

***THE GOLDEN
ASSE***

BOOK VIII

By

Lucius

Apuleius "Africanus"

THE EIGHTH BOOK

THE THIRTY-SECOND CHAPTER

How a young man came and declared the miserable death of Lepolemus and his wife Charites.

About midnight came a young man, which seemed to be one of the family of the good woman Charites, who sometimes endured so much misery and calamity with mee amongst the theeves, who after that hee had taken a stoole, and sate downe before the fireside, in the company of the servants, began to declare many terrible things that had happened unto the house of Charites, saying: O yee house-keepers, shepheards and cowheards, you shall understand that wee have lost our good mistris Charites miserably and by evill adventure: and to the end you may learne and know all the whole matter, I purpose to tell you the circumstances of every point, whereby such as are more learned then I (to whom fortune hath ministred more copious stile) may painte it out in paper in forme of an History. There was a young Gentleman dwelling in the next City, borne of good parentage, valiant in prowesse, and riche in substance, but very much given and adicted to whorehunting, and continuall revelling. Whereby he fell in company with Theeves, and had his hand ready to the effusion of humane blood; his name was Thrasillus. The matter was this according to the report of every man. Hee demanded Charites in marriage, who although he were a man more comely then the residue that wooed her, and also had riches abundantly, yet because he was of evill fame, and a man of wicked manners and conversation, he had the repulse and was put off by Charites, and so she married with Lepolemus. Howbeit this young man secretly loved her, yet moved somewhat at her refusall, hee busily searched some meanes to worke his damnable intent. And (having found occasion and opportunity to accomplish his purpose, which he had long time concealed) brought to passe, that the same day that Charites was delivered by the subtill meane and valiant audacity of her husband, from the puissance of the Theeves, he mingled himselfe among the assembly, faining that he was glad of the new marriage, and comming home againe of the maiden, Whereby (by reason that he came of so noble parents) he was received and entertained into the house as one of their chiefe and

principall friends: Howbeit under cloake of a faithfull welwiller, hee dissimuled his mischievous mind and intent: in continuance of time by much familiarity and often conversation and banketting together, he fell more and more in favour, like as we see it fortuneth to Lovers, who first doe little delight themselves in love: till as by continuall acquaintance they kisse and imbrace each other. Thrasillus perceiving that it was a hard matter to breake his minde secretly to Charites, whereby he was wholly barred from the accomplishment of his luxurious appetite, and on the other side perceiving that the love of her and her husband was so strongly lincked together, that the bond betweene them might in no wise be dissevered, moreover, it was a thing impossible to ravish her, although he had consented thereto, yet was hee still provoked forward by vehement lust, when as hee saw himselfe unable to bring his purpose to passe. Howbeit at length the thing which seemed so hard and difficill, thorough hope of his fortified love, did now appeare easie and facill: but marke I pray you diligently to what end the furious force of his inordinate desire came. On a day Lepolemus went to the chase with Thrasillus, to hunt for Goates, for his wife Charites desired him earnestly to meddle with no other beasts, which were of more fierce and wilde nature. When they were come within the chase to a great thicket fortified about with bryers and thornes, they compassed round with their Dogs and beset every place with nets: by and by warning was given to let loose. The Dogs rushed in with such a cry, that all the Forrest rang againe with the noyse, but behold there leaped out no Goat, nor Deere, nor gentle Hinde, but an horrible and dangerous wild Boare, hard and thicke skinned, bristled terribly with thornes, foming at the mouth, grinding his teeth, and looking direfully with fiery eyes. The Dogs that first set upon him, he tare and rent with his tuskes, and then he ranne quite through the nets, and escaped away. When wee saw the fury of this beast, wee were greatly stricken with feare, and because wee never accustomed to chase such dreadfull Boares, and further because we were unarmed and without weapons, we got and hid our selves under bushes and trees. Then Thrasillus having found opportunity to worke his treason, said to Lepolemus: What stand we here amazed? Why show we our selves like dastards? Why leese we so worthy a prey with our feminine hearts? Let us mount upon our Horses, and pursue him incontinently: take you a hunting staffe, and I will take a chasing speare. By and by they leaped upon their

