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GREENE'S VISION

Written at the instant of his death.

Containing a penitent passion for the folly of his pen.

*Sero sed serio.*

Imprinted at London for Thomas Newman, and are to be sold at his shop in Fleet Street in  
Saint Dunstan's Churchyard.

To the right worshipful and his especial good friend, M. Nicholas Sanders of Ewell,  
Esquire, T. Newman wisheth all felicity.

Were I as able as I am willing (right worshipful) to show myself thankful for your many kindnesses extended unto me, some more accomplished dedication than this should have offered itself to your judicial view at this instant. It was one of the last works of a well-known author, therefore I hope it will be more acceptable. Many have published repents under his name, but none more unfeigned than this, being every word of his own -- his own phrase, his own method. The experience of many vices brought forth this last vision of virtue. I recommend it entirely to your Worship's even-balancing censure. None have more insight than you into matters of wit. All men of art acknowledge you to be an especial Maecenas and supporter of learning in these her despised latter days. I am one that have no interest in knowledge but the inseparable love that I bear to them that profess it; that attendant love on good letters strives to honour you in whom art is honoured. I think not this pamphlet any way proportionable in worth with your Worship's patronage, but it is my desire to yield some increase to your fame in anything that I shall imprint. Thus wishing to your Worship that felicity and contentment which your own best-governed thoughts do aim at, I most humbly take my leave.

Your Worships' most bounden,

T. Newman.

To the gentlemen readers, health.

Gentlemen, in a vision before my death I foresee that I am like to sustain the shame of many follies of my youth when I am shrouded in my winding-sheet. O let not injurious tongues triumph over a dead carcass. Now I am sick, and sorrow hath wholly seized on me; vain I have been; let not other men show themselves vain in reproaching my vanity. I crave pardon of you all if I have offended any of you with lascivious pamphleting. Many things I have wrote to get money which I could otherwise wish to be suppressed; poverty is the father of innumerable infirmities; in seeking to salve private wants, I have made myself a public laughing-stock. He that cometh in print setteth himself up as a common mark for everyone to shoot at; I have shot at many abuses, overshot myself in describing of some; where truth failed, my invention hath stood my friend. God forgive me all my misdemeanours; now in the best lust of my years, death I fear will deprive me of any further proceeding in security. This book hath many things which I would not have written on my tomb; I write this last; let it be my last will and testament. Farewell; if I live you shall hear of me in divinity; in the meantime, accept the will for the deed, and speak well of me when I am dead.

Yours dying,

Robert Greene.

## GREENE'S VISION

After I was burdened with the penning of *The Cobbler of Canterbury*, I waxed passing melancholy, as grieveing that either I should be wrong [sic?] with envy, or wronged with suspicion. But when I entered into the consideration that slander spareth not kings, I brooked it with the more patience, & thought that as the strongest gusts offend less the low shrubs than the tall cedars, so the blemish of report would make a less scar in a cottage than in a palace, yet I could not but conceit it hardly, and so in a discontented humour I sat me down upon my bed-side and began to call to remembrance what fond and wanton lines had passed my pen, how I had bent my course to a wrong shore, as beating my brains about such vanities as were little profitable, sowing my seed in the sand and so reaping nothing but thorns and thistles. As this [sic] I recounted over the follies that youth led me unto, I stepped to my standish that stood hard by, and writ this ode.

Greene's Ode To The Vanity Of Wanton Writings.

*Though Tityrus, the herd's swain,  
Phyllis' love-mate, felt the pain  
That Cupid fires in the eye  
Till they love or till they die,  
Strained ditties from his pipe  
With pleasant voice and cunning stripe,  
Telling in his song how fair  
Phyllis' eyebrows and her hair,  
How her face passed all supposes  
For white lilies, for red roses,  
Though he sounded on the hills  
Such fond passions as love wills,  
That all the swains that folded by  
Flocked to hear his harmony,  
And vowed by Pan that Tityrus  
Did poet-like his loves discuss,  
That men might learn mickle good  
By the verdict of his mood,  
Yet old Menalcas, over-aged,  
That many winters there had waged,  
Sitting by and hearing this,  
Said their words were all amiss,  
For (quoth he) such wanton lays  
Are not worthy to have praise,  
Jigs and ditties of fond loves  
Youth to mickle folly moves,  
And told this old-said saw to thee  
Which Corydon did learn to me,  
'Tis shame and sin for pregnant wits*

*To spend their skill in wanton fits;  
Martial was a bonny boy,  
He writ love's grief and love's joy,  
He told what wanton looks passes  
Twixt the swains and the lasses,  
And mickle wonder did he write  
Of women's loves, and their spite,  
But for the follies of his pen  
He was hated of most men,  
For they could say 'twas sin and shame  
For scholars to indite such game;  
Quaint was Ovid in his rime,  
Chiefest poet of his time,  
What he could in words rehearse  
Ended in a pleasing verse,  
Apollo with his ay-green bays  
Crowned his head to show his praise,  
And all the Muses did agree  
He should be theirs, and none but he,  
This poet chanted all of love,  
Of Cupid's wings and Venus' dove,  
Of fair Corinna and her hue  
Of white and red, and veins blue,  
How they loved and how they greed,  
And how in fancy they did speed,  
His elegies were wanton all,  
Telling of love's pleasures [sic] thrall,  
And cause he would the poet seem  
That best of Venus' laws could deem,  
Strange precepts he did impart,  
And writ three books of love's art,  
There he taught how to woo,  
What in love men should do,  
How they might soonest win  
Honest women unto sin,  
Thus, to tellen all the truth,  
He infected Rome's youth,  
And with his books and verses brought  
That men in Rome naught else sought  
But how to tangle maid or wife  
With honour's breach through wanton life,  
The foolish sort did for his skill  
Praised the deepness of his quill,  
And like to him said there was none  
Since died old Anacreon,  
But Rome's Augustus, world's wonder,*

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*Brooked not of this foolish blunder,  
 Nor liked he of this wanton verse  
 That love's laws did rehearse,  
 For well he saw and did espy  
 Youth was sore impaired thereby,  
 And by experience he finds  
 Wanton books infect the minds,  
 Which made him straight, for reward,  
 Though the censure seemed hard,  
 To banish Ovid quite from Rome,  
 This was great Augustus' doom,  
 For (quoth he) poets' quills  
 Ought not for to teach men ills,  
 For learning is a thing of prize  
 To show precepts to make men wise,  
 And near the Muses' sacred place [sic?]  
 Dwells the virtuous-minded Graces,  
 'Tis shame and sin then for good wits  
 To show their skill in wanton fits;  
 This Augustus did reply,  
 And as he said, so think I.*

After I had written this ode a deep insight of my follies did pierce into the centre of my thoughts, that I felt a passionate remorse; discovering such particular vanities as I had soothed up withal my forepassed humours, I began to consider that that Astrea, that virtue, that metaphysical influence which maketh one man differ from another in excellence, being, I mean, come from the heavens, & was a thing infested into man from God, the abuse whereof I found to be as prejudicial as the right user [sic] thereof was profitable, that it ought to be employed to wit [sic] in painting out a goddess but in setting out the praises of God, not in discovering of beauty but in discovering of virtues, not in laying out the platforms of love nor in telling the deep passions of fancy but in persuading men to honest & honourable actions which are the steps that lead to the true and perfect felicity; the serpent is then therefore an odious creature for that he sucketh poison from that odoriferous flower from whence the painful bee gathers her sweet honey. And that lapidary is holden a man worthless in the world that will wrest the secret operation of the diamond to a deadly aconiton, and such scholars deserve much blame as out of that precious fountain of learning will fetch a pernicious water of vanity; the trees that grow in India have rough banks [sic], but they yield precious gums, and the stones in Sicilia have a dusky colour, but being cut they are as orient as the sun; so the outward phrase is not to be measured by pleasing the ear, but the inward matter by profiting the mind; the puffing glory of the lofty style shadowing wanton conceits is like to the skin of a serpent that contrives(?) empoisoned flesh, or to a panther that hath a beautiful hide but a beastly paunch, for as the flowers of Egypt please the eye but infect the stomach, and the water of the river Orum cooleth the hand but killeth the heart, so books that contrive scurrility may for awhile breed a pleasing conceit and a merry passion, but for every dram of mirth they leave behind them in the reader's mind a tunful of infecting mischiefs,

like to the scorpion, that flatters with his head and stings with his tail. These premises drive me into a maze, especially when I considered that we were born to profit our country, not only to pleasure ourselves; then the discommodities that grew from my vain pamphlets began to muster in my sight, then I called to mind how many idle fancies I had made to pass the press, how I had pestered gentlemen's eyes and minds with the infection of many fond passions, rather infecting them with the allurements of some enchanted aconiton that tempered their thought with any honest antidote, which consideration entered thus far into my conscience.

#### Greene's Trouble Of Mind.

Father of mercy, whose gracious favour is more pliant to pardon than we to become penitent, who art more willing to shadow the contrite heart with remission than we to offer ourselves with hearty repentance, I, here in the humbleness of heart, prostrate myself before the throne of thy majesty upholden with mercy and love, as one blushing at the blemish of my vile and detestable offences wherewith I have purchased the burden of thy wrath, being so heavy a load that the shoulders of my poor diseased conscience, being ready to sink under so heavy a weight, destitute of any mean to support the same or to cure the passion of such a malady but by the salve that grows from the death of thy bitter Passion, who camest into the world not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

When I do (great physician of our deepest misdeeds) but glance mine eye at the object of my sin, and *sicco pede* pass them over as faults of course, and follies of youth, yet I am pierced with so sharp a passion that I cannot conceal the grief of my conscience, but it bursteth forth in sighs and groans, insomuch that I think life an enemy to my weal, and I wish the beginning of my days had been the hour of my departure.

But when with a strict insight I say *Redde rationem villicationis*, and take a straight account what the deeds of my youth have been, how full of vanity and fond-conceited fancies, oh then what a fearful terror doth torture my mind, what a dungeon of dolours lies open to swallow me. As the scorpion stings deadly, and the vipers [sic?] bites mortally, so doth the worm of my conscience gripe without ceasing. And yet, O Lord, a deeper misery, for when with a foreseeing consideration I look into the time to come wherein the secret conjecture of my faults and offences shall be manifested and laid to my charge, and that I know *Stipendum peccati mors*, Oh then whither shall I fly from thy presence; shall I take the wings of the morning and absent myself, can the hideous mountains hide me, can wealth redeem sin, can beauty countervail my faults, or the whole world counterpoise the balance of mine offences; oh no, and therefore am I at my wits' end, wishing for death and the end of my miserable days, and yet then the remembrance of hell, and the torments thereof, drive me to wish the contrary. But when I covet long life, and to see more days, then this imagination wrings me: I think, as I was conceived in sin and from my birth inclined to ill, so the sequel of my days will grow *A malo in penis* [sic], and the longer the worse, the more years, the more offences, for the life of man is as the panther, the longer he lives the more spots he hath in his skin, and the onyx, the longer it is kept, the more strokes it hath. So our nature is so corrupt that we renew not our bill with the eagle, but grow blacker and blacker with the halcyons.

