

DESIDERIUS ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM

**ON COPIA OF
WORDS AND IDEAS**

(De Utraque Verborum ac Rerum Copia)

Translated from the Latin

With an Introduction

by

DONALD B. KING

Professor of English

College of Mt. St. Joseph On-the-Ohio

AND

H. DAVID RIX

Formerly Professor of English

Pennsylvania State University

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Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam

ON COPIA OF WORDS BOOK I

CHAPTER I

That the Aspiration to Copia Is Dangerous

Just as there is nothing more admirable or more splendid than a speech with a rich copia of thoughts and words overflowing in a golden stream, so it is, assuredly, such a thing as may be striven for at no slight risk, because, according to the proverb,

Not every man has the luck to go to Corinth. ¹

Whence we see it befalls not a few mortals that they strive for this divine excellence diligently, indeed, but unsuccessfully, and fall into a kind of futile and amorphous loquacity, as with a multitude of inane thoughts and words thrown together without discrimination, they alike obscure the subject and burden the ears of their wretched hearers. To such a degree is this true that a number of writers, having gone so far as to deliver precepts concerning this very thing, if it please the gods, seem to have accomplished nothing else than, having professed copia (abundance) to have betrayed their poverty. And in truth this thing has so disturbed us, that partly selecting those from among the precepts of the art of Rhetoric suitable to this purpose, and partly adapting those which we have learned by a now long-continued experience in speaking and writing and have observed in our varied reading of a great many authors, we here set forth concerning each kind of copia, a number of principles, examples, and rules. We have not, to be sure, attempted to cover everything fully in a book, but have been content, in the publication of what one might call a brief treatise, to have opened the way to the learned and studious, and as it were to have furnished certain raw materials for other workers in the field. We have thus limited our efforts partly because we were moved to undertake this labor solely by the desire to be of service and do not begrudge all the glory going to another if only we have produced something useful to youth eager for knowledge, and partly because we

¹Horace *Epistles* i. 17, 36. Cf. Aulus Gellius *Attic Nights* i. 8, 4.

have been devoted to more serious studies to an extent that there is lacking very much leisure to spend on these lesser ones, most useful to be sure to the former kind, indeed of the greatest use, but nevertheless minute in themselves.

CHAPTER II

By Whom Copia Was Developed and by Whom Practiced

Further, lest anyone think this a modern device and to be disdained as lately born at our home, let him know that this method of diversifying speech is touched on lightly in a number of places by a very learned and likewise very diligent man, Quintilian,² and that many noted Sophists showed the way to the advantages of condensing speech. And they would not by any means have been able to do this without pointing out also a method of amplification; and if their books were extant, or if, as Quintilian suggests,³ they had been willing to expound their doctrines fully, there would have been no need at all for these modest precepts of mine. It is a further recommendation of this thing that eminent men in every branch of learning have eagerly and diligently practiced this one. Thus there still survive several admirable efforts of Vergil about a mirror, about a stream frozen by the cold, about Iris, about the rising of the sun, about the four seasons of the year, about the heavenly constellations. That Aesopic fable about the fox and the crow which Apuleius narrates briefly with a wonderful economy of words, and also amplifies as fully as possible with a great many words, doubtless to exercise and display his genius, shows the same thing fully.⁴ But come, who could find fault with this study when he sees that Cicero, that father of all eloquence, was so given to this exercise that he used to compete with his friend, the mimic actor, Roscius, to see whether the latter might express the same idea more times by means of various gestures, or he himself render it more often in speech varied through copia of eloquence.

²See Quintilian *Education of an Orator* (hereinafter referred to as Quintilian) viii. 2; xii. 1; and in general, Books viii, ix and x.

³Quintilian iii.

⁴Apuleius *Prologue to On the God of Socrates*.

