# The Love Books

Ovid

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# Introduction 1

PUBLIUS OVIDIUS NASO was born at Sulmo--the modern Sulmona--on March the 20th, 43 B.C. He was fortunate in his birthplace, and it may not perhaps be over fanciful to ascribe the airy charm, the delicate grace, which his Muse so plentifully displays, at least as much to his early environment as to heredity. Sulmo, indeed, lies amid a region of great natural beauty. Its pastures, as Ovid himself tells us, were cool and rich, it produced abundant crops of corn, and yet so light and fine was the soil that the vine and the olive flourished there in profusion. It was a land of streams, of streams that hurried down from the mountains so clear and cold that the place is called by the poets "gelidus Sulmo." Even in the hottest of Italian summers, when the canicular is at its height, its meadows are fresh and green and its atmosphere sparkling and salubrious.

Ovid's family was of hereditary equestrian rank and possessed a sufficiency if not an abundance of wealth. The poet was proud of his ancestry and his family traditions, and he is careful to impress upon us that he is no upstart, no *parvenu*, emphatically not one of the postwar rich, as we are wont to say nowadays. At an early age he and his only brother--his elder by exactly a year--brought up in their father's house with the care and attention that would naturally be bestowed on the sons of well-to-do and aristocratic parents, were sent to continue their education in Rome. It was their father's intention that they should both follow the profession of advocate, and with this purpose in view they were sent to study rhetoric under two of the most celebrated professors of that art--Porcius Latro and Arellius Fuscus. For in the Rome of Ovid's time, though the days of the great political orators were gone for ever, oratory, the lucrative and harmless oratory of the schools or the bar, was a highly popular pursuit. The elder brother, Lucius, appears to have devoted himself to his studies with a will. Ovid's tastes, however, lay in a very different direction. He tried hard to follow the parental injunctions and to make himself an effective advocate, but he achieved only indifferent success. The elder Seneca tells us that he once heard Ovid delivering a speech before his master Fuscus, and he gives us to understand that the effort was more remarkable for the beauty of its phrasing than for its argumentative power. Indeed he describes the speech as nothing more or less than poetry without metre. Ovid himself confesses that, try as he would to declaim in prose, he constantly found himself gliding into poetry. He "lisped in numbers, for the numbers came." His heart was with the Muses. He wanted to be, not a barrister, but a poet. One can imagine the paternal chagrin when the boy made known his ambitions. A country gentleman with family traditions, and

not too much money to throw away, could hardly be expected to look with favour on poetry. As a pastime, well enough perhaps, but rather effeminate. As a profession, mere starvation. Naso *père* seems to have entertained the typical country squire's contempt for "those writing fellows" and to have given expression to it in no ambiguous terms. So for a time, at least, our poet had to stick to his declamatory exercises and turn his back on the Muses. It is clear that had his father remained obdurate, Ovid might well have achieved no more than mediocrity as a professional barrister, have filled with tolerable credit a few minor offices of State and, in course of time, have gone back to Sulmo to wear out the evening of his days in such innocent pursuits as usually fall to the lot of retired Civil servants with landed interests and a private income. The prudent and level-headed father would have had his way; the world would have lost one of its most delightful poets, and the literatures of Italy, France and England would have been immeasurably the poorer. But when Ovid had attained the age of nineteen or thereabouts, an event occurred which averted the threatened triumph of parental common-sense. That event was the death of Ovid's elder brother Lucius. His removal from the scene, though we have no reason to doubt that Ovid sincerely regretted it, went a long way to disarm the parental opposition, which had always been based on practical grounds of finance, for obviously what would have provided a bare sufficiency for two would furnish an easy if not abundant competence for one. Ovid doubtless returned to the charge and pressed his suit with the persuasive eloquence which his genius and his training would have placed at his command. His father, realising, like the good sensible man he was, that it is useless trying to drive a nail where it won't go, and wisely concluding that a willing poet is better than a reluctant advocate, "sealed his hard consent." Whether Ovid would have gone to Athens had he followed the forensic career designed for him by his father is perhaps doubtful, but, for the man of letters, and above all for the poet, such a crown to his education was in the highest degree desirable; so to Athens he went, much in the same way that a public school boy of to-day goes up to Oxford or Cambridge. What he did there we do not know. He himself, usually so communicative about his own affairs, contents himself with informing us that he went there for purposes of study. He would, at all events, have learned to read Homer, Euripides and Sophocles. A knowledge of Greek was in those days a mark of a superior education, and Greek he certainly acquired; but whatever he learned or did not learn--and we can scarcely picture this child of the Muses as a *fort-en-thème*, a determined reading man--we may be quite sure that he was not insensible to the beauty of the incomparable city to which his good fortune had sent him, or to the charm of the region in which it was set, and Attica, with its delicate and brilliant atmosphere, with its soil so

