

HQ
1201
A 326
1542 a

hbl, stx

HQ 1201.A326 1542a

Treatise of the nobilitie and exce



3 9153 00462824 6

HQ/1201/A326/1542a



PLEASE HANDLE
WITH CARE

University of
Connecticut Libraries



hbl,

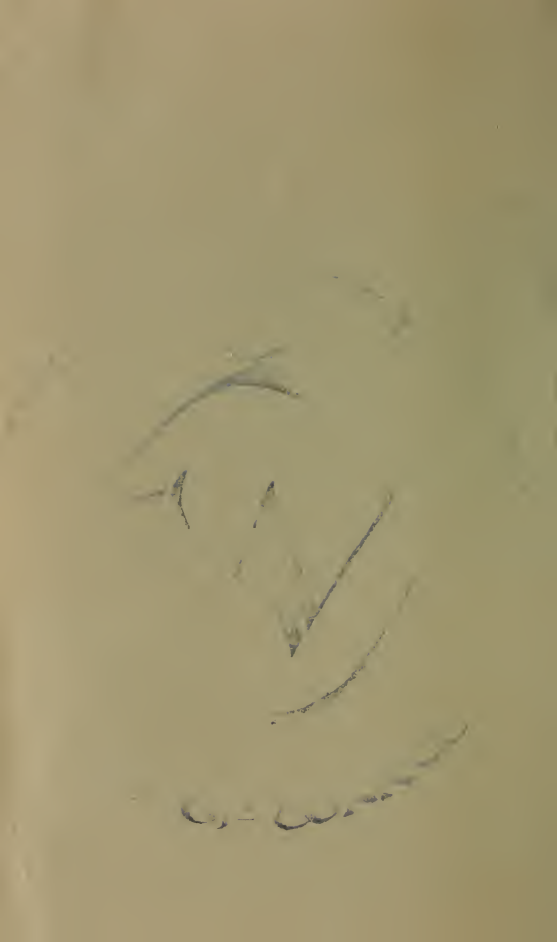
OPB

A TREATISE OF THE
MOBILITIE OF WOMAN KYNDE
1542

Henrie Cornelius Agrippa

UNIVERSITY MICROFILMS, INC.

Ann Arbor London





ORDER. No. 1733.

Ref. 203

Bod. Ref. 8^o. c. 97. 7^h.

"Agrippa. Hent. Corn.

HA

1201

A326

1542a

Agrippa von Nettesheim



Of the nobilitie
and excellencye
of vromankynde

OF THE NOBILITIE AND EXCELLENCIE OF WOMANKENDE.



ALMIGHTY GOD the maker & nourisher of all thynges, the Father and goodnesse of both male and fe-

male, of hys great bountyfulnes, hath create mankynne lyke vnto hym selfe, he made them man and woman. The diuersitie of which two kyndes, standeth onely in the sondry situation of the bodily partes, in whiche the vse of generacion requireth a necessary differēce. He hath giuen but one similitude and lykenes of the soule, to bothe male and female, betwene whose soules there is no maner of diffe-

Gen. 1.

tence of kynde. The woman hath
 that same mynd that a man hath,
 that same reason and speche, she
 gothe to the same ende of byskul-
 nes, where shall be noo exception
 of kynde. For after the euangeli-
 call truthe, they that ryse in theyr
 owne proper kynde, shall not be
 the offyce of theyr kynde. but the
 lyknes of angelles is promysed
 vnto theym. And thus betwene
 man and woman by substance of
 the soule, one hath no higher pre-
 emynence of nobyltye aboue the
 other, but both of them natural-
 ly haue equall libertie of dignitie
 and worthynesse. But all other
 thynges, the which be in man, be-
 sydes the dyuine substance of the
 soule, in those thynges the excel-
 lente and noble womanhed in a
 maner insynytely dothe excell the
 cude

Luc. 20.

Marc. 12.

Matt. 22.

the grosse kynd of men, the whiche
 che thyng we shall playnly proue
 to be true, nor with counterfayte
 and fayre flatterynge wordes, nor
 also with the subtyll sophismes of
 Logike, wherewith many sophis-
 tics were wont to blynde and de-
 cepe men, but by the auctorytpe
 of moſte excellent auctours, and
 true wyters of hystorys, and with
 manifest reasons, yea with the te-
 stimonies of holye ſcrypture, and
 by the ordynances and constitu-
 tions of lawes.

Thyſt to enter into this matter
 the womã is made ſo muche moze
 excellent than man, in howe mo-
 che the name that ſhe hath recey-
 ued, is moze excellent than hyſ.
 For Adam ſoundeth Erthe, but
 Eva is interpretate lyfe: and as
 moche as the lyfe doth excel erth.

So moche the woman is to be preferred aboue the man. For there is no cause why this Childe be called a feble argumēt, to gyue iugement of thynges by the names.

For we knowe, that the hyghe artycifer and maker of thynges and names, fyrst dyd knowe the thynges, befoze he named them, which for as moch as he could not be deceyued, for thys purpose he made the names, that it myght expresse the nature, pꝛopertye, and vse of the thynges. For the trouthe of antique names is suche, as the veraye Romanayne lawes testyfyē, that the selte names are consonāt to the thynges, and manifest signification of them. Therfoze an argument of the names of thynges amonges dyuynes and lawyars, is of greate weyghte.

Wꝛt.

written of Nabal, after his name
 is a foole, and folymenes is with
 him. Of this Paule in hys Epi-
 stle to the Hebrewes, purposynge
 to shewe the excellency of Chryste
 vseth this argument, sayeng: that
 he is made as moch more excellēt
 than the aungels, as he hath enhe-
 rited a name more excellent than
 they. And in an other place, God
 hath gyuen hym a name, the whiche
 is aboue al names, that in the
 name of Iesu, euery knee shall
 bowe both of thynges in heauen,
 of thynges vpon earth & of thynges
 vnder the earth. If urther (this
 thyng to approue) there is no
 smal strengthe of lawes, compris-
 hended and conteyned in the bon-
 des of wordes, in signification of
 wordes, in conditions and demon-
 strations, in conditions annexed,

and suche other kyndes of dysputations, and highe poyntes, and tytles of the lawe, as in the same tytles, and other lyke, a man may perceyue. For soo we make argu-
 mente and reasons in the lawe of the interpretation of the name, also of the strength of the word and vocable. Moreover, of the interpretation of the name, and also of the dyspnytion, and composition and order of the worde. For the lawes them selues do quykelye and sharpely consyder the significations of the names, that of the they myghte some thynge interpretate.

¶ Also Cyprian againste the Jewes argueth, that the fyrste man, Adam, receyved hys name of the iiii. princypal partes of the world, that is, East, west, North, and South

Cyprl. de
 montibus
 Syna et
 Syon.

Southe, and in the same booke he
 dothe expound the same name, A-
 dam, because erth was made flesh,
 althoughe suche exposition dothe
 dyffer from the tradition and tea-
 chynge of Moyses, sens among the
 Hebrzewes it is not wyrtten with
 foure but with. iii. letters. yet for
 all that, this exposition in so holy
 a man is not to be dyspraysed, for
 as moche as he was not lerned in
 the Hebrwee tongue, the whiche
 verye many saynctes and exposy-
 tours of holye scrypture, to theyr
 small blame knewe not. But if I
 can not haue lyke leaue and liber-
 tye for the praysse of womanheed,
 after my mynde and iugement, to
 vse lyke etymologie and declara-
 tion of the word and name of eue,
 at the leaste lette me be suffered to
 speake this one thyng out of the

NOBILITIE OF

mistickall Decrees, and agreeable
 wylls of the Cabalists, the very
 name of a woman to haue more
 affinitie with the ineffable and in-
 enarrable name of the Diuine po-
 wer almyghtye, called Tetragrama-
 maton, than the name of man, the
 whiche with the name of god, nei-
 ther in letters noz in figure, noz in
 noubze doth agree.

But now we wylle leaue these
 thynges, for they be redde of few,
 and of fewer vnderstande & they
 requyre a longer processe than is
 mete to be spoken of here. In the
 meane season, we wol serche ouer
 the excellencie of womanheed, not
 of the name onely, but of the very
 thynges, dueties, and merites.

Therfor let vs (as they say) serch
 the scriptures and takeinge ouer
 grounde at the fyrste creation, let

vs

By dispute and reason, what dignitie woman obteyned aboue mā, whanne she was fyrste made. We knowe, that whatso euer god almyghty made, do chiefly differre in this point, that certayne of them shuld abyde and remainn for euer more incorruptible and withoute putrefaction, and certayne shuld be subiecte vnto corruption, mutabilitie and change. And in creatinge those thynges, god proceeded forwarde, after thys order he beganne at the more noble and excellent of one thyng, and ended at the most noble of an other. And thus he created incorruptible angels and soules: for so doth saint Augustyne dispute & reason, that the soules of our fyrste parentes, were created with angels, before the bodyes were made. Further:

Aug. sup.
 Gen. li. 7.

