THE
LEARNED MAID
OR,
Whether a MAID may be a Scholar?
A LOGICK EXERCISE

Written
in Latine by that incomparable Virgin

Anna Maria à Schurman
of Vtrecht.

With some Epistles to the famous Gassendus
and others.

[Greek]. Ignat.

LONDON,
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The Low-Countries shew you a Virgin, excellent, not only in the learned Languages, but almost in all kinds of Literature; whose admirable wit and mind capable of all things, you may justly call the utmost Essay of Nature in this Sex. So largely hath the Divine bounty poored forth it self upon one person. If she hath a vast understanding piercing into all things, she hath also a skilful hand marvellously obedient to that guide, executing & expressing in all materialls whatsoever [page] that commands. But these Gifts are far inferiour to those which she accownteth chief; Piety without Ostentation, Modesty beyond Example, and most Exemplary Holineses of Life and Conversation. And though she most deserveth Praise, yet. (which is above all Praise) She desireth nothing less, &c.

In Epist. ad Lect.
TO THE
HONOURABLE LADY,
THE
LADY A. H.

Madam,

THis strange maid, being now the second time, drest up in her English Habit, cometh to Kiss your hand. She hopes you will admit her to your Closet, and speak a good word for her to your worthy Friends, and endear her to Them also. Her Company will be the more delightfull, because her discourse is very rational, and much tending to the perfection of that Sexe, whereof you, excellent Lady, by your Noble Virtues are so great an Ornament and Example.

The Honourer of your Piety,
more then of your Fortune;
C. B.
The Learned Maid.
A Logicall Exercise upon this Question.

Whether a Maid may be a Scholar?

We hold the Affirmative, and will endeavour to make it good.

These Praecognita we premit: First on the part of the Subject, and then of the Predicate.

By a Maid or Woman, I understand her that is a Christian, and that not in Profession onely, but really and indeed.

By a Scholar, I mean one that is given [p. 2] to the study of Letters, that is, the knowledge of Tongues and Histories, all kinds of Learning, both superiour entitled Faculties; and inferiour, call’d Philosophy. We except onely Scriptural Theology, properly so named, as that which without Controversie belongs to all Christians.

When we enquire, whether she may be, we mean whether it be convenient, that is, expedient, fit, decent.

The words being thus distinguished, the Things are to be distinguished also.

For some Maids are ingenious, others not so: some are rich, some poor: some engaged in Domestick cares, others at liberty.

The studies of a Scholar are either universal, when we give our selves to all sorts of Learning or particular, when we learn some one Language or Science, or one distinct Faculty.

Wherefore we make use of these Limitations:

[p. 3] First of the Subject; and first, that our Maid* be endued at least with an indifferent good wit, and not unapt for learning.

Secondly, that she be provided of necessaries and not oppressed with want: which exception I therefore put in, because few are so happy to have Parents to bread them up in studies, and Teachers are chargeable.

Thirdly, that the condition of the Times, and her quality be such, that she may have spare houres from her general and speciall Calling, that is, from the Exercises of Piety and houshold Affairs. To which end will conduce, partly her immunity from cares and employments in her yonger years, partly in her elder age either celibate, or the Ministry of handmaids, which are wont to free the richer sort of Matrons also from Domestick troubles.

Fourthly, let her end be, not vain glory and ostentation, or unprofitable [p. 4] curiositie: but beside the generall end, Gods Glory and the salvation of her own soul; that both her self may be the more vertuous and the more happy, and that she may (if that charge ly[e] upon her) instruct and direct her Family, and also be usefull, as much as may be to her whole Sex.

Next, Limitations of the Predicate, Scholarship, or the study of Letters I so limit, that I clearly affirm all honest Discipline, or the whole [Greek] the Circle and Crown of liberal Arts and Sciences (as the proper and universal Good and Ornament of Mankind) to be convenient for the Head of our Christian Maid: yet so, that according to the Dignity and Nature of every Art or Science, and according to the capacity and condition of the Maid herself, all in their order, place and time succeed each other in the learning of them, or be commodiously conjoyned. But especially let regard be had unto those Arts which have nearest alliance to Theology and the Moral Virtues, and are Principal subservient [p. 5] to them. In which number we reckon Grammar, Logick, Rhetorick, especially Logick, fitly called The Key of all Sciences: and then, Physicks, Metaphysicks, History, &c. and also the knowledge of Languages, chiefly of the Hebrew and Greek. All which may advance to the more facile and full understanding of Holy Scripture: to say nothing now of other Books. The rest, i.e. Mathematicks (to which is also referred Musick) Poesie, Picture, and the like, not illiberall Arts, may obtain the place of pretty Ornaments and ingenious Recreations.