Horses, and followed the beast. But hee returning against them with furious force, pryed with his eyes, on whom hee might first assayle with his tuskes: Lepolemus strooke the beast first on the backe with his hunting staffe. Thrasillus faining to ayde and assist him, came behind, and cut off the hinder legges of Lepolemus Horse, in such sort that hee fell downe to the ground with his master: and sodainely the Boare came upon Lepolemus and furiously tare and rent him with his teeth. Howbeit, Thrasillus was not sufficed to see him thus wounded, but when he desired his friendly help, he thrust Lepolemus through the right thigh with his speare, the more because he thought the wound of the speare would be taken for a wound of the Boars teeth, then he killed the beast likewise, And when he was thus miserably slaine, every one of us came out of our holes, and went towards our slaine master. But although that Thrasillus was joyfull of the death of Lepolemus, whom he did greatly hate, yet he cloked the matter with a sorrowfull countenance, he fained a dolorous face, he often imbraced the body which himselfe slew, he played all the parts of a mourning person, saving there fell no teares from his eyes. Thus hee resembled us in each point, who verily and not without occasion had cause to lament for our master, laying all the blame of this homicide unto the Boare. Incontinently after the sorrowfull newes of the death of Lepolemus, came to the eares of all the family, but especially to Charites, who after she had heard such pitifull tydings, as a mad and raging woman, ran up and down the streets, crying and howling lamentably. All the Citizens gathered together, and such as they met bare them company running towards the chasse. When they came to the slaine body of Lepolemus, Charites threw her selfe upon him weeping and lamenting grievously for his death, in such sort, that she would have presently ended her life, upon the corps of her slaine husband, whom shee so entirely loved, had it not beene that her parents and friends did comfort her, and pulled her away. The body was taken up, and in funerall pompe brought to the City and buried. In the meane season, Thrasillus fained much sorrow for the death of Lepolemus, but in his heart he was well pleased and joyfull. And to counterfeit the matter, he would come to Charites and say: O what a losse have I had of my friend, my fellow, my companion Lepolemus? O Charites comfort your selfe, pacifie your dolour, refraine your weeping, beat not your breasts: and with such other and like words and divers examples he endeavoured to

suppresse her great sorrow, but he spake not this for any other intent but to win the heart of the woman, and to nourish his odious love with filthy delight. Howbeit Charites after the buriall of her husband sought the meanes to follow him, and (not sustaining the sorrows wherein she was Wrapped) got her secretly into a chamber and purposed to finish her life there with dolour and tribulation. But Thrasillus was very importunate, and at length brought to passe, that at the intercession of the Parents and friends of Charites, she somewhat refreshed her fallen members with refection of meate and baine. Howbeit, she did it more at the commandement of her Parents, then for any thing else: for she could in no wise be merry, nor receive any comfort, but tormented her selfe day and night before the Image of her husband which she made like unto Bacchus, and rendred unto him divine honours and services. In the meane season Thrasillus not able to refraine any longer, before Charites had asswaged her dolor, before her troubled mind had pacified her fury, even in the middle of all her griefes, while she tare her haire and rent her garments, demanded her in marriage, and so without shame, he detected the secrets and unspeakeable deceipts of his heart. But Charites detested and abhorred his demand, and as she had beene stroken with some clap of thunder, with some storme, or with the lightning of Jupiter, she presently fell downe to the ground all amazed. Howbeit when her spirits were revived and that she returned to her selfe, perceiving that Thrasillus was so importunate, she demanded respite to deliberate and to take advise on the matter. In the meane season, the shape of Lepolemus that was slaine so miserably, appeared to Charites saying, O my sweet wife (which no other person can say but I) I pray thee for the love which is betweene us two, if there be any memorie of me in thy heart, or remembrance of my pittifull death, marry with any other person, so that thou marry not with the traitour Thrasillus, have no conference with him, eate not with him, lie not with him, avoid the bloudie hand of mineemie, couple not thy selfe with a paricide, for those wounds (the bloud whereof thy teares did wash away) were not the wounds of the teeth of the Boare, but the speare of Thrasillus, that deprived me from thee. Thus spake Lepolemus, unto his loving wife, and declared the residue of the damnable fact. Then Charites, awaking from sleepe, began to renew her dolour, to teare her garments, and to beate her armes with her comely hands, howbeit she revealed the vision which she saw to no manner of person, but