NOBILITIE OF

more he created incorruptible bodies, as the heuēns, the sterres and the elementes incorruptible, but subiecte to dyuers mutations: of the whiche he made al other thinges that be subiecte vnto corruption. From the more byler by seuerall degrees and orders of dignitie, agayne ascendyng and goinge vp vnto the perfection of the hole worlde. Firste he made minerals: thanne thynges vegetable plantes and trees: after that thinges lyuinges, than byute beastes, some crepyng, some swymmyng, some fleyng. Fynally he created two creatures lyke to hym selve, fyrst the male, and last the female: in whiche female, the heuens, the erthe, and al the goodly ornaments of the same, were perfected and fully finished. For the maker com
myng

mynge to the creation of woman;
 rested at her, as haupnge befoze
 his handes nothyng moze hono-
 rable to be made, and in her al the
 wisdom and power of the crea-
 toz came to conclusion and ende:
 after the which there can no crea-
 ture be found oꝝ imagined. Than
 seing a woman is the last of crea-
 tures, the full ende, mozte perfect
 of all goddis woꝝkes, and of the
 same the very perfection: who wol
 deny a woman to be the most woꝝ-
 thy & mozte excellent of all creatu-
 res: without whom ȳ very world,
 nowe beyng finished, and in all
 thynges mozte perfectly accom-
 plished, shulde haue ben vnper-
 fecte, the whiche coude none other
 wyse be perfyted, thanne with the
 mozte perfectest of al creatures.
 For it were ageynst reason and a
 thyng

NOBILITIE OF

thynges, vnseemely to thynke, that
 god wold finish so gret a woꝛke in
 any vnperfect thing. But bicause
 the woꝛld it selfe, as the absolute,
 hoie, and most perfect cyꝛcle, was
 created of god, the same cyꝛcle
 must nedes be ended in that lyttel
 parte, whiche myghte couple and
 loyue within it selfe the fyrste of
 all thynges with the laste of all
 thynges with one knotte. So a
 woman, whanne the woꝛlde was
 made, was the laste in tyme, and
 laste made: and the same woman
 partly in auctoꝛity, but chesely in
 dignitie, was the fyrst of all thin-
 ges, conceived in the mynde of
 god as it is wyꝛtten of her by the
 prophete: Befoze the heuens wete
 made; god dyd chose her, and he
 chose her, befoze all other creatu-
 res. For this is a common con-
 clusion

clusion among philosophers (if I
 maye vse theyr wordes) The ende
 alway is in the fyrst entention; and
 in the dede is the laste. So a wo-
 man was the laste worke of god,
 formed into thys world as quene
 of the same, into her prepared pa-
 layce, garnysed with all pleasu-
 res plentyfully. Therfore euerye
 creature worthely loueth reueren-
 ceth & serueth her, and worthly
 is subiect, and obeyeth vnto her,
 which is of al creatures the abso-
 lute quene, ende, perfeccion, & glo-
 ry by al wayes and meanes. Where-
 fore the wyse man saythe, who so
 hath god with him, reioyseth, and
 in harte comendeth the gentil na-
 ture of woman, ye and the lord of
 all thynges hym selfe loueth her.
 ¶ By reason of the place also, in
 whiche the woman was created,
 howe

Arist. v. l. 1.
 de auditu

Sapi. 8.

NOBILITIE OF

howe farre the passeth man in noblenesse, holy wyfte both witnesse vnto vs mooste plentifullye. For where the woman was made in Paradyse, a place mooste noble and pleasaunt, amonge aungels: the man was made withoute Paradyse, in the wyelde kyelde amonge brute beastes. Afterward, to thintent, that woman shuld be created, he was brought into Paradyse. And therefore the woman, endowed with the peculyar gyfte of Nature, as she were accustomed to be in the highest place of her creatiō, though she loke down ward from neuer so high a place, yet she neyther suffreth nor feleth any whirling or swimming in her heed, ne her eies dasyll not, like as it is wonte to chaunce to men.

Furthermoze, if it chance a woman

man to be in lyke peryll of Drownyng with a man, the without any outwarde helpe, swymmeth a losse longer than the man, whiche soner synketh, and goth downe to the bottom.

¶ And that the dygnytie of the place maketh moche to the nobyltie of manne, the ciuill lawe and humaine constitutions do playnly affirme, and the custome of all nations doth chye fly obserue this thynge, not onely in men, but also in other beastes, yea and in the estimation of thynge haung no lyfe: For the moze wo:thy place, that any thing is born oz brought by in, the moze noble it is iudged. wherfore Isaac commanded his sonne Jacob, that he shoulde not take a wyfe of the lande of Canaan, but of Mesopotamie in Syria,

ra, beyng of better estymation.
 And vnto this, is not moche vn-
 lyke, whiche is spoken in the gos-
 pellof Iohn, where Philip said :
 we haue founde Iesus the sonne
 of Ioseph of Nazareth. And Ma-
 thanael said to hym : what good
 can come oute of Nazareth ? But
 now let vs speke of other matters

¶ A woman doth passe a man in
 the materiall substance of her cre-
 ation. For she was not made of a
 ny creature wantyng lyfe & soule,
 or of the vyle clay or dytche, as the
 man was, but of a matter purifi-
 ed and lyuely, hauyng a reasona-
 ble soule, and a godly minde. Fur-
 thermoze, god made manne of the
 erthe, whiche naturally bynygeth
 forthe all kyndes of beastes and
 lyuely creatures, by the working
 togyther of the heuenly influences;

but

But the woman, aboue al heuenly influence and promptnes of nature, and without any other operation & power, was onely made of god, full stedfast and perfit in all thinges; the man in the meane season losynge one of his rybbes, of the whiche she was made, that is to say, Eue of Adam sleeping, and that so soundly, that he could not fele his ribbe plucked away. And thus, man is the worke of nature, and womannie the worke of god. And therfore the woman is many tymes moze apt and mete then the man, to receyue the heuenly light and byghnes, and is ofte replenished therewith: whiche thyng is easy to be fene, by her cleynesse, & maruylous faire beautye. For seyng that beaultie it selfe is none other thyng, but the clere byght-

NOBILITIE OF

nes of goddes visage naturallye
 sette in thinges, tyght fayre shy-
 nyng in the beautifull bodies of
 creatures: he therfoze hath chosen
 women befoze men, to be far moze
 endowed, and mozte abundantly
 replenished therwith. The propre
 body of a woman in syght and fea-
 lunge, is mozte delicate and plea-
 sant: her fleshe softe and tender:
 her colour faire and clere: her skin
 softe and sylke, her head comelye,
 and decked with heate softe lyke
 sylke, long, and shynyng lyke the
 golde wyre: her countenaunce so-
 bye: her loke and chere merye and
 pleasaunt: her face mozte fayre of
 all creatures, her necke white as
 milke: her forhed large and high:
 her eyes rollyng and shynyng like
 cristall, verye ampyable gladsome
 and gratious: her byowes aboue
 them,

them, wel sette togyther in propre
 thyn circles, with a comely playn-
 nesse, deuided equally with a feate
 distaunce, betwene the which, out
 of the middelt, descendeth the nose
 straghte and treatise: vnder the
 which is her ruddy mouthe, with
 soft and tender lypes, ful propre-
 ly proportioned: within the whi-
 che, whan she smileth, her teeth
 do shyne forth, beinge but lyttell
 ones, and sette in egall order, as
 white as the yuooy, and not so ma-
 ny in numbꝛe as a man hath, for
 she is nother greatte eater, bytar,
 noꝝ gnawer: And rounde aboute
 them ryse vp her iawes, & chekes,
 with tender softnes, as ruddy as
 rose, and replenished with Cham-
 fastnes: her chynne rounde, with
 a prett pꝛt therin. Under this she
 hath a small necke, somewhat long

NOBILITIE OF

and streighte vpryght frome her
 rounde sholders, with a delycate
 wescande, whytely, and meauye
 thecke and bigge: her voyce smal
 and shyll: her speche lowe and
 swete: her bzeaste brode and well
 sette out, clothed with euen flethe
 and hardnes of her pappes, whi-
 che are round and euen as her be-
 ly is: her sydes are softe and ten-
 der: her backe playn and streyght
 her armes long and ful: her han-
 des white and softe, with fingers
 longe and small, stretched forth a
 length from the ioyntes, and pro-
 pely set and knytte to gither: her
 byppes, thyes, and legges, well
 bzauned fleshy and full: her fin-
 gers endes and toos are propre &
 rounde, lyke a lyttel circle, and al
 the pannes of her body well furni-
 shed with humour. Howe ouer,
 her

her pace and going is right comely: her mouynge honest: her port and chere very comendable: and in the order of al the body, in Chap figure ppropotion and disposition aboue al other she is farre the fairest creature. In al the hole heape of creatures, there is noo thyng so wonderfull to see, ne noo miracle so maruaplouise to beholde. In so moche, that there is no man, excepte he be stark blynde, but he maye see, that god hym selfe condested and heaped together in woman, what so euer was beautiful in all the holle world: which causeth every creature to be astroyed and amased at her: yea and many wayes they louen and worshyppe her: in so moch that we se it chance ofte tymes, that the bodiles spirites and diuels are ardently taken

and rauyshed with the beautie of
 women, out of al measure: which
 opinion is not false, but the truth
 by many experyences is notabllye
 knowen. And to passe ouer those
 thynge, that the poetes haue left
 to vs in wrytynge, of the loue of
 the goddes, and of theyꝝ louers &
 concubines, as of Apollo, Daph-
 nes, Neptunus, Salmonca, Her-
 cules, Hebe, Iole, Omphale, and
 of the other goddis louers, ye and
 many of Jupiters hun self: This
 gyfte of beaute so diuine, so belo-
 ued of god and man, holye wrytte
 in many places doth hyghly com-
 mende and prayse, aboue al other
 gyftes and qualities. For it is reb
 in Genesis, That the chyldren of
 god, seinge the daughters of men
 that they were faire, did chose and
 toke vnto theym wyues, suche as
 they

they liked. we rede also of Sara, the wyfe of Abraham, that she was fayre, yea the fairest of al women on the erthe. Soo whan the seruant of Abraham, had sene Rebecca, a maide of excellēt beaurye, he said secretly to hym selfe, This is she, whiche god hath prepared for Isaac the sonne of Abraham. And Abigail, the wyfe of the wicked churle Naball, was prudente wyse and fayre: wherby she saued the life and goodes of her husbād from the furye of kynge Dauid. and the yuell man was saued by the fayre woman, for Dauid sayd to her these wordes: Go peasably into thy house: loo, I haue harde thy voyce, and honoured thy face. For seyng that all beautie is, eytther spirituall, vocal, or corporal. Abigail was all fayre, in pruden-

NOBILITIE OF

cy of spirite, in eloquēce of spech,
 and beautie of body : whiche cau-
 sed Dauid, after the dethe of Na-
 ball her husbände, to take her to
 his wyfe. And Bathsaba, was a
 womanne of so excellent beautie,
 that Dauid, beinge rauished and
 taken with her loue, after the deth
 of her husband, exalted her aboue
 all other, to be his wyfe & queene.
 Also Abisag, a Sunamite, by rea-
 son she was a mayden most faire,
 was chosen out, to lye with kyng
 Dauid, waringe very olde, to re-
 soze his naturall hete. wherfoze
 the aged kynges wyll was, high-
 ly to aduance her in honour. And
 also after the dethe of this migh-
 ty kyng, she was enterteined as
 a queene. We rede of the excellent
 beautie of queene Vasti, and also
 of Hester, which was preferrid be-
 foze

Reg. ii.

