

***THE GOLDEN
ASSE***

BOOK III

By

Lucius

Apuleius "Africanus"

THE THIRD BOOK

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER

How Apuleius was taken and put in prison for murder.

When morning was come, and that I was awaked from sleep, my heart burned sore with remembrance of the murder I had committed the night before: and I rose and sate downe on the side of the bed with my legges acrosse, and wringing my hands, I weeped in most miserable sort. For I imagined with my selfe, that I was brought before the Judge in the Judgement place, and that he awarded sentence against me, and that the hangman was ready to lead me to the gallows. And further I imagined and sayd, Alasse what Judge is he that is so gentle or benigne, that will thinke that I am unguilty of the slaughter and murder of these three men. Howbeit the Assyrian Diophanes did firmly assure unto me, that my peregrination and voyage hither should be prosperous. But while I did thus unfold my sorrowes, and greatly bewail my fortune, behold I heard a great noyse and cry at the dore, and in came the Magistrates and officers, who commanded two sergeants to binde and leade me to prison, whereunto I was willingly obedient, and as they led me through the street, all the City gathered together and followed me, and although I looked always on the ground for very shame, yet sometimes I cast my head aside and marvelled greatly that among so many thousand people there was not one but laughed exceedingly. Finally, when they had brought me through all the streets of the city, in manner of those that go in procession, and do sacrifice to mitigate the ire of the gods, they placed mee in the Judgement hall, before the seat of the Judges: and after that the Crier had commanded all men to keep silence, and people desired the Judges to give sentence in the great Theatre, by reason of the great multitude that was there, whereby they were in danger of stifling. And behold the prease of people increased stil, some climed to the top of the house, some got upon the beames, some upon the Images, and some thrust their heads through the windowes, little regarding the dangers they were in, so they might see me.

Then the officers brought mee forth openly into the middle of the hall, that every man might behold me. And after that the Cryer had

made a noise, and willed all such that would bring any evidence against me, should come forth, there stept out an old man with a glasse of water in his hand, dropping out softly, who desired that hee might have liberty to speake during the time of the continuance of the water. Which when it was granted, he began his oration in this sort.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER

How Apuleius was accused by an old man, and how he answered for himselfe.

O most reverend and just Judges, the thing which I propose to declare to you is no small matter, but toucheth the estate and tranquillity of this whole City, and the punishment thereof may be a right good example to others. Wherefore I pray you most venerable Fathers, to whom and every one of whom it doth appertain, to provide for the dignity and safety of the Commonweale, that you would in no wise suffer this wicked Homicide, embrued with the bloud of so many murdered citisens, to escape unpunished. And thinke you not that I am moved thereunto by envy or hatred, but by reason of my office, in that I am captain of the night Watch, and because no man alive should accuse mee to bee remisse in the same I wil declare all the whole matter, orderly as it was done last night.

This night past, when as at our accustomed houre I diligently searched every part of the City, behold I fortun'd to espy this cruell young man drawing out his sword against three Citisens, and after a long combat foughten between them, he murdered one after another miserably: which when hee had done, moved in his conscience at so great a crime hee ran away, and aided by the reason of darknes, slipt into a house, and there lay hidden all night, but by the providence of the Gods, which suffereth no heynous offence to pass unpunished, hee was taken by us this morning before he escaped any further, and so brought hither to your honourable presence to receive his desert accordingly.

So have you here a guilty person, a culpable homicide, and an accused stranger, wherefore pronounce you judgement against this man beeing an alien, when as you would most severely and sharply revenge such an offence found in a known Citisen. In this sort the cruell accuser finished and ended his terrible tale. Then the Crier commanded me to speake, if I had any thing to say for my selfe, but I could in no wise utter any word at all for weeping. And on the other side I esteemed not so much his rigorous accusation, as I did consider myne owne miserable conscience. Howbeit, beeing inspired by divine Audacity, at length I gan say, Verily I know that it is an hard thing for him that is accused to have slaine three

