, he is worthy to have thee captive. If thou meanest to marry, thou canst not have a meeter match.

Yea, but how if his heart be placed, and his mind settled? Then were I a great deal better to wail at the first than weep at the last, to be content with a little prick than with a deep wound. The scorpion, if he touch never so lightly, envenometh the whole body. The least spark of wild-fire sets on fire a whole house. The cockatrice killeth even with her sight. Ye sting of love woundeth deadly; the flame of fancy fireth the whole body, and the eyes of a lover are counted incurable.

Yet the elephant, being envenomed with the viper, eateth him up, and is healed. There is nothing better for burning than heat of fire, & nothing so soon killeth a basilisk as the sight of a man. Then, Publia, sith Pharicles hath given the wound, let him salve the sore; let the fire of affection drive out the flame of fancy, and sith thou art hurt by the eye, be healed by the sight. Hope for the best, for thou hast as much to be loved as he to be liked, & therefore remain patient till thou knowest more.

With that she went out of her closet, but before her return the strangers had dined, and were all descanting of the gentleman's disease. So many heads, so many wits, for some said it was a fever, and proceeded of cold; some, the consumption of the milt, whose original was thought some burstenness, and ensued of phlegm; some one thing and some another, but all I think missed the mark. Gonzaga, who heard all their opinions, said that if the gentleman were not well stricken in age, whatsoever the disease was, he would say

the first cause was love. *And my reason is this*, quoth he, *the oft change of colours, his sudden trances, his sighs in his dream, the dead stopping of his pulses and then their beating afresh; all these are signs of an unquiet mind, of an impatient affection, and, to be flat, of love itself.*

Signior Gonzaga, quoth the sick gentleman, *either you are expert in physic or else you speak by experience, but whether you do, you miss the cushion, for my disease doth not proceed of love, nor if I were well, should it. For I have felt the first dish of so variable a taste that I will never eat of the second. I mean, I felt the presence of my wife so sweet, and her absence by death so sour, as I mean never to try the like hap. But now sith you are all at leisure, and I very glad to hear anything that might mitigate the pain or shorten the time, I would crave this boon of you all in general, that one of you would satisfy my mind in this, to tell me what thing it is the common people call love.*

The gentlemen of their courtesy could do no less but condescend to their host's request, yet every one alleging of disability, so that they were forced to cast lots who should discuss this hard question, & amongst all, the chance fell upon Pharicles, which, although it was some small grief unto him because he doubted of his hability, yet he thought fortune favoured him in this point, that he might show his cunning before Publia.

Where I cannot but muse, gentlemen, to see that such moist liquor should turn to hard flint, that the most wholesome mithridate in twice shifting should be deadly poison, that the reeds in Candy will of their own nature become bitter gall, that the love of men should turn to hard hatred, that fancy should be quenched at the second sight, that the affection of Pharicles should turn to frantic folly in misliking without cause and choosing without trial, but it is not so common as true that men be fickle in their faith, brittle in their brain, and lukewarm in their love, neither hot nor cold, even like the pickerel, that keepeth the bait in his mouth to cast out at his pleasure. Yet where do we see any writing of love or of any such matter but they must have one fling at women, dispraising their nature, deciphering their nurture, painting out their politic practices and subtle shifts, declaring their mutability, comparing them to the polyp-stone that changeth colours every hour, to the weathercock, that wavereth with the wind, to the marigold, whose form is never permanent, but changeth with the sun, and yet they themselves a great deal worse, as Pharicles, one of the same sect, presently shall prove, who fried at every fire and changed his look at every leeke [= like], as one that builded upon beauty and not bounty, that did lust, but not love. With which fickle fever ye gentlemen of our time are greatly troubled, for he that cannot look & laugh, and tell a tale with *nulla fide*, they will straight note him in their tables for a dunce or put him in their books for a fool, and yet they will needs fry in frost & freeze in fire, they see & yet are blind, they hear without ears, they spend the day in sighing and the night in sobs, they have heaps of care, streams of tears, waves of woe, yea, to be short, they like without love and fancy without affection, that their choice must needs change because it is without reason.

But again to Pharicles, who seeing necessity on the one side and his credit on the other to be two spurs in his side, and that the gentlemen were attentive, began on this manner:

The poets and painters feigned not Fortune blind without good cause and great reason, for as her gifts are uncertain, so the lot is doubtful, and the chance unlooked for most often happeneth. She imparteth wealth to the fool and poverty to the wise, she poureth water into the sea when it overfloweth, and giveth riches to him that is cloyed with abundance. Do we not see that where is most need, there she giveth least, and the most noble men have the worst luck? Polycrate is a mirror of her mutability by his miserable end, and Abdolominus a pattern of her frailty by his good hap, and I here may serve for a proof of her small skill, that hath laid a great burden on me which am least able to bear it. But on the small branch hangeth oft the most fruit, and on the worst wit sometimes chanceth the greatest charge, for neither my experience by nurture nor my wit by nature hath whereof to compare with the worst of the company, and yet fortune by lot hath laid the most on me, so that he who worst may, must hold the candle.

But sith a man must needs go when the devil drives, although I know my fault and you shall find it, yet the hope of your courtesy void of curiosity somewhat encourageth my slender skill to presume the farther, although between your learned ears and my rude tongue there will be great discord. I will not do as Hiarbitas and Hermonides, who striving to excel in music, forever lost their voices, lest if I force myself in eloquence to seem a courtier I prove at length a flat carter. Astorides, seeing Roscius' gestures, durst never after come on the stage; Hiparchion, hearing Rufinus blow upon his pipe, would never after play on his flute. Two things daunt the mind of a young man, either the skill or person of the hearer. Demosthenes, the famous orator of Athens, was so astonished at the majesty of King Philip that he lost his speech; Carnitus, seeing Hannibal coming into the schools, became dumb. Then it is no marvel, gentlemen, if I be afraid to incur the common proverb, A fool's bolt is soon shot, or to doubt that my green wit should give a rash reason or enter too far in mine own conceit, which was so hurtful to Marsias that with his pipe would imitate Apollo's harp. Notwithstanding, as the prick of the spur forceth the horse that feareth the evil way, so in this my doubt the reverence I bear to Gostino and the rest of the company banisheth all fear, assuring myself you will lay the fault upon Fortune, who made the lot so unequal, and let my unjust chance serve for a sufficient excuse, and if I hap to stretch too far, I will blow the retrait with repentance, which never cometh without pardon.

When I conjecture with myself, gentlemen, the great travail and industry that the ancient philosophers and learned men have taken in searching out the secrets of nature (insomuch that some of them have put out their own eyes to attain to the greater perfection, thinking that they were obstacles & hindrances of their profound contemplations, as did Democles; others, being extremely delighted with supernatural cogitations and enamoured of the mathematical arts, with gazing up into the sky have fallen backward and broken their necks, as did Gallus; some, searching out the essence of the first matter, waded so far in the depth of astronomy seeking out the causes of the ebbing and flowing of the sea that they drowned themselves, as Aristotle; others, coveting to know the sense of secret matters, scanning the quiddities of logic, have lost their wits, as Crinitus and many other mo), I cannot but marvel that among all these secretaries of nature there have never been found any which have enterprised to search out the essence and perfect nature of love. Sure I

think they might answer with Hermes, who being demanded what God was, said he could never give answer because the farther he went the more was behind, yet in my judgment the true love is no other thing but a desire of that which is good, and this good is the influence of the celestial bounty, so that by the definition it is to be placed in the intellectual part of the mind, and not in the sensual.

But your question, Signior Gostino, is of that which the common people call love. Ovid, who thought himself a master of that art, and writ precepts of the same, thought it more obscure than the letters of Ephesus or the riddles of sphinx to tell the perfect definition of love, so that being demanded what it was, answered that he knew not what it should be, from whence it sprung, whither it went, nor to what end it tended, but sure, quoth he, it is the loss of a man's self. Anacreon said it was a sweet mischief, sith for a pince of pleasure we receive a gallon of sorrow, for what weepings, what watchings, what cursings, what sighs, what travail doth the lover endure, so that in another place he calleth it a warfare, for the drum of fancy strikes up the alarum in the lover's hearts [sic] as he goeth to fight, knowing to be vanquished, and that every frowning look of his lady is worse than the shot of a cruel cannon, and yet the passionate lover is thought to abide no pain, nor suffer no trouble.