Reg. i.

1. 2.
 Hester. i.

foze the other, bycause she was moze goodlye and fayze of face. We rede of Judith, whose fayzenesse god so moche encreased, that all that behelde her, were wonderfully amased. And shortly to speke we rede that Susanna was very delycate goodly and beautiful. We rede also, that after Jobs byuers temptations, vexations, and greuous troubles finished, besides all other thynges, whiche his gret patience deserued, god gaue vnto hym three daughters fayzer than the three Charites, yea there were found no where so fayze women. Howe ouer, we maye rede histories of holy byrgins, doubtles to our gret wonder, howe far, howe beautyfull they were aboue al other the childre of men, whose laude and prayse the catholyke churche

NOBILITIE OF

churche dothe solempnely syng: but specially the prayse of the immaculate and vndefiled pyncesse, the mother of god, the virgin Marie: whose fayre beautie the sonne and moone wōder at, from whose mooste fayre visage, so great cleerenes of beautie, with chastitie and holynes dyd shyne, that although she moued the myracles, and lykewyse the eyes of all men, yet for al that, no moztall man at any tyme, was allured or inticed by her beautie, ones to thynke amysse.

¶ Those thynges (all though some what at lengthe) I haue rehersed vnto you, and that almost the very selfe same wordes out of holy scripture, where mention of beautie is so ofte made: to the intent we shulde playnely perceyue, that the beautie of women is not
 onclly

onely among men, but also of god
hyghly esteemed and honoured.

In an other place of holy scrip Num. 31.
ture we lyke wyse rede, that god
commanded all the men, and men
childzen, to be slayne: but the faire
women to be saued. Deut. 21. In the booke
of Deuteronomy it was perimpt-
ted to the chylzen of Israell, eche
to chose hym a fayre womanne to
wyfe, of those that were taken pry-
soners.

And belydes this wouderfull
beautie, woman is endowed with
a certaine dignitie and worthines
of honestie, whiche is not gyuen
to man: for the heate of her head
hangeth downe soo lowe, that yt
wyl couer and hyde all the pryuy
partes of her body. Farther, it is
not nedefull for a woman, to han-
dle these partes of her body, in the
wozkes

NOBILITIE OF

workes of Nature, whiche man
customably vseth to doo. Finally
Nature hath the soe woundefullye
wrought for the comelynes of wo
man, that her priuie partes are not
so appatant as mans, but set in a
place moze secretely. And nature
hath gyuen moze shamefastnes to
woman than to man. Wherfoze it
hath ofte chanced, that a woman,
griuously dyseased in her priuie
partes, hath chosen rather to dye,
than to abyde the syght and hand
lynge of the surgian, to be cured
and healed. And this shamefast
honestie they obserue and kepe,
both in dyenge, and after they be
dead: as it appereth by them that
be drowned. For as Plinie and ex
perience witnesse, a woman ly
eth grouelyng whan she is deade
by the fauour that nature bereth
to her

to her Shamefaste honestie: but a man swymmeth vpryghte on his backe. Farther, the most worthy parte of man, wherby we chiefly differre from other brute beastes, and doo represente the dyuine nature, is the heade, and in it chiefly the countinaunce. Truly a mans heade is deformed with baldnes, and contrary, a womanne by the great pryuilege of nature, is not bald. Moreover, the countinaunce and face of man is (by the bearde to hym hateful) so oft defiled and hyd with filthy heares, that scarce from brute beastes he may be discerned, in woman contrary wise, the face doth alway remayn pure and comely. Wherfoze it was decreed in the law of the .xii. tables, that women shuld not scrape nor. Shave theyr chekes, leaste at any
tyme

NOBILITIE OF

tyme the bearde shuld growe out,
 and Chaynfastenes be hyd. Alsoo
 of the clenness and puritie of wo-
 man, this maye be to all men the
 moste euydent argumente and to-
 ken: That a woman ones washed
 clene ouer, as ofte as she is wal-
 shed afterwarde in cleane water,
 that water receyueth no spotte of
 vncleennesse: but a man, be he ne-
 uer so clene washed, as ofte as he
 washethe agayne, troubleth and
 fouleth the water. Furthermoze,
 Nature hath so ordeyned, that wo-
 men auoid superfluous humours
 by secreete partes, that men auoide
 by the face, the moste worthy part
 of mannes body. And where it is
 graunted to man aboue all other
 beastes to haue the face and con-
 tinuance lokyng vppe to heuen:
 Nature and fortune haue prouy-
 ded

ded so wonderly foꝝ woman, and shewed so great fauor, that if she chaunce to fall, she seldome oꝝ neuer falleth on her head oꝝ face.

¶ Shall we ouer passe, the pre-ferment of nature to woman a- boue man, in the procreation of mankynde & whyche thyng is thus very well perceyued. Foꝝ on- ly the womans seede (as wytnes- sen Galen and Auicenn) is the mat- ter and nourishment of the chyld, and not the mans, whiche is but an accident to the substance. Foꝝ as the lawe sayth, the greatest & chiefest offyce and duetye of wo- man, is to conceyue, and to saue that is conceyued. Foꝝ which cō- sideration we se very many to be lyke theyꝝ mothers, by reason they be begotten of their bloudd: and this lyknes is very oft well per-

C

cey

Galē. 2. de
Sparmate
& 1+. de v
tilitate par
ticularum.
Aui doc 5
Fen. 1. pri-
mi.

NOBILITIE OF

cepted in the proportion and ma-
 kyng of their bodtes, but it is al-
 wayes in their maners. For if the
 mothers be foolyshe, the chyliden
 proue foolyshe also. If the mo-
 thers be wyse, the chyliden shall
 haue a sent thereof. But contra-
 rye wyse it is in the fathers. For
 thoughe they be wyse, yet manye
 tymes they gette folyshe chyliden.
 and foolyshe fathers gette wyse
 chyliden, so that the mothers be
 wyse. And there is none other re-
 son, why mothers more than the
 fathers, shuld loue theyr chyliden,
 but that the mothers perceyue,
 that theyr chyliden haue, and soo
 they haue in vede, in theym more
 of theyr mothers substance, than
 of theyr fathers. For this cause,
 that I haue shewed you: I sup-
 pose it naturally grafte in vs, to
 be

be moze kynde and louyng to our mothers, than to our fathers. In so moch, that we seme to loue our father meanely, and to loue our mother hartelye. And for this cause, Nature hath gyuen vnto women, milk of so great strength and vertue, that it not onely nourisheth infantes and babes, but also restozeth such as are brought lowe by sycknes, and is a sufficient foode, to preserve the lyfe of those, that are of perfecte age.

As we rede an example in Valerius Maximus, of a certain yong woman, whiche with the mylk of her brestes nourished her mother in prison, that otherwyse shoulde haue famyshed for hunger. For the whiche pietifull dede, her mother was deliuered out of prison, and vnto them hath a perpetual

Val. li. 5.
cap. 4.

NOBILITIE OF

lyuyng was gyuen. And of that
pꝛison, they made a Temple, and
called it, The temple of Pitie.

It is well knowen, that foꝛ the
moꝛe parte, a woman hath alway
moꝛe pite and mercy than a man.
Whiche thyng Aristotle doth at-
tribute to womākynd, as a thing
appꝛopꝛied therevnto. Wherfoꝛe
Salomon sayth: where as is no
woman, there the sycke man wai-
leth: eyther bycause, that in ser-
uyng and helpyng the sicke, she
is full diligent, oꝛ els by reason of
her mery chere, she is full comfoꝛ-
table: oꝛ els bycause that womā's
mylke is the chiefe and pꝛincipall
reliefe foꝛ such as be feble & weke,
yea beyng broughte to deathes
dooꝛe, they are therby restozed a-
geyne vnto helthe. And the phisi-
tians say: That the heat of a wo-
mans

Arist. de a
nima.

Eccle. 36.

mans bꝛeaſtes and pappes, layde
and toynd to the bꝛeaſtis of feble
olde men, conſumed a way by age
ſtyꝛeth vp encreaſeth, and con-
ſerueth in them lyuely heate.

Whychē thyng was well knowne
to Dauid, that in his olde aegge
choſe the mayden Abiſag, a Su-
namite, with her collynges & clip-
pinges to hete & kepe him warme.
Alſo woman is rather redye and
moꝛe pꝛompt to the holy offyce of
generation, than man, as it is wel
kneuen.

C Further it is a wonderful my-
racle of Nature, that a womanne
bꝛedyngē chylde, ſoze longyng foꝛ
it, hathē eaten rawe fleſhe, rawe
fyſhe, coles, erth, ſtones, mettals,
poyſons, & many ſuche other lykē
thynges, which without hurt the
doth digeſte, conuerte, and turne

C.iii. into

into the hollome nutrimente and substance of the body. How great myracles and maruailes, that nature hath endowed woman with, shal he fynd, that redeth throug-ly the voluines and bokes of philosophers and phisitions: whiche for p̄fences we here ouerpasse.

T Nowe let vs speake of speche and langage, whiche is the gyfte of god, and by whiche one thing we passe and are better than all other bzute beastes: Crisnegistus Mercurius iudgeth it to be of as great pryce, as moch worth, and as good a thyng, as immortalitie. And Hesiodus nameth it the chiefest treasure of Mankynde. And is not a womā better spokē, moze eloquent, moze copious and plentyfull of wordes than a man? Do not all we, that be men, lerne
 fyre

first to speke of our mothers, or of
 our nources? Truely nature her
 selfe, the forner of thinges, sage-
 ly prouidyng for mankynde, gaue
 this gyfte to womankynde, that
 scarce in any place ye shall fynde
 a dumme womanne. Is it not
 right faite and cōmendable, that
 women shulde excelle men in that
 thing, in whiche men chiefly passe
 all other beastes? But from pro-
 phane mattiers, lette vs retourne
 home agem to holy scripture, and
 begynne at the verye fountaynes
 of our relygion.

¶ We know surely, that god blef-
 sed man for womans sake whiche
 blessinge the vnrworthy man de-
 serued not to haue, tyll the womā
 was created and made, wherewith
 Salomon in his prouerbes agre-
 eth: Who so fyndeth a good wo-
 man

Pro. 12.