favourable to the vine and olive, may well have reminded him of his native Sulmo.

His sojourn in Athens was followed by a tour which he made in company with Pompeius Macer, another youthful aspirant to poetic fame. In the course of these leisurely wanderings the two young men visited Sicily and the famous Greek cities of Western Asia Minor, bathing their spirits in the perennial springs from which Anacreon and Theocritus derived their inspiration. Altogether Ovid was away from Rome about three years. When he returned he sought, probably at his father's instigation, and obtained, certain public appointments, which, though not in themselves of great importance, were stepping-stones to the quæstorship, an office which, under the Empire, was shorn of much of its ancient importance, notably the care of the treasury, but which nevertheless carried with it the right to a seat in the Senate. He successively discharged the duties of *Triumvir Capitalis*, whose functions largely corresponded with those of a modern police magistrate, and *Decemvir Stlitibus Judicandis*, a member of a tribunal for the trial of private causes, representing the prætor. If, however, the father had entertained the hope that the fulfilment of these offices would divert his son from his poetic ambitions, that hope was doomed to disappointment, for, though Ovid appears to have filled these preliminary positions with credit, he made what his father at least must have considered *il gran rifiuto*. He declined the quæstorship, and exchanged the broad purple band which he had worn as a future member of the Senate for the narrower stripe to which he was entitled as a member of the equestrian order. In other words, he decided to retire into private life, preferring, it would seem, to indulge his dilettantism and to enjoy the distractions of society, as the fancy took him, rather than to incur the diminution of his freedom which the adoption of a public career would have necessarily involved.

When he was very young, scarcely more than a boy, Ovid was married, to a wife who was probably chosen for him by his parents. All we know about this union is that it was speedily dissolved. Another wife was promptly discovered, the bride on this occasion being a native of Falisci in Etruria and a woman of some social standing. Ovid's attitude towards her appears to have been dictated by respect rather than affection--he confesses that her conduct gave him nothing to complain of, yet the second marriage lasted but little, if any, longer than the first. All his devotion, in those early days, seems to have been reserved for the mistress whom he celebrates in his earliest poem, "The Loves," under the name of Corinna. Who Corinna was we do not know. That she was not Julia, as Sidonius Apollinaris would have us believe, is as certain as that she was a real and not an imaginary personage. How long Corinna continued to reign supreme in Ovid's heart is a matter of conjecture. Her dominion had probably come to an end some considerable time

before his marriage with his third wife, to whom he appears to have been sincerely attached. Since his daughter, Perilla, the fruit of this third union, had attained the age of twenty and was herself married when Ovid was banished., A.D. 8, the marriage could scarcely have taken place later than 12 B.C. Until his fiftieth year Ovid lived at Rome in a house near the Capitol, whence, from time to time, he would go to seek refreshment and repose on his country estate at Sulmo. It seemed as though everything had combined to make Ovid's lot a happy one. Endowed with talents that shone with special lustre even among the brilliant society of the day, blest with sufficient but not burdensome wealth, popular with the men, idolized by the women, smiled on by Augustus himself, Ovid seemed to be indeed a favourite of the gods. But suddenly, when the barometer of his fortune was at its height, this brilliant and fascinating child of the age, this refined and delicate voluptuary, was commanded by an Imperial edict to quit Rome and to take himself to Tomi, a town on the Euxine, by the mouths of the Danube and on the very confines of the Empire. Though the sentence which thus fell upon him was harsh enough, it was not as terrible as it might have been. It was not an *exsilium*, but a *relegatio*. He did not lose his citizenship, he was permitted to enjoy the income of his property, to correspond with his friends and to indulge in the hope (alas, illusory!) of ultimate pardon. Still, even with all these mitigating circumstances, such a fate would have been hard enough on any man. On a man of Ovid's habits and disposition it was peculiarly so. The place of his banishment was surrounded and continually threatened by hostile and barbarous tribes. The cold was so intense that the snow would sometimes remain unmelted from one winter to another. The wine turned to ice in the jar; the broad waters of the Danube were often frozen completely over, and afforded but too easy a viaduct to the men and horses of the barbarian foe, when they came to murder, outrage and destroy.

