

# OVID

ARS AMATORIA; OR, THE  
ART OF LOVE

Ovid

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*Ars Amatoria, or The Art Of Love / Literally Translated into English Prose,  
with Copious Notes:*

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**Ovid**  
**Ars Amatoria, or The**  
**Art Of Love / Literally**  
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**BOOK THE FIRST**

Should any one of the people not know the art of loving, let him read me; and taught by me, on reading my lines, let him love. By art the ships are onward sped by sails and oars; by art are the light chariots, by art is Love, to be guided. In the chariot and in the flowing reins was Automedon skilled: in the Hæmonian ship of *Jason* Tiphys was the pilot. Me, too, skilled in my craft, has Venus made the guardian of Love. Of Cupid the Tiphys and the Automedon shall I be styled. Unruly indeed he is, and one who oft rebels against me; but he is a child; his age is tender and easy to be governed. The son of Philyra made the boy Achilles skilled at the lyre; and with his soothing art he subdued his ferocious disposition. He who so oft alarmed his own companions, so oft the foe, is believed to have stood in dread of an aged man full

of years. Those hands which Hector was doomed to feel, at the request of his master he held out for stripes [701](#) as commanded. Chiron was the preceptor of the grandson of Æacus, I of Love. Both of the boys were wild; both of a Goddess born. But yet the neck of even the bull is laden with the plough; and the reins are champed by the teeth of the spirited steed. To me, too, will Love yield; though, with his bow, he should wound my breast, and should brandish his torches hurled against me. The more that Love has pierced me, the more has he relentlessly inflamed me; so much the fitter avenger shall I be of the wounds so made.

Phoebus, I pretend not that these arts were bestowed on me by thee; nor by the notes of the birds of the air am I inspired. Neither Clio nor the sisters of Clio have been beheld by me, while watching, Ascra, in thy vales, my flocks. To this work experience gives rise; listen to a Poet well-versed. The truth will I sing; Mother of Love, favour my design. Be ye afar, [702](#) ye with the thin fillets on your hair, the mark of chastity; and thou, long flounce, which dost conceal the middle of the foot. We will sing of guiltless delights, and of thefts allowed; and in my song there shall be nought that is criminal.

In the first place, endeavour to find out an object which you may desire to love, you who are now coming for the first time to engage as a soldier in a new service. The next task after that, is to prevail on the fair by pleasing her. The third is, for her love to prove of long duration. This is my plan; this space shall be marked out by my chariot; this the turning-place to be grazed by

my wheels in their full career.

While you may, and while you are able to proceed with flowing reins; choose one to whom you may say, "You alone are pleasing to me." She will not come to you gliding through the yielding air; the fair one that suits must be sought with your eyes. The hunter knows full well where to extend the toils for the deer; full well he knows in what vale dwells the boar gnashing with his teeth. The shrubberies are known to the fowlers. He who holds out the hooks, knows what waters are swam in by many a fish. You, too, who seek a subject for enduring love, first learn in what spot the fair are to be met with. In your search, I will not bid you give your sails to the wind, nor is a long path to be trodden by you, that you may find her.

Let Perseus bear away his Andromeda from the tawny Indians, [703](#) and let the Grecian fair be ravished by Paris, the Phrygian hero. Rome will present you damsels as many, and full as fair; so that you will declare, that whatever has been on the earth, she possesses. As many ears of corn as Gargara has, as many clusters as Methymna; as many fishes as are concealed in the seas, birds in the boughs; as many stars as [704](#) heaven has, so many fair ones does your own Rome contain; and in her own City does the mother of Æneas hold her reign. Are you charmed by early and still dawning years, the maiden in all her genuineness will come before your eyes; or do you wish a riper fair, [705](#) a thousand riper will please you; you will be forced not to know which is your own choice. Or does an age mature and more staid delight you; this

throng too, believe me, will be even greater.

Do you only saunter at your leisure in the shade of Pompey's Portico, [706](#) when the sun approaches the back of the Lion of Hercules; [707](#) or where the mother [708](#) has added her own gifts to those of her son, a work rich in its foreign marble. And let not the Portico of Livia [709](#) be shunned by you, which, here and there adorned with ancient paintings, bears the name of its founder. Where, too, are the grand-daughters of Be-lus, [710](#) who dared to plot death for their wretched cousins, and where their enraged father stands with his drawn sword. Nor let Adonis, bewailed by Venus, [711](#) escape you; and the seventh holy-day observed by the Jew of Syria. [712](#) Nor fly from the Memphian temples of Isis the linen-wearing heifer; she has made many a woman [713](#) that which she was herself to Jove. Even the Courts, (who would have believed it?) are favourable to Love; and oft in the noisy Forum has the flame been found. Where the erection [714](#) of Appius, [715](#) adjoining the temple of Venus, built of marble, beats the air with its shooting stream; [716](#) in that spot full oft is the pleader seized by Love; and he that has defended others, the same does not defend himself. Oft in that spot are their words found wanting to the eloquent man; and new cares arise, and his own cause has to be pleaded. From her temple, which is adjoining, [717](#) Venus laughs at him. He who so lately was a patron, now wishes to become a client.

But especially at the curving Theatres do you hunt for prey: these places are even yet more fruitful for your desires. There

you will find what you may love, what you may trifle with, both what you may once touch, and what you may wish to keep. As the numberless ants come and go in lengthened train, when they are carrying their wonted food in the mouth that bears the grains; or as the bees, when they have found both their own pastures and the balmy meads, hover around the flowers and the tops of the thyme; so rush the best-dressed women to the thronged spectacles; a multitude that oft has kept my judgment in suspense. They come to see, they come that they themselves may be seen; to modest chastity these spots are detrimental.