When I ruminate on these premises, then I loathe the length of more days, fearing lest the aptness of my corrupt flesh, through the rebellion thereof against the spirit, heap greater plagues upon my poor soul. What shall I do then, Lord, thus distressed on every side, having no hope of comfort left me, but fear and despair? If I seek to man, I know the strength of Samson, the policy of Achitophel, the wisdom of Solomon to be vain in this respect, for all have sinned and are within the compass of my miserable condition; being pained with this malady, to whom shall I fly for medicine, even to the sweet physician of all sickly souls, to thee that canst with a word cure all my sorrows, to the kind Samaritan that wilt pour wine and oil into my wounds, set me on thine own beast, and take care for the salving of my hurts, that canst say, thy sins are forgiven, and I am whole.

To thee I come (overheated with the thirst of sin) for water that may spring in me a well of life; I am heavy loaden, and I will lay the burden on thy back, for thou art a promised mediator for the penitent unto God the Father. It is thou that seekest the wandering sheep, and bringest him home on thy shoulders; thou wilt not lose that groat but findest it with joy; thou weepest in the neck of thy repenting son, and killst the fat calf for his welcome; thou hast cried out in the streets: Were your sins as red as scarlet, I'll make them as white as snow, and were they as purple, I will make them as white as wool. These proclaimed promises is comfort, this heavenly voice is consolation whereby I am revived, and my conscience lightened of the follies of my youth; now have I found the true and only physician for my long-diseased soul, even he that came to heal the penitent. Give me grace, Lord, then, to take perfect handfast of these comfortable sayings; stretch forth thy hand, and I will with Peter spring into the water, for thou wilt uphold me; let me touch with faith the hem of thy vesture, and then I shall enjoy the true working of that most singular medicine, thy death & bitter passion, who sufferedst for our sins, and on the cross criedst *Consumatum est* to take away the punishment due for our transgression; oh, thy mercy is infinite whereby thou callest us, thy love unsearchable whereby thou favourest us, and thy wisdom incomprehensible whereby thou guidest us; all these do appear to be imparted towards me in that thou stirrest up in my heart a loathing of my sin, and that the follies of my young years are odious in my remembrance. Sith then, O Lord, thou hast touched me with repentance, and hast called me from the wilderness of wickedness and extreme despair to place me in the pleasant fields of sincerity, truth, and godliness, and so shadow me with the wings of thy grace that my mind being free from all sinful cogitations I may forever keep my soul an undefiled member of thy church, and in faith, love, fear, humbleness of heart, prayer, and dutiful obedience show myself regenerate, and a reformed man from my former follies.

Being in this deep meditation, lying contemplating upon my bed, I fell asleep, where I had not lien long in a slumber but that methought I was in a fair meadow sitting under an oak, viewing the beauty of the sun which then showed himself in his pride; as thus I sat gazing on so gorgeous an object, I spied coming down the mead two ancient men, aged, for their foreheads were the calendars of their years, and the whiteness of their hairs bewrayed the number of their days; their pace was answerable to their age, and *in diebus illis* hung upon their garments; their visages were wrinkled, but well-featured, and their countenance contained much gravity. These two old men came to me, and sat down by

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me, the one of the right hand, and the other on the left; looking upon them earnestly, I espied written on the one's breast *Chaucer*, and on the other's *Gower*; Chaucer was thus attired, as near as I can describe it.

The Description Of Sir Geoffrey Chaucer.

*His stature was not very tall,  
Lean he was, his legs were small,  
Hosed within a stock of red,  
A buttoned bonnet on his head  
From under which did hang, I ween,  
Silver hairs both bright and sheen,  
His beard was white, trimmed round,  
His countenance blithe and merry found [sic?],  
A sleeveless jacket, large and wide,  
With many plaits and skirts side,  
Of water camlet did he wear,  
A whittle by his belt he bare,  
His shoes were corned broad before,  
His ink-horn at his side he wore,  
And in his hand he bore a book,  
Thus did this ancient poet look.*

Thus was Chaucer attired, and not unlike him was John Gower, whose description take thus.

The Description of John Gower.

*Large he was, his height was long,  
Broad of breast, his limbs were strong,  
But colour pale, and wan his look,  
Such have they that plien their book,  
His head was grey, and quaintly shorn,  
Neatly was his beard worn,  
His visage grave, stern and grim,  
Cato was most like to him,  
His bonnet was a hat of blue,  
His sleeves straight of that same hue,  
A surcoat of a tawny dye  
Hung in plaits over his thigh,  
A breech close unto his dock,  
Handsome with a long stock,  
Pricked before were his shoon,  
He wore such as others doon,  
A bag of red by his side,  
And by that his napkin tied,*

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*Thus John Gower did appear,  
Quaint-attired, as you hear.*

Sitting as a man in a maze at the view of these two ancient poets, as well at the gravity of their looks as the strangeness of their attire, at last Sir Geoffrey Chaucer start up, and leaning on his staff, with a smiling countenance began thus to break silence. My friend, quoth he, thy countenance bewray [sic] thy thoughts, and thy outward looks thy inward passions, for by thy face I see the figure of a discontented mind, and the very glance of thine eyes is a map of a disquieted conscience. Take heed, I tell thee, sorrows concealed are the more sour, and griefs smothered, if they burst not out, will make the heart to break; I confess it is best to be secretary to a man's self, and to reveal the inward thoughts to a stranger is more [sic?] folly, yet I tell thee, better brook an inconvenience than a mischief, and be counted a little fond that too foward. Therefore if thy grief be not too private, or so near to thyself that thou wilt not bewray it to thy shirt, many festering sores launched are the sooner cured, and cares discovered are the sooner eased; thou hast here two to whom experience hath taught many medicines for young men's maladies; I am Sir Geoffrey Chaucer, this John Gower; what we can in counsel shall be thy comfort, and for secrecy, we are no blabs. Hearing Sir Geoffrey Chaucer thus familiar, I took heart at grass to myself, and thought now I might have my doubt well debated between two such excellent scholars, whereupon putting off my hat with great reverence, I made this reply.

Grave laureates, the types of England's excellence for poetry and the world's wonders for your wits, all hail, and happily welcome, for your presence is a salve for my passions, and the inward griefs that you perceive by my outward looks are already half eased by your comfortable promise; I cannot deny but my thoughts are discontent and my senses in a great maze, which I have dammed up a long while, as thinking best to smother sorrow with silence, but now I will set fire on the straw and lay open my secrets to yourselves, that your sweet counsels may ease my discontent. So it is that by profession I am a scholar, & in will do affect that which I could never effect in action, for fain would I have some taste in the liberal sciences, but *Non licet cuibis adire Corinthum*, and therefore I content myself with a superficial insight, and only satisfy my desire with the name of a scholar, yet as blind Bayard will jump soonest into the mire, so have I ventured afore many my betters to put myself into the press, and have set forth sundry books in print of love & such amorous fancies which some have favoured as other have disliked. But now of late there came forth a book called *The Cobbler Of Canterbury*, a merry work, and made by some mad fellow, containing pleasant tales a little tainted with scurrility, such, reverend Chaucer, as yourself set forth in your journey to Canterbury. At this book the graver and greater sort repine, as thinking it not so pleasant to some as prejudicial to many, crossing it with such bitter invectives that they condemn the author almost for an atheist. Now, learned laureate, here lies the touch of my passion; they father the book upon me, whereas it is *incerti authoris*, and suspiciously slander me with many hard reproaches for penning that which never came within the compass of my quill. Their allegation is, because it is pleasant, and therefore mine; because it is full of wanton conceits, and therefore mine; in some places, say they, the style bewrays him; thus upon supposed premises they conclude peremptory, & though some men of account may be drawn by reason from that suppose, yet that *ignobile vulgus* whose mouths will not be

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stopped with a baker's batch will still cry: It was none but his; this, father Chaucer, hath made me enter into consideration of all my former follies, and to think how wantonly I have spent my youth in penning such fond pamphlets, that I am driven into a dump whether they shall redound to my ensuing credit or my future infamy, or whether I have done well or ill in setting forth such amorous trifles; herein resolve me, and my discontent is done.

At this long period of mine, Chaucer sat down & laughed, and then rising up and leaning his back against a tree, he made this merry answer. Why Greene, quoth he, knowest thou not that the waters that flow from Parnassus' fount are not tied to any particular operation, that there are nine Muses, amongst whom as there is a Clio to write grave matters, so there is a Thalis to indite pleasant conceits, and that Apollo hath bays for them both, as well to crown the one for her wanton amours as to honour the other for her worthy labours; the brain hath many strings, and the wit many stretches, some tragical to write like Euripedes, some comical to pen like Terence, some deeply conceited to set out matters of great import, others sharp-witted to discover pleasant fantasies; what if Cato set forth severe censures, and Ovid amorous axioms; were they not both counted for their faculties excellent; yes, and Ovid was commended for his *salem ingenii* when the other was counted to have a dull wit & a slow memory; if learning were knit in one string, and could express himself but in one vein, then should want of variety bring all into an imperfect chaos. But sundry men, sundry conceits, & wits are to be praised not for the gravity of the matter but for the ripeness of the invention, so that Martial, Horace, or any other deserve to be famous for their odes and elegies as well as Hesiod, Hortensius, or any other for their deeper precepts of doctrines. Fear not then what those morosi will murmur whose dead cinders brook no glowing sparks, nor care not for the opinion of such as hold none but philosophy for a subject; I tell thee, learning will have his due, and let a viper's wit reach his hand to Apollo and he shall sooner have a branch to eternize his fame than the sourest satirical author in the world. We have heard of thy work to be amorous, sententious, and well-written. If thou doubtest blame for thy wantonness, let myself suffice for an instance, whose *Canterbury Tales* are broad enough before, and written homely and pleasantly, yet who hath been more canonized for his works than Sir Geoffrey Chaucer? What, Greene, poet's wits are free, and their words ought to be without check; so it was in my time, and therefore resolve thyself, thou hast done scholarlike in setting forth thy pamphlets, and shalt have perpetual fame, which is learning's due, for thy endeavour. This saying of Chaucer cheered me until old John Gower, rising up with a sour countenance, began thus.

John Gower To The Author.

