

THE
DECISION
OF GIOVANNI BOCCACCIO
TRANSLATED BY
RICHARD WINDINGTON
WITH OBSERVATIONS BY
JEAN DE BOSSCHÈRE
D



Ex Libris

K.K. Venugopal

The Decameron

VOLUME ONE



The Decameron

of GIOVANNI BOCCACCIO

TRANSLATED BY RICHARD ALDINGTON

ILLUSTRATIONS BY JEAN DE BOSSCHÈRE

VOLUME ONE

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Volume One

FOREWORD

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HERE BEGINS THE BOOK CALLED "DECAMERON," ALSO ENTITLED PRINCE GALEOTTO, CONTAINING ONE HUNDRED TALES, TOLD IN TEN DAYS BY SEVEN LADIES AND THREE YOUNG MEN

The First Day

I

HERE BEGINS THE FIRST DAY OF THE "DECAMERON," WHEREIN, AFTER THE AUTHOR HAS SHOWED THE REASONS WHY CERTAIN PERSONS GATHERED TO TELL TALES, THEY TREAT OF ANY SUBJECT PLEASING TO THEM, UNDER THE RULE OF PAMPINEA

FIRST TALE

16

SER CIAPPELLETTO DECEIVES A HOLY FRIAR WITH A FALSE CONFESSION AND DIES; AND THOUGH HE HAD BEEN A MOST WICKED MAN IN HIS LIFETIME, IN DEATH HE IS DEEMED A SAINT AND CALLED SAINT CIAPPELLETTO

SECOND TALE

29

A JEW CALLED ABRAHAM, URGED BY GIANNOTTO DI CIVIGNI, GOES TO ROME, AND, BEHOLDING THE WICKEDNESS OF THE CLERGY THERE, RETURNS TO PARIS AND BECOMES A CHRISTIAN

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FIFTH TALE

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FIFTH TALE

80

ANDREUCCIO DA PERUGIA GOES TO NAPLES TO BUY HORSES, FALLS INTO THREE UNPLEASANT ADVENTURES IN ONE NIGHT, ESCAPES FROM THEM ALL, AND RETURNS HOME WITH A RUBY

SIXTH TALE

92

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SEVENTH TALE

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THE SULTAN OF BABYLON SENDS HIS DAUGHTER TO MARRY THE KING OF GARBO. IN THE SPACE OF FOUR YEARS SHE PASSES THROUGH MANY ADVENTURES IN DIFFERENT LANDS AND LIES WITH NINE MEN. SHE IS FINALLY RESTORED TO HER FATHER WHO IS MADE TO BELIEVE SHE IS STILL A VIRGIN, AND MARRIES THE KING OF GARBO

EIGHTH TALE

121

THE COUNT OF ANTWERP IS FALSELY ACCUSED, IS EXILED AND LEAVES HIS TWO CHILDREN IN DIFFERENT PARTS OF ENGLAND. HE RETURNS IN DISGUISE, FINDS THEM WELL, JOINS THE KING OF FRANCE'S ARMY AS A GROOM, HIS INNOCENCE IS PROVED, AND HE IS RESTORED TO HIS RANK

NINTH TALE

135

BERNABÒ DA GENOVA IS TRICKED BY AMBROGIUOLO, LOSES HIS MONEY AND ORDERS HIS INNOCENT WIFE TO BE MURDERED. SHE ESCAPES AND, DRESSED AS A MAN, ENTERS THE SULTAN'S SERVICE. SHE MEETS THE TRICKSTER; BRINGS BERNABÒ TO ALEXANDRIA; THE TRICKSTER IS PUNISHED; SHE RETURNS TO WOMAN'S CLOTHES; AND THEY GO HOME WEALTHY TO GENOA

TENTH TALE

146

PAGANINO DA MONACO STEALS THE WIFE OF MESSER RICCIARDO DI CHINZICA, WHO FINDS OUT WHERE SHE IS AND FOLLOWS HER; HE BECOMES FRIENDLY WITH PAGANINO AND ASKS FOR HIS WIFE BACK. PAGANINO SAYS SHE MAY RETURN TO HIM, IF SHE WANTS TO; BUT SHE WILL NOT DO SO, AND, ON THE DEATH OF MESSER RICCIARDO, BECOMES THE WIFE OF PAGANINO

The Third Day

156

HERE BEGINS THE THIRD DAY OF THE "DECAMERON," WHEREIN, UNDER THE RULE OF NEIFILE, TALES ARE TOLD OF THOSE WHO BY THEIR WITS OBTAINED SOMETHING THEY GREATLY DESIRED OR REGAINED SOMETHING THEY LOST

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- SECOND TALE** 165
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- THIRD TALE** 169
 UNDER PRETENCE OF CONFESSION AND PURITY OF CONSCIENCE, A LADY, WHO IS IN LOVE WITH A YOUNG MAN, DECEIVES A HOLY AND UNSUSPECTING FRIAR INTO ARRANGING THE COMPLETE SATISFACTION OF HER PLEASURE
- FOURTH TALE** 177
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 ZIMA GIVES MESSER FRANCESCO VERGELLESÌ ONE OF HIS HORSES, ON CONDITION THAT HE IS ALLOWED TO SPEAK IN PRIVATE TO MESSER FRANCESCO'S WIFE. SHE SAYS NOT A WORD, BUT ZIMA ANSWERS HIMSELF FOR HER, AND THINGS TURN OUT IN ACCORDANCE WITH HIS REPLIES
- SIXTH TALE** 187
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- SEVENTH TALE** 195
 TEDALDO QUARRELS WITH HIS MISTRESS AND LEAVES FLORENCE. SOME TIME LATER HE RETURNS DISGUISED AS A PILGRIM; HE TALKS WITH HIS MISTRESS AND SHOWS HER HOW SHE WAS IN ERROR, LIBERATES FROM DEATH HIS MISTRESS' HUSBAND WHO WAS CONDEMNED FOR HAVING KILLED TEDALDO, AND RECONCILES HIM WITH HIS BROTHERS. THEREAFTER HE WISELY ENJOYS HIMSELF WITH THE LADY

EIGHTH TALE

210

FERONDO EATS A CERTAIN POWDER AND IS BURIED AS IF DEAD. THE ABBOT, WHO IS IN LOVE WITH HIS WIFE, TAKES FERONDO OUT OF HIS GRAVE, PUTS HIM IN PRISON AND MAKES HIM BELIEVE HE IS IN PURGATORY. HE IS RESURRECTED AND BRINGS UP AS HIS OWN A CHILD BEGOTTEN ON HIS WIFE BY THE ABBOT

NINTH TALE

219

GILETTA DI NERBONA HEALS THE KING OF FRANCE OF A FISTULA. IN REWARD SHE ASKS FOR BELTRAMO DI ROSSIGLIONE AS HER HUSBAND, WHO MARRIES HER AGAINST HIS WILL, AND GOES OFF TO FLORENCE IN CONTEMPT OF HER. THERE HE FALLS IN LOVE WITH A GIRL, WHOM GILETTA IMPERSONATES, AND IN THIS WAY LIES WITH HIM AND HAS TWO CHILDREN BY HIM. WHEREBY SHE BECOMES DEAR TO HIM AND HE RECOGNISES HER AS HIS WIFE, TO THE GREAT JOY OF EVERYONE

TENTH TALE

227

ALIBECH BECOMES A HERMIT, AND THE MONK RUSTICO TEACHES HER HOW TO PUT THE DEVIL IN HELL. SHE IS AFTERWARDS TAKEN AWAY AND BECOMES THE WIFE OF NEERBALE

The Fourth Day

235

HERE BEGINS THE FOURTH DAY OF THE "DECAMERON," WHEREIN, UNDER THE RULE OF FILOSTRATO, TALES ARE TOLD OF THOSE WHOSE LOVE HAD AN UNHAPPY ENDING

FIRST TALE

241

TANCRED, PRINCE OF SALERNO, MURDERS HIS DAUGHTER'S LOVER, AND SENDS HER THE HEART IN A GOLD CUP. SHE POURS POISON ON IT, WHICH SHE DRINKS; AND SO DIES

SECOND TALE

250

FRATE ALBERTO PERSUADES A LADY THAT THE ANGEL GABRIEL IS IN LOVE WITH HER AND THUS MANAGES TO LIE WITH HER SEVERAL TIMES. FROM FEAR OF HER RELATIVES HE FLIES FROM HER HOUSE AND TAKES REFUGE IN THE HOUSE OF A POOR MAN, WHO NEXT DAY TAKES HIM TO THE PIAZZA AS A WILD MAN OF THE WOODS. HE IS RECOGNISED, ARRESTED AND IMPRISONED

THIRD TALE

259

THREE YOUNG MEN ARE IN LOVE WITH THREE SISTERS AND FLY WITH THEM TO CRETE. THE ELDEST KILLS HER LOVER OUT OF JEALOUSY; THE SECOND SISTER YIELDS TO THE DUKE OF CRETE TO SAVE HER FROM DEATH, BUT IS MURDERED BY HER OWN LOVER WHO RUNS AWAY WITH THE FIRST SISTER.

