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A CANDIDE
SUR LE CHOIX
D'UNE EPOUSE

Il faut, Candide, -- avis et ordre
du temps -- que tu renonces enfin
aux amours passagères, qu'enfin
tu cesses de hanter les incertaines
retraites de Cupidon. Il te faut
chercher une jeune fille et l'é-
pouser selon les formes consa-
crées, et l'unir à toi par les liens
d'un amour mutuel, pour qu'elle
accroisse ta famille -- est-il rien de
plus doux ? -- d'aimables enfants.
Ceci, ton père l'a fait pour toi :
ce que tu as reçu de tes ancêtres,
transmets-le avec intérêts à tes
descendants.

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Que pourtant ton plus grand souci
ne soit, mon beau prince, ni sa
beauté, ni la dot qu'elle apporte.
Chétif amour, celui que fait naître
un stupide élan suscité par la
beauté, ou qu'éveille l'appât gros-
sier de l'argent.

TO CANDIDUS
ON HOW TO
CHOOSE HIS WIFE

Your time of life, Candidus, is
now reaching a point where it
suggests that at last you reject
temporary attachments, that you
cease at last to pursue haphazard
love affairs, and that you find a
girl to take as wife formally and
in mutual devotion. Let her be
fruitful and add charming children
to your most splendid line. Your
father did as much for you. Hand
on with increase to your descen-
dants what you have already
received from your ancestors.

line 22.

Still, let not your primary concern
be how much dowry she brings
or how beautiful she is. Weakness
marks any love which arises either
from a blind impulse roused by
mere beauty or from a base love
of money.

*Nor be it chief your aim
Fortune or face to seek,
Slight love attends the dame
Sought for her purse or cheek.*

32 Quicumque amauerit
 33 Propter pecuniam,
 34 Amatur huic nihil
 35 Praeter pecuniam.
 36 Capta pecunia
 37 Vanescit ilico
 38 Item fugax amor
 39 Fereque iam prius
 40 Perit quam nascitur.
 41 At nec pecunia,
 42 Quam avarus antea
 43 Miser cupiuerat,
 44 Iuuare postea
 45 Quicquam potest ubi
 46 Quam non amauerit
 47 Inuitus attamen
 48 Omnino cogitur
 49 Tenere coniugem.
 50 Quid forma? Numquid haec
 51 Vel febre decedit
 52 Annisue deperit
 53 Vt sole flosculus?
 54 Tum defluentibus
 55 Genae coloribus
 56 Amor, ligauerant
 57 Quem haec sola uincula,
 58 Solutus aufugit.
 59 At uerus est amor
 60 Quem mente perspicax
 61 Ratione consule
 62 Prudens iniuerit,
 63 Et quem bono omine
 64 Virtutis inclytae
 65 (Quae certa permanens
 66 Non febre decedit
 67 Annisue deperit)
 68 Respectus efficit.

Qui aime pour l'argent, n'aime rien en dehors de l'argent. Sitôt l'argent reçu, s'évanouit l'amour volage ; celui-ci meurt en somme avant que d'être né. Quant à l'argent, que ce misérable avait tant convoité, il ne lui est plus d'aucun service dans la nécessité où il se trouve de garder pour épouse, bien malgré lui, celle qu'il n'aime point.



Que dire de la beauté ? Ne tombe-t-elle pas sous les attaques de la fièvre ? Ne se fane-t-elle pas avec le temps comme une fleur au soleil ? Et lorsque les joues perdent l'éclat de leurs couleurs, l'amour, que ces liens seuls retenaient, s'en va à la dérive. Mais l'amour véritable est celui ou l'on s'engage avec un esprit lucide et prévoyant, guidé par la raison. Il naît sous l'heureux augure et dans le rayonnement d'une vertu dont la constance assurée ne craint ni les atteintes de la fièvre ni l'outrage des ans.

