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Mariage, by Desiderius Erasmus**

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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK A MODEST MEANE
TO MARIAGE ***

**A modest meane
to Mariage, pleasauntly
set foorth by that
famous Clarke Erasmus Roterodamus,
and translated
into Englishe
by N. L.**

Anno. 1568.

¶ *Imprinted at London*

by Henrie Denham,
*dwelling in Pater noster
Rowe, at the signe
of the Starre.*

¶ *To the right worshipfull
Maister Francis Rogers*

Esquire, one of the Gentlemen pensioners
*vnto the Queenes Maiestie, Nicholas
Leigh wisheth long & quiet
lyfe, with much increase
of virtue and
worship.*

When I remember (gentle Maister Rogers) the auncient acquaintance and friendship, and the daylie and accustomed meetings, recourse and familiaritie that (among the rest) did happen and passe betwene vs in times past, in those our yong and tender yeares, and in those famous places of studie, vnto the which we were by oure friendes appointed and then sent for learning sake. And when moreouer, I doe remember, waye, and cōsider therein on the one side, that state and condition of life, in the which I was then, with that, which for my part on the other side, I doe now find and haue long since felt and tasted of, I cannot but reckon and thinke that time most happily passed which I bestowed in the trauaile and study of good letters. For besides the inestimable fruit, & the incomparable pleasure & delectation, that the Muses doe bring vnto the studious, beside the sweete rest of minde, voyde of all worldly cares and troubles, the faire & pleasaunt walkes, which we there (with a number of vertuous, and well disposed, and a sort of learned, ciuill, friendly and faithfull companions) enioyed, together with the wholesome and cleane diet, not infected with outragious or any surfetings (a vice else where to much vsed) what honest and godly exercises had we then there to the furtherance and increase of vertue, & to the abandoning of vice? insomuch that in a maner it hath fared with me euer since my departing thēce, as with one that being expelled and exiled from a second Paradise, replenished and adorned with all kinde of flagrant & of most wholesome and sweete flowers and delights, is presently fallen as it were into a darke & an yrkesome thicket of bushes and brambles of the cares and troubles of this worlde, daylie readie, not onely to molest and perturbe the quiet studious minde, but also so complete with an infinite number of displeasures, dammages, and daungers on euerye side that (verye much according to the auncient and wonted prouerbe) I may now iustly say vix fugiet Scyllam, qui vult vitare Charybdim. Wherefore that mans saying seemed not altogether voyde of reason, that sayde, that if there were anye choyse to be had as touching the estate of man, the better parte and the first thereof was not to be borne at al, the next vnto that was to die verie shortly. And yet by the way neuerthelesse, as he that hath bene once in any suche kinde of Paradise or place of pleasure, as is aforesaide, hath alwayes nowe and then some motions and occasions, to cast his sorrowfull eye with a mournfull minde towards the same: euen so I of late beholding and lamenting that chaunged place and state of life, and in the meane season perusing some pieces of mine olde exercises which I had then and did there (whereof I was alwayes bolde partly to make you priuie, as one among all others whose discrete iudgement and towardnesse in learning together with the great curtesie and singuler humanitie and friendship, and the passing readie and great pleasantnesse of wit, ioyned therewith was then certes not a little had in admiration and embraced euery where) happily I founde certaine loose papers of two Dialogues of the famous and excellent Clarke Erasmus of Roterodame, by me translated into englishe (partly for the pleasantnesse of the matter, as it seemed vnto me then, partly also for the prooffe and triall of my selfe what I coulde doe in translating, and lastly as the matter semed swete and pleasaunt, so not altogether voide of godlye and wholesome exhortations and lessons, for all sortes no lesse necessarie than profitable). Which when I had with earnest view perused, and hauing in minde diuers times to gratifie your goodnesse with some friendly token of remembraunce, forthwith I thought (renewing my wōted exercises) to dedicate these two Dialogues vnto you. Whose knowledge and learning I know, and gentlenesse therewithal to be such, that I am in an assured hope that (vntill I may giue better) ye will vouchsafe in the meane season thankfully to accept these my recreations, and these few lines at my handes as a pledge and a poore present of the continuall remembrance, and the vnfeyned good will I beare towards you, & your vertuous demerites. Wherin notwithstanding, albeit peradventure the exercise of study and learning, and especially the matter it selfe therein contained maye seeme to bee of very small importance or pleasure, & rather otherwise different or something disagreeable vnto your vocation on euerye side, and also vnto all such for the most part as in the roome and place of armes, are called towards the seruice of the Princes Maiestie, and of their Countrie (Rara enim inter Arma & literas vel togas est amicitia vel societas) Yet I knowing the great reuerence and the singular regard and estimation that you do beare, and alwayes haue borne towards the learned and towards good letters, for the pleasant and fruitfull knowledge that you your selfe haue most happily and with great dexteritie both reaped and tasted among them in times past, I doubt not but that (waying the worthinesse of the Author of them, and accepting the faithfull indeuours of me the rude translator of them) you will be content to permit the same to passe vnder your wing, and so much (I know) the rather for that they both doe tende to vertues

purpose. The one of them being betweene a Woer and his Feere, wherein albeit the naturall ouerthwartnesse of the womanishe minde, doth now and then burst out as out of the frayler and weaker vessell, yet is therein a godlye kinde of woeing without any scurilitie, very pleasantly, liuely, and plainly declared and set forth, to the good behaiour and honest inducement and furtherance of such as are yet to take that matter or enterprise in hand, farre from prouoking any vice, as the maner and guise of a number of lasciuious Louers and fayned woers nowe a dayes is, whose craftie and counterfet dealings, fonde iestures and motions, and vncomely and vaine communications and ydle talks is better to be passed ouer with silence than paper to be stained therewith, or any time to bee spent therein. The other is betweene a yong man and a light Woman, who in times past had bene further acquainted then honestie required, and hee hauing bene absent from hir for a certaine space, at last repaired to hir house, who after hir accustomed maner and wont, beganne to entise and allure him to their former follies, who perceyuing hir purpose therein, discreetly and properly perswaded hir by diuers and sundrie godly and vertuous reasons to leaue and forsake that kinde of life, as of all other most detestable, and in the ende making hir thereby to loath hir frayle and accustomed follies, bringeth hir vnto an honest and chaste conuersation. Thus the effect of the whole matter you haue in few words. Accept therefore (I praye you) this my simple doing in good part, weying my good will in the friendly Ballance of your accustomed gentlenesse, which I trust shall somewhat counterpaise the vnworthinesse of this my so grosse and rude a translation of so worthy a writer.