THE THIRD SISTER AND HER LOVER ARE INVOLVED IN THE AFFAIR, AND, WHEN ARRESTED, CONFESS TO IT; THEY BRIBE THE GUARD, AND ESCAPE TO RODI WHERE THEY DIE IN POVERTY

FOURTH TALE

265

CONTRARY TO THE TREATY MADE BY HIS GRANDFATHER, KING GUIGLIELMO, GERBINO JOINS BATTLE WITH A SHIP OF THE KING OF TUNIS IN ORDER TO CAPTURE HIS DAUGHTER; SHE IS KILLED BY THOSE ON BOARD; HE KILLS THEM; AND HE IS EXECUTED

FIFTH TALE

269

ISABETTA'S BROTHERS MURDER HER LOVER. HE APPEARS TO HER IN A DREAM AND TELLS HER WHERE HE IS BURIED. SHE SECRETLY DIGS UP THE HEAD AND PUTS IT IN A POT OF BASIL. FOR A LONG TIME SHE WEEPS OVER IT EVERY DAY; HER BROTHERS TAKE IT AWAY, AND SOON AFTER SHE DIES OF GRIEF

SIXTH TALE

273

ANDREUOLA LOVES GABRIOTTO. SHE TELLS HIM A DREAM, AND HE TELLS HER ANOTHER. HE SUDDENLY DIES IN HER ARMS, AND WHILE SHE AND HER SERVANT ARE CARRYING HIM TO HIS HOUSE THEY ARE ARRESTED BY THE POLICE, AND SHE RELATES WHAT HAD HAPPENED. THE MAGISTRATE WANTS TO LIE WITH HER; SHE WILL NOT ALLOW IT. HER FATHER HEARS ABOUT IT, ESTABLISHES HER INNOCENCE AND GETS HER RELEASED. SHE REFUSES TO REMAIN IN THE WORLD AND BECOMES A NUN

SEVENTH TALE

279

SIMONA LOVES PASQUINO. THEY ARE TOGETHER IN A GARDEN, AND PASQUINO RUBS A LEAF OF SAGE ON HIS TEETH AND FALLS DEAD. SIMONA IS ARRESTED AND, WHILE EXPLAINING TO THE JUDGE HOW PASQUINO DIED, SHE RUBS ONE OF THE SAME LEAVES ON HER TEETH, AND DIES TOO

EIGHTH TALE

283

GIROLAMO IS IN LOVE WITH SALVESTRA. COMPELLED BY HIS MOTHER'S ENTREATIES, HE GOES TO PARIS. WHEN HE RETURNS, HE FINDS HER MARRIED; HE SECRETLY ENTERS HER HOUSE AND DIES THERE. HIS BODY IS TAKEN TO A CHURCH, AND SALVESTRA DIES BESIDE HIM, AND BOTH ARE BURIED IN THE SAME GRAVE

NINTH TALE

288

MESSER GUIGLIELMO ROSSIGLIONE MAKES HIS WIFE EAT THE HEART OF MESSER GUIGLIELMO GUARDASTAGNO, HER LOVER, WHOM HE HAD SLAIN. WHEN SHE FINDS IT OUT, SHE THROWS HERSELF FROM A HIGH WINDOW AND KILLS HERSELF AND IS BURIED WITH HER LOVER

TENTH TALE

291

A DOCTOR'S WIFE THINKS HER LOVER IS DEAD AND PUTS HIM INTO A CHEST WHICH IS CARRIED OFF BY TWO USURERS. HE WAKES UP AND IS ARRESTED AS A THIEF. THE LADY'S SERVANT TELLS THE MAGISTRATE HOW SHE HAD PUT HIM INTO THE CHEST, UNKNOWN TO THE USURERS; HE ESCAPES HANGING, AND THE MONEY-LENDERS ARE FINED FOR STEALING THE CHEST

The Fifth Day

302

HERE BEGINS THE FIFTH DAY OF THE "DECAMERON," WHEREIN, UNDER THE RULE OF FIAMMETTA, TALES ARE TOLD OF THOSE LOVERS WHO WON HAPPINESS AFTER GRIEF OR MISFORTUNE

FIRST TALE

303

THROUGH LOVE CIMONE BECOMES CIVILIZED AND CAPTURES HIS LADY ON THE HIGH SEAS. HE IS IMPRISONED IN RHODES AND LIBERATED BY LISIMACO, AND THE TWO OF THEM ONCE MORE CARRY OFF THEIR MISTRESSES ON THEIR WEDDING DAY AND FLY WITH THEM TO CRETE. THEY MARRY THE LADIES AND RETURN HOME TO LIVE HAPPILY ON THEIR ESTATES

SECOND TALE

313

GOSTANZA LOVES MARTUCCIO GOMITO. SHE HEARS HE IS DEAD; IN DESPAIR SHE GETS INTO A BOAT WHICH IS CARRIED BY THE WIND TO SUSA. SHE FINDS HIM ALIVE AT TUNIS, MAKES HERSELF KNOWN TO HIM, AND, HE, WHO HAD BECOME THE KING'S FAVOURITE ON ACCOUNT OF HIS ADVICE, MARRIES HER, AND THEY RETURN RICH TO LIPARI

THIRD TALE

318

PIETRO BOCCAMAZZA RUNS AWAY WITH AGNOLELLA. THEY FALL AMONG THIEVES; THE GIRL FLEES TO A WOOD AND IS TAKEN TO A VILLAGE. PIETRO IS CAPTURED AND ESCAPES FROM THE ROBBERS. HE IS TAKEN TO THE PLACE WHERE AGNOLELLA IS, MARRIES HER, AND RETURNS WITH HER TO ROME

Volume Two

FOURTH TALE

I

RICCIARDO MANARDI IS DISCOVERED BY MESSER LIZIO DA VALBONA WITH HIS DAUGHTER, WHOM RICCIARDO MARRIES, AND REMAINS ON GOOD TERMS WITH THE FATHER

FIFTH TALE

6

GUIDOTTO DA CREMONA BEQUEATHS HIS DAUGHTER TO GIACOMINO DA PAVIA AND DIES. GIANNOLE DI SEVERINO AND MINGHINO DI MINGOLE BOTH FALL IN LOVE WITH HER IN FAENZA AND QUARREL OVER HER; THE GIRL IS DISCOVERED TO BE GIANNOLE'S SISTER AND IS GIVEN TO MINGHINO AS HIS WIFE

SIXTH TALE

11

GIANNI DI PROCIDA IS FOUND WITH A GIRL HE LOVES AND IS HANDED OVER TO KING FEDERIGO TO BE BOUND TO A STAKE AND BURNED; HE IS RECOGNISED BY RUGGIERI DELL' ORIA, ESCAPES, AND MARRIES THE GIRL

SEVENTH TALE

16

TEODORO FALLS IN LOVE WITH VIOLANTE, THE DAUGHTER OF MESSER AMERIGO, HIS MASTER, MAKES HER PREGNANT, AND IS CONDEMNED TO THE GALLOWS. WHILE HE IS BEING WHIPPED TO EXECUTION, HE IS RECOGNISED BY HIS FATHER AND SET FREE, AND AFTERWARDS MARRIES VIOLANTE

EIGHTH TALE

23

NASTAGIO DEGLI ONESTI IS IN LOVE WITH ONE OF THE TRAVERSARI AND SPENDS ALL HIS POSSESSIONS WITHOUT OBTAINING HER LOVE. AT THE REQUEST OF HIS RELATIVES, HE GOES TO CHIASSI, AND THERE SEES A HORSEMAN HUNTING A GIRL WHO IS KILLED AND DEVoured BY TWO DOGS. HE INVITES HIS RELATIVES AND THE LADY HE LOVES TO DINE WITH HIM, AND SHE SEES THE GIRL TORN TO PIECES. FEARING THE SAME FATE, SHE MARRIES NASTAGIO AND LIVES HAPPILY WITH HIM

