

# ERASMUS DESIDERIUS

ONE DIALOGUE, OR  
COLLOQUYE OF  
ERASMUS (ENTITULED  
DIUERSORIA)

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¶ **The Translator to the indifferent reader**

If I were throughlye perswaded (gẽtle reader) yt mine attempt of the learned were in all points allowed and the order in my translation correspondent thereunto, I woulde at this present procede in mine enterprise, with entent by gods helpe to finishe the translation of the whole boke: But because I am vnlearned & therefore must not be mine owne iudge therein, I geue the here

a tast of my store for prooffe of mine abilitie: desiring the at the least wise not to be offended at the same so boldly attempted and simplye perfourmed. For sithe mine entent is good, & my good wil not small I dare at this present yelde it to thy curtesye. Fare wel.

## ¶ Thine in will (though not in power) E.H

### Diuersoria

## ¶ The speakers

### Bertulphe. William

Why haue men taken suche pleasure and felicity (I pray you) in tariynge ii. or iii. dayes at Lions together, when they trauaile through the contrey? if I fall to trauailinge once, be fore suche time as I be come vnto my iourneyes ende, me thinks I am neuer at quiet in my mind.

## **William**

¶ Say ye so indeede? And I put you out of doubt, I wonder howe men can bee withdrawen thence againe after they be once come thether.

## **Bertulphe**

¶ Yea doe? And how so I pray you?

## **William**

¶ Mary sir because that is the verye place from whence Ulisses companions coulde in no wise be gotten by perswasion. There are the sweet Mermaides (that are spoken of) I warrant ye. Assuredlie, no man is better vsed at home at his own house then a guest is entertained there in a common Inne.

## **Bertulphe**

¶ Why? What is their order and vsage there?

## William

¶ Some woman or other did alwayes attende vpon the table to cheere the company with pleasaunt talke and prety conceites. And I tell you the women are meruailous bewtiful and wel faouored there. Firste of all the good wife of the house came & welcomed vs, praying vs all there to bee merye, and to take well in woorth the suche poore cheere as shee hadde prouided: when shee was gone, in commeth her Daughter (beeinge a verye proper woman) and tooke her roome: also whose behauioure and tongue were so pleasaunt and delectable, that she was able to make euen the grimme Sire Cato to bee merye and laugh, and besyde that they doe not talke wyth theyr gwestes as with men whome they neuer sawe before, but euen so famylyarlye and freendlye, as if they were menne that were of their olde acquaintaunce.

## Bertulphe

¶ Yea, thys is the ciuilytye of Fraunce in deede.

## William

¶ And because the Mother and the Daughter coule not bee alwayes in the waye (for that they muste goe aboute theyr

houssholde businesse, and welcome their other guestes in other places) a pretye little minion Girle stode forthe there by and by (hauinge learned her lirinette and lesson alreadye in all pointes I warraunte you) to make all the pastime that mighte be possible, and to aunswere (at omnia quare) all such as shoulde be busye to talke and dally with her, So shee didde prolonge or vpholde the Enterlude, till the goodwifes Daughter came vnto vs againe. For as for the mother she was somewhat stricken in yeres.

## **Bertulphe**

¶ Yea but tell vs what good cheere yee had there (I praye you) for a manne cannot fill his bellye with pleasaunte talke you knowe well inoughe.

## **William**

¶ I promise you faithfullye wee had notable good chere there, in so much that I wonder how they can entertaine their guestes so good cheape as they doe. And then when our table was takē vp, they fedde oure mindes wyth their merye deuises, leaste wee shoulde thinke the time werysome. Me thought I was euen at home at mine owne house, and not a trauayler abroad in a straunge cōtry.

## Bertulphe

¶ And what was the facion in your bed chambers there?

## William

¶ Why? some wenches went in euerye corner giggelinge there, playing the wantons, and dalying with vs, of their owne motion they would aske whether we had any foule gere to washe or no. That they washed and brought vs cleane againe, what should I make a longe proces or circumstance, we sawe nothinge els there but wenches and wemen sauinge in the stable. And yet many times they would fetche their vagaries in thether also. When the gwestes be going awaye, they embrace them, and take their leaue sweetlye with suche kindnes and curtesye, as if they were all brethern, or (at least) nighe a kinne the one to the other.

## Bertulphe

¶ This behaiour doth well beseme Frenchmen peraduenture, how be it the fashions of Duche lande<sup>1</sup> shall go for my monye when all is done, which are altogether manlike.

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<sup>1</sup> *et passim* "Duche lande": i.e. Deutschland = Germany.

## William

¶ Yt was neuer my chaunce to see the Contreye yet: and therefore I pray you take so much paine as to tell in what sorte they entertaine a straunger with them.

## Bertulphe

¶ I am not sure whether it be so in euerye place or no, but I will not sticke to reherse that whiche I haue sene with mine owne eyes. There no man biddeth him welcome that comes, lest they shuld seme to go about to procure a guest. And that of all sauces, they accompt a dishonest and beggarly thing, and vnmete for their demurenes & grauetie. After you haue stode crying oute at the doore a good while, at the length some one or other pereth out his hed at the stoue<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> *et passim* "Stove: " *A sitting-room or bedroom heated with a furnace. Chiefly with reference to Germany, the Low Countries, Scandinavia, or Russia.* (OED). This is an older sense than the heating apparatus itself.

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