Romulus, 'twas thou didst first institute the exciting games; at the time when the ravished Sabine fair [718](#) came to the aid of the solitary men. Then, neither did curtains [719](#) hang over the marble theatre, [720](#) nor was the stage [721](#) blushing with liquid saffron. There, the branches were simply arranged which the woody Palatium bore; the scene was void of art. On the steps made of turf sit the people; the branches promiscuously overshadowing their shaggy locks. They look about them, and they mark with their eyes, each for himself, the damsel which to choose; and in their silent minds they devise full many a plan. And while, as the Etrurian piper sends forth his harsh notes, the actor with his foot thrice beats the levelled ground; in the midst of the applause, (in those days applause was void of guile,) the King gives to his people the signal to be awaited for the spoil. At once, they start up, and, disclosing their intentions with a shout, lay their greedy hands upon the maidens. [722](#) As the doves,

a startled throng, fly from the eagles, and as the young Lamb flies from the wolves when seen; in such manner do they dread the men indiscriminately rushing on; the complexion remains in none, which existed there before. For their fear is the same; the symptoms of their fear not the same. Some tear their hair; some sit without consciousness; one is silent in her grief; another vainly calls upon her mother; this one laments; this one is astounded; this one carries; that one takes to flight. The ravished fair ones are carried off, a matrimonial spoil; and shame itself may have been becoming to many a one. If one struggled excessively, and repelled her companion; borne off, the man himself lifted her into his eager bosom. And thus he spoke: "Why spoil your charming eyes with tears? What to your mother your father was, the same will I be to you." Romulus, 'twas thou alone didst understand how to give rewards to thy soldiers. Give such a reward to me, and I will be a soldier. In good truth, from that transaction, the festive Theatres, even to this day, continue to be treacherous to the handsome.

And let not the contest of the noble steeds escape you; the roomy Circus of the people has many advantages. There is no need there of fingers, with which to talk over your secrets; nor must a hint be taken by you through nods. Be seated next to your mistress, there being no one to prevent it; press your side to her side as close as ever you can; and conveniently enough, because the partition [723](#) compels you to sit close, even if she be unwilling; and because, by the custom of the place, the fair

one must be touched by you. Here let the occasion be sought by you for some friendly chat, and let the usual subjects [724](#) lead to the first words. Take care, and enquire, with an air of Anxiety, whose horses those are, coming; and without delay, whoever it is to whom she wishes well, to him do you also wish well. But when the thronged procession shall walk with the holy statues of ivory, [725](#) do you applaud your mistress Venus with zealous hand. And, as often happens, if perchance a little dust should fall on the bosom of the fair, it must be brushed off with your fingers [726](#) and if there should be no dust, still brush off that none; let any excuse be a prelude to your attentions. If her mantle, hanging too low, shall be trailing on the earth, gather it up, and carefully raise it from the dirty ground. [727](#) At once, as the reward of your attention, the fair permitting it, her ancles will chance to be seen by your eyes. Look, too, behind, who shall be sitting behind you, that he may not press her tender back with his knee against it. [728](#) Trifles attract trifling minds. It has proved to the advantage of many a one, to make a cushion with his ready hand. [729](#) It has been of use, too, to waft a breeze with the graceful fan, and to place the hollow footstool beneath her delicate feet. Both the Circus, and the sand spread for its sad duties [730](#) in the bustling Forum, will afford these overtures to a dawning passion. On that sand, oft has the son of Venus fought; and he who has come to be a spectator of wounds, himself receives a wound. [731](#) While he is talking, and is touching her hand, and is asking for the racing list; [732](#) and, having deposited the stake, [733](#) is enquiring which

has conquered, wounded, he sighs, and feels the flying dart, and, himself, becomes a portion of the spectacle so viewed.

Besides; when, of late, [734](#) Cæsar, on the representation of a rival fight, introduced [735](#) the Persian and Athenian ships; in truth, from both seas came youths, from both came the fair; and in the City was the whole of the great world. Who, in that throng, did not find an object for him to love? How many, alas! did a foreign flame torment? See! Cæsar prepares [736](#) to add what was wanting to the world subdued; now, remote East, our own shalt thou be! Parthian, thou shalt give satisfaction; entombed Crassi, rejoice; [737](#) ye standards, too, that disgracefully submitted to barbarian hands. Your avenger is at hand, and proves himself a general in his earliest years; and, while a boy, is conducting a war not fitted to be waged by a boy. Cease, in your fears, to count the birth-days of the Gods: [738](#) valour is the lot of the Cæsars, in advance of their years. The divine genius rises more rapidly than its years, and brooks not the evils of slow delay. The Tirynthian hero was a baby, and he crushed two serpents in his hands; even in his cradle he was already worthy of Jove. Bacchus, who even now art a boy, how mighty wast thou then, when conquered India dreaded thy thyrsi! With the auspices and the courage of thy sire, thou, Youth, shalt wield arms; and with the courage and the auspices of thy sire shalt thou conquer. Such first lessons are thy due, under a name so great; now the first of the youths, [739](#) at a future day to be the first of the men. Since thou hast brothers, [740](#) avenge thy brethren slain; and since thou

hast a sire, [741](#) vindicate the rights of thy sire. He, the father of thy country and thine own, hath put thee in arms; the enemy is tearing realms away from thy reluctant sire. Thou wilt wield the weapons of duty, the foe arrows accursed; before thy standard, Justice and Duty will take their post. By the badness of their cause, the Parthians are conquered; in arms, too, may they be overcome; may my hero add to Latium the wealth of the East. Both thou, father Mars, and thou, father Cæsar, grant your divine favour as he sets out; for the one of you is now a Deity, thou, the other, wilt so be.