NINTH TALE

28

FEDERIGO DEGLI ALBERIGHI LOVES, BUT IS NOT BELOVED. HE SPENDS ALL HIS MONEY IN COURTSHIP AND HAS NOTHING LEFT BUT A FALCON, AND THIS HE GIVES HIS LADY TO EAT WHEN SHE COMES TO VISIT HIM BECAUSE THERE IS NOTHING ELSE TO GIVE HER. SHE LEARNS OF THIS, CHANGES HER MIND, TAKES HIM AS HER HUSBAND, AND MAKES HIM A RICH MAN

TENTH TALE

34

PIETRO DI VINCILO GOES OUT TO SUP. HIS WIFE BRINGS A LOVER INTO THE HOUSE; PIETRO RETURNS, AND SHE HIDES THE LOVER UNDER A CHICKEN COOP. PIETRO TELLS HER HOW, WHILE HE WAS SUPPING WITH ARCOLANO, A YOUNG MAN WHOM THE WIFE HAD HIDDEN WAS DISCOVERED. SHE BLAMES ARCOLANO'S WIFE, BUT AN ASS UNHAPPILY TREADS ON THE LOVER'S FINGER AS HE IS UNDER THE COOP, AND HE GIVES A SHRIEK; PIETRO RUNS OUT, SEES HIM, AND PERCEIVES HOW HIS WIFE HAS TRICKED HIM; BUT IN THE END HE PARDONS HER FAULT

The Sixth Day

44

HERE BEGINS THE SIXTH DAY OF THE "DECAMERON," WHEREIN, UNDER THE RULE OF ELISA, TALES ARE TOLD OF THOSE WHO HAVE RETORTED A WITTICISM DIRECTED AT THEM OR WITH A QUICK RETORT OR PIECE OF SHREWDNESS HAVE ESCAPED DESTRUCTION, DANGER OR CONTEMPT

FIRST TALE

46

A KNIGHT ASKS PERMISSION TO CARRY MADONNA ORETTA ON HIS PILLION AND PROMISES TO TELL HER A TALE; HE DOES IT SO BADLY THAT SHE ASKS HIM TO SET HER DOWN

SECOND TALE

47

THE BAKER CISTI MAKES A JEST AND SHOWS MESSER GERI SPINA THAT HE HAD MADE AN UNREASONABLE REQUEST

THIRD TALE

51

MONNA NONNA DE' PULCI IMPOSES SILENCE ON THE LESS THAN MODEST REMARKS OF THE BISHOP OF FLORENCE

FOURTH TALE

52

CHICHIBIO, COOK TO CURRADO GIANFIGLIAZZI, CHANGES CURRADO'S ANGER TO LAUGHTER, AND SO ESCAPES THE PUNISHMENT WITH WHICH CURRADO HAD THREATENED HIM

FIFTH TALE

55

MESSER FORESE DA RABATTA AND MASTER GIOTTO, THE PAINTER, RETURNING FROM MUGELLO, LAUGH AT EACH OTHER'S MEAN APPEARANCE

SIXTH TALE

57

MICHELE SCALZA PROVES TO CERTAIN YOUNG MEN THAT THE BARONCI ARE THE GREATEST GENTLEMEN IN THE WORLD OR THE MAREMMA AND WINS A SUPPER

SEVENTH TALE

59

MADONNA FILIPPA IS DISCOVERED WITH A LOVER BY HER HUSBAND AND TAKEN BEFORE THE JUDGE; SHE ESCAPES SCOT-FREE BY A QUICK RETORT AND HAS THE LAW ALTERED

EIGHTH TALE

61

FRESCO ADVISES HIS NIECE NOT TO LOOK IN THE MIRROR IF IT WAS UNPLEASANT TO LOOK AT DISAGREEABLE PEOPLE

- NINTH TALE** 63
GUIDO CALVALCANTI WITH A JEST POLITELY INSULTS CERTAIN FLORENTINE GENTLEMEN WHO CAME UPON HIM UNAWARES
- TENTH TALE** 65
FRIAR CIPOLLA PROMISES CERTAIN PEASANTS THAT HE WILL SHOW THEM A FEATHER OF THE ANGEL GABRIEL, INSTEAD OF WHICH HE FINDS ONLY SOME CHARCOAL, WHICH HE TELLS THEM IS SOME OF THAT WHICH ROASTED SAINT LORENZO
- The Seventh Day* 78
HERE BEGINS THE SEVENTH DAY OF THE "DECAMERON," WHEREIN, UNDER THE RULE OF DIONEIO, TALES ARE TOLD OF THE TRICKS PLAYED BY WIVES ON THEIR HUSBANDS, FOR LOVE'S SAKE OR FOR THEIR OWN SAFETY, WHETHER FOUND OUT OR NOT
- FIRST TALE** 79
GIANNI LOTTERINGHI HEARS A KNOCK AT HIS DOOR BY NIGHT; HE WAKES HIS WIFE AND SHE MAKES HIM THINK IT IS A GHOST. THEY GO AND EXORCISE IT, AND THE KNOCKING CEASES
- SECOND TALE** 83
PERONELLA HIDES HER LOVER IN A BUTT WHEN HER HUSBAND COMES HOME; AND WHEN THE HUSBAND SEES IT, SHE SAYS THAT SHE HAS SOLD IT TO A MAN WHO IS INSIDE IT SEEING WHETHER IT IS SOUND. THE LOVER JUMPS OUT, MAKES THE HUSBAND CLEAN IT, AND THEN CARRIES IT HOME
- THIRD TALE** 87
FRIAR RINALDO LIES WITH HIS GODCHILD'S MOTHER. THE HUSBAND FINDS HIM WITH HER, AND THEY MAKE HIM BELIEVE THAT THE FRIAR IS CHARMING AWAY THE CHILD'S WORMS
- FOURTH TALE** 92
ONE NIGHT TOFANO SHUTS HIS WIFE OUT OF THE HOUSE AND, SINCE HE WILL NOT LET HER IN FOR ALL HER ENTREATIES, SHE THROWS A LARGE STONE INTO THE WELL AND MAKES HIM THINK SHE HAS DROWNED HERSELF. TOFANO RUSHES OUT OF THE HOUSE TO THE WELL. SHE RUNS IN AND LOCKS THE DOOR AND SCREAMS INSULTS AT HIM
- FIFTH TALE** 96
A JEALOUS HUSBAND DISGUISES HIMSELF AS A PRIEST AND HEARS HIS WIFE'S CONFESSION; SHE GIVES HIM TO UNDERSTAND THAT SHE LOVES A PRIEST WHO

COMES TO HER EVERY NIGHT. WHILE THE HUSBAND WATCHES AT THE DOOR, SHE BRINGS HER LOVER IN THROUGH THE ROOF AND LIES WITH HIM

SIXTH TALE

103

MADONNA ISABELLA IS WITH LEONETTO AND AT THE SAME TIME IS VISITED BY ONE MESSER LAMBERTUCCIO. HER HUSBAND COMES HOME; SHE SENDS MESSER LAMBERTUCCIO OUT OF THE HOUSE WITH A DRAWN SWORD IN HIS HAND, WHILE HER HUSBAND GUARDS LEONETTO HOME

SEVENTH TALE

107

LODOVICO TELLS MADONNA BEATRICE OF HIS LOVE FOR HER. SHE SENDS HER HUSBAND INTO THE GARDEN DISGUISED AS HERSELF AND LIES WITH LODOVICO WHO AFTERWARDS GOES AND BEATS EGANO, THE HUSBAND

EIGHTH TALE

112

A MAN BECOMES JEALOUS OF HIS WIFE. SHE TIES A THREAD TO HER TOE AT NIGHT SO THAT SHE CAN KNOW WHEN HER LOVER COMES. THE HUSBAND FINDS IT OUT; BUT WHILE HE IS PURSUING THE LOVER, THE WIFE PUTS ANOTHER WOMAN IN BED IN HER PLACE. THE HUSBAND BEATS THIS WOMAN AND TEARS HER HAIR AND THEN GOES FOR HIS WIFE'S BROTHERS; FINDING WHAT HE SAYS TO BE FALSE, THEY UPBRAID HIM

