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GIOVANNI BOCCACCIO

THE DECAMERON

VOLUME ONE

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GIOVANNI BOCCACCIO

THE DECAMERON

TRANSLATED BY JOHN PAYNE
ILLUSTRATED BY CLARA TICE

VOLUME ONE

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To

My Friend

Stéphane Mallarmé


BOCCACCIO
CLARA T. C.

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Volume I

INTRODUCTION

By Francis Hueffer[1]

Giovanni Boccaccio (1313-1375), Italian author, whose *Decameron* is one of the classics of literature, was born in 1313, as we know from a letter of Petrarch, in which that poet, who was born in 1304, calls himself the senior of his friend by nine years. The place of his birth is somewhat doubtful—Florence, Paris and Certaldo being all mentioned by various writers as his native city. Boccaccio undoubtedly calls himself a Florentine, but this may refer merely to the Florentine citizenship acquired by his grandfather. The claim of Paris has been supported by Baldelli and Tiraboschi, mainly on the ground that his mother was a lady of good family in that city, where she met Boccaccio's father. There is a good deal in favour of Certaldo, a small town or castle in the valley of the Elsa, 20 miles from Florence, where the family had some property, and where the poet spent much of the latter part of his life. He always signed his name Boccaccio da Certaldo, and named that town as his birthplace in his own epitaph. Petrarch calls his friend Certaldese; and Filippo Villani, a contemporary, distinctly says that Boccaccio was born in Certaldo.

Boccaccio, an illegitimate son, as is put beyond dispute by the fact that a special licence had to be obtained when he desired to become a priest, was brought up with tender care by his father, who seems to have been a merchant of respectable rank. His elementary education he received from Giovanni da Strada, an esteemed teacher of grammar in Florence. But at an early age he was apprenticed to an eminent merchant, with whom he remained for six years, a time entirely lost to

[1] From *The Encyclopædia Britannica:* Eleventh Edition. Reprinted by permission.

him, if we may believe his own statement. For from his tenderest years his soul was attached to that "*alma poesis*," which, on his tombstone, he names as the task and study of his life. In one of his works he relates that, in his seventh year, before he had ever seen a book of poetry or learned the rules of metrical composition, he began to write verse in his childish fashion, and earned for himself amongst his friends the name of "the poet." It is uncertain where Boccaccio passed these six years of bondage; most likely he followed his master to various centres of commerce in Italy and France. We know at least that he was in Naples and Paris for some time, and the youthful impressions received in the latter city, as well as the knowledge of the French language acquired there, were of considerable influence on his later career. Yielding at last to his son's immutable aversion to commerce, the elder Boccaccio permitted him to adopt a course of study somewhat more congenial to the literary tastes of the young man. He was sent to a celebrated professor of canon law, at that time an important field of action both to the student and to the practical jurist. According to some accounts—far from authentic, it is true—this professor was Cino da Pistoia, the friend of Dante, and himself a celebrated poet and scholar. But, whoever he may have been, Boccaccio's master was unable to inspire his pupil with scientific ardour. "Again," Boccaccio says, "I lost nearly six years. And so nauseous was this study to my mind, that neither the teaching of my master nor the authority and command of my father, nor yet the exertions and reproof of my friends, could make me take to it, for my love of poetry was invincible."

About 1333 Boccaccio settled for some years at Naples, apparently sent there by his father to resume his mercantile pursuits, the canon law being finally abandoned. The place, it must be confessed, was little adapted to lead to a practical view of life one in whose heart the love of poetry was firmly rooted. The court of King Robert of Anjou at Naples was frequented by many Italian and French men of letters, the great Petrarch amongst the number. At the latter's public examination in the noble science of poetry by the king, previ-

ous to his receiving the laurel crown at Rome, Boccaccio was present,—without, however, making his personal acquaintance at this period. In the atmosphere of this gay court, enlivened and adorned by the wit of men and the beauty of women, Boccaccio lived for several years. We can imagine how the tedious duties of the market and the counting house became more and more distasteful to his aspiring nature. We are told that, finding himself by chance on the supposed grave of Virgil, near Naples, Boccaccio on that sacred spot took the firm resolution of devoting himself forever to poetry. But perhaps another event, which happened some time after, led quite as much as the first-mentioned occurrence to this decisive turning-point in his life. On Easter-eve, 1341, in the church of San Lorenzo, Boccaccio saw for the first time the natural daughter of King Robert, Maria, whom he immortalized as Fiammetta in the noblest creations of his muse. Boccaccio's passion on seeing her was instantaneous, and (if we may accept as genuine the confessions contained in one of her lover's works) was returned with equal ardour on the part of the lady. But not till after much delay did she yield to the amorous demands of the poet, in spite of her honour and her duty as the wife of another. All the information we have with regard to Maria or Fiammetta is derived from the works of Boccaccio himself, and owing to several apparently contradictory statements occurring in these works, the very existence of the lady has been doubted by commentators, who seem to forget that, surrounded by the chattering tongues of a court, and watched perhaps by a jealous husband, Boccaccio had all possible reason to give the appearance of fictitious incongruity to the effusions of his real passion. But there seems no more reason to call into question the main features of the story, or even the identity of the person, than there would be in the case of Petrarch's Laura or of Dante's Beatrice. It has been ingeniously pointed out by Baldelli, that the fact of her descent from King Robert being known only to Maria herself, and through her to Boccaccio, the latter was the more at liberty to refer to this circumstance,—the bold expression of the truth serving in this case to increase the mystery with which the

poets of the Middle Ages loved, or were obliged, to surround the objects of their praise. From Boccaccio's *Ameto* we learn that Maria's mother was, like his own, a French lady, whose husband, according to Baldelli's ingenious conjecture, was of the noble house of Aquino, and therefore of the same family with the celebrated Thomas Aquinas. Maria died, according to his account, long before her lover, who cherished her memory to the end of his life, as we see from a sonnet written shortly before his death.

The first work of Boccaccio, composed by him at Fiammetta's command, was the prose tale, *Filocopo*, describing the romantic love and adventures of Florio and Biancafiore, a favourite subject with the knightly minstrels of France, Italy and Germany. The treatment of the story by Boccaccio is not remarkable for originiality or beauty, and the narrative is encumbered by classical allusions and allegorical conceits. The style also cannot be held worthy of the future great master of Italian prose. Considering, however, that this prose was in its infancy, and that this was Boccaccio's first attempt at remoulding the unwieldy material at his disposal, it would be unjust to deny that *Filocopo* is a highly interesting work, full of promise and all but articulate power. Another work, written about the same time by Fiammetta's desire and dedicated to her, is the *Teseide*, an epic poem, and indeed the first heroic epic in the Italian language. The name is chosen somewhat inappropriately, as King Theseus plays a secondary part, and the interest of the story centres in the two noble knights, Palemone and Arcito, and their wooing of the beautiful Emelia. The *Teseide* is of particular interest to the student of poetry, because it exhibits the first example of the *ottava rima*, a metre which was adopted by Tasso and Ariosto, and in English by Byron in *Don Juan*. Another link between Boccaccio's epic and English literature is formed by the fact of Chaucer having in the *Knight's Tale* adopted its main features.

Boccaccio's poetry has been severely criticized by his countrymen, and most severely by the author himself. On reading Petrarch's sonnets, Boccaccio resolved in a fit of despair to burn his own attempts, and only the kindly encouragement of

his great friend prevented the holocaust. Posterity has justly differed from the author's sweeping self-criticism. It is true that, compared with Dante's grandeur and passion, and with Petrarch's absolute mastership of metre and language, Boccaccio's poetry seems to be somewhat thrown into shade. His verse is occasionally slip-shod, and particularly his epic poetry lacks what in modern parlance is called poetic diction,—the quality, that is, which distinguishes the elevated pathos of the recorder of heroic deeds from the easy grace of the mere *conteur*. This latter feature, so charmingly displayed in Boccaccio's prose, has to some extent proved fatal to his verse. At the same time, his narrative is always fluent and interesting, and his lyrical pieces, particularly the poetic interludes in the *Decameron*, abound with charming gallantry, and frequently rise to lyrical pathos.

About the year 1341 Boccaccio returned to Florence by command of his father, who in his old age desired the assistance and company of his son. Florence, at that time disturbed by civil feuds, and the silent gloom of his father's house could not but appear in an unfavourable light to one accustomed to the gay life of the Neapolitan court. But more than all this, Boccaccio regretted the separation from his beloved Fiammetta. The thought of her at once embittered and consoled his loneliness. Three of his works owe their existence to this period. With all of them Fiammetta is connected; of one of them she alone is the subject. The first work, called *Ameto*, describes the civilizing influence of love, which subdues the ferocious manners of the savage with its gentle power. Fiammetta, although not the heroine of the story, is amongst the nymphs who with their tales of true love soften the mind of the huntsman. *Ameto* is written in prose alternating with verse, specimens of which form occur in old and middle Latin writings. It is more probable, however, that Boccaccio adopted it from that sweetest and purest blossom of medieval French literature, *Aucassin et Nicolette*, which dates from the 13th century, and was undoubtedly known to him. So pleased was Boccaccio with the idea embodied in the character of *Ameto* that he repeated its essential features in the Cimone of his

Decameron (Day 5th, Tale I.). The second work referred to is a poem in fifty chapters, called *L'amorosa Visione*. It describes a dream in which the poet, guided by a lady, sees the heroes and lovers of ancient and medieval times. Boccaccio evidently has tried to imitate the celebrated *Trionfi* of Petrarch, but without much success. There is little organic development in the poem, which reads like the *catalogue raisonné* of a picture gallery; but it is remarkable from another point of view. It is perhaps the most astounding instance in literature of ingenuity wasted on trifles; even Edgar Poe, had he known Boccaccio's puzzle, must have confessed himself surpassed. For the whole of the *Amorosa Visione* is nothing but an acrostic on a gigantic scale. The poem is written, like the *Divina Commedia*, in *terza rima*, and the initial letters of all the triplets throughout the work compose three poems of considerable length, in the first of which the whole is dedicated to Boccaccio's lady-love, this time under her real name of Maria. In addition to this, the initial letters of the first, third, fifth, seventh and ninth lines of the dedicatory poem form the name of Maria; so that here we have the acrostic in the second degree. No wonder that thus entrammelled the poet's thought begins to flag and his language to halt. The third important work written by Boccaccio during his stay at Florence, or soon after his return to Naples, is called *L'amorosa Fiammetta;* and although written in prose, it contains more real poetry than the elaborate production just referred to. It purports to be Fiammetta's complaint after her lover, following the call of filial duty, had deserted her. Bitterly she deplores her fate, and upbraids her lover with coldness and want of devotion. Jealous fears add to her torture, not altogether unfounded, if we believe the commentators' assertion that the heroine of *Ameto* is in reality the beautiful Lucia, a Florentine lady loved by Boccaccio. Sadly Fiammetta recalls the moments of former bliss, the first meeting, the stolen embrace. Her narrative is indeed our chief source of information for the incidents of this strange love-story. It has been thought unlikely, and indeed impossible, that Boccaccio should thus have become the mouthpiece of a real lady's

real passion for himself; but there seems nothing incongruous in the supposition that after a happy reunion the poet should have heard with satisfaction, and surrounded with the halo of ideal art, the story of his lady's sufferings. Moreover, the language is too full of individual intensity to make the conjecture of an entirely fictitious love affair intrinsically probable. *L'amorosa Fiammetta* is a monody of passion sustained even to the verge of dulness, but strikingly real, and therefore artistically valuable.

By the intercession of an influential friend, Boccaccio at last obtained (in 1344) his father's permission to return to Naples, where in the meantime Giovanna, granddaughter of King Robert, had succeeded to the crown. Being young and beautiful, fond of poetry and of the praise of poets, she received Boccaccio with all the distinction due to his literary fame. For many years she remained his faithful friend, and the poet returned her favour with grateful devotion. Even when the charge of having instigated, or at least connived at, the murder of her husband was but too clearly proved against her. Boccaccio was amongst the few who stood by her, and undertook the hopeless task of clearing her name from the dreadful stain. It was by her desire, no less than by that of Fiammetta, that he composed (between 1344 and 1350) most of the stories of his *Decameron*, which afterwards were collected and placed in the mouths of the Florentine ladies and gentlemen. During this time he also composed the *Filostrato*, a narrative poem, the chief interest of which, for the English reader, lies in its connexion with Chaucer. With a boldness pardonable only in men of genius, Chaucer adopted the main features of the plot, and literally translated parts of Boccaccio's work, without so much as mentioning the name of his Italian source.

In 1350 Boccaccio returned to Florence, owing to the death of his father, who had made him guardian to his younger brother Jacopo. He was received with great distinction, and entered the service of the Republic, being at various times sent on important missions to the margrave of Brandenburg, and to the courts of several popes, in both Avignon and Rome.

Boccaccio boasts of the friendly terms on which he had been with the great potentates of Europe, the emperor and pope amongst the number. But he was never a politician in the sense that Dante and Petrarch were. As a man of the world he enjoyed the society of the great, but his interest in the internal commotions of the Florentine state seems to have been very slight. Besides, he never liked Florence, and the expressions used by him regarding his fellow-citizens betray anything but patriotic prejudice. In a Latin eclogue he applies to them the term "Batrachos" (frogs), by which, he adds parenthetically—*Ego intelligo Florentinorum morem; loquacissimi enim summus, verum in rebus bellicis nihil valemus.* The only important result of Boccaccio's diplomatic career was his intimacy with Petrarch. The first acquaintance of these two great men dates from the year 1350, when Boccaccio, then just returned to Florence, did all in his power to make the great poet's short stay in that city agreeable. When in the following year the Florentines were anxious to draw men of great reputation to their newly-founded university, it was again Boccaccio who insisted on the claims of Petrarch to the most distinguished position. He himself accepted the mission of inviting his friend to Florence, and of announcing to Petrarch at the same time that the forfeited estates of his family had been restored to him. In this manner an intimate friendship grew up between them to be parted only by death. Common interests and common literary pursuits were the natural basis of their friendship, and both occupy prominent positions in the early history of that great intellectual revival commonly called the Renaissance.

During the 14th century the study of ancient literature was at a low ebb in Italy. The interest of the lay world was engrossed by political struggles, and the treasures of classical history and poetry were at the mercy of monks, too lazy or too ignorant to use, or even to preserve them. Boccaccio himself told that, on asking to see the library of the celebrated monastery of Monte Cassion, he was shown into a dusty room without a door to it. Many of the valuable manuscripts were mutilated; and his guide told him that the monks were in

the habit of tearing leaves from the codices to turn them into psalters for children, or amulets for women at the price of four or five *soldi* apiece. Boccaccio did all in his power to remove by word and example this barbarous indifference. He bought or copied with his own hand numerous valuable manuscripts, and an old writer remarks that if Boccaccio had been a professional copyist, the amount of his work might astonish us. His zealous endeavours for the revival of the all but forgotten Greek language in western Europe are well known. The most celebrated Italian scholars about the beginning of the 15th century were unable to read the Greek characters. Boccaccio deplored the ignorance of his age. He took lessons from Leone Pilato, a learned adventurer of the period, who had lived a long time in Thessaly and, although born in Calabria, pretended to be a Greek. By Boccaccio's advice Leone Pilato was appointed professor of Greek language and literature in the university of Florence, a position which he held for several years, not without great and lasting benefit for the revival of classical learning. Boccaccio was justly proud of having been intimately connected with the foundation of the first chair of Greek in Italy. But he did not forget, in his admiration of classic literature, the great poets of his own country. He never tires in his praise of the sublime Dante, whose works he copied with his own hand. He conjures his friend Petrarch to study the great Florentine, and to defend himself against the charges of wilful ignorance and envy brought against him. A life of Dante, and the commentaries on the first sixteen cantos of the *Inferno*, bear witness to Boccaccio's learning and enthusiasm.

In the chronological enumeration of our author's writings we now come to his most important work, the *Decameron*, a collection of one hundred stories, published in their combined form in 1353, although mostly written at an earlier date. This work marks in a certain sense the rise of Italian prose. It is true that Dante's *Vita Nuova* was written before, but its involved sentences, founded essentially on Latin constructions, cannot be compared with the infinite suppleness and precision of Boccaccio's prose. The *Cento Novelle Antiche*, on the other

hand, which also precedes the *Decameron* in date, can hardly be said to be written in artistic language according to definite rules of grammar and style. Boccaccio for the first time speaks a new idiom, flexible and tender, like the character of the nation, and capable of rendering all the shades of feeling, from the coarse laugh of cynicism to the sigh of hopeless love. It is by the name of "Father of Italian prose" that Boccaccio ought to be chiefly remembered.

Like most progressive movements in art and literature, Boccaccio's remoulding of Italian prose may be described as a "return to nature." It is indeed the nature of the Italian people itself which has become articulate in the *Decameron;* here we find southern grace and elegance, together with that unveiled *naïveté* of impulse which is so striking and so amiable a quality of the Italian character. The undesirable complement of the last-mentioned feature, a coarseness and indecency of conception and expression hardly comprehensible to the northern mind, also appears in the *Decameron,* particularly where the life and conversation of the lower classes are the subject of the story. At the same time, these descriptions of low life are so admirable, and the character of popular parlance rendered with such humour, as often to make the frown of moral disgust give way to a smile.

It is not surprising that a style so concise and yet so pliable, so typical and yet so individual, as that of Boccaccio was of enormous influence on the further progress of a prose in a manner created by it. This influence has indeed prevailed down to the present time, to an extent beneficial upon the whole, although frequently fatal to the development of individual writers. Novelists like Giovanni Fiorentino or Franco Sachetti are completely under the sway of their great model; and Boccaccio's influence may be discerned equally in the plastic fulness of Machiavelli and in the pointed satire of Aretino. Without touching upon the individual merits of Lasca, Bandello and other novelists of the *cinque-cento,* it may be asserted that none of them created a style independent of their great predecessor. One cannot indeed but acquiesce in the authoritative utterance of the Accademia della Crusca,

which holds up the *Decameron* as the standard and model of Italian prose. Even the Della Cruscan writers themselves have been unable to deprive the language wholly of the fresh spontaneity of Boccaccio's manner, which in modern literature we again admire in Manzoni's *Promessi sposi.*

A detailed analysis of a work so well known as the *Decameron* would be unnecessary. The description of the plague of Florence preceding the stories is universally acknowledged to be a masterpiece of epic grandeur and vividness. It ranks with the paintings of similar calamities by Thucydides, Defoe and Manzoni. Like Defoe, Boccaccio had to draw largely on hearsay and his own imagination, it being almost certain that in 1348 he was at Naples, and therefore no eye-witness of the scenes he described. The stories themselves, a hundred in number, range from the highest pathos to the coarsest licentiousness. A creation like the patient Griselda, which international literature owes to Boccaccio, ought to atone for much that is morally and artistically objectionable in the *Decameron.* It may be said on this head, that his age and his country were not only deeply immoral, but in addition exceedingly outspoken. Moreover, his sources were anything but pure. Most of his improper stories are either anecdotes from real life, or they are taken from the *fabliaux* of medieval French poets. On comparing the latter class of stories (about one-fifth of the whole *Decameron*) with their French originals, one finds that Boccaccio has never added to, but has sometimes toned down the revolting ingredients. Notwithstanding this, it cannot be denied that the artistic value of the *Decameron* is greatly impaired by descriptions and expressions, the intentional licentiousness of which is but imperfectly veiled by an attempt at humour.

Boccaccio has been accused of plagiarism, particularly by French critics, who correctly state that the subjects of many stories in the *Decameron* are borrowed from their literature. A similar objection might be raised against Chaucer, Shakespeare, Goethe (in *Faust*), and indeed most of the master minds of all nations. Stories float about in the air, known to all yet realized by few; the poet gathers their *disjecta membra*

into an organic whole, and this he inspires and calls into life with the breath of his genius. It is in this sense that Boccaccio is the creator of those innumerable beautiful types and stories, which have since become household words amongst civilized nations. No author can equal him in these contributions to the store of international literature. There are indeed few great poets who have not in some way become indebted to the inexhaustible treasure of Boccaccio's creativeness. One of the greatest masterpieces of German literature, Lessing's *Nathan the Wise*, contains a story from Boccaccio (*Decameron* Day 1st, Tale III.), and the list of English poets who have drawn from the same source comprises, among many others, the names of Chaucer, Lydgate, Dryden, Keats and Tennyson.

For ten years Boccaccio continued to reside in Florence, leaving the city only occasionally on diplomatic missions or on visits to his friends. His fame in the meantime began to spread far and wide, and his *Decameron*, in particular, was devoured by the fashionable ladies and gentlemen of the age. About 1360 he seems to have retired from the turbulent scenes of Florence to his native Certaldo, the secluded charms of which he describes with rapture. In the following year took place that strange turning-point in Boccaccio's career which is generally described as his conversion. It seems that a Carthusian monk came to him while at Certaldo charged with a posthumous message from another monk of the same order, to the effect that if Boccaccio did not at once abandon his godless ways in life and literature his death would ensue after a short time. It is also mentioned that the revelation to the friar on his deathbed of a secret known only to Boccaccio gave additional import to this alarming information. Boccaccio's impressionable nature was deeply moved. His life had been far from virtuous; in his writings he had frequently sinned against the rules of morality, and worse still, he had attacked with bitter satire the institutions and servants of holy mother church. Terrified by the approach of immediate death, he resolved to sell his library, abandon literature, and devote the remainder of his life to penance and religious exercise. To this effect he wrote to Petrarch. We possess the

poet's answer; it is a masterpiece of writing, and what is more, a proof of tenderest friendship. The message of the monk Petrarch is evidently inclined to treat simply as pious fraud, without, however, actually committing himself to that opinion. "No monk is required to tell thee of the shortness and precariousness of human life. Of the advice received accept what is good; abandon worldly cares, conquer thy passions, and reform thy soul and life of degraded habits. But do not give up the studies which are the true food of a healthy mind." Boccaccio seems to have acted on this valuable advice. His later works, although written in Latin and scientific in character, are by no means of a religious kind. It seems, however, that his entering the church in 1362 is connected with the events just related.

In 1363 Boccaccio went on a visit to Naples to the seneschal of Acciajuoli (the same Florentine who had in 1344 persuaded the elder Boccaccio to permit his son's return to Naples), who commissioned him to write the story of his deeds of valour. On his arrival, however, the poet was treated with shameful neglect, and revenged himself by denying the possibility of relating any valorous deeds for want of their existence. This declaration, it must be confessed, came somewhat late, but it was provoked by a silly attack on the poet himself by one of the seneschal's indiscreet friends.

During the next ten years Boccaccio led an unsettled life, residing chiefly at Florence or Certaldo, but frequently leaving his home on visits to Petrarch and other friends, and on various diplomatic errands in the service of the Republic. He seems to have been poor, having spent large sums in the purchase of books, but his independent spirit rejected the numerous splendid offers of hospitality made to him by friends and admirers. During this period he wrote four important Latin works—*De Genealogia Deorum libri XV.*, a compendium of mythological knowledge full of deep learning; *De Montium, Silvarum, Lacuum, et Marium nominibus liber*, a treatise on ancient geography; and two historical books—*De Casibus Virorum et Feminarum Illustrium libri IX.*, interesting to the English reader as the original of John Lydgate's

Fall of Princes; and *De Claris Mulieribus.* To the list of his works ought to be added *Il Ninfale Fiesolano,* a beautiful love-story in verse, and *Il Corbaccio ossia Il Laberinto d'Amore,* a coarse satire on a Florentine widow who had jilted the poet, written about 1355, not to mention many eclogues in Latin and miscellaneous *Rime* in Italian (the latter collected by his biographer Count Baldelli in 1802).

In 1373 we find Boccaccio again settled at Certaldo. Here he was attacked by a terrible disease which brought him to the verge of death, and from the consequences of which he never quite recovered. But sickness could not subdue his intellectual vigour. When the Florentines established a chair for the explanation of the *Divina Commedia* in their university, and offered it to Boccaccio, the senescent poet at once undertook the arduous duty. He delivered his first lecture on the 23rd of October, 1373. The commentary on part of the *Inferno,* already alluded to, bears witness of his unabated power of intellect. In 1374 the news of the loss of his dearest friend Petrarch reached Boccaccio, and from this blow he may be said to have never recovered. Almost his dying efforts were devoted to the memory of his friend; urgently he entreated Petrarch's son-in-law to arrange the publication of the deceased poet's Latin epic *Africa,* a work of which the author had been far more proud than of his immortal sonnets to Laura.

In his last will Boccaccio left his library to his father confessor, and after his decease to the convent of Santo Spirito in Florence. His small property he bequeathed to his brother Jacopo. His own natural children had died before him. He himself died on the 21st of December, 1375, at Certaldo, and was buried in the church of SS. Jacopo e Filippo of that town. On his tombstone was engraved the epitaph composed by himself shortly before his death. It is calm and dignified, worthy indeed of a great life with a great purpose. These are the lines:

> "Hac sub mole jacent cineres ac ossa Joannis;
> Mens sedet ante Deum, meritis ornata laborum
> Mortalis vitæ. Genitor Boccaccius illi;
> Patria Certaldum; studium fuit alma poesis."

A complete edition of Boccaccio's Italian writings, in 16 vols., was published by Moutier (Florence, 1834). The life of Boccaccio has been written by Tiraboschi, Mazzuchelli, Count Baldelli (*Vita di Boccaccio*, Florence, 1806), and others. In English the best biography is by Edward Hutton (1909). The first printed edition of the *Decameron* is without date, place or printer's name; but it is believed to belong to the year 1469, or 1470, and to have been printed at Florence. Besides this, Baldelli mentions eleven editions during the 15th century. The entire number of editions by far exceeds a hundred. A curious expurgated edition, authorized by the pope, appeared at Florence, 1573. Here, however, the grossest indecencies remain, the chief alteration being the change of the improper personages from priests and monks into laymen. The best old edition is that of Florence, 1527. Of modern reprints, that by Forfoni (Florence, 1857) deserves mention. Manni has written a *Storia del Decamerone* (1742), and a German scholar, M. Landau, who published (Vienna, 1869) a valuable investigation of the sources of the *Decameron*, subsequently brought out in 1877 a general study of Boccaccio's life and works. An interesting English translation of the *Decameron* appeared in 1624, under the title *The Model of Mirth, Wit, Eloquence and Conversation.*

F. H.

THE DECAMERON

Days I-V

HERE BEGINNETH THE BOOK CALLED DECAMERON AND SURNAMED PRINCE GALAHALT* WHEREIN ARE CONTAINED AN HUNDRED STORIES IN TEN DAYS TOLD BY SEVEN LADIES AND THREE YOUNG MEN

PROËM

A KINDLY thing it is to have compassion of the afflicted and albeit it well beseemeth every one, yet of those is it more particularly required who have erst had need of comfort and have found it in any, amongst whom, if ever any had need thereof or held it dear or took pleasure therein aforetimes, certes, I am one of these. For that, having from my first youth unto this present been beyond measure inflamed with a very high and noble passion (higher and nobler, perchance, than might appear, were I to relate it, to sort with my low estate) albeit by persons of discretion who had intelligence thereof I was commended therefor and accounted so much the more worth, natheless a passing sore travail it was to me to bear it, not, certes, by reason of the cruelty of the beloved lady, but because of the exceeding ardour begotten in my breast of an ill-ordered appetite, for which, for that it suffered me not to stand content at any reasonable bounds, caused me ofttimes feel more chagrin than I had occasion for. In this my affliction the pleasant discourse of a certain friend of mine and his admirable consolations afforded me such refreshment that I firmly believe of these it came that I died not. But, as it pleased Him who, being Himself infinite, hath for immutable law appointed unto all things mundane that they shall have an end, my love,—beyond every

* Galahalt or Gallehaut (Ital. Galeotto), a personage of the old chivalric romance of "Lancelot du Lac," where he is described as a neighbouring king ("roy doultre les marches"), who, after first opposing the hero, is vanquished by him and becoming his confidant, brings about the first amorous interview between him and Guenevere; hence his name is generically used by Boccaccio (following his great and favourite exemplar, Dante, cf. Inferno, Canto v. l. 137, "Galeotto fu il libro e chi lo scrisse,") for a pander, go-between or one who kindles amorous desire in women and provokes them to satisfy it. In this case he seems, by giving this surname to his book (or perhaps rather merely recording the fact that it had been so surnamed) to

other fervent and which nor stress of reasoning nor counsel, no, nor yet manifest shame nor peril that might ensue thereof, had availed either to break or to bend,—of its own motion, in process of time, on such wise abated that of itself at this present it hath left me only that pleasance which it is used to afford unto whoso adventureth himself not too far in the navigation of its profounder oceans; by reason whereof, all chagrin being done away, I feel it grown delightsome, whereas it used to be grievous. Yet, albeit the pain hath ceased, not, therefore, is the memory fled of the benefits whilom received and the kindnesses bestowed on me by those to whom, of the goodwill they bore me, my troubles were grievous; nor, as I deem, will it ever pass away, save for death. And for that gratitude, to my thinking, is, among the other virtues, especially commendable and its contrary blameworthy, I have, that I may not appear ungrateful, bethought myself, now that I can call myself free, to endeavour, in that little which is possible to me, to afford some relief, in requital of that which I received aforetime,—if not to those who succoured me and who, belike, by reason of their good sense or of their fortune, have no occasion therefor,—to those, at least, who stand in need thereof. And albeit my support, or rather I should say my comfort, may be and indeed is of little enough avail to the afflicted, natheless meseemeth it should rather be proffered whereas the need appeareth greater, as well because it will there do more service as for that it will still be there the liefer had. And who will deny that this [comfort], whatsoever [worth] it be, it behoveth much more to give unto love-sick ladies than unto men? For that these within their tender bosoms, fearful and shamefast, hold hid the fires of love (which those who have proved know how much more puissance they have than those which are manifest), and constrained by the wishes, the pleasures, the commandments of fathers, mothers, brothers and husbands, abide most time enmewed in the narrow compass of their chambers and sitting in a manner idle, willing and willing not in one breath, revolve in themselves various

imply that its perusal is likely to have the same effect upon lovers or persons amorously inclined as that of the book unknown the reading of which played the Galahalt between Francesca and Paolo, loco citato. It is, however, not improbable that the words "and surnamed Prince Galahalt" may have been added by some one other than Boccaccio, although the implied reference to Dante is so much in his style and habit of thought as to make it at least probable that he was himself responsible for the addition. It may be noted, by the way, that Galahalt appears in the Morte d'Arthur, where he is always styled "le haut prince," but does not figure as go-between the two lovers.

thoughts which it is not possible should still be merry. By reason whereof if there arise in their minds any melancholy, bred of ardent desire, needs must it with grievous annoy abide therein, except it be done away by new discourse; more by token that they are far less strong than men to endure. With men in love it happeneth not on this wise, as we may manifestly see. They, if any melancholy or heaviness of thought oppress them, have many means of easing it or doing it away, for that to them, an they have a mind thereto, there lacketh not commodity of going about hearing and seeing many things, fowling, hunting, fishing, riding, gaming and trafficking; each of which means hath, altogether or in part, power to draw the mind unto itself and to divert it from troublous thought, at least for some space of time, whereafter, one way or another, either solacement superveneth or else the annoy groweth less. Wherefore, to the end that the unright of Fortune may by me in part be amended, which, where there is the less strength to endure, as we see it in delicate ladies, hath there been the more niggard of support, I purpose, for the succour and solace of ladies in love (unto others * the needle and the spindle and the reel suffice) to recount an hundred stories or fables or parables or histories or whatever you like to style them, in ten days' time related by an honourable company of seven ladies and three young men made in the days of the late deadly pestilence, together with sundry canzonets sung by the aforesaid ladies for their diversion. In these stories will be found love-chances,† both gladsome and grievous, and other accidents of fortune befallen as well in times present as in days of old, whereof the ladies aforesaid, who shall read them, may at once take solace from the delectable things therein shown forth and useful counsel, inasmuch as they may learn thereby what is to be eschewed and what is on like wise to be ensued,—the which methinketh cannot betide without cease of chagrin. If it happen thus (as God grant it may) let them render thanks therefor to Love, who, by loosing me from his bonds, hath vouchsafed me the power of applying myself to the service of their pleasures.

* *i.e.* those not in love.

† Syn. adventures (*casi*).

DAY THE FIRST

HERE BEGINNETH THE FIRST DAY OF THE DECAMERON WHEREIN (AFTER DEMONSTRATION MADE BY THE AUTHOR OF THE MANNER IN WHICH IT CAME TO PASS THAT THE PERSONS WHO ARE HEREINAFTER PRESENTED FOREGATHERED FOR THE PURPOSE OF DEVISING TOGETHER) UNDER THE GOVERNANCE OF PAMPINEA IS DISCOURSED OF THAT WHICH IS MOST AGREEABLE UNTO EACH

As often, most gracious ladies, as, taking thought in myself, I mind me how very pitiful you are all by nature, so often do I recognize that this present work will, to your thinking, have a grievous and a weariful beginning, inasmuch as the dolorous remembrance of the late pestiferous mortality, which it beareth on its forefront, is universally irksome to all who saw or otherwise knew it. But I would not therefore have this affright you from reading further, as if in the reading you were still to fare among sighs and tears. Let this grisly beginning be none other to you than is to wayfarers a rugged and steep mountain, beyond which is situate a most fair and delightful plain, which latter cometh so much the pleasanter to them as the greater was the hardship of the ascent and the descent; for, like as dolour occupieth the extreme of gladness, even so are miseries determined by imminent joyance. This brief annoy (I say brief, inasmuch as it is contained in few pages) is straightway succeeded by the pleasance and delight which I have already promised you and which, belike, were it not foresaid, might not be looked for from such a beginning. And in truth, could I fairly have availed to bring you to my desire otherwise than by so rugged a path as this will be, I had gladly done it; but being in a manner constrained thereto, for that, without this reminiscence of our past miseries, it might not be shown what was the occasion of the coming about of the things that will hereafter be read, I have brought myself to write them.*

I say, then, that the years [of the era] of the fruitful Incarnation of the Son of God had attained to the number of one thousand three hundred and forty-eight, when into the notable city of Florence, fair

* *i.e.*, the few pages of which he speaks above.

over every other of Italy, there came the death-dealing pestilence, which, through the operation of the heavenly bodies or of our own iniquitous dealings, being sent down upon mankind for our correction by the just wrath of God, had some years before appeared in the parts of the East and after having bereft these latter of an innumerable number of inhabitants, extending without cease from one place to another, had now unhappily spread towards the West. And thereagainst no wisdom availing nor human foresight (whereby the city was purged of many impurities by officers deputed to that end and it was forbidden unto any sick person to enter therein and many were the counsels given * for the preservation of health) nor yet humble supplications, not once but many times both in ordered processions and on other wise made unto God by devout persons,—about the coming in of the Spring of the aforesaid year, it began on horrible and miraculous wise to show forth its dolorous effects. Yet not as it had done in the East, where, if any bled at the nose, it was a manifest sign of inevitable death; nay, but in men and women alike there appeared, at the beginning of the malady, certain swellings, either on the groin or under the armpits, whereof some waxed of the bigness of a common apple, others like unto an egg, some more and some less, and these the vulgar named plague-boils. From these two parts the aforesaid death-bearing plague-boils proceeded, in brief space, to appear and come indifferently in every part of the body; wherefrom, after awhile, the fashion of the contagion began to change into black or livid blotches, which showed themselves in many [first] on the arms and about the thighs and [after spread to] every other part of the person, in some large and sparse and in others small and thick-sown; and like as the plague-boils had been first (and yet were) a very certain token of coming death, even so were these for every one to whom they came.

To the cure of these maladies nor counsel † of physician nor virtue of any medicine appeared to avail or profit aught; on the contrary,—whether it was that the nature of the infection suffered it not or that the ignorance of the physicians (of whom, over and above the men of art, the number, both men and women, who had never had any teaching of medicine, was become exceeding great,) availed not to know whence it arose and consequently took not due measures thereagainst,—not only did few recover thereof, but well nigh all died within the

* Syn. provisions made or means taken (*consigli dati*). Boccaccio constantly uses *consiglio* in this latter sense.

† Syn. help, remedy.

third day from the appearance of the aforesaid signs, this sooner and that later, and for the most part without fever or other accident.* And this pestilence was the more virulent for that, by communication with those who were sick thereof, it gat hold upon the sound, no otherwise than fire upon things dry or greasy, whenas they are brought very near thereunto. Nay, the mischief was yet greater; for that not only did converse and consortion with the sick give to the sound infection or cause of common death, but the mere touching of the clothes or of whatsoever other thing had been touched or used of the sick appeared of itself to communicate the malady to the toucher. A marvellous thing to hear is that which I have to tell and one which, had it not been seen of many men's eyes and of mine own, I had scarce dared credit, much less set down in writing, though I had heard it from one worthy of belief. I say, then, that of such efficience was the nature of the pestilence in question in communicating itself from one to another, that, not only did it pass from man to man, but this, which is much more, it many times visibly did;—to wit, a thing which had pertained to a man sick or dead of the aforesaid sickness, being touched by an animal foreign to the human species, not only infected this latter with the plague, but in a very brief space of time killed it. Of this mine own eyes (as hath a little before been said) had one day, among others, experience on this wise; to wit, that the rags of a poor man, who had died of the plague, being cast out into the public way, two hogs came up to them and having first, after their wont, rooted amain among them with their snouts, took them in their mouths and tossed them about their jaws; then, in a little while, after turning round and round, they both, as if they had taken poison, fell down dead upon the rags with which they had in an ill hour intermeddled.

From these things and many others like unto them or yet stranger divers fears and conceits were begotten in those who abode alive, which well nigh all tended to a very barbarous conclusion, namely, to shun and flee from the sick and all that pertained to them, and thus doing, each thought to secure immunity for himself. Some there were who conceived that to live moderately and keep oneself from all excess was the best defence against such a danger; wherefore, making up their company, they lived removed from every other and shut themselves up in those houses where none had been sick and where living was best; and there, using very temperately of the most delicate viands and the finest wines and eschewing all incontinence, they abode with

* *Accidente*, what a modern physician would call "complication." "Symptom" does not express the whole meaning of the Italian word.

music and such other diversions as they might have, never suffering themselves to speak with any nor choosing to hear any news from without of death or sick folk. Others, inclining to the contrary opinion, maintained that to carouse and make merry and go about singing and frolicking and satisfy the appetite in everything possible and laugh and scoff at whatsoever befell was a very certain remedy for such an ill. That which they said they put in practice as best they might, going about day and night, now to this tavern, now to that, drinking without stint or measure; and on this wise they did yet more freely in other folk's houses, so but they scented there aught that liked or tempted them, as they might lightly do, for that every one—as he were to live no longer—had abandoned all care of his possessions, as of himself, wherefore the most part of the houses were become common good and strangers used them, whenas they happened upon them, like as the very owner might have done; and with all this bestial preoccupation, they still shunned the sick to the best of their power.

In this sore affliction and misery of our city, the reverend authority of the laws, both human and divine, was all in a manner dissolved and fallen into decay, for [lack of] the ministers and executors thereof, who, like other men, were all either dead or sick or else left so destitute of followers that they were unable to exercise any office, wherefore every one had license to do whatsoever pleased him. Many others held a middle course between the two aforesaid, not straitening themselves so exactly in the matter of diet as the first neither allowing themselves such license in drinking and other debauchery as the second, but using things in sufficiency, according to their appetites; nor did they seclude themselves, but went about, carrying in their hands, some flowers, some odoriferous herbs and other some divers kinds of spiceries,* which they set often to their noses, accounting it an excellent thing to fortify the brain with such odours, more by token that the air seemed all heavy and attainted with the stench of the dead bodies and that of the sick and of the remedies used.

Some were of a more barbarous, though, peradventure, a surer way of thinking, avouching that there was no remedy against pestilences better than—no, nor any so good as—to flee before them; wherefore, moved by this reasoning and recking of nought but themselves, very many, both men and women, abandoned their own city, their own houses and homes, their kinsfolk and possessions, and sought the country seats of others, or, at the least, their own, as if the wrath of

* *i.e.* aromatic drugs.

God, being moved to punish the iniquity of mankind, would not proceed to do so wheresoever they might be, but would content itself with afflicting those only who were found within the walls of their city, or as if they were persuaded that no person was to remain therein and that its last hour was come. And albeit these, who opined thus variously, died not all, yet neither did they all escape; nay, many of each way of thinking and in every place sickened of the plague and languished on all sides, well nigh abandoned, having themselves, what while they were whole, set the example to those who abode in health.

Indeed, leaving be that townsman avoided townsman and that well nigh no neighbour took thought unto other and that kinsfolk seldom or never visited one another and held no converse together save from afar, this tribulation had stricken such terror to the hearts of all, men and women alike, that brother forsook brother, uncle nephew and sister brother and oftentimes wife husband; nay (what is yet more extraordinary and well nigh incredible) fathers and mothers refused to visit or tend their very children, as they had not been theirs. By reason whereof there remained unto those (and the number of them, both males and females, was incalculable) who fell sick, none other succour than that which they owed either to the charity of friends (and of these there were few) or the greed of servants, who tended them, allured by high and extravagant wage; albeit, for all this, these latter were not grown many, and those men and women of mean understanding and for the most part unused to such offices, who served for well nigh nought but to reach things called for by the sick or to note when they died; and in the doing of these services many of them perished with their gain.

Of this abandonment of the sick by neighbours, kinsfolk and friends and of the scarcity of servants arose an usage before well nigh unheard, to wit, that no woman, how fair or lovesome or well-born soever she might be, once fallen sick, recked aught of having a man to tend her, whatever he might be, or young or old, and without any shame discovered to him every part of her body, no otherwise than she would have done to a woman, so but the necessity of her sickness required it; the which belike, in those who recovered, was the occasion of lesser modesty in time to come. Moreover, there ensued of this abandonment the death of many who peradventure, had they been succoured, would have escaped alive; wherefore, as well for the lack of the opportune services which the sick availed not to have as for the virulence of the plague, such was the multitude of those who died in the city by day and by night that it was an astoniment to hear tell

thereof, much more to see it; and thence, as it were of necessity, there sprang up among those who abode alive things contrary to the pristine manners of the townsfolk.

It was then (even as we yet see it used) a custom that the kinswomen and she-neighbours of the dead should assemble in his house and there condole with those who more nearly pertained unto him, whilst his neighbours and many other citizens foregathered with his next of kin before his house, whither, according to the dead man's quality, came the clergy, and he with funeral pomp of chants and candles was borne on the shoulders of his peers to the church chosen by himself before his death; which usages, after the virulence of the plague began to increase, were either altogether or for the most part laid aside, and other and strange customs sprang up in their stead. For that, not only did folk die without having a multitude of women about them, but many there were who departed this life without witness and few indeed were they to whom the pious plaints and bitter tears of their kinsfolk were vouchsafed; nay, in lieu of these things there obtained, for the most part, laughter and jests and gibes and feasting and merry-making in company; which usance women, laying aside womanly pitifulness, had right well learned for their own safety.

Few, again, were they whose bodies were accompanied to the church by more than half a score or a dozen of their neighbours, and of these no worshipful and illustrious citizens, but a sort of blood-suckers, sprung from the dregs of the people, who styled themselves *pickmen* * and did such offices for hire, shouldered the bier and bore it with hurried steps, not to that church which the dead man had chosen before his death, but most times to the nearest, behind five or six † priests, with little light ‡ and whiles none at all, which latter, with the aid of the said pickmen, thrust him into what grave soever they first found unoccupied, without troubling themselves with too long or too formal a service.

The condition of the common people (and belike, in great part, of the middle class also) was yet more pitiable to behold, for that these, for the most part retained by hope § or poverty in their houses and

* *i.e.* gravediggers (*becchini*).

† Lit. *four* or six. This is the equivalent Italian idiom.

‡ *i.e.* but few tapers.

§ *i.e.* expectation of gain from acting as tenders of the sick, gravediggers, etc. The word *speranza* is, however, constantly used by Dante and his follower Boccaccio in the contrary sense of "fear," and may be so meant in the present instance.

abiding in their own quarters, sickened by the thousand daily and being altogether untended and unsuccoured, died well nigh all without recourse. Many breathed their last in the open street, whilst other many, for all they died in their houses, made it known to the neighbours that they were dead rather by the stench of their rotting bodies than otherwise; and of these and others who died all about the whole city was full. For the most part one same usance was observed by the neighbours, moved more by fear lest the corruption of the dead bodies should imperil themselves than by any charity they had for the departed; to wit, that either with their own hands or with the aid of certain bearers, whenas they might have any, they brought the bodies of those who had died forth of their houses and laid them before their doors, where, especially in the morning, those who went about might see corpses without number; then they fetched biers and some, in default thereof, they laid upon some board or other. Nor was it only one bier that carried two or three corpses, nor did this happen but once; nay, many might have been counted which contained husband and wife, two or three brothers, father and son or the like. And an infinite number of times it befell that, two priests going with one cross for some one, three or four biers, borne by bearers, ranged themselves behind the latter,* and whereas the priests thought to have but one dead man to bury, they had six or eight, and whiles more. Nor therefore were the dead honoured with aught of tears or candles or funeral train; nay, the thing was come to such a pass that folk recked no more of men that died than nowadays they would of goats; whereby it very manifestly appeared that that which the natural course of things had not availed, by dint of small and infrequent harms, to teach the wise to endure with patience, the very greatness of their ills had brought even the simple to expect and make no account of. The consecrated ground sufficing not to the burial of the vast multitude of corpses aforesaid, which daily and well nigh hourly came carried in crowds to every church,—especially if it were sought to give each his own place, according to ancient usance,—there were made throughout the churchyards, after every other part was full, vast trenches, wherein those who came after were laid by the hundred and being heaped up therein by layers, as goods are stowed aboard ship, were covered with a little earth, till such time as they reached the top of the trench.

Moreover,—not to go longer searching out and recalling every

* *i.e.* the cross.

particular of our past miseries, as they befell throughout the city,—I say that, whilst so sinister a time prevailed in the latter, on no wise therefor was the surrounding country spared, wherein, (letting be the castles,* which in their littleness † were like unto the city,) throughout the scattered villages and in the fields, the poor and miserable husbandmen and their families, without succour of physician or aid of servitor, died, not like men, but well nigh like beasts, by the ways or in their tillages or about the houses, indifferently by day and night. By reason whereof, growing lax like the townsfolk in their manners and customs, they recked not of any thing or business of theirs; nay, all, as if they looked for death that very day, studied with all their wit, not to help to maturity the future produce of their cattle and their fields and the fruits of their own past toils, but to consume those which were ready to hand. Thus it came to pass that the oxen, the asses, the sheep, the goats, the swine, the fowls, nay, the very dogs, so faithful to mankind, being driven forth of their own houses, went straying at their pleasure about the fields, where the very corn was abandoned, without being cut, much less gathered in; and many, well nigh like reasonable creatures, after grazing all day, returned at night, glutted, to their houses, without the constraint of any herdsman.

To leave the country and return to the city, what more can be said save that such and so great was the cruelty of heaven (and in part, peradventure, that of men) that, between March and the following July, what with the virulence of that pestiferous sickness and the number of sick folk ill tended or forsaken in their need, through the fearfulness of those who were whole, it is believed for certain that upward of an hundred thousand human beings perished within the walls of the city of Florence, which, peradventure, before the advent of that death-dealing calamity, had not been accounted to hold so many? Alas, how many great palaces, how many goodly houses, how many noble mansions, once full of families, of lords and of ladies, abode empty even to the meanest servant! How many memorable families, how many ample heritages, how many famous fortunes were seen to remain without lawful heir! How many valiant men, how many fair ladies, how many sprightly youths, whom, not others only, but Galen, Hippocrates or Æsculapius themselves would have judged most hale, breakfasted in the morning with their kinsfolk, comrades and friends and that same night supped with their ancestors in the other world!

* *i.e.* walled burghs.

† *i.e.* in miniature.

I am myself weary of going wandering so long among such miseries; wherefore, purposing henceforth to leave such part thereof as I can fitly, I say that,—our city being at this pass, well nigh void of inhabitants,—it chanced (as I afterward heard from a person worthy of credit) that there foregathered in the venerable church of Santa Maria Novella, one Tuesday morning when there was well nigh none else there, seven young ladies, all knit one to another by friendship or neighbourhood or kinship, who had heard divine service in mourning attire, as sorted with such a season. Not one of them had passed her eight-and-twentieth year nor was less than eighteen years old, and each was discreet and of noble blood, fair of favour and well-mannered and full of honest sprightliness. The names of these ladies I would in proper terms set out, did not just cause forbid me, to wit, that I would not have it possible that, in time to come, any of them should take shame by reason of the things hereinafter related as being told or hearkened by them, the laws of disport being nowadays somewhat straitened, which at that time, for the reasons above shown, were of the largest, not only for persons of their years, but for those of a much riper age; nor yet would I give occasion to the envious, who are still ready to carp at every praiseworthy life, on anywise to disparage the fair fame of these honourable ladies with unseemly talk. Wherefore, so that which each saith may hereafterward be apprehended without confusion, I purpose to denominate them by names altogether or in part sorting with each one's quality.* The first of them and her of ripest age I shall call Pampinea, the second Fiammetta, the third Filomena and the fourth Emilia. To the fifth we will give the name of Lauretta, to the sixth that of Neifile and the last, not without cause, we will style Elisa.† These, then, not

* Or character (*qualità*).

† I know of no explanation of these names by the commentators, who seem, indeed, after the manner of their kind, to have generally confined themselves to the elaborate illustration and elucidation (or rather, alas! too often, obscuration) of passages already perfectly plain, leaving the difficult passages for the most part untouched. The following is the best I can make of them. *Pampinea* appears to be formed from the Greek πᾶν, all, and πινύω, I advise, admonish or inform, and to mean all-advising or admonishing, which would agree well enough with the character of Pampinea, who is represented as the eldest and sagest of the female personages of the Decameron and as taking the lead in everything. *Fiammetta* is the name by which Boccaccio designates his mistress, the Princess Maria of Naples (the lady for whom he cherished "the very high and noble passion" of which he speaks in his

drawn of any set purpose, but foregathering by chance in a corner of the church, having seated themselves in a ring, after divers sighs, let be the saying of paternosters and fell to devising with one another many and various things of the nature of the time. After awhile, the others being silent, Pampinea proceeded to speak thus:

"Dear my ladies, you may, like myself, have many times heard that whoso honestly useth his right doth no one wrong; and it is the natural right of every one who is born here below to succour, keep and defend his own life as best he may, and in so far is this allowed that it hath happened whiles that, for the preservation thereof, men have been slain without any fault. If this much be conceded of the laws, which have in view the well-being of all mortals, how much more is it lawful for us and whatsoever other, without offence unto any, to take such means as we may for the preservation of our lives? As often as I consider our fashions of this morning and those of many other mornings past and bethink me what and what manner discourses are ours, I feel, and you likewise must feel, that each of us is in fear for herself. Nor do I anywise wonder at this; but I wonder exceedingly, considering that we all have a woman's wit, that we take no steps to provide ourselves against that which each of us justly feareth. We abide here, to my seeming, no otherwise than

Proëm, see ante, p. 3), in his earlier opuscule, the "Elégia di Madonna Fiammetta," describing, in her name, the torments of separation from the beloved. In this work he speaks of himself under the name of Pamfilo (Gr. πᾶν, all, and φιλέω, I love, *i.e.* the all-loving or the passionate lover), and it is probable, therefore, that under these names he intended to introduce his royal lady-love and himself in the present work. *Filomena* (Italian form of Philomela, a nightingale, Greek φίλος, loving, and μελός, melody, song, *i.e.* song-loving) is perhaps so styled for her love of music, and *Emilia's* character, as it appears in the course of the work, justifies the derivation of her name from the Greek αἰμύλιος, pleasing, engaging in manners and behaviour, cajoling. *Lauretta* Boccaccio probably intends us to look upon as a learned lady, if, as we may suppose, her name is a corruption of *laureata*, laurel-crowned; whilst *Neifile's* name (Greek νεῖος [νεός] new, and φιλέω, I love, *i.e.* novelty-loving) stamps her as being of a somewhat curious disposition, eager "to tell or to hear some new thing." The name *Elisa* is not so easily to be explained as the others; possibly it was intended by the author as a reminiscence of Dido, to whom the name (which is by some authorities explained to mean "Godlike," from a Hebrew root) is said to have been given "quòd plurima supra animi muliebris fortitudinem gesserit." It does not, however, appear that there was in Elisa's character or life anything to justify the implied comparison.

as if we would or should be witness of how many dead bodies are brought hither for burial or to hearken if the friars of the place, whose number is come well nigh to nought, chant their offices at the due hours or by our apparel to show forth unto whosoever appeareth here the nature and extent of our distresses. If we depart hence, we either see dead bodies or sick persons carried about or those, whom for their misdeeds the authority of the public laws whilere condemned to exile, overrun the whole place with unseemly excesses, as if scoffing at the laws, for that they know the executors thereof to be either dead or sick; whilst the dregs of our city, fattened with our blood, style themselves *pickmen* and ruffle it everywhere in mockery of us, riding and running all about and flouting us with our distresses in ribald songs. We hear nothing here but 'Such an one is dead' or 'Such an one is at the point of death'; and were there any to make them, we should hear dolorous lamentations on all sides. And if we return to our houses, I know not if it is with you as with me, but, for my part, when I find none left therein of a great household, save my serving-maid, I wax fearful and feel every hair of my body stand on end; and wherever I go or abide about the house, meseemeth I see the shades of those who are departed and who wear not those countenances that I was used to see, but terrify me with a horrid aspect, I know not whence newly come to them.

By reason of these things I feel myself alike ill at ease here and abroad and at home, more by token that meseemeth none, who hath, as we have, the power and whither to go, is left here, other than ourselves; or if any such there be, I have many a time both heard and perceived that, without making any distinction between things lawful and unlawful, so but appetite move them, whether alone or in company, both day and night, they do that which affordeth them most delight. Nor is it the laity alone who do thus; nay, even those who are shut in the monasteries, persuading themselves that what befitteth and is lawful to others is alike sortable and unforbidden unto them,* have broken the laws of obedience and giving themselves to carnal delights, thinking thus to escape, are grown lewd and dissolute. If thus, then, it be, as is manifestly to be seen, what do we here? What

* This phrase may also be read "persuading themselves that that (*i.e.* their breach of the laws of obedience, etc.) beseemeth them and is forbidden only to others" (*faccendosi a credere che quello a lor si convenga e non si disdica che all' altre*); but the reading in the text appears more in harmony with the general sense and is indeed indicated by the punctuation of the Giunta Edition of 1527, which I generally follow in case of doubt.

look we for? What dream we? Why are we more sluggish and slower to provide for our safety than all the rest of the townsfolk? Deem we ourselves of less price than others, or do we hold our life to be bounden in our bodies with a stronger chain than is theirs and that therefore we need reck nothing of aught that hath power to harm it? We err, we are deceived; what folly is ours, if we think thus! As often as we choose to call to mind the number and quality of the youths and ladies overborne of this cruel pestilence, we may see a most manifest proof thereof.

Wherefore, in order that we may not, through wilfulness or nonchalance, fall into that wherefrom we may, peradventure, an we but will, by some means or other escape, I know not if it seem to you as it doth to me, but methinketh it were excellently well done that we, such as we are, depart this city, as many have done before us, and eschewing, as we would death, the dishonourable example of others, betake ourselves quietly to our places in the country, whereof each of us hath great plenty, and there take such diversion, such delight and such pleasance as we may, without anywise overpassing the bounds of reason. There may we hear the small birds sing, there may we see the hills and plains clad all in green and the fields full of corn wave even as doth the sea; there may we see trees, a thousand sorts, and there is the face of heaven more open to view, the which, angered against us though it be, nevertheless denieth not unto us its eternal beauties, far goodlier to look upon than the empty walls of our city. Moreover, there is the air far fresher * and there at this season is more plenty of that which behoveth unto life and less is the sum of annoys, for that, albeit the husbandmen die there, even as do the townsfolk here, the displeasance is there the less, insomuch as houses and inhabitants are rarer than in the city.

Here, on the other hand, if I deem aright, we abandon no one; nay, we may far rather say with truth that we ourselves are abandoned, seeing that our kinsfolk, either dying or fleeing from death, have left us alone in this great tribulation, as it were we pertained not unto them. No blame can therefore befall the ensuing of this counsel; nay, dolour and chagrin and belike death may betide us, an we ensue it not. Wherefore, an it please you, methinketh we should do well to take our maids and letting follow after us with the necessary gear, sojourn to-day in this place and to-morrow in that, taking such pleasance and diversion as the season may afford, and on this wise abide

* Syn. cooler.

till such time (an we be not earlier overtaken of death) as we shall see what issue Heaven reserveth unto these things. And I would remind you that it is no more forbidden unto us honourably to depart than it is unto many others of our sex to abide in dishonour."

The other ladies, having hearkened to Pampinea, not only commended her counsel, but, eager to follow it, had already began to devise more particularly among themselves of the manner, as if, arising from their session there, they were to set off out of hand. But Filomena, who was exceeding discreet, said, "Ladies, albeit that which Pampinea allegeth is excellently well said, yet is there no occasion for running, as meseemeth you would do. Remember that we are all women and none of us is child enough not to know how [little] reasonable women are among themselves and how [ill], without some man's guidance, they know how to order themselves. We are fickle, wilful, suspicious, faint-hearted and timorous, for which reasons I misdoubt me sore, an we take not some other guidance than our own, that our company will be far too soon dissolved and with less honour to ourselves than were seemly; wherefore we should do well to provide ourselves, ere we begin."

"Verily," answered Elisa, "men are the head of women, and without their ordinance seldom cometh any emprise of ours to good end; but how may we come by these men? There is none of us but knoweth that of her kinsmen the most part are dead and those who abide alive are all gone fleeing that which we seek to flee, in divers companies, some here and some there, without our knowing where, and to invite strangers would not be seemly, seeing that, if we would endeavour after our welfare, it behoveth us find a means of so ordering ourselves that, wherever we go for diversion and repose, scandal nor annoy may ensue thereof."

Whilst such discourse was toward between the ladies, behold, there entered the church three young men,—yet not so young that the age of the youngest of them was less than five-and-twenty years,—in whom neither the perversity of the time nor loss of friends and kinsfolk, no, nor fear for themselves had availed to cool, much less to quench, the fire of love. Of these one was called Pamfilo,* another Filostrato † and the third Dioneo,‡ all very agreeable and well-bred,

* See ante, p. 17, note.

† *Filostrato*, Greek φίλος, loving, and στρατὸς, army, *met.* strife, war, *i.e.* one who loves strife. This name appears to be a reminiscence of Boccaccio's poem (*Il Filostrato*, well known through its translation by Chaucer and the Senechal d'Anjou) upon the subject of the loves of Troilus and Cres-

‡ See page 22 for footnote.

and they went seeking, for their supreme solace, in such a perturbation of things, to see their mistresses, who, as it chanced, were all three among the seven aforesaid; whilst certain of the other ladies were near kinswomen of one or other of the young men.

No sooner had their eyes fallen on the ladies than they were themselves espied of them; whereupon quoth Pampinea, smiling, "See, fortune is favourable to our beginnings and hath thrown in our way young men of worth and discretion, who will gladly be to us both guides and servitors, an we disdain not to accept of them in that capacity." But Neifile, whose face was grown all vermeil for shamefastness, for that it was she who was beloved of one of the young men, said, "For God's sake, Pampinea, look what thou sayest! I acknowledge most frankly that there can be nought but all good said of which one soever of them and I hold them sufficient unto a much greater thing than this, even as I opine that they would bear, not only ourselves, but far fairer and nobler dames than we, good and honourable company. But, for that it is a very manifest thing that they are enamoured of certain of us who are here, I fear lest, without our fault or theirs, scandal and blame ensue thereof, if we carry them with us." Quoth Filomena, "That skilleth nought; so but I live honestly and conscience prick me not of aught, let who will speak to the contrary; God and the truth will take up arms for me. Wherefore, if they be disposed to come, verily we may say with Pampinea that fortune is favourable to our going."

The other ladies, hearing her speak thus absolutely, not only held their peace, but all with one accord agreed that the young men should be called and acquainted with their project and bidden to be pleased bear them company in their expedition. Accordingly, without more words, Pampinea, who was knit by kinship to one of them, rising to her feet, made for the three young men, who stood fast, looking upon them, and saluting them with a cheerful countenance, discovered to them their intent and prayed them, on behalf of herself and her com-

sida and to be in this instance used by him as a synonym for an unhappy lover, whom no rebuffs, no treachery can divert from his ill-starred passion. Such a lover may well be said to be in love with strife, and that the Filostrato of the Decameron sufficiently answers to this description we learn later on from his own lips.

‡ *Dioneo*, a name probably coined from the Greek *Διώνη*, one of the *agnomina* of Venus (properly her mother's name) and intended to denote the amorous temperament of his personage, to which, indeed, the erotic character of most of the stories told by him bears sufficient witness.

panions, that they would be pleased to bear them company in a pure and brotherly spirit. The young men at the first thought themselves bantered, but, seeing that the lady spoke in good earnest, they made answer joyfully that they were ready, and without losing time about the matter, forthright took order for that which they had to do against departure.

On the following morning, Wednesday to wit, towards break of day, having let orderly make ready all things needful and despatched them in advance whereas they purposed to go,* the ladies, with certain of their waiting-women, and the three young men, with as many of their serving-men, departing Florence, set out upon their way; nor had they gone more than two short miles from the city, when they came to the place fore-appointed of them, which was situate on a little hill, somewhat withdrawn on every side from the high way and full of various shrubs and plants, all green of leafage and pleasant to behold. On the summit of this hill was a palace, with a goodly and great courtyard in its midst and galleries † and saloons and bedchambers, each in itself most fair and adorned and notable with jocund paintings, with lawns and grassplots round about and wonder-goodly gardens and wells of very cold water and cellars full of wines of price, things more apt unto curious drinkers than unto sober and modest ladies. The new comers, to their no little pleasure, found the place all swept and the beds made in the chambers and every thing full of such flowers as might be had at that season and strewn with rushes.

As soon as they had seated themselves, Dioneo, who was the merriest springald in the world and full of quips and cranks, said, "Ladies, your wit, rather than our foresight, hath guided us hither, and I know not what you purpose to do with your cares; as for my own, I left them within the city gates, whenas I issued thence with you awhile agone; wherefore, do you either address yourselves to make merry and laugh and sing together with me (in so far, I mean, as pertaineth to your dignity) or give me leave to go back for my cares and abide in the afflicted city." Whereto Pampinea, no otherwise than as if in like manner she had banished all her own cares, answered blithely, "Dioneo, thou sayst well; it behoveth us live merrily, nor hath any other occasion caused us flee from yonder miseries. But, for that things which

* *e prima mandato là dove*, etc. This passage is obscure and may be read to mean "and having first despatched [a messenger] (or sent [word]) whereas," etc. I think, however, that *mandato* is a copyist's error for *mandata*, in which case the meaning would be as in the text.

† Or balconies (*loggie*).

are without measure may not long endure, I, who began the discourse wherethrough this so goodly company came to be made, taking thought for the continuance of our gladness, hold it of necessity that we appoint some one to be principal among us, whom we may honour and obey as chief and whose especial care it shall be to dispose us to live joyously. And in order that each in turn may prove the burden of solicitude, together with the pleasure of headship; and that, the chief being thus drawn, in turn, from one and the other sex, there may be no cause for jealousy, as might happen, were any excluded from the sovranty, I say that unto each be attributed the burden and the honour for one day. Let who is to be our first chief be at the election of us all. For who shall follow, be it he or she whom it shall please the governor of the day to appoint, whenas the hour of vespers draweth near, and let each in turn, at his or her discretion, order and dispose of the place and manner wherein we are to live, for such time as his or her seignory shall endure."

Pampinea's words pleased mightily, and with one voice they elected her chief of the first day; whereupon Filomena, running nimbly to a laurel-tree—for that she had many a time heard speak of the honour due to the leaves of this plant and how worship-worth they made whoso was deservedly crowned withal—and plucking divers sprays therefrom, made her thereof a goodly and honourable wreath, which, being set upon her head, was thenceforth, what while their company lasted, a manifest sign unto every other of the royal office and seignory.

Pampinea, being made queen, commanded that every one should be silent; then, calling the serving-men of the three young gentlemen and her own and the other ladies' women, who were four in number, before herself and all being silent, she spoke thus: "In order that I may set you a first example, by which, proceeding from good to better, our company may live and last in order and pleasance and without reproach so long as it is agreeable to us, I constitute, firstly, Parmeno, Dioneo's servant, my seneschal and commit unto him the care and ordinance of all our household and [especially] that which pertaineth to the service of the saloon. Sirisco, Pamfilo's servant, I will shall be our purveyor and treasurer and ensue the commandments of Parmeno. Tindaro shall look to the service of Filostrato and the other two gentlemen in their bed chambers, what time the others, being occupied about their respective offices, cannot attend thereto. Misia, my woman, and Filomena's Licisca shall still abide in the kitchen and there diligently prepare such viands as shall be appointed them of Parmeno. Lauretta's Chimera and Fiammetta's Stratilia it

is our pleasure shall occupy themselves with the ordinance of the ladies' chambers and the cleanliness of the places where we shall abide; and we will and command all and several, as they hold our favour dear, to have a care that, whithersoever they go or whencesoever they return and whatsoever they hear or see, they bring us from without no news other than joyous." These orders summarily given and commended of all, Pampinea, rising blithely to her feet, said, "Here be gardens, here be meadows, here be store of other delectable places, wherein let each go a-pleasuring at will; and when tierce * soundeth, let all be here, so we may eat in the cool."

The merry company, being thus dismissed by the new queen, went straying with slow steps, young men and fair ladies together, about a garden, devising blithely and diverting themselves with weaving goodly garlands of various leaves and carolling amorously. After they had abidden there such time as had been appointed them of the queen, they returned to the house, where they found that Parmeno had made a diligent beginning with his office, for that, entering a saloon on the ground floor, they saw there the tables laid with the whitest of cloths and beakers that seemed of silver and everything covered with the flowers of the broom; whereupon, having washed their hands, they all, by command of the queen, seated themselves according to Parmeno's ordinance. Then came viands delicately drest and choicest wines were proffered and the three serving-men, without more, quietly tended the tables. All, being gladdened by these things, for that they were fair and orderly done, ate joyously and with store of merry talk, and the tables being cleared away,† the queen bade bring instruments of music, for that all the ladies knew how to dance, as also the

* *i.e.* Nine o'clock a.m. Boccaccio's habit of measuring time by the canonical hours has been a sore stumbling-block to the ordinary English and French translator, who is generally terribly at sea as to his meaning, inclining to render *tierce* three, *sexte* six o'clock and *none* noon and making shots of the same wild kind at the other hours. The monasterial rule (which before the general introduction of clocks was commonly followed by the mediæval public in the computation of time) divided the twenty-four hours of the day and night into seven parts (six of three hours each and one of six), the inception of which was denoted by the sound of the bells that summoned the clergy to the performance of the seven canonical offices i.e. *Matins* at 3 a.m., *Prime* at 6 a.m., *Tierce* at 9 a.m., *Sexte* or Noonsong at noon, *None* at 3 p.m., *Vespers* or Evensong at 6 p.m. and *Complines* or Nightsong at 9 p.m., and at the same time served the laity as a clock.

† The table of Boccaccio's time was a mere board upon trestles, which when not in actual use, was stowed away, for room's sake, against the wall.

young men, and some of them could both play and sing excellent well. Accordingly, by her commandment, Dioneo took a lute and Fiammetta a viol and began softly to sound a dance; whereupon the queen and the other ladies, together with the other two young men, having sent the serving-men to eat, struck up a round and began with a slow pace to dance a brawl; which ended, they fell to singing quaint and merry ditties. On this wise they abode till it seemed to the queen time to go to sleep,* and she accordingly dismissed them all; whereupon the young men retired to their chambers, which were withdrawn from the ladies' lodging, and finding them with the beds well made and as full of flowers as the saloon, put off their clothes and betook themselves to rest, whilst the ladies, on their part, did likewise.

None † had not long sounded when the queen, arising, made all the other ladies arise, and on like wise the three young men, alleging overmuch sleep to be harmful by day; and so they betook themselves to a little meadow, where the grass grew green and high nor there had the sun power on any side. There, feeling the waftings of a gentle breeze, they all, as their queen willed it, seated themselves in a ring on the green grass; while she bespoke them thus, "As ye see, the sun is high and the heat great, nor is aught heard save the crickets yonder among the olives; wherefore it were doubtless folly to go anywhither at this present. Here is the sojourn fair and cool, and here, as you see, are chess and tables,‡ and each can divert himself as is most to his mind. But, an my counsel be followed in this, we shall pass away this sultry part of the day, not in gaming,—wherein the mind of one of the players must of necessity be troubled, without any great pleasure of the other or of those who look on,—but in telling stories, which, one telling, may afford diversion to all the company who hearken; nor shall we have made an end of telling each his story but the sun will have declined and the heat be abated, and we can then go a-pleasuring whereas it may be most agreeable to us. Wherefore, if this that I say please you, (for I am disposed to follow your pleasure therein,) let us do it; and if it please you not, let each until the hour of vespers do what most liketh him." Ladies and men alike all approved the story-telling, whereupon, "Then," said the queen, "since this pleaseth you, I will that this first day each be free to tell of such matters as are most to his liking." Then, turning to Pamfilo, who sat on her right hand, she smilingly bade him give beginning to the story-

* *i.e.* to take the siesta or midday nap common in hot countries.

† *i.e.* three o'clock p.m.

‡ *i.e.* backgammon.

telling with one of his; and he, hearing the commandment, forthright began thus, whilst all gave ear to him.

THE FIRST STORY

MASTER CIAPPELLETTO DUPETH A HOLY FRIAR WITH A FALSE CONFESSION AND DIETH; AND HAVING BEEN IN HIS LIFETIME THE WORST OF MEN, HE IS, AFTER HIS DEATH, REPUTED A SAINT AND CALLED SAINT CIAPPELLETTO.

"It is a seemly thing, dearest ladies, that whatsoever a man doth, he give it beginning from the holy and admirable name of Him who is the maker of all things. Wherefore, it behoving me, as the first, to give commencement to our story-telling, I purpose to begin with one of His marvels, to the end that, this being heard, our hope in Him, as in a thing immutable, may be confirmed and His name be ever praised of us. It is manifest that, like as things temporal are all transitory and mortal, even so both within and without are they full of annoy and anguish and travail and subject to infinite perils, against which it is indubitable that we, who live enmingled therein and who are indeed part and parcel thereof, might avail neither to endure nor to defend ourselves, except God's especial grace lent us strength and foresight; which latter, it is not to be believed, descendeth unto us and upon us by any merit of our own, but of the proper motion of His own benignity and the efficacy of the prayers of those who were mortals even as we are and having diligently ensued His commandments, what while they were on life, are now with Him become eternal and blessed and unto whom we,—belike not daring to address ourselves unto the proper presence of so august a judge,—proffer our petitions of the things which we deem needful unto ourselves, as unto advocates * informed by experience of our frailty. And this more we discern in Him, full as He is of compassionate liberality towards us, that, whereas it chanceth whiles (the keenness of mortal eyes availing not in any wise to penetrate the secrets of the Divine intent), that we peradventure, beguiled by report, make such an one our advocate unto His majesty, who is outcast from His presence with an eternal banishment,—nevertheless He, from whom nothing is hidden, having regard rather to the purity of the suppliant's intent than to his

* Or procurators.

ignorance or to the reprobate estate of him whose intercession he invoketh, giveth ear unto those who pray unto the latter, as if he were in very deed blessed in His aspect. The which will manifestly appear from the story which I purpose to relate; I say manifestly, ensuing, not the judgment of God, but that of men.

It is told, then, that Musciatto Franzesi,* being from a very rich and considerable merchant in France become a knight and it behoving him thereupon go into Tuscany with Messire Charles Sansterre,† brother to the King of France,‡ who had been required and bidden thither by Pope Boniface,§ found his affairs in one part and another sore embroiled, (as those of merchants most times are,) and was unable lightly or promptly to disentangle them; wherefore he bethought himself to commit them unto divers persons and made shift for all, save only he abode in doubt whom he might leave sufficient to the recovery of the credits he had given to certain Burgundians. The cause of his doubt was that he knew the Burgundians to be litigious, quarrelsome fellows, ill-conditioned and disloyal, and could not call one to mind, in whom he might put any trust, curst enough to cope with their perversity. After long consideration of the matter, there came to his memory a certain Master Ciapperello da Prato, who came often to his house in Paris and whom, for that he was little of person and mighty nice in his dress, the French, knowing not what Cepparello || meant and thinking it be the same with Cappello, to wit, in their vernacular, Chaplet, called him, not Cappello, but Ciappelletto,¶ and accordingly as Ciappelletto he was known everywhere, whilst few knew him for Master Ciapperello.

Now this said Ciappelletto was of this manner life, that, being a scrivener, he thought very great shame whenas any of his instruments was found (and indeed he drew few such) other than false; whilst

* A Florentine merchant settled in France; he had great influence over Philippe le Bel and made use of the royal favour to enrich himself by means of monopolies granted at the expense of his compatriots.

† Charles, Comte de Valois et d'Alençon.

‡ Philippe le Bel, A.D. 1268-1314.

§ The Eighth.

|| Sic. *Cepparello* means a log or stump. *Ciapperello* is apparently a dialectic variant of the same word.

¶ Diminutive of Cappello. This passage is obscure and most likely corrupt. Boccaccio probably meant to write "hat" instead of "chaplet" (*ghirlanda*), as the meaning of *cappello*, chaplet (diminutive of Old English *chapel*, a hat,) being the meaning of *ciappelletto* (properly *cappelletto*.)

of the latter * he would have drawn as many as might be required of him and these with a better will by way of gift than any other for a great wage. False witness he bore with especial delight, required or not required, and the greatest regard being in those times paid to oaths in France, as he recked nothing of forswearing himself, he knavishly gained all the suits concerning which he was called upon to tell the truth upon his faith. He took inordinate pleasure and was mighty diligent in stirring up troubles and enmities and scandals between friends and kinsfolk and whomsoever else, and the greater the mischiefs he saw ensue thereof, the more he rejoiced. If bidden to manslaughter or whatsoever other naughty deed, he went about it with a will, without ever saying nay thereto; and many a time of his proper choice he had been known to wound men and do them to death with his own hand. He was a terrible blasphemer of God and the saints, and that for every trifle, being the most choleric man alive. To church he went never and all the sacraments thereof he flouted in abominable terms, as things of no account; whilst, on the other hand, he was still fain to haunt and use taverns and other lewd places. Of women he was as fond as dogs of the stick; but in the contrary he delighted more than any filthy fellow alive. He robbed and pillaged with as much conscience as a godly man would make oblation to God; he was a very glutton and a great wine bibber, insomuch that bytimes it wrought him shameful mischief, and to boot, he was a notorious gamester and a caster of cogged dice. But why should I enlarge in so many words? He was belike the worst man that ever was born.† His wickedness had long been upheld by the power and interest of Messer Musciatto, who had many a time safeguarded him as well from private persons, to whom he often did a mischief, as from the law, against which he was a perpetual offender.

This Master Ciappelletto, then, coming to Musciatto's mind, the latter, who was very well acquainted with his way of life, bethought himself that he should be such an one as the perversity of the Burgundians required and accordingly, sending for him, he bespoke him thus: 'Master Ciappelletto, I am, as thou knowest, about altogether to withdraw hence, and having to do, amongst others, with certain Burgundians, men full of guile, I know none whom I may leave to recover my due from them more fitting than thyself, more by token that thou dost nothing at this present; wherefore, an thou wilt under-

* *i.e.* false instruments.

† A "twopence-coloured" sketch of an impossible villain, drawn with a crudeness unusual in Boccaccio.

take this, I will e'en procure thee the favour of the Court and give thee such part as shall be meet of that which thou shalt recover.'

Dan Ciappelletto, who was then out of employ and ill provided with the goods of the world, seeing him who had long been his stay and his refuge about to depart thence, lost no time in deliberation, but, as of necessity constrained, replied that he would well. They being come to an accord, Musciatto departed and Ciappelletto, having gotten his patron's procuration and letters commendatory from the king, betook himself into Burgundy, where well nigh none knew him, and there, contrary to his nature, began courteously and blandly to seek to get in his payments and do that wherefor he was come thither, as if reserving choler and violence for a last resort. Dealing thus and lodging in the house of two Florentines, brothers, who there lent at usance and who entertained him with great honour for the love of Messer Musciatto, it chanced that he fell sick, whereupon the two brothers promptly fetched physicians and servants to tend him and furnished him with all that behoved unto the recovery of his health.

But every succour was in vain, for that, by the physicians' report, the good man, who was now old and had lived disorderly, grew daily worse, as one who had a mortal sickness; wherefore the two brothers were sore concerned and one day, being pretty near the chamber where he lay sick, they began to take counsel together, saying one to the other, 'How shall we do with yonder fellow? We have a sorry bargain on our hands of his affair, for that to send him forth of our house, thus sick, were a sore reproach to us and a manifest sign of little wit on our part, if the folk, who have seen us first receive him and after let tend and medicine him with such solicitude, should now see him suddenly put out of our house, sick unto death as he is, without it being possible for him to have done aught that should displease us. On the other hand, he hath been so wicked a man that he will never consent to confess or take any sacrament of the church; and he dying without confession, no church will receive his body; nay, he will be cast into a ditch, like a dog. Again, even if he do confess, his sins are so many and so horrible that the like will come of it, for that there is nor priest nor friar who can or will absolve him thereof; wherefore, being unshriven, he will still be cast into the ditches. Should it happen thus, the people of the city, as well on account of our trade, which appeareth to them most iniquitous and of which they missay all day, as of their itch to plunder us, seeing this, will rise up in riot and cry out, "These Lombard dogs, whom the church refuseth to receive, are to be suffered here no longer";—and they will run to

our houses and despoil us not only of our good, but may be of our lives, to boot; wherefore in any case it will go ill with us, if yonder fellow die.'

Master Ciappelletto, who, as we have said, lay near the place where the two brothers were in discourse, being quick of hearing, as is most times the case with the sick, heard what they said of him and calling them to him, bespoke them thus: 'I will not have you anywise misdoubt of me nor fear to take any hurt by me. I have heard what you say of me and am well assured that it would happen even as you say, should matters pass as you expect; but it shall go otherwise. I have in my lifetime done God the Lord so many an affront that it will make neither more nor less, an I do Him yet another at the point of death; wherefore do you make shift to bring me the holiest and worthiest friar you may avail to have, if any such there be,* and leave the rest to me, for that I will assuredly order your affairs and mine own on such wise that all shall go well and you shall have good cause to be satisfied.'

The two brothers, albeit they conceived no great hope of this, nevertheless betook themselves to a brotherhood of monks and demanded some holy and learned man to hear the confession of a Lombard who lay sick in their house. There was given them a venerable brother of holy and good life and a past master in Holy Writ, a very reverend man, for whom all the townsfolk had a very great and special regard, and they carried him to their house; where, coming to the chamber where Master Ciappelletto lay and seating himself by his side, he began first tenderly to comfort him and after asked him how long it was since he had confessed last; whereto Master Ciappelletto, who had never confessed in his life, answered, 'Father, it hath been my usance to confess every week once at the least and often more; it is true that, since I fell sick, to wit, these eight days past, I have not confessed, such is the annoy that my sickness hath given me." Quoth the friar, "My son, thou hast done well and so must thou do henceforward. I see, since thou confessest so often, that I shall be at little pains either of hearing or questioning.' 'Sir,' answered Master Ciappelletto, 'say not so; I have never confessed so much nor so often but I would still fain make a general confession of all my sins that I could call to mind from the day of my birth to that of my confession; wherefore I pray you, good my father, question me as punctually of everything, nay, everything, as if I had never confessed; and consider me not

* *i.e.* if there be such a thing as a holy and worthy friar.

because I am sick, for that I had far liefer displease this my flesh than, in consulting its ease, do aught that might be the perdition of my soul, which my Saviour redeemed with His precious blood.'

These words much pleased the holy man and seemed to him to argue a well-disposed mind; wherefore, after he had much commended Master Ciappelletto for that his usance, he asked him if he had ever sinned by way of lust with any woman. 'Father,' replied Master Ciappelletto, sighing, 'on this point I am ashamed to tell you the truth, fearing to sin by way of vainglory.' Quoth the friar, 'Speak in all security, for never did one sin by telling the truth, whether in confession or otherwise.' 'Then,' said Master Ciappelletto, 'since you certify me of this, I will tell you; I am yet a virgin, even as I came forth of my mother's body.' 'O blessed be thou of God!' cried the monk. 'How well hast thou done! And doing thus, thou hast the more deserved, inasmuch as, an thou wouldst, thou hadst more leisure to do the contrary than we and whatsoever others are limited by any rule.'

After this he asked him if he had ever offended against God in the sin of gluttony; whereto Master Ciappelletto answered, sighing, Ay had he, and that many a time; for that, albeit, over and above the Lenten fasts that are yearly observed of the devout, he had been wont to fast on bread and water three days at the least in every week,—he had oftentimes (and especially whenas he had endured any fatigue, either praying or going a-pilgrimage) drunken the water with as much appetite and as keen a relish as great drinkers do wine. And many a time he had longed to have such homely salads of potherbs as women make when they go into the country; and whiles eating had given him more pleasure than himseemed it should do to one who fasteth for devotion, as did he. 'My son,' said the friar, 'these sins are natural and very slight and I would not therefore have thee burden thy conscience withal more than behoveth. It happeneth to every man, how devout soever he be, that, after long fasting, meat seemeth good to him, and after travail, drink.'

'Alack, father mine,' rejoined Ciappelletto, 'tell me not this to comfort me; you must know I know that things done for the service of God should be done sincerely and with an ungrudging mind; and whoso doth otherwise sinneth.' Quoth the friar, exceeding well pleased, 'I am content that thou shouldst thus apprehend it and thy pure and good conscience therein pleaseth me exceedingly. But, tell me, hast thou sinned by way of avarice, desiring more than befitted or withholding that which it behoved thee not to withhold?' 'Father

mine,' replied Ciappelletto, 'I would not have you look to my being in the house of these usurers; I have nought to do here; nay, I came hither to admonish and chasten them and turn them from this their abominable way of gain; and methinketh I should have made shift to do so, had not God thus visited me. But you must know that I was left a rich man by my father, of whose good, when he was dead, I bestowed the most part in alms, and after, to sustain my life and that I might be able to succour Christ's poor. I have done my little traffickings, and in these I have desired to gain; but still with God's poor have I shared that which I gained, converting my own half to my occasion and giving them the other, and in this so well hath my Creator prospered me that my affairs have still gone from good to better.'

'Well hast thou done,' said the friar; 'but hast thou often been angered?' 'Oh,' cried Master Ciappelletto, 'that I must tell you I have very often been! And who could keep himself therefrom, seeing men do unseemly things all day long, keeping not the commandments of God neither fearing His judgments? Many times a day I had liefer been dead than alive, seeing young men follow after vanities and hearing them curse and forswear themselves, haunting the taverns, visiting not the churches and ensuing rather the ways of the world than that of God.' 'My son,' said the friar, 'this is a righteous anger, nor for my part might I enjoin thee any penance therefor. But hath anger at any time availed to move thee to do any manslaughter or to bespeak any one unseemly or do any other unright?' 'Alack, sir,' answered the sick man, 'you, who seem to me a man of God, how can you say such words? Had I ever had the least thought of doing any one of the things whereof you speak, think you I believe that God would so long have forborne me? These be the doings of outlaws and men of nought, whereof I never saw any but I said still, "Go, may God amend thee!"'

Then said the friar, 'Now tell me, my son (blessed be thou of God), hast thou never borne false witness against any or missaid of another or taken others' good, without leave of him to whom it pertained?' 'Ay, indeed, sir,' replied Master Ciappelletto; 'I have missaid of others; for that I had a neighbour aforetime, who, with the greatest unright in the world, did nought but beat his wife, insomuch that I once spoke ill of him to her kinsfolk, so great was the compassion that overcame me for the poor woman, whom he used as God alone can tell, whenassoever he had drunken overmuch.' Quoth the friar, 'Thou tellest me thou hast been a merchant. Hast thou never

cheated any one, as merchants do whiles?' 'I' faith, yes, sir,' answered Master Ciappelletto; 'but I know not whom, except it were a certain man, who once brought me monies which he owed me for cloth I had sold him and which I threw into a chest, without counting. A good month after, I found that they were four farthings more than they should have been; wherefore, not seeing him again and having kept them by me a full year, that I might restore them to him, I gave them away in alms.' Quoth the friar, 'This was a small matter, and thou didst well to deal with it as thou didst.'

Then he questioned him of many other things, of all which he answered after the same fashion, and the holy father offering to proceed to absolution, Master Ciappelletto said, 'Sir, I have yet sundry sins that I have not told you.' The friar asked him what they were, and he answered, 'I mind me that one Saturday, after none, I caused my servant sweep out the house and had not that reverence for the Lord's holy day which it behoved me have.' 'Oh,' said the friar, 'that is a light matter, my son.' 'Nay,' rejoined Master Ciappelletto, 'call it not a light matter, for that the Lord's Day is greatly to be honoured, seeing that on such a day our Lord rose from the dead.' Then said the friar, 'Well, hast thou done aught else?' 'Ay, sir,' answered Master Ciappelletto; 'once, unthinking what I did, I spat in the church of God.' Thereupon the friar fell a-smiling and said, 'My son, that is no thing to be recked of; we who are of the clergy, we spit there all day long.' 'And you do very ill,' rejoined Master Ciappelletto; 'for that there is nought which it so straitly behoveth to keep clean as the holy temple wherein is rendered sacrifice to God.'

Brief, he told him great plenty of such like things and presently fell a-sighing and after weeping sore, as he knew full well to do, whenas as he would. Quoth the holy friar, 'What aileth thee, my son?' 'Alas, sir,' replied Master Ciappelletto, 'I have one sin left, whereof I never yet confessed me, such shame have I to tell it; and every time I call it to mind, I weep, even as you see, and meseemeth very certain that God will never pardon it me.' 'Go to, son,' rejoined the friar; 'what is this thou sayest? If all the sins that were ever wrought or are yet to be wrought of all mankind, what while the world endureth, were all in one man and he repented him thereof and were contrite therefor, as I see thee, such is the mercy and lovingkindness of God that, upon confession, He would freely pardon them to Him. Wherefore do thou tell it in all assurance.' Quoth Master Ciappelletto, still weeping sore, 'Alack, father mine, mine is too great a sin, and I can scarce believe that it will ever be forgiven me of God, except your

prayers strive for me.' Then said the friar, 'Tell it me in all assurance, for I promise thee to pray God for thee.'

Master Ciappelletto, however, still wept and said nought; but, after he had thus held the friar a great while in suspense, he heaved a deep sigh and said, 'Father mine, since you promise me to pray God for me, I will e'en tell it you. Know, then, that, when I was little, I once cursed my mother.' So saying, he fell again to weeping sore. 'O my son,' quoth the friar, 'seemeth this to thee so heinous a sin? Why, men blaspheme God all day long and He freely pardoneth whoso repenteth him of having blasphemed Him; and deemest thou not He will pardon thee this? Weep not, but comfort thyself; for, certes, wert thou one of those who set Him on the cross, He would pardon thee, in favour of such contrition as I see in thee.' 'Alack, father mine, what say you?' replied Ciappelletto. 'My kind mother, who bore me nine months in her body, day and night, and carried me on her neck an hundred times and more, I did passing ill to curse her and it was an exceeding great sin; and except you pray God for me, it will not be forgiven me.'

The friar, then, seeing that Master Ciappelletto had no more to say, gave him absolution and bestowed on him his benison, holding him a very holy man and devoutly believing all that he had told him to be true. And who would not have believed it, hearing a man at the point of death speak thus? Then, after all this, he said to him, 'Master Ciappelletto, with God's help you will speedily be whole; but, should it come to pass that God call your blessed and well-disposed soul to Himself, would it please you that your body be buried in our convent?' 'Ay, would it, sir,' replied Master Ciappelletto. 'Nay, I would fain not be buried otherwhere, since you have promised to pray God for me; more by token that I have ever had a special regard for your order. Wherefore I pray you that, whenas you return to your lodging, you cause bring me that most veritable body of Christ, which you consecrate a-mornings upon the altar, for that, with your leave, I purpose (all unworthy as I am) to take it and after, holy and extreme unction, to the intent that, if I have lived as a sinner, I may at the least die like a Christian.' The good friar replied that it pleased him much and that he said well and promised to see it presently brought him; and so was it done.

Meanwhile, the two brothers, misdoubting them sore lest Master Ciappelletto should play them false, had posted themselves behind a wainscot, that divided the chamber where he lay from another, and listening, easily heard and apprehended that which he said to the friar

and had whiles so great a mind to laugh, hearing the things which he confessed to having done, that they were like to burst and said, one to other, 'What manner of man is this, whom neither old age nor sickness nor fear of death, whereunto he seeth himself near, nor yet of God, before whose judgment-seat he looketh to be ere long, have availed to turn from his wickedness nor hinder him from choosing to die as he hath lived?' However, seeing that he had so spoken that he should be admitted to burial in a church, they recked nought of the rest.

Master Ciappelletto presently took the sacrament and, growing rapidly worse, received extreme unction, and a little after evensong of the day he had made his fine confession, he died; whereupon the two brothers, having, of his proper monies, taken order for his honourable burial, sent to the convent to acquaint the friars therewith, bidding them come thither that night to hold vigil, according to usance, and fetch away the body in the morning, and meanwhile made ready all that was needful thereunto.

The holy friar, who had shriven him, hearing that he had departed this life, betook himself to the prior of the convent and, letting ring to chapter, gave out to the brethren therein assembled that Master Ciappelletto had been a holy man, according to that which he had gathered from his confession, and persuaded them to receive his body with the utmost reverence and devotion, in the hope that God should show forth many miracles through him. To this the prior and brethren credulously consented and that same evening, coming all whereas Master Ciappelletto lay dead, they held high and solemn vigil over him and on the morrow, clad all in albs and copes, book in hand and crosses before them, they went, chanting the while, for his body, and brought it with the utmost pomp and solemnity to their church, followed by well nigh all the people of the city, men and women.

As soon as they had set the body down in the church, the holy friar, who had confessed him, mounted the pulpit and fell a-preaching marvellous things of the dead man and of his life, his fasts, his virginity, his simplicity and innocence and sanctity, recounting, amongst other things, that which he had confessed to him as his greatest sin and how he had hardly availed to persuade him that God would forgive it him; thence passing on to reprove the folk who hearkened, 'And you, accursed that you are,' quoth he, 'for every waif of straw that stirreth between your feet, you blaspheme God and the Virgin and all the host of heaven.' Moreover, he told them many other things of his loyalty and purity of heart; brief, with his speech, whereto entire

"Master Ciappelletto lay dead"

faith was yielded of the people of the city, he so established the dead man in the reverent consideration of all who were present that, no sooner was the service at an end, than they all with the utmost eagerness flocked to kiss his hands and feet and the clothes were torn off his back, he holding himself blessed who might avail to have never so little thereof; and needs must they leave him thus all that day, so he might be seen and visited of all.

The following night he was honourably buried in a marble tomb in one of the chapels of the church and on the morrow the folk began incontinent to come and burn candles and offer up prayers and make vows to him and hang images of wax * at his shrine, according to the promise made. Nay, on such wise waxed the fame of his sanctity and men's devotion to him that there was scarce any who, being in adversity, would vow himself to another saint than him; and they styled and yet style him Saint Ciappelletto and avouch that God through him hath wrought many miracles and yet worketh them every day for whoso devoutly commendeth himself unto him.

Thus, then, lived and died Master Cepperello † da Prato and became a saint, as you have heard; nor would I deny it to be possible that he is beatified in God's presence, for that, albeit his life was wicked and perverse, he may at his last extremity have shown such contrition that peradventure God had mercy on him and received him into His kingdom; but, for that this is hidden from us, I reason according to that which is apparent and say that he should rather be in the hands of the devil in perdition than in Paradise. And if so it be, we may know from this how great is God's lovingkindness towards us, which, having regard not to our error, but to the purity of our faith, whenas we thus make an enemy (deeming him a friend) of His our intermediary, giveth ear unto us, even as if we had recourse unto one truly holy, as intercessor for His favour. Wherefore, to the end that by His grace we may be preserved safe and sound in this present adversity and in this so joyous company, let us, magnifying His name, in which we have begun our diversion, and holding Him in reverence, commend ourselves to Him in our necessities, well assured of being heard." And with this he was silent.

* *i.e.* ex voto.

† It will be noted that this is Boccaccio's third variant of his hero's name (the others being Ciapperello and Cepparello) and the edition of 1527 furnishes us with a fourth and a fifth form, *i.e.* Ciepparello and Ciepperello.

THE SECOND STORY

ABRAHAM THE JEW, AT THE INSTIGATION OF JEHANNOT DE CHEVIGNÉ, GOETH TO THE COURT OF ROME AND SEEING THE DEPRAVITY OF THE CLERGY, RETURNETH TO PARIS AND THERE BECOMETH A CHRISTIAN

PAMFILO's story was in part laughed at and altogether commended by the ladies, and it being come to its end, after being diligently hearkened, the queen bade Neifile, who sat next him, ensue the ordinance of the commenced diversion by telling one * of her fashion. Neifile, who was distinguished no less by courteous manners than by beauty, answered blithely that she would well and began on this wise: "Pamfilo hath shown us in his story that God's benignness regardeth not our errors, when they proceed from that which is beyond our ken; and I, in mine, purpose to show you how this same benignness, —patiently suffering the defaults of those who, being especially bounden both with words and deeds to bear true witness thereof,† yet practise the contrary,—exhibiteth unto us an infallible proof of itself, to the intent that we may, with the more constancy of mind, ensue that which we believe.

As I have heard tell, gracious ladies, there was once in Paris a great merchant and a very loyal and upright man, whose name was Jehannot de Chevigné and who was of great traffick in silks and stuffs. He had a particular friendship for a very rich Jew called Abraham, who was also a merchant and a very honest and trusty man, and seeing the latter's worth and loyalty, it began to irk him sore that the soul of so worthy and discreet and good a man should go to perdition for default of faith; wherefore he fell to beseeching him on friendly wise leave the errors of the Jewish faith and turn to the Christian verity, which he might see still wax and prosper, as being holy and good, whereas his own faith, on the contrary, was manifestly on the wane and dwindling to nought. The Jew made answer that he held no faith holy or good save only the Jewish, that in this latter he was born and therein meant to live and die, nor should aught ever make him remove therefrom.

Jehannot for all that desisted not from him, but some days after returned to the attack with similar words, showing him, on rude enough

* *i.e.* a story.

† *i.e.* of God's benignness.

wise (for that merchants for the most part can no better), for what reasons our religion is better than the Jewish; and albeit the Jew was a past master in their law, nevertheless, whether it was the great friendship he bore Jehannot that moved him or peradventure words wrought it that the Holy Ghost put into the good simple man's mouth, the latter's arguments began greatly to please him; but yet, persisting in his own belief, he would not suffer himself to be converted. Like as he abode obstinate, even so Jehannot never gave over importuning him, till at last the Jew, overcome by such continual insistance, said, 'Look you, Jehannot, thou wouldst have me become a Christian and I am disposed to do it; insomuch, indeed, that I mean, in the first place, to go to Rome and there see him who, thou sayest, is God's Vicar upon earth and consider his manners and fashions and likewise those of his chief brethren.* If these appear to me such that I may, by them, as well as by your words, apprehend that your faith is better than mine, even as thou hast studied to show me, I will do as I have said; and if it be not so, I will remain a Jew as I am.'

When Jehannot heard this, he was beyond measure chagrined and said in himself, 'I have lost my pains, which meseemed I had right well bestowed, thinking to have converted this man; for that, an he go to the court of Rome and see the lewd and wicked life of the clergy, not only will he never become a Christian, but, were he already a Christian, he would infallibly turn Jew again.' Then, turning to Abraham, he said to him, 'Alack, my friend, why wilt thou undertake this travail and so great a charge as it will be to thee to go from here to Rome? More by token that, both by sea and by land, the road is full of perils for a rich man such as thou art. Thinkest thou not to find here who shall give thee baptism? Or, if peradventure thou have any doubts concerning the faith which I have propounded to thee, where are there greater doctors and men more learned in the matter than are here or better able to resolve thee of that which thou wilt know or ask? Wherefore, to my thinking, this thy going is superfluous. Bethink thee that the prelates there are even such as those thou mayst have seen here, and indeed so much the better as they are nearer unto the Chief Pastor. Wherefore, an thou wilt be counselled by me, thou wilt reserve this travail unto another time against some jubilee or other, whereunto it may be I will bear thee company.' To this the Jew made answer, 'I doubt not, Jehannot, but it is as thou tellest me; but, to sum up many words in one, I am

* Lit. cardinal brethren (*fratelli cardinali*).

altogether determined, an thou wouldst have me do that whereof thou hast so instantly besought me, to go thither; else will I never do aught thereof.' Jehannot, seeing his determination, said, 'Go and good luck go with thee!' And was inwardly assured that he would never become a Christian, when once he should have seen the court of Rome, but, availing * nothing in the matter, he desisted.

The Jew mounted to horse and as quickliest he might betook himself to the court of Rome, where he was honourably entertained of his brethren, and there abiding, without telling any the reason of his coming, he began diligently to enquire into the manners and fashions of the Pope and Cardinals and other prelates and of all the members of his court, and what with that which he himself noted, being a mighty quick-witted man, and that which he gathered from others, he found all, from the highest to the lowest, most shamefully given to the sin of lust, and that not only in the way of nature, but after the Sodomitical fashion, without any restraint of remorse or shamefastness, insomuch that the interest of courtezans and catamites was of no small avail there in obtaining any considerable thing.