dissimulating that she knew no part of the mischief, devised with her selfe how she might be revenged on the traitor, and finish her owne life to end and knit up all sorrow. Incontinently came Thrasillus, the detestable demander of sodaine pleasure, and wearied the closed eares of Charites with talke of marriage, but she gently refused his communication, and coloring the matter, with passing craft in the midst of his earnest desires gan say, Thrasillus you shall understand that yet the face of your brother and my husband, is alwayes before mine eies, I smell yet the Cinamon sent of his pretious body, I yet feele Lepolemus alive in my heart: wherefore you shall do well if you grant to me miserable woman, necessarie time to bewaile his death, that after the residue of a few months, the whole yeare may be expired, which thing toucheth as well my shame as your wholsome profit, lest peradventure by your speed and quicke marriage we should justly raise and provoke the spirit of my husband to worke our destruction. Howbeit, Thrasillus was not contented with this promise, but more and more came upon her: Insomuch, that she was enforced to speake to him in this manner: My friend Thrasillus, if thou be so contented untill the whole yeare be compleate and finished, behold here is my bodie, take thy pleasure, but in such sort and so secret that no servant of the house may perceiue it. Then Thrasillus trusting to the false promises of the woman, and preferring his inordinate pleasure above all things in the world, was joyfull in his heart and looked for night, when as he might have his purpose. But come thou about midnight (quoth Charites) disguised without companie, and doe but hisse at my chamber doore, and my nourse shall attend and let thee in. This counsell pleased Thrasillus marveilously, who (suspecting no harme) did alwaies looke for night, and the houre assigned by Charites. The time was scarce come, when as (according to her commandement) he disguised himselfe, and went straight to the chamber, where he found the nourse attending for him, who (by the appointment of her Mistresse) fed him with flattering talke, and gave him mingled and doled drinke in a cup, excusing the absence of her Mistresse Charites, by reason that she attended on her Father being sick, untill such time, that with sweet talke and operation of the wine, he fell in a sound sleepe: Now when he lay prostrate on the ground readie to all adventure, Charites (being called for) came in, and with manly courage and bold force stood over the sleeping murderer, saying: Behold the faithfull companion of my husband,

behold this valiant hunter; behold me deere spouse, this is the hand which shed my bloud, this is the heart which hath devised so many subtill meanes to worke my destruction, these be the eies whom I have ill pleased, behold now they foreshew their owne destinie: sleepe carelesse, dreame that thou art in the hands of the mercifull, for I will not hurt thee with thy sword or any other weapon: God forbid that I should slay thee as thou slewest my husband, but thy eies shall faile thee, and thou shalt see no more, then that whereof thou dreamest: Thou shalt thinke the death of thine enemy more sweet then thy life: Thou shalt see no light, thou shalt lacke the aide of a leader, thou shalt not have me as thou hopest, thou shalt have no delight of my marriage, thou shalt not die, and yet living thou shalt have no joy, but wander betweene light and darknesse as an unsure Image: thou shalt seeke for the hand that pricked out thine eies, yet shalt thou not know of whom thou shouldest complaine: I will make sacrifice with the bloud of thine eies upon the grave of my husband. But what gainest thou through my delay? Perhaps thou dreamest that thou embracest me in thy armes: leave off the darknesse of sleepe and awake thou to receive a penall deprivation of thy sight, lift up thy face, regard thy vengeance and evill fortune, reckon thy miserie; so pleaseth thine eies to a chaste woman, that thou shall have blindnesse to thy companion, and an everlasting remorse of thy miserable conscience. When she had spoken these words, she tooke a great needle from her head and pricked out both his eies: which done, she by and by caught the naked sword which her husband Lepolemus accustomed to weare, and ranne throughout all the Citie like a mad woman towards the Sepulchre of her husband. Then all we of the house, with all the Citizens, ranne incontinently after her to take the sword out of her hand, but she clasping about the tombe of Lepolemus, kept us off with her naked weapon, and when she perceived that every one of us wept and lamented, she spake in this sort: I pray you my friends weepe not, nor lament for me, for I have revenged the death of my husband, I have punished deservedly the wicked breaker of our marriage; now is it time to seeke out my sweet Lepolemus, and presently with this sword to finish my life. And therewithall after she had made relation of the whole matter, declared the vision which she saw and told by what meane she deceived Thrasillus, thrusting her sword under her right brest, and wallowing in her owne bloud, at length with manly courage yeilded up the Ghost. Then immediately the