Calimachus calleth it a court without sergeants for because they that love obey without constraint, and are captive without conquest. Therefore in my judgment, sith love cometh of free will, it ought to have the better reward.

Prince Tamburlaine, the most bloody butcher in the world, never shed blood where there was submission, and the lion spareth life if his enemy yield. What beast is so brute as killeth his fellow? Then that woman is much to blame that with her denial would seek his life who, brought captive by love, craves pardon. Propertius saith love is a sweet tyranny because the lover endureth his torments willingly, and that the mind of the lover is not where it liveth, but where it loveth.

Oh, saith he, what man is able to resist the force of love, or rather, what will not love force a man to do? Did not Retormodicus overthrow the whole state of the Lacedaemonians for the love of Scedasus' daughters? Roderick of Spain lost his kingdom for Camma. Yea, many have not only hated both father and mother for the love of their ladies, but also have poisoned their kinsmen and acquaintance for to fulfil their fancies. Catiline slew his son for the love of Orestilla, and yet men are counted neither loyal nor faithful. Tibullus called love a profound science.

To be brief, everyone paints it out in his colours as it please them, and yet none can tell what they say, in such sort that they make a mystery which can neither be expressed nor taught but by demonstration in a dumb school, as secret as ye sacrifice of Ceres or of Vesta, yet the most wise philosophers have showed themselves doctors in the art of love, condemning them as unperfect of nature, void of sense and civility, that have done and thought it good to live without love. For Aristotle in his Politics & Plato in his Commonweal have proved by substantial reasons that nature never framed anything more precious than society, and what is so sure a fellowship as marriage? This was the

cause that by the laws of Lacedaemon those men which despised love were driven out of the common plays [sic?], and were sent to the wild forests as brute beasts to live there with savage satyrs, so that Casimer, the King of Polonia, which would never marry, or Henry the First, Emperor, who after he was married used his wife but by the eye, should never have bought their freedom in that city. Or if the Bishop of Alexandria, which scratched out his own eyes for fear of Venus' charms, or Lewis, the second son of Charles, King of Sicilia, which would never see any woman for fear to be entrapped, or the superstitious Essenians, that were the mortal enemies to womankind, had had Lycurgus for their judge, they had in mine opinion purchased ye strapado for their pains.

Wherefore sith love, both according to the philosophers, yea, even the Stoics themselves, which were moved with no affections, and by the opinion of the most just and severe lawgivers, is so necessary that without it the world would perish, fall into ruin and decay, it is needful that before we receive such a guest we know what he is, whence he comes, and how to be entreated.

But methink, gentlemen, we have begun prettily to follow the steps of our ancestors, for as the Samians, which built a college, and the Parians and Lacedaemonians, that set up a temple in the honour of love next unto that of Venus, so you have here in this place erected a school, and have chosen the most unworthy for master, whose rules, although they be void of reason, yet they take this by the way, that sith love is young he requireth young scholars. And therefore, gentlemen, do not, as Hercules did, who began to be an amorous knight in his age, but love when both your beauty is in the bud and your wit in the flower, for an old lover is like an old hog with a green tail.

Signior Gostino, whether it were through the weakness of his stomach or the extremity of his pain, was forced to interrupt Pharicles in the mids of his talk, requesting the gentleman not to think that it was weariness of his discourse but ye strangeness of the disease that procured this restraint, and to entreat the rest of the company not to take it in evil part that he was the cause of such a sudden intermission, hoping the gentleman at their next meeting would satisfy their minds fully, wishing Pharicles not to be a stranger at his house, but to use him as a friend, and the oftener he should come, the better should be the welcome.

Pharicles, with the rest of the gentlemen, perceiving Gostino to crave rest, and that his drowsy eyes chimed for sleep, thanking him for their good cheer and wishing his welfare, took their leave and departed. But Pharicles, whose heart was on his halfpenny, found fish on his fingers that he might be the last should take his leave of Publia to see if he could strike fire out of the flint, and therefore straining her by the hand gave her his *A dio*:

Gentlewoman, if I take my leave more boldly than any of the rest, impute the fault to your beauty and not to my impudency, which so hath fired my fancy with the flame of affection as I am half in doubt it is unquenchable, yet though the patient knows his disease uncurable, he covets a plaster to mitigate the pain. But I hope well, and if I may have well, I shall think myself to get as much as I would wish. The traveller, talking of hunger, hath ever a more sharp stomach, and I so long discoursed of love that where before I shot as a

blind man, now were I able to speak by experience. For Ovid nor all the masters of love could never find out a more perfect definition than my fancy fettered in the beams of your beauty hath imprinted into my mind, so that by the charge of Venus, will you, nill you, I remain your servant.

Publia, receiving this farewell as heartily as he uttered it, gave him a cake of the same paste, and a sop of the same sauce:

Gentleman, quoth she, as I cannot lay the fault of your boldness, as you term it, to any impudency, so would I not have you without cause accuse my beauty, lest you either commit folly or flattery, for he that praiseth the crow for her colour is either stone blind or stark mad, and therefore I think that your fancy is not fixed, but your fantasy is fumed with some vapours proceeding from a hot stomach, procuring a rash judgment, so that when it shall be allayed with some cold confection, you will not be of the same opinion. But sure I am content at your next coming to take a recantation for a recompense of your error, which the sooner it be, the better it shall please me, and so fare you well.

This word, as it came faintly from Publia, so was it as hard of digestion to Pharicles, yet he, dissembling, held Mamillia with that till he had brought her home, and taking his conge with a cold kiss at her warm lips, given her her *Vale* with a counterfeit kind of courtesy, and so departed.

But Publia, more impatient, even as the horse that, never having felt the spur, runneth at the first prick, so she, never having felt the flame, was more hot and less wary than if she had been burnt before, as she was forced to witness her love in these or suchlike terms:

I see, quoth she, that things unlooked for most often happen, and that he which most trusteth is less assured. The hart, when he hopeth best in the nimbleness of his joints, is then plucked down with the dogs; the dove, giving credit to her wings, is seized on with the hawk; the hare, in the most pride of her swiftness, is caught by the hunters. A woman, when she trusteth most on her chastity, hath then the greatest overthrow by beauty, which I say not only by guess, but speak by trial, for neither the feature of the face, the beauty of the body, nor the virtues of the mind, or goodness of fortune, could ever stir the stayed mind of Publia to swerve from the vowed virginity, so that thinking myself as chaste as any in Padua, I prove the lightest in Italy, for I yield before I be overcome, I consent without compulsion. The first assault, the first shot, the first alarm, yea, the first word hath scaled the walls, won the fort, and caught me captive. Alas, what will they say that praised me for my virtue? Will they not as fast dispraise me for my vice? Will not my father fret, my kinsfolk cry out, my friends be sorry, my enemies laugh me to scorn? Yea, will not all the world wonder to see me of late given to chastity, and now shake hands with virginity, to yield my dearest jewel and chieftest treasure unto the stranger? The choice of a friend requireth the eating of a bushel of salt; then the choosing of a husband, ten, for by how much the band is straiter, by so much the choice should be longer. But I almost like before I look, and love before I know, and cast my corn I wot not where, and am like to reap I know not what.

Ah, fool, is not the jacinth, if it be rubbed with lime, soon set afire, and hardly quenched? Is not the adamant and the iron soon joined, and hardly dissevered? The coin hath his stamp in a moment, and cannot be taken out without melting. Love entereth easily, and is as hard to thrust out as nature. Fancy soon fireth, but long ere it quencheth.

Yea, but Publia flatter not thyself, for soon ripe, soon rotten. That which entereth without compulsion will wear away without constraint. Marriage, if it be soon begun, yet it is not so soon ended. Take time and choice, and choose warily, not his face, for nothing so soon gluts the stomach as sweet meat, and nothing sooner fills the eye than beauty, for oftentimes where is the best proportion, there are the worst properties. The wine is not known by the cask, but by the taste. The gods, intending to show the perfection of nature in one creature, framed a man so exquisite in form and feature as neither for the lineaments of his face nor the proportion of his body was possible to be said, this was wanting. This demigod being sent upon the earth, whenas none could condemn nature of want, Momus only found this fault, that the gods framed not a window in his breast through which to perceive his inward thoughts, meaning, as I conjecture, that there is none so comely in his body but may be corrupt in his mind, nor so fine in his feature but he may be faulty in his faith. To conclude, as every saint hath his feast, so every man hath his fault, that a man had need grope well that should find one fish among so many scorpions, and what a one Pharicles is, I may easily guess, but I know not.