What, Parthian, dost thou leave to the conquered, who dost fly that thou mayst overcome? Parthian, even now has thy mode of warfare an unhappy omen. And will that day then come, on which thou, the most graceful of all objects, glittering with gold, shalt go, drawn by the four snow-white steeds? Before thee shall walk the chiefs, their necks laden with chains; that they may no longer, as formerly, be secure in flight. The joyous youths, and the mingled fair, shall be looking on; and that day shall gladden the minds of all. And when some one of the fair shall enquire the names of the Monarchs, what places, what mountains, or what rivers are borne in the procession; answer to it all; and not only if she shall make any inquiry; even what you know not, relate, as though known perfectly well. \*

This is the Euphrates, [742](#) with his forehead encircled with reeds; the one whose [743](#) azure hair is streaming down, will be the Tigris. Make these to be the Armenians; this is Persia, sprung

from Danaë; [744](#) that was a city in the vales of Achæmenes. This one or that will be the leaders; and there will be names for you to call them by; correctly, if you can; if not, still by such as suggest themselves.

Banquets, too, with the tables arranged, afford an introduction; there is something there besides wine for you to look for. Full oft does blushing Cupid, with his delicate arms, press the soothed horns of Bacchus there present. And when the wine has besprinkled the soaking wings of Cupid, there he remains and stands overpowered on the spot of his capture. He, indeed, quickly flaps his moistened wings; but still it is fatal [745](#) for the breast to be sprinkled by Love. Wine composes to choose an object for you to love, where to lay your nets. Now, I attempt to teach you, by what arts she must be captured who has pleased you, a work of especial skill. Ye men, whoever you are, and in every spot, give attention eager to be informed; and give, all people, a favourable ear to the realization of my promises. First of all, let a confidence enter your mind, that all women may be won; you will win them; do you only lay your toils. Sooner would the birds be silent in spring, the grasshoppers in summer, sooner would the Mænalian dog turn its back upon the hare, than the fair, attentively courted, would resist the youth. She, however, will wish you to believe, so far as you can, that she is reluctant.

Lo! I utter a prophecy; thou wilt conquer, and I shall offer the lines which I have vowed; and with a loud voice wilt thou have to be celebrated by me. Thou wilt there be taking thy stand,

and in my words thou wilt be animating thy troops. O that my words may not prove unworthy of thy spirit! I will celebrate both the backs of the Parthians as they fly, and the valour of the Romans, and the darts and the feelings, and makes them ready to be inflamed; care flies, and is drenched with plenteous wine. Then come smiles; then the poor man resumes his confidence then grief and cares and the wrinkles of the forehead depart. Then candour, most uncommon in our age, reveals the feelings, the God expelling *all* guile. On such occasions, full oft have the fair captivated the hearts of the youths; and Venus amid wine, has proved flames in flame. Here do not you trust too much to the deceiving lamp; [746](#) both night and wine are unsuited to a judgment upon beauty. In daylight, and under a clear sky, did Paris view the Goddesses, when he said to Venus: "Thou, Venus, dost excel them both." By night, blemishes are concealed, and pardon is granted to every imperfection; and that hour renders every woman beauteous. Consult the daylight about jewels, about wool steeped in purple; consult the daylight about the figure and the proportion.

Why enumerate the resorts of fair ones suited for your search? The sands would yield to my number. Why mention Baiæ, [747](#) and the shores covered with sails, and the waters which send forth the smoke from the warm sulphur? Many a one carrying thence a wound in his breast, has exclaimed; "This water was not so wholesome as it was said to be." See, too, the temple in the grove of suburban Diana, and the realms acquired with the sword by

hostile hand. [748](#) Because she is a virgin, because she hates the darts of Cupid, she has given many a wound to the public, *and* will give many *still*.

Thus far, Thalia borne upon unequal wheels, [749](#) teaches where the foeman hurls from his flying steed.

As stealthy courtship is pleasing to the man, so, too, is it to the fair. The man but unsuccessfully conceals his passion; with more concealment does she desire. Were it agreed among the males not to be the first to entreat any female, the conquered fair would soon act the part of the suppliant. In the balmy meads, the female lows after the bull; the female is always neighing after the horny-hoofed horse. Passion in us is more enduring, and not so violent; among men the flame has reasonable bounds. Why mention Byblis, who burned with a forbidden passion for her brother, and who resolutely atoned with the halter for her crimes? Myrrha loved her father, but not as a daughter ought; and she now lies hid, overwhelmed by the bark [750](#) that grew over her. With her tears too, which she distils from the odoriferous tree, are we perfumed; and the drops still retain the name of their mistress.

By chance, in the shady vales of the woody Ida, there was a white hull, the glory of the herd, marked with a little black in the middle between his horns; there was but one spot; the rest was of the complexion of milk. The heifers of Gnosus and of Cydon [751](#) sighed to mate with him. Pasiphaë delighted to become the paramour of the bull; in her jealousy she hated the beauteous cows. I sing of facts well known: Crete, which contains

its hundred cities, untruthful as it is, [752](#) cannot gainsay them. She herself is said to have cut down fresh leaves and the tenderest grass with hand unused to such employment.