Vale.

Yours vnfeynedly Nicholas
Leigh.

To the Reader.

I haue (Gentle Reader) set forth to thy viewe, two Dialogues of the Reuerende & renowmed Clarke *Erasmus Roterodamus*: whose learning, vertue, and authoritie is of sufficient force to defend his doyngs. But bicause I haue chaunged his eloquent stile, into our English phrase: and thereby altered his liuerie, and embased the perfite grace of his Muse, I am compelled to craue pardon of this my doings, consider I beseeche thee (learned Reader) that if it had still rested in that Noble language wherein hee left it, although thy knowledge had yelded thee greater felicitie than this my trauaile can, yet thousandes, which by this mine indeuour may draw out some sweete sap of these his pleasant and fruitfull doings, might (thorow ignorance) haue wanted thys peece of delyght. Therefore the offence (if any be) is made to *Erasmus* a má of that pacience in his lyfe, as I assure my self that this my bold dealing with him, can not a whit disquiet his ghost. Harme to thee at all it can not bee, for that I haue not digressed from mine Author. Pleasant and profitable I hope it will be to many of my country folks whose increase in vertue I greatlye desire. Then suffer mee I pray thee to rest with thy quiet and thankfull iudgement: whereby thou shalt vrge me to attempt farther enterprise (perchance to thy delight.) Thus assuring my selfe of thy lawfull fauour, I rest voyde of care of the vnlearneds reproche, if they beyonde their skill shall couet to chat. And wishing to thee thy full delight in learning & to them increase of knoweledge, I bid you both farewell.

FINIS.

**Pamphilus, the Louer,
Maria, the woman
beloued.**

Good morrowe cruell, good morrow ruthlesse, good morrow (I say) thou stony harted woman.

Maria. I wishe you the same againe *Pamphilus* as often, and as mucche as you please. And by what name you lyke best to be saluted. But in the meane while it séemeth you haue forgotten my name, my name is *Maria*.

Pamphilus. It might more rightlye haue béene *Martia*.

Maria. And why so I beséech you? what haue I to doe with *Mars*?

Pamphilus: For as that God counteth it but a pastime to murther and kill men, euen so doe you. Herein yet more cruell then *Mars*, for you murther him that hartily loueth you.

Maria. Good wordes I praye you, where is that heape of deade bodies whom I have murthered? where is the bloud of them which by me are slaine?

Pamphilus. One lifelesse bodye thou séest present wyth thine eyes, if (pardie) thou seest me.

Ma. What saye you man? doe you both talke and walke, and yet dead? I pray to God I neuer méete with ghostes more to be feared.

Pam. Thus thou makest but a laughing matter of it. Nathelesse thou hast reft me wofull creature my life, and more cruelly doest murther me, than if thou should stab me into the body with a weapon, for now am I miserably torne and vexed with long torments.

Maria. Yea good Lord? tell mee how manye women with childe haue lost their fruite by meeting with you?

Pam. Yet this pale wanne colour sheweth mée to bée more bloudlesse than any shadowe.

Ma. But this palenesse (thanked be God) is died with some Violet colour, you are euen so pale as a Chery waxing ripe, or a Grape when he commeth to his purple skin.

Pam. Thus with disdainy ynough you mocke a man in state rather to be pittied.

Ma. Why in case you beléeue not mee, take the Glasse, & beléeue your owne eyes.

Pam. I woulde wishe no better Glasse, neyther (I suppose) is there anye, more cléere, than that in which I presently behold my selfe euen now.

Ma. What Glasse speake you off.

Pam. Marie euen your owne eyes.

Ma. Duertharter: how thou talkest alwayes lyke thy selfe, but howe proue you your selfe to bee deade: Doe ghostes & shadowes use to eat meat:

Pam. They doe, but find no sauour therin, no more doe I.

Ma. And what, what doe they eate I praye?

Pam. Mallowes, Léekes and Lupines.

Ma. But you (I hope) let not to eate Capons and Partriches.

Pam. I graunt, howbeit I féele no more pleasure in eating them, than if I should crashe vpon Mallowes, or Béetes, without Pepper, wine and

vinegar.

Ma. Alack for you good man, and yet you are in méetely good lyking, & do ghostes speake also.

Pam. Euen as I doe with a Verye pewling and faint voice.

Ma. But not long since, when I hearde you checking with mine other suter, your voice was not very fœble pardie. Moreouer I beséech you tell me this, doe ghostes vse to walke; are they clad in garments; doe they eftsoones sléepe.

Pam. Yea more than all that, they practise the acte of kinde, but after their owne maner.

Ma. Now by the faith of my bodye you are a pleasaunt trifler.

Pam. But what will you saye, if I proue this by substantiall and strong reasons (I meane) my selfe to be dead, and you to be a murtherer.

Ma. God shyldes that (friend *Pamphile*) but let me heare your Sophistrie.

Pam. First you wil graunt me this: (I suppose) that death is naught else but a seperation of the soule from the body.

Ma. I graunt.

Pamphilus. But graunt it so y^e you reuoke and call it not back againe, afterwarde.

Ma. No more I wyll.

Pam. Secondly, you wil not denie but he which reaueth the soule, wherein consisteth life, is a murtherer.

Ma. I consent.

Pam. You will I am sure graunt me this lykewyse, which most graue and credible Authors haue affirmed, & by the consent and iudgement of all ages hath bene holden truth and allowed, (I meane) that the soule of a man is not where he liueth, but where he loueth.

Ma. You must vtter that after a more grosse, and plaine sorte, for in good faith I perceyue not your meaning.

Pam. And I am the more sorie, and euill at ease, bicause you doe not perceiue and féele this to be true, as well as I doe.

Ma. Make me to feele it then.

Pam. As well mightest thou bid me, make an Adamant féele it.