Ah, Publia, if anyone heard thy talk they might condemn thee of villainy. Wilt thou speak evil of him which wisheth well to thee? Shall ye reward of love be loathing? Doth goodwill deserve hatred, or fancy defiance? What hath he that thou mayest not like, or what wouldst thou like that is wanting in him, neither beauty, birth, wisdom, wealth, & what more is to be required in a man? Ah, nothing, Publia. His store procureth thy want, his perfection hath made thee unperfect, as now thy welfare hangs in the will of another man, and dost both live and love, so that conclude with thyself, Pharicles must be he whose shape thou wilt shrine in thy heart forever, hap good or hap evil, against all the assaults of fortune.

Publia was not thus vexed on the one side but Pharicles suffered a far greater torment, that after he came to his lodging, casting himself on his bed, he exclaimed on his hap in such sort that the abundance of tears were sufficient sign of his woe:

O Pharicles, Pharicles, what a doubtful combat dost thou feel in thy mind between fancy and faith, love and loyalty, beauty and bounty? Shall the flickering assault of fancy overthrow the castle of constancy? Shall the lightness of love violate the league of loyalty? Shall the shadow of beauty wipe out the substance of bounty? Shall hope be of more force than assurance? Wilt thou vow thee constant to one, and prove thyself not steadfast to any? The turtle chooseth, but never changeth; the swan liketh, but never loatheth; the lion, after he hath entered league with his make, doth never covet a new choice. These have but only sense, and I am sure thou hast reason and sense, and art more unruly. They have but nature for their guide, and yet art constant; thou hast both nature and nurture, and yet thy mind is moveable. These brute beasts keep their consent inviolable, and thou, a reasonable creature, dost falsify thy faith without constraint, yea, even break thine oath

without compulsion, whereas nothing is so to be hated as perjury, and a man having cracked his credit is half hanged.

Marcus Regulus, rather than he should falsify his faith, even to his enemies, suffered a most horrible death. Horatius Secundus, being betrothed to Civilia, was racked to death for his constancy. Lamia, a concubine, by no torments could be haled from the love of Aristogicon. What perils suffered Theagines to keep his credit with Caricha [sic for Cariclia?]. Pharicles, let these examples move thee to be loyal to Mamillia. Be thou steadfast, and no doubt thou shalt not find her staggering, but if thou waver, ware thou dost not as the dog, lose both bones, for deceit deserves deceit, and the end of treachery is to have small trust.

Sudafus, a Parian born, when he came into the court to swear that he never loved Castana, became dumb, and so was condemned. Iovinianus Otto, nephew to Alexandrus Farnesius, after that he had renounced his vow made to his lover, ran mad. Beware, Pharicles, of the like reward if thou commit the like offence.

Tush, he that would refrain from drink because he hath heard that Anacreon died with the pot at his head, or that hateth an egg because Appeius Sauleius died in eating of one, would be noted for an ass. So if I should stand to my pennyworth, having made my market like a fool and may change for the better, because other in the like case have had evil hap, I may either be counted for a coward or a calf.

Do not the gods, say the poets, laugh at the perjury of lovers, and that Jupiter smiles at the craft of Cupid? Paris, when he stole away Helena and forsook his Oenone, did not both sea and wind favour his enterprises with a speedy gale? Theseus had never better luck than after he had forsaken Ariadne, and I perchance may have as good hap in leaving Mamillia. He that having tasted of water, & after will not drink of wine, is of a gross nature. The dog that winding ye hedgehog will not forsake the scent to hunt at the hare is but a cur, and he that will not change in love if beauty make the choice shall not come in my creed. Mamillia is fair, but not second to Publia; she is witty, but ye other more wise. Where the sauce sharpenest with prunes, tasteth of sugar, it is folly to infer comparison.

Yea, but what complaints will Mamillia make when she perceiveth thy dissembling? Her hot love will turn to deadly hate, she will procure thy discredit even with Publia, she will blaze thy forged flattery, not only here in Padua but throughout all Italy. I shall have Gonzaga mine enemy, yea, and mine own friends to be my foes, yea and perhaps by that means both lose her friendship and the other's favour.

Tush, Pharicles, he that is afraid to venture on the buck because he is wrapped in the briars shall never have hunter's hap, and he that puts a doubt in love at every chance shall never have lover's luck. Cannot the cat catch mice without she have a bell hanged at her ear? Cannot ye hobby seize on his prey but he must check? Cannot the spaniel return the partridge but he must quest, and cannot I deal so warily but all the world must ring of it? Yes, it is a subtle bird that breeds among the aerie of hawks, and a shifty sheep that lambs in the fox's den, and he shall be crafty shall spy me halting. I can like Mamillia for

a need, and love Publia of necessity. It is good to keep a stale for fear I catch no fowl, and needful to hold Mamillia on the fist lest Publia prove so haggard she will not come to the lure. He that hath two fishes at the bait, it is hard if he miss both. Therefore I will be of the surer side, always provided. Publia shall have my heart, and I hers, or else I will sit beside the saddle.

And with that he fell in a study with himself of sundry matters pertaining to his amorous devises, and at last determined with himself, if he could find a trusty messenger, to send her a letter, fearing if he should make his repair so suddenly it would breed some suspicion in Gostino's head, for he that loves casts beyond the moon, and especially he that dissembles, and craft had need of cloaking, where truth [+is] ever naked.

Where by the way, gentlemen, we see Pharicles a perfect pattern of lovers in these our days, that bear two faces under one hood, and have as many ladies as they have wits, and that is not a few, for every new face must have a new fancy, and if he see a thousand, they must all be viewed with a sigh, as though he were enamoured. If she be younger, her tender age pleaseth him. If she be of middle age, the ripeness of her years contenteth him. Another enchanteth him with her voice, and one with her gestures, so that his courteous desire would have all, and yet amidst store he is pined, and dissembling doubt maketh a restraint of his choice, yet he must needs be a carpet-knight, for they think it is as hard to live without love as without meat. But when they begin to like, it is a world to see how they learn to lie. Fancy they cannot without flattery, nor talk without tales. They be dead at the first dash & plunged in Pluto's pit when they have a merrier heart than the poor maid. They say a woman is the weaker vessel, but sure in my judgment it is in the strength of her body and not in the force of her mind, for the ripest wit, the readiest heat [sic?]. The most subtle sconce is fain to set his brains on the last and his wit on the tenters to deceive a simple maid. First he assays with flattery, then with sophistry, inferring his comparisons: he is caught in the beams of her beauty as the bee in the cobweb, he is parched with the hue of her face as the fly in the candle, he is drawn by the qualities of her mind and the sweetness of her voice as with a siren's tongue, and when perhaps she hath nothing to be praised nor to be liked in her, yet the comeliness of her body and the rareness of her conditions hath so enchanted as if she heal not his wound, he shall, as it were, with Circe's cup be turned to a hog or a horse.

And this they use not to one, but to many, counting him a fool that cannot flatter, and a dolt that dare not dissemble, as Pharicles, an arch-captain of their crew, presently will prove, who knew the best and followed the worst, and could speak hotly but follow it as coldly. For after that he had given the reins of liberty to his frantic affections, and had fostered the spark to grow to a great flame, the medicine then came too late when the disease was incurable. The more he did strive, the worse he was, even as the hart, which feeling the arrow in his side, the more he forceth himself, the farther in entereth, or the bird, being taken in the net, by struggling becomes faster. So he, seeking to eschew his first malady, fell into a deeper sickness, perceiving as the wound by time is more grievous than when the blow was fresh, so love increaseth by delay, and delays breed dangers, fearing again his hasty venturing might procure a slack speeding, determined to take

counsel at his pillow, and as his mind should give him, to prosecute his purpose. And in this doubt he remained the space of a week.

In which time Publia, seeing Pharicles made no great haste in his return, thought her new lover would prove an old scoffer, condemning herself of folly that she should be so soon enticed by flattery, seeking to root out that by reason which was inserted by sensuality, knowing no fitter remedy for love than to resist betimes, in which determination, as she should have proceeded, she had the retrait blown by a letter which Pharicles had sent her by his page, likewise offering in his master's behalf a present unto Gostino in recompense of his good cheer, which he receiving gratefully, wished the page to give it to his daughter, who taking the present and receiving the letter could scarcely stay to unrip the seal while she came in her closet, where between hope and dread she read these lines following:

Pharicles to Publia.

