

Richard Brathwaite *The English gentleman and the English gentlewoman: both in one volume couched, and in one model portrayed: to the living glory of their sexe, the lasting story of their worth: being presented to present times for ornaments, commended to posterity for presidents: with A ladies love-lecture and supplement lately annexed, and entituled The turtles triumph*

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(...) Vertue is the life of action, action the life of man: without the former, all actions are fruitlesse: without the latter all our ayes are uscesse. Now in this one Subject it is strange to observe what diversity of active dispositions wee shall finde. Some are employed to the purpose, but they are so remisse in their employment, as they lose the benefit of it. Others are employed to no purpose, making a palling of time a meere pastime comming as farre short of one usefull action at their death, as they were incapable of it at their birth. Others sleepe out their time in carelessee security; faluting the morning with a sacrifice to their Glasse, the Noone with a tuicious repair, the Afternoone with a Play or a Pallet repose, the Evening with a wanton confort, accoutred with a reere banket, to belull the abused soule with the sleepe of an incessant furfeit. Others have crept into such an Apish formality; as they cannot for a world discourse of ought without some mimicke gesture or other; which, seeme it never complete to them, appears ridiculous to the beholder. This was Semphronia's error, for which (he was generally taxed, before ever her honour was publicly tainted. What a tinkling you shall observe some to make with their feet, as if they were forthwith to dance a Morrice? They are ever in motion like Puppets, but in actions of goodnesse meere Punies. Their pace is a Pavin in the street; their looks a Lure to a lascivious attempt. They expresse nothing by their gesture worthy the image they beare, besides, who is hee, whose judgement will not taxe theie of lightnesse, by these light and uncivill appearances? A woman's honour is of higher esteeme, than to bee thus dif-valued. Light occasions are many times grounds of deepe aspersions. Actions are to bee seasoned with discretion, seconded by direction, strengthened with instruction, left too much rashnesse bring the undertaker to destruction. In the Maze or Labyrinth of this life, many bee our cares, mighty bee our feares, strong our assailants, weake our afflictants, unlesse wee have that brazen wall within us to fortifie us against all occurrents. O then, let not the kast action betray you to your enemy, for you have many; within you, for they are dangerous, because domesticall; without you, for they are for angers, and therefore doubtfull I let your actions bee your applausive Actions; The Scene of your life is short, live that your noble ations may preserve your memory long. It was Seneca's counsell to his deare friend Lucius, that whensoever hee went about to doe any thing, he

should imagine Cato, or Scipie, or some other worthy Rowan to bee in presence. To second his advice, which may conferre on your glorious anions eternall praise, set alwayes before your eyes, as an imitable mirror, some good woman or other, before whom you may live, as if she ey'd you, shee view'd you. You may finde women, though weake in sexe and condition, yet parallels to men, for charity, chastity, piety, purity, and vertuous conversation. Revisit those ancient families of Rome, and you filiall finde those famous; Matrons, Ottavia, Portia, Cacilia, Cornelia; make a Pagan State seeme morally Christian. Nor were Nicosirata, mother to Evander, Cervina, Sappho, women lesse famous for Learning, than the other for blamelesie living. Neither have our moderne times lesse flourished with feminine worthies, as might be ifuritrated with sundry eminent instances, if I would reflect upon this Subject, but this hath beene the the same off sundry Panegyrick Poems, which makes me more sparingin it. Onely in your behalfe, and to your honour, let me retort their Criticke Censure who draw from the very Etymon of your name an occasion of error:

*Women are woe to men: No they're the way/To bring them homeward when they run astray.*

In a word, conforme your selves to such patternes as are imitable; imitate them in all such actions as are laudable . So live , that none may have Occasion to speake evilly of you, if they speake truly. The memory of Dorcas livet: Shee wasfull ofgood workes and dimes which shee did. Yea, even the very Coats and Garments which shee made, while she was living, were showne the Apostle as arguments of her industry, memorials of her piety. Hence it was that Saint Jerome , that excellent patterne of holy Discipline, serious professor of Divine Doctrine, counselleth the holy Virgin Demetrias to eschew idlenesse : Exhorting her withall, that having done her prayers, shee should take in hand wooll and wea- ving, after the commendable example of Dorcas, that by such change or variety of workes, the day might seeme lesse tedious,and the assaults of Satan lesse grievous. Concluding his devout Exhortation, with this definite position, I speake generally, no rayment, ornament, or habit whatsoever, shall seeme precious in Christ's sight, but that which thou makest thyselfe, either for thine owne peculiar use, or example of other Virgins, or to give unto thy Grand-mother, or thy Mother, no, though thou distribute all thy goods unto the poore. See how strictly this holy Father proceeds with his religious Daughter. Yet was this Demetrias, to whom hee addressed this his exhortation, a Noble Lady; not one, whom poverty did enforce to actions of fuch necessity: but one honourably descended , richly endowed , powerfully friended. Let this Lady bee your Patterne, her action your direction, her obedience your instruction, that you may share with her in a peacefull disolution. Entertaine no time without some devout taske: reflect upon the Noblenesse of your descent, ennoble it with excellence of desert