NINTH TALE

119

LIDIA, THE WIFE OF NICOSTRATO, IS IN LOVE WITH PIRRO WHO ASKS OF HER THREE THINGS (ALL OF WHICH SHE PERFORMS) TO TEST HER SINCERITY. MOREOVER, SHE LIES WITH HIM IN THE PRESENCE OF NICOSTRATO AND MAKES NICOSTRATO BELIEVE THAT WHAT HE SAW WAS NOT TRUE

TENTH TALE

128

TWO SIENESE ARE IN LOVE WITH THE SAME WOMAN, AND ONE OF THEM IS GODFATHER TO HER CHILD. THE GODFATHER DIES AND, AS HE HAD PROMISED, HIS SPIRIT RETURNS TO HIS FRIEND AND TELLS HIM HIS STATE IN THE NEXT WORLD

The Eighth Day

135

HERE BEGINS THE EIGHTH DAY OF THE "DECAMERON," WHEREIN, UNDER THE RULE OF LAURETTA, TALES ARE TOLD OF THE TRICKS PLAYED EVERY DAY BY MEN UPON WOMEN OR WOMEN UPON MEN OR MEN UPON MEN

FIRST TALE

135

GULFARDO BORROWS MONEY FROM GUASPARRUOLO AND THEN GIVES HIS WIFE THE SAME SUM OF MONEY TO LIE WITH HER. IN THE PRESENCE OF GUASPARRUOLO AND HIS WIFE HE CLAIMS TO HAVE PAID HER BACK THE SUM AND SHE HAS TO ADMIT IT

- SECOND TALE** 138
 THE PRIEST OF VARLUNGO LIES WITH MONNA BELCOLORE AND LEAVES HER HIS CLOAK AS A PLEDGE. HE BORROWS A MORTAR OF HER AND, WHEN SHE ASKS FOR IT, HE CLAIMS HIS CLOAK WHICH HE SAYS HE HAD LEFT AS A PLEDGE FOR THE MORTAR, AND SO THE GOOD WOMAN IS LEFT GRUMBLING
- THIRD TALE** 143
 CALANDRINO, BRUNO AND BUFFALMACCO GO ABOUT MUGNONE LOOKING FOR THE MAGIC STONE, HELIOTROPE, AND CALANDRINO THINKS HE HAS FOUND IT. HE RETURNS HOME LADEN WITH STONES AND HIS WIFE SCOLDS HIM; IN ANGER HE BEATS HER AND TELLS HIS COMPANIONS WHAT THEY KNOW BETTER THAN HE
- FOURTH TALE** 150
 THE CANON OF FIESOLE FALLS IN LOVE WITH A WIDOW WHO DOES NOT LOVE HIM. HE LIES WITH HER MAID, THINKING IT IS SHE; THE LADY'S BROTHERS BRING THE BISHOP TO SEE HIM
- FIFTH TALE** 155
 THREE YOUNG MEN TAKE THE BREECHES FROM A JUDGE OF THE MARCHES IN FLORENCE WHILE HE IS ON THE BENCH
- SIXTH TALE** 158
 BRUNO AND BUFFALMACCO STEAL A PIG FROM CALANDRINO. THEY PERSUADE HIM TO TRY TO DISCOVER THE THIEF WITH GINGER PILLS AND WHITE WINE; THEY GIVE HIM TWO PILLS MADE OF ALOES, WHEREBY IT APPEARS THAT HE STOLE THE PIG. THEY MAKE HIM PAY UNDER THREAT OF TELLING HIS WIFE
- SEVENTH TALE** 163
 A SCHOLAR IS IN LOVE WITH A WIDOW WHO LOVES SOMEONE ELSE AND MAKES HIM WAIT FOR HER A WHOLE WINTER'S NIGHT IN THE SNOW. BY A DEVICE OF HIS HE MAKES HER SPEND A WHOLE JULY DAY NAKED ON A TOWER IN THE SUN, EXPOSED TO FLIES AND GADFLIES
- EIGHTH TALE** 184
 TWO MEN ARE CLOSE FRIENDS, AND ONE LIES WITH THE OTHER'S WIFE. THE HUSBAND FINDS IT OUT AND MAKES THE WIFE SHUT HER LOVER IN A CHEST, AND, WHILE HE IS INSIDE, THE HUSBAND LIES WITH THE LOVER'S OWN WIFE ON THE CHEST
- NINTH TALE** 188
 MASTER SIMONE, THE DOCTOR, IS PERSUADED BY BRUNO AND BUFFALMACCO TO JOIN AN IMAGINARY GATHERING AND WHEN HE GOES TO THE RENDEZ-VOUS BUFFALMACCO THROWS HIM INTO A DITCH OF FOULNESS

TENTH TALE

201

A SICILIAN WOMAN ARTFULLY SWINDLES A MERCHANT OF ALL THE GOODS HE HAD BROUGHT TO PALERMO. HE PRETENDS TO RETURN WITH MORE MERCHANDISE THAN BEFORE, BORROWS HER MONEY, AND LEAVES NOTHING BUT WATER AND HEMP

The Ninth Day

214

HERE BEGINS THE NINTH DAY OF THE "DECAMERON," WHEREIN, UNDER THE RULE OF EMILIA, TALES ARE TOLD AS EVERYONE PLEASES ON WHATEVER SUBJECT HE LIKES

FIRST TALE

215

MADONNA FRANCESCA IS BELOVED BY RINUCCIO AND BY ALESSANDRO, NEITHER OF WHOM SHE LIKES. SHE MAKES ONE OF THEM LIE DOWN IN A GRAVE AND SENDS THE OTHER TO GET OUT WHAT HE THINKS TO BE A DEAD BODY; AS THEY FAIL IN THE TEST, SHE GETS RID OF THEM BOTH

SECOND TALE

220

AN ABBESS GETS OUT OF BED HASTILY IN THE DARK TO CATCH ONE OF HER NUNS WHO IS ACCUSED OF BEING WITH A LOVER IN BED. THE ABBESS HERSELF IS LYING WITH A PRIEST AND PUTS HIS BREECHES ON HER HEAD IN MISTAKE FOR HER VEIL. THE ACCUSED NUN SEES THEM AND POINTS THEM OUT TO THE ABBESS; SHE IS SET FREE AND ALLOWED TO BE WITH HER LOVER

THIRD TALE

223

MASTER SIMONE, EGGED ON BY BRUNO, BUFFALMACCO AND NELLO, MAKES CALANDRINO THINK HE IS PREGNANT. HE GIVES THEM CAPONS AND MONEY TO MAKE MEDICINE AND IS CURED WITHOUT HAVING A CHILD

FOURTH TALE

227

CECCO DI MESSER FORTARRIGO GAMBLES AWAY ALL HE HAS AT BUONCONVENTO AND THE MONEY OF CECCO DI MESSER ANGIULIERI AS WELL. HE RUNS AFTER ANGIULIERI IN HIS SHIRT, SAYING THAT HE IS A THIEF, GETS THE PEASANTS TO STOP HIM, DRESSES IN HIS CLOTHES, MOUNTS HIS HORSE AND LEAVES HIM IN HIS SHIRT

FIFTH TALE

231

CALANDRINO FALLS IN LOVE WITH A YOUNG WOMAN. BRUNO MAKES HIM A WRITTEN CHARM AND, WHEN HE TOUCHES HER WITH IT, SHE GOES WITH HIM. HE IS SURPRISED BY HIS WIFE AND HAS A PAINFUL QUARREL WITH HER IN CONSEQUENCE

SIXTH TALE

238

TWO YOUNG MEN SPEND THE NIGHT WITH A MAN; ONE OF THEM LIES WITH THE MAN'S DAUGHTER, AND HIS WIFE UNWITTINGLY LIES WITH THE OTHER. THE YOUNG MAN WHO LAY WITH THE DAUGHTER GETS INTO THE FATHER'S BED AND TELLS HIM ABOUT IT, THINKING IT IS HIS COMPANION. THEY START A QUARREL. THE WIFE GUESSES WHAT HAS HAPPENED, GETS INTO THE DAUGHTER'S BED AND MAKES PEACE BETWEEN THEM

SEVENTH TALE

242

TALANO DI MOLESE DREAMS THAT A WOLF TEARS HIS WIFE'S THROAT AND FACE AND WARNS HER TO BE CAREFUL. SHE PAYS NO ATTENTION TO THE WARNING, AND THE THING HAPPENS