persons, to perswade you that he is innocent, although he should declare the whole truth, and confesse the matter how it was indeed, but if your honours will vouchsafe to give me audience, I will shew you, that if I am condemned to die, I have not deserved it as myne owne desert, but that I was mooved by fortune and reasonable cause to doe that fact. For returning somewhat late from supper yester night (beeing well tippled with wine, which I will not deny) and approaching nigh to my common lodging, which was in the house of one Milo a Citisen of this city, I fortun'd to espy three great theeves attempting to break down his walls and gates, and to open the locks to enter in. And when they had removed the dores out of the hookes, they consulted amongst themselves, how they would handle such as they found in the house. And one of them being of more courage, and of greater stature than the rest, spake unto his fellows and sayd, Tush you are but boyes, take mens hearts unto you, and let us enter into every part of the house, and such as we find asleep let us kill, and so by that meanes we shall escape without danger. Verily ye three Judges, I confess that I drew out my sword against those three Citizens, but I thought it was the office and duty of one that beareth good will to this weale publique, so to doe, especially since they put me in great fear, and assayed to rob and spoyl my friend Milo. But when those cruell and terrible men would in no case run away, nor feare my naked sword, but boldly resist against me, I ran upon them and fought valiantly. One of them which was the captain invaded me strongly, and drew me by the haire with both his hands, and began to beat me with a great stone: but in the end I proved the hardier man, and threw him downe at my feet and killed him. I tooke likewise the second that clasped me about the legs and bit me, and slew him also. And the third that came running violently against me, after that I had stricken him under the stomacke fell downe dead. Thus when I had delivered my selfe, the house, Myne host, and all his family from this present danger, I thought that I should not onely escape unpunished, but also have some great reward of the city for my paines.

Moreover, I that have always been clear and unspotted of crime, and that have esteemed myne innocency above all the treasure of the world, can finde no reasonable cause why upon myne accusation I should be condemned to die, since first I was mooved to set upon the theeves by just occasion. Secondly, because there is

none that can affirm, that there hath been at any time either grudge or hatred between us. Thirdly, we were men meere strangers and of no acquaintance. Last of all, no man can prove that I committed that fact for lucre or gaine.

When I had ended my words in this sort, behold, I weeped againe pitteously, and holding up my hands I prayed all the people by the mercy of the Commonweale and for the love of my poore infants and children, to shew me some pittie and favour. And when my hearts were somewhat relented and mooved by my lamentable teares, I called all the gods to witnesse that I was unguilty of the crime, and so to their divine providence, I committed my present estate, but turning my selfe againe, I perceived that all the people laughed exceedingly, and especially my good friend and host Milo. Then thought I with my selfe, Alasse where is faith? Where is remorse of conscience? Behold I am condemned to die as a murtherer, for the safeguard of myne Host Milo and his family. Yet is he not contented with that, but likewise laugheth me to scorne, when otherwise he should comfort and help mee.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER

How Apuleius was accused by two women, and how the slaine bodies were found blowne bladders.

When this was done, out came a woman in the middle of the Theatre arrayed in mourning vesture, and bearing a childe in her armes. And after her came an old woman in ragged robes, crying and howling likewise: and they brought with them the Olive boughs wherewith the three slaine bodies were covered on the Beere, and cried out in this manner: O right Judges, we pray by the justice and humanity which is in you, to have mercy upon these slaine persons, and succour our Widowhood and losse of our deare husbands, and especially this poore infant, who is now an Orphan, and deprived of all good fortune: and execute your justice by order and law, upon the bloud of this Theefe, who is the occasion of all our sorrowes. When they had spoken these words, one of the most antient Judges did rise and say, Touching this murther, which deserveth great punishment, this malefactor himselfe cannot deny, but our duty is to enquire and try out, whether he had Coadjutors to help him. For it is not likely that one man alone could kill three such great and valiant persons, wherefore the truth must be tried out by the racke, and so wee shall learne what other companions he hath, and root out the nest of these mischievous murtherers. And there was no long delay, but according to the custome of Grecia, the fire, the wheele, and many other torments were brought in. Then my sorrow encreased or rather doubled, in that I could not end my life with whole and unperished members. And by and by the old woman, who troubled all the Court with her howling, desired the Judges, that before I should be tormented on the racke, I might uncover the bodies which I had slaine, that every man might see their comely shape and youthfull beauty, and that I might receive condign and worthy punishment, according to the quality of my offence: and therewithall shee made a sign of joy. Then the Judge commanded me forthwith to discover the bodies of the slain, lying upon the beere, with myne own handes, but when I refused a good space, by reason I would not make my fact apparent to the eies of all men, the Sergeant charged me by commandement of the Judges, and thrust me forward to do the same. I being then forced by necessity, though it were against my wil, uncovered the bodies: but O good Lord what