*But genuine is the love
 Which reason, virtue, rears :
 All fever's force above,
 Above the assault of years.*

The man who loves for money's sake loves only money. As soon as he acquires the money, his fleeting love is gone and dies almost before it is born. And the money, which in his miserable selfishness he had coveted earlier, cannot help him in the least later on when he is required, howsoever unwilling, to keep the wife he does not love.

line 50.

What is beauty ? Does it not fail in sickness, perish with time like a flower in the sun ? Then, when the bloom leaves her cheek, a love secured only by such ties as these breaks free and is gone forever. Only a man of intelligence and foresight, with reason for his guide, can enter upon true love. True love is inspired, with happy promise, by respect for a woman's chastity, a noble gift which endures, does not fail in sickness, does not perish with the years.

69 Primum ergo quam uoles,
 70 Amice, ducere
 71 Quibus parentibus
 72 Sit orta perspicé,
 73 Vt mater optimis
 74 Sit culta moribus
 75 Cuius tenellula
 76 Mores puellula
 77 Insugat, exprimat.
 78 Tum qua sit indole
 79 Quam dulcis, hoc uide,
 80 Vt ore uirginis
 81 Insit serenitas,
 82 Ab ore uirginis
 83 Absitque toruitas,
 84 At rursus ut tamen
 85 Sit in genis pudor,
 86 Nec ore uirginis
 87 Insit procacitas.
 88 Et sit quieta nec
 89 Cingat salacibus
 90 Viros lacertulis.
 91 Vultu modesta sit
 92 Nec spectet undique
 93 Vagis ocellulis.
 94 Proculque stulta sit
 95 Paruis labellulis
 96 Semper loquacitas,
 97 Proculque rusticum
 98 Semper silentium.
 99 Sit illa uel modo
 100 Instructa literis
 101 Vel talis ut modo
 102 Sit apta literis,
 103 Felix quibus bene
 104 Priscis ab optimis
 105 Possit libellulis
 106 Vitam beantia
 107 Haurire dogmata,
 108 Armata cum quibus
 109 Nec illa prosperis
 110 Superba turgeat

Ainsi donc, mon ami, la demoiselle que tu voudras épouser, examine d'abord quels sont ses parents ; il faut qu'elle ait été formée à des moeurs exquises cette mère dont la fillette à son tour reproduira les manières, les ayant bues au sein maternel.

Vois aussi quel est son caractère, si elle est gracieuse; que son jeune visage de vierge reflète la sérénité, que rien d'agressif ne durcisse ses traits. Que la retenue, par contre, s'y inscrive. Qu'on n'y voie point d'effronterie. Qu'elle soit réservée et ne serre point les hommes dans ses bras tentateurs. Que ses regards soient modestes, et que ses yeux ne divaguent pas en tous sens. Que le sot bavardage soit toujours absent de ses jolies lèvres et tout autant le silence impoli.

Si elle n'est pas instruite, qu'elle ait au moins des aptitudes à l'instruction. Sa culture lui donnera le privilège de puiser dans les bons vieux livres les enseignements qui anoblissent l'existence. Armée de ces principes, qu'elle ne s'enfle pas d'orgueil dans la prospérité.

And so, my friend, if you desire to marry, first observe what kind of parents the lady has, in the hope that, as a mother, she may be endowed with the best of characters for her tender infant to acquire – along with mother's milk – and to imitate.

line 78.

Next see to this : what sort of personality she has ; how agreeable she is. Let her expression be calm and without severity. And, too, let her modesty bring blushes to her cheeks ; let her glance be not provocative. Let her be mild-mannered, not inclined to bold embraces. Let her glances be restrained ; let her have no roving eye. In her speech let there be never a trace of pointless garrulity or of boorish taciturnity.

line 99.