CHAPTER III

How Authors Have Indulged in a Display of Copia

Moreover, the same authors, not only in school, but also in their serious work, sometimes indulged in a display of copia; while they at one time so compress a subject that you can take nothing away, at another, they so enrich and expand the same subject that you can add nothing to it. Homer, according to Quintilian,⁵ is equally admirable at both--*now copia, now brevity*. Although it is not our intention here to cite examples, yet we will cite one of each from the peerless Vergil. What can have been said by anyone more concisely than this: "And the fields, where Troy was"⁶ With the fewest words, as Macrobius says, he consumed the state and engulfed it; not even a ruin was left.⁷ On the other hand, listen to how fully he has treated the same topic:

The final day has come and the inescapable doom
Of Troy; we were Trojans, there was Ilium and a great
Glory of the Trojans, cruel Jupiter Argos, all has
Taken away: the Greeks are supreme in a burning city.
O fatherland, O home of the gods, Ilium, and Trojans'
Walls, famed in war. . . .
Who the disaster of that night, who the sorrows in words
Could express? or who could make its tears equal to
its sufferings?⁸

What fountain, what torrent, what sea has overflowed with as many waves as he has with words? But it might appear that this example should rather be referred to copia of thought. He indulged in profusion of words also when he said:

. . . . Does he survive and breathe the upper air,
Nor yet lie dead in the cruel shadows?⁹

⁵Quintilian x. 1, 46.

⁶Vergil *Aeneid* iii. 11.

⁷Macrobius *Saturnalia* v. 1.

⁸Vergil *Aeneid* ii. 324-27; 241-42; 361-62.

⁹Vergil *Aeneid* i, 546-47.

¹⁰Quintilian x. 1, 125. Aulus Gellius *Attic Nights* xiii. 2.

But this thing is more common in Ovid, to such a degree that he is criticized on the score that he does not preserve due moderation in copia. However, he is criticized by Seneca, whose whole style Quintilian, Suetonius and Aulus Gellius condemn. ¹⁰

CHAPTER IV

To Whom Unrestrained Copia Has Been Attributed As a Fault

Nor does it matter to me that some writers have been criticized for unduly and mistakenly striving for copia. For Quintilian notes too effusive and redundant copia in Stesichorus; but he mentions it in such a way as to confess that the fault should not be entirely avoided. ¹¹ In Old Comedy Aeschylus is reproached because he said the same thing twice. "ἦκω καὶ ἰκατέρχομαι," that is, I am come back and I am returned. ¹² Seneca scarcely tolerates Vergil's repeating the same idea two or three times. ¹³ And, not to needlessly recount a long list, there have not been lacking those who condemned even Cicero as Asian and redundant and too extravagant in copia. ¹⁴ But these things, as I said, don't at all concern me, who indeed am not prescribing how one should write and speak, but am pointing out what to do for training, where, as everyone knows, all things ought to be exaggerated. Then I am instructing youth, in whom extravagance of speech does not seem wrong to Quintilian, because with judgment, superfluities are easily restrained, certain of them even, age itself wears away, while on the other hand, you cannot by any method cure meagerness and poverty. ¹⁵

CHAPTER V

That It Is Characteristic of the Same Artist to Speak Both Concisely and Copiously

Now if there are any who fully approve the Homeric Menelaus, a man of few words, and who, on the other hand, disapprove of Ulysses,

¹¹Quintilian x. 1, 62.

¹²Aristophanes *Frogs* 1154 seq.

¹³Aulus Gellius *Attic Nights* xii. 2, 2.

¹⁴Quintilian xii. 10, 12 *ad fin.*

¹⁵Quintilian ii. 4. 5 *seq.*

rushing on like a river swollen by the winter snows, that is, those whom laconism and conciseness greatly delight, not even they ought to object to our work, for in fact they themselves would find it not unprofitable, because it seems best to proceed by the same principle either to speak most concisely or most fully. If indeed it is true, as in Plato, Socrates acutely reasons, that the ability to lie and to tell the truth cleverly are talents of the same man, no artist will better compress speech to conciseness than he who has skill to enrich the same with as varied an ornamentation as possible. For as far as conciseness of speech is concerned, who could speak more tersely than he who has ready at hand an extensive array of words and figures for conciseness? Or as far as concerns conciseness of thought, who would be more able at expressing any subject in the fewest possible words than one who has learned and studied what the matters of special importance in a case are, the supporting pillars, as it were, what are most closely related, what are appropriate for purposes of ornament. No one certainly will see more quickly and more surely what can be suitably omitted than he who has seen what can be added and in what ways.