Lastly, those studies which pertain to the practice of the Law, Military Discipline, Oratory in the Church, Court, Vniversity, as less proper and less necessary, we do not very much urge. And yet we in no wise yield that our Maid should be excluded from the Scholastick knowledge or Theory of those; especially, not from understanding the most noble Doctrine of the Polities or Civil Government.

And when we say a Maid may be a Scholar; [p. 6] it is plain we do not affirm Learning to be a property, or a thing requisite and precisely needfull to eternall salvation: no, nor as such a good thing which maketh to the very Essence of happiness in this life: but as a mean and very usefull, conferring much to the integrity
and perfection thereof: and as that, which by the contemplation of excellent things will promote us to a higher degree in the Love of God, and everlasting Felicity.

*Therefore let our Thesis of proposition be:*

*A Maid may be a Scholar.*

For the confirmation whereof we bring these *Arguments*: 1. On the part of the *Subject*: 2. On the part of the *Predicate*.

1. *Argument, from the Property of the Subject.*

Whosoever is naturally endu’d with the *Principles*, or powers of the [p. 7] principles, of all Arts and Sciences, may be a student in all Arts and Sciences:

But Maids are naturally endued with the *Principles*, &c. Therefore, &c.

The proposition is thus proved.

They that may have the knowledge of *Conclusions* deduced from *Principles* may be Students, &c.

But they that are naturally endued with the *Principles* may have the knowledge of *Conclusions* deduced from those *Principles*. Therefore, &c.

*The Assertion* may be proved both from the property of the *form* of this Subject, or the rational soul: and from the very acts and effects themselves. For it is manifest that Maids doe *actually* learn any Arts and Sciences.

Now, no *Acts* Can be without their *Principles*.

*II. Argument. Again from the property of the Subject.*

Whosoever hath naturally a *desire* of Arts and Sciences, may study the Arts and Sciences.

But a Maid hath naturally a *desire* of Arts and Sciences. Therefore, &c.

The Reason of the *major* is manifest: because Nature doth nothing in vain.

*The Minor is thus confirmed.*
That which is in the whole Specie or kind, is in every Individual or particular person; in Maids also.

But all Mankind have in them by Nature a desire of knowledge. (Aristol. Metaph. 1. 2.) Therefore, & c.

III. Argument, from the external Property, or Adjunct.

Whosoever is by God created with a sublime countenance, and erected toward Heaven, may (and ought) give himself to the contemplation and knowledge of sublime and heavenly things.

But God hath created woman also with a sublime and erected countenance: O, homini sublime, &c. Therefore, &c.

IV. Argument.

Whosoever is in most need of solid and continuall employment, may conveniently give himself to learning:

But woman is in most need of solid and continual employment: Therefore, &c.

The Major is good, because nothing doth more exercise and intend all the nerves and powers of the mind; (and as the great Trasmus faith +) nothing takes so full possession of the fair Temple of a Virgins breast, as learning and study, whither, on all occasions she may fly for refuge.

+ In his Epistle to Badæus, where he discoarseth of the Institution of Sir Tho. Moores daughters.

The Minor is proved by these two reasons.

[p. 10]

1. Whosoever through imbecillity and inconstancy of disposition or temper, and the innumerable snares of the world, is in most danger of vanitie, is in most need of solid and perpetual employment.

But woman, through the imbecillity and inconstancy, &c. Therefore, &c.

The Major in this Syllogism is true; because contraries are best cured by contraries: and nothing doth more effectually oppose vanity, then serious and constant employment.
The *Minor*, we take to be without controversie: for hardly any, though Heroical Vertue can safely pass by the Sirens of the world and of youth, unless it be busied about serious and solid things.

2. The second reason to prove the Assumption or Minor of the IV. *Argument* is this:

They that abound with *leisure* have most need of solid and continual employment:

But women of higher rank, most [p. 11] part abound with leisure. Therefore.