She goes as the companion of the herds; so going, no regard for her husband restrains her; and by a bull [753](#) is Minos conquered. "Of what use, Pasiphaë, is it to put on those costly garments? This love of thine understands nothing about wealth. What hast thou to do with a mirror, when accompanying the herds of the mountain? Why, foolish one, art thou so often arranging thy smoothed locks? Still, do thou believe that mirror, that denies that thou art a heifer. How much couldst thou wish for horns to spring up upon thy forehead! If Minos still pleases thee, let no paramour be sought; but if thou wouldst rather deceive thy husband, deceive him through a being that is human."

Her chamber abandoned, the queen is borne over the groves and the forests, just as a Bacchanal impelled by the Aonian God. Alas! how oft with jealous look does she eye a cow, and say, "Why is she thus pleasing to my love? See how she skips before him on the tender grass! I make no doubt that the fool thinks that it is becoming to her." Thus she spoke, and at once ordered her to be withdrawn from the vast herd, and, in her innocence, to be dragged beneath the bending yoke; or else she forced her to fall before the altars, and rites feigned for the purpose; and, with joyous hand, she held the entrails of her rival. How often did she propitiate the Deities with her slain rivals, and say, as she held the entrails, "Now go and charm my love!" And sometimes she

begged that she might become Europa, sometimes Io; because the one was a cow, the other borne upon a bull. Still, deceived by a cow made of maple-wood, the leader of the herd impregnated her; and by the offspring was the sire [754](#) betrayed.

If the Cretan dame [755](#) had withheld from love for Thyestes (alas! how hard it is for a woman possibly to be pleasing to one man only!) Phoebus would not have interrupted his career in the midst, and, his chariot turned back, retreated, with his returning steeds, to the morn. The daughter, who spoiled [756](#) Nisus of his purple locks, presses beneath her thigh and groin the raving dogs. The son of Atreus, who escaped from Mars by land, and Neptune on the waves, was the mournful victim of his wife. By whom have not been lamented the flames [757](#) of the Ephyrean Creusa? Medea, the parent, too, stained with the blood of her children? Phoenix, the son of Amyntor, [758](#) wept with his blinded eyes; you, startled steeds, tore Hippolytus in pieces. Why, Phineus, dost thou tear out the eyes of thy guiltless sons? [759](#) That punishment will revert to thy own head.

All these things have been caused by the passion of females. It is more violent than ours, and has more frenzy *in it*. Come then, and doubt not that you can conquer all the fair: out of so many, there will be hardly one to deny you. What they yield, and what they refuse, still are they glad to be asked for. Even if you are deceived, your repulse is without danger. But why should you be deceived, since new pleasures are delightful, and since what is strange attracts the feelings more than what is one's own? [760](#)

The crop [761](#) of corn is always more fertile in the fields of other people; and the herds of our neighbours have their udders more distended.

But first, be it your care to make acquaintance with the handmaid of the fair one to be courted; she can render your access easy. [762](#) Take care that she is deep in the secrets of her mistress, and not too little entrusted with her secret frolics. Her do you bribe with promises, her with entreaties; you will obtain what you ask with little trouble, if she shall be willing. Let her choose the time (physicians, even, watch their time) when the feelings of her mistress are pliant, and easy to be influenced. Then will her feelings be easily influenced, when, in the best humour in the world, she shall be smiling, just as the corn on the rich soil. While hearts are joyous, and not closed by sadness, *then* are they assailable; then with soothing arts does Venus steal on apace. At the time when Troy was in sorrow, she was defended by arms; when joyous, she admitted the horse pregnant with its soldiers. Then, too, must she be assailed, when she shall be fretting on being offended by a rival; then effect it by your means that she go not unrevenged. Let her handmaid, as she combs her hair in the morning, urge her on; and to the sail let her add the resources of the oar. And, sighing to herself, let her say, in gentle murmurs: "In my idea, you yourself cannot pay him in return." [763](#) Then let her talk about you; then let her add persuasive expressions; and let her swear that you are perishing with frantic passion. But speed on, let not the sails fall, and the breezes lull:

like brittle ice, anger disappears in lapse of time.

You inquire if it is of use [764](#) to win the handmaid herself? In such attempts there is a great risk. This one becomes *more* zealous after an intrigue; that one more tardy; the one procures you as a gift for her mistress, the other for her own self. The result is doubtful; although she should favour your advances, still it is my advice, to refrain from so doing. I shall not go over headlong *tracks*, and over sharp crags; and, under my guidance, no youth shall be deceived. Even if she pleases you, while she gives and receives the letters, by her person, and not only by her zealousness alone; take care and gain her mistress first; let the other follow as her companion; your courtship must not be commenced with a servant-maid. This one thing I advise you (if you only put some trust in my skill, and if the boisterous wind does not bear my words over the seas): either do not attempt, or else do you persist; the informer is removed, when once she herself has shared in the criminality. The bird does not easily escape when its wings are bird-limed; the boar does not readily get away from the loose nets: the wounded fish can be held by the hook it has seized. Once tried, press her hard, and do not retreat, but as the conqueror. Then, guilty of a fault that is common to you both, she will not betray you; and the sayings and doings of her mistress will be well known to you. But let this be well concealed; if your informant shall be well concealed, your mistress will ever be under your eye.