C. iiii.

man

NOBILITIE OF

man, syndeth a good thinge, and
 receyueth an holsome benefite of
 the lozde. And it is wrytten Ecclesi
 astici. 26. Happy is the man, that
 Eccle. 26. hath a vertuous wyfe: For the
 number of his yeres shall be dou-
 ble. And no man may be compa-
 red to him in dignitie, that for his
 worthynes hath a good woman.
 Ibidem. For as Ecclesiasticus saythe: A
 good woman is a gyfte about all
 other gyftes. And therfore Salo-
 mon in his prouerbes calleth her,
 Pro. 12. the crowne of her husbände: and
 I. Cor. 11. Paul, the glozie of man. For glo-
 rie is defined to be the accomplish-
 ment and perfection of a thinge,
 resting and delytyng in his ende:
 that is to say, when nothing moze
 may be added, to encrease or aimed
 the perfection thereof. A woman
 therfore is the ende, perfection, fe-
 licitie,

Kestie, benediction, and glozpe of
 the man: and as Augustin sayth:
 the fyyste societie and company of
 mankynde in this moxall lyfe.
 Wherfoze of necessitie euery man
 loueth her, whome who soo euer
 wyl not loue, but hate, is a stran-
 ger not only to all humanitie and
 gentylnesse, but also to all vertue
 and grace. And to speake agayne
 of the Cabalisticall mysteries, Gene. 17.
 Abzaam was blessed of god by the
 woman Sarah, and takynge the
 letter H, from the womans name
 and puttynge it to the mans, cal- Gene. 17.
 led hym Abraham. Also the bles- &. 28.
 synge of Iacob was gotten hym,
 by a woman, his mother. There
 be many suche examples in holye
 Scripture: but not to be shewed
 in this place.

Thus blessing was gyuen foꝝ
 C.v. the

NOBILITIE OF

the woman, and law for the man:

Gene. 2.

The lawe I say, of anger and of curlynge. For why, the fruyte of the tree was forbydden to the mā. but not to the woman: which was not than created. For god wolde her to be fre from the begynning. Therfore the manne sinned in eatyng, not the woman. The man gaue vs death, not the woman. And all we synned in Adam, not in Eua. And we toke oꝝygynalle synne of oure father the man, not of our mothet the woman. And therfore the olde law commanded all the malekynde to be circumcised, but the females to remaine vncircumcised: that is to witte, he ordeyned the oꝝiginal synne to be punyshed onely in that kind, whiche had trespassed. Furthermore, god rebuked not the woman, for that

that she had eatē, but bicause she gaue occasion of yuelle vnto the inan, and that dyd she vnwarely, intycced therto by the dyuell. The man knew well he dyd amisse: but the woman being deceyued, erred ignozātly. For she was fyrst temp ted of the dyuell, whom he knewe to be mooste excellent of all creatures. And as Bernarde saith: The dyuell, scing her wonderful beautie, and perceyuyng her to be suche one, as he had knowen befoze in the godly lyght, whiche aboue all aungels, shoulde retoyce with the speche of god: conceived enuie onely ageynst the woman for her excellencye. Wherfoze Chyste bozne into this worlde most humble and lowe, to thende he woulde with his great humilite make satisfaction for the synne of pryde,

com:

NOBILITIE OF

cōmitted by our foꝛfather: he toke
 vpon hym manhode, as the moꝛe
 humble and lower kynde, and not
 womankynde, the moꝛe hygher &
 noble. Furthermoꝛe, bycause we
 were condemned foꝛ the synne of
 the man, and not of the woman,
 god wolde, that in what kynd the
 synne was committed, in the same
 shulde be the purgation of synne:
 and by the same kinde, whiche ig-
 noꝛantly was deceyued, we shuld
 also be reuengid. Therfoꝛe it was
 said vnto the serpent, that the wo-
 man, oꝛ moꝛe truly, the seede of the
 woman, shoulde bꝛeake his head,
 and not the man, noꝛ the seede of
 the man. And perchance, hereof
 it came, that the oꝛder of pꝛieste-
 hode is of the churche rather com-
 mitted to the man, thā to the wo-
 man, bycause euerye pꝛieste dothe
 rcpꝛe:

represent Chyſte, and Chyſte, the
 fyrſt man, that is to wite, the ſyn-
 ner Adam. To this purpoſe, we
 vnderſtande the Canon, that be-
 gynneth, Hęc imago, whiche ſayth
 that a woman was not made to y-
 ymage of god, but to the ſimpli-
 tude of Chyſte. Yet for all that I
 ſay, that he beynge verye god) I
 ſpeake of Chyſte (wold not be the
 ſonne of man, but of a woman,
 the whiche he ſo hyghly honored,
 that of a womanne onely he toke
 fleſhe and bloudde. For onely for
 the woman, Chyſt was called the
 ſonne of man, and not for the mā.
 ¶ This is that great myracle, at
 the whiche the prophete ſo moche
 meruayled: that a woman com-
 prehended manne, whan a virgin
 conceived mankynde, and bare
 Chyſte in her body.

Hier. 31.

Alſo

Ioan. 20.

Mar. 16.

Luc. 24.

Matt. 27.

Also Chyriste risyng by ageyn
 from deth to lyfe, appered first vn
 to women, not to mē. And it is not
 vnkno wen, that after the death of
 Chyriste, men fell from the faythe :
 but it was neuer knowē, that wo
 men syppte and fell from Chyristen
 fayth and religion. Farther, there
 was no persecution of the faythe
 at any tyme, no heresye, no errour
 in the faythe, that arose and came
 by women, but by menne. Chyriste
 was boughte and solde, accused,
 condemned, scourged, hanged on
 the Crosse, and at the last putte to
 cruell deathe onely by men. yea;
 he was denyed of his owne De-
 ter, forsakē of his other disciples,
 and only accompanied wayted v-
 pon and folowed of women vnto
 the crosse and graue. Also the be-
 ry wyfe of Pylate, an hethen wo-
 man

man, went aboute, and laboured moze to saue Iesus than any mā, yea any of these men, that beleued in hym. Furthermoze almost the hole schoole of diuines asserme & say, that the churche dyd than remaine only with the woman, that is to say, with the virgin Marye. And therfoze womankind is woꝝthly called relygypous, deuoute, and holy. But yet if any man wol say with Aristotle, that among al beastes and luyng creatures, the male kynd is moze valiāt, strong, wise, and noble: Unto him, a moze excellent man, the great doctour, the holy apostel saint Paule woll

Arist. de
anima.

1. Cor. 1.

NOBILITIE OF

In this worlde, he hath chosen to confounde the mighty: & the vile and dispised befoze the world god hath chosen: yea & those thynges, which be nothing, & of no reputation: that he myght destroy those thynges, which be in price & moche set by. For who amonge men, in all gyftes of nature and of grace was higher than Adam: yet a woman brought him low, who was stronger than Sampson: A woman ouercame his strength, who was moze chaste than Loth: A woman inticed hym to incest. Who was moze religious than David: A woman disturbed his holynes. Who was moze wyser than Salomon: a woman deceyued hym. Who was moze paciēt than Job, whom the dyuell stryped out of all his goodes, kyled all his family,

and

Gene. 2.

Judic. 14.
& 16.

Gene. 19.

2. Reg. 11

3. Reg. 11.

and chyl dren, and filled al his bo-
 dy full of boyles and soozes, and
 yet for all that he coulde not pro-
 uoke hym from the olde simplici-
 tie of his mynde: but the woman
 intyced hym (and in that she was
 moze hygher and constaunt than
 the dyuell) and so vexed hym, that
 he cursed god. And if it myght be
 lesul to make any cōparison with
 Chyste, who is most myghtyfull
 and mozte wylse, for he is the eter-
 nall and euetlastyng wylsedom
 and power of god: dydde he not
 suffer hym selfe to be ouercome of
 that pooze woman of Chanaan?
 saytng hym selfe, It is not good
 to take the chyl dernes byeade, and
 cast it to dogges. She answered
 and sayde, Trowthe lordc, neuer
 the lesse, the dogges eate of the
 crommes, whiche fall frome their

Matt. 15.

D mal:

NOBILITIE OF

masters table. Now whan Christ perceyued, that he could not ouer come her with that reasonne, he blessed her, sayenge: Be it vnto the as thou desyrest.

Ioan. 18.

Matt. 20.

Marc. 14.

Luc. 22.

Who was moze hotte and feruent in the faythe of Christe, than Peter? A woman made hym, so greatte a Spyyster of Chrystis Church, to denye Christe.

Plaut. 8.

Lette the Canonistes crake what they wylle, that theyr Church can not erre, a woman pope mocked her by a goodlye imposture and deceyte.

But nowe some men wyl say, that those thynges redounde rather to the dyspraysse than praysse of women. Vnto whome women shall make this aunswere: If it were so, that one of vs two, must nedes lose eyther goodes or lyfe.

I had

I had leauer to lose the, than to be losse my selfe: And that by the example of Innocētius the thyrd, whychē in a certayne pisle decreetall, wryten vnto a cardynall ambassatour, sent frome the See of Rome, sayth: If one of vs twain muste nedes be confounded, I wold rather chose to haue the confounded.

Howeouer, it was prouyded by the Cyuile lawes, that women might lawfully loke to their own profit, to other mens hinderance. And in holy writ, is not the iniquitie of a woman praysed more then a mans wel doing: is not Rachel praysed, whiche by a proper sleight deceyued her father selynge vnto ydols: was not Rebecca lauded, whychē by craftē gotte her soune Jacob the blessing of his fathere

Gene 31.
Gene. 27.

D.ii. And

NOBILITIE OF

And afterward by polycie caused
 him to escape the anger of his bro-
 ther. The harlotte Raab deceiued
 those, whych soughte for the ser-
 chers and spies of Josue: and it
 was imputed vnto her for rygh-
 tuousnes. Jabel went out to mete
 Sifar, and sayde vnto hym: My
 lozde, come into me. And askynge
 water, she gaue hym to drynke of
 the bottell of mylke, and couered
 hym, as he laye sleapyng. And
 whyle Sifara laye and slepte, she
 entred in pryly, & strake a nayle
 in his head, and slewe hym, which
 had put his truste in her promyse
 and fidelitie, to be saued. And for
 this notable treason, the Scrip-
 ture saith: Blessed is Jabel among
 women, and Jabel shalbe blessed
 in her tabernacle.