*For you must know true honour is not wonne/ Untill some honourable deed bee done*

Waste not prodigally the precious Lampe of your life without some vertuous atlion that may purchase love. Your time is lesse than a minute in respect of eternity, employ that minute so, as it

may eternize your memory. Let this bee your highest taske to promote the honour of your Maker, esteeming all things elsea slavish and servile labour.

There is nothing which requires more discretion, than how to behave or carry our selves while wee are enthralled to affection. The Lover is ever blinded (saith wise Plato) with affection towards his beloved. Reason is laid asleepe, while Sense becomes the matter Wooer. Whence came that usuall faying, One cannot love and be wise. But I wholly oppose my selfe to their assertion, who seeme thus farre transported with the sensuall opinion of affection. My Tenet is, One cannot truely love, and not be wise. It is a Beldam frenzy and no fancy, which gives way to fury, and admits not reason to have sovereignty. Yet in this Subect, Gentlewomen, is your temper best tryed, your discretion most required, and your Patience, oft-times, most exercised. Looke therefore how you plant it, left you bootlesly repent it, when it is misplaced. It is most certaine, there is nothing more impatient of delay than love, nor no wound more incurable while wee live. There is no exemption all have a taste of this Potion, though it have seyerall degrees of operation.

*Looke all about you; who so young that loves not? Or who so old a comely feature moves not?*

Yet what different passions arise from one and the selfe same Subject ? Here, Gentlewomen, you shall see some of your Sexe so surprized with affectiones it bursts out into violent extremes; their discourie is semibrev'd with sighes, their talke with teares, they walke desperately forlome, making Launds and desolate Groves their disconsolate Consorts, I Their eyes are estrang'd from sleepe, their weakened appetite from repast, their wearied limbs from repose. Melancholy is their sole melody. They have made a Contract with grieffe, till grieffe bring them to their grave. And these poore wenches are much to bee pittied, because their owne tender hearts brought them to this exigent: having either set their affectiones where they thought verily they might bee requited and were not, or else where they received like seeming tender of affection, but afterwards rejected, what they wished to effect they could not. So as, in time, if continuance of absence reduce them not to a better temper, they I fall into a poore Maudlins distemper, by giving reines to passiion, till it estrange them from the sovereignty of reason. Whereas others you shall see, though not such kind soules, nor halfe so passionate, yet more discreet in their choyce, and in the passages of love more temperate. These will not deigne to cast a loose looke upon their beloved : but stand so punctually upon their termes, as if they flood indifferent for their choyce, I albeit constantly resolved never to admit of any change. These scorned to paint out their passions in plaints, or utter their thoughts in sighes, or bed one dispassionate teare so ran incompassionate Lover. Their Experience hath taught them better Notions: they will seemingly fly to make them follow, and so take them by whom they are most taken. They can play with the flame, and never einge their wings; looke love in the face, and preserve their eyes ; converse where they take delight, and colour their affection with a seeming disdain. These are they who can walke in the Clouds to their intimatest friends: make their eyes strangers to their hearts, and conclude; nothing more foolishi then Love, if discovered; nothing more wise, if artfully inadowed. But I neither approve the violence of the former, nor indifference of the latter. The one interlayeth affection

with too much passion , the other with too much dissimulation, These were well to bee so allayed or attempered as neither too much eagernesse take the discretion, nor too much remisnesse argue coolness of affection. For the former, I must tell them, they give great advantage to an insulting Lover , to entertaine Love with such vehement ardour: it fares with these, as with hot duellists, who fight themselves out of breath, and so subject their relenting force to the command of a beiter tempered enemy. For the latter, they hold constantly that position in arguments of Love, as well as in other actions of their life ; She knowes not how to live, nor how to love , that knowes not how to dissemble. I must tell these, Dissimulation sorts not well with affection. Lovers seldom reade Loves Politicks, Let them appeare what they are , with that discreet temper , as they may deserve the embraces of a Noble Lover. In brieses let such as are too hot in the quest of their desires , attemperate that heat with intermissions: such violence is belt rebated by absence. Contrariwise , such as are too coole , let them quicken that easinesse with their more frequent conference, and assiduate presence.

(...)