Well hath Chaucer said that the brain hath sundry strings, and the wit diverse stretches, some bent to pen grave poems, other to indite wanton fancies, both honoured and praised for the height of their capacity, yet as the diamond is more estimated in the lapidary's shop than the topaz, and the rose more valued in the garden than gillyflowers, so men that write of moral precepts or philosophical aphorisms are more highly esteemed than such as write poems of love and conceits of fancy. In elder time learning was so high-prized that scholars were companions for kings, & philosophers were fathers of the

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commonwealth, upholding the state with the strength of their precepts; their wits were then employed either to the censures of virtue or to the secrets of nature, either to deliver opinions of moral discipline or conclusions of natural philosophy, being measured by the gravity of their sayings, not the wantonness of their sentences, and so long were poets titled with many honours as long as their poems were virtuous, either tending to suppress vanity with Hesiod, or to advance arms and valour with Homer. But when they began to wrest their sonnets to a wrong use, then they were out of credit, and for an instance of their follies, Ovid, their grand captain, was rewarded with banishment. They which considered that man was born to profit his country sought how to apply their time and bend their wits to attain to perfection of learning, not to inveigle youth with amours, but to incite to virtuous labours; some in their Academies taught the motion of the stars, the count [sic?] of the heavens, some the nature of trees, plants, herbs, and stones; others deciphered the secret qualities of beasts, birds, & souls; others wriths [sic] of economical precepts, some of policy, some of government of commonwealths, and how the citizens should follow virtue and eschew vice; others delivered instruction for manners. Thus all generally aimed at an universal profit of their country, and how to keep youth from any touch of idle vanities. None in their writings discoursed either of love or her laws, for Venus then only was holden for a wandering planet, not honoured for a wanton goddess. Philosophers were dunces in love's doctrine, and held it infamous for to be tainted with the blemish of fond fancy, much more to pen down any precepts of affection; if then ethnic philosophers, who knew not God but by a natural instinct of virtue sought so carefully to avoid such vanities, & only bent the sum of their wits to their country's profit, then how blameworthy are such as endeavour to show their quick capacities in such wanton works as greatly prejudice the state of the commonwealth? I grant there is no weed so ill but some will gather, no stone so crazed but some will choose, nor no book so fond but some will favour, but *vox populi vox Dei*, the most & the gravest will account it vain and scurrilous. Therefore trust me, John Gower's opinion is thou hast applied thy wits ill, & hast sowed chaff & shalt reap no harvest. But my master Chaucer brings in his works for an instance, that as his, so thine shall be famoured; no, it is not a promise to conclude upon, for men honour his more for the antiquity of the verse, the English & prose, than for any deep love to the matter; for proof, mark how they wear out of use. Therefore let me tell thee, thy books are baits that allure youth, sirens that sing sweetly and yet destroy with their notes, fair flowers without smell, and good phrases without any profit.

Without any profit (quoth Chaucer), and with that he start up with a frown; no Gower, I tell thee, his labours, as they be amorous, so they be sententious, and serve as well to suppress vanity as they seem to import wantonness. Is there no means to cure sores but with corrosives, no help for ulcers but sharp emplasters, no salve against vice but sour satires? Yes, a pleasant vein quips as nigh the quick as a graver invective, and under a merry fable can Aesop as well taunt(?) folly as Hesiod correct manners in his heroics. I tell thee this man hath joined pleasure with profit, & though his bee hath a sting, yet she makes sweet honey. Hath he not discovered in his works the follies of love, the sleights of fancy, and lightness of youth to be induced to such vanities, and what more profit can there be to his country than manifest such open mischiefs as grew from the conceit of beauty & deceit of women, and all this hath he painted [sic?] down in his pamphlets. I

grant (quoth Gower) the meaning is good, but the method is bad, for by aiming at an inconvenience, he bringeth in a mischief; in seeking to suppress [sic] fond love, the sweetness of his discourse allures youth to love, like such as taking drink to cool their thirst, feel the taste so pleasant that they drink while they surfeit. Ovid drew not so many with his *Remedy Of Love* from love as his *Ars Amandi* bred amorous scholars, nor hath Greene's books weaned so many from vanity as they have wedded from [sic?] wantonness. That is the reason (quoth Chaucer) that youth is more prone unto evil than to good, and with the serpent suck honey from the sweetest syrups, and have not poets shadowed weighty precepts in slender poems, and in pleasant fancies used deep persuasions; who bit the courtesans of his time and the follies of youth more than Horace, and yet his odes were wanton. Who more inveighed against the manners of men than Martial, and yet his verse was lascivious? And had he not better (quoth Gower) have discovered his principles in some grave sort as Hesiod did, or Pindaris [sic?], than in such amorous & wanton manner; the lightness of the conceit cracks half the credit, and the vanity of the pen breeds the less belief. After Ovid had written his *Art Of Love*, and set the youth on fire to embrace fancy, he could not reclaim them with:

*Otia si tollas periere cupidinis arcus.*

The thoughts of young men are like bavins, which once set on fire will not out till they be ashes, and therefore do I infer that such pamphlets do rather prejudice than profit. Tush (quoth Chaucer), all this is but a peremptory self-conceit in thine own humour, for I will show thee for instance such sentences as may like the gravest, please the wisest, and instruct the youngest and wantonest, and they be these, first of the disposition of women.

Sentences Collected Out Of The Author's Books.

*Quid leuius bruto? fulmen, quid fulmine? flamma,  
Quid flamma? mulier, quid muliere? nihil.*

1. Be not overtaken with the beauty of women, whose eyes are framed by art to enamour, and their hearts by nature to enchant.
2. Women with their false tears know their due times, and their sweet words pierce deeper than sharp swords.
3. Women's faces are lures, their beauties are baits, their looks nets, their words charms, and all to bring men to ruin.
4. A hard-favoured woman that is renowned for her chastity is more honourable than she that is famous for her beauty.
5. She which holdeth in her eye most coins hath oft in her heart most dishonesty.

6. A woman may aptly be compared to a rose, for as we cannot enjoy the fragrant smell of the one without prickles, so we cannot possess the virtues of the other without some shrewish conditions.
7. Though women have small force to overcome men by reason, yet have they good fortune to undermine men by policy.
8. Women's pains are more pinching if they be girded with a frump than if they be galled with a mischief.
9. The ready way to fire a woman to desire is to cross them with disdain.
10. Some women have their loves in their looks, which taken in with a gaze is thrust out with a wink.
11. Women's ears are not their touchstones, but their eyes; they see and make choice, and not hear and fancy.
12. Women oft resemble in their loves the apothecaries in their art, which choose the weeds for their shops when they leave the flowers in the field.
13. Every look that women lend is not love, nor every smile in their face is not a prick in their bosom.
14. Women's hearts are full of holes, apt to receive, but not to retain.
15. The closets of women's thought are ever open, & the depth of their heart hath a string that stretcheth to their tongue's end.
16. A woman is like fortune standing upon a globe, winged with the feathers of fickleness.
17. Women's hearts are the exchequers where fancy yields up her accounts.
18. Women, be they chaste, be they courteous, be they constant, be they rich, renowned, honest, wise, yet have they sufficient vanities to countervail their virtues.
19. Women's excellency is discovered in their constancy.
20. As the glittering beams of the sun when it riseth decketh the heavens, so the glistening beauty of a good wife adorneth the house.

How sayest thou, Gower, quoth Chaucer, to these sentences; are they not worthy grave ears, and necessary for young minds; is there no profit in these principles; is there not flowers amongst weeds, and sweet aphorisms hidden amongst effeminate amours? Are not these worthy to eternize a man's fame, and to make the memorial of him lasting? I

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cannot deny, quoth Gower, but the sayings are good, both pleasant and satirical, but if they had been placed in another humour, how much more had they been excellent, for is not a diamond placed in gold more precious than set in copper, and sentences in a matter of import higher valued than thrust in amongst vain trifles? If ripe wits would consider what glory redounds by deep studies, they would never busy their brains about such superficial vanities. Tush, quoth Chaucer, it behoves a scholar to fit his pen to the time and persons, and to enter with a deep insight into the humours of men, and win them by such writings as best will content their fancies; I tell thee:

*Omne tulit punctum, qui miscuit vtile dulci.*

What, a pleasant tale stuffed full of conceit breeds delight to the ear and pierceth into the thoughts; Demosthenes, when he could not persuade the Athenians with his long and learned orations, drew them to withstand Philip with a merry fable. And Alcibiades wrought more amongst his soldiers with his pleasant allusions than with all his grave exhortations; for proof, Gower, thou shalt hear me tell a tale for the suppressing of jealousy, which tell me how thou likest when thou hast heard it. With that he sat him down, and so did Gower, and I in the midst was very attentive.

#### Chaucer's Tale Of Jealousy.

There dwelled in Grandchester hard by Cambridge a man called Tomkins, a wheelwright he was, and such a one as lived by his art, who being a young man and unmarried, held it a religion every Sunday to frolic it in the churchyard; his doublet was of leather, russetted after the best fashion, fair trussed afore with a dozen and a half of pewter buttons; a jerkin of grey kersey with a tagged welt of the own, and because his doublet was new his sleeves hung down very properly; a round slop of white with two guards about the pocket-hole, graced with a long stock, that for wearing at the knee were fenced with two pieces of a calf's-skin; his ruff was of fine lockram stitched very fair with Coventry blue; a green hat fresh from the haberdasher's tied up before, and a breech of copper wherein Saint George sat very well mounted.

Thus Tomkins came ruffling amongst the wenches to the churchyard where he was always fore-gallant of the country gambols, performing his charge with such a grace that the proudest wench in all the parish would favour him with her napkin. The bee flies so long amongst the flowers that at last he lights on one, and Tomkins could not touch the fire so oft but he must warm; put flax and fire together and they will flame, and so proper a squire could not court it so oft among so many fair maids but at last he was caught by the heel, and over the shoes, forsooth, in love, and with whom? with a maid that every day went to sell cream at Cambridge.

A bonny lass she was, very well tucked up in a russet petticoat with a bare hem and no fringe, yet had she a red lace, and a stomacher of tuft mockado, and a partlet cast over with a pretty whip, and dressed she was in a kerchief of Holland, for her father was a farmer; her girdle was green, and at that hung a large leather purse with fair threaden tassels, & a new pair of yellow gloves tufted with red raw silk very richly, and forsooth

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this maid's name was Kate; her did Tomkins love, insomuch that many looks passed between them, and many wooings, that at last he brake the matter to her, and she that was old enough to give an answer said if he could get her father's goodwill, she was content. At this Tomkins struck the bargain up with a kiss, and sought opportunity to meet with her father to break the matter unto him. At last fortune so favoured that her father's axle-tree broke as he was carrying manure to the ground, whereupon he was fain to pull forth his horses and in all post-haste to send for Tomkins, and forsooth Kate must be the woman to fetch the wheelwright; away she goes, and as she went smugged herself up with her harding(?) apron, and comes to Tomkins' house, whom she found lusty at his work; she saluted him, & he down with his axe and gave her a welcome; she did her message, and he left all works and went with her. As soon as he came to her father's house he went about his work and made him a new axle-tree; when he had done, he was bidden come in and drink, and her father drew forth his purse and pleased him for his pains. Tomkins, that thought now to bewray the matter, putting his axe under his arm, desired the old man he might have a word with him, to whom he discoursed the whole matter as concerning his daughter. He heard him like an old fox, and considered Tomkins was a young man and a thrifty, and had a good occupation, and therefore he could not have a fitter match. Whereupon after some prattle between them, all was agreed, and the marriage-day was set down, against which the tailor of the town had work enough for the bride and bridegroom's apparel, and many a goose and many a pig lost their life against that day. Well, on a Sunday it was, and the maids flocked to Kate's father's house, striving to make the bride handsome, who had a fresh gown of homespun cloth, and was very finely dizeden in a little cap and a fair paste; the glover sold two dozen of twopenny gloves which she gave to her friends, and I warrant you Tomkins' house was as full of lusty gallants that took care to set out their bridegroom all new from top to toe with a pair of green garters tied cross above the knee, and a dozen of crewel points that set out his hose very fair. Thus with a branch of rosemary marched Tomkins to the church, where Kate and he met, and there, to be brief, they were married; well, that day was passed with dancing, and honeymoon it was for a month after; Tomkins did little work, for he had enough to do to look on his fair wife, yet she went as she was wont when she was a maid to Cambridge with her cream, but Tomkins on a day, considering that scholars were mad fellows, began to be jealous lest some of them might teach his wife logic, so that he cut her off from that vein, and tied her to her distaff, and caused her to sit by him as he wrought.