a strange sight did I see, what a monster? What sudden change of all my sorrows? I seemed as though I were one of the house of Proserpina and of the family of death, insomuch that I could not sufficiently expresse the forme of this new sight, so far was I amased and astonied thereat: for why, the bodies of the three slaine men were no bodies, but three blown bladders mangled in divers places, and they seemed to be wounded in those parts where I remembered I wounded the theeves the night before. Whereat the people laughed exceedingly: some rejoiced marvellously at the remembrance thereof, some held their stomackes that aked with joy, but every man delighted at this passing sport, so passed out of the theatre. But I from the time that I uncovered the bodies stood stil as cold as ice, no otherwise than as the other statues and images there, neither came I into my right senses, until such time as Milo my Host came and tooke mee by the hand, and with civil violence lead me away weeping and sobbing, whether I would or no. And because that I might be seene, he brought me through many blind wayes and lanes to his house, where he went about to comfort me, beeing sad and yet fearfull, with gentle entreaty of talke. But he could in no wise mitigate my impatency of the injury which I conceived within my minde. And behold, by and by the Magistrates and Judges with their ensignes entred into the house, and endeavoured to pacify mee in this sort, saying, O Lucius, we are advertised of your dignity, and know the genealogie of your antient lineage, for the nobility of your Kinne doe possesse the greatest part of all this Province: and thinke not that you have suffered the thing wherfore you weepe, to any reproach and ignominy, but put away all care and sorrow out of your minde. For this day, which we celebrate once a yeare in honour of the god Risus, is alwaies renowned with some solemne novel, and the god doth continually accompany with the inventor therof, and wil not suffer that he should be sorrowfull, but pleasantly beare a joyfull face. And verily all the City for the grace that is in you, intend to reward you with great honours, and to make you a Patron. And further that your statue or image may be set up for a perpetuall remembrance.

To whome I answered, As for such benefits as I have received of the famous City of Thessaly, I yeeld and render the most entire thanks, but as touching the setting up of any statues or images, I

would wish that they should bee reserved for myne Auntients, and such as are more worthy than I.

And when I had spoken these words somewhat gravely, and shewed my selfe more merry than I was before, the Judges and magistrates departed, and I reverently tooke my leave of them, and bid them farewell. And behold, by and by there came one running unto me in haste, and sayd, Sir, your cousin Byrrhena desireth you to take the paines according to your promise yester night, to come to supper, for it is ready. But I greatly fearing to goe any more to her house in the night, said to the messenger, My friend I pray you tell to my cousine your mistresse, that I would willingly be at her commandement, but for breaking my troth and credit. For myne host Milo enforced me to assure him, and compelled me by the feast of this present day, that I should not depart from his company, wherefore I pray you to excuse, and to defer my promise to another time.

And while I was speaking these words, Milo tooke me by the hand, and led me towards the next Baine: but by the way I went couching under him, to hide my selfe from the sight of men, because I had ministred such an occasion of laughter. And when I had washed and wiped my selfe, and returned home againe, I never remembred any such thing, so greatly was I abashed at the nodding and pointing of every person. Then went I to supper with Milo, where God wot we fared but meanly. Wherefore feigning that my head did ake by reason of my sobbing and weeping all day, I desired license to depart to my Chamber, and so I went to bed.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER

How Fotis told to Apuleius, what witchcraft her mistresse did use.