Moreover, he manifestly perceived them to be universally gluttons, winebibbers, drunkards and slaves to their bellies, brute-beast fashion, more than to aught else after lust. And looking farther, he saw them all covetous and greedy after money, insomuch that human, nay, Christian blood, no less than things sacred, whatsoever they might be, whether pertaining to the sacrifices of the altar or to the benefices of the church, they sold and bought indifferently for a price, making a greater traffic and having more brokers thereof than folk at Paris of silks and stuffs or what not else. Manifest simony they had christened 'procuration' and gluttony 'sustentation,' as if God apprehended not, —let be the meaning of words but,—the intention of depraved minds and would suffer Himself, after the fashion of men, to be duped by the names of things. All this, together with much else which must be left unsaid, was supremely displeasing to the Jew, who was a sober and modest man, and himseeming he had seen enough, he determined to return to Paris and did so.

As soon as Jehannot knew of his return, he betook himself to him, hoping nothing less than that he should become a Christian, and they greeted each other with the utmost joy. Then, after Abraham had rested some days, Jehannot asked him how himseemed of the Holy Father and of the cardinals and others of his court. Whereto the

* Lit. losing (*perdendo*); but this is probably some copyist's mistake for *podendo*, the old form of *potendo*, availing.

Jew promptly answered, 'Meseemeth, God give them ill one and all! And I say this for that, if I was able to observe aright, no piety, no devoutness, no good work or example of life or otherwhat did I see there in any who was a churchman; nay, but lust, covetise, gluttony and the like and worse (if worse can be) meseemed to be there in such favour with all that I hold it for a forging-place of things diabolical rather than divine. And as far as I can judge, meseemeth your chief pastor and consequently all the others endeavour with all diligence and all their wit and every art to bring to nought and banish from the world the Christian religion, whereas they should be its foundation and support. And for that I see that this whereafter they strive cometh not to pass, but that your religion continually increaseth and waxeth still brighter and more glorious, meseemeth I manifestly discern that the Holy Spirit is verily the foundation and support thereof, as of that which is true and holy over any other. Wherefore, whereas aforetime I abode obdurate and insensible to thine exhortations and would not be persuaded to embrace thy faith, I now tell thee frankly that for nothing in the world would I forbear to become a Christian. Let us, then, to church and there have me baptized, according to the rite and ordinance of your holy faith.'

Jehannot, who looked for a directly contrary conclusion to this, was the joyfullest man that might be, when he heard him speak thus, and repairing with him to our Lady's Church of Paris, required the clergy there to give Abraham baptism. They, hearing that the Jew himself demanded it, straightway proceeded to baptize him, whilst Jehannot raised him from the sacred font * and named him Giovanni. After this, he had him throughly lessoned by men of greath worth and learning in the tenets of our holy faith, which he speedily apprehended and thenceforward was a good man and a worthy and one of a devout life."

THE THIRD STORY

MELCHIZEDEK THE JEW, WITH A STORY OF THREE RINGS, ESCAPETH A PARLOUS SNARE SET FOR HIM BY SALADIN

NEIFILE having made an end of her story, which was commended of all, Filomena, by the queen's good pleasure, proceeded to speak

* *i.e.* stood sponsor for him.

thus: "The story told by Neifile bringeth to my mind a parlous case that once betided a Jew; and for that, it having already been excellent well spoken both of God and of the verity of our faith, it should not henceforth be forbidden us to descend to the doings of mankind and the events that have befallen them, I will now proceed to relate to you the case aforesaid, which having heard, you will peradventure become more wary in answering the questions that may be put to you. You must know, lovesome * companions † mine, that, like as folly ofttimes draweth folk forth of happy estate and casteth them into the utmost misery, even so doth good sense extricate the wise man from the greatest perils and place him in assurance and tranquillity. How true it is that folly bringeth many an one from fair estate unto misery is seen by multitude of examples, with the recounting whereof we have no present concern, considering that a thousand instances thereof do every day manifestly appear to us; but that good sense is a cause of solacement I will, as I promised, briefly show you by a little story.

Saladin,—whose valour was such that not only from a man of little account it made him Soldan of Babylon, but gained him many victories over kings Saracen and Christian,—having in divers wars and in the exercise of his extraordinary munificences expended his whole treasure and having an urgent occasion for a good sum of money nor seeing whence he might avail to have it as promptly as it behoved him, called to mind a rich Jew, by name Melchizedek, who lent at usance in Alexandria, and bethought himself that this latter had the wherewithal to oblige him, an he would; but he was so miserly that he would never have done it of his free-will and Saladin was loath to use force with him; wherefore, need constraining him, he set his every wit awork to find a means how the Jew might be brought to serve him in this and presently concluded to do him a violence coloured by some show of reason.

Accordingly he sent for Melchizedek and receiving him familiarly, seated him by himself, then said to him, 'Honest man, I have understood from divers persons that thou art a very learned man and deeply versed in matters of divinity; wherefore I would fain know of thee whether of the three Laws thou reputest the true, the Jewish, the

* Lit. amorous (*amorose*), but Boccaccio frequently uses *amoroso*, *vago*, and other adjectives, which are now understood in an active or transitive sense only, in their ancient passive or intransitive sense of lovesome, desirable, etc.

† *Compagne*, i.e. she-companions. Filomena is addressing the female part of the company.

Saracen or the Christian.' The Jew, who was in truth a man of learning and understanding, perceived but too well that Saladin looked to entrap him in words, so he might fasten a quarrel on him, and bethought himself that he could not praise any of the three more than the others without giving him the occasion he sought. Accordingly, sharpening his wits, as became one who felt himself in need of an answer by which he might not be taken at a vantage, there speedily occurred to him that which it behoved him reply and he said, 'My lord, the question that you propound to me is a nice one and to acquaint you with that which I think of the matter, it behoveth me tell you a little story, which you shall hear.

An I mistake not, I mind me to have many a time heard tell that there was once a great man and a rich, who, among other very precious jewels in his treasury, had a very goodly and costly ring, whereunto being minded, for its worth and beauty, to do honour and wishing to leave it in perpetuity to his descendants, he declared that whichsoever of his sons should, at his death, be found in possession thereof, by his bequest unto him, should be recognized as his heir and be held of all the others in honour and reverence as chief and head. He to whom the ring was left by him held a like course with his own descendants and did even as his father had done. In brief the ring passed from hand to hand, through many generations, and came at last into the possession of a man who had three goodly and virtuous sons, all very obedient to their father, wherefore he loved them all three alike. The young men, knowing the usance of the ring, each for himself, desiring to be the most honoured among his folk, as best he might, besought his father, who was now an old man, to leave him the ring, whenas he came to die. The worthy man, who loved them all alike and knew not himself how to choose to which he had liefer leave the ring, bethought himself, having promised it to each, to seek to satisfy all three and privily let make by a good craftsman other two rings, which were so like unto the first that he himself scarce knew which was the true. When he came to die, he secretly gave each one of his sons his ring, wherefore each of them, seeking, after their father's death, to occupy the inheritance and the honour and denying it to the others, produced his ring, in witness of his right, and the three rings being found so like unto one another that the true might not be known, the question which was the father's very heir abode pending and yet pendeth. And so say I to you, my lord, of the three Laws to the three peoples given of God the Father, whereof you question me; each people deemeth itself to have His inheritance, His true Law and His commandments;

might after have no occasion to murmur against himself, whenas he should punish the offender, or seek first to learn from the girl herself how the thing had passed; and bethinking himself that she might perchance be the wife or daughter of such a man that he would be loath to have done her the shame of showing her to all the monks, he determined first to see her and after come to a conclusion; wherefore, betaking himself to the cell, he opened it and, entering, shut the door after him.

The girl, seeing the abbot enter, was all aghast and fell a-weeping for fear of shame; but my lord abbot, casting his eyes upon her and seeing her young and handsome, old as he was, suddenly felt the pricks of the flesh no less importunate than his young monk had done and fell a-saying in himself, 'Marry, why should I not take somewhat of pleasure, wheneas I may, more by token that displeasance and annoy are still at hand, whenever I have a mind to them? This is a handsome wench and is here unknown of any in the world. If I can bring her to do my pleasure, I know not why I should not do it. Who will know it? No one will ever know it and a sin that's hidden is half forgiven. Maybe this chance will never occur again. I hold it great sense to avail ourselves of a good, whenas God the Lord sendeth us thereof.'

So saying and having altogether changed purpose from that wherewith he came, he drew near to the girl and began gently to comfort her, praying her not to weep, and passing from one word to another, he ended by discovering to her his desire. The girl, who was neither iron nor adamant, readily enough lent herself to the pleasure of the abbot, who, after he had clipped and kissed her again and again, mounted upon the monk's pallet and having belike regard to the grave burden of his dignity and the girl's tender age and fearful of irking her for overmuch heaviness, bestrode not her breast, but set her upon his own and so a great while disported himself with her.

Meanwhile, the monk, who had only made believe to go to the wood and had hidden himself in the dormitory, was altogether reassured, whenas he saw the abbot enter his cell alone, doubting not but his device should have effect, and when he saw him lock the door from within, he held it for certain. Accordingly, coming forth of his hiding-place, he stealthily betook himself to a crevice, through which he both heard and saw all that the abbot did and said. When it seemed to the latter that he had tarried long enough with the damsel, he locked her in the cell and returned to his own chamber, whence, after awhile, he heard the monk stirring and deeming him returned

"He heard and saw all"

from the wood, thought to rebuke him severely and cast him into prison, so himself might alone possess the prey he had gotten; wherefore, sending for him, he very grievously rebuked him and with a stern countenance and commanded that he should be put in prison.

The monk very readily answered, 'Sir, I have not yet pertained long enough to the order of St. Benedict to have been able to learn every particular thereof, and you had not yet shown me that monks should make of women a means of mortification,* as of fasts and vigils; but, now that you have shown it me, I promise you, so you will pardon me this default, never again to offend therein, but still to do as I have seen you do.' The abbot, who was a quick-witted man, readily understood that the monk not only knew more than himself, but had seen what he did; wherefore, his conscience pricking him for his own default, he was ashamed to inflict on the monk a punishment which he himself had merited even as he. Accordingly, pardoning him and charging him keep silence of that which he had seen, they privily put the girl out of doors and it is to be believed that they caused her return thither more than once thereafterward."

THE FIFTH STORY

THE MARCHIONESS OF MONFERRATO, WITH A DINNER OF HENS AND CERTAIN SPRIGHTLY WORDS, CURBETH THE EXTRAVAGANT PASSION OF THE KING OF FRANCE

THE story told by Dioneo at first pricked the hearts of the listening ladies with somewhat of shamefastness, whereof a modest redness appearing in their faces gave token; but after, looking one at other and being scarce able to keep their countenance, they listened, laughing in their sleeves. The end thereof being come, after they had gently chidden him, giving him to understand that such tales were not fit to be told among ladies, the queen, turning to Fiammetta, who sat next him on the grass, bade her follow on the ordinance. Accordingly, she began with a good grace and a cheerful countenance, "It hath occurred to my mind, fair my ladies,—at once because it pleaseth me that we

* Lit. a pressure or oppression (*priemere*, hod. *premere*, to press or oppress, indicative used as a noun). The monk of course refers to the posture in which he had seen the abbot have to do with the girl, pretending to believe that he placed her on his own breast (instead of mounting on hers) out of a sentiment of humility and a desire to mortify his flesh ipsâ in voluptate.

have entered upon showing by stories how great is the efficacy of prompt and goodly answers and because, like as in men it is great good sense to seek still to love a lady of higher lineage than themselves,* so in women it is great discretion to know how to keep themselves from being taken with the love of men of greater condition than they, —to set forth to you, in the story which it falleth to me to tell, how both with deeds and words a noble lady guarded herself against this and diverted another therefrom.

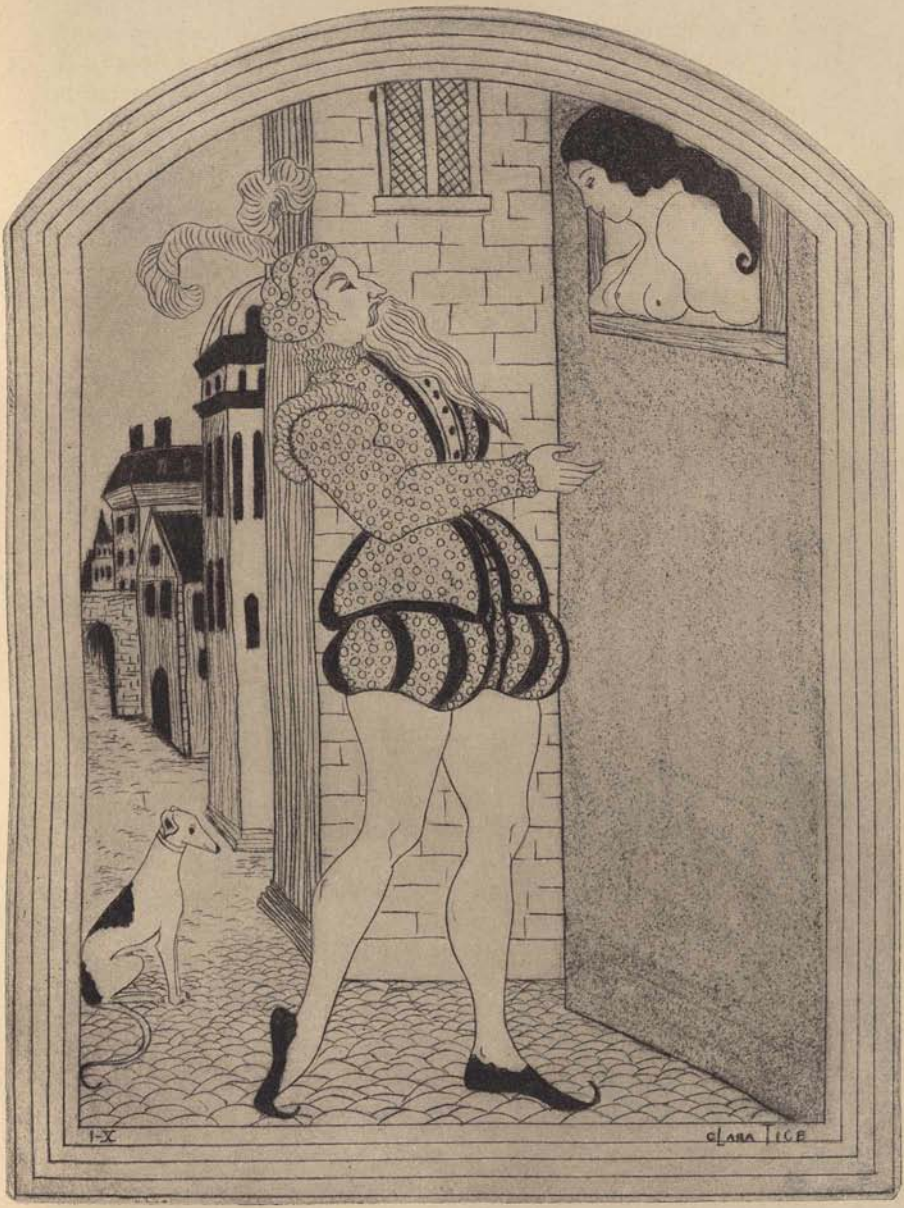
The Marquis of Monferrato, a man of high worth and gonfalonier † of the church, had passed beyond seas on the occasion of a general crusade undertaken by the Christians, arms in hand, and it being one day discoursed of his merit at the court of King Philippe le Borgne,‡ who was then making ready to depart France upon the same crusade, it was avouched by a gentleman present that there was not under the stars a couple to match with the marquis and his lady, for that, even as he was renowned among knights for every virtue, so was she the fairest and noblest of all the ladies in the world. These words took such hold upon the mind of the King of France that, without having seen the marchioness, he fell of a sudden ardently in love with her and determined to take ship for the crusade, on which he was to go, no otherwhere than at Genoa, in order that, journeying thither by land, he might have an honourable occasion of visiting the marchioness, doubting not but that, the marquis being absent, he might avail to give effect to his desire.

As he had bethought himself, so he put his thought into execution; for, having sent forward all his power, he set out, attended only by some few gentlemen, and coming within a day's journey of the marquis's domains, despatched a vaunt-courier to bid the lady expect him the following morning to dinner. The marchioness, who was well advised and discreet, replied blithely that in this he did her the greatest of favours and that he would be welcome and after bethought herself what this might mean that such a king should come to visit her in her husband's absence, nor was she deceived in the conclusion to which she came, to wit, that the report of her beauty drew him thither. Nevertheless, like a brave lady as she was, she determined

* An evident allusion to Boccaccio's passion for the Princess Maria, *i.e.* Fiammetta herself.

† Or standard-bearer.

‡ *i.e.* the One-eyed (syn. le myope, the short-sighted, the Italian word [*Il Bornio*] having both meanings), i.e. Philip II. of France, better known as Philip Augustus.



"He fell to passing continually"

to receive him with honour and summoning to her counsels sundry gentlemen of those who remained there, with their help, she let provide for everything needful. The ordinance of the repast and of the viands she reserved to herself alone and having forthright caused collect as many hens as were in the country, she bade her cooks dress various dishes of these alone for the royal table.

The king came at the appointed time and was received by the lady with great honour and rejoicing. When he beheld her, she seemed to him fair and noble and well-bred beyond that which he had conceived from the courtier's words, whereat he marvelled exceedingly and commended her amain, waxing so much the hotter in his desire as he found the lady overpassing his foregone conceit of her. After he had taken somewhat of rest in chambers adorned to the utmost with all that pertaineth to the entertainment of such a king, the dinner hour being come, the king and the marchioness seated themselves at one table, whilst the rest, according to their quality, were honourably entertained at others. The king, being served with many dishes in succession, as well as with wines of the best and costliest, and to boot gazing with delight the while upon the lovely marchioness, was mightily pleased with his entertainment; but, after awhile, as the viands followed one upon another, he began somewhat to marvel, perceiving that, for all the diversity of the dishes, they were nevertheless of nought other than hens, and this although he knew the part where he was to be such as should abound in game of various kinds and although he had, by advising the lady in advance of his coming, given her time to send a-hunting. However, much as he might marvel at this, he chose not to take occasion of engaging her in parley thereof, otherwise than in the matter of her hens, and accordingly, turning to her with a merry air, 'Madam,' quoth he, 'are hens only born in these parts, without ever a cock?' The marchioness, who understood the king's question excellent well, herseeming God had vouchsafed her, according to her wish, an opportune occasion of discovering her mind, turned to him and answered boldly, 'Nay, my lord; but women, albeit in apparel and dignities they may differ somewhat from others, are natheless all of the same fashion here as elsewhere.'

The King, hearing this, right well apprehended the meaning of the banquet of hens and the virtue hidden in her speech and perceived that words would be wasted upon such a lady and that violence was out of the question; wherefore, even as he had ill-advisedly taken fire for her, so now it behoved him sagely, for his own honour's sake, stifle his ill-conceived passion. Accordingly, without making any more

words with her, for fear of her replies, he dined, out of all hope; and the meal ended, thanking her for the honourable entertainment he had received from her and commending her to God, he set out for Genoa, so by his prompt departure he might make amends for his unseemly visit."

THE SIXTH STORY

AN HONEST MAN, WITH A CHANCE PLEASANTRY, PUTTETH TO SHAME THE PERVERSE HYPOCRISY OF THE RELIGIOUS ORDERS

EMILIA, who sat next after Fiammetta,—the courage of the marchioness and the quaint rebuke administered by her to the King of France having been commended of all the ladies,—began, by the queen's pleasure, boldly to speak as follows: "I also, I will not keep silence of a biting reproof given by an honest layman to a covetous monk with a speech no less laughable than commendable.

There was, then, dear lasses, no great while agone, in our city, a Minor friar and inquisitor of heretical pravity, who, for all he studied hard to appear a devout and tender lover of the Christian religion, as do they all, was no less diligent in enquiring of who had a well-filled purse than of whom he might find wanting in the things of the Faith. Thanks to this his diligence, he lit by chance upon a good simple man, richer by far in coin than in wit, who, of no lack of religion, but speaking thoughtlessly and belike overheated with wine or excess of mirth, chanced one day to say to a company of his friends that he had a wine so good that Christ himself might drink thereof. This being reported tc the inquisitor and he understanding that the man's means were large and his purse well filled, ran in a violent hurry *cum gladiis et fustibus* * to clap up a right grievous suit against him, looking not for an amendment of misbelief in the defendant, but for the filling of his own hand with florins to ensue thereof, (as indeed it did,) and causing him to be cited, asked him if that which had been alleged against him were true.

The good man replied that it was and told him how it chanced; whereupon quoth the most holy inquisitor, who was a devotee of St. John Goldenbeard,† 'Then hast thou made Christ a winebibber and

* *i.e.* with sword and whips, a technical term of ecclesiastical procedure, about equivalent to our "with the strong arm of the law."

† *i.e.* a lover of money.

curious in wines of choice, as if he were Cinciglione * or what not other of your drunken sots and tavern-haunters; and now thou speakest lowly and wouldst feign this to be a very light matter! It is not as thou deemest; thou hast merited the fire therefor, an we were minded to deal with thee as we ought.' With these and many other words he bespoke him, with as menacing a countenance as if the poor wretch had been Epicurus denying the immortality of the soul, and in brief so terrified him that the good simple soul, by means of certain intermediaries, let grease his palm with a good dose of St. John Goldenmouth's ointment † (the which is a sovereign remedy for the pestilential covetise of the clergy and especially of the Minor Brethren, who dare not touch money), so he should deal mercifully with him.

This unguent, being of great virtue (albeit Galen speaketh not thereof in any part of his Medicines), wrought to such purpose that the fire denounced against him was by favour commuted into [the wearing, by way of penance, of] a cross, and to make the finer banner, as he were to go a crusading beyond seas, the inquisitor imposed it him yellow upon black. Moreover, whenas he had gotten the money, he detained him about himself some days, enjoining him, by way of penance, hear a mass every morning at Santa Croce and present himself before him at dinner-time, and after he might do what most pleased him the rest of the day; all which he diligently performed.

One morning, amongst others, it chanced that at the Mass he heard a Gospel, wherein these words were chanted, 'For every one ye shall receive an hundred and shall possess eternal life.' ‡ This he laid fast up in his memory and according to the commandment given him, presented him at the eating hour before the inquisitor, whom he found at dinner. The friar asked him if he had heard mass that morning, whereto he promptly answered, 'Ay have I, sir.' Quoth the inquisitor, 'Heardest thou aught therein whereof thou doubtest or would question?' 'Certes,' replied the good man, 'I doubt not of aught that I heard, but do firmly believe all to be true. I did indeed hear something which caused and yet causeth me have the greatest compassion of you and your brother friars, bethinking me of the ill case wherein you will find yourselves over yonder in the next life.' 'And what

* A notorious drinker of the time.

† *i.e.* money.

‡ "And every one that hath forsaken houses or brethren or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands for my name's sake shall receive an hundredfold and shall inherit everlasting life."—Matthew xix. 29. Boccaccio has garbled the passage for the sake of his point.

was it that moved thee to such compassion of us?' asked the inquisitor. 'Sir,' answered the other, 'it was that verse of the Evangel, which saith, "For every one ye shall receive an hundred."' 'That is true, rejoined the inquisitor; 'but why did these words move thee thus?' 'Sir,' replied the good man, 'I will tell you. Since I have been used to resort hither, I have seen give out every day to a multitude of poor folk now one and now two vast great cauldrons of broth, which had been taken away from before yourself and the other brethren of this convent, as superfluous; wherefore, if for each one of these cauldrons of broth there be rendered you an hundred in the world to come, you will have so much thereof that you will assuredly all be drowned therein.'

All who were at the inquisitor's table fell a-laughing; but the latter, feeling the hit at the broth-swilling * hypocrisy of himself and his brethren, was mightily incensed, and but that he had gotten blame for that which he had already done, he would have saddled him with another prosecution, for that with a laughable speech he had rebuked him and his brother good-for-noughts; wherefore, of his despite, he bade him thenceforward do what most pleased him and not come before him again."

THE SEVENTH STORY

BERGAMINO, WITH A STORY OF PRIMASSO AND THE ABBOT OF CLUNY, COURTEOUSLY REBUKETH A FIT OF PARSIMONY NEWLY COME TO MESSER CANE DELLA SCALA

EMILIA's pleasantness and her story moved the queen and all the rest to laugh and applaud the rare conceit of this new-fangled crusader. Then, after the laughter had subsided and all were silent again, Filostrato, whose turn it was to tell, began to speak on this wise: "It is a fine thing, noble ladies, to hit a mark that never stirreth; but it is well-nigh miraculous if, when some unwonted thing appeareth of a sudden, it be forthright stricken of an archer. The lewd and filthy life of the clergy, in many things as it were a constant mark for malice, giveth without much difficulty occasion to all who have a mind to speak of, to gird at and rebuke it; wherefore, albeit the worthy man, who pierced the inquisitor to the quick touching the hypocritical charity

* Syn. gluttonous (*brodajuola*).

of the friars, who give to the poor that which it should behove them cast to the swine or throw away, did well, I hold him much more to be commended of whom, the foregoing tale moving me thereto, I am to speak and who with a quaint story rebuked Messer Cane della Scala, a magnificent nobleman, of a sudden and unaccustomed niggardliness newly appeared in him, figuring, in the person of another, that which he purposed to say to him concerning themselves; the which was on this wise.

As very manifest renown proclaimeth well nigh throughout the whole world, Messer Cane della Scala, to whom in many things fortune was favourable, was one of the most notable and most magnificent gentlemen that have been known in Italy since the days of the Emperor Frederick the Second. Being minded to make a notable and wonder-goodly entertainment in Verona, whereunto many folk should have come from divers parts and especially men of art * of all kinds, he of a sudden (whatever might have been the cause) withdrew therefrom and having in a measure requited those who were come thither, dismissed them all, save only one, Bergamino by name, a man ready of speech and accomplished beyond the credence of whoso had not heard him, who, having received neither largesse nor dismissal, abode behind, in the hope that his stay might prove to his future advantage. But Messer Cane had taken it into his mind that what thing soever he might give him were far worse bestowed than if it had been thrown into the fire, nor of this did he bespeak him or let tell him aught.

Bergamino, after some days, finding himself neither called upon nor required unto aught that pertained to his craft and wasting his substance, to boot, in the hostelry with his horses and his servants, began to be sore concerned, but waited yet, himseeming he would not do well to depart. Now he had brought with him three goodly and rich suits of apparel, which had been given him of other noblemen, that he might make a brave appearance at the festival, and his host pressing for payment, he gave one thereof to him. After this, tarrying yet longer, it behoved him give the host the second suit, an he would abide longer with him, and withal he began to live upon the third, resolved to abide in expectation so long as this should last and then depart. Whilst he thus fed upon the third suit, he chanced one day, Messer Cane being at dinner, to present himself before him with a rueful countenance, and Messer Cane, seeing this, more by way of rallying him than of intent to divert himself with any of his speech,

* *i.e.* gleemen, minstrels, story-tellers, jugglers and the like, lit. men of court (*uomini di corte*).

said to him, 'What aileth thee, Bergamino, to stand thus disconsolate? Tell us somewhat.' * Whereupon Bergamino, without a moment's hesitation, forthright, as if he had long considered it, related the following story to the purpose of his own affairs.

'My lord,' said he, 'you must know that Primasso was a very learned grammarian † and a skilful and ready versemaker above all others, which things rendered him so notable and so famous that, albeit he might not everywhere be known by sight, there was well nigh none who knew him not by name and by report. It chanced that, finding himself once at Paris in poor case, as indeed he abode most times, for that worth is ‡ little prized of those who can most,§ he heard speak of the Abbot of Cluny, who is believed to be, barring the Pope, the richest prelate of his revenues that the Church of God possesseth, and of him he heard tell marvellous and magnificent things, in that he still held open house nor were meat and drink ever denied to any who went whereas he might be, so but he sought it what time the Abbot was at meat. Primasso, hearing this and being one who delighted in looking upon men of worth and nobility, determined to go see the magnificence of this Abbot and enquired how near he then abode to Paris. It was answered him that he was then at a place of his maybe half a dozen miles thence; wherefore Primasso thought to be there at dinner-time, by starting in the morning betimes.

Accordingly, he enquired the way, but, finding none bound thither, he feared lest he might go astray by mischance and happen on a part where there might be no victual so readily to be found; wherefore, in order that, if this should betide, he might not suffer for lack of food, he bethought himself to carry with him three cakes of bread, judging that water (albeit it was little to his taste) he should find everywhere. The bread he put in his bosom and setting out, was fortunate enough to reach the Abbot's residence before the eating-hour. He entered and went spying all about and seeing the great multitude of tables set and the mighty preparations making in the kitchen and what not else provided against dinner, said in himself, "Of a truth

* *Dinne alcuna cosa.* If we take the affix *ne* (thereof, of it) in its other meaning (as dative of *noi*, we), of "to us," this phrase will read "Tell somewhat thereof," *i.e.* of the cause of thy melancholy.

† *i.e.* Latinist.

‡ Lit. was (*era*); but as Boccaccio puts "can" (*possono*) in the present tense, we must either read *é* and *possono* or *era* and *potevano*. The first reading seems the more probable.

§ *i.e.* have most power or means of requiting it.

this Abbot is as magnificent as folk say." After he had abidden awhile intent upon these things, the Abbot's seneschal, eating-time being come, bade bring water for the hands; which being done, he seated each man at table, and it chanced that Primasso was set right over against the door of the chamber, whence the Abbot should come forth into the eating-hall.

Now it was the usance in that house that neither wine nor bread nor aught else of meat or drink should ever be set on the tables, except the Abbot were first came to sit at his own table. Accordingly, the seneschal, having set the tables, let tell the Abbot that, whenas it pleased him, the meat was ready. The Abbot let open the chamber-door, that he might pass into the saloon, and looking before him as he came, as chance would have it, the first who met his eyes was Primasso, who was very ill accoutred and whom he knew not by sight. When he saw him, incontinent there came into his mind an ill thought and one that had never yet been there, and he said in himself, "See to whom I give my substance to eat!" Then, turning back, he bade shut the chamber-door and enquired of those who were about him if any knew yonder losel who sat at table over against his chamber-door; but all answered no.

Meanwhile Primasso, who had a mind to eat, having come a journey and being unused to fast, waited awhile and seeing that the Abbot came not, pulled out of his bosom one of the three cakes of bread he had brought with him and fell to eating. The Abbot, after he had waited awhile, bade one of his serving-men look if Primasso were gone, and the man answered, "No, my lord; nay, he eateth bread, which it seemeth he hath brought with him." Quoth the Abbot, "Well, let him eat of his own, an he have thereof; for of ours he shall not eat to-day." Now he would fain have had Primasso depart of his own motion, himseeming it were not well done to turn him away; but the latter, having eaten one cake of bread and the Abbot coming not, began upon the second; the which was likewise reported to the Abbot, who had caused look if he were gone.

At last, the Abbot still tarrying, Primasso, having eaten the second cake, began upon the third, and this again was reported to the Abbot, who fell a-pondering in himself and saying, "Alack, what new maggot is this that is come into my head to-day? What avarice! What despite! And for whom? This many a year have I given my substance to eat to whosoever had a mind thereto, without regarding if he were gentle or simple, poor or rich, merchant or huckster, and have seen it with mine own eyes squandered by a multitude of ribald knaves;

nor ever yet came there to my mind the thought that hath entered into me for yonder man. Of a surety avarice cannot have assailed me for a man of little account; needs must this who seemeth to me a losel be some great matter, since my soul hath thus repugned to do him honour."

So saying, he desired to know who he was and finding that it was Primasso, whom he had long known by report for a man of merit, come thither to see with his own eyes that which he had heard of his magnificence, was ashamed and eager to make him amends, studied in many ways to do him honour. Moreover, after eating, he caused clothe him sumptuously, as befitted his quality, and giving him money and a palfrey, left it to his own choice to go or stay; whereupon Primasso, well pleased with his entertainment, rendered him the best thanks in his power and returned on horseback to Paris, whence he had set out afoot.'

Messer Cane, who was a gentleman of understanding, right well apprehended Bergamino's meaning, without further exposition, and said to him, smiling, 'Bergamino, thou hast very aptly set forth to me thy wrongs and merit and my niggardliness, as well as that which thou wouldst have of me; and in good sooth, never, save now on thine account, have I been assailed of parsimony; but I will drive it away with that same stick which thou thyself hast shown me.' Then, letting pay Bergamino's host and clothing himself most sumptuously in a suit of his own apparel, he gave him money and a palfrey and committed to his choice for the nonce to go or stay."

THE EIGHTH STORY

GUGLIELMO BORSIERE WITH SOME QUAINT WORDS REBUKETH THE NIGGARDLINESS OF MESSER ERMINO DE' GRIMALDI

NEXT Filostrato sat Lauretta, who, after she had heard Bergamino's address commended, perceiving that it behoved her tell somewhat, began, without awaiting any commandment, blithely to speak thus: "The foregoing story, dear companions,* bringeth me in mind to tell how an honest minstrel on like wise and not without fruit rebuked the covetise of a very rich merchant, the which, albeit in effect it re-

* Fem.

sembleth the last story, should not therefore be less agreeable to you, considering that good came thereof in the end.

There was, then, in Genoa, a good while agone, a gentleman called Messer Ermino de' Grimaldi, who (according to general belief) far overpassed in wealth of lands and monies the riches of whatsoever other richest citizen was then known in Italy; and like as he excelled all other Italians in wealth, even so in avarice and sordidness he outwent beyond compare every other miser and curmudgeon in the world; for not only did he keep a strait purse in the matter of hospitality, but, contrary to the general usance of the Genoese, who are wont to dress sumptuously, he suffered the greatest privations in things necessary to his own person, no less than in meat and in drink, rather than be at any expense; by reason whereof the surname de' Grimaldi had fallen away from him and he was deservedly called of all only Messer Ermino Avarizia.

It chanced that, whilst, by dint of spending not, he multiplied his wealth, there came to Genoa a worthy minstrel,* both well-bred and well-spoken, by name Guglielmo Borsiere, a man no whit like those † of the present day, who (to the no small reproach of the corrupt and blameworthy usances of those ‡ who nowadays would fain be called and reputed gentlefolk and seigniors) are rather to be styled asses, reared in all the beastliness and depravity of the basest of mankind, than [minstrels, bred] in the courts [of kings and princes]. In those times it used to be a minstrel's office and his wont to expend his pains in negotiating treaties of peace, where feuds or despites had befallen between noblemen, or transacting marriages, alliances and friendships, in solacing the minds of the weary and diverting courts with quaint and pleasant sayings, ay, and with sharp reproofs, fatherlike, rebuking the misdeeds of the froward,—and this for slight enough reward; but nowadays they study to spend their time in hawking evil

* *Uomo di corte.* This word has been another grievous stumbling block to the French and English translators of Boccaccio, who render it literally "courtier." The reader need hardly be reminded that the minstrel of the middle ages was commonly jester, gleeman and story-teller all in one and in these several capacities was allowed the utmost license of speech. He was generally attached to the court of some king or sovereign prince, but, in default of some such permanent appointment, passed his time in visiting the courts and mansions of princes and men of wealth and liberality, where his talents were likely to be appreciated and rewarded; hence the name *uomo di corte*, "man of court" (not "courtier," which is *cortigiano*).

† *i.e.* those minstrels. ‡ *i.e.* the noblemen their patrons.

reports from one to another, in sowing discord, in speaking naughtiness and obscenity and (what is worse) doing them in all men's presence, in imputing evil doings, lewdnesses and knaveries, true or false, one to other, and in prompting men of condition with treacherous allurements to base and shameful actions; and he is most cherished and honoured and most munificently entertained and rewarded of the sorry unmannerly noblemen of our time who saith and doth the most abominable words and deeds; a sore and shameful reproach to the present age and a very manifest proof that the virtues have departed this lower world and left us wretched mortals to wallow in the slough of the vices.

But to return to my story, from which a just indignation hath carried me somewhat farther astray than I purposed,—I say that the aforesaid Guglielmo was honoured by all the gentlemen of Genoa and gladly seen of them, and having sojourned some days in the city and hearing many tales of Messer Ermino's avarice and sordidness, he desired to see him. Messer Ermino having already heard how worthy a man was this Guglielmo Borsiere and having yet, all miser as he was, some tincture of gentle breeding, received him with very amicable words and blithe aspect and entered with him into many and various discourses. Devising thus, he carried him, together with other Genoese who were in his company, into a fine new house of his which he had lately built and after having shown it all to him, said, 'Pray, Messer Guglielmo, you who have seen and heard many things, can you tell me of something that was never yet seen, which I may have depictured in the saloon of this my house?' Guglielmo, hearing this his preposterous question, answered, 'Sir, I doubt me I cannot undertake to tell you of aught that was never yet seen, except it were sneezings or the like; but, an it like you, I will tell you of somewhat which methinketh you never yet beheld.' Quoth Messer Ermino, not looking for such an answer as he got, 'I pray you tell me what it is.' Whereto Guglielmo promptly replied, 'Cause Liberality to be here depictured.'

When Messer Ermino heard this speech, there took him incontinent such a shame that it availed in a manner to change his disposition altogether to the contrary of that which it had been and he said, 'Messer Guglielmo, I will have it here depictured after such a fashion that neither you nor any other shall ever again have cause to tell me that I have never seen nor known it.' And from that time forth (such was the virtue of Guglielmo's words) he was the most liberal and the most courteous gentleman of his day in Genoa and he who most hospitably entreated both strangers and citizens."

THE NINTH STORY

THE KING OF CYPRUS, TOUCHED TO THE QUICK BY A GASCON LADY, FROM A MEAN-SPIRITED PRINCE BECOMETH A MAN OF WORTH AND VALIANCE

THE Queen's last commandment rested with Elisa, who, without awaiting it, began all blithely, "Young ladies, it hath often chanced that what all manner reproofs and many pains * bestowed upon a man have not availed to bring about in him hath been effected by a word more often spoken at hazard than of purpose aforethought. This is very well shown in the story related by Lauretta and I, in my turn, purpose to prove to you the same thing by means of another and a very short one; for that, since good things may still serve, they should be received with a mind attent, whoever be the sayer thereof.

I say, then, that in the days of the first King of Cyprus, after the conquest of the Holy Land by Godefroi de Bouillon, it chanced that a gentlewoman of Gascony went on a pilgrimage to the Holy Sepulchre and returning thence, came to Cyprus, where she was shamefully abused of certain lewd fellows; whereof having complained, without getting any satisfaction, she thought to appeal to the king for redress, but was told that she would lose her pains, for that he was of so abject a composition and so little of worth that, far from justifying others of their wrongs, he endured with shameful pusillanimity innumerable affronts offered to himself, insomuch that whoso had any grudge [against him] was wont to vent his despite by doing him some shame or insult.

The lady, hearing this and despairing of redress, bethought herself, by way of some small solacement of her chagrin, to seek to rebuke the king's pusillanimity; wherefore, presenting herself in tears before him, she said to him, 'My lord, I come not into thy presence for any redress that I expect of the wrong that hath been done me; but in satisfaction thereof, I prithee teach me how thou dost to suffer those affronts which I understand are offered unto thyself, so haply I may learn of thee patiently to endure mine own, the which God knoweth, an I might, I would gladly bestow on thee, since thou art so excellent a supporter thereof.'

The King, who till then had been sluggish and supine, awoke as if from sleep and beginning with the wrong done to the lady, which

* Syn. penalties, punishments (*pene*).

he cruelly avenged, thenceforth became a very rigorous prosecutor of all who committed aught against the honour of his crown."

THE TENTH STORY

MASTER ALBERTO OF BOLOGNA CIVILLY PUTTETH A LADY TO THE BLUSH WHO THOUGHT TO HAVE SHAMED HIM OF BEING ENAMOURED OF HER

ELISA being now silent, the last burden of the story-telling rested with the queen, who, with womanly grace beginning to speak, said, "Noble damsels, like as in the lucid nights the stars are the ornament of the sky and as in Spring-time the flowers of the green meadows, even so are commendable manners and pleasing discourse adorned by witty sallies, which latter, for that they are brief, are yet more beseeming to women than to men, inasmuch as much and long speech, whenas it may be dispensed with, is straitlier forbidden unto women than to men, albeit nowadays there are few or no women left who understand a sprightly saying or, if they understand it, know how to answer it, to the general shame be it said of ourselves and of all women alive. For that virtue,* which was erst in the minds of the women of times past, those of our day have diverted to the adornment of the body, and she on whose back are to be seen the most motley garments and the most gaudily laced and garded and garnished with the greatest plenty of fringes and purflings and broidery deemeth herself worthy to be held of far more account than her fellows and to be honoured above them, considering not that, were it a question of who should load her back and shoulders with bravery, an ass would carry much more thereof than any of them nor would therefore be honoured for more than an ass.

I blush to avow it, for that I cannot say aught against other women but I say it against myself; these women that are so laced and purfled and painted and parti-coloured abide either mute and senseless, like marble statues, or, an they be questioned, answer after such a fashion that it were far better to have kept silence. And they would have you believe that their unableness to converse among ladies and men of parts proceedeth from purity of mind, and to their witlessness they give the name of modesty, as if forsooth no woman were modest

* *Virtù*, in the old Roman sense of strength, vigour, energy.

but she who talketh with her chamberwoman or her laundress or her bake-wench; the which had Nature willed, as they would have it believed, she had assuredly limited unto them their prattle on other wise. It is true that in this, as in other things, it behoveth to have regard to time and place and with whom one talketh; for that it chanceth bytimes that women or men, thinking with some pleasantry or other to put another to the blush and not having well measured their own powers with those of the latter, find that confusion, which they thought to cast upon another, recoil upon themselves. Wherefore, so you may know how to keep yourselves and that, to boot, you may not serve as a text for the proverb which is current everywhere, to wit, that women in everything still take the worst, I would have you learn a lesson from the last of to-day's stories, which falleth to me to tell, to the intent that, even as you are by nobility of mind distinguished from other women, so likewise you may show yourselves no less removed from them by excellence of manners.

It is not many years since there lived (and belike yet liveth) at Bologna a very great and famous physician, known by manifest renown to well nigh all the world. His name was Master Alberto and such was the vivacity of his spirit that, albeit he was an old man of hard upon seventy years of age and well nigh all natural heat had departed his body, he scrupled not to expose himself to the flames of love; for that, having seen at an entertainment a very beautiful widow lady, called, as some say, Madam Malgherida* de' Ghisolieri, and being vastly taken with her, he received into his mature bosom, no otherwise than if he had been a young gallant, the amorous fire, insomuch that himseemed he rested not well by night, except the day foregone he had looked upon the delicate and lovesome countenance of the fair lady. Wherefore he fell to passing continually before her house, now afoot and now on horseback, as the occasion served him, insomuch that she and many other ladies got wind of the cause of his constant passings to and fro and oftentimes made merry among themselves to see a man thus ripe of years and wit in love, as if they deemed that that most pleasant passion of love took root and flourished only in the silly minds of the young and not otherwhere.

What while he continued to pass back and forth, it chanced one holiday that, the lady being seated with many others before her door and espying Master Alberto making towards them from afar, they one and all took counsel together to entertain him and do him honour

* Old form of Margherita.

and after to rally him on that his passion. Accordingly, they all rose to receive him and inviting him [to enter,] carried him into a shady courtyard, whither they let bring the choicest of wines and sweetmeats and presently enquired of him, in very civil and pleasant terms, how it might be that he was fallen enamoured of that fair lady, knowing her to be loved of many handsome, young and sprightly gentlemen. The physician, finding himself thus courteously attacked, put on a blithe countenance and answered, 'Madam, that I love should be no marvel to any understanding person, and especially that I love yourself, for that you deserve it; and albeit old men are by operation of nature bereft of the vigour that behoveth unto amorous exercises, yet not for all that are they bereft of the will nor of the wit to apprehend that which is worthy to be loved; nay, this latter is naturally the better valued of them, inasmuch as they have more knowledge and experience than the young. As for the hope that moveth me, who am an old man, to love you who are courted of many young gallants, it is on this wise: I have been many a time where I have seen ladies lunch and eat lupins and leeks. Now, although in the leek no part is good, yet is the head * thereof less hurtful and more agreeable to the taste; but you ladies, moved by a perverse appetite, commonly hold the head in your hand and munch the leaves, which are not only naught, but of an ill savour. How know I, madam, but you do the like in the election of your lovers? In which case, I should be the one chosen of you and the others would be turned away.'

The gentlewoman and her companions were somewhat abashed and said, 'Doctor, you have right well and courteously chastised our presumptuous emprise; algates, your love is dear to me, as should be that of a man of worth and learning; wherefore, you may in all assurance command me, as your creature, of your every pleasure, saving only mine honour.' The physician, rising with his companions, thanked the lady and taking leave of her with laughter and merriment, departed thence. Thus the lady, looking not whom she rallied and thinking to discomfit another, was herself discomfited; wherefrom, an you be wise, you will diligently guard yourselves."

The sun had begun to decline towards the evening, and the heat was in great part abated, when the stories of the young ladies and of the three young men came to an end; whereupon quoth the queen blithesomely, "Henceforth, dear companions, there remaineth nought

* *i.e.* the base or eatable part of the stem.

more to do in the matter of my governance for the present day, save to give you a new queen, who shall, according to her judgment, order her life and ours, for that * which is to come, unto honest pleasance. And albeit the day may be held to endure from now until nightfall, yet,—for that whoso taketh not somewhat of time in advance cannot, meseemeth, so well provide for the future and in order that what the new queen shall deem needful for the morrow may be prepared,—methinketh the ensuing days should commence at this hour. Wherefore, in reverence of Him unto whom all things live and for our own solacement, Filomena, a right discreet damsel, shall, as queen, govern our kingdom for the coming day." So saying, she rose to her feet and putting off the laurel-wreath, set it reverently on the head of Filomena, whom first herself and after all the other ladies and the young men likewise saluted as queen, cheerfully submitting themselves to her governance.

Filomena blushed somewhat to find herself invested with the queendom, but, calling to mind the words a little before spoken by Pampinea,†—in order that she might not appear witless, she resumed her assurance and in the first place confirmed all the offices given by Pampinea; then, having declared that they should abide whereas they were, she appointed that which was to do against the ensuing morning, as well as for that night's supper, and after proceeded to speak thus:

"Dearest companions, albeit Pampinea, more of her courtesy than for any worth of mine, hath made me queen of you all, I am not therefore disposed to follow my judgment alone in the manner of our living, but yours together with mine; and that you may know that which meseemeth is to do and consequently at your pleasure add thereto or abate thereof, I purpose briefly to declare it to you.

If I have well noted the course this day held by Pampinea, meseemeth I have found it alike praiseworthy and delectable; wherefore till such time as, for overlong continuance or other reason, it grow irksome to us, I judge it not to be changed. Order, then, being taken for [the continuance of] that which we have already begun to do, we will, arising hence, go awhile a-pleasuring, and whenas the sun shall be for going under, we will sup in the cool of the evening, and after sundry canzonets and other pastimes, we shall do well to betake ourselves to sleep. To-morrow, rising in the cool of the morning, we will on like wise go somewither a-pleasuring, as shall be most agreeable to every one; and as we have done to-day, we

* *i.e.* that day.

† See ante, p. 18.

will at the due hour come back to eat; after which we will dance and when we arise from sleep, as to-day we have done, we will return hither to our story-telling, wherein meseemeth a very great measure to consist alike of pleasance and of profit. Moreover, that which Pampinea had indeed no opportunity of doing, by reason of her late election to the governance, I purpose now to enter upon, to wit, to limit within some bound that whereof we are to tell and to declare it * to you beforehand, so each of you may have leisure to think of some goodly story to relate upon the theme proposed, the which, an it please you, shall be on this wise; namely, seeing that since the beginning of the world men have been and will be, until the end thereof, bandied about by various shifts of fortune, each shall be holden to tell OF THOSE WHO AFTER BEING BAFFLED BY DIVERS CHANCES HAVE WON AT LAST TO A JOYFUL ISSUE BEYOND THEIR HOPE."

Ladies and men alike all commended this ordinance and declared themselves ready to ensue it. Only Dioneo, the others all being silent, said, "Madam, as all the rest have said, so say I, to wit, that the ordinance given by you is exceeding pleasant and commendable; but of especial favour I crave you a boon, which I would have confirmed to me for such time as our company shall endure, to wit, that I may not be constrained by this your law to tell a story upon the given theme, an it like me not, but shall be free to tell that which shall most please me. And that none may think I seek this favour as one who hath not stories in hand, from this time forth I am content to be still the last to tell."

The queen,—who knew him for a merry man and a gamesome and was well assured that he asked this but that he might cheer the company with some laughable story, whenas they should be weary of discoursing,—with the others' consent, cheerfully accorded him the favour he sought. Then, arising from session, with slow steps they took their way towards a rill of very clear water, that ran down from a little hill, amid great rocks and green herbage, into a valley overshaded with many trees and there, going about in the water, bare-armed and shoeless, they fell to taking various diversions among themselves, till supper-time drew near, when they returned to the palace and there supped merrily. Supper ended, the queen called for instruments of music and bade Lauretta lead up a dance, whilst Emilia sang a song, to the accompaniment of Dioneo's lute. Accordingly, Lauretta

* *i.e.* the terms of the limitation aforesaid.

promptly set up a dance and led it off, whilst Emilia amorously warbled the following song:

I burn for mine own charms with such a fire,
Methinketh that I ne'er
Of other love shall reck or have desire.

Whene'er I mirror me, I see therein *
That good which still contenteth heart and spright;
Nor fortune new nor thought of old can win
To dispossess me of such dear delight.
What other object, then, could fill my sight,
Enough of pleasance e'er
To kindle in my breast a new desire?

This good flees not, what time soe'er I'm fain
Afresh to view it for my solacement;
Nay, at my pleasure, ever and again
With such a grace it doth itself present
Speech cannot tell it nor its full intent
Be known of mortal e'er,
Except indeed he burn with like desire.

And I, grown more enamoured every hour,
The straitlier fixed mine eyes upon it be,
Give all myself and yield me to its power,
E'en tasting now of that it promised me,
And greater joyance yet I hope to see,
Of such a strain as ne'er
Was proven here below of love-desire.

Lauretta having thus made an end of her ballad,†—in the burden of which all had blithely joined, albeit the words thereof gave some much matter for thought,—divers other rounds were danced and a part of the short night being now spent, it pleased the queen to give an end to the first day; wherefore, letting kindle the flambeaux, she commanded that all should betake themselves to rest until the ensuing morning, and all, accordingly, returning to their several chambers, did so.

* *i.e.* in the mirrored presentment of her own beauty.

† *Ballatella*, lit. little dancing song or song made to be sung as an accompaniment to a dance (from *ballare*, to dance). This is the origin of our word ballad.

HERE ENDETH THE FIRST DAY
OF THE DECAMERON

DAY THE SECOND

HERE BEGINNETH THE SECOND DAY OF THE DECAMERON WHEREIN UNDER THE GOVERNANCE OF FILOMENA IS DISCOURSED OF THOSE WHO AFTER BEING BAFFLED BY DIVERS CHANCES HAVE WON AT LAST TO A JOYFUL ISSUE BEYOND THEIR HOPE

THE sun had already everywhere brought on the new day with its light and the birds, carolling blithely among the green branches, bore witness thereof unto the ear with their merry songs, when the ladies and the three young men, arising all, entered the gardens and pressing the dewy grass with slow step, went wandering hither and thither, weaving goodly garlands and disporting themselves, a great while. And like as they had done the day foregone, even so did they at present; to wit, having eaten in the cool and danced awhile, they betook them to repose and arising thence after none, came all, by command of their queen, into the fresh meadows, where they seated themselves round about her. Then she, who was fair of favour and exceeding pleasant of aspect, having sat awhile, crowned with her laurel wreath, and looked all her company in the face, bade Neifile give beginning to the day's stories by telling one of her fashion; whereupon the latter, without making any excuse, blithely began to speak thus:

THE FIRST STORY

MARTELLINO FEIGNETH HIMSELF A CRIPPLE AND MAKETH BELIEVE TO WAX WHOLE UPON THE BODY OF ST. ARRIGO. HIS IMPOSTURE BEING DISCOVERED, HE IS BEATEN AND BEING AFTER TAKEN [FOR A THIEF,] GOETH IN PERIL OF BEING HANGED BY THE NECK, BUT ULTIMATELY ESCAPETH

"IT chanceth oft, dearest ladies, that he who studieth to befool others, and especially in things reverend, findeth himself with nothing for his pains but flouts and whiles cometh not off scathless. Wherefore, that I may obey the queen's commandment and give beginning

to the appointed theme with a story of mine, I purpose to relate to you that which, first misfortunately and after happily, beyond his every thought, betided a townsman of ours.

No great while agone there was at Treviso a German called Arrigo, who, being a poor man, served whoso required him to carry burdens for hire; and withal he was held of all a man of very holy and good life. Wherefore, be it true or untrue, when he died, it befell, according to that which the Trevisans avouch, that, in the hour of his death, the bells of the great church of Treviso began to ring, without being pulled of any. The people of the city, accounting this a miracle, proclaimed this Arrigo a saint and running all to the house where he lay, bore his body, for that of a saint, to the Cathedral, whither they fell to bringing the halt, the impotent and the blind and others afflicted with whatsoever defect or infirmity, as if they should all be made whole by the touch of the body.

In the midst of this great turmoil and concourse of folk, it chanced that there arrived at Treviso three of our townsmen, whereof one was called Stecchi, another Martellino and the third Marchese, men who visited the courts of princes and lords and diverted the beholders by travestying themselves and counterfeiting whatsoever other man with rare motions and grimaces. Never having been there before and seeing all the folk run, they marvelled and hearing the cause, were for going to see what was toward; wherefore they laid up their baggage at an inn and Marchese said, 'We would fain go look upon this saint; but, for my part, I see not how we may avail to win thither, for that I understand the Cathedral place is full of German and other men-at-arms, whom the lord of this city hath stationed there, so no riot may betide; more by token that they say the church is so full of folk that well nigh none else might enter there.' 'Let not that hinder you,' quoth Martellino, who was all agog to see the show; 'I warrant you I will find a means of winning to the holy body.' 'How so?' asked Marchese, and Martellino answered, 'I will tell thee. I will counterfeit myself a cripple and thou on one side and Stecchi on the other shall go upholding me, as it were I could not walk of myself, making as if you would fain bring me to the saint, so he may heal me. There will be none but, seeing us, will make way for us and let us pass.'

The device pleased Marchese and Stecchi and they went forth of the inn without delay, all three. Whenas they came to a solitary place, Martellino writhed his hands and fingers and arms and legs and eke his mouth and eyes and all his visnomy on such wise that it

was a frightful thing to look upon, nor was there any saw him but would have avouched him to be verily all fordone and palsied of his person. Marchese and Stecchi, taking him up, counterfeited as he was, made straight for the church, with a show of the utmost compunction, humbly beseeching all who came in their way for the love of God to make room for them, the which was lightly yielded them. Brief, every one gazing on them and crying well nigh all, 'Make way! Make way!' they came whereas Saint Arrigo's body lay and Martellino was forthright taken up by certain gentlemen who stood around and laid upon the body, so he might thereby regain the benefit of health. Martellino, having lain awhile, whilst all the folk were on the stretch to see what should come of him, began, as right well he knew how, to make a show of opening first one finger, then a hand and after putting forth an arm and so at last coming to stretch himself out altogether. Which when the people saw, they set up such an outcry in praise of Saint Arrigo as would have drowned the very thunder.

Now, as chance would have it, there was therenigh a certain Florentine, who knew Martellino very well, but had not recognized him, counterfeited as he was, whenas he was brought thither. However, when he saw him grown straight again, he knew him and straightway fell a-laughing and saying, 'God confound him! Who that saw him come had not deemed him palsied in good earnest?' His words were overheard of sundry Trevisans, who asked him incontinent, 'How! Was he not palsied?' 'God forbid!' answered the Florentine. 'He hath ever been as straight as any one of us; but he knoweth better than any man in the world how to play off tricks of this kind and counterfeit what shape soever he will.'

When the others heard this, there needed nothing farther; but they pushed forward by main force and fell a-crying out and saying, 'Seize yonder traitor and scoffer at God and His saints, who, being whole of his body, hath come hither, in the guise of a cripple, to make mock of us and of our saint!' So saying, they laid hold of Martellino and pulled him down from the place where he lay. Then, taking him by the hair of his head and tearing all the clothes off his back, they fell upon him with cuffs and kicks; nor himseemed was there a man in the place but ran to do likewise. Martellino roared out, 'Mercy for God's sake!' and fended himself as best he might, but to no avail; for the crowd redoubled upon him momently. Stecchi and Marchese, seeing this, began to say one to the other that things stood ill, but, fearing for themselves, dared not come to his aid; nay, they cried out with the rest to put him to death, bethinking them the while how they

might avail to fetch him out of the hands of the people, who would certainly have slain him, but for a means promptly taken by Marchese; to wit, all the officers of the Seignory being without the church, he betook himself, as quickliest he might, to him who commanded for the Provost and said, 'Help, for God's sake! There is a lewd fellow within who hath cut my purse, with a good hundred gold florins. I pray you take him, so I may have mine own again.'

Hearing this, a round dozen of sergeants ran straightway whereas the wretched Martellino was being carded without a comb and having with the greatest pains in the world broken through the crowd, dragged him out of the people's hands, all bruised and tumbled as he was, and haled him off to the palace, whither many followed him who held themselves affronted of him and hearing that he had been taken for a cutpurse and themseeming they had no better occasion * of doing him an ill turn,† began each on like wise to say that he had cut his purse. The Provost's judge, who was a crabbed, ill-conditioned fellow, hearing this, forthright took him apart and began to examine him of the matter; but Martellino answered jestingly, as if he made light of his arrest; whereat the judge, incensed, caused truss him up and give him two or three good bouts of the strappado, with intent to make him confess that which they laid to his charge, so he might after have him strung up by the neck.

When he was let down again, the judge asked him once more if that were true which the folk avouched against him, and Martellino, seeing that it availed him not to deny, answered, 'My lord, I am ready to confess the truth to you; but first make each who accuseth me say when and where I cut his purse, and I will tell you what I did and what not.' Quoth the judge, 'I will well,' and calling some of his accusers, put the question to them; whereupon one said that he had cut his purse eight, another six and a third four days agone, whilst some said that very day. Martellino, hearing this, said, 'My lord, these all lie in their throats and I can give you this proof that I tell you the truth, inasmuch as would God it were as sure that I had never come hither as it is that I was never in this place till a few hours agone; and as soon as I arrived, I went, of my ill fortune, to see yonder holy body in the church, where I was carded as you may

* Or pretext (*titolo*).

† Or "having him punished," lit. "causing give him ill luck" (*fargli dar la mala ventura*). This passage, like so many others of the Decameron, is ambiguous and may also be read "themseeming none other had a juster title to do him an ill turn."

see; and that this I say is true, the Prince's officer who keepeth the register of strangers can certify you, he and his book, as also can my host. If, therefore, you find it as I tell you, I beseech you torture me not neither put me to death at the instance of these wicked men.'

Whilst things were at this pass, Marchese and Stecchi, hearing that the judge of the Provostry was proceeding rigorously against Martellino and had already given him the strappado, were sore affeared and said in themselves, 'We have gone the wrong way to work; we have brought him forth of the frying-pan and cast him into the fire.' Wherefore they went with all diligence in quest of their host and having found him, related to him how the case stood. He laughed and carried them to one Sandro Agolanti, who abode in Treviso and had great interest with the Prince, and telling him everything in order, joined with them in beseeching him to occupy himself with Martellino's affairs. Sandro, after many a laugh, repaired to the Prince and prevailed upon him to send for Martellino.

The Prince's messengers found Martellino still in his shirt before the judge, all confounded and sore adread, for that the judge would hear nothing in his excuse; nay, having, by chance, some spite against the people of Florence, he was altogether determined to hang him by the neck and would on no wise render him up to the Prince till such time as he was constrained thereto in his despite. Martellino, being brought before the lord of the city and having told him everything in order, besought him, by way of special favour, to let him go about his business, for that, until he should be in Florence again, it would still seem to him he had the rope about his neck. The Prince laughed heartily at his mischance and let give each of the three a suit of apparel, wherewith they returned home safe and sound, having, beyond all their hope, escaped so great a peril."

THE SECOND STORY

RINALDO D'ASTI, HAVING BEEN ROBBED, MAKETH HIS WAY TO CASTEL GUGLIELMO, WHERE HE IS HOSPITABLY ENTERTAINED BY A WIDOW LADY AND HAVING MADE GOOD HIS LOSS, RETURNETH TO HIS OWN HOUSE, SAFE AND SOUND

THE ladies laughed immoderately at Martellino's misfortunes narrated by Neifile, as did also the young men and especially Filostrato, whom, for that he sat next Neifile, the queen bade follow her in story-

telling. Accordingly he began without delay, "Fair ladies, needs must I tell you a story * of things Catholic,† in part mingled with misadventures and love-matters, which belike will not be other than profitable to hear, especially to those who are wayfarers in the perilous lands of love, wherein whoso hath not said St. Julian his Paternoster is oftentimes ill lodged, for all he have a good bed.

In the days, then, of the Marquis Azzo of Ferrara, there came a merchant called Rinaldo d'Asti to Bologna on his occasions, which having despatched and returning homeward, it chanced that, as he issued forth of Ferrara and rode towards Verona, he fell in with certain folk who seemed merchants, but were in truth highwaymen and men of lewd life and condition, with whom he unwarily joined company and entered into discourse. They, seeing him to be a merchant and judging him to have monies about him, took counsel together to rob him, at the first opportunity that should offer; wherefore, that he might take no suspicion, they went devising with him, like decent peaceable folk, of things honest and seemly and of loyalty, ordering themselves toward him, in so far as they knew and could, with respect and complaisance, so that he deemed himself in great luck to have met with them, for that he was alone with a serving man of his on horseback.

Thus faring on and passing from one thing to another, as it chanceth in discourse, they presently fell to talking of the orisons that men offer up to God, and one of the highwaymen, who were three in number, said to Rinaldo, 'And you, fair sir, what orison do you use to say on a journey?' Whereto he answered, 'Sooth to say, I am but a plain man and little versed in these matters and have few orisons in hand; I live after the old fashion and let a couple of shillings pass for four-and-twenty pence.‡ Nevertheless, I have still been wont, when on a journey, to say of a morning, what time I come forth of the inn, a Pater and an Ave for the soul of St. Julian's father and mother, after which I pray God and the saint to grant me a good lodging for the ensuing night. Many a time in my day have I, in the course of my journeyings, been in great perils, from all of which I have escaped and have still found myself at night, to boot, in a

* Lit. a story striveth in (draweth) me to be told or to tell itself (*a raccontarsi mi tira una novella*).

† *i.e.* religious matters (*cose cattoliche*).

‡ *i.e.* take things by the first intention, without seeking to refine upon them, or, in English popular phrase, "I do not pretend to see farther through a stone wall than my neighbours."

place of safety and well lodged. Wherefore I firmly believe that St. Julian, in whose honour I say it, hath gotten me this favour of God; nor meseemeth should I fare well by day nor come to good harbourage at night, except I had said it in the morning.' 'And did you say it * this morning?' asked he who had put the question to him. 'Ay did I,' answered Rinaldo; whereupon quoth the other in himself, knowing well how the thing was to go, 'May it stand thee in stead! † For, an no hindrance betide us, methinketh thou art e'en like to lodge ill.' Then, to Rinaldo, 'I likewise,' quoth he, 'have travelled much and have never said this orison, albeit I have heard it greatly commended, nor ever hath it befallen me to lodge other than well; and this evening maybe you shall chance to see which will lodge the better, you who have said it or I who have not. True, I use, instead thereof, the *Dirupisti* or the *Intemerata* or the *De Profundis*, the which, according to that which a grandmother of mine used to tell me, are of singular virtue.'

Discoursing thus of various matters and faring on their way, on the look out the while for time and place apt unto their knavish purpose, they came, late in the day, to a place a little beyond Castel Guglielmo, where, at the fording of a river, the three rogues, seeing the hour advanced and the spot solitary and close shut in, fell upon Rinaldo and robbed him of money, clothes and horse. Then, leaving him afoot and in his shirt, they departed, saying, 'Go see if thy St. Julian will give thee a good lodging this night, even as ours ‡ will assuredly do for us.' And passing the stream, they went their ways. Rinaldo's servant, seeing him attacked, like a cowardly knave as he was, did nought to help him, but turning his horse's head, never drew bridle till he came to Castel Guglielmo and entering the town, took up his lodging there, without giving himself farther concern.

Rinaldo, left in his shirt and barefoot, it being very cold and snowing hard, knew not what to do and seeing the night already at hand, looked about him, trembling and chattering the while with his teeth, if there were any shelter to be seen therenigh, where he might pass the night, so he should not perish of cold; but, seeing none, for that a little before there had been war in those parts and everything had been burnt, set off at a run, spurred by the cold, towards Castel Guglielmo, knowing not withal if his servant were fled thither or otherwhere and thinking that, so he might but avail to enter therein, God would send

* *i.e.* the aforesaid orison.

† Or " 'Twill have been opportunely done of thee."

‡ *i.e.* our patron saint.

him some relief. But darkness overtook him near a mile from the town, wherefore he arrived there so late that, the gates being shut and the drawbridges raised, he could get no admission. Thereupon, despairing and disconsolate, he looked about, weeping, for a place where he might shelter, so at the least it should not snow upon him, and chancing to espy a house that projected somewhat beyond the walls of the town, he determined to go bide thereunder till day. Accordingly, betaking himself thither, he found there a door, albeit it was shut, and gathering at foot thereof somewhat of straw that was therenigh, he laid himself down there, tristful and woebegone, complaining sore to St. Julian and saying that this was not of the faith he had in him.

However, the saint had not lost sight of him and was not long in providing him with a good lodging. There was in the town a widow lady, as fair of favour as any woman living, whom the Marquis Azzo loved as his life and there kept at his disposition, and she abode in that same house, beneath the projection whereof Rinaldo had taken shelter. Now, as chance would have it, the Marquis had come to the town that day, thinking to lie the night with her, and had privily let make ready in her house a bath and a sumptuous supper. Everything being ready and nought awaited by the lady but the coming of the Marquis, it chanced that there came a serving-man to the gate, who brought him news, which obliged him to take horse forthright; wherefore, sending to tell his mistress not to expect him, he departed in haste. The lady, somewhat disconsolate at this, knowing not what to do, determined to enter the bath prepared for the Marquis and after sup and go to bed.

Accordingly she entered the bath, which was near the door, against which the wretched merchant was crouched without the city-wall; wherefore she, being therein, heard the weeping and trembling kept up by Rinaldo, who seemed as he were grown a stork,* and calling her maid, said to her, 'Go up and look over the wall who is at the postern-foot and what he doth there.' The maid went thither and aided by the clearness of the air, saw Rinaldo in his shirt and barefoot, sitting there, as hath been said, and trembling sore; whereupon she asked him who he was. He told her, as briefliest he might, who he was and how and why he was there, trembling the while on such wise that he could scarce form the words, and after fell to beseeching her piteously not to leave him there all night to perish of cold, [but

* *i.e.* whose teeth chattered as it were the clapping of a stork's beak.

to succour him,] an it might be. The maid was moved to pity of him and returning to her mistress, told her all. The lady, on like wise taking compassion on him and remembering that she had the key of the door aforesaid, which served whiles for the privy entrances of the Marquis, said, 'Go softly and open to him; here is this supper and none to eat it and we have commodity enough for his lodging.'

The maid, having greatly commended her mistress for this her humanity, went and opening to Rinaldo, brought him in; whereupon the lady, seeing him well nigh palsied with cold, said to him, 'Quick, good man, enter this bath, which is yet warm.' Rinaldo, without awaiting farther invitation, gladly obeyed and was so recomforted with the warmth of the bath that himseemed he was come back from death to life. The lady let fetch him a suit of clothes that had pertained to her husband, then lately dead, which when he had donned, they seemed made to his measure, and whilst awaiting what she should command him, he fell to thanking God and St. Julian for that they had delivered him from the scurvy night he had in prospect and had, as he deemed, brought him to good harbourage.

Presently, the lady, being somewhat rested,* let make a great fire in her dining-hall and betaking herself thither, asked how it was with the poor man; whereto the maid answered, 'Madam, he hath clad himself and is a handsome man and appeareth a person of good condition and very well-mannered.' Quoth the lady, 'Go, call him and bid him come to the fire and sup, for I know he is fasting.' Accordingly, Rinaldo entered the hall and seeing the gentlewoman, who appeared to him a lady of quality, saluted her respectfully and rendered her the best thanks in his power for the kindness done him. The lady, having seen and heard him and finding him even as her maid had said, received him graciously and making him sit familiarly with her by the fire, questioned him of the chance that had brought him thither; whereupon he related everything to her in order. Now she had heard somewhat of this at the time of his servant's coming into the town, wherefore she gave entire belief to all he said and told him, in turn, what she knew of his servant and how he might lightly find him again on the morrow. Then, the table being laid, Rinaldo, at the lady's instance, washed his hands and sat down with her to supper. Now he was tall of his person and comely and pleasant of favour and very engaging and agreeable of manners and a man in the prime of life; wherefore the lady had several times cast her eyes on him and

* *i.e.* after her bath.

found him much to her liking, and her desires being already aroused for the Marquis, who was to have come to lie with her, she had taken a mind to him. Accordingly, after supper, whenas they were risen from table, she took counsel with her maid whether herseemed she would do well, the Marquis having left her in the lurch, to use the good which fortune had sent her. The maid, seeing her mistress's drift, encouraged her as best she might to ensue it; whereupon the lady, returning to the fireside, where she had left Rinaldo alone, fell to gazing amorously upon him and said to him, 'How now, Rinaldo, why bide you thus melancholy? Think you you cannot be requited the loss of a horse and of some small matter of clothes? Take comfort and be of good cheer; you are in your own house. Nay, I will e'en tell you more, that, seeing you with those clothes on your back, which were my late husband's, and meseeming you were himself, there hath taken me belike an hundred times to-night a longing to embrace you and kiss you: and but that I feared to displease you, I had certainly done it.'

Rinaldo, who was no simpleton, hearing these words and seeing the lady's eyes sparkle, advanced towards her with open arms, saying, 'Madam, considering that I owe it to you to say that I am now alive and having regard to that from which you delivered me, it were great unmannerliness in me, did I not study to do everything that may be agreeable to you; wherefore do you embrace me and kiss me to your heart's content, and I will kiss and clip you more than willingly.' There needed no more words. The lady, who was all afire with amorous longing, straightway threw herself into his arms and after she had strained him desirefully to her bosom and bussed him a thousand times and had of him been kissed as often, they went off to her chamber and there without delay betaking themselves to bed, they fully and many a time, before the day should come, satisfied their desires one of the other. Whenas the day began to appear, they arose,—it being her pleasure, so the thing might not be suspected of any,—and she, having given him some sorry clothes and a purse full of money and shown him how he should go about to enter the town and find his servant, put him forth at the postern whereby he had entered, praying him keep the matter secret.

As soon as it was broad day and the gates were opened, he entered the town, feigning to come from afar, and found his servant. Therewithal he donned the clothes that were in the saddle-bags and was about to mount the man's horse and depart, when, as by a miracle, it befell that the three highwaymen, who had robbed him overnight,

"Straightway threw herself into his arms"

having been a little after taken for some other misdeed of them committed, were brought into the town and on their confession, his horse and clothes and money were restored to him, nor did he lose aught save a pair of garters, with which the robbers knew not what they had done. Rinaldo accordingly gave thanks to God and St. Julian and taking horse, returned home, safe and sound, leaving the three rogues to go kick on the morrow against the wind." *

THE THIRD STORY

THREE YOUNG MEN SQUANDER THEIR SUBSTANCE AND BECOME POOR; BUT A NEPHEW OF THEIRS, RETURNING HOME IN DESPERATION, FALLETH IN WITH AN ABBOT AND FINDETH HIM TO BE THE KING'S DAUGHTER OF ENGLAND, WHO TAKETH HIM TO HUSBAND AND MAKETH GOOD ALL HIS UNCLE'S LOSSES, RESTORING THEM TO GOOD ESTATE

THE adventures of Rinaldo d'Asti were hearkened with admiration and his devoutness commended by the ladies, who returned thanks to God and St. Julian for that they had succoured him in his utmost need. Nor yet (though this was said half aside) was the lady reputed foolish, who had known how to take the good God had sent her in her own house. But, whilst they discoursed, laughing in their sleeves, of the pleasant night she had had, Pampinea, seeing herself beside Filostrato and deeming, as indeed it befell, that the next turn would rest with her, began to collect her thoughts and take counsel with herself what she should say; after which, having received the queen's commandment, she proceeded to speak thus, no less resolutely than blithely, "Noble ladies, the more it is discoursed of the doings of Fortune, the more, to whoso is fain to consider her dealings aright, remaineth to be said thereof; and at this none should marvel, an he consider advisedly that all the things, which we foolishly style ours, are in her hands and are consequently, according to her hidden ordinance, transmuted by her without cease from one to another and back again, without any method known unto us. Wherefore, albeit this truth is conclusively demonstrated in everything and all day long and hath already been shown forth in divers of the foregoing stories, nevertheless, since it is our queen's pleasure that we discourse upon this

* *i.e.* to be hanged or, in the equivalent English idiom, to dance upon nothing.

theme, I will, not belike without profit for the listeners, add to the stories aforesaid one of my own, which methinketh should please.

There was once in our city a gentleman, by name Messer Tedaldo, who, as some will have it, was of the Lamberti family, albeit others avouch that he was of the Agolanti, arguing more, belike, from the craft after followed by his sons,* which was like unto that which the Agolanti have ever practised and yet practise, than from aught else. But, leaving be of which of these two houses he was, I say that he was, in his time, a very rich gentleman and had three sons, whereof the eldest was named Lamberto, the second Tedaldo and the third Agolante, all handsome and sprightly youths, the eldest of whom had not reached his eighteenth year when it befell that the aforesaid Messer Tedaldo died very rich and left all his possessions, both moveable and immoveable, to them, as his legitimate heirs. The young men, seeing themselves left very rich both in lands and monies, began to spend without check or reserve or other governance than that of their own pleasure, keeping a vast household and many and goodly horses and dogs and hawks, still holding open house and giving largesse and making tilts and tournaments and doing not only that which pertaineth unto men of condition, but all, to boot, that it occurred to their youthful appetite to will.

They had not long led this manner of life before the treasure left by their father melted away and their revenues alone sufficing not unto their current expenses, they proceeded to sell and mortgage their estates, and selling one to-day and another to-morrow, they found themselves come well nigh to nought, without perceiving it, and poverty opened their eyes, which wealth had kept closed. Whereupon Lamberto, one day, calling the other two, reminded them how great had been their father's magnificence and how great their own and setting before them what wealth had been theirs and the poverty to which they were come through their inordinate expenditure, exhorted them, as best he knew, ere their distress should become more apparent, to sell what little was left them and get them gone, together with himself. They did as he counselled them and departing Florence, without leavetaking or ceremony, stayed not till they came to England, where, taking a little house in London and spending very little, they addressed themselves with the utmost diligence to lend money at usance. In this fortune was so favourable to them that in a few years they amassed a vast sum of money, wherewith, returning to Florence,

* *i.e.* usury? See post. One of the commentators ridiculously suggests that they were needlemakers, from *ago*, a needle.

one after another, they bought back great part of their estates and purchased others to boot and took unto themselves wives.

Nevertheless, they still continued to lend money in England and sent thither, to look to their affairs, a young man, a nephew of theirs, Alessandro by name, whilst themselves all three at Florence, for all they were become fathers of families, forgetting to what a pass inordinate expenditure had aforetime brought them, began to spend more extravagantly than ever and were high in credit with all the merchants, who trusted them for any sum of money, however great. The monies remitted them by Alessandro, who had fallen to lending to the barons upon their castles and other their possessions, which brought him great profit, helped them for some years to support these expenses; but, presently, what while the three brothers spent thus freely and lacking money, borrowed, still reckoning with all assurance upon England, it chanced that, contrary to all expectation, there broke out war in England between the king and his son, through which the whole island was divided into two parties, some holding with the one and some with the other; and by reason thereof all the barons' castles were taken from Alessandro nor was there any other source of revenue that answered him aught. Hoping that from day to day peace should be made between father and son and consequently everything restored to him, both interest and capital, Alessandro departed not the island and the three brothers in Florence no wise abated their extravagant expenditure, borrowing more and more every day. But, when, after several years, no effect was seen to follow upon their expectation, the three brothers not only lost their credit, but, their creditors seeking to be paid their due, they were suddenly arrested and their possessions sufficing not unto payment, they abode in prison for the residue, whilst their wives and little ones betook themselves, some into the country, some hither and some thither, in very ill plight, unknowing what to expect but misery for the rest of their lives.

Meanwhile, Alessandro, after waiting several years in England for peace, seeing that it came not and himseeing that not only was his tarrying there in vain, but that he went in danger of his life, determined to return to Italy. Accordingly, he set out all alone and as chance would have it, coming out of Bruges, he saw an abbot of white friars likewise issuing thence, accompanied by many monks and with a numerous household and a great baggage-train in his van. After him came two old knights, kinsmen of the King, whom Alessandro accosted as acquaintances and was gladly admitted into their company. As he journeyed with them, he asked them softly who were the monks

that rode in front with so great a train and whither they were bound; and one of them answered, 'He who rideth yonder is a young gentleman of our kindred, who hath been newly elected abbot of one of the most considerable abbeys of England, and for that he is younger than is suffered by the laws for such a dignity, we go with him to Rome to obtain of the Holy Father that he dispense him of his defect of overmuch youthfulness and confirm him in the dignity aforesaid; but this must not be spoken of with any.'

The new abbot, faring on thus, now in advance of his retinue and now in their rear, as daily we see it happen with noblemen on a journey, chanced by the way to see near him Alessandro, who was a young man exceeding goodly of person and favour, well-bred, agreeable and fair of fashion as any might be, and who at first sight pleased him marvellously, as nought had ever done, and calling him to his side, fell a-discoursing pleasantly with him, asking him who he was and whence he came and whither he was bound; whereupon Alessandro frankly discovered to him his whole case and satisfied his questions, offering himself to his service in what little he might. The abbot, hearing his goodly and well-ordered speech, took more particular note of his manners and inwardly judging him to be a man of gentle breeding, for all his business had been mean, grew yet more enamoured of his pleasantness and full of compassion for his mishaps, comforted him on very friendly wise, bidding him be of good hope, for that, an he were a man of worth, God would yet replace him in that estate whence fortune had cast him down, nay, in a yet higher. Moreover, he prayed him, since he was bound for Tuscany, that it would please him bear him company, inasmuch as himself was likewise on the way thitherward; whereupon Alessandro returned him thanks for his encouragement and declared himself ready to his every commandment.

The abbot, in whose breast new feelings had been aroused by the sight of Alessandro, continuing his journey, it chanced that, after some days, they came to a village not over-well furnished with hostelries, and the abbot having a mind to pass the night there, Alessandro caused him alight at the house of an innkeeper, who was his familiar acquaintance, and let prepare him his sleeping-chamber in the least incommodious place of the house; and being now, like an expert man as he was, grown well nigh a master of the household to the abbot, he lodged all his company, as best he might, about the village, some here and some there. After the abbot had supped, the night being now well advanced and every one gone to bed, Alessandro asked the host where he himself could lie; whereto he answered, 'In

truth, I know not; thou seest that every place is full and I and my household must needs sleep upon the benches. Algates, in the abbot's chamber there be certain grainsacks, whereto I can bring thee and spread thee thereon some small matter of bed, and there, an it please thee, thou shalt lie this night, as best thou mayst.' Quoth Alessandro, 'How shall I go into the abbot's chamber, seeing thou knowest it is little and of its straitness none of his monks might lie there? Had I bethought me of this, ere the curtains were drawn, I would have let his monks lie on the grain-sacks and have lodged myself where they sleep.' 'Nay,' answered the host, 'the case standeth thus; * but, an thou wilt, thou mayst lie whereas I tell thee with all the ease in the world. The abbot is asleep and his curtains are drawn; I will quickly lay thee a pallet-bed there, and do thou sleep on it.' Alessandro, seeing that this might be done without giving the abbot any annoy, consented thereto and settled himself on the grain-sacks as softliest he might.

The abbot, who slept not, nay, whose thoughts were ardently occupied with his new desires, heard what passed between Alessandro and the host and noted where the former laid himself to sleep, and well pleased with this, began to say in himself, 'God hath sent an occasion unto my desires; an I take it not, it may be long ere the like recur to me.' Accordingly, being altogether resolved to take the opportunity and himseeming all was quiet in the inn, he called to Alessandro in a low voice and bade him come couch with him. Alessandro, after many excuses, put off his clothes and laid himself beside the abbot, who put his hand on his breast and fell to touching him no otherwise than amorous damsels use to do with their lovers; whereat Alessandro marvelled exceedingly and misdoubted him the abbot was moved by unnatural love to handle him on that wise; but the latter promptly divined his suspicions, whether of presumption or through some gesture of his, and smiled; then, suddenly putting off a shirt that he wore, he took Alessandro's hand and laying it on his own breast, said, 'Alessandro, put away thy foolish thought and searching here, know that which I conceal.'

Alessandro accordingly put his hand to the abbot's bosom and found there two little breasts, round and firm and delicate, no otherwise than as they were of ivory, whereby perceiving that the supposed prelate was a woman, without awaiting farther bidding, he straightway took her in his arms and would have kissed her; but she said to him, 'Ere thou draw nearer to me, hearken to that which I have to

* *i.e.* the thing is done and cannot be undone; there is no help for it.

say to thee. As thou mayst see, I am a woman and not a man, and having left home a maid, I was on my way to the Pope, that he might marry me. Be it thy good fortune or my mishap, no sooner did I see thee the other day than love so fired me for thee, that never yet was woman who so loved man. Wherefore, I am resolved to take thee, before any other, to husband; but, an thou wilt not have me to wife, begone hence forthright and return to thy place.'

Alessandro, albeit he knew her not, having regard to her company and retinue, judged her to be of necessity noble and rich and saw that she was very fair; wherefore, without over-long thought, he replied that, if this pleased her, it was mighty agreeable to him. Accordingly, sitting up with him in bed, she put a ring into his hand and made him espouse her * before a picture wherein our Lord was portrayed, after which they embraced each other and solaced themselves with amorous dalliance, to the exceeding pleasure of both parties, for so much as remained of the night.

When the day came, after they had taken order together concerning their affairs, Alessandro arose and departed the chamber by the way he had entered, without any knowing where he had passed the night. Then, glad beyond measure, he took to the road again with the abbot and his company and came after many days to Rome. There they abode some days, after which the abbot, with the two knights and Alessandro and no more, went in to the Pope and having done him due reverence, bespoke him thus, 'Holy Father, as you should know better than any other, whoso is minded to live well and honestly should, inasmuch as he may, eschew every occasion that may lead him to do otherwise; the which that I, who would fain live honestly, may throughly do, having fled privily with a great part of the treasures of the King of England my father, (who would have given me to wife to the King of Scotland, a very old prince, I being, as you see, a young maid), I set out, habited as you see me, to come hither, so your Holiness might marry me. Nor was it so much the age of the King of Scotland that made me flee as the fear, if I were married to him, lest I should, for the frailty of my youth, be led to do aught that might be contrary to the Divine laws and the honour of the royal blood of my father. As I came, thus disposed, God, who alone knoweth aright that which behoveth unto every one, set before mine eyes (as I believe, of His mercy) him whom it pleased Him

* i.e. make her a solemn promise of marriage, formally plight her his troth. The ceremony of betrothal was formerly (and still is in certain countries) the most essential part of the marriage rite.

"Put his hand on his breast"

should be my husband, to wit, this young man,' showing Alessandro, 'whom you see here beside me and whose fashions and desert are worthy of however great a lady, although belike the nobility of his blood is not so illustrious as the blood-royal. Him, then, have I taken and him I desire, nor will I ever have any other than he, however it may seem to my father or to other folk. Thus, the principal occasion of my coming is done away; but it pleased me to make an end of my journey, at once that I might visit the holy and reverend places, whereof this city is full, and your Holiness and that through you I might make manifest, in your presence and consequently in that of the rest of mankind, the marriage contracted between Alessandro and myself in the presence of God alone. Wherefore I humbly pray you that this which hath pleased God and me may find favour with you and that you will vouchsafe us your benison, in order that with this, as with more assurance of His approof whose Vicar you are, we may live and ultimately die together.'

Alessandro marvelled to hear that the damsel was the King's daughter of England and was inwardly filled with exceeding great gladness; but the two knights marvelled yet more and were so incensed, that, had they been otherwhere than in the Pope's presence, they had done Alessandro a mischief and belike the lady also. The Pope also, on his part, marvelled exceedingly both at the habit of the lady and at her choice; but, seeing that there was no going back on that which was done, he consented to satisfy her of her prayer. Accordingly, having first appeased the two knights, whom he knew to be angered, and made them well at one again with the lady and Alessandro, he took order for that which was to do, and the day appointed by him being come, before all the cardinals and many other men of great worship, come, at his bidding, to a magnificent bride-feast prepared by him, he produced the lady, royally apparelled, who showed so fair and so agreeable that she was worthily commended of all, and on like wise Alessandro splendidly attired, in bearing and appearance no whit like a youth who had lent at usury, but rather one of royal blood, and now much honoured of the two knights. There he caused solemnly celebrate the marriage afresh and after goodly and magnificent nuptials made, he dismissed them with his benison.

It pleased Alessandro, and likewise the lady, departing Rome, to betake themselves to Florence, whither report had already carried the news. There they were received by the townsfolk with the utmost honour and the lady caused liberate the three brothers, having first paid every man [his due]. Moreover, she reinstated them and their

ladies in their possessions and with every one's goodwill, because of this, she and her husband departed Florence, carrying Agolante with them, and coming to Paris, were honourably entertained by the King. Thence the two knights passed into England and so wrought with the King that the latter restored to his daughter his good graces and with exceeding great rejoicing received her and his son-in-law, whom he a little after made a knight with the utmost honour and gave him the Earldom of Cornwall. In this capacity he approved himself a man of such parts and made shift to do on such wise that he reconciled the son with his father, whereof there ensued great good to the island, and thereby he gained the love and favour of all the people of the country.

Moreover, Agolante throughly recovered all that was there due to him and his brethren and returned to Florence, rich beyond measure, having first been knighted by Count Alessandro. The latter lived long and gloriously with his lady, and according as some avouch, what with his wit and valour and the aid of his father-in-law, he after conquered Scotland and was crowned King thereof."

THE FOURTH STORY

LANDOLFO RUFFOLO, GROWN POOR, TURNETH CORSAIR AND BEING TAKEN BY THE GENOESE, IS WRECKED AT SEA, BUT SAVETH HIMSELF UPON A COFFER FULL OF JEWELS OF PRICE AND BEING ENTERTAINED IN CORFU BY A WOMAN, RETURNETH HOME RICH

LAURETTA, who sat next Pampinea, seeing her come to the glorious ending of her story, began, without awaiting more, to speak on this wise: "Most gracious ladies, there can, to my judgment, be seen no greater feat of fortune than when we behold one raised from the lowest misery to royal estate, even as Pampinea's story hath shown it to have betided her Alessandro. And for that from this time forth whosoever relateth of the appointed matter must of necessity speak within these limits,* I shall think no shame to tell a story, which, albeit it compriseth in itself yet greater distresses, hath not withal so splendid an issue. I know well, indeed, that, having regard unto that,

* *i.e.* cannot hope to tell a story presenting more extraordinary shifts from one to the other extreme of human fortune than that of Pampinea.

my story will be hearkened with less diligence; but, as I can no otherwise, I shall be excused.

The sea-coast from Reggio to Gaeta is commonly believed to be well nigh the most delightful part of Italy, and therein, pretty near Salerno, is a hill-side overlooking the sea, which the country-folk call Amalfi Side, full of little towns and gardens and springs and of men as rich and stirring in the matter of trade as any in the world. Among the said cities is one called Ravello and therein, albeit nowadays there are rich men there, there was aforetime one, Landolfo Ruffolo by name, who was exceeding rich and who, his wealth sufficing him not, came nigh, in seeking to double it, to lose it all and himself withal. This man, then, having, after the usance of merchants, laid his plans, bought a great ship and freighting it all of his own monies with divers merchandise, repaired therewith to Cyprus. There he found sundry other ships come with the same kind and quality of merchandise as he had brought, by reason of which not only was he constrained to make great good cheap of his own venture, but it behoved him, an he would dispose of his goods, well nigh to throw them away, whereby he was brought near unto ruin.

Sore chagrined at this mischance and knowing not what to do, seeing himself thus from a very rich man in brief space grown in a manner poor, he determined either to die or repair his losses by pillage, so he might not return thither poor, whence he had departed rich. Accordingly, having found a purchaser for his great ship, with the price thereof and that which he had gotten of his wares, he bought a little vessel, light and apt for cruising and arming and garnishing it excellent well with everything needful unto such a service, addressed himself to make his purchase of other men's goods and especially of those of the Turks. In this trade fortune was far kinder to him than she had been in that of a merchant, for that, in some year's space, he plundered and took so many Turkish vessels that he found he had not only gotten him his own again that he had lost in trade, but had more than doubled his former substance. Whereupon, schooled by the chagrin of his former loss and deeming he had enough, he persuaded himself, rather than risk a second mischance, to rest content with that which he had, without seeking more. Accordingly he resolved to return therewith to his own country and being fearful of trade, concerned not himself to employ his money otherwise, but, thrusting his oars into the water, set out homeward in that same little vessel wherewith he had gained it.

He had already reached the Archipelago when there arose one

evening a violent south-east wind, which was not only contrary to his course, but raised so great a sea that his little vessel could not endure it; wherefore he took refuge in a bight of the sea, made by a little island, and there abode sheltered from the wind and purposing there to await better weather. He had not lain there long when two great Genoese carracks, coming from Constantinople, made their way with great difficulty into the little harbour, to avoid that from which himself had fled. The newcomers espied the little ship and hearing that it pertained to Landolfo, whom they already knew by report to be very rich, blocked against it the way by which it might depart and addressed themselves, like men by nature rapacious and greedy of gain,* to make prize of it. Accordingly, they landed part of their men well harnessed and armed with crossbows and posted them on such wise that none might come down from the bark, an he would not be shot; whilst the rest, warping themselves in with small boats and aided by the current, laid Landolfo's little ship aboard and took it out of hand, crew and all, without missing a man. Landolfo they carried aboard one of the carracks, leaving him but a sorry doublet; then, taking everything out of the ship, they scuttled her.

On the morrow, the wind having shifted, the carracks made sail westward and fared on their voyage prosperously all that day; but towards evening there arose a tempestuous wind which made the waves run mountains high and parted the two carracks one from the other. Moreover, from stress of wind it befell that that wherein was the wretched and unfortunate Landolfo smote with great violence upon a shoal over against the island of Cephalonia and parting amidships, broke all in sunder no otherwise than a glass dashed against a wall. The sea was in a moment all full of bales of merchandise and chests and planks, that floated on the surface, as is wont to happen in such cases, and the poor wretches on board, swimming, those who knew how, albeit it was a very dark night and the sea was exceeding great and swollen, fell to laying hold of such things as came within their reach. Among the rest the unfortunate Landolfo, albeit many a time that day he had called for death, (choosing rather to die than return home poor as he found himself,) seeing it near at hand, was fearful thereof and like the others, laid hold of a plank that came to his hand, so haply, an he put off drowning awhile, God might send him some means of escape.

Bestriding this, he kept himself afloat as best he might, driven hither

* The Genoese have the reputation in Italy of being thieves by nature.

and thither of the sea and the wind, till daylight, when he looked about him and saw nothing but clouds and sea and a chest floating on the waves, which bytimes, to his sore affright, drew nigh unto him, for that he feared lest peradventure it should dash against him on such wise as to do him a mischief; wherefore, as often as it came near him, he put it away from him as best he might with his hand, albeit he had little strength thereof. But presently there issued a sudden flaw of wind out of the air and falling on the sea, smote upon the chest and drove it with such violence against Landolfo's plank that the latter was overset and he himself perforce went under water. However, he struck out and rising to the surface, aided more by fear than by strength, saw the plank far removed from him, wherefore, fearing he might be unable to reach it again, he made for the chest, which was pretty near him, and laying himself flat with his breast on the lid thereof, guided it with his arms as best he might.*

On this wise, tossed about by the sea now hither and now thither, without eating, as one indeed who had not the wherewithal, but drinking more than he could have wished, he abode all that day and the ensuing night, unknowing where he was and descrying nought but sea; but, on the following day, whether it was God's pleasure or stress of wind that wrought it, he came, grown well nigh a sponge and clinging fast with both hands to the marges of the chest, even as we see those do who are like to drown, to the coast of the island of Corfu, where a poor woman chanced to be scouring her pots and pans and making them bright with sand and salt water. Seeing Landolfo draw near and discerning in him no [human] shape, she drew back, affrighted and crying out. He could not speak and scarce saw, wherefore he said nothing; but presently, the sea carrying him landward, the woman descried the shape of the chest and looking straitlier, perceived first the arms outspread upon it and then the face and guessed it for that which it was.

Accordingly, moved with compassion, she entered somedele into the sea, which was now calm, and seizing Landolfo by the hair, dragged him ashore, chest and all. There having with difficulty unclasped his hands from the chest, she set the latter on the head of a young daughter of hers, who was with her, and carried him off, as he were a little child, to her hut, where she put him in a bagnio and so chafed and bathed him with warm water that the strayed heat re-

* It seems doubtful whether *la reggeva diritta* should not rather be rendered "kept it upright." Boccaccio has a knack, very trying to the translator, of constantly using words in an obscure or strained sense.

turned to him, together with somewhat of his lost strength. Then, taking him up out of the bath, whenas it seemed good to her, she comforted him with somewhat of good wine and confections and tended him some days, as best she might, till he had recovered his strength and knew where he was, when she judged it time to restore him his chest, which she had kept safe for him, and to tell him that he might now prosecute his fortune.

Landolfo, who had no recollection of the chest, yet took it, when the good woman presented it to him, thinking it could not be so little worth but that it might defray his expenses for some days, but, finding it very light, was sore abated of his hopes. Nevertheless, what while his hostess was abroad, he broke it open, to see what it contained, and found therein store of precious stones, both set and unset. He had some knowledge of these matters and seeing them, knew them to be of great value; wherefore he praised God, who had not yet forsaken him, and was altogether comforted. However, as one who had in brief space been twice cruelly baffled by fortune, fearing a third misadventure, he bethought himself that it behoved him use great wariness an he would bring those things home; wherefore, wrapping them, as best he might, in some rags, he told the good woman that he had no more occasion for the chest, but that, an it pleased her, she should give him a bag and take the chest herself. This she willingly did and he, having rendered her the best thanks in his power for the kindness received from her, shouldered his bag and going aboard a bark, passed over to Brindisi and thence made his way, along the coast, to Trani.

Here he found certain townsmen of his, who were drapers and clad him for the love of God,* after he had related to them all his adventures, except that of the chest; nay more, they lent him a horse and sent him, under escort, to Ravello, whither he said he would fain return. There, deeming himself in safety and thanking God who had conducted him thither, he opened his bag and examining everything more diligently than he had yet done, found he had so many and such stones that, supposing he sold them at a fair price or even less, he was twice as rich again as when he departed thence. Then, finding means to dispose of his jewels, he sent a good sum of money to Corfu to the good woman who had brought him forth of the sea, in requital of the service received, and the like to Trani to those who had reclothed him. The rest he kept for himself and lived in honour and worship to the end of his days, without seeking to trade any more."

* *i.e.* for nothing.

THE FIFTH STORY

ANDREUCCIO OF PERUGIA, COMING TO NAPLES TO BUY HORSES, IS IN ONE NIGHT OVERTAKEN WITH THREE GRIEVOUS ACCIDENTS, BUT ESCAPETH THEM ALL AND RETURNETH HOME WITH A RUBY

"THE stones found by Landolfo," began Fiammetta, to whose turn it came to tell, "have brought to my mind a story scarce less full of perilous scapes than that related by Lauretta, but differing therefrom inasmuch as the adventures comprised in the latter befell in the course of belike several years and these of which I have to tell in the space of a single night, as you shall hear.

There was once in Perugia, as I have heard tell aforetime, a young man, a horse-courser, by name Andreuccio di Pietro,* who, hearing that horses were good cheap at Naples, put five hundred gold florins in his purse and betook himself thither with other merchants, having never before been away from home. He arrived there one Sunday evening, towards vespers, and having taken counsel with his host, sallied forth next morning to the market, where he saw great plenty of horses. Many of them pleased him and he cheapened one and another, but could not come to an accord concerning any. Meanwhile, to show that he was for buying, he now and again, like a raw unwary clown as he was, pulled out the purse of florins he had with him, in the presence of those who came and went. As he was thus engaged, with his purse displayed, it chanced that a Sicilian damsel, who was very handsome, but disposed for a small matter to do any man's pleasure, passed near him, without his seeing her, and catching sight of the purse, said straightway in herself, 'Who would fare better than I, if yonder money were mine!' And passed on.

Now there was with her an old woman, likewise a Sicilian, who, seeing Andreuccio, let her companion pass on and running to him, embraced him affectionately, which when the damsel saw, she stepped aside to wait for her, without saying aught. Andreuccio, turning to the old woman and recognizing her, gave her a hearty greeting and she, having promised to visit him at his inn, took leave, without holding over-long parley there, whilst he fell again to chaffering, but bought nothing that morning. The damsel, who had noted first

* *i.e.* son of Pietro, as they still say in Lancashire and other northern provinces, "Tom o' Dick" for "Thomas, son of Richard," etc.

Andreuccio's purse and after her old woman's acquaintance with him, began cautiously to enquire of the latter, by way of casting about for a means of coming at the whole or part of the money, who and whence he was and what he did there and how she came to know him. The old woman told her every particular of Andreuccio's affairs well nigh as fully as he himself could have done, having long abidden with his father, first in Sicily and after at Perugia, and acquainted her, to boot, where he lodged and wherefore he was come thither.