Society is the solace of the living; for to live without it, were a kinde of dying. Companions and friendly Associats are the Theeves of time. No houre can be so tedious, which two loving Contorts cannot passe over with delight, and spend without distaste. Bee the night never so darke, the place never so meane, the cheerefull beames of conceiving consorts will enlighten the one, and their affections mutually plantced, enliven the other. What a Desart then were the world without friends? and how uselesse those friends without conceiving mindes and how weake those mindes, unlesse united in equall bonds? So then, love is the Cement of our life: a load without love. Now, Gentlewomen, you are to put on your vailes, and goe into Company. Which am persvaded you cannot enter without a maiden blush, a modest tincture. Herein you are to be mos cauteous, feeling no place can bee more mortally dangerous. Beware therefore with whom you consort, as you tender your reputes for report will brute what you are, by the Company which you beare, Augustus being at a combat , discerned the inclinations of his two daughters, Mia and Livia, by the Company which frequented them: for grave Senators talked with Livia, but riotous persons with Iulia. Would you preserve those precious odors of your good names ? Consort with such whose names were never branded, converse with such whose tongues for immodesty were never taxed. As by good words evill manners are corrected, so by evill words are good ones corrupted. Make no reside there, where the lead occasion of lightnesse is ministred; avert your Eare when you heare it, but your heart especially left you harbour it. To enter into much discourse or familiarity with strangers, argues lightnesse or indiscretion: what is spoken of Maids , may bee properly applyed by an usefull consequence to all women. They should be feene , and not beard: A Traveller sets himselfe best out by discourse , whereas their best setting out is silence. You shall have many trifling questions asked , as much to purpose as if they said nothing: but a frivolous question deserves to bee resolv'd by silence. For your Carriage, it should neither be too precise, nor too loose. These sempring made faces partake more of Chambermaid then Gentlewoman. Modesty and mildnesse hold sweetest correspondence. You may possibly be wooed to interchange favours: Rings or Ribonds are but trifles; yet truff mee they are no trifles

that are aym'd at in those exchanges. Let nothing passe from you, that may any way impeach you, or give others advantage over you. Your innocent credulity is as free from conceit of ill, as theirs, perhaps, from intendment of good: but thefe intercourses of Countefies are not to be admitted, left by this familiarity, an Entry to affection be opened, which before was closed. It is dangerous to enter parley with a beleagring enemy, it implies wanton weaknesse in the besieged. Chastity is an inclosed Garden that should not be so much as assaulted, lest the report of her spotlesse beauty become soyled. Such Forts hold out best, which hold themselves lead secure, when they are securest. It was the faying of a worthy Generall, Pressing on a mans owne strength is the greatest weaknesse; and the readie way to betray himselfe to dangers is to contemne them. Nasta, when the Roman Commonwealth was supposed to be in most secure esate, because freed of their enemies, and strongly fenced by their friends, assumed that though the Achaians and Carthaginiam were both brought under the yoke of bondage, yet they were most in danger, because none were left, whom they might either feare for danger, or who should keepe them in awe. How subject poore be to lapses, and recidivations, being left their owne Guardians, daily experience can sufficiently discover. Of which number, those alwayes proved weakest, who were confident oft of their owne strength. Preemption is a daring sinne and ever brings out some untimely birth, which viper-like deprives her unhappy parent of life. I have knowne divers so resolute in their undertakings, so presuming of their wemanish strength, so constantly devoted to a single life, as in publike consorts they held it their choycest merriment to give love the affront, to discourse of affection with an imperious contempt, geere their amorous suiters out of Countnance, and make a very jeering of love. But marke the conclusion of these insulting spirits: they sport so long with love till they fall to love in earnest. A moment makes them of Sovereignes Captives, by slaving them to that deservedly, which at first they entertained so disdainfully. The way then to prevent this malady, is to weane you from conforting with folly. What an excellent impregnable fortresse Were Woman, did not her Windowes betray her to her enemy? But principally, when shee leaves her Chamber to walke on the publike Theatre, when shee throwes off her vaile, and gives attention to a merry tale; when shee consorts with youthfull bloud, and either enters parley, or admits of an enterview with love. It is most true what the sententious morall sometimes observed: Wee may bee in security, so long as wee are sequestred from society. Then, and never till then, begins the insection to bee dispersed, when the found and sicke begin to bee promiscuously mixed. Tempt not Chastity; hazard not your Christian liberty. You shall encounter with many forward youths, who will most punctually tender their needesse service to your shadowes at the very first sight; doe not admit them, left you prostitute your selves to their prostrate service. Allies found fault with Protogencs, in that hee could not hold his hands from his Table. Whereas our Damsels may more justly finde fault with their youthfull Amorists, for that they cannot hold their hands from under the Table. It is impossible to come off faire with these light-fingred fooles. Your onely way is rampire your chaste intentions with Divine and Morall instructions, to flop the source, divert the occassion, subject affection to reason, so may you become Emperesses of that which hath sometimes tyrannized over Emperours. By this meanes shall every place where you publicly resort minister to you some

object of inward comfort. By this meanes shall Company furnsh you with precepts of chastity, inable you in the serious practice of piety, and secretly conduct you to the port of glory.