When I was a bed I began to call to minde all the sorrowes and griefes that I was in the day before, until such time as my love Fotis, having brought her mistresse to sleepe, came into the chamber, not as shee was wont to do, for she seemed nothing pleasant neither in countenance nor talke, but with sowre face and frowning looke, gan speak in this sort, Verily I confesse that I have been the occasion of all thy trouble this day, and therewith shee pulled out a whippe from under her apron, and delivered it unto mee saying, Revenge thyself upon mee mischievous harlot, or rather slay me.

And thinke you not that I did willingly procure this anguish and sorrow unto you, I call the gods to witnesse. For I had rather myne owne body to perish, than that you should receive or sustaine any harme by my means, but that which I did was by the commandement of another, and wrought as I thought for some other, but behold the unlucky chance fortun'd on you by my evill occasion.

The I, very curious and desirous to know the matter, answered, In faith (quoth I), this most pestilent and evill favoured whip which thou hast brought to scourge thee withal, shal first be broken in a thousand pieces, than it should touch or hurt thy delicate and dainty skin. But I pray you tell me how have you been the cause and mean of my trouble and sorrow? For I dare sweare by the love that I beare unto you, and I will not be perswaded, though you your selfe should endeavour the same, that ever you went to trouble or harm me: perhaps sometimes you imagined an evil thought in your mind, which afterwards you revoked, but that is not to bee deemed as a crime.

When I had spoken these words, I perceived by Fotis eys being wet with tears and well nigh closed up that shee had a desire unto pleasure and specially because shee embraced and kissed me sweetly. And when she was somewhat restored unto joy shee desired me that shee might first shut the chamber doore, least by the untemperance of her tongue, in uttering any unfitting words, there might grow further inconvenience. Wherewithall shee barred and

propped the doore, and came to me againe, and embracing me lovingly about the neck with both her armes, spake with a soft voice and said, I doe greatly feare to discover the privities of this house, and to utter the secret mysteries of my dame. But I have such confidence in you and in your wisdom, by reason that you are come of so noble a line, and endowed with so profound sapience, and further instructed in so many holy and divine things, that you will faithfully keepe silence, and that whatsoever I shall reveale or declare unto you, you would close them within the bottome of your heart, and never discover the same: for I ensure you, the love that I beare unto you, enforceth mee to utter it. Now shal you know all the estate of our house, now shal you know the hidden secrets of my mistres, unto whome the powers of hel do obey, and by whom the celestial planets are troubled, the gods made weake, and the elements subdued, neither is the violence of her art in more strength and force, than when she espieth some comly young man that pleaseth her fancie, as oftentimes it hapneth, for now she loveth one Boetian a fair and beautiful person, on whom she employes al her sorcerie and enchantment, and I heard her say with mine own ears yester night, that if the Sun had not then presently gon downe, and the night come to minister convenient time to worke her magicall enticements, she would have brought perpetuall darkness over all the world her selfe. And you shall know, that when she saw yester night, this Boetian sitting at the Barbers a polling, when she came from the Baines shee secretly commanded me to gather up some of the haire of his head which lay dispersed upon the ground, and to bring it home. Which when I thought to have done the Barber espied me, and by reason it was bruited though all the City that we were Witches and Enchantresses, he cried out and said, Wil you never leave off stealing of young mens haire? In faith I assure you, unlesse you cease your wicked sorceries, I will complaine to the Justices. Wherewithall he came angerly towards me, and tooke away the haire which I had gathered, out of my apron: which grieved me very much, for I knew my Mistresses manners, that she would not be contented but beat me cruelly.