¶ Rede the story of Judith, and
 marke

Josue. 2

Judic. 4.

marke her woꝝdes vnto Holofer-
 nes. She said : Spꝛ take and vnder-
 stande the woꝝdes of thy hand
 mayde. For if thou wylte folowe
 & do after these woꝝdes, the loꝝde
 shall make the perfite, and shall
 byꝛnge thy mattier to prosperous
 effecte. I shall come and shewe al
 thynges vnto the, so that I shall
 leade the thꝛoughe the myddes of
 Hierusalem, and thou shalt haue
 all the people of Israell, lyke as
 shepe without a shepeherde, and
 not soo moche as one dogge shall
 barke ageynst the. For those thin-
 ges are shewed me by the iustice
 and pꝛouidence of god. And thus
 by her flattering the stroke of Ho-
 lofernes head, as he lay and slept.
 I pray you, what wyckeddes tall-
 fell, what crueller deceptes, what
 craftier treason could be inuented:

Pro. 18.

D.iii. And

And yet holy Scripture bleſſeth; praiſeth, and extolleth her, and the iniquite of the woman is reputed farre better, than a mans wel doinge. But nowe lette vs retourne to our pourpoſe.

C Of the excellency of ſo happy a kynde of women, this alſo may be to euery man an argumēt moſt euident, that the moſt excellent of all creatures, than whiche neuer was, nor neuer ſhalbe a more worthy, I meane the moſt bleſſed virgyn Marye, was conceyued without originali ſynne: and ſhe was not inferiour to Chriſte, touching his humanitie.

C This is a ſtronge argumente of Aristotle: Of what kynde the beſte is nobler thanne the beſte of an other kynde, that kynde muſte needes be nobler thanne the other,

ther. In the femynne kynde,
 the best is the byrgyn Marye, in
 the Masculyne, there arose none
 greater thanne John Baptiste:
 but howe farre doothe the holpe
 byrgyn excelle hym, whiche (as
 euerye Catholyke man knoweth)
 was exalted aboue all the orders
 of aungelles. Lykewyse a man
 maye reasonne. Of what kynde
 the worst is worse than the worst
 of an other kynde, that kynde is
 lower than the other.

Nowe we knowe, that the most
 bycious and worst of all creatu-
 res, is a man, whether it be Ju-
 das, that betrayd Christ, of whom
 Christe sayth: It had bene good
 for that man, yf he had not bene
 borne: or whether any Antechrist
 shal come herafter, worse than he.

D. W. wht.

NOBILITIE OF

whychē shall be endowed with all the power of Sathan. Howe o-
 uer, holy writ sheweth many men
 to be condemned to euerlastyngē
 turment: but we rede in no place,
 of any womanne so condemned.
 Farther, as a witnessse to our pur-
 pose, there is a certayne pꝛeroga-
 tiue gyuen to the brutalle nature.
 For the queene of all birdes, and
 the most noble, is the Eagle, whi-
 che is alway found of the female
 kynde, and not of the masculyne.
 Also this is clere, that the byrd of
 Egypte, calld Fenix, wherof there
 is neuer but one at oones, is a fe-
 male. But contrary wyse, the ser-
 pent Regulus, called also Basiliscus
 the most pestilent of al venomous
 beastes, is only masculine, of whi-
 che kynde it is not possible to find
 a female. Farther the excellencye
 of

of this kynd, the verue & efficacy, is by these argumentes, and reasons abundantly mough declared. For the begynnyng of all puelle comineth by men, and not by women. Certaynely the fyrst man Adam, boldely breakynge the commaundement of god, dyd shut vp the gates of heauen, and made vs all subiectes to synne and death. For al we haue synned (and must dye) in Adam, not in Eua. whose fyrste begotten sonne opened hell gates. Man was fyrste enuious, fyrst a murderer, fyrste the sleat of his parentes, the fyrste dispayer of the mercy of god: the first that hadde two wyues, Lamech; the fyrste drunkarde Nohe: the fyrste that discouered the fylthynesse of his father, Nohes sonne Cham: the fyrst tyran and idolater Aem-
 D. v. both:

Gene. 3.

Gene. 4.

Gene. 9.

Gene. 10.

NOBILITIE OF

broth: the fyrste aduouterer: the fyrst defouler of his kynswomen: Men also fyrste made confederacyes with synnes, and inuented cursed wytchcraftes.

Gene. 37.

Exod. 1.

Gene. 19.

Certayne menne, the sonnes of Jacob, fyrst solde theyr owne brother Joseph: Pharao, the Egyptian, fyrste slewe chyldren. Men fyrste synned ageynste Nature, as wytnessen Sodoma and Gomorta, the whyche souke for the synnes of menne, somme tyme beyng most famousse and noble cyties. We rede in euery place, that menne, for theyr tasche voluptuousse pleasure, hadde two wyues, many wyues, many lemmans: they were aduouterers and fornicatours. Of this sorte, that hadde many wyues, many concubynes, were Lamech, Abraham, Jacob, Esau,

Esau, Joseph, Moses, Samson,
 Helcana, Saul, Dauid, Salo-
 moni, Assur, Hiram, Abia, Ca-
 leph, Assuerus, and innumerable
 other, the whiche had euery oone,
 many wyues, harlottes, and con-
 cubines. Noz beyng contente to
 marye many, to fulfull theyr luste
 & pleasure, but also medled with
 their maydens. And we rede not,
 that any woman (except only Bat-
 sheba) was contente to haue any
 mo; but alway one husband. Noz
 ye shall not fynde, that anye wo-
 man married two husbādes, if she
 had a childe by her first husband.
 For women in cleynesse of liuing
 and chastitie, are farre moze con-
 tinent than men: the which (as we
 rede) bycause they were baptyne,
 haue absteyned from wyng with
 theyr hui bandes, & haue brought

In other, to lye with their husban-
 des, as Sara, Rachel, and many
 other vnapt to generation, which
 brought in their hande maydens,
 that their husbandes myghte get
 chyldren to succede the. But what
 man I pray you, were he neuer so
 olde, colde, bareyn, and vnapt for
 generation, was euer of so greate
 pittie or myld stomake toward his
 wyfe, that he wolde substitute an
 other manne in his place, to sowe
 fruitefull sede in his wyues plen-
 tiffull gardeyne? And althoughe
 we rede, that kyng Licurgus and
 Solon made lawes in olde tyme,
 that is to wyte, if any man beinge
 ouer aged, vnmeete for mariage,
 or otherwise vnlusty to do the de-
 des of Venus, had married a mai-
 den, it shoulde be lauffull for his
 wyfe, to chose a goodly, and a tall
 yonge

young maime, to dalye and play
with her, and the chyld gotten
betwene theym, shoulde be ascri-
bed to her housbande, and not to
be called a bastarde: and though
those lawes were made and esta-
blyshed, yet we rede not, that they
were kepte, not so moche through
the sturdynesse of the men, as by
the chastitie of the womanne retu-
synge those lawes.

¶ There be innumerable excel-
lent women, whiche with notable
cleunnesse of lyfe, and perfet wiue-
ly loue, haue farre passed al men:
as Abigail, the wyfe of Naball:
Arthemisia, the wyfe of Hauso-
leus: Argia, the wyfe of Polici-
nus, a Thebane. Julia, the wife of
Pompeius: Portia, the wyfe of
Cato: Cornelia the wife of Grac-
chus: Messalina, the wife of Sul-
pici:

Arist. de a-
nima.

1. Cor. 1.

NOBILITIE OF

pice: Alceste, the wyfe of Adme-
 tus: Hypsicratea, the wife of Mi-
 thridates, kynge of Pontus: and
 also Dido, the buylder of Car-
 thage, and the Romayn Lucretce:
 and Sulpitia, the wyfe of Len-
 tulus. There be innumerable o-
 ther, whose hartes were so fixt
 on byrgnitie and chastitte, that
 the very dethe coulde not renoue
 them: of whom the examples are
 manifest and playne: as Athlan-
 ta, Calidonia, Camilla, Volca,
 Fphigenia of Grece, Cassandra,
 and Crise. With these gone the
 Argynes of Lacedemonpe, of
 Spartane, of Milefia, & of The-
 bes, with other innumerable, of
 whome the stoyses of the Hebre-
 wes, of the Grekes, and of other
 Nacyons, doo make mencyon,
 the whyche esteemed byrgnitie a-
 beue

bove kyngdomes, yea and aboue
theyr very lyues.

CIf the examples also of pitie
and louing kyndnes be required,
amonge al other Claudia Uesta-
liz towarde her father, and that
pooze yonge woman (of the whi-
che we spake afoze) towardes her
mother, are wonderfull.

CBut here some enuious felow
wyl obiect agaynst those thynges,
the headely mariages of Samp-
son, of Jason, of Deiphobus, of
Agamemnon, and such other tra-
gedies, on whych (as saythe the
prouerbe) if a man looke throughe-
ly, with cleere eyes, he shall fynde,
that theyr wyues are falsely bla-
med, of the whych neuer chaun-
ced vnto a good man one yll. For
yll wyues neuer chaunce, but to
ylle husl andes : vnto whome all
though

NOBILITIE OF

though the good somtyme chāce,
 yet their husbandes byces make
 them naught.

¶ If it had bene lawfull foꝛ wo-
 men to make lawes, too wyte hi-
 stozies, how gret tragedies (trow
 pe) woldz they haue wꝛiten of the
 inestimable malice of men, amōg
 whom many ben murtherers, the-
 ues, raulshers of byꝛgins, periu-
 rers, robbers, burners of houses,
 traytours: of whome also, in the
 tyme of Josue, & David the king
 so greate a multitude were mur-
 therers & robbers, that they were
 able to make pꝛinces capytaynes
 ouer theꝝ companies. Yea and at
 this day there is an infinite num-
 ber of them. Foꝛ all pꝛisons be fil-
 led with men, and al the galowes
 in euerye place be loded with the
 carcasses of men. But contrarꝝe
 wylle,

Iusuc. 7.