The damsel, being thus fully informed both of his name and parentage, thereby with subtle craft laid her plans for giving effect to her desire and returning home, set the old woman awork for the rest of the day, so she might not avail to return to Andreuccio. Then, calling a maid of hers, whom she had right well lessoned unto such offices, she despatched her, towards evensong, to the inn where Andreuccio lodged. As chance would have it, she found him alone at the door and enquired at him of himself. He answered that he was the man she sought, whereupon she drew him aside and said to him, 'Sir, an it please you, a gentlewoman of this city would fain speak with you.' Andreuccio, hearing this, considered himself from head to foot and himseeming he was a handsome varlet of his person, he concluded (as if there were no other well-looking young fellow to be found in Naples,) that the lady in question must have fallen in love with him. Accordingly, he answered without further deliberation that he was ready and asked the girl when and where the lady would speak with him; whereto she answered, 'Sir, whenas it pleaseth you to come, she awaiteth you in her house;' and Andreuccio forthwith rejoined, without saying aught to the people of the inn, 'Go thou on before; I will come after thee.'

Thereupon the girl carried him to the house of her mistress, who dwelt in a street called Malpertugio,* the very name whereof denoteth how reputable a quarter it is. But he, unknowing neither suspecting aught thereof and thinking to go to a most honourable place and to a lady of quality, entered the house without hesitation,—preceded by the serving-maid, who called her mistress and said, 'Here is Andreuccio,'—and mounting the stair, saw the damsel come to the stairhead to receive him. Now she was yet in the prime of youth, tall of person, with a very fair face and very handsomely dressed and adorned. As he drew near her, she came down three steps to meet him with open arms and clasping him round the neck, abode awhile

* *i.e.* ill hole.

without speaking, as if hindered by excess of tenderness; then kissed him on the forehead, weeping, and said, in a somewhat broken voice, 'O my Andreuccio, thou art indeed welcome.'

He was amazed at such tender caresses and answered, all confounded, 'Madam, you are well met.' Thereupon, taking him by the hand, she carried him up into her saloon and thence, without saying another word to him, she brought him into her chamber, which was all redolent of roses and orange flowers and other perfumes. Here he saw a very fine bed, hung round with curtains, and store of dresses upon the pegs and other very goodly and rich gear, after the usance of those parts; by reason whereof, like a freshman as he was, he firmly believed her to be no less than a great lady. She made him sit with her on a chest that stood at the foot of the bed and bespoke him thus, 'Andreuccio, I am very certain thou marvellest at these caresses that I bestow on thee and at my tears, as he may well do who knoweth me not and hath maybe never heard speak of me; but I have that to tell thee which is like to amaze thee yet more, namely, that I am thy sister; and I tell thee that, since God hath vouchsafed me to look upon one of my brothers, (though fain would I see you all), before my death, henceforth I shall not die disconsolate; and as perchance thou has never heard of this, I will tell it thee.

Pietro, my father and thine, as I doubt not thou knowest, abode long in Palermo and there for his good humour and pleasant composition was and yet is greatly beloved of those who knew him; but, among all his lovers, my mother, who was a lady of gentle birth and then a widow, was she who most affected him, insomuch that, laying aside the fear of her father and brethren, as well as the care of her own honour, she became so private with him that I was born thereof and grew up as thou seest me. Presently, having occasion to depart Palermo and return to Perugia, he left me a little maid with my mother nor ever after, for all that I could hear, remembered him of me or of her; whereof, were he not my father, I should blame him sore, having regard to the ingratitude shown by him to my mother (to say nothing of the love it behoved him bear me, as his daughter, born of no serving-wench nor woman of mean extraction) who had, moved by very faithful love, without anywise knowing who he might be, committed into his hands her possessions and herself no less. But what [skilleth it]? Things ill done and long time passed are easier blamed than mended; algates, so it was.

He left me a little child in Palermo, where being grown well nigh as I am now, my mother, who was a rich lady, gave me to wife to

a worthy gentleman of Girgenti, who, for her love and mine, came to abide at Palermo and there, being a great Guelph,* he entered into treaty with our King Charles,† which, being discovered by King Frederick,‡ ere effect could be given to it, was the occasion of our being enforced to flee from Sicily, whenas I looked to be the greatest lady was ever in the island; wherefore, taking such few things as we might (I say few, in respect of the many we had) and leaving our lands and palaces, we took refuge in this city, where we found King Charles so mindful of our services that he hath in part made good to us the losses we had sustained for him, bestowing on us both lands and houses, and still maketh my husband, thy kinsman that is, a goodly provision, as thou shalt hereafter see. On this wise come I in this city, where, Godamercy and no thanks to thee, sweet my brother, I now behold thee.' So saying, she embraced him over again and kissed him on the forehead, still weeping for tenderness.

Andreuccio, hearing this fable so orderly, so artfully delivered by the damsel, without ever stammering or faltering for a word, and remembering it to be true that his father had been in Palermo, knowing, moreover, by himself the fashions of young men and how lightly they fall in love in their youth and seeing the affectionate tears and embraces and the chaste kisses that she lavished on him, held all she told him for more than true; wherefore, as soon as she was silent, he answered her, saying, 'Madam, it should seem to you no very great matter if I marvel, for that in truth, whether it be that my father, for whatsoever reason, never spoke of your mother nor of yourself, or that if he did, it came not to my notice, I had no more knowledge of you than if you had never been, and so much the dearer is it to me to find you my sister here, as I am alone in this city and the less expected this. Indeed, I know no man of so high a condition that you should not be dear to him, to say nothing of myself, who am but a petty trader. But I pray you make me clear of one thing; how knew you that I was here?' Whereto she made answer, 'A poor woman, who much frequenteth me, gave me this morning to know of thy coming, for that, as she telleth me, she abode long with our father both at Palermo and at Perugia; and but that meseemed it was a more reputable thing that thou shouldst visit me in my own house than I thee in that of another, I had come to thee this great while agone.'

* *i.e.* a member of the Papal party, as against the Ghibellines or partisans of the Emperor.

† Charles d'Anjou, afterwards King of Sicily.

‡ *i.e.* Frederick II. of Germany.

After this, she proceeded to enquire more particularly of all his kinsfolk by name, and he answered her of all, giving the more credence, by reason of this, to that which it the less behoved him to believe.

The talk being long and the heat great, she called for Greek wine and confections and let give Andreuccio to drink, after which he would have taken leave, for that it was supper-time; but she would on no wise suffer it and making a show of being sore vexed, embraced him and said, 'Ah, woe is me! I see but too clearly how little dear I am to thee! Who would believe that thou couldst be with a sister of thine, whom thou hast never yet seen and in whose house thou shouldst have lighted down, whenas thou camest hither, and offer to leave her, to go sup at the inn? Indeed, thou shalt sup with me, and albeit my husband is abroad, which grieveth me mightily, I shall know well how to do thee some little honour, such as a woman may.' To which Andreuccio, unknowing what else he should say, answered, 'I hold you as dear as a sister should be held; but, an I go not, I shall be expected to supper all the evening and shall do an unmannerliness.' 'Praised be God!' cried she. 'One would think I had no one in the house to send to tell them not to expect thee; albeit thou wouldst do much greater courtesy and indeed but thy duty an thou sentest to bid thy companions come hither to supper; and after, an thou must e'en begone, you might all go away together.'

Andreuccio replied that he had no desire for his companions that evening; but that, since it was agreeable to her, she might do her pleasure of him. Accordingly, she made a show of sending to the inn to say that he was not to be expected to supper, and after much other discourse, they sat down to supper and were sumptuously served with various meats, whilst she adroitly contrived to prolong the repast till it was dark night. Then, when they rose from table and Andreuccio would have taken his leave, she declared that she would on no wise suffer this, for that Naples was no place to go about in by night, especially for a stranger, and that, whenas she sent to the inn to say that he was not to be expected to supper, she had at the same time given notice that he would lie abroad. Andreuccio, believing this and taking pleasure in being with her, beguiled as he was by false credence, abode where he was, and after supper they held much and long discourse, not without reason,* till a part of the night was past, when she withdrew with her women into another room, leaving

* The reason was that she wished to keep him in play till late into the night, when all the folk should be asleep and she might the lightlier deal with him.

Andreuccio in her own chamber, with a little lad to wait upon him, if he should lack aught.

The heat being great, Andreuccio, as soon as he found himself alone, stripped to his doublet and putting off his hosen, laid them at the bedhead; after which, natural use soliciting him to rid himself of the overmuch burden of his stomach, he asked the boy where this might be done, who showed him a door in one corner of the room and said, 'Go in there.' Accordingly he opened the door and passing through in all assurance, chanced to set foot on a plank, which, being broken loose from the joist at the opposite end, [flew up] and down they went, plank and man together. God so favoured him that he did himself no hurt in the fall, albeit he fell from some height; but he was all bemired with the ordure whereof the place was full; and in order that you may the better apprehend both that which hath been said and that which ensueth, I will show you how the place lay. There were in a narrow alley, such as we often see between two houses, a pair of rafters laid from one house to another, and thereon sundry boards nailed and the place of session set up; of which boards that which gave way with Andreuccio was one.

Finding himself, then, at the bottom of the alley and sore chagrined at the mishap, he fell a-bawling for the boy; but the latter, as soon as he heard him fall, had run to tell his mistress, who hastened to his chamber and searching hurriedly if his clothes were there, found them and with them the money, which, in his mistrust, he still foolishly carried about him. Having now gotten that for which, feigning herself of Palermo and sister to a Perugian, she had set her snare, she took no more reck of him, but hastened to shut the door whereby he had gone out when he fell.

Andreuccio, getting no answer from the boy, proceeded to call loudlier, but to no purpose; whereupon, his suspicions being now aroused, he began too late to smoke the cheat. Accordingly, he scrambled over a low wall that shut off the alley from the street, and letting himself down into the road, went up to the door of the house, which he knew very well, and there called long and loud and shook and beat upon it amain, but all in vain. Wherefore, bewailing himself, as one who was now fully aware of his mischance, 'Ah, woe is me!' cried he. 'In how little time have I lost five hundred florins and a sister!' Then, after many other words, he fell again to battering the door and crying out and this he did so long and so lustily that many of the neighbours, being awakened and unable to brook the annoy, arose and one of the courtezan's waiting-women, coming to

the window, apparently all sleepy-eyed, said peevishly, 'Who knocketh below there?'

'What?' cried Andreuccio. 'Dost thou not know me? I am Andreuccio, brother to Madam Fiordaliso.' Whereto quoth she, 'Good man, an thou have drunken overmuch, go sleep and come back to-morrow morning. I know no Andreuccio nor what be these idle tales thou tellest. Begone in peace and let us sleep, so it please thee.' 'How?' replied Andreuccio. 'Thou knowest not what I mean? Certes, thou knowest; but, if Sicilian kinships be of such a fashion that they are forgotten in so short a time, at least give me back my clothes and I will begone with all my heart.' 'Good man,' rejoined she, as if laughing, 'methinketh thou dreamest;' and to say this and to draw in her head and shut the window were one and the same thing. Whereat Andreuccio, now fully certified of his loss, was like for chagrin to turn his exceeding anger into madness and bethought himself to seek to recover by violence that which he might not have again with words; wherefore, taking up a great stone, he began anew to batter the door more furiously than ever.

At this many of the neighbours, who had already been awakened and had arisen, deeming him some pestilent fellow who had trumped up this story to spite the woman of the house and provoked at the knocking he kept up, came to the windows and began to say, no otherwise than as all the dogs of a quarter bark after a strange dog, ''Tis a villainous shame to come at this hour to decent women's houses and tell these cock-and-bull stories. For God's sake, good man, please you begone in peace and let us sleep. An thou have aught to mell with her, come back to-morrow and spare us this annoy to-night.' Taking assurance, perchance, by these words, there came to the window one who was within the house, a bully of the gentlewoman's, whom Andreuccio had as yet neither heard nor seen, and said, in a terrible big rough voice, 'Who is below there?'

Andreuccio, hearing this, raised his eyes and saw at the window one who, by what little he could make out, himseemed should be a very masterful fellow, with a bushy black beard on his face, and who yawned and rubbed his eyes, as he had arisen from bed or deep sleep; whereupon, not without fear, he answered, 'I am a brother of the lady of the house.' The other waited not for him to make an end of his reply, but said, more fiercely than before, 'I know not what hindereth me from coming down and cudgelling thee what while I see thee stir, for a pestilent drunken ass as thou must be, who will not let us sleep this night.' Then, drawing back into the house, he shut the window;

whereupon certain of the neighbours, who were better acquainted with the fellow's quality, said softly to Andreuccio, 'For God's sake, good man, begone in peace and abide not there to-night to be slain; get thee gone for thine own good.'

Andreuccio, terrified at the fellow's voice and aspect and moved by the exhortations of the neighbours, who seemed to him to speak out of charity, set out to return to his inn, in the direction of the quarter whence he had followed the maid, without knowing whither to go, despairing of his money and woebegone as ever man was. Being loathsome to himself, for the stench that came from him, and thinking to repair to the sea to wash himself, he turned to the left and followed a street called Ruga Catalana,* that led towards the upper part of the city. Presently, he espied two men coming towards him with a lantern and fearing they might be officers of the watch or other ill-disposed folk, he stealthily took refuge, to avoid them, in a hovel, that he saw hard by. But they, as of malice aforethought, made straight for the same place and entering in, began to examine certain irons which one of them laid from off his shoulder, discoursing various things thereof the while.

Presently, 'What meaneth this?' quoth one. 'I smell the worst stench meseemeth I ever smelt.' So saying, he raised the lantern and seeing the wretched Andreuccio, enquired, in amazement, 'Who is there?' Andreuccio made no answer, but they came up to him with the light and asked him what he did there in such a pickle; whereupon he related to them all that had befallen him, and they, conceiving where this might have happened, said, one to the other, 'Verily, this must have been in the house of Scarabone Buttafuoco.' Then, turning to him, 'Good man,' quoth one, 'albeit thou hast lost thy money, thou hast much reason to praise God that this mischance betided thee, so that thou fellest nor couldst after avail to enter the house again; for, hadst thou not fallen, thou mayst be assured that, when once thou wast fallen asleep, thou hadst been knocked on the head and hadst lost thy life as well as thy money. But what booteth it now to repine? Thou mayst as well look to have the stars out of the sky as to recover a farthing of thy money; nay, thou art like to be murdered, should yonder fellow hear that thou makest any words thereof.' Then they consulted together awhile and presently said to him, 'Look you, we are moved to pity for thee; wherefore, an thou wilt join with us in somewhat we go about to do, it seemeth to us certain that

* *i.e.* Catalan Street.

there will fall to thee for thy share much more than the value of that which thou hast lost.' Whereupon Andreuccio, in his desperation, answered that he was ready.

Now there had been that day buried an archbishop of Naples, by name Messer Filippo Minutolo, and he had been interred in his richest ornaments and with a ruby on his finger worth more than five hundred florins of gold. Him they were minded to despoil and this their intent they discovered to Andreuccio, who, more covetous than well-advised, set out with them for the cathedral. As they went, Andreuccio still stinking amain, one of the thieves said, 'Can we not find means for this fellow to wash himself a little, be it where it may, so he may not stink so terribly?' 'Ay can we,' answered the other. 'We are here near a well, where there useth to be a rope and pulley and a great bucket; let us go thither and we will wash him in a trice.' Accordingly they made for the well in question and found the rope there, but the bucket had been taken away; wherefore they took counsel together to tie him to the rope and let him down into the well, so he might wash himself there, charging him shake the rope as soon as he was clean, and they would pull him up.

Hardly had they let him down when, as chance would have it, certain of the watch, being athirst for the heat and with running after some rogue or another, came to the well to drink, and the two rogues, setting eyes on them, made off incontinent, before the officers saw them. Presently, Andreuccio, having washed himself at the bottom of the well, shook the rope, and the thirsty officers, laying by their targets and arms and surcoats, began to haul upon the rope, thinking the bucket full of water at the other end. As soon as Andreuccio found himself near the top, he let go the rope and laid hold of the marge with both hands; which when the officers saw, overcome with sudden affright, they dropped the rope, without saying a word, and took to their heels as quickliest they might. At this Andreuccio marvelled sore, and but that he had fast hold of the marge, would have fallen to the bottom, to his no little hurt or maybe death. However, he made his way out and finding the arms, which he knew were none of his companions' bringing, he was yet more amazed; but, knowing not what to make of it and misdoubting [some snare], he determined to begone without touching aught and accordingly made off he knew not whither, bewailing his ill-luck.

As he went, he met his two comrades, who came to draw him forth of the well; and when they saw him, they marvelled exceedingly and asked him who had drawn him up. Andreuccio replied that

he knew not and told them orderly how it had happened and what he had found by the well-side, whereupon the others, perceiving how the case stood, told him, laughing, why they had fled and who these were that had pulled him up. Then, without farther parley, it being now middle night, they repaired to the cathedral and making their way thereinto lightly enough, went straight to the archbishop's tomb, which was of marble and very large. With their irons they raised the lid, which was very heavy, and propped it up so as a man might enter; which being done, quoth one, 'Who shall go in?' 'Not I,' answered the other. 'Nor I,' rejoined his fellow; 'let Andreuccio enter.' 'That will I not,' said the latter; whereupon the two rogues turned upon him and said, 'How! Thou wilt not? Cock's faith, an thou enter not, we will clout thee over the costard with one of these iron bars till thou fall dead.'

Andreuccio, affrighted, crept into the tomb, saying in himself the while, 'These fellows will have me go in here so they may cheat me, for that, when I shall have given them everything, they will begone about their business, whilst I am labouring to win out of the tomb, and I shall abide empty-handed.' Accordingly, he determined to make sure of his share beforehand; wherefore, as soon as he came to the bottom, calling to mind the precious ring whereof he had heard them speak, he drew it from the archbishop's finger and set it on his own. Then he passed them the crozier and mitre and gloves and stripping the dead man to his shirt, gave them everything, saying that there was nothing more. The others declared that the ring must be there and bade him seek everywhere; but he replied that he found it not and making a show of seeking it, kept them in play awhile. At last, the two rogues, who were no less wily than himself, bidding him seek well the while, took occasion to pull away the prop that held up the lid and made off, leaving him shut in the tomb.

What became of Andreuccio, when he found himself in this plight, you may all imagine for yourselves. He strove again and again to heave up the lid with his head and shoulders, but only wearied himself in vain; wherefore, overcome with chagrin and despair, he fell down in a swoon upon the archbishop's dead body; and whoso saw him there had hardly known which was the deader, the prelate or he. Presently, coming to himself, he fell into a passion of weeping, seeing he must there without fail come to one of two ends, to wit, either he must, if none came thither to open the tomb again, die of hunger and stench, among the worms of the dead body, or, if any came and found him there, he would certainly be hanged for a thief.

As he abode in this mind, exceeding woebegone, he heard folk stirring in the church and many persons speaking and presently perceived that they came to do that which he and his comrades had already done; whereat fear redoubled upon him. But, after the newcomers had forced open the tomb and propped up the lid, they fell into dispute of who should go in, and none was willing to do it. However, after long parley, a priest said, 'What fear ye? Think you he will eat you? The dead eat not men. I will go in myself.' So saying, he set his breast to the marge of the tomb and turning his head outward, put in his legs, thinking to let himself drop. Andreuccio, seeing this, started up and catching the priest by one of his legs, made a show of offering to pull him down into the tomb. The other, feeling this, gave a terrible screech and flung precipitately out of the tomb; whereupon all the others fled in terror, as they were pursued by an hundred thousand devils, leaving the tomb open.

Andreuccio, seeing this, scrambled hastily out of the tomb, rejoiced beyond all hope, and made off out of the church by the way he had entered in. The day now drawing near, he fared on at a venture, with the ring on his finger, till he came to the sea-shore and thence made his way back to his inn, where he found his comrades and the host, who had been in concern for him all that night. He told them what had betided him and themseemed, by the host's counsel, that he were best depart Naples incontinent. Accordingly, he set out forthright and returned to Perugia, having invested his money in a ring, whereas he came to buy horses."

THE SIXTH STORY

MADAM BERITOLA, HAVING LOST HER TWO SONS, IS FOUND ON A DESERT ISLAND WITH TWO KIDS AND GOETH THENCE INTO LUNIGIANA, WHERE ONE OF HER SONS, TAKING SERVICE WITH THE LORD OF THE COUNTRY, LIETH WITH HIS DAUGHTER AND IS CAST INTO PRISON. SICILY AFTER REBELLING AGAINST KING CHARLES AND THE YOUTH BEING RECOGNIZED BY HIS MOTHER, HE ESPOUSETH HIS LORD'S DAUGHTER, AND HIS BROTHER BEING LIKEWISE FOUND, THEY ARE ALL THREE RESTORED TO HIGH ESTATE

LADIES and young men alike laughed heartily at Andreuccio's adventures, as related by Fiammetta, and Emilia, seeing the story ended,

began, by the queen's commandment, to speak thus: "Grievous things and woeful are the various shifts of Fortune, whereof,—for that, whenassoever it is discoursed of them, it is an awakenment for our minds, which lightly fall asleep under her blandishments,—methinketh it should never be irksome either to the happy or the unhappy to hear tell, inasmuch as it rendereth the former wary and consoleth the latter. Wherefore, albeit great things have already been recounted upon this subject, I purpose to tell you thereanent a story no less true than pitiful, whereof, for all it had a joyful ending, so great and so longsome was the bitterness that I can scarce believe it to have been assuaged by any subsequent gladness.

You must know, dearest ladies, that, after the death of the Emperor Frederick the Second, Manfred was crowned King of Sicily, in very high estate with whom was a gentleman of Naples called Arrighetto Capece, who had to wife a fair and noble lady, also of Naples, by name Madam Beritola Caracciola. The said Arrighetto, who had the governance of the island in his hands, hearing that King Charles the First * had overcome and slain Manfred at Benevento and that all the realm had revolted to him and having scant assurance of the short-lived fidelity of the Sicilians, prepared for flight, misliking to become a subject of his lord's enemy; but, his intent being known of the Sicilians, he and many other friends and servants of King Manfred were suddenly made prisoners and delivered to King Charles, together with possession of the island.

Madam Beritola, in this grievous change of affairs, knowing not what was come of Arrighetto and sore adread of that which had befallen, abandoned all her possessions for fear of shame and poor and pregnant as she was, embarked, with a son of hers of maybe eight years of age, Giusfredi by name, in a little boat and fled to Lipari, where she gave birth to another male child, whom she named Scacciato,† and getting her a nurse, took ship with all three, to return to her kinsfolk at Naples. But it befell otherwise than as she purposed; for that the ship, which should have gone to Naples, was carried by stress of wind to the island of Ponza,‡ where they entered a little bight of the sea and there awaited an occasion for continuing their voyage. Madam Beritola, going up, like the rest, into the island

* Charles d'Anjou.

† *i.e.* the Banished or the Expelled One.

‡ An island in the Gulf of Gaeta, about 70 miles from Naples. It is now inhabited, but appears in Boccaccio's time to have been desert.

and finding a remote and solitary place, addressed herself to make moan for her Arrighetto, all alone there.

This being her daily usance, it chanced one day that, as she was occupied in bewailing herself, there came up a pirate galley, unobserved of any, sailor or other, and taking them all at unawares, made off with her prize. Madam Beritola, having made an end of her diurnal lamentation, returned to the sea-shore, as she was used to do, to visit her children, but found none there; whereat she first marvelled and after, suddenly misdoubting her of that which had happened, cast her eyes out to sea and saw the galley at no great distance, towing the little ship after it; whereby she knew but too well that she had lost her children, as well as her husband, and seeing herself there poor and desolate and forsaken, unknowing where she should ever again find any of them, she fell down aswoon upon the strand, calling upon her husband and her children. There was none there to recall her distracted spirits with cold water or other remedy, wherefore they might at their leisure go wandering whither it pleased them; but, after awhile, the lost senses returning to her wretched body, in company with tears and lamentations, she called long upon her children and went a great while seeking them in every cavern. At last, finding all her labour in vain and seeing the night coming on, she began, hoping and knowing not what, to be careful for herself and departing the sea-shore, returned to the cavern where she was wont to weep and bemoan herself.

She passed the night in great fear and inexpressible dolour and the new day being come and the hour of tierce past, she was fain, constrained by hunger, for that she had not supped overnight, to browse upon herbs; and having fed as best she might, she gave herself, weeping, to various thoughts of her future life. Pondering thus, she saw a she-goat enter a cavern hard by and presently issue thence and betake herself into the wood; whereupon she arose and entering whereas the goat had come forth, found there two little kidlings, born belike that same day, which seemed to her the quaintest and prettiest things in the world Her milk being yet undried from her recent delivery, she tenderly took up the kids and set them to her breast. They refused not the service, but sucked her as if she had been their dam and thenceforth made no distinction between the one and the other. Wherefore, herseeming she had found some company in that desert place, and growing no less familiar with the old goat than with her little ones, she resigned herself to live and die there and abode eating

of herbs and drinking water and weeping as often as she remembered her of her husband and children and of her past life.

The gentle lady, thus grown a wild creature, abiding on this wise, it befell, after some months, that there came on like wise to the place whither she had aforetime been driven by stress of weather, a little vessel from Pisa and there abode some days. On board this bark was a gentleman named Currado [of the family] of the Marquises of Malespina, who, with his wife, a lady of worth and piety, was on his return home from a pilgrimage to all the holy places that be in the kingdom of Apulia. To pass away the time, Currado set out one day, with his lady and certain of his servants and his dogs, to go about the island, and not far from Madam Beritola's place of harbourage, the dogs started the two kids, which were now grown pretty big, as they went grazing. The latter, chased by the dogs, fled to no other place but into the cavern where was Madam Beritola, who, seeing this, started to her feet and catching up a staff, beat off the dogs. Currado and his wife, who came after them, seeing the lady, who was grown swart and lean and hairy, marvelled, and she yet more at them. But after Currado had, at her instance, called off his dogs, they prevailed with her, by dint of much entreaty, to tell them who she was and what she did there; whereupon she fully discovered to them her whole condition and all that had befallen her, together with her firm resolution [to abide alone in the island].

Currado, who had known Arrighetto Capece very well, hearing this, wept for pity, and did his utmost to divert her with words from so barbarous a purpose, offering to carry her back to her own house or to keep her with himself, holding her in such honour as his sister, until God should send her happier fortune. The lady not yielding to these proffers, Currado left his wife with her, bidding the latter cause bring thither to eat and clothe the lady, who was all in rags, with some of her own apparel, and charging her contrive, by whatsoever means, to bring her away with her. Accordingly, the gentle lady, being left with Madam Beritola, after condoling with her amain of her misfortunes, sent for raiment and victual and prevailed on her, with all the pains in the world, to don the one and eat of the other.

Ultimately, after many prayers, Madam Beritola protesting that she would never consent to go whereas she might be known, she persuaded her to go with her into Lunigiana, together with the two kids and their dam, which latter were meantime returned and had greeted her with the utmost fondness, to the no small wonderment of the gentlewoman.

"She tenderly took up the kids"

Accordingly, as soon as fair weather was come, Madam Beritola embarked with Currado and his lady in their vessel, carrying with her the two kids and the she-goat (on whose account, her name being everywhere unknown, she was styled Cavriuola *) and setting sail with a fair wind, came speedily to the mouth of the Magra,† where they landed and went up to Currado's castle. There Madam Beritola abode, in a widow's habit, about the person of Currado's lady, as one of her waiting-women, humble, modest and obedient, still cherishing her kids and letting nourish them.

Meanwhile, the corsairs, who had taken the ship wherein Madam Beritola came to Ponza, but had left herself, as being unseen of them, betook themselves with all the other folk to Genoa, where, the booty coming to be shared among the owners of the galley, it chanced that the nurse and the two children fell, amongst other things, to the lot of a certain Messer Guasparrino d'Oria,‡ who sent them all three to his mansion, to be there employed as slaves about the service of the house. The nurse, afflicted beyond measure at the loss of her mistress and at the wretched condition whereinto she found herself and the two children fallen, wept long and sore; but, for that, albeit a poor woman, she was discreet and well-advised, when she saw that tears availed nothing and that she was become a slave together with them, she first comforted herself as best she might and after, considering whither they were come, she bethought herself that, should the two children be known, they might lightly chance to suffer hindrance; wherefore, hoping withal that, sooner or later fortune might change and they, an they lived, regain their lost estate, she resolved to discover to no one who they were, until she should see occasion therefor, and told all who asked her thereof that they were her sons. The elder she named, not Giusfredi, but Giannotto di Procida (the name of the younger she cared not to change), and explained to him, with the utmost diligence, why she had changed his name, showing him in what peril he might be, an he were known. This she set out to him not once, but many and many a time, and the boy, who was quick of wit, punctually obeyed the enjoinment of his discreet nurse.

Accordingly, the two boys and their nurse abode patiently in Messer Guasparrino's house several years, ill-clad and worse shod and employed about the meanest offices. But Giannotto, who was now sixteen years of age and had more spirit than pertained to a slave, scorning the

* *i.e.* wild she-goat.

† A river falling into the Gulf of Genoa between Carrara and Spezzia.

‡ More familiar to modern ears as Doria.

baseness of a menial condition, embarked on board certain galleys bound for Alexandria and taking leave of Messer Guasparrino's service, journey to divers parts, without any wise availing to advance himself. At last, some three or four years after his departure from Genoa, being grown a handsome youth and tall of his person and hearing that his father, whom he thought dead, was yet alive, but was kept by King Charles in prison and duresse, he went wandering at a venture, well nigh despairing of fortune, till he came to Lunigiana and there, as chance would have it, took service with Currado Malespina, whom he served with great aptitude and acceptance. And albeit he now and again saw his mother, who was with Currado's lady, he never recognized her nor she him, so much had time changed the one and the other from that which they were used to be, wheneas they last set eyes on each other.

Giannotto being, then, in Currado's service, it befell that a daughter of the latter, by name Spina, being left the widow of one Niccolo da Grignano, returned to her father's house and being very fair and agreeable and a girl of little more than sixteen years of age, chanced to cast eyes on Giannotto and he on her, and they became passionately enamoured of each other. Their love was not long without effect and lasted several months ere any was ware thereof. Wherefore, taking overmuch assurance, they began to order themselves with less discretion than behoveth unto matters of this kind, and one day, as they went, the young lady and Giannotto together, through a fair and thick-set wood, they pushed on among the trees, leaving the rest of the company behind. Presently, themseeming they had far foregone the others, they laid themselves down to rest in a pleasant place, full of grass and flowers and shut in with trees, and there fell to taking amorous delight one of the other.

In this occupation, the greatness of their delight making the time seem brief to them, albeit they had been there a great while, they were surprised, first by the girl's mother and after by Currado, who, chagrined beyond measure at this sight, without saying aught of the cause, had them both seized by three of his serving-men and carried in bonds to a castle of his and went off, boiling with rage and despite and resolved to put them both to a shameful death. The girl's mother, although sore incensed and holding her daughter worthy of the severest punishment for her default, having by certain words of Currado apprehended his intent towards the culprits and unable to brook this, hastened after her enraged husband and began to beseech him that it would please him not run madly to make himself in his old age the

murderer of his own daughter and to soil his hands with the blood of one of his servants, but to find other means of satisfying his wrath, such as to clap them in prison and there let them pine and bewail the fault committed. With these and many other words the pious lady so wrought upon him that she turned his mind from putting them to death and he bade imprison them, each in a place apart, where they should be well guarded and kept with scant victual and much unease, till such time as he should determine farther of them. As he bade, so was it done, and what their life was in duresse and continual tears and in fasts longer than might have behoved unto them, each may picture to himself.

What while Giannotto and Spina abode in this doleful case and had therein already abidden a year's space, unremembered of Currado, it came to pass that King Pedro of Arragon, by the procurement of Messer Gian di Procida, raised the island of Sicily against King Charles and took it from him, whereat Currado, being a Ghibelline,* rejoiced exceedingly. Giannotto, hearing of this from one of those who had him in guard, heaved a great sigh and said, 'Ah, woe is me! These fourteen years have I gone ranging beggar-like about the world, looking for nought other than this, which, now that it is come, so I may never again hope for weal, hath found me in a prison whence I have no hope ever to come forth, save dead.' 'How so?' asked the gaoler. 'What doth that concern thee which great kings do to one another? What hast thou to do in Sicily?' Quoth Giannotto, 'My heart is like to burst when I remember me of that which my father erst had to do there, whom, albeit I was but a little child, when I fled thence, yet do I mind me to have seen lord thereof, in the lifetime of King Manfred.' 'And who was thy father?' asked the gaoler. 'My father's name,' answered Giannotto, 'I may now safely make known, since I find myself in the peril whereof I was in fear, an I discovered it. He was and is yet, an he live, called Arrighetto Capece, and my name is, not Giannotto, but Giusfredi, and I doubt not a jot, an I were quit of this prison, but I might yet, by returning to Sicily, have very high place there.'

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What while Giannotto and Spina abode in this doleful case and had therein already abidden a year's space, unremembered of Currado, it came to pass that King Pedro of Arragon, by the procurement of Messer Gian di Procida, raised the island of Sicily against King Charles and took it from him, whereat Currado, being a Ghibelline,* rejoiced exceedingly. Giannotto, hearing of this from one of those who had him in guard, heaved a great sigh and said, 'Ah, woe is me! These fourteen years have I gone ranging beggar-like about the world, looking for nought other than this, which, now that it is come, so I may never again hope for weal, hath found me in a prison whence I have no hope ever to come forth, save dead.' 'How so?' asked the gaoler. 'What doth that concern thee which great kings do to one another? What hast thou to do in Sicily?' Quoth Giannotto, 'My heart is like to burst when I remember me of that which my father erst had to do there, whom, albeit I was but a little child, when I fled thence, yet do I mind me to have seen lord thereof, in the lifetime of King Manfred.' 'And who was thy father?' asked the gaoler. 'My father's name,' answered Giannotto, 'I may now safely make known, since I find myself in the peril whereof I was in fear, an I discovered it. He was and is yet, an he live, called Arrighetto Capece, and my name is, not Giannotto, but Giusfredi, and I doubt not a jot, an I were quit of this prison, but I might yet, by returning to Sicily, have very high place there.'

* The Ghibellines were the supporters of the Papal faction against the Guelphs or adherents of the Emperor Frederick II. of Germany. The cardinal struggle between the two factions took place over the succession to the throne of Naples and Sicily, to which the Pope appointed Charles of Anjou, who overcame and killed the reigning sovereign Manfred, but was himself, through the machinations of the Ghibellines, expelled from Sicily by the celebrated popular rising known as the Sicilian Vespers.

The honest man, without asking farther, reported Giannotto's words, as first he had occasion, to Currado, who, hearing this,—albeit he feigned to the gaoler to make light of it,—betook himself to Madam Beritola and courteously asked her if she had had by Arrighetto a son named Giusfredi. The lady answered, weeping, that, if the elder of her two sons were alive, he would so be called and would be two-and-twenty years old. Currado, hearing this, concluded that this must be he and bethought himself that, were it so, he might at once do a great mercy and take away his own and his daughter's shame by giving her to Giannotto to wife; wherefore, sending privily for the latter, he particularly examined him touching all his past life and finding, by very manifest tokens, that he was indeed Giusfredi, son of Arrighetto Capece, he said to him, 'Giannotto, thou knowest what and how great is the wrong thou hast done me in the person of my daughter, whereas, I having ever well and friendly entreated thee, it behoved thee, as a servant should, still to study and do for my honour and interest; and many there be who, hadst thou used them like as thou hast used me, would have put thee to a shameful death, the which my clemency brooked not. Now, if it be as thou tellest me, to wit, that thou art the son of a man of condition and of a noble lady, I purpose, an thou thyself be willing, to put an end to thy tribulations and relieving thee from the misery and duresse wherein thou abidest, to reinstate at once thine honour and mine own in their due stead. As thou knowest, Spina, whom thou hast, though after a fashion misbeseeming both thyself and her, taken with love-liking, is a widow and her dowry is both great and good; as for her manners and her father and mother, thou knowest them, and of thy present state I say nothing. Wherefore, an thou will, I purpose that, whereas she hath unlawfully been thy mistress, she shall now lawfully become thy wife and that thou shalt abide here with me and with her, as my very son, so long as it shall please thee.'

Now prison had mortified Giannotto's flesh, but had nothing abated the generous spirit, which he derived from his noble birth, nor yet the entire affection he bore his mistress; and albeit he ardently desired that which Currado proffered him and saw himself in the latter's power, yet no whit did he dissemble of that which the greatness of his soul prompted him to say; wherefore he answered, 'Currado, neither lust of lordship nor greed of gain nor other cause whatever hath ever made me lay snares, traitor-wise, for thy life or thy good. I loved and love thy daughter and still shall love her, for that I hold her worthy of my love, and if I dealt with her less than honourably,

in the opinion of the vulgar, my sin was one which still goeth hand in hand with youth and which an you would do away, it behoveth you first do away with youth. Moreover, it is an offence which, would the old but remember them of having been young and measure the defaults of others by their own and their own by those of others, would show less grievous than thou and many others make it; and as a friend, and not as an enemy, I committed it. This that thou profferest me I have still desired and had I thought it should be vouchsafed me, I had long since sought it; and so much the dearer will it now be to me, as my hope thereof was less. If, then, thou have not that intent which thy words denote, feed me not with vain hope; but restore me to prison and there torment me as thou wilt, for, so long as I love Spina, even so, for the love of her, shall I still love thee, whatsoever thou dost with me, and have thee in reverence.'

Currado, hearing this, marvelled and held him great of soul and his love fervent and tendered him therefore the dearer; wherefore, rising to his feet, he embraced him and kissed him and without more delay bade privily bring Spina thither. Accordingly, the lady—who was grown lean and pale and weakly in prison and showed well nigh another than she was wont to be, as on like wise Giannotto another man—being come, the two lovers in Currado's presence with one consent contracted marriage according to our usance. Then, after some days, during which he had let furnish the newly-married pair with all that was necessary or agreeable to them, he deemed it time to gladden their mothers with the good news and accordingly calling his lady and Cavriuola, he said to the latter, 'What would you say, madam, an I should cause you have again your elder son as the husband of one of my daughters?' Whereto she answered, 'Of that I can say to you no otherwhat than that, could I be more beholden to you than I am, I should be so much the more so as you would have restored to me that which is dearer to me than mine own self; and restoring it to me on such wise as you say, you would in some measure re-awaken in me my lost hope.' With this, she held her peace, weeping, and Currado said to his lady, 'And thou, mistress, how wouldst thou take it, were I to present thee with such a son-in-law?' The lady replied, 'Even a common churl, so he pleased you, would please me, let alone one of these,* who are men of gentle birth.' 'Then,' said Currado, 'I hope, ere many days, to make you happy women in this.'

Accordingly, seeing the two young folk now restored to their former

* *i.e.* Beritola's sons.

cheer, he clad them sumptuously and said to Giusfredi, 'Were it not dear to thee, over and above thy present joyance, an thou sawest thy mother here?' Whereto he answered, 'I dare not flatter myself that the chagrin of her unhappy chances can have left her so long alive; but, were it indeed so, it were dear to me above all, more by token that methinketh I might yet, by her counsel, avail to recover great part of my estate in Sicily.' Thereupon Currado sent for both the ladies, who came and made much of the newly-wedded wife, no little wondering what happy inspiration it could have been that prompted Currado to such exceeding complaisance as he had shown in joining Giannotto with her in marriage. Madam Beritola, by reason of the words she had heard from Currado, began to consider Giannotto and some remembrance of the boyish lineaments of her son's countenance being by occult virtue awakened in her, without awaiting farther explanation, she ran, open-armed, to cast herself upon his neck, nor did over-abounding emotion and maternal joy suffer her to say a word; nay, they so locked up all her senses that she fell into her son's arms, as if dead.

The latter, albeit he was sore amazed, remembering to have many times before seen her in that same castle and never recognized her, nevertheless knew incontinent the maternal odour and blaming himself for his past heedlessness, received her, weeping, in his arms and kissed her tenderly. After awhile, Madam Beritola, being affectionately tended by Currado's lady and Spina and plied both with cold water and other remedies, recalled her strayed senses and embracing her son anew, full of maternal tenderness, with many tears and many tender words, kissed him a thousand times, whilst he all reverently beheld and entreated her. After these joyful and honourable greetings had been thrice or four times repeated, to the no small contentment of the bystanders, and they had related unto each other all that had befallen them, Currado now, to the exceeding satisfaction of all, signified to his friends the new alliance made by him and gave ordinance for a goodly and magnificent entertainment.

Then said Giusfredi to him, 'Currado, you have made me glad of many things and have long honourably entertained my mother; and now, that no whit may remain undone of that which it is in your power to do, I pray you gladden my mother and my bride-feast and myself with the presence of my brother, whom Messer Guasparrino d'Oria holdeth in servitude in his house and whom, as I have already told you, he took with me in one of his cruises. Moreover, I would have you send into Sicily one who shall throughly inform himself of

the state and condition of the country and study to learn what is come of Arrighetto, my father, an he be alive or dead, and if he be alive, in what estate; of all which having fully certified himself, let him return to us.' Giusfredi's request was pleasing to Currado, and without any delay he despatched very discreet persons both to Genoa and to Sicily.

He who went to Genoa there sought out Messer Guasparrino and instantly besought him, on Currado's part, to send him Scacciato and his nurse, orderly recounting to him all his lord's dealings with Giusfredi and his mother. Messer Guasparrino marvelled exceedingly to hear this and said, 'True is it I would do all I may to pleasure Currado, and I have, indeed, these fourteen years had in my house the boy thou seekest and one his mother, both of whom I will gladly send him; but do thou bid him, on my part, beware of lending overmuch credence to the fables of Giannotto, who nowadays styleth himself Giusfredi, for that he is a far greater knave than he deemeth.' So saying, he caused honourably entertain the gentleman and sending privily for the nurse, questioned her shrewdly touching the matter. Now she had heard of the Sicilian revolt and understood Arrighetto to be alive, wherefore, casting off her former fears, she told him everything in order and showed him the reasons that had moved her to do as she had done.

Messer Guasparrino, finding her tale to accord perfectly with that of Currado's messenger, began to give credit to the latter's words and having by one means and another, like a very astute man as he was, made enquiry of the matter and happening hourly upon things that gave him more and more assurance of the fact, took shame to himself of his mean usage of the lad, in amends whereof, knowing what Arrighetto had been and was, he gave him to wife a fair young daughter of his, eleven years of age, with a great dowry. Then, after making a great bride-feast thereon, he embarked with the boy and girl and Currado's messenger and the nurse in a well-armed galliot and betook himself to Lerici, where he was received by Currado and went up, with all his company, to one of the latter's castles, not far removed thence, where there was a great banquet toward.

The mother's joy at seeing her son again and that of the two brothers in each other and of all three in the faithful nurse, the honour done of all to Messer Guasparrino and his daughter and of him to all and the rejoicing of all together with Currado and his lady and children and friends, no words might avail to express; wherefore,

ladies, I leave it to you to imagine. Thereunto,* that it might be complete, it pleased God the Most High, a most abundant giver, whenas He beginneth, to add the glad news of the life and well-being of Arrighetto Capece; for that, the feast being at its height and the guests, both ladies and men, yet at table for the first service, there came he who had been sent into Sicily and amongst other things, reported of Arrighetto that he, being kept in captivity by King Charles, whenas the revolt against the latter broke out in the land, the folk ran in a fury to the prison and slaying his guards, delivered himself and as a capital enemy of King Charles, made him their captain and followed him to expel and slay the French: wherefore he was become in especial favour with King Pedro,† who had reinstated him in all his honours and possessions, and was now in great good case. The messenger added that he had received himself with the utmost honour and had rejoiced with inexpressible joy in the recovery of his wife and son, of whom he had heard nothing since his capture; moreover, he had sent a brigantine for them, with divers gentlemen aboard, who came after him.

The messenger was received and hearkened with great gladness and rejoicing, whilst Currado, with certain of his friends, set out incontinent to meet the gentlemen who came for Madam Beritola and Giusfredi and welcoming them joyously, introduced them into his banquet, which was not yet half ended. There both the lady and Giusfredi, no less than all the others, beheld them with such joyance that never was heard the like; and the gentlemen, ere they sat down to meat, saluted Currado and his lady on the part of Arrighetto, thanking them, as best they knew and might, for the honour done both to his wife and his son and offering himself to their pleasure,‡ in all that lay in his power. Then, turning to Messer Guasparrino, whose kindness was unlooked for, they avouched themselves most certain that, whenas that which he had done for Scacciato should be known of Arrighetto, the like thanks and yet greater would be rendered him.

Thereafter they banqueted right joyously with the new-made bridegrooms at the bride-feast of the two newly-wedded wives; nor that day alone did Currado entertain his son-in-law and other his kinsmen and friends, but many others. As soon as the rejoicings were some-

* *i.e.* to which general joy.

† Pedro of Arragon, son-in-law of Manfred, who, in consequence of the Sicilian Vespers, succeeded Charles d'Anjou as King of Sicily.

‡ Or (in modern phrase) putting himself at their disposition.

what abated, it appearing to Madam Beritola and to Giusfredi and the others that it was time to depart, they took leave with many tears of Currado and his lady and Messer Guasparrino and embarked on board the brigantine, carrying Spina with them; then, setting sail with a fair wind, they came speedily to Sicily, where all alike, both sons and daughters-in-law, were received by Arrighetto in Palermo with such rejoicing as might never be told; and there it is believed that they all lived happily a great while after, in love and thankfulness to God the Most High, as mindful of the benefits received."

THE SEVENTH STORY

THE SOLDAN OF BABYLON SENDETH A DAUGHTER OF HIS TO BE MARRIED TO THE KING OF ALGARVE, AND SHE, BY DIVERS CHANCES, IN THE SPACE OF FOUR YEARS COMETH TO THE HANDS OF NINE MEN IN VARIOUS PLACES. ULTIMATELY, BEING RESTORED TO HER FATHER FOR A MAID, SHE GOETH TO THE KING OF ALGARVE TO WIFE, AS FIRST SHE DID

HAD Emilia's story been much longer protracted, it is like the compassion had by the young ladies on the misfortunes of Madam Beritola would have brought them to tears; but, an end being now made thereof, it pleased the queen that Pamfilo should follow on with his story, and accordingly he, who was very obedient, began thus, "Uneath, charming ladies, is it for us to know that which is meet for us, for that, as may oftentimes have been seen, many, imagining that, were they but rich, they might avail to live without care and secure, have not only with prayers sought riches of God, but have diligently studied to acquire them, grudging no toil and no peril in the quest, and who,—whereas, before they became enriched, they loved their lives,—once having gotten their desire, have found folk to slay them, for greed of so ample an inheritance. Others of low estate, having, through a thousand perilous battles and the blood of their brethren and their friends, mounted to the summit of kingdoms, thinking in the royal estate to enjoy supreme felicity, without the innumerable cares and alarms whereof they see and feel it full, have learned, at the cost of their lives, that poison is drunken at royal tables in cups of gold. Many there be who have with most ardent appetite desired bodily strength and beauty and divers personal adornments and perceived not that they had desired ill till they found these very gifts

a cause to them of death or dolorous life. In fine, not to speak particularly of all the objects of human desire, I dare say that there is not one which can, with entire assurance, be chosen by mortal men as secure from the vicissitudes of fortune; wherefore, an we would do aright, needs must we resign ourselves to take and possess that which is appointed us of Him who alone knoweth that which behoveth unto us and is able to give it to us. But for that, whereas men sin in desiring various things, you, gracious ladies, sin, above all, in one, to wit, in wishing to be fair,—insomuch that, not content with the charms vouchsafed you by nature, you still with marvellous art study to augment them,—it pleaseth me to recount to you how ill-fortunedly fair was a Saracen lady, whom it befell, for her beauty, to be in some four years' space nine times wedded anew.

It is now a pretty while since there was a certain Soldan of Babylon,* by name Beminedab, to whom in his day many things happened in accordance with his pleasure.† Amongst many other children, both male and female, he had a daughter called Alatiel, who, by report of all who saw her, was the fairest woman to be seen in the world in those days, and having, in a great defeat he had inflicted upon a vast multitude of Arabs who were come upon him, been wonder-well seconded by the King of Algarve,‡ had, at his request, given her to him to wife, of especial favour; wherefore, embarking her aboard a ship well armed and equipped, with an honourable company of men and ladies and store of rich and sumptuous gear and furniture, he despatched her to him, commending her to God.

The sailors, seeing the weather favourable, gave their sails to the wind and departing the port of Alexandria, fared on prosperously many days, and having now passed Sardinia, deemed themselves near the end

* *i.e.* Egypt. Cairo was known in the middle ages by the name of "Babylon of Egypt." It need hardly be noted that the Babylon of the Bible was the city of that name on the Euphrates, the ancient capital of Chaldæa (Irak Babili). The names Beminedab and Alatiel are purely imaginary.

† *i.e.* to his wish, to whom fortune was mostly favourable in his enterprises.

‡ *Il Garbo*, Arabic El Gherb or Gharb, الغرب, the West, a name given by the Arabs to several parts of the Muslim empire, but by which Boccaccio apparently means Algarve, the southernmost province of Portugal and the last part of that kingdom to succumb to the wave of Christian reconquest, it having remained in the hands of the Muslims till the second half of the thirteenth century. This supposition is confirmed by the course taken by Alatiel's ship, which would naturally pass Sardinia and the Balearic Islands on its way from Alexandria to Portugal.

of their voyage, when there arose one day of a sudden divers contrary winds, which, being each beyond measure boisterous, so harassed the ship, wherein was the lady, and the sailors, that the latter more than once gave themselves over for lost. However, like valiant men, using every art and means in their power, they rode it out two days, though buffeted by a terrible sea; but, at nightfall of the third day, the tempest abating not, nay, waxing momently, they felt the ship open, being then not far off Majorca, but knowing not where they were neither availing to apprehend it either by nautical reckoning or by sight, for that the sky was altogether obscured by clouds and dark night; wherefore, seeing no other way of escape and having each himself in mind and not others, they lowered a shallop into the water, into which the officers cast themselves, choosing rather to trust themselves thereto than to the leaking ship. The rest of the men in the ship crowded after them into the boat, albeit those who had first embarked therein opposed it, knife in hand,—and thinking thus to flee from death, ran straight into it, for that the boat, availing not, for the intemperance of the weather, to hold so many, foundered and they perished one and all.

As for the ship, being driven by a furious wind and running very swiftly, albeit it was now well nigh water-logged, (none being left on board save the princess and her women, who all, overcome by the tempestuous sea and by fear, lay about the decks as they were dead,) it stranded upon a beach of the island of Majorca and such and so great was the shock that it well nigh buried itself in the sand some stone's cast from the shore, where it abode the night, beaten by the waves, nor might the wind avail to stir it more. Broad day came and the tempest somewhat abating, the princess, who was half dead, raised her head and weak as she was, fell to calling now one, now another of her household, but to no purpose, for that those she called were too far distant. Finding herself unanswered of any and seeing no one, she marvelled exceedingly and began to be sore afraid; then, rising up, as best she might, she saw the ladies who were in her company and the other women lying all about and trying now one and now another, found few who gave any signs of life, the most of them being dead what with sore travail of the stomach and what with affright; wherefore fear redoubled upon her.

Nevertheless, necessity constraining her, for that she saw herself alone there and had neither knowledge nor inkling where she was, she so goaded those who were yet alive that she made them arise and finding them unknowing whither the men were gone and seeing the

ship stranded and full of water, she fell to weeping piteously, together with them. It was noon ere they saw any about the shore or elsewhere, whom they might move to pity and succour them; but about that hour there passed by a gentleman, by name Pericone da Visalgo, returning by chance from a place of his, with sundry of his servants on horseback. He saw the ship and forthright conceiving what it was, bade one of the servants board it without delay and tell him what he found there. The man, though with difficulty, made his way on board and found the young lady, with what little company she had, crouched, all adread, under the heel of the bowsprit. When they saw him, they besought him, weeping, of mercy again and again; but, perceiving that he understood them not nor they him, they made shift to make known to him their misadventure by signs.

The servant having examined everything as best he might, reported to Pericone that which was on board; whereupon the latter promptly caused bring the ladies ashore, together with the most precious things that were in the ship and might be gotten, and carried them off to a castle of his, where, the women being refreshed with food and rest, he perceived, from the richness of her apparel, that the lady whom he had found must needs be some great gentlewoman, and of this he was speedily certified by the honour that he saw the others do her and her alone; and although she was pale and sore disordered of her person, for the fatigues of the voyage, her features seemed to him exceeding fair; wherefore he forthright took counsel with himself, an she had no husband, to seek to have her to wife, and if he might not have her in marriage, to make shift to have her favours.

He was a man of commanding presence and exceeding robust and having for some days let tend the lady excellently well and she being thereby altogether restored, he saw her lovely past all conception and was grieved beyond measure that he could not understand her nor she him and so he might not learn who she was. Nevertheless, being inordinately inflamed by her charms, he studied, with pleasing and amorous gestures, to engage her to do his pleasure without contention; but to no avail; she altogether rejected his advances and so much the more waxed Pericone's ardour. The lady, seeing this and having now abidden there some days, perceived, by the usances of the folk, that she was among Christians and in a country where, even if she could, it had little profited her to make herself known and foresaw that, in the end, either perforce or for love, needs must she resign herself to do Pericone's pleasure, but resolved nevertheless by dint of magnanimity to override the wretchedness of her fortune; wherefore she com-

manded her women, of whom but three were left her, that they should never discover to any who she was, except they found themselves whereas they might look for manifest furtherance in the regaining of their liberty, and urgently exhorted them, moreover, to preserve their chastity, avouching herself determined that none, save her husband, should ever enjoy her. They commended her for this and promised to observe her commandment to the best of their power.

Meanwhile Pericone, waxing daily more inflamed, insomuch as he saw the thing desired so near and yet so straitly denied, and seeing that his blandishments availed him nothing, resolved to employ craft and artifice, reserving force unto the last. Wherefore, having observed bytimes that wine was pleasing to the lady, as being unused to drink thereof, for that her law forbade it, he bethought himself that he might avail to take her with this, as with a minister of Venus. Accordingly, feigning to reck no more of that whereof she showed herself so chary, he made one night by way of special festival a goodly supper, whereto he bade the lady, and therein, the repast being gladdened with many things, he took order with him who served her that he should give her to drink of various wines mingled. The cupbearer did his bidding punctually and she, being nowise on her guard against this and allured by the pleasantness of the drink, took more thereof than consisted with her modesty; whereupon, forgetting all her past troubles, she waxed merry and seeing some women dance after the fashion of Majorca, herself danced in the Alexandrian manner.

Pericone, seeing this, deemed himself on the high road to that which he desired and continuing the supper with great plenty of meats and wines, protracted it far into the night. Ultimately, the guests having departed, he entered with the lady alone into her chamber, where she, more heated with wine than restrained by modesty, without any reserve of shamefastness, undid herself in his presence, as he had been one of her women, and betook herself to bed. Pericone was not slow to follow her, but, putting out all the lights, promptly hid himself beside her and catching her in his arms, proceeded, without any gainsayal on her part, amorously to solace himself with her; which when once she had felt,—having never theretofore known with what manner horn men butt,—as if repenting her of not having yielded to Pericone's solicitations, thenceforth, without waiting to be bidden to such agreeable nights, she oftentimes invited herself thereto, not by words, which she knew not how to make understood, but by deeds.

But, in the midst of this great pleasance of Pericone and herself, fortune, not content with having reduced her from a king's bride

to be the mistress of a country gentleman, had foreordained unto her a more barbarous alliance. Pericone had a brother by name Marato, five-and-twenty years of age and fair and fresh as a rose, who saw her and she pleased him mightily. Himseemed, moreover, according to that which he could apprehend from her gestures, that he was very well seen of her and conceiving that nought hindered him of that which he craved of her save the strait watch kept on her by Pericone, he fell into a barbarous thought, whereon the nefarious effect followed without delay.

There was then, by chance, in the harbour of the city a vessel laden with merchandise and bound for Chiarenza * in Roumelia; whereof two young Genoese were masters, who had already hoisted sail to depart as soon as the wind should be fair. Marato, having agreed with them, took order how he should on the ensuing night be received aboard their ship with the lady; and this done, as soon as it was dark, having inwardly determined what he should do, he secretly betook himself, with certain of his trustiest friends, whom he had enlisted for the purpose, to the house of Pericone, who nowise mistrusted him. There he hid himself, according to the ordinance appointed between them, and after a part of the night had passed, he admitted his companions and repaired with them to the chamber where Pericone lay with the lady. Having opened the door, they slew Pericone, as he slept, and took the lady, who was now awake and in tears, threatening her with death, if she made any outcry; after which they made off, unobserved, with great part of Pericone's most precious things and betook themselves in haste to the sea-shore, where Marato and the lady embarked without delay on board the ship, whilst his companions returned whence they came.

The sailors, having a fair wind and a fresh, made sail and set out on their voyage, whilst the princess sore and bitterly bewailed both her former and that her second misadventure; but Marato, with that Saint Waxeth-in-hand, which God hath given us [men,] proceeded to comfort her after such a fashion that she soon grew familiar with him and forgetting Pericone, began to feel at her ease, when fortune, as if not content with the past tribulations wherewith it had visited her, prepared her a new affliction; for that, she being, as we have already more than once said, exceeding fair of favour and of very engaging manners, the two young men, the masters of the ship, became so passionately enamoured of her that, forgetting all else, they

* The modern Klarentza in the north-west of the Morea, which latter province formed part of Roumelia under the Turkish domination.

studied only to serve and pleasure her, being still on their guard lest Marato should get wind of the cause. Each becoming aware of the other's passion, they privily took counsel together thereof, and agreed to join in getting the lady for themselves and enjoy her in common, as if love should suffer this, as do merchandise and gain.

Seeing her straitly guarded by Marato and being thereby hindered of their purpose, one day, as the ship fared on at full speed under sail and Marato stood at the poop, looking out on the sea and nowise on his guard against them, they went of one accord and laying hold of him suddenly from behind, cast him into the sea, nor was it till they had sailed more than a mile farther that any perceived Marato to be fallen overboard. Alatiel, hearing this and seeing no possible way of recovering him, began anew to make moan for herself; whereupon the two lovers came incontinent to her succour and with soft words and very good promises, whereof she understood but little, studied to soothe and console the lady, who lamented not so much her lost husband as her own ill fortune. After holding much discourse with her at one time and another, themseeming after awhile they had well nigh comforted her, they came to words with one another which should first take her to lie with him. Each would fain be the first and being unable to come to any accord upon this, they first with words began a sore and hot dispute and thereby kindled into rage, they clapped hands to their knives and falling furiously on one another, before those on board could part them, dealt each other several blows, whereof one incontinent fell dead, whilst the other abode on life, though grievously wounded in many places.

This new mishap was sore unpleasing to the lady, who saw herself alone, without aid or counsel of any, and feared lest the anger of the two masters' kinsfolk and friends should revert upon herself; but the prayers of the wounded man and their speedy arrival at Chiarenza delivered her from danger of death. There she went ashore with the wounded man and took up her abode with him in an inn, where the report of her great beauty soon spread through the city and came to the ears of the Prince of the Morea, who was then at Chiarenza and was fain to see her. Having gotten sight of her and himseeming she was fairer than report gave out, he straightway became so sore enamoured of her that he could think of nothing else and hearing how she came thither, doubted not to be able to get her for himself. As he cast about for a means of effecting his purpose, the wounded man's kinsfolk got wind of his desire and without awaiting more, sent her to him forthright, which was mighty agreeable to the prince

and to the lady also, for that herseemed she was quit of a great peril. The prince, seeing her graced, over and above her beauty, with royal manners and unable otherwise to learn who she was, concluded her to be some noble lady, wherefore he redoubled in his love for her and holding her in exceeding honour, entreated her not as a mistress, but as his very wife.

The lady, accordingly, having regard to her past troubles and herseeming she was well enough bestowed, was altogether comforted and waxing blithe again, her beauties flourished on such wise that it seemed all Roumelia could talk of nothing else. The report of her loveliness reaching the Duke of Athens, who was young and handsome and doughty of his person and a friend and kinsman of the prince, he was taken with a desire to see her and making a show of paying him a visit, as he was wont bytimes to do, repaired, with a fair and worshipful company, to Chiarenza, where he was honourably received and sumptuously entertained. Some days after, the two kinsmen coming to discourse together of the lady's charms, the Duke asked if she were indeed so admirable a creature as was reported; to which the Prince answered, 'Much more so; but thereof I will have not my words, but thine own eyes certify thee.' Accordingly, at the Duke's solicitation, they betook themselves together to the princess's lodging, who, having had notice of their coming, received them very courteously and with a cheerful favour, and they seated her between them, but might not have the pleasure of conversing with her, for that she understood little or nothing of their language; wherefore each contented himself with gazing upon her, as upon a marvel, and especially the Duke, who could scarce bring himself to believe that she was a mortal creature and thinking to satisfy his desire with her sight, heedless of the amorous poison he drank in at his eyes, beholding her, he miserably ensnared himself, becoming most ardently enamoured of her.

After he had departed her presence with the prince and had leisure to bethink himself, he esteemed his kinsman happy beyond all others in having so fair a creature at his pleasure, and after many and various thoughts, his unruly passion weighing more with him than his honour, he resolved, come thereof what might, to do his utmost endeavour to despoil the prince of that felicity and bless himself therewith. Accordingly, being minded to make a quick despatch of the matter and setting aside all reason and all equity, he turned his every thought to the devising of means for the attainment of his wishes, and one day, in accordance with the nefarious ordinance taken by him with a

privy chamberlain of the Prince's, by name Ciuriaci, he let make ready in secret his horses and baggage for a sudden departure.

The night come, he was, with a companion, both armed, stealthily introduced by the aforesaid Ciuriaci into the Prince's chamber and saw the latter (the lady being asleep) standing, all naked for the great heat, at a window overlooking the sea-shore, to take a little breeze that came from that quarter; whereupon, having beforehand informed his companion of that which he had to do, he went softly up to the window and striking the Prince with a knife, stabbed him through and through the small of his back; then, taking him up in haste, he cast him forth of the window. The palace stood over against the sea and was very lofty and the window in question looked upon certain houses that had been undermined by the beating of the waves and where seldom or never any came; wherefore it happened, as the Duke had foreseen, that the fall of the Prince's body was not nor might be heard of any. The Duke's companion, seeing this done, pulled out a halter he had brought with him to that end and making a show of caressing Ciuriaci, cast it adroitly about his neck and drew it so that he could make no outcry; then, the Duke coming up, they strangled him and cast him whereas they had cast the Prince.

This done and they being manifestly certified that they had been unheard of the lady or of any other, the Duke took a light in his hand and carrying it to the bedside, softly uncovered the princess, who slept fast. He considered her from head to foot and mightily commended her; for, if she was to his liking, being clothed, she pleased him, naked, beyond all compare. Wherefore, fired with hotter desire and unawed by his new-committed crime, he couched himself by her side, with hands yet bloody, and lay with her, all sleepy-eyed as she was and thinking him to be the Prince. After he had abidden with her awhile in the utmost pleasure, he arose and summoning certain of his companions, caused take up the lady on such wise that she could make no outcry and carry her forth by a privy door, whereat he had entered; then, setting her on horseback, he took to the road with all his men, as softliest he might, and returned to his own dominions. However (for that he had a wife) he carried the lady, who was the most distressful of women, not to Athens, but to a very goodly place he had by the sea, a little without the city, and there entertained her in secret, causing honourably furnish her with all that was needful.

The Prince's courtiers on the morrow awaited his rising till none, when, hearing nothing, they opened the chamber-doors, which were but closed, and finding no one, concluded that he was gone somewhither

privily, to pass some days there at his ease with his fair lady, and gave themselves no farther concern. Things being thus, it chanced next day that an idiot, entering the ruins where lay the bodies of the Prince and Ciuriaci, dragged the latter forth by the halter and went haling him after him. The body was, with no little wonderment, recognized by many, who, coaxing the idiot to bring them to the place whence he had dragged it, there, to the exceeding grief of the whole city, found the Prince's corpse and gave it honourable burial. Then, enquiring for the authors of so heinous a crime and finding that the Duke of Athens was no longer there, but had departed by stealth, they concluded, even as was the case, that it must be he who had done this and carried off the lady; whereupon they straightway substituted a brother of the dead man to their Prince and incited him with all their might to vengeance. The new Prince, being presently certified by various other circumstances that it was as they had surmised, summoned his friends and kinsmen and servants from divers parts and promptly levying a great and goodly and powerful army, set out to make war upon the Duke of Athens.

The latter, hearing of this, on like wise mustered all his forces for his own defence, and to his aid came many lords, amongst whom the Emperor of Constantinople sent Constantine his son and Manuel his nephew, with a great and goodly following. The two princes were honourably received by the Duke and yet more so by the Duchess, for that she was their sister,* and matters drawing thus daily nearer unto war, taking her occasion, she sent for them both one day to her chamber and there, with tears galore and many words, related to them the whole story, acquainting them with the causes of the war. Moreover, she discovered to them the affront done her by the Duke in the matter of the woman whom it was believed he privily entertained, and complaining sore thereof, besought them to apply to the matter such remedy as best they might, for the honour of the Duke and her own solacement.

The young men already knew all the fact as it had been; wherefore, without enquiring farther, they comforted the Duchess, as best they might, and filled her with good hope. Then, having learned from her where the lady abode, they took their leave and having a mind to see the latter, for that they had oftentimes heard her commended for marvellous beauty, they besought the Duke to show her to them. He, unmindful of that which had befallen the Prince of

* *i.e.* sister to the one and cousin to the other.

the Morea for having shown her to himself, promised to do this and accordingly next morning, having let prepare a magnificent collation in a very goodly garden that pertained to the lady's place of abode, he carried them and a few others thither to eat with her. Constantine, sitting with Alatiel, fell a-gazing upon her, full of wonderment, avouching in himself that he had never seen aught so lovely and that certes the Duke must needs be held excused, ay, and whatsoever other, to have so fair a creature, should do treason or other foul thing, and looking on her again and again and each time admiring her more, it betided him no otherwise than it had betided the Duke; wherefore, taking his leave, enamoured of her, he abandoned all thought of the war and occupied himself with considering how he might take her from the Duke, carefully concealing his passion the while from every one.

Whilst he yet burnt in this fire, the time came to go out against the new Prince, who now drew near to the Duke's territories; wherefore the latter and Constantine and all the others, sallied forth of Athens according to the given ordinance and betook themselves to the defence of certain frontiers, so the Prince might not avail to advance farther. When they had lain there some days, Constantine having his mind and thought still intent upon the lady and conceiving that, now the Duke was no longer near her, he might very well avail to accomplish his pleasure, feigned himself sore indisposed of his person, to have an occasion of returning to Athens; wherefore, with the Duke's leave, committing his whole power to Manuel, he returned to Athens to his sister, and there, after some days, putting her upon talk of the affront which herseemed she suffered from the Duke by reason of the lady whom he entertained, he told her that, an it liked her, he would soon ease her thereof by causing take the lady from whereas she was and carry her off. The Duchess, conceiving that he did this of regard for herself and not for love of the lady, answered that it liked her exceeding well so but it might be done on such wise that the Duke should never know that she had been party thereto, which Constantine fully promised her, and thereupon she consented that he should do as seemed best to him.

Constantine, accordingly, let secretly equip a light vessel and sent it one evening to the neighbourhood of the garden where the lady abode; then, having taught certain of his men who were on board what they had to do, he repaired with others to the lady's pavilion, where he was cheerfully received by those in her service and indeed by the lady herself, who, at his instance, betook herself with him

to the garden, attended by her servitors and his companions. There, making as he would speak with her on the Duke's part, he went with her alone towards a gate, which gave upon the sea and had already been opened by one of his men, and calling the bark thither with the given signal, he caused suddenly seize the lady and carry her aboard; then, turning to her people, he said to them, 'Let none stir or utter a word, an he would not die; for that I purpose not to rob the Duke of his wench, but to do away the affront which he putteth upon my sister.'

To this none dared make answer; whereupon Constantine, embarking with his people and seating himself by the side of the weeping lady, bade thrust the oars into the water and make off. Accordingly, they put out to sea and not hieing, but flying,* came, a little after daybreak on the morrow, to Egina, where they landed and took rest, whilst Constantine solaced himself awhile with the lady, who bemoaned her ill-fated beauty. Thence, going aboard the bark again, they made their way, in a few days, to Chios, where it pleased Constantine to take up his sojourn, as in a place of safety, for fear of his father's resentment and lest the stolen lady should be taken from him. There the fair lady bewailed her ill fate some days, but, being presently comforted by Constantine, she began, as she had done otherwhiles, to take her pleasure of that which fortune had foreordained to her.

Things being at this pass, Osbech, King of the Turks, who abode in continual war with the Emperor, came by chance to Smyrna, where hearing how Constantine abode in Chios, without any precaution, leading a wanton life with a mistress of his, whom he had stolen away, he repaired thither one night with some light-armed ships and entering the city by stealth with some of his people, took many in their beds, ere they knew of the enemy's coming. Some, who, taking the alert, had run to arms, he slew and having burnt the whole place, carried the booty and captives on board the ships and returned to Smyrna. When they arrived there, Osbech, who was a young man, passing his prisoners in review, found the fair lady among them and knowing her for her who had been taken with Constantine asleep in bed, was mightily rejoiced at sight of her. Accordingly, he made her his wife without delay, and celebrating the nuptials forthright, lay with her some months in all joyance.

Meanwhile, the Emperor, who had, before these things came to

* *Non vogando, ma volando.*

pass, been in treaty with Bassano, King of Cappadocia, to the end that he should come down upon Osbech from one side with his power, whilst himself assailed him on the other, but had not yet been able to come to a full accord with him, for that he was unwilling to grant certain things which Bassano demanded and which he deemed unreasonable, hearing what had betided his son and chagrined beyond measure thereat, without hesitating farther, did that which the King of Cappadocia asked and pressed him as most he might to fall upon Osbech, whilst himself made ready to come down upon him from another quarter. Osbech, hearing this, assembled his army, ere he should be straitened between two such puissant princes, and marched against Bassano, leaving his fair lady at Smyrna, in charge of a trusty servant and friend of his. After some time he encountered the King of Cappadocia and giving him battle, was slain in the mellay and his army discomfited and dispersed; whereupon Bassano advanced in triumph towards Smyrna, unopposed, and all the folk submitted to him by the way, as to a conqueror.

Meanwhile, Osbech's servant, Antiochus by name, in whose charge the lady had been left, seeing her so fair, forgot his plighted faith to his friend and master and became enamoured of her, for all he was a man in years. Urged by love and knowing her tongue (the which was mighty agreeable to her, as well as it might be to one whom it had behoved for some years live as she were deaf and dumb, for that she understood none neither was understanded of any) he began, in a few days, to be so familiar with her that, ere long, having no regard to their lord and master who was absent in the field, they passed from friendly commerce to amorous privacy, taking marvellous pleasure one of the other between the sheets. When they heard that Osbech was defeated and slain and that Bassano came carrying all before him, they took counsel together not to await him there and laying hands on great part of the things of most price that were there pertaining to Osbech, gat them privily to Rhodes, where they had not long abidden ere Antiochus sickened unto death.

As chance would have it, there was then in lodging with him a merchant of Cyprus, who was much loved of him and his fast friend, and Antiochus, feeling himself draw to his end, bethought himself to leave him both his possessions and his beloved lady; wherefore, being now nigh upon death, he called them both to him and bespoke them thus, 'I feel myself, without a doubt, passing away, which grieveth me, for that never had I such delight in life as I presently have. Of one thing, indeed, I die most content, in that, since I must

e'en die, I see myself die in the arms of those twain whom I love over all others that be in the world, to wit, in thine, dearest friend, and in those of this lady, whom I have loved more than mine own self, since first I knew her. True, it grieveth me to feel that, when I am dead, she will abide here a stranger, without aid or counsel; and it were yet more grievous to me, did I not know thee here, who wilt, I trust, have that same care of her, for the love of me, which thou wouldst have had of myself. Wherefore, I entreat thee, as most I may, if it come to pass that I die, that thou take my goods and her into thy charge and do with them and her that which thou deemest may be for the solacement of my soul. And thou, dearest lady, I prithee forget me not after my death, so I may vaunt me, in the other world, of being beloved here below of the fairest lady ever nature formed; of which two things an you will give me entire assurance, I shall depart without misgiving and comforted.'

The merchant his friend and the lady, hearing these words, wept, and when he had made an end of his speech, they comforted him and promised him upon their troth to do that which he asked, if it came to pass that he died. He tarried not long, but presently departed this life and was honourably interred of them. A few days after, the merchant having despatched all his business in Rhodes and purposing to return to Cyprus on board a Catalan carrack that was there, asked the fair lady what she had a mind to do, for that it behoved him return to Cyprus. She answered that, an it pleased him, she would gladly go with him, hoping for Antiochus his love to be of him entreated and regarded as a sister. The merchant replied that he was content to do her every pleasure, and the better to defend her from any affront that might be offered her, ere they came to Cyprus, he avouched that she was his wife. Accordingly, they embarked on board the ship and were given a little cabin on the poop, where, that the fact might not belie his words, he lay with her in one very small bed. Whereby there came about that which was not intended of the one or the other of them at departing Rhodes, to wit, that—darkness and commodity and the heat of the bed, matters of no small potency, inciting them,—drawn by equal appetite and forgetting both the friendship and the love of Antiochus dead, they fell to dallying with each other and before they reached Baffa, whence the Cypriot came, they had clapped up an alliance together.

At Baffa she abode some time with the merchant till, as chance would have it, there came thither, for his occasions, a gentleman by name Antigonus, great of years and greater yet of wit, but little of

wealth, for that, intermeddling in the affairs of the King of Cyprus, fortune had in many things been contrary to him. Chancing one day to pass by the house where the fair lady dwelt with the merchant, who was then gone with his merchandise into Armenia, he espied her at a window and seeing her very beautiful, fell to gazing fixedly upon her and presently began to recollect that he must have seen her otherwhere, but where he could on no wise call to mind. As for the lady, who had long been the sport of fortune, but the term of whose ills was now drawing near, she no sooner set eyes on Antigonus than she remembered to have seen him at Alexandria in no mean station in her father's service; wherefore, conceiving a sudden hope of yet by his aid regaining her royal estate and knowing her merchant to be abroad, she let call him to her as quickliest she might and asked him, blushing, an he were not, as she supposed, Antigonus of Famagosta. He answered that he was and added, 'Madam, meseemeth I know you, but on no wise can I remember me where I have seen you; wherefore I pray you, an it mislike you not, put me in mind who you are.'

The lady, hearing that it was indeed he, to his great amazement, cast her arms about his neck, weeping sore, and presently asked him if he had never seen her in Alexandria. Antigonus, hearing this, incontinent knew her for the Soldan's daughter Alatiel, who was thought to have perished at sea, and would fain have paid her the homage due to her quality; but she would on no wise suffer it and besought him to sit with her awhile. Accordingly, seating himself beside her, he asked her respectfully how and when and whence she came thither, seeing that it was had for certain, through all the land of Egypt, that she had been drowned at sea years agone. 'Would God,' replied she, 'it had been so, rather than that I should have had the life I have had; and I doubt not but my father would wish the like, if ever he came to know it.'

So saying, she fell anew to weeping wonder-sore; whereupon quoth Antigonus to her, 'Madam, despair not ere it behove you; but, an it please you, relate to me your adventures and what manner of life yours hath been; it may be the matter hath gone on such wise that, with God's aid, we may avail to find an effectual remedy.' 'Antigonus,' answered the fair lady, 'when I beheld thee, meseemed I saw my father, and moved by that love and tenderness, which I am bounden to bear him, I discovered myself to thee, having it in my power to conceal myself from thee, and few persons could it have befallen me to look upon in whom I could have been so well-pleased

as I am to have seen and known thee before any other; wherefore that which in my ill fortune I have still kept hidden, to thee, as to a father, I will discover. If, after thou hast heard it, thou see any means of restoring me to my pristine estate, prithee use it; but, if thou see none, I beseech thee never tell any that thou hast seen me or heard aught of me.'

This said, she recounted to him, still weeping, that which had befallen her from the time of her shipwreck on Majorca up to that moment; whereupon he fell a-weeping for pity and after considering awhile, 'Madam,' said he, 'since in your misfortunes it hath been hidden who you are, I will, without fail, restore you, dearer than ever, to your father and after to the King of Algarve to wife.' Being questioned of her of the means, he showed her orderly that which was to do, and lest any hindrance should betide through delay, he presently returned to Famagosta and going in to the king, said to him, 'My lord, an it like you, you have it in your power at once to do yourself exceeding honour and me, who am poor through you, a great service, at no great cost of yours.' The king asked how and Antigonus replied, 'There is come to Baffa the Soldan's fair young daughter, who hath so long been reputed drowned and who, to save her honour, hath long suffered very great unease and is presently in poor case and would fain return to her father. An it pleased you send her to him under my guard, it would be much to your honour and to my weal, nor do I believe that such a service would ever be forgotten of the Soldan.'

The king, moved by a royal generosity of mind, answered forthright that he would well and sending for Alatiel, brought her with all honour and worship to Famagosta, where she was received by himself and the queen with inexpressible rejoicing and entertained with magnificent hospitality. Being presently questioned of the king and queen of her adventures, she answered according to the instructions given her by Antigonus and related everything; * and a few days after, at her request, the king sent her, under the governance of Antigonus, with a goodly and worshipful company of men and women, back to the Soldan, of whom let none ask if she was received with rejoicing, as also was Antigonus and all her company.

As soon as she was somewhat rested, the Soldan desired to know how it chanced that she was yet alive and where she had so long abidden, without having ever let him know aught of her condition; where-

* Sic (*contò tutto*); but this is an oversight of the author's, as it is evident from what follows that she did *not* relate everything.

upon the lady, who had kept Antigonus his instructions perfectly in mind, bespoke him thus, 'Father mine, belike the twentieth day after my departure from you, our ship, having sprung a leak in a terrible storm, struck in the night upon certain coasts yonder in the West,* near a place called Aguamorta, and what became of the men who were aboard I know not nor could ever learn; this much only do I remember that, the day come and I arisen as it were from death to life, the shattered vessel was espied of the country people, who ran from all the parts around to plunder it. I and two of my women were first set ashore and the latter were incontinent seized by certain of the young men, who fled with them, one this way and the other that, and what came of them I never knew.

As for myself, I was taken, despite my resistance, by two young men, and haled along by the hair, weeping sore the while; but, as they crossed over a road, to enter a great wood, there passed by four men on horseback, whom when my ravishers saw, they loosed me forthwith and took to flight. The new comers, who seemed to me persons of great authority, seeing this, ran where I was and asked me many questions; whereto I answered much, but neither understood nor was understanded of them. However, after long consultation they set me on one of their horses and carried me to a convent of women vowed to religion, according to their law, where, whatever they said, I was of all the ladies kindly received and still entreated with honour, and there with great devotion I joined them in serving Saint Waxeth-in-Deepdene, a saint for whom the women of that country have a vast regard.

After I had abidden with them awhile and learned somewhat of their language, they questioned me of who I was and fearing, an I told the truth, to be expelled from amongst them, as an enemy of their faith, I answered that I was the daughter of a great gentleman of Cyprus, who was sending me to be married in Crete, when, as ill-luck would have it, we had run thither and suffered shipwreck. Moreover, many a time and in many things I observed their customs, for fear of worse, and being asked by the chief of the ladies, her whom they call abbess, if I wished to return thence to Cyprus, I answered that I desired nothing so much; but she, tender of my honour, would never consent to trust me to any person who was bound for Cyprus, till some two months agone, when there came thither certain gentlemen of France with their ladies. One of the latter being a

* Lit. Ponant (*Ponente*), *i.e.* the Western coasts of the Mediterranean, as opposed to the Eastern or Levant.

kinswoman of the abbess and she hearing that they were bound for Jerusalem, to visit the Sepulchre where He whom they hold God was buried, after He had been slain by the Jews, she commended me to their care and besought them to deliver me to my father in Cyprus.

With what honour these gentlemen entreated me and how cheerfully they received me together with their ladies, it were a long story to tell; suffice it to say that we took ship and came, after some days, to Baffa, where finding myself arrived and knowing none in the place, I knew not what to say to the gentlemen, who would fain have delivered me to my father, according to that which had been enjoined them of the reverend lady; but God, taking pity belike on my affliction, brought me Antigonus upon the beach what time we disembarked at Baffa, whom I straightway hailed and in our tongue, so as not to be understood of the gentlemen and their ladies, bade him receive me as a daughter. He promptly apprehended me and receiving me with a great show of joy, entertained the gentlemen and their ladies with such honour as his poverty permitted and carried me to the King of Cyprus, who received me with such hospitality and hath sent me back to you [with such courtesy] as might never be told of me. If aught remain to be said, let Antigonus, who hath ofttimes heard from me these adventures, recount it.'

Accordingly Antigonus, turning to the Soldan, said, 'My lord, even as she hath many a time told me and as the gentlemen and ladies, with whom she came, said to me, so hath she recounted unto you. Only one part hath she forborne to tell you, the which methinketh she left unsaid for that it beseemeth her not to tell it, to wit, how much the gentlemen and ladies, with whom she came, said of the chaste and modest life which she led with the religious ladies and of her virtue and commendable manners and the tears and lamentations of her companions, both men and women, when, having restored her to me, they took leave of her. Of which things were I fain to tell in full that which they said to me, not only this present day, but the ensuing night would not suffice unto us; be it enough to say only that (according to that which their words attested and that also which I have been able to see thereof,) you may vaunt yourself of having the fairest daughter and the chastest and most virtuous of any prince that nowadays weareth a crown.'

The Soldan was beyond measure rejoiced at these things and besought God again and again to vouchsafe him of His grace the power of worthily requiting all who had succoured his daughter and especially the King of Cyprus, by whom she had been sent back to him

with honour. After some days, having caused prepare great gifts for Antigonus, he gave him leave to return to Cyprus and rendered, both by letters and by special ambassadors, the utmost thanks to the King for that which he had done with his daughter. Then, desiring that that which was begun should have effect, to wit, that she should be the wife of the King of Algarve, he acquainted the latter with the whole matter and wrote to him to boot, that, an it pleased him have her, he should send for her. The King of Algarve was mightily rejoiced at this news and sending for her in state, received her joyfully; and she, who had lain with eight men belike ten thousand times, was put to bed to him for a maid and making him believe that she was so, lived happily with him as his queen awhile after; wherefore it was said, 'Lips for kissing forfeit no favour; nay, they renew as the moon doth ever.'"

THE EIGHTH STORY

THE COUNT OF ANTWERP, BEING FALSELY ACCUSED, GOETH INTO EXILE AND LEAVETH HIS TWO CHILDREN IN DIFFERENT PLACES IN ENGLAND, WHITHER, AFTER AWHILE, RETURNING IN DISGUISE AND FINDING THEM IN GOOD CASE, HE TAKETH SERVICE AS A HORSEBOY IN THE SERVICE OF THE KING OF FRANCE AND BEING APPROVED INNOCENT, IS RESTORED TO HIS FORMER ESTATE

THE ladies sighed amain over the fortunes of the fair Saracen; but who knoweth what gave rise to those sighs? Maybe there were some of them who sighed no less for envy of such frequent nuptials than for pity of Alatiel. But, leaving that be for the present, after they had laughed at Pamfilo's last words, the queen, seeing his story ended, turned to Elisa and bade her follow on with one of hers. Elisa cheerfully obeyed and began as follows: "A most ample field is that wherein we go to-day a-ranging, nor is there any of us but could lightly enough run, not one, but half a score courses there, so abounding hath Fortune made it in her strange and grievous chances; wherefore, to come to tell of one of these latter, which are innumerable, I say that

When the Roman Empire was transferred from the French to the Germans,* there arose between the one and the other nation an ex-

* *i.e.* A.D. 912, when, upon the death of Louis III., the last prince of the Carlovingian race, Conrad, Duke of Franconia, was elected Emperor and the

ceeding great enmity and a grievous and continual war, by reason whereof, as well for the defence of their own country as for the offence of that of others, the King of France and a son of his, with all the power of their realm and of such friends and kinsfolk as they could command, levied a mighty army to go forth upon the foe; and ere they proceeded thereunto,—not to leave the realm without governance,—knowing Gautier, Count of Antwerp,† for a noble and discreet gentleman and their very faithful friend and servant, and for that (albeit he was well versed in the art of war) he seemed to them more apt unto things delicate than unto martial toils, they left him vicar general in their stead over all the governance of the realm of France and went on their way. Gautier accordingly addressed himself with both order and discretion to the office committed unto him, still conferring of everything with the queen and her daughter-in-law, whom, for all they were left under his custody and jurisdiction, he honoured none the less as his liege ladies and mistresses.

Now this Gautier was exceeding goodly of his body, being maybe forty years old and as agreeable and well-mannered a gentleman as might be; and withal, he was the sprightliest and daintiest cavalier known in those days and he who went most adorned of his person. His countess was dead, leaving him two little children, a boy and a girl, without more, and it befell that, the King of France and his son being at the war aforesaid and Gautier using much at the court of the aforesaid ladies and speaking often with them of the affairs of the kingdom, the wife of the king's son cast her eyes on him and considering his person and his manners with very great affection, was secretly fired with a fervent love for him. Feeling herself young and lusty and knowing him wifeless, she doubted not but her desire might lightly be accomplished unto her and thinking nought hindered her thereof but shamefastness, she bethought herself altogether to put that away and discover to him her passion. Accordingly, being one day alone and it seeming to her time, she sent for him into her chamber, as though she would discourse with him of other matters.

Empire, which had till then been hereditary in the descendants of Charlemagne, became elective and remained thenceforth in German hands.

† *Anguersa*, the old form of *Anversa*, Antwerp. All versions that I have seen call Gautier Comte d'*Angers* or *Angiers*, the translators, who forgot or were unaware that Antwerp, as part of Flanders, was then a fief of the French crown, apparently taking it for granted that the mention of the latter city was in error and substituting the name of the ancient capital of Anjou on their own responsibility.

The count, whose thought was far from that of the lady, betook himself to her without any delay and at her bidding, seated himself by her side on a couch; then, they being alone together, he twice asked her the occasion for which she had caused him come thither; but she made him no reply. At last, urged by love and grown all vermeil for shame, well nigh in tears and all trembling, with broken speech she thus began to say: 'Dearest and sweet friend and my lord, you may easily as a man of understanding apprehend how great is the frailty both of men and of women, and that more, for divers reasons, in one than in another; wherefore, at the hands of a just judge, the same sin in divers kinds and qualities of persons should not in equity receive one same punishment. And who is there will deny that a poor man or a poor woman, whom it behoveth gain with their toil that which is needful for their livelihood, would, an they were stricken with Love's smart and followed after him, be far more blameworthy than a lady who is rich and idle and to whom nothing is lacking that can flatter her desires? Certes, I believe, no one. For which reason methinketh the things aforesaid [to wit, wealth and leisure and luxurious living] should furnish forth a very great measure of excuse on behalf of her who possesseth them, if, peradventure, she suffer herself lapse into loving, and the having made choice of a lover of worth and discretion should stand for the rest,* if she who loveth hath done that. These circumstances being both, to my seeming, in myself (beside several others which should move me to love, such as my youth and the absence of my husband), it behoveth now that they rise up in my behalf for the defence of my ardent love in your sight, wherein if they avail that which they should avail in the eyes of men of understanding, I pray you afford me counsel and succour in that which I shall ask of you. True is it, that availing not, for the absence of my husband, to withstand the pricks of the flesh nor the might of loveliking, the which are of such potency that they have erst many a time overcome and yet all day long overcome the strongest men, to say nothing of weak women,—and enjoying the commodities and the leisures wherein you see me, I have suffered myself lapse into ensuing Love his pleasures and becoming enamoured; the which,—albeit, were it known, I acknowledge it would not be seemly, yet,—being and abiding hidden, I hold † well nigh nothing unseemly; more by token that Love hath been insomuch gracious to me that not only hath he

* *i.e.* of her excuse.

† Lit. Thou holdest (or judgest); but *giudichi* in the text is apparently a mistake for *giudico*.

not bereft me of due discernment in the choice of a lover, but hath lent me great plenty thereof * to that end, showing me yourself worthy to be loved of a lady such as I,—you whom, if my fancy beguile me not, I hold the goodliest, the most agreeable, the sprightliest and the most accomplished cavalier that may be found in all the realm of France; and even as I may say that I find myself without a husband, so likewise are you without a wife. Wherefore, I pray you, by the great love which I bear you, that you deny me not your love in return, but have compassion on my youth, the which, in very deed, consumeth for you, as ice before the fire.'

With these words, her tears welled up in such abundance that, albeit she would fain have proffered him yet other prayers, she had no power to speak farther, but, bowing her face, as if overcome, she let herself fall, weeping, with her head on the count's bosom. The latter, who was a very loyal gentleman, began with the gravest reproofs to rebuke so fond a passion and to repel the princess, who would fain have cast herself on his neck, avouching to her with oaths that he had liefer be torn limb from limb than consent unto such an offence against his lord's honour, whether in himself or in another. The lady, hearing this, forthright forgot her love and kindling into a furious rage, said, 'Felon knight that you are, shall I be this wise flouted by you of my desire? Now God forbid, since you would have me die, but I have you put to death or driven from the world!' So saying, she set her hands to her tresses and altogether disordered and tore them; then, rending her raiment at the breast, she fell to crying aloud and saying, 'Help! Help! The Count of Antwerp would do me violence.' The count, seeing this, misdoubting far more the courtiers' envy than his own conscience and fearful lest, by reason of this same envy, more credence should be given to the lady's malice than to his own innocence, started up and departing the chamber and the palace as quickliest he might, fled to his own house, where, without taking other counsel, he set his children on horseback and mounting himself to horse, made off with them, as most he might, towards Calais.

Meanwhile, many ran to the princess's clamour and seeing her in that plight and hearing [her account of] the cause of her outcry, not only gave credence to her words, but added † that the count's gallant bearing and debonair address had long been used by him to win to that end. Accordingly, they ran in a fury to his houses to arrest him, but finding him not, first plundered them all and after razed them to

* *i.e.* of discernment.

† Sic (*aggiunsero*); but *semble* should mean "believed, in addition."

"Then rending her raiment"

the foundations. The news, in its perverted shape, came presently to the army to the king and his son, who, sore incensed, doomed Gautier and his descendants to perpetual banishment, promising very great guerdons to whoso should deliver him to them alive or dead.

The count, woeful for that by his flight he had, innocent as he was, approved himself guilty, having, without making himself known or being recognized, reached Calais with his children, passed hastily over into England and betook himself in mean apparel to London, wherein ere he entered, with many words he lessoned his two little children, and especially in two things; first, that they should brook with patience the poor estate, whereunto, without their fault, fortune had brought them, together with himself,—and after, that with all wariness they should keep themselves from ever discovering unto any whence or whose children they were, as they held life dear. The boy, Louis by name, who was some nine and the girl, who was called Violante and was some seven years old, both, as far as their tender age comported, very well apprehended their father's lessons and showed it thereafter by deed. That this might be the better done,* he deemed it well to change their names; wherefore he named the boy Perrot and the girl Jeannette and all three, entering London, meanly clad, addressed themselves to go about asking alms, like as we see yonder French vagabonds do.

They being on this account one morning at a church door, it chanced that a certain great lady, the wife of one of the King's marshals of England, coming forth of the church, saw the count and his two little ones asking alms and questioned him whence he was and if the children were his, to which he replied that he was from Picardy and that, by reason of the misfeasance of a rakehelly elder son of his, it had behoved him depart the country with these two, who were his. The lady, who was pitiful, cast her eyes on the girl and being much taken with her, for that she was handsome, well-mannered and engaging, said, 'Honest man, an thou be content to leave thy daughter with me, I will willingly take her, for that she hath a good favour, and if she prove an honest woman, I will in due time marry her on such wise that she shall fare well.' This offer was very pleasing to the count, who promptly answered, 'Yes,' and with tears gave up the girl to the lady, urgently commending her to her care.

Having thus disposed of his daughter, well knowing to whom, he resolved to abide there no longer and accordingly, begging his way

* *i.e.* That the secret might be the better kept.

across the island, came, not without sore fatigue, as one who was unused to go afoot, into Wales. Here dwelt another of the King's marshals, who held great state and entertained a numerous household, and to his court both the count and his son whiles much resorted to get food. Certain sons of the said marshal and other gentlemen's children being there engaged in such boyish exercises as running and leaping, Perrot began to mingle with them and to do as dextrously as any of the rest, or more so, each feat that was practised among them. The marshal, chancing whiles to see this and being much taken with the manners and fashion of the boy, asked who he was and was told that he was the son of a poor man who came there bytimes for alms; whereupon he caused require him of the count, and the latter, who indeed besought God of nought else, freely resigned the boy to him, grievous as it was to him to be parted from him. Having thus provided his son and daughter, he determined to abide no longer in England and passing over into Ireland, made his way, as best he might, to Stamford, where he took service with a knight belonging to an earl of the country, doing all such things as pertain unto a lackey or a horseboy, and there, without being known of any, he abode a great while in unease and travail galore.

Meanwhile Violante, called Jeannette, went waxing with the gentlewoman in London in years and person and beauty and was in such favour both with the lady and her husband and with every other of the house and whoso else knew her, that it was a marvellous thing to see; nor was there any who noted her manners and fashions but avouched her worthy of every greatest good and honour. Wherefore the noble lady who had received her from her father, without having ever availed to learn who he was, otherwise than as she had heard from himself, was purposed to marry her honourably according to that condition whereof he deemed her. But God, who is a just observer of folk's deserts, knowing her to be of noble birth and to bear, without fault, the penalty of another's sin, ordained otherwise, and fain must we believe that He of His benignity permitted that which came to pass, to the end that the gentle damsel might not fall into the hands of a man of low estate.

The noble lady with whom Jeannette dwelt had of her husband one only son, whom both she and his father loved with an exceeding love, both for that he was their child and that he deserved it by reason of his worth and virtues. He, being some six years older than Jeannette and seeing her exceeding fair and graceful, became so sore enamoured of her that he saw nought beyond her; yet, for that he

deemed her to be of mean extraction, not only dared he not demand her of his father and mother to wife, but, fearing to be blamed for having set himself to love unworthily, he held his love, as most he might, hidden; wherefore it tormented him far more than if he had discovered it; and thus it came to pass that, for excess of chagrin, he fell sick and that grievously. Divers physicians were called in to medicine him, who, having noted one and another symptom of his case and being nevertheless unable to discover what ailed him, all with one accord despaired of his recovery; whereat the young man's father and mother suffered dolour and melancholy so great that greater might not be brooked, and many a time, with piteous prayers, they questioned him of the cause of his malady, whereto or sighs he gave for answer or replied that he felt himself all wasting away.

It chanced one day that, what while a doctor, young enough, but exceedingly deeply versed in science, sat by him and held him by the arm in that part where leaches use to seek the pulse, Jeannette, who, of regard for his mother, tended him solicitously, entered, on some occasion or another, the chamber where the young man lay. When the latter saw her, without word said or gesture made, he felt the amorous ardour redouble in his heart, wherefore his pulse began to beat stronglier than of wont; the which the leach incontinent noted and marvelling, abode still to see how long this should last. As soon as Jeannette left the chamber, the beating abated, wherefore it seemed to the physician he had gotten impartment of the cause of the young man's ailment, and after waiting awhile, he let call Jeannette to him, as he would question her of somewhat, still holding the sick man by the arm. She came to him incontinent and no sooner did she enter than the beating of the youth's pulse returned and she being gone again, ceased. Thereupon, it seeming to the physician that he had full enough assurance, he rose and taking the young man's father and mother apart, said to them, 'The healing of your son is not in the succour of physicians, but abideth in the hands of Jeannette, whom, as I have by sure signs manifestly recognized, the young man ardently loveth, albeit, for all I can see, she is unaware thereof. You know now what you have to do, if his life be dear to you.'

The gentleman and his lady, hearing this, were well pleased, inasmuch as some means was found for his recoverance, albeit it irked them sore that the means in question should be that whereof they misdoubted them, to wit, that they should give Jeannette to their son to wife. Accordingly, the physician being gone, they went in to the sick man and the lady bespoke him thus: 'Son mine, I could never have

believed that thou wouldst keep from me any desire of thine, especially seeing thyself pine away for lack thereof; for that thou shouldst have been and shouldst be assured that there is nought I can for thy contentment, were it even less than seemly, which I would not do as for myself. But, since thou hast e'en done this, God the Lord hath been more pitiful over thee than thou thyself and that thou mayst not die of this sickness, hath shown me the cause of thine ill, which is no otherwhat than excess of love for some damsel or other, whoever she may be; and this, indeed, thou neededst not have thought shame to discover, for that thine age requireth it, and wert thou not enamoured, I should hold thee of very little account. Wherefore, my son, dissemble not with me, but in all security discover to me thine every desire and put away from thee the melancholy and the thought-taking which be upon thee and from which proceedeth this thy sickness and take comfort and be assured that there is nothing of that which thou mayst impose on me for thy satisfaction but I will do it to the best of my power, as she who loveth thee more than her life. Banish shamefastness and fearfulness and tell me if I can do aught to further thy passion; and if thou find me not diligent therein or if I bring it not to effect for thee, account me the cruellest mother that ever bore son.'

The young man, hearing his mother's words, was at first abashed, but presently, bethinking himself that none was better able than she to satisfy his wishes, he put away shamefastness and said thus to her: 'Madam, nothing hath wrought so effectually with me to keep my love hidden as my having noted of most folk that, once they are grown in years, they choose not to remember them of having themselves been young. But, since in this I find you reasonable, not only will I not deny that to be true which you say you have observed, but I will, to boot, discover to you of whom [I am enamoured], on condition that you will, to the best of your power, give effect to your promise; and thus may you have me whole again.' Whereto the lady (trusting overmuch in that which was not to come to pass for her on such wise as she deemed in herself) answered freely that he might in all assurance discover to her his every desire, for that she would without any delay address herself to contrive that he should have his pleasure. 'Madam,' then said the youth, 'the exceeding beauty and commendable fashions of our Jeannette and my unableness to make her even sensible, still less to move her to pity, of my love and the having never dared to discover it unto any have brought me whereas you see me; and if that which you have promised me come not, one way or another, to pass, you may be assured that my life will be brief.'