If the gods, Publia, having made man, had likewise given him free will to be master of himself in subduing his rebellious affections, or had appointed medicine for the mind as physic for the soul, I needed not at this time have sought for help to resist the assaults of contrary passions, as he that after long combat for the defence of his liberty is forced to yield by the strength of the victor, hoping by submission to obtain the more favour.

But nature and fortune hath in no creature framed such a perfect uniformity but there is as great a contrariety, and as many salves as art hath taught, so many sores nature hath given, never suffering bliss to come without bale, nor good luck without ill hap, finding always a cooling card of misfortune to pluck down ye puffing peat [sic?] of prosperity. The bee, as she hath the fragrant flower whereon to take delight, so she hath the spider's web wherein to be tangled. The fly, as she is revived by the heat of the sun, so is she consumed by the flame of the fire. As the lion cooleth his stomach with eating the sea-mouse, so it is inflamed with eating the little ermin. But although in this respect I cannot greatly either accuse nature or fortune, yet the destinies I think have framed your beauty such a furious enemy to my careful mind as it hath made such a breach in my heart that the strongest rampire and surest defence I could make is not possible to resist the continual alarms wherewith the remembrance of your rare virtues night and day do assail me, in such wise that since my departure I have felt in my heart, as in a little world, all the passions and contrarieties of the elements. For in [sic?] my eyes, Publia, I call the gods to witnesses I speak without feigning, almost turn unto water through the continual streams of tears, and my sighs fly as wind in the air proceeding from ye flaming fire which is kindled in my heart, as that without the drops of your pity it will turn my body into dry earth and cinders.

Then, Publia, sith your beauty is my bale, let it be my bliss. Covet not to vanquish him which is already captive, strive not for my life sith you have my liberty, but let the waves of mercy quench the fire of fancy, and do but render love for love. Yea, Publia, such love as eternity shall never blot out with oblivion, neither any sinister fortune in any wise do diminish, so that if the world wondered at the loyalty of Petrarch to his Laura, or Amadis to Oriane, they shall have more cause to marvel at the love of Pharicles to Publia, whose

life and death standeth in your answer, which I hope shall be such as belongeth to the desert of my love and the show of your beauty.

Yours if he be Pharicles.

Publia, having read over this letter, viewing and reviewing every line in particular, changed colours at every syllable, fearing to be foiled by flattery or to be brought into a fool's paradise by promises, knowing that the nightingale hath a sweet voice and yet but a rank flesh, that the storks in India have a pleasant cry but a bloody bill, that the fairest nut without may have the foulest worm within, that the most dainty delicacies may be sauced with deadly poison, that smooth talk and fair promises may have but small performance, that words were but wind, that ink and paper were not sufficient pledges for such an inseparable knot. Yet hope haled her on to think well of his offer, and that she which would not trust ere she tried should not prove without peril, saying that experience is the mistress of fools, and that they which were incredulous incurred the greatest suspicion of flattery. So amidst these sundry dumps she took her pen and sent Pharicles this dump [sic?]:

Publia to Pharicles.

Master Pharicles, your letters being more hastily received than heartily read, I stood in a doubt whether I should answer with silence or sophistry, for because where the question is extreme, there the answer must needs want a mean, and where the demand is but a jest, it is best to make a reply with a scoff. But at length I was resolved to write more largely than I would, hoping both to profit and persuade you. Profit, I mean, in that I, spying so soon your feigning, I may dehort you from flattery, and be the means that you leave this folly to be passionate only in your pen, a lover but in your lips, for although you think my simple wit hath no such capacity to conceive your vain jesting, yet all women are not of one metal, but as I know it and bear with it, so they will spy it and both blab it and blame it, yea, perhaps cross you out of their creed, for he that hath been scratched with the briars will take heed of a thorn, and he that sees his fellow hurt will beware of the like harm. He that hath been deceived with a lie will scarcely credit a true tale. Women are wily, and will take example one by another, so that it shall be hard for one to halt before a cripple. They think everyone that writes an amorous style doth not love faithfully, but most of them lie falsely. A prick with a pen proved not Clanuel a true lover but a trothless lecher. Yea, many write before they know the party, and get by it they know not what, so that, Pharicles, if women would credit every line they would buy repentance too dear. But if Phyllis were alive in these our days she would never hang herself, and if Dido had been incredulous she had not died so desperately. Therefore, Pharicles, if I doubt without cause, or fear before I have occasion, blame me not sith others have suffered such evil hap by venturing too far in an unknown vessel.

Well, put case your flattery be faith, and that all that you have written is gospel, yet you claim kindness where none was offered, or else you think because I said farewell friendly, I did fancy firmly. Surely either you are deceived, or else I was in a dream at the departure, for I do not know in what respect either my words or deeds should be a spur to

prick you forward in this rash enterprise, but assure yourself, if there were any, I repent me of them, not that I am so foolish to repay hatred for love, but that I have vowed perpetual virginity, and mean to remain chaste forever. Therefore, Pharicles, cease to crave that cannot be gotten; seek not for impossibilities. Quench the fire yourself when another cannot put out the flame; abate the force of love where you cannot have your longing. I give you perhaps a sour sauce to your sweet meat because I will not feed you with delays nor fob you with fair words and foul deeds, but I speak as I think, & so you shall find it.

Yet in fine, lest you should judge me altogether ungrateful, I thank you for your goodwill, and I think well of it, and if ever I chance to love, you have as much to like as any. Therefore if your fancy be so fixed as you make fair on, pray that both my heart m[a]y turn and my vow may be broken, and then hope well. But in the meantime, if you come you shall be welcome as a friend, but no farther.

Yours if she could, Publia.

After Pharicles, gentlemen, had received and read this letter, seeing the beginning was hard, thought the ending as ill, so that being somewhat choleric he threw it away in a rage, not half read, rebuking his folly in so soon yielding unto fancy, turning his great love to a grievous hate, as one somewhat tickled with self-love, thinking ye hawk too haggard that should not come at the first call, now again praising his Mamillia, vowing wholly his heart unto her and promising in recompense of his disloyalty never to lend Publia a good look, and in this determination flung out of his study and went to the house of Gonzaga.

Here, gentlemen, we may see the flitting of men's fancy and the fickleness of their faith, that they may well be compared to a black wall that receiveth every impression, which notwithstanding with the wipe of one's hand is easily defaced. So men love all, and now none, verifying the saying of Callimachus, that as flowers fade and flourish every year, so their love is hot and cold every hour, having nothing certain but only this, that the last driveth out the first, as one nail forceth out another, the nature of men is so desirous of novelty.

But because it is an evil dog barks at his fellow, again to Pharicles, who being come into the house of Gonzaga found not all things according to his desire, for Mamillia was half sick in her bed, yet she herself knew scarcely the disease, but Pharicles, missing her, went farther, and found Madam Castilla sitting solitary in her musing, whom after he had saluted and demanded how Mistress Mamillia did, *Marry, quoth Madam Castilla, your often repair unto her, as far as we can conjecture, hath driven her into a pleurisy, or us into some jealousy, but whether it did, she is sick.*

Pharicles, feeling his galled conscience pricked, said that although it pleased her to jest by contraries, yet his return was as speedy as might be, for his business was so necessary that the loss of his lands hanged thereon, but if he had known Mamillia would have conceived any displeasure at his absence, he would not only have hazarded his lands but have ventured his life to have made his repair more speedy. If, then, her sickness

proceeds of my negligence, I hope my sufficient excuse will be a remedy to cure the disease.

You speak well, quoth Madam Castilla, therefore follow me that you may plead your own cause, for I will be no advocate. And with that she carried him into Mamillia's chamber where she lay, half sleeping, half waking, whom Madam Castilla called out of her trance with this parole:

Mistress Mamillia, quoth she, you know when time was we termed this gentleman a ghostly father. Therefore I thought good in this your sickness that he should receive your confession, as one most meet for the purpose.

I thank you for your pains, quoth Mamillia, for indeed I have a great block in my conscience which I mean to reveal unto him, & that is of my folly in loving so lightly, and fixing my fancy where I doubt is no faith, whereof, if he can give me absolution, I shall surely be bound unto him.