The Major of this syllogism is good, because leisure (or idleneesse) is of it self tedious, yea, burdensome, so that Divine Nazianzen justly said, [Greek]. *Tis the greatest pain to be out of action*. And because Idleness is the Mother of wickedness: *Hominis nihil agendo male agere discunt*. Men by doing nothing learn to do ill.

*V. Argument.*

They that have the happiness of a more quiet and free course of life, may with most convenience follow their studies.

But Maids for the most part, have the happiness of a more quiet and free course of life: Therefore.

The reason of the *Major* is evident: for nothing is so great a friend to studies as Tranquillity and Liberty.

*The Minor is proved thus:*

They which for the most part have their time to bestow *upon themselves*, and are exempt from publick cares [p. 12] and employments, have the happiness of a more quiet and free course of life:

But Maids (especially during their celibate, or single life) most part have their time to bestow on themselves, &c. Therefore.

*VI. Argument.*

To whom is agreeable the study of the *principal Sciences*, to the same is also agreeable the study of Sciences instrumental and subservient: But, to a Christian woman agrees the study of the Principal Sciences. Therefore:

The *Major* is firm for this reason:
To whom the end agrees, to the same is convenient also the lawfull means, whereby we are most easily brought unto that end:

But the instrumental or subservient Sciences are the lawful means, &c.

Therefore.

The Minor is true, because to a Christian woman agrees the study, or assiduous [p. 13] and serious Meditation of Gods Word, the knowledge of God, and contemplation of his most beautifull works, as being of most concernment to all Christians whatsoever.

VII. Argument.

The study of Letters is convenient for them, for whom it is more decent to find themselves both business and Recreation at home and in private, then abroad among others.

But it is more decent for a Christian Maid to find her self both worke and recreation at home then abroad: therefore &c.

The Major is most true: because studies have this prerogative, to give us a delightful exercise, and to recreate us when we have no other company, whence in the Greek proverbe, *A wise man, is* [Greek], self-sufficient.

The Minor is no less: because the Apostle requireth Women to be [Greek] [Keepers as home], + Tit. 2. 5. And moreover, Experience [p. 14] testifies; whose tongues, Ears, eyes often travail abroad, hunting after pleasures; their faith, diligence, and modesty too, is generally called into question.

VIII. Argument, from the Genus of the predicate, or, of Learning.

Arts and Sciences are convenient for those, to whom all Virtue in general is convenient:

But all Virtue in general is convenient for a Maid. Therefore:

The Major is evident from the division of Virtue into Intellectual and Moral: under the former whereof, the Philosopher comprehended Arts and Sciences.

The Minor hath no need of proof: for Virtue, as Seneca saith, chooseth her servants, neither by their State nor Sexe.

IX. Argument, from the end of Sciences.
Whatsoever *perfects* and *adorns* the intellect of Man, that is fit and decent for a Christian woman:

But Arts and Sciences doe perfect and adorn the intellect. Therefore:

The reason of the *Major* is, because all creatures tend unto their last and highest perfections as that which is most convenient for them.

The *Minor* is plain, because Arts and Sciences are *Habits*, and by these Habits are the natural *powers* and faculties of the soul proved and perfected.

* X. Argument. *

The things that by their nature conduce to the greater *Love of God* and the exciting of his greater reverence in us, are convenient and fit for a Christian Woman:

But Arts and Sciences by their nature conduce, &c. Therefore:

[p. 16]

The Verity of the *Major* is clearer then the Light. For the most perfect love and reverence of God becometh [*] kind: so that none can here offend in the excess.

The *Minor* is thus confirmed:

That which exhibiteth and proposeth God and his works to be seen and known by us in a more eminent degree, naturally conduceth to the stirring up in us the greater love of God and reverence:

But Arts and Sciences exhibite and propose God and his Works, &c.

Therefore.

The *Major* in this last syllogism is proved by this reason:

Whatsoever is indeed most beautiful, most excellent and most perfect, that, the more it is known, the more it is loved, and accounted more worthy of reverence or celebration:

But God and his Works are indeed most beautifull, &c.

Therefore.
The Minor likewise may be proved from the end or effects of Sciences, [p. 17] which
do all confer somewhat to the more facile and more distinct knowledge of God and
his Works.

