

personage, . . . [and] nature wrought in their hearts such a mutual affection, that their wills and appetites daily more and more . . . confederated themselves" (p. 344). Their friendship discourages Gisippus from even contemplating marriage: "But the young man, having his heart already wedded to his friend Titus and his mind fixed to the study of philosophy, fearing that marriage should be the occasion to sever him both from the one and the other, refused of long time to be persuaded" (p. 345). His fear that marriage will impede the friendship implies that the two draw on the same emotional source. Bassanio's friendship with Antonio appears to facilitate his marriage to Portia, but are these relationships in concord or conflict with each other? If Portia and Antonio are in some sense competing for Bassanio, what do they want from him? Who wins? The tension between marriage and friendship that appears in a number of comedies in the period reflects contemporary social conditions: "Young men of a certain age in Renaissance England had, then, to reconcile between two conflicting demands: the emotional intensity of male bonds as they were fostered by Renaissance patriarchy and the necessity of marrying to acquire full status within that patriarchy" (Smith 65). Plutarch gives voice to this conflict in his debate on love, in translating it for an early modern English audience, Philemon Holland vehemently condemns homoerotic desire and expresses anxiety about its favorable presentation in Plutarch's story (p. 347). In so doing he nevertheless attributes a powerful attraction to homoerotic love. Although marriage ultimately wins out in this story, a strong case is made for the superiority of homoerotic relations. Protophages takes the argument a step further, characterizing heterosexual relations as just and arguing that homoerotic relations constitute a superior and more virtuous form of sexuality and true love. While early modern discourse privileged male friendship and castigated sodomy, many important social, political, and economic relations were homosocial. Friendship implied a physical as well as emotional intimacy, which included the common practices of sharing beds and embraces. Such actions do not necessarily indicate the existence of a sexual relationship, but they do not preclude it either; as Alan Bray argues, "[the] shadow [of sodomy] was never far from the flower-strewn world of Elizabethan friendship and it could never wholly be distinguished from it" (Bray 4–5, 8). What evidence does the play offer about the nature of the relationship between Antonio and Bassanio? What kind of statements do you think the play makes about same-sex relationships and heterosexual ones? How do ideas of love and gender relate in the play?

➔ JUAN LUIS VIVES

From *The Instruction of a Christian Woman* 1529 Translated by Richard Hyde

Juan Luis Vives (1492–1540) was born in Valencia and was educated there and in Paris. In 1520 he began teaching at the University of Louvain; shortly afterward, he agreed to a request from Erasmus (who was preparing a new edition of the works of St. Augustine) to write a commentary on Augustine's *The City of God*. Vives lived much of his life in Bruges (a city in what is now Belgium), where he met the visiting English rulers, Henry VIII and Katherine of Aragon. Vives had already received a pension from his countrywoman the queen, and he dedicated *The City of God* to the king. In 1523 he journeyed to England to seek out royal patronage; he resided and apparently lectured at Oxford. He was inevitably drawn into the controversy of Henry's divorce from Katherine, and managed to anger both the king and the queen, siding with the queen, but refusing, after an imprisonment, to serve as one of her defenders. He spent the rest of his life writing, authoring a number of works of theology, grammar, philosophy, law, and history. *The Instruction of a Christian Woman*, dedicated to Katherine of Aragon, articulates a conservative and restrictive view of female behavior, and probably reflects Continental and Mediterranean attitudes more than English attitudes. Nevertheless, it was an extremely popular book and saw four subsequent editions in the fifty years after the first publication of the English translation. The excerpt that follows presents Vives's somewhat progressive advocacy of female education, though he argues against their freedom of speech and movement. He presents a skeptical view of romantic love and emphasizes the necessity of the parents' involvement in selecting a spouse. Perhaps most radical is Vives's formulation of wifely chastity—going so far as to argue that her husband's power over her and her body extends even to controlling her sexual continence.