Long were they not married, but seeing his wife was the fairest in all the parish, and noting that divers of his neighbours did use to his house, he began to wax jealous, insomuch that every look she cast he thought to be love, and if she smiled, it went to his heart, for he thought it was a favour. Thus Tomkins grew almost mad, and yet durst not wrong his wife because her father was one of the chief men in all the parish, and beside, his wife was so honest as he could find her in no fault, yet thus smothering his own suspicion he lived in a second hell, not daring let his wife go out of his sight, and scarce trusting his own eyes; Kate was not so simple but she could perceive it, and grieved that without case she was so wronged, yet, poor wench, she concealed her grief with patience, and brooked his suspicion till she might with credit revenge, for causeless jealousy is the greatest breach to a woman's honesty; I know not how she dealt with the wheelwright,

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but a scholar of Trinity hostel *vitiavit glycerium*, and made poor Tomkins look over the pale like a buck in season. Women have their shifts, and if they be willing, they have as many enchantments as ever Circes had to turn men into horned beasts. Still was Tomkins suspicious, but fault he could find none, for Kate was a wary wench, and the scholar had taught her *Si non caste, tamen caute*, but his jealousy still stuck in her stomach, that on a time she desired the scholar to devise some mean how he might rid her husband of his fond suspicion; let that alone for me, quoth the scholar; take no care; before Sunday at night I'll make him sing a new song; Kate went home, and to her wheel she goes, and makes much of her Tomkins, who upon Friday next carried his wife to her father's, and commanded her to stay there while he went to Cambridge and came again; she obeyed his charge, and away goes he towards the good town. By the way, as he went in a dump studying on the beauty of his wife, feeding himself with his jealous humour, he overtook a scholar to whom he gave the time of the day; welcome, friend, quoth the scholar, where do you dwell; sir, quoth he, at next town at Grandchester; at Grandchester, man, quoth he; I am glad I met thee; now shall I laugh a little; I pray thee tell me, friend, have you not a wheelwright that dwells there, they call him Tomkins; yes, marry, sir, quoth he: I am his next neighbour; I pray you, what of him; if thou dwellest so near, I marvel (quoth he) thou dost ask; why, he married bonny Kate of Grandchester that sold cream, and now he is the most famous cuckold in all the country. This went as cold as a stone to Tomkins' heart, yet because he would learn all, he concealed the matter and bare it out with a good countenance, and said that although he dwelt at the next door, yet he never heard so much. I'll tell thee, man, quoth the scholar, for a quart of wine I'll show thee, the next time she comes to town, with whom she is familiarly acquainted; marry, quoth he, and at the next tavern I'll bestow it on you, and tomorrow comes lusty Kate to Cambridge, and if you do me so much favour I'll bestow a dish of apples on you to eat these winter evenings; the scholar thanked him, & to the wine they went, & the next day Tomkins was appointed to come to Trinity hostel to such a chamber, upon which conclusion he did his business and home he went. He bare out the matter with a good face, although he was full of choler in his heart & could not sleep to think St. Luke was his patron. But the next morning early he had his wife make her ready to go to market, for he was not well, and keep his bed he would till she came again. Kate start up and made herself very handsome, and suspected there was something in the wind; well, to Cambridge she must, for it was her husband's charge, and away she went. No sooner was she out of the doors but up got he and made himself ready, took the key in his pocket, and crossed another way to Cambridge, that he was seen of none, and to Trinity hostel he goes, and found out the scholar, who bade him welcome, thanked him for his wine, and told him: You are come in a good hour, for follow me and I will show you where your wife and a scholar are now making merry together. The matter before was debated amongst them how poor Tomkins should be handled. Well, the scholar brought him secretly to a chamber-window, where looking in he might see his wife sitting upon a scholar's lap eating of a pound of cherries; scarce could he keep his tongue from railing out, but at the scholar's request he bridled it, and put it up with patience. Well, home he would to provide for his wife's welcome, but the scholar told him he should drink first, and filling him out drink, gave him a dormitory potion, that after he had talked a little he fell in a dead sleep; then went the scholar in and fetched Kate out, and showed her her husband. Merry they were, and passed away the time while it was late in the night, &

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then they heaved up Tomkins on a horse' back, and carried him home to his house, undressed him, and laid him in his bed, & though it were late, Katherine called her mother up & revealed the whole matter to her. The old beldam laughed and said the jealous fool was well served. Well, the scholars had good cheer made them, and away they went, and the mother and the daughter set up a watching candle, and sat very mannerly by a good fire, looking when Tomkins should wake. About midnight the drink left his operation, and he suddenly awoke, and starting up swore by Gog's nouns, you arrant whore, I'll be revenged upon thee; with that his mother and his wife stepped to him and said: What cheer, son; fie, leave such idle talk and remember God; nay, you whore (quoth Tomkins), I'll be revenged both on you and your knave scholar. Daughter, quoth the old beldam, go for more neighbours; he begins to rave; good son, leave these words, and remember Christ; with that Tomkins looked about, began to call himself to remembrance, and saw he was in his bed with a kercher on his head, watched by his mother and his wife, marvelled how he should come from Cambridge, that in this maze he lay a long while as in a trance; at last he said: Alas, where am I? Marry, husband (quoth Kate), in your own house, and in your own bed, sick, God help you; why (quoth he), and was I not at Cambridge today; at Cambridge, man; alas, when I came home I found you here, and my mother sitting by you, very sick, and so you continued till within this hour, and then you fell in a slumber; why but (quoth Tomkins), was I not at Cambridge this day, and saw thee in Trinity hostel? In Trinity hostel; trust me (quoth she), I was not there this two year, and for your being at Cambridge, God help you, I pray God you were able to go thither. Why mother (quoth he), make me not mad; as soon as my wife went to Cambridge, I start up, made me ready, and went to Trinity hostel, and there saw I her with these eyes, sitting upon a scholar's knee, eating of a pound of cherries. Well, husband (quoth Kate), and how came you home again? Aye, marry (quoth he); there lies the question; I know well of my going thither, and of my being there, but of my return, why I remember nothing. No, I think so, poor man (quoth she), for all this day hast thou been a sick man, and full of broken slumbers and strange dreams; I will tell thee, son, this disease is a mad blood that lies in thy head, which is grown from jealousy; take heed of it, for if it should continue but six days, it would make thee stark mad, for it was nothing but an idle and a jealous fancy that made thee think thou wert at Cambridge, and sawest thy wife there; and was I not then out of my bed, quoth he; no, God help you, quoth the mother. Then wife, quoth he, and he wept, I ask both God and thee forgiveness, and make a vow, if God grant me health, never hereafter to suspect thee; thou shalt go whither thou wilt, and keep what company thou wilt, for a jealous mind is a second hell. Thus was Tomkins brought from his suspicion, and his wife and he reconciled.

What sayest thou, quoth Chaucer, to this tale; is there any offence to be taken; is it not a good invective against jealousy; *Sauf votre grace*, quoth John Gower, Sir Geoffrey, your tale is too scurrilous, and not worthy to trouble my grave ear; such fantastical toys be in *The Cobbler Of Canterbury*, and that bred the book such discredit; call you this a method to put down any particular vice, or rather a means generally to set up vanity; this is the sore that creeps into the mind of youth and leaves not fretting till it be an incurable ulcer, this is the rust that eateth the hardest steel and cannot be rubbed off with the purest oil. Men's minds are apt to follies, and prone to all such idle fancies, and such books are

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spurs to prick them forward in their wickedness where they need sharp bits to bridle in their wanton affections; cannot the physician salve a malady without under a poisoned and pleasant syrup he hide a medicinable potion, when the operation of the one shall do more prejudice than the virtue of the other can work profit? Shall I in such sharp hooks lay alluring baits; shall I seek to draw men from dancing with a tabor, to persuade men to peace with weapons, or exhort men to virtuous actions with tales of wanton affections; no, Greene, mark John Gower well, thou hast writ no book well but thy *Nunquam sera est*, and that is indifferent linsey-woolsey, to be borne, and to be praised, and no more; the rest have sweet phrases, but sour follies, good precepts tempered amongst idle matter, eels amongst scorpions, and pearls strowed amongst pebbles; believe not Sir Geoffrey Chaucer in this; mark but his mad tale to put down jealousy; I will tell a tale to the same effect, and yet I hope neither so light of conceit nor so full of scurrility.

John Gower's Tale Against Jealousy.

In the city of Antwerp there dwelled a gentleman of good parentage called Alexander Vandermast, who being endued with lands and livings such as were able to maintain an honest port, thought not with the cedar to die fruitless, nor to end his name with his life, and therefore to have a private friend with whom to communicate his thoughts, and issue to maintain the fame of his house, he thought to wed himself to some good wife with whose beauty he might delight his eye, & with whose virtues he might content his mind. At last looking about, he saw many fair and well-featured, but they had faults that bred his mislike; some thought to amend nature with art, and with apothecaries' drugs to refine that which God had made perfect; such artificial paintings he liked not, as being the instances of pride. Some had their eyes full of amours, casting their looks with such alluring glances that their very immodesty appeared in their eyelids; those he held too forward to the fist; some had delight to hear themselves chat, and had more talk in their tongues than wit in their heads; those he counted for gossips, and let them slip; taking thus a narrow view of the maids of Antwerp, at last he spied one amongst the rest who was fair, modest, silent, and generally endued with all virtues, as highly commended through all the city for her chastity as she was praised for her beauty. Upon her did Alexander cast his eye, and so fire his heart that he began to affect her, knowing what a precious jewel he should have if he got so virtuous a wife, for he had read in *Jesus Sirach* that happy is that man that hath a virtuous wife, for the number of his days shall be double. A virtuous woman doth make a joyful man, and whether he be rich or poor, he may always have a merry heart. A woman that is silent of tongue, shamefast in countenance, sober in behaviour, and honest in condition, adorned with virtuous qualities correspondent, is like a goodly pleasant flower decked with the colours of all the flowers in the field, which shall be given for a good portion to such a one as feareth God.