Ma. Now truely I am a yong wench, not a stone.

Pam. Truth, but more harde yet than the Adamant stone.

Ma. But procéede with your argument.

Pam. Those which are rapt in the spirite, or fallen into a traunce (as they call it) neyther heare, nor see, nor smell, nor féele any thing, no though you would kil them.

Ma. Surely I haue hard say so.

Pa. And what think you to be the cause of this insensibilitie.

Ma. I would learne that of you which are a Philosopher.

Pam. Bicause (pardie) the soule or minde is in heauen, where it hath that which it vehemently loueth, & is not present with the body.

Ma. And what is next? what conclude you vpon this?

Pam. Askest thou what O cruell? euen this necessarily followeth, my selfe to be deade, and thy selfe to bée a murtherer.

Ma. Why, where is your soule become and God wil?

Pam. There it is, where it loueth.

Ma. And who hath reft it from you? why sigh you man? speake and feare not, you shall not be hindered by me.

Pam. A certaine cruell and pittlesse mayde, whome neuerthelesse I cannot finde in my hart to hate, being by hir spoyled of my life.

Ma. Ah, a louing hart, ah gentle nature. But why do you not againe take from hir, hir soule, and serue hir as they saye, with the same sause.

Pam. The happiest in the worlde, were I, if I could make that exchange (I meane) that hir minde might come dwell in my brest, in sorte as mine hath wholy dwelled in hir body.

Ma. But wil you giue me leaue now eftsones a while to play the Sophister his part with you?

Pam. Nay the Sophistresse parte.

Ma. Is it possible that one and the same bodie both haue the soule and be without the soule.

Pam. Not both together or at one time.

Ma. When the soule is awaye, then the body (you say) is deade.

Pam. Truth.

Ma. And it lyueth not but when y^e soule is present withall?

Pam. Be it so verily.

Ma. How commeth this to passe then, that y^e soule being there where it loueth, the body yet wherout it is departed, neuerthelesse lyueth? for if it lyueth in one place, when it loueth in an other, by what reasō is it called *Exanime Corpus*, as you would say, a lifelesse body, since it hath life and sense in it.

Pam. By saint Marie you playe the Sophistres meetelye well, howbeit you cannot snarle me in such chicken bandes. That soule which after a sort gouerneth the bodye of a liuing creature being in suche case is improperly called the soule, for in very dede it is a certaine small portion of the soule, which remaineth behind, euen as the sauor of Roses tarieth still in the hande of him, which bare them, when y^e very Roses themselues be done away.

Ma. I sée well inough it is hard to take a foxe in a pitch, but answere me to this also. Is not he a doer which murthereth.

Pam. What else.

Ma. And is not y^e partie a sufferer, who is murdered?

Pam. Yes.

Ma. How commeth it to passe then, that since he which loueth is the doer and shée which is beloued is but the sufferer, she should be infamed for a murtherer, which is beloued. When as in verie déede, he that loueth rather murthereth himself?

Pam. Nay, it is contrarie, for he that loueth suffreth, she that is beloued doth.

Ma. That shall you neuer proue true with the consent of our chiefe *Areopagites* of Grammer.

Pam. But this will I proue true by the consent of the whole Parliament of

Logitians.

Ma. But aunswere me to this againe, loue you with your wil, or against your wyll?

Pam. With my will.

Maria. Ergo, sithence it is in frée choise to loue, or not to loue, whoso loueth, is a murtherer of himselfe, and wrongfullye accuseth the poore wench beloued.

Pam. Why? I say not that the wench murthereth bicause she is beloued, but bicause she loueth not againe the party which loueth hir: for (truth it is) she is guilty of murther, which might saue a mans life and will not.

Ma. I put case a yong man cast his loue vpon one, which he ought not to loue, or maye not lawfully obtaine, as an other man hys wyfe, or a Virgine, which hath professed continuall chastitie, shall she loue him againe, so to preserue and saue hir louer?

Pam. But this yong man loueth that, which to loue is both lawfull and godly, and standeth both with reason and equity, and yet neuerthelessse is cast away. That in case you set light by the crime of homicide, I will aguilt you also of sorcerie and enchaunting me.

Ma. Marrie gods forbod man, what will you make of me a *Circes* ympe, a witch?

Pa. Yea and somewhat more cruell yet, than euer was *Circes*. For I had rather be a groueling Hog or beare, then as I am, without life or soule.

Ma. And with what kinde of sorcerie I praye ye doe I destroy men.

Pam. By euill aspect.

Ma. Will you then that I hurt you no more with loking vpon you?

Pam. Not so for Gods sake, but rather looke more vpon me.

Ma. If mine eyes be witches, how hapneth it then that other also do not consume away, whome I looke vpon as ofte as you, therefore I feare me much, y^e bewitching is in your owne eyes, not in mine.

Pam. Why thinke you it not inough to flea *Pamphilus*, except you triumph ouer him being dead.

Maria. Oh queint handsome, nise dead body: when shall your funerals be prouided for.

Pam. Sooner than you thinke ywisse, except you remedie in time.

Ma. I remedie good Lord? am I able to doe such a cure?

Pam. Yea surely: all were I deade, it lyeth in you to rayse me vp againe to life, and that with a light thing.

Maria. As you say, peraduenture I might doe it, if some bodye woulde helpe me to the herbe *Panaces*, wherevnto they ascribe so great a vertue.

Pam. There needeth none herbes to doe it, only vouchsafe to loue againe, what is more easie to be performed? nay rather what is more due and iust? otherwise you shall neuer acquite your selfe of manspilling.

Maria. And before what iudgement seate shall I be arrayned, before the seuere **Areopagetes** and God will?

Pam. Not so, but before the tribunall seate of *Venus*.

Maria. Best of al, for they say she is a patient and pitiful Goddess.

Pam. Say you so, there is not one amongst them all, whose wrath is

more to be feared.

Ma. Why, hath she a thunderbolte?

Pam. No.

Maria. Hath she a thréeforked mase like *Neptune*?

Pam. Not so.

Ma. Hath she a speare as *Pallas*?

Pam. Neyther: but shée is a Goddess of the Sea.

Maria. I come not within hir kingdome.

Pam. But she hath a boye.