Probably Ovid exaggerated the horrors of his situation in the hopes of moving the Emperor's pity. Those hopes, to which he clung with despairing tenacity, were destined never to be fulfilled, and he died in exile, A.D. 18, in the sixtieth year of his age.

What was the real cause of his banishment is, and will probably always remain, a mystery, for the publication of the *Ars Amatoria* was obviously but a mere pretext and could have deceived nobody. It certainly did not deceive Ovid, for whenever he mentions the ostensible cause of his misfortune,, he darkly alludes to another which he never discloses. He is continually harping on a "Carmen" and an "Error." The "Carmen" was the *Ars Amatoria*; what the "Error" was he never reveals. It is commonly supposed that, in some way or another, he had given serious offence to Livia and that the poet's banishment was due to the machinations of that redoubtable woman.

It may have been so, or it may merely have been that Augustus, with the shadows of oncoming age descending upon him, viewed with misgiving the increasing licentiousness of the times, the growing corruption, which had not spared even the members of his own household, and which the sternest legislation seemed unable to repress, and that he therefore determined to make an example of those who were most conspicuously identified with the dissolute society he thought it his duty to castigate, foremost amongst whom was the unhappy Ovid. If, as is not improbable, Ovid was privy to the adulterous intercourse of the younger Julia with Silanus, he, as well as the erring lovers, would, by the *lex de adulteriis*, have been liable to the capital sentence, so that in suffering a mere *relegatio*, the milder form of exile, he may be considered to have got off lightly.

# Introduction 2

The society into which Ovid was received after his refusal of the quæstorship, and in which he gained that intimate knowledge of women which make his love poems such masterpieces of feminine psychology, was one of the most brilliant that the world has ever known.

Out of the welter of conflicting forces and rival ambitions which had so long distracted the Roman State, the crafty and patient Augustus had emerged triumphant. The era of bloodshed, of political strife and social insecurity was over. The shadow of civil conflict which had so long oppressed men's minds had at length departed, and, even if the last vestiges of political freedom had vanished with it, the loss was forgotten, at least temporarily, in the joyfulness with which the dawning of what promised, and indeed proved, to be a long era of peace and settled government was universally acclaimed.

The age in which Ovid flourished was singularly favourable to the cultivation of the arts. It was a luxurious, pleasure-loving age if you will, but at the same time it was an age of extraordinary elegance and refinement, and Ovid was one of the choicest and most typical of its products. He flung himself with zest into this brilliant and witty society, a society which he was destined to immortalize in his verse, and its members, recognizing in him a rare and congenial spirit, welcomed him with open arms. He was, in fact, an immediate and an immense success. Being a man of breeding and education, as well as the possessor of brilliant natural gifts, no door, however exclusive, was closed against him. He was a delightful companion, a brilliant talker, a tremendous favourite with the women, as well as a most observant and penetrating student of their psychology. "The Loves," the first of the three poems included in this volume, was also the first work published by Ovid. Originally, as the poet himself tells us, it consisted of five books, subsequently compressed into three, and the "elegies" of which it is made up are for the most part written to or concerned with his mistress. Who the Corinna was whom he celebrates in his "Loves" is, as we have stated, unknown. She was clearly a woman of some social standing. In an early elegy he commends himself to her favour by the merits of his poetry the purity of his morals, and by the vow he makes to her of his unchangeable fidelity. "I am none of these," he avers, "who love a hundred women at a time; I am no fickle philanderer. Whatsoever the tale of years the fates may spin for me, I will pass them at thy side, and dying be lamented by thee." At length, after a long siege, she surrenders, and Ovid is in the seventh heaven. Alas for the frailty of lovers' vows! We turn but a page or two, and we find him cursing himself for laying violent hands upon her in a fit of rage. But *amantium iræ!* It's soon made

up; they are fast friends again, and in a poem of singular beauty he upbraids the Dawn for hastening her coming, and so tearing him from her side.