friends of miserable Charites did bury her body within the same Sepulchre. Thrasillus hearing all the matter, and knowing not by what meanes he might end his life, for he thought his sword was not sufficient to revenge so great a crime, at length went to the same Sepulchre, and cryed with a lowd voice, saying: o yee dead spirites whom I have so highly and greatly offended, vouchsafe to receive me, behold I make Sacrifice unto you with my whole body: which said, hee closed the Sepulchre, purposing to famish himselfe, and to finish his life there in sorrow. These things the young man with pitifull sighes and teares, declared unto the Cowheards and Shepheards, which caused them all to weepe: but they fearing to become subject unto new masters, prepared themselves to depart away.

THE THIRTY-THIRD CHAPTER

How Apuleius was lead away by the Horsekeeper: and what danger he was in.

By and by the Horsekeeper, to whom the charge of me was committed, brought forth all his substance, and laded me and other Horses withall, and so departed thence: we bare women, children, pullets, sparrowes, kiddes, whelpes, and other things which were not able to keepe pace with us, and that which I bare upon my backe, although it was a mighty burthen, yet seemed it very light because I was driven away from him that most terribly had appointed to kill me. When we had passed over a great mountaine full of trees, and were come againe into the open fields, behold we approached nigh to a faire and rich Castell, where it was told unto us that we were not able to passe in our journey that night, by reason of the great number of terrible Wolves which were in the Country about, so fierce and cruell that they put every man in feare, in such sort that they would invade and set upon such which passed by like theeves, and devoure both them and their beasts. Moreover, we were advertised that there lay in the way where we should passe, many dead bodies eaten and torne with wolves. Wherefore we were willed to stay there all night, and on the next morning, to goe close and round together, whereby we might passe and escape all dangers. But (notwithstanding this good counsell) our caitife drivers were so covetous to goe forward, and so fearefull of pursuite, that they never stayed till the morning: But being welnigh midnight, they made us trudge in our way apace. Then I fearing the great danger which might happen, ran amongst the middle of the other Horses, to the end I might defend and save my poore buttocks from the Wolves, whereat every man much marvelled to see, that I scowred away swifter then the other Horses. But such was my agility, not to get me any prayse, but rather for feare: at that time I remembered with my selfe, that the valiant Horse Pegasus did fly in the ayre more to avoyd the danger of dreadful Chimera, then for any thing else. The shepherds which drave us before them were well armed like warriours: one had a speare, another had a sheepehooke, some had darts, some clubbes, some gathered up great stones, some held up their sharp Javelings, and some feared away the Woolves with light firebrands. Finally wee lacked nothing

to make up an Army, but onely Drummes and Trumpets. But when we had passed these dangers, not without small feare, wee fortun'd to fall into worse, for the Woolves came not upon us, either because of the great multitude of our company, or else because [of] our firebrands, or peradventure they were gone to some other place, for wee could see none, but the Inhabitants of the next villages (supposing that wee were Theeves by reason of the great multitude) for the defence of their owne substance, and for the feare that they were in, set great and mighty masties upon us, which they had kept and nourished for the safety of their houses, who compassing us round about leaped on every side, tearing us with their teeth, in such sort that they pulled many of us to the ground: verily it was a pittifull sight to see so many Dogs, some following such as flyed, some invading such as stood still, some tearing those which lay prostrate, but generally there were none which escaped cleare: Behold upon this another danger ensued, the Inhabitants of the Towne stood in their garrets and windowes, throwing great stones upon our heads, that wee could not tell whether it were best for us to avoyd the gaping mouthes of the Dogges at hand or the perill of the stones afarre, amongst whome there was one that hurled a great flint upon a woman, which sate upon my backe, who cryed out pitiously, desiring her husband to helpe her. Then he (comming to succour and ayd his wife) beganne to speake in this sort: Alas masters, what mean you to trouble us poore labouring men so cruelly? What meane you to revenge your selves upon us, that doe you no harme? What thinke you to gaine by us? You dwell not in Caves or Dennes: you are no people barbarous, that you should delight in effusion of humane blood. At these words the tempest of stones did cease, and the storme of the Dogges vanished away. Then one (standing on the toppe of a great Cypresse tree) spake unto us saying: Thinke you not masters that we doe this to the intent to rifle or take away any of your goods, but for the safeguard of our selves and family: now a Gods name you may depart away. So we went forward, some wounded with stones, some bitten with Dogs, but generally there was none which escaped free.