He is mistaken who supposes that time is the object of those

only who till the fields, and is to be observed by mariners alone. Neither must the corn be always trusted to the treacherous soil; nor the hollow ships at all times to the green waves; nor is it safe to be ever angling for the charming fair. The same thing may often be better done when an opportunity offers. Whether it is her birthday [765](#) that comes, or whether the Calends, [766](#) which Venus delights to have as the successor of the month of Mars; or whether the Circus shall be adorned, not with statues, as it was before, but shall be containing the wealth of kings [767](#) exposed to view; delay your project; then the storm is boisterous, then the Pleiades prevail; [768](#) then, the tender Kid is sinking in the ocean wave. Then, 'tis well to desist; then, if one trusts the deep, with difficulty he grasps the shipwrecked fragments of his dismantled bark. You may make a beginning on the day on which tearful Allia [769](#) was stained with the blood of the Latian wounds; on the day, too, when the festival recurs, observed each seventh day by the Syrian of Palestine, a day not suited for [770](#) the transaction of business.

Great must be [771](#) your dread of the birthday of your mistress, and unlucky be that day on which any present must be made. Though you should cleverly avoid her, still she will spoil you; a woman finds contrivances, by means of which to plunder the riches of the eager lover. The loosely-clad pedlar [772](#) will be coming to your mistress, so fond of buying, and while you are by, will be exposing his wares. She will ask you to examine them, only that you may appear to be knowing; then she will give you

a kiss, and then entreat you to purchase. She will swear that she will be content with this for many a year; she will say that now she has need of it, now it may be bought a bargain. If you shall make the excuse that you have not the money at home to give; a promissory note [773](#) will be asked for; it would then profit you not to have learned [774](#) to write. Besides, too; when she asks for a present, as though for the birth-day cake, [775](#) and is born for her own pleasure as often as she pleases. And further; when, full of tears, she laments her pretended loss, and the jewel [776](#) is feigned to have fallen from her pierced ear. They ask for many a sum to be lent them; so lent, they have no inclination to return them. You lose the whole; and no thanks are there for your loss. Had I ten mouths, with tongues as many, they would not suffice for me to recount the abominable contrivances of courtesans.

Let the wax that is poured upon the polished tablets first try the ford; let the wax first go as the messenger of your feelings. Let it carry your compliments; and whoever you are, add expressions that feign you to be in love, and entreaties not a few. Achilles, moved with his entreaties, granted Hector to Priam; an angered Divinity is moved by the voice of entreaty. Take care to make promises: for what harm is there in promising? Any person whatever can be rich in promises. Hope, if she is only once cherished, holds out for a long time; she is, indeed, a deceitful Goddess, but still a convenient one. Should you give her [777](#) anything, you may for that reason be abandoned by her: she will bear off the gift-by-gone, and will have lost nothing in return. But

that which you have not given, you may always seem as though about to give; thus has the sterile field full oft deceived its owner. So the gambler, in order that he may not lose, does not cease to lose; and the alluring dice ever recall the anxious hand. This is the task, this the labour; to gain her without even the first present. What she has once given, she will always give, that she may not have granted to no purpose. Let the letter go then, and let it be couched in tender expressions; and let it ascertain her feelings, and be the first to feel its way. A letter borne upon an apple [778](#) deceived Cydippe; and by her own words the fair was unconsciously caught.

Youths of Rome, learn, I recommend you, the liberal arts; and not only that you may defend the trembling accused. Both the public, and the grave judge, and the silent Senate, as well as the fair, conquered by your eloquence, shall extend their hands. [779](#) But let your power lie concealed: and do not be eloquent at the first. Let your letters avoid difficult words. Who, but one bereft of sense, would declaim before a charming mistress? Full oft has a letter proved a powerful cause for hatred. Let your language be intelligible, and your words the usual ones; but pleasing, so that you may seem to be speaking in person. Should she not accept your letter, and send it back unread, hope that she will read it, and persist in your design. In time the stubborn oxen come beneath the ploughs: in time the steeds are taught to submit to the flowing reins: by continued use the ring of iron [780](#) is consumed: by being in the ground continually, the crooked plough is worn out.

What is there harder than stone? What more yielding than water? Yet hard stones are hollowed out by yielding water. Only persist, and in time you will overcome Penelope herself. You see that Pergamus was taken after a long time; still, it was taken.

If she reads it, and will not write in answer, do not attempt to compel her. Do you only make her to be continually reading your flattering lines. What she has been pleased to read, she will be pleased to answer when read. *All* these things will come in their turn, and by degrees. Perhaps even, at first, a discouraging letter will come to you; and one that entreats you not to wish to molest her. What she entreats you *to do*, she dreads; what she does not entreat you *to do*, *namely*, to persist, she wishes you *to do*. Press on; and soon you will be the gainer of your desires. In the meantime, if she shall be carried lying along upon her couch, do you, as though quite by accident, approach the litter of your mistress; and that no one may give a mischievous ear to your words, cunningly conceal, them so far as you can in doubtful signs. If, with sauntering foot, the spacious Portico is paced by her; here, too, do you bestow your leisure in her attendance. And sometimes do you take care to go before; sometimes follow behind; and sometimes be in a hurry, and sometimes walk leisurely. And be not ashamed to pass from the throng under some of the columns, [781](#) or to walk with her, side by side. And let her not be seated long without you in the curving Theatre; in her shoulders she will bring something for you to be spectator of. Her you may gaze upon, her you may admire; much may you say

by your brows, much by your gestures. Clap too, when the actor is dancing [782](#) in the part of some damsel; and whatever lover is represented, him applaud. Rise when she rises; sit as long as she is seated; employ your time at the caprice of your mistress.