 XI. Argument.

That which armes us against Herefies, and detecteth their fraud, is convenient for a
Christian Woman:

But Sciences arme us, &c.

Therefore.

The reason of the Major is evident: because no Christians in this common danger,
ought to neglect their duetie.

The Minor is proved, because found Philosophy is as a hedge and fence (to use the
words of Clemens Alexandrinus) of the Lord’s Vineyard, or of our Saviours Doctrine:
Or, being compared with the Gospel, it is (in Saint Basil’s similitude) like the leaves
which are an Ornament and Muniment to the fruit. Indeed by right reason, that
corrupt and false reason, upon which heresies mainly depend, may most easily be
refuted.

[p. 18]

 XII. Argument.

What teacheth Prudence without any detriment of Fame or Modest, is convenient for
a Christian Woman:

But the studies of, good Learning teach Prudence, &c.

Therefore:

The Major is confessed: for no man is ignorant, that the Honour of the Female Sexe
is most tender, and needeth nothing more then Prudence: and how hard a thing it is
and full of hazard, to draw Prudence from use and Experience.

The Minor is proved, because the Writings of Learned men doe offer us not only
excellent Precepts, but notable Examples, and do lead us as it were by the hand to
Virtue,

 XIII. Argument.

That which makes to true Magnanimiteit, is Convenient for a Christian Woman:
But the study of Letters makes to true magnanimity.

Therefore.

I prove the Major: because, the more any one is by nature prone to the vice of pusillanimity, so much the more need there is of aid from the opposite Virtue. But a Woman is by Nature prone, & c.

Therefore:

The Minor is prov’d, because Learning erecteth the Mind and puts courage into the heart, and takes off the vizor from those things which are feared by the vulgar, or impotently affected.

XIV. Argument.

That which affecteth and replenisheth the Mind with honest and ingenuous delight, is convenient for a Christian Woman:

But, Learning doth so.

Therefore.

The reason of the Major is, because nothing is more agreeable to humane nature, then honest and ingenuous delight, which represents in Man a certain similitude of Divine gladness. Which Aristotle also highly extolleth. vii. Eth. xiii. Pleasure is by nature a Divine thing implanted in the hearts of Men.

The Minor is proved thus: Because there is no delight or pleasure (except that of Christians which is supernatural) either more worthy of an ingenuous soul, or greater then this, which ariseth from the study of Letters: as by examples and various reasons might easily be evinced.

XV. Argument, from the Opposite.

Where ignorance and want of knowledge is not convenient, there the study of knowledge is convenient:

But, ignorance and want of knowledge is not convenient for a Christian Woman.

Therefore.
The *Minor* is confirmed thus:

That which is of it self, not onely the [p. 21] cause of errour in the understanding, but of vice in the will or action is not convenient for a Christian Woman:

But ignorance and want of knowledge is of itself the cause of error, &c.

Therefore.

The *Major* of this syllogism is demonstrated; First, in respect of errour in the understanding; Because ignorance in the understanding (which is called the *Eye* of the Soul) is nothing else but blindness, and darkness which is the cause of all errour. Secondly, in respect of vice in the Will or Action: because, Whatsoever makes men proud, fierce, &c. that is the cause of Vice in the will or action:

+[Greek] *If the light that is in the be darkness, how great is that darkness.* Matt. vi.

But ignorance and want of knowledge makes men proud, & c.

Therefore.

The *Major* is evident, the *Minor* is proved hence; because, the less a man knowes himself, the more will he please himself and contemn others: And he who [p. 22] knowes not how much he is ignorant of, will be wise in his own conceit. And then (as to fierceness) nothing is more intractable then ignorance, as Erasmus upon much experience testifies: And that I may relate a Sentence of Divine Plato: *[Greek]. Man well bred and informed becomes the mildest and Gentlest of Creatures, but being ill brought up is the worldest of all the beasts of the Earth.* Adde quod ingenuas &c. Learning mollifies and sweetens a man and takes away roughness of manners and rusticity.

Lastly, the danger of ignorance, in respect of vice, may be shewn from the nature of vice and vertue. For, whereas to every vertuous action is required such Exactness, that it must be conformable on every part to the Rule of right reason; to the Nature of vice even the least *nordination*, which followeth ignorance, may be sufficient.