OF THE LEARNING OF MAIDS

Of maids, some be but little meet for learning: likewise as some men be unapt, again some to be even born unto it, or at least not unfit for it. Therefore they that be dull are not to be discouraged, and those that be apt, should be heartened and encouraged. I perceive that learned women be suspected of many: as who sayeth, the subtlety of learning should be nourishment for the maliciousness of their nature. Verily, I do not allow in a subtle and crafty

Juan Luis Vives, *A Very Fruitful and Pleasant Book Called the Instruction of a Christian Woman* (1523), trans. Richard Hyde (London, 1529), Cr-C2v, Cv-C7r, 1r-13v, K8v, M1v-M3v, Or-O3v, O7r, P4r-P8v.

woman such learning as should teach her deceit and teach her no good manners and virtues. Notwithstanding, the precepts of living and the examples of those that have lived well and had knowledge together of holiness be the keepers of chastity and pureness, and the copies of virtues, and pricks to prick and to move folks to continue in them. . . . But you shall not lightly¹ find an ill woman, except it be such a one, as either knoweth not, or at the least way considereth not what chastity and honesty is worth. . . . nor pondreth² what bodily pleasure is, how vain and foolish a thing, which is not worth the turning of a hand, in respect that she should cast away that which is the goodliest treasure that a woman can have. And she that hath learned in books to cast this³ and such other things, and hath furnished and fenced her mind with holy counsels, shall never find to do any villainy. For if she can find in her heart to do naughtily, having so many precepts of virtue to keep her, what should we suppose she⁴ should do, having no knowledge of goodness at all? And truly, if we would call the old world to remembrance, and rehearse their time, we shall find no learned woman that ever was ill.

But here, peradventure, a man would ask, what learning a woman should be set unto, and what shall she study? I have told you, the study of wisdom, which doth instruct their manners and inform their living and teacheth them the way of good and holy life. As for eloquence, I have no great care, nor a woman needeth it not, but she needeth goodness and wisdom. Nor it is no shame for a woman to hold her peace, but it is a shame for her and abominable to lack discretion and to live ill. . . . When she shall be taught to read, let those books be taken in hand that may teach good manners. And when she shall learn to write, let not her example be void verses nor wanton or trifling songs, but some sad sentences prudent and chaste, taken out of the Scripture, or the sayings of philosophers, which by often writing she may fasten better in her memory. And in learning, as I point⁵ none end to the man, no more I do to the woman: saving it is meet that the man have knowledge of many and diverse things that may both profit himself and the commonwealth, both with the use and increasing of learning. But I would the woman should be altogether in that part of philosophy that taketh upon him⁶ to inform and teach, and amend the conditions.

Finally, let her learn for herself alone and her young children or her sisters in our Lord. For it neither becometh a woman to rule a school, nor to live amongst men, or speak abroad, and shake off her demureness and honesty, either all together, or else a great part; which if she be good, it were better be at home within and unknown to other folks, and in company to hold

¹ lightly: easily. ² pondreth: ponders. ³ this: bodily pleasure. ⁴ she: text reads "we" here.
⁵ point: appoint. ⁶ him: it.

her tongue demurely, and let few see her, and none at all hear her. The apostle Paul, the vessel of election, informing and teaching the Church of the Corinthians with holy precepts, sayeth: "Let your women hold their tongues in congregations. For they be not allowed to speak but to be subject as the law biddeth. If they would learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home."⁷ And to his disciple Timothy, he writeth on this wise: "Let a woman learn in silence with all subjection."⁸ But I give no license to a woman to be a teacher, nor to have authority of the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was the first made, and after, Eve; and Adam was not betrayed; the woman was betrayed into the breach of the commandment.⁹ Therefore, because a woman is a frail thing and of weak discretion, and that may lightly be deceived, which thing our first mother Eve sheweth, whom the Devil caught with a light argument, therefore a woman should not teach, lest when she hath taken a false opinion and belief of any thing, she spread it into the hearers by the authority of masterhip, and lightly bring other¹⁰ into the same error, for the learners commonly do after the teacher with good will.