The lady, to whom it appeared more a time for comfort than for reproof, said, smilingly, 'Alack, my son, hast thou then for this suffered thyself to languish thus? Take comfort and leave me do, once thou shalt be recovered.' The youth, full of good hope, in a very short time showed signs of great amendment, whereat the lady, being much rejoiced, began to cast about how she might perform that which she had promised him. Accordingly, calling Jeannette to her one day, she asked her very civilly, as by way of a jest, if she had a lover; whereupon she waxed all red and answered, 'Madam, it concerneth not neither were it seemly in a poor damsel like myself, banished from house and home and abiding in others' service, to think of love.' Quoth the lady, 'An you have no lover, we mean to give you one, in whom you may rejoice and live merry and have more delight of your beauty, for it behoveth not that so handsome a girl as you are abide without a lover.' To this Jeannette made answer, 'Madam, you took me from my father's poverty and have reared me as a daughter, wherefore it behoveth me to do your every pleasure; but in this I will nowise comply with you, and therein methinketh I do well. If it please you give me a husband, him do I purpose to love, but none other; for that, since of the inheritance of my ancestors nought is left me save only honour, this latter I mean to keep and preserve as long as life shall endure to me.'

This speech seemed to the lady very contrary to that whereto she thought to come for the keeping of her promise to her son,—albeit, like a discreet woman as she was, she inwardly much commended the damsel therefor,—and she said, 'How now, Jeannette? If our lord the king, who is a young cavalier, as thou art a very fair damsel, would fain have some easance of thy love, wouldst thou deny it to him?' Whereto she answered forthright, 'The king might do me violence, but of my consent he should never avail to have aught of me save what was honourable.' The lady, seeing how she was minded, left parleying with her and bethought herself to put her to the proof; wherefore she told her son that, whenas he should be recovered, she would contrive to get her alone with him in a chamber, so he might make shift to have his pleasure of her, saying that it appeared to her unseemly that she should, procuress-wise, plead for her son and solicit her own maid.

With this the young man was nowise content and presently waxed grievously worse, which when his mother saw, she opened her mind to Jeannette, but, finding her more constant than ever, recounted what she had done to her husband, and he and she resolved of one accord,

grievous though it seemed to them, to give her to him to wife, choosing rather to have their son alive with a wife unsorted to his quality than dead without any; and so, after much parley, they did; whereat Jeannette was exceeding content and with a devout heart rendered thanks to God, who had not forgotten her; but for all that she never avouched herself other than the daughter of a Picard. As for the young man, he presently recovered and celebrating his nuptials, the gladdest man alive, proceeded to lead a merry life with his bride.

Meanwhile, Perrot, who had been left in Wales with the King of England's marshal, waxed likewise in favour with his lord and grew up very goodly of his person and doughty as any man in the island, insomuch that neither in tourneying nor jousting nor in any other act of arms was there any in the land who could cope with him; wherefore he was everywhere known and famous under the name of Perrot the Picard. And even as God had not forgotten his sister, so on like wise He showed that He had him also in mind; for that a pestilential sickness, being come into those parts, carried off well nigh half the people thereof, besides that most part of those who survived fled for fear into other lands; wherefore the whole country appeared desert. In this mortality, the marshal his lord and his lady and only son, together with many others, brothers and nephews and kinsmen, all died, nor was any left of all his house save a daughter, just husband-ripe, and Perrot, with sundry other serving folk. The pestilence being somewhat abated, the young lady, with the approof and by the counsel of some few gentlemen of the country * left alive, took Perrot, for that he was a man of worth and prowess, to husband and made him lord of all that had fallen to her by inheritance; nor was it long ere the King of England, hearing the marshal to be dead and knowing the worth of Perrot the Picard, substituted him in the dead man's room and made him his marshal. This, in brief, is what came of the two innocent children of the Count of Antwerp, left by him for lost.

Eighteen years were now passed since the count's flight from Paris, when, as he abode in Ireland, having suffered many things in a very sorry way of life, there took him a desire to learn, as he might, what was come of his children. Wherefore, seeing himself altogether changed of favour from that which he was wont to be and feeling himself, for long exercise, grown more robust of his person than he had been when young and abiding in ease and idlesse, he took leave

* *Paesani*, lit., countrymen; but Boccaccio evidently uses the word in the sense of "vassals."

of him with whom he had so long abidden and came, poor and ill enough in case, to England. Thence he betook himself whereas he had left Perrot and found him a marshal and a great lord and saw him robust and goodly of person; the which was mighty pleasing unto him, but he would not make himself known to him till he should have learned how it was with Jeannette. Accordingly, he set out and stayed not till he came to London, where, cautiously enquiring of the lady with whom he had left his daughter and of her condition, he found Jeannette married to her son, which greatly rejoiced him and he counted all his past adversity a little thing, since he had found his children again alive and in good case.

Then, desirous of seeing Jeannette, he began, beggarwise, to haunt the neighbourhood of her house, where one day Jamy Lamiens, (for so was Jeannette's husband called,) espying him and having compassion on him, for that he saw him old and poor, bade one of his servants bring him in and give him to eat for the love of God, which the man readily did. Now Jeannette had had several children by Jamy, whereof the eldest was no more than eight years old, and they were the handsomest and sprightliest children in the world. When they saw the count eat, they came one and all about him and began to caress him, as if, moved by some occult virtue, they divined him to be their grandfather. He, knowing them for his grandchildren, fell to fondling and making much of them, wherefore the children would not leave him, albeit he who had charge of their governance called them. Jeannette, hearing this, issued forth of a chamber therenigh and coming whereas the count was, chid them amain and threatened to beat them, an they did not what their governor willed. The children began to weep and say that they would fain abide with that honest man, who loved them better than their governor, whereat both the lady and the count laughed. Now the latter had risen, nowise as a father, but as a poor man, to do honour to his daughter, as to a mistress, and seeing her, felt a marvellous pleasure at his heart. But she nor then nor after knew him any whit, for that he was beyond measure changed from what he was used to be, being grown old and hoar and bearded and lean and swart, and appeared altogether another man than the count.

The lady then, seeing that the children were unwilling to leave him and wept, when she would have them go away, bade their governor let them be awhile and the children thus being with the good man, it chanced that Jamy's father returned and heard from their governor what had passed, whereupon quoth the marshal, who held Jeannette in

despite, 'Let them be, God give them ill-luck! They do but hark back to that whence they sprang. They come by their mother of a vagabond and therefore it is no wonder if they are fain to herd with vagabonds.' The count heard these words and was mightily chagrined thereat; nevertheless, he shrugged his shoulders and put up with the affront, even as he had put up with many others. Jamy, hearing how the children had welcomed the honest man, to wit, the count, albeit it misliked him, nevertheless so loved them that, rather than see them weep, he commanded that, if the good man chose to abide there in any capacity, he should be received into his service. The count answered that he would gladly abide there, but that he knew not to do aught other than tend horses, whereto he had been used all his lifetime. A horse was accordingly assigned to him and when he had cared for it, he busied himself with making sport for the children.

Whilst fortune handled the Count of Antwerp and his children on such wise as hath been set out, it befell that the King of France, after many truces made with the Germans, died and his son, whose wife was she through whom the count had been banished, was crowned in his place; and no sooner was the current truce expired than he again began a very fierce war. To his aid the King of England, as a new-made kinsman, despatched much people, under the commandment of Perrot his marshal and Jamy Lamiens, son of the other marshal, and with them went the good man, to wit, the count, who, without being recognized of any, abode a pretty while with the army in the guise of a horseboy, and there, like a man of mettle as he was, wrought good galore, more than was required of him, both with counsels and with deeds.

During the war, it came to pass that the Queen of France fell grievously sick and feeling herself nigh unto death, contrite for all her sins, confessed herself unto the Archbishop of Rouen, who was held of all a very holy and good man. Amongst her other sins, she related to him that which the Count of Antwerp had most wrongfully suffered through her; nor was she content to tell it to him alone, nay, but before many other men of worth she recounted all as it had passed, beseeching them so to do with the king that the count, an he were on life, or, if not, one of his children, should be restored to his estate; after which she lingered not long, but, departing this life, was honourably buried. Her confession, being reported to the king, moved him, after he had heaved divers sighs of regret for the wrong done to the nobleman, to let cry throughout all the army and in many other parts, that whoso should give him news of the Count of Antwerp or of

either of his children should for each be wonder-well guerdoned of him, for that he held him, upon the queen's confession, innocent of that for which he had gone into exile and was minded to restore him to his first estate and more.

The count, in his guise of a horseboy, hearing this and being assured that it was the truth,* betook himself forthright to Jamy Lamiens and prayed him go with him to Perrot, for that he had a mind to discover to them that which the king went seeking. All three being then met together, quoth the count to Perrot, who had it already in mind to discover himself, 'Perrot, Jamy here hath thy sister to wife nor ever had any dowry with her; wherefore, that thy sister may not go undowered, I purpose that he and none other shall, by making thee known as the son of the Count of Antwerp, have this great reward that the king promiseth for thee and for Violante, thy sister and his wife, and myself, who am the Count of Antwerp and your father.' Perrot, hearing this and looking steadfastly upon him, presently knew him and cast himself, weeping, at his feet and embraced him, saying, 'Father mine, you are dearly welcome.' Jamy, hearing first what the count said and after seeing what Perrot did, was overcome at once with such wonderment and such gladness that he scarce knew what he should do. However, after awhile, giving credence to the former's speech and sore ashamed for the injurious words he had whiles used to the hostler-count, he let himself fall, weeping, at his feet and humbly besought him pardon of every past affront, the which the count, having raised him to his feet, graciously accorded him.

Then, after they had all three discoursed awhile of each one's various adventures and wept and rejoiced together amain, Perrot and Jamy would have re-clad the count, who would on nowise suffer it, but willed that Jamy, having first assured himself of the promised guerdon, should, the more to shame the king, present him to the latter in that his then plight and in his groom's habit. Accordingly, Jamy, followed by the count and Perrot, presented himself before the king, and offered, provided he would guerdon him according to the proclamation made, to produce to him the count and his children. The king promptly let bring for all three a guerdon marvellous in Jamy's eyes and commanded that he should be free to carry it off, whenas he should in very deed produce the count and his children, as he promised. Jamy, then, turning himself about and putting forward the count his horseboy and Perrot, said, 'My lord, here be the father and the son;

* *i.e.* that it was not a snare.

the daughter, who is my wife and who is not here, with God's aid you shall soon see.'

The king, hearing this, looked at the count and albeit he was sore changed from that which he was used to be, yet, after he had awhile considered him, he knew him and well nigh with tears in his eyes raised him—for that he was on his knees before him—to his feet and kissed and embraced him. Perrot, also, he graciously received and commanded that the count should incontinent be furnished anew with clothes and servants and horses and harness, according as his quality required, which was straightway done. Moreover, he entreated Jamy with exceeding honour and would fain know every particular of his * past adventures. Then, Jamy being about to receive the magnificent guerdons appointed him for having discovered the count and his children, the former said to him, 'Take these of the munificence of our lord the king and remember to tell thy father that thy children, his grandchildren and mine, are not by their mother born of a vagabond.' Jamy, accordingly, took the gifts and sent for his wife and mother to Paris, whither came also Perrot's wife; and there they all foregathered in the utmost joyance with the count, whom the king had reinstated in all his good and made greater than he ever was. Then all, with Gautier's leave, returned to their several homes and he until his death abode in Paris more worshipfully than ever."

THE NINTH STORY

BERNABO OF GENOA, DUPED BY AMBROGIUOLO, LOSETH HIS GOOD AND COMMANDETH THAT HIS INNOCENT WIFE BE PUT TO DEATH. SHE ESCAPETH AND SERVETH THE SOLDAN IN A MAN'S HABIT. HERE SHE LIGHTETH UPON THE DECEIVER OF HER HUSBAND AND BRINGETH THE LATTER TO ALEXANDRIA, WHERE, HER TRADUCER BEING PUNISHED, SHE RESUMETH WOMAN'S APPAREL AND RETURNETH TO GENOA WITH HER HUSBAND, RICH

ELISA having furnished her due with her pitiful story, Filomena the queen, who was tall and goodly of person and smiling and agreeable of aspect beyond any other of her sex, collecting herself, said, "Needs must the covenant with Dioneo be observed, wherefore, there remaining none other to tell than he and I, I will tell my story first,

* *Quære*, the Count's?

and he, for that he asked it as a favour, shall be the last to speak." So saying, she began thus, "There is a proverb oftentimes cited among the common folk to the effect that the deceiver abideth * at the feet of the deceived; the which meseemeth may by no reasoning be shown to be true, an it approve not itself by actual occurrences. Wherefore, whilst ensuing the appointed theme, it hath occurred to me, dearest ladies, to show you, at the same time, that this is true, even as it is said; nor should it mislike you to hear it, so you may know how to keep yourselves from deceivers.

There were once at Paris in an inn certain very considerable Italian merchants, who were come thither, according to their usance, some on one occasion and some on another, and having one evening among others supped all together merrily, they fell to devising of divers matters, and passing from one discourse to another, they came at last to speak of their wives, whom they had left at home, and one said jestingly, 'I know not how mine doth; but this I know well, that, whenas there cometh to my hand here any lass that pleaseth me, I leave on one side the love I bear my wife and take of the other such pleasure as I may.' 'And I,' quoth another, 'do likewise, for that if I believe that my wife pusheth her fortunes [in my absence,] she doth it, and if I believe it not, still she doth it; wherefore tit for tat be it; an ass still getteth as good as he giveth.' † A third, following on, came well nigh to the same conclusion, and in brief all seemed agreed upon this point, that the wives they left behind had no mind to lose time in their husbands' absence. One only, who hight Bernabo Lomellini of Genoa, maintained the contrary, avouching that he, by special grace of God, had a lady to wife who was belike the most accomplished woman of all Italy in all those qualities which a lady, nay, even (in great part) in those which a knight or an esquire, should have; for that she was fair of favour and yet in her first youth and adroit and robust of her person; nor was there aught that pertaineth

* *Rimane.* The verb *rimanere* is constantly used by the old Italian writers in the sense of "to become," so that the proverb cited in the text may be read "The deceiver becometh (*i.e.* findeth himself in the end) at the feet (*i.e.* at the mercy) of the person deceived."

† Lit. Whatsoever an ass giveth against a wall, such he receiveth (*Quale asino da in parete, tal riceve*). I cannot find any satisfactory explanation of this proverbial saying, which may be rendered in two ways, according as *quale* and *tale* are taken as relative to a thing or a person. The probable reference seems to be to the circumstance of an ass making water against a wall, so that his urine returns to him.

unto a woman, such as works of broidery in silk and the like, but she did it better than any other of her sex. Moreover, said he, there was no sewer, or in other words, no serving-man, alive who served better or more deftly at a nobleman's table than did she, for that she was very well bred and exceeding wise and discreet. He after went on to extol her as knowing better how to ride a horse and fly a hawk, to read and write and cast a reckoning than if she were a merchant; and thence, after many other commendations, coming to that whereof it had been discoursed among them, he avouched with an oath that there could be found no honester nor chaster woman than she; wherefore he firmly believed that, should he abide half a score years, or even always, from home, she would never incline to the least levity with another man. Among the merchants who discoursed thus was a young man called Ambrogiuolo of Piacenza, who fell to making the greatest mock in the world of this last commendation bestowed by Bernabo upon his wife and asked him scoffingly if the emperor had granted him that privilege over and above all other men. Bernabo, some little nettled, replied that not the emperor, but God, who could somewhat more than the emperor, had vouchsafed him the favour in question. Whereupon quoth Ambrogiuolo, 'Bernabo, I doubt not a whit but that thou thinkest to say sooth; but meseemeth thou hast paid little regard to the nature of things; for that, hadst thou taken heed thereunto, I deem thee not so dull of wit but thou wouldst have noted therein certain matters which had made thee speak more circumspectly on this subject. And that thou mayst not think that we, who have spoken much at large of our wives, believe that we have wives other or otherwise made than thine, but mayst see that we spoke thus, moved by natural perception, I will e'en reason with thee a little on this matter. I have always understood man to be the noblest animal created of God among mortals, and after him, woman; but man, as is commonly believed and as is seen by works, is the more perfect and having more perfection, must without fail have more of firmness and constancy, for that women universally are more changeable; the reason whereof might be shown by many natural arguments, which for the present I purpose to leave be. If then man be of more stability and yet cannot keep himself, let alone from complying with a woman who soliciteth him, but even from desiring one who pleaseth him, nay more, from doing what he can, so he may avail to be with her,—and if this betide him not once a month, but a thousand times a day,—what canst thou expect a woman, naturally unstable, to avail against the prayers, the blandishments, the gifts and a thousand other means which an

adroit man, who loveth her, will use? Thinkest thou she can hold out? Certes, how much soever thou mayst affirm it, I believe not that thou believest it; and thou thyself sayst that thy wife is a woman and that she is of flesh and blood, as are other women. If this be so, those same desires must be hers and the same powers that are in other women to resist these natural appetites; wherefore, however honest she be, it is possible she may do that which other women do; and nothing that is possible should be so peremptorily denied nor the contrary thereof affirmed with such rigour as thou dost.' To which Bernabo made answer, saying, 'I am a merchant, and not a philosopher, and as a merchant I will answer; and I say that I acknowledge that what thou sayst may happen to foolish women in whom there is no shame; but those who are discreet are so careful of their honour that for the guarding thereof they become stronger than men, who reck not of this; and of those thus fashioned is my wife.' 'Indeed,' rejoined Ambrogiuolo, 'if, for every time they occupy themselves with toys of this kind, there sprouted from their foreheads a horn to bear witness of that which they have done, there be few, I believe, who would incline thereto; but, far from the horn sprouting, there appeareth neither trace nor token thereof in those who are discreet, and shame and soil of honour consist not but in things discovered; wherefore, whenas they may secretly, they do it, or, if they forbear, it is for stupidity. And have thou this for certain that she alone is chaste, who hath either never been solicited of any or who, having herself solicited, hath not been hearkened. And although I know by natural and true reasons that it is e'en as I say, yet should I not speak thereof with so full an assurance, had I not many a time and with many women made essay thereof. And this I tell thee, that, were I near this most sanctified wife of thine, I warrant me I would in brief space of time bring her to that which I have already gotten of other women.' Whereupon quoth Bernabo, 'Disputing with words might be prolonged without end; thou wouldst say and I should say, and in the end it would all amount to nothing. But, since thou wilt have it that all women are so compliant and that thine address is such, I am content, so I may certify thee of my wife's honesty, to have my head cut off, an thou canst anywise avail to bring her to do thy pleasure in aught of the kind; and if thou fail thereof, I will have thee lose no otherwhat than a thousand gold florins.' 'Bernabo,' replied Ambrogiuolo, who was now grown heated over the dispute, 'I know not what I should do with thy blood, if I won the wager; but, an thou have a mind to see proof of that which I have advanced, do thou stake five thousand

gold florins of thy monies, which should be less dear to thee than thy head, against a thousand of mine, and whereas thou settest no limit [of time,] I will e'en bind myself to go to Genoa and within three months from the day of my departure hence to have done my will of thy wife and to bring back with me, in proof thereof, sundry of her most precious things and such and so many tokens that thou shalt thyself confess it to be truth, so verily thou wilt pledge me thy faith not to come to Genoa within that term nor write her aught of the matter.' Bernabo said that it liked him well and albeit the other merchants endeavoured to hinder the affair, foreseeing that sore mischief might come thereof, the two merchants' minds were so inflamed that, in despite of the rest, they bound themselves one to other by express writings under their hands. This done, Bernabo abode behind, whilst Ambrogiuolo, as quickliest he might, betook himself to Genoa. There he abode some days and informing himself with the utmost precaution of the name of the street where the lady dwelt and of her manner of life, understood of her that and more than that which he had heard of her from Bernabo, wherefore himseemed he was come on a fool's errand. However, he presently clapped up an acquaintance with a poor woman, who was much about the house and whose great well-wisher the lady was, and availing not to induce her to aught else, he debauched her with money and prevailed with her to bring him, in a chest wroughten after a fashion of his own, not only into the house, but into the gentlewoman's very bedchamber, where, according to the ordinance given her of him, the good woman commended it to her care for some days, as if she had a mind to go somewhither. The chest, then, being left in the chamber and the night come, Ambrogiuolo, what time he judged the lady to be asleep, opened the chest with certain engines of his and came softly out into the chamber, where there was a light burning, with whose aid he proceeded to observe the ordinance of the place, the paintings and every other notable thing that was therein and fixed them in his memory. Then, drawing near the bed and perceiving that the lady and a little girl, who was with her, were fast asleep, he softly altogether uncovered the former and found that she was as fair, naked, as clad, but saw no sign about her that he might carry away, save one, to wit, a mole which she had under the left pap and about which were sundry little hairs as red as gold. This noted, he covered her softly up again, albeit, seeing her so fair, he was tempted to adventure his life and lay himself by her side; however, for that he had heard her to be so obdurate and uncomplying in matters of this kind, he hazarded not

himself, but, abiding at his leisure in the chamber the most part of the night, took from one of her coffers a purse and a night-rail, together with sundry rings and girdles, and laying them all in his chest, returned thither himself and shut himself up therein as before; and on this wise he did two nights, without the lady being ware of aught. On the third day the good woman came back for the chest, according to the given ordinance, and carried it off whence she had taken it, whereupon Ambrogiuolo came out and having rewarded her according to promise, returned, as quickliest he might, with the things aforesaid, to Paris, where he arrived before the term appointed. There he summoned the merchants who had been present at the dispute and the laying of the wager and declared, in Bernabo's presence, that he had won the wager laid between them, for that he had accomplished that whereof he had vaunted himself; and to prove this to be true, he first described the fashion of the chamber and the paintings thereof and after showed the things he had brought with him thence, avouching that he had them of herself. Bernabo confessed the chamber to be as he had said and owned, moreover, that he recognized the things in question as being in truth his wife's; but said that he might have learned from one of the servants of the house the fashion of the chamber and have gotten the things in like manner; wherefore, an he had nought else to say, himseemed not that this should suffice to prove him to have won. Whereupon quoth Ambrogiuolo, 'In sooth this should suffice; but, since thou wilt have me say more, I will say it. I tell thee that Madam Ginevra thy wife hath under her left pap a pretty big mole, about which are maybe half a dozen little hairs as red as gold.' When Bernabo heard this, it was as if he had gotten a knifethrust in the heart, such anguish did he feel, and though he had said not a word, his countenance, being all changed, gave very manifest token that what Ambrogiuolo said was true. Then, after awhile, 'Gentlemen,' quoth he, 'that which Ambrogiuolo saith is true; wherefore, he having won, let him come whenassoever it pleaseth him and he shall be paid.' Accordingly, on the ensuing day Ambrogiuolo was paid in full and Bernabo, departing Paris, betook himself to Genoa with fell intent against the lady. When he drew near the city, he would not enter therein, but lighted down a good score miles away at a country house of his and despatched one of his servants, in whom he much trusted, to Genoa with two horses and letters under his hand, advising his wife that he had returned and bidding her come to him; and he privily charged the man, whenas he should be with the lady in such place as should seem best to him, to put her to death without

pity and return to him. The servant accordingly repaired to Genoa and delivering the letters and doing his errand, was received with great rejoicing by the lady, who on the morrow took horse with him and set out for their country house. As they fared on together, discoursing of one thing and another, they came to a very deep and lonely valley, beset with high rocks and trees, which seeming to the servant a place wherein he might, with assurance for himself, do his lord's commandment, he pulled out his knife and taking the lady by the arm, said, 'Madam, commend your soul to God, for needs must you die, without faring farther.' The lady, seeing the knife and hearing these words, was all dismayed and said, 'Mercy, for God's sake! Ere thou slay me, tell me wherein I have offended thee, that thou wouldst put me to death.' 'Madam,' answered the man, 'me you have nowise offended; but wherein you have offended your husband I know not, save that he hath commanded me slay you by the way, without having any pity upon you, threatening me, an I did it not, to have me hanged by the neck. You know well how much I am beholden to him and how I may not gainsay him in aught that he may impose upon me; God knoweth it irketh me for you, but I can no otherwise.' Whereupon quoth the lady, weeping, 'Alack, for God's sake, consent not to become the murderer of one who hath never wronged thee, to serve another! God who knoweth all knoweth that I never did aught for which I should receive such a recompense from my husband. But let that be; thou mayst, an thou wilt, at once content God and thy master and me, on this wise; to wit, that thou take these my clothes and give me but thy doublet and a hood and with the former return to my lord and thine and tell him that thou hast slain me; and I swear to thee, by that life which thou wilt have bestowed on me, that I will remove hence and get me gone into a country whence never shall any news of me win either to him or to thee or into these parts.' The servant, who was loath to slay her, was lightly moved to compassion; wherefore he took her clothes and gave her a sorry doublet of his and a hood, leaving her sundry monies she had with her. Then praying her depart the country, he left her in the valley and afoot and betook himself to his master, to whom he avouched that not only was his commandment accomplished, but that he had left the lady's dead body among a pack of wolves, and Bernabo presently returned to Genoa, where, the thing becoming known, he was much blamed. As for the lady, she abode alone and disconsolate till nightfall, when she disguised herself as most she might and repaired to a village hard by, where, having gotten from an old woman that which she needed, she

fitted the doublet to her shape and shortening it, made a pair of linen breeches of her shift; then, having cut her hair and altogether transformed herself in the guise of a sailor, she betook herself to the seashore, where, as chance would have it, she found a Catalan gentleman, by name Senor Encararch, who had landed at Alba from a ship he had in the offing, to refresh himself at a spring there. With him she entered into parley and engaging with him as a servant, embarked on board the ship, under the name of Sicurano da Finale. There, being furnished by the gentleman with better clothes, she proceeded to serve him so well and so aptly that she became in the utmost favour with him. No great while after it befell that the Catalan made a voyage to Alexandria with a lading of his and carrying thither certain peregrine falcons for the Soldan, presented them to him. The Soldan, having once and again entertained him at meat and noting with approof the fashions of Sicurano, who still went serving him, begged him * of his master, who yielded him to him, although it irked him to do it, and Sicurano, in a little while, by his good behaviour, gained the love and favour of the Soldan, even as he had gained that of the Catalan. Wherefore, in process of time, it befell that,—the time coming for a great assemblage, in the guise of a fair, of merchants, both Christian and Saracen, which was wont at a certain season of the year to be held in Acre, a town under the seignory of the Soldan, and to which, in order that the merchants and their merchandise might rest secure, the latter was still used to despatch, beside other his officers, some one of his chief men, with troops, to look to the guard,—he bethought himself to send Sicurano, who was by this well versed in the language of the country, on this service; and so he did. Sicurano accordingly came to Acre as governor and captain of the guard of the merchants and their merchandise and there well and diligently doing that which pertained to his office and going round looking about him, saw many merchants there, Sicilians and Pisans and Genoese and Venetians and other Italians, with whom he was fain to make acquaintance, in remembrance of his country. It befell, one time amongst others, that, having lighted down at the shop of certain Venetian merchants, he espied, among other trinkets, a purse and a girdle, which he straightway knew for having been his and marvelled thereat; but, without making any sign, he carelessly asked to whom they pertained and if they were for sale. Now Ambrogiuolo of Piacenza was come thither with much merchandise on board a Venetian ship and hearing

* From this point until the final discovery of her true sex, the heroine is spoken of in the masculine gender, as became her assumed name and habit.

the captain of the guard ask whose the trinkets were, came forward and said, laughing, 'Sir, the things are mine and I do not sell them; but, if they please you, I will gladly give them to you.' Sicurano, seeing him laugh, misdoubted he had recognized him by some gesture of his; but yet, keeping a steady countenance, he said, 'Belike thou laughest to see me, a soldier, go questioning of these women's toys?' 'Sir,' answered Ambrogiuolo, 'I laugh not at that; nay, but at the way I came by them.' 'Marry, then,' said Sicurano, 'an it be not unspeakable, tell me how thou gottest them, so God give thee good luck.' Quoth Ambrogiuolo, 'Sir, a gentlewoman of Genoa, hight Madam Ginevra, wife of Bernabo Lomellini, gave me these things, with certain others, one night that I lay with her, and prayed me keep them for the love of her. Now I laugh for that I mind me of the simplicity of Bernabo, who was fool enough to lay five thousand florins to one that I would not bring his wife to do my pleasure; the which I did and won the wager; whereupon he, who should rather have punished himself for his stupidity than her for doing that which all women do, returned from Paris to Genoa and there, by what I have since heard, caused put her to death.' Sicurano, hearing this, understood forthwith what was the cause of Bernabo's anger against his wife * and manifestly perceiving this fellow to have been the occasion of all her ills, determined not to let him go unpunished therefor. Accordingly he feigned to be greatly diverted with the story and artfully clapped up a strait acquaintance with him, insomuch that, the fair being ended, Ambrogiuolo, at his instance, accompanied him, with all his good, to Alexandria. Here Sicurano let build him a warehouse and lodged in his hands store of his own monies; and Ambrogiuolo, foreseeing great advantage to himself, willingly took up his abode there. Meanwhile, Sicurano, careful to make Bernabo clear of his † innocence, rested not till, by means of certain great Genoese merchants who were then in Alexandria, he had, on some plausible occasion of his ‡ own devising, caused him come thither, where, finding him in poor enough case, he had him privily entertained by a friend of his § against it should seem to him || time to do that which he purposed. Now he had already made Ambrogiuolo recount his story before the Soldan for the latter's diversion; but, seeing Bernabo there and thinking there was no need to use farther delay in the

* Here Boccaccio uses the feminine pronoun, immediately afterward resuming the masculine form in speaking of Sicurano.

† *i.e.* her.

‡ *i.e.* her.

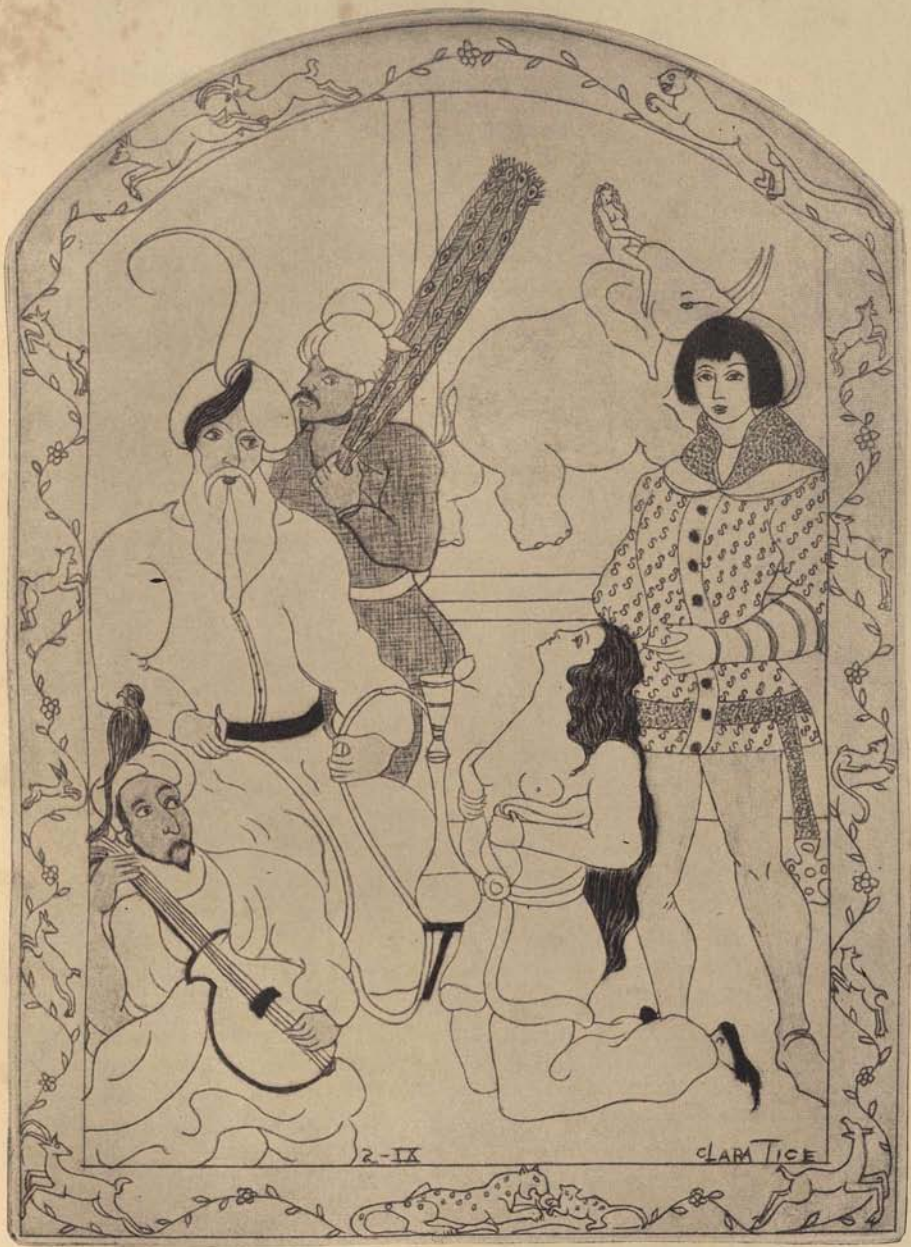
§ *i.e.* hers.

|| *i.e.* her.

matter, he took occasion to procure the Soldan to have Ambrogiuolo and Bernabo brought before him and in the latter's presence, to extort from the former, by dint of severity, an it might not easily be done [by other means,] the truth of that whereof he vaunted himself concerning Bernabo's wife. Accordingly, they both being come, the Soldan, in the presence of many, with a stern countenance commanded Ambrogiuolo to tell the truth how he had won of Bernabo the five thousand gold florins; and Sicurano himself, in whom he most trusted, with a yet angrier aspect, threatened him with the most grievous torments, and he told it not; whereupon Ambrogiuolo, affrighted on one side and another and in a measure constrained, in the presence of Bernabo and many others, plainly related everything, even as it passed, expecting no worse punishment therefor than the restitution of the five thousand gold florins and of the stolen trinkets. He having spoken, Sicurano, as he were the Soldan's minister in the matter, turned to Bernabo and said to him, 'And thou, what didst thou to thy lady for this lie?' Whereto Bernabo replied, 'Overcome with wrath for the loss of my money and with resentment for the shame which meseemed I had gotten from my wife, I caused a servant of mine put her to death, and according to that which he reported to me, she was straightway devoured by a multitude of wolves.' These things said in the presence of the Soldan and all heard and apprehended of him, albeit he knew not yet to what end Sicurano, who had sought and ordered this, would fain come, the latter said to him, 'My lord, you may very clearly see how much reason yonder poor lady had to vaunt herself of her gallant and her husband, for that the former at once bereaved her of honour, marring her fair fame with lies, and despoiled her husband, whilst the latter, more credulous of others' falsehoods than of the truth which he might by long experience have known, caused her be slain and eaten of wolves; and moreover, such is the goodwill and the love borne her by the one and the other that, having long abidden with her, neither of them knoweth her. But, that you may the better apprehend that which each of these hath deserved, I will,—so but you vouchsafe me, of special favour, to punish the deceiver and pardon the dupe,—e'en cause her come hither into your and their presence.' The Soldan, disposed in the matter altogether to comply with Sicurano's wishes, answered that he would well and bade him produce the lady; whereat Bernabo marvelled exceedingly, for that he firmly believed her to be dead, whilst Ambrogiuolo, now divining his danger, began to be in fear of worse than paying of monies and knew not whether more to hope or to fear from the

coming of the lady, but awaited her appearance with the utmost amazement. The Soldan, then, having accorded Sicurano his wish, the latter threw himself, weeping, on his knees before him and putting off, as it were at one and the same time, his manly voice and masculine demeanour, said, 'My lord, I am the wretched misfortunate Ginevra, who have these six years gone wandering in man's disguise about the world, having been foully and wickedly aspersed by this traitor Ambrogiuolo and given by yonder cruel and unjust man to one of his servants to be slain and eaten of wolves.' Then, tearing open the fore part of her clothes and showing her breast, she discovered herself to the Soldan and all else who were present and after, turning to Ambrogiuolo, indignantly demanded of him when he had ever lain with her, according as he had aforetime boasted; but he, now knowing her and fallen well nigh dumb for shame, said nothing. The Soldan, who had always held her for a man, seeing and hearing this, fell into such a wonderment that he more than once misdoubted that which he saw and heard to be rather a dream than true. However, after his amazement had abated, apprehending the truth of the matter, he lauded to the utmost the life and fashions of Ginevra, till then called Sicurano, and extolled her constancy and virtue; and letting bring her very sumptuous woman's apparel and women to attend her, he pardoned Bernabo, in accordance with her request, the death he had merited, whilst the latter, recognizing her, cast himself at her feet, weeping and craving forgiveness, which she, ill worthy as he was thereof, graciously accorded him and raising him to his feet, embraced him tenderly, as her husband. Then the Soldan commanded that Ambrogiuolo should incontinent be bound to a stake and smeared with honey and exposed to the sun in some high place of the city, nor should ever be loosed thence till such time as he should fall of himself; and so was it done. After this he commanded that all that had belonged to him should be given to the lady, the which was not so little but that it outvalued ten thousand doubloons. Moreover, he let make a very goodly banquet, wherein he entertained Bernabo with honour, as Madam Ginevra's husband, and herself as a very valiant lady and gave her, in jewels and vessels of gold and silver and monies, that which amounted to better * than other ten thousand doubloons. Then, the banquet over, he caused equip them a ship and gave them leave to return at their pleasure to Genoa, whither accordingly they returned with great joyance and exceeding rich; and there they were

* Sic (*meglio*).



"Tearing open the forepart of her clothes"

received with the utmost honour, especially Madam Ginevra, who was of all believed to be dead and who, while she lived, was still reputed of great worth and virtue. As for Ambrogiuolo, being that same day bounded to the stake and anointed with honey, he was, to his exceeding torment, not only slain, but devoured, of the flies and wasps and gadflies, wherewith that country aboundeth, even to the bones, which latter, waxed white and hanging by the sinews, being left unremoved, long bore witness of his villainy to all who saw them. And on this wise did the deceiver abide at the feet of the deceived."

THE TENTH STORY

PAGANINO OF MONACO STEALETH AWAY THE WIFE OF MESSER RICCIARDO DI CHINZICA, WHO, LEARNING WHERE SHE IS, GOETH THITHER AND MAKING FRIENDS WITH PAGANINO, DEMANDETH HER AGAIN OF HIM. THE LATTER CONCEDETH HER TO HIM, AN SHE WILL; BUT SHE REFUSETH TO RETURN WITH HIM AND MESSER RICCIARDO DYING, SHE BECOMETH THE WIFE OF PAGANINO

EACH of the honourable company highly commended for goodly the story told by their queen, especially Dioneo, with whom alone for that present day it now rested to tell, and who, after many praises bestowed upon the preceding tale, said, "Fair ladies, one part of the queen's story hath caused me change counsel of telling you one that was in my mind, and determine to tell you another,—and that is the stupidity of Bernabo (albeit good betided him thereof) and of all others who give themselves to believe that which he made a show of believing and who, to wit, whilst going about the world, diverting themselves now with this woman and now with that, imagine that the ladies left at home abide with their hands in their girdles, as if we knew not, we who are born and reared among the latter, unto what they are fain. In telling you this story, I shall at once show you how great is the folly of these folk and how greater yet is that of those who, deeming themselves more potent than nature herself, think by dint of sophistical inventions * to avail unto that which is beyond their power and study to bring others to that which they themselves are, whenas the complexion of those on whom they practise brooketh it not.

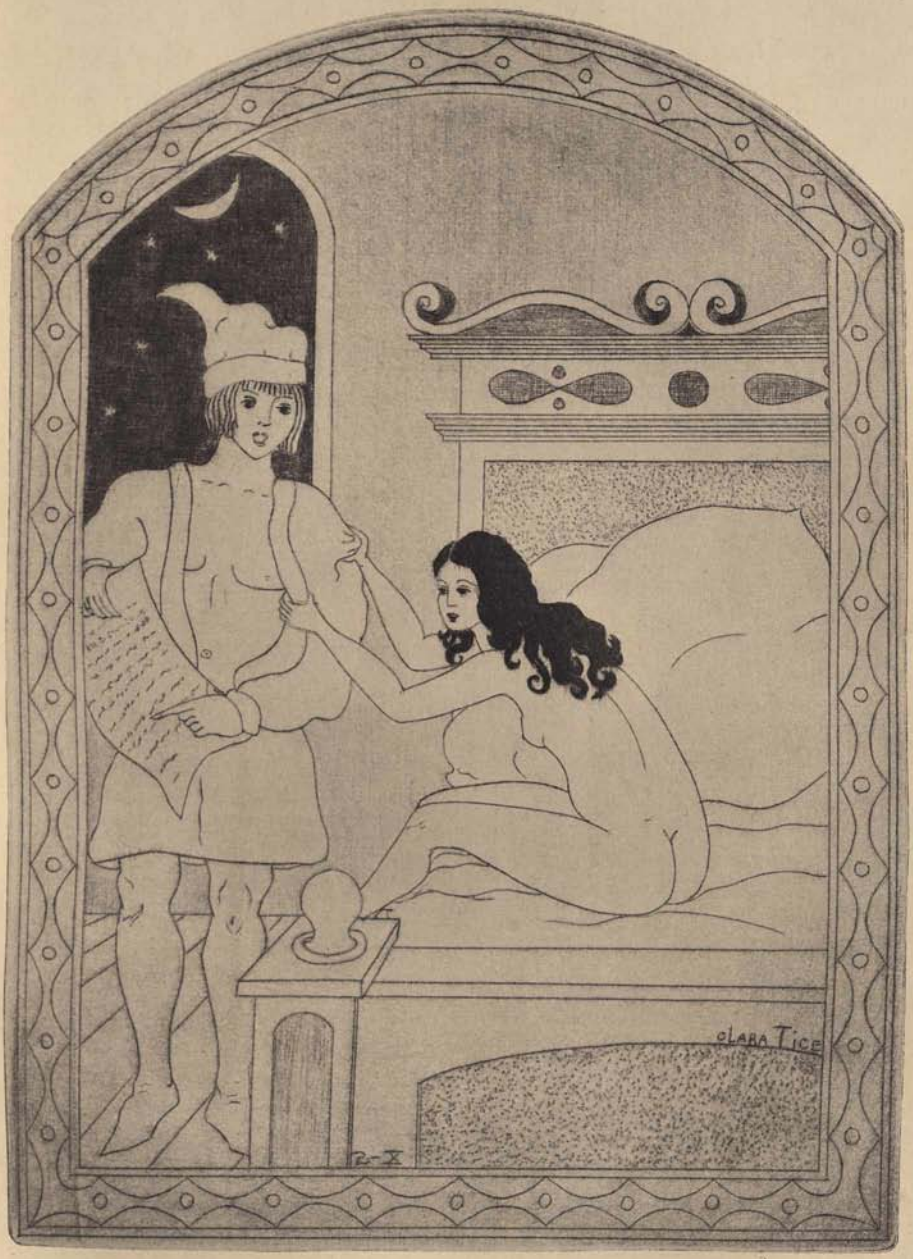
* Lit. fabulous demonstrations (*dimostrazioni favolose*), casuistical arguments, founded upon premisses of their own invention.

There was, then, in Pisa a judge, by name Messer Ricciardo di Chinzica, more gifted with wit than with bodily strength, who, thinking belike to satisfy a wife by the same means which served him to despatch his studies and being very rich, sought with no little diligence to have a fair and young lady to wife; whereas, had he but known to counsel himself as he counselled others, he should have shunned both the one and the other. The thing came to pass according to his wish, for Messer Lotto Gualandi gave him to wife a daughter of his, Bartolomea by name, one of the fairest and handsomest young ladies of Pisa, albeit there be few there that are not very lizards to look upon. The judge accordingly brought her home with the utmost pomp and having held a magnificent wedding, made shift the first night to handle her one venue for the consummation of the marriage, but came within an ace of making a stalemate of it, whereafter, lean and dry and scant of wind as he was, it behoved him on the morrow bring himself back to life with malmsey and restorative confections and other remedies. Thenceforward, being now a better judge of his own powers than he was, he fell to teaching his wife a calendar fit for children learning to read and belike made aforetime at Ravenna,* for that, according to what he feigned to her, there was no day in the year but was sacred not to one saint only, but to many, in reverence of whom he showed by divers reasons that man and wife should abstain from carnal conversation; and to these he added, to boot, fast days and Emberdays and the vigils of the Apostles and of a thousand other saints and Fridays and Saturdays and Lord's Day and all Lent and certain seasons of the moon and store of other exceptions, conceiving belike that it behoved to keep holiday with women in bed like as he did bytimes whilst pleading in the courts of civil law. This fashion (to the no small chagrin of the lady, whom he handled maybe once a month, and hardly that) he followed a great while, still keeping strait watch over her, lest peradventure some other should teach her to know working-days, even as he had taught her holidays. Things standing thus, it chanced that, the heat being great and Messer Ricciardo having a mind to go a-pleasuring to a very fair country-seat he had, near Monte Nero, and there abide some days to take the air, he betook himself thither, carrying with him his fair lady. There sojourning, to give her some diversion, he caused one day fish and they went out to sea in two boats, he in one with the fishermen, and she

* According to one of the commentators of the Decameron, there are as many churches at Ravenna as days in the year and each day is there celebrated as that of some saint or other.

in another with other ladies. The sport luring them on, they drifted some miles out to sea, well nigh without perceiving it, and whilst they were intent upon their diversion, there came up of a sudden a galliot belonging to Paganino da Mare, a famous corsair of those days. The latter, espying the boats, make for them, nor could they flee so fast but he overtook that in which were the women and seeing therein the judge's fair lady, he carried her aboard the galliot, in full sight of Messer Ricciardo, who was now come to land, and made off without recking of aught else. When my lord judge, who was so jealous that he misdoubted of the very air, saw this, it booteth not to ask if he was chagrined; and in vain, both at Pisa and otherwhere, did he complain of the villainy of the corsairs, for that he knew not who had taken his wife from him nor whither he had carried her. As for Paganino, finding her so fair, he deemed himself in luck and having no wife, resolved to keep her for himself. Accordingly, seeing her weeping sore, he studied to comfort her with soft words till nightfall, when, his calendar having dropped from his girdle and saints' days and holidays gone clean out of his head, he fell to comforting her with deeds, himseeming that words had availed little by day; and after such a fashion did he console her that, ere they came to Monaco, the judge and his ordinances had altogether escaped her mind and she began to lead the merriest of lives with Paganino. The latter carried her to Monaco and there, over and above the consolations with which he plied her night and day, he entreated her honourably as his wife. After awhile it came to Messer Ricciardo's ears where his wife was and he, being possessed with the most ardent desire to have her again and bethinking himself that none other might throughly suffice to do what was needful to that end, resolved to go thither himself, determined to spend any quantity of money for her ransom. Accordingly, he set out by sea and coming to Monaco, there both saw and was seen of the lady, who told it to Paganino that same evening and acquainted him with her intent. Next morning Messer Ricciardo, seeing Paganino, accosted him and quickly clapped up a great familiarity and friendship with him, whilst the other feigned not to know him and waited to see at what he aimed. Accordingly, whenas it seemed to him time, Messer Ricciardo discovered to him, as best and most civilly he knew, the occasion of his coming and prayed him take what he pleased and restore him the lady. To which Paganino made answer with a cheerful countenance, 'Sir, you are welcome, and to answer you briefly, I say thus; it is true I have a young lady in my house, if she be your wife or another's I know not, for that I know you not

nor indeed her, save in so much as she hath abidden awhile with me. If you be, as you say, her husband, I will, since you seem to me a civil gentleman, carry you to her and I am assured that she will know you right well. If she say it is as you avouch and be willing to go with you, you shall, for the sake of your civility, give me what you yourself will to her ransom; but, an it be not so, you would do ill to seek to take her from me, for that I am a young man and can entertain a woman as well as another, and especially such an one as she, who is the most pleasing I ever saw.' Quoth Messer Ricciardo, 'For certain she is my wife, and an thou bring me where she is, thou shalt soon see it; for she will incontinent throw herself on my neck; wherefore I ask no better than that it be as thou proposest.' 'Then,' said Paganino, 'let us be going.' Accordingly they betook themselves to the corsair's house, where he brought the judge into a saloon of his and let call the lady, who issued forth of a chamber, all dressed and tired, and came whereas they were, but accosted Messer Ricciardo no otherwise than as she would any other stranger who might have come home with Paganino. The judge, who looked to have been received by her with the utmost joy, marvelled sore at this and fell a-saying in himself, 'Belike the chagrin and long grief I have suffered, since I lost her, have so changed me that she knoweth me not.' Wherefore he said to her, 'Wife, it hath cost me dear to carry thee a-fishing, for that never was grief felt like that which I have suffered since I lost thee, and now meseemeth thou knowest me not, so distantly dost thou greet me. Seest thou not that I am thine own Messer Ricciardo, come hither to pay that which this gentleman, in whose house we are, shall require to thy ransom and to carry thee away? And he, of his favour, restoreth thee to me for what I will.' The lady turned to him and said, smiling somewhat, 'Speak you to me, sir? Look you mistake me not, for, for my part, I mind me not ever to have seen you.' Quoth Ricciardo, 'Look what thou sayest; consider me well; an thou wilt but recollect thyself, thou wilt see that I am thine own Ricciardo di Chinzica.' 'Sir,' answered the lady, 'you will pardon me; belike it is not so seemly a thing as you imagine for me to look much on you. Nevertheless, I have seen enough of you to know that I never before set eyes on you.' Ricciardo, concluding that she did this for fear of Paganino and chose not to confess to knowing him in the latter's presence, besought him of his favour that he might speak with her in a room alone. Paganino replied that he would well, so but he would not kiss her against her will, and bade the lady go with him into a chamber and there hear what he had to say and answer him



"Teaching his wife a calendar"

as it should please her. Accordingly the lady and Messer Ricciardo went into a room apart and as soon as they were seated, the latter began to say, 'Alack, heart of my body, sweet my soul and my hope, knowest thou not thy Ricciardo, who loveth thee more than himself? How can this be? Am I so changed? Prithee, fair mine eye, do but look on me a little.' The lady began to laugh and without letting him say more, replied, 'You may be assured that I am not so scatterbrained but that I know well enough you are Messer Ricciardo di Chinzica, my husband; but, what time I was with you, you showed that you knew me very ill, for that you should have had the sense to see that I was young and lusty and gamesome and should consequently have known that which behoveth unto young ladies, over and above clothes and meat, albeit for shamefastness they name it not; the which how you performed, you know. If the study of the laws was more agreeable to you than your wife, you should not have taken her, albeit it never appeared to me that you were a judge; nay, you seemed to me rather a common crier of saints' days and sacraments and fasts and vigils, so well you knew them. And I tell you this, that, had you suffered the husbandmen who till your lands keep as many holidays as you allowed him who had the tilling of my poor little field, you would never have reaped the least grain of corn. However, as God, having compassion on my youth, hath willed it, I have happened on yonder man, with whom I abide in this chamber, wherein it is unknown what manner of thing is a holiday (I speak of those holidays which you, more assiduous in the service of God than in that of the ladies, did so diligently celebrate) nor ever yet entered in at this door Saturday nor Friday nor vigil nor Emberday nor Lent, that is so long; nay, here swink we day and night and thump our wool; and this very night after matinsong, I know right well how the thing went, once he was up. Wherefore I mean to abide with him and work, whilst I am young, and leave saints' days and jubilees and fasts for my keeping when I am old; so get you gone about your business as quickliest you may, good luck go with you, and keep as many holidays as you please, without me.' Messer Ricciardo, hearing these words, was distressed beyond endurance and said, whenas he saw she had made an end of speaking, 'Alack, sweet my soul, what is this thou sayest? Hast thou no regard for thy kinsfolk's honour and thine own? Wilt thou rather abide here for this man's whore and in mortal sin than at Pisa as my wife? He, when he is weary of thee, will turn thee away to thine own exceeding reproach; whilst I will still hold thee dear and still (e'en though I willed it not) thou shalt

be mistress of my house. Wilt thou, for the sake of a lewd and disorderly appetite, forsake thine honour and me, who love thee more than my life? For God's sake, dear my hope, speak no more thus, but consent to come with me; henceforth, since I know thy desire, I will enforce myself [to content it;] wherefore, sweet my treasure, change counsel and come away with me, who have never known weal since thou wast taken from me.' Whereto answered the lady, 'I have no mind that any, now that it availeth not, should be more tender of my honour than I myself; would my kinsfolk had had regard thereto, whenas they gave me to you! But, as they had then no care for my honour, I am under no present concern to be careful of theirs; and if I am here in *mortar* * sin, I shall abide though it be in *pestle* * sin. And let me tell you that here meseemeth I am Paganino's wife, whereas at Pisa meseemed I was your whore, seeing that there, by seasons of the moon and quadratures of geometry, needs must the planets concur to couple betwixt you and me, whereas here Paganino holdeth me all night in his arms and straineth me and biteth me, and how he serveth me, let God tell you for me. You say forsooth you will enforce yourself; to what? To do it in three casts and cause it stand by dint of cudgelling? I warrant me you are grown a doughty cavalier since I saw you last! Begone and enforce yourself to live, for methinketh indeed you do but sojourn here below upon sufferance, so peaked and scant o' wind you show to me. And yet more I tell you, that, should he leave me, (albeit meseemeth he is nowise inclined thereto, so I choose to stay,) I purpose not therefor ever to return to you, of whom, squeeze you as I might, there were no making a porringer of sauce; for that I abode with you once to my grievous hurt and loss, wherefore in such a case I should seek my vantage elsewhere. Nay, once again I tell you, here be neither saints' days nor vigils; wherefore here I mean to abide; so get you gone in God's name as quickliest you may, or I will cry out that you would fain force me.' Messer Ricciardo, seeing himself in ill case and now recognizing his folly in taking a young wife, whenas he was himself forspent, went forth the chamber, tristful and woebegone, and bespoke Paganino with many words, that skilled not a jot. Ultimately, leaving the lady, he returned to Pisa, without having accomplished aught, and there for chagrin fell into such dotage that, as he went about Pisa, to whoso greeted him or asked him of anywhat, he an-

* A trifling jingle upon the similarity in sound of the words *mortale* (mortal), *mortaio* (mortar), *pestello* (pestle), and *pestilente* (pestilential). The same word-play occurs at least once more in the Decameron.

swered nought but 'The ill hole * will have no holidays;' † and there, no great while after, he died. Paganino, hearing this and knowing the love the lady bore himself, espoused her to his lawful wife and thereafter, without ever observing saints' day or vigil or keeping Lent, they wrought what while their legs would carry them and led a jolly life of it. Wherefore, dear my ladies, meseemeth Bernabo, in his dispute with Ambrogiuolo, rode the she-goat down the steep." ‡

This story gave such occasion for laughter to all the company that there was none whose jaws ached not therefor, and all the ladies avouched with one accord that Dioneo spoke sooth and that Bernabo had been an ass. But, after the story was ended and the laughter abated, the queen, observing that the hour was now late and that all had told and seeing that the end of her seignory was come, according to the ordinance commenced, took the wreath from her own head and set it on that of Neifile, saying, with a blithe aspect, "Henceforth, companion dear, be thine the governance of this little people;" and reseated herself. Neifile blushed a little at the honour received and became in countenance like as showeth a new-blown rose of April or of May in the breaking of the day, with lovesome eyes some little downcast, sparkling no otherwise than the morning-star. But, after the courteous murmur of the bystanders, whereby they gladsomely approved their goodwill towards the new-made queen, had abated and she had taken heart again, she seated herself somewhat higher than of wont and said, 'Since I am to be your queen, I will, departing not from the manner holden of those who have foregone me and whose governance you have by your obedience commended, make manifest to you in few words my opinion, which, an it be approved by your counsel, we will ensue. To-morrow, as you know, is Friday and the next day is Saturday, days which, by reason of the viands that are used therein,§ are somewhat irksome to most folk, more by token that Friday, considering that He who died for our life on that day suf-

* *Il mal foro*, a woman's commodity (Florio).

† i.e. *Cunnus nonvult feriari.* Some commentators propose to read *il mal furo*, the ill thief, supposing Ricciardo to allude to Paganino, but this seems far-fetched.

‡ *i.e. semble* ran headlong to destruction. The commentators explain this proverbial expression by saying that a she-goat is in any case a hazardous mount, and *a fortiori* when ridden down a precipice; but this seems a somewhat "sporting" kind of interpretation.

§ *i.e.* Friday being a fast day and Saturday a *jour maigre.*

fered passion, is worthy of reverence; wherefore I hold it a just thing and a seemly that, in honour of the Divinity, we apply ourselves rather to orisons than to story-telling. As for Saturday, it is the usance of ladies on that day to wash their heads and do away all dust and all uncleanliness befallen them for the labours of the past week; and many, likewise, use, in reverence of the Virgin Mother of the Son of God, to fast and rest from all manner work in honour of the ensuing Sunday. Wherefore, we being unable fully to ensue the order of living taken by us, on like wise methinketh we were well to rest from story-telling on that day also; after which, for that we shall then have sojourned here four days, I hold it opportune, an we would give no occasion for new-comers to intrude upon us, that we remove hence and get us gone elsewhither; where I have already considered and provided. There when we shall be assembled together on Sunday, after sleeping,—we having to-day had leisure enough for discoursing at large,*—I have bethought myself,—at once that you may have more time to consider and because it will be yet goodlier that the license of our story-telling be somewhat straitened and that we devise of one of the many fashions of fortune,—that our discourse shall be OF SUCH AS HAVE, BY DINT OF DILIGENCE,† ACQUIRED SOME MUCH DESIRED THING OR RECOVERED SOME LOST GOOD. Whereupon let each think to tell somewhat that may be useful or at least entertaining to the company, saving always Dioneo his privilege.' All commended the speech and disposition of the queen and ordained that it should be as she had said. Then, calling for her seneschal, she particularly instructed him where he should set the tables that evening and after of what he should do during all the time of her seignory; and this done, rising to her feet, she gave the company leave to do that which was most pleasing unto each. Accordingly, ladies and men betook themselves to a little garden and there, after they had disported themselves awhile, the hour of supper being come, they supped with mirth and pleasance; then, all arising thence and Emilia, by the queen's commandment, leading the round, the ditty following was sung by Pampinea, whilst the other ladies responded:

What lady aye should sing, an if not I,
Who'm blest with all for which a maid can sigh?

* *i.e.* generally upon the vicissitudes of Fortune and not upon any particular feature.

† *Industria,* syn. address, skilful contrivance.

Come then, O Love, thou source of all my weal,
All hope and every issue glad and bright
Sing we awhile yfere
Of sighs nor bitter pains I erst did feel,
That now but sweeten to me thy delight,
Nay, but of that fire clear,
Wherein I, burning, live in joy and cheer,
And as my God, thy name do magnify.

Thou settest, Love, before these eyes of mine
Whenas thy fire I entered the first day,
A youngling so beseen
With valour, worth and loveliness divine,
That never might one find a goodlier, nay,
Nor yet his match, I ween.
So sore I burnt for him I still must e'en
Sing, blithe, of him with thee, my lord most high.

And that in him which crowneth my liesse
Is that I please him, as he pleaseth me,
Thanks to Love debonair;
Thus in this world my wish I do possess
And in the next I trust at peace to be,
Through that fast faith I bear
To him; sure God, who seeth this, will ne'er
The kingdom of His bliss to us deny.

After this they sang sundry other songs and danced sundry dances and played upon divers instruments of music. Then, the queen deeming it time to go to rest, each betook himself, with torches before him, to his chamber, and all on the two following days, whilst applying themselves to those things whereof the queen had spoken, looked longingly for Sunday.

HERE ENDETH THE SECOND DAY
OF THE DECAMERON

DAY THE THIRD

HERE BEGINNETH THE THIRD DAY OF THE DECAMERON WHEREIN UNDER THE GOVERNANCE OF NEIFILE IS DISCOURSED OF SUCH AS HAVE BY DINT OF DILIGENCE ACQUIRED SOME MUCH DESIRED THING OR RECOVERED SOME LOST GOOD

THE dawn from vermeil began to grow orange-tawny, at the approach of the sun, when on the Sunday the queen arose and caused all her company rise also. The seneschal had a great while before despatched to the place whither they were to go store of things needful and folk who should there make ready that which behoved, and seeing the queen now on the way, straightway let load everything else, as if the camp were raised thence, and with the household stuff and such of the servants as remained set out in rear of the ladies and gentlemen. The queen, then, with slow step, accompanied and followed by her ladies and the three young men and guided by the song of some score nightingales and other birds, took her way westward, by a little-used footpath, full of green herbs and flowers, which latter now all began to open for the coming sun, and chatting, jesting and laughing with her company, brought them a while before half tierce,* without having gone over two thousand paces, to a very fair and rich palace, somewhat upraised above the plain upon a little knoll. Here they entered and having gone all about and viewed the great saloons and the quaint and elegant chambers all throughly furnished with that which pertaineth thereunto, they mightily commended the place and accounted its lord magnificent. Then, going below and seeing the very spacious and cheerful court thereof, the cellars full of choicest wines and the very cool water that welled there in great abundance, they praised it yet more. Thence, as if desirous of repose, they betook themselves to sit in a gallery which commanded all the courtyard and was all full of flowers, such as the season afforded, and leafage, whereupon there came the careful seneschal and entertained and refreshed them with costliest confections and wines of choice. Thereafter, letting open to them a garden, all walled about, which coasted the palace, they entered therein and it seeming to them, at

* *i.e.* half *before* (not half *after*) tierce or 7.30 a.m. *Cf.* the equivalent German idiom, *halb acht*, 7.30 (not 8.30) a.m.

their entering, altogether * wonder-goodly, they addressed themselves more intently to view the particulars thereof. It had about it and athwart the middle very spacious alleys, all straight as arrows and embowered with trellises of vines, which made great show of bearing abundance of grapes that year and being then all in blossom, yielded so rare a savour about the garden, that, as it blent with the fragrance of many another sweet-smelling plant that there gave scent, themseemed they were among all the spiceries that ever grew in the Orient. The sides of these alleys were all in a manner walled about with roses, red and white, and jessamine, wherefore not only of a morning, but what while the sun was highest, one might go all about, untouched thereby, neath odoriferous and delightsome shade. What and how many and how orderly disposed were the plants that grew in that place, it were tedious to recount; suffice it that there is none goodly of those which may brook our air but was there in abundance. Amiddleward the garden (what was not less, but yet more commendable than aught else there) was a plat of very fine grass, so green that it seemed well nigh black, enamelled all with belike a thousand kinds of flowers and closed about with the greenest and lustiest of orange and citron trees, the which, bearing at once old fruits and new and flowers, not only afforded the eyes a pleasant shade, but were no less grateful to the smell. Midmost the grassplat was a fountain of the whitest marble, enchased with wonder-goodly sculptures, and thence,—whether I know not from a natural or an artificial source,—there sprang, by a figure that stood on a column in its midst, so great a jet of water and so high towards the sky, whence not without a delectable sound it fell back into the wonder-limpid fount, that a mill might have wrought with less; the which after (I mean the water which overflowed the full basin) issued forth of the lawn by a hidden way, and coming to light therewithout, encompassed it all about by very goodly and curiously wroughten channels. Thence by like channels it ran through well nigh every part of the pleasance and was gathered again at the last in a place whereby it had issue from the fair garden and whence it descended, in the clearest of streams, towards the plain; but, ere it won thither, it turned two mills with exceeding power and to the no small vantage of the lord. The sight of this garden and its fair ordinance and the plants and the fountain, with the rivulets proceeding therefrom, so pleased the ladies and the three young men that they all of one accord avouched that, an Paradise might be created upon earth, they could not avail to conceive what

* *i.e.* as a whole (*tutto insieme*).

form, other than that of this garden, might be given it nor what farther beauty might possibly be added thereunto. However, as they went most gladsomely thereabout, weaving them the goodliest garlands of the various leafage of the trees and hearkening the while to the carols of belike a score of different kinds of birds, that sang as if in rivalry one of other, they became aware of a delectable beauty, which, wonderstricken as they were with the other charms of the place, they had not yet noted; to wit, they found the garden full of maybe an hundred kinds of goodly creatures, and one showing them to other, they saw on one side rabbits issue, on another hares run; here lay kids and there fawns went grazing, and there was many another kind of harmless animal, each going about his pastime at his pleasure, as if tame; the which added unto them a yet greater pleasure than the others. After they had gone about their fill, viewing now this thing and now that, the queen let set the tables around the fair fountain and at her commandment, having first sung half a dozen canzonets and danced sundry dances, they sat down to meat. There, being right well and orderly served, after a very fair and sumptuous and tranquil fashion, with goodly and delicate viands, they waxed yet blither and arising thence, gave themselves anew to music-making and singing and dancing till it seemed good to the queen that those whom it pleased should betake themselves to sleep. Accordingly some went thither, whilst others, overcome with the beauty of the place, willed not to leave it, but, abiding there, addressed themselves, some to reading romances and some to playing chess or tables, whilst the others slept. But presently, the hour of none being past and the sleepers having arisen and refreshed their faces with cold water, they came all, at the queen's commandment, to the lawn hard by the fountain and there seating themselves, after the wonted fashion, waited to fall to story-telling upon the subject proposed by her. The first upon whom she laid this charge was Filostrato, who began on this wise:

THE FIRST STORY

MASETTO OF LAMPORECCHIO FEIGNETH HIMSELF DUMB AND BECOMETH GARDENER TO A CONVENT OF WOMEN, WHO ALL FLOCK TO LIE WITH HIM

"FAIREST ladies, there be many men and women foolish enough to believe that, whenas the white fillet is bound about a girl's head

and the black cowl clapped upon her back, she is no longer a woman and is no longer sensible of feminine appetites, as if the making her a nun had changed her to stone; and if perchance they hear aught contrary to this their belief, they are as much incensed as if a very great and heinous misdeed had been committed against nature, considering not neither having regard to themselves, whom full licence to do that which they will availeth not to sate, nor yet to the much potency of idlesse and thought-taking.* On like wise there are but too many who believe that spade and mattock and coarse victuals and hard living do altogether purge away carnal appetites from the tillers of the earth and render them exceeding dull of wit and judgment. But how much all who believe thus are deluded, I purpose, since the queen hath commanded it to me, to make plain to you in a little story, without departing from the theme by her appointed.

There was (and is yet) in these our parts a convent of women, very famous for sanctity (the which, that I may not anywise abate its repute, I will not name), wherein no great while agone, there being then no more than eight nuns and an abbess, all young, in the nunnery, a poor silly dolt of a fellow was gardener of a very goodly garden of theirs, who, being miscontent with his wage, settled his accounts with the ladies' bailiff and returned to Lamporecchio, whence he came. There, amongst others who welcomed him home, was a young labouring man, stout and robust and (for a countryman) a well-favoured fellow, by name Masetto, who asked him where he had been so long. The good man, whose name was Nuto, told him, whereupon Masetto asked him in what he had served the convent, and he, 'I tended a great and goodly garden of theirs, and moreover I went whiles to the coppice for faggots and drew water and did other such small matters of service; but the nuns gave me so little wage that I could scarce find me in shoon withal. Besides, they are all young and methinketh they are possessed of the devil, for there was no doing anything to their liking; nay, when I was at work whiles in the hortyard,† quoth one, 'Set this here,' and another, 'Set that here,' and a third snatched the spade from my hand, saying, 'That

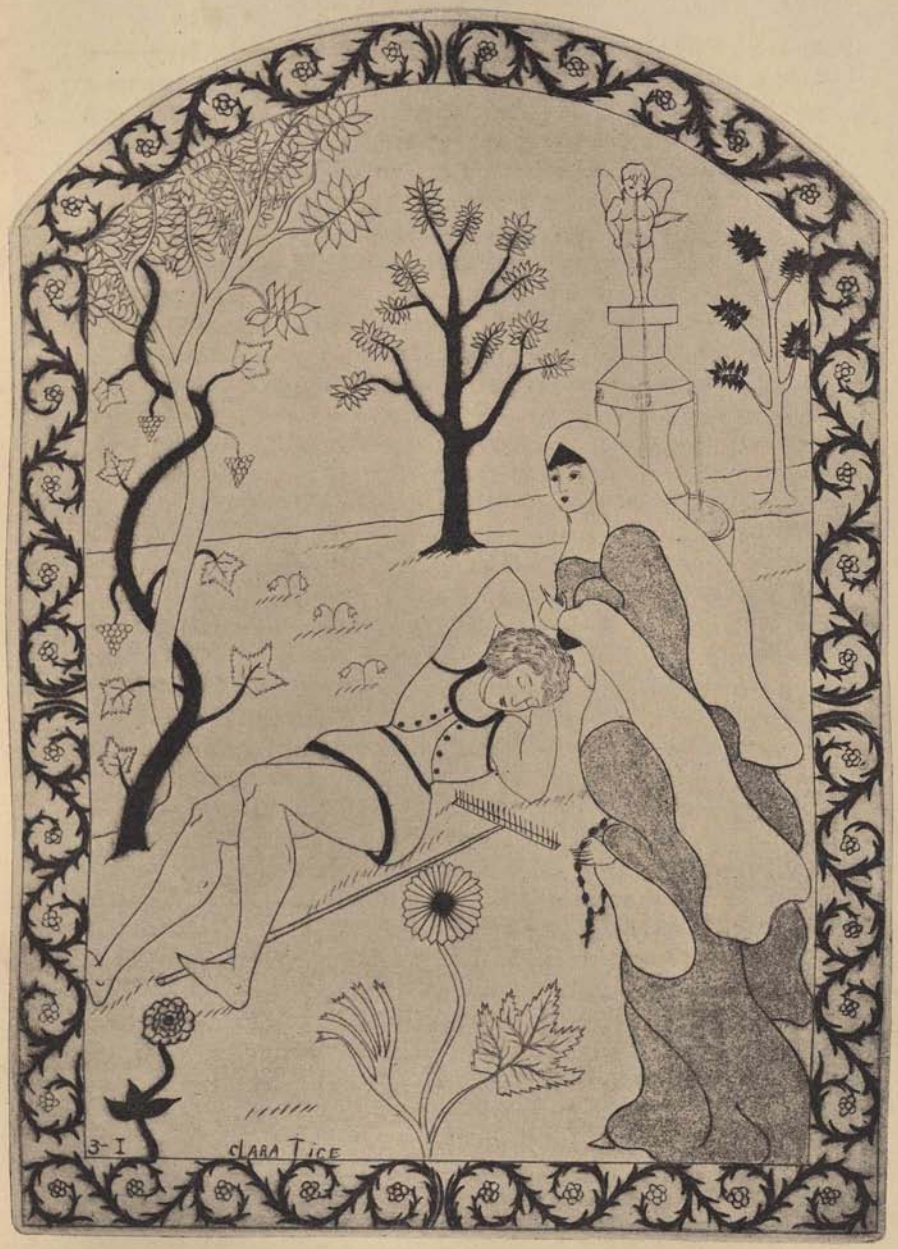
* *Sollecitudine.* The commentators will have it that this is an error for *solitudine,* solitude, but I see no necessity for the substitution, the text being perfectly acceptable as it stands.

† Hortyard (*orto*) is the old form of orchard, properly an enclosed tract of land in which fruit, vegetables and potherbs are cultivated for use, *i.e.* the modern kitchen garden and orchard in one, as distinguished from the pleasaunce or flower garden (*giardino*).

is naught;' brief, they gave me so much vexation that I would leave work be and begone out of the hortyard; insomuch that, what with one thing and what with another, I would abide there no longer and took myself off. When I came away, their bailiff besought me, an I could lay my hand on any one apt unto that service, to send the man to him, and I promised it him; but may God make him sound of the loins as he whom I shall get him, else will I send him none at all!' Masetto, hearing this, was taken with so great a desire to be with these nuns that he was all consumed therewith, judging from Nuto's words that he might avail to compass somewhat of that which he desired. However, foreseeing that he would fail of his purpose, if he discovered aught thereof to Nuto, he said to the latter, 'Egad, thou didst well to come away. How is a man to live with women? He were better abide with devils. Six times out of seven they knew not what they would have themselves.' But, after they had made an end of their talk, Masetto began to cast about what means he should take to be with them and feeling himself well able to do the offices of which Nuto had spoken, he had no fear of being refused on that head, but misdoubted him he might not be received, for that he was young and well-looked. Wherefore, after pondering many things in himself, he bethought himself thus: 'The place is far hence and none knoweth me there, an I can but make a show of being dumb, I shall for certain be received there.' Having fixed upon this device, he set out with an axe he had about his neck, without telling any whither he was bound, and betook himself, in the guise of a beggarman, to the convent, where being come, he entered in and as luck would have it, found the bailiff in the courtyard. Him he accosted with signs such as dumb folk use and made a show of asking food of him for the love of God and that in return he would, an it were needed, cleave wood for him. The bailiff willingly gave him to eat and after set before him divers logs that Nuto had not availed to cleave, but of all which Masetto, who was very strong, made a speedy despatch. By and by, the bailiff, having occasion to go to the coppice, carried him thither and put him to cutting faggots; after which, setting the ass before him, he gave him to understand by signs that he was to bring them home. This he did very well; wherefore the bailiff kept him there some days, so he might have him do certain things for which he had occasion. One day it chanced that the abbess saw him and asked the bailiff who he was. 'Madam,' answered he, 'this is a poor deaf and dumb man, who came hither the other day to ask an alms; so I took him in out of charity and

have made him do sundry things of which we had need. If he knew how to till the hortyard and chose to abide with us, I believe we should get good service of him; for that we lack such an one and he is strong and we could make what we would of him; more by token that you would have no occasion to fear his playing the fool with yonder lasses of yours.' 'I' faith,' rejoined the abbess, 'thou sayst sooth. Learn if he knoweth how to till and study to keep him here; give him a pair of shoes and some old hood or other and make much of him, caress him, give him plenty to eat.' Which the bailiff promised to do. Masetto was not so far distant but he heard all this, making a show the while of sweeping the courtyard, and said merrily in himself, 'An you put me therein, I will till you your hortyard as it was never tilled yet.' Accordingly, the bailiff, seeing that he knew right well how to work, asked him by signs if he had a mind to abide there and he replied on like wise that he would do whatsoever he wished; whereupon the bailiff engaged him and charged him till the hortyard, showing him what he was to do; after which he went about other business of the convent and left him. Presently, as Masetto went working one day after another, the nuns fell to plaguing him and making mock of him, as ofttimes it betideth that folk do with mutes, and bespoke him the naughtiest words in the world, thinking he understood them not; whereof the abbess, mayhap supposing him to be tailless as well as tongueless, recked little or nothing. It chanced one day, however, that, as he rested himself after a hard morning's work, two young nuns, who went about the garden,* drew near the place where he lay and fell to looking upon him, whilst he made a show of sleeping. Presently quoth one who was somewhat the bolder of the twain to the other, 'If I thought thou wouldst keep my counsel, I would tell thee a thought which I have once and again had and which might perchance profit thee also.' 'Speak in all assurance,' answered the other, 'for certes I will never tell it to any.' Then said the forward wench, 'I know not if thou have ever considered how straitly we are kept and how no man dare ever enter here, save the bailiff, who is old, and yonder dumb fellow; and I have again and again heard ladies, who come to visit us, say that all other delights in the world are but toys in comparison with that which a woman enjoyeth, whenas she hath to do with a man. Wherefore I have often had it in mind to make trial with this mute, since with others I may not, if it be so. And indeed he is the best in the world

* *Giardino*, i.e. flower-garden.



"Two young nuns went about the garden"

to that end, for that, e'en if he would, he could not nor might tell it again. Thou seest he is a poor silly lout of a lad, who hath overgrown his wit, and I would fain hear how thou deemest of the thing.' 'Alack!' rejoined the other, 'what is this thou sayest? Knowest thou not that we have promised our virginity to God?' 'Oh, as for that,' answered the first, 'how many things are promised Him all day long, whereof not one is fulfilled unto Him! An we have promised it Him, let Him find Himself another or others to perform it to Him.' 'Or if,' went on her fellow, 'we should prove with child, how would it go then?' Quoth the other, 'Thou beginnest to take thought unto ill ere it cometh; when that betideth, then will we look to it; there will be a thousand ways for us of doing so that it shall never be known, provided we ourselves tell it not.' The other, hearing this and having now a greater itch than her companion to prove what manner beast a man was, said, 'Well, then, how shall we do?' Quoth the first, 'Thou seest it is nigh upon none and methinketh the sisters are all asleep, save only ourselves; let us look about the hortyard if there be any there, and if there be none, what have we to do but to take him by the hand and carry him into yonder hut, whereas he harboureth against the rain, and there let one of us abide with him, whilst the other keepeth watch? He is so simple that he will do whatever we will.' Masetto heard all this talk and disposed to compliance, waited but to be taken by one of the nuns. The latter having looked well all about and satisfied themselves that they could be seen from nowhere, she who had broached the matter came up to Masetto and aroused him, whereupon he rose incontinent to his feet. The nun took him coaxingly by the hand and led him, grinning like an idiot, to the hut, where, without overmuch pressing, he did what she would. Then, like a loyal comrade, having had her will, she gave place to her fellow, and Masetto, still feigning himself a simpleton, did their pleasure. Before they departed thence, each of the girls must needs once more prove how the mute could horse it, and after devising with each other, they agreed that the thing was as delectable as they had heard, nay, more so. Accordingly, watching their opportunity, they went oftentimes at fitting seasons to divert themselves with the mute, till one day it chanced that one of their sisters, espying them in the act from the lattice of her cell, showed it to other twain. At first they talked of denouncing the culprits to the abbess, but, after, changing counsel and coming to an accord with the first two, they became sharers with them in Masetto's services, and to them the other three nuns were at divers times and by divers chances

added as associates. Ultimately, the abbess, who had not yet gotten wind of these doings, walking one day alone in the garden, the heat being great, found Masetto (who had enough of a little fatigue by day, because of overmuch posting it by night) stretched out asleep under the shade of an almond-tree, and the wind lifting the forepart of his clothes, all abode discovered. The lady, beholding this and seeing herself alone, fell into that same appetite which had gotten hold of her nuns, and arousing Masetto, carried him to her chamber, where, to the no small miscontent of the others, who complained loudly that the gardener came not to till the hortyard, she kept him several days, proving and reproving that delight which she had erst been wont to blame in others. At last she sent him back to his own lodging, but was fain to have him often again and as, moreover, she required of him more than her share, Masetto, unable to satisfy so many, bethought himself that his playing the mute might, an it endured longer, result in his exceeding great hurt. Wherefore, being one night with the abbess, he gave loose to * his tongue and bespoke her thus: 'Madam, I have heard say that one cock sufficeth unto half a score hens, but that half a score men can ill or hardly satisfy one woman; whereas needs must I serve nine, and to this I can no wise endure; nay, for that which I have done up to now, I am come to such a pass that I can do neither little nor much; wherefore do ye either let me go in God's name or find a remedy for the matter.' The abbess, hearing him speak whom she held dumb, was all amazed and said, 'What is this? Methought thou wast dumb.' 'Madam,' answered Masetto, 'I was indeed dumb, not by nature, but by reason of a malady which bereft me of speech, and only this very night for the first time do I feel it restored to me, wherefore I praise God as most I may.' The lady believed this and asked him what he meant by saying that he had to serve nine. Masetto told her how the case stood, whereby she perceived that she had no nun but was far wiser than herself; but, like a discreet woman as she was, she resolved to take counsel with her nuns to find some means of arranging the matter, without letting Masetto go, so the convent might not be defamed by him. Accordingly, having openly confessed to one another that which had been secretly done of each, they all of one accord, with Masetto's consent, so ordered it that the people round about believed speech to have been restored to him, after he had long been mute, through their prayers and by the merits of the saint in whose

* Lit. broke the string of.

name the convent was intituled, and their bailiff being lately dead, they made Masetto bailiff in his stead and apportioned his toils on such wise that he could endure them. Thereafter, albeit he began upon them monikins galore, the thing was so discreetly ordered that nothing took vent thereof till after the death of the abbess, when Masetto began to grow old and had a mind to return home rich. The thing becoming known, enabled him lightly to accomplish his desire, and thus Masetto, having by his foresight contrived to employ his youth to good purpose, returned in his old age, rich and a father, without being at the pains or expense of rearing children, to the place whence he had set out with an axe about his neck, avouching that thus did Christ entreat whoso set horns to his cap."

THE SECOND STORY

A HORSEKEEPER LIETH WITH THE WIFE OF KING AGILULF, WHO, BECOMING AWARE THEREOF, WITHOUT WORD SAID, FINDETH HIM OUT AND POLLETH HIM; BUT THE POLLED MAN POLLETH ALL HIS FELLOWS ON LIKE WISE AND SO ESCAPETH ILL HAP

THE end of Filostrato's story, whereat whiles the ladies had some little blushed and other whiles laughed, being come, it pleased the queen that Pampinea should follow on with a story, and she accordingly, beginning with a smiling countenance, said, "Some are so little discreet in seeking at all hazards to show that they know and apprehend that which it concerneth them not to know, that whiles, rebuking to this end unperceived defects in others, they think to lessen their own shame, whereas they do infinitely augment it; and that this is so I purpose, lovesome ladies, to prove to you by the contrary thereof, showing you the astuteness of one who, in the judgment of a king of worth and valour, was held belike of less account than Masetto himself.

Agilulf, King of the Lombards, as his predecessors had done, fixed the seat of his kingship at Pavia, a city of Lombardy, and took to wife Theodolinda * the widow of Autari, likewise King of the Lombards, a very fair lady and exceeding discreet and virtuous, but ill

* Boccaccio calls her *Teudelinga;* but I know of no authority for this form of the name of the famous Longobardian queen.

fortuned in a lover.* The affairs of the Lombards having, thanks to the valour and judgment of King Agilulf, been for some time prosperous and in quiet, it befell that one of the said queen's horse-keepers, a man of very low condition, in respect of birth, but otherwise of worth far above so mean a station, and comely of person and tall as he were the king, became beyond measure enamoured of his mistress. His mean estate hindered him not from being sensible that this love of his was out of all reason, wherefore, like a discreet man as he was, he discovered it unto none, nor dared he make it known to her even with his eyes. But, albeit he lived without any hope of ever winning her favour, yet inwardly he gloried in that he had bestowed his thoughts in such high place, and being all aflame with amorous fire, he studied, beyond every other of his fellows, to do whatsoever he deemed might pleasure the queen; whereby it befell that, whenas she had occasion to ride abroad, she liefer mounted the palfrey of which he had charge than any other; and when this happened, he reckoned it a passing great favour to himself nor ever stirred from her stirrup, accounting himself happy what time he might but touch her clothes. But, as often enough we see it happen that, even as hope groweth less, so love waxeth greater, so did it betide this poor groom, insomuch that sore uneath it was to him to avail to brook his great desire, keeping it, as he did, hidden and being upheld by no hope; and many a time, unable to rid himself of that his love, he determined in himself to die. And considering inwardly of the manner, he resolved to seek his death on such wise that it should be manifest he died for the love he bore the queen, to which end he bethought himself to try his fortune in an enterprise of such a sort as should afford him a chance of having or all or part of his desire. He set not himself to seek to say aught to the queen nor to make her sensible of his love by letters, knowing he should speak and write in vain, but chose rather to essay an he might by practice avail to lie with her; nor was there any other shift for it but to find a means how he might, in the person of the king, who, he knew, lay not with her continually, contrive to make his way to her and enter her bedchamber. Accordingly, that he might see on what wise and in what habit the king went, whenas he visited her, he hid himself several times by night in a great saloon of the palace, which lay between the king's bedchamber and that of the queen, and one night, amongst others, he saw the king come forth of his chamber, wrapped in a great mantle, with a lighted taper

* Referring apparently to the adventure related in the present story.

in one hand and a little wand in the other, and making for the queen's chamber, strike once or twice upon the door with the wand, without saying aught, whereupon it was incontinent opened to him and the taper taken from his hand. Noting this and having seen the king return after the same fashion, he bethought himself to do likewise. Accordingly, finding means to have a cloak like that which he had seen the king wear, together with a taper and a wand, and having first well washed himself in a bagnio, lest haply the smell of the muck should offend the queen or cause her smoke the cheat, he hid himself in the great saloon, as of wont. Whenas he knew that all were asleep and it seemed to him time either to give effect to his desire or to make his way by high emprise * to the wished-for death, he struck a light with a flint and steel he had brought with him and kindling the taper, wrapped himself fast in the mantle, then, going up to the chamber-door, smote twice upon it with the wand. The door was opened by a bedchamber-woman, all sleepy-eyed, who took the light and covered it; whereupon, without saying aught, he passed within the curtain, put off his mantle and entered the bed where the queen slept. Then, taking her desirefully in his arms and feigning himself troubled (for that he knew the king's wont to be that, whenas he was troubled, he cared not to hear aught), without speaking or being spoken to, he several times carnally knew the queen; after which, grievous as it seemed to him to depart, yet, fearing lest his too long stay should be the occasion of turning the gotten delight into dolour, he arose and taking up the mantle and the light, withdrew, without word said, and returned, as quickliest he might, to his own bed. He could scarce yet have been therein when the king arose and repaired to the queen's chamber, whereat she marvelled exceedingly; and as he entered the bed and greeted her blithely, she took courage by his cheerfulness and said, 'O my lord, what new fashion is this of to-night? You left me but now, after having taken pleasure of me beyond your wont, and do you return so soon? Have a care what you do.' The king, hearing these words, at once concluded that the queen had been deceived by likeness of manners and person, but, like a wise man, bethought himself forthright, seeing that neither she nor any else had perceived the cheat, not to make her aware thereof; which many simpletons would not have done, but would have said, 'I have not been here, I. Who is it hath been here? How did it happen? Who came hither?' Whence many things might have arisen, whereby he would needlessly

* Lit. with high (*i.e.* worthy) cause (*con alta cagione*).

have afflicted the lady and given her ground for desiring another time that which she had already tasted; more by token that, an he kept silence of the matter, no shame might revert to him, whereas, by speaking, he would have brought dishonour upon himself. The king, then, more troubled at heart than in looks or speech, answered, saying, 'Wife, seem I not to you man enough to have been here a first time and to come yet again after that?' 'Ay, my lord,' answered she. 'Nevertheless, I beseech you have regard to your health.' Quoth Agilulf, 'And it pleaseth me to follow your counsel, wherefore for the nonce I will get me gone again, without giving you more annoy.' This said, taking up his mantle, he departed the chamber, with a heart full of wrath and despite for the affront that he saw had been done him, and bethought himself quietly to seek to discover the culprit, concluding that he must be of the household and could not, whoever he might be, have issued forth of the palace. Accordingly, taking a very small light in a little lantern, he betook himself to a very long gallery that was over the stables of his palace and where all his household slept in different beds, and judging that, whoever he might be that had done what the queen said, his pulse and the beating of his heart for the swink endured could not yet have had time to abate, he silently, beginning at one end of the gallery, fell to feeling each one's breast, to know if his heart beat high. Although every other slept fast, he who had been with the queen was not yet asleep, but, seeing the king come and guessing what he went seeking, fell into such a fright that to the beating of the heart caused by the late-had fatigue, fear added yet a greater and he doubted not but the king, if he became aware of this, would put him to death without delay, and many things passed through his thought that he should do. However, seeing him all unarmed, he resolved to feign sleep and await what he should do. Agilulf, then, having examined many and found none whom he judged to be he of whom he was in quest, came presently to the horse-keeper and feeling his heart beat high, said in himself, 'This is the man.' Nevertheless, as he would have nought be known of that which he purposed to do, he did nought to him but poll, with a pair of scissors he had brought with him, somewhat on one side of his hair, which they then wore very long, so by that token he might know him again on the morrow; and this done, he withdrew and returned to his own chamber. The culprit, who had felt all this, like a shrewd fellow as he was, understood plainly enough why he had been thus marked; wherefore he arose without delay and finding a pair of shears, whereof it chanced there were several about the stables for the service of the

horses, went softly up to all who lay in the gallery and clipped each one's hair on like wise over the ear; which having done without being observed, he returned to sleep. When the king arose in the morning, he commanded that all his household should present themselves before him, or ever the palace-doors were opened; and it was done as he said. Then, as they all stood before him with uncovered heads, he began to look that he might know him whom he had polled; but, seeing the most part of them with their hair clipped after one and the same fashion, he marvelled and said in himself, 'He whom I seek, for all he may be of mean estate, showeth right well he is of no mean wit.' Then, seeing that he could not, without making a stir, avail to have him whom he sought, and having no mind to incur a great shame for the sake of a paltry revenge, it pleased him with one sole word to admonish the culprit and show him that he was ware of the matter; wherefore, turning to all who were present, he said, 'Let him who did it do it no more and get you gone in peace.' Another would have been for giving them the strappado, for torturing, examining and questioning, and doing this, would have published that which every one should go about to conceal; and having thus discovered himself, though he should have taken entire revenge for the affront suffered, his shame had not been minished, nay, were rather much enhanced therefor and his lady's honour sullied. Those who heard the king's words marvelled and long debated amongst themselves what he meant by this speech; but none understood it, save he whom it concerned, and he, like a wise man, never, during Agilulf's lifetime, discovered the matter nor ever again committed his life to the hazard of such a venture."

THE THIRD STORY

UNDER COLOUR OF CONFESSION AND OF EXCEEDING NICENESS OF CONSCIENCE, A LADY, BEING ENAMOURED OF A YOUNG MAN, BRINGETH A GRAVE FRIAR, WITHOUT HIS MISDOUBTING HIM THEREOF, TO AFFORD A MEANS OF GIVING ENTIRE EFFECT TO HER PLEASURE

PAMPINEA being now silent and the daring and subtlety of the horsekeeper having been extolled by several of the company, as also the king's good sense, the queen, turning to Filomena, charged her follow on; whereupon she blithely began to speak thus, "I purpose

to recount to you a cheat which was in very deed put by a fair lady upon a grave friar and which should be so much the more pleasing to every layman as these [—friars, to wit—], albeit for the most part very dull fools and men of strange manners and usances, hold themselves to be in everything both better worth and wiser than others, whereas they are of far less account than the rest of mankind, being men who, lacking, of the meanness of their spirit, the ability to provide themselves, take refuge, like swine, whereas they may have what to eat. And this story, charming ladies, I shall tell you, not only for the ensuing of the order imposed, but to give you to know withal that even the clergy, to whom we women, beyond measure credulous as we are, yield overmuch faith, can be and are whiles adroitly befooled, and that not by men only, but even by certain of our own sex.

In our city, the which is fuller of cozenage than of love or faith, there was, not many years agone, a gentlewoman adorned with beauty and charms and as richly endowed by nature as any of her sex with engaging manners and loftiness of spirit and subtle wit, whose name albeit I know, I purpose not to discover it, no, nor any other that pertaineth unto the present story, for that there be folk yet alive who would take it in despite, whereas it should be passed over with a laugh. This lady, then, seeing herself, though of high lineage, married to a woolmonger and unable, for that he was a craftsman, to put off the haughtiness of her spirit, whereby she deemed no man of mean condition, how rich soever he might be, worthy of a gentlewoman and seeing him moreover, for all his wealth, to be apt unto nothing of more moment than to lay a warp for a piece of motley or let weave a cloth or chaffer with a spinster anent her yarn, resolved on no wise to admit of his embraces, save in so far as she might not deny him, but to seek, for her own satisfaction, to find some one who should be worthier of her favours than the woolmonger appeared to her to be, and accordingly fell so fervently in love with a man of very good quality and middle age, that, whenas she saw him not by day, she could not pass the ensuing night without unease. The gentleman, perceiving not how the case stood, took no heed of her, and she, being very circumspect, dared not make the matter known to him by sending of women nor by letter, fearing the possible perils that might betide. However, observing that he companied much with a churchman, who, albeit a dull lump of a fellow, was nevertheless, for that he was a man of a very devout life, reputed of well nigh all a most worthy friar, she bethought herself that this latter would make an excellent go-between herself and her lover and having considered what means

she should use, she repaired, at a fitting season, to the church where he abode, and letting call him to her, told him that, an he pleased, she would fain confess herself to him. The friar seeing her and judging her to be a woman of condition, willingly gave ear to her, and she, after confession, said to him, 'Father mine, it behoveth me have recourse to you for aid and counsel anent that which you shall hear. I know, as having myself told you, that you know my kinsfolk and my husband, who loveth me more than his life, nor is there aught I desire but I have it of him incontinent, he being a very rich man and one who can well afford it; wherefore I love him more than mine own self and should I but think, let alone do, aught that might be contrary to his honour and pleasure, there were no woman more wicked or more deserving of the fire than I. Now one, whose name in truth I know not, but who is, meseemeth, a man of condition, and is, if I mistake not, much in your company,—a well-favoured man and tall of his person and clad in very decent sad-coloured raiment,—unaware belike of the constancy of my purpose, appeareth to have laid siege to me, nor can I show myself at door or window nor go without the house, but he incontinent presenteth himself before me, and I marvel that he is not here now; whereat I am sore concerned, for that such fashions as these often bring virtuous women into reproach, without their fault. I have whiles had it in mind to have him told of this by my brothers; but then I have bethought me that men oftentimes do messages on such wise that ill answers ensue, which give rise to words and from words they come to deeds; wherefore, lest mischief spring therefrom and scandal, I have kept silence of the matter and have determined to discover it to yourself rather than to another, at once because meseemeth you are his friend and for that it beseemeth you to rebuke not only friends, but strangers, of such things. I beseech you, therefore, for the one God's sake, that you rebuke him of this and pray him leave these his fashions. There be women enough, who incline belike to these toys and would take pleasure in being dogged and courted by him, whereas to me, who have no manner of mind to such matters, it is a very grievous annoy.' So saying, she bowed her head as she would weep. The holy friar understood incontinent of whom she spoke and firmly believing what she said to be true, greatly commended her righteous intent and promised her to do on such wise that she should have no farther annoy from the person in question; and knowing her to be very rich, he commended to her works of charity and almsdeeds, recounting to her his own need. Quoth the lady, 'I beseech you thereof for God's sake, and should he deny,

prithee scruple not to tell him that it was I who told you this and complained to you thereof.' Then, having made her confession and gotten her penance, recalling the friar's exhortations to works of almsgiving, she stealthily filled his hand with money, praying him to say masses for the souls of her dead kinsfolk; after which she rose from his feet and taking leave of him, returned home. Not long after up came the gentleman, according to his wont, and after they had talked awhile of one thing and another, the friar, drawing his friend aside, very civilly rebuked him of the manner in which, as he believed, he pursued and spied upon the lady aforesaid, according to that which she had given him to understand. The other marvelled, as well he might, having never set eyes upon her and being used very rarely to pass before her house, and would have excused himself; but the friar suffered him not to speak, saying, 'Now make no show of wonderment nor waste words in denying it, for it will avail thee nothing; I learnt not these matters from the neighbours; nay, she herself told them to me, complaining sore of thee. And besides that such toys beseem not a man of thine age, I may tell thee this much of her, that if ever I saw a woman averse to these follies, it is she; wherefore, for thine own credit and her comfort, I prithee desist therefrom and let her be in peace.' The gentleman, quicker of wit than the friar, was not slow to apprehend the lady's device and feigning to be somewhat abashed, promised to meddle no more with her thenceforward; then, taking leave of the friar, he betook himself to the house of the lady, who still abode await at a little window, so she might see him, should he pass that way. When she saw him come, she showed herself so rejoiced and so gracious to him, that he might very well understand that he had gathered the truth from the friar's words, and thenceforward, under colour of other business, he began with the utmost precaution to pass continually through the street, to his own pleasure and to the exceeding delight and solace of the lady. After awhile, perceiving that she pleased him even as he pleased her and wishful to inflame him yet more and to certify him of the love she bore him, she betook herself again, choosing her time and place, to the holy friar and seating herself at his feet in the church, fell a-weeping. The friar, seeing this, asked her affectionately what was to do with her anew. 'Alack, father mine,' answered she, 'that which aileth me is none other than yonder God-accursed friend of yours, of whom I complained to you the other day, for that methinketh he was born for my especial torment and to make me do a thing, such that I should never be glad again nor ever after dare to seat myself at your feet.'