2. Reg. 19.

3. Reg. 4.

wyse, womenne were the fyrste in-
uentours of all honest craftes: of
all vertue and benefittes. Whiche
thyng the very names of sciences
and vertues, beynge of the femy-
nine gender, do playnly specifye.
Whereof this is a notable profe;
that the circuite of the hole world
is callyd by the names of women:
that is to say of the Nymph, Asia;
of Europa, the daughter of Age-
noz, of Libia, the daughter of E-
paphus, the whiche is also callid
Aphrica. And finally to recte all
kyndes of vertue, a woman shall
euery where obteyne the hygheste
place. For the vyrgin Mary was
a woman, the whiche fyrst dydde
bowe her vyrginitie to god, and
thereby deserued to be the mother
of god. The womenne prophetes
were euermoze inspyred with a
E more

NOBILITIE OF

more diuine spyzte, than the men,
whiche thynge is welle knowen,
by that Lactatius, Eusebius, and
Augustine wytnessen of the Si-
bylles.

Lact. lib.
Insti.
Euf de sp.
Euangel.
August de
ci. del. 7.

Exod. 15.
4. reg. 22.
2. Para. 34

¶ So Mary, the syster of Mo-
ses prophecied: And whan Jere-
mye was taken prysoner, his vn-
cles daughter Olda, rose vp and
prophected beyonde mans reache,
to the people of Israell, atte the
poynte redy to peryshe. Lette vs
serche holy scripture, and we shall
fynde, that women in constancye,
in feythe, and in other vertues ar
commended farre aboue men, as
in Judith, Ruth, Hester, the whi-
che with so great glozy and prasse
were celebrate and honozed, that
holy bokes beare their names.

Rom. 4.
Genes. 15.
&. 21.

And all though Abraham, for the
stedfastnes of his fayth, is called.

In scripture a iuste man, by cause
 he sutely beleued in god: yet for al
 that, he muste submyt hym selfe to
 his wyfe Sara. For by y^e voyce of
 the lozde he was comanded thus:
 what so euer Sara saythe to the
 here her voyce. So Rebecca, bele-
 uing stedfastly, went to aske god
 certayne questions, and she being
 reputed worthy, harde this oracle
 or aunswere of god. Two maner
 of folke are in thy bealy: and two
 maner of people shall be deuyded
 from thy bealy. And the wydowe
 Sareptana gaue credence to He-
 lias, all thoughe it were harde to
 beleue that he tolde her. So za-
 chary, rebuked of the aungell for
 his incredulitte, was dumme: and
 his wife Elizabeth, with her wōbe
 and voyce prophesied: & is pray-
 sed, because she beleued faithfully.

Gene. 25,

Luc. 1.

E.ii. and

NOBILITIE OF

and she afterwarde, praysed the
 most blessed virgin mary, saying :
 Blessed art thou, whyche dyddest
 beleue those thynge, that were
 spoken to the of the lord. So An-
 na the prophete, after the reue-
 lation of Simeon confessed god, &
 spake of him to al that wold here,
 whyche looked for the redemption
 of Israel. And Phylip had foure
 vyrgins to his daughters, which
 dyd prophesy. What shall I saye
 of her the samaritan, with whom
 Chyste spake at the well : and be-
 inge fedde with the faythe of this
 beleuing womā, refused the meate
 that the apostelles broughte : To
 these may be ioyned the faithfull
 woman of Chananee, and the wo-
 man dysleasid with the blouddye
 fyre. Was not also the faith and
 confessyon of Martha, lyke the

con-

Luc. 2.

Act. 21.

Ioan. 4.

Matt. 15.

Marc. 7.

Mat. 9.

Mar. 5.

Luc. 8.

Ioan. 11.

Matt. 16.

Luce. 7.

Ioan. 19.

Matt. 27.

Mar. 16.

& 17.

confessyon of Peter? The Gos-
pell wytnesseth, howe greate con-
stācy of faith was in Mary Mag-
daleyn. For whyle the pristes and
Jewes crucyfyed Christe, she we-
peth, she bringeth oymntentes br
to the Crosse, she seeketh in the
Tombe, she asketh the gardyner
for hym, she aknowledgeth god,
she gothe to the apostels, and she-
weth them, that he is risen. They
were in doubtte therof, but she be-
leued it verily. Ageyn, what shall
I saye, of that holy woman Pris-
cilla, the whiche instructed Apol-
lo, apostolycke man, perfytely ler-
ned in the lawe, and byshoppe of
the Corinthians? No; it was no
shame for a postell, to lerne of a
woman, what he shulde teache in
the church.

¶ Moreover, they that haue she-
E.iii. wed

NOBILITIE OF

wed the stedfastnes of theyr faith
 by sufferynge of Martyrdom, and
 by the dyspyng of death, be no
 fewer in number than men. Noz
 that wonderfull mother shuld be
 leste vnspoken of, so worthy to be
 remembred, the whiche not onely
 behelde her, vii. sonnes putte to
 death, by most cruell martyrdom
 but also she boldly exhorted them
 stedfastlye to dye. And she aboue
 all thynges trustyng in god, was
 after her chylderne cruelly put to
 death, for the mayntenaunce of
 the lawes of her countrey.

¶ Dyd not also Theodelina, the
 daughter of the kynge of Baua-
 rians, conuerte the Lumbardes
 to the fayth? And Ericilla, the
 syster of Henry the fyrste Empe-
 rour, conuerte the Hungarians?
 & Clotildis, the daughter of the
 kynge

kyng of Burgundia, conuert the
frenche men : And a certayn wo
man called Apostola, of a lowe de
gree, conuerted the Hiberians.

Eche of them turned innumera-
ble people vnto Christis faythe.

And fynally, this is the onely and
spectall relygious kynd, in whom
vnto this day the catholike faith,
and the continual woꝝkes of ver-
tue and goodnesse doo flouryſhe
and thryue.

¶ But to the ende that noo man
ſhuld doubt women to be as able
to doo all thoſe thynges that men
can, let vs handle the matter with
examples : and we ſhal fynd, that
there was neuer noble nor woꝝ-
thy acte, in any kynde of vertue,
doone by men, but that as noble
hath ben done by women. In do-
inge ſacrifyce, as the paynyms in

Ca. iiii. olde

NOBILITIE OF

olde tyme vsed, Melyssa Cibeles
 was the Mynyster, after whose
 name, the other Goddesses, that
 vsed the priestes offyce, were cal-
 lyd melyssa. Also Hyppecaustria
 was Miuercuas mynyster, Hera
 of Venus, Iphiginia of Diana.
 And the mynysters of Bacchus,
 were very notable, as Thyades,
 Menades, Bacche, Eliades, Mi-
 mallouides, Conides, Eubiades,
 Bassarides, Triaterides. Also a-
 monge the Jewes, Mary Moses
 syster, entred with Aaron into the
 Sanctuarie, and was taken as a
 mynyster oz priest. And although
 women be forbydden in our rel-
 gion, to vse the order of presthod
 yet it appereth by hystories, that a
 woman on a tyme by counterfai-
 tynge her kynde, was bisshoppe of
 Rome. There haue bene in Chri-
 stis

Sanctua-
 ry, a place
 consecrate
 oz halo:
 wcd.

stis churche, many abbasses and nunnes, whiche in olde tyme menr disdayned not to calle holy mynisters. There haue bene among all nations, that excelled in prophecienge, as Cassandra, the Sybilles, Mary Moyles sister, Delbo-
ra, Holda, Anna, Elyzabeth, the foure daughters of Philip, & many other holy womē of later time, as Brigida and Heldegardis.

Furthermoze, in the inuyncible arte magyke, whether it came of good spirytes or bad. Circes and Medea wroughte farre greater wonders than Zoroastes hym self whiche as many suppose, was the fyrste fynder of the sayde scyence. Moze ouer in phylosophye, many haue ben very excellent, as Theano the wyfe of Pythagoras, and Dama his daughter was ryghte
E. v. famous

NOBILITIE OF

famous, in openynge and decla-
 ringe her fathers obscure & darke
 sentences. Also Aspasia and Dio-
 tina, Socrates scholars, & Man-
 tineia and Philefia Ariochta, both
 scholars to Plato. finally Ploti-
 nus highly prayseth Gemina and
 Amphiclea, Lactantius Themis-
 ten. Christs church reioyceth in
 saynt Caterine, which being but
 a lyttell mayde, dyd farre passe in
 lernynge, the wyse menne of that
 tyme,

¶ Let vs not forget in this place
 the queene Zenobia, scholar to the
 phylosopher Longinus, whiche
 for her great vertue and cunning
 was called Ephemissa, whose ho-
 ly workis Nichomachus transla-
 ted into Greke.

¶ Let vs speake of the oratours
 arte, and of poetrie. Behold here
 cometh

comineth Arnesia, surna med An-
 drogeneia, Hortentia, Lacera, Va-
 leria, Coptola, Sapho, Cozina,
 Cornificia the Romayne, Eryn-
 na, Telia, or Thelbia, whyche
 was named an Epigrammatist,
 in Saluste Semprouia, in the
 law ciuyl Calphurnia: And were
 it not, that women in our tyme ar
 forbydden, to gyue theym to good
 lernynges, we shulde euen nowe,
 haue women moze excellēt in wyt
 and lernynge than menne. What
 shulde we hercof say, that women
 onely by nature are sene to excelle
 the very artificers in all sciences?
 Doo not the Grammaticians take
 vppon theym, to be the maysters
 of eloquence? And that do we far
 better lerne of oure naurces and
 mothers, than of the Grammatici-
 ans. Dyd not Cornelia fourme
 and

NOBILITIE OF

and falshyon the tongues of her
 moſte eloquent ſonnes Gracchi?
 Dyd not Iſtrineus mother, teach
 Syles the ſonne of Aripithus,
 kyng of Scythia, the Greeke
 tongue? Dydde not the chylzen
 bozne of theym that were ſente to
 inhabyte in ſtraunge countreyes,
 alway obſerue and kepe theyꝝ mo-
 thers tongue, amonge ſtrangers?
 Surely foꝝ none other cauſe Pla-
 to and Quintilian ſo diligentely
 ordeyned a mete and conueniente
 nource foꝝ chylterne to be choſen,
 but that the chylternes tongue &
 ſpeche myght be ryghtly and diſ-
 cretely fourmed.