These sayings made Alexander an earnest suitor to Theodora, for so was the maid's name, and so followed his purposed intent that not only he obtained the goodwill of the maid but the consent of her parents, so that in short time there was a marriage not only concluded but fully consummated. These two agreed together lovingly, and in such loyalty that all Antwerp talked of the affection of the one and the obedience of the other, and the love of both; living in this concord, the devil, that grudged at the sincerity of Job,

grieved at the mutual amity of these two, and sought to set them at odds, which he attempted with the pernicious fire of jealousy, a plague that offereth deepest wrong to the holy estate of marriage, and setteth such mortal variance as hardly by any means can be pacified. Where married couples agree together, it is a great happiness, and a thing very acceptable in the sight of God, but as in music are many discords before there can be framed a true diapason, so in wedlock are many jars before there be established a perfect friendship; falling out there may be, and words may grow between such sweet friends, but:

*Amantium irae amoris redinte gratis est,*

Marry, where jealousy enters by stealth, from thence he cannot be thrust out by force. This pestilent humour entered into the mind of Alexander, for seeing he had the fairest wife in all Antwerp, & that many merchants resorted to his house, he found that women are weak vessels, and conceited a jealous opinion without cause, thinking such as came to enter parle with him for traffic come rather for the beauty of his wife than for any other trade of merchandise, insomuch that he pinned her up in her chamber and kept himself the key; not content with this, sitting one day in a great dump, he fell into this meditation.

Alexander Vandermast, His Jealous Meditation With Himself.

Thou hast married thyself, Alexander, to a woman, and therefore to a thing light and inconstant, whose heart is like to feathers blown abroad with every wind, & whose thoughts aim at every new object; thou mightest, Vandermast, have forseen this, for thou hast read that Armins of Carthage, being earnestly persuaded to marry, answered: I dare not, for if I chance upon one that is wise, she will be wilful; if wealthy, then wanton; if poor, then peevish; if beautiful, then proud; if deformed, then loathsome, and the least of these is able to kill a thousand men. Why, Alexander, did thou not eschew this, foreseeing this, and knowing them to be such evils; why didst thou load thyself with such a heavy burden; oh how art thou changed, what motion hath madded thee with this conceit; thou wert wont to say that they were heaven's wealth and earth's miracles, adorned with the singularity of proportion to shroud the excellency of all perfection, as far exceeding men in virtues as they excel them in beauties, resembling angels in qualities as they are like to gods in perfectness, being purer in mind than in mould, and yet made of the purity of man; just they are, as giving love her due; constant, as holding loyalty more precious than life, as hardly to be drawn from united affection as the salamanders from the caverns of Aetna. Oh Alexander, I would they were so; then wert thou as happy as now thou art miserable, but no doubt their hearts are made of jet, that draw up fancy in a minute and let it slip in a moment, and their thoughts so fickle that they covet to feed on every new object; they seek to marry that the husband may cover their faults, and like atheists they count all pardoned that is done with secrecy. She riseth up, saith the wise man, and wipeth her mouth as though she had made no offence. No doubt there be such as thou dost decipher, but torment not thyself with jealousy; let not thy heart suspect what neither thy eye sees by proof nor thine ears hear by report; Theodora is virtuous and chaste; honour dwells in her thoughts, and modesty in her eyes; she treads upon the tortoise, and keeps her house, and strays not abroad with every

wanton giglet; she lays not out the trammels of her hair to allure men's looks, nor is she wanton in her eyelids; she seeks not to company with strangers, nor takes delight in much prattle, but as Susanna was to Joachim, and Lucretia to Collatine, so is Theodora to Alexander. She is like the virtuous woman which Solomon sets out in the *Proverbs*, who eats not her bread with idleness; she is up early and late, labouring gladly with her hands; she occupies wool and flax, lays hold upon the distaff, and puts her fingers to the spindle; such a one, Alexander, is thy Theodora, whom Antwerp admires for her virtues, and thou mayest love for her perfection. Such she seems indeed, but women are subtile, showing themselves to disdain that which they most desire, and under the mask of a pure life shadow a thousand deceitful vanities. She is fair and many eyes await upon her beauty, and women are weak creatures, some women [sic].

I see many merchants flock to my house, and amongst them all perhaps she will like one; tush, for all her show of constancy and virtuous perfection, I will not trust her nor believe her, for women are subtile to allure and slippery to deceive, having their hearts made of wax ready to receive every impression, and with this he start up and went to look if his wife's chamber-door were safe locked, and so went about his business, but so discontent in his thoughts as all the world might espy his grief by his passions. Theodora saw all this, and perceived the folly of her husband, and brooked it with great patience for that she knew herself free from all intended suspicion, coveting with her forcible effects of duty to race out the cankered rust of jealousy that bred such secret and silent jars betwixt her and her Alexander; pinned up thus as a hawk in a mew, to solace her she had recourse to her book, aiming in all her orisons for grace that her actions might be directed and the course of her life so levelled that no blemish might taint the brightness of her credit; otherwhile for recreation she would take her lute in her hand and sing this ditty.

Theodora's Song.

*Secret alone and silent in my bed,  
When follies of my youth do touch my thought,  
And reason tells me that all flesh is sin,  
And all is vain that so by man is wrought,  
Heart's sighs,  
Eyes' tears,  
With sorrow throb when in my mind I see  
All that man doth is foolish vanity.*

*When pride presents the state of honour's pomp,  
And seeks to set aspiring minds on fire,  
When wanton love brings beauty for a bait  
To scorch the eye with over-hot desire,  
Heart's sighs,  
Eyes' tears,  
With sorrow throb when in my mind I see  
That pride and love are extreme vanity.*

*Oh love, that ere I loved, yet love is chaste,  
 My fancy liked none but my husband's face,  
 But when I think I loved none but him,  
 Nor would my thought give any other grace,  
 Heart's sighs,  
 Eyes' tears,*

*With sorrow throb when in my mind I see  
 The purest love is touched with jealousy.*

*Alas, mine eye had never wanton looks,  
 A modest blush did ever taint my cheeks,  
 If then suspicion with a false conceit  
 The ruin of my fame and honour seeks,  
 Heart's sighs,  
 Eyes' tears,*

*Must needs throb sorrows when my mind doth see  
 Chaste thoughts are blamed with causeless jealousy.*

*My husband's will was ere to me a law,  
 To please his fancy is my whole delight,  
 Then if he thinks whatsoever I do is bad,  
 And with suspicion chastity requite,  
 Heart's sighs,  
 Eyes' tears,*

*Must needs throb sorrows when my mind doth see  
 Duty and love are quit with jealousy.*

*No deeper hell can fret a woman's mind  
 Than to be tainted with a false suspect,  
 Then if my constant thoughts be overcrossed,  
 When prattling fond can yield no true detect,  
 Heart's sighs,  
 Eyes' tears,*

*Must needs throb sorrows when my mind doth see  
 Duty and love are quit with jealousy.*

*Seek I to please, he thinks I flatter then,  
 Obedience is a cover for my fault,  
 When thus he deems I tread my shoe awry,  
 And going right, he still suspects I halt,  
 Heart's sighs,  
 Eyes' tears,*

*Must needs throb sorrows when my mind doth see  
 Duty and love are quit with jealousy.*

*No salve I have to cure this restless sore*

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*But sighs to God to change his jealous mind,  
Then shall I praise him in applauding hymns,  
And when the want of this mistrust I find,  
Heart's sighs,  
Eyes' tears,  
Shall cease, and Lord, I'll only pray to thee  
That women ne'er be wronged with jealousy.*

Theodora, having ended her ditty, laid by her lute and sat in a muse, when divers merchants came in to ask for her husband; among the rest one was very pleasant with the maid of the house, and fell to prattle with her, in which instant Alexander coming in, and seeing them in secret and private talk (and the merchant with a letter), began straight to mistrust that the gentleman was communing with his maid for the delivery of some amorous letter to her mistress, whereupon he began to enter into such a frantic as he regarded not the salute of his friends, but seemed like a madman, not answering according to their demands, but in such abrupt replies that all of them espied the man to be passing passionate, thinking some fond humour so infected his brain that he would grow lunatic, whereupon after some short parle with him they all departed and took their leave, leaving him deep perplexed in his deepest thoughts; first he went and looked if the door were fast, which he found as strongly locked as he left it; then he questioned with his maid about the talk and the letter; she discoursed unto him all the truth, but in vain, for so deeply had suspicion grafted mistrust in his conscience that belief could take no place, but that his heart suspected, that he thought verily to be as sure as the gospel, for whoso is pained with the restless torment of jealousy doubteth all, mistrusteth himself, being always frozen with fear and fired with suspicion; with this cankered poison was the mind of Alexander so corrupt as he thought verily his wife had played false, and that he being blind had eaten the fly, whereupon he studied how to quittance her villainy, so heavy an enemy is jealousy to the holy estate of matrimony, sowing between the married couples such deadly seeds of secret hatred that love being once raced out by sackless distrust, through envy there ensueth a desire of bloody revenge, and so it fell out with Alexander, but that God which defendeth the innocent shrouded guiltless Theodora under his wings, and kept her from the peremptory resolution of her frantic husband. Well, at last jealousy entered so far into his thought that he fell into a lunatic melancholy, and like a madman fled out of his house and ran about the fields, haunting secret groves and solitary places to feed his humour. The report of this strange chance was bruited abroad throughout all Antwerp, which made men to wonder at the matter; some had hard opinion of Theodora, and said her lewdness bred his frenzy, and that Alexander having spied some wanton trick by his wife fell into that lunacy, condemning her for a pernicious courtesan; others, seeing the virtuous disposition of the woman, could not be induced to so hard a suspicion, but thought the brainsick jealousy of the man had procured that strange malady; some suspended their judgements both of him and her till further trial might make it manifest, but the most part spake ill of her, especially his parents and kinsfolk, who reviled her and called her strumpet, turning her out of door as a courtesan deserving no better favour.

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Thus hardly was poor Theodora used, who took all patiently, and being distressed and wronged went to a poor woman's house who upon mere pity harboured her, where falling to her labour she confirmed to all good minds the assured confidence of virtuous chastity; being there poor, changing her apparel to the place, she went in her white waistcoat, and sat to her wheel, whereon working busily every day above other, noting her innocence and how unjustly she was accused, she burst out into tears and blubbered out this passion.