Maria. I feare no boyes.

Pam. He is readie to reuenge, and will paye home when he striketh.

Ma. And what shall he doe to me?

Pam. What shall he doe: the gods fore let him. I will prognosticate none euill vnto one, whome I beare good will.

Ma. Yet tell me I pray you, I will take no conceit of it.

Pam. Then will I tell you if you shall disdaine this loue, who doubtlesse is not vnworthie your loue, verily I beleue, that same boy (peradventure at the cōmaundement of his mother) wyll thirle into your heart a launce embrued with to bad a poyson, wherby you shal set your affection miserably vpon some hoblout, who shall not loue you any whit againe.

Ma. Marrie that were a plague in déede, of all other most to be detested. Certes I had rather to die, than to be entangled in the loue of one which is deformed, & could not finde in his hart to loue me likewise againe.

Pam. But it is not long time, since there was a right notable example of this euil, which I now speak off, shewed in a certaine yong damzel.

Ma. In what place, and I may be so bold as to ask you?

Pam. At the Citie *Aurelia*.

Ma. Howe many yeares ago?

Pam. Howe many yeares, nay, it is scarce yet ten monethes.

Ma. And what was the Maydes name? whereat sticke you?

Pam. Nothing. I knewe hir as well as I knewe you.

Ma. Why tell you me not hir name then?

Pam. Bicause I like not the lucke therof, I had rather she had had any other name: She had euen the verie name that you haue.

Ma. Who was hir father?

Pam. He is yet man aliue, and amongst the Lawyers is one of chiefe estimation, and of substantiall welth.

Ma. Tell me his name also.

Pam. *Mauritius*.

Ma. His surname.

Pam. His surname was *Aglaus*.

Ma. Liue the mother yet?

Pam. She departed of late.

Ma. Of what disease died shée?

Pam. Of what disease, quoth you, for méere sorrow & heauinesse. And the father himselfe albeit he is a man of a strong nature scaped very narrowly.

Ma. And may I learne at your hand also the name of the mother.

Pam. With all mine hart, who is he that knoweth not *Sophrona*. But what meane you by this questioning? Thinke you that I contriue fables for you.

Ma. Why would I thinke so, that is rather to be suspected in oure kinde, but tell on, what befell vnto this mayde.

Pam. This damzell was come of an honest stock (as I haue said) and wanted no welth to hir preferment: for bewty and shape of body, also goodly to beholde, what needeth many words, she was well worthy to haue lien by a Prince his side. She had a wooer, who earnestly besought hir good will, a man for personage & bewtie not vnlike hir self.

Ma. And what was his name?

Pam. Alas, God blesse me from the luck, hys name also was *Pamphilus*, when he had done all that he could, and assayed all waies possible to obtaine hir good will, she still obstinately despised him. In fine, the yong man pined away with sorrow, and dyed. Not long after, this wench beganne to dote vppon such a handsome squire, as for his personage, I might more rightly call an Ape than a mā.

Ma. What say you man?

Pam. She was so farre fallen in the brakes with him, that I am not able to expresse.

Ma. What, so proper a wench with so vnsightly a péece?

Pam. He had a head made like a sugar lofe, the heare thereof growing as it were by stitches and that knotted, vnkempt, full of scurfe and nittes, and a good parte of hys scalpe was bared by the disease called *Alopecia*, his eies sunk into his head, his nosethrils wide & turning vpwardes, a mouth like an Ouen with rotten téeth, and a stamering tongue, a scury beard, a hunch backe, a belly like a tode, and legges as right as a paire of horse hāmes.

Alopecia is a disease that causeth the heare to pill off.

Ma. Marry sir you describe him to be a very *Thersites*?

Pam. Nay besides al this, they say, he had but one of his eares.

Ma. Peraduenture he had lost the other in some battaile.

Pam. No surely, euen in peace.

Thersites a Prince, that came with the Greekes to the siege of Troye, which in person and condicion was of all other most deformed.

Ma. Who durst be so bolde to doe that?

Pam. Who but *Dionysius* that cutteth of eares at the Pillory.

Ma. Wel, it may be yet y^e his substance at home was such as made a full mendes for all the deformitie that you haue spoken of.

Pam. Nay surely: he had vnthriftilye spent all, and ought more than hee was worth, with this suchen an husbande doth this so goodly a wench nowe lead hir life.

Ma. You haue declared a thing much to be pittied.

Pam. Surely it is true, the Goddessse *Nemesis* woulde so haue it, that the iniurie of the yong man, whome

Nemesis, the

shée despised might be requited of hir.

*Goddesse of
wrath or
indignation.*

Ma. I would rather wish to be destroyed with a thunderbolt out of hande, than to be yoked with such a mate.

Pam. Therefore beware how you prouoke this Ladie, who reuengeth disdain, and frame your harte to loue him againe, who loueth you.

Ma. If that may suffice (loe) I loue you again.

Pam. But I craue that loue at your hand, which should be perpetuall and to loue me as your owne. I séeke a wife, not a friend.

Ma. I know that well inough, but that thing requireth long deliberation, and much aduisement, which when it is done, cannot be vndone againe.

*Deliberandum est
diu, quod
statuendum est
semel.*

Pam. I haue deliberated vppon it to long for my part.

Ma. Well (I réede you) take héede, least loue who is not the best counsellor beguile you, for men say that loue is blinde.

Pam. Nay, that loue hath eyes which springeth vpon iudgement: I doe not therefore take you to be such a one as you are, bicause I loue you: but I loue you for that I plainly sée you to be such a one.

Ma. Beware I say, you mistake me not, you maye bée ouerséene, if you had worne the shoe, then you shoulde perceyue where it wringeth.

Pam. I must put it in a venture, although by many good tokens I conceyue a hope of better lucke.

Ma. Whye, are you skilfull in signes and tokens, are you become an Augur?

Pam. Yea marry am I.

Ma. By what Augurall signes I praye you, do you coniecture that it shal be thus? hath the night Crowe taken hir flight before you?

*Augurs bee they
which by certaine
signes in birdes
and beasts
descrie things to
come.*

Pam. She flieth for fooles.

Ma. What, haue you séene a cowple of Dooues come flying towardes you on the right hande?