¶ But nowe, be not the poetes in
 theyꝝ trifles & fables, & the logiti-
 ans in their cōtentious talking o-
 uercome of women? Ther was ne-
 uer oratour ſo good oꝝ ſo happy,
 that

that in perswasyon coulde get the
 bypper hande of an harlot: what
 arithmetrician by false recknyng,
 coulde deceyue a woman in paye-
 ment of her det: or what musittian
 can compare with a woman in str-
 gyngge and swetenesse of bzeaste:
 Be not these Phyllosophers, these
 astrologians, in theyr diuynatiōs,
 & forknowleges many tymes infe-
 riours to the cōutrey wiues: yea &
 very oft tymes a sely olde woman
 excelleth the phisitian: Socrates
 hym selfe (aboue all other reckned
 the most wyse man) being very a-
 ged, dyd not disdain to be taught
 of the womā Aspasia. Lyke as A-
 pollo, a man so wel lerned in Chri-
 stis doctrine, was not ashamed to
 be taught of the womā Priscilla.
 ¶ Nowe for prudence, you maye
 take for examples those women.

Opis

NOBILITIE OF

We shulde not forget Abigail and Bathsaba, of whiche two Abigail delyuered her husbände, from the wrathe of Dauid; and after the death of her husbände she was queene and wyfe of Dauid. The other, the mother of Salomon, by her prudēcy opteyned, that her sonne was kynge.

¶ More ouer, in the Inuentton of thynges; Isis, Minerva; Nicostрата, be examples. In rulyng of realmes, and buyldynge of cities women excelle: Semiramis was the souerayne gouernour of the vniuersall worlde: Dido was the buylder and queene of Carthage: the Amazons were mooste worthy in warre and polytyke in peace. In the bolde byckerynges of battayle, what a woman was Thomyris the queene of Massageta-

getaries: She ouercame Cyrus
the gret conquerour and puissant
kynge of Persians. Also Camilla,
of the Volscians, and Valisca
of Boheme, were two most mighty
queenes. We rebe of many o-
ther moste noble women, whyche
by theyr wonderfulle power and
polycie, in moste extremitye, and
whan there was no hope of helpe
loked for, recouered theyre coun-
trei, and restozed it to wealthe a-
geyne. Amonge whome is Iu-
dith, whyche saynt Jerome hygh-
lye prayseth with these wordes:
Take Iudith the wydowre, the ex-
ample of chastite, deuote her with
triumphant prayse and perpetual
commendation. For god gaue her
to be an example, not only for wo-
men, but also for men to folowe,
whyche for a rewarde of her cha-
stite,

NOBILITIE OF

Opis for her wysedome counted a
goddesse: Plotina wyfe of Etola-
nus the imperour: Amalafuntha,
the queene of Ostrogottes: Emi-
lia the wyfe of Scipio: with whō
reken Delboza, the wyfe of La-
bidoth, a meruaylouse wyse wo-
man, whiche (as we rede in Judi-
cum) was a certayn tyme Judge
ouer the people of Israell, and the
chyldeerne of Israell came by to
her for iudgement in all causes.

And whan Barach refused to go
ageynste their eunemies, excepte
she wolde go with hym, Delboza
was chosen capitayne of the host
of Israell: and sleynge and dys-
comfytynge theyz foes, she retur-
ned home with vyctorie.

4. Reg. 2. **C** More ouer, it is redde in the
2. Par. 22. fourth boke of kingis, that quene
Attalia reigned, & was souerayne

Judge

Judic. 4.

Judge in Ierusalem seuen yerres
 space. And Semiramis, after the
 deathe of kynge Ninus, iudged
 the people .xl. yerres. And all the
 quenes of Ethiope, called Can-
 daces, were mooste wyse, and reig-
 ned mooste myghtely: of whomit
 is written in the actes of the apo-
 stels. And meruaylouse thynge
 of them speaketh the faithful wri-
 ter of antyquytte Iosephus. Also
 Atalanta, the quene of Saba, cam
 from the ende of the world, to here
 the wysedome of Salomon, and
 as Christ witnesseth, she shall con-
 demne all the people of Hierusa-
 lem. And there was a certain wise
 woman of Thecoa, whyche con-
 cluded kynge Dauids demaunde
 with a question, with a ryddle she
 taught hym; and by the exāple of
 god, swaged his wꝛath. No: here
 we

Act. 8.

Ios. li. aut.

3. Reg. 10.

2. Paral. 9.

Matt. 12.

Luce. 11.

2. Reg. 14.

1. Reg. 25.

3. Reg. 1.

NOBILITIE OF

Attie, armed her with suche vertue, that she vanquished him that was invincible to all menne, and subdued hym, that no man coulde overcome.

2. Reg. 20. **C** Further, we reade, that a certayn wise woman called unto her Joab the capitayne, and deliuered into his handes the heade of Siba, the enemye of Daud, to the intente to saue the citie Abela, from destruction, whiche was the chiefe citie of Israell.

Judic. 9.

And a certayne woman, threw a piece of a myl stone vpon Abimelechs head, and brake his brayne panne, executing the vengeance of god vpon Abimelech, because he hadde done yll before god agaynste his father, in sleinge. lxx. of his brethren vpon one stone.

Hest. 7. 8. **S**o Hester, the wyfe of kynge Assuer

Assuer, not only deliuered her people from the moste shamesfull death but also made theym ryght honorable.

¶ Iohanne Coztolanus with the Volscians, had besieged Rome, & soo sharply assailed it, that the Romaynes were not able to defende them selues agaynste hym: an auncient woman Veturia his mother, soo handled the mattier, that she ouercame his rage and furye, and reconcyled hym ageyn to the Romaynes. Artemisia, whan the Rhodians came fiercly vpon her, both disapoynted them of theyr nauye of shypes, and conquered that Ilande, and sette vp her Image within the citie of Rhodes, as a perpetuall note of infamy vnto them.

¶ Howe moche doo the frenche
 F.ii. men

NOBILITIE OF

Anno dñi
1428.

men prayse a yonge damsell, whiche beynge descended of a lowe lineage, toke vpon her after the manner of the Amazons, to leade the forwarde of the army: & she fought so ballantly, and hadde soo good chaunce, that the French men beleued verily, that by her prowesse, they recouered the reline of France out of the Englysshe mens handes: And therfore, to the perpetuall remembrance of her, they made an ymage of a mayden to be sette vpon the Dyltaunce on the brydge ouer the ryuer of Liger or Loier. I coulde yet reherce out of the histories of the Grekes, of the Latines, and other barbarous nations innumerable mooste excellent women, but to the ende this worke shulde not be to greate a volume, I studyed to be bryefe. For Plutarche

tarche, Valerius, Bocattius, and
 many other haue writtē the praise
 of noble women: And therfoze I
 haue spokē but lytel of their prat-
 ses, but ouer passed verye manye
 thynge. For why, I am not soo
 presumptuous, to thynke my selke
 able, to cōprehend in few wordes,
 ȳ infynite nobylities & vertues of
 womē. For who is able thzoughly
 and perfectly to recyte the infinite
 praises of women, of whome we
 take all oure lyfe and substaince,
 and in whome is all the conserua-
 tion of mankynde, the whyche els
 shulde peryshe and decay in short
 tyme: on whome also euery fami-
 lye and common welthe depen-
 deth: This thynge was well kno-
 wen to the buylder of Rome, whi-
 che bycause he lacked women, ra-
 uyshe and caried away the Sa-

lines daughters, not doubtynge
the cruel warre that shuld folowe
thervpon. For he knewe, that su-
che an empire wolde in short time
perishe, yf they wanted women.

¶ And at laste, whan the Capytoll
was taken by the Sabynes, and
that in the myddes of the market
place, they foughte moste cruellye
hande to hande, with the sodayne
rummyng of the women betwene
bothe the hostes, the battayle ces-
sed: and at the laste a peace being
made, and a truce taken, they con-
cluded a perpetual amitie. For the
whych cause Romulus registred
these womens names in the cour-
tes and courte rolles. And it was
by the Romaynes assente decreed
and wrytten in the common ta-
bles, that women shuld not grind
at the quyzne, noz dudge in the
kychen

kitchen: noz the husbände shulde
 not say: wife, I giue the this: noz
 the wyfe: Husbände, I gyue you
 this: bycause they shulde knowe,
 that euery thyng betwene theym
 was cōmon. And hereof at length
 grewe a custome, that whan y new
 wedded wyfe was brought home,
 she wolde saye: vbi tu, ego, that is
 where you be lord, I am ladye:
 where you be maister, I am may-
 stresse. Moreouer, great honours
 tokens of high reuerence and di-
 gnitie were done to women by de-
 cree of the Senatours, as these:
 that in the way they shulde go on
 the vpper hande: and that men
 shuld ryse on their sete vnto them
 & gyue them place. Furthermore,
 it was graunted theym, to weare
 purple garmentes, embrowdred
 about with gold, ornaumentes dec-

NOBILITIE OF

ked with pꝛecyous stones, rynges
 at theyꝝ eares, & chaynes of golde
 about theyꝝ neckes. And it was at
 the last decreed by the emperours
 lawes, that as ofte as any statute
 was made in any place, foꝛbyd-
 ding oznamentes oꝛ apparayle to
 be woꝛne, women shoulde not be
 compꝛehended vnder that lawe.
 Also it was granted theym, to re-
 ceꝛue herytage and succession of
 goodes, & the funeralg of women
 to be celebrat and honourablye
 kepte, as the funeralles of noble
 men were. Foꝛ why on a time whā
 a gyfte shoulde be sente to Apollo
 Delphicus, as Camillus had vo-
 wed, and that there was not soo
 moche golde in the cytie: the wo-
 men of theyꝝ owne good wylles,
 bzought in the iewelles and ozna-
 mentes of theyꝝ bodieꝝ.

And

And in the warre that Cyrus made agaynst Astiages, the Persians armye was by the castigation of women repprehended, and being newly restozed againe, opteyned a right worthy byctorye.