Chapter VI

Concerning Those Who Strive for Either Conciseness or Copia Foolishly

But if we use either brevity or copia without method, there is the danger that there may befall us what we see happen to certain perverse affectors of laconism, although they speak but few words, yet even in those few, many, not to say all, are superfluous.¹⁶ Just as in a different way it may happen to those who unskillfully strive for copia that although they are excessively loquacious, yet they say too little, leaving out many things that certainly need to be said. Accordingly, our precepts will be directed to this, that you may be able in the fewest possible words so to comprehend the essence of a matter that nothing is lacking; that you may be able to amplify by copia in such a way that there is nonetheless no redundancy; and, the principle learned, that you may be free either to emulate laconism, if you wish, or to copy Asian exuberance, or to exhibit Rhodian moderation.

¹⁶ See Quintilian viii. 3, 56, on , excellence carried to excess.

Chapter VII

That Copia Is Twofold

Furthermore, I think it is clear that copia is twofold, as Quintilian himself declares, especially admiring among the other excellences of Pindar that most happy copia of thought and words.¹⁷ And of these one consists in *Synonymia*, in *Heterosis* or *Enallage* of words, in metaphor, in change of word form, in *Isodynamia* and the remaining ways of this sort for gaining variety; the other depends upon the piling up, expanding and amplifying of arguments, *exempla*, *collationes*, similes, *dissimilia*, *contraria*, and other methods of this sort, which we will discuss in more detail in their proper place. Although these can be observed anywhere, so closely combined that you cannot tell them apart at all easily, so much does one serve the other, so that they might seem to be distinct only in theory, rather than in fact and in use, nevertheless, for the purpose of teaching, we shall make the distinction in such a way that we cannot deservedly be condemned for hair splitting in distinguishing, nor, on the other hand, for negligence.

Chapter VIII

For What Things This Training Is Useful

Now in order that studious youth may apply itself to this study with an eager disposition we shall make clear in a few words for what things it is of use. First of all then, this training in varying speech will be useful in every way for attaining good style, which is a matter of no little moment. In particular, however, it will be useful in avoiding tautology, that is, repetition of the same word or expression, a vice not only unseemly but also offensive. It not infrequently happens that we have to say the same thing several times, in which case, if destitute of copia we will either be at a loss, or, like the cuckoo, croak out the same words repeatedly, and be unable to give different shape or form to the thought. And thus betraying our want of eloquence we will appear ridiculous ourselves and utterly exhaust our wretched audience with weariness. Worse than tautology is *homologia*, as Quintilian says,¹⁸ which does not lighten tedium with any charm of variety, and is wholly monotonous. Moreover, who is so patient a listener that he would even for a short time put up with a speech unvarying throughout?

¹⁷ Quintilian x. 1. 61.

¹⁸ Quintilian viii. 3. 52.

Variety everywhere has such force that nothing at all is so polished as not to seem rough when lacking its excellence. Nature herself especially rejoices in variety; in such a great throng of things she has left nothing anywhere not painted with some wonderful artifice of variety. And just as the eye is held more by a varying scene, in the same way the mind always eagerly examines whatever it sees as new. And if all things continually present themselves to the mind without variation, it will at once turn away in disgust. Thus the whole profit of a speech is lost. This great fault he will shun easily who is prepared to turn the same thought into many forms, as the famous Proteus is said to have changed his form. And in truth this training will contribute greatly to skill in extemporaneous speaking or writing; it will assure that we will not frequently hesitate in bewilderment or keep shamefully silent. Nor will it be difficult, with so many formulas prepared in readiness for action, to aptly divert even a rashly begun speech in any desired direction. Besides, in interpreting authors, in translating books from a foreign language, in writing verse, it will give us no little help, since in such matters, unless we are trained in the principles of copia, we shall often find ourselves either confused, or crude, or even silent.

Chapter IX

By What Methods of Training This Faculty May Be Developed

Next it remains to mention briefly by what methods of training this faculty may be developed. Having diligently committed the precepts to memory, we should often of set purpose select certain expressions and make as many variations of them as possible in the way Quintilian advises, "just as several different figures are commonly formed from the same piece of wax."¹⁹ This work, moreover, will bear richer fruit, if several students compete with one another either orally or in writing, on a subject set for them. For then each individual will be aided by their common discoveries, and, the opportunity having been furnished, each one will discover many things.