THE THIRTY-FOURTH CHAPTER

How the shepherds determined to abide in a certaine wood to cure their wounds.

When we had gone a good part of our way, we came to a certaine wood invironed with great trees and compassed about with pleasant meddowes, whereas the Shepherds appointed to continue a certaine space to cure their wounds and sores; then they sate downe on the ground to refresh their wearie minds, and afterwards they sought for medicines, to heale their bodies: some washed away their blood with the water of the running River: some stopped their wounds with Spunges and cloutes, in this manner every one provided for his owne safety. In the meane season wee perceived an old man, who seemed to be a Shepheard, by reason of the Goates and Sheep that fed round about him. Then one of our company demanded whether he had any milke, butter, or cheese to sell. To whom he made answeare saying: Doe you looke for any meate or drinke, or any other refection here? Know you not in what place you be?

And therewithall he tooke his sheepe and drave them away as fast as he might possible. This answeare made our shepherds greatly to feare, that they thought of nothing else, but to enquire what Country they were in: Howbeit they saw no manner of person of whom they might demand. At length as they were thus in doubt, they perceived another old man with a staffe in his hand very weary with travell, who approaching nigh to our company, began to weepe and complaine saying: Alas masters I pray you succour me miserable caitife, and restore my nephew to me againe, that by following a sparrow that flew before him, is fallen into a ditch hereby, and verily I thinke he is in danger of death. As for me, I am not able to helpe him out by reason of mine old age, but you that are so valiant and lusty may easily helpe me herein, and deliver me my boy, my heire and guide of my life. These words made us all to pity him. And then the youngest and stoutest of our company, who alone escaped best the late skirmish of Dogges and stones, rose up and demanded in what ditch the boy was fallen: Mary (quod he) yonder, and pointed with his finger, and brought him to a great thicket of bushes and thornes where they both entred in. In the meane season,

after we cured our wounds, we tooke up our packs, purposing to depart away. And because we would not goe away without the young man our fellow: The shepherds whistled and called for him, but when he gave no answer, they sent one out of their company to seeke him out, who after a while returned againe with a pale face and sorrowfull newes, saying that he saw a terrible Dragon eating and devouring their companion: and as for the old man, hee could see him in no place. When they heard this, (remembering likewise the words of the first old man that shaked his head, and drave away his sheep) they ran away beating us before them, to fly from this desart and pestilent Country.

THE THIRTY-FIFTH CHAPTER

How a woman killed her selfe and her child, because her husband haunted harlots.

After that we had passed a great part of our journey, we came to a village where we lay all night, but harken, and I will tell you what mischief happened there: you shall understand there was a servant to whom his Master had committed the whole government of his house, and was Master of the lodging where we lay: this servant had married a Maiden of the same house, howbeit he was greatly in love with a harlot of the towne, and accustomed to resort unto her, wherewith his wife was so highly displeased and became so jealous, that she gathered together all her husbands substance, with his tales and books of account, and threw them into a light fire: she was not contented with this, but she tooke a cord and bound her child which she had by her husband, about her middle and cast her selfe headlong into a deepe pit. The Master taking in evill part the death of these twaine, tooke his servant which was the cause of this murther by his luxurie, and first after that he had put off all his apparell, he annointed his body with honey, and then bound him sure to a fig-tree, where in a rotten stocke a great number of Pismares had builded their neasts, the Pismares after they had felt the sweetnesse of the honey came upon his body, and by little and little (in continuance of time) devoured all his flesh, in such sort, that there remained on the tree but his bare bones: this was declared unto us by the inhabitants of the village there, who greatly sorrowed for the death of this servant: then we avoiding likewise from this dreadfull lodging incontinently departed away.

THE THIRTY-SIXTH CHAPTER

How Apuleius was cheapned by divers persons, and how they looked in his mouth to know his age.

