

THE WOOING.
FROM THE GREEK OF THEOCRITUS.

A young Shepherd and his Maiden discourse of Love and Marriage: he offering, she withholding.

Eventually, after an exchange of views and vows, she yields to his Passion, whereupon she retires, shamefaced but happy, he rejoicing at his Victory.

THE WOOING.

DAPHNIS.

A MAIDEN.



nother rural Paris came, and Helen chaste

was missing :

“Wiser is my Helen ; she stays, her
Paris kissing.”

“ You needn’t boast, you Satyr ; vain are kisses,
they say true.”

“ But I find a satisfaction, even vainly
kissing you.”

“ Pooh to you ! I wipe my lips ! Where are your
kisses then ? ”

“ And Pooh to you ! For when they’re dry I’ll take
your lips agen.”

“ Go and kiss your heifers, not a virgin girl like me.”

“ You silly thing! Your youth will fly, and then
where will you be? ”

“ When grapes are dried they’re raisons ; rose-leaves
dead are just a glory.”

“ Come here beneath the olive-trees, and listen to my
sad story.”

“ No, thank you! You have told your tale to me
before today.”

“ Well, come beneath the elm-trees, then, and hear
my pan-pipes play.”

“ To me your pipe is weary woe! Play to yourself,
an’t please you.”

“ Aha! Remember you’re a maid! Let fear of Venus
sieve you.”

“ Away with Venus! Artemis! On her my soul is
set!”

“ Beware of what you speak, or you’ll be tied in
Venus’ net!”

“ A fig for Venus ! Once again Diana’s will shall
stand.

“ —But you’ll find my teeth-marks in your lip if you
don’t remove your
hand ! ”

“ Flee not Eros ! For never maid has been of love
distrustful ! ”

“ By Pan, I flee him easily ! It’s you who’re slave and
lustful ! ”

“ I fear lest he deliver thee to a more unworthy
lover. ”

“ Many have wooed me, but not one whom I could
love all over. ”

“ I, too, one out of many swains, I too have come
a-wooing. ”

“ What would you have, my gentle swain ? What’s
yoking but undoing ? ”

“ No pain or pine in yoking ! Wedded lovers dance
for joyance ! ”

“ Ah! But they say that women fear their masters’
angry bouyance.”

“ The flat reverse is true : there is no word of
women-scaring.”

“ But I dread to bear a baby, for Lucina’s dart is
tearing.”

“ Be Artemis your goddess : she will aid you in your
rigour.”

“ But I fear the woes of bearing, lest I lose my lissome
figure.”

“ By the bearing of free children a new life-light you
will shed.”

“ What are the offerings whereby you’ll grace my
bridal-bed ?”

“ All my groves and pasture fields I bring, and all
my flock.”

“ Swear it, lest when it’s done you go, and leave me
for a mock.”

“ By Pan, I swear I’ll never go, though you yourself
implore me ! ”

“ And will you build a house and stalls and a wedding-
chamber for me ? ”

“ You shall have your wedding-chamber ; and the
flocks I tend are
glorious ! ”

“ What shall I tell mine aged sire, if he should grow
uproarious ? ”

“ Ah ! When he hears my name he’s certain to approve
your plighting . ”

“ Pray tell me then, what is your name, for some
names are exciting . ”

“ Daphnis. Nomæa bore me, and my father’s
Lycidas . ”

“ A goodly stock, but mine it does not any ways
surpass . ”

“ Well, you yourself aren’t noble, since Menalcas is
your sire . ”

“ And now you’ll show me round your fields, and
which way lies your
byre?”

“ Oh, come and see how green my slender cypress-
trees all stand.”

“ My goats, feed on ; I’m going just to see my
shepherd’s land.”

“ Feed on, my bulls. I’ll show my maiden how my
pastures grow.”

“ Remove your hand, you satyr ; do not seek my
blossoms so !”

“ Just a first glance ! Oh! I must see those snowy
flowers of mine !”

“ O Pan ! O Pan ! I’m fainting ! Take away that
hand of thine !”

“ Darling, look up ! Don’t tremble so ! Why fear your
Lycidas ?”

“ Oh, Daphnis ! I shall spoil my robe, it’s filthy on
this grass.”

“ But—just see here !—the softest fleece over your
robe I’ve thrown.”

“ Ah me! Oh! Don’t undo my belt! Why do you
loose my zone?”

“ Because the Paphian Queen must have it for an
offering.”

“ Some one will come! I hear a noise! Leave off
you cruel thing!”

“ A noise? My cypresses: they murmur how my
darling weds.”

“ Oh, I am bare! You’ve torn my robe into a string
of shreds!”

“ A better robe I’ll give you soon; a larger robe I’ll
buy.”

“ Oh, yes! You’ll give me all, when soon salt even
you’ll deny.”

“ Oh, could I pour my soul into you for your dear
delight!”

“ Forgive, O Artemis, forgive your faithless
acolyte.”

“ Venus shall have an ox ; a calf for Cupid I will
burn.”

“ A virgin came I hither, but a woman shall
return.”

“ The nurse, the mother, of my babes, now never
more a maid.”

So with young limbs entwined in love all joyously
they played,
Soft-murmuring each to each ; then from their secret
couch they leap :
She, when she had arisen, went away to feed her
sheep ;
Shame was in her eyes, but her heart beat high
above :
Joyous, he went to feed his flocks, glad from the bed
of love.