Let her be either educated or capable of being educated. Happy is the woman whose education permits her to derive from the best of ancient works the principles which confer a blessing on life. Armed with this learning, she would not yield to pride in prosperity,

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111 Nec illa turbidis
 112 Misella lugeat
 113 Prostrata casibus.
 114 Iucunda sic erit
 115 Semper nec unquam erit
 116 Grauis molestaue
 117 Vitae comes tuae.
 118 Quae docta paruulos
 119 Docebit et tuos
 120 Cum lacte literas
 121 Olim nepotulos.
 122 Iam te iuuauerit
 123 Viros relinquere
 124 Doctaeque coniugis
 125 Sinu quiescere,
 126 Dum grata te fouet,
 127 Manuque mobili
 128 Dum plectra personant
 129 Et uoce (qua nec est,
 130 Progne, sororculae
 131 Tuae suauior)
 132 Amoena cantilat,
 133 Apollo quae uelit
 134 Audire carmina.
 135 Iam te iuuauerit
 136 Sermone blandulo
 137 Docto tamen dies
 138 Noctesque ducere,
 139 Notare uerbula
 140 Mellita maximis
 141 Non absque gratiis
 142 Ab ore melleo
 143 Semper fluentia,
 144 Quibus coherceat
 145 Si quando te leuet
 146 Inane gaudium,
 147 Quibus leuauerit
 148 Si quando deprimat
 149 Te moeror anxius,
 150 Certabit in quibus

Qu'elle ne soit pas non plus toute
 éplorée ni écrasée par l'adversité.
 Et ainsi la compagne de ta vie
 sera toujours gaie et jamais pénible
 ni ennuyeuse. Savante, elle
 fera connaître leurs lettres, dès le
 berceau, à tes enfants, et quelque
 jour, à tes petits-enfants.



Tu trouveras grand plaisir à quitter
 le cercle des hommes et à te reposer
 près de ta docte épouse qui te cajole
 aimablement. Sous ses doigts agiles,
 la lyre résonne et sa voix agréable
 (Celle de ta soeur, Procné, n'est pas
 plus douce) elle fredonne des airs
 suaves que voudrait ouïr Apollon.
 Désormais tu auras le plaisir de
 passer tes jours et tes nuits en de
 savantes et charmantes conversations,
 de recueillir ces propos enjoués
 pleins de mille grâces que répandront
 ses lèvres douces comme le miel. Soit
 qu'elle te calme lorsqu'un rire trop
 expansif te saisira, soit qu'elle te
 reconforte si une fâcheuse tristesse
 vient à t'accabler. Dans ses propos
 rivaliseront l'éloquence et de
 sérieuses connaissances en tout
 domaine.



nor to grief in distress – even
 though misfortune strike her
 down. For this reason your life-
 time companion will be ever agree-
 able, never a trouble or a burden.
 If she is well instructed herself,
 then some day she will teach
 your little grandsons, at an early
 age, to read.

line 122.

You will find it a pleasure to
 leave the company of men and,
 after your accomplished wife has
 embraced you, to lie at ease
 while she encourages you, while
 under her dexterous touch the
 stringed music swells, while in a
 sweet voice (as sweet, Procne, as
 your sister's) she sings pleasant
 songs such as Apollo would be
 glad to hear. Then it will be your
 pleasure to spend days and nights
 in pleasant and intelligent conver-
 sation, listening to the sweet
 words which most charmingly
 flow from her ever honeyed
 mouth. By her comments she
 would restrain you if ever vain
 success should exalt you or
 speechless grief should cast you
 down. When she speaks, it will be
 difficult to judge between her
 extraordinary ability to say what
 she thinks and her thoughtful
 understanding of all kinds of
 affairs.