#### Theodora's Meditation Of Her Innocency.

Unfortunate Theodora, whose thoughts are measured with envy and whose deeds are weighed with suspicion, the prime of thy years is nipped with mishaps, and when the blossoms of thy youth should grow to ripe fruits, they are bitten with the frosts of fortune. When thou wert a maid, modesty hung in thy looks, and thy chaste thoughts appeared in thy countenance; all Antwerp spoke of thy beauty and applauded thy virtues, and now being a wife they accuse thee of vanity and lightness, whereas thy constancy is as great and thy chastity no less. Ah but infamy galleth unto death and liveth after death; tush, Theodora, virtue may be blamed, but never shamed. The diamond may be hidden in dirt but never lose his operation; the sun may be obscured with a cloud but at last it will break forth in his brightness, and virtue hidden with slander will at last, maugre envy, appear without blemish. Ah Theodora, but Alexander, thine Alexander, the joy of thy youth and the content of thy mind is run lunatic, and all for thee; I confess, and my heart grieves at his mishap, and with daily orisons I will pray that his jealous thoughts may be raced out; his parents and friends hold thee for a courtesan, all Antwerp wonders at thee and exclaims against thee for a strumpet; the more is my sorrow & the greater my misery, but the Lord who is *Chrodiognostes*, whose eye sees the secrets of all hearts, sees mine innocence. Oh but what shall I do to recover my husband's weal & recover my former credit; might my blood be a salve to cure his malady, or my life ease the sore that so torments him, I would with the hazard of my soul seek to recover the weal of his body, and launch out the dearest drops of blood to purchase his least content. But jealousy, that infectious fiend, hath wrought thy bitter bale and his utter overthrow, setting such a flame of fire in his breast as neither reason nor counsel can quench. What shall I then do; sit thee down, Theodora, and let thy prayer pierce the heavens, cry out in the bitterness of mind, take hold of the hem of Christ's vesture by faith, and with the blind man say: Thou son of David, look upon the innocence of thy handmaid, redress her wrongs and heal the malady of her husband. Orisons, Theodora, have wings, and if they be plumed with the feathers of an assured belief in Christ his Passion, they fly fast through the farthest spheres and penetrate even the throne of his majesty, and that [sic?] they plead for grace, from whence by the help of the lamb who sits there a mediator for us, they return not without regard. Do this, Theodora; then sit thee down to thy work and with thy hands' thirst [sic] satisfy thy heart's thirst. Forget thy amours, and fall to labours, and be sure of this: in thy cottage thou shalt shun much envy and many reproaches, for fortune seldom looks so low as poverty. Content thee with thy estate, for adversity is the trial of the mind, and mishap is the balance of the thoughts. Use patience, for it is a great proof of virtue, and be not seen abroad, for secrecy kills infamy, and such as delight to be seen shall have their credit touched with many tongues, and have this verse hung on their back:

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*Spectatum veniunt, veniunt spectentur vt ipsae.*

Thus living poorly content and patient in thy labours, Antwerp shall think it was thy husband's folly, not thy vanity.

Thus Theodora satisfied herself with her own persuasion, & in the cottage shunned the storms that fortune inflicted upon great mansions as she thus rested happy, for that:

*Foelix qui potuit contentus viuere paruo.*

Alexander roamed up and down, still perplexed with his jealous passions and finding no ease in his conscience, for jealousy is like the biting of hidaspis, which suffers a man to take no sleep; lunatic he was, and yet sundry times he would both reasonably meditate with himself and confer with others, sorrowing at the fondness of his own suspicion, but straight again he would with the dog return to his vomit, and fall to his old vein of frenzy with general exclamations against beauty, yet so sententious that amongst the rest I remember some of his principles, which seemed rather the censure of some ripe wit than the fruits of any lunacy, and they, as I remember, be these.

Alexander's Sentences In His Lunacy Against Beauty.

1. Ah beauty is a vain thing whose paintings are tricked up with time's colours, which being set to dry in the sun, lose their brightness with the sun.
2. Beauty is a charm worse than Circes had amongst her confections, for it first enchanteth the eye, then bewitcheth the heart, and at last brings both to utter ruin, when of itself it is but like the flower asautis, that loseth colour with every loud wind.
3. Beauty draweth many men's eyes to look on so gorgeous an object, and is oft the cause of many dishonest actions.
4. Beauty is delightsome and pleasant, yet nothing more perilous and deadly.
5. The more beauty, the more pride; the more pride, the more inconstancy.
6. Beauty, when it is not joined with virtue, is like the feathers of a phoenix placed on the carcass of a crow.
7. Beauty is of the fairest mark that leadeth to mishaps.
8. Beauty is a colour dashed with every breath, a flower mixed [sic?] with every frost, and a favour that time & age defaceth.

These sententious and satirical invectives against beauty did he breathe out in his madness, which seemed he was more melancholy than lunatic; well, howsoever, about he

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ran restless and passionate, till on a day coming into a meadow he saw in a little hovel made with boughs an aged man sitting holding a serpent in his hand that with her teeth still bit herself, and still the aged father smiled. Alexander standing by and seeing this, as mad as he was, marvelled at the matter, and upon a sudden said: Father, what dost thou mean by that emblem? The old man, turning his head and seeing Alexander, was nothing abashed, but replied: My son, quoth he, I am viewing the enigmatical [sic] figure of jealousy; of jealousy, quoth Alexander; as how; marry, quoth he, thus. Thou seest this serpent; it is bred in the caverns of Sicilia, brought from thence, and given me by a merchant; the name of it is a limster; mark how nature hath made it full of spleen and choler, still intending to do, and restless to revenge, but so hath the serious(?) workman of all provided that it can bite nor prejudice no creature but itself, which disposition when I considered, I compared it to a jealous man, who being pinched with that passion hurteth none but himself, and galled with suspicion biteth with the lemster his own flesh, for I tell thee, my son, whosoever is fired with jealousy or touched with that hateful passion of mistrust, he fretteth inwardly, taketh no rest, & consumes himself with inward grief, hurting none but himself, as containing all the misery within himself. Ah Alexander, quoth he, I know thee, and sorrow that I see thee thus fond, to be brought into such dishonour by the suspicion of a woman, when being jealous of her, thou wringest thyself at the heart when thou hurtest not her little finger; if thou couldst conceit what it were, and knewest the secret operation and inward prejudice, thou wouldst shake it off as a toy worthless a man of such calling. Antwerp, I tell thee, pities thee as they love thee, and wonders at thee as they note thy follies, and are angry at thee as thou perseverest in so vain an humour, and because thou shalt have an insight by me into the folly of thine own humour, I will set thee down the description of jealousy wherein, as in a glass, thou mayest perceive thine own madding passions.

#### The Old Man's Description Of Jealousy.

Jealousy is a canker that fretteth the quiet of the thoughts, a moth that secretly consumeth the life of man, & a poison specially opposed against the perfection of love. The heart being once infected with jealousy, the sleeps are broken; dreams, disquiet slumbers; thoughts, care and sorrows; the life, woe and misery, that living he dies, and living prolongs out his life in passions worse than death. None looketh on his love but suspicion says this is he that cometh to be contrival [sic] of my favours; none knocks at his door, but starting up he thinks them messengers; none talk, but they whisper of affection; if she frown, she hates him and loves others; if she smile, it is because she hath had success in her loves; look she frowardly on any man, she dissembles; if she favour him with a gracious eye, then as a man tainted with a frenzy he cries out that neither fire in the straw nor love in a woman's looks can be concealed. Thus doth he live restless, maketh love that oft is sweet to be in taste as bitter as gall, and consumes himself with secret torments.

How sayest thou, my son (quoth the old man), have I not hit thee in the right vein, and made a perfect description of thine own pathetical humours? Oh, quoth Alexander, and he sat him down with tears in his eyes and sighs in such sort and so deeply strained as his heart was ready to burst. Now father, and never before now, do I see into the depth of

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mine own follies, and perceive how infortunately this jealous conceit hath led me, but teach me, how shall I shake off this fiend that so mortally haunts me; by what means shall I race out this passion that so pains me, and have the disquiet of my thoughts satisfied? Oh my son (quoth the old man), thou art commanded by the wise man not to be jealous over the wife of thy bosom lest she show some shrewd point of wickedness upon thee, for nothing more grieveth an honest woman, nor draweth more aptly to some mortal resolution, that to be suspected without cause. And I tell thee, my son, Antwerp hath ever spoken well of thy wife, whatsoever thou hath misconstrued. Thou hast then done amiss in absenting thyself from her, for thou art charged not to depart from a good and discreet woman that is fallen unto thee for thy portion in the fear of the Lord, for the gift of her honesty is above gold. A woman of few words is a gift of God, and to a well-nurtured maid may nothing be compared, An honest and mannerly woman is a gift above other gifts, and there is no weight to be compared to a woman's mind that can rule itself; like as the clear light upon the holy candlesticks, so is the beauty of the face upon an honest body; like as the golden pillars upon the sockets of silver, so are the fair legs upon a woman that hath a constant mind.

A fair wife rejoiceth her husband, and a man loveth nothing better, but if she be loving and virtuous withal, then is not her husband like to other men. He that hath gotten a virtuous woman hath a goodly possession; she is unto him a help and pillar on whom he resteth; where no hedge is, there the goods are spoiled, and where no husband is, there the friendless mourneth. Dost thou mark, my son, these sentences; if thou hast so good a wife, oh how hast thou sinned to wrong her with jealousy, to taint thine honour, and to blemish the credit of her chastity? If she be wanton, and will never want one, but sitteth down as Sirach saith, and openeth her quiver to every arrow, then my son, shake her off; abide not with such a woman lest ye feel the force of the law, but be not jealous, for that breeds thy fatal ruin, and to her is no prejudice. Oh father (quoth he), these words, as they pierce to the quick, so are they balm unto my distressed soul; I feel a comfort in the sweetness of your counsel, and these principles are persuasive arguments to race out my former follies. I must of force confess that I married her a maid famoured through all Antwerp for her virtue, as she was spoken of for her beauty. And being married, I found her obedient, chaste, modest and silent, but here beauty bred the bane, and was the means of all my misery, for when I noted the excellency of her feature and the rareness of her perfection, and considered that every man's eye aimed at so fair an object, that women's hearts were of wax ready to receive every impression, and saw how diverse merchants of the city flocked to my house, then the sting of jealousy began to torment me, and suspicion brought me into this melancholy humour. I need not paint out in particulars, for father, thou hast decribed sufficiently my passions; how I was passionate, only let this suffice, I was jealous, but whether with cause or no, there lies the question. Were I satisfied in this, I would say farewell to all fond jealousy; to ease thee of this martyrdom, my son, I will not only relieve them [sic] with counsel, but aid thee with the effect of mine art. Thou hast been absent a long while from thy wife, and all men hold thee still for lunatic; I, having some skill in necromancy, will change thy countenance into the shape of a most beautiful young man; being thus metamorphosed, thou shalt go to thy wife, and being now crossed with poverty, & living poor distressed in [a] cottage, thou shalt proffer her gold and maintenance; I tell thee, my son, thou shalt carry with thee two

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great persuasions to make breach into a woman's honesty, which is beauty and wealth, chiefly where the party is pinched with penury. If she yield unto thee, shake her off as an inconstant courtesan, and then be [no] more jealous. For what shouldst thou be suspicious of that which thou knowest? If she withstand, and had rather brook honest poverty than violate her chastity, oh Alexander, then sorrow at thy follies; say thou hast sinned against so virtuous a wife, and reconcile thyself unto her, and be not touched any more with jealousy, for that is a hell to thee, and no hurt to her. This counsel did greatly comfort Alexander, that he not only humbly thanked the old man for his advice, but entreated him to prosecute the intent of his purpose, which he presently did, for by his art he made him seem a beautiful young man, fair to the eye and well-proportioned, but in all form far from that which he was; having store of crowns in his purse (thus transformed), away he trudgeth towards Antwerp, where in the suburbs he heard of his wife, how she was wronged by his friends, turned out of doors, and lived there with a widow woman in a poor cottage; her fame was good, and the report of her labours were great, her honesty highly valued, and her patience much commended, which greatly comforted the thoughts of Alexander; at last learning out the house, he went thither, and coming in asked for Theodora, who humbly rose and saluted him with such modest courtesy as did import a show of great virtue. Alexander, noting her bashfulness, began to consider that if she played false, she was cunning to coin her countenance, and he sought therefore to try her thus.