Pam. No such thing, but I haue knowne for the space of certaine yeares the verteous and honest behaiour of your parents, that is a birde not least to be regarded (I think) to be come of a good stock. Moreouer, I am not ignorant with what wholesome instructions, and verteous examples you haue bene traded and brought vp by them. And truely good education is of more effect than good Parentage. This is an other signe which moueth me to conceyue a good hope, beside this, betwene my parents, which I hope I néede not to be ashamed of and yours, haue (as I suppose) bene, no smal loue and friendship. Yea we our selues from our biggens (as they say) haue bene brought vp together, & not much vnlike one vnto another in nature and disposition. Now our age, substance, estimation, and bloude are as well betwéene vs two, as betwéene both our parentes in a maner equall. Lastly that which in friendship is the chiefe thing, your maners séemeth not the worste to square vnto my minde and liking, for it maye bee that a thing is simply and of it selfe right excellent and yet not apt and méete for some vse. How my maners frameth vnto your minde againe I knowe not. These, these be the birdes (my Ioy) which putteth mee in an assured hope, that a coniunction betwéene vs two, shall be right ioyfull, pleasant, stable, & swéete, so that you could finde in your hart to sing that song, which I so much desire to beare.

Maria. What song is that you would haue me to sing.

Pam. I will teach you the tune therof. *Sum tuus*, say you againe, *Sum tua*.

*I am thine.
Be thou mine.*

Ma. The song in déede is short, but me thinks it hath a

verie long ende, and much matter dependeth thereon.

Pam. What forceth it for the length, so it be pleasant & swéete vnto you.

Ma. I loue you so well that I woulde not haue you doe that, whereof you should herafter repent & beshrew your self.

Pa. I pray you neuer speake of any repentance.

Ma. Peraduenture you shoulde otherwise esteme of me, when eyther age or sicknesse shall chaunge this fourme or fauour.

Pam. Why? this body of myne (O my déere) shall not alwayes continue in this estate, thus prest and lustie, but I respect not so muche this flourishing and bewtiful house, as I doe him that dwelleth therein.

Maria. What meane you by that you speak of him that dwelleth within?

Pam. Verily, I meane your well disposed and vertuous minde, whose beawtie alwayes encreaseth with age.

Ma. What, your sight is yet more pleasant than *Linx*, if you can espie that, through so many couerings.

Pam. Yea certes with my mind I doe right well espie your minde: moreouer (I saye) in those children which God shall sende vs, wée shall as it were, ware yong againe.

Maria. But in the meane time virginitie is lost.

Pam. Truth, in good faith, tell me if you had a goodly orchyarde plat, whether woulde you with nothing should therein grow but blossomes, or else had you rather (the blossomes fallen awaye) beholde your trées fraught and laden with pleasaunt fruite?

Maria. Howe sliely he reasoneth.

Pam. At the least aunswere me to this: whether is it a better sight for a Vine to lye vppon the grounde and rot, or the same to embrace a poale, or an elme, and lode it full with purple grapes?

Maria. Now sir aunswere me to this againe, whether is it a more pleasant sight a Rose trim and milkewhite, yet growing on his stalk, or the same plucked with the hande, and by little and little withering awaye?

Pam. Certes in mine opinion the rose is the happiest, and commeth to the better ende, which withereth and dieth in the hande of man, delighting in the meane while both the eies and nosethrils, than thother which withereth on the bush, for there muste it néedes wither also at length, euen as that wine hath better luck which is drunken, than that which standeth still, and is turned into vinigar. And yet the flowring beutie of a woman doth not decay forthwith as soone as she is maried, for I knowe some my selfe, who before they were maried, were pale colored, faint, and as it were pined away, who by the friendly felowship of an husband, haue wared so faire, and welfauoured, that you would think they neuer came to the flower of their beutie till then.

Ma. But for all your saying, virginity is a thing much beloued and lyked with all men.

Pam. I graunt you, a yong woman, a virgine, is a fayre, & goodly thing, but what by course of kind is more vnseemly thā an old wrinkled maide: Had not your mother bene contented to lose that flower of hir virginitie, surely we had not had this flower of your beutie. So that in case (as I hope) our mariage be not barren, for the losse of one virgine we shall paye God manye.

Ma. But they saye chastitie is a thing wherein God is much delighted.

Pam. And therefore doe I desire to couple my selfe in mariage with a chast mayden, that with hir I may leade a chaste life. As for our mariage it shall rather be a mariage of our minds, than of our bodies, we shall increase vnto Christ, we shall increase vnto the cōmon welth. How little

shall this matrimonie differ frō virginitie? & peradventure hereafter we shall so liue together, as blessed Marie liued with Joseph, no man cometh at the first to perfection.

Maria. What is that I heard you say euen now, must virginity be violated and lost, therby to learn chastitie?

Pam. Whye not, euen as by drinking of wine moderately, we learn by little and little to forbear wine vtterlye, which of these two seemeth vnto thée to be more temperat, he that sitting in the mids of many daintie dishes, abstaineth from them all, or he which forbeareth intemperauncie, hauing none occasiō to moue him vnto the same?

Ma. I suppose him to haue the more confirmed habite of temperance whom plentie alwayes prest can not corrupt.

Pam. Whether deserueth more the prayse of chastitie, he that geldeth him selfe, or he which kéeping his members all and sounde abstaineth from all womans companie?

Ma. Verily by my consent the latter shal haue the praise of chastitie, that other of mad follie.

Pam. Why? those which by vowe haue abiured matrimonye doe they not after a sort gelde themselues?

Maria. Verily it séemeth so.

Pam. Thus you sée, it is no vertue to forbear womens companie.

Maria. Is it no vertue?

Pam. Marke me this, if it were simplye a vertue to forbear the companie of a woman, then shoulde it be also a vice to vse the companie of a woman, but sometime it befalleth that it is sin to refuse the acte, and a vertue to vse it.

Ma. In what case is it so?

Pam. In case the husband requireth of his wife the debt of marriage, euen so often as he shall do it, especially if he requireth it for the desire of generation.

Ma. But what if he be fleshfond and wanton, may she not lawfully denie it him?