Wherefore I intended to runne away, but the remembrance of you put alwayes the thought out of my minde, and so I came homeward very sorrowful: but because I would not seeme to come to my mistresse sight with empty hands, I saw a man shearing of blowne

goat skinned, and the hayre which he had shorne off was yellow, and much resembled the haire of the Boetian, and I tooke a good deale thereof, and colouring of the matter, I brought it to my mistresse. And so when night came, before your return from supper, she to bring her purpose to passe, went up to a high Gallery of her house, opening to the East part of the world, and preparing her selfe according to her accustomed practise, shee gathered together all substance for fumigations, she brought forth plates of mettall carved with strange characters, she prepared the bones of such as were drowned by tempest in the seas, she made ready the members of dead men, as the nosethrills and fingers, shee set out the lumps of flesh of such as were hanged, the blood which she had reserved of such as were slaine and the jaw bones and teeth of willed beasts, then she said certaine charmes over the haire, and dipped it in divers waters, as in Wel water, Cow milk, mountain honey, and other liquor. Which when she had done, she tied and lapped it up together, and with many perfumes and smells threw it into an hot fire to burn. Then by the great force of this sorcerie, and the violence of so many confections, those bodies whose haire was burning in the fire, received humane shape, and felt, heard and walked: And smelling the sent of their owne haire, came and rapped at our doores in stead of Boetius. Then you being well tiple, and deceived by the obscurity of the night, drew out your sword courageously like furious Ajax, and kild not as he did, whole heard of beastes, but three blowne skinned, to the intent that I, after the slaughter of so many enemies, without effusion of bloud might embrace and kisse, not an homicide but an Utricide.

Thus when I was pleasantly mocked and taunted by Fotis, I sayd unto her, verily now may I for this atcheived enterprise be numbered as Hercules, who by his valiant prowesse performed the twelve notable Labors, as Gerion with three bodies, and as Cerberus with three heads, for I have slaine three blown goat skinned. But to the end that I may pardon thee of that thing which though hast committed, perform, the thing which I most earnestly desire of thee, that is, bring me that I may see and behold when thy mistresse goeth about any Sorcery or enchantment, and when she prayeth unto the gods: for I am very desirous to learne that art, and as it seemeth unto mee, thou thy selfe hath some experience in the same. For this I know and plainly feele, That whereas I have always yrked

and loathed the embrace of Matrones, I am so stricken and subdued with thy shining eyes, ruddy cheekes, glittering haire, sweet cosses, and lilly white paps, that I have neither minde to goe home, nor to depart hence, but esteeme the pleasure which I shall have with thee this night, above all the joyes of the world. Then (quoth she) O my Lucius, how willing would I be to fulfil your desire, but by reason shee is so hated, she getteth her selfe into solitary places, and out of the presence of every person, when she mindeth to work her enchantments. Howbeit I regarde more to gratify your request, than I doe esteeme the danger of my life: and when I see opportunitie and time I will assuredly bring you word, so that you shal see all her enchantments, but always upon this condition, that you secretly keepe close such things as are done.

Thus as we reasoned together the courage of Venus assailed, as well our desires as our members, and so she unrayed herself and came to bed, and we passed the night in pastime and dalliance, till as by drowsie and unlusty sleep I was constrained to lie still.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER

How Fotis brought Apuleius to see her Mistresse enchant.

On a day Fotis came running to me in great feare, and said that her mistresse, to work her sorceries on such as shee loved, intended the night following to transforme her selfe into a bird, and to fly whither she pleased. Wherefore she willed me privily to prepare my selfe to see the same. And when midnight came she led me softly into a high chamber, and bid me look thorow the chink of a doore: where first I saw how shee put off all her garments, and took out of a certain coffer sundry kindes of Boxes, of the which she opened one, and tempered the ointment therein with her fingers, and then rubbed her body therewith from the sole of the foot to the crowne of the head, and when she had spoken privily with her selfe, having the candle in her hand, she shook the parts of her body, and behold, I perceived a plume of feathers did burgen out, her nose waxed crooked and hard, her nailes turned into clawes, and so she became an Owle. Then she cried and screeched like a bird of that kinde, and willing to proove her force, mooved her selfe from the ground by little and little, til at last she flew quite away.