EIGHTH TALE

244

BIONDELLO PLAYS A TRICK ON CIACCO WITH A DINNER; CIACCO REVENGES HIMSELF PRUDENTLY AND GETS BIONDELLO SOUNDLY BEATEN

NINTH TALE

248

TWO YOUNG MEN GO TO SOLOMON FOR ADVICE. ONE ASKS WHAT HE MUST DO TO BE LOVED, THE OTHER HOW TO REFORM A SHREWISH WIFE. SOLOMON TELLS THE FIRST TO LOVE, AND THE OTHER TO GO TO THE BRIDGE OF GESE

TENTH TALE

252

AT THE REQUEST OF GAFFER PIETRO, DON GIANNI RECITES SPELLS TO TURN HIS WIFE INTO A MARE; BUT WHEN IT COMES TO STICKING ON THE TAIL, GAFFER PIETRO SPOILS THE WHOLE MAGICAL OPERATION BY SAYING HE DOESN'T WANT A TAIL

The Tenth Day

258

HERE BEGINS THE TENTH AND LAST DAY OF THE "DECAMERON," WHEREIN, UNDER THE RULE OF PAMFILO, TALES ARE TOLD OF THOSE WHO HAVE ACTED LIBERALLY OR MAGNIFICENTLY IN LOVE AFFAIRS OR IN OTHER MATTERS

FIRST TALE

258

A KNIGHT IN THE SERVICE OF THE KING OF SPAIN THINKS HIMSELF ILL-REWARDED, BUT THE KING PROVES THAT IT IS NOT HIS FAULT BUT THE KNIGHT'S MISFORTUNE, AND THEN HIGHLY REWARDS HIM FOR HIS VALOUR

SECOND TALE

261

GHINO DI TACCO CAPTURES THE ABBOT OF CLIGNI, TREATS HIM FOR A MALADY OF THE STOMACH, AND THEN SETS HIM FREE. THE ABBOT RETURNS TO ROME, RECONCILES GHINO WITH POPE BONIFACE AND MAKES HIM PRIOR OF THE HOSPITALLERS

THIRD TALE

266

MITRIDANES ENVIES THE GENEROSITY OF NATHAN AND SETS OUT TO KILL HIM. NATHAN RECEIVES MITRIDANES WITHOUT MAKING HIMSELF KNOWN, INFORMS HIM HOW HE MAY BE KILLED, MEETS HIM IN A WOOD AS ARRANGED, TO THE SHAME OF NATHAN, WHO BECOMES HIS FRIEND

FOURTH TALE

272

MESSER GENTIL DE' CARISENDI COMES FROM MODENA AND TAKES FROM THE GRAVE A LADY HE LOVES, WHO HAD BEEN BURIED AS DEAD. SHE BEARS A MALE CHILD, AND MESSER GENTIL RESTORES HER AND THE CHILD TO HER HUSBAND

FIFTH TALE

278

MADONNA DIANORA ASKS MESSER ANSALDO FOR A GARDEN IN JANUARY AS BEAUTIFUL AS ONE IN MAY. MESSER ANSALDO PAYS A LARGE SUM TO A MAGICIAN, AND SO GIVES IT TO HER. HER HUSBAND DECLARES SHE MUST KEEP HER WORD AND SUBMIT TO MESSER ANSALDO'S PLEASURE; BUT WHEN HE HEARS OF THE HUSBAND'S GENEROSITY HE FREES HER FROM HER PROMISE, AND THE MAGICIAN LIKEWISE REFUSES TO TAKE ANYTHING

SIXTH TALE

282

KING CARLO, VICTORIOUS BUT AGED, FALLS IN LOVE WITH A YOUNG GIRL; ASHAMED OF HIS FOOLISH PASSION, HE ARRANGES HONOURABLE MARRIAGES FOR HER AND HER SISTER

SEVENTH TALE

288

KING PIETRO DISCOVERS THE ARDENT LOVE FELT FOR HIM BY LISA WHO HAS FALLEN ILL BECAUSE OF IT. HE COMFORTS HER, MARRIES HER TO A YOUNG GENTLEMAN, AND KISSES HER ON THE FOREHEAD, EVER AFTERWARDS HER KNIGHT

EIGHTH TALE

294

SOPRONIA THINKS SHE IS THE WIFE OF GISIPPUS, BUT IN FACT IS MARRIED TO TITUS QUINTUS FULVIUS WITH WHOM SHE GOES TO ROME. THERE GISIPPUS ARRIVES IN POVERTY AND THINKS HE HAS BEEN TREATED CONTEMPTUOUSLY BY TITUS AND THEREFORE SAYS HE HAS KILLED A MAN IN ORDER TO DIE HIMSELF. TITUS RECOGNISES HIM AND, TO SAVE HIM, SAYS HE KILLED THE MAN; WHEREUPON THE REAL MURDERER THEN CONFESSES. OCTAVIUS SETS THEM ALL AT LIBERTY; TITUS GIVES GISIPPUS HIS SISTER IN MARRIAGE AND SHARES HIS PROPERTY WITH HIM

NINTH TALE

310

SALADIN, DISGUISED AS A MERCHANT, IS ENTERTAINED BY MESSER TORELLO, WHO AFTERWARDS GOES ON A CRUSADE AND SETS A TIME TO HIS WIFE, AFTER

WHICH IF HE DOES NOT RETURN SHE MAY RE-MARRY. MESSER TORELLO IS CAPTURED, AND HIS SKILL IN DRESSING HAWKS BRINGS HIM TO THE NOTICE OF THE SULTAN, BY WHOM HE IS RECOGNISED AND HIGHLY HONOURED. MESSER TORELLO FALLS ILL; THEN BY MAGIC ARTS HE IS CARRIED BACK TO PAVIA AT THE VERY MOMENT WHEN HIS WIFE IS ABOUT TO RE-MARRY. SHE RECOGNISES HIM, AND THEY RETURN HOME TOGETHER

TENTH TALE

326

THE MARQUESS OF SALUZZO IS URGED BY HIS SUBJECTS TO TAKE A WIFE AND, TO CHOOSE IN HIS OWN WAY, TAKES THE DAUGHTER OF A PEASANT. HE HAS TWO CHILDREN BY HER AND PRETENDS TO HER THAT HE HAS KILLED THEM. HE THEN PRETENDS THAT HE IS TIRED OF HER AND THAT HE HAS TAKEN ANOTHER WIFE AND SO BRINGS THEIR OWN DAUGHTER TO THE HOUSE AS IF SHE WERE HIS NEW WIFE, AFTER DRIVING HER AWAY IN HER SHIFT. SHE ENDURES IT ALL PATIENTLY. HE BRINGS HER BACK HOME, MORE BELOVED BY HIM THAN EVER, SHOWS HER THEIR GROWN CHILDREN, HONOURS HER AND MAKES OTHERS HONOUR HER AS MARCHIONESS

CONCLUSION

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Foreword

HERE BEGINS THE BOOK CALLED *DECAMERON*, ALSO ENTITLED *PRINCE GALEOTTO*, CONTAINING ONE HUNDRED TALES, TOLD IN TEN DAYS BY SEVEN LADIES AND THREE YOUNG MEN

'Tis human to have compassion upon the unhappy. Much is required of those who are happy, especially if they have needed comforting in the past, and have received it. Now if any man ever needed compassion, or found it dear to him, or ever received comfort, that man am I. From my earliest youth until this time present I was taken with a lofty and noble love, one that was perhaps too high for my lowly birth. Although I was praised and more highly esteemed by discreet persons who heard of this love, yet it caused me great pain and suffering, not indeed through the cruelty of my beloved lady, but through the excessive fire kindled in my soul by ill-regulated appetite. And since this brought me to no satisfactory end, I often suffered more distress than was needful.

While suffering this unhappiness I was comforted by the pleasant talk and consolation of a friend, but for whom I am firmly persuaded I should now be dead. But He that is Infinite has been pleased to decree immutably that all things shall have an end. Thus my love, which was more fervent than any other love, my love which no resolve, no advice, no evident shame, no risk of danger could ever break or bend, at length by the passage of time diminished of itself, and now has left within my soul that delight which love is wont to grant those who do not adventure too far upon its dark seas. And whereas this love was once burdensome, now all torment is removed, and only delight remains.