Pam. She maye admonish him of his fault and rather gently perswade him to bridle hys affections, to giue him a flat nay when he straineth vpon hir, she may not. Albeit I here verie fewe men complaine of their wyfes vncurtisie this way.

Ma. Yet méee thinks libertie is swéete.

Pam. Nay rather virginie is a heauie burthen. I shall be to you a King, and you shall be to me a Quéene. And eyther of vs shall rule the familie, as we thinke good, take you thys to be a bondage?

Ma. The common sort calleth mariage an halter.

Pam. Now on my fayth they are well worthie an halter that so termeth it. Tell me I praye you is not your soule bounde vnto your body?

Ma. I thinke so.

Pam. Yea surely euen as a bird vnto hir cage, & yet if ye should aske him the question, whether he would bée loosed or no, I suppose he would saye nay. And why so? bicause he is willinglie and gladlie bounde therevnto.

Ma. We haue little to take to neither of vs both.

Pam. So much the lesse indaungered to fortune are wee, that little you shall encrease at home wyth sauing, which as they counteruayleth a

great reuene, and I abroad with diligence.

Ma. An houshold of children bringeth innumerable cares.

Pam. On the other side agayne, the same children bringeth infinite pleasures, and oftentimes requiteth the parentes naturall paines to the vttermost, with great ouerplusse.

Ma. Then to lead a barren life in marriage is a great miserie.

Pam. Why are you not now barraine? tell me whether had ye rather neuer be borne, or borne to die.

Ma. Certes I had rather be borne to die.

Pam. So that barrainnesse is yet more miserable which neyther hadde, nor shall haue child, euen as they be more happie which haue alreadye lyued, then they which neuer haue, nor shall hereafter be borne to liue.

Ma. And what be those, I praye you which neyther are, nor shall be.

Pam. For he that cannot finde in his hart to suffer and abide the chaunges, & chaunces, whervnto all we indifferently be subiect, as well men of poore estate, as Kings, & Emperours, he is not to dwell here, let him get him out of this worlde. And yet, whatsoeuer shal mischaunce vnto vs two, yours shoulde be but the one halfe thereof, the greater parte I will alwaies take vnto mine owne selfe. So that if anie good thing doe happen vnto vs oure pleasure shall be dubble if anye euill betide vs, you shall haue but the one halfe of the grieffe, and I the other. As for my selfe, if God so woulde, it were vnto me a pleasure, euen to ende my life in your armes.

Ma. Men can better sustaine and beare with y^t which chaunceth according to the common course and rule of nature. For I see that some parentes are more troubled wyth their childrens euill manners, than with their naturall deathes.

Pam. To preuent such misfortune, that it happen not vnto vs, it resteth for the most part in our power.

Ma. How so?

Pam. For commonly parentes, which bee good and vertuous, haue good & vertuous children, I meane as concerning their natural disposition, for doues do not hatch Puthockes: wherefore we will first indeuour to bee good our selues, and oure next care shall bee, that our children may euen from the mothers brest, be seasoned with vertuous counsails, and right opinions, for it skilleth not a little what licour you poure into a newe vessell at the first. Finallye, we shall prouide that they may haue euen at home in our house a good example of lyfe to followe.

Ma. Harde it is to bring that to passe that you say.

Pam. No maruaile, for commendable, and good it is. And for that also are you harde to bee entreated and wonne, the more deficile and harde it is, the more good will and indeuour shall wee put there vnto.

Difficiliaque
pulchra. *Godly*
things be harde.

Maria. You shall haue mee a matter soft and plyant, see you y^t you do your part in forming and shaping me as you ought.

Pam. But in the meane while saye those threé wordes which I require of you.

Ma. Nothing were more easie for me to doe, but wordes be wynged, and when they be flowen out once doe not retire, I will tell you what were a better way for vs both. You shall treat with your Parentes and myne, and with their will and consent let the matter be concluded.

Pam. Ah you set me to wooe againe, it is in you, with threé words to dispatch the whole matter.

Ma. Whether it lyeth in mee so to doe (as you say) I knowe not, for I am

not at liberty. And in olde time mariages were not concluded without the will & consent of their parents or elders. But howsoever the case be, I suppose our mariage shall be the more luckie, if it be made by the authoritie of our parents. And your part it is to seke and craue the good will, for vs to doe it, it were vnseemely: virginite would seeme alwayes to be taken with violence, yea though sometime we loue the partie most earnestly.

Pam. I wil not let to seeke their good will, so that I may alwayes be in an assurance of your consent.

Ma. You néede not doubt thereof, be of good chéere (my *Pamphile*)

Pam. You are herein more scrupulus yet then I woulde wish you to be.

Ma. Nay marie, waye, and consider you well with your selfe, before, whervnto you haue set your minde and will. And do not take into your counsaile, this blind affection borne towards my person, but rather reason, for that which affection decerneth is liked for a reasō, but that which reason auiseth is neuer mislyked.

Pam. Certes thou speakest like a wittie wench; wherefore I intende to followe thy counsaile.

Ma. You shall not repent you thereof, but how he sirha there is now fallen into my minde a doubt, which vexeth mee sore.

Pam. Away with all such doubttes for Gods sake.

Ma. Why will you haue me marry my selfe to a dead man.

Pam. Not so, for I will reuiue againe.

Maria. Now, loe you haue voided this doubt, fare yee well my *Pamphile*.

Pam. See you I pray that I may so doe.

Ma. I pray God giue you a good night, why fetch you such a sighe man?

Pam. A good night say you? I woulde to God you would vouchsafe to giue me that, which you wishe mee.

Ma. Soft and faire, I pray you your haruest is as yet but in the greene blade.

Pam. Shall I haue nothing of yours wyth me at my departure.

Ma. Take this Pomander to chéere your harte wyth.

Pam. Yet giue me a kisse withal I pray thee.

Ma. I would kéepe my virginitie whole, and vndefiled for you.

Pam. Why doth a kisse take ought away from your virginitie?

Ma. Would you thinke it well done that I shoulde be frée of kisses vnto other men.

Pam. Nay marrie I would haue my kisses spared for my selfe.

Ma. I keepe them for you then. And yet there is an other thing in y^e way, which maketh me that I dare not at thys time giue you a kisse.