Testimonies and Examples I doe here omit for brevity sake.
A R E F U T A T I O N  
O F  T H E  
A D V E R S A R I E S. 

These Præcognita are to be premitted.

First, there are some of the Adversaries, who being as it were blinded by I know not what prejudices, do not limit our Subject; but think it followes from our thesis, that there is no choice neither of Wits, nor of Conditions, to make the predicate agree unto it.

Others there are, who seem to acknowledge no other end of studies, then either Gain or vain Glory: which is the prime error. and shamefull [p. 24] enough: as if it were supervacaneous to Philosophize* [Greek]. Arist. Metaph. 1. 2. for the avoiding of ignorance.

And some there are lasty who deny not altogether that studies are convenient for a Maid, but onely an eminent degree of Knowledge. Who are perhaps vexed with Emulation, or certainly with fear, least that should at any time come to pass.


Many Scholars excell their Masters: and that other saying of a very ancient Poet, Vos etenim juvenes aninios geritis muliebres: Illa Virago Viri.

Those Men are spirited like Women, that Virgin like a Man.
A Christian Maid (or Woman) except she be perhaps divinely excited to it by some peculiar motion or instinct, may not conveniently give her self to the study of Letters.

I. Argument. On the part of the Subject.

Whosoever hath a weak wit may not give her self to the study of Letters:

But Women are of weak wits.

Therefore.

[p. 26] They will provide the Major; because, to the study of Letters is required a wit firm and strong: unless we will labour in vain, or fall into the danger + of a disease of the Intellect.

[]

The Minor, they think, needeth no Proofe.

We answer to the Major: that by our limitation such are exempted, which by imbecillity of their wit are altogether unapt for studies; when we state it, that at least indifferent good wits are here required. Then, we say, not alwayes heroical wits are precisely necessary to studies: for the number even of learned Men, we see, is made up in good part, of those that are of the middle sort.

To the Minor we answer: It is not absolutely true, but comparatively onely, in respect of the male Sex. For, though Women cannot be equalled for their wit with those more excellent Men, (who are*. Eagles in the Clouds:) yet, the matter it self speaks [p. 27] thus much; Not a few are found of so good wit, that they may be admitted to studies, not without fruit. But

On the contrary we infer.
They that are less able by dexterity of wit, may most conveniently addict themselves to studies:

But Women are less able by dexterity of wit. Therefore.

We prove the Major, because studies do supply us with aids and helps for our weakness:

II. Objection.

Whose mind is not inclined to studies, they are not fit to study;

But the minds of Women are not inclined to studies.

They prove the Major, because nothing is to be done invitâ Minervâ, as we say, Against the hair.

The Minor they will prove from use and custome; because very seldom do Women apply their mind to study.

We answer to the Major. It should [p. 27] be thus: Whose mind, after all means duely tried, is not inclined to studies: otherwise it is denied.

To the Minor we say, no man can tightly judge of our Inclination to studies, before he hath encouraged us by the best reasons and means to set upon them: and withall hath given us some taste of their sweetness, although in the mean time we do not want examples to evince the contrary to be true.

III. Objection.

The studies of Learning are not convenient for those that are destitute of means necessary to their studies.

But Women are destitute of means, &c.

Therefore.

The Major is without controversie.

They endeavour to prove the Minor, because there be no Academics and Colledges, wherein they may exercise themselves.

But we deny this consequence for it sufficeth, that under the conduct of their parents or of some private [p. 29] Teacher, they may exercise themselves at home.
IV. Objection.

Studies are not fitt for them whose labour misseth of its proper End.

But the labour of Women misseth of its proper End.

Therefore.

The Major may be proved, because the End is that for which all things are done.

They prove the Minor by this, that Women are seldome or never preferred to publicke Offices, Politicall, Ecclesiasticall, or Academicall.

We answer to the Major: Women, in speculative Sciences are never frustrated of their End: and in the Practicall (now spoken of) though they attain not the Primary, or that publick End; yet doe they attain a Secondary End, as I may say, and more private.

V. Objection.

To whom, for their Vocation, it is sufficient to know a little, to them is not convenient the Encyclopady, or a more sublime degree of knowledge.

But it is sufficient to Women, &c.

Therefore.