151 Summa eloquentia
 152 Iam cum omnium graui
 153 Rerum scientia.
 154 Talem olim ego putem
 155 Et uatis Orphei
 156 Fuisse coniugem.
 157 Nec unquam ab inferis
 158 Curasset improbo
 159 Labore foeminam
 160 Referre rusticam.
 161 Talemque credimus
 162 Nasonis inclytam
 163 Quae uel patrem queat
 164 Aequare carmine
 165 Fuisse filiam.
 166 Talemque suspicor
 167 (Qua nulla charior
 168 Vnquam fuit patri
 169 Quo nemo doctior)
 170 Fuisse Tulliam.
 171 Talisque quae tulit
 172 Gracchos duos fuit.
 173 Quae quos tulit bonis
 174 Instruxit artibus
 175 Nec profuit minus
 176 Magistra quam parens.
 177 Quid prisca secula
 178 Tandem reuoluimus ?
 179 Vtcunque rusticum
 180 Vnam tamen tenet
 181 Nostrumque uirginem,
 182 Tenet, sed unicam,
 183 At sic ut unicam
 184 Plerisque praeferat,
 185 Cuique conferat
 186 Ex hijs, fuisse quae
 187 Narrantur omnibus
 188 Tot retro seculis,
 189 Quae nunc et ultimam
 190 Monet Britanniam

Telle, je pense, était jadis l'épouse
 du poète Orphée. Jamais il n'au-
 rait pris souci de ramener des En-
 fers par de pénibles efforts une
 femme sans grâces. Telle était, je
 crois, la fille si renommée d'Ovide,
 capable d'égaliser les poèmes de son
 père. Telle était, je le soupçonne,
 Tullia : jamais fille ne fut plus
 aimée de son père, et n'en eut
 de plus docte. Telle était celle
 qui mit au monde les deux Grac-
 ques : elle forma l'esprit de ses
 fils et ne leur fut pas moins utile
 comme institutrice que comme
 mère.

Mais pourquoi donc parcourir ces
 temps antiques ? Si inculte qu'il
 soit, notre siècle à nous possède
 aussi sa jeune femme idéale, assez
 unique et sans pareille pour qu'il
 la préfère à l'ensemble des autres,
 lorsqu'il la compare à celles qui
 ont vécu, au dire des historiens,
 durant tant de siècles. Elle se fait
 aujourd'hui écouter jusqu'aux
 confins de la Grande Bretagne ;
 portée sur les ailes de la renom-
 mée, cette adolescente sans rivale
 est la gloire et l'honneur de l'u-
 nivers, et non seulement la Cas-
 sandre de son propre pays.

I should think that the wife of
 the bard Orpheus long ago was
 such a woman ; he would never
 have taken the trouble to recover
 from the dead, by impious effort,
 an uncultivated wife. Such a
 woman, I believe, was Ovid's
 famous daughter, who could rival
 in poetical composition even her
 own father. Such a woman, I
 suspect, was Tullia, most beloved
 daughter of a most learned father.
 Such a woman was the mother of
 the two Gracchi. She taught her
 sons right principles ; she accom-
 plished no less as their teacher
 than she did as their mother.

line 177

Why do I continue to contemplate
 ancient times ? After all, our age,
 rude though it is, possesses one
 maiden — but only one — so
 extraordinary that our own age
 would prefer her to most and
 compare her with any of those
 famous women of so long ago.
 Borne high upon the soaring
 wings of fame, she is now heeded
 even in the remotest parts of
 Britain, an incomparable girl, a
 Cassandra, the admiration and
 glory of the whole world, not
 merely of her own country.

*The gaze of other lands,
 Cassandra of her own.*

191 *Perlata pennulis*
 192 *Famae uolucribus;*
 193 *Laus atque gloria*
 194 *Orbis puellula*
 195 *Totius unica,*
 196 *Ac non modo suae*
 197 *Cassandra patriae.*
 198 *Dic ergo, Candide,*
 199 *Si talis et tibi*
 200 *Puella nuberet*
 201 *Quales ego tibi*
 202 *Supra recensui.*
 203 *Desit licet queas*
 204 *Formam requirere,*
 205 *Dotisue quod parum*
 206 *Lucrere conqueri,*
 207 *Hic sermo uerus est,*
 208 *Quaecunque sit, satis*
 209 *Est bella quae placet,*
 210 *Nec quisquam habet magis*
 211 *Quam qui sibi satis,*
 212 *Quodcunque habet, putat.*
 213 *Sic nunc me amet mea*
 214 *Vt nil ego tibi,*
 215 *Amice, mentiar.*
 216 *Cuicunque gratiam*
 217 *Formae negauerit*
 218 *Natura uirgini,*
 219 *Certe licet siet*
 220 *Carbone nigror,*
 221 *Foret tamen mihi hac*
 222 *Virtutis indole*
 223 *Olore pulchrrior.*
 224 *Cuicunque lubrica*
 225 *Dotem negauerit*
 226 *Fortuna uirgini,*
 227 *Certe siet licet*
 228 *Vel Iro egentior,*
 229 *Foret tamen mihi hac*
 230 *Virtutis indole*
 231 *Te, Croese, ditior.*