Pam. What is that.

Ma. You saye that your soule is alreadie gone well néere altogether into my body, and a very small parte thereof taryeth behinde in your owne, so that I feare in time of a kisse, that which remayneth might happen to sterte out after it, & then were you altogether without a soule. Haue you therefore my right hande in token of mutuall loue, and so fare you well. Go you earnestly about your matters. And I for my part in the meane while, shall pray vnto Christ, that the thing which you do, may be vnto the ioy and felicitie of vs both. Amen



Transcriber's Note:

A paragraph break was added for the insertion of the side note. All original spelling has been retained. Obvious punctuation errors have been corrected.

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Of the yong man and the *euill disposed woman.*

Lucrecia. Sophronius.

Iesu mercy my olde louing Frynde *Sophronius*, are you at length come againe vnto vs? nowe mee thinkes you haue beene awaye euen a worlde space, Truelye at the first blushe I scarce knewe you.

Sophronius. And why so myne olde acquanintaunce *Lucreces*?

Lucreces. Why so? bicause at your departing you had no berd at al, now you become a handsome bearding. But what is the matter my sweete harte: for me thinks you are waxed more sterne and graue countenaunced then to fore you had wont.

Sophronius. I would gladly talke with you friendlye in some place aparte from all companye.

Lucreces. Why are we not here alone (my luste?)

Sophronius. No, let vs go our selues into some place yet more secret and priuie.

Lu. Be it so, let vs go into my inwarde chamber, if ought you list to doe.

Sophronius. Yet mee thinketh this place is not close & secret ynough.

Lucreces. Why? whence comes this new shamefastnesse vpon you. I haue a Closet wherein I lay vp my Iewels and array, a place so darke that vnneeth the one of vs shall see the other.

So. Looke round about it, if there be any crany or rifte.

Lu. Here is not a cranye nor rifte to be seene.

So. Is there no body neere that mought listen and here vs?

Lu. No verily not a flie (my ioy) why doubt you? Why go you not about your purpose?

So. Shall wee here beguile the eies of God?

Lu. Not so, for he seeth thorow all things?

So. Or shall wee be out of the sight of his Aungels?

Lu. Neyther, for no bodie can hide him out of their sight.

So. How happeneth it then, that we be not ashamed to doe that before the eyes of God, and in the presence of his holy Aungels, which wee would be ashamed to doe in the syght of men?

Lu. What a strange thing is this, came you hither to preache? put yee on, one of Saint Francis cowles, and get ye vp into the Pulpit, and let vs heare you there my yong Beardling.

So. Neither would I thinke it much so to doe, if by that meane I might call you backe from thys kind of life, not only most foule & shameful, but also most miserable.

Lu. And why so good sir? I must get my liuing one way or other, euery man liueth and is maintained by his craft, & science, this is our trade our lands and reuenues.

So. I would to God (good friende *Luces*) that you, voyding for a while this dronkenesse of the mynde, coulde finde in your heart rightly to ponder and consider with me, the thing as it is.

Lu. Keepe your sermond till an other time, nowe let vs take our pleasure (my good friende *Sophronie*).

So. All that you doe, you doe it for lucre and gaines I am sure.

Lu. Therin you haue gone nere the marke.

So. Well, you shall loose no parte of that, which you make your accompt vpon, I will giue you euen foure times as much onely, to lend me your attentie care.

Lu. Say on then euen what you please.

So. First aunswere me to this. Haue you any that beareth you euill wil?

Lu. Mo then one.

So. And are there not some againe, whome you hate likewise?

Lu. Euen as they deserue at my hande.

So. Now if it lay in thee to pleasure them wouldest thou in faith do it?

Lu. Nay sooner woulde I giue them their bane.

So. Verie well, consider now, consider I saye whither ought thou mayest doe to them more pleasaunt and better lyked, then to let them see thee leade this maner of lyfe, so shamefull and wretched. On the other side, what canst thou do more to the grieffe and misliking of them, which be thy verie friendes in deede?

Lu. Such was my lot, and destinie.

So. Moreouer, that which is compted to be the most harde, and heauie happe of those which are cast out into Ilands, or banished vnto the people most inhumaine and barbarous, the same haue you of your owne free will, and election, taken vnto your selfe.

Lu. And what is that?

So. Hast not thou of thine accorde renounced & forsaken all naturall affections and loues, your father, mother, brethren, sistrene, aunt, great aunt, & whomsoeuer beside nature hath linked vnto thee for they in verie deede, are full euill ashamed of thee, and thou darrest not once come into their sight.

Lu. Naye marrye, mee thinkes I haue luckilye chaunged myne affectes, in that for a few louers, nowe I haue won me verie many, among whome you are one, whome I haue accompted off as my naturall brother.

So. Let passe this light accustomed talke, & way the matter as it is, in earnest. And first beleeeue mee this (my *Luces*) shee that hath so many louers, hath no loue at all. They that resort vnto thee, doe not take thee

for their loue, but rather for their luste, see howe thou hast debased thy selfe wretched Woman. Christ helde thee so deere, that hee vouchsafed to redeeme thee with his most precious bloud, to the ende, thou mightest partake with him in his heauenlye kingdome. And thou makest thy selfe a cōmon Gonge, or muckhill wherevnto fowle and filthy, scalde, and scruie, doth at their pleasure resort, to shake off their filth and corruption. That if thou be yet free and not infected wyth that lothsome kinde of leprie, commonly called the french pockes, assure thy selfe thou cannot long be wythout it. Which if it chaunce thee to haue, what in more miserable and wretched case then thou, yea, though other things were as thou wouldst wish (I meane) thy substance and fame, what shalt thou then be, but a lump of quick carraine: you thought it a great matter to be obedient vnto your mother, now you liue in seruitude, vnder a filthie bawde. It went to your heart to heare the good aduertisements of your father, here you must often tymes take in good parte, euen the stripes of dronkardes, and madbraines, you coulde awaye with no maner of worke, when you were with your friendes, to helpe towards your lyuing, but in this place what trouble, what continuall watcking are you faine to sustaine?

Lu. From whence (and God will) coms this new prating preacher.