Again, we may treat some theme as a whole in many ways. And in this matter it will be well to emulate the ingenuity of Milo of Croton, so that making at first two variations, then three, then more and more, we may attain to such ability that at length we can without difficulty make a hundred or two hundred variations. In addition we will greatly increase the

¹⁹ Quintilian x. 5. 9.

copia of our speech by translation from Greek authors, because the Greek language is especially rich in both word and thought. Moreover, it will occasionally be very useful to emulate them by paraphrasing. It will be of especial help to rewrite the verses of poets in prose; and on the other hand, to bind prose in meter, and put the same theme into first one and then another type of verse. And it will be very helpful for us to emulate and attempt by our own efforts to equal or even to improve upon that passage in any author which appears unusually rich in copia. Moreover, it will be especially useful if we peruse good authors night and day, particularly those who have excelled in copia of speech, such as Cicero, Aulus Gellius, Apuleius; and with vigilant eyes we should note all figures in them, store up in our memory what we have noted, imitate what we have stored up, and by frequent use make it a habit to have them ready at hand.

Chapter X

First Precept Concerning Copia

Having said these things as a sort of preface, it remains to address ourselves to the propounding of precepts, although the things we have already said can be regarded as precepts. However, it does not seem that we will be acting illogically if we commence the precepts here by forewarning the student of copia that, above all, care must be taken that speech be appropriate, be Latin, be elegant, be correct; and that he should not consider anything to belong to copia that is not consistent with the purity of the Roman language. Elegance consists partly in words used by suitable authors; partly in using the right word; and partly in using it in the right expression. What clothing is to our body, diction is to the expression of our thoughts. For just as the fine appearance and dignity of the body are either set off to advantage or disfigured by dress and habit, just so thought is by words. Accordingly, they err greatly who think that it matters nothing in what words something is expressed, provided only it is in some way understandable. And the reason for changing clothes and for varying speech is one and the same. Consequently, let this be the primary concern, that the clothes be not dirty, or ill fitting, or improperly arranged. For it would be a shame if a figure good in itself should be displeasing because degraded by dirty clothes. And it would be ridiculous for a man to appear in public in a woman's dress, and unseemly for anyone to be seen with his clothes turned backside to and inside out. Therefore, if anyone should wish to strive for copia before he has acquired competence in the Latin language, that one, in my opinion at least, would be acting no less ridiculously than a

pauper who did not own a single garment that he could wear without great shame, and who, suddenly changing his clothes, should appear in the forum covered by assorted rags, ostentatiously exhibiting his poverty instead of his riches. And will he not appear more senseless the more often he does this? I think he will. And yet no less absurdly do some of those who strive for copia act, who, although they are not able to express their thoughts even in one way in elegant phrases, nevertheless, just as if they were ashamed to appear insufficiently stammering, variously rephrase their stuttering in such a way as to make it more stuttering; as if they have undertaken a contest with themselves to speak as barbarously as possible. I want the furnishings of a rich house to exhibit the greatest variety; but I want it to be altogether in good taste, not with every corner crammed with willow and fig and Samian ware. At a splendid banquet I want various kinds of food to be served, but who could endure anyone serving a hundred different dishes not one of which but would move to nausea? I have deliberately given this warning at length, because I know the rash presumption of very many people who prefer to omit the fundamentals and (as the saying goes) with dirty feet to hasten to the heights straightway. Nor do they sin much less seriously who, mixing the sordid with the elegant, disfigure the purple with rags, and intersperse glass among precious stones, and combine garlic with Attic sweetmeats. Now we shall set forth formulas for varying, those of course that pertain to copia of words.

Chapter XVI

Method of Varying by Metaphor

Another method of varying comes from metaphor, which is called *translatio* (transference) in Latin because it transfers a word from its real and proper meaning to one not its own. This is done in many ways.

Deflexio

First by *deflexio*, as often as a word is transferred from a related thing to one very close, as, I see, for I understand. Nothing is more used than such a type of metaphor.

From the Irrational to the Rational

The next type is the transfer from the unreasoning animal to a being endowed with reason or vice versa. As if one should say that a man of odious and fatuous loquacity brayed, or bleated, or grunted, or barked.

From the Animate to the Inanimate or Vice Versa

The metaphor will be more difficult to find if it is a transference from the animate to the inanimate or vice versa: And now every field, every tree is in labor.

From the Animate to the Animate

As if someone should speak of pasturing bees.

From the Inanimate to the Inanimate

This metaphor is used when one speaks of a forest welling up, which is an expression used of fountains.