'How?' cried the friar. 'Hath he not given over annoying thee?' 'No, indeed,' answered she; 'nay, since I complained to you of him, as if of despite, maybe taking it ill that I should have done so, for every once he used to pass before my house, I verily believe he hath passed seven times. And would to God he were content with passing and spying upon me! Nay, he is grown so bold and so malapert that but yesterday he despatched a woman to me at home with his idle tales and toys and sent me a purse and a girdle, as if I had not purses and girdles galore; the which I took and take so ill that I believe, but for my having regard to the sin of it and after for the love of you, I had played the devil. However, I contained myself and would not do or say aught whereof I should not first have let you know. Nay, I had already returned the purse and the girdle to the baggage who brought them, that she might carry them back to him, and had given her a rough dismissal, but after, fearing she might keep them for herself and tell him that I had accepted them, as I hear women of her fashion do whiles, I called her back and took them, full of despite, from her hands and have brought them to you, so you may return them to him and tell him I want none of his trash, for that, thanks to God and my husband, I have purses and girdles enough to smother him withal. Moreover, if hereafter he desist not from this, I tell you, as a father, you must excuse me, but I will tell it, come what may, to my husband and my brothers; for I had far liefer he should brook an affront, if needs he must, than that I should suffer blame for him; wherefore let him look to himself.' So saying, still weeping sore, she pulled out from under her surcoat a very handsome and rich purse and a quaint and costly girdle and threw them into the lap of the friar, who, fully crediting that which she told him and incensed beyond measure, took them and said to her, 'Daughter, I marvel not that thou art provoked at these doings, nor can I blame thee therefor; but I much commend thee for following my counsel in the matter. I rebuked him the other day and he hath ill performed that which he promised me; wherefore, as well for that as for this that he hath newly done, I mean to warm his ears * for him after such a fashion that methinketh he will give thee no farther concern; but do thou, God's benison on thee, suffer not thyself to be so overcome with anger that thou tell it to any of thy folk, for that overmuch harm might ensue thereof unto him. Neither fear thou lest by this blame anywise ensue to thee, for I shall still, before both God and men, be a most con-

* Lit. (*riscaldare gli orecchi*).

stant witness to thy virtue.' The lady made believe to be somewhat comforted and leaving that talk, said, as one who knew his greed and that of his fellow-churchmen, "Sir, these some nights past there have appeared to me sundry of my kinsfolk, who ask nought but almsdeeds, and meseemeth they are indeed in exceeding great torment, especially my mother, who appeareth to me in such ill case and affliction that it is pity to behold. Methinketh she suffereth exceeding distress to see me in this tribulation with yonder enemy of God; wherefore I would have you say me forty masses of Saint Gregory for her and their souls, together with certain of your own prayers, so God may deliver them from that penitential fire.' So saying, she put a florin into his hand, which the holy father blithely received and confirming her devoutness with fair words and store of pious instances, gave her his benison and let her go. The lady being gone, the friar, never thinking how he was gulled, sent for his friend, who, coming and finding him troubled, at once divined that he was to have news of the lady and awaited what the friar should say. The latter repeated that which he had before said to him and bespeaking him anew angrily and reproachfully, rebuked him severely of that which, according to the lady's report, he had done. The gentleman, not yet perceiving the friar's drift, faintly enough denied having sent her the purse and the girdle, so as not to undeceive the friar, in case the lady should have given him to believe that he had done this; whereat the good man was sore incensed and said, 'How canst thou deny it, wicked man that thou art? See, here they are, for she herself brought them to me, weeping; look if thou knowest them.' The gentleman feigned to be sore abashed and answered, 'Yes, I do indeed know them and I confess to you that I did ill; but I swear to you, since I see her thus disposed, that you shall never more hear a word of this.' Brief, after many words, the numskull of a friar gave his friend the purse and the girdle and dismissed him, after rating him amain and beseeching him occupy himself no more with these follies, the which he promised him. The gentleman, overjoyed both at the assurance that himseemed he had of the lady's love and at the goodly gift, was no sooner quit of the friar than he betook himself to a place where he made shift to let his mistress see that he had the one and the other thing; whereat she was mightily rejoiced, more by token that herseemed her device went from good to better. She now awaited nought but her husband's going abroad to give completion to the work, and it befell not long after that it behoved him repair to Genoa on some occasion or other. No sooner had he mounted to horse in the morning and gone his way,

than the lady betook herself to the holy man and after many lamentations, said to him, weeping, 'Father mine, I tell you now plainly that I can brook no more; but, for that I promised you the other day to do nought, without first telling you, I am come to excuse myself to you; and that you may believe I have good reason both to weep and to complain, I will tell you what your friend, or rather devil incarnate, did to me this very morning, a little before matins. I know not what ill chance gave him to know that my husband was to go to Genoa yestermorn; algates, this morning, at the time I tell you, he came into a garden of mine and climbing up by a tree to the window of my bedchamber, which giveth upon the garden, had already opened the lattice and was for entering, when I of a sudden awoke and starting up, offered to cry out, nay, would assuredly have cried out, but that he, who was not yet within, besought me of mercy in God's name and yours, telling me who he was; which when I heard, I held my peace for the love of you and naked as I was born, ran and shut the window in his face; whereupon I suppose he took himself off (ill-luck go with him!), for I heard no more of him. Look you now if this be a goodly thing and to be endured. For my part I mean to bear with him no more; nay, I have already forborne him overmuch for the love of you.' The friar, hearing this, was the wrathfullest man alive and knew not what to say, except to ask again and again if she had well certified herself that it was indeed he and not another; to which she answered, 'Praised be God! As if I did not yet know him from another! I tell you it was himself, and although he should deny it, credit him not.' Then said the friar, 'Daughter, there is nothing to be said for it but that this was exceeding effrontery and a thing exceeding ill done, and in sending him off, as thou didst, thou didst that which it behoved thee to do. But I beseech thee, since God hath preserved thee from shame, that, like as thou hast twice followed my counsel, even so do thou yet this once; to wit, without complaining to any kinsman of thine, leave it to me to see an I can bridle yonder devil broke loose, whom I believed a saint. If I can make shift to turn him from this lewdness, well and good; if not, I give thee leave henceforth to do with him that which thy soul shall judge best, and my benison go with thee.' 'Well, then,' answered the lady, 'for this once I will well not to vex or disobey you; but look you do on such wise that he be ware of annoying me again, for I promise you I will never again return to you for this cause.' Thereupon, without saying more, she took leave of the friar and went away, as if in anger. Hardly was she out of the church when up came the gentleman and

was called by the friar, who, taking him apart, gave him the soundest rating ever man had, calling him disloyal and forsworn and traitor. The other, who had already twice had occasion to know to what the monk's reprimands amounted, abode expectant and studied with embarrassed answers to make him speak out, saying, at the first, 'Why all this passion, Sir? Have I crucified Christ?' Whereupon, 'Mark this shameless fellow!' cried the friar. 'Hear what he saith! He speaketh as if a year or two were passed and he had for lapse of time forgotten his misdeeds and his lewdness! Hath it then escaped thy mind between this and matinsong that thou hast outraged some one this very morning? Where wast thou this morning a little before day?' 'I know not,' answered the gentleman; 'but wherever it was, the news thereof hath reached you mighty early.' Quoth the friar, 'Certes, the news hath reached me. Doubtless thou supposedst, because her husband was abroad, that needs must the gentlewoman receive thee incontinent in her arms. A fine thing, indeed! Here's a pretty fellow! Here's an honourable man! He's grown a night-hawk, a garden-breaker, a tree-climber! Thinkest thou by importunity to overcome this lady's chastity, that thou climbest up to her windows anights by the trees? There is nought in the world so displeasing to her as thou; yet must thou e'en go essaying it again and again. Truly, thou hast profited finely by my admonitions, let alone that she hath shown thee her aversion in many ways. But this I have to say to thee; she hath up to now, not for any love she beareth thee, but at my instant entreaty, kept silence of that which thou hast done; but she will do so no more; I have given her leave to do what seemeth good to her, an thou annoy her again in aught. What wilt thou do, an she tell her brothers?' The gentleman having now gathered enough of that which it concerned him to know, appeased the friar, as best he knew and might, with many and ample promises, and taking leave of him, waited till matinsong * of the ensuing night, when he made his way into the garden and climbed up by the tree to the window. He found the lattice open and entering the chamber as quickliest he might, threw himself into the arms of his fair mistress, who, having awaited him with the utmost impatience, received him joyfully, saying, 'Gramercy to my lord the friar for that he so well taught thee the way hither!' Then, taking their pleasure one of the other, they solaced themselves together with great delight, devising and laughing amain anent the simplicity of the dolt of a friar and gibing at wool-

* *i.e.* three a.m. next morning.

"Climbed up by the tree to the window"

hanks and teasels and carding-combs. Moreover, having taken order for their future converse, they did on such wise that, without having to resort anew to my lord the friar, they foregathered in equal joyance many another night, to the like whereof I pray God, of His holy mercy, speedily to conduct me and all Christian souls who have a mind thereto."

THE FOURTH STORY

DOM FELICE TEACHETH FRA PUCCIO HOW HE MAY BECOME BEATIFIED BY PERFORMING A CERTAIN PENANCE OF HIS FASHION, WHICH THE OTHER DOTH, AND DOM FELICE MEANWHILE LEADETH A MERRY LIFE OF IT WITH THE GOOD MAN'S WIFE

FILOMENA, having made an end of her story, was silent and Dioneo having with dulcet speech mightily commended the lady's shrewdness and eke the prayer with which Filomena had concluded, the queen turned with a smile to Pamfilo and said, "Come, Pamfilo, continue our diversion with some pleasant trifle." Pamfilo promptly answered that he would well and began thus: "Madam, there are many persons who, what while they study to enter Paradise, unwittingly send others thither; the which happened, no great while since, to a neighbour of ours, as you shall hear.

According to that which I have heard tell, there abode near San Pancrazio an honest man and a rich, called Puccio di Rinieri, who, devoting himself in his latter days altogether to religious practices, became a tertiary * of the order of St. Francis, whence he was styled Fra Puccio, and ensuing this his devout life, much frequented the church, for that he had no family other than a wife and one maid and consequently it behoved him not apply himself to any craft. Being an ignorant, clod-pated fellow, he said his paternosters, went to preachments and attended mass, nor ever failed to be at the Lauds chanted by the seculars,† and fasted and mortified himself; nay, it was buzzed about that he was of the Flagellants.‡ His wife, whose

* *i.e.* a lay brother or affiliate.

† *i.e.* the canticles of praise chanted by certain lay confraternities, established for that purpose and answering to our præ-Reformation Laudsingers.

‡ An order of lay penitents, who were wont at certain times to go masked about the streets, scourging themselves in expiation of the sins of the people. This expiatory practice was particularly prevalent in Italy in the middle of the thirteenth century.

name was Mistress Isabetta,* a woman, yet young, of eight-and-twenty to thirty years of age, fresh and fair and plump as a lady-apple, kept, by reason of the piety and belike of the age of her husband, much longer and more frequent fasts than she could have wished, and when she would have slept or maybe frolicked with him, he recounted to her the life of Christ and the preachments of Fra Nastagio or the Complaint of Mary Magdalene or the like. Meantime there returned home from Paris a monk hight Dom † Felice, Conventual ‡ of San Pancrazio, who was young and comely enough of person, keen of wit and a profound scholar, and with him Fra Puccio contracted a strait friendship. And for that this Dom Felice right well resolved him his every doubt and knowing his pious turn of mind, made him a show of exceeding devoutness, Fra Puccio fell to carrying him home bytimes and giving him to dine and sup, as the occasion offered; and the lady also, for her husband's sake, became familiar with him and willingly did him honour. The monk, then, continuing to frequent Fra Puccio's house and seeing the latter's wife so fresh and plump, guessed what should be the thing whereof she suffered the most default and bethought himself, an he might, to go about to furnish her withal himself, and so spare Fra Puccio fatigue. Accordingly, craftily casting his eyes on her, at one time and another, he made shift to kindle in her breast that same desire which he had himself, which when he saw, he bespoke her of his wishes as first occasion betided him. But, albeit he found her well disposed to give effect to the work, he could find no means thereunto, for that she would on nowise trust herself to be with him in any place in the world save her own house, and there it might not be, seeing that Fra Puccio never went without the town. At this the monk was sore chagrined; but, after much consideration, he hit upon a device whereby he might avail to foregather with the lady in her own house, without suspect, for all Fra Puccio should be at home. Accordingly, the latter coming one day to visit him, he bespoke him

* Contraction of Elisabetta.

† *Dom*, contraction of Dominus (lord), the title commonly given to the beneficed clergy in the middle ages, answering to our *Sir* as used by Shakspeare (*e.g.* Sir Hugh Evans the Welsh Parson, Sir Topas the Curate, etc.) The expression survives in the title *Dominie* (*i.e.* Domine, voc. of Dominus) still familiarly applied to schoolmasters, who were of course originally invariably clergymen.

‡ A Conventual is a member of some monastic order attached to the regular service of a church, or (as would nowadays be said) a "beneficed" monk.

thus, 'I have many a time understood, Fra Puccio, that all thy desire is to become a saint and to this end meseemeth thou goest about by a long road, whereas there is another and a very short one, which the Pope and the other great prelates, who know and practise it, will not have made known, for that the clergy, who for the most part live by alms, would incontinent be undone, inasmuch as the laity would no longer trouble themselves to propitiate them with alms or otherwhat. But, for that thou art my friend and hast very honourably entertained me, I would teach it thee, so I were assured thou wouldst practise it and wouldst not discover it to any living soul.' Fra Puccio, eager to know the thing, began straightway to entreat him with the utmost instancy that he would teach it him and then to swear that never, save in so far as it should please him, would he tell it to any, engaging, an if it were such as he might avail to follow, to address himself thereunto. Whereupon quoth the monk, 'Since thou promisest me this, I will e'en discover it to thee. Thou must know that the doctors of the church hold that it behoveth whoso would become blessed to perform the penance which thou shalt hear; but understand me aright; I do not say that, after the penance, thou wilt not be a sinner like as thou presently art; but this will betide, that the sins which thou hast committed up to the time of the penance will all by virtue thereof be purged and pardoned unto thee, and those which thou shalt commit thereafterward will not be written to thy prejudice, but will pass away with the holy water, as venial sins do now. It behoveth a man, then, in the first place, whenas he cometh to begin the penance, to confess himself with the utmost diligence of his sins, and after this he must keep a fast and a very strict abstinence for the space of forty days, during which time thou * must abstain from touching, not to say other women, but even thine own wife. Moreover, thou must have in thine own house some place whence thou mayst see the sky by night, whither thou must betake thyself towards the hour of complines,† and there thou must have a wide plank set up, on such wise that, standing upright, thou mayst lean thy loins against it and keeping thy feet on the ground, stretch out thine arms, crucifix fashion. An thou wouldst rest them upon some peg or other, thou mayst do it, and on this wise

* *Sic.* This confusion of persons constantly occurs in Boccaccio, especially in the conversational parts of the Decameron, in which he makes the freest use of the various forms of enallage and of other rhetorical figures, such as hyperbaton, synecdoche, etc., to the no small detriment of his style in the matter of clearness.

† *i.e.*, nine o'clock p.m.

thou must abide gazing upon the sky, without budging a jot, till matins. Wert thou a scholar, thou wouldst do well to repeat certain orisons I would give thee; but, as thou art it not, thou must say three hundred Paternosters and as many Ave Marys, in honour of the Trinity, and looking upon heaven, still have in remembrance that God is the Creator of heaven and earth and the passion of Christ, abiding on such wise as He abode on the cross. When the bell ringeth to matins, thou mayst, an thou wilt, go and cast thyself, clad as thou art, on thy bed and sleep, and after, in the forenoon, betake thyself to church and there hear at least three masses and repeat fifty Paternosters and as many Aves; after which thou shalt with a single heart do all and sundry thine occasions, if thou have any to do, and dine and at evensong be in church again and there say certain orisons which I will give thee by writ and without which it cannot be done. Then, towards complines, do thou return to the fashion aforesaid, and thus doing, even as I have myself done aforetime, I doubt not but, ere thou come to the end of the penance, thou wilt, (provided thou shalt have performed it with devoutness and compunction,) feel somewhat marvellous of eternal beatitude.' Quoth Fra Puccio, 'This is no very burdensome matter, nor yet overlong, and may very well be done; wherefore I purpose in God's name to begin on Sunday.' Then, taking leave of him and returning home, he related everything in due order to his wife, having the other's permission therefor. The lady understood very well what the monk meant by bidding him stand fast without stirring till matins; wherefore, the device seeming to her excellent, she replied that she was well pleased therewith and with every other good work that he did for the health of his soul and that, so God might make the penance profitable to him, she would e'en fast with him, but do no more. They being thus of accord and Sunday come, Fra Puccio began his penance and my lord monk, having agreed with the lady, came most evenings to sup with her, bringing with him store of good things to eat and drink, and after lay with her till matinsong, when he arose and took himself off, whilst Fra Puccio returned to bed. Now the place which Fra Puccio had chosen for his penance adjoined the chamber where the lady lay and was parted therefrom but by a very slight wall, wherefore, Master Monk wantoning it one night overfreely with the lady and she with him, it seemed to Fra Puccio that he felt a shaking of the floor of the house. Accordingly, having by this said an hundred of his Paternosters, he made a stop there and without moving, called to his wife to know what she did. The lady, who was of a waggish turn and

"The latter continued to do penance"

was then belike astride of San Benedetto his beast or that of San Giovanni Gualberto, answered, 'I' faith, husband mine, I toss as most I may.' 'How?' quoth Fra Puccio. 'Thou tossest? What meaneth this tossing?' The lady, laughing, for that she was a frolicsome dame and doubtless had cause to laugh, answered merrily, 'How? You know not what it meaneth? Why, I have heard you say a thousand times, "Who suppeth not by night must toss till morning light."' Fra Puccio doubted not but that the fasting was the cause of her unableness to sleep and it was for this she tossed thus about the bed; wherefore, in the simplicity of his heart, 'Wife,' said he, 'I told thee not to fast; but, since thou wouldst e'en do it, think not of that, but address thyself to rest; thou givest such vaults about the bed that thou makest all in the place shake.' 'Have no care for that,' answered the lady; 'I know what I am about; do you but well, you, and I will do as well as I may.' Fra Puccio, accordingly, held his peace and betook himself anew to his Paternosters; and after that night my lord monk and the lady let make a bed in another part of the house, wherein they abode in the utmost joyance what while Fra Puccio's penance lasted. At one and the same hour the monk took himself off and the lady returned to her own bed, whereto a little after came Fra Puccio from his penance; and on this wise the latter continued to do penance, whilst his wife did her delight with the monk, to whom quoth she merrily, now and again, 'Thou hast put Fra Puccio upon performing a penance, whereby we have gotten Paradise.' Indeed, the lady, finding herself in good case, took such a liking to the monk's fare, having been long kept on low diet by her husband, that, whenas Fra Puccio's penance was accomplished, she still found means to feed her fill with him elsewhere and using discretion, long took her pleasure thereof. Thus, then, that my last words may not be out of accord with my first, it came to pass that, whereas Fra Puccio, by doing penance, thought to win Paradise for himself, he put therein the monk, who had shown him the speedy way thither, and his wife, who lived with him in great lack of that whereof Dom Felice, like a charitable man as he was, vouchsafed her great plenty."

THE FIFTH STORY

RICCIARDO, SURNAMED IL ZIMA, GIVETH MESSER FRANCESCO VERGELLESI A PALFREY OF HIS AND HATH THEREFOR HIS LEAVE TO SPEAK WITH HIS WIFE. SHE KEEPING SILENCE, HE IN HER PERSON REPLIETH UNTO HIMSELF, AND THE EFFECT AFTER ENSUETH IN ACCORDANCE WITH HIS ANSWER

PAMFILO having made an end, not without laughter on the part of the ladies, of the story of Fra Puccio, the queen with a commanding air bade Elisa follow on. She, rather tartly than otherwise, not out of malice, but of old habit, began to speak thus, "Many folk, knowing much, imagine that others know nothing, and so ofttimes, what while they think to overreach others, find, after the event, that they themselves have been outwitted of them; wherefore I hold his folly great who setteth himself without occasion to test the strength of another's wit. But, for that maybe all are not of my opinion, it pleaseth me, whilst following on the given order of the discourse, to relate to you that which befell a Pistolese gentleman * by reason thereof.

There was in Pistoia a gentleman of the Vergellesi family, by name Messer Francesco, a man of great wealth and understanding and well advised in all else, but covetous beyond measure. Being made provost of Milan, he had furnished himself with everything necessary for his honourable going thither, except only with a palfrey handsome enough for him, and finding none to his liking, he abode in concern thereof. Now there was then in the same town a young man called Ricciardo, of little family, but very rich, who still went so quaintly clad and so brave of his person that he was commonly known as Il Zima,† and he had long in vain loved and courted Messer Francesco's wife, who was exceeding fair and very virtuous. Now he had one of the handsomest palfreys in all Tuscany and set great store by it for its beauty; and it being public to every one that he was enamoured of Messer Francesco's wife, there were those who told the latter that, should he ask it, he might have the horse for the love Il Zima bore his lady. Accordingly, moved by covetise, Messer Fran-

* *i.e.* a gentleman of Pistoia.

† Lit. "The summit," or in modern slang "The tiptop," *i.e.* the pink of fashion.

cesco let call Il Zima to him and sought of him his palfrey by way of sale, so he should proffer it to him as a gift. The other, hearing this, was well pleased and made answer to him, saying, 'Sir, though you gave me all you have in the world, you might not avail to have my palfrey by way of sale, but by way of gift you may have it, whenas it pleaseth you, on condition that, ere you take it, I may have leave to speak some words with your lady in your presence, but so far removed from every one that I may be heard of none other than herself.' The gentleman, urged by avarice and looking to outwit the other, answered that it liked him well and [that he might speak with her] as much as he would; then, leaving him in the saloon of his palace, he betook himself to the lady's chamber and telling her how easily he might acquire the palfrey, bade her come hearken to Il Zima, but charged her take good care to answer neither little or much to aught that he should say. To this the lady much demurred, but, it behoving her ensue her husband's pleasure, she promised to do his bidding and followed him to the saloon, to hear what Il Zima should say. The latter, having renewed his covenant with the gentleman, seated himself with the lady in a part of the saloon at a great distance from every one and began to say thus, 'Noble lady, meseemeth certain that you have too much wit not to have long since perceived how great a love I have been brought to bear you by your beauty, which far transcendeth that of any woman whom methinketh I ever beheld, to say nothing of the engaging manners and the peerless virtues which be in you and which might well avail to take the loftiest spirits of mankind; wherefore it were needless to declare to you in words that this [my love] is the greatest and most fervent that ever man bore woman; and thus, without fail, will I do * so long as my wretched life shall sustain these limbs, nay, longer; for that, if in the other world folk love as they do here below, I shall love you to all eternity. Wherefore you may rest assured that you have nothing, be it much or little worth, that you may hold so wholly yours and whereon you may in every wise so surely reckon as myself, such as I am, and that likewise which is mine. And that of this you may take assurance by very certain argument, I tell you that I should count myself more graced, did you command me somewhat that I might do and that would pleasure you, than if, I commanding, all the world should promptliest obey me. Since, then, I am yours, even as you have heard,

* *i.e.* this love shall I bear you. This is a flagrant instance of the misuse of ellipsis, which so frequently disfigures Boccaccio's dialogue.

it is not without reason that I dare to offer up my prayers to your nobility, wherefrom alone can all peace, all health and all wellbeing derive for me, and no otherwhence; yea, as the humblest of your servants, I beseech you, dear my good and only hope of my soul, which, midmost the fire of love, feedeth upon its hope in you,—that your benignity may be so great and your past rigour shown unto me, who am yours, on such wise be mollified that I, recomforted by your kindness, may say that, like as by your beauty I was stricken with love, even so by your pity have I life, which latter, an your haughty soul incline not to my prayers, will without fail come to nought and I shall perish and you may be said to be my murderer. Letting be that my death will do you no honour, I doubt not eke but that, conscience bytimes pricking you therefor, you will regret having wrought it * and whiles, better disposed, will say in yourself, "Alack, how ill I did not to have compassion upon my poor Zima!" and this repentance, being of no avail, will cause you the greater annoy. Wherefore, so this may not betide, now that you have it in your power to succour me, bethink yourself and ere I die, be moved to pity on me, for that with you alone it resteth to make me the happiest or the most miserable man alive. I trust your courtesy will be such that you will not suffer me to receive death in guerdon of such and so great a love, but will with a glad response and full of favour quicken my fainting spirits, which flutter, all dismayed, in your presence.' Therewith he held his peace and heaving the deepest of sighs, followed up with sundry tears, proceeded to await the lady's answer. The latter,—whom the long court he had paid her, the joustings held and the serenades given in her honour and other like things done of him for the love of her had not availed to move,—was moved by the passionate speech of this most ardent lover and began to be sensible of that which she had never yet felt, to wit, what manner of thing love was; and albeit, in ensuance of the commandment laid upon her by her husband, she kept silence, she could not withal hinder sundry gentle sighs from discovering that which, in answer to Il Zima, she would gladly have made manifest. Il Zima, having waited awhile and seeing that no response ensued, was wondered and presently began to divine the husband's device; but yet, looking her in the face and observing certain flashes of her eyes toward him now and again and noting, moreover, the sighs which she suffered not to escape her bosom with all her strength, conceived fresh hope and heartened thereby, took new

* *i.e.* my death.

counsel * and proceeded to answer himself after the following fashion, she hearkening the while: 'Zima mine, this long time, in good sooth, have I perceived thy love for me to be most great and perfect, and now by thy words I know it yet better and am well pleased therewith, as indeed I should be. Algates, an I have seemed to thee harsh and cruel, I will not have thee believe that I have at heart been that which I have shown myself in countenance; nay, I have ever loved thee and held thee dear above all other men; but thus hath it behoved me do, both for fear of others and for the preserving of my fair fame. But now is the time at hand when I may show thee clearly that I love thee and guerdon thee of the love that thou hast borne and bearest me. Take comfort, therefore, and be of good hope, for that a few days hence Messer Francesco is to go to Milan for provost, as indeed thou knowest, who hast for the love of me given him thy goodly palfrey; and whenas he shall be gone, I promise thee by my troth and of the true love I bear thee, that, before many days, thou shalt without fail foregather with me and we will give gladsome and entire accomplishment to our love. And that I may not have to bespeak thee otherwhiles of the matter, I tell thee presently that, whenas thou shalt see two napkins displayed at the window of my chamber, which giveth upon our garden, do thou that same evening at nightfall make shift to come to me by the garden door, taking good care that thou be not seen. Thou wilt find me awaiting thee and we will all night long have delight and pleasance one of another, to our heart's content.' Having thus spoken for the lady, he began again to speak in his own person and rejoined on this wise, 'Dearest lady, my every sense is so transported with excessive joy for your gracious reply that I can scarce avail to make response, much less to render you due thanks; nay, could I e'en speak as I desire, there is no term so long that it might suffice me fully to thank you as I would fain do and as it behoveth me; wherefore I leave it to your discreet consideration to imagine that which, for all my will, I am unable to express in words. This much only I tell you that I will without fail bethink myself to do as you have charged me, and being then, peradventure, better certified of so great a grace as that which you have vouchsafed me, I will, as best I may, study to render you the utmost thanks in my power. For the nonce there abideth no more to say; wherefore, dearest lady mine, God give you that gladness and that

* Syn. a rare or strange means (*nuovo consiglio*). The word *nuovo* is constantly used by Boccaccio in the latter sense, as is *consiglio* in its remoter signification of means, remedy, etc.

weal which you most desire, and so to Him I commend you.' For all this the lady said not a word; whereupon Il Zima arose and turned towards the husband, who, seeing him risen, came up to him and said, laughing, 'How deemest thou? Have I well performed my promise to thee?' 'Nay, sir,' answered Il Zima; 'for you promised to let me speak with your lady and you have caused me speak with a marble statue.' These words were mighty pleasing to the husband, who, for all he had a good opinion of the lady, conceived of her a yet better and said, 'Now is thy palfrey fairly mine.' 'Ay is it, sir,' replied Il Zima, 'but, had I thought to reap of this favour received of you such fruit as I have gotten, I had given you the palfrey, without asking it * of you; and would God I had done it, for that now you have bought the palfrey and I have not sold it.' The other laughed at this and being now provided with a palfrey, set out upon his way a few days after and betook himself to Milan, to enter upon the Provostship. The lady, left free in her house, called to mind Il Zima's words and the love he bore her and the palfrey given for her sake and seeing him pass often by the house, said in herself, 'What do I? Why waste I my youth? Yonder man is gone to Milan and will not return these six months. When will he ever render me them † again? When I am old? Moreover, when shall I ever find such a lover as Il Zima? I am alone and have no one to fear. I know not why I should not take this good opportunity what while I may; I shall not always have such leisure as I presently have. None will know the thing, and even were it to be known, it is better to do and repent, than to abstain and repent.' Having thus taken counsel with herself, she one day set two napkins in the garden window, even as Il Zima had said, which when he saw, he was greatly rejoiced and no sooner as the night come than he betook himself, secretly and alone, to the gate of the lady's garden and finding it open, passed on to another door that opened into the house, where he found his mistress awaiting him. She, seeing him come, started up to meet him and received him with the utmost joy, whilst he clipped and kissed her an hundred thousand times and followed her up the stair to her chamber, where, getting them to bed without a moment's delay, they knew the utmost term of amorous delight. Nor was this first time the last, for that, what while the gentleman abode at Milan and even after his coming back, Il Zima returned thither many another time, to the exceeding satisfaction of both parties."

* *i.e.* the favour.

† *i.e.* the lost six months.

THE SIXTH STORY

RICCIARDO MINUTOLO, BEING ENAMOURED OF THE WIFE OF FILIPPELLO FIGHINOLFI AND KNOWING HER JEALOUSY OF HER HUSBAND, CONTRIVETH, BY REPRESENTING THAT FILIPPELLO WAS ON THE ENSUING DAY TO BE WITH HIS OWN WIFE IN A BAGNIO, TO BRING HER TO THE LATTER PLACE, WHERE, THINKING TO BE WITH HER HUSBAND, SHE FINDETH THAT SHE HATH ABIDDEN WITH RICCIARDO

ELISA having no more to say, the queen, after commending the sagacity of Il Zima, bade Fiammetta proceed with a story, who answered, all smilingly, "Willingly, Madam," and began thus: "It behoveth somedele to depart our city (which, like as it aboundeth in all things else, is fruitful in instances of every subject) and as Elisa hath done, to recount somewhat of the things that have befallen in other parts of the world; wherefore, passing over to Naples, I shall tell how one of those she-saints, who feign themselves so shy of love, was by the ingenuity of a lover of hers brought to taste the fruits of love, ere she had known its flowers; the which will at once teach you circumspection in the things that may hap and afford you diversion of those already befallen.

In Naples, a very ancient city and as delightful as any in Italy or maybe more so, there was once a young man, illustrious for nobility of blood and noted for his much wealth, whose name was Ricciardo Minutolo. Albeit he had to wife a very fair and lovesome young lady, he fell in love with one who, according to general opinion, far overpassed in beauty all the other ladies of Naples. Her name was Catella and she was the wife of another young gentleman of like condition, hight Filippello Fighinolfi, whom, like a very virtuous woman as she was, she loved and cherished over all. Ricciardo, then, loving this Catella and doing all those things whereby the love and favour of a lady are commonly to be won, yet for all that availing not to compass aught of his desire, was like to despair; and unknowing or unable to rid him of his passion, he neither knew how to die nor did it profit him to live.

Abiding in this mind, it befell that he was one day urgently exhorted by certain ladies of his kinsfolk to renounce this passion of his, seeing he did but weary himself in vain, for that Catella had none other good than Filippello, of whom she lived in such jealousy that she

fancied every bird that flew through the air would take him from her. Ricciardo, hearing of Catella's jealousy, forthright bethought himself how he might compass his wishes and accordingly proceeded to feign himself in despair of her love and to have therefore set his mind upon another lady, for whose love he began to make a show of jousting and tourneying and doing all those things which he had been used to do for Catella; nor did he do this long before well nigh all the Neapolitans, and among the rest the lady herself, were persuaded that he no longer loved Catella, but was ardently enamoured of this second lady; and on this wise he persisted until it was so firmly believed not only of others, but of Catella herself, that the latter laid aside a certain reserve with which she was wont to entreat him, by reason of the love he bore her, and coming and going, saluted him familiarly, neighbourwise, as she did others.

It presently befell that, the weather being warm, many companies of ladies and gentlemen went, according to the usance of the Neapolitans, to divert themselves on the banks of the sea and there to dine and sup, and Ricciardo, knowing Catella to be gone thither with her company, betook himself to the same place with his friends and was received into Catella's party of ladies, after allowing himself to be much pressed, as if he had no great mind to abide there. The ladies and Catella fell to rallying him upon his new love, and he, feigning himself sore inflamed therewith, gave them the more occasion for discourse. Presently, one lady going hither and another thither, as commonly happeneth in such places, and Catella being left with a few whereas Ricciardo was, the latter cast at her a hint of a certain amour of Filippello her husband, whereupon she fell into a sudden passion of jealousy and began to be inwardly all afire with impatience to know what he meant. At last, having contained herself awhile and being unable to hold out longer, she besought Ricciardo, for that lady's sake whom he most loved, to be pleased to make her clear * of that which he had said of Filippello; whereupon quoth he, 'You conjure me by such a person that I dare not deny aught you ask me; wherefore I am ready to tell it you, so but you promise me that you will never say a word thereof either to him or to any other, save whenas you shall by experience have seen that which I shall tell you to be true; for that, when you please, I will teach you how you may see it.'

The lady consented to that which he asked and swore to him never to repeat that which he should tell her, believing it the more to be

* Or, in modern parlance, to enlighten her.

true. Then, withdrawing apart with her, so they might not be overheard of any, he proceeded to say thus: 'Madam, an I loved you as once I loved, I should not dare tell you aught which I thought might vex you; but, since that love is passed away, I shall be less chary of discovering to you the whole truth. I know not if Filippello have ever taken umbrage at the love I bore you or have believed that I was ever loved of you. Be this as it may, he hath never personally shown me aught thereof; but now, having peradventure awaited a time whenas he deemed I should be less suspicious, it seemeth he would fain do unto me that which I misdoubt me he feareth I have done unto him, to wit, [he seeketh] to have my wife at his pleasure. As I find, he hath for some little time past secretly solicited her with sundry messages, all of which I have known from herself, and she hath made answer thereunto according as I have enjoined her. This very day, however, ere I came hither, I found in the house, in close conference with my wife, a woman whom I set down incontinent for that which she was, wherefore I called my wife and asked her what the woman wanted. Quoth she, "She is the agent of Filippello, with whom thou hast saddled me, by dint of making me answer him and give him hopes, and she saith that he will e'en know once for all what I mean to do and that, an I will, he would contrive for me to be privily at a bagnio in this city; nay, of this he prayeth and importuneth me; and hadst thou not, I know not why, caused me keep this traffic with him, I would have rid myself of him after such a fashion that he should never more have looked whereas I might be." Thereupon meseemed this was going too far and that it was no longer to be borne; and I bethought myself to tell it to you, so you might know how he requiteth that entire fidelity of yours, whereby aforetime I was nigh upon death. And so you shall not believe this that I tell you to be words and fables, but may, whenas you have a mind thereto, openly both see and touch it, I caused my wife make this answer to her who awaited it, that she was ready to be at the bagnio in question to-morrow at none, whenas the folk sleep; with which the woman took leave of her, very well pleased. Now methinketh not you believe that I will send my wife thither; but, were I in your place, I would contrive that he should find me there in the room of her he thinketh to meet, and whenas I had abidden with him awhile, I would give him to know with whom he had been and render him such honour thereof as should beseem him; by which means methinketh you would do him such a shame that the affront he would fain put upon yourself and upon me would at one blow be avenged.

Catella, hearing this, without anywise considering who it was that said it to her or suspecting his design, forthright, after the wont of jealous folk, gave credence to his words and fell a-fitting to his story certain things that had already befallen; then, fired with sudden anger, she answered that she would certainly do as he counselled,—it was no such great matter,—and that assuredly, if Filippello came thither, she would do him such a shame that it should still recur to his mind, as often as he saw a woman. Ricciardo, well pleased at this and himseeming his device was a good one and in a fair way of success, confirmed her in her purpose with many other words and strengthened her belief in his story, praying her, natheless, never to say that she had heard it from him, the which she promised him on her troth.

Next morning, Ricciardo betook himself to a good woman, who kept the bagnio he had named to Catella, and telling her what he purposed to do, prayed her to further him therein as most she might. The good woman, who was much beholden to him, answered that she would well and agreed with him what she should do and say. Now in the house where the bagnio was she had a very dark chamber, for that no window gave thereon by which the light might enter. This chamber she made ready and spread a bed there, as best she might, wherein Ricciardo, as soon as he had dined, laid himself and proceeded to await Catella. The latter, having heard Ricciardo's words and giving more credence thereto than behoved her, returned in the evening, full of despite, to her house, whither Filippello also returned and being by chance full of other thought, maybe did not show her his usual fondness. When she saw this, her suspicions rose yet higher and she said in herself, 'Forsooth, his mind is occupied with yonder lady with whom he thinketh to take his pleasure to-morrow; but of a surety this shall not come to pass.' And in this thought she abode well nigh all that night, considering how she should bespeak him, whenas she should be with him [in the bagnio].

What more [need I say?] The hour of none come, she took her waiting-woman and without anywise changing counsel, repaired to the bagnio that Ricciardo had named to her, and there finding the good woman, asked her if Filippello had been there that day, whereupon quoth the other, who had been duly lessoned by Ricciardo, 'Are you the lady that should come to speak with him?' 'Ay am I,' answered Catella. 'Then,' said the woman, 'get you in to him.' Catella, who went seeking that which she would fain not have found, caused herself be brought to the chamber where Ricciardo was and entering with covered head, locked herself in. Ricciardo, seeing her enter, rose joy-

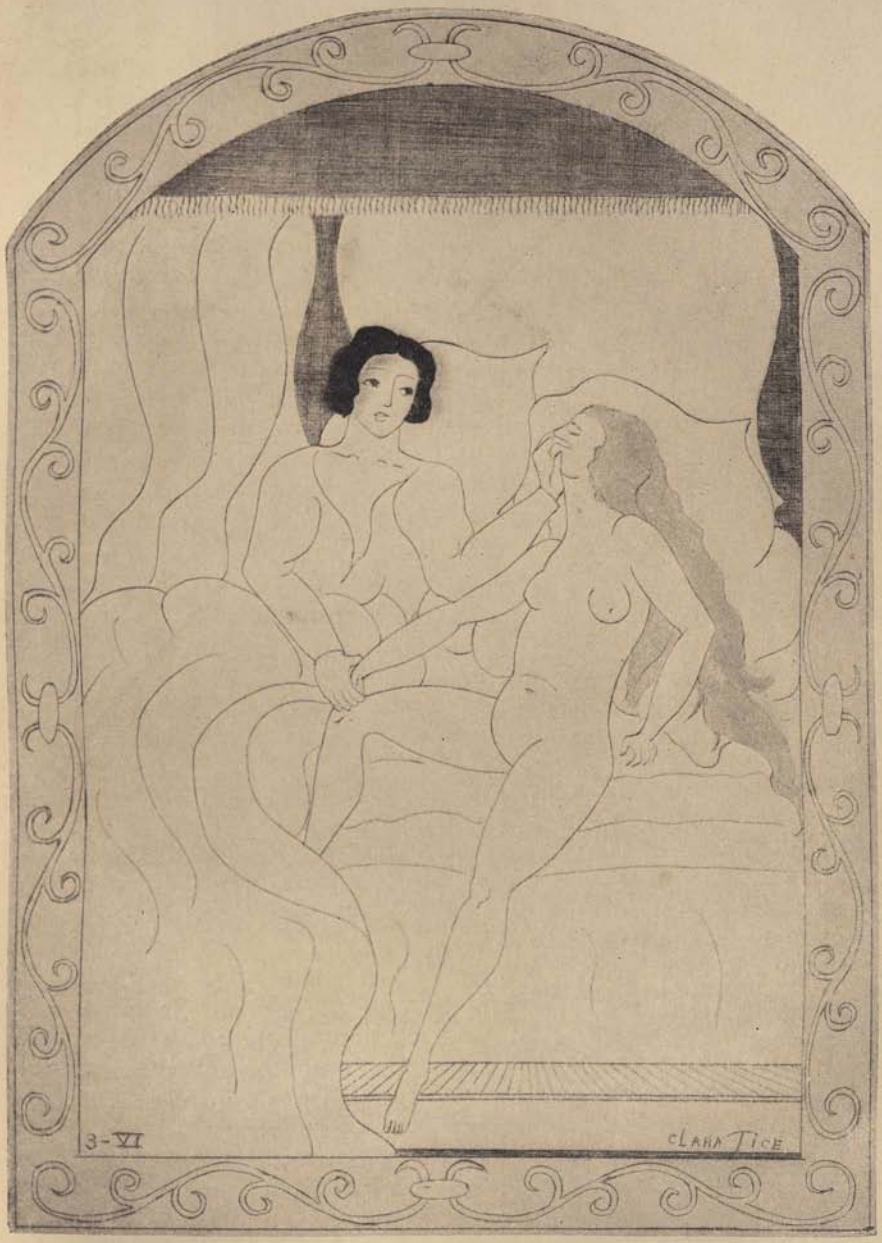
fully to his feet and catching her in his arms, said softly, 'Welcome, my soul!' whilst she, the better to feign herself other than she was, clipped him and kissed him and made much of him, without saying a word, fearing to be known of him if she should speak. The chamber was very dark, wherewith each of them was well pleased, nor for long abiding there did the eyes recover more power. Ricciardo carried her to the bed and there, without speaking, lest their voices should bewray them, they abode a long while, to the greater delight and pleasance of the one party than the other.

But presently, it seeming to Catella time to vent the resentment she felt, she began, all afire with rage and despite, to speak thus, 'Alas, how wretched is women's lot and how ill bestowed the love that many of them bear their husbands! I, unhappy that I am, these eight years have I loved thee more than my life, and thou, as I have felt, art all afire and all consumed with love of a strange woman, wicked and perverse man that thou art! Now with whom thinkest thou to have been? Thou hast been with her whom thou hast too long beguiled with thy false blandishments, making a show of love to her and being enamoured elsewhere. I am Catella, not Ricciardo's wife, disloyal traitor that thou art! Hearken if thou know my voice; it is indeed I; and it seemeth to me a thousand years till we be in the light, so I may shame thee as thou deservest, scurvy discredited cur that thou art! Alack, woe is me! To whom have I borne so much love these many years? To this disloyal dog, who, thinking to have a strange woman in his arms, hath lavished on me more caresses and more fondnesses in this little while I have been here with him than in all the rest of the time I have been his. Thou hast been brisk enough to-day, renegade cur that thou art, that usest at home to show thyself so feeble and forspent and impotent; but, praised be God, thou hast tilled thine own field and not, as thou thoughtest, that of another. No wonder thou camest not anigh me yesternight; thou lookedst to discharge thee of thy lading elsewhere and wouldst fain come fresh to the battle; but, thanks to God and my own foresight, the stream hath e'en run in its due channel. Why answerest thou not, wicked man? Why sayst thou not somewhat? Art thou grown dumb, hearing me? Cock's faith, I know not what hindereth me from thrusting my hands into thine eyes and tearing them out for thee. Thou thoughtest to do this treason very secretly; but, perdie, one knoweth as much as another; thou hast not availed to compass thine end; I have had better beagles at thy heels than thou thoughtest.'

Ricciardo inwardly rejoiced at these words and without making any

reply, clipped her and kissed her and fondled her more than ever; whereupon quoth she, following on her speech, 'Ay, thou thinkest to cajole me with thy feigned caresses, fashious dog that thou art, and to appease and console me; but thou art mistaken; I shall never be comforted for this till I have put thee to shame therefor in the presence of all our friends and kinsmen and neighbours. Am I not as fair as Ricciardo's wife, thou villain? Am I not as good a gentlewoman? Why dost thou not answer, thou sorry dog? What hath she more than I? Keep thy distance; touch me not; thou hast done enough feats of arms for to-day. Now thou knowest who I am, I am well assured that all thou couldst do would be perforce; but, so God grant me grace, I will yet cause thee suffer want thereof, and I know not what hindereth me from sending for Ricciardo, who hath loved me more than himself and could never boast that I once even looked at him; nor know I what harm it were to do it. Thou thoughtest to have his wife here and it is as if thou hadst had her, inasmuch as it is none of thy fault that the thing hath miscarried; wherefore, were I to have himself, thou couldst not with reason blame me.'

Brief, many were the lady's words and sore her complaining. However, at last, Ricciardo, bethinking himself that, an he let her go in that belief, much ill might ensue thereof, determined to discover himself and undeceive her; wherefore, catching her in his arms and holding her fast, so she might not get away, he said, 'Sweet my soul, be not angered; that which I could not have of you by simply loving you, Love hath taught me to obtain by practice; and I am your Ricciardo.' Catella, hearing this and knowing him by the voice, would have thrown herself incontinent out of bed, but could not; whereupon she offered to cry out; but Ricciardo stopped her mouth with one hand and said, 'Madam, this that hath been may henceforth on nowise be undone, though you should cry all the days of your life; and if you cry out or cause this ever anywise be known of any one, two things will come thereof; the one (which should no little concern you) will be that your honour and fair fame will be marred, for that, albeit you may avouch that I brought you hither by practice, I shall say that it is not true, nay, that I caused you come hither for monies and gifts that I promised you, whereof for that I gave you not so largely as you hoped, you waxed angry and made all this talk and this outcry; and you know that folk are more apt to credit ill than good, wherefore I shall more readily be believed than you. Secondly, there will ensue thereof a mortal enmity between your husband and myself, and



"Ricciardo stopped her mouth"

it may as well happen that I shall kill him as he me, in which case you are never after like to be happy or content. Wherefore, heart of my body, go not about at once to dishonour yourself and to cast your husband and myself into strife and peril. You are not the first woman, nor will you be the last, who hath been deceived, nor have I in this practised upon you to bereave you of your own, but for the exceeding love that I bear you and am minded ever to bear you and to be your most humble servant. And although it is long since I and all that I possess or can or am worth have been yours and at your service, henceforward I purpose that they shall be more than ever so. Now, you are well advised in other things and so I am certain you will be in this."

Catella, what while Ricciardo spoke thus, wept sore; but, albeit she was sore provoked and complained grievously, nevertheless, her reason allowed so much force to his true words that she knew it to be possible that it should happen as he said; wherefore quoth she, 'Ricciardo, I know not how God will vouchsafe me strength to suffer the affront and the cheat thou hast put upon me; I will well to make no outcry here whither my simplicity and overmuch jealousy have brought me; but of this be assured that I shall never be content till one way or another I see myself avenged of this thou hast done to me. Wherefore, leave me, hold me no longer; thou hast had that which thou desiredst and hast tumbled me to thy heart's content; it is time to leave me; let me go, I prithee.'

Ricciardo, seeing her mind yet overmuch disordered, had laid it to heart never to leave her till he had gotten his pardon of her; wherefore, studying with the softest of words to appease her, he so bespoke and so entreated and so conjured her that she was prevailed upon to make peace with him, and of like accord they abode together a great while thereafter in the utmost delight. Moreover, Catella having thus learned how much more savoury were the lover's kisses than those of the husband and her former rigour being changed into kind love-liking for Ricciardo, from that day forth she loved him very tenderly and thereafter, ordering themselves with the utmost discretion, they many a time had joyance of their loves. God grant us to enjoy ours!"

THE SEVENTH STORY

TEDALDO ELISEI, HAVING FALLEN OUT WITH HIS MISTRESS, DEPARTETH FLORENCE AND RETURNING THITHER, AFTER AWHILE, IN A PILGRIM'S FAVOUR, SPEAKETH WITH THE LADY AND MAKETH HER COGNISANT OF HER ERROR; AFTER WHICH HE DELIVERETH HER HUSBAND, WHO HAD BEEN CONVICTED OF MURDERING HIM, FROM DEATH AND RECONCILING HIM WITH HIS BRETHREN, THENCEFORWARD DISCREETLY ENJOYETH HIMSELF WITH HIS MISTRESS

FIAMMETTA being now silent, commended of all, the queen, to lose no time, forthright committed the burden of discourse to Emilia, who began thus: "It pleaseth me to return to our city, whence it pleased the last two speakers to depart, and to show you how a townsman of ours regained his lost mistress.

There was, then, in Florence a noble youth, whose name was Tedaldo Elisei and who, being beyond measure enamoured of a lady called Madam Ermellina, the wife of one Aldobrandino Palermini, deserved, for his praiseworthy fashions, to enjoy his desire. However, Fortune, the enemy of the happy, denied him this solace, for that, whatever might have been the cause, the lady, after complying awhile with Tedaldo's wishes, suddenly altogether withdrew her good graces from him and not only refused to hearken to any message of his, but would on no wise see him; wherefore he fell into a dire and cruel melancholy; but his love for her had been so hidden that none guessed it to be the cause of his chagrin. After he had in divers ways studied amain to recover the love himseemed he had lost without his fault and finding all his labour vain, he resolved to withdraw from the world, that he might not afford her who was the cause of his ill the pleasure of seeing him pine away; wherefore, without saying aught to friend or kinsman, save to a comrade of his, who knew all, he took such monies as he might avail to have and departing secretly, came to Ancona, where, under the name of Filippo di Sanlodeccio, he made acquaintance with a rich merchant and taking service with him, accompanied him to Cyprus on board a ship of his.

His manners and behaviour so pleased the merchant that he not only assigned him a good wage, but made him in part his associate and put into his hands a great part of his affairs, which he ordered so well and so diligently that in a few years he himself became a rich

and famous and considerable merchant; and albeit, in the midst of these his dealings, he oft remembered him of his cruel mistress and was grievously tormented of love and yearned sore to look on her again, such was his constantcy that seven years long he got the better of the battle. But, chancing one day to hear sing in Cyprus a song that himself had made aforetime and wherein was recounted the love he bore his mistress and she him and the pleasure he had of her, and thinking it could not be she had forgotten him, he flamed up into such a passion of desire to see her again that, unable to endure longer, he resolved to return to Florence.

Accordingly, having set all his affairs in order, he betook himself with one only servant to Ancona and transporting all his good thither, despatched it to Florence to a friend of the Anconese his partner, whilst he himself, in the disguise of a pilgrim returning from the Holy Sepulchre, followed secretly after with his servant and coming to Florence, put up at a little hostelry kept by two brothers, in the neighbourhood of his mistress's house, whereto he repaired first of all, to see her, an he might. However, he found the windows and doors and all else closed, wherefore his heart misgave him she was dead or had removed thence and he betook himself, in great concern, to the house of his brethren, before which he saw four of the latter clad all in black. At this he marvelled exceedingly and knowing himself so changed both in habit and person from that which he was used to be, whenas he departed thence, that he might not lightly be recognized, he boldly accosted a cordwainer hard by and asked him why they were clad in black; whereto he answered, 'Yonder men are clad in black for that it is not yet a fortnight since a brother of theirs, who had not been here this great while, was murdered, and I understand they have proved to the court that one Aldobrandino Palermini, who is in prison, slew him, for that he was a well-wisher of his wife and had returned hither unknown to be with her.'

Tedaldo marvelled exceedingly that any one should so resemble him as to be taken for him and was grieved for Aldobrandino's ill fortune. Then, having learned that the lady was alive and well and it being now night, he returned, full of various thoughts, to the inn and having supped with his servant, was put to sleep well nigh at the top of the house. There, what with the many thoughts that stirred him and the badness of the bed and peradventure also by reason of the supper, which had been meagre, half the night passed whilst he had not yet been able to fall asleep; wherefore, being awake, himseemed about midnight he heard folk come down into the house from the roof, and

after through the chinks of the chamber-door he saw a light come up thither. Thereupon he stole softly to the door and putting his eye to the chink, fell a-spying what this might mean and saw a comely enough lass who held the light, whilst three men, who had come down from the roof, made towards her; and after some greetings had passed between them, one of them said to the girl, 'Henceforth, praised be God, we may abide secure, since we know now for certain that the death of Tedaldo Elisei hath been proved by his brethren against Aldobrandino Palermini, who hath confessed thereto, and judgment is now recorded; nevertheless, it behoveth to keep strict silence, for that, should it ever become known that it was we [who slew him], we shall be in the same danger as is Aldobrandino.' Having thus bespoken the woman, who showed herself much rejoiced thereat, they left her and going below, betook themselves to bed.

Tedaldo, hearing this, fell a-considering how many and how great are the errors which may befall the minds of men, bethinking him first of his brothers who had bewept and buried a stranger in his stead and after of the innocent man accused on false suspicion and brought by untrue witness to the point of death, no less than of the blind severity of laws and rulers, who ofttimes, under cover of diligent investigation of the truth, cause, by their cruelties, prove that which is false and style themselves ministers of justice and of God, whereas indeed they are executors of iniquity and of the devil; after which he turned his thought to the deliverance of Aldobrandino and determined in himself what he should do. Accordingly, arising in the morning, he left his servant at the inn and betook himself alone, whenas it seemed to him time, to the house of his mistress, where, chancing to find the door open, he entered in and saw the lady seated, all full of tears and bitterness of soul, in a little ground floor room that was there.

At this sight he was like to weep for compassion of her and drawing near to her, said, 'Madam, afflict not yourself; your peace is at hand.' The lady, hearing this, lifted her eyes and said, weeping, 'Good man, thou seemest to me a stranger pilgrim; what knowest thou of my peace or of my affliction?' 'Madam,' answered Tedaldo, 'I am of Constantinople and am but now come hither, being sent of God to turn your tears into laughter and to deliver your husband from death.' Quoth she, 'An thou be of Constantinople and newly come hither, how knowest thou who I am or who is my husband?' Thereupon, the pilgrim, beginning from the beginning, recounted to her the whole history of Aldobrandino's troubles and told her who she was and how

long she had been married and other things which he very well knew of her affairs; whereat she marvelled exceedingly and holding him for a prophet, fell on her knees at his feet, beseeching him for God's sake, an he were come for Aldobrandino's salvation, to despatch, for that the time was short.

The pilgrim, feigning himself a very holy man, said, 'Madam, arise and weep not, but hearken well to that which I shall say to you and take good care never to tell it to any. According to that which God hath revealed unto me, the tribulation wherein you now are hath betided you because of a sin committed by you aforetime, which God the Lord hath chosen in part to purge with this present annoy and will have altogether amended of you; else will you fall into far greater affliction.' 'Sir,' answered the lady, 'I have many sins and know not which one, more than another, God the Lord would have me amend; wherefore, an you know it, tell me and I will do what I may to amend it.' 'Madam,' rejoined the pilgrim, 'I know well enough what it is, nor do I question you thereof the better to know it, but to the intent that, telling it yourself, you may have the more remorse thereof. But let us come to the fact; tell me, do you remember ever to have had a lover?'

The lady, hearing this, heaved a deep sigh and marvelled sore, supposing none had ever known it, albeit, in the days when he was slain who had been buried for Tedaldo, there had been some whispering thereof, for certain words not very discreetly used by Tedaldo's confidant, who knew it; then answered, 'I see that God discovereth unto you all men's secrets, wherefore I am resolved not to hide mine own from you. True it is that in my youth I loved over all the ill-fortuned youth whose death is laid to my husband's charge, which death I have bewept as sore as it was grievous to me, for that, albeit I showed myself harsh and cruel to him before his departure, yet neither his long absence nor his unhappy death hath availed to tear him from my heart.' Quoth the pilgrim, 'The hapless youth who is dead you never loved, but Tedaldo Elisei ay.* But tell me, what was the occasion of your falling out with him? Did he ever give you any offence?' 'Certes, no,' replied she; 'he never offended against me; the cause of the breach was the prate of an accursed friar, to whom I once confessed me and who, when I told him of the love I bore Tedaldo and the privacy I had with him, made such a racket about my ears that I tremble yet to think of it, telling me that, an I desisted

* *i.e.* It was not the dead man, but Tedaldo Elisei whom you loved. (*Lo sventurato giovane che fu morto non amasti voi mai, ma Tedaldo Elisei si.*)

not therefrom, I should go in the devil's mouth to the deepest deep of hell and there be cast into everlasting fire; whereupon there entered into me such a fear that I altogether determined to forswear all further converse with him, and that I might have no occasion therefor, I would no longer receive his letters or messages; albeit I believe, had he persevered awhile, instead of getting him gone (as I presume) in despair, that, seeing him, as I did, waste away like snow in the sun, my harsh resolve would have yielded, for that I had no greater desire in the world.'

'Madam,' rejoined the pilgrim, 'it is this sin alone that now afflicteth you. I know for certain that Tedaldo did you no manner of violence; whenas you fell in love with him, you did it of your own free will, for that he pleased you; and as you yourself would have it, he came to you and enjoyed your privacy, wherein both with words and deeds you showed him such complaisance that, if he loved you before, you caused his love redouble a thousandfold. And this being so (as I know it was) what cause should have availed to move you so harshly to withdraw yourself from him? These things should be pondered awhile beforehand and if you think you may presently have cause to repent thereof, as of ill doing, you ought not to do them. You might, at your pleasure, have ordained of him, as of that which belonged to you, that he should no longer be yours; but to go about to deprive him of yourself, you who were his, was a theft and an unseemly thing, whenas it was not his will. Now you must know that I am a friar and am therefore well acquainted with all their usances; and if I speak somewhat at large of them for your profit, it is not forbidden me, as it were to another; nay, and it pleaseth me to speak of them, so you may henceforward know them better than you appear to have done in the past.

Friars of old were very pious and worthy men, but those who nowadays style themselves friars and would be held such have nothing of the monk but the gown; nor is this latter even that of a true friar, for that,—whereas of the founders of the monastic orders they * were ordained strait and poor and of coarse stuff and demonstrative † of the spirit of the wearers, who testified that they held things temporal in contempt whenas they wrapped their bodies in so mean a habit,—those of our time have them made full and double and glossy and of the finest cloth and have brought them to a quaint pontifical cut,

* *i.e.* friars' gowns. Boccaccio constantly uses this irregular form of enallage, especially in dialogue.

† Or, as we should nowadays say, "typical."

insomuch that they think no shame to flaunt it withal, peacock-wise, in the churches and public places, even as do the laity with their apparel; and like as with the sweep-net the fisher goeth about to take many fishes in the river at one cast, even so these, wrapping themselves about with the amplest of skirts, study to entangle therein great store of prudish maids and widows and many other silly women and men, and this is their chief concern over any other exercise; wherefore, to speak more plainly, they have not the friar's gown, but only the colours thereof.

Moreover, whereas the ancients * desired the salvation of mankind, those of our day covet women and riches and turn their every thought to terrifying the minds of the foolish with clamours and depicturements † and to making believe that sins may be purged with almsdeeds and masses, to the intent that unto themselves (who, of poltroonery, not of devoutness, and that they may not suffer fatigue,‡ have, as a last resort, turned friars) one may bring bread, another send wine and a third give them a dole of money for the souls of their departed friends. Certes, it is true that almsdeeds and prayers purge away sins; but, if those who give alms knew on what manner folk they bestow them, they would or keep them for themselves or cast them before as many hogs. And for that these § know that, the fewer the possessors of a great treasure, the more they live at ease, every one of them studieth with clamours and bugbears to detach others from that whereof he would fain abide sole possessor. They decry lust in men, in order that, they who are chidden desisting from women, the latter may be left to the chiders; they condemn usury and unjust gains, to the intent that, it being entrusted to them to make restitution thereof, they may, with that which they declare must bring to perdition him who hath it, make wide their gowns and purchase bishopricks and other great benefices.

And when they are taken to task of these and many other unseemly things that they do, they think that to answer, "Do as we say and not as we do," is a sufficient discharge of every gravé burden, as if it were possible for the sheep to be more constant and stouter to resist

* *i.e.* the founders of the monastic orders.

† Lit. pictures, paintings (*dipinture*), but evidently here used in a tropical sense, Boccaccio's apparent meaning being that the hypocritical friars used to terrify their devotees by picturing to them, in vivid colours, the horrors of the punishment reserved for sinners.

‡ *i.e.* may not have to labour for their living.

§ *i.e.* the false friars.

temptation * than the shepherds. And how many there be of those to whom they make such a reply who apprehend it not after the fashion † in which they say it, the most part of them know. The monks of our day would have you do as they say, to wit, fill their purses with money, trust your secrets to them, observe chastity, practise patience and forgiveness of injuries and keep yourselves from evil speaking,—all things good, seemly and righteous; but why would they have this? So they may do that, which if the laity did, themselves could not do. Who knoweth not that without money idleness may not endure? An thou expend thy monies in thy pleasures, the friar will not be able to idle it in the monastery; an thou follow after women, there will be no room for him, and except thou be patient or a forgiver of injuries, he will not dare to come to thy house to corrupt thy family. But why should I hark back after every particular? They condemn themselves in the eyes of the understanding as often as they make this excuse. An they believe not themselves able to abstain and lead a devout life, why do they not rather abide at home? Or, if they will e'en give themselves unto this,‡ why do they not ensue that other holy saying of the Gospel, "Christ began to do and to teach"? § Let them first do and after teach others. I have in my time seen a thousand of them wooers, lovers and haunters, not of lay women alone, but of nuns; ay, and of those that make the greatest outcry in the pulpit. Shall we, then, follow after these who are thus fashioned? Whoso doth it doth that which he will, but God knoweth if he do wisely.

But, granted even we are to allow that which the friar who chid you said to you, to wit, that it is a grievous sin to break the marriage vow, is it not a far greater sin to rob a man and a greater yet to slay him or drive him into exile, to wander miserably about the world? Every one must allow this. For a woman to have converse with a man is a sin of nature; but to rob him or slay him or drive him into exile proceedeth from malignity of mind. That you robbed Tedaldo I have already shown you, in despoiling him of yourself, who had

* Lit. more of iron (*più di ferro*).

† Sic (*per lo modo*); but *quære* not rather "in the sense."

‡ *i.e.* if they must enter upon this way of life, to wit, that of the friar.

§ The reference is apparently to the opening verse of the Acts of the Apostles, where Luke says, "The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began to do and to teach." It need hardly be remarked that the passage in question does not bear the interpretation Boccaccio would put upon it.

become his of your spontaneous will, and I say also that, so far as in you lay, you slew him, for that it was none of your fault,—showing yourself, as you did, hourly more cruel,—that he slew not himself with his own hand; and the law willeth that whoso is the cause of the ill that is done be held alike guilty with him who doth it. And that you were the cause of his exile and of his going wandering seven years about the world cannot be denied. So that in whichever one of these three things aforesaid you have committed a far greater sin than in your converse with him.

But, let us see; maybe Tedaldo deserved this usage? Certes, he did not; you yourself have already confessed it, more by token that I know he loveth * you more than himself. No woman was ever so honoured, so exalted, so magnified over every other of her sex as were you by him, whenas he found himself where he might fairly speak of you, without engendering suspicion. His every good, his every honour, his every liberty were all committed by him into your hands. Was he not noble and young? Was he not handsome among all his townsmen? Was he not accomplished in such things as pertain unto young men? Was he not loved, cherished and well seen of every one? You will not say nay to this either. Then how, at the bidding of a scurvy, envious numskull of a friar, could you take such a cruel resolve against him? I know not what error is that of women who eschew men and hold them in little esteem, whenas, considering what themselves are and what and how great is the nobility, beyond every other animal, given of God to man, they should rather glory whenas they are loved of any and prize him over all and study with all diligence to please him, so he may never desist from loving them. This how you did, moved by the prate of a friar, who must for certain have been some broth-swilling pasty-gorger, you yourself know; and most like he had a mind to put himself in the place whence he studied to expel others.

This, then, is the sin that Divine justice, the which with a just balance bringeth all its operations to effect, hath willed not to leave unpunished; and even as you without reason studied to withdraw yourself from Tedaldo, so on like wise hath your husband been and is yet, without reason, in peril for Tedaldo, and you in tribulation. Wherefrom an you would be delivered, that which it behoveth you to promise, and yet more to do, is this; that, should it ever chance that Tedaldo return hither from his long banishment, you will render

* *Sic;* but the past tense "loved" is probably intended, as the pretended pilgrim had not yet discovered Tedaldo to be alive.

him again your favour, your love, your goodwill and your privacy and reinstate him in that condition wherein he was, ere you foolishly hearkened to yonder crack-brained friar.'

The pilgrim having thus made an end of his discourse, the lady, who had hearkened thereto with the utmost attention, for that his arguments appeared to her most true and that, hearing him say, she accounted herself of a certainty afflicted for the sin of which he spoke, said, 'Friend of God, I know full well that the things you allege are true, and in great part by your showing do I perceive what manner of folk are these friars, whom till now I have held all saints. Moreover, I acknowledge my default without doubt to have been great in that which I wrought against Tedaldo; and an I might, I would gladly amend it on such wise as you have said; but how may this be done? Tedaldo can never more return hither; he is dead; wherefore I know not why it should behove me promise that which may not be performed.' 'Madam,' replied the pilgrim, 'according to that which God hath revealed unto me, Tedaldo is nowise dead, but alive and well and in good case, so but he had your favour.' Quoth the lady, 'Look what you say; I saw him dead before my door of several knife-thrusts and had him in these arms and bathed his dead face with many tears, the which it may be gave occasion for that which hath been spoken thereof unseemly.' 'Madam,' replied the pilgrim, 'whatever you may say, I certify you that Tedaldo is alive, and if you will e'en promise me that [which I ask,] with intent to fulfil your promise, I hope you shall soon see him.' Quoth she, 'That do I promise and will gladly perform; nor could aught betide that would afford me such content as to see my husband free and unharmed and Tedaldo alive.'

Thereupon it seemed to Tedaldo time to discover himself and to comfort the lady with more certain hope of her husband, and accordingly he said, 'Madam, in order that I may comfort you for your husband, it behoveth me reveal to you a secret, which look you discover not unto any, as you value your life.' Now they were in a very retired place and alone, the lady having conceived the utmost confidence of the sanctity which herseemed was in the pilgrim; wherefore Tedaldo, pulling out a ring, which she had given him the last night he had been with her and which he had kept with the utmost diligence, and showing it to her, said, 'Madam, know you this?' As soon as she saw it, she recognized it and answered, 'Ay, sir; I gave it to Tedaldo aforetime.' Whereupon the pilgrim, rising to his feet,

hastily cast off his palmer's gown and hat and speaking Florence-fashion, said, 'And know you me?'

When the lady saw this, she knew him to be Tedaldo and was all aghast, fearing him as one feareth the dead, an they be seen after death to go as if alive; wherefore she made not towards him to welcome him as Tedaldo returned from Cyprus, but would have fled from him in affright, as he were Tedaldo come back from the tomb. Whereupon, 'Madam,' quoth he, 'fear not; I am your Tedaldo, alive and well, and have never died nor been slain, whatsoever you and my brothers may believe.' The lady, somewhat reassured and knowing his voice, considered him awhile longer and avouched in herself that he was certainly Tedaldo; wherefore she threw herself, weeping, on his neck and kissed him, saying, 'Welcome back, sweet my Tedaldo.'

Tedaldo, having kissed and embraced her, said, 'Madam, it is no time now for closer greetings; I must e'en go take order that Aldobrandino may be restored to you safe and sound; whereof I hope that, ere to-morrow come eventide, you shall hear news that will please you; nay, if, as I expect, I have good news of his safety, I trust this night to be able to come to you and report them to you at more leisure than I can at this present.' Then, donning his gown and hat again, he kissed the lady once more and bidding her be of good hope, took leave of her and repaired whereas Aldobrandino lay in prison, occupied more with fear of imminent death than with hopes of deliverance to come. Tedaldo, with the gaoler's consent, went in to him, in the guise of a ghostly comforter, and seating himself by his side, said to him, 'Aldobrandino, I am a friend of thine, sent thee for thy deliverance by God, who hath taken pity on thee because of thine innocence; wherefore, if, in reverence to Him, thou wilt grant me a little boon that I shall ask of thee, thou shalt without fail, ere to-morrow be night, whereas thou lookest for sentence of death, hear that of thine acquittance.'

'Honest man,' replied the prisoner, 'since thou art solicitous of my deliverance, albeit I know thee not nor mind me ever to have seen thee, needs must thou be a friend, as thou sayst. In truth, the sin, for which they say I am to be doomed to death, I never committed; though others enough have I committed aforetime, which, it may be, have brought me to this pass. But this I say to thee, of reverence to God; an He presently have compassion on me, I will not only promise, but gladly do any thing, however great, to say nothing of a little one; wherefore ask that which pleaseth thee, for without fail, if it

come to pass that I escape with life, I will punctually perform it.' Then said the pilgrim, 'What I would have of thee is that thou pardon Tedaldo's four brothers the having brought thee to this pass, believing thee guilty of their brother's death, and have them again for brethren and for friends, whenas they crave thee pardon thereof.' Whereto quoth Aldobrandino, 'None knoweth but he who hath suffered the affront how sweet a thing is vengeance and with what ardour it is desired; nevertheless, so God may apply Himself to my deliverance, I will freely pardon them; nay, I pardon them now, and if I come off hence alive and escape, I will in this hold such course as shall be to thy liking.'

This pleased the pilgrim and without concerning himself to say more to him, he exhorted him to be of good heart, for that, ere the ensuing day came to an end, he should without fail hear very certain news of his safety. Then, taking leave of him, he repaired to the Seignory and said privily to a gentleman who was in session there, 'My lord, every one should gladly labour to bring to light the truth of things, and especially those who hold such a room as this of yours, to the end that those may not suffer the penalty who have not committed the crime and that the guilty may be punished; that which may be brought about, to your honour and the bane of those who have merited it, I am come hither to you. As you know, you have rigorously proceeded against Aldobrandino Palermini and thinking you have found for truth that it was he who slew Tedaldo Elisei, are minded to condemn him; but this is most certainly false, as I doubt not to show you, ere midnight betide, by giving into your hands the murderers of the young man in question.'

The worthy gentleman, who was in concern for Aldobrandino, willingly gave ear to the pilgrim's words and having conferred at large with him upon the matter, on his information, took the two innkeeper brothers and their servant, without resistance, in their first sleep. He would have put them to the question, to discover how the case stood; but they brooked it not and each first for himself, and after all together, openly confessed that it was they who had slain Tedaldo Elisei, knowing him not. Being questioned of the case, they said [that it was] for that he had given the wife of one of them sore annoy, what while they were abroad, and would fain have enforced her do his will.

The pilgrim, having heard this, with the magistrate's consent took his leave and repairing privily to the house of Madam Ermellina, found her alone and awaiting him, (all else in the house being gone

to sleep,) alike desirous of having good news of her husband and of fully reconciling herself with her Tedaldo. He accosted her with a joyful countenance and said, 'Dearest lady mine, be of good cheer, for to-morrow thou shalt certainly have thine Aldobrandino here again safe and sound;' and to give her more entire assurance thereof, he fully recounted to her that which he had done. Whereupon she, glad as ever woman was of two so sudden and so happy chances, to wit, the having her lover alive again, whom she verily believed to have bewept dead, and the seeing Aldobrandino free from peril, whose death she looked ere many days to have to mourn, affectionately embraced and kissed Tedaldo; then, getting them to bed together, with one accord they made a glad and gracious peace, taking delight and joyance one of the other. Whenas the day drew near, Tedaldo arose, after showing the lady that which he purposed to do and praying her anew to keep it a close secret, and went forth, even in his pilgrim's habit, to attend, whenas it should be time, to Aldobrandino's affairs. The day come, it appearing to the Seignory that they had full information of the matter, they straightway discharged Aldobrandino and a few days after let strike off the murderers' heads whereas they had committed the crime.

Aldobrandino being now, to the great joy of himself and his wife and of all his friends and kinsfolk, free and manifestly acknowledging that he owed his deliverance to the good offices of the pilgrim, carried the latter to his house for such time as it pleased him to sojourn in the city; and there they could not sate themselves of doing him honour and worship, especially the lady, who knew with whom she had to do. After awhile, deeming it time to bring his brothers to an accord with Aldobrandino and knowing that they were not only put to shame by the latter's acquittance, but went armed for fear [of his resentment,] he demanded of his host the fulfilment of his promise. Aldobrandino freely answered that he was ready, whereupon the pilgrim caused him prepare against the morrow a goodly banquet, whereat he told him he would have him and his kinsmen and kinswomen entertain the four brothers and their ladies, adding that he himself would go incontinent and bid the latter on his part to his peace and his banquet. Aldobrandino consenting to all that liked the pilgrim, the latter forthright betook himself to the four brothers and plying them with store of such words as behoved unto the matter, in fine, with irrepugnable arguments, brought them easily enough to consent to regain Aldobrandino's friendship by asking pardon; which done, he invited them and their ladies to dinner with Aldobrandino next morn-

ing, and they, being certified of his good faith, frankly accepted the invitation.

Accordingly, on the morrow, towards dinner-time, Tedaldo's four brothers, clad all in black as they were, came, with sundry of their friends, to the house of Aldobrandino, who stayed for them, and there, in the presence of all who had been bidden of him to bear them company, cast down their arms and committed themselves to his mercy, craving forgiveness of that which they had wrought against him. Aldobrandino, weeping, received them affectionately, and kissing them all on the mouth, despatched the matter in a few words, remitting unto them every injury received. After them came their wives and sisters, clad all in sad-coloured raiment, and were graciously received by Madam Ermellina and the other ladies. Then were all, ladies and men alike, magnificently entertained at the banquet, nor was there aught in the entertainment other than commendable, except it were the taciturnity occasioned by the yet fresh sorrow expressed in the sombre raiment of Tedaldo's kinsfolk. Now on this account the pilgrim's device of the banquet had been blamed of some and he had observed it; wherefore, the time being come to do away the constraint aforesaid, he rose to his feet, according as he had foreordained in himself, what while the rest still ate of the fruits, and said, 'Nothing hath lacked to this entertainment that should make it joyful, save only Tedaldo himself; whom (since, having had him continually with you, you have not known him) I will e'en discover to you.

So saying, he cast off his palmer's gown and all other his pilgrim's weeds and abiding in a jerkin of green sendal, was, with no little amazement, long eyed and considered of all, ere any would venture to believe that it was indeed he. Tedaldo, seeing this, recounted many particulars of the relations and things betided between them, as well as of his own adventures; whereupon his brethren and the other gentlemen present ran all to embrace him, with eyes full of joyful tears, as after did the ladies on like wise, as well strangers as kinswomen, except only Madam Ermellina. Which Aldobrandino seeing, 'What is this, Ermellina?' quoth he. 'Why dost thou not welcome Tedaldo, as do the other ladies?' Whereto she answered, in the hearing of all, 'There is none who had more gladly welcomed and would yet welcome him than myself, who am more beholden to him than any other woman, seeing that by his means I have gotten thee again; but the unseemly words spoken in the days when we mourned him whom we deemed Tedaldo made me refrain therefrom.' Quoth

her husband, 'Go to; thinkest thou I believe in the howlers? * He hath right well shown their prate to be false by procuring my deliverance; more by token that I never believed it. Quick, rise and go and embrace him.'

The lady, who desired nothing better, was not slow to obey her husband in this and accordingly, arising, embraced Tedaldo, as the other ladies had done, and gave him joyous welcome. This liberality of Aldobrandino was mighty pleasing to Tedaldo's brothers and to every man and woman there, and thereby all suspect † that had been aroused in the minds of some by the words aforesaid was done away. Then, every one having given Tedaldo joy, he with his own hands rent the black clothes on his brothers' backs and the sad-coloured on those of his sisters and kinswomen and would have them send after other apparel, which whenas they had donned, they gave themselves to singing and dancing and other diversions galore; wherefore the banquet, which had had a silent beginning, had a loud-resounding ending. Thereafter, with the utmost mirth, they one and all repaired, even as they were, to Tedaldo's house, where they supped that night, and on this wise they continued the feast several days longer.

The Florentines awhile regarded Tedaldo with amazement, as a man risen from the dead; nay, in many an one's mind, and even in that of his brethren, there abode a certain faint doubt an he were indeed himself and they did not yet thoroughly believe it, nor belike had they believed it for a long time to come but for a chance which made them clear who the murdered man was which was on this wise. There passed one day before their house certain footmen ‡ of Lunigiana, who, seeing Tedaldo, made towards him and said, 'Give you good day, Faziuolo.' Whereto Tedaldo in his brothers' presence answered, 'You mistake me.' The others, hearing him speak, were abashed and cried him pardon, saying, 'Forsooth you resemble, more than ever we saw one man favour another, a comrade of ours called Faziuolo of Pontremoli, who came hither some fortnight or more agone, nor could we ever since learn what is come of him. Indeed, we marvelled at the dress, for that he was a soldier, even as we are.' Tedaldo's elder brother, hearing this, came forward and enquired how

* Lit. barkers (*abbajatori*), i.e. slanderers.

† Lit. despite, rancour (*rugginuzza*); but the phrase appears to refer to the suspicions excited by the whispers that had been current, as above mentioned, of the connection between Ermellina and Tedaldo.

‡ *i.e.* foot-soldiers.

this Faziuolo had been clad. They told him and it was found to have been punctually as they said; wherefore, what with these and what with other tokens, it was known for certain that he who had been slain was Faziuolo and not Tedaldo, and all doubt of the latter * accordingly departed [the minds of] his brothers and of every other. Tedaldo, then, being returned very rich, persevered in his love and the lady falling out with him no more, they long, discreetly dealing, had enjoyment of their love. God grant us to enjoy ours!"

THE EIGHTH STORY

FERONDO, HAVING SWALLOWED A CERTAIN POWDER, IS ENTOMBED FOR DEAD AND BEING TAKEN FORTH OF THE SEPULCHRE BY THE ABBOT, WHO ENJOYETH HIS WIFE THE WHILE, IS PUT IN PRISON AND GIVEN TO BELIEVE THAT HE IS IN PURGATORY; AFTER WHICH, BEING RAISED UP AGAIN, HE REARETH FOR HIS OWN A CHILD BEGOTTEN OF THE ABBOT ON HIS WIFE

THE end being come of Emilia's long story,—which had not withal for its length been unpleasing to any of the company, nay, but was held of all the ladies to have been briefly narrated, having regard to the number and diversity of the incidents therein recounted, —the queen, having with a mere sign intimated her pleasure to Lauretta, gave her occasion to begin thus: "Dearest ladies, there occurreth to me to tell you a true story which hath much more semblance of falsehood than of that which it indeed is and which hath been recalled to my mind by hearing one to have been bewept and buried for another. I purpose then, to tell you how a live man was entombed for dead and how after he and many other folk believed himself to have come forth of the sepulchre as one raised from the dead, by reason whereof he † was adored as a saint who should rather have been condemned as a criminal.

There was, then, and yet is, in Tuscany, an abbey situate, like as we see many thereof, in a place not overmuch frequented of men, whereof a monk was made abbot, who was a very holy man in everything, save in the matter of women, and in this he contrived to do so warily that well nigh none, not to say knew, but even suspected him thereof, for that he was holden exceeding godly and just in every-

* *i.e.* of his identity.

† *i.e.* the abbot who played the trick upon Ferondo. See post.

thing. It chanced that a very wealthy farmer, by name Ferondo, contracted a great intimacy with him, a heavy, clodpated fellow and dull-witted beyond measure, whose commerce pleased the abbot but for that his simplicity whiles afforded him some diversion, and in the course of their acquaintance, the latter perceived that Ferondo had a very handsome woman to wife, of whom he became so passionately enamoured that he thought of nothing else day or night; but, hearing that, simple and shallow-witted as Ferondo was in everything else, he was shrewd enough in the matter of loving and guarding his wife, he well nigh despaired of her.

However, like a very adroit man as he was, he wrought on such wise with Ferondo that he came whiles, with his wife, to take his pleasance in the abbey-garden, and there he very demurely entertained them with discourse of the beatitude of life eternal and of the pious works of many men and women of times past, insomuch that the lady was taken with a desire to confess herself to him and asked and had Ferondo's leave thereof. Accordingly, to the abbot's exceeding pleasure, she came to confess to him and seating herself at his feet, before she proceeded to say otherwhat, began thus: 'Sir, if God had given me a right husband or had given me none, it would belike be easy to me, with the help of your exhortations, to enter upon the road which you say leadeth folk unto life eternal; but I, having regard to what Ferondo is and to his witlessness, may style myself a widow, and yet I am married, inasmuch as, he living, I can have no other husband; and dolt as he is, he is, without any cause, so out of all measure jealous of me that by reason thereof I cannot live with him otherwise than in tribulation and misery; wherefore, ere I come to other confession, I humbly beseech you, as most I may, that it may please you give me some counsel concerning this, for that, an the occasion of my well-doing begin not therefrom, confession or other good work will profit me little.'

This speech gave the abbot great satisfaction and himseemed fortune had opened him the way to his chief desire; wherefore, 'Daughter,' quoth he, 'I can well believe that it must be a sore annoy for a fair and dainty dame such as you are to have a blockhead to husband, but a much greater meseemeth to have a jealous man; wherefore, you having both the one and the other, I can lightly credit that which you avouch of your tribulation. But for this, speaking briefly, I see neither counsel nor remedy save one, the which is that Ferondo be cured of this jealousy. The medicine that will cure him I know very well how to make, provided you have the heart to keep secret that

which I shall tell you.' 'Father mine,' answered the lady, 'have no fear of that, for I would liefer suffer death than tell any that which you bid me not repeat; but how may this be done?' Quoth the abbot, 'An we would have him cured, it behoveth of necessity that he go to purgatory.' 'But how,' asked she, 'can he go thither alive?' 'Needs must he die,' replied the abbot, 'and so go thither; and wheneas he shall have suffered such penance as shall suffice to purge him of his jealousy, we will pray God with certain orisons that He restore him to this life, and He will do it.' 'Then,' said the lady, 'I am to become a widow?' 'Ay,' answered the abbot, 'for a certain time, wherein you must look well you suffer not yourself to be married again, for that God would take it in ill part, and whenas Ferondo returned hither, it would behove you return to him and he would then be more jealous than ever.' Quoth she, 'Provided he be but cured of this calamity, so it may not behove me abide in prison all my life, I am content; do as it pleaseth you.' 'And I will do it,'* rejoined he; 'but what guerdon am I to have of you for such a service?' 'Father,' answered the lady, 'you shall have whatsoever pleaseth you, so but it be in my power; but what can the like of me that may befit such a man as yourself?' 'Madam,' replied the abbot; 'you can do no less for me than that which I undertake to do for you; for that, like as I am disposed to do that which is to be your weal and your solacement, even so can you do that which will be the saving and assainment of my life.' Quoth she, 'An it be so, I am ready.' 'Then,' said the abbot, 'you must give me your love and vouchsafe me satisfaction of yourself, for whom I am all afire with love and languishment.'

The lady, hearing this, was all aghast and answered, 'Alack, father mine, what is this you ask? Methought you were a saint. Doth it beseem holy men to require women, who come to them for counsel, of such things?' 'Fair my soul,' rejoined the abbot, 'marvel not, for that sanctity nowise abateth by this, seeing it hath its seat in the soul and that which I ask of you is a sin of the body. But, be that as it may, your ravishing beauty hath had such might that love constraineth me to do thus; and I tell you that you may glory in your charms over all other women, considering that they please holy men, who are used to look upon the beauties of heaven. Moreover, abbot though I be, I am a man like another and am, as you see, not yet old. Nor should this that I ask be grievous to you to do; nay, you

* *i.e.* I will cure your husband of his jealousy.

should rather desire it, for that, what while Ferondo sojourneth in purgatory, I will bear you company by night and render you that solacement which he should give you; nor shall any ever come to know of this, for that every one believeth of me that, and more than that, which you but now believed of me. Reject not the grace that God sendeth you, for there be women enough who covet that which you may have and shall have, if, like a wise woman, you hearken to my counsel. Moreover, I have fair and precious jewels, which I purpose shall belong to none other than yourself. Do, then, for me, sweet my hope, that which I willingly do for you.'

The lady hung her head, knowing not how to deny him, whilst herseemed it were ill done to grant him what he asked; but the abbot, seeing that she hearkened and hesitated to reply and himseeming he had already half converted her, followed up his first words with many others and stayed not till he had persuaded her that she would do well to comply with him. Accordingly, she said, blushing, that she was ready to do his every commandment, but might not avail thereto till such time as Ferondo should be gone to purgatory; whereupon quoth the abbot, exceeding well pleased, 'And we will make shift to send him thither incontinent; do you but contrive that he come hither to-morrow or next day to sojourn with me.' So saying, he privily put a very handsome ring into her hand and dismissed her. The lady, rejoiced at the gift and looking to have others, rejoined her companions, to whom she fell to relating marvellous things of the abbot's sanctity, and presently returned home with them.

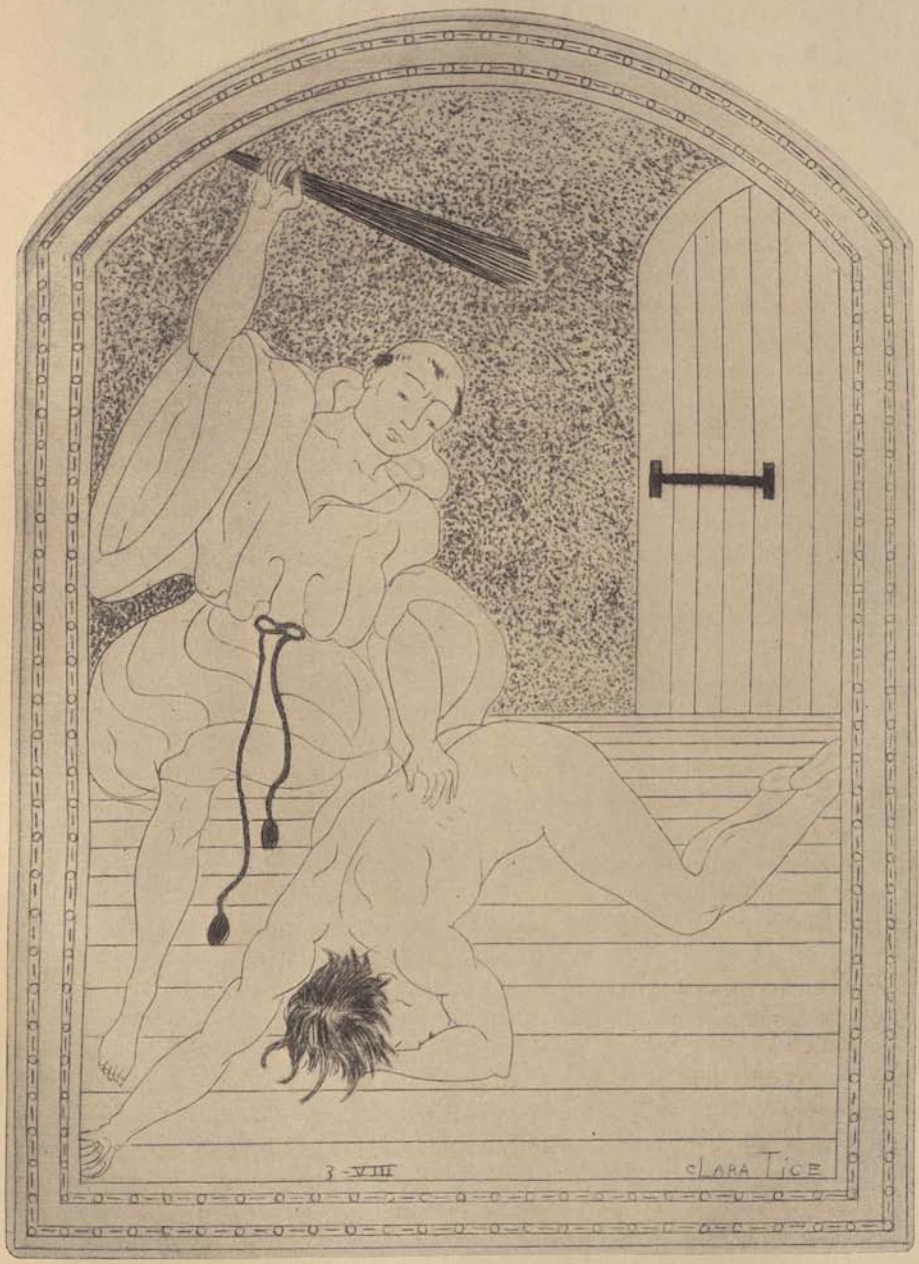
A few days after, Ferondo repaired to the abbey, whom, whenas the abbot saw, he cast about to send him to purgatory. Accordingly, he sought out a powder of marvellous virtue, which he had gotten in the parts of the Levant of a great prince who avouched it to be that which was wont to be used of the Old Man of the Mountain,* whenas he would fain send any one, sleeping, into his paradise or bring him forth thereof, and that, according as more or less thereof was given, without doing any hurt, it made him who took it sleep more or less [time] on such wise that, whilst its virtue lasted, none would say he had life in him. Of this he took as much as might suffice to make

* The well-known chief of the Assassins (properly *Heshashin*, i.e. hashish or hemp eaters). The powder in question is apparently a preparation of hashish or hemp. Boccaccio seems to have taken his idea of the Old Man of the Mountain from Marco Polo, whose travels, published in the early part of the fourteenth century, give a most romantic account of that chieftain and his followers.

a man sleep three days and putting it in a beaker of wine, that was not yet well cleared, gave it to Ferondo to drink in his cell, without the latter suspecting aught; after which he carried him into the cloister and there with some of his monks fell to making sport of him and his dunceries; nor was it long before, the powder working, Ferondo was taken with so sudden and overpowering a drowsiness, that he slumbered as yet he stood afoot and presently fell down fast asleep.

The abbot made a show of being concerned at this accident and letting untruss him, caused fetch cold water and cast it in his face and essay many other remedies of his fashion, as if he would recall the strayed life and senses from [the oppression of] some fumosity of the stomach or what not like affection that had usurped them. The monks, seeing that for all this he came not to himself and feeling his pulse, but finding no sign of life in him, all held it for certain that he was dead. Accordingly, they sent to tell his wife and his kinsfolk, who all came thither forthright, and the lady having bewept him awhile with her kinswomen, the abbot caused lay him, clad as he was, in a tomb; whilst the lady returned to her house and giving out that she meant never to part from a little son, whom she had had by her husband, abode at home and occupied herself with the governance of the child and of the wealth which had been Ferondo's. Meanwhile, the abbot arose stealthily in the night and with the aid of a Bolognese monk, in whom he much trusted and who was that day come thither from Bologna, took up Ferondo out of the tomb and carried him into a vault, in which there was no light to be seen and which had been made for prison of such of the monks as should make default in aught. There they pulled off his garments and clothing him monk-fashion, laid him on a truss of straw and there left him against he should recover his senses, whilst the Bolognese monk, having been instructed by the abbot of that which he had to do, without any else knowing aught thereof, proceeded to await his coming to himself.

On the morrow, the abbot, accompanied by sundry of his monks, betook himself, by way of visitation, to the house of the lady, whom he found clad in black and in great tribulation, and having comforted her awhile, he softly required her of her promise. The lady, finding herself free and unhindered of Ferondo or any other and seeing on his finger another fine ring, replied that she was ready and appointed him to come to her that same night. Accordingly, night come, the abbot, disguised in Ferondo's clothes and accompanied by the monk his confidant, repaired thither and lay with her in the utmost delight and pleasance till the morning, when he returned to the abbey. After



"The monk laid hold of him"

this he very often made the same journey on a like errand and being whiles encountered, coming or going, of one or another of the villagers, it was believed he was Ferondo who went about those parts, doing penance; by reason whereof many strange stories were after bruited about among the simple country-folk, and this was more than once reported to Ferondo's wife, who well knew what it was.

As for Ferondo, when he recovered his senses and found himself he knew not where, the Bolognese monk came in to him with a horrible noise and laying hold of him, gave him a sound drubbing with a rod he had in his hand. Ferondo, weeping and crying out, did nought but ask, 'Where am I?' To which the monk answered, 'Thou art in purgatory.' 'How?' cried Ferondo. 'Am I then dead?' 'Ay, certes,' replied the other; whereupon Ferondo fell to bemoaning himself and his wife and child, saying the oddest things in the world. Presently the monk brought him somewhat of meat and drink, which Ferondo seeing, 'What!' cried he. 'Do the dead eat?' 'Ay do they,' answered the monk. 'This that I bring thee is what the woman, thy wife that was, sent this morning to the church to let say masses for thy soul, and God the Lord willeth that it be made over to thee.' Quoth Ferondo, 'God grant her a good year! I still cherished her ere I died, insomuch that I held her all night in mine arms and did nought but kiss her, and t' other thing also I did, when I had a mind thereto.' Then, being very sharp-set, he fell to eating and drinking and himseeming the wine was not overgood, 'Lord confound her!' quoth he. 'Why did not she give the priest wine of the cask against the wall?'

After he had eaten, the monk laid hold of him anew and gave him another sound beating with the same rod; whereat Ferondo roared out lustily and said, 'Alack, why dost thou this to me?' Quoth the monk, 'Because thus hath God the Lord ordained that it be done unto thee twice every day.' 'And for what cause?' asked Ferondo. 'Because,' answered the monk, 'thou wast jealous, having the best woman in the country to wife.' 'Alas!' said Ferondo. 'Thou sayst sooth, ay, and the kindest creature; she was sweeter than syrup; but I knew not that God the Lord held it for ill that a man should be jealous; else had I not been so.' Quoth the monk, 'Thou shouldst have bethought thyself of that, whenas thou wast there below,* and have amended thee thereof; and should it betide that thou ever return thither, look thou so have in mind that which I do unto thee at this present that thou be nevermore jealous.' 'What?' said Ferondo. 'Do the dead ever return thither?' 'Ay,' answered the monk; 'whom God

* *i.e.* in the sublunary world.

willeth.' 'Marry,' cried Ferondo, 'and I ever return thither, I will be the best husband in the world; I will never beat her nor give her an ill word, except it be anent the wine she sent hither this morning and for that she sent no candles, so it behoved me eat in the dark.' 'Nay,' said the monk, 'she sent candles enough, but they were all burnt for the masses.' 'True,' rejoined Ferondo; 'and assuredly, an I return thither, I will let her do what she will. But tell me, who art thou that usest me thus?' Quoth the monk, 'I also am dead. I was of Sardinia and for that aforetime I much commended a master of mine of being jealous, I have been doomed of God to this punishment, that I must give thee to eat and drink and beat thee thus, till such time as God shall ordain otherwhat of thee and of me.' Then said Ferondo, 'Is there none here other than we twain?' 'Ay,' answered the monk, 'there be folk by the thousand; but thou canst neither see nor hear them, nor they thee.' Quoth Ferondo, 'And how far are we from our own countries?' 'Ecod,' replied the other, 'we are distant thence more miles than we can well cack at a bout.' 'Faith,' rejoined the farmer, 'that is far enough; meseemeth we must be out of the world, an it be so much as all that.'

In such and the like discourse was Ferondo entertained half a score months with eating and drinking and beating, what while the abbot assiduously visited the fair lady, without miscarriage, and gave himself the goodliest time in the world with her. At last, as ill-luck would have it, the lady found herself with child and straightway acquainted the abbot therewith, wherefore it seemed well to them both that Ferondo should without delay be recalled from purgatory to life and return to her, so she might avouch herself with child by him. Accordingly, the abbot that same night caused call to Ferondo in prison with a counterfeit voice, saying, 'Ferondo, take comfort, for it is God's pleasure that thou return to the world, where thou shalt have a son by thy wife, whom look thou name Benedict, for that by the prayers of thy holy abbot and of thy wife and for the love of St. Benedict He doth thee this favour.' Ferondo, hearing this, was exceeding rejoiced and said, 'It liketh me well, Lord grant a good year to Seignior God Almighty and to the abbot and St. Benedict and my cheesy * sweet honey wife.' The abbot let give him, in the wine that

* *Sic* (*casciata*); meaning that he loves her as well as he loves cheese, for which it is well known that the lower-class Italian has a romantic passion. According to Alexandre Dumas, the Italian loves cheese so well that he has succeeded in introducing it into everything he eats or drinks, with the one exception of coffee.

he sent him, so much of the powder aforesaid as should cause him sleep maybe four hours and with the aid of his monk, having put his own clothes on him, restored him privily to the tomb wherein he had been buried.

Next morning, at break of day, Ferondo came to himself and espying light,—a thing which he had not seen for good ten months,—through some crevice of the tomb, doubted not but he was alive again. Accordingly, he fell to bawling out, 'Open to me! Open to me!' and heaving so lustily at the lid of the tomb with his head that he stirred it, for that it was eath to move, and had begun to move it away, when the monks, having now made an end of saying matins, ran thither and knew Ferondo's voice and saw him in act to come forth of the sepulchre; whereupon, all aghast for the strangeness of the case, they took to their heels and ran to the abbot, who made a show of rising from prayer and said, 'My sons, have no fear; take the cross and the holy water and follow after me, so we may see that which God willeth to show forth to us of His might;' and as he said, so he did.

Now Ferondo was come forth of the sepulchre all pale, as well might he be who had so long abidden without seeing the sky. As soon as he saw the abbot, he ran to cast himself at his feet and said, 'Father mine, according to that which hath been revealed to me, your prayers and those of St. Benedict and my wife have delivered me from the pains of purgatory and restored me to life, wherefore I pray God to give you a good year and good calends now and always.' Quoth the abbot, 'Praised be God His might! Go, my son, since He hath sent thee back hither; comfort thy wife, who hath been still in tears, since thou departedst this life, and henceforth be a friend and servant of God.' 'Sir,' replied Feronda, 'so hath it indeed been said to me; only leave me do; for, as soon as I find her, I shall buss her, such goodwill do I bear her.'

The abbot, left alone with his monks, made a great show of wonderment at this miracle and caused devoutly sing Miserere therefor. As for Ferondo, he returned to his village, where all who saw him fled, as men use to do from things frightful; but he called them back and avouched himself to be raised up again. His wife on like wise feigned to be adread of him; but, after the folk were somewhat reassured anent him and saw that he was indeed alive, they questioned him of many things, and he, as it were he had returned wise, made answer to all and gave them news of the souls of their kinsfolk, making up, of his own motion, the finest fables in the world of the

affairs of purgatory and recounting in full assembly the revelation made him by the mouth of the Rangel Bragiel * ere he was raised up again. Then, returning to his house and entering again into possession of his goods, he got his wife, as he thought, with child, and by chance it befell that, in due time,—to the thinking of the fools who believe that women go just nine months with child,—the lady gave birth to a boy, who was called Benedict Ferondi.†

Ferondo's return and his talk, well nigh every one believing him to have risen from the dead, added infinitely to the renown of the abbot's sanctity, and he himself, as if cured of his jealousy by the many beatings he had received therefor, thenceforward, according to the promise made by the abbot to the lady, was no more jealous; whereat she was well pleased and lived honestly with him, as of her wont, save indeed that, whenas she conveniently might, she willingly foregathered with the holy abbot, who had so well and diligently served her in her greatest needs."

THE NINTH STORY

GILLETTE DE NARBONNE RECOVERETH THE KING OF FRANCE OF A FISTULA AND DEMANDETH FOR HER HUSBAND BERTRAND DE ROUSSILLON, WHO MARRIETH HER AGAINST HIS WILL AND BETAKETH HIM FOR DESPITE TO FLORENCE, WHERE, HE PAYING COURT TO A YOUNG LADY, GILLETTE, IN THE PERSON OF THE LATTER, LIETH WITH HIM AND HATH BY HIM TWO SONS; WHEREFORE AFTER, HOLDING HER DEAR, HE ENTERTAINETH HER FOR HIS WIFE

LAURETTA's story being now ended, it rested but with the queen to tell, an she would not infringe upon Dioneo's privilege; wherefore, without waiting to be solicited by her companions, she began all blithesomely to speak thus: "Who shall tell a story that may appear goodly, now we have heard that of Lauretta? Certes, it was well for us that

* *i.e.* the Angel Gabriel.