Women in Ovid's time were no less slaves to fashion than they are in ours. In these days of bobbing and shingling and permanent waving and henna dyeing, what a note of actuality rings in the reproaches he addresses to Corinna for dyeing and crimping her hair till she has nearly lost it all, and is compelled to conceal her baldness with a toupet made from the tresses of a German slave-girl! How many a lover in these days has had to deplore that his Corinna, or his Neobule, or his Cynara has wilfully deprived herself of the aureole with which the gods had endowed her.

A little while ago he was vowing eternal fidelity to Corinna, yet a few pages further on, incorrigible rogue, he is confessing that every type of beauty sets his heart on fire. Here is a girl who is shy and demure. That's enough, the flame's alight. Here's one that's out for prey. Good! She's bound to be an adept at the art of love. Here's one that's learned. He loves her because she's clever. And this one's quite unlearned. Her naïveté enthrals him. This girl tells him he's a better poet than Callimachus. How nice of her! This one says he's no poet at all. Yet he longs to have her in his arms. And so, dark or fair, short or tall, slim or plump, the girlish novice, the woman of experience he adores them all. "In a word, of all the beauties they rave about in Rome, there's none whose lover I am not fain to be."

But if men were deceivers ever, it is no less certain that

"Souvent femme varie,
Bien fol qui s'y fie,"

for in the very next elegy we find him upbraiding his mistress, whom he has detected acting falsely towards him. "I saw you making eyes at him. I saw what you wrote in wine on the table. I saw you kiss him, when you thought I was asleep. And what a kiss it was! Not the sort of kiss a girl gives her brother, but such as a loving mistress might bestow upon her eager lover." And then they make it up and she kisses him; kisses him so voluptuously that all his old suspicions are aroused again, for he wonders where she learnt the art to such perfection. "Was it that fellow who taught her?--And in bed too, perhaps!"

And now Corinna accuses him of carrying on an intrigue with her maid Cypassis. He is very indignant and swears by all that's holy that he's innocent of the charge. How could she imagine he would do such a thing, with a mere servant-girl too! And then, no sooner is he alone with Cypassis than he asks her in tones of amazement: "How ever did she find out? Who, or what, could have given us away? Anyhow, I satisfied her and she thinks it's all right. I got you out of a nice scrape, and now in payment for that good deed, my dusky Cypassis, grant me your favours to-day. What, you refuse? Nay then, in that case I shall turn King's

evidence and tell your mistress all that we have done, when and where and how." We may be sure that Cypassis did not persist in her refusal. And so it goes on to the end of the chapter. Ovid "could resist everything except temptation," and temptations were so plentiful in Rome. He loved Corinna--in his fashion. But there were many interludes--on his part and on hers. She came to consoling herself, and that liberally. He knew, poor fellow; and yet he could not give her up. "I have had a lot to put up with," he exclaims one day, "and I've put up with it a great deal too long! I am completely out of patience with you. I've done with you. No, no more kisses; it's no good talking like that any more; your words don't move me now. I'm not the madman I used to be." Brave words these. But no sooner are they out of his mouth than something catches at his heart. And forthwith he begins to chant his palinode. "Oh, this wavering heart of mine!" he cries. "How it is wrenched this way and that, torn simultaneously by love and hate. And love, I think, is winning. . . . I can live neither with you nor without you. Helpless, indeed, am I!" And then he surrenders completely. "Forgive me," he implores her, "by all the gods who lend themselves so often to thy false oaths; by that face that seems to me a thing divine, and by thine eyes which have made captives of mine."