After this we came to a faire Citie very populous, where our shepherds determined to continue, by reason that it seemed a place where they might live unknowne, far from such as should pursue them, and because it was a countrey very plentifull of corne and other victuals, where when we had remained the space of three dayes, and that I poore Asse and the other horses were fed and kept in the stable to the intent we might seeme more saleable, we were brought out at length to the market, and by and by a crier sounded with his horne to notifie that we were to be sold: all my companion horses were bought up by Gentlemen, but as for me I stood still forsaken of all men. And when many buiers came by and looked in my mouth to know mine age, I was so weary with opening my jawes that at length (unable to endure any longer) when one came with a stinking paire of hands and grated my gummes with his filthy fingers, I bit them cleane off, which thing caused the standers by to forsake me as being a fierce and cruell beast: the crier when he had gotten a hoarse voice with crying, and saw that no man would buy me, began to mocke me saying, To what end stand we here with this wilde Asse, this feeble beast, this slow jade with worne hooves, good for nothing but to make sives of his skin? Why do we not give him to some body for he earneth not his hay? In this manner he made all the standers by to laugh exceedingly, but my evill fortune which was ever so cruell against me, whom I by travell of so many countreys could in no wise escape, did more and more envie me, with invention of new meanes to afflict my poore body in giving me a new Master as spitefull as the rest. There was an old man somewhat bald, with long and gray haire, one of the number of those that go from door to door, throughout all the villages, bearing the Image of the goddesse Syria, and playing with Cimbals to get the almes of good and charitable folks, this old man came hastely towards the cryer, and demanded where I was bred: Marry (quoth he) in Cappadocia: Then he enquired what age I was of, the cryer answered as a Mathematician, which disposed to me my Planets, that I was five yeares old, and willed the old man to looke in my mouth: For I would not willingly (quoth he) incur the penalty of the

law Cornelia, in selling a free Citizen for a servile slave, buy a Gods name this faire beast to ride home on, and about in the countrey: But this curious buier did never stint to question of my qualities, and at length he demanded whether I were gentle or no: Gentle (quoth the crier) as gentle as a Lambe, tractable to all use, he will never bite, he will never kicke, but you would rather thinke that under the shape of an Asse there were some well advised man, which verely you may easily coniect, for if you would thrust your nose in his taile you shall perceive how patient he is: Thus the cryer mocked the old man, but he perceiving his taunts and jests, waxed very angry saying, Away doting cryer, I pray the omnipotent and omniparent goddesse Syria, Saint Sabod, Bellona, with her mother Idea, and Venus, with Adonis, to strike out both thine eies, that with taunting mocks hast scoffed me in this sort: Dost thou thinke that I will put a goddesse upon the backe of any fierce beast, whereby her divine Image should be throwne downe on the ground, and so I poore miser should be compelled (tearing my haire) to looke for some Physition to helpe her? When I heard him speake thus, I thought with my selfe sodainly to leap upon him like a mad Asse, to the intent he should not buy me, but incontinently there came another Marchant that prevented my thought, and offered 17 Pence for me, then my Master was glad and received the money, and delivered me to my new Master who was called Phelibus, and he caried his new servant home, and before he came to his house, he called out his daughters saying, Behold my daughters, what a gentle servant I have bought for you: then they were marvailous glad, and comming out pratling and shouting for joy, thought verely that he had brought home a fit and conveniable servant for their purpose, but when they perceived that it was an Asse, they began to provoke him, saying that he had not bought a servant for his Maidens, but rather an Asse for himselfe. Howbeit (quoth they) keepe him not wholly for your owne riding, but let us likewise have him at commandement. Therewithall they led me into the stable, and tied me to the manger: there was a certaine yong man with a mighty body, wel skilled in playing on instruments before the gods to get money, who (as soone as he had espied me) entertained me verie well, for he filled my racke and maunger full of meat, and spake merrily saying, O master Asse, you are very welcome, now you shall take my office in hand, you are come to supply my roome, and to ease me of my miserable labour: but I pray God thou maist long live and please my Master well, to

the end thou maist continually deliver me from so great paine. When I heard these words I did prognosticate my miserie to come.