Gentlewoman, quoth Pharicles, the block of your conscience, as I judge, is not so great an offence as to accuse without cause, for I dare venture my credit you never loved lightly nor fancied where faith shall fail unless you count absence by necessity a breach of loyalty, but sith perhaps it is the force of sickness that procureth this talk, I care the less, and if there be no worse offence behind, my soul shall bear the charge of this sin.

Pharicles, quoth Mamillia, your answer hath greatly eased my mind, and if time shall try all things true, it shall both race out mistrust and breed greater credit, for surely your absence made me think that either you misliked your choice or else repented your chance, but now I am otherwise persuaded, hoping to find you as firm in your works as fine in your words, and that proving true, I am sure my father will be willing to knit up the match as we desirous of his consent. The match, I say, for I hope your suit tends to no other end but that linking ourselves together in the lasting knot of marriage, we may live and die in perfect amity.

Ah, Mamillia, quoth Pharicles, do you think that I have such a traitorous heart or such an impudent face to imagine such treachery against your divine beauty? No, no, Mamillia, I call the gods to witnesses and the heavens to hear my protestations, and if my words be not conformable to my thoughts, the infernal furies conspire my utter destruction, and if my mind remain not constant and my fancy firm, the gods themselves be revengers of such disloyalty.

Well, said Mamillia, Jason promised as much to Medea, and yet she found him a liar, but I fear no such matter.

No, methink, quoth Madam Castilla, I dare promise for the gentleman. But now let us see how we can find our teeth occupied as we have done our tongues, and then I will say none of us are fallen into a consumption through weakness of stomach. So they all went to dinner.

Where I leave you to consider, gentlemen, how far unmeet women are to have such reproaches laid upon them as sundry large-lipped fellows have done, who when they take a piece of work in hand, and either for want of matter or lack of wit are half gravelled, then they must fill up the page with slandering of women who scarcely know what a woman is. But if I were able either by wit or art to be their defender, or had the law in my hand to dispose as I list, which would be as unseemly as an ass to tread the measures, yet if it were so, I would correct Mantuan's eglogue intituled *Alphus*, or else if the author were alive, I would not doubt to persuade him in recompense of his error to frame a new one, for surely though Euripides in his tragedies doth greatly exclaim against that sex, yet it was in his choler, and he inferred a general by a particular, which is absurd. He had an evil wife, what then? Because the hill Canaros hath a fountain runs deadly poison, is all water naught? Shall the fire be rejected because some one spark fireth a whole house? Are the bodies of the flies cantharides to be cast away because their legs are poison? Shall we condemn all women of inconstancy because Helena was fickle, or all to be naught because some one is a shrew? If the premises will infer such a conclusion, I refer me to their greatest enemy.

But for fear of a farther digression, again to them we left at dinner, who after they had taken a sufficient repast, fell again to their former discourse, till Gonzaga, returning home, broke off their talk with his presence, entertaining Pharicles very friendly, assuring him he was as welcome as he could wish himself to be, which courtesy was not so heartily offered as willingly received, so that it seemed if the one were content, the other was as well pleased. Yet Gonzaga, being as wily as Pharicles was witty, desirous to smell the vein of young gentlemen, trained his hook with this bait:

Pharicles, quoth he, the old fox that cannot spy the fetch of the young one was never crafty himself; the goose that cannot see the gosling wink may seem to have a defect of nature. He that cannot see fire in the straw is surely stone blind, and he that cannot spy the flame of fancy is but a fool. There is none will so soon spy one halting as a cripple. It is hard to cover smoke, but more hard to conceal love. I myself both have tried it, and now I likewise find the proof of it in you, who as closely as you keep your cloak, yet I spy the lining, for love kept in secret is like the spark covered with ashes, which at length bursteth into a great flame. But if it be as I think, I am glad of it.

As I have taken care, Pharicles, to have my daughter keep her virginity inviolate without spot of suspiciousness, so would I be as willing to yield the fruits of her chastity into the hands of some gentleman whom she might both like for love & think well of for his birth & honesty, rather wishing with Themistocles to marry my daughter to a man than to money, desiring likewise his choice to be for her goodness and not for her goods, lest if the knot should be knit for wealth it might be dissevered for poverty. Lycurgus would have no dowries given with maids, lest some should be liked for riches and others loathed for want. The maids of Esseneia went never barefaced until they were married, lest beauty should be of more force than honesty, esteeming her which was honest neither to have want of nature nor lack of nurture. So that, Pharicles, I hope if you choose it shall not be for wealth, which is vanity, nor for beauty, which is momentary (although I thank God she

can neither blame nature nor fortune), but only for virtue, which is permanent, for where the cause is durable, there the effect must needs be lasting. Love ought to be like the stone armenic, which is hardly inflamed, but once set on fire is never quenched, like the emerald, which being imprinted, never changeth form without breaking. Surely, Pharicles, I speak these words to you as a friend, and to Mamillia as a father, wishing well to you for good-liking, and to her by course of kind, being willing to marry my daughter, but neither to buy her an husband nor to set her to sale unless the price be love. I mean that I would not make the match by entreaty, nor seem to consent lightly, lest haste should make waste.

Therefore, Pharicles, although I speak largely, think not my consent is any proffer. For others of great birth and no small wealth (I will make no comparisons) have both made great suit and offered large feoffments to have my goodwill, yet sith Mamillia did not love I did not like, and what she doth now, I am not privy to it, but if she do, my mind perhaps may be changed, for you know old men are very suspicious, and I myself doubt by the dread of others. We are cold of complexion, and therefore fearful by nature, and will quickly spy a pad in the straw and a snake in the grass. I perhaps think the moon is eclipsed when she is but changing, & guess love is lust when it is loyalty, falsehood to be faith and truth to be treason, judging upon meat with a sick stomach and tasting wine with a furred tongue, construing all things by contraries through the imbecility of our wit, sith everything is the worse for wearing, so that he which will court an old man's daughter may be courteous & yet thought curious, his liberality may be thought prodigality, his cleanliness, pride and unthriftiness, that, walk as warily as you can, the old doter will suspect you.

Pharicles, I speak against mine own age, and confess the frailty of my nature, that if you chance to find the like fault in me, that you impute it not to peevishness, but to course of kind, for you, Pharicles, profess love to my daughter, and I think it is but dissimulation. You feign faith, and I doubt of flattery. You seem to offend in excess, and I fear you faint in defect. I fear more than you can forge, and all little enough in my judgment. For you young gentlemen nowadays like without love, and lust without liking. You fancy every face and each sundry month you must have a new mistress, vowing as you think with great wit, and at length proves without wisdom, so that as the seed is subilty and the fruit folly, the harvest can reap but little honesty. Pharicles, I infer no particulars. I told you my fault, and therefore blame me not if I cannot digress from nature but speak what I think, for if your conscience be clear it doth not touch you; if it be not, I am glad I have spoken so much, that either you may amend or else make an end, for if my sight fail me not, one you must do.

Pharicles, being rubbed on his galled back, thought Gonzaga was a subtile fox, and needed not to learn his occupation, and that he could see the gosling wink, being broad waking. But as young wits are rash, so they are ready, and can smell a tale before it be half told. For Pharicles found his fetch at the first word, & therefore intending to be as wily as he was wise, gave false fire to his piece, thereby to blind Gonzaga's eyes, as warily as he could look, and to wink and yet not be spied, on this manner:

Sir, quoth he, as it is hard to hide the smoke, so were he a fool that would go about to cover it, and if fancy must needs be spied, who would seek to cloak it? Nature cannot be restrained, nor love kept in secret, for the one will come to his course and the other seem light amidst the darkness. I, knowing this (although you mistake me), never thought to love where I might not come lawfully, nor to like where either the person or place should have need of a veil for sunburning. As for myself, I need none. Therefore, sir, if I halt, it is outright, that more may perceive it than a cripple. But I hope, judge what you will, you shall find me stand to my tackling, and to take my course so well by my compass that I shall prove a cunning pilot, and to show myself so chary in my choice, what wares I choose, that I shall be a good chapman, and the better, I trust, in that I have your counsel. The lion's whelp taketh ever the fattest sheep when the old sire is by; the fawn never makes so good choice of his feed as the old buck. Age speaketh by experience and liketh by trial; youth leaneth upon wit, which is void of wisdom. Where the old falcon seizeth, there is ever the best prey. Therefore he that will not be ruled by age shall be deceived by youth, and he that will not hear the admonition of a friend shall perhaps feel the correction of a foe.