Vers 198

Dis-moi donc, Candide, si tu épousais une jeune fille semblable à celles que je viens de te décrire, tu aurais beau regretter l'absence de beauté, ou te plaindre du peu de dot que tu toucheras, il n'en reste pas moins vrai de dire : "Quelle qu'elle soit, une femme qui plaît est bien assez belle, et nul ne possède plus que celui qui estime suffisant pour lui, ce qu'il a."

Sur l'amour que me porte mon amie, je t'assure, ami, que je ne te mens point. Si la Nature a refusé la beauté à une jeune fille, l'a faite plus noire que le charbon, son caractère vertueux me la rendra plus belle que le cygne. Si la Fortune capricieuse a pu lui refuser une dot, et la faire plus pauvre qu'Irus, pour moi, grâce à son caractère vertueux, elle sera plus riche que toi Crésus.

And so speak up, Candidus. Suppose you, too, had for wife a girl such as those I mentioned above — then, although you might perceive in her some lack of beauty, although you might complain because you are too little enriched by her dowry, still here is the truth of the matter : "Whoever she is, if a woman is agreeable, she is goodlooking enough ; and no man possesses more than he who is content with what he has."

Line 213.

May my own wife cease to love me if I am not telling you the truth, my friend. If nature has denied the gift of beauty to a girl, yes, though she be blacker than coal, still, if she has this inborn gift of virtue, she would be in my eyes fairer than the swan. If elusive fortune has denied her a dowry, yes, though she be poorer than Irus, still, if she has this inborn gift of virtue, she would be in my eyes richer, Croesus, than you.

*So loved, were she, I swear,
 Than soot of darker die ;
 I'd think her far more fair
 Than e'er met mortal eye.*

*So loved, were she, I swear,
 Than poverty more poor,
 I'd think her richer far
 Than kings with all their store.*

EDITOR'S POSTSCRIPT

T.E. Bridgett rightly quoted this poem when he came to More's own marriage, in chapter VII of *Life and Writings of Sir Thomas More*, also called *Life of Blessed Thomas More*, second edition, 1892, p. 54. His paragraph begins with a famous account of More's love-match to Joan or Jane Colt :

"She was very young," says Erasmus, "of good family, with a mind somewhat uncultivated, having always resided in the country with her parents and sisters ; but she was all the more apt to be moulded according to his habits. He took care to have her instructed in learning, and especially in all musical accomplishments, and had made her such that he could have willingly passed his whole life with her, but a premature death separated them." His affection is shown by one little word in his own epitaph, composed more than twenty years after her death. He calls her More's dear little wife (*uxorcula Mori*). It is curious that love of books and love of music, on the part of a wife, are two of the components of conjugal happiness mentioned by More in his poem to Candidus, of which the title is, "What sort of wife to choose". She must neither be too talkative nor too taciturn, but she must sing and she must read.

Not only More's life, but his writings, can throw some light on or yield interesting parallels to these brachy-catalectic dimeters. One instance will suffice for now. Lines 94-98 on shunning both *garrulitas* and *taciturnitas* are charmingly rendered by Wrangham :

*Far from her lip's soft door
Be noise, be silence stern.*

But More himself, listing the accomplishments of Jane Shore, praises her skill in steering that middle course ; she was, writes he, "neither mute nor full of babble : *neque silentio rustico, neque immodica dicacitate notabilis*". (The *History of Richard III*, Yale ed. p. 56/5)