Chapter XVII

Reciprocal Metaphors

Certain metaphors are reciprocal or common... Since indeed as you rightly transfer crown (vertex) from man to mountain, so you would not properly refer summit (cacumen) to man. However, as Quintilian says, metaphor contributes not only to copia of speech by assuring that nothing will appear to be lacking a name, but also to ornamentation, dignity, vivid presentation, sublimity, humor. And sometimes it is necessary, as the farmers speak of a gem on vines, of vines gemming, of fields thirsting, of fruit being afflicted, of crops being luxuriant, and we speak of a hard man, a rough one, for we have no other word. But it is not within our present plan to pursue in more detail the number of ways metaphor may be used and to what degree it may differ from very closely related tropes. It will serve to suggest that whoever wishes to be more fluent in speech should observe and collect from the best authors a great number of striking metaphors and for the same purpose add many *similitudines*. The best are in Cicero; there are a great many in Quintilian. But in these matters hardly any other is more productive than Plutarch. From the *Adagia* likewise not a few can be collected because many contain an allegory or some sort of metaphor. In collecting these we labored, I know not how successfully, but certainly with great vigilance. Nothing indeed keeps us from forming metaphors ourselves by reading and by observing the nature of all things, provided only that the metaphor be not harsh, or low, or more exaggerated than is proper, or mixed, or too frequent, especially in the same class. It will likewise not be out of place to point out that a metaphor is sometimes found in a single noun, as if one should call a man devoted to his belly an animal; sometimes in an epithet, as when we speak of a man of stone, or an iron writer, or glassy waves, or a flowering age; sometimes in a single verb, as, a lifetime flies away, the years glide by; sometimes something is added to explain the metaphor, he inflamed the man with a passion for glory, he fired him with wrath.

Chapter XVIII

Method of Varying by Allegory

Allegory has the same force as metaphor. For allegory is nothing but a continuous metaphor, as: he would scuttle the ship in which he himself sails, i.e., he would overthrow the state, in the fall of which he himself must also perish. Use of this is more common in proverbial sententiae and in proverbs, as: flame is near smoke, which means that peril ought to be avoided in good time; saleable wine has no need of ivy trimmings, by which we mean, a thing praiseworthy in itself has no need of other recommendation. In proverbs of this sort, allegory sometimes results in enigma. Nor is that bad, if you are talking to the learned, or writing; indeed in the latter case, not even if for the general reader. For things should not be written in such a way that everyone understands everything, but so that they are forced to investigate certain things, and learn.

Chapter XXVII

Method of Varying by Amplification

Speech is varied by *auxesis*, i.e., by amplification, when in order to render something more effectively we put in place of an appropriate word a stronger one; as when we say of one who has been slain, that he has been slaughtered; of one who is dishonest, that he is a brigand; of one to whom something very distressing has happened, that he has died; of one afflicted with grief, that he is lifeless. In this class also belong those terms of exaggeration which I have mentioned before, when we call a cruel man, a torturer, a despoiler of churches, a criminal, a poisoner or an evil; and besides these: crime, monstrosity, pestilence, ruin; and finally, these: Atreus for a cruel person; Sardanapalus for an effeminate one. Concerning these, more in their proper place.

Chapter XXVIII

Method of Varying by Hyperbole

Hyperbole is also a means of variation, which some have named *superlatio*. By this lie, as Seneca says, we come to truth; for hyperbole says more than reality warrants, yet what is true is understood from the false, as: he could split the very rocks by his eloquence; to touch the sky with his finger; swifter than the wind; and swifter than the wings of lightning.

Chapter XXIX

Method of Varying by *Diminutio*

A different method of varying is by ... *diminutio*.

For example: When we say of one who has struck another, that he has

touched him; of one who has wounded, that he has hurt. Sometimes *diminutio* has a savor of hyperbole, as: they scarcely cling to their bones; shorter than a pygmy; he has less than nothing. But of these also we will treat in their proper place.

Chapter XXXIII

Practice

Now, to make the matter clearer, let us set forth an expression as an experiment and try how far it is possible to have it turn like Proteus into several forms; not that every method of varying is suitable in any one instance, but as many as are, we shall use. let us take the following sentence for an example: *Your letter has delighted me very much.* *Your* does not admit of a synonym. Your fulness, your sublimity, your grandeur, are *periphrasis*. If you use a proper name, for instance, Faustus, it is *heterosis*, both of part of speech and of person, Faustus' letter. If Faustine letter, there is heterosis of the substantive in the epithet.