But, though the pain has gone, I have not lost the memory of kindness received from those who were moved by sorrow on account of their affection for me; nor do I think I shall ever forget these things, save through death alone. Now I think that gratitude is highly to be praised among the other virtues, while the opposite is blameworthy. And since I do not want to appear ungrateful, now that I may say I am free, I

have determined to do what little I can in exchange for what I received, to provide amusement for those who helped me. If their wisdom or their good fortune makes this unnecessary, then it may be for others who need it. And however slender my support or comfort may be to them, still I think it should be offered to those who most need it, since it will there be more useful and be more valuable to them. And who will deny that it is far more fitting to give this to beautiful women than to men?

In fear and shamefacedness they conceal within their delicate breasts the hidden flames of love, whose strength is far greater than those of evident love, as is well known to those who have suffered them. Moreover, women are restricted by the authority of fathers, mothers, brothers and husbands. They spend most of their time shut up in the narrow circuit of their rooms, sitting in almost complete idleness, wanting and not wanting a thing in the same hour, turning over different thoughts which cannot always be gay ones.

Now if the melancholy born of fierce desire should enter their minds, they must be forced to remain in sadness unless it is driven away by new discourse; moreover, they have much less endurance than men. This does not happen with men in love, as may be evidently seen. If men are afflicted with melancholy or heavy thoughts, they have many ways of lightening them or avoiding them; whenever they wish, they can go out and hear and look at things, they can go hawking, hunting, fishing, riding; they can gamble or trade. By these means every man can divert his mind from himself wholly or partly, and free it from uneasy thought, at least for a time; and thus in one way and another consolation comes to him or the anguish grows less.

Therefore I mean to atone for the wrong done by Fortune, who is ever most miserly of comfort where there is least strength, as we may see in the case of delicate women. As an aid and comfort to women in love (for the needle, the distaff and the winder should suffice the others) I intend to relate one hundred tales or fables or parables or stories—whichever you choose to call them—as they were told in ten days by a band of seven ladies and three young men during the time of the recent plague, and also certain songs sung for their delight by the said ladies.

In these tales will be seen the gay and sad adventures of lovers and other happenings both of ancient and modern times. The ladies who read them may find delight in the pleasant things therein displayed; and they may also obtain useful advice, since they may learn what things to avoid and what to seek. Nor can all this happen without some soothing of their melancholy.

If this happens (and God grant it may!) let them render thanks to Love who, by freeing me from its bonds, granted me the power to serve their pleasure.

The First Day

HERE BEGINS THE FIRST DAY OF THE *DECAMERON*, WHEREIN, AFTER THE AUTHOR HAS SHOWED THE REASONS WHY CERTAIN PERSONS GATHERED TO TELL TALES, THEY TREAT OF ANY SUBJECT PLEASING TO THEM, UNDER THE RULE OF PAMPINEA

MOST gracious ladies, knowing that you are all by nature pitiful, I know that in your judgment this work will seem to have a painful and sad origin. For it brings to mind the unhappy recollection of that late dreadful plague, so pernicious to all who saw or heard of it. But I would not have this frighten you from reading further, as though you were to pass through nothing but sighs and tears in your reading. This dreary opening will be like climbing a steep mountain side to a most beautiful and delightful valley, which appears the more pleasant in proportion to the difficulty of the ascent. The end of happiness is pain, and in like manner misery ends in unexpected happiness.

This brief fatigue (I say brief, because it occupies only a few words) is quickly followed by pleasantness and delight, as I promised you above; which, if I had not promised, you would not expect perhaps from this opening. Indeed, if I could have taken you by any other way than this, which I know to be rough, I would gladly have done so; but since I cannot otherwise tell you how the tales you are about to read came to be told, I am forced by necessity to write in this manner.

In the year 1348 after the fruitful incarnation of the Son of God, that most beautiful of Italian cities, noble Florence, was attacked by deadly plague. It started in the East either through the influence of the heavenly bodies or because God's just anger with our wicked deeds sent it as a punishment to mortal men; and in a few years killed an innumerable quantity of people. Ceaselessly passing from place to place, it extended its miserable length over the West. Against this plague all human wisdom and foresight were vain. Orders had been given to cleanse the city of filth, the entry of any sick person was forbidden, much advice

was given for keeping healthy; at the same time humble supplications were made to God by pious persons in processions and otherwise. And yet, in the beginning of the spring of the year mentioned, its horrible results began to appear, and in a miraculous manner. The symptoms were not the same as in the East, where a gush of blood from the nose was the plain sign of inevitable death; but it began both in men and women with certain swellings in the groin or under the armpit. They grew to the size of a small apple or an egg, more or less, and were vulgarly called tumours. In a short space of time these tumours spread from the two parts named all over the body. Soon after this the symptoms changed and black or purple spots appeared on the arms or thighs or any other part of the body, sometimes a few large ones, sometimes many little ones. These spots were a certain sign of death, just as the original tumour had been and still remained.

No doctor's advice, no medicine could overcome or alleviate this disease. An enormous number of ignorant men and women set up as doctors in addition to those who were trained. Either the disease was such that no treatment was possible or the doctors were so ignorant that they did not know what caused it, and consequently could not administer the proper remedy. In any case very few recovered; most people died within about three days of the appearance of the tumours described above, most of them without any fever or other symptoms.

The violence of this disease was such that the sick communicated it to the healthy who came near them, just as a fire catches anything dry or oily near it. And it even went further. To speak to or go near the sick brought infection and a common death to the living; and moreover, to touch the clothes or anything else the sick had touched or worn gave the disease to the person touching.

What I am about to tell now is a marvelous thing to hear; and if I and others had not seen it with our own eyes I would not dare to write it, however much I was willing to believe and whatever the good faith of the person from whom I heard it. So violent was the malignancy of this plague that it was communicated, not only from one man to another, but from the garments of a sick or dead man to animals of another

species, which caught the disease in that way and very quickly died of it. One day among other occasions I saw with my own eyes (as I said just now) the rags left lying in the street of a poor man who had died of the plague; two pigs came along and, as their habit is, turned the clothes over with their snouts and then munched at them, with the result that they both fell dead almost at once on the rags, as if they had been poisoned.

From these and similar or greater occurrences, such fear and fanciful notions took possession of the living that almost all of them adopted the same cruel policy, which was entirely to avoid the sick and everything belonging to them. By so doing, each one thought he would secure his own safety.

Some thought that moderate living and the avoidance of all superfluity would preserve them from the epidemic. They formed small communities, living entirely separate from everybody else. They shut themselves up in houses where there were no sick, eating the finest food and drinking the best wine very temperately, avoiding all excess, allowing no news or discussion of death and sickness, and passing the time in music and suchlike pleasures. Others thought just the opposite. They thought the sure cure for the plague was to drink and be merry, to go about singing and amusing themselves, satisfying every appetite they could, laughing and jesting at what happened. They put their words into practice, spent day and night going from tavern to tavern, drinking immoderately, or went into other people's houses, doing only those things which pleased them. This they could easily do because everyone felt doomed and had abandoned his property, so that most houses became common property and any stranger who went in made use of them as if he had owned them. And with all this bestial behaviour, they avoided the sick as much as possible.

In this suffering and misery of our city, the authority of human and divine laws almost disappeared, for, like other men, the ministers and the executors of the laws were all dead or sick or shut up with their families, so that no duties were carried out. Every man was therefore able to do as he pleased.

Many others adopted a course of life midway between the two just described. They did not restrict their victuals so much as the former, nor allow themselves to be drunken and dissolute like the latter, but satisfied their appetites moderately. They did not shut themselves up, but went about, carrying flowers or scented herbs or perfumes in their hands, in the belief that it was an excellent thing to comfort the brain with such odours; for the whole air was infected with the smell of dead bodies, of sick persons and medicines.

Others again held a still more cruel opinion, which they thought would keep them safe. They said that the only medicine against the plague-stricken was to go right away from them. Men and women, convinced of this and caring about nothing but themselves, abandoned their own city, their own houses, their dwellings, their relatives, their property, and went abroad or at least to the country round Florence, as if God's wrath in punishing men's wickedness with this plague would not follow them but strike only those who remained within the walls of the city, or as if they thought nobody in the city would remain alive and that its last hour had come.

Not everyone who adopted any of these various opinions died, nor did all escape. Some when they were still healthy had set the example of avoiding the sick, and, falling ill themselves, died untended.