† The plural of a surname is, in strictness, always used by the Italians in speaking of a man by his full name, *dei* being understood between the Christian and surname, as *Benedetto* (*dei*) *Ferondi*, Benedict of the Ferondos or Ferondo family, whilst, when he is denominated by the surname alone, it is used in the singular, *il* (the) being understood, *e.g.* (Il) Boccaccio, (Il) Ferondo, *i.e.* the particular Boccaccio or Ferondo in question for the nonce.

hers was not the first, for that few of the others would have pleased after it, as I misdoubt me * will betide of those which are yet to tell this day. Natheless, be that as it may, I will e'en recount to you that which occurreth to me upon the proposed theme.

There was in the kingdom of France a gentleman called Isnard, Count of Roussillon, who, for that he was scant of health, still entertained about his person a physician, by name Master Gerard de Narbonne. The said count had one little son, and no more, hight Bertrand, who was exceeding handsome and agreeable, and with him other children of his own age were brought up. Among these latter was a daughter of the aforesaid physician, by name Gillette, who vowed to the said Bertrand an infinite love and fervent more than pertained unto her tender years. The count dying and leaving his son in the hands of the king, it behoved him betake himself to Paris, whereof the damsel abode sore disconsolate, and her own father dying no great while after, she would fain, an she might have had a seemly occasion, have gone to Paris to see Bertrand; but, being straitly guarded, for that she was left rich and alone, she saw no honourable way thereto; and being now of age for a husband and having never been able to forget Bertrand, she had, without reason assigned, refused many to whom her kinsfolk would have married her.

Now it befell that, what while she burned more than ever for love of Bertrand, for that she heard he was grown a very goodly gentleman, news came to her how the King of France, by an imposthume which he had had in his breast and which had been ill tended, had gotten a fistula, which occasioned him the utmost anguish and annoy, nor had he yet been able to find a physician who might avail to recover him thereof, albeit many had essayed it, but all had aggravated the ill; wherefore the king, despairing of cure, would have no more counsel nor aid of any. Hereof the young lady was beyond measure content and bethought herself that not only would this furnish her with a legitimate occasion of going to Paris, but that, should the king's ailment be such as she believed, she might lightly avail to have Bertrand to husband. Accordingly, having aforetime learned many things of her father, she made a powder of certain simples useful for such an infirmity as she conceived the king's to be and taking horse, repaired to Paris.

Before aught else she studied to see Bertrand and next, presenting herself before the king, she prayed him of his favour to show her

* Lit. and so I hope (*spero*), a curious instance of the ancient Dantesque use of the word *spero*, I hope, in its contrary sense of fear.

his ailment. The king, seeing her a fair and engaging damsel, knew not how to deny her and showed her that which ailed him. Whenas she saw it, she was certified incontinent that she could heal it and accordingly said, 'My lord, an it please you, I hope in God to make you whole of this your infirmity in eight days' time, without annoy or fatigue on your part.' The king scoffed in himself at her words, saying, 'That which the best physicians in the world have availed not neither known to do, how shall a young woman know?' Accordingly, he thanked her for her good will and answered that he was resolved no more to follow the counsel of physicians. Whereupon quoth the damsel, 'My lord, you make light of my skill, for that I am young and a woman; but I would have you bear in mind that I medicine not of mine own science, but with the aid of God and the science of Master Gerard de Narbonne, who was my father and a famous physician whilst he lived.'

The king, hearing this, said in himself, 'It may be this woman is sent me of God; why should I not make proof of her knowledge, since she saith she will, without annoy of mine, cure me in little time?' Accordingly, being resolved to essay her, he said, 'Damsel, and if you cure us not, after causing us break our resolution, what will you have ensue to you therefor?' 'My lord,' answered she, 'set a guard upon me and if I cure you not within eight days, let burn me alive; but, if I cure you, what reward shall I have?' Quoth the king, 'You seem as yet unhusbanded; if you do this, we will marry you well and worshipfully.' 'My lord,' replied the young lady, 'I am well pleased that you should marry me, but I will have a husband such as I shall ask of you, excepting always any one of your sons or of the royal house.' He readily promised her that which she sought, whereupon she began her cure and in brief, before the term limited, she brought him back to health.

The king, feeling himself healed, said, 'Damsel, you have well earned your husband;' whereto she answered, 'Then, my lord, I have earned Bertrand de Roussillon, whom I began to love even in the days of my childhood and have ever since loved over all.' The king deemed it a grave matter to give him to her; nevertheless, having promised her and unwilling to fail of his faith, he let call the count to himself and bespoke him thus: 'Bertrand, you are now of age and accomplished [in all that behoveth unto man's estate]; * wherefore

* *Fornito*, a notable example of what the illustrious Lewis Carroll Dodgson, Waywode of Wonderland, calls a "portmanteau-word," a species that abounds in mediæval Italian, for the confusion of translators.

it is our pleasure that you return to govern your county and carry with you a damsel, whom we have given you to wife.' 'And who is the damsel, my lord?' asked Bertrand; to which the king answered, 'It is she who hath with her medicines restored to us our health.'

Bertrand, who had seen and recognized Gillette, knowing her (albeit she seemed to him very fair) to be of no such lineage as sorted with his quality, said all disdainfully, 'My lord, will you then marry me to a she-leach? Now God forbid I should ever take such an one to wife!' 'Then,' said the king, 'will you have us fail of our faith, the which, to have our health again, we pledged to the damsel, who in guerdon thereof demanded you to husband?' 'My lord,' answered Bertrand, 'you may, an you will, take from me whatsoever I possess or, as your liegeman, bestow me upon whoso pleaseth you; but of this I certify you, that I will never be a consenting party unto such a marriage.' 'Nay,' rejoined the king, 'but you shall, for that the damsel is fair and wise and loveth you dear; wherefore we doubt not but you will have a far happier life with her than with a lady of higher lineage.' Bertrand held his peace and the king let make great preparations for the celebration of the marriage.

The appointed day being come, Bertrand, sore against his will, in the presence of the king, espoused the damsel, who loved him more than herself. This done, having already determined in himself what he should do, he sought leave of the king to depart, saying he would fain return to his county and there consummate the marriage; then, taking horse, he repaired not thither, but betook himself into Tuscany, where, hearing that the Florentines were at war with those of Sienna, he determined to join himself to the former, by whom he was joyfully received and made captain over a certain number of men-at-arms; and there, being well provided * of them, he abode a pretty while in their service.

The newly-made wife, ill content with such a lot, but hoping by her fair dealing to recall him to his county, betook herself to Roussillon, where she was received of all as their liege lady. There, finding everything waste and disordered for the long time that the land had been without a lord, with great diligence and solicitude, like a discreet lady as she was, she set all in order again, whereof the count's vassals were mightily content and held her exceeding dear, vowing her a great love and blaming the count sore for that he accepted not of her. The lady, having throughly ordered the county, notified the

* *i.e.* getting good pay and allowances (*avendo buona provisione*).

count thereof by two knights, whom she despatched to him, praying him that, an it were on her account he forbore to come to his county, he should signify it to her and she, to pleasure him, would depart thence; but he answered them very harshly, saying, 'For that, let her do her pleasure; I, for my part, will return thither to abide with her, whenas she shall have this my ring on her finger and in her arms a son by me begotten.' Now the ring in question he held very dear and never parted with it, by reason of a certain virtue which it had been given him to understand that it had.

The knights understood the hardship of the condition implied in these two well nigh impossible requirements, but, seeing that they might not by their words avail to move him from his purpose, they returned to the lady and reported to her his reply; whereat she was sore afflicted and determined, after long consideration, to seek to learn if and where the two things aforesaid might be compassed, to the intent that she might, in consequence, have her husband again. Accordingly, having bethought herself what she should do, she assembled certain of the best and chiefest men of the county and with plaintive speech very orderly recounted to them that which she had already done for love of the count and showed them what had ensued thereof, adding that it was not her intent that, through her sojourn there, the count should abide in perpetual exile; nay, rather she purposed to spend the rest of her life in pilgrimages and works of mercy and charity for her soul's health; wherefore she prayed them take the ward and governance of the county and notify the count that she had left him free and vacant possession and had departed the country, intending nevermore to return to Roussillon. Many were the tears shed by the good folk, whilst she spoke, and many the prayers addressed to her that it would please her change counsel and abide there; but they availed nought. Then, commending them to God, she set out upon her way, without telling any whither she was bound, well furnished with monies and jewels of price and accompanied by a cousin of hers and a chamberwoman, all in pilgrims' habits, and stayed not till she came to Florence, where, chancing upon a little inn, kept by a decent widow woman, she there took up her abode and lived quietly, after the fashion of a poor pilgrim, impatient to hear news of her lord.

It befell, then, that on the morrow of her arrival she saw Bertrand pass before her lodging, a-horseback with his company, and albeit she knew him full well, natheless she asked the good woman of the inn who he was. The hostess answered, 'That is a stranger gentleman, who calleth himself Count Bertrand, a pleasant man and a courteous

and much loved in this city; and he is the most enamoured man in the world of a she-neighbour of ours, who is a gentlewoman, but poor. Sooth to say, she is a very virtuous damsel and abideth, being yet unmarried for poverty, with her mother, a very good and discreet lady, but for whom, maybe, she had already done the count's pleasure.' The countess took good note of what she heard and having more closely enquired into every particular and apprehended all aright, determined in herself how she should do.

Accordingly, having learned the house and name of the lady whose daughter the count loved, she one day repaired privily thither in her pilgrim's habit and finding the mother and daughter in very poor case, saluted them and told the former that, an it pleased her, she would fain speak with her alone. The gentlewoman, rising, replied that she was ready to hearken to her and accordingly carried her into a chamber of hers, where they seated themselves and the countess began thus, 'Madam, meseemeth you are of the enemies of Fortune, even as I am; but, an you will, belike you may be able to relieve both yourself and me.' The lady answered that she desired nothing better than to relieve herself by any honest means; and the countess went on, 'Needs must you pledge me your faith, whereto an I commit myself and you deceive me, you will mar your own affairs and mine.' 'Tell me anything you will in all assurance,' replied the gentlewoman; 'for never shall you find yourself deceived of me.'

Thereupon the countess, beginning with her first enamourment, recounted to her who she was and all that had betided her to that day after such a fashion that the gentlewoman, putting faith in her words and having, indeed, already in part heard her story from others, began to have compassion of her. The countess, having related her adventures, went on to say, 'You have now, amongst my other troubles, heard what are the two things which it behoveth me have, an I would have my husband, and to which I know none who can help me, save only yourself, if that be true which I hear, to wit, that the count my husband is passionately enamoured of your daughter.' 'Madam,' answered the gentlewoman, 'if the count love my daughter I know not; indeed he maketh a great show thereof. But, an it be so, what can I do in this that you desire?' 'Madam,' rejoined the countess, 'I will tell you; but first I will e'en show you what I purpose shall ensue thereof to you, an you serve me. I see your daughter fair and of age for a husband, and according to what I have heard, meseemeth I understand the lack of good to marry her withal it is that causeth you keep her at home. Now I purpose, in requital of the service you shall

do me, to give her forthright of mine own monies such a dowry as you yourself shall deem necessary to marry her honourably.'

The mother, being needy, was pleased with the offer; algates, having the spirit of a gentlewoman, she said, 'Madam, tell me what I can do for you; if it consist with my honour, I will willingly do it, and you shall after do that which shall please you.' Then said the countess, 'It behoveth me that you let tell the count my husband by some one in whom you trust, that your daughter is ready to do his every pleasure, so she may but be certified that he loveth her as he pretendeth, the which she will never believe, except he send her the ring which he carrieth on his finger and by which she hath heard he setteth such store. An he send you the ring, you must give it to me and after send to him to say that your daughter is ready to do his pleasure; then bring him hither in secret and privily put me to bed to him in the stead of your daughter. It may be God will vouchsafe me to conceive and on this wise, having his ring on my finger and a child in mine arms of him begotten, I shall presently regain him and abide with him, as a wife should abide with her husband, and you will have been the cause thereof.'

This seemed a grave matter to the gentlewoman, who feared lest blame should haply ensue thereof to her daughter; nevertheless, bethinking her it were honourably done to help the poor lady recover her husband and that she went about to do this to a worthy end and trusting in the good and honest intention of the countess, she not only promised her to do it, but, before many days, dealing with prudence and secrecy, in accordance with the latter's instructions, she both got the ring (albeit this seemed somewhat grievous to the count) and adroitly put her to bed with her husband, in the place of her own daughter. In these first embracements, most ardently sought of the count, the lady, by God's pleasure, became with child of two sons, as her delivery in due time made manifest. Nor once only, but many times, did the gentlewoman gratify the countess with her husband's embraces, contriving so secretly that never was a word known of the matter, whilst the count still believed himself to have been, not with his wife, but with her whom he loved; and whenas he came to take leave of a morning, he gave her, at one time and another, divers goodly and precious jewels, which the countess laid up with all diligence.

Then, feeling herself with child and unwilling to burden the gentlewoman farther with such an office, she said to her, 'Madam, thanks to God and you, I have gotten that which I desired, wherefore

"With her children in her arms"

it is time that I do that which shall content you and after get me gone hence.' The gentlewoman answered that, if she had gotten that which contented her, she was well pleased, but that she had not done this of any hope of reward, nay, for that herseemed it behoved her to do it, an she would do well. 'Madam,' rejoined the countess, 'that which you say liketh me well and so on my part I purpose not to give you that which you shall ask of me by way of reward, but to do well, for that meseemeth behoveful so to do.' The gentlewoman, then, constrained by necessity, with the utmost shamefastness, asked her an hundred pounds to marry her daughter withal; but the countess, seeing her confusion and hearing her modest demand, gave her five hundred and so many rare and precious jewels as were worth maybe as much more. With this the gentlewoman was far more than satisfied and rendered the countess the best thanks in her power; whereupon the latter, taking leave of her, returned to the inn, whilst the other, to deprive Bertrand of all farther occasion of coming or sending to her house, removed with her daughter into the country to the house of one of her kinsfolk, and he, being a little after recalled by his vassals and hearing that the countess had departed the country, returned to his own house.

The countess, hearing that he had departed Florence and returned to his county, was mightily rejoiced and abode at Florence till her time came to be delivered, when she gave birth to two male children, most like their father, and let rear them with all diligence. Whenas it seemed to her time, she set out and came, without being known of any, to Montpellier, where having rested some days and made enquiry of the count and where he was, she learned that he was to hold a great entertainment of knights and ladies at Roussillon on All Saints' Day and betook herself thither, still in her pilgrim's habit that she was wont to wear. Finding the knights and ladies assembled in the count's palace and about to sit down to table, she went up, with her children in her arms and without changing her dress, into the banqueting hall and making her way between man and man whereas she saw the count, cast herself at his feet and said, weeping, 'I am thine unhappy wife, who, to let thee return and abide in thy house, have long gone wandering miserably about the world. I conjure thee, in the name of God, to accomplish unto me thy promise upon the condition appointed me by the two knights I sent thee; for, behold, here in mine arms is not only one son of thine, but two, and here is thy ring. It is time, then, that I be received of thee as a wife, according to thy promise.'

The count, hearing this, was all confounded and recognized the ring and the children also, so like were they to him; but yet he said, 'How can this have come to pass?' The countess, then, to his exceeding wonderment and that of all others who were present, orderly recounted that which had passed and how it had happened; whereupon the count, feeling that she spoke sooth and seeing her constancy and wit and moreover two such goodly children, as well for the observance of his promise as to pleasure all his liegemen and the ladies, who all besought him thenceforth to receive and honour her as his lawful wife, put off his obstinate despite and raising the countess to her feet, embraced her and kissing her, acknowledged her for his lawful wife and those for his children. Then, letting clothe her in apparel such as beseemed her quality, to the exceeding joyance of as many as were there and of all other his vassals who heard the news, he held high festival, not only all that day, but sundry others, and from that day forth still honoured her as his bride and his wife and loved and tendered her over all."

THE TENTH STORY

ALIBECH, TURNING HERMIT, IS TAUGHT BY RUSTICO, A MONK, TO PUT THE DEVIL IN HELL, AND BEING AFTER BROUGHT AWAY THENCE, BECOMETH NEERBALE HIS WIFE

DIONEO, who had diligently hearkened to the queen's story, seeing that it was ended and that it rested with him alone to tell, without awaiting commandment, smilingly began to speak as follows: "Charming ladies, maybe you have never heard tell how one putteth the devil in hell; wherefore, without much departing from the tenor of that whereof you have discoursed all this day, I will e'en tell it you. Belike, having learned it, you may catch the spirit * thereof and come to know that, albeit Love sojourneth liefer in jocund palaces and luxurious chambers than in the hovels of the poor, yet none the less doth he whiles make his power felt midmost thick forests and rugged mountains and in desert caverns; whereby it may be understood that all things are subject to his puissance.

* *Guadagnare l'anima*, lit. gain the soul (syn. pith, kernel, substance). This passage is ambiguous and should perhaps be rendered "catch the knack or trick" or "acquire the wish."

To come, then, to the fact, I say that in the city of Capsa in Barbary there was aforetime a very rich man, who, among his other children, had a fair and winsome young daughter, by name Alibech. She, not being a Christian and hearing many Christians who abode in the town mightily extol the Christian faith and the service of God, one day questioned one of them in what manner one might avail to serve God with the least hindrance. The other answered that they best served God who most strictly eschewed the things of the world, as those did who had betaken them into the solitudes of the deserts of Thebaïs. The girl, who was maybe fourteen years old and very simple, moved by no ordered desire, but by some childish fancy, set off next morning by stealth and all alone, to go to the desert of Thebaïs, without letting any know her intent. After some days, her desire persisting, she won, with no little toil, to the deserts in question and seeing a hut afar off, went thither and found at the door a holy man, who marvelled to see her there and asked her what she sought. She replied that, being inspired of God, she went seeking to enter into His service and was now in quest of one who should teach her how it behoved to serve Him.

The worthy man, seeing her young and very fair and fearing lest, an he entertained her, the devil should beguile him, commended her pious intent and giving her somewhat to eat of roots of herbs and wild apples and dates and to drink of water, said to her, 'Daughter mine, not far hence is a holy man, who is a much better master than I of that which thou goest seeking; do thou betake thyself to him;' and put her in the way. However, when she reached the man in question, she had of him the same answer and faring farther, came to the cell of a young hermit, a very devout and good man, whose name was Rustico and to whom she made the same request as she had done to the others. He, having a mind to make a trial of his own constancy, sent her not away, as the others had done, but received her into his cell, and the night being come, he made her a little bed of palm-fronds and bade her lie down to rest thereon. This done, temptations tarried not to give battle to his powers of resistance and he, finding himself grossly deceived by these latter, turned tail, without awaiting many assaults, and confessed himself beaten; then, laying aside devout thoughts and orisons and mortifications, he fell to revolving in his memory the youth and beauty of the damsel and bethinking himself what course he should take with her, so as to win to that which he desired of her, without her taking him for a debauched fellow.

Accordingly, having sounded her with sundry questions, he found that she had never known man and was in truth as simple as she seemed; wherefore he bethought him how, under colour of the service of God, he might bring her to his pleasures. In the first place, he showed her with many words how great an enemy the devil was of God the Lord and after gave her to understand that the most acceptable service that could be rendered to God was to put back the devil into hell, whereto He had condemned him. The girl asked him how this might be done; and he, 'Thou shalt soon know that; do thou but as thou shalt see me do.' So saying, he proceeded to put off the few garments he had and abode stark naked, as likewise did the girl, whereupon he fell on his knees, as he would pray, and caused her abide over against himself.

Matters standing thus and Rustico being more than ever inflamed in his desires to see her so fair, there came the resurrection of the flesh, which Alibech observing and marvelling, 'Rustico,' quoth she, 'what is that I see on thee which thrusteth forth thus and which I have not?' 'Faith, daughter mine,' answered he, 'this is the devil whereof I bespoke thee; and see now, he giveth me such sore annoy that I can scarce put up with it.' Then said the girl, 'Now praised be God! I see I fare better than thou, in that I have none of yonder devil.' 'True,' rejoined Rustico; 'but thou hast otherwhat that I have not, and thou hast it instead of this.' 'What is that?' asked Alibech; and he, 'Thou hast hell, and I tell thee methinketh God hath sent thee hither for my soul's health, for that, whenas this devil doth me this annoy, an it please thee have so much compassion on me as to suffer me put him back into hell, thou wilt give me the utmost solacement and wilt do God a very great pleasure and service, so indeed thou be come into these parts to do as thou sayst.'

The girl answered in good faith, 'Marry, father mine, since I have hell, be it whensoever it pleaseth thee;' whereupon quoth Rustico, 'Daughter, blessed be thou; let us go then and put him back there, so he may after leave me in peace.' So saying, he laid her on one of their little beds and taught her how she should do to imprison that accursed one of God. The girl, who had never yet put any devil in hell, for the first time felt some little pain; wherefore she said to Rustico, 'Certes, father mine, this same devil must be an ill thing and an enemy in very deed of God, for that it irketh hell itself, let be otherwhat, when he is put back therein.' 'Daughter,' answered Rustico, 'it will not always happen thus;' and to the end that this should not happen, six times, or ever they stirred from the bed, they

put him in hell again, insomuch that for the nonce they so took the conceit out of his head that he willingly abode at peace. But, it returning to him again and again the ensuing days and the obedient girl still lending herself to take it out of him, it befell that the sport began to please her and she said to Rustico, 'I see now that those good people in Capsa spoke sooth, when they avouched that it was so sweet a thing to serve God; for, certes, I remember me not to have ever done aught that afforded me such pleasance and delight as putting the devil in hell; wherefore methinketh that whoso applieth himself unto aught other than God His service is a fool.'

Accordingly, she came ofttimes to Rustico and said to him, 'Father mine, I came here to serve God and not to abide idle; let us go put the devil in hell.' Which doing, she said whiles, 'Rustico, I know not why the devil fleeth away from hell; for, an he abode there as willingly as hell receiveth him and holdeth him, he would never come forth therefrom.' The girl, then, on this wise often inviting Rustico and exhorting him to the service of God, so took the bombast out of his doublet that he felt cold what time another had sweated; wherefore he fell to telling her that the devil was not to be chastised nor put into hell, save whenas he should lift up his head for pride; 'and we,' added he, 'by God's grace, have so baffled him that he prayeth our Lord to suffer him abide in peace;' and on this wise he for awhile imposed silence on her. However, when she saw that he required her not of putting the devil in hell, she said to him one day, 'Rustico, an thy devil be chastened and give thee no more annoy, my hell letteth me not be; wherefore thou wilt do well to aid me with thy devil in abating the raging of my hell, even as with my hell I have helped thee take the conceit out of thy devil.'

Rustico, who lived on roots and water, could ill avail to answer her calls and told her that it would need overmany devils to appease hell, but he would do what he might thereof. Accordingly he satisfied her bytimes, but so seldom it was but casting a bean into the lion's mouth; whereat the girl, herseeming she served not God as diligently as she would fain have done, murmured somewhat. But, whilst this debate was toward between Rustico his devil and Alibech her hell, for overmuch desire on the one part and lack of power on the other, it befell that a fire broke out in Capsa and burnt Alibech's father in his own house, with as many children and other family as he had; by reason whereof she abode heir to all his good. Thereupon, a young man called Neerbale, who had spent all his substance in gallantry, hearing that she was alive, set out in search of her and finding her,

before the court* had laid hands upon her father's estate, as that of a man dying without heir, to Rustico's great satisfaction, but against her own will, brought her back to Capsa, where he took her to wife and succeeded, in her right, to the ample inheritance of her father.

There, being asked by the women at what she served God in the desert, she answered (Neerbale having not yet lain with her) that she served Him at putting the devil in hell and that Neerbale had done a grievous sin in that he had taken her from such service. The ladies asked, 'How putteth one the devil in hell?' And the girl, what with words and what with gestures, expounded it to them; whereat they set up so great a laughing that they laugh yet and said, 'Give yourself no concern, my child; nay, for that is done here also and Neerbale will serve our Lord full well with thee at this.' Thereafter, telling it from one to another throughout the city, they brought it to a common saying there that the most acceptable service one could render to God was to put the devil in hell, which byword, having passed the sea hither, is yet current here. Wherefore do all you young ladies, who have need of God's grace, learn to put the devil in hell, for that this is highly acceptable to Him and pleasing to both parties and much good may grow and ensue thereof."

A thousand times or more had Dioneo's story moved the modest ladies to laughter, so quaint and comical did his words appear to them; then, whenas he had made an end thereoef, the queen, knowing the term of her sovranty to be come, lifted the laurel from her head and set it merrily on that of Filostrato, saying, "We shall presently see if the wolf will know how to govern the ewes better than the ewes have governed the wolves." Filostrato, hearing this, said, laughing, "An I were hearkened to, the wolves had taught the ewes to put the devil in hell, no worse than Rustico taught Alibech; wherefore do ye not style us wolven, since you yourselves have not been ewen. Algates, I will govern the kingdom committed to me to the best of my power." "Harkye, Filostrato," rejoined Neifile, "in seeking to teach us, you might have chanced to learn sense, even as did Masetto of Lamporecchio of the nuns, and find your tongue what time your bones should have learnt to whistle without a master."

Filostrato, finding that he still got a Roland for his Oliver,† gave

* *i.e.* the government (*corte*).

† Lit. that scythes were no less plenty that he had arrows (*che falci si trovavano non meno che egli avesse strali*), a proverbial expression the exact

over pleasantry and addressed himself to the governance of the kingdom committed to him. Wherefore, letting call the seneschal, he was fain to know at what point things stood all and after discreetly ordained that which he judged would be well and would content the company for such time as his seignory should endure. Then, turning to the ladies, "Lovesome ladies," quoth he, "since I knew good from evil, I have, for my ill fortune, been still subject unto Love for the charms of one or other of you; nor hath humility neither obedience, no, nor the assiduous ensuing him in all his usances, in so far as it hath been known of me, availed me but that first I have been abandoned for another and after have still gone from bad to worse; and so I believe I shall fare unto my death; wherefore it pleaseth me that it be discoursed to-morrow of none other matter than that which is most conformable to mine own case, to wit, OF THOSE WHOSE LOVES HAVE HAD UNHAPPY ENDING, for that I in the long run look for a most unhappy [issue to mine own]; nor was the name by which you call me conferred on me for otherwhat by such an one who knew well what it meant." * So saying, he rose to his feet and dismissed every one until suppertime.

The garden was so goodly and so delightsome that there was none who elected to go forth thereof, in the hope of finding more pleasance elsewhere. Nay, the sun, now grown mild, making it nowise irksome to give chase to the fawns and kids and rabbits and other beasts which were thereabout and which, as they sat, had come maybe an hundred times to disturb them by skipping through their midst, some addressed themselves to pursue them. Dioneo and Fiammetta fell to singing of Messer Guglielmo and the Lady of Vergiu,† whilst Filomena and Pamfilo sat down to chess; and so, some doing one thing and some another, the time passed on such wise that the hour of supper came well nigh unlooked for; whereupon, the tables being set round about the fair fountain, they supped there in the evening with the utmost delight.

As soon as the tables were taken away, Filostrato, not to depart from the course holden of those who had been queens before him, commanded Lauretta to lead up a dance and sing a song. "My lord," answered she, "I know none of other folk's songs, nor have I in mind

bearing of which I do not know, but whose evident sense I have rendered in the equivalent English idiom.

* Syn. what he said (*che si dire*). See ante, Vol. I. p. 21, note.

† Apparently the well-known fabliau of the Dame de Vergy, upon which Marguerite d'Angoulême founded the seventieth story of the Heptameron.

any of mine own which should best beseem so joyous a company; but, an you choose one of those which I have, I will willingly sing it." Quoth the king, "Nothing of thine can be other than goodly and pleasing; wherefore sing us such as thou hast." Lauretta, then, with a sweet voice enough, but in a somewhat plaintive style, began thus, the other ladies answering:

No maid disconsolate
  Hath cause as I, alack!
Who sigh for love in vain, to mourn her fate.

He who moves heaven and all the stars in air
  Made me for His delight
Lovesome and sprightly, kind and debonair,
  E'en here below to give each lofty spright
Some inkling of that fair
  That still in heaven abideth in His sight;
  But erring men's unright,
    Ill knowing me, my worth
      Accepted not, nay, with dispraise did bate.

Erst was there one who held me dear and fain
  Took me, a youngling maid,
Into his arms and thought and heart and brain,
  Caught fire at my sweet eyes; yea, time, unstayed
Of aught, that flits amain
  And lightly, all to wooing me he laid.
  I, courteous, nought gainsaid
    And held * him worthy me;
      But now, woe's me, of him I'm desolate.

Then unto me there did himself present
  A youngling proud and haught,
Renowning him for valorous and gent;
  He took and holds me and with erring thought †
To jealousy is bent;
  Whence I, alack! nigh to despair am wrought,
  As knowing myself,—brought
    Into this world for good
      Of many an one,—engrossed of one sole mate.

* Lit. made (*Di me il feci digno*).
† *i.e.* false suspicion (*falso pensiero*).

The luckless hour I curse, in very deed,
  When I, alas! said yea,
Vesture to change,—so fair in that dusk wede
  I was and glad, whereas in this more gay
A weary life I lead,
  Far less than erst held honest, welaway!
  Ah, dolorous bridal day,
    Would God I had been dead
      Or e'er I proved thee in such ill estate!

O lover dear, with whom well pleased was I
  Whilere past all that be,—
Who now before Him sittest in the sky
  Who fashioned us,—have pity upon me
Who cannot, though I die,
  Forget thee for another; cause me see
  The flame that kindled thee
    For me lives yet unquenched
      And my recall up thither * impetrate.

Here Lauretta made an end of her song, wherein, albeit attentively followed of all, she was diversely apprehended of divers persons, and there were those who would e'en understand, Milan-fashion, that a good hog was better than a handsome wench; † but others were of a loftier and better and truer apprehension, whereof it booteth not to tell at this present. Thereafter the king let kindle store of flambeaux upon the grass and among the flowers and caused sing divers other songs, until every star began to decline, that was above the horizon, when, deeming it time for sleep, he bade all with a good night betake themselves to their chambers.

* *i.e.* to heaven (*e costa su m'impetra la tornata*).

† The pertinence of this allusion, which probably refers to some current Milanese proverbial saying, the word *tosa*, here used by Boccaccio for "wench," belonging to the Lombard dialect, is not very clear. The expression "Milan-fashion" (*alla melanese*) may be supposed to refer to the proverbial materialism of the people of Lombardy.

HERE ENDETH THE THIRD DAY
OF THE DECAMERON

DAY THE FOURTH

HERE BEGINNETH THE FOURTH DAY OF THE DECAMERON WHEREIN UNDER THE GOVERNANCE OF FILOSTRATO IS DISCOURSED OF THOSE WHOSE LOVES HAVE HAD UNHAPPY ENDING

DEAREST ladies, as well by words of wise men heard as by things many a time both seen and read of myself, I had conceived that the boisterous and burning blast of envy was apt to smite none but lofty towers or the highest summits of the trees; but I find myself mistaken in my conceit, for that, fleeing, as I have still studied to flee, from the cruel onslaught of that raging wind, I have striven to go, not only in the plains, but in the very deepest of the valleys, as may manifestly enough appear to whoso considereth these present stories, the which have been written by me, not only in vulgar Florentine and in prose and without [author's] name, but eke in as humble and sober a style as might be. Yet for all this have I not availed to escape being cruelly shaken, nay, well nigh uprooted, of the aforesaid wind and all torn of the fangs of envy; wherefore I can very manifestly understand that to be true which the wise use to say, to wit, that misery alone in things present is without envy.*

There are then, discreet ladies, some who, reading these stories, have said that you please me overmuch and that it is not a seemly thing that I should take so much delight in pleasuring and solacing you; and some have said yet worse of commending you as I do. Others, making a show of wishing to speak more maturely, have said that it sorteth ill with mine age henceforth to follow after things of this kind, to wit, to discourse of women or to study to please them. And many, feigning themselves mighty tender of my repute, avouch that I should do more wisely to abide with the Muses on Parnassus than to busy myself among you with these toys. Again, there be some who, speaking more despitefully than advisedly, have said that I should do more discreetly to consider whence I might get me bread than to go peddling after these baubles, feeding upon wind; and certain others, in disparagement of my pains, study to prove the things recounted by me to have been otherwise than as I present them to you.

* Sic (*senza invidia*); but the meaning is that misery alone is without *enviers*.

With such, then, and so many blusterings,* such atrocious backbitings, such needle-pricks, noble ladies, am I, what while I battle in your service, baffled and buffeted and transfixed even to the quick. The which things, God knoweth, I hear and apprehend with an untroubled mind; and albeit my defence in this pertaineth altogether unto you, natheless, I purpose not to spare mine own pains; nay, without answering so much [at large] as it might behove, I mean to rid mine ears of them with some slight rejoinder, and that without delay; for that if even now, I being not yet come to † the third part of my travail, they ‡ are many and presume amain, I opine that, ere I come to the end thereof, they may, having had no rebuff at the first, on such wise be multiplied that with whatsoever little pains of theirs they might overthrow me, nor might your powers, great though they be, avail to withstand this.

But, ere I come to make answer to any of them, it pleaseth me, in mine own defence, to relate, not an entire story,—lest it should seem I would fain mingle mine own stories with those of so commendable a company as that which I have presented to you,—but a part of one,—that so its very default [of completeness] may attest that it is none of those,—and accordingly, speaking to my assailants, I say that in our city, a good while agone, there was a townsman, by name Filippo Balducci, a man of mean enough extraction, but rich and well addressed and versed in such matters as his condition comported. He had a wife, whom he loved with an exceeding love, as she him, and they lived a peaceful life together, studying nothing so much as wholly to please one another. In course of time it came to pass, as it cometh to pass of all, that the good lady departed this life and left Filippo nought of herself but one only son, begotten of him and maybe two years old. Filippo for the death of his lady abode as disconsolate as ever man might, having lost a beloved one, and seeing himself left alone and forlorn of that company which most he loved, he resolved to be no more of the world, but to give himself altogether to the service of God and do the like with his little son. Wherefore, bestowing all his good for the love of God,§ he repaired without delay to the top of Mount Asinajo, where he took up his abode with his son in a little hut and there living with him upon alms, in the practice of fasts and prayers, straitly guarded himself from discoursing, whereas the boy was, of any temporal thing, neither suffered him see aught thereof, lest this should divert him from the service aforesaid,

* *i.e.* blasts of calumny.

† *i.e.* having not yet accomplished.

‡ *i.e.* my censors.

§ *i.e.* in alms.

but still bespoke him of the glories of life eternal and of God and the saints, teaching him nought but pious orisons; and in this way of life he kept him many years, never suffering him go forth of the hermitage nor showing him aught other than himself.

Now the good man was used to come whiles into Florence, where being succoured, according to his occasions, of the friends of God, he returned to his hut, and it chanced one day that, his son being now eighteen years old and Filippo an old man, the lad asked him whither he went. Filippo told him and the boy said, "Father mine, you are now an old man and can ill endure fatigue; why do you not whiles carry me to Florence and bring me to know the friends and devotees of God and yourself, to the end that I, who am young and better able to toil than you, may after, whenas it pleaseth you, go to Florence for our occasions, whilst you abide here?" The worthy man, considering that his son was now grown to man's estate and thinking him so inured to the service of God that the things of this world might thenceforth uneath allure him to themselves, said in himself, "The lad saith well;" and accordingly, having occasion to go thither, he carried him with him. There the youth, seeing the palaces, the houses, the churches and all the other things whereof one seeth all the city full, began, as one who had never to his recollection beheld the like, to marvel amain and questioned his father of many things what they were and how they were called. Filippo told him and he, hearing him, abode content and questioned of somewhat else.

As they went thus, the son asking and the father answering, they encountered by chance a company of pretty and well-dressed young women, coming from a wedding, whom as soon as the young man saw, he asked his father what manner of things these were. "My son," answered Filippo, "cast your eyes on the ground and look not at them, for that they are an ill thing." Quoth the son, "And how are they called?" The father, not to awaken in the lad's mind a carnal appetite less than useful, would not name them by the proper name, to wit, women, but said, "They are called green geese." Whereupon, marvellous to relate, he who had never seen a woman and who recked not of palaces nor oxen nor horses nor asses nor monies nor of aught else he had seen, said suddenly, "Father mine, I prithee get me one of these green geese." "Alack, my son," replied the father, "hold thy peace; I tell thee they are an ill thing." "How!" asked the youth. "Are ill things then made after this fashion?" and Filippo answered, "Ay." Then said the son, "I know not what you would say nor why these are an ill thing; for my part,

meseemeth I never yet saw aught goodly or pleasing as are these. They are fairer than the painted angels you have shown me whiles. For God's sake, an you reck of me, contrive that we may carry one of yonder green geese back with us up yonder, and I will give it to eat." "Nay," answered the father, "I will not: thou knowest not whereon they feed." And he understand incontinent that nature was stronger than his wit and repented him of having brought the youth to Florence. But I will have it suffice me to have told this much of the present story and return to those for whose behoof I have related it.

Some, then, of my censurers say that I do ill, young ladies, in studying overmuch to please you and that you please me overmuch. Which things I do most openly confess, to wit, that you please me and that I study to please you, and I ask them if they marvel thereat,—considering (let be the having known the dulcet kisses and amorous embracements and delightsome couplings that are of you, most sweet ladies, often gotten) only my having seen and still seeing your dainty manners and lovesome beauty and sprightly grace and above all your womanly courtesy,—whenas he who had been reared and bred on a wild and solitary mountain and within the bounds of a little cell, without other company than his father, no sooner set eyes on you than you alone were desired of him, you alone sought, you alone followed with the eagerness of passion. Will they, then, blame me, backbite me, rend me with their tongues if I, whose body Heaven created all apt to love you, I, who from my childhood vowed my soul to you, feeling the potency of the light of your eyes and the sweetness of your honeyed words and the flame enkindled by your piteous sighs,—if, I say, you please me or if I study to please you, seeing that you over all else pleased a hermitling, a lad without understanding, nay, rather, a wild animal? Certes, it is only those, who, having neither sense nor cognizance of the pleasures and potency of natural affection, love you not nor desire to be loved of you, that chide me thus; and of these I reck little.

As for those who go railing anent mine age, it would seem they know ill that, for all the leek hath a white head, the tail thereof is green. But to these, laying aside pleasantry, I answer that never, no, not to the extreme limit of my life, shall I repute it to myself for shame to seek to please those whom Guido Cavalcanti and Dante Alighieri, when already stricken in years, and Messer Cino da Pistoja, when a very old man, held in honour and whose approof was dear to them. And were it not to depart from the wonted usance of discourse, I would cite history in support and show it to be all full

of stories of ancient and noble men who in their ripest years have still above all studied to please the ladies, the which an they know not, let them go learn. That I should abide with the Muses on Parnassus, I confess to be good counsel; but, since we can neither abide for ever with the Muses, nor they with us, it is nothing blameworthy if, whenas it chanceth a man is parted from them, he take delight in seeing that which is like unto them. The muses are women, and albeit women may not avail to match with them, yet at first sight they have a semblance of them; insomuch that, an they pleased me not for aught else, for this they should please me; more by token that women have aforetime been to me the occasion of composing a thousand verses, whereas the Muses never were to me the occasion of making any. They aided me, indeed, and showed me how to compose the verses in question; and peradventure, in the writing of these present things, all lowly though they be, they have come whiles to abide with me, in token maybe and honour of the likeness that women bear to them; wherefore, in inditing these toys, I stray not so far from Mount Parnassus nor from the Muses as many belike conceive.

But what shall we say to those who have such compassion on my hunger that they counsel me provide myself bread? Certes, I know not, save that, whenas I seek to imagine in myself what would be their answer, an I should of necessity beseech them thereof, to wit, of bread, methinketh they would reply, 'Go seek it among thy fables.' Indeed, aforetime poets have found more thereof among their fables than many a rich man among his treasures, and many, following after their fables, have caused their age to flourish; whereas, on the contrary, many, in seeking to have more bread than they needed, have perished miserably. What more [shall I say?] Let them drive me forth, whenas I ask it of them, not that, God-a-mercy, I have yet need thereof; and even should need betide, I know with the Apostle Paul both how to abound and suffer need; * wherefore let none be more careful of me than I am of myself. For those who say that these things have not been such as I have here set them down, I would fain have them produce the originals, and an these latter accord not with that of which I write, I will confess their objection for just and will study to amend myself; but, till otherwhat than words appeareth, I will leave them to their opinion and follow mine own, saying of them that which they say of me.

* "I know both how to be abased and I know how to abound; everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and suffer need."—*Philippians* iv. 12.

Wherefore, deeming that for the nonce I have answered enough, I say that, armed, as I hope to be, with God's aid and yours, gentlest ladies, and with fair patience, I will fare on with this that I have begun, turning my back to the wind aforesaid and letting it blow, for that I see not that aught can betide me other than that which betideth thin dust, the which a whirlwind, whenas it bloweth, either stirreth not from the earth, or, an it stir it, carrieth it aloft and leaveth it oftentimes upon the heads of men and upon the crowns of kings and emperors, nay, bytimes upon high palaces and lofty towers, whence an it fall, it cannot go lower than the place wherefrom it was uplifted. And if ever with all my might I vowed myself to seek to please you in aught, now more than ever shall I address myself thereto; for that I know none can with reason say otherwhat than that I and others who love you do according to nature, whose laws to seek to gainstand demandeth overgreat strength, and oftentimes not only in vain, but to the exceeding hurt of whoso striveth to that end, is this strength employed. Such strength I confess I have not nor ever desired in this to have; and an I had it, I had liefer lend it to others than use it for myself. Wherefore, let the carpers be silent and an they avail not to warm themselves, let them live star-stricken * and abiding in their delights—or rather their corrupt appetites,—leave me to abide in mine for this brief life that is appointed me. But now, fair ladies, for that we have strayed enough, needs must we return whence we set out and ensue the ordinance commenced.

The sun had already banished every star from the sky and had driven from the earth the humid vapours of the night, when Filostrato, arising, caused all his company arise and with them betook himself to the fair garden, where they all proceeded to disport themselves, and the eating-hour come, they dined whereas they had supped on the foregoing evening. Then, after having slept, what time the sun was at its highest, they seated themselves, after the wonted fashion, hard by the fair fountain, and Filostrato bade Fiammetta give beginning to the story-telling; whereupon, without awaiting further commandment, she began with womanly grace as follows:

* *i.e.* benumbed (*assiderati*).

THE FIRST STORY

TANCRED, PRINCE OF SALERNO, SLAYETH HIS DAUGHTER'S LOVER AND SENDETH HER HIS HEART IN A BOWL OF GOLD; WHEREUPON, POURING POISONED WATER OVER IT, SHE DRINKETH THEREOF AND DIETH

"OUR king hath this day appointed us a woeful subject of discourse, considering that, whereas we came hither to make merry, needs must we tell of others' tears, the which may not be recounted without moving both those who tell and those who hearken to compassion thereof. He hath mayhap done this somedele to temper the mirth of the foregoing days; but, whatsoever may have moved him thereto, since it pertaineth not to me to change his pleasure, I will relate a piteous chance, nay, an ill-fortuned and a worthy of your tears.

Tancred, Lord of Salerno, was a humane prince and benign enough of nature, (had he not in his old age imbrued his hands in lovers' blood), who in all the course of his life had but one daughter, and happier had he been if he had none. She was of him as tenderly loved as ever daughter of father, and knowing not, by reason of this his tender love for her, how to part with her, he married her not till she had long overpassed the age when she should have had a husband. At last, he gave her to wife to a son of the Duke of Capua, with whom having abidden a little while, she was left a widow and returned to her father. Now she was most fair of form and favour, as ever was woman, and young and sprightly and learned perchance more than is required of a lady. Abiding, then, with her father in all ease and luxury, like a great lady as she was, and seeing that, for the love he bore her, he recked little of marrying her again, nor did it seem to her a seemly thing to require him thereof, she bethought herself to seek, an it might be, to get her privily a worthy lover. She saw men galore, gentle and simple, frequent her father's court, and considering the manners and fashions of many, a young serving man of her father's, Guiscardo by name, a man of humble enough extraction, but nobler of worth and manners than whatsoever other, pleased her over all and of him, seeing him often, she became in secret ardently enamoured, approving more and more his fashions every hour; whilst the young man, who was no dullard, perceiving her liking for him, received her into his heart, on such wise that his mind

was thereby diverted from well nigh everything other than the love of her.

Each, then, thus secretly tendering the other, the young lady, who desired nothing so much as to foregather with him, but had no mind to make any one a confidant of her passion, bethought herself of a rare device to apprize him of the means; to wit, she wrote him a letter, wherein she showed him how he should do to foregather with her on the ensuing day, and placing it in the hollow of a cane, gave the latter jestingly to Guiscardo, saying, 'Make thee a bellows thereof for thy serving-maid, wherewith she may blow up the fire to-night.' Guiscardo took the cane and bethinking himself that she would not have given it him nor spoken thus, without some cause, took his leave and returned therewith to his lodging. There he examined the cane and seeing it to be cleft, opened it and found therein the letter, which having read and well apprehended that which he had to do, he was the joyfullest man alive and set about taking order how he might go to her, according to the fashion appointed him of her.

There was, beside the prince's palace, a grotto hewn out of the rock and made in days long agone, and to this grotto some little light was given by a tunnel * by art wrought in the mountain, which latter, for that the grotto was abandoned, was well nigh blocked at its mouth with briers and weeds that had overgrown it. Into this grotto one might go by a privy stair which was in one of the ground floor rooms of the lady's apartment in the palace and which was shut in by a very strong door. This stair was so out of all folk's minds, for that it had been unused from time immemorial, that well nigh none remembered it to be there; but Love, to whose eyes there is nothing so secret but it winneth, had recalled it to the memory of the enamoured lady, who, that none should get wind of the matter, had laboured sore many days with such tools as she might command, ere she could make shift to open the door; then, going down alone thereby into the grotto and seeing the tunnel, she sent to bid Guiscardo study to come to her thereby and acquainted him with the height which herseemed should be from the mouth thereof to the ground.

To this end Guiscardo promptly made ready a rope with certain knots and loops, whereby he might avail to descend and ascend, and donning a leathern suit, that should defend him from the briers, he on the ensuing night repaired, without letting any know aught of the matter, to the mouth of the tunnel. There making one end of the

* Or airshaft (*spiraglio*).

rope fast to a stout tree-stump that had grown up in the mouth, he let himself down thereby into the grotto and there awaited the lady, who, on the morrow, feigning a desire to sleep, dismissed her women and shut herself up alone in her chamber; then, opening the privy door, she descended into the grotto, where she found Guiscardo. They greeted one another with marvellous joy and betook themselves to her chamber, where they abode great part of the day in the utmost delight; and after they had taken order together for the discreet conduct of their loves, so they might abide secret, Guiscardo returned to the grotto, whilst she shut the privy door and went forth to her women. The night come, Guiscardo climbed up by his rope to the mouth of the tunnel and issuing forth whence he had entered in, returned to his lodging; and having learned this road, he in process of time returned thither many times after.

But fortune, jealous of so long and so great a delight, with a woeful chance changed the gladness of the two lovers into mourning and sorrow; and it befell on this wise. Tancred was wont to come bytimes all alone into his daughter's chamber and there abide with her and converse awhile and after go away. Accordingly, one day, after dinner, he came thither, what time the lady (whose name was Ghismonda) was in a garden of hers with all her women, and willing not to take her from her diversion, he entered her chamber, without being seen or heard of any. Finding the windows closed and the curtains let down over the bed, he sat down in a corner on a hassock at the bedfoot and leant his head against the bed; then, drawing the curtain over himself, as if he had studied to hide himself there, he fell asleep. As he slept thus, Ghismonda, who, as ill chance would have it, had appointed her lover to come thither that day, softly entered the chamber, leaving her women in the garden, and having shut herself in, without perceiving that there was some one there, opened the secret door to Guiscardo, who awaited her. They straightway betook themselves to bed, as of their wont, and what while they sported and solaced themselves together, it befell that Tancred awoke and heard and saw that which Guiscardo and his daughter did; whereat beyond measure grieved, at first he would have cried out at them, but after bethought himself to keep silence and abide, an he might, hidden, so with more secrecy and less shame to himself he might avail to do that which had already occurred to his mind.

The two lovers abode a great while together, according to their usance, without observing Tancred, and coming down from the bed, whenas it seemed to them time, Guiscardo returned to the grotto and

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she departed the chamber; whereupon Tancred, for all he was an old man, let himself down into the garden by a window and returned, unseen of any, to his own chamber, sorrowful unto death. That same night, at the time of the first sleep, Guiscardo, by his orders, was seized by two men, as he came forth of the tunnel, and carried secretly, trussed as he was in his suit of leather, to Tancred, who, whenas he saw him, said, well nigh weeping, 'Guiscardo, my kindness to thee merited not the outrage and the shame thou hast done me in mine own flesh and blood, as I have this day seen with my very eyes.' Whereto Guiscardo answered nothing but this, 'Love can far more than either you or I.' Tancred then commanded that he should be kept secretly under guard and in one of the chambers of the palace, and so was it done.

On the morrow, having meanwhile revolved in himself many and divers devices, he betook himself, after eating, as of his wont, to his daughter's chamber and sending for the lady, who as yet knew nothing of these things, shut himself up with her and proceeded, with tears in his eyes, to bespeak her thus: 'Ghismonda, meseemed I knew thy virtue and thine honesty, nor might it ever have occurred to my mind, though it were told me, had I not seen it with mine own eyes, that thou wouldst, even so much as in thought, have abandoned thyself to any man, except he were thy husband; wherefore in this scant remnant of life that my eld reserveth unto me, I shall still abide sorrowful, remembering me of this. Would God, an thou must needs stoop to such wantonness, thou hadst taken a man sortable to thy quality! But, amongst so many who frequent my court, thou hast chosen Guiscardo, a youth of the meanest condition, reared in our court, well nigh of charity, from a little child up to this day; wherefore thou hast put me in sore travail of mind, for that I know not what course to take with thee. With Guiscardo, whom I caused take yesternight, as he issued forth of the tunnel, and have in ward, I am already resolved how to deal; but with thee God knoweth I know not what to do. On one side love draweth me, which I have still borne thee more than father ever bore daughter, and on the other most just despite, conceived for thine exceeding folly; the one would have me pardon thee, the other would have me, against my nature, deal harshly by thee. But, ere I come to a decision, I would fain hear what thou hast to say to this.' So saying, he bowed his head and wept sore as would a beaten child.

Ghismonda, hearing her father's words and seeing that not only was her secret love discovered, but Guiscardo taken, felt an inexpres-

sible chagrin and came many a time near upon showing it with outcry and tears, as women mostly do; nevertheless, her haughty soul overmastering that weakness, with marvellous fortitude she composed her countenance and rather than proffer any prayer for herself, determined inwardly to abide no more on life, doubting not but her Guiscardo was already dead. Wherefore, not as a woman rebuked and woeful for her default, but as one undaunted and valiant, with dry eyes and face open and nowise troubled, she thus bespoke her father: 'Tancred, I purpose neither to deny nor to entreat, for that the one would profit me nothing nor would I have the other avail me; more by token that I am nowise minded to seek to render thy mansuetude and thine affection favourable to me, but rather, confessing the truth, first with true arguments to vindicate mine honour and after with deeds right resolutely to ensue the greatness of my soul. True is it I have loved and love Guiscardo, and what while I live, which will be little, I shall love him, nor, if folk live after death, shall I ever leave loving him; but unto this it was not so much my feminine frailty that moved me as thy little solicitude to remarry me and his own worth.

It should have been manifest to thee, Tancred, being as thou art of flesh and blood, that thou hadst begotten a daughter of flesh and blood and not of iron or stone; and thou shouldst have remembered and should still remember, for all thou art old, what and what like are the laws of youth and with what potency they work; nor, albeit thou, being a man, hast in thy best years exercised thyself in part in arms, shouldst thou the less know what ease and leisure and luxury can do in the old, to say nothing of the young. I am, then, as being of thee begotten, of flesh and blood and have lived so little that I am yet young and (for the one and the other reason) full of carnal desire, whereunto the having aforetime, by reason of marriage, known what pleasure it is to give accomplishment to such desire hath added marvellous strength. Unable, therefore, to withstand the strength of my desires, I addressed myself, being young and a woman, to ensue that whereto they prompted me and became enamoured. And certes in this I set my every faculty to the endeavouring that, so far as in me lay, no shame should ensue either to thee or to me through this to which natural frailty moved me. To this end compassionate Love and favouring Fortune found and showed me a very occult way, whereby, unknown of any, I won to my desire, and this, whoever it be discovered it to thee or howsoever thou knowest it, I nowise deny.

Guiscardo I took not at hazard, as many women do; nay, of de-

liberate counsel I chose him before every other and with advisement prepense drew him to me * and by dint of perseverance and discretion on my part and on his, I have long had enjoyment of my desire. Whereof it seemeth that thou, ensuing rather vulgar prejudice than truth, reproachest me with more bitterness than of having sinned by way of love, saying (as if thou shouldst not have been chagrined, had I chosen therefor a man of gentle birth,) that I have committed myself with a man of mean condition. Wherein thou seest not that thou blamest not my default, but that of fortune, which too often advanceth the unworthy to high estate, leaving the worthiest alow.

But now let us leave this and look somewhat to the first principles of things, whereby thou wilt see that we all get our flesh from one same stock and that all souls were by one same Creator created with equal faculties, equal powers and equal virtues. Worth it was that first distinguished between us, who were all and still are born equal; wherefore those who had and used the greatest sum thereof were called noble and the rest abode not noble. And albeit contrary usance hath since obscured this primary law, yet is it nowise done away nor blotted out from nature and good manners; wherefore he who doth worthily manifestly showeth himself a gentleman, and if any call him otherwise, not he who is called, but he who calleth committeth default. Look among all thy gentlemen and examine into their worth, their usances and their manners, and on the other hand consider those of Guiscardo; if thou wilt consent to judge without animosity, thou wilt say that he is most noble and that these thy nobles are all churls. With regard to his worth and virtue, I trusted not to the judgment of any other, but to that of thy words and of mine own eyes. Who ever so commended him as thou didst in all those praiseworthy things wherefor a man of worth should be commended? And certes not without reason; for, if mine eyes deceived me not, there was no praise given him of thee which I saw him not justify by deeds, and that more admirably than thy words availed to express; and even had I suffered any deceit in this, it is by thyself I should have been deceived. An, then, thou say that I have committed myself with a man of mean condition, thou sayst not sooth; but shouldst thou say with a poor man, it might peradventure be conceded thee, to thy shame who hast so ill known to put a servant of thine and a man of worth in good case; yet poverty bereaveth not any of gentilesse; nay, rather, wealth it is that doth this. Many kings,

* Lit. introduced him to me (*a me lo 'ntrodussi*); but Boccaccio here uses the word *introdurre* in its rarer literal sense to lead, to draw, to bring in.

many great princes were once poor and many who delve and tend sheep were once very rich.

The last doubt that thou broachest, to wit, what thou shouldst do with me, drive it away altogether; an thou in thine extreme old age be disposed to do that which thou usedst not, being young, namely, to deal cruelly, wreak thy cruelty upon me, who am minded to proffer no prayer unto thee, as being the prime cause of this sin, if sin it be; for of this I certify thee, that whatsoever thou hast done or shalt do with Guiscardo, an thou do not the like with me, mine own hands shall do it. Now begone; go shed tears with women and waxing cruel, slay him and me with one same blow, an it seem to thee we have deserved it.'

The prince knew the greatness of his daughter's soul, but notwithstanding believed her not altogether so firmly resolved as she said unto that which her words gave out. Wherefore, taking leave of her and having laid aside all intent of using rigour against her person, he thought to cool her fervent love with others' suffering and accordingly bade Guiscardo's two guardians strangle him without noise that same night and taking out his heart, bring it to him. They did even as it was commanded them, and on the morrow the prince let bring a great and goodly bowl of gold and setting therein Guiscardo's heart, despatched it to his daughter by the hands of a very privy servant of his, bidding him say, whenas he gave it her, 'Thy father sendeth thee this, to solace thee of the thing thou most lovest, even as thou hast solaced him of that which he loved most.'

Now Ghismonda, unmoved from her stern purpose, had, after her father's departure, let bring poisonous herbs and roots and distilled and reduced them in water, so she might have it at hand, an that she feared should come to pass. The serving-man coming to her with the prince's present and message, she took the cup with a steadfast countenance and uncovered it. Whenas she saw the heart and apprehended the words of the message, she was throughly certified that this was Guiscardo's heart and turning her eyes upon the messenger, said to him, 'No sepulchre less of worth than one of gold had beseemed a heart such as this; and in this my father hath done discreetly.' So saying, she set the heart to her lips and kissing it, said, 'Still in everything and even to this extreme limit of my life have I found my father's love most tender towards me; but now more than ever; wherefore do thou render him on my part for so great a gift the last thanks I shall ever have to give him.'

Then, bending down over the cup, which she held fast, she said,

looking upon the heart, 'Alack, sweetest harbourage of all my pleasures, accursed be his cruelty who maketh me now to see thee with the eyes of the body! Enough was it for me at all hours to behold thee with those of the mind. Thou hast finished thy course and hast acquitted thyself on such wise as was vouchsafed thee of fortune; thou art come to the end whereunto each runneth; thou hast left the toils and miseries of the world, and of thy very enemy thou hast that sepulchre which thy worth hath merited. There lacked nought to thee to make thy funeral rites complete save her tears whom in life thou so lovedst, the which that thou mightest have, God put it into the heart of my unnatural father to send thee to me, and I will give them to thee, albeit I had purposed to die with dry eyes and visage undismayed of aught; and having given them to thee, I will without delay so do that my soul, thou working it,* shall rejoin that soul which thou erst so dearly guardedst. And in what company could I betake me more contentedly or with better assurance to the regions unknown than with it? † Certain am I that it abideth yet herewithin ‡ and vieweth the seats of its delights and mine and as that which I am assured still loveth me, awaiteth my soul, whereof it is over all beloved.'

So saying, no otherwise than as she had a fountain of water in her head, bowing herself over the bowl, without making any womanly outcry, she began, lamenting, to shed so many and such tears that they were a marvel to behold, kissing the dead heart the while an infinite number of times. Her women, who stood about her, understood not what this heart was nor what her words meant, but, overcome with compassion, wept all and in vain questioned her affectionately of the cause of her lament and studied yet more, as best they knew and might, to comfort her. The lady, having wept as much as herseemed fit, raised her head and drying her eyes, said, 'O much-loved heart, I have accomplished mine every office towards thee, nor is there left me aught else to do save to come with my soul and bear thine company.' So saying, she called for the vial wherein was the water she had made the day before and poured the latter into the bowl where was the heart bathed with so many of her tears; then, setting her mouth thereto without any fear, she drank it all off and having drunken, mounted, with the cup in her hand, upon the bed, where

* *i.e.* thou being the means of bringing about the conjunction (*adoperandol tu*).

† *i.e.* Guiscardo's soul.

‡ *i.e.* in the heart.

composing her body as most decently she might, she pressed her dead lover's heart to her own and without saying aught, awaited death.

Her women, seeing and hearing all this, albeit they knew not what water this was she had drunken, had sent to tell Tancred everything, and he, fearing that which came to pass, came quickly down into his daughter's chamber, where he arrived what time she laid herself on her bed and addressed himself too late to comfort her with soft words; but, seeing the extremity wherein she was, he fell a-weeping grievously; whereupon quoth the lady to him, 'Tancred, keep these tears against a less desired fate than this of mine and give them not to me, who desire them not. Who ever saw any, other than thou, lament for that which he himself hath willed? Nevertheless, if aught yet live in thee of the love which once thou borest me, vouchsafe me for a last boon that, since it was not thy pleasure that I should privily and in secret live with Guiscardo, my body may openly abide with his, whereassoever thou hast caused cast him dead.' The agony of his grief suffered not the prince to reply; whereupon the young lady, feeling herself come to her end, strained the dead heart to her breast and said, 'Abide ye with God, for I go hence.' Then, closing her eyes and losing every sense, she departed this life of woe. Such, then, as you have heard, was the sorrowful ending of the loves of Guiscardo and Ghismonda, whose bodies Tancred, after much lamentation, too late repenting him of his cruelty, caused honourably bury in one same sepulchre, amid the general mourning of all the people of Salerno."

THE SECOND STORY

FRA ALBERTO GIVETH A LADY TO BELIEVE THAT THE ANGEL GABRIEL IS ENAMOURED OF HER AND IN HIS SHAPE LIETH WITH HER SUNDRY TIMES; AFTER WHICH, FOR FEAR OF HER KINSMEN, HE CASTETH HIMSELF FORTH OF HER WINDOW INTO THE CANAL AND TAKETH REFUGE IN THE HOUSE OF A POOR MAN, WHO ON THE MORROW CARRIETH HIM, IN THE GUISE OF A WILD MAN OF THE WOODS, TO THE PIAZZA, WHERE, BEING RECOGNIZED, HE IS TAKEN BY HIS BRETHREN AND PUT IN PRISON

THE story told by Fiammetta had more than once brought the tears to the eyes of the ladies her companions; but, it being now finished, the king with a stern countenance said, "My life would seem to me a little price to give for half the delight that Guiscardo had with

Ghismonda, nor should any of you ladies marvel thereat, seeing that every hour of my life I suffer a thousand deaths, nor for all that is a single particle of delight vouchsafed me. But, leaving be my affairs for the present, it is my pleasure that Pampinea follow on the order of the discourse with some story of woeful chances and fortunes in part like to mine own; which if she ensue like as Fiammetta hath begun, I shall doubtless begin to feel some dew fallen upon my fire." Pampinea, hearing the order laid upon her, more by her affection apprehended the mind of the ladies her companions than that of Filostrato by his words,* wherefore, being more disposed to give them some diversion than to content the king, farther than in the mere letter of his commandment, she bethought herself to tell a story, that should, without departing from the proposed theme, give occasion for laughter, and accordingly began as follows:

"The vulgar have a proverb to the effect that he who is naught and is held good may do ill and it is not believed of him; the which affordeth me ample matter for discourse upon that which hath been proposed to me and at the same time to show what and how great is the hypocrisy of the clergy, who, with garments long and wide and faces paled by art and voices humble and meek to solicit the folk, but exceeding loud and fierce to rebuke in others their own vices, pretend that themselves by taking and others by giving to them come to salvation, and to boot, not as men who have, like ourselves, to purchase paradise, but as in a manner they were possessors and lords thereof,

* *i.e.* was more inclined to consider the wishes of the ladies her companions, which she divined by sympathy, than those of Filostrato, as shown by his words (*più per la sua affezione cognobbe l'animo delle campagne che quello del re per le sue parole*). It is difficult, however, in this instance as in many others, to discover with certainty Boccaccio's exact meaning, owing to his affectation of Ciceronian concision and delight in obscure elliptical forms of construction; whilst his use of words in a remote or unfamiliar sense and the impossibility of deciding, in certain cases, the person of the pronouns and adjectives employed tend still farther to darken counsel. *E.g.*, if we render *affezione* sentiment, *cognobbe* (as *riconobbe*) acknowledged, recognized, and read *le sue parole* as meaning *her* (instead of *his*) words, the whole sense of the passage is changed, and we must read it "more by her sentiment (*i.e.* by the tendency and spirit of her story) recognized the inclination of her companions than that of the king by her [actual] words." I have commented thus at large on this passage, in order to give my readers some idea of the difficulties which at every page beset the translator of the Decameron and which make Boccaccio perhaps the most troublesome of all authors to render into representative English.

assign unto each who dieth, according to the sum of the monies left them by him, a more or less excellent place there, studying thus to deceive first themselves, an they believe as they say, and after those who put faith for that matter in their words. Anent whom, were it permitted me to discover as much as it behoved, I would quickly make clear to many simple folk that which they keep hidden under those huge wide gowns of theirs. But would God it might betide them all of their cozening tricks, as it betided a certain minor friar, and he no youngling, but held one of the first casuists * in Venice; of whom it especially pleaseth me to tell you, so as peradventure somewhat to cheer your hearts, that are full of compassion for the death of Ghismonda, with laughter and pleasance.

There was, then, noble ladies, in Imola, a man of wicked and corrupt life, who was called Berto della Massa and whose lewd fashions, being well known of the Imolese, had brought him into such ill savour with them that there was none in the town who would credit him, even when he said sooth; wherefore, seeing that his shifts might no longer stand him in stead there, he removed in desperation to Venice, the receptacle of every kind of trash, thinking to find there new means of carrying on his wicked practices. There, as if conscience-stricken for the evil deeds done by him in the past, feigning himself overcome with the utmost humility and waxing devouter than any man alive, he went and turned Minor Friar and styled himself Fra Alberto da Imola; in which habit he proceeded to lead, to all appearance, a very austere life, greatly commending abstinence and mortification and never eating flesh nor drinking wine, whenas he had not thereof that which was to his liking. In short, scarce was any ware of him when from a thief, a pimp, a forger, a manslayer, he suddenly became a great preacher, without having for all that forsworn the vices aforesaid, whenas he might secretly put them in practice. Moreover, becoming a priest, he would still, whenas he celebrated mass at the altar, an he were seen of many, beweep our Saviour's passion, as one whom tears cost little, whenas he willed it. Brief, what with his preachings and his tears, he contrived on such wise to

* Lit. of those who *was* held of the greatest casuists (*di quelli che de' maggior cassesi era tenuto*). This is another very obscure passage. The meaning of the word *cassesi* is unknown and we can only guess it to be a dialectic (probably Venetian) corruption of the word *casisti* (casuists). The Giunta edition separates the word thus, *casse si*, making *si* a mere corroborative prefix to *era*, but I do not see how the alteration helps us, the word *casse* (chests, boxes) being apparently meaningless in this connection.

inveigle the Venetians that he was trustee and depositary of well nigh every will made in the town and guardian of many folks' monies, besides being confessor and counsellor of the most part of the men and women of the place; and doing thus, from wolf he was become shepherd and the fame of his sanctity was far greater in those parts than ever was that of St. Francis at Assisi.

It chanced one day that a vain simple young lady, by name Madam Lisetta da Ca * Quirino, wife of a great merchant who was gone with the galleys into Flanders, came with other ladies to confess to this same holy friar, at whose feet kneeling and having, like a true daughter of Venice as she was (where the women are all feather-brained), told him part of her affairs, she was asked of him if she had a lover. Whereto she answered, with an offended air, 'Good lack, sir friar, have you no eyes in your head? Seem my charms to you such as those of yonder others? I might have lovers and to spare, an I would; but my beauties are not for this one nor that. How many women do you see whose charms are such as mine, who would be fair in Paradise?' Brief, she said so many things of this beauty of hers that it was a weariness to hear. Fra Alberto incontinent perceived that she savoured of folly and himseeming she was a fit soil for his tools, he fell suddenly and beyond measure in love with her; but, reserving blandishments for a more convenient season, he proceeded, for the nonce, so he might show himself a holy man, to rebuke her and tell her that this was vainglory and so forth. The lady told him he was an ass and knew not what one beauty was more than another, whereupon he, unwilling to vex her overmuch, took her confession and let her go away with the others.

He let some days pass, then, taking with him a trusty companion of his, he repaired to Madam Lisetta's house and withdrawing with her into a room apart, where none might see him, he fell on his knees before her and said, 'Madam, I pray you for God's sake pardon me that which I said to you last Sunday, whenas you bespoke me of your beauty, for that the following night I was so cruelly chastised therefor that I have not since been able to rise from my bed till to-day.' Quoth Mistress Featherbrain, 'And who chastised you thus?' 'I will tell you,' replied the monk. 'Being that night at my orisons, as I still use to be, I saw of a sudden a great light in my cell and ere I could turn me to see what it might be, I beheld over against me a very fair youth with a stout cudgel in his hand, who took me by the gown and

* Venetian contraction of *Casa*, house. Da Ca Quirino, of the Quirino house or family.

dragging me to my feet, gave me such a drubbing that he broke every bone in my body. I asked him why he used me thus and he answered, "For that thou presumedst to-day to disparage the celestial charms of Madam Lisetta, whom I love over all things, save only God." "Who, then, are you?" asked I; and he replied that he was the angel Gabriel. "O my lord," said I, "I pray you pardon me;" and he, "So be it; I pardon thee on condition that thou go to her, as first thou mayst, and get her pardon; but, if she pardon thee not, I will return to thee and give thee such a bout of it that I will make thee a woeful man for all the time thou shalt live here below." That which he said to me after I dare not tell you, except you first pardon me.'

My Lady Addlepate, who was somewhat scant of wit, was overjoyed to hear this, taking it all for gospel, and said, after a little, 'I told you, Fra Alberto, that my charms were celestial; but, so God be mine aid, it irketh me for you and I will pardon you forthright, so you may come to no more harm, provided you tell me truly that which the angel said to you after.' 'Madam,' replied Fra Alberto, 'since you pardon me, I will gladly tell it you; but I must warn you of one thing, to wit, that whatever I tell you, you must have a care not to repeat it to any one alive, an you would not mar your affairs, for that you are the luckiest lady in the world. The angel Gabriel bade me tell you that you pleased him so much that he had many a time come to pass the night with you, but that he feared to affright you. Now he sendeth to tell you by me that he hath a mind to come to you one night and abide awhile with you and (for that he is an angel and that, if he came in angel-form, you might not avail to touch him,) he purposeth, for your delectation, to come in guise of a man, wherefore he biddeth you send to tell him when you would have him come and in whose form, and he will come hither; whereof you may hold yourself blest over any other lady alive.'

My Lady Conceit answered that it liked her well that the angel Gabriel loved her, seeing she loved him well nor ever failed to light a candle of a groat before him, whereas she saw him depictured, and that what time soever he chose to come to her, he should be dearly welcome and would find her all alone in her chamber, but on this condition, that he should not leave her for the Virgin Mary, whose great well-wisher it was said he was, as indeed appeareth, inasmuch as in every place where she saw him [limned], he was on his knees before her. Moreover, she said it must rest with him to come in whatsoever form he pleased, so but she was not affrighted.

Then said Fra Alberto, 'Madam, you speak sagely and I will with-

out fail take order with him of that which you tell me. But you may do me a great favour, which will cost you nothing; it is this, that you will him come with this my body. And I will tell you in what you will do me a favour; you must know that he will take my soul forth of my body and put it in Paradise, whilst he himself will enter into me; and what while he abideth with you, so long will my soul abide in Paradise.' 'With all my heart,' answered Dame Littlewit. 'I will well that you have this consolation, in requital of the buffets he gave you on my account.' Then said Fra Alberto, 'Look that he find the door of your house open to-night, so he may come in thereat, for that, coming in human form, as he will, he might not enter save by the door.' The lady replied that it should be done, whereupon the monk took his leave and she abode in such a transport of exultation that her breech touched not her shift and herseemed a thousand years till the angel Gabriel should come to her.

Meanwhile, Fra Alberto, bethinking him that it behoved him play the cavalier, not the angel, that night, proceeded to fortify himself with confections and other good things, so he might not lightly be unhorsed; then, getting leave, as soon as it was night, he repaired with one of his comrades to the house of a woman, a friend of his, whence he was used whiles to take his start what time he went to course the fillies; and thence, whenas it seemed to him time, having disguised himself, he betook him to the lady's house. There he tricked himself out as an angel with the trappings he had brought with him and going up, entered the chamber of the lady, who, seeing this creature all in white, fell on her knees before him. The angel blessed her and raising her to her feet, signed to her to go to bed, which she, studious to obey, promptly did, and the angel after lay down with his devotee. Now Fra Alberto was a personable man of his body and a lusty and excellent well set up on his legs; wherefore, finding himself in bed with Madam Lisetto, who was young and dainty, he showed himself another guess bedfellow than her husband and many a time that night took flight without wings, whereof she avowed herself exceeding content; and eke he told her many things of the glories of heaven. Then, the day drawing near, after taking order for his return, he made off with his trappings and returned to his comrade, whom the good woman of the house had meanwhile borne amicable company, lest he should get a fright, lying alone.

As for the lady, no sooner had she dined than, taking her waiting-woman with her, she betook herself to Fra Alberto and gave him news of the angel Gabriel, telling him that which she had heard from

"He tricked himself out as an angel"

him of the glories of life eternal and how he was made and adding, to boot, marvellous stories of her own invention. 'Madam,' said he, 'I know not how you fared with him; I only know that yesternight, whenas he came to me and I did your message to him, he suddenly transported my soul amongst such a multitude of roses and other flowers that never was the like thereof seen here below, and I abode in one of the most delightsome places that was aye until the morning; but what became of my body meanwhile I know not.' 'Do I not tell you?' answered the lady. 'Your body lay all night in mine arms with the angel Gabriel. If you believe me not, look under your left pap, whereas I gave the angel such a kiss that the marks of it will stay by you some days to come.' Quoth the friar, 'Say you so? Then will I do to-day a thing I have not done this great while; I will strip myself, to see if you tell truth.' Then, after much prating, the lady returned home and Fra Alberto paid her many visits in angel-form, without suffering any hindrance.

However, it chanced one day that Madam Lisetta, being in dispute with a gossip of hers upon the question of female charms, to set her own above all others, said, like a woman who had little wit in her noddle, 'An you but knew whom my beauty pleaseth, in truth you would hold your peace of other women.' The other, longing to hear, said, as one who knew her well, 'Madam, maybe you say sooth; but, knowing not who this may be, one cannot turn about so lightly.' Thereupon quoth Lisetta, who was eath enough to draw, 'Gossip, it must go no farther; but he I mean is the angel Gabriel, who loveth me more than himself, as the fairest lady (for that which he telleth me) who is in the world or the Maremma.' * The other had a mind to laugh, but contained herself, so she might make Lisetta speak farther, and said, 'Faith, madam, an the angel Gabriel be your lover and tell you this, needs must it be so; but methought not the angels did these things.' 'Gossip,' answered the lady, 'you are mistaken; zounds, he doth what you wot of better than my husband and telleth me they do it also up yonder; but, for that I seem to him fairer than any she in heaven, he hath fallen in love with me and cometh full oft to lie with me; seestow now?' †

The gossip, to whom it seemed a thousand years till she should be wheras she might repeat these things, took her leave of Madam Lisetta and foregathering at an entertainment with a great company of ladies,

* *cf.* Artemus Ward's "Natives of the Universe and other parts."

† *Mo vedi vu*, Venetian for *Or vedi tu*, now dost thou see? I have rendered it by the equivalent old English form.

orderly recounted to them the whole story. They told it again to their husbands and other ladies, and these to yet others, and so in less than two days Venice was all full of it. Among others to whose ears the thing came were Lisetta's brothers-in-law, who, without saying aught to her, bethought themselves to find the angel in question and see if he knew how to fly, and to this end they lay several nights in wait for him. As chance would have it, some inkling of the matter * came to the ears of Fra Alberto, who accordingly repaired one night to the lady's house, to reprove her, but hardly had he put off his clothes ere her brothers-in-law, who had seen him come, were at the door of her chamber to open it.

Fra Alberto, hearing this and guessing what was to do, started up and having no other resource, opened a window, which gave upon the Grand Canal, and cast himself thence into the water. The canal was deep there and he could swim well, so that he did himself no hurt, but made his way to the opposite bank and hastily entering a house that stood open there, besought a poor man, whom he found within, to save his life for the love of God, telling him a tale of his own fashion, to explain how he came there at that hour and naked. The good man was moved to pity and it behoving him go do his occasions, he put him in his own bed and bade him abide there against his return; then, locking him in, he went about his affairs. Meanwhile, the lady's brothers-in-law entered her chamber and found that the angel Gabriel had flown, leaving his wings there; whereupon, seeing themselves baffled, they gave her all manner hard words and ultimately made off to their own house with the angel's trappings, leaving her disconsolate.

Broad day come, the good man with whom Fra Alberto had taken refuge, being on the Rialto, heard how the angel Gabriel had gone that night to lie with Madam Lisetta and being surprised by her kinsmen, had cast himself for fear into the canal, nor was it known what was come of him, and concluded forthright that this was he whom he had at home. Accordingly, he returned thither and recognizing the monk, found means, after much parley, to make him fetch him fifty ducats, an he would not have him give him up to the lady's kinsmen. Having gotten the money and Fra Alberto offering to depart thence, the good man said to him, 'There is no way of escape for you, an it be not one that I will tell you. We hold to-day a festival, wherein one bringeth a man clad bear-fashion and another one accoutred as a

* *i.e.* not of the trap laid for him by the lady's brothers-in-law, but of her indiscretion in discovering the secret.

wild man of the woods and what not else, some one thing and some another, and there is a hunt held in St. Mark's Place, which finished, the festival is at an end and after each goeth whither it pleaseth him with him whom he hath brought. An you will have me lead you thither, after one or other of these fashions, I can after carry you whither you please, ere it be spied out that you are here; else I know not how you are to get away, without being recognized, for the lady's kinsmen, concluding that you must be somewhere hereabout, have set a watch for you on all sides.'

Hard as it seemed to Fra Alberto to go on such wise, nevertheless, of the fear he had of the lady's kinsmen, he resigned himself thereto and told his host whither he would be carried, leaving the manner to him. Accordingly, the other, having smeared him all over with honey and covered him with down, clapped a chain about his neck and a mask on his face; then, giving him a great staff in one hand and in the other two great dogs which he had fetched from the shambles, he despatched one to the Rialto to make public proclamation that whoso would see the angel Gabriel should repair to St. Mark's Place; and this was Venetian loyalty! This done, after a while, he brought him forth and setting him before himself, went holding him by the chain behind, to the no small clamour of the folk, who said all, 'What be this? What be this?' * till he came to the place, where, what with those who had followed after them and those who, hearing the proclamation, were come thither from the Rialto, were folk without end. There he tied his wild man to a column in a raised and high place, making a show of awaiting the hunt, whilst the flies and gads gave the monk exceeding annoy, for that he was besmeared with honey. But, when he saw the place well filled, making as he would unchain his wild man, he pulled off Fra Alberto's mask and said, 'Gentlemen, since the bear cometh not and there is no hunt toward, I purpose, so you may not be come in vain, that you shall see the angel Gabriel, who cometh down from heaven to earth anights, to comfort the Venetian ladies.'

No sooner was the mask off than Fra Alberto was incontinent recognized of all, who raised a general outcry against him, giving him the scurviest words and the soundest rating was ever given a canting knave; moreover, they cast in his face, one this kind of filth and another that, and so they baited him a great while, till the news came by chance to his brethren, whereupon half a dozen of them sallied

* *Che xe quel?* Venetian for *che c'e quella cosa,* What is this thing?

forth and coming thither, unchained him and threw a gown over him; then, with a general hue and cry behind them, they carried him off to the convent, where it is believed he died in prison, after a wretched life. Thus then did this fellow, held good and doing ill, without it being believed, dare to feign himself the angel Gabriel, and after being turned into a wild man of the woods and put to shame, as he deserved, bewailed, when too late, the sins he had committed. God grant it happen thus to all other knaves of his fashion!"

THE THIRD STORY

THREE YOUNG MEN LOVE THREE SISTERS AND FLEE WITH THEM INTO CRETE, WHERE THE ELDEST SISTER FOR JEALOUSY SLAYETH HER LOVER. THE SECOND, YIELDING HERSELF TO THE DUKE OF CRETE, SAVETH HER SISTER FROM DEATH, WHEREUPON HER OWN LOVER SLAYETH HER AND FLEETH WITH THE ELDEST SISTER. MEANWHILE THE THIRD LOVER AND THE YOUNGEST SISTER ARE ACCUSED OF THE NEW MURDER AND BEING TAKEN, CONFESS IT; THEN, FOR FEAR OF DEATH, THEY CORRUPT THEIR KEEPERS WITH MONEY AND FLEE TO RHODES, WHERE THEY DIE IN POVERTY

FILOSTRATO, having heard the end of Pampinea's story, bethought himself awhile and presently, turning to her, said, "There was some little that was good and that pleased me in the ending of your story; but there was overmuch before that which gave occasion for laughter and which I would not have had there." Then, turning to Lauretta, "Lady," said he, "ensue you with a better, and it may be." Quoth she, laughing, "You are too cruel towards lovers, an you desire of them only an ill end; * but, to obey you, I will tell a story of three who all ended equally ill. having had scant enjoyment of their loves." So saying, she began thus: "Young ladies, as you should manifestly know, every vice may turn to the grievous hurt of whoso practiseth it, and often of other folk also; but of all others that which with the slackest rein carrieth us away to our peril, meseemeth is anger, which is none otherwhat than a sudden and unconsidered emotion, aroused by an affront suffered, and which, banishing all reason and overclouding the eyes of the understanding with darkness, kindleth the soul to the

* i.e. *semble* "an you would wish them nought but an ill end."

hottest fury. And although this often cometh to pass in men and more in one than in another, yet hath it been seen aforetime to work greater mischiefs in women, for that it is lightlier enkindled in these latter and burneth in them with a fiercer flame and urgeth them with less restraint. Nor is this to be marvelled at, for that, an we choose to consider, we may see that fire, of its nature, catcheth quicklier to light and delicate things than to those which are denser and more ponderous; and we women, indeed,—let men not take it ill,—are more delicately fashioned than they and far more mobile. Wherefore, seeing that we are naturally inclined thereunto * and considering after how our mansuetude and our lovingkindness are of great repose and pleasance to the men with whom we have to do and how big with harm and peril are anger and fury, I purpose, to the intent that we may with a more steadfast mind keep ourselves from these latter, to show you by my story how the loves of three young men and as many ladies came, as I said before, to an ill end, becoming, through the ire of one of the latter, from happy most unhappy.

Marseilles is, as you know, a very ancient and noble city, situate in Provence on the sea-shore, and was once more abounding in rich and great merchants than it is nowadays. Among the latter was one called Narnald Cluada, a man of mean extraction, but of renowned good faith and a loyal merchant, rich beyond measure in lands and monies, who had by a wife of his several children, whereof the three eldest were daughters. Two of these latter, born at a birth, were fifteen and the third fourteen years old, nor was aught awaited by their kinsfolk to marry them but the return of Narnald, who was gone into Spain with his merchandise. The names of the two elder were the one Ninetta and the other Maddalena and the third was called Bertella. Of Ninetta a young man of gentle birth, though poor, called Restagnone, was enamoured as much as man might be, and she of him, and they had contrived to do on such wise that, without any knowing it, they had enjoyment of their loves.

They had already a pretty while enjoyed this satisfaction when it chanced that two young companions, named the one Folco and the other Ughetto, whose fathers were dead, leaving them very rich, fell in love, the one with Maddalena and the other with Bertella. Restagnone, noting this (it having been shown him of Ninetta), bethought himself that he might make shift to supply his own lack by means of the newscomers' love. Accordingly, he clapped up an ac-

* *i.e.* to anger.

quaintance with them, so that now one, now the other of them accompanied him to visit their mistresses and his; and when himseemed he was grown privy enough with them and much their friend, he called them one day into his house and said to them, 'Dearest youths, our commerce should have certified you how great is the love I bear you and that I would do for you that which I would do for myself; and for that I love you greatly, I purpose to discover to you that which hath occurred to my mind, and you and I together will after take such counsel thereof as shall seem to you best. You, an your words lie not and for that to boot which meseemeth I have apprehended by your deeds, both daily and nightly, burn with an exceeding passion for the two young ladies beloved of you, as do I for the third their sister; and to this ardour, an you will consent thereunto,* my heart giveth me to find a very sweet and pleasing remedy, the which is as follows. You are both very rich, which I am not; now, if you will agree to bring your riches into a common stock, making me a third sharer with you therein, and determine in which part of the world we shall go lead a merry life with our mistresses, my heart warranteth me I can without fail so do that the three sisters, with a great part of their father's good, will go with us whithersoever we shall please, and there, each with his wench, like three brothers, we may live the happiest lives of any men in the world. It resteth with you now to determine whether you will go about to solace yourself in this or leave it be.'

The two young men, who were beyond measure inflamed, hearing that they were to have their lasses, were not long in making up their minds, but answered that, so this † should ensue, they were ready to do as he said. Restagnone, having gotten this answer from the young men, found means a few days after to foregather with Ninetta, to whom he could not come without great unease, and after he had abidden with her awhile, he told her what he had proposed to the others and with many arguments studied to commend the emprise to her. This was little uneath to him, seeing that she was yet more desirous than himself to be with him without suspect; wherefore she answered him frankly that it liked her well and that her sisters would do whatever she wished, especially in this, and bade him make ready everything needful therefor as quickliest he might. Restagnone accordingly returned to the two young men, who still importuned him amain to do that whereof he had bespoken them, and told them that, so far as concerned their mistresses, the matter was settled. Then,

* *i.e.* to the proposal I have to make.

† *i.e.* the possession of their mistresses.

having determined among themselves to go to Crete, they sold certain lands they had, under colour of meaning to go a-trading with the price, and having made money of all their other goods, bought a light brigantine and secretly equipped it to the utmost advantage.

Meanwhile, Ninetta, who well enough knew her sisters' mind, with soft words inflamed them with such a liking for the venture that themseemed they might not live to see the thing accomplished. Accordingly, the night come when they were to go aboard the brigantine, the three sisters opened a great coffer of their father's and taking thence a vast quantity of money and jewels, stole out of the house, according to the given order. They found their gallants awaiting them and going straightway all aboard the brigantine, they thrust the oars into the water and put out to sea nor rested till they came, on the following evening, to Genoa, where the new lovers for the first time took ease and joyance of their loves. There having refreshed themselves with that whereof they had need, they set out again and sailing from port to port, came, ere it was the eighth day, without any hindrance, to Crete, where they bought great and goodly estates near Candia and made them very handsome and delightsome dwelling-houses thereon. Here they fell to living like lords and passed their days in banquets and joyance and merrymaking, the happiest men in the world, they and their mistresses, with great plenty of servants and hounds and hawks and horses.

Abiding on this wise, it befell (even as we see it happen all day long that, how much soever things may please, they grow irksome, an one have overgreat plenty thereof) that Restagnone, who had much loved Ninetta, being now able to have her at his every pleasure, without let or hindrance, began to weary of her, and consequently his love for her began to wane. Having seen at an entertainment a damsel of the country, a fair and noble young lady, who pleased him exceedingly, he fell to courting her with all his might, giving marvellous entertainments in her honour and plying her with all manner gallantries; which Ninetta coming to know, she fell into such a jealousy that he could not go a step but she heard of it and after harassed both him and herself with words and reproaches on account thereof. But, like as overabundance of aught begetteth weariness, even so doth the denial of a thing desired redouble the appetite; accordingly, Ninetta's reproaches did but fan the flame of Restagnone's new love and in process of time it came to pass that, whether he had the favours of the lady he loved or not, Ninetta held it for certain, whoever it was reported it to her; wherefore she fell into such a

passion of grief and thence passed into such a fit of rage and despite that the love which she bore Restagnone was changed to bitter hatred, and blinded by her wrath, she bethought herself to avenge, by his death, the affront which herseemed she had received.

Accordingly, betaking herself to an old Greek woman, a past mistress in the art of compounding poisons, she induced her with gifts and promises to make her a death-dealing water, which she, without considering farther, gave Restagnone one evening to drink, he being heated and misdoubting him not thereof; and such was the potency of the poison that, ere morning came, it had slain him. Folco and Ughetto and their mistresses, hearing of his death and knowing not of what poison he had died,* bewept him bitterly, together with Ninetta, and caused bury him honourably. But not many days after it chanced that the old woman, who had compounded the poisoned water for Ninetta, was taken for some other misdeed and being put to the torture, confessed to this amongst her other crimes, fully declaring that which had betided by reason thereof; whereupon the Duke of Crete, without saying aught of the matter, beset Folco's palace by surprise one night and without any noise or gainsayal, carried off Ninetta prisoner, from whom, without putting her to the torture, he readily got what he would know of the death of Restagnone.

Folco and Ughetto (and from them their ladies) had privy notice from the duke why Ninetta had been taken, the which was exceeding grievous to them and they used their every endeavour to save her from the fire, whereto they doubted not she would be condemned, as indeed she richly deserved; but all seemed vain, for that the duke abode firm in willing to do justice upon her. However, Maddalena, who was a beautiful young woman and had long been courted by the duke, but had never yet consented to do aught that might pleasure him, thinking that, by complying with his wishes, she might avail to save her sister from the fire, signified to him by a trusty messenger that she was at his commandment in everything, provided two things should ensue thereof, to wit, that she should have her sister again safe and sound and that the thing should be secret. Her message pleased the duke, and after long debate with himself if he should do as she proposed, he ultimately agreed thereto and said that he was ready. Accordingly, one night, having, with the lady's consent, caused detain Folco and Ughetto, as he would fain examine them of the matter, he went secretly to couch with Maddalena and having first made a show of putting

* Sic (*di che veleno fosse morto*), but this is probably a copyist's error for *che di veleno fosse morto*, i.e. that he had died of poison.

Ninetta in a sack and of purposing to let sink her that night in the sea, he carried her with him to her sister, to whom on the morrow he delivered her at parting, in payment of the night he had passed with her, praying her that this,* which had been the first of their loves, might not be the last and charging her send the guilty lady away, lest blame betide himself and it behove him anew proceed against her with rigour.

Next morning, Folco and Ughetto, having heard that Ninetta had been sacked overnight and believing it, were released and returned home to comfort their mistresses for the death of their sister. However, for all Maddalena could do to hide her, Folco soon became aware of Ninetta's presence in the palace, whereat he marvelled exceedingly and suddenly waxing suspicious,—for that he had heard of the duke's passion for Maddalena,—asked the latter how her sister came to be there. Maddalena began a long story, which she had devised to account to him therefor, but was little believed of her lover, who was shrewd and constrained her to confess the truth, which, after long parley, she told him. Folco, overcome with chagrin and inflamed with rage, pulled out a sword and slew her, whilst she in vain besought mercy; then, fearing the wrath and justice of the duke, he left her dead in the chamber and repairing whereas Ninetta was, said to her, with a feigned air of cheerfulness, 'Quick, let us begone whither it hath been appointed of thy sister that I shall carry thee, so thou mayst not fall again into the hands of the duke.' Ninetta, believing this and eager, in her fearfulness, to begone, set out with Folco, it being now night, without seeking to take leave of her sister; whereupon he and she, with such monies (which were but few) as he could lay hands on, betook themselves to the seashore and embarked on board a vessel; nor was it ever known whither they went.

On the morrow, Maddalena being found murdered, there were some who, of the envy and hatred they bore to Ughetto, forthright gave notice thereof to the duke, whereupon the latter, who loved Maddalena exceedingly, ran furiously to the house and seizing Ughetto and his lady, who as yet knew nothing of the matter,—to wit, of the departure of Folco and Ninetta,—constrained them to confess themselves guilty, together with Folco, of his mistress's death. They, apprehending with reason death in consequence of this confession, with great pains corrupted those who had them in keeping, giving them a certain sum of money, which they kept hidden in their house against

* *i.e.* that night.

urgent occasions, and embarking with their guards, without having leisure to take any of their goods, fled by night to Rhodes, where they lived no great while after in poverty and distress. To such a pass, then, did Restagnone's mad love and Ninetta's rage bring themselves and others."

THE FOURTH STORY

GERBINO, AGAINST THE PLIGHTED FAITH OF HIS GRANDFATHER, KING GUGLIELMO OF SICILY, ATTACKETH A SHIP OF THE KING OF TUNIS, TO CARRY OFF A DAUGHTER OF HIS, WHO BEING PUT TO DEATH OF THOSE ON BOARD, HE SLAYETH THESE LATTER AND IS AFTER HIMSELF BEHEADED

LAURETTA, having made an end of her story, was silent, whilst the company bewailed the illhap of the lovers, some blaming Ninetta's anger and one saying one thing and another another, till presently the king, raising his head, as if aroused from deep thought, signed to Elisa to follow on; whereupon she began modestly, "Charming ladies, there are many who believe that Love launcheth his shafts only when enkindled of the eyes and make mock of those who hold that one may fall in love by hearsay; but that these are mistaken will very manifestly appear in a story that I purpose to relate, wherein you will see that report not only wrought this, without the lovers having ever set eyes on each other, but it will be made manifest to you that it brought both the one and the other to a miserable death.

Guglielmo, the Second, King of Sicily, had (as the Sicilians pretend) two children, a son called Ruggieri and a daughter called Costanza. The former, dying before his father, left a son named Gerbino, who was diligently reared by his grandfather and became a very goodly youth and a renowned for prowess and courtesy. Nor did his fame abide confined within the limits of Sicily, but, resounding in various parts of the world, was nowhere more glorious than in Barbary, which in those days was tributary to the King of Sicily. Amongst the rest to whose ears came the magnificent fame of Gerbino's valour and courtesy was a daughter of the King of Tunis, who, according to the report of all who had seen her, was one of the fairest creatures ever fashioned by nature and the best bred and of a noble and great soul. She, delighting to hear tell of men of valour, with such goodwill received the tales recounted by one and another of

the deeds valiantly done of Gerbino and they so pleased her that, picturing to herself the prince's fashion, she became ardently enamoured of him and discoursed more willingly of him than of any other and hearkened to whoso spoke of him.

On the other hand, the great renown of her beauty and worth had won to Sicily, as elsewhither, and not without great delight nor in vain had it reached the ears of Gerbino; nay, it had inflamed him with love of her, no less than that which she herself had conceived for him. Wherefore, desiring beyond measure to see her, against he should find a colourable occasion of having his grandfather's leave to go to Tunis, he charged his every friend who went thither to make known to her, as best he might, his secret and great love and bring him news of her. This was very dexterously done by one of them, who, under pretence of carrying her women's trinkets to view, as do merchants, throughly discovered Gerbino's passion to her and avouched the prince and all that was his to be at her commandment. The princess received the messenger and the message with a glad flavour and answering that she burnt with like love for the prince, sent him one of her most precious jewels in token thereof. This Gerbino received with the utmost joy wherewith one can receive whatsoever precious thing and wrote to her once and again by the same messenger, sending her the most costly gifts and holding certain treaties * with her, whereby they should have seen and touched one another, had fortune but allowed it.

But, things going thus and somewhat farther than was expedient, the young lady on the one hand and Gerbino on the other burning with desire, it befell that the King of Tunis gave her in marriage to the King of Granada, whereat she was beyond measure chagrined, bethinking herself that not only should she be separated from her lover by long distance, but was like to be altogether parted from him; and had she seen a means thereto, she would gladly, so this might not betide, have fled from her father and betaken herself to Gerbino. Gerbino, in like manner, hearing of this marriage, was beyond measure sorrowful therefor and often bethought himself to take her by force, if it should chance that she went to her husband by sea. The King of Tunis, getting some inkling of Gerbino's love and purpose and fearing his valour and prowess, sent to King Guglielmo, whenas the time came for despatching her to Granada, advising him of that which he was minded to do and that, having assurance from him that he should not be hindered therein by Gerbino or others, he purposed to

* Or, in modern parlance, "laying certain plans."

do it. The King of Sicily, who was an old man and had heard nothing of Gerbino's passion and consequently suspected not that it was for this that such an assurance was demanded, freely granted it and in token thereof, sent the King of Tunis a glove of his. The latter, having gotten the desired assurance, caused equip a very great and goodly ship in the port of Carthage and furnish it with what was needful for those who were to sail therein and having fitted and adorned it for the sending of his daughter into Granada, awaited nought but weather.

The young lady, who saw and knew all this, despatched one of her servants secretly to Palermo, bidding him salute the gallant Gerbino on her part and tell him that she was to sail in a few days for Granada, wherefore it would now appear if he were as valiant a man as was said and if he loved her as much as he had sundry times declared to her. Her messenger did his errand excellent well and returned to Tunis, whilst Gerbino, hearing this and knowing that his grandfather had given the king of Tunis assurance, knew not what to do. However, urged by love and that he might not appear a craven, he betook himself to Messina, where he hastily armed two light galleys and manning them with men of approved valour, set sail with them for the coast of Sardinia, looking for the lady's ship to pass there. Nor was he far out in his reckoning, for he had been there but a few days when the ship hove in sight with a light wind not far from the place where he lay expecting it.

Gerbino, seeing this, said to his companions, 'Gentlemen, an you be the men of mettle I take you for, methinketh there is none of you but hath either felt or feeleth love, without which, as I take it, no mortal can have aught of valour or worth in himself; and if you have been or are enamoured, it will be an easy thing to you to understand my desire. I love and love hath moved me to give you this present pains; and she whom I love is in the ship which you see becalmed yonder and which, beside that thing which I most desire, is full of very great riches. These latter, an ye be men of valour, we may with little difficulty acquire, fighting manfully; of which victory I desire nothing to my share save one sole lady, for whose love I have taken up arms; everything else shall freely be yours. Come, then, and let us right boldly assail the ship; God is favourable to our emprise and holdeth it here fast, without vouchsafing it a breeze.'

The gallant Gerbino had no need of so many words, for that the Messinese, who were with him, being eager for plunder, were already disposed to do that unto which he exhorted them. Where-

"With many tears he bewept it"

fore, making a great outcry, at the end of his speech, that it should be so, they sounded the trumpets and catching up their arms, thrust the oars into the water and made for the Tunis ship. They who were aboard this latter, seeing the galleys coming afar off and being unable to flee,* made ready for defence. The gallant Gerbino accosting the ship, let command that the masters thereof should be sent on board the galleys, an they had no mind to fight; but the Saracens, having certified themselves who they were and what they sought, declared themselves attacked of them against the faith plighted them by King Guglielmo; in token whereof they showed the latter's glove, and altogether refused to surrender themselves, save for stress of battle, or to give them aught that was in the ship.