Letter

Epistle, letter, writing are synonyms. Little letter, little epistle, little writing constitute *heterosis*. Written sheet is synecdoche; what you have written to me, *periphrasis*.

Me

My mind, my heart, my eyes is either periphrasis or synecdoche; us for me is enallage of number; Erasmus is *heterosis* of person.

Very Much

Greatly, mightily, exceedingly, wonderfully, in a wonderful manner, etc. are synonyms. In the most profound manner, above measure, beyond measure, in an extraordinary degree, is *auxesis*. Not indifferently, not a little, not commonly is *contrarium* and negation. It is impossible to say how greatly, incredible to say, I cannot express in words, and others of that type savor of hyperbole.

Has Delighted

Has pleased, has refreshed, has exhilarated, are synonymous, except that there seems to be metaphor in has exhilarated. Has brought pleasure, has been a pleasure, has been a joy, etc. constitute *periphrasis*. Has imbued with joy, has been honeyed are metaphorical; has been not unpleasant, not disagreeable, substitutions of contraries.

Others cannot readily be illustrated without a context. Now then let us make trial.

Your letter has delighted me very much. In a wonderful way your letter has delighted me; in an unusually wonderful way your letter has delighted me. Up to this point almost nothing has been varied except the word order. By your letter I have been greatly delighted. I have been delighted in an unusually wonderful way by your letter. Here only the voice of the verb has been changed. Your epistle has cheered me exceedingly. In truth by your epistle I have been exceedingly cheered. Your note has refreshed my spirit in no indifferent manner. By the writing of your humanity I have been refreshed in spirit in no indifferent manner. From your most pleasing letter I have had incredible joy. Your paper has been the occasion of an unusual pleasure for me. From your paper I have received a wondrous pleasure. What you wrote has brought me the deepest delight. From what you wrote the deepest joy has been brought me. From the letter of your excellency we have drunk a great joy; this is *relatio*. Anyone may easily compose others for himself. From the letter of my Faustus I have drunk the greatest joy. A by no means common joy has come to me from what you wrote. I have been uniquely delighted by your letter. I have received a wonderful delight from the letter of Faustus. How exceedingly your letter has delighted my spirit. Your paper has imbued me with ineffable delight. This is metaphor. Through your letter I have been imbued with an unusual delight. What you wrote has given me incredible pleasure. This is metaphor also. Your letter provided me with no little delight. I have been exceedingly delighted by reading your letter. The reading of your letter imbued my mind with singular joy. Your epistle was very delightful. Your letter was a source of extraordinary pleasure for me. From your letter I had a singular pleasure. Your epistle was the greatest joy to me. What you wrote was the keenest delight to me. Your epistle was an incredible pleasure to me. Your epistle was immeasurably pleasing to me. You would scarcely believe how greatly I enjoy (*acquiescam*) what you wrote. Cicero frequently used *acquiescere* in this way for *oblectare*. Your epistle was the keenest enjoyment for me. Your letter has been most delightful. A singular pleasure has been provided for me by your letter. Your letter has been the occasion of glad joy for me. On receiving your letter I was carried away with joy. When your letter came I was filled with joy. On reading your most loving letter I was seized with an unusual pleasure. When I received your letter an incredible joy seized my spirit. Your epistle caressed me with extraordinary pleasure. What you