But let it not please you to curl your hair with the irons: [783](#) and rub not your legs with the rough pumice. [784](#) Bid those do this, [785](#) in whose Phrygian notes the Cybeleian Mother is celebrated by their yells. A neglect of beauty becomes men, Theseus bore off the daughter of Minos, though his temples were bedecked by no cringing-pin. Phædra loved Hippolytus, [786](#) and he was not finely trimmed. Adonis, habituated to the woods, was the care of a Goddess. But let neatness please you; let your body be bronzed on the Plain of Mars: [787](#) let your robe be well-fitting, and without a spot. Let your tongue, too, not be clammy; [788](#) your teeth free from yellowness; and let not your foot wallop about, losing itself in the shoe down at heel. Let not the cutting shockingly disfigure your hair bolt upright; let your locks, let your beard be trimmed by a skilful hand. Let your nails, too, not be jagged, and let them be without dirt; and let no hairs project from the cavities of your nostrils. And let not the breath of your ill-smelling mouth be offensive; and let not the husband and the father of the flock [789](#) offend the nostrils. The rest, allow the luxurious fair to do; and any man that perchance disgracefully seeks to attract another.

Lo! Bacchus calls his own Poet: he, too, aids those who love; and he encourages the flame with which he burns himself. The

Gnossian fair was wandering distractedly on the unknown sands, where little Dia is beaten by the ocean waves. And, just as she was *on awaking* from her sleep, [790](#) clothed in a loose tunic, with bare feet, and having her yellow hair loose, she was exclaiming to the deaf waves that Theseus was cruel, while the piteous shower of tears was moistening her tender cheeks. She exclaimed, and at the same moment she wept; but both became her, nor was she rendered unsightly by her tears. And now again beating her most beautiful bosom with her hands, she cried—"That perfidious man has gone; what will become of me?"

"What will become of me?" she said; when cymbals resounded over all the shore, and tambourines were beaten with frantic hand. She dropped down with alarm, and stopped short in her closing words; and no blood was there in her lifeless body. See! the Mimallonian females, [791](#) with their locks flowing on their backs; see! the nimble Satyrs, the throng preceding the God; see! Silenus, the drunken old man, [792](#) on his bending ass, sits there with difficulty, and holds fast by the mane that he presses. While he follows the Bacchanals, the Bacchanals both fly and return: while the unskilful rider is goading on his animal with his stick, slipping from the long-eared ass, he tumbles upon his head. The Satyrs cry aloud, "Come, rise up; rise, father!" Now, the God, from his chariot, the top of which he had wreathed with grapes, loosened the golden reins for the tigers yoked to it. Both her complexion, and Theseus, and her voice forsook the fair one; and thrice she attempted flight, and thrice

was she detained by fear. She shuddered, just as the barren ears of corn, which the wind shakes; just as the slender reed quivers in the swampy marsh.

To her the Divinity said, "Lo! I come to thee a more constant lover; damsel of Gnossus, lay aside thy fear, the wife of Bacchus shalt thou be. Receive heaven as my gift: a conspicuous Constellation in the heavens, full oft, Cretan Diadem, [793](#) shalt thou direct the veering bark." Thus he said; and he leapt from the chariot, that she might not be in dread of the tigers; the sand yielded to his foot placed upon it. And folding her in his bosom he bore her off; for to struggle she was unable: how easy 'tis for a God to be able to do anything. Some sing "Hymenæus," some cry "Evie, Evoë!" [794](#) Thus are the God and his bride united in holy wedlock.

Therefore, when the gifts of Bacchus placed before you fall to your lot, and the fair one shall be a sharer in the convivial couch; pray both to father Nyctelius, and his nocturnal rites, that they will bid the wine not to take effect on your head. Here, in secret discourse, you may say to her many a free word, which she may understand is addressed to her; and you may trace out short compliments with a little wine, so that she may read on the table [795](#) that she is your favorite; and look on her eyes with eyes that confess your flame; the silent features often have both words and expression. Take care to be the next to seize the cup that has been touched by her lips; and drink from the side [796](#) that the fair drinks from. And whatever food she shall have touched with

her fingers, [797](#) do you reach for it; and while you are reaching, her hand may be touched by you. Let it also be your object to please the husband of the fair; *once* made a friend, he will be more serviceable for your designs. If you are drinking by lot, [798](#) grant him the first turn: let the chaplet, taken from your own head, be presented to him. Whether he is below you, or whether your neighbour, let him help Himself to every thing first; and do not hesitate to speak only after he has spoken. Secure and much frequented is the path, for deceiving through the name of friendship. Secure and much frequented though that path be; *still* it is to be condemned. For this cause 'tis that the agent attends even too much [799](#) to his agency, and thinks that more things ought to be looked after by him than those entrusted to him.

A sure rule for drinking shall be given you by me: let both your mind and your feet ever observe their duty. Especially avoid quarrels stimulated by wine, and hands too ready for savage warfare. Eurytion [801](#) met his death from foolishly quaffing the wine set before him. Banquets and wine are rather suited for pleasant mirth. If you have a voice, sing; if pliant arms, dance; and by whatever talent you can amuse, amuse. As real drunkenness offends, so feigned *inebriety* will prove of service. Let your deceiving tongue stutter with lispings accents; so that whatever you shall do or say with more freedom than usual, it may be supposed that excess of wine is the cause. And express all good wishes for your mistress; all good wishes for him who shares her couch; but in your silent thoughts pray for curses on

her husband. But when, the tables removed, the guests shall be going, (the very crowd will afford you access and room) mix in the throng: and quietly stealing up [802](#) to her as she walks, twitch her side with your fingers; and touch her foot with your foot.