A striking contrast this with the sane, smiling, softly ironic philosophy of Horace. "Boy, fetch the unguents and the garlands and the wine and then go round to Neaera's; tell her I want her and bid her make haste. But if the janitor's surly and you have any fuss, give it up and come away. Passion grows cool when the hair turns grey. I shouldn't have stood such a thing, though, in my young days, when Plancus was Consul." Heart-whole Horace had managed to remain, even when jilted by Pyrrha, who, reclining on her couch of roses, shines down the ages with the clear-cut perfection of the cameo. "Who's the happy youth now, Pyrrha? For whom are you braiding your fair tresses, you model of simple grace? Poor fellow, he little knows what's in store for him who thinks you will always be sparkling and lovely as the sunlit sea. He'll find out to his cost how suddenly the squalls come on. I was nearly done for once, but thank heaven I escaped." For Horace women were an interlude, a pastime. If he felt inclined for Lydia, or Glycera, or Neobule, and she was free to come, so much the better. If not, he just shrugged his shoulders and thought of other things.

But Ovid, despite his own peccadilloes, and her *passades*, could not live without his Corinna. He had not yet acquired the wisdom which came with later years and which he set forth in such masterly fashion in his *Remedia Amoris*. Home is not home without her. "Behold me," he writes to her from the land of his birth, "behold me at Sulmo, in the land of the Peligni. It is a little spot, but bright and clear with its streams of sparkling water. Though the scorching sun may crack the earth, though the dog-star shines its fiercest, limpid streamlets wind their way across

the fields of the Peligni, and there the grass is always green. The land with corn is rich and with the vine is richer still. The olive, too, flourishes in profusion on the light, loose soil. The rivulets, meandering among, the meadows, clothe the moist earth with shadowy verdure. "But here my love is not. Or stay--my love is here, but not the object of my love. I would not live in heaven itself without you." He seems, he tells her, to be dwelling not in the fair land of the Peligni, not in the familiar home of his ancestors, but in the heart of Scythia, or among the grim Cilicians, or the Britons who smear themselves with green stain--and all because she is not there beside him. The conclusion is charming: "If thou hast any pity for me in my lonely state, begin to make thy words bear fruit in deeds." She had promised never to quit his side:--"Quick, up with you into your little chaise, and with your own hands shake the reins about your horses' flying manes. And you, ye swelling hills, abase yourselves before her as she comes; ye paths in the winding vales, be smooth beneath her feet."

# Introduction 3

The *Art of Love*, in which he sets forth the rules of amatory intrigue, is divided into three parts. Of these, the first deals with choosing the woman to whom you intend to lay siege. "First catch your hare." The hunter knows where to spread his nets to enmesh the stag; the fowler where to smear his bird-lime; the fisherman what waters most abound in fish. As for the lover, he has no need to journey far. Here in Rome, beneath his very eyes, he'll find every type of beauty; 'tis a very *embarras de richesses*. Let him take a stroll through the porticoes of Pompey or of Livia, he'll discover plenty of pretty women to choose from. And the theatre! There they abound as thick as the bees that hover among the flowers and the thyme. The Circus, too, is another place most favourable to love, for there you have to sit close, you cannot help it, and it's so easy to begin a conversation. Then, you arrange a cushion for her and find a place for her to rest her feet; a speck of dust lights on her bosom: you flick it off. And if it isn't there, you flick it off just the same. Boldness is the essence of success. It's no use waiting for the woman to make the first advance. Enter the fray with a stout heart. Not one woman in a thousand will offer any serious resistance. She may put up a fight, but she'll be sorry if she wins, however pleased. She may try to look. Pay plenty of compliments, unlimited compliments, but don't start giving costly presents. That's an error, and you'll find there'll be no end to it. She'll have a birthday every time she wants you to buy her something. Study the fine arts. Adorn your mind so that you may interest her with your conversation. In whatever you say or write to her, avoid the highbrow style. Don't talk to her like a professor, or as if you were addressing a meeting. That's fatal. Keep on the best of terms with her husband. If, when the dice are thrown, chance crowns you monarch of the feast, take off your wreath and place it on his brow. Drink moderately, never overdo it. Simulate drunkenness, if you like, because that will afford you an excuse for saying things you would not dare to say when sober.

If she treats you with hauteur, cool off a little. Don't let her think you too importunate. Above all suit the treatment to the case. Different women require different methods.