For the whiche dede Cyrus made a lawe, that kynges of the Persians entrynge into the cylie, shuld paye to euerye woman a piece of golde. The whiche thynge also kyng Alexander, entrynge twyse into that citie payd twyse. Ye and moze ouer, he commaunded the gyft to be doubled to women with chylde. So from the moste auncient kynges of the Persyans and Romaynes, yea from the very begynnynge of the citie of Rome and empire, women were hadde in all hygh honour and reuerence: and the very emperours theym selues esteemed

NOBILITIE OF

esteemed theym mooste highly, For
 Justynian the emperour, in ma-
 kyng of lawes, thoughte it con-
 ueniente, to haue the counsaylle
 and aduyse of his wyfe. And in
 an other place, the law sayth, that
 the wyfe shyneth in the honour of
 her husbände, and the brightnes
 of his dignitie beautifieth her, for
 the higher the husband is aduan-
 ced in honour, the higher is his
 wyfe. Soo the Emperours wyfe
 is callid empresse, the kingis wife
 quene, the princis wyfe, the prin-
 cesse: and is therby enobled, howe
 lowe so euer she be of byrthe. And
 Ulpian the lawyer sayth. A prince
 that is to saye, the Emperoure or
 kynge, is aboue the lawes, and al-
 though the empresse is bonde by
 the lawes, yet the emperour frely
 granteth her as great priuileges
 as

as he hath hym selfe. Wherfoze it
is permitted vnto noble women,
to iudge, to arbytrate and decyde
matters, to doo and take homage
and fealtie, to keepe courtes, and
mynyster Iustyce amonge theyr
tenautes. And for this pour-
pose, the woman may haue coue-
nant seruautes of her owne, as
well as the man may: and a wo-
manne may be iudge, yea amonge
straungers. She maye also gyue
name to her familie and kynred:
so that the chyldern shalbe named
after their mother, and not after
their father. And in dyuerse pla-
ces of the lawecyuple, womenne
haue, touchynge theyr doweries,
many great priuileges graunted
them. Wherc amonge other thyn-
ges it is ordeyned, that a woman
of good name and fame, shall not
be

NOBILITIE OF

be impꝛysoned foꝛ dette, and the Judge, that comynyteth her to pꝛyson, shall lose his heed. If she be suspected of any faute, she shall be putte into a monasterye oꝛ secrete place, oꝛ eiles be delyuerid to womē, to be impꝛysoned by them. Foꝛ the lawe saythe, A woman is of better state and condition than a man: and also in one selfe kynd of offence, the manne trespasseth moꝛe than the woman. Wherfoꝛe the man taken in auoutrie, loseth his head: but the woman aduouterer is put into a monasterye.

Also the Lawyer gethereth moꝛe pꝛi uiledges foꝛ the womenne in his Summe and bꝛiefe Annotation vpon the title named, Ad Senatus consulum uelleianum, & Speculator vpon the title De renuntiationibus.

¶ Also the auncyente lawe ma-
kers

kees and stablyshers of common
wealthes, the mooste graue, wyse,
and prudent menne, A. turgus I
say, and Plato, knowynge verye
welle by the secretes of Phyloso=
phy, that women were not inferi=
ours to men, neyther in excellen=
cye of mynde, nor in strengthe of
hodye, nor in dygnitie of Nature,
but lyke able vnto all thynges,
decreed and made lawes, that wo=
men shoulde exercise suche may=
stries as men vled, yea all feates
perteynyng to the warre, in the
bowe, in the slynge, in hurlyng
of stones, in shotynge, in fygh=
tynge in armour, as toell on hors
backe as on foote, in pyrching of
tentes, in settyng men in arraye.
and couductynge of an hoste: and
to be bryefe, they ordeyned, that
women shuld as comonly as men
vse

NOBILITIE OF

vse all maner exercyses. Lette vs
 rede wyters of antiquitte, worthy
 to be beleued, and we shall fynde,
 that in Getulia, Bactris, and Gal
 litta, the maner was, that meime
 gaue them selves to ease and Deli-
 cacy, and the women to plow and
 tylle the ffeldes, to buylde, to bye
 and sel, to ryde, to go on warfare,
 and to do all other thynges, wht-
 che nowe amonge vs the men do.
 Amonge the Cantabrians, men
 gaue dowerye to the women, bre-
 therne wete gyuen to marriage by
 theyr sisters, daughters were ap-
 poynted to be heires. Amonge the
 Scythians, the Thracians, and
 Frenche menne, all worthy dedes
 were as cōmonly done by women
 as by men, and in matters concer-
 nyng warre and peace, women
 were called to councele, to gyue
 theyr

theyr aduylse and ſentence. Which
 thyng the Cruce that the Celtes
 made with Hanniball, dothe well
 declare to be trewe, by theſe woꝝ-
 des: If any of the Celtes com-
 playne, to haue had wronge of a-
 ny of the Carthaginences: of that
 thing let the rulers & officers of
 Carthaginences, or els the capy-
 taynes which ſhal be in Spayne,
 be iudges: If any of the Cartha-
 ginences hath hadde any wronge
 done hym, by anye of the Celtes,
 lette the women of the Celtes be
 iuges, and determyne that thyng.
 But by the great tyzanny of men,
 preuaylyng againſt the lawes of
 god and nature, ſuch libertie was
 gyuen to women.

Thou wylte ſaye, that is nowe
 foꝝbydden by lawes, aboliſhed by
 cuſtome, extincted by education.

NOBILITIE OF

For anon as a woman is borne euen from her infancy, she is kept at home in ydelnes, & as though she were vnnete for any hygher busynesse, she is pmitted to know no farther, than her nedle and her threedde. And than whan she cometh to age, able to be married; she is delyuered to the rule and gouernance of a telous husband, or els she is perpetually shutte vp in a close nouncye. And all offyces belonging to the common weale, be forbydden theym by the lawes. For it is not permitted to a woman, though she be very wise and prudent, to pleade a cause before a Iudge. Furthermore, they be repelled in iurisdiction, in arbitrement, in adoption, in intercession, in procuration, or to be gardeyns or tutours, in causes testamētary

and

and criminall. Also they be repel-
 led frome preachynge of goddes
 worde, agaynst expresse and playn
 scripture, in whych the holy gost
 promised vnto them by Iohel the
 prophet, sayeng: And your daugh-
 ters shall prophecie and preache :
 lyke as they taught openly in the
 tyme of the apostels : as it is well
 knowen, that Anna the wydowe
 of Symeon, the daughters of
 Phylipp, and Priscilla, the wyfe of
 Aquila dydde. But the vnworthy
 dealing of the later lawe makers
 is so great, that breakyng goddes
 commaundemente, to stablyshe
 theyr owne traditions, they haue
 pronounced openlye, that women
 otherwyse in excellency of nature,
 dignitie, and honour most noble,
 be in condicion moze hyle than all
 men : And thus by these lawes,

Iohel. 2.

G the

NOBILITIE OF

the women being subdued as they were by force of armes, are constrained to giue place to men, and to obeye theyr subdewers, not by no naturall, no diuine necessittie or reason, but by custome, education, fortune, and a certayne tyrannicall occasion.

¶ Furthermore, there be somme men, whych by relygion, clayme authoritie ouer women, and they proue theyr tyranny by holy scripture: the whiche haue this cursed sayenge, spoken to Eue, continually in theyr mouth: Thou shalt be vnder the power of man, and he shall haue lordeshyp ouer the. But yf it be answered vnto them, that Chryste toke awaye that cursed sayenge: they wyll obiecte ageyne the wordes of Peter, with whome Paule agreeth, sayenge:
 Lette

Genes. 2.

e. Pet. 3.
 Ad col. 3.
 Ad eph. 5.

Lette women be in subjection of
 theyr husoandes. Lette women in
 the churche kepe sylvence. But he
 that knoweth the dyuers fygures
 of Scripture, and the effectes of
 the same, shall soone se, that these
 thynges be not repugnant but in
 the kynde. For this is the order in
 the churche, that men in ministra-
 tion shall be preferred befoze wo-
 men: lyke as the Jewes in pro-
 myssion are befoze the Greeces:
 yet neuerthelesse God is not accep-
 ter of persones. For in Christ nei-
 ther male noz female is of value,
 but a newe creature. And manye
 thynges were permitted vnto me,
 for the hardenesse and crueltie of
 theyr hartes agaynst women: as
 in times past diuorces were gran-
 ted vnto the Jewes, whiche for al
 that nothyng hurteth the dignitte

Rom. 2.
 Act. 10.

11. 11. 11. 11.

NOBILITIE OF

of women: But whan men com-
 mytte offence and erre, the women
 haue power of Iudgement ouer
 theym, to the great shame and re-
 buke of menne. And that quene
 Saba shall iudge the men of Je-
 rusalem. Therfoze they, whyche
 beyng justified by fayth: are be-
 come the sounes of Abraham, the
 chylderne I say of promysion, be
 subdewed to a woman, and bound-
 den by the cōmandement of god,
 sayenge to Abraham: what so e-
 uer Sara saith vnto the, folow it.

¶ Nowe at laste, bryefely to recol-
 lecte, fyrste, I haue shewed the
 great excellency: of womankynd;
 by her name, order, place, and mat-
 ter, and what greate dignitie she
 hath obtained of god aboue man:
 farther I haue declared it by re-
 lygion, nature, humayne lawes,

by

Gene. 22.

by diuers authorities, reason and
 examples, inyngling one with an
 other. And yet haue I not so mo-
 che sayd, but that I haue left mo-
 che moze vnsspoken. For neyther
 Ambition, noz the cause of myne
 owne cominendation, but my du-
 tie and the very truthē moued me
 to wyte: lest that I, as one com-
 myttinge sacrilege (holdynge my
 peace) shuld seme priuily to steale
 and byrbe away by a certayn wye-
 ked silence, from so noble a kynde,
 the laudes and prayes due to it,
 as it were, burienge in the ground
 the talente that god hathē gyuen
 me. But yf anye man moze cury-
 ous than I, shal fynde any argu-
 ment oz reason, that hathē escapd
 me, whyche he thynketh worthyē
 to be addē to this my booke, I
 woll not recken my selfe blame, but

NOBILITIE OF

but rather holpen thereby, in that
this my worke, by his wytte
and counnyng, he wolle
make better. There-
foze leste this
worke shuld
growe to
ouer

great a volume, here

I make an ende

FINIS.

Londini in ædibus Thomæ Berthe-
leti typis impress. Cum pri-
uilegio ad imprimen-
dum solum.

ANNO. M. D. XLII.





University of
Connecticut
Libraries