They prove the Major, because it is not convenient for any one to study things superfluous and impertinent to his Calling.

The Minor they will prove; because forfooth the Vocation of a Maid, or Woman, is included in very narrow limits, the termes of a private or Oeconomicall life.

Let the Major pass, we answer to the Minor. There is an ambiguity in the words; First, Vocation: for, if here they understand the Vocation of a private life, opposed to publick Offices, We say, by the same reason the Encyclopady or a more sublime degree of Knowledge is denied all men too, that lead a private life: When yet, that most grave [p. 31] Sentence of Plutarch is pronounced of all men of what rank soever, without exception: It becomes a perfect Man to know what is to be known, and to doe what is to be done. Bur if they understand a speciall Vocation., in order to a Family and Oeconomicall cares; We say, that the universall Calling which
pertaineth chiefly to us all, either as Christians, or at least as men, is in no wise, excluded by it. Yea, I may be bold to affirm, that a Virgin both may and ought especially to attend upon this Universall Calling, as being usually more free from the impediments of the former. *She that is unmarried careth for the things of the Lord: 1 cor. vii. 34. Again, there is ambiguity in the words, it is sufficient, which is sufficiently taken away by what is above said in the limitation of the convenience and necessity of studies.

*[Greek]*

Wherefore our Thesis stands firm:

_A Christian Maid, Or Woman, may conveniently give her self to Learning:_

[p. 32] Whence we draw this Consectary.

That Maids may and ought to be excited and encouraged by the best and strongest Reasons, by the Testimonies of wise Men: and lastly, by the examples of illustrious Women, to the embracing of this kind of life especially those who are above others provided of leisure, and other means and aides for their studies, And, because is it best, that the mind be seasoned with Learning from the very Infancy: therefore the Parents themselves are chiefly to be stirred up, as we suppose, and to be admonished of their duty.
SIR,

YOU have lately in your most courteous Letters given such a favourable Character of me, and described me after the Pattern of Virtue herself, that I would not desire any other Statue to be decreed to my eternall Memory, if your Good-will here had not carried you beyond the bounds of Truth. But, seeing you, that are in other things, a most severe Patron of Truth, are so far transported, either by the fur wind of flattering Fame, or by an excessive Affection to us, that in accumulating prayses on me, you have rather expressed the Candour of your own Minde; then my Effigies, I should offend against your Genius and veracity, unlesse I did without delay deliver you out of this loving errour. I perceive, you have so kindly interpreted our short Dissertation of the more polite studies of the Femal Sexe, that from thence hath proceeded no small accession to your esteem of me. And yet, what I pray is greatly to be praised in this writing, besides my endeavour seriously to maintain a liberal Cause, and (if I may have any suffrage here) most reasonable, so far as Modesty would permit? But it is an illustrious Argument of your Love to true Wifedom, that you are so far from contemning the least spark of it, even in our Sex: that you are pleased to cherish it, and raise it up into a Flame. Wherefore, though for divers reasons, I have heretofore resolved to send no Letters unto Strangers; nevertheless, because your Virtue and your excellent Benefits conferred upon the whole World of Learning, exempt you out of that number, I should incur the displeasure of all the Graces, should I not by some Monument or other testifie, how much cause of joy I have, from the Approbation you have vouchsafed to my course of Life. My ambition is to please the Few and Good (for to please the Many is to displease the wise) and you especially, whom I behold furnished with such Arms, and Forces. that as of late you have excellently vindicated the Reputation of Ancient Philosophy; so if need be, you can easily defend the common Cause of Good Arts and Learning, against the professed Enemies thereof, or at least the contemners of the Female Glory.

Farewell Vtrecht xii. Kalend.
Ian. CI_ I_C XLIV. [1644]
ANNA MARIA

à SCHVRMAN,

To the excellent

IOANNES BEVEROVICI VS.