(...)

Women in sundry Countryes, when they goe into any publike concourse or presse of people, use to weare vayles, to imply that secret insereened beauty, which best becomes a Woman, Basefull modestiy. Which habit pur owne Nation now in latter yeares hath observed, which, how soever the intention of the wearer appeare, deferves approvement; becaufe it expresseth in itselfe Modesti shamenesse, a Womans chiefest Ornament. I second his opinion, who hold it; for divers maine respects a custome very irregular an undecent, that Women should frequent places of publike retort, as Stage-playes , Wakes, solemne Feafits and the like. It is Occasion that depraves us Company that corrupts us. Hence it was that some flourishing States, having eyed the inconveniences which arife from the usuall resort of Women to Enterludes and other publike Solemnities, published expresse inhibition against such free and frequent meetings. Had Hippodamia never wandred, shee had proved an Hypemnestra, and had never wantoned. Had Dinah never roaved shee had prov'd a Diana, and had never beene ravished. Yet farre bee it from me, to bee so regularly strict, or Laconically severe, as to exclude Women from all publike societies. Meetings they may have, and improve them, by a Civill and Morall use of them, to their benefit, They may chat and converse with a modest freedome, so they doe not gossip it. For these Shee Eleoenors, and Feminine Epicures, who surset out their time in an unwomanly excesse, wee exclude them the pale of our Commonweale. Bee they of what state soever , they are staines to their Sexe for ever. Especially such, who carouse in depe healths, rcjoyce at the colour of the wine, till it sparkle in their veines, inflame their bloods, and lay open a breach to the frailty of their Sexe. For prevention whereof, wee reade that kinsmen kissed their kinswomen to know whether they drunke wine or no, and if they had, to bee punished by death, or banished into some Hand. Plutarch saith, that if the Matrons had any necessity to drinke wine , either because they were sicke or weake the Senate was to give them licence and not then in Rome neither , but out of the City.

Macrobius saith, that there were two Senators in Rome chiding, and the one called the others wife an Adulteresse, and the other his wife a Drunkard; and it was judged, that to bee a drunkard was more infamy. Truth is, they might joyne hands as mates of one society, for I have seldome seene any one subject it to Ebriety, preserve long untainted the honour of their chastity.

Now for publike Employments, I know all are not borne to bee be Deborahs, to beare virile spirits in feminine bodies. Yet, in chusing the better part, you may fit and accommodate your persons to publike affaires, well sorting and suting with your ranke and quality. Claudia and Priscilla were nobly descended, yet they publikely resorted where they might bee religiously instructed; and no lesse publicly instructed others in those principles wherein they were informed. It is said of the Vestall Virgins that they first learned what to doe secondly, they did what they had learned, thirdly, they instructed others to doe that which they had both done and learned. For this, the rich Satan Queene left her owne Region to heare the Wisdome of King Salomon. Surely , howsoever some, no lesse properly than pregnantly have emblematic'd Woman by a Smile;

because shee still carries her house about her, as is the property of a good House-keeper; yet in my judgement (wherein I ingenuously submit to others censure) a modest and well Behaved Woman may by her frequent or resort to publike places, conferre no lese benefit to such as observe her behaviour, than occassion of profit to her private family, where shee is Quer-seer. I have seene some in these places of publick repair expresse fuch a well-seeming State without Apish formality, as every action deserved imitation off such as were in their Company. Their Conceits were sweetly tempered without lightnesie; their jests savoty, yet without falsnesse their discourse free Without nicenesse, their answers milde without tartnesse; their smile pleasing, mix't with bathsulnese their pace gracefull without too much activenesse; their whole posture delightfull with a seemely carelesnesse. These arc such mirrors of modesty, patternes of piety, as they would not for a world transgresse the bounds of Civility. These arce Matrons in their houses, Models in publike places. Words spoken in season are like apples of gold with pistures of silver. So opportunately are their words delivered, so seasonably uttered , with such unaffected eloquence expressed, wheresoever this sweet and well-tempered discretion is seated. Whereas others there be whofe indiscretion makes discovery of an Ocean of words , but a drop of reason. They speake much , but expresse little; their conceits are ever ballased with harshnesse ; their jeste softened in with too much dulnesse, their discourse trimmed up with too much neatnesse, their answers leavened with too much sowrenesse, their lookes promising too much lightnesse or insociable perversenesse their pace either too quicke or too flow in dispatch of bussines, their whole poslure an indisposed frame of irregular absurdities.(...)

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