One citizen avoided another, hardly any neighbour troubled about others, relatives never or hardly ever visited each other. Moreover, such terror was struck into the hearts of men and women by this calamity, that brother abandoned brother, and the uncle his nephew, and the sister her brother, and very often the wife her husband. What is even worse and nearly incredible is that fathers and mothers refused to see and tend their children, as if they had not been theirs.

Thus, a multitude of sick men and women were left without any care except from the charity of friends (but these were few), or the greed of servants, though not many of these could be had even for high wages. Moreover, most of them were coarse-minded men and women, who did little more than bring the sick what they asked for or watch over them when they were dying. And very often these servants lost their lives and

their earnings. Since the sick were thus abandoned by neighbours, relatives and friends, while servants were scarce, a habit sprang up which had never been heard of before. Beautiful and noble women, when they fell sick, did not scruple to take a young or old man-servant, whoever he might be, and with no sort of shame, expose every part of their bodies to these men as if they had been women, for they were compelled by the necessity of their sickness to do so. This, perhaps, was a cause of looser morals in those women who survived.

In this way many people died who might have been saved if they had been looked after. Owing to the lack of attendants for the sick and the violence of the plague, such a multitude of people in the city died day and night that it was stupifying to hear of, let alone to see. From sheer necessity, then, several ancient customs were quite altered among the survivors.

The custom had been (as we still see it today), that women relatives and neighbours should gather at the house of the deceased, and there lament with the family. At the same time the men would gather at the door with the male neighbours and other citizens. Then came the clergy, few or many according to the dead person's rank; the coffin was placed on the shoulders of his friends and carried with funeral pomp of lighted candles and dirges to the church which the deceased had chosen before dying. But as the fury of the plague increased, this custom wholly or nearly disappeared, and new customs arose. Thus, people died, not only without having a number of women near them, but without a single witness. Very few indeed were honoured with the piteous laments and bitter tears of their relatives, who, on the contrary, spent their time in mirth, feasting and jesting. Even the women abandoned womanly pity and adopted this custom for their own safety. Few were they whose bodies were accompanied to church by more than ten or a dozen neighbours. Nor were these grave and honourable citizens but grave-diggers from the lowest of the people who got themselves called sextons, and performed the task for money. They took up the bier and hurried it off, not to the church chosen by the deceased but to the church nearest, preceded by four or six of the clergy with few candles and often none at

all. With the aid of the grave-diggers, the clergy huddled the bodies away in any grave they could find, without giving themselves the trouble of a long or solemn burial service.

The plight of the lower and most of the middle classes was even more pitiful to behold. Most of them remained in their houses, either through poverty or in hopes of safety, and fell sick by thousands. Since they received no care and attention, almost all of them died. Many ended their lives in the streets both at night and during the day; and many others who died in their houses were only known to be dead because the neighbours smelled their decaying bodies. Dead bodies filled every corner. Most of them were treated in the same manner by the survivors, who were more concerned to get rid of their rotting bodies than moved by charity towards the dead. With the aid of porters, if they could get them, they carried the bodies out of the houses and laid them at the doors, where every morning quantities of the dead might be seen. They then were laid on biers or, as these were often lacking, on tables.

Often a single bier carried two or three bodies, and it happened frequently that a husband and wife, two or three brothers, or father and son were taken off on the same bier. It frequently happened that two priests, each carrying a cross, would go out followed by three or four biers carried by porters; and where the priests thought there was one person to bury, there would be six or eight, and often, even more. Nor were these dead honoured by tears and lighted candles and mourners, for things had reached such a pass that people cared no more for dead men than we care for dead goats. Thus it plainly appeared that what the wise had not learned to endure with patience through the few calamities of ordinary life, became a matter of indifference even to the most ignorant people through the greatness of this misfortune.

Such was the multitude of corpses brought to the churches every day and almost every hour that there was not enough consecrated ground to give them burial, especially since they wanted to bury each person in the family grave, according to the old custom. Although the cemeteries were full they were forced to dig huge trenches, where they buried the bodies by hundreds. Here they stowed them away like bales in the hold

of a ship and covered them with a little earth, until the whole trench was full.

Not to pry any further into all the details of the miseries which afflicted our city, I shall add that the surrounding country was spared nothing of what befell Florence. The villages on a smaller scale were like the city; in the fields and isolated farms the poor wretched peasants and their families were without doctors and any assistance, and perished in the highways, in their fields and houses, night and day, more like beasts than men. Just as the townsmen became dissolute and indifferent to their work and property, so the peasants, when they saw that death was upon them, entirely neglected the future fruits of their past labours both from the earth and from cattle, and thought only of enjoying what they had. Thus it happened that cows, asses, sheep, goats, pigs, fowls and even dogs, those faithful companions of man, left the farms and wandered at their will through the fields, where the wheat crops stood abandoned, unreaped and ungarnered. Many of these animals seemed endowed with reason, for, after they had pastured all day, they returned to the farms for the night of their own free will, without being driven.

Returning from the country to the city, it may be said that such was the cruelty of Heaven, and perhaps in part of men, that between March and July more than one hundred thousand persons died within the walls of Florence, what between the violence of the plague and the abandonment in which the sick were left by the cowardice of the healthy. And before the plague it was not thought that the whole city held so many people.

Oh, what great palaces, how many fair houses and noble dwellings, once filled with attendants and nobles and ladies, were emptied to the meanest servant! How many famous names and vast possessions and renowned estates were left without an heir! How many gallant men and fair ladies and handsome youths, whom Galen, Hippocrates and Æsculapius themselves would have said were in perfect health, at noon dined with their relatives and friends, and at night supped with their ancestors in the next world!

But it fills me with sorrow to go over so many miseries. Therefore,

since I want to pass over all I can leave out, I shall go on to say that when our city was in this condition and almost emptied of inhabitants, one Tuesday morning the venerable church of Santa Maria Novella had scarcely any congregation for divine service except (as I have heard from a person worthy of belief) seven young women in the mourning garments suitable to the times, who were all related by ties of blood, friendship or neighbourship. None of them was older than twenty-eight or younger than eighteen; all were educated and of noble blood, fair to look upon, well-mannered and of graceful modesty.

I should tell you their real names if I had not a good reason for not doing so, which is that I would not have any of them blush in the future for the things they say and hearken to in the following pages. The laws are now strict again, whereas then, for the reasons already shown, they were very lax, not only for persons of their age but for those much older. Nor would I give an opportunity to the envious (always ready to sneer at every praiseworthy life) to attack the virtue of these modest ladies with vulgar speech. But so that you may understand without confusion what each one says, I intend to give them names wholly or partly suitable to the qualities of each.

The first and eldest I shall call Pampinea, the second Fiammetta, the third Filomena, the fourth Emilia, the fifth Lauretta, the sixth Neifile, and the last Elisa (or "the virgin") for a very good reason. They met, not by arrangement, but by chance, in the same part of the church, and sat down in a circle. After many sighs they ceased to pray and began to talk about the state of affairs and other things. After a short space of silence, Pampinea said:

"Dear ladies, you must often have heard, as I have, that to make a sensible use of one's reason harms nobody. It is natural for everybody to aid, preserve and defend his life as far as possible. And this is so far admitted that to save their own lives men often kill others who have done no harm. If this is permitted by the laws which are concerned with the general good, it must certainly be lawful for us to take any reasonable means for the preservation of our lives. When I think of what we have been doing this morning and still more on former days, when I remem-

ber what we have been saying, I perceive and you must perceive that each of us goes in fear of her life. I do not wonder at this, but, since each of us has a woman's judgment, I do wonder that we do not seek some remedy against what we dread.

"In my opinion we remain here for no other purpose than to witness how many bodies are buried, or listen whether the friars here (themselves reduced almost to nothing) sing their offices at the canonical hours, or to display by our clothes the quantity and quality of our miseries to anyone who comes here. If we leave this church we see the bodies of the dead and the sick being carried about. Or we see those who had been exiled from the city by the authority of the laws for their crimes, deriding this authority because they know the guardians of the law are sick or dead, and running loose about the place. Or we see the dregs of the city batten- ing on our blood and calling themselves sextons, riding about on horse- back in every direction and insulting our calamities with vile songs. On every side we hear nothing but "So-and-so is dead" or "So-and-so is dying." And if there were anyone left to weep we should hear nothing but piteous lamentations. I do not know if it is the same in your homes as in mine. But if I go home there is nobody left there but one of my maids, which fills me with such horror that the hair stands upon my head. Wherever I go or sit at home I seem to see the ghosts of the departed, not with the faces as I knew them but with dreadful looks which terrify me.