The first part of the *Art of Love*, then, instructs the lover how to win his mistress. In the second part, the poet sets out to teach his pupil what is certainly no less important, and that is, how to retain her. Good looks are something, but charm of manner is a great deal more. Pleasant words--like music--are the food of love. Never squabble. Quarrels are the dowry which married folk bring one another. A mistress should only hear agreeable things. This, and all his counsels, are intended for lovers

of small or moderate incomes. If a man has got money, there's no need for him to learn the Art of Love. Money is the sure passport to a woman's favours. If you are not endowed with wealth, you must make up for it in other ways. Pander to her when she's well; pet her and coddle her when she's sick. Don't make her take nasty medicine, or put her on a lowering diet. Leave that sort of thing to your rival. And don't try to rush things. Gradually make yourself indispensable to her; and when you are sure that she will long for you, leave her alone for a bit, so that your absence may give her some anxiety. But don't stay away too long. Out of sight may eventually be out of mind. If you've had a little dalliance elsewhere (and no man can be expected to stick wholly to one woman), don't, when you come back to your mistress, be sheepish or gushing. To be either is a sure sign of a guilty conscience and is bound to give you away. Satisfy her, if she isn't pleased with you, in the only way a woman can be satisfied. Never spy on a woman. Even if they tell you your mistress is out, when you know very well she's in don't make a fuss. Make believe she is out and that your eyes have deceived you.

In these clays when women of forty, like the little girl in *Punch*, have often still got "a past before them," it will gladden many hearts to hear that Ovid considered a woman only really interesting when she had passed the age of thirty-five. "No new wine for me!" he cries. "Let me have a rich and mellow vintage."

The third part of his treatise he reserves for advice to women. "Never fear," he says to those who would have it he was arming the enemy, "women are not as black as they're painted. We must not condemn the whole sex for the crimes of a few. Helen, Clytemnestra, Eriphyle--these were certainly not shining examples; but look at Penelope, look at Laodamia, look at Alcestis. No; Virtue is a woman both in vesture and in name."

Let them make haste, and not be niggard of their favours while they are yet young. Old age and wrinkles and white hair will come all too soon. Such is the burden of his counsel. Good looks are a fine thing, but they're rare. But a careful toilet will make a woman attractive, and without it the loveliest faces lose their charm.

"Let who will praise the ancient days when Tatius was king and all the women housewives. I am a child of the age. I find it better suited to my tastes not because we've got a lot of gold and wear expensive clothes, but because we know how to enjoy the amenities of life and have discarded the boorish ways of our forefathers. Dress well, but do not over-dress; smell sweet; attend to your teeth; see that your legs are not hairy; learn the art of cosmetics, but don't powder and paint before your lover--these are some of his excellent injunctions. Learn how to walk, how to laugh, and even how to weep, for there's a right and a wrong way of doing everything. Above all, if you want to keep your good looks, keep your temper. A woman is never so ugly as when she's in a rage. If your

lover's getting lukewarm, let him scent a rival. Don't let him think he's the only pebble on the beach. Don't gourmandize, and don't drink to excess. There is no sight so beastly as a drunken woman." Then, with some further advice, some intimate instructions, which formed the pretext for his exile, he concludes.

As one turns these pages, one cannot but reflect how little, in essentials, the world of society, the *beau monde* has changed since Ovid's day. Take away the accidental circumstances, change the *mise-en-scène* from Augustan Rome to Paris or London, and the poem might have been written yesterday. No; woman has not changed, nor man, nor the way of a man with a woman, or of a woman with a man. It is true that the loves Ovid sings have little in common with the *grande passion*. The love that ends in ruin, despair and death is not for him. Such passions are enemies to wit and gaiety, and would be terribly out of place in this careless, frivolous, pleasure-loving, elegant and highly sophisticated society, a society in which the revelation of any depth of feeling would have been considered somewhat ridiculous and condemned as "bad form," even as it would be in our own. No vows of eternal fidelity for Ovid! He knew well enough that *à la fin on se lasse de tout*. "If Tereus had had recourse to my remedies, if I had been there to prescribe for him, he would never have gone off his head about Philomel and never have been changed into a bird for his sins." Pasiphaë would have given up her bull, Phædra would have seen the error of her ways; Paris would have pulled up in time, and there would have been no Trojan wars; Dido would never have slain herself for Æneas. Those myrtle groves, whereof Virgil sings, and within whose shade wander the ghosts of those whom hopeless love consumes, would, if Ovid could have had his way, have been eternally untenanted.