HOW THE MAID SHALL BEHAVE HERSELF FORTH ABROAD

Forth she must needs go sometimes, but I would it should be as seldom as may be, for many causes. Principally because as oft as a maid goeth forth among people, so often she cometh in judgment and extreme peril of her beauty, honesty, demureness, with shamefastness, and virtue. For nothing is more tender than is the fame and estimation¹¹ of women, nor nothing more in danger of wrong; insomuch that it hath been said and not without cause to hang by a cobweb, because those things that I have rehearsed be required perfect in a woman, and folk's judgments be dangerous to please and suspicious. . . .

But afore she go forth at door, let her prepare her mind and stomach none otherwise than if she went to fight. Let her remember what she shall hear, what she shall see, and what herself shall say. Let her consider with herself that something shall chance on every side that shall move her chastity and good mind. Against these darts of the devil flying on every side, let her take the buckler of stomach¹² defended with good examples and precepts, and a firm purpose of chastity, and a mind ever bent toward Christ.

⁷ 1 Corinthians 14:34-35. ⁸ 1 Timothy 2:10-14. ⁹ Genesis 3:1-6; the snake "betrays" Eve into breaking the commandment that forbids eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. ¹⁰ other: others. ¹¹ fame and estimation: reputation. ¹² buckler of stomach: a shield of valor.

OF LOVING

Love is bred by reason of company and communication with men; for among pleasures, feasts, laughing, dancing, and volupties¹³ is the kingdom of Venus and Cupid. And with these things folk's minds be enticed and snared, and specially the women's, on whom pleasure hath sorest dominion. O miserable young woman, careful¹⁴ mayest thou be if thou depart out of that company entangled already; how much better had it been for thee to have bidden at home and rather to have broken a leg of thy body than a leg of thy mind? Howbeit, yet I will go about to find a remedy to save thee from taking if thee be untaken,¹⁵ and if thou be taken, that thou mayest [escape] out again. . . . Love of the beauty is a forgetting of reason and the next thing unto frenzy, a foul vice, and an unmannerly for an whole mind. It troubleth all the wits, it breaketh and abateth high and noble stomachs, and draweth them down from the study and thinking of high and excellent things unto low and vile, and causeth them to be full of groaning and complaining, to be angry, hasty, foolhardy, strait in ruling, full of vile and servile flattering, unmeet¹⁶ for everything, and at the last unmeet for love itself. . . . Give none ear unto the lover, no more than thou wouldst do unto an enchanter or a sorcerer; for he cometh pleasantly and flattering, first praising the maiden showing her how he is taken with the love of her beauty, and that he must be dead for her love. For these lovers know well enough the vainglorious minds of many which have a great delight in their own praises wherewith they be caught like as the birder beguileth the birds.¹⁷ He calleth thee fair, proper, witty, well-spoken, and of gentle blood, wherof peradventure thou art nothing at all, and thou, like a fool, art glad to hear those lies and weenest¹⁸ that thou dost seem so indeed when thou art never a whit so. . . .

He sayeth he shall die for thee, yea, and that he dieth even straightaway. Believest thou that? A fool; let him show thee how many have died for love among so many thousands as have been lovers. Love doth pain sometimes, but it never slayeth. Or though he did die for thee, yet it were better for thee to let him perish than be perished thyself, and that one should perish rather than twain.

HOW THE MAID SHALL SEEK A HUSBAND

The wise poet Virgil signifyeth that it becometh not a maid to talk where her father and mother be in communication about her marriage, but to leave all that care and charge wholly unto them which love her as well as her self

¹³ volupties: delights. ¹⁴ careful: full of grief. ¹⁵ untaken: free from love. ¹⁶ unmeet: unfit. ¹⁷ the birder beguileth the birds: the bird-catcher traps birds. ¹⁸ weenest: thinks.

doth. And let her think that her father and mother will provide no less diligently for her than she would for herself, but much better, by the reason they have more experience and wisdom. Moreover, it is not comely for a maid to desire marriage, and much less to show herself to long therefore. . . . Therefore, when the father and the mother be busy about their daughter's marriage, let her help the matter forward with good prayer and desire of Christ with pure affection that she may have such a husband which shall not let nor hinder her from virtuous living, but rather provoke, exhort, and help her unto it. . . .