Sir,

I have seen your Treatise, *Of the excellency of the Female Sexe*: but I have onely seen it, [Greek] on the By, both by reason of various little businesses, wherein I am even against my will many times engaged; and because I feared, least by detaining it with me, I should be a hindrance to you, and have more regard to my own desire then your design. Truely, I admired your design. Truely, I admired your overflowing kindenesse, whereby you have been pleased, not onely, [p. 38] by your most Elegant stile, to assert that, which alone I lately requested of you, the glory of Learning and Wisedome to our Sexe: but so favour our Cause, as to equall us every where to Men, that I may not say to prefer us above them in some things. Doe not think I am altogether of your Opinion, especially, having raised up so many Examples of illustrious Women to so high renown, that your discourse seemeth to procure them more Envie then Admiration. Wherefore, I doe heartily intreat you, yea by our inviolable Friendship I beseech you, that you would not (as according to your accustomed favour toward me, you seem to intend) Dedicate this Book to me. For, you are not ignorant, with what evil eyes the greatest part of men (I mean not so much Men of the meanest [p. 39] rank, whom it is ease to contemn, as men of great Esteem) doe behold what tendeth to our praise. So that, they thinke we are well dealt with, if wee obtain pardon for aspiring to these higher studies; so farre are they from being pleased, if they should suspect me to have given the least Occasion of sounding forth or prayses after that manner.

I need not therefore, use many words to prevaile to you, not to give our Adversaries new matter of Calumniation, after you have done so much in this worke to stoppe their mouthes. But if you seeke some Illustrious Name to prefixe in the Frontispice of this Booke, you will not finde, in my Opinion, any more auspicious than the Name of N. N. For, you cannot but receive much Favour from this Noble [p. 40] Lady, who, as she is exceedingly delighted with good Letters, and the study of Languages; so is she safely placed above all danger of Envie.

And, which is the Principall thing, she is able both by her Authoritie and Example, to afford no small Honour to our Cause.

Farewell; my excellent Friend.

M. DC. XXXIX.
Most Noble Lady,

Your Letters seemed unto me sweeter than Nectur; to which, because I am highly delighted in conferring with you, I had returned a more speedy Answer, had I not waited for the Bearer my Brothers going that way toward England. [p. 42] He will declare unto you the manner of my Life, and open to your view the closet of my heart, (where you will finde your self to have a chiefe place.) yet I cannot chuse but say something to the grave and serious Argument of your Epistle. You enquire, how I order and dispose of my affairs, that with least offence; I may especially in these calamitous times, pass through the troubles of this Life. Though I acknowledge your singular Modesty and Civility, that you esteem my Example not unworthy of your imitation: yet I doubt not, if by Gods Grace, we might once enjoy the happiness of living together in the same house, we may be able in to great a Conspiration of studies and affections, to excite each other unto Virtue. However, I will tell you in a word, not what I alwayes attain to, but what mark I aim at, to come as near as I can. The compendious and safeth way is pointed out unto us by the Pole-Starre of Heavenly Truth. For it was excellently said, by that great Earle of Mirandula: Philosophy seeks Truth; Theology finds it; Religion possestth it. But, that I may not goe from the purpose; we determine with the notable Philosopher Epictetus not amiss; That Humane Affaires have two Handles: yet not, as He, One convenient, the other inconvenient: but, Both most convenient, if they be well and orderly taken. Thus, Whatsoever pertaineth to a Virtuous and happy Life, must either be referred to Divine providence, or to our Dutie. As to the first, my business is, that in things of our power, I may have one onely care, namely, to cast all my cares upon God: according to that [p. 44] Advice of the Apostle; Cast ye all your care upon him, for be careth for you. For indeed, here is the Originall of all our inquietude, that we use to roull in our minds too anxiously the events of things, which alone depend upon the pleasure of Almighty God. Next, as to our Duty: it belongeth to us to moderate and govern those things onely which fall under our deliberation, both by our industry and prudence.

Nothing doth so much throw us out of the Castle of Tranquillitie, as evil Examples, and the fallacious enticements of this World: (That I may omit the tediousnesse and trouble, perpetually attending their Condition, who act as it were, upon the publicke
Stage.) And for this Malady, I find no remedy, more present and effectuall then, the retirement of [p. 45] Studies. For, since the manners of men are so corrupted, one can hardly raise so much heat in others for the prosecution of Virtue, as he shall abate of his own, for the most part, by frequent Conversation With the Men of this Age. But here, in our recesse, the vanities and deceits of the World, being farre removed, we judge of all things more rightly, and securely contemne the vanities that fill prophaner souls with admiration.