So. Now I praye thee, haue this also in thy minde. The flower of beautie, which is the baite that allureth men to loue thee, in shorte time it shall fade, and decaye. And what shalt thou then doe, vnhappy creature, what donghill shall be more vile, and vnregarded than thou then? than loe, thou shalt of an hoore, become a bawde, yet euery one of you commeth not vnto that promotion, but if that befalleth thee, what is more abhominable, or nerer reprocheth euen to the wicked occupacion of the deull.

Lu. Truth it is in good faith, *Sophonie* in a maner all that you haue hitherto sayde. But howe commeth this newe holinesse vpon you, who were wont to be amongst all the little goods, yet one of the least, for no man repaired hither, eyther oftener or at more vntimely howres, than your self? I heare say you haue beene at Roome latelie.

So. I haue so in deede.

Lucret. Why men are wont to come from thence worse than they went thither. How happeneth the contrarie to you?

So. I will tell you, bycause I went not to Rome, with that minde, and after that sort, other commonlie goe to Rome, euen of set purpose to retourne woorse, & so doing they want none occasions when they come there, to be as they purposed. But I went thither in the companie of an honest vertuous man, by whose aduise, in steede of a bibbing bottel, I caried with me, a handsome little booke the new testament of *Erasmus* translation.

Lu. Of *Erasmus*? And they saye he is an heretike and an halfe.

So. Why hath the name of that man come hither also?

Lu. None more famous with vs.

So. Haue you euer seene his persone?

Lu. Neuer, but in good fayth I woulde I might, bycause I haue hearde so much euill of hym.

So. Perhaps of them that be euill themselues.

Lu. Nay truely, euen of reuerend personages.

So. What be they.

Lucret. I may not tell you that.

So. And why so I pray.

Lu. Bicause if you should blab it out, and it come vnto their eares, I should loose no small part of my lyuing.

So. Feare thou not, thou shalt speake it to a stone.

Lu. Harken hither in thine eare thẽ.

So. A fonde wench, what needeth it to lay mine eare to thine, seing we be alone? except it were that God shoulde not heare it. Oh lyuing God, I see thou art a religious whore, thou doest thy charity vpon Mendicants.

Lu. Well, I get more by these Mendicants & simple Mendicant Friers. beggers, than by you riche folke.

So. So I thinke, they spoyle and prowle from honest matrones to cast at whores tayles.

Lu. But tell on your tale concerning the booke.

So. I will so doe, and better it is. Therein Paule taught me a lessõ, who being indued with the spirite of truth could not lie, that neyther whores, nor whore haunters shall inherite the kingdome of heauen. When I had reade this, I beganne to consider with my selfe in this wise. It is a small thinge, which I looke to be heire of by my father, and yet neuerthelesse rather I had to shake hands with all wanton women, then to be set beside that inheritance, how muche more then doth it sit me on, to beware y^e my father in heaue doth not disinherit me of that far more excellent inheritance, for against mine earthly father, which goeth about to disinherit me, or to cast me off, the ciuill lawes doe offer a remedie, but if God list to cast of, or disinherit, there is no helpe at all. Wherevpon, I fourthwith vtterlie forefended my selfe, the vse and familiaritie of all euill disposed women.

Lu. That is if you be able to lyue chaste.

So. It is a good parte of the vertue of continencie, hartlie to couit and desire the same, if it will not so bee, well, the vttermost remedie is to take a Wife. When I was come to Rome, I powred out the hole sincke of my conscience into the bosome of a certayne Frier penitentiarie, who with many words, right wisely exhorted mee to puritie, and cleannesse of minde and bodye, and vnto the deuout reading of holie scripture, with oft prayer & sobernesse of life, for my penaunce he enioyned me naught else, but that I shoulde kneele on my knees before the high alter, and say y^e Psalme *Miserere mei deus*. And if I had mony to giue in almoys vnto some poore bodie a *Carolyn*. And wheras I meruayled much, that for so many times, as I hadde confessed my selfe to haue played the brothell, he layed vppon me so small a penaunce, hee aunswered me right pleasauntlye thus. Sonne (quoth he) if thou truly repent, if thou change thy conuersation, I passe not on thy penance, but if thou proceed stil therin, thy very lust it selfe shal at the length bring thee to paine and penaunce ynough I warrant thee, though the Priest appointeth thee none, for example loke vpon my selfe, whome thou seest now, bleare eyed, palsey shaken, and crooked, and in time paste I was euen such a one as thou declarest thy selfe to be. Thus loe haue I learned to leaue it.

Lu. Why then for ought that I can see I haue loste my *Sophronius*.

So. Nay rather thou hast him safe, for before he was in deede loste, as one which neyther loued thee nor hymselfe. He now loueth thee with a true loue, and thirsteth thy saluation.

Lu. What aduise you me then to doe, friende *Sophronius*?

So. As soone as possible you may to withdrawe your selfe from this kinde of lyfe, you are yet but a girle (to speake off) and the spot of your misdemeanour maye be washed away. Either take an husband (so doing we wyll contribute some thing to preferre you) eyther else get you into some godly Colledge or Monestery which receyue those that haue done amisse, vpon promise of amendment, or at the leastwyse departing from this place, betake your selfe into the seruice of some vertuous and well disposed Matrone. And to which of these you liste to encline your minde, I offer you my friendly helpe and furtheraunce.

Lu. Now I besech you with all my hart *Sophronie* looke about & prouide for me, I will follow your counsayle.

So. But in the meane while conuey your selfe from out of this place.

Lu. Alack so sone,

So. Why not, rather this day than to morrow? namely since lingering it is damage, and delay is daungerous.

Lu. Whether should I then repaire, where should I stay my selfe?

So. You shall packe vp all your apparell and Iewels, & deliuer it vnto me in the euening, my seruaunt shall closeye carrie it, vnto a faithfull honest Matrone. And within a while after, I will leade you out, as it were to walke with me and you shal secretly abide in that Matrons house, at my charge, vntill I prouide for you: And that time shall not bee long.

Lu. Be it so my *Sophonius*, I betake my selfe wholly vnto you.

So. For so doing here-after, you shall haue ioy.

FINIS.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK A MODEST MEANE
TO MARIAGE ***

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