This causeth me to thank [sic?] your counsel, although I was determined before, for I never meant to love without lasting, nor fancy for a time, lest I myself might be the first should repent it, but was fully resolved to lay my foundation upon such a rock as neither the earthquakes of dissension nor the tempests of trouble may once be able to move. Now I know well enough that he that chooseth the carnation for colour should find it to have less virtue than the black violet, that the fading blossoms are more delectable to the sight than the lasting fruit, that the painter's colours which are most bright will soonest lose their glose, that nothing so soon staineth as cloth of light colour, and nothing to be less permanent than the gloss of beauty, which beginneth to decay in the bud, to wither in the blossom, and if it cometh to be fruit, is rotten before it be half ripe. The love of beauty, saith Anacreon, is the forgetting of reason, the enemy to wit, and to be counted indeed a short frenzy, for he that loveth only for beauty will either loathe when age approacheth, or else soon be glutted with plenty, whereas fancy fired upon virtue increaseth ever by continuance. He that putteth the adder in his bosom, delighted with her golden skin, is worthy to be envenomed; the mouse, if she feed upon rosalger for the glistening hue, deserveth to be poisoned. If the fish will needs to the bait because it is of flies in Cantabria, it is her own folly if she be taken; the bird that cometh to the glass, enticed by the brightness, deserveth the net. He that will choose a fair face with evil conditions claimeth by right to be counted a fool. Catiline had not so much pleasure in the beauty of Oristilla as he reaped sorrow by her outrageous cruelty, or won so much credit by her comeliness as Brutus did of his wife Portia for her courtesy. The husband of Sempronia, for all her fair face, had a wife of whom it was in question whether she were more prodigal of her purse or liberal of her honesty, that I am sure he would have made a change with Gracchus for his black wife, Cornelia. Menelaus, who had that earthly goddess, Helena, reaped for every seed of pleasure a whole harvest of sorrow, contented to become Captain of Cornetto, & for her comeliness to have her almost common, being as infortunate in his choice as Glitio Gallus was happy in his chance by wedding Egnatia Maximilia, so that he which maketh choice of beauty without virtue commits as much folly as Critius did in choosing a golden box filled with rotten bones.

I, therefore, fearing the fetters by the captivity of the bondman, was ever careful to like for the proportion of the body, and love for the qualities of the mind, never meaning to make a rusty rapier my rampire of defence, though it have a velvet scabbard, nor my choice of any evil woman, be she never so proper of person, having peevish conditions, lest for every inch of joy I catch an ell of annoy, and for every drop of delight a whole draught of spite. This, I say, was the cause, Gonzaga, that forced me to repair unto your daughter, because the fame of her exquisite perfection, by nature plentifully placed in her, hath ravished even her enemies' hearts to love & like her. Her gravity in gestures, her modesty in manners, her courtesy in conversation challengeth my liberty and won my heart her own forever. It was not the colour of her cheeks, but the conditions of her mind; not her comeliness, but her courtesy; not her person, but her perfection that enchanted me.

But why do I seek to try myself loyal when the hearers do deem me a liar? Why do I bring in reasons to prove my troth when my words can have no trust, or to debate the matter when they think it dalliance? Well, sir, I cannot let you to think, but if I dally, it is in dolour; if I sport, it is in spite; if I jest, it is without joy, and so tract of time shall try it. You apply this mistrust to your age, and suspicion to your old brain. Sure you may do so, for I call the gods to witness that the words which I speak and the love I protest to Mamillia is verity without vanity, truth without trifling, faith without flattery, as fine within as fair without, a silver sheath with a golden dagger, and in token she shall have both lands and life, hand and heart as her own forever.

Gonzaga, hearing the solemn protestation of the gentleman, being as credulous as suspicious, thought what the heart did think the tongue would clink, and that his filed speech was without feigning, and his sweet talk without sour tales, gave him his hand that he was as glad to have him to his son as he desirous of such a father, and that he conceived a great contentation of mind that he found so fit a match for his daughter. So that after many pleasant parleys on both sides, they were fully betrothed together, Pharicles promising the next spring to consummate the marriage, and Gonzaga providing a courtly banquet to seal up the matter, which being ended, Pharicles, after many amiable looks and sweet kisses, gave her the courteous conge and departed to his lodging, no less contented than if he had obtained Croesus' wealth, Alexander's empire, or any treasure that fortune could assign unto him.

But the sun being at the highest, declineth; the sea, being at full tide, ebbeth. Calm continueth not long without a storm, neither is happiness had long without heaviness, bliss without bale, weal without woe, as by this new betrothed couple may be seen, who now flowing in floods of felicity are by the falsehood of Pharicles soused in the seas of sorrow, exalted to highest degree of happiness are driven to the greatest extremity of evil, alate placed in paradise, and now plunged in perplexity. For he no sooner entered his study, but espying the cruel letter of his merciless mistress, Publia, frying in fury, burning in rage and turning his wonted love to a present hate, even as the dog which biteth the stone or the boar that in chase teareth the trees, so he in revenge of his choler thought to read over this letter more for spite than for pleasure, more for loathing than for love. But as the bird, when she is most careless, is caught of the fowler, so Pharicles, reading in jest,

found good earnest, and was so caught in the hay and taken with the toils that his fancy was fettered with a new charm, and his mind so amazed with this new musing that he bestowed all the night in examining particularly every line of her letter, and though the first part was sharp and rigorous, yet he found the last to be mixed with metal of more mild matter, reading it over a thousand times, blaming his nature and condemning his choler in being so rash to refuse meat at the first taste, to reject the orange because the pill was sour, to disallow the love of Publia because she made chary of her chastity. His new plighted troth was almost wavering, and weighing at the first assault his feigned fancy, almost eclipsed through fading folly, insomuch that the hope of his new lust had almost quenched the show of his new love. The friendly conclusion of Publia had well-nigh raced out his faith to Mamillia. The desire of his fond affection so blinded his understanding that he passed not to pervert both human & divine laws for the accomplishment thereof. No rules of reason, no fear of laws, no pricks of conscience, no respect of honesty, no regard of God or man could prohibit him from his pestiferous purpose. For if laws had been of force, he knew his deed was contrary to all laws in violating his sacred oath; if conscience, he knew it was terrible; if honesty, he knew it most wicked; if God or man, he knew it abominable in the sight of both.

But too true it is that the force of love, nay rather ye fury of lust, doth neither care for kith nor kin, friend nor foe, God nor the devil, as the faithless Pharicles will prove, who having shrined his heart by solemn promises in the bulwark of Mamillia's bounty, yielded with a fresh alarm given by the remembrance of Publia's beauty, showing that the cat will to kind, that the wolf will be a devourer, the fox wily, & men deceitful, for nature must have his course. Their love is never guided by reason, but by rage, nor their fancy by faith, but by fury. They burn in outward shape as hot as Aetna where their mere substance is as cold as Caucasus. Their promises are loyal, but the performance lascivious. They import fervent affection, but it proveth fleshly fancy. They are so given unto guiles, framed to forswearing, prone unto perjury, wedded unto wickedness, & vowed unto vanity, that to say what I think, the most trusty lover that they make most account of, if he were thoroughly sifted, would shrink in the wetting, & prove a lewd lecher, so that she which yieldeth herself under ye courteous countenance of an injurious man is commonly so wrapped in the waves of wiles that she is drowned at ye length in the depth of deceit, & hardly escaped with the loss of his [sic] liberty unless they smell them betimes, which is hard to do, for in their wooing they counterfeit simplicity, and in their wedding they show their subtilty. While they are suitors, they are saints, but being sold, they are serpents. They will bear a painted sheath with a rusty blade, a fair blossom, but rotten fruit, & doves they will needs be when indeed they are devils.

But again to our gentleman, whose careful mind was so tossed with the tempests of contrary cogitations, that as the vessel borne with the tide against the wind feeleth double force, and is compelled to yield to wind and wave, so Pharicles, driven by the force of lust against the laws of love, felt double dolour, and was so diversly tormented that he fell into these terms:

Of all evil which either God or nature hath laid upon man, there is none so great but either reason may redress, pleasure assuage, or mirth mitigate, herbs heal, or by some

means or other be cured, love only excepted, whose furious force is so full of rancour that physic can in no respect prevail to help the patient, deserving not ye name of a disease, but of an incurable mischief, yet importing such a show of goodness that it so inflameth our desire to purchase it that we will not care to buy it at an unreasonable rate, which love hath taken such deep root in me as neither reason can rule nor wisdom wield, it is so rankled with rage & infected with frantic folly. Frantic I may well term it, sith it is so light as it seemeth to come without liking, so momentary as it showeth no modesty, so unconstant that it hath no one jot of continuance, so divers as it may well be called devilish, more brittle than a broken glass, more wavering than ye weathercock, more variable in thought than ye chameleon in hue, more changeable indeed than the nightingale in voice, now liking, now loathing; now fire, now frost; cold before I am hot, & hot at the first dash.