This *Art of Love* is indeed a miracle of a poem. There had been nothing like it in the Roman world before. Gallantry was a new cult to the Romans and Ovid was its high priest. The Comedy of Love! Here we have all the charming and familiar ingredients--the promenades, the whispered confidences, the secret assignations, the fops and the dandies, the billets-doux, the presents, the dainty dresses, the lover's pleadings, the mistress's disdain, the kissings and the quarrellings, the cuckold husband and the obliging--the very obliging--maid, the perfume, the powder, the courtliness, the wit, the raillery, the naughtiness, the rippling laughter--all the familiar stock-in-trade of the perennial comedy whose setting is now Rome, now Paris, now Versailles, or Bath or Vauxhall or the Mall. Here, in this *Art of Love*, we assist, as it were, at the birth of the World of Gallantry. Here is the world in which later on the de Grammonts, the de Lauzuns, the Rochesters, the Buckinghams, Beau Nash and Beau Brummell *et hoc genus omne*, were to find themselves so thoroughly at home.

And what a man of taste he is, this Ovid; with the true exquisite's abhorrence of vulgar display. Elegance is his watchword, but it is elegance based on the most scrupulous cleanliness. It's no good wearing fine clothes if your nails are in mourning; and--this he is never weary of reiterating--it is not only the body but the mind we must adorn. Music, poetry, dancing, there's none so fair--whether man or woman--who can afford to disdain these accomplishments. And these charming, but not very difficult, ladies, how beautiful they were, and what a wealth of care and artifice and what a troop of artists it needed to dress them, to do their hair, to emphasise their beauty or repair the ravages of time! There was the slave who removed grey and superfluous hair, a slave to comb and brush my lady's unbraided tresses; a slave for her pomades, another for her perfumes. It was the duty of one to apply the rouge and of another to paint her eyebrows and eyelashes and to shade her eyelids; another had to see to her hands, another to polish and adorn her feet. There were the wardrobe-maids and the tire-women, the *ornatrices*, who put on her necklaces and saw to her jewellery. One slave was skilled at holding the mirror, another at holding the torch-and when at length my lady is sufficiently bedecked, adorned, tricked out, bathed and aired, powdered and scented; when, in a word, she looks as if she has just stepped out of a bandbox, the door is flung open to admit the women-critics, the experts, who give just one last look to see that everything is just perfection.

It has been said that with the mere names of the things that composed Corinna's trousseau Ovid could have made a poem. First came the little flimsy garment woven of silk or linen, and artfully embroidered. Then the *castula*, which reached up to the throat, and the *indusiata*, which went on over it. There were the *brassières* to hold in a too voluminous bosom; the scarf which fell about her white shoulders from her lofty head dress; veils of every hue. As to the different dresses that a Lesbia, a Corinna or a Neaera might wear, one would have a train like the dress worn to-day by a great lady at Court. There was a wonderful diaphanous thing called the "laconic." There was the *crocula*, a short saffron-coloured dress; there was the *impluvia*, a dress worn on days of mourning, or when it was raining. As for tunics and cloaks, they were as divers as the dresses. There was the long tunic with a fringe, the short one just reaching to the knee and flounced with fur; the *calthula*, a sort of yellow mantilla; tunics closely woven, tunics loosely woven. There was a marvellous thing called the man-killer, because it was caught up high at the bottom and liberally displayed the wearer's person.