Gerbino, who saw the lady upon the poop, far fairer than he had pictured her to himself, and was more inflamed than ever, replied to the showing of the glove that there were no falcons there at that present and consequently there needed no gloves; wherefore, an they chose not to give up the lady, they must prepare to receive battle. Accordingly, without further parley, they fell to casting shafts and stones at one another, and on this wise they fought a great while, with loss on either side. At last, Gerbino, seeing that he did little to the purpose, took a little vessel he had brought with him out of Sardinia and setting fire therein, thrust it with both the galleys aboard the ship. The Saracens, seeing this and knowing that they must of necessity surrender or die, fetched the king's daughter, who wept below, on deck and brought her to the ship's prow; then, calling Gerbino, they butchered her before his eyes, what while she called for mercy and succour, and cast her into the sea, saying, 'Take her; we give her to thee, such as we may and such as thine unfaith hath merited.'

Gerbino, seeing their barbarous deed, caused lay himself alongside the ship and recking not of shaft or stone, boarded it, as if courting death, in spite of those who were therein; then,—even as a hungry lion, coming among a herd of oxen, slaughtereth now this, now that, and with teeth and claws sateth rather his fury than his hunger,—sword in hand, hewing now at one, now at another, he cruelly slew many of the Saracens; after which, the fire now waxing in the enkindled ship, he caused the sailors fetch thereout what they might, in payment of their pains, and descended thence, having gotten but a sorry victory over his adversaries. Then, letting take up the fair lady's body from the sea, long and with many tears he bewept it

* *i.e.* for lack of wind.

and steering for Sicily, buried it honourably in Ustica, a little island over against Trapani; after which he returned home, the woefullest man alive.

The King of Tunis, hearing the heavy news, sent his ambassadors, clad all in black, to King Guglielmo, complaining of the ill observance of the faith which he had plighted him. They recounted to him how the thing had passed, whereat King Guglielmo was sore incensed and seeing no way to deny them the justice they sought, caused take Gerbino; then himself,—albeit there was none of his barons but strove with prayers to move him from his purpose,—condemned him to death and let strike off his head in his presence, choosing rather to abide without posterity than to be held a faithless king. Thus, then, as I have told you, did these two lovers within a few days * die miserably a violent death, without having tasted any fruit of their loves."

THE FIFTH STORY

LISABETTA'S † BROTHERS SLAY HER LOVER, WHO APPEARETH TO HER IN A DREAM AND SHOWETH HER WHERE HE IS BURIED, WHEREUPON SHE PRIVILY DISINTERRETH HIS HEAD AND SETTETH IT IN A POT OF BASIL. THEREOVER MAKING MOAN A GREAT WHILE EVERY DAY, HER BROTHERS TAKE IT FROM HER AND SHE FOR GRIEF DIETH A LITTLE THEREAFTERWARD

ELISA's tale being ended and somedele commended of the king, Filomena was bidden to discourse, who, full of compassion for the wretched Gerbino and his mistress, after a piteous sigh, began thus: "My story, gracious ladies, will not treat of folk of so high condition as were those of whom Elisa hath told, yet peradventure it will be no less pitiful; and what brought me in mind of it was the mention, a little before, of Messina, where the case befell.

There were then in Messina three young brothers, merchants and left very rich by their father, who was a man of San Gimignano, and

* *i.e.* of each other.

† This is the proper name of the heroine of the story immortalized by Keats as "Isabella or the Pot of Basil," and is one of the many forms of the name *Elisabetta* (Elizabeth), *Isabetta* and *Isabella* being others. Some texts of the Decameron call the heroine *Isabetta*, but in the heading only, all with which I am acquainted agreeing in the use of the form *Lisabetta* in the body of the story.

they had an only sister, Lisabetta by name, a right fair and well-mannered maiden, whom, whatever might have been the reason thereof, they had not yet married. Now these brothers had in one of their warehouses a youth of Pisa, called Lorenzo, who did and ordered all their affairs and was very comely and agreeable of person; wherefore, Lisabetta looking sundry times upon him, it befell that he began strangely to please her; of which Lorenzo taking note at one time and another, he in like manner, leaving his other loves, began to turn his thoughts to her; and so went the affair, that, each being alike pleasing to the other, it was no great while before, taking assurance, they did that which each of them most desired.

Continuing on this wise and enjoying great pleasure and delight one of the other, they knew not how to do so secretly but that, one night, Lisabetta, going whereas Lorenzo lay, was, unknown to herself, seen of the eldest of her brothers, who, being a prudent youth, for all the annoy it gave him to know this thing, being yet moved by more honourable counsel, abode without sign or word till the morning, revolving in himself various things anent the matter. The day being come, he recounted to his brothers that which he had seen the past night of Lisabetta and Lorenzo, and after long advisement with them, determined (so that neither to them nor to their sister should any reproach ensue thereof) to pass the thing over in silence and feign to have seen and known nothing thereof till such time as, without hurt or unease to themselves, they might avail to do away this shame from their sight, ere it should go farther. In this mind abiding and devising and laughing with Lorenzo as was their wont, it befell that one day, feigning to go forth the city, all three, a-pleasuring, they carried him with them to a very lonely and remote place; and there, the occasion offering, they slew him, whilst he was off his guard, and buried him on such wise that none had knowledge of it; then, returning to Messina, they gave out that they had despatched him somewhither for their occasions, the which was the lightlier credited that they were often used to send him abroad about their business.

Lorenzo returning not and Lisabetta often and instantly questioning her brothers of him, as one to whom the long delay was grievous, it befell one day, as she very urgently enquired of him, that one of them said to her, 'What meaneth this? What hast thou to do with Lorenzo, that thou askest thus often of him? An thou question of him more, we will make thee such answer as thou deservest.' Wherefore the girl, sad and grieving and fearful she knew not of what, abode without more asking; yet many a time anights she piteously

called him and prayed him come to her, and whiles with many tears she complained of his long tarrying; and thus, without a moment's gladness, she abode expecting him alway, till one night, having sore lamented Lorenzo for that he returned not and being at last fallen asleep, weeping, he appeared to her in a dream, pale and all disordered, with clothes all rent and mouldered, and herseemed he bespoke her thus: 'Harkye, Lisabetta; thou dost nought but call upon me, grieving for my long delay and cruelly impeaching me with thy tears. Know, therefore, that I may never more return to thee, for that, the last day thou sawest me, thy brothers slew me.' Then, having discovered to her the place where they had buried him, he charged her no more call him nor expect him and disappeared; whereupon she awoke and giving faith to the vision, wept bitterly.

In the morning, being risen and daring not say aught to her brothers, she determined to go to the place appointed and see if the thing were true, as it had appeared to her in the dream. Accordingly, having leave to go somedele without the city for her disport, she betook herself thither,* as quickliest she might, in company of one who had been with them † otherwhiles and knew all her affairs; and there, clearing away the dead leaves from the place, she dug whereas herseemed the earth was less hard. She had not dug long before she found the body of her unhappy lover, yet nothing changed nor rotted, and thence knew manifestly that her vision was true, wherefore she was the most distressful of women; yet, knowing that this was no place for lament, she would fain, an she but might, have borne away the whole body, to give it fitter burial; but, seeing that this might not be, she with a knife did off ‡ the head from the body, as best she could, and wrapping it in a napkin, laid it in her maid's lap. Then, casting back the earth over the trunk, she departed thence, without being seen of any, and returned home, where, shutting herself in her chamber with her lover's head, she bewept it long and bitterly, insomuch that she bathed it all with her tears, and kissed it a thousand times in every part. Then, taking a great and goodly pot, of those wherein they plant marjoram or sweet basil, she set the head therein, folded in a fair linen cloth, and covered it with earth, in which she planted sundry heads of right fair basil of Salerno; nor did she ever water these with other water than that of her tears or rose or orange-flower water. Moreover she took wont to sit still near the pot and to gaze amorously upon it

* *i.e.* to the place shown her in the dream.

† i.e. in their service.

‡ Lit. unhung (*spiccò*).

with all her desire, as upon that which held her Lorenzo hid; and after she had a great while looked thereon, she would bend over it and fall to weeping so sore and so long that her tears bathed all the basil, which, by dint of long and assiduous tending, as well as by reason of the fatness of the earth, proceeding from the rotting head that was therein, waxed passing fair and very sweet of savour.

The damsel, doing without cease after this wise, was sundry times seen of her neighbours, who to her brothers, marvelling at her waste beauty and that her eyes seemed to have fled forth her head [for weeping], related this, saying, 'We have noted that she doth every day after such a fashion.' The brothers, hearing and seeing this and having once and again reproved her therefor, but without avail, let secretly carry away from her the pot, which she, missing, with the utmost instance many a time required, and for that it was not restored to her, stinted not to weep and lament till she fell sick; nor in her sickness did she ask aught other than the pot of basil. The young men marvelled greatly at this continual asking and bethought them therefor to see what was in this pot. Accordingly, turning out the earth, they found the cloth and therein the head, not yet so rotted but they might know it, by the curled hair, to be that of Lorenzo. At this they were mightily amazed and feared lest the thing should get wind; wherefore, burying the head, without word said, they privily departed Messina, having taken order how they should withdraw thence, and betook themselves to Naples. The damsel, ceasing never from lamenting and still demanding her pot, died, weeping; and so her ill-fortuned love had end. But, after a while, the thing being grown manifest unto many, there was one who made thereon the song that is yet sung, to wit:

Alack! ah, who can the ill Christian be,
That stole my pot away?" etc.*

* The following is a translation of the whole of the song in question, as printed, from a MS. in the Medicean Library, in Fanfani's edition of the Decameron.

Alack! ah, who can the ill Christian be,
That stole my pot away,
My pot of basil of Salern, from me?
'Twas thriv'n with many a spray
And I with mine own hand did plant the tree,
Even on the festal † day.
'Tis felony to waste another's ware,

† Quære—natal?—perhaps meaning her birthday (*lo giorno della festa*).

'Tis felony to waste another's ware;
  Yea, and right grievous sin.
And I, poor lass, that sowed myself whilere
  A pot with flowers therein,
Slept in its shade, so great it was and fair;
  But folk, that envious bin,
Stole it away even from my very door.

'Twas stolen away even from my very door.
  Full heavy was my cheer,
(Ah, luckless maid, would I had died tofore!)
  Who bought * it passing dear,
Yet kept ill ward thereon one day of fear.
  For him I loved so sore,
I planted it with marjoram about.

I planted it with marjoram about,
  When May was blithe and new;
Yea, thrice I watered it, week in, week out,
  And watched how well it grew:
But now, for sure, away from me 'tis ta'en.

Ay, now, for sure, away from me 'tis ta'en;
  I may 't no longer hide.
Had I but known (alas, regret is vain!)
  That which should me betide,
Before my door on guard I would have lain
  To sleep, my flowers beside.
Yet might the Great God ease me at His will.

Yea, God Most High might ease me, at His will,
  If but it liked Him well,
Of him who wrought me such unright and ill;
  He into pangs of hell
Cast me who stole my basil-pot, that still
  Was full of such sweet smell,
Its savour did all dole from me away.

All dole its savour did from me away;
  It was so redolent,
When, with the risen sun, at early day
  To water it I went,

* Or "purchased" in the old sense of obtained, acquired (*accattai*).

THE SIXTH STORY

ANDREVUOLA LOVETH GABRIOTTO AND RECOUNTETH TO HIM A DREAM SHE HATH HAD, WHEREUPON HE TELLETH HER ONE OF HIS OWN AND PRESENTLY DIETH SUDDENLY IN HER ARMS. WHAT WHILE SHE AND A WAITING WOMAN OF HERS BEAR HIM TO HIS OWN HOUSE, THEY ARE TAKEN BY THE OFFICERS OF JUSTICE AND CARRIED BEFORE THE PROVOST, TO WHOM SHE DISCOVERETH HOW THE CASE STANDETH. THE PROVOST WOULD FAIN FORCE HER, BUT SHE SUFFERETH IT NOT AND HER FATHER, COMING TO HEAR OF THE MATTER, PROCURETH HER TO BE SET AT LIBERTY, SHE BEING FOUND INNOCENT; WHEREUPON, ALTOGETHER REFUSING TO ABIDE LONGER IN THE WORLD, SHE BECOMETH A NUN

FILOMENA's story was very welcome to the ladies, for that they had many a time heard sing this song, yet could never, for asking, learn the occasion of its making. But the king, having heard the end thereof, charged Pamfilo follow on the ordinance; whereupon quoth he, "The dream in the foregoing story giveth me occasion to recount one wherein is made mention of two dreams, which were of a thing to come, even as the former was of a thing [already] betided, and scarce were they finished telling by those who had dreamt them than the accomplishment followed of both. You must know, then, lovesome ladies, that it is an affection common to all alive to see various things in sleep, whereof,—albeit to the sleeper, what while he sleepeth, they all appear most true and he, awakened, accounteth some true, others probable and yet others out of all likelihood,—many are natheless found to be come to pass. By reason whereof many lend to every

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The folk would marvel all at it and say,
"Whence comes the sweetest scent?"
And I for love of it shall surely die.

Yea, I for love of it shall surely die,
For love and grief and pain.
If one would tell me where it is, I'd buy
It willingly again.
Fivescore gold crowns, that in my pouch have I,
I'd proffer him full fain,
And eke a kiss, if so it liked the swain.

dream as much belief as they would to things they should see, waking, and for their proper dreams they sorrow or rejoice, according as by these they hope or fear. And contrariwise, there are those who believe none thereof, save after they find themselves fallen into the peril foreshown. Of these,* I approve neither the one nor the other, for that dreams are neither always true nor always false. That they are not all true, each one of us must often enough have had occasion to know; and that they are not all false hath been already shown in Filomena her story, and I also purpose, as I said before, to show it in mine. Wherefore I am of opinion that, in the matter of living and doing virtuously, one should have no fear of any dream contrary thereto nor forego good intentions by reason thereof; as for perverse and wicked things, on the other hand, however favourable dreams may appear thereto and how much soever they may hearten him who seeth them with propitious auguries, none of them should be credited, whilst full faith should be accorded unto all that tend to the contrary.† But to come to the story.

There was once in the city of Brescia a gentleman called Messer Negro da Ponte Carraro, who amongst sundry other children had a daughter named Andrevuola, young and unmarried and very fair. It chanced she fell in love with a neighbour of hers, Gabriotto by name, a man of mean condition, but full of laudable fashions and comely and pleasant of his person, and by the means and with the aid of the serving maid of the house, she so wrought that not only did Gabriotto know himself beloved of her, but was many and many a time brought, to the delight of both parties, into a goodly garden of her father's. And in order that no cause, other than death, should ever avail to sever those their delightsome loves, they became in secret husband and wife, and so stealthily continuing their foregatherings, it befell that the young lady, being one night asleep, dreamt that she was in her garden with Gabriotto and held him in her arms, to the exceeding pleasure of each; but, as they abode thus, herseemed she saw come forth of his body something dark and frightful, the form whereof she could not discern; the which took Gabriotto and tearing him in her despite with marvellous might from her embrace, made off with him underground, nor ever more might she avail to see either the one or the other.

At this she fell into an inexpressible passion of grief, whereby she awoke, and albeit, awaking, she was rejoiced to find that it was not

* *i.e.* these two classes of folk.

† i.e. to the encouragement of good and virtuous actions and purposes.

as she had dreamed, nevertheless fear entered into her by reason of the dream she had seen. Wherefore, Gabriotto presently desiring to visit her that next night, she studied as most she might to prevent his coming; however, seeing his desire and so he might not misdoubt him of otherwhat, she received him in the garden and having gathered great store of roses, white and red (for that it was the season), she went to sit with him at the foot of a very goodly and clear fountain that was there. After they had taken great and long delight together, Gabriotto asked her why she would have forbidden his coming that night; whereupon she told him, recounting to him the dream she had seen the foregoing night and the fear she had gotten therefrom.

He, hearing this, laughed it to scorn and said that it was great folly to put any faith in dreams, for that they arose of excess of food or lack thereof and were daily seen to be all vain, adding, 'Were I minded to follow after dreams, I had not come hither, not so much on account of this of thine as of one I myself dreamt last night; which was that meseemed I was in a fair and delightsome wood, wherein I went hunting and had taken the fairest and loveliest hind was ever seen; for methought she was whiter than snow and was in brief space become so familiar with me that she never left me a moment. Moreover, meseemed I held her so dear that, so she might not depart from me, I had put a collar of gold about her neck and held her in hand with a golden chain. After this medreamed that, once upon a time, what while this hind lay couched with its head in my bosom,* there issued I know not whence a greyhound bitch as black as coal, anhungred and passing gruesome of aspect, and made towards me. Methought I offered it no resistance, wherefore meseemed it thrust its muzzle into my breast on the left side and gnawed thereat till it won to my heart, which methought it tore from me, to carry it away. Therewith I felt such a pain that my sleep was broken and awaking, I straightway clapped my hand to my side, to see if I had aught there; but, finding nothing amiss with me, I made mock of myself for having sought. But, after all, what booteth this dream? † I have dreamed many such and far more frightful, nor hath aught in the world befallen me by reason thereof; wherefore let it pass and let us think to give ourselves a good time.'

The young lady, already sore adread for her own dream, hearing this, waxed yet more so, but hid her fear, as most she might, not to be the occasion of any unease to Gabriotto. Nevertheless, what

* Or "lap" (*seno*).

† Lit. what meaneth this? (*che vuol dire questo?*)

while she solaced herself with him, clipping and kissing him again and again and being of him clipped and kissed, she many a time eyed him in the face more than of her wont, misdoubting she knew not what, and whiles she looked about the garden, and she should see aught of black come anywhence. Presently, as they abode thus, Gabriotto heaved a great sigh and embracing her, said, 'Alas, my soul, help me, for I die!' So saying, he fell to the ground upon the grass of the lawn. The young lady, seeing this, drew him up into her lap and said, well nigh weeping, 'Alack, sweet my lord, what aileth thee?' He answered not, but, panting sore and sweating all over, no great while after departed this life.

How grievous, how dolorous was this to the young lady, who loved him more than her life, each one of you may conceive for herself. She bewept him sore and many a time called him in vain; but after she had handled him in every part of his body and found him cold in all, perceiving that he was altogether dead and knowing not what to do or to say, she went, all tearful as she was and full of anguish, to call her maid, who was privy to their loves, and discovered to her her misery and her grief. Then, after they had awhile made woeful lamentation over Gabriotto's dead face, the young lady said to the maid, 'Since God hath bereft me of him I love, I purpose to abide no longer on life; but, ere I go about to slay myself, I would fain take fitting means to preserve my honour and the secret of the love that hath been between us twain and that the body, wherefrom the gracious spirit is departed, may be buried.'

'Daughter mine,' answered the maid, 'talk not of seeking to slay thyself, for that, if thou have lost him in this world, by slaying thyself thou wouldst lose him in the world to come also, since thou wouldst go to hell, whither I am assured his soul hath not gone; for he was a virtuous youth. It were better far to comfort thyself and think of succouring his soul with prayers and other good works, so haply he have need thereof for any sin committed. The means of burying him are here at hand in this garden and none will ever know of the matter, for none knoweth that he ever came hither. Or, an thou wilt not have it so, let us put him forth of the garden and leave him be; he will be found to-morrow morning and carried to his house, where his kinsfolk will have him buried.' The young lady, albeit she was full of bitter sorrow and wept without ceasing, yet gave ear to her maid's counsels and consenting not to the first part thereof, made answer to the second, saying, 'God forbid that I should suffer so dear a youth and one so beloved of me and my husband to be buried after

"Drew him up into her lap"

the fashion of a dog or left to lie in the street! He hath had my tears and inasmuch as I may, he shall have those of his kinsfolk, and I have already bethought me of that which we have to do to that end.'

Therewith she despatched her maid for a piece of cloth of silk, which she had in a coffer of hers, and spreading it on the earth, laid Gabriotto's body thereon, with his head upon a pillow. Then with many tears she closed his eyes and mouth and weaving him a chaplet of roses, covered him with all they had gathered, he and she; after which she said to the maid, 'It is but a little way hence to his house; wherefore we will carry him thither, thou and I, even as we have arrayed him, and lay him before the door. It will not be long ere it be day and he will be taken up; and although this may be no consolation to his friends, yet to me, in whose arms he died, it will be a pleasure.' So saying, once more with most abundant tears she cast herself upon his face and wept a great while. Then, being urged by her maid to despatch, for that the day was at hand, she rose to her feet and drawing from her finger the ring wherewith Gabriotto had espoused her, she set it on his and said, weeping, 'Dear my lord, if thy soul now seeth my tears or if any sense or cognizance abide in the body, after the departure thereof, benignly receive her last gift, whom, living, thou lovedst so well.' This said, she fell down upon him in a swoon, but, presently coming to herself and rising, she took up, together with her maid, the cloth whereon the body lay and going forth the garden therewith, made for his house.

As they went, they were discovered and taken with the dead body by the officers of the provostry, who chanced to be abroad at that hour about some other matter. Andrevuola, more desirous of death than of life, recognizing the officers, said frankly, 'I know who you are and that it would avail me nothing to seek to flee; I am ready to go with you before the Seignory and there declare how the case standeth; but let none of you dare to touch me, provided I am obedient to you, or to remove aught from this body, an he would not be accused of me.' Accordingly, without being touched of any, she repaired, with Gabriotto's body, to the palace, where the Provost, hearing what was to do, arose and sending for her into his chamber, proceeded to enquire of this that had happened. To this end he caused divers physicians look if the dead man had been done to death with poison or otherwise, who all affirmed that it was not so, but that some imposthume had burst near the heart, the which had suffocated him. The magistrate hearing this and feeling her to be guilty in [but] a small matter, studied to make a show of giving her that which he could not sell

her and told her that, an she would consent to his pleasures, he would release her; but, these words availing not, he offered, out of all seemliness, to use force. However, Andrevuola, fired with disdain and waxed strong [for indignation], defended herself manfully, rebutting him with proud and scornful words.

Meanwhile, broad day come and these things being recounted to Messer Negro, he betook himself, sorrowful unto death, to the palace, in company with many of his friends, and being there acquainted by the Provost with the whole matter, demanded resentfully * that his daughter should be restored to him. The Provost, choosing rather to accuse himself of the violence he would have done her than to be accused of her, first extolled the damsel and her constancy and in proof thereof, proceeded to tell that which he had done; by reason whereof, seeing her of so excellent a firmness, he had vowed her an exceeding love and would gladly, an it were agreeable to him, who was her father, and to herself, espouse her for his lady, notwithstanding she had had a husband of mean condition. Whilst they yet talked, Andrevuola presented herself and weeping, cast herself before her father and said, 'Father mine, methinketh there is no need that I recount to you the story of my boldness and my illhap, for I am assured that you have heard and know it; wherefore, as most I may, I humbly ask pardon of you for my default, to wit, the having without your knowledge taken him who most pleased me to husband. And this boon I ask of you, not for that my life may be spared me, but to die your daughter and not your enemy.' So saying, she fell weeping at his feet.

Messer Negro, who was an old man and kindly and affectionate of his nature, hearing these words, began to weep and with tears in his eyes raised his daughter tenderly to her feet and said, 'Daughter mine, it had better pleased me that thou shouldst have had such a husband as, according to my thinking, behoved unto thee; and that thou shouldst have taken such an one as was pleasing unto thee had also been pleasing unto me; but that thou shouldst have concealed him, of thy little confidence in me, grieveth me, and so much the more as I see thee to have lost him, ere I knew it. However, since the case is so, that which, had he lived, I had gladly done him, to content thee, to wit, honour, as to my son-in-law, be it done him, now he is dead.' Then, turning to his sons and his kinsfolk, he commanded that great and honourable obsequies should be prepared for Gabriotto.

* Lit. complaining, making complaint (*dolendosi*).

Meanwhile, the kinsmen and kinswomen of the young man, hearing the news, had flocked thither, and with them well nigh all the men and women in the city. Therewith, the body, being laid out amiddleward the courtyard upon Andrevuola's silken cloth and strewn with all her roses, was there not only bewept by her and his kinsfolk, but publicly mourned by well nigh all the ladies of the city and by many men, and being brought forth of the courtyard of the Seignory, not as that of a plebeian, but as that of a nobleman, it was with the utmost honour borne to the sepulchre upon the shoulders of the most noble citizens. Some days thereafterward, the provost ensuing that which he had demanded, Messer Negro propounded it to his daughter, who would hear nought thereof, but, her father being willing to comply with her in this, she and her maid made themselves nuns in a convent very famous for sanctity and there lived honourably a great while after."

THE SEVENTH STORY

SIMONA LOVETH PASQUINO AND THEY BEING TOGETHER IN A GARDEN, THE LATTER RUBBETH A LEAF OF SAGE AGAINST HIS TEETH AND DIETH. SHE, BEING TAKEN AND THINKING TO SHOW THE JUDGE HOW HER LOVER DIED, RUBBETH ONE OF THE SAME LEAVES AGAINST HER TEETH AND DIETH ON LIKE WISE

PAMFILO having delivered himself of his story, the king, showing no compassion for Andrevuola, looked at Emilia and signed to her that it was his pleasure she should with a story follow on those who had already told; whereupon she, without delay, began as follows: "Dear companions, the story told by Pamfilo putteth me in mind to tell you one in nothing like unto his save that, like as Andrevuola lost her beloved in a garden, even so did she of whom I have to tell, and being taken in like manner as was Andrevuola, freed herself from the court, not by dint of fortitude nor constancy, but by an unlooked-for death. And as hath otherwhile been said amongst us, albeit Love liefer inhabiteth the houses of the great, yet not therefor doth he decline the empery of those of the poor; nay, whiles in these latter he so manifesteth his power that he maketh himself feared, as a most puissant seignior, of the richer sort. This, if not in all, yet in great part, will appear from my story, with which it pleaseth me to re-enter our own city, wherefrom this day, discoursing diversely of divers

things and ranging over various parts of the world, we have so far departed.

There was, then, no great while ago, in Florence a damsel very handsome and agreeable, according to her condition, who was the daughter of a poor father and was called Simona; and although it behoved her with her own hands earn the bread she would eat and sustain her life by spinning wool, she was not therefor of so poor a spirit but that she dared to admit into her heart Love, which,—by means of the pleasing words and fashions of a youth of no greater account than herself, who went giving wool to spin for a master of his, a wool-monger,—had long made a show of wishing to enter there. Having, then, received Him into her bosom with the pleasing aspect of the youth who loved her and whose name was Pasquino, she heaved a thousand sighs, hotter than fire, at every hank of yarn she wound about the spindle, bethinking her of him who had given it her to spin and ardently desiring, but venturing not to do more. He, on his side, grown exceeding anxious that his master's wool should be well spun, overlooked Simona's spinning more diligently than that of any other, as if the yarn spun by her alone and none other were to furnish forth the whole cloth; wherefore, the one soliciting and the other delighting to be solicited, it befell that, he growing bolder than of his wont and she laying aside much of the timidity and shamefastness she was used to feel, they gave themselves up with a common accord to mutual pleasures, which were so pleasing to both that not only did neither wait to be bidden thereto of the other, but each forewent other in the matter of invitation.

Ensuing this their delight from day to day and waxing ever more enkindled for continuance, it chanced one day that Pasquino told Simona he would fain have her find means to come to a garden, whither he wished to carry her, so they might there foregather more at their ease and with less suspect. Simona answered that she would well and accordingly one Sunday, after eating, giving her father to believe that she meant to go a-pardoning to San Gallo,* she betook herself, with a friend of hers, called Lagina, to the garden appointed her of Pasquino. There she found him with a comrade of his, whose

* *i.e.* to attend the ecclesiastical function called a Pardon, with which word, used in this sense, Meyerbeer's opera of Dinorah (properly Le Pardon de Ploërmel) has familiarized opera-goers. A Pardon is a sort of minor jubilee of the Roman Catholic Church, held in honour of some local saint, at which certain indulgences and remissions of sins (hence the name) are granted to the faithful attending the services of the occasion.

name was Puccino, but who was commonly called Stramba,* and an amorous acquaintance being quickly clapped up between the latter and Lagina, Simona and her lover withdrew to one part of the garden, to do their pleasure, leaving Stramba and Lagina in another.

Now in that part of the garden, whither Pasquino and Simona had betaken themselves, was a very great and goodly bush of sage, at the foot whereof they sat down and solaced themselves together a great while, holding much discourse of a collation they purposed to make there at their leisure. Presently, Pasquino turned to the great sage-bush and plucking a leaf thereof, began to rub his teeth and gums withal, avouching that sage cleaned them excellent well of aught that might be left thereon after eating. After he had thus rubbed them awhile, he returned to the subject of the collation, of which he had already spoken, nor had he long pursued his discourse when he began altogether to change countenance and well nigh immediately after lost sight and speech, and in a little while he died. Simona, seeing this, fell to weeping and crying out and called Stramba and Lagina, who ran thither in haste and seeing Pasquino not only dead, but already grown all swollen and full of dark spots about his face and body, Stramba cried out of a sudden, 'Ah, wicked woman! Thou hast poisoned him.' Making a great outcry, he was heard of many who dwelt near the garden and who, running to the clamour, found Pasquino dead and swollen.

Hearing Stramba lamenting and accusing Simona of having poisoned him of her malice, whilst she, for dolour of the sudden mishap that had carried off her lover, knew not how to excuse herself, being as it were beside herself, they all concluded that it was as he said; and accordingly she was taken and carried off, still weeping sore, to the Provost's palace, where, at the instance of Stramba and other two comrades of Pasquino, by name Atticciato and Malagevole, who had come up meanwhile, a judge addressed himself without delay to examine her of the fact and being unable to discover that she had done malice in the matter or was anywise guilty, he bethought himself, in her presence, to view the dead body and the place and manner of the mishap, as recounted to him by her, for that he apprehended it not very well by her words.

Accordingly, he let bring her, without any stir, whereas Pasquino's body lay yet, swollen as it were a tun, and himself following her thither, marvelled at the dead man and asked her how it had been;

* *i.e.* Bandy-legs.

whereupon, going up to the sage-bush, she recounted to him all the foregoing story and to give him more fully to understand how the thing had befallen, she did even as Pasquino had done and rubbed one of the sage-leaves against her teeth. Then,—whilst her words were, in the judge's presence, flouted by Stramba and Atticciato and the other friends and comrades of Pasquino as frivolous and vain and they all denounced her wickedness with the more instance, demanding nothing less than that the fire should be the punishment of such perversity,—the wretched girl, who abode all confounded for dolour of her lost lover and fear of the punishment demanded by Stramba, fell, for having rubbed the sage against her teeth, into that same mischance whereinto her lover had fallen [and dropped dead], to the no small wonderment of as many as were present. O happy souls, to whom it fell in one same day to terminate at once your fervent love and your mortal life! Happier yet, an ye went together to one same place! And most happy, if folk love in the other life and ye love there as you loved here below! But happiest beyond compare,—at least in our judgment who abide after her on life,—was Simona's soul, whose innocence fortune suffered not to fall under the testimony of Stramba and Atticciato and Malagevole, wool-carders belike or men of yet meaner condition, finding her a more honourable way, with a death like unto that of her lover, to deliver herself from their calumnies and to follow the soul, so dearly loved of her, of her Pasquino.

The judge, in a manner astonied, as were likewise as many as were there, at this mischance and unknowing what to say, abode long silent; then, recollecting himself, he said, 'It seemeth this sage is poisonous, the which is not wont to happen of sage. But, so it may not avail to offend on this wise against any other, be it cut down even to the roots and cast into the fire.' This the keeper of the garden proceeded to do in the judge's presence, and no sooner had he levelled the great bush with the ground than the cause of the death of the two unfortunate lovers appeared; for thereunder was a toad of marvellous bigness, by whose pestiferous breath they concluded the sage to have become venomous. None daring approach the beast, they made a great hedge of brushwood about it and there burnt it, together with the sage. So ended the judge's inquest upon the death of the unfortunate Pasquino, who, together with his Simona, all swollen as they were, was buried by Stramba and Atticciato and Guccio Imbratta and Malagevole in the church of St. Paul, whereof it chanced they were parishioners."

THE EIGHTH STORY

GIROLAMO LOVETH SALVESTRA AND BEING CONSTRAINED BY HIS MOTHER'S PRAYERS TO GO TO PARIS, RETURNETH AND FINDETH HIS MISTRESS MARRIED; WHEREUPON HE ENTERETH HER HOUSE BY STEALTH AND DIETH BY HER SIDE; AND HE BEING CARRIED TO A CHURCH, SALVESTRA DIETH BESIDE HIM

EMILIA's story come to an end, Neifile, by the king's commandment, began thus: "There are some, noble ladies, who believe themselves to know more than other folk, albeit, to my thinking, they know less, and who, by reason thereof, presume to oppose their judgment not only to the counsels of men, but even to set it up against the very nature of things; of which presumption very grave ills have befallen aforetime, nor ever was any good known to come thereof. And for that of all natural things love is that which least brooketh contrary counsel or opposition and whose nature is such that it may lightlier consume of itself than be done away by advisement, it hath come to my mind to narrate to you a story of a lady, who, seeking to be wiser than pertained unto her and than she was, nay, than the matter comported in which she studied to show her wit, thought to tear out from an enamoured heart a love which had belike been set there of the stars, and so doing, succeeded in expelling at once love and life from her son's body.

There was, then, in our city, according to that which the ancients relate, a very great and rich merchant, whose name was Lionardo Sighieri and who had by his wife a son called Girolamo, after whose birth, having duly set his affairs in order, he departed this life. The guardians of the boy, together with his mother, well and loyally ordered his affairs, and he, growing up with his neighbours' children, became familiar with a girl of his own age, the daughter of a tailor, more than with any other of the quarter. As he waxed in age, use turned to love so great and so ardent that he was never easy save what time he saw her, and certes she loved him no less than she was loved of him. The boy's mother, observing this, many a time chid and rebuked him therefor and after, Girolamo availing not to desist therefrom, complained thereof to his guardians, saying to them, as if she thought, thanks to her son's great wealth, to make an orange-tree of a bramble, 'This boy of ours, albeit he is yet scarce fourteen years old, is so enamoured of the daughter of a tailor our neighbour, by

name Salvestra, that, except we remove her from his sight, he will peradventure one day take her to wife, without any one's knowledge, and I shall never after be glad; or else he will pine away for her, if he see her married to another; wherefore meseemeth, to avoid this, you were best send him somewhither far from here, about the business of the warehouse; for that, he being removed from seeing her, she will pass out of his mind and we may after avail to give him some well-born damsel to wife.'

The guardians answered that the lady said well and that they would do this to the best of their power; wherefore, calling the boy into the warehouse, one of them began very lovingly to bespeak him thus, 'My son, thou art now somewhat waxen in years and it were well that thou shouldst begin to look for thyself to thine affairs; wherefore it would much content us that thou shouldst go sojourn awhile at Paris, where thou wilt see how great part of thy wealth is employed, more by token that thou wilt there become far better bred and mannered and more of worth than thou couldst here, seeing the lords and barons and gentlemen who are there in plenty and learning their usances; after which thou mayst return hither.' The youth hearkened diligently and answered curtly that he was nowise disposed to do this, for that he believed himself able to fare as well at Florence as another. The worthy men, hearing this, essayed him again with sundry discourse, but, failing to get other answer of him, told his mother, who, sore provoked thereat, gave him a sound rating, not because of his unwillingness to go to Paris, but of his enamourment; after which, she fell to cajoling him with fair words, coaxing him and praying him softly be pleased to do what his guardians wished; brief, she contrived to bespeak him to such purpose that he consented to go to France and there abide a year and no more.

Accordingly, ardently enamoured as he was, he betook himself to Paris and there, being still put off from one day to another, he was kept two years; at the end of which time, returning, more in love than ever, he found his Salvestra married to an honest youth, a tent maker. At this he was beyond measure woebegone; but, seeing no help for it, he studied to console himself therefor and having spied out where she dwelt, began, after the wont of young men in love, to pass before her, expecting she should no more have forgotten him than he her. But the case was otherwise; she had no more remembrance of him than if she had never seen him; or, if indeed she remembered aught of him, she feigned the contrary; and of this, in a very brief space of time, Girolamo became aware, to his no small chagrin.

Nevertheless, he did all he might to bring himself to her mind; but, himseeming he wrought nothing, he resolved to speak with her, face to face, though he should die for it.

Accordingly, having learned from a neighbour how her house stood, one evening that she and her husband were gone to keep wake with their neighbours, he entered therein by stealth and hiding himself behind certain tent cloths that were spread there, waited till, the twain having returned and gotten them to bed, he knew her husband to be asleep; whereupon he came whereas he had seen Salvestra lay herself and putting his hand upon her breast, said softly, 'Sleepest thou yet, O my soul?' The girl, who was awake, would have cried out; but he said hastily, 'For God's sake, cry not, for I am thy Girolamo.' She, hearing this, said, all trembling, 'Alack, for God's sake, Girolamo, get thee gone; the time is past when it was not forbidden unto our childishness to be lovers. I am, as thou seest, married and it beseemeth me no more to have regard to any man other than my husband; wherefore I beseech thee, by God the Only, to begone, for that, if my husband heard thee, even should no other harm ensue thereof, yet would it follow that I might never more avail to live with him in peace or quiet, whereas now I am beloved of him and abide with him in weal and in tranquillity.'

The youth, hearing these words, was grievously endoloured and recalled to her the time past and his love no whit grown less for absence, mingling many prayers and many great promises, but obtained nothing; wherefore, desiring to die, he prayed her at last that, in requital of so much love, she would suffer him couch by her side, so he might warm himself somewhat, for that he was grown chilled, awaiting her, promising her that he would neither say aught to her nor touch her and would get him gone, so soon as he should be a little warmed. Salvestra, having some little compassion of him, granted him this he asked, upon the conditions aforesaid, and he accordingly lay down beside her, without touching her. Then, collecting into one thought the long love he had borne her and her present cruelty and his lost hope, he resolved to live no longer; wherefore, straitening in himself his vital spirits,* he clenched his hands and died by her side, without word or motion.

After a while the young woman, marvelling at his continence and fearing lest her husband should awake, began to say, 'Alack, Giro-

* *Ristretti in sè gli spiriti.* An obscure passage; perhaps "holding his breath" is meant; but in this case we should read "*lo spirito*" instead of "*gli spiriti.*"

lamo, why dost thou not get thee gone?' Hearing no answer, she concluded that he had fallen asleep and putting out her hand to awaken him, found him cold to the touch as ice, whereat she marvelled sore; then, nudging him more sharply and finding that he stirred not, she felt him again and knew that he was dead; whereat she was beyond measure woebegone and abode a great while, unknowing what she should do. At last she bethought herself to try, in the person of another, what her husband should say was to do [in such a case]; wherefore, awaking him, she told him, as having happened to another, that which had presently betided herself and after asked him what counsel she should take thereof,* if it should happen to herself. The good man replied that himseemed the dead man should be quietly carried to his house and there left, without bearing any ill will thereof to the woman, who, it appeared to him, had nowise done amiss. Then said Salvestra, 'And so it behoveth us do;' and taking his hand, made him touch the dead youth; whereupon, all confounded, he arose, without entering into farther parley with his wife, and kindled a light; then, clothing the dead body in its own garments, he took it, without any delay, on his shoulders and carried it, his innocence aiding him, to the door of Girolamo's house, where he set it down and left it.

When the day came and Girolamo was found dead before his own door, great was the outcry, especially on the part of his mother, and the physicians having examined him and searched his body everywhere, but finding no wound nor bruise whatsoever on him, it was generally concluded that he had died of grief, as was indeed the case. Then was the body carried into a church and the sad mother, repairing thither with many other ladies, kinswomen and neighbours, began to weep without stint and make sore moan over him, according to our usance. What while the lamentation was at its highest, the good man, in whose house he had died, said to Salvestra, 'Harkye, put some mantlet or other on thy head and get thee to the church whither Girolamo hath been carried and mingle with the women and hearken to that which is discoursed of the matter; and I will do the like among the men, so we may hear if aught be said against us.' The thing pleased the girl, who was too late grown pitiful and would fain look upon him, dead, whom, living, she had not willed to pleasure with one poor kiss, and she went thither. A marvellous thing it is to think how uneath to search out are the ways of love! That heart, which Girolamo's fair fortune had not availed to open, his illhap

* *i.e.* what course she should take in the matter, *consiglio* used as before (see notes, Vol. I. pp. 10 and 195) in this special sense.

opened and the old flames reviving all therein, whenas she saw the dead face, it* melted of a sudden into such compassion that she pressed between the women, veiled as she was in the mantlet, and stayed not till she won to the body, and there, giving a terrible great shriek, she cast herself, face downward, on the dead youth, whom she bathed not with many tears, for that no sooner did she touch him than grief bereaved her of life, even as it had bereft him.

The women would have comforted her and bidden her arise, not yet knowing her; but after they had bespoken her awhile in vain, they sought to lift her and finding her motionless, raised her up and knew her at once for Salvestra and for dead; whereupon all who were there, overcome with double pity, set up a yet greater clamour of lamentation. The news soon spread abroad among the men without the church and came presently to the ears of her husband, who was amongst them and who, without lending ear to consolation or comfort from any, wept a great while; after which he recounted to many of those who were there the story of that which had befallen that night between the dead youth and his wife; and so was the cause of each one's death made everywhere manifest, the which was grievous unto all. Then, taking up the dead girl and decking her, as they use to deck the dead, they laid her beside Girolamo on the same bier and there long bewept her; after which the twain were buried in one same tomb, and so these, whom love had not availed to conjoin on life, death conjoined with an inseparable union."

THE NINTH STORY

SIR GUILLAUME DE ROUSSILLON GIVETH HIS WIFE TO EAT THE HEART OF SIR GUILLAUME DE GUARDESTAING BY HIM SLAIN AND LOVED OF HER, WHICH SHE AFTER COMING TO KNOW, CASTETH HERSELF FROM A HIGH CASEMENT TO THE GROUND AND DYING, IS BURIED WITH HER LOVER

NEIFILE having made an end of her story, which had awakened no little compassion in all the ladies her companions, the king, who purposed not to infringe Dioneo his privilege, there being none else to tell but they twain, began, "Gentle ladies, since you have such compassion upon ill-fortuned loves, it hath occurred to me to tell you

* *i.e.* her heart.

a story whereof it will behove you have no less pity than of the last, for that those to whom that which I shall tell happened were persons of more account than those of whom it hath been spoken and yet more cruel was the mishap that befell them.

You must know, then, that, according to that which the Provençals relate, there were aforetime in Provence two noble knights, each of whom had castles and vassals under him, called the one Sir Guillaume de Roussillon and the other Sir Guillaume de Guardestaing; and for that they were both men of great prowess in arms, they loved each other with an exceeding love and were wont to go still together and clad in the same colours to every tournament or jousting or other act of arms. Although they abode each in his own castle and were distant, one from other, a good half score miles, yet it came to pass that, Sir Guillaume de Roussillon having a very fair and lovesome lady to wife, Sir Guillaume de Guardestaing, notwithstanding the friendship and fellowship that was between them, became beyond measure enamoured of her and so wrought, now with one means and now with another, that the lady became aware of his passion and knowing him for a very valiant knight, it pleased her and she began to return his love, insomuch that she desired and tendered nothing more than him nor awaited otherwhat than to be solicited of him; the which was not long in coming to pass and they foregathered once and again.

Loving each other amain and conversing together less discreetly than behoved, it befell that the husband became aware of their familiarity and was mightily incensed thereat, insomuch that the great love he bore to Guardestaing was turned into mortal hatred; but this he knew better to keep hidden than the two lovers had known to conceal their love and was fully resolved in himself to kill him. Roussillon being in this mind, it befell that a great tourneying was proclaimed in France, the which he forthright signified to Guardestaing and sent to bid him come to him, an it pleased him, so they might take counsel together if and how they should go thither; whereto the other very joyously answered that he would without fail come to sup with him on the ensuing day. Roussillon, hearing this, thought the time come whenas he might avail to kill him and accordingly on the morrow he armed himself and mounting to horse with a servant of his, lay at ambush, maybe a mile from his castle, in a wood whereas Guardestaing must pass.

There after he had awaited him a good while, he saw him come, unarmed and followed by two servants in like case, as one who apprehended nothing from him; and when he saw him come whereas he

would have him, he rushed out upon him, lance in hand, full of rage and malice, crying, 'Traitor, thou art dead!' And to say thus and to plunge the lance into his breast were one and the same thing. Guardestaing, without being able to make any defence or even to say a word, fell from his horse, transfixed of the lance, and a little after died; whilst his servants, without waiting to learn who had done this, turned their horses' heads and fled, as quickliest they might, towards their lord's castle. Roussillon dismounted and opening the dead man's breast with a knife, with his own hands tore out his heart, which he let wrap in the pennon of a lance and gave to one of his men to carry. Then, commanding that none should dare make words of the matter, he remounted, it being now night, and returned to his castle.

The lady, who had heard that Guardestaing was to be there that evening to supper and looked for him with the utmost impatience, seeing him not come, marvelled sore and said to her husband, 'How is it, sir, that Guardestaing is not come?' 'Wife,' answered he, 'I have had [word] from him that he cannot be here till to-morrow;' whereat the lady abode somewhat troubled. Roussillon then dismounted and calling the cook, said to him, 'Take this wild boar's heart and look thou make a dainty dish thereof, the best and most delectable to eat that thou knowest, and when I am at table, send it to me in a silver porringer.' The cook accordingly took the heart and putting all his art thereto and all his diligence, minced it and seasoning it with store of rich spices, made of it a very dainty ragout.

When it was time, Sir Guillaume sat down to table with his wife and the viands came; but he ate little, being hindered in thought for the ill deed he had committed. Presently the cook sent him the ragout, which he caused set before the lady, feigning himself disordered * that evening and commending the dish to her amain. The lady, who was nowise squeamish, tasted thereof and finding it good, ate it all; which when the knight saw, he said to her, 'Wife, how deem you of this dish?' 'In good sooth, my lord,' answered she, 'it liketh me exceedingly.' Whereupon, 'So God be mine aid,' quoth Roussillon; 'I do indeed believe it you, nor do I marvel if that please you, dead, which, alive, pleased you more than aught else.' The lady, hearing this, hesitated awhile, then said, 'How? What have you made me eat?' 'This that you have eaten,' answered the knight, 'was in very truth the heart of Sir Guillaume de Guardestaing, whom you, disloyal wife as you are, so loved; and know for certain that it is his very

* Or surfeited (*svogliato*).

heart, for that I tore it from his breast with these hands a little before my return.'

It needeth not to ask if the lady were woebegone, hearing this of him whom she loved more than aught else; and after awhile she said, 'You have done the deed of a disloyal and base knight, as you are; for, if I, unenforced of him, made him lord of my love and therein offended against you, not he, but I should have borne the penalty thereof. But God forfend that ever other victual should follow upon such noble meat as the heart of so valiant and so courteous a gentleman as was Sir Guillaume de Guardestaing!" Then, rising to her feet, without any manner of hesitation, she let herself fall backward through a window which was behind her and which was exceeding high above the ground; wherefore, as she fell, she was not only killed, but well nigh broken in pieces.

Sir Guillaume, seeing this, was sore dismayed and himseemed he had done ill; wherefore, being adread of the country people and of the Count of Provence, he let saddle his horses and made off. On the morrow it was known all over the country how the thing had passed; whereupon the two bodies were, with the utmost grief and lamentation, taken up by Guardestaing's people and those of the lady and laid in one same sepulchre in the chapel of the latter's own castle; and thereover were verses written, signifying who these were that were buried therewithin and the manner and occasion of their death." *

THE TENTH STORY

A PHYSICIAN'S WIFE PUTTETH HER LOVER FOR DEAD IN A CHEST, WHICH TWO USURERS CARRY OFF TO THEIR OWN HOUSE, GALLANT AND ALL. THE LATTER, WHO IS BUT DRUGGED, COMETH PRESENTLY TO HIMSELF AND BEING DISCOVERED, IS TAKEN FOR A THIEF; BUT THE LADY'S MAID AVOUCHETH TO THE SEIGNORY THAT SHE HERSELF HAD PUT HIM INTO THE CHEST STOLEN BY THE TWO USURERS, WHEREBY HE ESCAPETH THE GALLOWS AND THE THIEVES ARE AMERCED IN CERTAIN MONIES

FILOSTRATO having made an end of his telling, it rested only with Dioneo to accomplish his task, who, knowing this and it being presently commanded him of the king, began as follows: "The sorrows

* This is the well-known story of the Troubadour Guillem de Cabestanh or Cabestaing, whose name Boccaccio alters to Guardastagno or Guardestaing.

that have been this day related of illfortuned loves have saddened not only your eyes and hearts, ladies, but mine also; wherefore I have ardently longed for an end to be made thereof. Now that, praised be God, they are finished (except I should choose to make an ill addition to such sorry ware, from which God keep me!), I will, without farther ensuing so dolorous a theme, begin with something blither and better, thereby perchance affording a good argument for that which is to be related on the ensuing day.

You must know, then, fairest lasses, that there was in Salerno, no great while since, a very famous doctor in surgery, by name Master Mazzeo della Montagna, who, being already come to extreme old age, took to wife a fair and gentle damsel of his city and kept her better furnished with sumptuous and rich apparel and jewels and all that can pleasure a lady than any woman of the place. True it is she went a-cold most of her time, being kept of her husband ill covered a-bed; for, like as Messer Ricciardo di Chinzica (of whom we have already told) taught his wife to observe saints' days and holidays, even so the doctor pretended to her that once lying with a woman necessitated I know not how many days' study to recruit the strength and the like toys; whereof she abode exceeding ill content and like a discreet and high-spirited woman as she was, bethought herself, so she might the better husband the household good, to betake herself to the highway and seek to spend others' gear. To this end, considering divers young men, at last she found one to her mind and on him she set all her hope; whereof he becoming aware and she pleasing him mightily, he in like manner turned all his love upon her.

The spark in question was called Ruggieri da Jeroli, a man of noble birth, but of lewd life and blameworthy carriage, insomuch that he had left himself neither friend nor kinsman who wished him well or cared to see him and was defamed throughout all Salerno for thefts and other knaveries of the vilest; but of this the lady recked little, he pleasing her for otherwhat, and with the aid of a maid of hers, she wrought on such wise that they came together. After they had taken some delight, the lady proceeded to blame his past way of life and to pray him, for the love of her, to desist from these ill fashions; and to give him the means of doing this, she fell to succouring him, now with one sum of money and now with another. On this wise they abode together, using the utmost discretion, till it befell that a sick man was put into the doctor's hands, who had a gangrened leg, and Master Mazzeo, having examined the case, told the patient's kinsfolk that, except a decayed bone he had in his leg

were taken out, needs must he have the whole limb cut off or die, and that, by taking out the bone, he might recover, but that he would not undertake him otherwise than for a dead man; to which those to whom the sick man pertained agreed and gave the latter into his hands for such. The doctor, judging that the patient might not brook the pain nor would suffer himself to be operated, without an opiate, and having appointed to set about the matter at evensong, let that morning distil a certain water of his composition, which, being drunken by the sick man, should make him sleep so long as he deemed necessary for the performing of the operation upon him, and fetching it home, set it in his chamber, without telling any what it was.

The hour of vespers come and the doctor being about to go to the patient in question, there came to him a messenger from certain very great friends of his at Malfi, charging him fail not for anything to repair thither incontinent, for that there had been a great fray there, in which many had been wounded. Master Mazzeo accordingly put off the tending of the leg until the ensuing morning and going aboard a boat, went off to Malfi; whereupon his wife, knowing that he would not return home that night, let fetch Ruggieri, as of her wont, and bringing him into her chamber, locked him therewithin, against certain other persons of the house should be gone to sleep. Ruggieri, then, abiding in the chamber, awaiting his mistress, and being,—whether for fatigue endured that day or salt meat that he had eaten or maybe for usance,—sore athirst, caught sight of the flagon of water, which the doctor had prepared for the sick man and which stood in the window, and deeming it drinking-water, set it to his mouth and drank it all off; nor was it long ere a great drowsiness took him and he fell asleep.

The lady came to the chamber as first she might and finding Ruggieri asleep, nudged him and badè him in a low voice arise, but to no effect, for he replied not neither stirred anywhit; whereat she was somewhat vexed and nudged him more sharply, saying, 'Get up, slug-a-bed! An thou hadst a mind to sleep, thou shouldst have betaken thee to thine own house and not come hither.' Ruggieri, being thus pushed, fell to the ground from a chest whereon he lay and gave no more sign of life than a dead body; whereupon the lady, now somewhat alarmed, began to seek to raise him up and to shake him more roughly, tweaking him by the nose and plucking him by the beard, but all in vain; he had tied his ass to a fast picket.* At this she began

* A proverbial way of saying that he was fast asleep.

"Clapped him into the chest"

to fear lest he were dead; nevertheless she proceeded to pinch him sharply and burn his flesh with a lighted taper, but all to no purpose; wherefore, being no doctress, for all her husband was a physician, she doubted not but he was dead in very deed. Loving him over all else as she did, it needeth no asking if she were woebegone for this and daring not make any outcry, she silently fell a-weeping over him and bewailing so sore a mishap.

After awhile, fearing to add shame to her loss, she bethought herself that it behoved her without delay find a means of carrying the dead man forth of the house and knowing not how to contrive this, she softly called her maid and discovering to her her misadventure, sought counsel of her. The maid marvelled exceedingly and herself pulled and pinched Ruggieri, but, finding him without sense or motion, agreed with her mistress that he was certainly dead and counselled her put him forth of the house. Quoth the lady, 'And where can we put him, so it may not be suspected, whenas he shall be seen to-morrow morning, that he hath been brought out hence?' 'Madam,' answered the maid, 'I saw, this evening at nightfall, over against the shop of our neighbour yonder the carpenter, a chest not overbig, the which, an the owner have not taken it in again, will come very apt for our affair; for that we can lay him therein, after giving him two or three slashes with a knife, and leave him be. I know no reason why whoso findeth him should suppose him to have been put there from this house rather than otherwhence; nay, it will liefer be believed, seeing he was a young man of lewd life, that he hath been slain by some enemy of his, whilst going about to do some mischief or other, and after clapped in the chest.'

The maid's counsel pleased the lady, save that she would not hear of giving him any wound, saying that for nought in the world would her heart suffer her to do that. Accordingly she sent her to see if the chest were yet whereas she had noted it and she presently returned and said, 'Ay.' Then, being young and lusty, with the aid of her mistress, she took Ruggieri on her shoulders and carrying him out,—whilst the lady forewent her, to look if any came,—clapped him into the chest and shutting down the lid, left him there. Now it chanced that, a day or two before, two young men, who lent at usance, had taken up their abode in a house a little farther and lacking household gear, but having a mind to gain much and spend little, had that day espied the chest in question and had plotted together, if it should abide there the night, to carry it off to their own house. Accordingly, midnight come, they sallied forth and finding the chest still there,

without looking farther, they hastily carried it off, for all it seemed to them somewhat heavy, to their own house, where they set it down beside a chamber in which their wives slept and there leaving it, without concerning themselves for the nonce to settle it overnicely, betook them to bed.

Presently, the morning drawing near, Ruggieri, who had slept a great while, having by this time digested the sleeping draught and exhausted its effects, awoke and albeit his sleep was broken and his senses in some measure restored, there abode yet a dizziness in his brain, which held him stupefied, not that night only, but some days after. Opening his eyes and seeing nothing, he put out his hands hither and thither and finding himself in the chest, bethought himself and said, 'What is this? Where am I? Am I asleep or awake? Algates I mind me that I came this evening into my mistress's chamber and now meseemeth I am in a chest. What meaneth this? Can the physician have returned or other accident befallen, by reason whereof the lady hath hidden me here, I being asleep? Methinketh it must have been thus; assuredly it was so.' Accordingly, he addressed himself to abide quiet and hearken if he could hear aught and after he had abidden thus a great while, being somewhat ill at ease in the chest, which was small, and the side whereon he lay irking him, he would have turned over to the other and wrought so dexterously that, thrusting his loins against one of the sides of the chest, which had not been set on a level place, he caused it first to incline to one side and after topple over. In falling, it made a great noise, whereat the women who slept therenigh awoke and being affrighted, were silent for fear. Ruggieri was sore alarmed at the fall of the chest, but, finding that it had opened in the fall, chose rather, if aught else should betide, to be out of it than to abide therewithin. Accordingly, he came forth and what with knowing not where he was and what with one thing and another, he fell to going groping about the house, so haply he should find a stair or a door, whereby he might get him gone.

The women, hearing this, began to say, 'Who is there?' But Ruggieri, knowing not the voice, answered not; whereupon they proceeded to call the two young men, who, for that they had overwatched themselves, slept fast and heard nothing of all this. Thereupon the women, waxing more fearful, arose and betaking themselves to the windows, fell a-crying, 'Thieves! Thieves!' At this sundry of the neighbours ran up and made their way, some by the roof and some by one part and some by another, into the house; and

the young men also, awaking for the noise, arose and seized Ruggieri, who, finding himself there, was in a manner beside himself for wonderment and saw no way of escape. Then they gave him into the hands of the officers of the governor of the city, who had now run thither at the noise and carried him before their chief. The latter, for that he was held of all a very sorry fellow, straightway put him to the question and he confessed to having entered the usurers' house to steal; whereupon the governor thought to let string him up by the neck without delay.

The news was all over Salerno by the morning that Ruggieri had been taken in the act of robbing the money-lenders' house, which the lady and her maid hearing, they were filled with such strange and exceeding wonderment that they were like to persuade themselves that they had not done, but had only dreamed of doing, that which they had done overnight; whilst the lady, to boot, was so concerned at the news of the danger wherein Ruggieri was that she was like to go mad. Soon after half tierce * the physician, having returned from Malfi and wishing to medicine his patient, called for his prepared water and finding the flagon empty, made a great outcry, saying that nothing could abide as it was in his house. The lady, who was troubled with another guess chagrin, answered angrily, saying, 'What wouldst thou say, doctor, of a grave matter, whenas thou makest such an outcry anent a flagonlet of water overset? Is there no more water to be found in the world?' 'Wife,' rejoined the physician, 'thou thinkest this was common water; it was not so; nay, it was a water prepared to cause sleep;' and told her for what occasion he had made it. When she heard this, she understood forthright that Ruggieri had drunken the opiate and had therefore appeared to them dead and said to her husband, 'Doctor, we knew it not; wherefore do you make yourself some more;' and the physician, accordingly, seeing he might not do otherwise, let make thereof anew.

A little after, the maid, who had gone by her mistress's commandment to learn what should be reported of Ruggieri, returned and said to her, 'Madam, every one missaith of Ruggieri; nor, for aught I could hear, is there friend or kinsman who hath risen up or thinketh to rise up to assist him, and it is held certain that the prefect of police will have him hanged to-morrow. Moreover, I have a strange thing to tell you, to wit, meseemeth I have discovered how he came into the money-lenders' house, and hear how. You know the carpenter overagainst whose shop was the chest wherein we laid him; he was but

*i.e. about half-past seven a.m.

now at the hottest words in the world with one to whom it seemeth the chest belonged; for the latter demanded of him the price of his chest, and the carpenter replied that he had not sold it, but that it had that night been stolen from him. Whereto, "Not so," quoth the other, "nay, thou soldest it to the two young men, the money-lenders yonder, as they told me yesternight, when I saw it in their house what time Ruggieri was taken." "They lie," answered the carpenter. "I never sold it to them; but they stole it from me yesternight. Let us go to them." So they went off with one accord to the money-lenders' house, and I came back hither. On this wise, as you may see, I conclude that Ruggieri was transported whereas he was found; but how he came to life again I cannot divine.'

The lady now understood very well how the case stood and telling the maid what she had heard from the physician, besought her help to save Ruggieri, for that she might, an she would, at once save him and preserve her honour. Quoth she, 'Madam, teach me how, and I will gladly do anything.' Whereupon the lady, whose wits were sharpened by the urgency of the case, having promptly bethought herself of that which was to do, particularly acquainted the maid therewith, who first betook herself to the physician and weeping, began to say to him, 'Sir, it behoveth me ask you pardon of a great fault, which I have committed against you.' 'In what?' asked the doctor, and she, never giving over weeping, answered, 'Sir, you know what manner young man is Ruggieri da Jeroli. He took a liking to me awhile agone and partly for fear and partly for love, needs must I become his mistress. Yesternight, knowing that you were abroad, he cajoled me on such wise that I brought him into your house to lie with me in my chamber, and he being athirst and I having no whither more quickly to resort for water or wine, unwilling as I was that your lady, who was in the saloon, should see me, I remembered me to have seen a flagon of water in your chamber. Accordingly, I ran for it and giving him the water to drink, replaced the flagon whence I had taken it, whereof I find you have made a great outcry in the house. And certes I confess I did ill; but who is there doth not ill bytimes? Indeed, I am exceeding grieved to have done it, not so much for the thing itself as for that which hath ensued of it and by reason whereof Ruggieri is like to lose his life. Wherefore I pray you, as most I may, pardon me and give me leave to go succour Ruggieri inasmuch as I can.' The physician, hearing this, for all he was angry, answered jestingly, 'Thou hast given thyself thine own penance therefor, seeing that, whereas thou thoughtest yesternight to have a lusty young

fellow who would shake thy skincoats well for thee, thou hadst a sluggard; wherefore go and endeavour for the deliverance of thy lover; but henceforth look thou bring him not into the house again, or I will pay thee for this time and that together.'

The maid, thinking she had fared well for the first venue, betook herself, as quickliest she might, to the prison where Ruggieri lay and coaxed the gaoler to let her speak with the prisoner, whom after she had instructed what answers he should make to the prefect of police, an he would fain escape, she contrived to gain admission to the magistrate himself. The later, for that she was young and buxom, would fain, ere he would hearken to her, cast his grapnel aboard the good wench, whereof she, to be the better heard, was no whit chary; then, having quitted herself of the grinding due,* 'Sir,' said she, 'you have here Ruggieri da Jeroli taken for a thief; but the truth is not so.' Then, beginning from the beginning, she told him the whole story; how she, being his mistress, had brought him into the physician's house and had given him the drugged water to drink, unknowing what it was, and how she had put him for dead into the chest; after which she told him the talk she had heard between the master carpenter and the owner of the chest, showing him thereby how Ruggieri had come into the money-lenders' house.

The magistrate, seeing it an easy thing to come at the truth of the matter, first questioned the physician if it were true of the water and found that it was as she had said; whereupon he let summon the carpenter and him to whom the chest belonged and the two money-lenders and after much parley, found that the latter had stolen the chest overnight and put it in their house. Ultimately he sent for Ruggieri and question him where he had lain that night, whereto he replied that where he had lain he knew not; he remembered indeed having gone to pass the night with Master Mazzeo's maid, in whose chamber he had drunken water for a sore thirst he had; but what became of him after he knew not, save that, when he awoke, he found himself in the money-lenders' house in a chest. The prefect, hearing these things and taking great pleasure therein, caused the maid and Ruggieri and the carpenter and the money-lenders repeat their story again and again; and in the end, seeing Ruggieri to be innocent, he released him and amerced the money-lenders in half a score ounces for that they had stolen the chest. How welcome this was to Ruggieri, none need ask, and it was beyond measure pleasing

* Or "having risen from the grinding" (*levatasi dal macinio*).

to his mistress, who together with her lover and the precious maid, who had proposed to give him the slashes with the knife, many a time after laughed and made merry of the matter, still continuing their loves and their disport from good to better; the which I would well might so betide myself, save always the being put in the chest."

If the former stories had saddened the hearts of the lovesome ladies, this last one of Dioneo's made them laugh so heartily, especially when he spoke of the prefect casting his grapnel aboard the maid, that they were able thus to recover themselves of the melancholy caused by the others. But the king, seeing that the sun began to grow yellow and that the term of his seignory was come, with very courteous speech excused himself to the fair ladies for that which he had done, to wit, that he had caused discourse of so sorrowful a matter as that of lovers' infelicity; which done, he rose to his feet and taking from his head the laurel wreath, whilst the ladies waited to see on whom he should bestow it, set it daintily on Fiammetta's fair head, saying, "I make over this crown to thee, as to her who will, better than any other, know how with to-morrow's pleasance to console these ladies our companions of to-day's woefulness."

Fiammetta, whose locks were curled and long and golden and fell over her white and delicate shoulders and whose soft-rounded face was all resplendent with white lilies and vermeil roses commingled, with two eyes in her head as they were those of a peregrine falcon and a dainty little mouth, the lips whereof seemed twin rubies, answered, smiling, "And I, Filostrato, I take it willingly, and that thou mayst be the better cognizant of that which thou hast done, I presently will and command that each prepare to discourse to-morrow of THAT WHICH HATH HAPPILY BETIDED LOVERS AFTER SUNDRY CRUEL AND MISFORTUNATE ADVENTURES." Her proposition * was pleasing unto all and she, after summoning the seneschal and taking counsel with him of things needful, arising from session, blithely dismissed all the company until supper-time. Accordingly, they all proceeded, according to their various appetites, to take their several pleasures, some wandering about the garden, whose beauties were not such as might lightly tire, and other some betaking themselves towards the mills which wrought therewithout, whilst the rest fared some hither and some thither, until the hour of supper, which being come, they all foregathered, as of their wont, anigh the fair fountain and there supped with exceeding

i.e. the theme proposed by her.

pleasance and well served. Presently, arising thence, they addressed themselves, as of their wont, to dancing and singing, and Filomena leading off the dance, the queen said, "Filostrato, I purpose not to depart from the usance of those who have foregone me in the sovranty, but, like as they have done, so I intend that a song be sung at my commandment; and as I am assured that thy songs are even such as are thy stories, it is our pleasure that, so no more days than this be troubled with thine ill fortunes, thou sing such one thereof as most pleaseth thee." Filostrato replied that he would well and forthright proceeded to sing on this wise:

Weeping, I demonstrate
How sore with reason doth my heart complain
Of love betrayed and plighted faith in vain.

Love, whenas first there was of thee imprest
Thereon * her image for whose sake I sigh,
Sans hope of succour aye,
So full of virtue didst thou her pourtray,
That every torment light accounted I
That through thee to my breast,
Grown full of drear unrest
And dole, might come; but now, alack! I'm fain
To own my error, not withouten pain.

Yea, of the cheat first was I made aware,
Seeing myself of her forsaken sheer,
In whom I hoped alone;
For, when I deemed myself most fairly grown
Into her favour and her servant dear,
Without her thought or care
Of my to-come despair,
I found she had another's merit ta'en
To heart and put me from her with disdain.

Whenas I knew me banished from my stead,
Straight in my heart a dolorous plaint there grew,
That yet therein hath power,
And oft I curse the day and eke the hour
When first her lovesome visage met my view,
Graced with high goodlihead;
And more enamouréd
Than aye, my soul keeps up its dying strain,
Faith, ardour, hope, blaspheming still amain.

* i.e. on my heart.

How void my misery is of all relief
Thou mayst e'en feel, so sore I call thee, sire,
With voice all full of woe;
Ay, and I tell thee that it irks me so
That death for lesser torment I desire.
Come, death, then; shear the sheaf
Of this my life of grief
And with thy stroke my madness eke assain;
Go where I may, less dire will be my bane.

No other way than death is left my spright,
Ay, and none other solace for my dole;
Then give it * me straightway,
Love; put an end withal to my dismay:
Ah, do it; since fate's spite
Hath robbed me of delight;
Gladden thou her, lord, with my death, love-slain,
As thou hast cheered her with another swain.

My song, though none to learn thee lend an ear,
I reck the less thereof, indeed, that none
Could sing thee even as I;
One only charge I give thee, ere I die,
That thou find Love and unto him alone
Show fully how undear
This bitter life and drear
Is to me, craving of his might he deign
Some better harbourage I may attain.

Weeping I demonstrate
How sore with reason doth my heart complain
Of love betrayed and plighted faith in vain.

The words of this song clearly enough discovered the state of Filostrato's mind and the cause thereof, the which belike the countenance of a certain lady who was in the dance had yet plainlier declared, had not the shades of the now fallen night hidden the blushes that rose to her face. But, when he had made an end of his song, many others were sung, till such time as the hour of sleep arrived, whereupon, at the queen's commandment, each of the ladies withdrew to her chamber.

* *i.e.* death.

HERE ENDETH THE FOURTH DAY
OF THE DECAMERON

DAY THE FIFTH

HERE BEGINNETH THE FIFTH DAY OF THE DECAMERON WHEREIN UNDER THE GOVERNANCE OF FIAMMETTA IS DISCOURSED OF THAT WHICH HATH HAPPILY BETIDED LOVERS AFTER SUNDRY CRUEL AND MISFORTUNATE ADVENTURES

THE East was already all white and the rays of the rising sun had made it light through all our hemisphere, when Fiammetta, allured by the sweet song of the birds, that blithely chanted the first hour of the day upon the branches, arose and let call all the other ladies and the three young men; then, with leisured pace descending into the fields, she went a-pleasuring with her company about the ample plain upon the dewy grasses, discoursing with them of one thing and another, until the sun was somewhat risen, when, feeling that its rays began to grow hot, she turned their steps to their abiding-place. There, with excellent wines and confections, she let restore the light fatigue had and they disported themselves in the delightsome garden until the eating hour, which being come and everything made ready by the discreet seneschal, they sat blithely down to meat, such being the queen's pleasure, after they had sung sundry roundelays and a ballad or two. Having dined orderly and with mirth, not unmindful of their wonted usance of dancing, they danced sundry short dances to the sound of songs and tabrets, after which the queen dismissed them all until the hour of slumber should be past. Accordingly, some betook themselves to sleep, whilst others addressed themselves anew to their diversion about the fair garden; but all, according to the wonted fashion, assembled together again, a little after none, near the fair fountain, whereas it pleased the queen. Then she, having seated herself in the chief room, looked towards Pamfilo and smilingly charged him make a beginning with the fair-fortuned stories; whereto he willingly addressed himself and spoke as follows:

THE FIRST STORY

CIMON, LOVING, WAXETH WISE AND CARRIETH OFF TO SEA IPHIGENIA HIS MISTRESS. BEING CAST INTO PRISON AT RHODES, HE IS DELIVERED THENCE BY LYSIMACHUS AND IN CONCERT WITH HIM CARRIETH OFF IPHIGENIA AND CASSANDRA ON THEIR WEDDING-DAY, WITH WHOM THE TWAIN FLEE INTO CRETE, WHERE THE TWO LADIES BECOME THEIR WIVES AND WHENCE THEY ARE PRESENTLY ALL FOUR RECALLED HOME

"MANY stories, delightsome ladies, apt to give beginning to so glad a day as this will be, offer themselves unto me to be related; whereof one is the most pleasing to my mind, for that thereby, beside the happy issue which is to mark this day's discourses, you may understand how holy, how puissant and how full of all good is the power of Love, which many, unknowing what they say, condemn and vilify with great unright; and this, an I err not, must needs be exceeding pleasing to you, for that I believe you all to be in love.

There was, then, in the island of Cyprus, (as we have read aforetime in the ancient histories of the Cypriots,) a very noble gentleman, by name Aristippus, who was rich beyond any other of the country in all temporal things and might have held himself the happiest man alive, had not fortune made him woeful in one only thing, to wit, that amongst his other children he had a son who overpassed all the other youths of his age in stature and goodliness of body, but was a hopeless dullard and well nigh an idiot. His true name was Galesus, but for that neither by toil of teacher nor blandishment nor beating of his father nor study nor endeavour of whatsoever other had it been found possible to put into his head any inkling of letters or good breeding and that he had a rough voice and an uncouth and manners more befitting a beast than a man, he was of well nigh all by way of mockery called Cimon, which in their tongue signified as much as brute beast in ours. His father brooked his wasted life with the most grievous concern and having presently given over all hope of him, he bade him begone to his country house * and there abide with his husbandmen, so he might not still have before him the cause of his chagrin; the which was very agreeable to Cimon, for that the manners

* Or farm (*villa*).

and usages of clowns and churls were much more to his liking than those of the townsfolk.

Cimon, then, betaking himself to the country and there employing himself in the things that pertained thereto, it chanced one day, awhile after noon, as he passed from one farm to another, with his staff on his shoulder, that he entered a very fair coppice which was in those parts and which was then all in leaf, for that it was the month of May. Passing therethrough, he happened (even as his fortune guided him thither) upon a little mead compassed about with very high trees, in one corner whereof was a very clear and cool spring, beside which he saw a very fair damsel asleep upon the green grass, with so thin a garment upon her body that it hid well nigh nothing of her snowy flesh. She was covered only from the waist down with a very white and light coverlet; and at her feet slept on like wise two women and a man, her servants. When Cimon espied the young lady, he halted and leaning upon his staff, fell, without saying a word, to gazing most intently upon her with the utmost admiration, no otherwise than as he had never yet seen a woman's form, whilst in his rude breast, wherein for a thousand lessonings no least impression of civil pleasance had availed to penetrate, he felt a thought awaken which intimated to his gross and material spirit that this maiden was the fairest thing that had been ever seen of any living soul. Thence he proceeded to consider her various parts,—commending her hair, which he accounted of gold, her brow, her nose, her mouth, her throat and her arms, and above all her breast, as yet but little upraised,—and grown of a sudden from a churl a judge of beauty, he ardently desired in himself to see the eyes, which, weighed down with deep sleep, she kept closed. To this end, he had it several times in mind to awaken her; but, for that she seemed to him beyond measure fairer than the other women aforetime seen of him, he misdoubted him she must be some goddess. Now he had wit enough to account things divine worthy of more reverence than those mundane; wherefore he forbore, waiting for her to awake of herself; and albeit the delay seemed overlong to him, yet, taken as he was with an unwonted pleasure, he knew not how to tear himself away.

It befell, then, that, after a long while, the damsel, whose name was Iphigenia, came to herself, before any of her people, and opening her eyes, saw Cimon (who, what for his fashion and uncouthness and his father's wealth and nobility, was known in a manner to every one in the country) standing before her, leant on his staff, marvelled exceedingly and said, 'Cimon, what goest thou seeking in this wood

at this hour?' He made her no answer, but, seeing her eyes open, began to look steadfastly upon them, himseeming there proceeded thence a sweetness which fulfilled him with a pleasure such as he had never before felt. The young lady, seeing this, began to misdoubt her lest his so fixed looking upon her should move his rusticity to somewhat that might turn to her shame; wherefore, calling her women, she rose up, saying, 'Cimon, abide with God.' To which he replied, 'I will begone with thee;' and albeit the young lady, who was still in fear of him, would have declined his company, she could not win to rid herself of him till he had accompanied her to her own house.

Thence he repaired to his father's house [in the city,] and declared to him that he would on no wise consent to return to the country; the which was irksome enough to Aristippus and his kinsfolk; nevertheless they let him be, awaiting to see what might be the cause of his change of mind. Love's arrow having, then, through Iphigenia's beauty, penetrated into Cimon's heart, whereinto no teaching had ever availed to win an entrance, in a very brief time, proceeding from one idea to another, he made his father marvel and all his kinsfolk and every other that knew him. In the first place he besought his father that he would cause him go bedecked with clothes and every other thing, even as his brothers, the which Aristippus right gladly did. Then, consorting with young men of condition and learning the fashions and carriage that behoved unto gentlemen and especially unto lovers, he first, to the utmost wonderment of every one, in a very brief space of time, not only learned the first [elements of] letters, but became very eminent among the students of philosophy, and after (the love which he bore Iphigenia being the cause of all this) he not only reduced his rude and rustical manner of speech to seemliness and civility, but became a past master of song and sound * and exceeding expert and doughty in riding and martial exercises, both by land and by sea. In short, not to go recounting every particular of his merits, the fourth year was not accomplished from the day of his first falling in love, ere he was grown the sprightliest and most accomplished gentleman of all the young men in the island of Cyprus, ay, and the best endowed with every particular excellence. What, then, charming ladies, shall we say of Cimon? Certes, none other thing than that the lofty virtues implanted by heaven in his generous soul had been bounden with exceeding strong bonds of jealous fortune and

* *i.e.* of music, vocal and instrumental.

"Gazing intently with the utmost admiration"

shut in some straitest corner of his heart, all which bonds Love, as a mightier than fortune, broke and burst in sunder and in its quality of awakener and quickener of drowsed and sluggish wits, urged forth into broad daylight the virtues aforesaid, which had till then been overdarkened with a barbarous obscurity, thus manifestly discovering from how mean a room it can avail to uplift those souls that are subject unto it and to what an eminence it can conduct them with its beams.

Although Cimon, loving Iphigenia as he did, might exceed in certain things, as young men in love very often do, nevertheless Aristippus, considering that Love had turned him from a dunce into a man, not only patiently bore with the extravagances into which it might whiles lead him, but encouraged him to ensue its every pleasure. But Cimon, (who refused to be called Galesus, remembering that Iphigenia had called him by the former name,) seeking to put an honourable term to his desire, once and again caused essay Cipseus, Iphigenia's father, so he should give him his daughter to wife; but Cipseus still answered that he had promised her to Pasimondas, a young nobleman of Rhodes, to whom he had no mind to fail of his word. The time coming for the covenanted nuptials of Iphigenia and the bridegroom having sent for her, Cimon said in himself, 'Now, O Iphigenia, is the time to prove how much thou are beloved of me. By thee am I become a man and so I may but have thee, I doubt not to become more glorious than any god; and for certain I will or have thee or die.'

Accordingly, having secretly recruited certain young noblemen who were his friends and let privily equip a ship with everything apt for naval battle, he put out to sea and awaited the vessel wherein Iphigenia was to be transported to her husband in Rhodes. The bride, after much honour done of her father to the bridegroom's friends, took ship with the latter, who turned their prow towards Rhodes and departed. On the following day, Cimon, who slept not, came out upon them with his ship and cried out, in a loud voice, from the prow, to those who were on board Iphigenia's vessel, saying, 'Stay, strike your sails or look to be beaten and sunken in the sea.' Cimon's adversaries had gotten up their arms on deck and made ready to defend themselves; whereupon he, after speaking the words aforesaid, took a grappling-iron and casting it upon the poop of the Rhodians, who were making off at the top of their speed, made it fast by main force to the prow of his own ship. Then, bold as a lion, he leapt on board their ship, without waiting for any to follow him, as if he held them all for

machus, in whom the chief magistracy of the Rhodians was for that year vested, coming thither from the city with a great company of men-at-arms, haled Cimon and all his men to prison. On such wise did the wretched and lovelorn Cimon lose his Iphigenia, scantwhile before won of him, without having taken of her more than a kiss or two; whilst she herself was received by many noble ladies of Rhodes and comforted as well for the chagrin had of her seizure as for the fatigue suffered by reason of the troubled sea; and with them she abode against the day appointed for her nuptials.

As for Cimon and his companions, their lives were granted them, in consideration of the liberty given by them to the young Rhodians the day before,—albeit Pasimondas used his utmost endeavour to procure them to be put to death,—and they were condemned to perpetual prison, wherein, as may well be believed, they abode woebegone and without hope of any relief. However, whilst Pasimondas, as most he might, hastened the preparations for his coming nuptials, fortune, as if repenting her of the sudden injury done to Cimon, brought about a new circumstance for his deliverance, the which was on this wise. Pasimondas had a brother called Ormisdas, less in years, but not in merit, than himself, who had been long in treaty for the hand of a fair and noble damsel of the city, by name Cassandra, whom Lysimachus ardently loved, and the match had sundry times been broken off by divers untoward accidents. Now Pasimondas, being about to celebrate his own nuptials with the utmost splendour, bethought himself that it were excellently well done if he could procure Ormisdas likewise to take wife on the same occasion, not to resort afresh to expense and festival making. Accordingly, he took up again the parleys with Cassandra's parents and brought them to a successful issue; wherefore he and his brother agreed, in concert with them, that Ormisdas should take Cassandra to wife on the same day whenas himself took Iphigenia.

Lysimachus hearing this, it was beyond measure displeasing to him, for that he saw himself bereaved of the hope which he cherished, that, an Ormisdas took her not, he should certainly have her. However, like a wise man, he kept his chagrin hidden and fell to considering on what wise he might avail to hinder this having effect, but could see no way possible save the carrying her off. This seemed easy to him to compass for the office which he held, but he accounted the deed far more dishonourable than if he had not held the office in question. Ultimately, however, after long deliberation, honour gave place to love and he determined, come what might of it, to carry off

Cassandra. Then, bethinking himself of the company he must have and the course he must hold to do this, he remembered him of Cimon, whom he had in prison with his comrades, and concluded that he might have no better or trustier companion than Cimon in this affair.

Accordingly, that same night he had him privily into his chamber and proceeded to bespeak him on this wise: 'Cimon, like as the gods are very excellent and bountiful givers of things to men, even so are they most sagacious provers of their virtues, and those, whom they find resolute and constant under all circumstances, they hold deserving, as the most worthy, of the highest recompenses. They have been minded to have more certain proof of thy worth than could be shown by thee within the limits of thy father's house, whom I know to be abundantly endowed with riches; wherefore, first, with the poignant instigations of love they brought thee from a senseless animal to be a man, and after with foul fortune and at this present with prison dour, they would fain try if thy spirit change not from that which it was, whenas thou wast scantwhile glad of the gotten prize. If that * be the same as it was erst, they never yet vouchsafed thee aught so gladsome as that which they are presently prepared to bestow on thee and which, so thou mayst recover they wonted powers and resume thy whilom spirit, I purpose to discover to thee.

Pasimondas, rejoicing in thy misadventure and a diligent promoter of thy death, bestirreth himself as most he may to celebrate his nuptials with thine Iphigenia, so therein he may enjoy the prize which fortune first blithely conceded thee and after, growing troubled, took from thee of a sudden. How much this must grieve thee, an thou love as I believe, I know by myself, to whom Ormisdas his brother prepareth in one same day to do a like injury in the person of Cassandra, whom I love over all else. To escape so great an unright and annoy of fortune, I see no way left open of her to us, save the valour of our souls and the might of our right hands, wherein it behoveth us take our swords and make us a way to the carrying off of our two mistresses, thee for the second and me for the first time. If, then, it be dear to thee to have again—I will not say thy liberty, whereof methinketh thou reckest little without thy lady, but—thy mistress, the gods have put her in thy hands, an thou be willing to second me in my emprize.'

All Cimon's lost spirit was requickened in him by these words and he replied, without overmuch consideration, 'Lysimachus, thou canst

* *i.e.* thy spirit.

have no stouter or trustier comrade than myself in such an enterprise, an that be to ensue thereof for me which thou avouchest; wherefore do thou command me that which thou deemest should be done of me, and thou shalt find thyself wonder-puissantly seconded.' Then said Lysimachus, 'On the third day from this the new-married wives will for the first time enter their husbands' houses, whereinto thou with thy companions armed and I with certain of my friends, in whom I put great trust, will make our way towards nightfall and snatching up our mistresses out of the midst of the guests, will carry them off to a ship, which I have caused secretly equip, slaying whosoever shall presume to offer opposition.' The device pleased Cimon and he abode quiet in prison until the appointed time.

The wedding-day being come, great and magnificent was the pomp of the festival and every part of the two brothers' house was full of mirth and merry-making; whereupon Lysimachus, having made ready everything needful, divided Cimon and his companions, together with his own friends, all armed under their clothes, into three parties and having first kindled them to his purpose with many words, secretly despatched one party to the harbour, so none might hinder their going aboard the ship, whenas need should be. Then, coming with the other twain, whenas it seemed to him time, to Pasimondas his house, he left one party of them at the door, so as none might shut them up therewithin or forbid them the issue, and with Cimon and the rest went up by the stairs. Coming to the saloon where the new-wedded brides were seated orderly at meat with many other ladies, they rushed in upon them and overthrowing the tables, took each his mistress and putting them in the hands of their comrades, bade straightway carry them to the ship that was in waiting. The brides fell a-weeping and shrieking, as did likewise the other ladies and the servants, and the whole house was of a sudden full of clamour and lamentation.

Cimon and Lysimachus and their companions, drawing their swords, made for the stairs, without any opposition, all giving way to them, and as they descended, Pasimondas presented himself before them, with a great cudgel in his hand, being drawn thither by the outcry; but Cimon dealt him a swashing blow on the head and cleaving it sheer in sunder, laid him dead at his feet. The wretched Ormisdas, running to his brother's aid, was on like wise slain by one of Cimon's strokes, and divers others who sought to draw nigh them were in like manner wounded and beaten off by the companions of the latter and Lysimachus, who, leaving the house full of blood and clamour and weeping and woe, drew together and made their way to the ship with

their prizes, unhindered of any. Here they embarked with their mistresses and all their companions, the shore being now full of armed folk come to the rescue of the ladies, and thrusting the oars into the water, made off, rejoicing, about their business. Coming presently to Crete, they were there joyfully received by many, both friends and kinsfolk, and espousing their mistresses with great pomp, gave themselves up to the glad enjoyment of their purchase. Loud and long were the clamours and differences in Cyprus and in Rhodes by reason of their doings; but, ultimately, their friends and kinsfolk, interposing in one and the other place, found means so to adjust matters that, after some exile, Cimon joyfully returned to Cyprus with Iphigenia, whilst Lysimachus on like wise returned to Rhodes with Cassandra, and each lived long and happily with his mistress in his own country."

THE SECOND STORY

COSTANZA LOVETH MARTUCCIO GOMITO AND HEARING THAT HE IS DEAD, EMBARKETH FOR DESPAIR ALONE IN A BOAT, WHICH IS CARRIED BY THE WIND TO SUSA. FINDING HER LOVER ALIVE AT TUNIS, SHE DISCOVERETH HERSELF TO HIM AND HE, BEING GREAT IN FAVOUR WITH THE KING FOR COUNSELS GIVEN, ESPOUSETH HER AND RETURNETH RICH WITH HER TO LIPARI.

THE queen, seeing Pamfilo's story at an end, after she had much commended it, enjoined Emilia to follow on, telling another, and she accordingly began thus: "Every one must naturally delight in those things wherein he seeth rewards ensue according to the affections; * and for that love in the long run deserveth rather happiness than affliction, I shall, in treating of the present theme, obey the queen with much greater pleasure to myself than I did the king in that of yesterday.

You must know, then, dainty dames, that near unto Sicily is an islet called Lipari, wherein, no great while agone, was a very fair damsel called Costanza, born of a very considerable family there. It chanced that a young man of the same island, called Martuccio Gomito, who was very agreeable and well bred and of approved

* Syn. inclinations (*affezioni*). This is a somewhat obscure passage, owing to the vagueness of the word *affezioni* (syn. *affetti*) in this position, and may be rendered, with about equal probability, in more than one way.

worth * in his craft,† fell in love with her; and she in like manner so burned for him that she was never easy save whenas she saw him. Martuccio, wishing to have her to wife, caused demand her of her father, who answered that he was poor and that therefore he would not give her to him. The young man, enraged to see himself rejected for poverty, in concert with certain of his friends and kinsmen, equipped a light ship and swore never to return to Lipari, except rich. Accordingly, he departed thence and turning corsair, fell to cruising off the coast of Barbary and plundering all who were weaker than himself; wherein fortune was favourable enough to him, had he known how to set bounds to his wishes; but, it sufficing him not to have waxed very rich, he and his comrades, in a brief space of time, it befell that, whilst they sought to grow overrich, he was, after a long defence, taken and plundered with all his companions by certain ships of the Saracens, who, after scuttling the vessel and sacking the greater part of the crew, carried Martuccio to Tunis, where he was put in prison and long kept in misery.

The news was brought to Lipari, not by one or by two, but by many and divers persons, that he and all on board the bark had been drowned; whereupon the girl, who had been beyond measure woebegone for her lover's departure, hearing that he was dead with the others, wept sore and resolved in herself to live no longer; but, her heart suffering her not to slay herself by violence, she determined to give a new occasion ‡ to her death.§ Accordingly, she issued secretly forth of her father's house one night and betaking herself to the harbour, happened upon a fishing smack, a little aloof from the other ships, which, for that its owners had but then landed therefrom, she found furnished with mast and sail and oars. In this she hastily embarked and rowed herself out to sea; then, being somewhat skilled in the mariner's art, as the women of that island mostly are, she made sail and casting the oars and rudder

* Or "eminent" (*valoroso*), i.e. in modern parlance, "a man of merit and talent."

† *Valoroso nel suo mestiere.* It does not appear that Martuccio was a craftsman and it is possible, therefore, that Boccaccio intended the word *mestiere* to be taken in the sense (to me unknown) of "condition" or "estate," in which case the passage would read, "a man of worth for (*i.e.* as far as comported with) his [mean] estate"; and this seems a probable reading.

‡ Lit. necessity (*necessità*).

§ *i.e.* to use a new (or strange) fashion of exposing herself to an inevitable death (*nuova necessità dare alla sua morte*).

adrift, committed herself altogether to the mercy of the waves, conceiving that it must needs happen that the wind would either overturn a boat without lading or steersman or drive it upon some rock and break it up, whereby she could not, even if she would, escape, but must of necessity be drowned. Accordingly, wrapping her head in a mantle, she laid herself, weeping, in the bottom of the boat.

But it befell altogether otherwise than as she conceived, for that, the wind being northerly and very light and there being well nigh no sea, the boat rode it out in safety and brought her on the morrow, about vespers, to a beach near a town called Susa, a good hundred miles beyond Tunis. The girl, who, for aught that might happen, had never lifted nor meant to lift her head, felt nothing of being ashore more than at sea; * but, as chance would have it, there was on the beach, whenas the bark struck upon it, a poor woman in act to take up from the sun the nets of the fishermen her masters, who, seeing the bark, marvelled how it should be left to strike full sail upon the land. Thinking that the fishermen aboard were asleep, she went up to the bark and seeing none therein but the damsel aforesaid, who slept fast, called her many times and having at last aroused her and knowing her by her habit for a Christian, asked her in Latin how she came there in that bark all alone. The girl, hearing her speak Latin, misdoubted her a shift of wind must have driven her back to Lipari and starting suddenly to her feet, looked about her, but knew not the country, and seeing herself on land, asked the good woman where she was; to which she answered, 'Daughter mine, thou art near unto Susa in Barbary.' The girl, hearing this, was woeful for that God had not chosen to vouchsafe her the death she sought, and being in fear of shame and knowing not what to do, she seated herself at the foot of her bark and fell a-weeping.

The good woman, seeing this, took pity upon her and brought her, by dint of entreaty, into a little hut of hers and there so humoured her that she told her how she came thither; whereupon, seeing that she was fasting, she set before her her own dry bread and somewhat of fish and water and so besought her that she ate a little. Costanza after asked her who she was that she spoke Latin thus; to which she answered that she was from Trapani and was called Carapresa and served certain Christian fishermen there. The girl, hearing the name of Carapresa, albeit she was exceeding woebegone and knew not what

* *i.e.* knew not whether she was ashore or afloat, so absorbed was she in her despair.

reason moved her thereunto, took it unto herself for a good augury to have heard this name * and began to hope, without knowing what, and somewhat to abate of her wish to die. Then, without discovering who or whence she was, she earnestly besought the good woman to have pity, for the love of God, on her youth and give her some counsel how she might escape any affront being offered her.

Carapresa, like a good woman as she was, hearing this, left her in her hut, whilst she hastily gathered up her nets; then, returning to her, she wrapped her from head to foot in her own mantle and carried her to Susa, where she said to her, 'Costanza, I will bring thee into the house of a very good Saracen lady, whom I serve oftentimes in her occasions and who is old and pitiful. I will commend thee to her as most I may and I am very certain that she will gladly receive thee and use thee as a daughter; and do thou, abiding with her, study thine utmost, in serving her, to gain her favour, against God send thee better fortune.' And as she said, so she did. The lady, who was well stricken in years, hearing the woman's story, looked the girl in the face and fell a-weeping; then, taking her by the hand, she kissed her on the forehead and carried her into her house, where she and sundry other women abode, without any man, and wrought all with their hands at various crafts, doing divers works of silk and palm-fibre and leather. Costanza soon learned to do some of these and falling to working with the rest, became in such favour with the lady and the others that it was a marvellous thing; nor was it long before, with their teaching, she learnt their language.

What while she abode thus at Susa, being now mourned at home for lost and dead, it befell that, one Mariabdela † being King of Tunis, a certain youth of great family and much puissance in Granada, avouching that that kingdom belonged to himself, levied a great multitude of folk and came upon King Mariabdela, to oust him from the kingship. This came to the ears of Martuccio Gomito in prison and he, knowing the Barbary language excellent well and hearing that the king was making great efforts for his defence, said to one of those who had him and his fellows in keeping, 'An I might have speech of the king, my heart assureth me that I could give him a counsel, by which he should gain this his war.' The keeper reported these words to his chief, and he carried them incontinent to the king, who bade fetch Martuccio and asked him what might be his counsel; whereto

* Or "augured well from the hearing of the name." *Carapresa* signifies "a dear or precious prize, gain or capture."

† This name is apparently a distortion of the Arabic *Amir Abdallah.*

he made answer on this wise, 'My lord, if, what time I have otherwhiles frequented these your dominions, I have noted aright the order you keep in your battles, meseemeth you wage them more with archers than with aught else; wherefore, if a means could be found whereby your adversary's bowman should lack of arrows, whilst your own had abundance thereof, methinketh your battle would be won.' 'Without doubt,' answered the king, 'and this might be compassed, I should deem myself assured of victory.' Whereupon, 'My lord,' quoth Martuccio, 'an you will, this may very well be done, and you shall hear how. You must let make strings for your archers' bows much thinner than those which are everywhere commonly used and after let make arrows, the notches whereof shall not serve but for these thin strings. This must be so secretly done that your adversary should know nought thereof; else would he find a remedy therefor; and the reason for which I counsel you thus is this. After your enemy's archers and your own shall have shot all their arrows, you know that, the battle lasting, it will behove your foes to gather up the arrows shot by your men and the latter in like manner to gather theirs; but the enemy will not be able to make use of your arrows, by reason of the strait notches which will not take their thick strings, whereas the contrary will betide your men of the enemy's arrows, for that the thin strings will excellently well take the wide-notched arrows; and so your men will have abundance of ammunition, whilst the others will suffer default thereof.'

The king, who was a wise prince, was pleased with Martuccio's counsel and punctually following it, found himself thereby to have won his war. Wherefore Martuccio became in high favour with him and rose in consequence to great and rich estate. The report of these things spread over the land and it came presently to Costanza's ears that Martuccio Gomito, whom she had long deemed dead, was alive, whereupon the love of him, that was now grown cool in her heart, broke out of a sudden into fresh flame and waxed greater than ever, whilst dead hope revived in her. Therewithal she altogether discovered her every adventure to the good lady, with whom she dwelt, and told her that she would fain go to Tunis, so she might satisfy her eyes of that whereof her ears had made them desireful, through the reports received. The old lady greatly commended her purpose and taking ship with her, carried her, as if she had been her mother, to Tunis, where they were honourably entertained in the house of a kinswoman of hers. There she despatched Carapresa, who had come with them, to see what she could learn of Martuccio, and she, finding him

alive and in great estate and reporting this to the old gentlewoman, it pleased the latter to will to be she who should signify unto Martuccio that his Costanza was come thither to him; wherefore, betaking herself one day whereas he was, she said to him, 'Martuccio, there is come to my house a servant of thine from Lipari, who would fain speak with thee privily there; wherefore, not to trust to others, I have myself, at his desire, come to give thee notice thereof.' He thanked her and followed her to her house, where when Costanza saw him, she was like to die of gladness and unable to contain herself, ran straightway with open arms to throw herself on his neck; then, embracing him, without availing to say aught, she fell a-weeping tenderly, both for compassion of their past ill fortunes and for present gladness.

Martuccio, seeing his mistress, abode awhile dumb for amazement, then said, sighing, 'O my Costanza, art thou then yet alive? It is long since I heard that thou wast lost; nor in our country was aught known of thee.' So saying, he embraced her, weeping, and kissed her tenderly. Costanza then related to him all that had befallen her and the honourable treatment which she had received from the gentlewoman with whom she dwelt; and Martuccio, after much discourse, taking leave of her, repaired to the king his master and told him all, to wit, his own adventures and those of the damsel, adding that, with his leave, he meant to take her to wife, according to our law. The king marvelled at these things and sending for the damsel and hearing from her that it was even as Martuccio had avouched, said to her, 'Then hast thou right well earned him to husband.' Then, letting bring very great and magnificent gifts, he gave part thereof to her and part to Martuccio, granting them leave to do one with the other that which was most pleasing unto each of them; whereupon Martuccio, having entreated the gentlewoman who had harboured Costanza with the utmost honour and thanked her for that which she had done to serve her and bestowed on her such gifts as sorted with her quality, commended her to God and took leave of her, he and his mistress, not without many tears from the latter. Then, with the king's leave, they embarked with Carapresa on board a little ship and returned with a fair wind to Lipari, where so great was the rejoicing that it might never be told. There Martuccio took Costanza to wife and held great and goodly nuptials; after which they long in peace and repose had enjoyment of their loves."

THE THIRD STORY

PIETRO BOCCAMAZZA, FLEEING WITH AGNOLELLA, FALLETH AMONG THIEVES; THE GIRL ESCAPETH THROUGH A WOOD AND IS LED [BY FORTUNE] TO A CASTLE, WHILST PIETRO IS TAKEN BY THE THIEVES, BUT PRESENTLY, ESCAPING FROM THEIR HANDS, WINNETH, AFTER DIVERS ADVENTURES, TO THE CASTLE WHERE HIS MISTRESS IS AND ESPOUSING HER, RETURNETH WITH HER TO ROME

THERE was none among all the company but commended Emilia's story, which the queen seeing to be finished, turned to Elisa and bade her follow on. Accordingly, studious to obey, she began: "There occurreth to my mind, charming ladies, an ill night passed by a pair of indiscreet young lovers; but, for that many happy days ensued thereon, it pleaseth me to tell the story, as one that conformeth to our proposition.