It is a great charge for a man to seek a husband for his daughter, neither it ought not to be gone about negligently. It is a knot that cannot be lightly loosed; only death undoeth it. Wherefore the fathers and mothers procure unto their daughters either perpetual felicity if they marry them to good men or perpetual misery, marrying them unto ill men. Here is much to be studied and great deliberation to be taken with good advisement and counsel afore a man determine ought. For there is much weariness in marriage and many pains must be suffered. There is nothing but one¹⁹ that shall cause marriage to be easy unto a woman, that is, if she chance on a good and wise husband. O foolish friends, and maids also, that set more by them that be fair, or rich, or of noble birth than them that be good, and cast yourselves into perpetual care. For if thou be married to a fair one, he will be proud of his person; and if thou marry to a rich one, his substance maketh him stately; and if thou be married to one of great birth, his kindred exalteth his stomach²⁰ . . . and in very deed it were better to be married unto an image or a picture or unto a painted table than to be married to a vicious or a foolish or a brainless man.

But they that would keep the nature of things whole and pure, neither corrupt them with wrong understanding, should reckon that wedlock is a band and coupling of love, benevolence, friendship, and charity; comprehending within it all names of goodness, sweetness, and amity. Therefore let the maid neither catch and deceive by subtlety him that should be her inseparable fellow, nor pull and draw by plain violence, but take and be taken by honest, simple, plain, and good manner, that neither of them complain with both their harms, or say they were deceived or compelled.

OF TWO [OF] THE GREATEST POINTS IN A MARRIED WOMAN

Among all other virtues of a married woman, two there ought to be most special and greatest, the which only if she have them may cause marriage to

¹⁹ one: one thing. ²⁰ his kindred exalteth his stomach: his family increases his pride.

be sure, stable, durable, easy, light, sweet, and happy; and again, if one be lacked, it shall be unsure, painful, unpleasant, and intolerable, yea, and full of misery and wretchedness. These two virtues that I mean be chastity and great love toward her husband. The first she must bring with her forth of her father's house. The second she must take after she is once entered in at her husband's door; and both father and mother, kinsfolks, and all her friends left, she shall reckon to find all these in only her husband. And in both these virtues he shall represent the image of the holy church, which is both most chaste and most faithfully doth keep truth and promise unto her spouse, Christ. . . .

A married woman ought to be of greater chastity than an unmarried. For if that thou then pollute and defile thy chastity, as God forbid thou shouldst, hark, I pray thee, how many thou shalt offend and displeaseth once with one wicked deed. How many revengers thou shalt provoke against thee. They be so many and so heinous that among some a man can make no difference, but I shall gather them without any order and set them before their eyes. First thou offendest two, which ought to be unto thee both most in price and most dear and best, that is to say, almighty God, by whose means ye were coupled together and by whose power thou hast made oath to keep the pureness of the body. And next unto God, thou offendest thine husband, unto whom only thou hast given thyself, in whom thou breakest all loves and charities if thou once be defiled. For thou art unto him as Eye was unto Adam, that is to say, his daughter, his sister, his companion, and his wife, and as I might say another himself.