Fair mistress, whom fortune hath made as miserable as nature had formed beautiful, and whom the cross aspect of the planets have left as distressed as the gods in their favours have made her virtuous, know this, that coming as a stranger to Antwerp, it was told me by mine host, as a wonder, of the extremity of your husband's jealousy and the excellency of your patience, his follies and your virtues, his suspicion and your constancy. His report made me desirous to see with mine eye what I heard with mine ear, that I might confirm report with a sure witness. Now seeing you, and noting your exterior lineaments graced with so many inward perfections, I praise nature for her workmanship, accuse fortune for her tyranny, and sorrow that so beautiful a creature should be bitten with such bitter crosses.

But necessity is a sore penance, and extremity is as hard to bear as death; yet Mistress Theodora, it is a cold comfort is wrapped in no remedy, a grievous ulcer that no chirurgy can find a salve for, and a hard sorrow that no relief can medicine. Seeing therefore your husband's jealousy hath left you from [sic] friends and many cares, seek, as you hath hitherto chocked [sic] fortune with patience, so to thwart mishap with a present remedy, and thus it is: your beauty, Mistress Theodora, is able to content any eye, and your qualities to satisfy the most curious mind, which as it doth amaze me, so it drives a pitiful compassion into my thoughts to lay any plot for your better estate. Therefore may it please you to vouchsafe of such a friend as myself, your want shall be relieved and your necessity redressed; I will take you from this cottage to a place more fit for your calling; your rags shall be robes and your thin diet plenteous fare, and to make up all fortunate, you shall have such a friend at your command as no mishap any way can divert from your love. If you stand upon the loss of your honour and the blemish of your fame, to answer that objection, first Antwerp hath made hazard of your credit, and though without

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cause, yet they have called your name in question, and infamy is such a deep colour that it will hardly be raced out with oblivion, to [sic?] take you from such vipers as cease not to sting you with the envy of their tongues; I will carry you from the reach of them all, and the greatest wonder lasteth but nine days, nor will the talk of your departure continue any longer terms; for the offence, why it is love, and that shadows wanton scapes; what is done closely is half pardoned, and affections that are maintained with loyalty are but slender faults; let not fear of a little fame tie you still to such extremity; misery is a malady that ought to have no respect of medicine, and where necessity doth breed a sore, foolish is that patient if he makes doubt to accept of any salve. What, Theodora, your husband is lunatic, never to be hoped for, nor had again in his right wits; then vouchsafe a friend who, if no other mask will serve, will shadow all faults with gold.

Theodora could scarce stay the hearing of such a long discourse, knowing it was prejudicial to a woman's credit to listen to such prattle, alluding to the French proverb:

*Le ville que parle, le femme qui s'esconte,  
L'ane se gaigne, l'autle, s'effonte.*

Whereupon she pulled her hand from his, and with a modest blush made him answer.

I cannot deny, sir, but I have found fortune my foe, yet to countervail her malice I have had patience my friend, and what the world hath objected with suspicion, I have answered with innocency; for my present misery, as I brook it with content, so I hope to find the heavens more favourable, and for my husband's follies, I count his present jealousy countervailed with his former loves, and hope that God will change his opinions into better censures, and make him conceit of me as favourable [sic?] as now he thinks hardly. In the meantime, sir, your aim is far beyond the mark, and your compass directed by a wrong star, for though I be pinched with want and touched with that sting that forceth many to attempt unlawful actions, yet had I rather sit with Cornelia and satisfy my hunger with hands'-labours than frolic it with Lamia and buy repentance with delicates; no sir, think not that all the poverty in the world can hale me from the thought of mine old honour, or any shower of misfortune drive me from the seat of virtue; better live in low content that in high infamy, and more precious is want with honesty than wealth with discredit; therefore, sir, I thank you for your proffer, but I am no traffic for such a chapman, but report this wheresoever you come, that I would scorn a crown in respect of constancy, and hold the participation of a kingdom light in value of my chastity; I tell you sir, though I be a woman, yet the love that I bear and the duty that I owe to my husband, howsoever he hath wronged me, makes me so resolute that neither extremity shall dissuade me from affecting him, nor any proffer of riches persuade to fancy any other. And whereas you object that my credit is already crazed in Antwerp, I deny not but I am suspected, and of most wronged with hard reproaches, yet carrying a clear conscience, I have this hope, that seeing

*Temporis filia veritas,*

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time and my good behaviour shall wipe out the blemish of such causeless infamy, and then shall I show myself to mine own honour and their discredit. And whereas you say that lovers' faults are slender offences, I answer that there can be no greater stain to a woman than to be touched with loss of her good name, especially being confirmed and ratified by proof, for that being lost, she hath no more whereon to boast, and that made Lucretia let out a pure soul from a defiled body.

Then, good sir, you know my mind; my poverty is my content, mine honour my wealth, and mine innocency the only thing that is left to quiet my conscience; therefore as your mart was little, your market being done, the door is open, and you may go when you please.

Alexander hearing this was highly contented, yet thought to give one assault more, and holding her fast by the wrist, returned her a reply thus.

Tush, Mistress Theodora, women must be coy, and seem at the first to disdain that which after they desire, else might they be thought very light that would come at every lure. I have been a huntsman, and will not at the first default give over the chase; therefore advise yourself better; take time when you will give me an answer; ask counsel of your pillow; I can tell you, gold is a goodly thing, and there is not a warmer coat than wealth; what, such faults are checked with a smile, not controlled with a frown, and men smother up lovers' offences with favour. Be not peremptory, for in that you shall discover rather folly than any advised wisdom; such as have diseases and refuse remedy are worthy still to bide in the pain, and they who are over the shoes in want are worthy the staff and the wallet if they will not any way reach at wealth. Consider therefore with yourself, and tomorrow this time I will come & crave an answer.

Theodora, having her face full of choler, plucked away her arm, sat her down to her wheel, and then reasoned thus roughly with him.

Sir, never take any longer days where the party is unwilling to set no further date, nor give any more attempts where the castle is impregnable; know your suit is in vain and your words breathed into the wind, and to be short, take it as you please, I hold your gold in scorn and yourself (unless you were more honest) in disdain. If you be so passionate that you must needs have a paramour, go seek such lettuce where they grow, for here is none for your lips; you shall not find here a Danae that will be drawn in with a shower of gold, but rather a Diana whom Venus and all her frowns could never affright. Therefore take this for a final answer: if you come any more, you shall find your welcome as bad as may be, and for want of entertainment you shall do your account at the door, and so sir, if you be a gentleman, begone.

This cheered so the heart of Alexander that in that very moment he left to be jealous, & conceived such a new love towards Theodora that he could scarce abstain from embracing her, but yet he bridled his affection, & seeing he could do no good, took his leave very courteously. He was no sooner out of door, but Theodora rose and shut it.

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Alexander subtilly stole under the window to hear what she would say, and according to his expectation, he heard her say thus to her landslady.

Oh (quoth she), and she fetched a deep sigh, how doth fortune frown, and how is the time injurious, that men think gold able to banish virtue, and fame to be less valued than treasure. Because I am poor, what, doth Antwerp think I mean to make sale of my chastity, and because extremity hath bitten me by the heel, do men think pelf shall draw me to become a wanton; no, I call him to witness that knows mine innocency. I hold mine honour as dear as my life, and my constancy as precious as the apple of mine eye, and though as the wise man writ, the dishonest woman says: What, we are in the dark, and compassed in with the walls; fear not, no man can espy us, yet the eye of the Lord sees all, and he searcheth the heart and the reins, and punisheth such offences in justice; far rather had I be openly blamed, being innocent, than have a good report with a guilty conscience, for though I be wrongfully accused, yet the Lord is able at all times to raise up a Daniel that may clear them that put their trust in him. Poverty, want, extremity, misfortune, all seem easy, being tempered with content and patience, but riches, treasure, prosperity, and wealth are odious, being tainted with the stain of an adulterous name. No, Alexander, wheresoever thou beest, or whatsoever thy fortune is, or howsoever thou hast wronged me, yet thy faults shall not make me offend, nor thy abuse draw me to any prejudice, but I will be loyal Theodora, the constant wife of Alexander, forever, for in the *Book of Wisdom* this I read:

Wisdom, Chapter 4.

*O how fair is a chaste generation with virtue; the memorial thereof is immortal, for it is known with God & men when it is present; men take example thereat, and if it go away, yet they desire it; it is always crowned and holden in honour, & winneth the reward of the universal battle.*

With this she ceased, and fell to her spinning, and Alexander, he went his way to find out the old man, whom he found solitary in his hovel. As soon as he cast up his eye and saw Alexander: Oh my son Alexander (quoth he), what news? Alexander sat him down, and fetching a deep sigh said: Father, I have sinned, and wronged my wife with a false suspect; now do I find that she that loveth loyally may well be crossed with calamity, but never justly accused of inconstancy; suspicion may put in a false plea, but proof never maintained the action, and with that he discoursed from point to point how he had dealt with Theodora, what proffers, what answers, and what she said in his absence. The old man at this was very glad, and demanded of him how he felt himself from his former frantic humour; quite shaken off (quoth Alexander), and therefore now pull off your enchantment that I may return to my former shape, and home to my wife, which he did, and after many good instructions (glad that he had recalled him from his jealousy), he took his leave of Alexander, who trimming up himself like a pilgrim departed towards Antwerp, and in the evening coming thither, went to his father's house. As soon as he came in and was espied, they all ran away as afraid of him, but when with reverence his father saw him do his duty, he entertained him with tears, and demanded of him how he fared. Alexander said well, and sat down by him, and discoursed to him at large all his

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fortunes, his meeting with the old man, and what had happened, still crying at every sentence how he had wronged his loving Theodora; at this glad news all his friends and kinsfolks were sent for, and there at a solemn supper the discourse of all was declared unto them; they rejoiced at his happy metamorphosis, and sorrowed at the hard abuse they offered to Theodora.

But to make amends, the next day there was a great feast provided, and all the chief of Antwerp bidden thither as guests. Theodora was sent for, her husband and she reconciled, set into her former estate, held in great estimation for her constancy, and her husband ever after free from all suspicious jealousy.