Here, sweetly passing away our time with the Muses, we erect our minds to higher matters, and without impediment runne the course of Philosophy. Whereof, you may reade more in the Printed Epistle enclosed. To which I have added my Effigies done to the Life with my own hand: that, every way, so far as I can, I [p. 46] may make my selfe known unto you.

Farewell, the immortall Honour of our Sexe, and continue your Love of Her, who loves you most affectionately.

_Vtrecht, Cal. April. MDCXLI._
I have received your Letters, illustrious Sir, with great joy, as it was fit to receive Letters that carry with them the purest candour, and most polite Humanity. And truely, I would not have so long delayed my Answer, but that for divers reasons, I have resolved to write to my Countrey Men not often, to strangers very seldom. Neverthelesse, having lately, understood by the most Noble and most faithfull Lord Strickland, how much you excelled in Honour, and all kind of Learning, my Virgin bashfulness (to which I am used to yield very much) blusheth, not to give place to your affable Virtues, as the chiefest of all. Wherefore in Contemplation hereof, I laid hold upon my Pen with an earnest desire to doe them that reverence by my Letters, which they justly require at my hands. And I was not a little encouraged hereunto by your most equitable Sentence concerning our’ Sexe: which I heartily wish I could as well make good by my Example (according to your too favourarable Censure) as by reasons, and Arguments.

As to what you write concerning the most Learned Matron, Madam Bathsua Metkins, that the so highly commended my Industrie in sublimer studies, and that you were upon that account inflamed with an incredible desire of having conference with me. All this, I impute both to her undeserved affection toward me, and to your courtesie in giving so ease an Assent. For you ‘asctibe unto me such glory of Learning, which is I should willingly admit, I should greatly offend against the Lawes of Truth and sobernesse. And yet I will not denie, that I am very much delighted with the best and noblest things, though some times they exceed my capacitie. And I beseech you thinke not I am insensible of that Concussion and shaking of your Commonwealth: for whose safetie my incessant Prayers are sent up to Heaven. Wherefore, you will doe me a very great favour is, as you promise, you please to communicate unto us (partakers of the same cause) whatsoever shall be atchieved by your Honourable Assemblie, either in Peace or Warre.

Farewell, the great Patron of Learning, with your most generous Wife, whom I retreat you most humbly to salute in my name.

Vtrecht prid. Galend. Novemb. MDCXLV.
I have received your Letters. Reverend Sir, but saw not the Minister whom you commended to me *De meliore nota*, as a man of the better mark. As to the Edition of my Trifles, which you still persuade me to yield unto: though I have been hitherto irresolute, yet now because it is your pleasure, I cannot any longer resist your counsels, proceeding from so much candour and friendship.

Yet because many of the Letters contain little beside words and complements, I will take a care that the best of them (such as they are) shall be selected and transmitted to your hand. But do you correct, form and reform them according to your own mind: and take the same power over this Epistle which I send to *N.* and if you suspect any syllable in it that may justly offend him, blot it out, and then be pleased to seal it up and deliver it.

Farewell my most loving friend. We do also very affectionately salute you and your dear Wife.

*Vtrecht ix. Cal. Ian MDCXLVI.*
To conclude I will here alledge one Example which is ever before my eyes: the Example of that incomparable Princess Iane Grey, to whom no Nation, no Age, (Let me speak it with the good leave of all) will afford an equal. Michael Angela, a Florentine who describeth the Historie of her Life and Death fully and pathetically, hath among other things noted this, in the Conference she had with which Fecknam the Messenger of her Death: Namely that slighting those other excellent endowments [p. 54] she had received from God; such as Nobilitie, Beautie, and Youth; whereby she might have acquired Greatnesse and Glory to her selfe in this World; She magnanimously pronounced;

Nothing in all her Life was so pleasant to her, as that she had the Knowledge of the three Learned Tongues. And, if the delight, thence arising to us in this Life, may be called by the name of true Felicity, She confessed, her selfe had found it in the study of good Letters, and especially of the holy Scripture. And, although many men doe greatly blame such studies in a Woman; yet she, for the great comfort of her Soul which she had at last perceived thence, and still did perceive within, judged their Opinion contrary to all reason.

Oh sweet words, pronounced not under shade of the Schools, but at a last Act of a most Glorious Martyrdom! Who would not reverence this saying, and take it for an Oracle.

FINIS.
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