There was, a little while agone, at Rome,—once the head, as it is nowadays the tail of the world,*—a youth, called Pietro Boccamazza, of a very worshipful family among those of the city, who fell in love with a very fair and lovesome damsel called Agnolella, the daughter of one Gigliuozzo Saullo, a plebeian, but very dear to the Romans, and loving her, he contrived so to do that the girl began to love him no less than he loved her; whereupon, constrained by fervent love and himseeming he might no longer brook the cruel pain that the desire he had of her gave him, he demanded her in marriage; which no sooner did his kinsfolk know than they all repaired to him and chid him sore for that which he would have done; and on the other hand they gave Gigliuozzo to understand that he should make no account of Pietro's words, for that, an he did this, they would never have him for friend or kinsman. Pietro, seeing that way barred whereby alone he deemed he might avail to win to his desire, was like to die of chagrin, and had Gigliuozzo consented, he would have taken his daughter to wife, in despite of all his kindred. However, he determined, an it liked the girl, to contrive to give effect to their

*Clement V. early in the fourteenth century removed the Papal See to Avignon, where it continued to be during the reigns of the five succeeding Popes, Rome being in the meantime abandoned by the Papal Court, till Gregory XI. in the year 1376 again took up his residence at the latter city. It is apparently to this circumstance that Boccaccio alludes in the text.

wishes, and having assured himself, by means of an intermediary, that this was agreeable to her, he agreed with her that she should flee with him from Rome.

Accordingly, having taken order for this, Pietro arose very early one morning and taking horse with the damsel, set out for Anagni, where he had certain friends in whom he trusted greatly. They had no leisure to make a wedding of it, for that they feared to be followed, but rode on, devising of their love and now and again kissing one another. It chanced that, when they came mayhap eight miles from Rome, the way not being overwell known to Pietro, they took a path to the left, whereas they should have kept to the right; and scarce had they ridden more than two miles farther when they found themselves near a little castle, wherefrom, as soon as they were seen, there issued suddenly a dozen footmen. The girl, espying these, whenas they were already close upon them, cried out, saying, 'Pietro, let us begone, for we are attacked;' then, turning her rouncey's head, as best she knew, towards a great wood hard by, she clapped her spurs fast to his flank and held on to the saddle-bow, whereupon the nag, feeling himself goaded, bore her into the wood at a gallop.

Pietro, who went gazing more at her face than at the road, not having become so quickly aware as she of the new comers, was overtaken and seized by them, whilst he still looked, without yet perceiving them, to see whence they should come. They made him alight from his hackney and enquired who he was, which he having told, they proceeded to take counsel together and said, 'This fellow is of the friends of our enemies; what else should we do but take from him these clothes and this nag and string him up to one of yonder oaks, to spite the Orsini?' They all fell in with this counsel and bade Pietro put off his clothes, which as he was in act to do, foreboding him by this of the ill fate which awaited him, it chanced that an ambush of good five-and-twenty footmen started suddenly out upon the others, crying, 'Kill! Kill!' The rogues, taken by surprise, let Pietro be and turned to stand upon their defence, but, seeing themselves greatly outnumbered by their assailants, betook themselves to flight, whilst the others pursued them.

Pietro, seeing this, hurriedly caught up his gear and springing on his hackney, addressed himself, as best he might, to flee by the way he had seen his mistress take; but finding her not and seeing neither road nor footpath in the wood neither perceiving any horse's hoof marks, he was the woefullest man alive; and as soon as himseemed he was safe and out of reach of those who had taken him, as well as

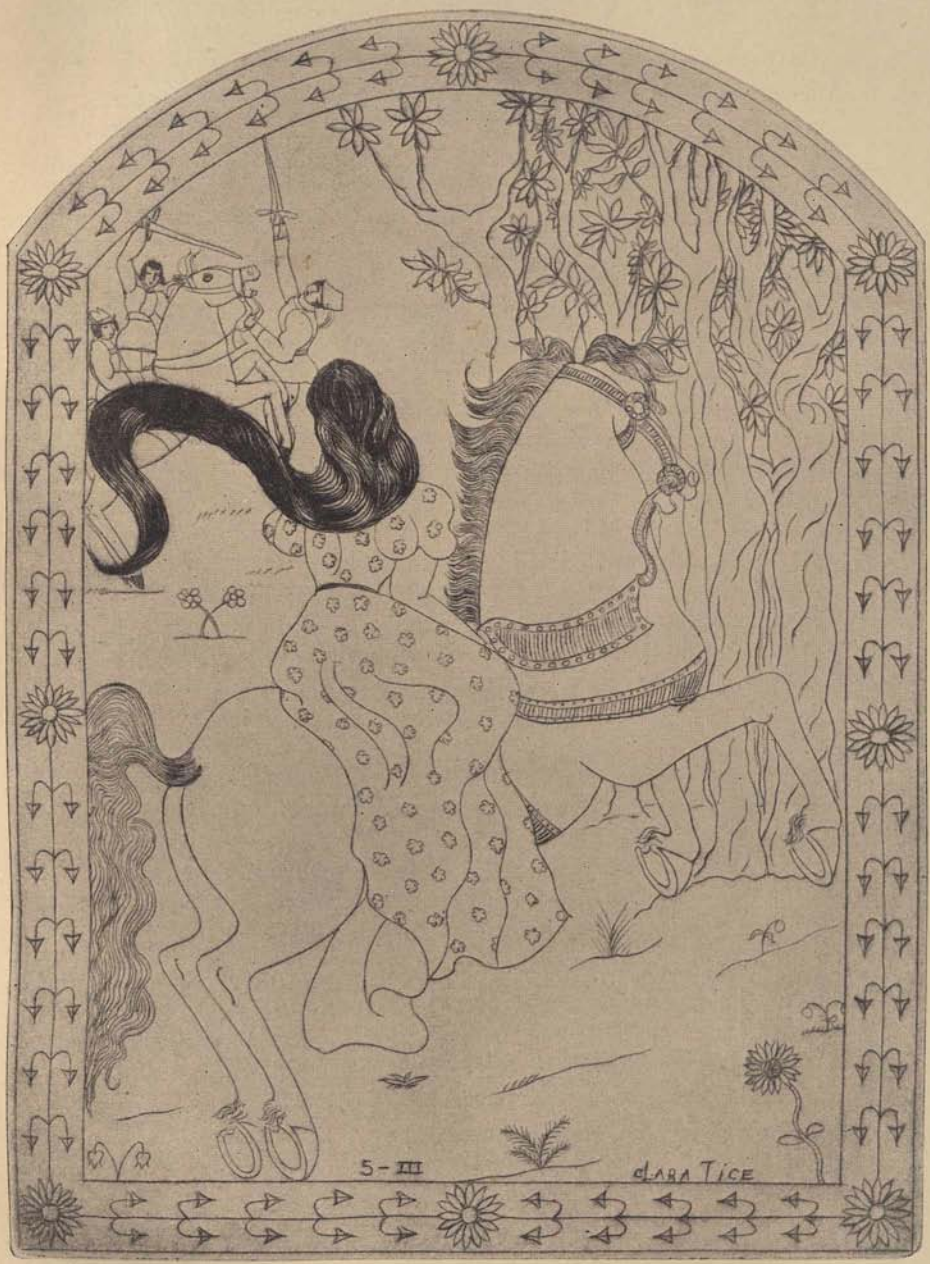
of the others by whom they had been assailed, he began to drive hither and thither about the wood, weeping and calling; but none answered him and he dared not turn back and knew not where he might come, an he went forward, more by token that he was in fear of the wild beasts that use to harbour in the woods, at once for himself and for his mistress, whom he looked momently to see strangled of some bear or some wolf. On this wise, then, did the unlucky Pietro range all day about the wood, crying and calling, whiles going backward, whenas he thought to go forward, until, what with shouting and weeping and fear and long fasting, he was so spent that he could no more and seeing the night come and knowing not what other course to take, he dismounted from his hackney and tied the latter to a great oak, into which he climbed, so he might not be devoured of the wild beasts in the night. A little after the moon rose and the night being very clear and bright, he abode there on wake, sighing and weeping and cursing his ill luck, for that he durst not go to sleep, lest he should fall, albeit, had he had more commodity thereof, grief and the concern in which he was for his mistress would not have suffered him to sleep.

Meanwhile, the damsel, fleeing, as we have before said, and knowing not whither to betake herself, save whereas it seemed good to her hackney to carry her, fared on so far into the wood that she could not see where she had entered, and went wandering all day about that desert place, no otherwise than as Pietro had done, now pausing [to hearken] and now going on, weeping the while and calling and making moan of her illhap. At last, seeing that Pietro came not and it being now eventide, she happened on a little path, into which her hackney turned, and following it, after she had ridden some two or more miles, she saw a little house afar off. Thither she made her way as quickliest she might and found there a good man sore stricken in years and a woman, his wife, alike old, who, seeing her alone, said to her, 'Daughter, what dost thou alone at this hour in these parts?' The damsel replied, weeping, that she had lost her company in the wood and enquired how near she was to Anagni. 'Daughter mine,' answered the good man, 'this is not the way to go to Anagni; it is more than a dozen miles hence.' Quoth the girl, 'And how far is it hence to any habitations where I may have a lodging for the night?' To which the good man answered, 'There is none anywhere so near that thou mayst come thither by daylight.' Then said the damsel, 'Since I can go no otherwhere, will it please you harbour me here tonight for the love of God?' 'Young lady,' replied the old man, 'thou art very welcome to abide with us this night; algates, we must warn

you that there are many ill companies, both of friends and of foes, that come and go about these parts both by day and by night, who many a time do us sore annoy and great mischief; and if, by ill chance, thou being here, there come any of them and seeing thee, fair and young as thou art, should offer to do thee affront and shame, we could not avail to succour thee therefrom. We deem it well to apprise thee of this, so that, an it betide, thou mayst not be able to complain of us.'

The girl, seeing that it was late, albeit the old man's words affrighted her, said, 'An it please God, He will keep both you and me from that annoy; and even if it befall me, it were a much less evil to be maltreated of men than to be mangled of the wild beasts in the woods.' So saying, she alighted from the rouncey and entered the poor man's house, where she supped with him on such poor fare as they had and after, all clad as she was, cast herself, together with them, on a little bed of theirs. She gave not over sighing and bewailing her own mishap and that of Pietro all night, knowing not if she might hope other than ill of him; and when it drew near unto morning, she heard a great trampling of folk approaching, whereupon she arose and betaking herself to a great courtyard, that lay behind the little house, saw in a corner a great heap of hay, in which she hid herself, so she might not be so quickly found, if those folk should come thither. Hardly had she made an end of hiding herself when these, who were a great company of ill knaves, came to the door of the little house and causing open to them, entered and found Agnolella's hackney yet all saddled and bridled; whereupon they asked who was there and the good man, not seeing the girl, answered, 'None is here save ourselves; but this rouncey, from whomsoever it may have escaped, came hither yestereve and we brought it into the house, lest the wolves should eat it.' 'Then,' said the captain of the troop, 'since it hath none other master, it is fair prize for us.'

Thereupon they all dispersed about the little house and some went into the courtyard, where, laying down their lances and targets, it chanced that one of them, knowing not what else to do, cast his lance into the hay and came very near to slay the hidden girl and she to discover herself, for that the lance passed so close to her left breast that the steel tore a part of her dress, wherefore she was like to utter a great cry, fearing to be wounded; but, remembering where she was, she abode still, all fear-stricken. Presently, the rogues, having dressed the kids and other meat they had with them and eaten and drunken, went off, some hither and some thither, about their affairs, and carried with them the girl's hackney. When they had gone some distance,



"Meanwhile the damsel fleeing"

the good man asked his wife, 'What befell of our young woman, who came hither yestereve? I have seen nothing of her since we arose.' The good wife replied that she knew not and went looking for her, whereupon the girl, hearing that the rogues were gone, came forth of the hay, to the no small contentment of her host, who, rejoiced to see that she had not fallen into their hands, said to her, it now growing day, 'Now that the day cometh, we will, an it please thee, accompany thee to a castle five miles hence, where thou wilt be in safety; but needs must thou go afoot, for yonder ill folk, that but now departed hence, have carried off thy rouncey.' The girl concerned herself little about the nag, but besought them for God's sake to bring her to the castle in question, whereupon they set out and came thither about half tierce.

Now this castle belonged to one of the Orsini family, by name Lionello di Campodifiore, and there by chance was his wife, a very pious and good lady, who, seeing the girl, knew her forthright and received her with joy and would fain know orderly how she came thither. Agnolella told her all and the lady, who knew Pietro on like wise, as being a friend of her husband's, was grieved for the ill chance that had betided and hearing where he had been taken, doubted not but he was dead; wherefore she said to Agnolella, 'Since thou knowest not what is come of Pietro, thou shalt abide here till such time as I shall have a commodity to send thee safe to Rome.'

Meanwhile Pietro abode, as woebegone as could be, in the oak, and towards the season of the first sleep, he saw a good score of wolves appear, which came all about his hackney, as soon as they saw him. The horse, scenting them, tugged at his bridle, till he broke it, and would have fled, but, being surrounded and unable to escape, he defended himself a great while with his teeth and his hoofs. At last, however, he was brought down and strangled and quickly disembowelled by the wolves, which took all their fill of his flesh and having devoured him, made off, without leaving aught but the bones; whereat Pietro, to whom it seemed he had in the rouncey a companion and a support in his troubles, was sore dismayed and misdoubted he should never avail to win forth of the wood. However, towards daybreak, being perished with cold in the oak and looking still all about him, he caught sight of a great fire before him, mayhap a mile off; wherefore, as soon as it was grown broad day, he came down from the oak, not without fear, and making for the fire, fared on till he came to the place, where he found shepherds eating and making merry about it, by whom he was received for compassion.

After he had eaten and warmed himself, he acquainted them with his misadventure and telling them how he came thither alone, asked them if there was in those parts a village or castle, to which he might betake himself. The shepherds answered that some three miles thence there was a castle belonging to Lionello di Campodifiore, whose lady was presently there; whereat Pietro was much rejoiced and besought them that one of them should accompany him to the castle, which two of them readily did. There he found some who knew him and was in act to enquire for a means of having search made about the forest for the damsel, when he was bidden to the lady's presence and incontinent repaired to her. Never was joy like unto his, when he saw Agnolella with her, and he was all consumed with desire to embrace her, but forbore of respect for the lady, and if he was glad, the girl's joy was no less great. The gentle lady, having welcomed him and made much of him and heard from him what had betided him, chid him amain of that which he would have done against the will of his kinsfolk; but, seeing that he was e'en resolved upon this and that it was agreeable to the girl also, she said in herself, 'Why do I weary myself in vain? These two love and know each other and both are friends of my husband. Their desire is an honourable one and meseemeth it is pleasing to God, since the one of them hath scaped the gibbet and the other the lance-thrust and both the wild beasts of the wood; wherefore be it as they will.' Then, turning to the lovers, she said to them, 'If you have it still at heart to be man and wife, it is my pleasure also; be it so, and let the nuptials be celebrated here at Lionello's expense. I will engage after to make peace between you and your families.' Accordingly, they were married then and there, to the great contentment of Pietro and the yet greater satisfaction of Agnolella, and the gentle lady made them honourable nuptials, in so far as might be in the mountains. There, with the utmost delight, they enjoyed the first-fruits of their love and a few days after, they took horse with the lady and returned, under good escort, to Rome, where she found Pietro's kinsfolk sore incensed at that which he had done, but contrived to make his peace with them, and he lived with his Agnolella in all peace and pleasance to a good old age."

THE FOURTH STORY

RICCIARDO MANARDI, BEING FOUND BY MESSER LIZIO DA VALBONA WITH HIS DAUGHTER, ESPOUSETH HER AND ABIDETH IN PEACE WITH HER FATHER

ELISA holding her peace and hearkening to the praises bestowed by the ladies her companions upon her story, the queen charged Filostrato tell one of his own, whereupon he began, laughing, "I have been so often rated by so many of you ladies for having imposed on you matter for woeful discourse and such as tended to make you weep, that methinketh I am beholden, an I would in some measure requite you that annoy, to relate somewhat whereby I may make you laugh a little; and I mean therefore to tell you, in a very short story, of a love that, after no worse hindrance than sundry sighs and a brief fright, mingled with shame, came to a happy issue.

It is, then, noble ladies, no great while ago since there lived in Romagna a gentleman of great worth and good breeding, called Messer Lizio da Valbona, to whom, well nigh in his old age, it chanced there was born of his wife, Madam Giacomina by name, a daughter, who grew up fair and agreeable beyond any other of the country; and for that she was the only child that remained to her father and mother, they loved and tendered her exceeding dear and guarded her with marvellous diligence, looking to make some great alliance by her. Now there was a young man of the Manardi of Brettinoro, comely and lusty of his person, by name Ricciardo, who much frequented Messer Lizio's house and conversed amain with him and of whom the latter and his lady took no more account than they would have taken of a son of theirs. Now, this Ricciardo, looking once and again upon the young lady and seeing her very fair and sprightly and commendable of manners and fashions, fell desperately in love with her, but was very careful to keep his love secret. The damsel presently became aware thereof and without anywise seeking to shun the stroke, began on like wise to love him; whereat Ricciardo was mightily rejoiced. He had many a time a mind to speak to her, but kept silence of misdoubtance; however, one day, taking courage and opportunity, he said to her, 'I prithee, Caterina, cause me not die of love.' To which she straightway made answer, 'Would God thou wouldst not cause *me* die!'

This answer added much courage and pleasure to Ricciardo and he

said to her, 'Never shall aught that may be agreeable to thee miscarry * for me; but it resteth with thee to find a means of saving thy life and mine.' 'Ricciardo,' answered she, 'thou seest how straitly I am guarded; wherefore, for my part, I cannot see how thou mayst avail to come at me; but, if thou canst see aught that I may do without shame to myself, tell it me and I will do it.' Ricciardo, having bethought himself of sundry things, answered promptly, 'My sweet Caterina, I can see no way, except that thou lie or make shift to come upon the gallery that adjoineth thy father's garden, where an I knew that thou wouldst be anights, I would without fail contrive to come to thee, how high soever it may be.' 'If thou have the heart to come thither,' rejoined Caterina, 'methinketh I can well enough win to be there.' Ricciardo assented and they kissed each other once only in haste and went their ways.

Next day, it being then near the end of May, the girl began to complain before her mother that she had not been able to sleep that night for the excessive heat. Quoth the lady, 'Of what heat dost thou speak, daughter? Nay, it was nowise hot.' 'Mother mine,' answered Caterina, 'you should say "To my seeming," and belike you would say sooth; but you should consider how much hotter are young girls than ladies in years.' 'Daughter mine,' rejoined the lady, 'that is true; but I cannot make it cold and hot at my pleasure, as belike thou wouldst have me do. We must put up with the weather, such as the seasons make it; maybe this next night will be cooler and thou wilt sleep better.' 'God grant it may be so!' cried Caterina. 'But it is not usual for the nights to go cooling, as it groweth towards summer.' 'Then what wouldst thou have done?' asked the mother; and she answered, 'An it please my father and you, I would fain have a little bed made in the gallery, that is beside his chamber and over his garden, and there sleep. There I should hear the nightingale sing and having a cooler place to lie in, I should fare much better than in your chamber.' Quoth the mother, 'Daughter, comfort thyself; I will tell thy father, and as he will, so will we do.'

Messer Lizio, hearing all this from his wife, said, for that he was an old man and maybe therefore somewhat cross-grained, 'What nightingale is this to whose song she would sleep? I will yet make her sleep to the chirp of the crickets.' Caterina, coming to know this, more of despite than for the heat, not only slept not that night, but suffered not her mother to sleep, still complaining of the great heat. Accord-

* Lit. stand (*stare*), *i.e.* abide undone.

ingly, next morning, the latter repaired to her husband and said to him, 'Sir, you have little tenderness for yonder girl; what mattereth it to you if she lie in the gallery? She could get no rest all night for the heat. Besides, can you wonder at her having a mind to hear the nightingale sing, seeing she is but a child? Young folk are curious of things like themselves.' Messer Lizio, hearing this, said, 'Go to, make her a bed there, such as you think fit, and bind it about with some curtain or other, and there let her lie and hear the nightingale sing to her heart's content.'

The girl, learning this, straightway let make a bed in the gallery and meaning to lie there that same night, watched till she saw Ricciardo and made him a signal appointed between them, by which he understood what was to be done. Messer Lizio, hearing the girl gone to bed, locked a door that led from his chamber into the gallery and betook himself likewise to sleep. As for Ricciardo, as soon as he heard all quiet on every hand, he mounted a wall, with the aid of a ladder, and thence, laying hold of certain toothings of another wall, he made his way, with great toil and danger, if he had fallen, up to the gallery, where he was quietly received by the girl with the utmost joy. Then, after many kisses, they went to bed together and took delight and pleasure one of another well nigh all that night, making the nightingale sing many a time. The nights being short and the delight great and it being now, though they thought it not, near day, they fell asleep without any covering, so overheated were they what with the weather and what with their sport, Caterina having her right arm entwined about Ricciardo's neck and holding him with the left hand by that thing which you ladies think most shame to name among men.

As they slept on this wise, without awaking, the day came on and Messer Lizio arose and remembering him that his daughter lay in the gallery, opened the door softly, saying in himself, 'Let us see how the nightingale hath made Caterina sleep this night.' Then, going in, he softly lifted up the serge, wherewith the bed was curtained about, and saw his daughter and Ricciardo lying asleep, naked and uncovered, embraced as it hath before been set out; whereupon, having recognized Ricciardo, he went out again and repairing to his wife's chamber, called to her, saying, 'Quick, wife, get thee up and come see, for that thy daughter hath been so curious of the nightingale that she hath e'en taken it and hath it in hand.' 'How can that be?' quoth she; and he answered, 'Thou shalt see it, an thou come quickly.' Accordingly, she made haste to dress herself and quietly followed her husband to the bed, where, the curtain being drawn, Madam Giacomina might

plainly see how her daughter had taken and held the nightingale, which she had so longed to hear sing; whereat the lady, holding herself sore deceived of Ricciardo, would have cried out and railed at him; but Messer Lizio said to her, 'Wife, as thou holdest my love dear, look thou say not a word, for, verily, since she hath gotten it, it shall be hers. Ricciardo is young and rich and gently born; he cannot make us other than a good son-in-law. An he would part from me on good terms, needs must he first marry her, so it will be found that he hath put the nightingale in his own cage and not in that of another.'

The lady was comforted to see that her husband was not angered at the matter and considering that her daughter had passed a good night and rested well and had caught the nightingale, to boot, she held her tongue. Nor had they abidden long after these words when Ricciardo awoke and seeing that it was broad day, gave himself over for lost and called Caterina, saying, 'Alack, my soul, how shall we do, for the day is come and hath caught me here?' Whereupon Messer Lizio came forward and lifting the curtain, answered, 'We shall do well.' When Ricciardo saw him, himseemed the heart was torn out of his body and sitting up in bed, he said, 'My lord, I crave your pardon for God's sake. I acknowledge to have deserved death, as a disloyal and wicked man; wherefore do you with me as best pleaseth you; but, I prithee, an it may be, have mercy on my life and let me not die.' 'Ricciardo,' answered Messer Lizio, 'the love that I bore thee and the faith I had in thee merited not this return; yet, since thus it is and youth hath carried thee away into such a fault, do thou, to save thyself from death and me from shame, take Caterina to thy lawful wife, so that, like as this night she hath been thine, she may e'en be thine so long as she shall live. On this wise thou mayst gain my pardon and thine own safety; but, an thou choose not to do this, commend thy soul to God.'

Whilst these words were saying, Caterina let go the nightingale and covering herself, fell to weeping sore and beseeching her father to pardon Ricciardo, whilst on the other hand she entreated her lover to do as Messer Lizio wished, so they might long pass such nights together in security. But there needed not overmany prayers, for that, on the one hand, shame of the fault committed and desire to make amends for it, and on the other, the fear of death and the wish to escape,—to say nothing of his ardent love and longing to possess the thing beloved,—made Ricciardo freely and without hesitation avouch himself ready to do that which pleased Messer Lizio; whereupon the latter borrowed of Madam Giacomina one of her rings and there,

without budging, Ricciardo in their presence took Caterina to his wife. This done, Messer Lizio and his lady departed, saying, 'Now rest yourselves, for belike you have more need thereof than of rising.' They being gone, the young folk clipped each other anew and not having run more than half a dozen courses overnight, they ran other twain ere they arose and so made an end of the first day's tilting. Then they arose and Ricciardo having had more orderly conference with Messer Lizio, a few days after, as it beseemed, he married the damsel over again, in the presence of their friends and kinsfolk, and brought her with great pomp to his own house. There he held goodly and honourable nuptials and after went long nightingale-fowling with her to his heart's content, in peace and solace, both by night and by day."

THE FIFTH STORY

GUIDOTTO DA CREMONA LEAVETH TO GIACOMINO DA PAVIA A DAUGHTER OF HIS AND DIETH. GIANNOLE DI SEVERINO AND MINGHINO DI MINGOLE FALL IN LOVE WITH THE GIRL AT FAENZA AND COME TO BLOWS ON HER ACCOUNT. ULTIMATELY SHE IS PROVED TO BE GIANNOLE'S SISTER AND IS GIVEN TO MINGHINO TO WIFE

ALL the ladies, hearkening to the story of the nightingale, had laughed so much that, though Filostrato had made an end of telling, they could not yet give over laughing. But, after they had laughed awhile, the queen said to Filostrato, "Assuredly, if thou afflictedest us ladies yesterday, thou hast so tickled us to-day that none of us can deservedly complain of thee." Then, addressing herself to Neifile, she charged her tell, and she blithely began to speak thus: "Since Filostrato, discoursing, hath entered into Romagna, it pleaseth me on like wise to go ranging awhile therein with mine own story.

I say, then, that there dwelt once in the city of Fano two Lombards, whereof the one was called Guidotto da Cremona and the other Giacomino da Pavia, both men advanced in years, who had in their youth been well nigh always soldiers and engaged in deeds of arms. Guidotto, being at the point of death and having nor son nor other kinsman nor friend in whom he trusted more than in Giacomino, left him a little daughter he had, of maybe ten years of age, and all that he possessed in the world, and after having bespoken him at length of his affairs, he died. In those days it befell that the city of Faenza,

which had been long in war and ill case, was restored to somewhat better estate and permission to sojourn there was freely conceded to all who had a mind to return thither; wherefore Giacomino, who had abidden there otherwhile and had a liking for the place, returned thither with all his good and carried with him the girl left him by Guidotto, whom he loved and entreated as his own child.

The latter grew up and became as fair a damsel as any in the city, ay, and as virtuous and well bred as she was fair; wherefore she began to be courted of many, but especially two very agreeable young men of equal worth and condition vowed her a very great love, insomuch that for jealousy they came to hold each other in hate out of measure. They were called, the one Giannole di Severino and the other Minghino di Mingole; nor was there either of them but would gladly have taken the young lady, who was now fifteen years old, to wife, had it been suffered of his kinsfolk; wherefore, seeing her denied to them on honourable wise, each cast about to get her for himself as best he might. Now Giacomino had in his house an old serving-wench and a serving-man, Crivello by name, a very merry and obliging person, with whom Giannole clapped up a great acquaintance and to whom, whenas himseemed time, he discovered his passion, praying him to be favourable to him in his endeavour to obtain his desire and promising him great things an he did this; whereto quoth Crivello, 'Look you, I can do nought for thee in this matter other than that, when next Giacomino goeth abroad to supper, I will bring thee whereas she may be; for that, an I offered to say a word to her in thy favour, she would never stop to listen to me. If this like thee, I promise it to thee and will do it; and do thou after, an thou know how, that which thou deemest shall best serve thy purpose.' Giannole answered that he desired nothing more and they abode on this understanding. Meanwhile Minghino, on his part, had suborned the maidservant and so wrought with her that she had several times carried messages to the girl and had well nigh inflamed her with love of him; besides which she had promised him to bring him in company with her, so soon as Giacomino should chance to go abroad of an evening for whatever cause.

Not long after this it chanced that, by Crivello's contrivance, Giacomino went to sup with a friend of his, whereupon Crivello gave Giannole to know thereof and appointed with him that, whenas he made a certain signal, he should come and would find the door open. The maid, on her side, knowing nothing of all this, let Minghino know that Giacomino was to sup abroad and bade him abide near the house,

so that, whenas he saw a signal which she should make, he might come and enter therein. The evening come, the two lovers, knowing nothing of each other's designs, but each misdoubting of his rival, came, with sundry companions armed, to enter into possession. Minghino, with his troop, took up his quarters in the house of a friend of his, a neighbour of the young lady's; whilst Giannole and his friends stationed themselves at a little distance from the house. Meanwhile, Crivello and the maid, Giacomino being gone, studied each to send the other away. Quoth he to her, 'Why dost thou not get thee to bed? Why goest thou still wandering about the house?' 'And thou,' retorted she, 'why goest thou not for thy master? What awaitest thou here, now that thou hast supped?' And so neither could make other avoid the place; but Crivello, seeing the hour come that he had appointed with Giannole, said in himself, 'What reck I of her? An she abide not quiet, she is like to smart for it.'

Accordingly, giving the appointed signal, he went to open the door, whereupon Giannole, coming up in haste with two companions, entered and finding the young lady in the saloon, laid hands on her to carry her off. The girl began to struggle and make a great outcry, as likewise did the maid, which Minghino hearing, he ran thither with his companions and seeing the young lady being presently dragged out at the door, they pulled out their swords and cried all, 'Ho, traitors, ye are dead men! The thing shall not go thus. What is this violence?' So saying, they fell to hewing at them, whilst the neighbours, issuing forth at the clamour with lights and arms, began to blame Giannole's behaviour and to second Minghino; wherefore, after long contention, the latter rescued the young lady from his rival and restored her to Giacomino's house. But, before the fray was over, up came the town-captain's officers and arrested many of them; and amongst the rest Minghino and Giannole and Crivello were taken and carried off to prison. After matters were grown quiet again, Giacomino returned home and was sore chagrined at that which had happened; but, enquiring how it had come about and finding that the girl was nowise at fault, he was somewhat appeased and determined in himself to marry her as quickliest he might, so the like should not again betide.

Next morning, the kinsfolk of the two young men, hearing the truth of the case and knowing the ill that might ensue thereof for the imprisoned youths, should Giacomino choose to do that which he reasonably might, repaired to him and prayed him with soft words to have regard, not so much to the affront which he had suffered from the little sense of the young men as to the love and goodwill which they

believed he bore to themselves who thus besought him, submitting themselves and the young men who had done the mischief to any amends it should please him take. Giacomino, who had in his time seen many things and was a man of sense, answered briefly, 'Gentlemen, were I in mine own country, as I am in yours, I hold myself so much your friend that neither in this nor in otherwhat would I do aught save insomuch as it should please you; besides, I am the more bounden to comply with your wishes in this matter, inasmuch as you have therein offended against yourselves, for that the girl in question is not, as belike many suppose, of Cremona nor of Pavia; nay, she is a Faentine,* albeit neither I nor she nor he of whom I had her might ever learn whose daughter she was; wherefore, concerning that whereof you pray me, so much shall be done by me as you yourselves shall enjoin me.'

The gentlemen, hearing this, marvelled and returning thanks to Giacomino for his gracious answer, prayed him that it would please him tell them how she came to his hands and how he knew her to be a Faentine; whereto quoth he, 'Guidotto da Cremona, who was my friend and comrade, told me, on his deathbed that, when this city was taken by the Emperor Frederick and everything given up to pillage, he entered with his companions into a house and found it full of booty, but deserted by its inhabitants, save only this girl, who was then some two years old or thereabouts and who, seeing him mount the stairs, called him "father"; whereupon, taking compassion upon her, he carried her off with him to Fano, together with all that was in the house, and dying there, left her to me with what he had, charging me marry her in due time and give her to her dowry that which had been hers. Since she hath come to marriageable age, I have not yet found an occasion of marrying her to my liking, though I would gladly do it, rather than that another mischance like that of yesternight should betide me on her account.'

Now among the others there was a certain Guiglielmino da Medicina, who had been with Guidotto in that affair † and knew very well whose house it was that he had plundered, and he, seeing the person in question ‡ there among the rest, accosted him, saying, 'Bernabuccio, hearest thou what Giacomino saith?' 'Ay do I,' answered Bernabuccio, 'and I was presently in thought thereof, more by token that

* *i.e.* a native of Faenza (*Faentina*).

† *A questo fatto*, *i.e.* at the storm of Faenza.

‡ *i.e.* the owner of the plundered house.

I mind me to have lost a little daughter of the age whereof Giacomino speaketh in those very troubles.' Quoth Guiglielmino, 'This is she for certain, for that I was once in company with Guidotto, when I heard him tell where he had done the plundering and knew it to be thy house that he had sacked; wherefore do thou bethink thee if thou mayst credibly recognize her by any token and let make search therefor; for thou wilt assuredly find that she is thy daughter.'

Accordingly, Bernabuccio bethought himself and remembered that she should have a little cross-shaped scar over her left ear, proceeding from a tumour, which he had caused cut for her no great while before that occurrence; whereupon, without further delay, he accosted Giacomino, who was still there, and besought him to carry him to his house and let him see the damsel. To this he readily consented and carrying him thither, let bring the girl before him. When Bernabuccio set eyes on her, himseemed he saw the very face of her mother, who was yet a handsome lady; nevertheless, not contenting himself with this, he told Giacomino that he would fain of his favour have leave to raise her hair a little above her left ear, to which the other consented. Accordingly, going up to the girl, who stood shamefast, he lifted up her hair with his right hand and found the cross; whereupon, knowing her to be indeed his daughter, he fell to weeping tenderly and embracing her, notwithstanding her resistance; then, turning to Giacomino, 'Brother mine,' quoth he, 'this is my daughter; it was my house Guidotto plundered and this girl was, in the sudden alarm, forgotten there of my wife and her mother; and until now we believed that she had perished with the house, which was burned me that same day.'

The girl, hearing this, and seeing him to be a man in years, gave credence to his words and submitting herself to his embraces, as moved by some occult instinct, fell a-weeping tenderly with him. Bernabuccio presently sent for her mother and other her kinswomen and for her sisters and brothers and presented her to them all, recounting the matter to them; then, after a thousand embraces, he carried her home to his house with the utmost rejoicing, to the great satisfaction of Giacomino. The town-captain, who was a man of worth, learning this and knowing that Giannole, whom he had in prison, was Bernabuccio's son and therefore the lady's own brother, determined indulgently to overpass the offence committed by him and released with him Minghino and Crivello and the others who were implicated in the affair. Moreover, he interceded with Bernabuccio and Giacomino concerning these matters and making peace between the two young

men, gave the girl, whose name was Agnesa, to Minghino to wife, to the great contentment of all their kinsfolk; whereupon Minghino, mightily rejoiced, made a great and goodly wedding and carrying her home, lived with her many years after in peace and weal."

THE SIXTH STORY

GIANNI DI PROCIDA BEING FOUND WITH A YOUNG LADY, WHOM HE LOVED AND WHO HAD BEEN GIVEN TO KING FREDERICK OF SICILY, IS BOUND WITH HER TO A STAKE TO BE BURNT; BUT, BEING RECOGNIZED BY RUGGIERI DELL' ORIA, ESCAPETH AND BECOMETH HER HUSBAND

NEIFILE's story, which had much pleased the ladies, being ended, the queen bade Pampinea address herself to tell another, and she accordingly, raising her bright face, began: "Exceeding great, charming ladies, is the might of Love and exposeth lovers to sore travails, ay, and to excessive and unforeseen perils, as may be gathered from many a thing that hath been related both to-day and otherwhiles; nevertheless, it pleaseth me yet again to demonstrate it to you with a story of an enamoured youth.

Ischia is an island very near Naples, and therein, among others, was once a very fair and sprightly damsel, by name Restituta, who was the daughter of a gentleman of the island called Marino Bolgaro and whom a youth named Gianni, a native of a little island near Ischia, called Procida, loved more than his life, as she on like wise loved him. Not only did he come by day from Procida to see her, but oftentimes anights, not finding a boat, he had swum from Procida to Ischia, at the least to look upon the walls of her house, an he might no otherwise. During the continuance of this so ardent love, it befell that the girl, being all alone one summer day on the sea-shore, chanced, as she went from rock to rock, loosening shell-fish from the stones with a knife, upon a place hidden among the cliffs, where, at once for shade and for the commodity of a spring of very cool water that was there, certain young men of Sicily, coming from Naples, had taken up their quarters with a pinnace they had. They, seeing that she was alone and very handsome and was yet unaware of them, took counsel together to seize her and carry her off and put their resolve into execution. Accordingly, they took her, for all she made a great outcry, and carrying her aboard the pinnace, made the best of their

way to Calabria, where they fell to disputing of whose she should be. Brief, each would fain have her; wherefore, being unable to agree among themselves and fearing to come to worse and to mar their affairs for her, they took counsel together to present her to Frederick, King of Sicily, who was then a young man and delighted in such toys. Accordingly, coming to Palermo, they made gift of the damsel to the king, who, seeing her to be fair, held her dear; but, for that he was presently somewhat infirm of his person, he commanded that, against he should be stronger, she should be lodged in a very goodly pavilion, belonging to a garden of his he called La Cuba, and there tended; and so it was done.

Great was the outcry in Ischia for the ravishment of the damsel and what most chagrined them was that they could not learn who they were that had carried her off; but Gianni, whom the thing concerned more than any other, not looking to get any news of this in Ischia and learning in what direction the ravishers had gone, equipped another pinnace and embarking therein, as quickliest he might, scoured all the coast from La Minerva to La Scalea in Calabria, enquiring everywhere for news of the girl. Being told at La Scalea that she had been carried off to Palermo by some Sicilian sailors, he betook himself thither, as quickliest he might, and there, after much search, finding that she had been presented to the king and was by him kept under ward at La Cuba, he was sore chagrined and lost well nigh all hope, not only of ever having her again, but even of seeing her. Nevertheless, detained by love, having sent away his pinnace and seeing that he was known of none there, he abode behind and passing often by La Cuba, he chanced one day to catch sight of her at a window, and she saw him, to the great contentment of them both.

Gianni, seeing the place lonely, approached as most he might and bespeaking her, was instructed by her how he must do, an he would thereafterward have further speech of her. He then took leave of her, having first particularly examined the ordinance of the place in every part, and waited till a good part of the night was past, when he returned thither and clambering up in places where a woodpecker had scarce found a foothold, he made his way into the garden. There he found a long pole and setting it against the window which his mistress had shown him, climbed up thereby lightly enough. The damsel, herseeming she had already lost her honour, for the preservation whereof she had in times past been somewhat coy to him, thinking that she could give herself to none more worthily than to him and doubting not to be able to induce him to carry her off, had resolved

in herself to comply with him in every his desire; wherefore she had left the window open, so he might enter forthright. Accordingly, Gianni, finding it open, softly made his way into the chamber and laid himself beside the girl, who slept not and who, before they came to otherwhat, discovered to him all her intent, instantly beseeching him to take her thence and carry her away. Gianni answered that nothing could be so pleasing to him as this and promised that he would without fail, as soon as he should have taken his leave of her, put the matter in train on such wise that he might carry her away with him, the first time he returned thither. Then, embracing each other with exceeding pleasure, they took that delight beyond which Love can afford no greater, and after reiterating it again and again, they fell asleep, without perceiving it, in each other's arms.

Meanwhile, the king, who had at first sight been greatly taken with the damsel, calling her to mind and feeling himself well of body, determined, albeit it was nigh upon day, to go and abide with her awhile. Accordingly, he betook himself privily to La Cuba with certain of his servants and entering the pavilion, caused softly open the chamber wherein he knew the girl slept. Then, with a great lighted flambeau before him, he entered therein and looking upon the bed, saw her and Gianni lying asleep and naked in each other's arms; whereat he was of a sudden furiously incensed and flamed up into such a passion of wrath that it lacked of little but he had, without saying a word, slain them both then and there with a dagger he had by his side. However, esteeming it a very base thing of any man, much more a king, to slay two naked folk in their sleep, he contained himself and determined to put them to death in public and by fire; wherefore, turning to one only companion he had with him, he said to him, 'How deemest thou of this vile woman, on whom I had set my hope?' And after he asked him if he knew the young man who had dared enter his house to do him such an affront and such an outrage; but he answered that he remembered not ever to have seen him. The king then departed the chamber, full of rage, and commanded that the two lovers should be taken and bound, naked as they were, and that, as soon as it was broad day, they should be carried to Palermo and there bound to a stake, back to back, in the public place, where they should be kept till the hour of tierce, so they might be seen of all, and after burnt, even as they had deserved; and this said, he returned to his palace at Palermo, exceeding wroth.

The king gone, there fell many upon the two lovers and not only awakened them, but forthright without any pity took them and bound

"Bound to the stake, back to back"

them; which when they saw, it may lightly be conceived if they were woeful and feared for their lives and wept and made moan. According to the king's commandment, they were carried to Palermo and bound to a stake in the public place, whilst the faggots and the fire were made ready before their eyes, to burn them at the hour appointed. Thither straightway flocked all the townsfolk, both men and women, to see the two lovers; the men all pressed to look upon the damsel and like as they praised her for fair and well made in every part of her body, even so, on the other hand, the women, who all ran to gaze upon the young man, supremely commended him for handsome and well shapen. But the wretched lovers, both sore ashamed, stood with bowed heads and bewailed their sorry fortune, hourly expecting the cruel death by fire.

Whilst they were thus kept against the appointed hour, the default of them committed, being bruited about everywhere, came to the ears of Ruggieri dell' Oria, a man of inestimable worth and then the king's admiral, whereupon he repaired to the place where they were bound and considering first the girl, commended her amain for beauty, then, turning to look upon the young man, knew him without much difficulty and drawing nearer to him, asked him if he were not Gianni di Procida. The youth, raising his eyes and recognizing the admiral, answered, 'My lord, I was indeed he of whom you ask; but I am about to be no more.' The admiral then asked him what had brought him to that pass, and he answered, 'Love and the king's anger.' The admiral caused him tell his story more at large and having heard everything from him as it had happened, was about to depart, when Gianni called him back and said to him, 'For God's sake, my lord, an it may be, get me one favour of him who maketh me to abide thus.' 'What is that?' asked Ruggieri; and Gianni said, 'I see I must die, and that speedily, and I ask, therefore, by way of favour,—as I am bound with my back to this damsel, whom I have loved more than my life, even as she hath loved me, and she with her back to me,—that we may be turned about with our faces one to the other, so that, dying, I may look upon her face and get me gone, comforted. 'With all my heart,' answered Ruggieri, laughing; 'I will do on such wise that thou shalt yet see her till thou grow weary of her sight.'

Then, taking leave of him, he charged those who were appointed to carry the sentence into execution that they should proceed no farther therein, without other commandment of the king, and straightway betook himself to the latter, to whom, albeit he saw him sore incensed, he spared not to speak his mind, saying, 'King, in what have the two

young folk offended against thee, whom thou hast commanded to be burned yonder in the public place?' The king told him and Ruggieri went on, 'The offence committed by them deserveth it indeed, but not from thee; for, like as defaults merit punishment, even so do good offices merit recompense, let alone grace and clemency. Knowest thou who these are thou wouldst have burnt?' The king answered no, and Ruggieri continued, 'Then I will have thee know them, so thou mayst see how discreetly * thou sufferest thyself to be carried away by the transports of passion. The young man is the son of Landolfo di Procida, own brother to Messer Gian di Procida,† by whose means thou art king and lord of this island, and the damsel is the daughter of Marino Bolgaro, to whose influence thou owest it that thine officers have not been driven forth of Ischia. Moreover, they are lovers who have long loved one another and constrained of love, rather than of will to do despite to thine authority, have done this sin, if that can be called sin which young folk do for love. Wherefore, then, wilt thou put them to death, whenas thou shouldst rather honour them with the greatest favours and boons at thy commandment?'

The king, hearing this and certifying himself that Ruggieri spoke sooth, not only forbore from proceeding to do worse, but repented him of that which he had done, wherefore he commanded incontinent that the two lovers should be loosed from the stake and brought before him; which was forthright done. Therewith, having fully acquainted himself with their case, he concluded that it behoved him requite them the injury he had done them with gifts and honour; wherefore he let clothe them anew on sumptuous wise and finding them of one accord, caused Gianni take the damsel to wife. Then, making them magnificent presents, he sent them back, rejoicing, to their own country, where they were received with the utmost joyance and delight."

* Iron., meaning "with how little discretion."

† Gianni (Giovanni) di Procida was a Sicilian noble, to whose efforts in stirring up the island to revolt against Charles of Anjou was mainly due the popular rising known as the Sicilian Vespers (A.D. 1282) which expelled the French usurper from Sicily and transferred the crown to the house of Arragon. The Frederick (A.D. 1296-1337) named in the text was the fourth prince of the latter dynasty.

THE SEVENTH STORY

TEODORO, BEING ENAMOURED OF VIOLANTE, DAUGHTER OF MESSER AMERIGO HIS LORD, GETTETH HER WITH CHILD AND IS CONDEMNED TO BE HANGED; BUT, BEING RECOGNIZED AND DELIVERED BY HIS FATHER, AS THEY ARE LEADING HIM TO THE GALLOWS, SCOURGING HIM THE WHILE, HE TAKETH VIOLANTE TO WIFE

THE ladies, who abode all fearful in suspense to know if the lovers should be burnt, hearing of their escape, praised God and were glad; whereupon the queen, seeing that Pampinea had made an end of her story, imposed on Lauretta the charge of following on, who blithely proceeded to say: "Fairest ladies, in the days when good King William * ruled over Sicily, there was in that island a gentleman hight Messer Amerigo Abate of Trapani, who, among other worldly goods, was very well furnished with children; wherefore, having occasion for servants and there coming thither from the Levant certain galleys of Genoese corsairs, who had, in their cruises off the coast of Armenia, taken many boys, he bought some of these latter, deeming them Turks, and amongst them one, Teodoro by name, of nobler mien and better bearing than the rest, who seemed all mere shepherds. Teodoro, although entreated as a slave, was brought up in the house with Messer Amerigo's children and conforming more to his own nature than to the accidents of fortune, approved himself so accomplished and well-bred and so commended himself to Messer Amerigo that he set him free and still believing him to be a Turk, caused baptize him and call him Pietro and made him chief over all his affairs, trusting greatly in him.

As Messer Amerigo's other children grew up, there grew up with them a daughter of his, called Violante, a fair and dainty damsel, who, her father tarrying overmuch to marry her, became by chance enamoured of Pietro and loving him and holding his manners and fashions in great esteem, was yet ashamed to discover this to him. But Love spared her that pains, for that Pietro, having once and again looked upon her by stealth, had become so passionately enamoured of her that he never knew ease save whenas he saw her; but he was sore

* William II. (A.D. 1166-1189), the last (legitimate) king of the Norman dynasty in Sicily, called the Good, to distinguish him from his father, William the Bad.

afraid lest any should become aware thereof, himseeming that in this he did other than well. The young lady, who took pleasure in looking upon him, soon perceived this and to give him more assurance, showed herself exceeding well pleased therewith, as indeed she was. On this wise they abode a great while, daring not to say aught to one another, much as each desired it; but, whilst both, alike enamoured, languished enkindled in the flames of love, fortune, as if it had determined of will aforethought that this should be, furnished them with an occasion of doing away the timorousness that baulked them.

Messer Amerigo had, about a mile from Trapani, a very goodly place,* to which his lady was wont ofttimes to resort by way of pastime with her daughter and other women and ladies. Thither accordingly they betook themselves one day of great heat, carrying Pietro with them, and there abiding, it befell, as whiles we see it happen in summer time, that the sky became of a sudden overcast with dark clouds, wherefore the lady set out with her company to return to Trapani, so they might not be there overtaken of the foul weather, and fared on as fast as they might. But Pietro and Violante, being young, outwent her mother and the rest by a great way, urged, belike, no less by love than by fear of the weather, and they being already so far in advance that they were hardly to be seen, it chanced that, of a sudden, after many thunder-claps, a very heavy and thick shower of hail began to fall, wherefrom the lady and her company fled into the house of a husbandman.

Pietro and the young lady, having no readier shelter, took refuge in a little old hut, well nigh all in ruins, wherein none dwelt, and there huddled together under a small piece of roof, that yet remained whole. The scantness of the cover constrained them to press close one to other, and this touching was the means of somewhat emboldening their minds to discover the amorous desires that consumed them both; and Pietro first began to say, 'Would God this hail might never give over, so but I might abide as I am!' 'Indeed,' answered the girl, 'that were dear to me also.' From these words they came to taking each other by the hands and pressing them and from that to clipping and after to kissing, it hailing still the while; and in short, not to recount every particular, the weather mended not before they had known the utmost delights of love and had taken order to have their pleasure secretly one of the other. The storm ended, they fared on to the

* Apparently a pleasure-garden, without a house attached in which they might have taken shelter from the rain.

gate of the city, which was near at hand, and there awaiting the lady, returned home with her.

Thereafter, with very discreet and secret ordinance, they foregathered again and again in the same place, to the great contentment of them both, and the work went on so briskly that the young lady became with child, which was sore unwelcome both to the one and the other; wherefore she used many arts to rid herself, contrary to the course of nature, of her burden, but could nowise avail to accomplish it. Therewithal, Pietro, fearing for his life, bethought himself to flee and told her, to which she answered, 'An thou depart, I will without fail kill myself.' Whereupon quoth Pietro, who loved her exceedingly, 'Lady mine, how wilt thou have me abide here? Thy pregnancy will discover our default and it will lightly be pardoned unto thee; but I, poor wretch, it will be must needs bear the penalty of thy sin and mine own.' 'Pietro,' replied she, 'my sin must indeed be discovered; but be assured that thine will never be known, an thou tell it not thyself.' Then said he, 'Since thou promisest me this, I will remain; but look thou keep thy promise to me.'

After awhile, the young lady, who had, as most she might, concealed her being with child, seeing that, for the waxing of her body, she might no longer dissemble it, one day discovered her case to her mother, beseeching her with many tears to save her; whereupon the lady, beyond measure woeful, gave her hard words galore and would know of her how the thing had come about. Violante, in order that no harm might come to Pietro, told her a story of her own devising, disguising the truth in other forms. The lady believed it and to conceal her daughter's default, sent her away to a country house of theirs. There, the time of her delivery coming and the girl crying out, as women use to do, what while her mother never dreamed that Messer Amerigo, who was well nigh never wont to do so, should come thither, it chanced that he passed, on his return from hawking, by the chamber where his daughter lay and marvelling at the outcry she made, suddenly entered the chamber and demanded what was to do. The lady, seeing her husband come unawares, started up all woebegone and told him that which had befallen the girl. But he, less easy of belief than his wife had been, declared that it could not be true that she knew not by whom she was with child and would altogether know who he was, adding that, by confessing it, she might regain his favour; else must she make ready to die without mercy.

The lady did her utmost to persuade her husband to abide content with that which she had said; but to no purpose. He flew out into a

passion and running, with his naked sword in his hand, at his daughter, who, what while her mother held her father in parley, had given birth to a male child, said, 'Either do thou discover by whom the child was begotten, or thou shalt die without delay.' The girl, fearing death, broke her promise to Pietro and discovered all that had passed between him and her; which when the gentleman heard, he fell into a fury of anger and hardly withheld himself from slaying her.

However, after he had said to her that which his rage dictated to him, he took horse again and returning to Trapani, recounted the affront that Pietro had done him to a certain Messer Currado, who was captain there for the king. The latter caused forthright seize Pietro, who was off his guard, and put him to the torture, whereupon he confessed all and being a few days after sentenced by the captain to be flogged through the city and after strung up by the neck, Messer Amerigo (whose wrath had not been done away by the having brought Pietro to death,) in order that one and the same hour should rid the earth of the two lovers and their child, put poison in a hanap with wine and delivering it, together with a naked poniard, to a serving-man of his, said to him, 'Carry these two things to Violante and bid her, on my part, forthright take which she will of these two deaths, poison or steel; else will I have her burned alive, even as she hath deserved, in the presence of as many townsfolk as be here. This done, thou shalt take the child, a few days agone born of her, and dash its head against the wall and after cast it to the dogs to eat.' This barbarous sentence passed by the cruel father upon his daughter and his grandchild, the servant, who was more disposed to ill than to good, went off upon his errand.

Meanwhile, Pietro, as he was carried to the gallows by the officers, being scourged of them the while, passed, according as it pleased those who led the company, before a hostelry wherein were three noblemen of Armenia, who had been sent by the king of that country ambassadors to Rome, to treat with the Pope of certain matters of great moment, concerning a crusade that was about to be undertaken, and who had lighted down there to take some days' rest and refreshment. They had been much honoured by the noblemen of Trapani and especially by Messer Amerigo, and hearing those pass who led Pietro, they came to a window to see. Now Pietro was all naked to the waist, with his hands bounden behind his back, and one of the three ambassadors, a man of great age and authority, named Fineo, espied on his breast a great vermeil spot, not painted, but naturally imprinted on his skin, after the fashion of what women here call *roses*. See-

ing this, there suddenly recurred to his memory a son of his who had been carried off by corsairs fifteen years agone upon the coast of Lazistan and of whom he had never since been able to learn any news; and considering the age of the poor wretch who was scourged, he bethought himself that, if his son were alive, he must be of such an age as Pietro appeared to him. Wherefore he began to suspect by that token that it must be he and bethought himself that, were he indeed his son, he should still remember him of his name and that of his father and of the Armenian tongue. Accordingly, as he drew near, he called out, saying, 'Ho, Teodoro!' Pietro, hearing this, straightway lifted up his head and Fineo, speaking in Armenian, said to him, 'What countryman art thou and whose son?' The sergeants who had him in charge halted with him, of respect for the nobleman, so that Pietro answered, saying, 'I was of Armenia and son to one Fineo and was brought hither, as a little child, by I know not what folk.'

Fineo, hearing this, knew him for certain to be the son whom he had lost, wherefore he came down, weeping, with his companions, and ran to embrace him among all the sergeants; then, casting over his shoulders a mantle of the richest silk, which he had on his own back, he besought the officer who was escorting him to execution to be pleased to wait there till such time as commandment should come to him to carry the prisoner back; to which he answered that he would well. Now Fineo had already learned the reason for which Pietro was being led to death, report having noised it abroad everywhere; wherefore he straightway betook himself, with his companions and their retinue, to Messer Currado and bespoke him thus: 'Sir, he whom you have doomed to die, as a slave, is a free man and my son and is ready to take to wife her whom it is said he hath bereft of her maidenhead; wherefore may it please you to defer the execution till such time as it may be learned if she will have him to husband, so, in case she be willing, you may not be found to have done contrary to the law.' Messer Currado, hearing that the condemned man was Fineo's son, marvelled and confessing that which the latter said to be true, was somewhat ashamed of the unright of fortune and straightway caused carry Pietro home; then, sending for Messer Amerigo, he acquainted him with these things.

Messer Amerigo, who by this believed his daughter and grandson to be dead, was the woefullest man in the world for that which he had done, seeing that all might very well have been set right, so but Violante were yet alive. Nevertheless, he despatched a runner whereas

his daughter was, to the intent that, in case his commandment had not been done, it should not be carried into effect. The messenger found the servant sent by Messer Amerigo rating the lady, before whom he had laid the poniard and the poison, for that she made not her election as speedily [as he desired], and would have constrained her to take the one or the other. But, hearing his lord's commandment, he let her be and returning to Messer Amerigo, told him how the case stood, to the great satisfaction of the latter, who, betaking himself whereas Fineo was, excused himself, well nigh with tears, as best he knew, of that which had passed, craving pardon therefor and avouching that, an Teodoro would have his daughter to wife, he was exceeding well pleased to give her to him. Fineo gladly received his excuses and answered, 'It is my intent that my son shall take your daughter to wife; and if he will not, let the sentence passed upon him take its course.'

Accordingly, being thus agreed, they both repaired whereas Teodoro abode yet all fearful of death, albeit he was rejoiced to have found his father again, and questioned him of his mind concerning this thing. When he heard that, an he would, he might have Violante to wife, such was his joy that himseemed he had won from hell to heaven at one bound, and he answered that this would be to him the utmost of favours, so but it pleased both of them. Thereupon they sent to know the mind of the young lady, who, whereas she abode in expectation of death, the woefullest woman alive, hearing that which had betided and was like to betide Teodoro, after much parley, began to lend some faith to their words and taking a little comfort, answered that, were she to ensue her own wishes in the matter, no greater happiness could betide her than to be the wife of Teodoro; algates, she would do that which her father should command her.

Accordingly, all parties being of accord, the two lovers were married with the utmost magnificence, to the exceeding satisfaction of all the townsfolk; and the young lady, heartening herself and letting rear her little son, became ere long fairer than ever. Then, being risen from childbed, she went out to meet Fineo, whose return was expected from Rome, and paid him reverence as to a father; whereupon he, exceeding well pleased to have so fair a daughter-in-law, caused celebrate their nuptials with the utmost pomp and rejoicing and receiving her as a daughter, ever after held her such. And after some days, taking ship with his son and her and his little grandson, he carried them with him into Lazistan, where the two lovers abode in peace and happiness, so long as life endured unto them."

THE EIGHTH STORY

NASTAGIO DEGLI ONESTI, FALLING IN LOVE WITH A LADY OF THE TRAVERSARI FAMILY, SPENDETH HIS SUBSTANCE WITHOUT BEING BELOVED IN RETURN, AND BETAKING HIMSELF, AT THE INSTANCE OF HIS KINSFOLK, TO CHIASSI, HE THERE SEETH A HORSEMAN GIVE CHASE TO A DAMSEL AND SLAY HER AND CAUSE HER BE DEVOURED OF TWO DOGS. THEREWITHAL HE BIDDETH HIS KINSFOLK AND THE LADY WHOM HE LOVETH TO A DINNER, WHERE HIS MISTRESS SEETH THE SAME DAMSEL TORN IN PIECES AND FEARING A LIKE FATE, TAKETH NASTAGIO TO HUSBAND

No sooner was Lauretta silent than Filomena, by the queen's commandment, began thus: "Lovesome ladies, even as pity is in us commended, so also is cruelty rigorously avenged by Divine justice; the which that I may prove to you and so engage you altogether to purge yourselves therefrom, it pleaseth me tell you a story no less pitiful than delectable.

In Ravenna, a very ancient city of Romagna, there were aforetime many noblemen and gentlemen, and amongst the rest a young man called Nastagio degli Onesti, who had, by the death of his father and an uncle of his, been left rich beyond all estimation and who, as it happeneth often with young men, being without a wife, fell in love with a daughter of Messer Paolo Traversari, a young lady of much greater family than his own, hoping by his fashions to bring her to love him in return. But these, though great and goodly and commendable, not only profited him nothing; nay, it seemed they did him harm, so cruel and obdurate and intractable did the beloved damsel show herself to him, being grown belike, whether for her singular beauty or the nobility of her birth, so proud and disdainful that neither he nor aught that pleased him pleased her. This was so grievous to Nastagio to bear that many a time, for chagrin, being weary of complaining, he had it in his thought to kill himself, but held his hand therefrom; and again and again he took it to heart to let her be altogether or have her, an he might, in hatred, even as she had him. But in vain did he take such a resolve, for that, the more hope failed him, the more it seemed his love redoubled. Accordingly, he persisted both in loving and in spending without stint or measure, till it seemed to certain of his friends and kinsfolk that he was like to consume both

himself and his substance; wherefore they besought him again and again and counselled him depart Ravenna and go sojourn awhile in some other place, for that, so doing, he would abate both his passion and his expenditure. Nastagio long made light of this counsel, but, at last, being importuned of them and able no longer to say no, he promised to do as they would have him and let make great preparations, as he would go into France or Spain or some other far place. Then, taking horse in company with many of his friends, he rode out of Ravenna and betook himself to a place called Chiassi, some three miles from the city, where, sending for tents and pavilions, he told those who had accompanied him thither that he meant to abide and that they might return to Ravenna. Accordingly, having encamped there, he proceeded to lead the goodliest and most magnificent life that was aye, inviting now these, now those others, to supper and to dinner, as he was used.

It chanced one day, he being come thus well nigh to the beginning of May and the weather being very fair, that, having entered into thought of his cruel mistress, he bade all his servants leave him to himself, so he might muse more at his leisure, and wandered on, step by step, lost in melancholy thought, till he came [unwillingly] into the pinewood. The fifth hour of the day was well nigh past and he had gone a good half mile into the wood, remembering him neither of eating nor of aught else, when himseemed of a sudden he heard a terrible great wailing and loud cries uttered by a woman; whereupon, his dulcet meditation being broken, he raised his head to see what was to do and marvelled to find himself among the pines; then, looking before him, he saw a very fair damsel come running, naked, through a thicket all thronged with underwood and briers, towards the place where he was, weeping and crying sore for mercy and all dishevelled and torn by the bushes and the brambles. At her heels ran two huge and fierce mastiffs, which followed hard upon her and ofttimes bit her cruelly, whenas they overtook her; and after them he saw come riding upon a black courser a knight arrayed in sad-coloured armour, with a very wrathful aspect and a tuck in his hand, threatening her with death in foul and fearsome words.

This sight filled Nastagio's mind at once with terror and amazement and after stirred him to compassion of the ill-fortuned lady, wherefrom arose a desire to deliver her, an but he might, from such anguish and death. Finding himself without arms, he ran to take the branch of a tree for a club, armed wherewith, he advanced to meet the dogs and the knight. When the latter saw this, he cried out to him from

afar off, saying, 'Nastagio, meddle not; suffer the dogs and myself to do that which this wicked woman hath merited.' As he spoke, the dogs, laying fast hold of the damsel by the flanks, brought her to a stand and the knight, coming up, lighted down from his horse; whereupon Nastagio drew near unto him and said, 'I know not who thou mayst be, that knowest me so well; but this much I say to thee that it is a great felony for an armed knight to seek to slay a naked woman and to set the dogs on her, as she were a wild beast; certes, I will defend her as most I may.'

'Nastagio,' answered the knight, 'I was of one same city with thyself and thou wast yet a little child when I, who hight Messer Guido degli Anastagi, was yet more passionately enamoured of this woman than thou art presently of yonder one of the Traversari and my ill fortune for her hard-heartedness and barbarity came to such a pass that one day I slew myself in despair with this tuck thou seest in my hand and was doomed to eternal punishment. Nor was it long ere she, who was beyond measured rejoiced at my death, died also and for the sin of her cruelty and of the delight had of her in my torments (whereof she repented her not, as one who thought not to have sinned therein, but rather to have merited reward,) was and is on like wise condemned to the pains of hell. Wherein no sooner was she descended than it was decreed unto her and to me, for penance thereof,* that she should flee before me and that I, who once loved her so dear, should pursue her, not as a beloved mistress, but as a mortal enemy, and that, as often as I overtook her, I should slay her with this tuck, wherewith I slew myself, and ripping open her loins, tear from her body, as thou shalt presently see, that hard and cold heart, wherein nor love nor pity might ever avail to enter, together with the other entrails, and give them to these dogs to eat. Nor is it a great while after ere, as God's justice and puissance will it, she riseth up again, as she had not been dead, and beginneth anew her woeful flight, whilst the dogs and I again pursue her. And every Friday it betideth that I come up with her here at this hour and wreak on her the slaughter that thou shalt see; and think not that we rest the other days; nay, I overtake her in other places, wherein she thought and wrought cruelly against me. Thus, being as thou seest, from her lover grown her foe, it behoveth me pursue her on this wise as many years as she was cruel to me months. Wherefore leave me to carry the justice of God into effect and seek not to oppose that which thou mayst not avail to hinder.'

* *i.e.* of her sin.

Nastagio, hearing these words, drew back, grown all adread, with not an hair on his body but stood on end, and looking upon the wretched damsel, began fearfully to await that which the knight should do. The latter, having made an end of his discourse, ran, tuck in hand, as he were a ravening dog, at the damsel, who, fallen on her knees and held fast by the two mastiffs, cried him mercy, and smiting her with all his might amiddleward the breast, pierced her through and through. No sooner had she received this stroke than she fell grovelling on the ground, still weeping and crying out; whereupon the knight, clapping his hand to his hunting-knife, ripped open her loins and tearing forth her heart and all that was thereabout, cast them to the two mastiffs, who devoured them incontinent, as being sore anhungred. Nor was it long ere, as if none of these things had been, the damsel of a sudden rose to her feet and began to flee towards the sea, with the dogs after her, still rending her; and in a little while they had gone so far that Nastagio could see them no more. The latter, seeing these things, abode a great while between pity and fear, and presently it occurred to his mind that this might much avail him, seeing that it befell every Friday; wherefore, marking the place, he returned to his servants and after, whenas it seemed to him fit, he sent for sundry of his kinsmen and friends and said to them, 'You have long urged me leave loving this mine enemy and put an end to my expenditure, and I am ready to do it, provided you will obtain me a favour; the which is this, that on the coming Friday you make shift to have Messer Paolo Traversari and his wife and daughter and all their kinswomen and what other ladies soever it shall please you here to dinner with me. That for which I wish this, you shall see then.' This seemed to them a little thing enough to do, wherefore, returning to Ravenna, they in due time invited those whom Nastagio would have to dine with him, and albeit it was no easy matter to bring thither the young lady whom he loved, natheless she went with the other ladies. Meanwhile, Nastagio let make ready a magnificent banquet and caused set the tables under the pines round about the place where he had witnessed the slaughter of the cruel lady.

The time come, he seated the gentlemen and the ladies at table and so ordered it that his mistress should be placed right over against the spot where the thing should befall. Accordingly, hardly was the last dish come when the despairful outcry of the hunted damsel began to be heard of all, whereat each of the company marvelled and enquired what was to do, but none could say; whereupon all started to their feet and looking what this might be, they saw the woeful damsel

"Smiting her with all his might"

and the knight and the dogs; nor was it long ere they were all there among them. Great was the clamour against both dogs and knight, and many rushed forward to succour the damsel; but the knight, bespeaking them as he had bespoken Nastagio, not only made them draw back, but filled them all with terror and amazement. Then did he as he had done before, whereat all the ladies that were there (and there were many present who had been kinswomen both to the woeful damsel and to the knight and who remembered them both of his love and of his death) wept as piteously as if they had seen this done to themselves.

The thing carried to its end and the damsel and the knight gone, the adventure set those who had seen it upon many and various discourses; but of those who were the most affrighted was the cruel damsel beloved of Nastagio, who had distinctly seen and heard the whole matter and understood that these things concerned her more than any other who was there, remembering her of the cruelty she had still used towards Nastagio; wherefore herseemed she fled already before her enraged lover and had the mastiffs at her heels. Such was the terror awakened in her thereby that,—so this might not betide her,—no sooner did she find an opportunity (which was afforded her that same evening) than, turning her hatred into love, she despatched to Nastagio a trusty chamberwoman of hers, who besought him that it should please him to go to her, for that she was ready to do all that should be his pleasure. He answered that this was exceeding agreeable to him, but that, so it pleased her, he desired to have his pleasure of her with honour, to wit, by taking her to wife. The damsel, who knew that it rested with none other than herself that she had not been his wife, made answer to him that it liked her well; then, playing the messenger herself, she told her father and mother that she was content to be Nastagio's wife, whereat they were mightily rejoiced, and he, espousing her on the ensuing Sunday and celebrating his nuptials, lived with her long and happily. Nor was this affright the cause of that good only; nay, all the ladies of Ravenna became so fearful by reason thereof, that ever after they were much more amenable than they had before been to the desires of the men."

THE NINTH STORY

FEDERIGO DEGLI ALBERIGHI LOVETH AND IS NOT LOVED. HE WASTETH HIS SUBSTANCE IN PRODIGAL HOSPITALITY TILL THERE IS LEFT HIM BUT ONE SOLE FALCON, WHICH, HAVING NOUGHT ELSE, HE GIVETH HIS MISTRESS TO EAT, ON HER COMING TO HIS HOUSE; AND SHE, LEARNING THIS, CHANGETH HER MIND AND TAKING HIM TO HUSBAND, MAKETH HIM RICH AGAIN

FILOMENA having ceased speaking, the queen, seeing that none remained to tell save only herself and Dioneo, whose privilege entitled him to speak last, said, with a blithe aspect, "It pertaineth now to me to tell and I, dearest ladies, will willingly do it, relating a story like in part to the foregoing, to the intent that not only may you know how much the love of you * can avail in gentle hearts, but that you may learn to be yourselves, whenas it behoveth, bestowers of your guerdons, without always suffering fortune to be your guide, which most times, as it chanceth, giveth not discreetly, but out of all measure.

You must know, then, that Coppo di Borghese Domenichi, who was of our days and maybe is yet a man of great worship and authority in our city and illustrious and worthy of eternal renown, much more for his fashions and his merit than for the nobility of his blood, being grown full of years, delighted oftentimes to discourse with his neighbours and others of things past, the which he knew how to do better and more orderly and with more memory and elegance of speech than any other man. Amongst other fine things of his, he was used to tell that there was once in Florence a young man called Federigo, son of Messer Filippo Alberighi and renowned for deeds of arms and courtesy over every other bachelor in Tuscany, who, as betideth most gentlemen, became enamoured of a gentlewoman named Madam Giovanna, in her day held one of the fairest and sprightliest ladies that were in Florence; and to win her love, he held jousts and tourneyings and made entertainments and gave gifts and spent his substance without any stint; but she, being no less virtuous than fair, recked nought of these things done for her nor of him who did them. Federigo spending thus far beyond his means and gaining nought, his wealth, as lightly happeneth, in course of time came to an end and he abode poor, nor was aught left him but a poor little farm, on whose returns

* Syn. your charms (*la vostra vaghezza*).

he lived very meagrely, and to boot a falcon he had, one of the best in the world. Wherefore, being more in love than ever and himseeming he might no longer make such a figure in the city as he would fain do, he took up his abode at Campi, where his farm was, and there bore his poverty with patience, hawking whenas he might and asking of no one.

Federigo being thus come to extremity, it befell one day that Madam Giovanna's husband fell sick and seeing himself nigh upon death, made his will, wherein, being very rich, he left a son of his, now well grown, his heir, after which, having much loved Madam Giovanna, he substituted her to his heir, in case his son should die without lawful issue, and died. Madam Giovanna, being thus left a widow, betook herself that summer, as is the usance of our ladies, into the country with her son to an estate of hers very near that of Federigo; wherefore it befell that the lad made acquaintance with the latter and began to take delight in hawks and hounds, and having many a time seen his falcon flown and being strangely taken therewith, longed sore to have it, but dared not ask it of him, seeing it so dear to him. The thing standing thus, it came to pass that the lad fell sick, whereat his mother was sore concerned, as one who had none but him and loved him with all her might, and abode about him all day, comforting him without cease; and many a time she asked him if there were aught he desired, beseeching him tell it her, for that, an it might be gotten, she would contrive that he should have it. The lad, having heard these offers many times repeated, said, 'Mother mine, an you could procure me to have Federigo's falcon, methinketh I should soon be whole.'

The lady, hearing this, bethought herself awhile and began to consider how she should do. She knew that Federigo had long loved her and had never gotten of her so much as a glance of the eye; wherefore quoth she in herself, 'How shall I send or go to him to seek of him this falcon, which is, by all I hear, the best that ever flew and which, to boot, maintaineth him in the world? And how can I be so graceless as to offer to take this from a gentleman who hath none other pleasure left?' Perplexed with this thought and knowing not what to say, for all she was very certain of getting the bird, if she asked for it, she made no reply to her son, but abode silent. However, at last, the love of her son so got the better of her that she resolved in herself to satisfy him, come what might, and not to send, but to go herself for the falcon and fetch it to him. Accordingly she said to him, 'My son, take comfort and bethink thyself to grow well again,

for I promise thee that the first thing I do to-morrow morning I will go for it and fetch it to thee.' The boy was rejoiced at this and showed some amendment that same day.

Next morning, the lady, taking another lady to bear her company, repaired, by way of diversion to Federigo's little house and enquired for the latter, who, for that it was no weather for hawking nor had been for some days past, was then in a garden he had, overlooking the doing of certain little matters of his, and hearing that Madam Giovanna asked for him at the door, ran thither, rejoicing and marvelling exceedingly. She, seeing him come, rose and going with womanly graciousness to meet him, answered his respectful salutation with 'Give you good day, Federigo!' then went on to say, 'I am come to make thee amends for that which thou hast suffered through me, in loving me more than should have behoved thee; and the amends in question is this that I purpose to dine with thee this morning familiarly, I and this lady my companion.' 'Madam,' answered Federigo humbly, 'I remember me not to have ever received any ill at your hands, but on the contrary so much good that, if ever I was worth aught, it came about through your worth and the love I bore you; and assuredly, albeit you have come to a poor host, this your gracious visit is far more precious to me than it would be an it were given me to spend over again as much as that which I have spent aforetime.' So saying, he shamefastly received her into his house and thence brought her into his garden, where, having none else to bear her company, he said to her, 'Madam, since there is none else here, this good woman, wife of yonder husbandman, will bear you company, whilst I go see the table laid.'

Never till that moment, extreme as was his poverty, had he been so dolorously sensible of the straits to which he had brought himself for the lack of those riches he had spent on such disorderly wise. But that morning, finding he had nothing wherewithal he might honourably entertain the lady, for love of whom he had aforetime entertained folk without number, he was made perforce aware of his default and ran hither and thither, perplexed beyond measure, like a man beside himself, inwardly cursing his ill fortune, but found neither money nor aught he might pawn. It was now growing late and he having a great desire to entertain the gentle lady with somewhat, yet choosing not to have recourse to his own labourer, much less any one else, his eye fell on his good falcon, which he saw on his perch in his little saloon; whereupon, having no other resource, he took the bird and finding him fat, deemed him a dish worthy of such a lady. Accord-

ingly, without more ado, he wrung the hawk's neck and hastily caused a little maid of his pluck it and truss it and after put it on the spit and roast it diligently. Then, the table laid and covered with very white cloths, whereof he had yet some store, he returned with a blithe countenance to the lady in the garden and told her that dinner was ready, such as it was in his power to provide. Accordingly, the lady and her friend, arising, betook themselves to table and in company with Federigo, who served them with the utmost diligence, ate the good falcon, unknowing what they did.

Presently, after they had risen from table and had abidden with him awhile in cheerful discourse, the lady, thinking it time to tell that wherefor she was come, turned to Federigo and courteously bespoke him, saying, 'Federigo, I doubt not a jot but that, when thou hearest that which is the especial occasion of my coming hither, thou wilt marvel at my presumption, remembering thee of thy past life and of my virtue, which latter belike thou reputedst cruelty and hardness of heart; but, if thou hadst or hadst had children, by whom thou mightest know how potent is the love one beareth them, meseemeth certain that thou wouldst in part hold me excused. But, although thou hast none, I, who have one child, cannot therefore escape the common laws to which other mothers are subject and whose enforcements it behoving me ensue, need must I, against my will and contrary to all right and seemliness, ask of thee a boon, which I know is supremely dear to thee (and that with good reason, for that thy sorry fortune hath left thee none other delight, none other diversion, none other solace), to wit, thy falcon, whereof my boy is so sore enamoured that, an I carry it not to him, I fear me his present disorder will be so aggravated that there may presently ensue thereof somewhat whereby I shall lose him. Wherefore I conjure thee,—not by the love thou bearest me and whereto thou art nowise beholden, but by thine own nobility, which in doing courtesy hath approved itself greater than in any other,—that it please thee give it to me, so by the gift I may say I have kept my son alive and thus made him for ever thy debtor.'

Federigo, hearing what the lady asked and knowing that he could not oblige her, for that he had given her the falcon to eat, fell a-weeping in her presence, ere he could answer a word. The lady at first believed that his tears arose from grief at having to part from his good falcon and was like to say that she would not have it. However, she contained herself and awaited what Federigo should reply, who, after weeping awhile, made answer thus: 'Madam, since it pleased God that I should set my love on you, I have in many things reputed

fortune contrary to me and have complained of her; but all the ill turns she hath done me have been a light matter in comparison with that which she doth me at this present and for which I can never more be reconciled to her, considering that you are come hither to my poor house, whereas you deigned not to come what while I was rich, and seek of me a little boon, the which she hath so wrought that I cannot grant you; and why this cannot be I will tell you briefly. When I heard that you, of your favour, were minded to dine with me, I deemed it a right thing and a seemly, having regard to your worth and the nobility of your station, to honour you, as far as in me lay, with some choicer victual than that which is commonly set before other folk; wherefore, remembering me of the falcon which you ask of me and of his excellence, I judged him a dish worthy of you. This very morning, then, you have had him roasted upon the trencher, and indeed I had accounted him excellently well bestowed; but now, seeing that you would fain have had him on other wise, it is so great a grief to me that I cannot oblige you therein that methinketh I shall never forgive myself therefor.' So saying, in witness of this, he let cast before her the falcon's feathers and feet and beak.

The lady, seeing and hearing this, first blamed him for having, to give a woman to eat, slain such a falcon, and after inwardly much commended the greatness of his soul, which poverty had not availed nor might anywise avail to abate. Then, being put out of all hope of having the falcon and fallen therefore in doubt of her son's recovery, she took her leave and returned, all disconsolate, to the latter, who, before many days had passed, whether for chagrin that he could not have the bird or for that his disorder was e'en fated to bring him to that pass, departed this life, to the inexpressible grief of his mother. After she had abidden awhile full of tears and affliction, being left very rich and yet young, she was more than once urged by her brothers to marry again, and albeit she would fain not have done so, yet, finding herself importuned and calling to mind Federigo's worth and his last magnificence, to wit, the having slain such a falcon for her entertainment, she said to them, 'I would gladly, an it liked you, abide as I am; but, since it is your pleasure that I take a [second] husband, certes I will never take any other, an I have not Federigo degli Alberighi.' Whereupon her brothers, making mock of her, said, 'Silly woman that thou art, what is this thou sayest? How canst thou choose him, seeing he hath nothing in the world?' 'Brothers mine,' answered she, 'I know very well that it is as you say; but I would liefer have a man that lacketh of riches than riches that lack of a man.' Her

brethren, hearing her mind and knowing Federigo for a man of great merit, poor though he was, gave her, with all her wealth, to him, even as she would; and he, seeing himself married to a lady of such worth and one whom he had loved so dear and exceeding rich, to boot, became a better husband of his substance and ended his days with her in joy and solace."

THE TENTH STORY

PIETRO DI VINCIOLO GOETH TO SUP ABROAD, WHEREUPON HIS WIFE LETTETH FETCH HER A YOUTH TO KEEP HER COMPANY, AND HER HUSBAND RETURNING, UNLOOKED FOR, SHE HIDETH HER GALLANT UNDER A HEN-COOP. PIETRO TELLETH HER HOW THERE HAD BEEN FOUND IN THE HOUSE OF ONE ARCOLANO, WITH WHOM HE WAS TO HAVE SUPPED, A YOUNG MAN BROUGHT IN BY HIS WIFE, AND SHE BLAMETH THE LATTER. PRESENTLY, AN ASS, BY MISCHANCE, SETTETH FOOT ON THE FINGERS OF HIM WHO IS UNDER THE COOP AND HE ROARETH OUT, WHEREUPON PIETRO RUNNETH THITHER AND ESPYING HIM, DISCOVERETH HIS WIFE'S UNFAITH, BUT ULTIMATELY COMETH TO AN ACCORD WITH HER FOR HIS OWN LEWD ENDS

THE queen's story come to an end and all having praised God for that He had rewarded Federigo according to his desert, Dioneo, who never waited for commandment, began on this wise: "I know not whether to say if it be a casual vice, grown up in mankind through perversity of manners and usances, or a defect inherent in our nature, that we laugh rather at things ill than at good works, especially when they concern us not. Wherefore, seeing that the pains I have otherwhiles taken and am now about to take aim at none other end than to rid you of melancholy and afford you occasion for laughter and merriment,—albeit the matter of my present story may be in part not altogether seemly, nevertheless, lovesome lasses, for that it may afford diversion, I will e'en tell it you, and do you, hearkening thereunto, as you are wont to do, whenas you enter into gardens, where, putting out your dainty hands, you cull the roses and leave the thorns be. On this wise must you do with my story, leaving the naughty man of whom I shall tell you to his infamy and ill-luck go with him, what while you laugh merrily at the amorous devices of his wife, having compassion, whenas need is, of the mischances of others.

There was, then, in Perugia, no great while agone, a rich man called Pietro di Vinciolo, who, belike more to beguile others and to abate the general suspect in which he was had of all the Perugians, than for any desire of his own, took him a wife, and fortune in this was so far conformable to his inclination that the wife he took was a thick-set, red-haired, hot-complexioned wench, who would liefer have had two husbands than one, whereas she happened upon one who had a mind far more disposed to otherwhat than to her. Becoming, in process of time, aware of this and seeing herself fair and fresh and feeling herself buxom and lusty, she began by being sore incensed thereat and came once and again to unseemly words thereof with her husband, with whom she was well nigh always at variance. Then, seeing that this might result rather in her own exhaustion than in the amendment of her husband's depravity, she said in herself, 'Yonder caitiff forsaketh me to go of his ribaldries on pattens through the dry, and I will study to carry others on shipboard through the wet. I took him to husband and brought him a fine great dowry, knowing him to be a man and supposing him desireful of that whereunto men are and should be fain; and had I not believed that he would play the part of a man, I had never taken him. He knew that I was a woman; why, then, did he take me to wife, if women were not to his mind? This is not to be suffered. Were I minded to renounce the world, I should have made myself a nun; but, if, choosing to live in the world, as I do, I look for delight or pleasure from yonder fellow, I may belike grow old, expecting in vain, and whenas I shall be old, I shall in vain repent and bemoan myself of having wasted my youth, which latter he himself is a very good teacher and demonstrator how I should solace, showing me by example how I should delect myself with that wherein he delighteth, more by token that this were commendable in me, whereas in him it is exceeding blameworthy, seeing that I should offend against the laws alone, whereas he offendeth against both law and nature.'

Accordingly, the good lady, having thus bethought herself and belike more than once, to give effect privily to these considerations, clapped up an acquaintance with an old woman who showed like Saint Verdiana, that giveth the serpents to eat, and still went to every pardoning, beads in hand, nor ever talked of aught but the lives of the Holy Fathers or of the wounds of St. Francis and was of well nigh all reputed a saint, and whenas it seemed to her time, frankly discovered to her her intent. 'Daughter mine,' replied the beldam, 'God who knoweth all knoweth that thou wilt do exceeding well, and if for

nought else, yet shouldst thou do it, thou and every other young woman, not to lose the time of your youth, for that to whoso hath understanding, there is no grief like that of having lost one's time. And what a devil are we women good for, once we are old, save to keep the ashes about the fire-pot? If none else knoweth it and can bear witness thereof, that do and can I; for, now that I am old, I recognize without avail, but not without very sore and bitter remorse of mind, the time that I let slip, and albeit I lost it not altogether (for that I would not have thee deem me a ninny), still I did not what I might have done; whereof whenas I remember me, seeing myself fashioned as thou seest me at this present, so that thou wouldst find none to give me fire to my tinder,* God knoweth what chagrin I feel. With men it is not so; they are born apt for a thousand things, not for this alone, and most part of them are of much more account old than young; but women are born into the world for nothing but to do this and bear children, and it is for this that they are prized; the which, if from nought else, thou mayst apprehend from this, that we women are still ready for the sport; more by token that one woman would tire out many men at the game, whereas many men cannot tire one woman; and for that we are born unto this, I tell thee again that thou wilt do exceeding well to return thy husband a loaf for his bannock, so thy soul may have no cause to reproach thy flesh in thine old age. Each one hath of this world just so much as he taketh to himself thereof, and especially is this the case with women, whom it behoveth, much more than men, make use of their time, whilst they have it; for thou mayst see how, when we grow old, nor husband nor other will look at us; nay, they send us off to the kitchen to tell tales to the cat and count the pots and pans; and what is worse, they tag rhymes on us and say,

"Tidbits for wenches young;
Gags † for the old wife's tongue."

And many another thing to the like purpose. And that I may hold thee no longer in parley, I tell thee in fine that thou couldst not have discovered thy mind to any one in the world who can be more useful to thee than I, for that there is no man so high and mighty but I

* *i.e.* she was grown so repulsively ugly in her old age, that no one cared to do her even so trifling a service as giving her a spark in tinder to light her fire withal.

† Or chokebits (*stranguglioni*).

dare tell him what behoveth, nor any so dour or churlish but I know how to supple him aright and bring him to what I will. Wherefore do thou but show me who pleaseth thee and after leave me do; but one thing I commend to thee, daughter mine, and that is, that thou be mindful of me, for that I am a poor body and would have thee henceforth a sharer in all my pardonings and in all the paternosters I shall say, so God may make them light and candles for thy dead.' *

With this she made an end of her discourse, and the young lady came to an understanding with her that, whenas she chanced to spy a certain young spark who passed often through that quarter and whose every feature she set out to her, she should know what she had to do; then, giving her a piece of salt meat, she dismissed her with God's blessing; nor had many days passed ere the old woman brought her him of whom she had bespoken her privily into her chamber, and a little while after, another and another, according as they chanced to take the lady's fancy, who stinted not to indulge herself in this as often as occasion offered, though still fearful of her husband. It chanced one evening that, her husband being to sup abroad with a friend of his, Ercolano by name, she charged the old woman bring her a youth, who was one of the goodliest and most agreeable of all Perugia, which she promptly did; but hardly had the lady seated herself at table to sup with her gallant, when, behold, Pietro called out at the door to have it opened to him. She, hearing this, gave herself up for lost, but yet desiring, an she might, to conceal the youth and not having the presence of mind to send him away or hide him elsewhere, made him take refuge under a hen-coop, that was in a shed adjoining the chamber where they were at supper, and cast over him the sacking of a pallet-bed that she had that day let empty.

This done, she made haste to open to her husband, to whom quoth she, as soon as he entered the house, 'You have very soon despatched this supper of yours!' 'We have not so much as tasted it,' replied he; and she said, 'How was that?' Quoth he, 'I will tell thee. Scarce were we seated at table, Ercolano and his wife and I, when we heard some one sneeze hard by, whereof we took no note the first time nor the second; but, he who sneezed sneezing yet a third time and a fourth and a fifth and many other times, it made us all marvel; whereupon Ercolano, who was somewhat vexed with his wife for that she had kept us a great while standing at the door, without opening to us, said,

* *i.e.* that they may serve to purchase remission from purgatory for the souls of her dead relatives, instead of the burning of candles and tapers, which is held by the Roman Catholic Church to have that effect.

as if in a rage, "What meaneth this? Who is it sneezeth thus?" And rising from table, made for a stair that stood near at hand and under which, hard by the stairfoot, was a closure of planks, wherein to bestow all manner things, as we see those do every day who set their houses in order. Himseeming it was from this that came the noise of sneezing, he opened a little door that was therein and no sooner had he done this than there issued forth thereof the frightfullest stench of sulphur that might be. Somewhat of this smell had already reached us and we complaining thereof, the lady had said, "It is because I was but now in act to bleach my veils with sulphur and after set the pan, over which I had spread them to catch the fumes, under the stair, so that it yet smoketh thereof."

As soon as the smoke was somewhat spent, Ercolano looked into the cupboard and there espied him who had sneezed and who was yet in act to sneeze, for that the fumes of the sulphur constrained him thereto, and indeed they had by this time so straitened his breast that, had he abidden a while longer, he had never sneezed nor done aught else again. Ercolano, seeing him, cried out, "Now, wife, I see why, whenas we came hither awhile ago, we were kept so long at the door, without its being opened to us; but may I never again have aught that shall please me, an I pay thee not for this!" The lady, hearing this and seeing that her sin was discovered, stayed not to make any excuse, but started up from table and made off I know not whither. Ercolano, without remarking his wife's flight, again and again bade him who sneezed come forth; but the latter, who was now at the last gasp, offered not to stir, for all that he could say; whereupon, taking him by one foot, he haled him forth of his hiding-place and ran for a knife to kill him; but I, fearing the police on mine own account, arose and suffered him not to slay him or do him any hurt; nay, crying out and defending him, I gave the alarm to certain of the neighbours, who ran thither and taking the now half-dead youth, carried him forth the house I know not whither. Wherefore, our supper being disturbed by these things, I have not only not despatched it, nay, I have, as I said, not even tasted it.

The lady, hearing this, knew that there were other women as wise as herself, albeit illhap bytimes betided some of them thereof, and would fain have defended Ercolano's wife with words; but, herseeming that, by blaming others' defaults, she might make freer way for her own, she began to say, 'Here be fine doings! A holy and virtuous lady indeed she must be! She, to whom, as I am an honest woman, I would have confessed myself, so spiritually minded meseemed she

was! And the worst of it is that she, being presently an old woman, setteth a mighty fine example to the young. Accursed be the hour she came into the world and she also, who suffereth herself to live, perfidious and vile woman that she must be, the general reproach and shame of all the ladies of this city, who, casting to the winds her honour and the faith plighted to her husband and the world's esteem, is not ashamed to dishonour him, and herself with him, for another man, him who is such a man and so worshipful a citizen and who used her so well! So God save me, there should be no mercy had of such women as she; they should be put to death; they should be cast alive into the fire and burned to ashes.' Then, bethinking her of her gallant, whom she had hard by under the coop, she began to exhort Pietro to betake himself to bed, for that it was time; but he, having more mind to eat than to sleep, enquired if there was aught for supper. 'Supper, quotha!' answered the lady. 'Truly, we are much used to get supper, whenas thou art abroad! A fine thing, indeed! Dost thou take me for Ercolano's wife? Alack, why dost thou not go to sleep for to-night? How far better thou wilt do!' Now it chanced that, certain husbandmen of Pietro's being come that evening with sundry matters from the farm and having put up their asses, without watering them, in a little stable adjoining the shed, one of the latter, being sore athirst, slipped his head out of the halter and making his way out of the stable, went smelling to everything, so haply he might find some water, and going thus, he came presently full on the hen-coop, under which was the young man. The latter having, for that it behoved him abide on all fours, put out the fingers of one hand on the ground beyond the coop, such was his luck, or rather let us say, his ill luck, that the ass set his hoof on them, whereupon the youth, feeling an exceeding great pain, set up a terrible outcry. Pietro, hearing this, marvelled and perceived that the noise came from within the house; wherefore he went out into the shed and hearing the other still clamouring, for that the ass had not lifted up his hoof from his fingers, but still trod hard upon them, said, 'Who is there?' Then, running to the hen-coop, he raised it and espied the young man, who, beside the pain he suffered from his fingers that were crushed by the ass's hoof, was all a-tremble for fear lest Pietro should do him a mischief.

The latter, knowing him for one whom he had long pursued for his lewd ends, asked him what he did there, whereto he answered him nothing, but prayed him for the love of God do him no harm. Quoth Pietro, 'Arise and fear not that I will do thee any hurt; but tell me

how thou comest here and for what purpose.' The youth told him all, whereupon Pietro, no less rejoiced to have found him than his wife was woeful, taking him by the hand, carried him into the chamber, where the lady awaited him with the greatest affright in the world, and seating himself overagainst her, said, 'But now thou cursedst Ercolano's wife and avouchedst that she should be burnt and that she was the disgrace of all you women; why didst thou not speak of thyself? Or, an thou choosedst not to speak of thyself, how could thy conscience suffer thee to speak thus of her, knowing thyself to have done even as did she? Certes, none other thing moved thee thereunto save that you women are all made thus and look to cover your own doings with others' defaults; would fire might come from heaven to burn you all up, perverse generation that you are!'

The lady, seeing that, in the first heat of the discovery, he had done her no harm other than in words and herseeming she saw that he was all agog with joy for that he held so goodly a stripling by the hand, took heart and said, 'Of this much, indeed, I am mighty well assured, that thou wouldst have fire come from heaven to burn us women all up, being, as thou art, as fain to us as a dog to cudgels; but, by Christ His cross, thou shalt not get thy wish. However, I would fain have a little discourse with thee, so I may know of what thou complainest. Certes, it were a fine thing an thou shouldst seek to even me with Ercolano's wife, who is a beat-breast, a smell-sin,* and hath of her husband what she will and is of him held dear as a wife should be, the which is not the case with me. For, grant that I am well clad and shod of thee, thou knowest but too well how I fare for the rest and how long it is since thou hast lain with me; and I had liefer go barefoot and rags to my back and be well used of thee abed than have all these things, being used as I am of thee. For understand plainly, Pietro; I am a women like other women and have a mind unto that which other women desire; so that, an I procure me thereof, not having it from thee, thou hast no call to missay of me therefor; at the least, I do thee this much honour that I have not to do with horseboys and scaldheads.'

Pietro perceived that words were not like to fail her for all that night; wherefore, as one who recked little of her, 'Wife,' said he, 'no more for the present; I will content thee aright of this matter; but thou wilt do us a great courtesy to let us have somewhat to sup withal, for that meseemeth this lad, like myself, hath not yet supped.'

* *i.e.* a hypocritical sham devotee, covering a lewd life with an appearance of sanctity.

'Certes, no,' answered the lady, 'he hath not yet supped; for we were sitting down to table, when thou camest in thine ill hour.' 'Go, then,' rejoined Pietro, 'contrive that we may sup, and after I will order this matter on such wise that thou shalt have no cause to complain.' The lady, finding that her husband was satisfied, arose and caused straightway reset the table; then, letting bring the supper she had prepared, she supped merrily in company with her caitiff of a husband and the young man. After supper, what Pietro devised for the satisfaction of all three hath escaped my mind; but this much I know that on the following morning the youth was escorted back to the public place, not altogether certain which he had the more been that night, wife or husband. Wherefore, dear my ladies, this will I say to you, 'Whoso doth it to you, do you it to him;' and if you cannot presently, keep it in mind till such time as you can, so he may get as good as he giveth."

Dioneo having made an end of his story, which had been less laughed at by the ladies [than usual], more for shamefastness than for the little delight they took therein, the queen, seeing the end of her sovranty come, rose to her feet and putting off the laurel crown, set it blithely on Elisa's head, saying, "With you, madam, henceforth it resteth to command." Elisa, accepting the honour, did even as it had been done before her, in that, having first, to the satisfaction of the company, taken order with the seneschal for that whereof there was need for the time of her governance, she said, "We have many a time heard how, by dint of smart sayings and ready repartees and prompt advisements, many have availed with an apt retort * to take the edge off other folks' teeth or to fend off imminent perils; and, for that the matter is goodly and may be useful,† I will that to-morrow, with God's aid, it be discoursed within these terms, to wit, OF WHOSO, BEING ASSAILED WITH SOME JIBING SPEECH, HATH VINDICATED HIMSELF OR HATH WITH SOME READY REPLY OR ADVISEMENT ESCAPED LOSS, PERIL OR SHAME."

This was much commended of all, whereupon the queen, rising to her feet, dismissed them all until supper time. The honourable com-

* Lit. a due or deserved bite (*debito morso*). I mention this to show the connection with teeth.

† An ellipsis of a kind common in Boccaccio and indeed in all the old Italian writers, meaning "it may be useful to enlarge upon the subject in question."

pany, seeing her risen, stood up all and each, according to the wonted fashion, applied himself to that which was most agreeable to him. But, the crickets having now given over singing, the queen let call every one and they betook themselves to supper, which being despatched with merry cheer, they all gave themselves to singing and making music, and Emilia having, at the queen's commandment, set up a dance, Dioneo was bidden sing a song, whereupon he straightway struck up with, "Mistress Aldruda, come lift up your fud-a, for I bring you, I bring you good tidings." Whereat all the ladies fell a-laughing and especially the queen, who bade him leave that and sing another. Quoth Dioneo, "Madam, had I a tabret, I would sing 'Come truss your coats, I prithee, Mistress Burdock,' or 'Under the olive the grass is;' or will you have me say 'The waves of the sea do great evil to me'? But I have no tabret, so look which you will of these others. Will it please you have 'Come forth unto us, so it may be cut down, like a May in the midst of the meadows'?" "Nay," answered the queen; "give us another." "Then," said Dioneo, "shall I sing, 'Mistress Simona, embarrel, embarrel! It is not the month of October'?" Quoth the queen, laughing, "Ill luck to thee, sing us a goodly one, an thou wilt, for we will none of these." "Nay, madam," rejoined Dioneo, "fash not yourself; but which then like you better? I know more than a thousand. Will you have 'This my shell an I prick it not well,' or 'Fair and softly, husband mine' or 'I'll buy me a cock, a cock of an hundred pounds sterling'?" * Therewithal the queen, somewhat provoked, though all the other ladies laughed, said, "Dioneo, leave jesting and sing us a goodly one; else shalt thou prove how I can be angry." Hearing this, he gave over his quips and cranks and forthright fell a-singing after this fashion:

O Love, the amorous light
That beameth from yon fair one's lovely eyes
Hath made me thine and hers in servant-guise.

The splendour of her lovely eyes, it wrought
That first thy flames were kindled in my breast,
Passing thereto through mine;
Yea, and thy virtue first unto my thought
Her visage fair it was made manifest,
Which picturing, I twine
And lay before her shrine

* The songs proposed by Dioneo are all apparently of a light, if not a wanton, character and "not fit to be sung before ladies."

All virtues, that to her I sacrifice,
Become the new occasion of my sighs.

Thus, dear my lord, thy vassal am I grown
And of thy might obediently await
Grace for my lowliness;
Yet wot I not if wholly there be known
The high desire that in my breast thou'st set
And my sheer faith, no less,
Of her who doth possess
My heart so that from none beneath the skies,
Save her alone, peace would I take or prize.

Wherefore I pray thee, sweet my lord and sire,
Discover it to her and cause her taste
Some scantling of thy heat
To-me-ward,—for thou seest that in the fire,
Loving, I languish and for torment waste
By inches at her feet,—
And eke in season meet
Commend me to her favour on such wise
As I would plead for thee, should need arise.*

Dioneo, by his silence, showing that his song was ended, the queen let sing many others, having natheless much commended his. Then, somedele of the night being spent and the queen feeling the heat of the day to be now overcome of the coolness of the night, she bade each at his pleasure betake himself to rest against the ensuing day.

* This singularly naïve give-and-take fashion of asking a favour of a God recalls the old Scotch epitaph cited by Mr. George Macdonald:

Here lie I Martin Elginbrodde:
Hae mercy o' my soul, Lord God;
As I wad do, were I Lord God
And ye were Martin Elginbrodde.

HERE ENDETH THE FIFTH DAY
OF THE DECAMERON