Now, Sir Geoffrey Chaucer (quoth Gower), how like you this tale; is it not more full of humanity than your vain and scurrilous invention, and yet affecteth as much in the mind of the hearers; are not grave sentences as forcible as wanton principles; tush (quoth Chaucer), but these are not pleasant, they breed no delight, youth will not like of such a long circumstance. Our English gentlemen are of the mind of the Athenians, that will sooner be persuaded by a fable than an oration, and induced with a merry tale when they will not be brought to any compass with serious circumstances. The more pity (quoth Gower) that they should be so fond as to be subject to the delight of every lewd fancy when the true badge of a gentleman is learning joined with valour and virtue, and therefore ought they to read of martial discipline, not of the flight of Venus, and to talk of hard labours, not to chat of foolish and effeminate amours. Aristotle read not to Alexander wanton elegies, but he instructed him in moral precepts, and taught how to govern like a king, not how to court like a lover, but now-a-days our youths desire to read amorous pamphlets rather than philosophical actions, and covet like Epicures rather to pass the time in some pleasant fable than like philosophers to spend the day in profitable aphorisms, but when the black ox hath trod on their foot, and that age hales them on to old years, and the palm tree, as the preacher says, waxeth white, then will they repent those hours they have spent in tossing over such fruitless papers. Therefore, Greene, take this of me, as thou hast written many fond works, so from henceforth attempt nothing but of worth; let not thy pen stoop so low as vanity, nor thy wit be so far abused to paint out any precepts of fancy, but fly higher with the hobby, soar against the sun with the eagle, carry spices into thy nest with the phoenix, & do nothing but worthy thy wit and thy learning. Is not a diamond as soon cut as a pebble, a rose as soon planted as a weed, a good book as easily penned as a wanton pamphlet? Then, Greene, give thyself to write either of humanity, and as Tully did, set down thy mind *de officiis*, or else of moral virtue, and so be a profitable instructor of manners; do as the philosophers did, seek to bring youth to virtue with setting down axioms of good living, and do not persuade young gentlemen to folly by the acquainting themselves with thy idle works. I tell thee, books are companions and friends and counsellors, and therefore ought to be civil, honest, and discreet, lest they corrupt with false doctrine, rude manners, and vicious living, or else pen something of natural philosophy. Dive down into the aphorisms of the philosophers and see what nature hath done, and with thy pen paint that out to the world; let them see in the creatures the mightiness of the Creator; so shalt thou reap report worthy of memory. Thus, Greene, have I counselled thee, and the seven liberal sciences lie before thee as subjects whereon to write. Leave love and her follies; let Venus be a star to gaze

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at, or else if thou wilt needs poetically have her a woman, accept her an infamous strumpet to wonder at; let fancy alone, and meddle no more with affection; thou hast said enough, and if Augustus had lived, as much as would have deserved banishment. Now that I have counselled thee, tell me, Greene, what thinkest thou of my advertisement; how art thou resolved; dost thou not repent of thy time mis-spent in penning such fruitless pamphlets? Rising up reverently with my cap in my hand, I made them this answer.

The Author's Answer To Gower And Chaucer.

Learned & laureate, whose censures are authentical, I have noted your words with such attention that my mind is cleared of that doubt wherewith it hath been long blemished, for now I perceive, Father Chaucer, that I followed too long your pleasant vein in penning such amorous works, and that the fame that I sought after by such travail was nothing but smoke. I did with the southern wind bring in clouds to destroy myself, and like the smith, make a tool to breed mine own bane, and hunt after fame, when indeeds [sic] I found the ready path to infamy. My pamphlets have passed the press, and some have given them praise, but the gravest sort, whose mouths are the trumpets of true report, had spoken hardly of my labours, for which, if sorrow may make amends, I hope to acquit some part of my miss with penance, and in token (Father Gower) that what my tongue speaketh, my heart thinketh, I will begin from henceforth to hate all such follies, and to write of matters of some import, either moral, to discover the active course of virtue, how man should direct his life to the perfect felicity, or else to discourse as a naturalist of the perfection that nature hath planted in her creatures, thereby to manifest the excellent glory of the Maker, or some political axioms or acanonical [sic] precepts that may both generally and particularly profit the commonwealth. Henceforth, Father Gower, farewell the insight I had into love's secrets; let Venus rest in her sphere; I will be no astronomer to her influence; let affection die, and perish as a vapour that vanisheth in the air; my years grow towards the grave, and I have had bouts enough with fancy; they which held Greene for a patron of love and a second Ovid shall now think him a Timon of such lineaments, and a Diogenes that will bark at every amorous pen. Only this (Father Gower), I must end my *Nunquam sera est*, and for that I crave pardon, but for all these follies, that I may with the Ninevites show in sackcloth my hearty repentance, look as speedily as the press will serve for my *Mourning Garment*, a weed that I know is of so plain a cut that it will please the gravest eye and the most precise ear. Thus, Father Gower, thy counsel hath made me a convert & a penitent deeply sorrowful for the follies of my pen, but promising here that no idle fancies shall grow any more from my conceit, hoping you will take my hand for a pawn of the faith of my promise, I rest yours in all humble duty. At this Gower wrung me by the hand and smiled, and Chaucer shaked his head and fumed, all three rising, and ready to depart, when the meadow was all shadowed with a light which suddenly vanished and there appeared a man in great royalty, attired gorgeous in the habit of a king, carrying such gravity in his countenance as it struck both fear and reverence into my thoughts; at his presence Chaucer and Gower abashed, and both putting off their bonnets, fell on their knees; myself in a great maze did him such duty as belonged to a potentate, but still mine eyes gazed on the man, whose description take thus.

The Description Of Solomon.

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*His stature tall, large, and high,  
Limbed and featured beauteously,  
Chest was broad, arms were strong;  
Locks of amber passing long  
That hung and waved upon his neck,  
Heaven's beauty might they check;  
Visage fair and full of grace,  
Mild and stern, for in one place  
Sat mercy meekly in his eye  
And justice in his looks hard by;  
His robes of byss were crimson hue,  
Bordered round with twine of blue,  
In Tyre no richer silk sold,  
Over-braided all with gold;  
Costly set with precious stone,  
Such before I ne'er saw none,  
A massy crown upon his head  
Chequered through with rubies red,  
Orient pearl and bright topaz  
Did burnish out each valiant place;  
Thus this prince that seemed sage  
Did go in royal equipage.*

This gorgeous potentate drew near me, and taking me by the hand, lifted me up from the place where I kneeled, and said thus: My son, they which respect their fame are the children of wisdom, & such as fear the danger of report shall be holden virtuous. I know thy thoughts by thy looks, and thy face bewrays thy resolution. The *pro et contra* these have had about thy pamphlets, them I heard, though thou hast not seen me, and I have equally weighed their censures; Chaucer's opinion hath his [sic?] Master Gower refelled, and made them [sic?] by his counsel peremptory to leave the follies of the pen and all wanton amours to betake them [sic?] to philosophy and higher labours, but to divert thee from that opinion, my son, am I come to put knowledge in thy lips, and to teach thee wisdom. I am he that craved it of the Lord, and he gave me it, and made me wiser than the sons of men. Therefore hearken to my words, and let my sayings sink down into thy heart; so shalt thou be honoured in the streets & be had in estimation before the magistrate. Wisdom, my son, is more worth than precious stones, yea, all the things that thou canst desire are not to be compared to it. Wisdom hath her dwelling with knowledge, and prudent counsel is her own; with her is the fear of the Lord, and the eschewing of ill. As for pride and disdain, and a mouth that speaketh foolish things, she utterly abhorreth them. She gives counsel, & is a guide, and is full of understanding and strength; through her kings reign, through her princes make just laws, through her lords bear rule, & judges of the earth execute judgement; she is loving to those that love her, and they that seek her early shall find her. Riches and honour are with her, yea, excellent goodness and righteousness; her fruit is better than gold, & her increase more worth than fine silver. The Lord himself hath her in possession; therefore hearken to her, for blessed

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is that man that watcheth at her doors; whoso findeth her, findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord, and whoso offendeth against her, hurteth his own soul, and whoso hateth her is the lover of death. If then, my son, wisdom be so precious, how hast thou mis-spent thy youth that hast haunted after foolishness, and beaten thy brains about idle fancies, and yet are now resolving to continue in vanity; I tell thee, I have sought out to find what is perfect under the sun, and I have found nothing but wisdom without blemish.

Learning hath many branches, and teacheth her scholars many strange things, and yet my son, when thou hast waded the depth of her knowledge, and sought into the secret of her bosom, thou shalt find all thy labours to be vexations of mind and vanity. Canst thou number and extract as the cunning arithmetician, or with geometry measure the ground and level out the plains by the excellency of thine art? Canst thou reach unto the heavens with thy knowledge, and tell the course of the stars, setting down their aspects, oppositives, times, and sextiles, and discourse of the influence of every star; canst thou with music please thine ear, and with the medley of her cords make thy heart merry? Canst thou tell the secrets of philosophy, and like a cunning naturalist discover the hidden aphorisms of art, and set out the nature and operation of all things; well, my son, say thou canst write of all these things, yet when thou dost with a careful insight enter into a consideration what the and of all is, thou shalt find the study of them to be utter vexation of mind and vanity, and the fame that grows from such labours to vanish away like smoke or a vapour tossed with the wind; if then all be folly, seek wisdom, and she will teach thee the fear of the Lord. Therefore my son, follow my counsel from henceforth; as thou hast made a vow to leave effeminate fancies, and to proclaim thyself an open enemy to love, so abjure all other studies, seeing *Omnia sub coelo vanitas*, and only give thyself to theology; be a divine, my son, for her documents are severity and her food is the bread of life, her principles came from heaven and her words came from above; so shalt thou make amends for the follies of thy youth, and as thou hast seduced youth by thy wanton pamphlets, so shalt thou instruct them by thy godly labours. Divinity, why it is a study that far surpasseth all the seven liberal sciences, and the least spark that it doth lighten is more bright than all their fading glories; it comprehendeth the law of the Lord, and by it shalt thou know what the depth of his will is. Theology is mother of all knowledge, for from it cometh health of the soul, and through it thou shalt win men unto heaven. Then, my son, leave all other vain studies, and apply thyself to feed upon that heavenly manna whose taste shall comfort thy heart, and drink of those waters which shall spring in thee a well of life, and so shalt thou recover thy fame that thou hast lost, and be accounted of amongst the elders of the city. Covet not to blind thyself with the illusions that other arts present unto thee, for so shalt thou have the portion of the fool, and the end of thy labours shall be vanity, for all knowledge except it is mere folly, and there is no wisdom but the knowledge of the law of the Lord.

Therefore be not wise in thine own conceit, for he that will not hear instruction shall feel the smart of the rod. Divinity, I tell thee, is the true wisdom, and upon her right hand is long life, and upon her left hand is riches and honour; her ways are pleasant, and her paths are peaceable; she is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her, and blessed are they that keep her fast. The first point of wisdom is that thou be willing to obtain wisdom, and when thou hast got her, she will make thee a gracious head, and garnish thy

temples with a crown of glory; if then, my son, all knowledge, all sciences, all arts, all learning except theology be mere foolishness and vanity, leave the quiddities of logic and aphorisms of philosophy, and apply thy wits only to divinity. Hold not this precept light that I have given thee, nor disdain not my counsel, for I that speak to thee am Solomon.

All this he spake with such a majesty that the terror of his countenance affrighted me, and I started and awoke, and found myself in a dream, yet gentlemen, when I entered into the consideration of the vision, and called to mind not only the counsel of Gower but the persuasions of Solomon, a sudden fear tainted every limb, and I felt a horror in my conscience for the follies of my pen, whereupon, as in my dream, so awoke, I resolved peremptorily to leave all thoughts of love, and to apply my wits as near as I could to seek after wisdom so highly commended by Solomon, but howsoever the direction of my studies shall be limited me, as you had the blossoms of my wanton fancies, so you shall have the fruits of my better labours.

FINIS.

Rob. Greene.

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