Wherefore, thou desperate woman that hast abused thyself so, thou farrest in like manner as though thou haddest strangled, destroyed or murdered thyself. Thou hast broken the greatest band that can be in the world. Thou has broken, thou false woman, the most holy band of temporal law, that is to say, thy faith and thy truth, which once given, one enemy in the field will keep to another though he should stand in danger of death, and thou like a false wretch doth not keep it to thine husband, which ought to be more dear unto thee by right than thyself. Thou defilest the most pure church, which helped to couple thee; thou breakest worldly company; thou breakest the laws; thou offendest thy country; thou beatest thy father with a bitter scourge; thou beatest thy sorrowful mother, thy sisters, thy brethren, thy kinsfolks, alliances, and all thy friends; thou givest unto the company once an example of mischief and castest an everlasting blot and shame upon thy kin; thou, like a cruel mother, castest thy children into such a necessity that they can never hear speak of their mother without shame nor of their father without doubting. What greater offense can they do; or what great wickedness can they infect themselves withal that destroy their country and

perish all laws and justice, and murder their fathers and mothers, and finally defile and mar all things both spiritual and temporal? What good man or God, thinkest thou, can favor thee that dost so? All thy country folks,²¹ all rights and laws, thy country itself, thy parents, all thy kinsfolk and thine husband himself shall damn and punish thee. Almighty God will avenge most rigorously his majesty so displeased and offended of thee.

And know thou this, woman, that the chastity and honesty which thou hast is not thine, but committed and betaken unto thy keeping by thine husband. Wherefore thou dost the more wrong to give away that thing which is another body's, without the owner's license. And therefore the married woman of Lacedemon,²² when a young man desired of her that dishonest thing,²³ answered him, I would grant thee thine asking, young man, if it were mine own to give that thou askest, but that thing which thou wouldst have while I was unmarried was my father's and now is my husband's. She made him a merry and wise answer. But St. Paul speaketh full wisely for the [ad]monition of good women where he teacheth the church of God, saying: "A woman hath no power of her own body, but her husband."²⁴ Which saying ought so much to keep a woman, except²⁵ she be too ungracious, from all filthy acts, that St. Augustine doth not allow perpetual chastity²⁶ in a married woman, without²⁷ her husband be content with the same. . . . For a woman hath no power of her own body, no not unto the goodness of continence.²⁸

HOW SHE SHALL BEHAVE HERSELF UNTO HER HUSBAND

[If] it be true that men do say that friendship maketh one heart of two, much more truly and effectually ought wedlock to do the same, which far passeth all manner both friendship and kindred. Therefore, it is not said that wedlock doth make one man, or one mind, or one body of two, but clearly one person. Wherefore the words that the man spake of the woman, saying for her sake a man should leave both father and mother and abide with his wife, the same words the woman ought both to say and think with more reason. For although there be one made of two, yet the woman is as daughter unto her husband, and of nature more weaker. Wherefore she needeth his

²¹ country folks: fellow country men and women. ²² Lacedemon: from Sparta, a military city-state in ancient Greece. ²³ dishonest thing: adultery. ²⁴ 1 Corinthians 7:4; St. Paul says here that husbands have control over their wives' bodies and wives have control over their husbands'. Vives omits the second part of this statement. ²⁵ except: unless. ²⁶ perpetual chastity: celibacy. ²⁷ without: unless. ²⁸ For a woman . . . continence: because her body belongs to her husband, a wife cannot independently choose to remain celibate.

aid and succor. Wherefore if she be destitute of her husband, deserted and left alone, she may soon take hurt and wrong. Therefore if she be with her husband, where he is, there hath she both her country, her house, her father, her mother, her friends, and all her treasure.

Neither I would that she should love her husband as one loveth his friend or his brother, that is to say, I will that she shall give him great worship, reverence, great obedience, and service also; which thing not only the example of the old world teacheth us, but also all laws, both spiritual and temporal, and Nature herself cryeth and commandeth that the woman shall be subject and obedient to the man. And in all kinds of beasts the females obey the males, and wait upon them, and fawn upon them, and suffer themselves to be corrected of them. Which thing Nature showeth must be and is convenient to be done. Which, as Aristotle in his book of beasts showeth, hath given less strength and power unto the females of all kinds of beasts than to the males and more soft flesh and tender hair. Moreover, these parts which nature hath given for weapons of defense unto beasts, as teeth, horns, spurs, and such other, the most part of females lack, which their males have, as harts²⁹ and boars. And if any females have any of these, yet be they more stronger in the males, as horns of bulls be more stronger than of kine.³⁰ In all the which things Nature showeth that the male's duty is to succor and defend, and the female's to follow and to wait upon the male and to creep under his aid and obey him, that she may live the better.