Now is the time come for some conversation: fly afar hence, coy bashfulness, let Chance and Venus befriend the daring. Let your eloquence not be subject to any laws of mine; only make a beginning, of your own accord you will prove fluent. You must act the lover, and wounds must be feigned in your words. Hence let confidence be sought by you, by means of any contrivances whatever. And 'tis no hard matter to be believed; each woman seems to herself worthy to be loved. Though she be ugly in the extreme, to no one are her own looks displeasing. Yet often, he that pretends to love, begins in reality: full oft he becomes that which in the beginning he feigned to be. For this cause, the rather, O ye fair, be propitious to those who pretend. That passion will become real, which so lately was feigned.

Now be it your part stealthily to captivate her affection by attentions; just as the shelving bank is encroached on by the flowing stream. Be not tired of praising either her face or her hair; her taper fingers too, and her small foot. The praise of their beauty pleases even the chaste; their charms are the care and the pleasure of even maidens. For, why, even now, are Juno and Pallas ashamed at not having gained the decision in the Phrygian groves? The bird of Juno [803](#) exposes her feathers, when praised; if you look at them in silence, she conceals her treasures. Amid

the contests of the rapid course, their trimmed manes, and their patted necks, delight the steeds.

Promise, too, without hesitation: promises attract the fair: make any Gods you please to be witnesses of what you promise. Jupiter, from on high, smiles at the perjuries of lovers, and commands the Æolian South winds to sweep them away as worthless, Jupiter was accustomed to swear falsely to Juno by the Styx: now is he himself indulgent to his own precedent. 'Tis expedient that there should be Gods; [804](#) and as it is expedient, let us believe them to exist. Let frankincense and wine be presented on their ancient altars. No repose, free from care and similar to sleep, possesses them; live in innocence, for a Divinity is ever present. Restore the pledge; let piety observe her duties; be there no fraud; keep your hands free from bloodshed.

Deceive, if you are wise, the fair alone with Impunity; for this one piece of deceit only is good faith to be disregarded. Deceive the deceivers; in a great measure they are all a guilty race; let them fall into the toils which they have spread. Egypt is said to have been without showers that refresh the fields: and to have been parched during nine years. When Thrasius went to Busiris, [805](#) and showed that Jupiter could be propitiated by shedding the blood of strangers; to him Busiris said, "Thou shalt become the first sacrifice to Jove, and, a stranger, thou shalt produce rain for Egypt." Phalaris, too, burnt in the bull the limbs of the cruel Perillus; the unhappy inventor was the first to make proof of his work. Each of them was just; and, indeed, no law is there

more righteous, than that the contrivers of death should perish by their own contrivances. Therefore, since perjuries with justice impose upon the perjured, let woman grieve, deceived through a precedent her own.

Tears, too, are of utility: by tears you will move adamant. Make her, if you can, to see your moistened cheeks. If tears shall fail you, for indeed they do not always come in time, touch your eyes with your wet hand. What discreet person would not mingle kisses with tender words? Though she should not grant them; still take them ungranted. Perhaps she will struggle at first, and will say, "You naughty man!" still, in her struggling, she will wish to be overcome. Only, let them not, rudely snatched, hurt her tender lips, and take care that she may not be able to complain that they have proved a cause of pain. He who has gained kisses, if he cannot gain the rest as well, will deserve to lose even that which has been granted him. How much is there wanting for unlimited enjoyment after a kiss! Oh shocking! 'twere *downright* clownishness, and not modesty. Call it violence, if you like; such violence is pleasing to the fair; they often wish, through compulsion, to grant what they are delighted *to grant*. Whatever fair one has been despoiled by the sudden violence of passion, she is delighted at it; and the chief is as good as a godsend. But she, who, when she might have been carried by storm, has escaped untouched, though, in her features, she should pretend gladness, will *really* be sorry. Phoebe suffered [806](#) violence; to her sister was violence offered; and pleasing was

either ravisher to the ravished. The damsel of Scyros being united to the Hæmonian hero, is a well-known story indeed, but not unworthy to be related.

Now, the Goddess, worthy to conquer the other two at the foot of mount Ida, had given her reward of the approval of her beauty. Now, from a distant region, had a daughter-in-law come to Priam: and within Ilian walls there was a Grecian wife. All swore in the words of the affronted husband; for the grief of one was the common cause. A disgraceful thing, had he not yielded in this to the entreaties of his mother, Achilles had concealed his manhood by the long garments. What art thou doing, descendant of Æacus? The wool is no task of thine. Do thou seek glory by other arts of Pallas. What hast thou to do with work-baskets? [807](#) Thy hand is fitted for holding the shield. Why hold the allotted flax in thy right hand, by which Hector shall fall? Spurn those spindles enwrapped in the laborious warp; the lance from Pelion is to be brandished by that hand. By chance in the same chamber there was a royal maiden; in her own undoing she found that he was a male. By force, indeed, was she overcome, so we must believe: but still, by force was she willing to be overcome. Many a time did she say, "Stay," when now Achilles was hastening *to depart*; for, the distaff laid aside, he had assumed valiant arms. Where now is this violence? Why, with gentle voice, Deidamia, dost thou detain the perpetrator of thy disgrace? As, forsooth, there is shame in first beginning at any time, so 'tis pleasing *to the fair* to submit, when the other takes the initiative.