Thus by her sorcery shee transformed her body into what shape she would. Which when I saw I was greatly astonied: and although I was enchanted by no kind of charme, yet I thought that I seemed not to have the likenesse of Lucius, for so was I banished from my senses, amazed in madnesse, and so I dreamed waking, that I felt myne eyes, whether I were asleepe or no. But when I was come againe to my selfe, I tooke Fotis by the hand, and moved it to my face and said, I pray thee while occasion doth serve, that I may have the fruition of the fruits of my desire, and grant me some of this oyntment. O Fotis I pray thee by thy sweet paps, to make that in the great flames of my love I may be turned into a bird, so I will ever hereafter be bound unto you, and obedient to your commandement. Then said Fotis, Wil you go about to deceive me now, and inforce me to work my own sorrow? Are you in the mind that you will not tarry in Thessaly? If you be a bird, where shall I seek you, and when shall I see you? Then answered I, God forbid that I should commit such a crime, for though I could fly in the aire as an Eagle or though I were the messenger of Jupiter, yet would I have recourse to nest

with thee: and I swear by the knot of thy amiable hair, that since the time I first loved thee, I never fancied any other person: moreover, this commeth to my minde, that if by the vertue of the oyntment I shall become an Owle, I will take heed I will come nigh no mans house: for I am not to learn, how these matrons would handle their lovers, if they knew that they were transformed into Owles: Moreover, when they are taken in any place they are nayled upon posts, and so they are worthily rewarded, because it is thought that they bring evill fortune to the house. But I pray you (which I had almost forgotten) to tell me by what meanes when I am an Owle, I shall return to my pristine shape, and become Lucius againe. Feare not (quoth she) for my mistres hath taught me the way to bring that to passe, neither thinke you that she did it for any good will and favour, but to the end that I might help her, and minister some remedy when she returneth home.

Consider I pray you with your selfe, with what frivolous trifles so marvellous a thing is wrought: for by Hercules I swear I give her nothing else save a little Dill and Lawrell leaves, in Well water, the which she drinketh and washeth her selfe withall. Which when she had spoken she went into the chamber and took a box out of the coffer, which I first kissed and embraced, and prayed that I might [have] good successe in my purpose. And then I put off all my garments, and greedily thrust my hand into the box, and took out a good deale of oyntment and rubbed my selfe withall.

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER

How Apuleius thinking to be turned into a Bird, was turned into an Asse, and how he was led away by Theves.

After that I had well rubbed every part and member of my body, I hovered with myne armes, and moved my selfe, looking still when I should bee changed into a Bird as Pamphiles was, and behold neither feathers nor appearance of feathers did burgen out, but verily my haire did turne in ruggednesse, and my tender skin waxed tough and hard, my fingers and toes losing the number of five, changed into hoofes, and out of myne arse grew a great taile, now my face became monstrous, my nostrils wide, my lips hanging downe, and myne eares rugged with haire: neither could I see any comfort of my transformation, for my members encreased likewise, and so without all helpe (viewing every part of my poore body) I perceived that I was no bird, but a plaine Asse.

The I though to blame Fotis, but being deprived as wel of language as of humane shape, I looked upon her with my hanging lips and watery eyes. Who as soon as shee espied me in such sort, cried out, Alas poore wretch that I am, I am utterly cast away. The feare I was in, and my haste hath beguiled me, but especially the mistaking of the box, hath deceived me. But it forceth not much, in regard a sooner medicine may be gotten for this than for any other thing. For if thou couldst get a rose and eat it, thou shouldst be delivered from the shape of an Asse, and become my Lucius againe. And would to God I had gathered some garlands this evening past, according to my custome, then thou shouldst not continue an Asse one nights space, but in the morning I shall seek some remedy. Thus Fotis lamented in pittifull sort, but I that was now a perfect asse, and for Lucius a brute beast, did yet retaine the sence and understanding of a man. And did devise a good space with my selfe, whether it were best for me to teare this mischievous and wicked harlot with my mouth, or to kicke and kill her with my heels. But a better thought reduced me from so rash a purpose: for I feared lest by the death of Fotis I should be deprived of all remedy and help. Then shaking myne head, and dissembling myne ire, and taking my adversity in good part, I went into the stable to my owne horse, where I found another asse of Milos, sometime my host, and I did