But let us leave the examples of beasts which make us ashamed of ourselves without³¹ we pass them in virtue, and let us ascend up unto man's reason. . . . For in wedlock the man resembleth the reason and the woman the body. Now reason ought to rule and the body to obey if a man will live. Also St. Paul sayeth the head of the woman is the man.³² Here now I enter into the divine commandments, which in stomachs of reasonable people ought of reason to bear more rule and value than laws, more than all man's reasons, and more than the voice of Nature herself. God the maker of the whole world in the beginning, when the world was yet but rude³³ and new, giving laws unto mankind, he gave this charge unto the woman. Thou shalt be under thine husband's rule, and he shall have dominion over thee.³⁴ . . . But foolish women, do not see how sore they dishonest themselves that take the sovereignty of their husbands,³⁵ of whom all their honor must come. And so in seeking for honor, they lose it. For if the husband lack honor, the wife must needs go without it. Neither kindred, riches, nor wealth can avail her. For

²⁹harts: male deer. ³⁰kine: cows. ³¹without: unless. ³²head of the woman. . . . man: 1 Corinthians 11:3. ³³rude: uncultivated. ³⁴Thou shalt. . . . dominion over thee: Genesis 3:16. ³⁵how sore. . . . husbands: how seriously they dishonor themselves by ruling over their husbands.

who will give any honor to that man whom he seeth mastered by a woman. And again, if thy husband be honorable, be thou never so low of birth, never so poor, never so uncomely of face, yet canst thou not lack honor. . . .

Nor let [women] not love goodly men for their beauty, nor rich men for their money, nor men of great authority for their honor; for if they do so, then shall they hate the sickly, the poor, and those that bear no rule. If thou have a learned husband, learn good holy lessons of³⁶ him; if he be virtuous, do after him. . . . [I]f she chance upon an infortunate husband, neither hate nor despise him therefore, but rather contrary. She ought, if he be poor, to comfort him, and advertise³⁷ him to call into remembrance that virtue is the chief riches. . . . But beware thou fall not into such a wicked mind to will him for lucre of money³⁸ to occupy any dishonest crafts or to do any unhappy deeds that thou mayest live more delicately, or more wealthily, or go more gaily and gorgeously arrayed, or dwell in more goodly housing; and at few words, compel not him to use any filthy occupation or drudgery for thy welfare, nor to sweat and to toil that thou mayest lie at ease. For it were better for thee to eat brown bread and drink clay and mirey³⁹ water than cause thy husband to fall unto any slubbery⁴⁰ work or stinking occupation and exceeding labor for to escape thy scolding and chiding at home. For the husband is his own ruler and his wife's lord, and not her subject; neither the wife ought to crave any more of her husband than she seeth she may obtain with his heart and good will, wherein many women do amiss which with their ungoodly crying and unreasonable calling, craving and bullying upon them, driveth them to seek unlawful means of living and to do ungracious deeds, to bear out with all their⁴¹ gluttony and vain pride. . . . but thou, good daughter that wilt do well, shalt not withdraw thine husband from goodness, but rather exhort him unto virtue though thou shouldst be sure to lose all thy goods.

³⁶of: from. ³⁷advertise: counsel. ³⁸lucre of money: financial gain. ³⁹mirey: muddy. ⁴⁰slubbery: messy, dirty. ⁴¹their: the wives.

→ THOMAS BECON

From The Catechism

c. 1550

Thomas Becon (1512–1567) was educated at Cambridge; he became a minister in 1538 and was appointed to a small parish. His controversial writings attacking Catholicism landed him in trouble in 1543 when he was forced to recant his

Thomas Becon, *The Catechism* (c. 1550) Parker Society vol. 3, ed. John Ayre (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1844), 343–44, 368, 369, 371–72.