The day following I saw there a great number of persons apparelled in divers colours, having painted faces, mitres on their heads, vestiments coloured like saffron, Surplusses of silke, and on their feet yellow shooes, who attired the goddesse in a robe of Purple, and put her upon my backe. Then they went forth with their armes naked to their shoulders, bearing with them great swords and mightie axes, and dancing like mad persons. After that we had passed many small villages, we fortun'd to come to one Britunis house, where at our first entrie they began to hurle themselves hither and thither, as though they were mad. They made a thousand gestures with their feete and their hands, they would bite themselves, finally, every one tooke his weapon and wounded his armes in divers places.

Amongst whom there was one more mad then the rest, that let many deepe sighes from the bottome of his heart, as though he had beene ravished in spirite, or replenished with divine power. And after that, he somewhat returning to himselfe, invented and forged a great lye, saying, that he had displeas'd the divine majesty of the goddesse, by doing of some thing which was not convenable to the order of their holy religion, wherefore he would doe vengeance of himselfe: and therewithall he tooke a whip, and scourged his owne body, that the bloud issued out aboundantly, which thing caused me greatly to feare, to see such wounds and effusion of bloud, least the same goddesse desiring so much the bloud of men, should likewise desire the bloud of an Asse. After they were wearie with hurling and beating themselves, they sate downe, and behold, the inhabitants came in, and offer'd gold, silver, vessels of wine, milke, cheese, flower, wheate and other things: amongst whom there was one, that brought barly to the Asse that carried the goddesse, but the greedie whoresons thrust all into their sacke, which they brought for the purpose and put it upon my backe, to the end I might serve for two purposes, that is to say, for the barne by reason of my corne, and for the Temple by reason of the goddesse. In this sort, they went from place to place, robbing all the Countrey over. At length they came to a certaine Castle where under colour of divination, they brought to passe that they obtained a fat sheepe of a poore

husbandman for the goddesse supper and to make sacrifice withall. After that the banquet was prepared, they washed their bodies, and brought in a tall young man of the village, to sup with them, who had scarce tasted a few pottage, when hee began to discover their beastly customes and inordinate desire of luxury. For they compassed him round about, sitting at the table, and abused the young man, contrary to all nature and reason. When I beheld this horrible fact, I could not but attempt to utter my mind and say, O masters, but I could pronounce no more but the first letter O, which I roared out so valiantly, that the young men of the towne seeking for a straie Asse, that they had lost the same night, and hearing my voice, whereby they judged that I had beene theirs, entred into the house unwares, and found these persons committing their vile abomination, which when they saw, they declared to all the inhabitants by, their unnatural villany, mocking and laughing at this the pure and cleane chastity of their religion. In the meane season, Phelibus and his company, (by reason of the bruit which was dispersed throughout all the region there of their beastly wickednesse) put all their trumpery upon my backe, and departed away about midnight. When we had passed a great part of our journey, before the rising of the Sun, we came into a wild desart, where they conspired together to slay me. For after they had taken the goddesse from my backe and set her gingerly upon the ground, they likewise tooke off my harnesse, and bound me surely to an Oake, beating me with their whip, in such sort that all my body was mortified. Amongst whom there was one that threatened to cut off my legs with his hatchet, because by my noyse I diffamed his chastity, but the other regarding more their owne profit than my utility, thought best to spare my life, because I might carry home the goddesse. So they laded me againe, driving me before them with their naked swords, till they came to a noble City: where the principall Patrone bearing high reverence unto the goddesse, Came in great devotion before us with Tympany, Cymbals, and other instruments, and received her, and all our company with much sacrifice and veneration. But there I remember, I thought my selfe in most danger, for there was one that brought to the Master of the house, a side of a fat Bucke for a present, which being hanged behind the kitchin doore, not far from the ground, was cleane eaten up by a gray hound, that came in. The Cooke when he saw the Venison devoured, lamented and wept pitifully. And because

supper time approached nigh, when as he should be reprov'd of too much negligence, he tooke a halter to hang himselfe: but his wife perceiving whereabouts he went, ran incontinently to him, and taking the halter in both her hands, stopped him of his purpose, saying, O husband, are you out of your wits? pray husband follow my counsel, cary this strange Asse out into some secret place and kill him, which done, cut off one of his sides, and sawce it well like the side of the Bucke, and set it before your Master. Then the Cooke hearing the counsell of his wife, was well pleas'd to slay me to save himselfe: and so he went to the whetstone, to sharpe his tooles accordingly.

Freeditorial 