wrote to me was most delightful. That you sent a letter to me was exceedingly pleasant. Nothing could have given me more pleasure than that you deemed me worthy of your letter. Your dear letter has made me rejoice exceedingly. By your letter I am made exceedingly joyful. That you have informed me by your letter is not only acceptable to me, but in truth delightful. You should have seen me transported by the extent of my joy when your letter reached me. That you would greet me at least by letter was certainly delightful. Nothing more longed for than your letter could have come to me. Your very anxiously awaited letter has come. Nothing more desired than your letter could have come. In these last three there is *metalepsis* or at least synecdoche; for those things which we greatly desire are customarily considered pleasing. The letter of Faustus to Erasmus is unable not to be most pleasing. Not unpleasing to me was your letter. Your by no means disagreeable letter has come to me. Your writing in no way displeasing to me has come. Your letter was as charming to me as the most charming things. I have read your letter through with great pleasure. I have received your letter not without the keenest pleasure. He who handed me your letter, brought me a heap of joys. It is wonderful to say how your letter has taken hold of me. I have received the letter you sent; it lightens my heart with a new light of joys. Whatever there was of sadness in my heart, your letter cast out straightway. I felt a wondrous joy in my heart when your letter came to me. An uncommon pleasure entered my spirit from your letter. Your letter was the cause of my abundant rejoicing. Your letter made me rejoice exceedingly. It is scarcely possible to say how much joy came to me from your letter. I can hardly express in words how much pleasure was provided me by your letter. It is wonderful to say how much joy shone upon me from your letter. Immortal God! what great joy came to us from your letter? O wonderful, what great cause of joy your letter supplied! Good gods, what a great number of joys did your writing afford me? Your letter brought me greater joy than I can express. Your letter brought me very great pleasure. You would scarcely believe what a multitude of joys your letter brought to my spirit. I am not able to say in words with what great joys your letter loaded me. Why should I fear to speak thus when Terence spoke of "the day loaded with many advantages." Your letter has made me laden with joys. I rejoiced exceedingly in your letter. I took a unique pleasure in your letter. Your writing poured forth a most rich abundance of pleasure. Your letter was most pleasurable to me. By your letter the wrinkles were straightway wiped from my brow. Directly I saw your letter, I smoothed the brow of my spirit. While I read what you wrote to me, a wonderful pleasure stole into my heart. While I looked at your letter an

extraordinary multitude of joys seized my mind. When I looked at your letter an incredible wave of joy entered my heart. When I received your most kind letter, a great joy possessed me entirely. I would die if anything more pleasing than your letter ever happened. I would perish if anything in life occurred more pleasurable than your letter. I call the muses to witness that nothing has ever before brought me more joy than your letter. Do not believe that Fortune can offer anything more pleasing than your letter. The delight your letter gives me is equalled only by the love I bear you. Oh wonderful! How much joy your letter aroused in me. What laughter, what applause, what exultant dancing your letter caused in me. Reading your most elegant letter I was touched with a strange joy. Your pen has sated me with joys. Your letter has afforded me much pleasure. Your so fine letter has wholly imbued me with joy. Your letter has imbued me with a rare pleasure. Your letter has covered my soul with an unusual pleasure. Nothing dearer than your letter has ever happened to me. I have never seen anything more joyful than your letter. There is nothing I shall receive with a gladder spirit than the next letter of my Faustus. With what joy do you suppose I am filled when I recognize your soul in your letter. When the letter carrier handed me your letter, my spirit at once began to thrill with an ineffable joy. How shall I tell you what joy titillated the spirit of your Erasmus when he received your letter. My spirit overflowed, as it were, with joy when your letter was given to me. How gladly I received your letter. After your note was brought to me, my spirit truly glowed with joy. I was almost insane with joy when I received your letter. The charm of your letter stays my spirit with extraordinary joy. I am unable to refrain from rejoicing exceedingly whenever your letters come to me. Your letter was pure honey to me. Whatever letters come from you seem to overflow with saccharin and honey. I am sumptuously refreshed by the rich banquets of your letters. Your writings are sweeter than any ambrosia. The letter of my Faustus was more sumptuous even than Sicilian feasts. There is no pleasure, no charm which I would compare with your letter. All things are sickening compared to your letter. The heart of Erasmus leaped with joy on reading your most affectionate letter. The papers covered with your writing completely filled me with joy. Whatever letter comes from you is pure joy to my heart. Your letter is alive with joy. He brought me a festal day who brought me your letter. I would have preferred what you wrote to any nectar. I would not have compared any Attic honey with your most affectionate letter. Saccharin is not sweet if it is compared with your letter. No draught of men has such a flavor as your letter has for me. What wine is to a man thirsting for it, your letter is to me. What clover is to bees, what willow boughs are to

goats, what honey is to the bear, your letter is to me. The letter of your sublimity was sweeter to me than any honey. When I received your so eagerly awaited letter, you would have said that Erasmus was certainly drunk with joy. As soon as your letter came, you would have seen me as though drunk with excessive joy. As utterly as I love you, so utterly am I delighted by your letter. What you wrote seems nothing but pure charm to me. No dainty so caresses the palate as your letter charms my spirit. No luxuries titillate the palate more agreeably than what you wrote titillates my mind.

If any of these appear to be of such a sort as would scarcely be considered suitable in prose, remember that this exercise is adapted to the composition of verse also.