There was a bewildering assortment of implements and instruments in Corinna's dressing-room and on Corinna's dressing-table: scissors, razors, files, various brushes for the teeth, the nails, the hair, combs of every shape, a preparation of burnt cork for darkening the eyelashes; soaps, pastes, cosmetics, phials of scent; "strigils," that is, little ivory

currycombs for rubbing and cleansing the skin after the bath; hair-nets, wigs, false teeth; oiled pumice-stone for giving a polish to the arms, neck and shoulders; paint red and white; pomades both emollient and astringent; necklaces and earrings; hair-pins in infinite variety, gold chains, brooches, bracelets, rings, cameos, artificial flowers, chaplets enriched with pearls and precious stones, butterflies, grasshoppers, flies made out of gems, cloaks embroidered and fringed, scarves inwrought with silver and gold, girdles sparkling with precious stones, frontlets, ribands, veils, shoes and so on *ad infinitum*.

The *Remedia Amoris* contains a variety of precepts too sound to admit of any other conclusion than that the physician had himself suffered from the disease in its most acute form. "If you can take it in time," he says, "before it has got a hold on you, cut it out. If you can't, wait a little until the attack has spent its force. Then drink deep of the cup of love. Drink to satiety. Drink till you're sick. And find work to occupy your mind: love thrives on idleness. Take up farming, gardening, shooting, fishing. Above all, go away. There's nothing like a long journey and change of scene to remove 'this something-settled matter in the heart.' If you've got to stay on in town willy-nilly, don't go near the places where you used to meet her; cut her friends, burn her letters, destroy her portrait and--get another mistress. And remember, if you can go on long enough pretending you're cured, you'll be cured indeed." Thus spoke Ovid in the first century, and thus speaks Dr. Coué in the twentieth. Verily, there's nothing new under the sun.

The Art of Beauty is a fragment of one hundred lines. He begins by telling his fair pupils what he had already impressed upon them in the Art of Love, namely, the importance of cultivating charm of manner. Beauty fades, but charm endures. Then he gives them a recipe or two for their complexions. What these are we leave the reader to discover.

It will readily be seen that in these poems there is no hint of the *lacrimæ rerum*, the sense of tears in mortal things. All is bright, sunny, sensuous and superficial, incomparably elegant, irresistibly charming, and completely insincere. If the note of sadness steals in once or twice to mingle with the laughter and the lutes, it is but to warn some pretty woman who is niggard of her favours, to make the most of her time while she is still young; ere yet the vandal years have filched the roses from her cheeks and sprent her hair with grey. It is a poetry of the senses, not of the heart, a poetry that is whole worlds away from the grave and melancholy cadences that fell from the lips of Ovid's great compatriot Virgil, that *anima naturaliter Christiana*. But, like the hymn to Adonis of which Matthew Arnold speaks in his essay on Pagan and Mediæval Religious Sentiment, Ovid's poetry "adapts itself exactly to the tone and temper of a gay and pleasure-loving multitude of light-hearted people who seem never made to be serious, never made to be sick or sorry." Whether or not the world to which Ovid addressed himself was "made to be sick or sorry," it is certain that it did not want to be. It wanted to be amused, and to forget.

And so "all unmindful of his doom" Ovid went on gaily singing his careless lays and taking life very easily. He suffered the consequences born of too great a sense of security. Even if he, the amorous *butineur* of days now past, had more or less settled down to a life of conjugal fidelity--the temptation to err having forsaken him--he probably viewed with sympathy and, when he could, abetted, the moral delinquencies of others. Perhaps he failed to observe the clouds ominously gathering about the Imperial brow, or, if he observed them, cheated himself with the fond belief that their thunders would never discharge themselves upon him or upon his friends. He had ample leisure at Tomi to meditate on the foolishness of putting one's trust in princes.

It is a remarkable thing that, so far as we are aware, no complete translation of the *Ars Amatoria*, which Macaulay held to be Ovid's finest poem, has hitherto appeared in English. The poem, as Sir Edmund Gosse recently took occasion to remark in discussing the reason of Ovid's exile, contains "nothing so very terrible," and, as he justly proceeds to observe, "Catullus before him and Martial after him were far more indecent, to our modern ears at least, than Ovid, and nobody ever dreamed of banishing or even blaming them." The explanation of this unjust treatment of so delightful a poem is probably to be found in the fact that it was made the pretext for Ovid's banishment. It affords yet another example of the truth contained in the old adage about giving a dog a bad name. The result has been that Ovid, in so far as his Love