O fickle love, fraught with frailty! O traitorous heart full of treachery! O cursed conscience, altogether careless! O miserable wretch wrapped in wickedness! Shall I requite ye liberal love of Mamillia with such disloyalty, returning as ye dog to my vomit in liking Publia? Shall I deceive ye opinion that both she & her father conceived in me with such detestable villainy? Shall I return ye trust they put in me with such treason? Shall I defile my faith towards her with such forged falsehood? Shall I be so newfangle to leave ye one so lewdly, & love the other so lightly? It is a common saying that change is seldom made for the better, & he is a fool, they say, that will buy ye pig in the poke, or wed a wife without trial, or settle love without time. What a madness were it, then, to make such an ill market, to chop & change, and live by ye loss, to refuse Mamillia without reason & choose Publia without trial, to reject assurance for uncertainty, to fish for hope where I may satisfy myself with trust, to venture upon one of whom I have had no proof but (if there be so much) a little trifling love. Well, those whelps are ever blind that dogs beget in haste; ye seed too timely sown hath ever small increase. He that leaps before he look may hap to light in ye ditch. He that settles his affection in such speed as he makes his choice without discretion, so his hasty choosing may perchance get a heavy bargain.

Tush, he that seeks to restrain love kicks again [sic?] the prick; he steps [sic?] ye stream, & beats the fire downward. He will make necessity to have a law, & cause Balaam's ass to speak, for love is above king or kaiser, lord or laws, yea, even above ye gods themselves. If it be then so strong, why is it not then more steadfast? If it be so forcible, why is it not fixed? Perhaps so it is in all, saving me. I am ye odd person, I am that one particular on whom Cupid will show his craft & decipher his nature, in whom all the contrarities of love will work their contrary passions, on whom Venus will vaunt for her vain vassal as one ready to strike at every stale, to come at every call, to light on every lure, yea, and almost seize on the empty fist, neither regarding the ware nor the price, but leaving the fort for the first assault of fancy.

Oh gods, how foolishly do I fable! How my talk, enforced by rage, is altogether without reason! Can I strive against that which is stirred by the stars? Can I pervert that which is placed by the planets? Can I drive out that which is decreed by the destinies, or show force in that which is fixed by the fates? No, no, Pharicles, assure thyself, this thy change is by the charge of the gods, and thy new liking to some greater end. Perhaps they will

prevent by the means of Publia some great inconvenience which should light upon thee in matching with Mamillia. Aeneas, had he not settled his mind upon Dido, yea, and celebrated the rites of matrimony? Was he not warned by the gods in a dream to falsify his faith, & lay his love upon Lavinia? Who did more for Jason than Medea, yet he was driven by the destinies to forsake her, and fix his fancy upon Creusa, to whom he was constant to the end.

Theseus, by the admonition of Bacchus, left Ariadne, and was forced by the fates to fancy Phecia, with whom he remained as loyal as light unto the other. So perhaps I am forced by nature and destiny to loathe Mamillia and like Publia, and if it be so, all is well, for Aristotle saith that nature nor fate never framed anything amiss, and though I offend in liking the one lightly, yet I will make amends in loving the other more firmly. If the world shall wonder at my feigning to the one, they shall marvel as much at my faith to the other. If all men talk of my treachery to Mamillia, they shall speak as much of my troth to Publia. Now have I surely settled myself never from henceforth to lend a loving look to Mamillia. Publia shall be the planet whereby to direct my doings. She shall be the star shall guide my compass. She shall be the haven to harbour in, the saint at whose shrine I mean to offer my devotion.

I will now put all fear aside, for a faint heart was never favoured of fortune. The coward that feareth ye crack of the cannon will never prove a courageous captain, nor vaunt himself of victory. The dastard that dreadeth the noise of the drum will never come in the skirmish, nor wear ye flag of triumph. The lover that beareth such a calm conscience as for fear of his credit dare not match [sic] under the dissembling standard of Cupid's camp shall never be proclaimed heir apparent to Venus' kingdom. Therefore sith I have settled & decreed, I will make no delay for fear the grass be cut from under my feet, but either by words or writing send an answer to my new mistress.

And with that he took his pen, and sent her this letter:

Pharicles to Publia.

The physician, mistress Publia, that letteth the sick patient bleed for the pleurisy when tract of time hath made the disease incurable defendeth the walls when the city is overrun. Salves seldom help an over-long suffered sore. It is too late to bring the ruin of battery when the walls are already broken. That shower cometh out of time when the corn is ripe, & too late it is to dislodge love out of one's breast when it hath before infected every part of the body. The surgeon, when the festering fistula hath by long continuance made the sound flesh rotten, can neither with lenitive plasters nor cutting corrosives be cured. So love craveth but only time to bring the body & mind to bondage. So your seemly self, seeing me fettered in ye chain of fancy, & fast bound in the bands of your beauty, have sent me pills of hard digestion to assuage ye force of my love, & mitigate the firmness of my fancy, but as the biting of a viper rankleth & rageth till he hath brought the body bitten to bane, so the sight of your comely person hath so pierced every vein with the sting of love that neither the sourness of the sauce nor sharpness of the salve can in any wise prevail.

Only the mild medicine of your mercy may salve the sore, & cut away the cause of my careful disease.

Sith therefore, mistress Publia, it is in your power either to exalt me to ye highest degree of happiness or drive me down to the deepest bottom of bitter bale, to place me in the princely palace of earthly paradise or plunge me in the pit of perplexity, weigh my cause equally in the scales of honesty & equity, and yield me but according unto justice, which am a careful client at beauty's bar, that is, to give according to my desert, and the desert of love is love again. And although the shortness of time hath made no trial to procure any great trust, yet I hope the clearness of my conscience in that case & the firmness of my faith will in time force the truth to flame bright amidst the darkest mists of distrust, & again [sic?] the scalding sighs & piteous complaints & prayers that I have poured out to the gods that they might change your heart & settled vow of chastity, I hope when they shall take effect, that they will be witnesses of my goodwill. For since the receipt of your letters, if my words cannot be taken for witnesses, yet the prayers, processions, pilgrimages, offers & vows that I have made unto the gods if they grant my petition will testify the joy I conceived in the courteous clause [sic for close?] of your letters, although I was almost foundered for fear, covered with care, & daunted with dread at the rigorous sight of your first lines.

But as I was never of that mind to count him a courageous captain that at the first shot of the cannon would yield the keys of the city, so was I ever in that opinion that the more hard the combat were, the more haughty were the conquest; the more doubtful the fight, the more worthy the victory; ye more pain I should take about the battery, the more pleasure to win the bulwark of your breast, which if I should obtain, I would count it a more rich price than ever Scipio or any of the nine worthy won by conquest.

And that these words be verity & not vanity, truth & not trifling, I appeal to your good grace and favour, minding to be tried by your courtesy, abiding either the sentence of consent unto life, or denial unto death.

Yours even after death, Pharicles.