verily think that mine owne horse (if there were any natural conscience or knowledge in brute beasts) would take pittie on me, and profer me lodging for that night: but it chanced far otherwise. For see, my horse and the asse as it were consented together to work my harm, and fearing lest I should eat up their provender, would in no wise suffer me to come nigh the manger, but kicked me with their heels from their meat, which I my self gave them the night before. Then I being thus handled by them, and driven away, got me into a corner of the stable, where while I remembred their uncurtesie, and how on the morrow I should return to Lucius by the help of a Rose, when as I thought to revenge my selfe of myne owne horse, I fortun'd to espy in the middle of a pillar sustaining the rafters of the stable the image of the goddesse Hippone, which was garnished and decked round about with faire and fresh roses: then in hope of present remedy, I leaped up with my fore feet as high as I could, stretching out my neck, and with my lips coveting to snatch some roses. But in an evill houre I did go about that enterprise, for behold the boy to whom I gave charge of my horse, came presently in, and finding me climbing upon the pillar, ranne fretting towards me and said, How long shall wee suffer this wild Asse, that doth not onely eat up his fellowes meat, but also would spoyle the images of the gods? Why doe I not kill this lame theefe and weake wretch. And therewithall looking about for some cudgel, hee espied where lay a fagot of wood, and chusing out a crabbed truncheon of the biggest hee could finde, did never cease beating of mee poore wretch, until such time as by great noyse and rumbling, hee heard the doores of the house burst open, and the neighbours crying in most lamentable sort, which enforced him being stricken in feare, to fly his way. And by and by a troupe of theeves entred in, and kept every part and corner of the house with weapons. And as men resorted to aid and help them which were within the doores, the theeves resisted and kept them back, for every man was armed with a sword and target in his hand, the glimpses whereof did yeeld out such light as if it had bin day. Then they brake open a great chest with double locks and bolts, wherein was layd all the treasure of Milo, and ransackt the same: which when they had done they packed it up and gave every man a portion to carry: but when they had more than they could beare away, yet were they loth to leave any behind, but came into the stable, and took us two poore asses and my horse, and laded us with greater trusses than wee were able

to beare. And when we were out of the house, they followed us with great staves, and willed one of their fellows to tarry behind, and bring them tydings what was done concerning the robbery: and so they beat us forward over great hills out of the way. But I, what with my heavy burden and long journey, did nothing differ from a dead asse: wherefore I determined with my self to seek some civil remedy, and by invocation of the name of the prince of the country to be delivered from so many miseries: and on a time I passed through a great faire, I came among a multitude of Greeks, and I thought to call upon the renowned name of the Emperour and say, O Cesar, and cried out aloud O, but Cesar I could in no wise pronounce. The Theeves little regarding my crying, did lay me on and beat my wretched skinne in such sort, that after it was neither apt nor meet to make Sives or Sarces. Howbeit at last Jupiter administred to me an unhoped remedy. For when we had passed through many townes and villages, I fortun'd to espy a pleasant garden, wherein beside many other flowers of delectable hiew, were new and fresh roses: and being very joyful, and desirous to catch some as I passed by, I drew neerer and neerer: and while my lips watered upon them, I thought of a better advice more profitable for me, lest if from an asse I should become a man, I might fall into the hands of the theeves, and either by suspition that I were some witch, or for feare that I should utter their theft, I should be slaine, wherefore I abstained for that time from eating of Roses, and enduring my present adversity, I did eat hay as other Asses did.

Freeditorial 