Alas! too great is the confidence of any youth in his own good looks, if he awaits for her to be the first to ask him. Let the man make the first approaches; let the man use words of entreaty; she will kindly receive his soft entreaties. To gain *your wish*, ask; *she only wishes to be asked*. Tell her the cause and the origin of your desires. Jupiter came as a suppliant to the Heroines of olden times; [808](#) no fair one found fault with great Jove. But if you perceive puffed-up vanity to be the result of your prayers, desist from your design, and withhold your advances. Many desire that which flies from them, and hate that which is close at hand. By pressing on less eagerly, remove all weariness of yourself. Nor must your hope of enjoyment be always confessed by you as you entreat; let Love make his entrance concealed beneath the name of friendship. By this introduction, I have seen the prudish fair deceived; he who was the friend, became the lover. A fair complexion is unbecoming in a sailor; he ought to be swarthy, from the spray of the sea and the rays of the sun. It is unbecoming, too, to the husbandman, who, with his crooked plough and his heavy harrows, is always turning up the ground in the open air. And if your body is fair, you, by whom the glory of the chaplet of Pallas [809](#) is sought, you will be unsightly.

Let every one that is in love be pale; that is the proper complexion for one in love. That is becoming; from your features, let the fair think that you are not in good health. Pale with love for Lyrice, [810](#) did Orion wander in the woods; pale for the Naiad, in her indifference, was Daphnis. [811](#) Thinness,

too, shows the feelings; and think it no disgrace to put a hood over your shining looks. Let sleepless nights attenuate the bodies of the youths; care, too, and the grief that proceeds from violent love. That you may gain your desires, be wretched, that he who sees you may be able to say, "You are in love."

Shall I complain, or *only* remind you how all right and wrong is confused? Friendship is but a name, constancy an empty title. Alas! alas! it is not safe to praise the object that you love to your friend. When he has credited your praises, he supplants you. But the descendant of Actor did not defile the couch of Achilles; so far as Pirithous was concerned, Phædra was chaste. Pylades [812](#) loved Hermione, with the affection with which Phoebus loved Pallas; and he was such, daughter of Tyndarus, as thy twin brother Castor was towards thee. If any one expects the same, let him expect that the tamarisks will bear apples, and let him look for honey in the middle of the stream. Nothing pleases but what is base; his own gratification is the object of each. This, too, becomes pleasant from the sorrow of another. Oh disgraceful conduct! no enemy is to be dreaded by the lover. Shun those whom you think trustworthy; then you will be safe. Shun your kinsman, and your brother, and your dear friend; this class will cause you real alarm.

I was *here* about to conclude; but there are various dispositions in the fair; treat these thousand dispositions in a thousand *different* ways. The same soil does not produce everything; one suits the vine, another the olive; in this, corn springs

up vigorously. There are as many characters in these various dispositions, as there are forms in the world; the man that is wise, will adapt himself to these innumerable characters. And as at one moment Proteus will make himself flow in running water; and now will be a lion, now a tree, now a shaggy goat. These fish are taken with a dart, [813](#) those with hooks; these the encircling nets draw up, the rope being extended. And let no one method be adopted by you for all years. The aged hind will espy from a greater distance your contrivances. Should you seem learned to the ignorant, or forward to the bashful, she will at once distrust herself, now apprehensive. Thence it happens, that she who has dreaded to trust herself to the well-bred man, *often* falls into the embrace of some worthless inferior.

A part remains of the task which I have undertaken, a part is completed; here let the anchor, thrown out, hold fast my bark.

## BOOK THE SECOND

Sing, "Io Pæan" [901](#) and "Io Pæan" twice sing; the prey that was sought has fallen into our toils. Let the joyous lover present my lines with the verdant palm; to *Hesiod* the Ascræan and to *Homer* the Mæonian old man shall I be preferred. Such did the stranger son of Priam set his whitening sails from the armed Amyclæ, [902](#) together with the ravished wife. Such was he who bore thee, Hippodamia, in his victorious chariot, carried by the wheels of the stranger. Why hasten then, young man? Thy ship is sailing in the midst of the waves; and far distant is the harbour for which I make. It is not enough, me your Poet, for the fair to be gained by you. Through my skill has she been acquired; through my skill must she be retained. 'Tis no less merit to keep what is acquired, than to gain it. In the former there is some chance; in the latter will be a work of art.

Now, if ever, Boy *Cupid* and Cytherea, be propitious *to me*: now, Erato; [903](#) for thou hast a name from Love. Great attempts do I contemplate; to tell by what means Love can be arrested, the Boy that wanders over the world so wide. He is both inconstant, and he has two wings with which to fly.'Tis an arduous task to impose laws on these.

Minos had obstructed all means of escape to the stranger. He discovered a bold path [904](#) with his wings. When Dædalus had enclosed the man half-bull, and the bull half-man, that

was conceived in the criminality of his mother; he said, "Most just Minos, let there be a termination of my exile; and let my paternal land receive my ashes. And since, harassed by the cruel Destinies, I cannot live in my country, let me be enabled to die. If the merits of an old man are but small, grant a return to this boy, if thou art unwilling to favour the boy, then favour the old man." This he said: but both this and many more things he might have said; the other did not permit a return to the hero. Soon as he saw this, he said, "Now, O now, Dædalus, thou hast a subject, upon which thou mayst prove ingenious. Lo! Minos possesses the land, and he possesses the ocean; neither earth nor water is open for our escape; there remains a path through the heavens; through the heavens will we attempt to go. Jupiter on high, grant pardon to my design. I do not aim to reach the starry abodes; there is no way but this one, by which I may escape the tyrant. Should a road through Styx be granted; then we will swim through the Stygian waves; let the laws of nature be changed by me." *Misfortunes often sharpen the genius*; who could have ever believed, that a mortal could attempt the paths of the air?

He arranges swift feathers in order, like oars, [905](#)

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