Publia, having received this letter, perceiving the constant mind of ye young gentleman, by rubbing afresh her half-headed sore with the remembrance of his person & image of his perfectness, framing in her mind a mirror of his modesty, & as it were viewing in a glass the feature of his face, the comeliness of his corps, the beauty of his body, & all the virtues so abundantly bestowed upon him by nature, had such a new alarm given her by love that the glowing coals turned to flashing flames, her fleeting fancy to firm affection, her lingering liking to loyal love, as now she felt the furious fight of contrary passions in her tender heart, expressing the heat which was kindled within her in these scalding terms:

Alas, quoth she, how hath nature ordained by her prudent policy that no creature under heaven but if he hath one commodity imparted unto him, he hath another inconvenience as well incident unto him, & especially mainkind [sic], who for every moment of mirth hath annexed a month of misery, for every proud puff of prosperity some sour sops of adversity, for every mite of happiness a thousand chips of ill chance, for every dram of

felicity a whole shower of shrewd fortune, & when the sun of good success shineth most clearly, then comes the clouds of care & mists of mischief when they are most unlooked for, for that I perceive it is so common as true how amongst human things nothing is stable in one state. The lark, when she is most careless, & mounteth most highest unto the sky with cheerful notes, is then seized on by the hawk, & a woman walking in the wide field of freedom & large leaze of liberty, secure from care, is then soonest caught in ye links of love & fetters of fancy, restrained with a strait band of bondage wherein nature & fortune hath also most unequally provided, for ye most tender tree is ever laden with the most fruit, & the smallest stalk hath ever ye greatest corn, the weakest wit & youngest years, whom neither experience nor age hath taught any skill, is ever forced to bear the loadsome burden of love, whereas riper years are seldom or never troubled, so that the weakest is ever driven to the wall, & they that worst may hold the candle, which procureth the greater pain, for as the young colt at the first breaking snuffles at the snaffle, & thinks ye bit bitter, so the yoke of love seemeth more heavy unto me because I never felt the force of it before.

But what need I make this exclamation against fortune sith I am not the first nor shall not be the last whom the frantic frenzy of fluttering fancy hath with more wrong & greater vantage piteously expressed, that now I see & try it by experience that there is no fish so fleeting but will come to the bait, no boa [sic for boar?] so wild but will stand at the gaze, no hawk so haggard but will stoop at the lure, no nyas so ramage but will be reclaimed to the limes [sic?], no fruit so fine but the caterpillar will consume it, no adamant so hard but will yield to the file, no metal so strong but will bend at the stamp, no maid so free but love will bring her to bondage & thralldom, & so I call it bondage, fond fool, to be bound unto beauty.

If I be a slave, yet shall I be subject unto virtue. Is it thralldom to live in league with him who will like me in my youth and love me in mine age, in whom I shall find nothing but only pleasure & contentation, who will be the haven of my happiness wherein I may rest, & the port of my prosperity to defend me from the tempests of forward fortune & shroud me from ye bitter blasts of bale? Shall I repent me, sith my bargain is good, or complain of the loss of liberty, sith I have made a change for a more worthy thing? Shall I grudge when the gods are agreed, or defer it sith ye destinies drive it, or frown, sith my fortunes frame it? No, Pharicles is my saint, & him will I serve. He is my joy, and him will I enjoy. He hath laid the siege, & he shall sack ye city; he hath abode the battery, & he shall have the bulwark of my breast; he hath fought the combat, & he shall be victor in the conquest, for I cannot be so unnatural to reward his love with loathing, so without reason to defraud him of his right, so devilish for his deep desire to give him a doleful dish of despair. No, no, I have settled with myself that if ever I marry, Pharicles shall be the man I will match with, & therefore, as I have driven him with delays & fed him with folly, so now I will send him a settled answer of my goodwill & favour; as I have given him cutting corrosives, so I will send him confects of comfort; as I have been fearful to show my liking for ye better trial, so now will I be bold to show my love in token of a sure trust.

But Publia, be not too forward for fear he misconstrue thy meaning, or think sinisterly of thy light consent, lest thy proffered goodwill prove not half worth the wearing. Doth not Pharicles say himself that where the conquest is doubtful, the vic[t]ory is most to be

counted, ye castle that hath longest battery is thought the richer booty? Are not those pearls which are scarcely found & hardly gotten ever of the greatest value? The spice which ye merchant through raging rocks and perilous seas bringeth home hath a sweeter taste than that which is easily gotten; hardly come by, warily kept. The maid that by long suit & much travail is obtained, by how much the more she was hard in the getting, by so much the more she will be sweet in the wearing. She which in her virginity is chary of her chastity, in her marriage will be as wary of her honesty. Therefore I will send Pharicles such a potion as shall be sour in the mouth & sweet in the maw, sharp in eating & pleasant in digesting. And with that she sent him a letter to this effect:

Publia to Pharicles.

It is hard, Master Pharicles, to purchase credit by the praise of anything which either defect of nature or want of art do blemish, & as impossible is it to be believed without sufficient witness where either the person or cause doth make the plea imperfect, for praise in a thing unworthy is a manifest sign of flattery. Who would think he spoke in earnest which extolled the crow for her colour, the hare to be hearty, ye mould for her sight, the dolphin for his straight back, sith lack of such perfection in them condemns the praiser for a parasite? I therefore, knowing in myself no desert to drive you to such deep desire as you profess, am the hardlier induced to believe your words. Because ye means of my beauty merits no such praise as you attribute unto it, it procureth less credit to your talk, so that I take them for words of course rather than for tales of troth, thinking & fearing to find in ye fairest rose a foul canker, & in finest speech foulest falsehood. It is given to ye world by nature to be cruel, to the lion to be fierce, to the fox subtileness, & as well it is engrafted in man both by nature & education to be dissembling, so that it is a settled sentence amongst them: he that cannot dissemble cannot live, & he that cannot with a few filed words bring a maid into a fool's paradise cannot love.

These things and these feigned flatteries of men considered, Pharicles, with the small acquaintance I have with you, might justly drive me into the deep den of distrust, & almost sink me in the surging seas of suspicion but that the secret goodwill which I have borne you long time will neither suffer me to conceive such mistrust nor to conceal any longer ye fire of my fancy, but must of necessity give place where ye flame bursteth forth by force. Think, therefore, Pharicles, that the sour sauce I sent you was to taste your stomach, that the salves of suspect was to search the sores of dissimulation, that the tents of distrust was to feel the depth of the wound, that my denial was for the greater trial, that my straitness in words was no stangeness in mind, but to try the truth of your goodwill, for if the sour taste of my talk had quatted your stomach I would have thought it altogether queasy, if the salves of suspect had found the sore but a small blain, if the tents had tried the wound full of dead flesh, or if one daunt of denial had eased your courage & proved you as cravenly a coward as that venturous knight that, finding the first encounter cumbersome, giveth over the quest, then might I well have thought your love light, your fancy fickle, your faith fading, as ill to be liked & worse to be blamed than the hound which at the first default giveth over the chase, but sith you stood to your tackling amidst the deepest waves of denial, & never shrunk for all the showers of repulsion, assure yourself you have gained one in lieu of your travail whose faith & fancy is so fixed upon your person and virtue as

no mists of misery shall ever be able to move, but vows to be constant unto the end, requesting in recompense of this my goodwill but only sincere love and loyalty, wishing your presence as speedy as may be,

Thine, if the fates forswear it, Publia.

After Pharicles had read this friendly letter of Publia, perceiving that the saint he served had heard his prayers & that his goddess had given him as happy an oracle as he could wish, where before he sailed in the seas of suspicious doubt, now he cast anchor in the haven of hope, where at the first he was fretted with fear, now at the last he was fortified with assurance, as he determined to rase out the memory of Mamillia forever, & to remain constant unto Publia.

Where, gentlemen, we may note the fleeting fancy of such foolish fondlings as will be lovers but for lust, & amorous without honesty. They are more like horse-corsers, which love to chop & change, & oftentimes live by the loss, than like courtly gentlemen that should be so chary of their choice as they should never like without lasting. But let their love be never so light & their fancy never so fickle, yet they will be counted all constant if vows may cloak their vanity or tears be taken for truth. If prayers, protestations & pilgrimages might be performance of promises, then the maid should have mountains that hath but molehills; treasure, that hath but trash; faith, that hath but flattery; truth, that hath but trifles, yea, should enjoy a trusty lover that is glad of a trothless lecher. Pharicles could promise as much as most, but perform as little as any, & vow as much constancy as Leander, but prove as fickle as Aeneas. Yea, his fancy was not half fired before it began to fade, nor half settled before it began to slide, for he was not well scorched with the beauty of Mamillia before he was enamoured with the person of Publia, now liking, now loathing, as the sick patient whose stomach is but queasy, yet as the wind after often changing remaineth long in one quarter, so Pharicles, in amends of his fleeting fancy towards Mamillia, determined to be always constant with Publia. Which determination had such evil success as it was the cause of his exile, for after he knew Mamillia heard of his dissembling, he conveyed himself closely into Sicilia, traveling forth on his journey pilgrim-like, but where his intent was to remain, no man knew. But as soon as I shall either hear or learn of his abode, look for news by a speedy post.

Robert Greene.