"I am ill at ease here and outside of here and at home; the more so since nobody who has the strength and ability to go away (as we have) now remains here, except ourselves. The few that remain (if there are any), according to what I see and hear, do anything which gives them pleasure or pleases their appetites, both by day and night, whether they are alone or in company, making no distinction between right and wrong. Not only laymen, but those cloistered in convents have broken their oaths and given themselves up to the delights of the flesh, and thus in trying to escape the plague by doing what they please, they have become lascivious and dissolute.

"If this is so (and we may plainly see it is) what are we doing here? What are we waiting for? What are we dreaming about? Are we less

eager and active than other citizens in saving our lives? Are they less dear to us than to others? Or do we think that our lives are bound to our bodies with stronger chains than other people's, and so believe that we need fear nothing which might harm us? We were and are deceived. How stupid we should be to believe such a thing! We may see the plainest proofs from the number of young men and women who have died of this cruel plague.

"I do not know if you think as I do, but in my opinion if we, through carelessness, do not want to fall into this calamity when we can escape it, I think we should do well to leave this town, just as many others have done and are doing. Let us avoid the wicked examples of others like death itself, and go and live virtuously in our country houses, of which each of us possesses several. There let us take what happiness and pleasure we can, without ever breaking the rules of reason in any manner.

"There we shall hear the birds sing, we shall see the green hills and valleys, the wheat-fields rolling like a sea, and all kinds of trees. We shall see the open Heavens which, although now angered against man, do not withhold from us their eternal beauties that are so much fairer to look upon than the empty walls of our city. The air will be fresher there, we shall find a greater plenty of those things necessary to life at this time, and fewer troubles. Although the peasants are dying like the townsmen, still, since the houses and inhabitants are fewer, we shall see less of them and feel less misery. On the other hand I believe we are not abandoning anybody here. Indeed we can truthfully say that we are abandoned, since our relatives have either died or fled from death and have left us alone in this calamity as if we were nothing to them.

"If we do what I suggest, no blame can fall upon us; if we fail to do it, the result may be pain, trouble and perhaps death. Therefore I think that we should do well to take our servants and all things necessary, and go from one house to another, enjoying whatever merriment and pleasure these times allow. Let us live in this way (unless death comes upon us) until we see what end Heaven decrees to this plague. And remember that going away virtuously will not harm us so much as staying here in wickedness will harm others."

The other ladies listened to what Pampinea said, praised her advice, and in their eagerness to follow it began to discuss details, as if they were going to leave at once. But Filomena, who was a most prudent young woman, said:

“Ladies, although what Pampinea says is excellent advice, we must not rush off at once, as you seem to wish. Remember we are all women; and any girl can tell you how women behave together and conduct themselves without the direction of some man. We are fickle, wayward, suspicious, faint-hearted and cowardly. So if we have no guide but ourselves I greatly suspect that this company will very soon break up, without much honour to ourselves. Let us settle this matter before we start.”

Elisa then broke in:

“Indeed men are a woman’s head and we can rarely succeed in anything without their help; but how can we find any men? Each of us knows that most of her menfolk are dead, while the others are away, we know not where, flying with their companions from the end we wish to escape. To ask strangers would be unbecoming; for, if we mean to go away to save our lives we must take care that scandal and annoyance do not follow us where we are seeking rest and amusement.”

While the ladies were thus arguing, three young men came into the church, the youngest of whom was not less than twenty-five. They were lovers whose love could not be quenched or even cooled by the horror of the times, the loss of relatives and friends, or even fear for themselves. The first was named Pamfilo, the second Filostrato, the third Dioneo. They were pleasant, well-mannered men, and in this public calamity they sought the consolation of looking upon the ladies they loved. These ladies happened to be among our seven, while some of the others were related to one or other of the three men. They no sooner came into sight than the ladies saw them; whereupon Pampinea said with a smile:

“See how Fortune favours our plan at once by sending us these valiant and discreet young men, who will gladly act as our guides and servants if we do not refuse to accept them for such duties.”

Neifile then became crimson, for she was one of the ladies beloved by one of the young men, and said:

“For God’s sake, Pampinea, be careful what you are saying. I know quite well that nothing but good can be said of any of them and I am sure they could achieve greater things than this. I also think that their company would be fitting and pleasant, not only to us, but to ladies far more beautiful and charming than we are. But it is known to everyone that they are in love with some of us women here; and so, if we take them with us, I am afraid that blame and infamy will fall upon us, through no fault of ours or theirs.”

Then said Filomena:

“What does that matter? If I live virtuously, my conscience never pricks me, whatever people may say. God and the truth will fight for me. If these men would come with us, then indeed, as Pampinea said, fortune would be favourable to our plan of going away.”

The others not only refrained from censuring what she said, but agreed by common consent that the men should be spoken to, told their plan, and asked if they would accompany the ladies on their expedition. Without more ado, Pampinea, who was related to one of them, arose and went towards them where they stood looking at the ladies, saluted them cheerfully, told them the plan, and begged them in the name of all the ladies to accompany them out of pure and fraternal affection.

At first the young men thought this was a jest. But when they saw the lady was speaking seriously, they said they were willing to go. And in order to start without delay they at once gave the orders necessary for departure. Everything necessary was made ready, and word was sent on ahead to the place they were going. At dawn next morning, which was Wednesday, the ladies with some of their servants, and the young men with a man servant each, left the city and set out. They had not gone more than two miles when they came to the first place where they were to stay.

This estate was on slightly raised ground, at some distance from any main road, with many trees and plants, fair to look upon. At the top of the rise was a country mansion with a large inner courtyard. It had open colonnades, galleries and rooms, all beautiful in themselves and ornamented with gay paintings. Roundabout were lawns and marvelous

gardens and wells of cool water. There were cellars of fine wines, more suitable to wine connoisseurs than to sober and virtuous ladies. The whole house had been cleaned, the beds were prepared in the rooms, and every corner was strewn with the flowers of the season and fresh rushes. All of which the company beheld with no little pleasure.

They all sat down to discuss plans, and Dioneo, who was a most amusing young man and full of witticisms, remarked:

“Ladies, your good sense, rather than our foresight, has brought us here. I do not know what you are thinking of doing with your troubles here, but I dropped mine inside the gates of the city when I left it with you a little time ago. Therefore, either you must make up your minds to laugh and sing and amuse yourselves with me (that is, to the extent your dignity allows), or you must let me go back to my troubles and stay in the afflicted city.”

Pampinea, who had driven away her woes in the same way, cheerfully replied:

“Dioneo, you speak well, let us amuse ourselves, for that was the reason why we fled from our sorrows. But when things are not organised they cannot long continue. And, since I began the discussion which brought this fair company together and since I wish our happiness to continue, I think it necessary that one of us should be made chief, whom the others will honour and obey, and whose duty shall be to regulate our pleasures. Now, so that everyone—both man and woman—may experience the cares as well as the pleasures of ruling and no one feel any envy at not sharing them, I think the weight and honour should be given to each of us in turn for one day. The first shall be elected by all of us. At vespers he or she shall choose the ruler for the next day, and so on. While their reigns last these rulers shall arrange where and how we are to spend our time.”

These words pleased them all and they unanimously elected her for the first day. Filomena ran to a laurel bush, whose leaves she had always heard were most honourable in themselves and did great honour to anyone crowned with them, plucked off a few small branches and wove them into a fair garland of honour. When this was placed on the head of any

one of them, it was a symbol of rule and authority over the rest so long as the party remained together.

Pampinea, thus elected queen, ordered silence. She then sent for the three servants of the young men and the four women servants the ladies had brought, and said:

“To set a first example to you all which may be bettered and thus allow our gathering to live pleasantly and orderly and without shame and to last as long as we desire, I appoint Dioneo’s servant Parmeno as my steward, and hand over to him the care of the whole family and of everything connected with the dining hall. Pamfilo’s servant Sirisco shall be our treasurer and buyer, and carry out Parmeno’s instructions. Tindaro shall wait on Filostrato and Dioneo and Pamfilo in their rooms, when the other two servants are occupied with their new duties. Filomena’s servant Licisca and my own servant Misia shall remain permanently in the kitchen and carefully prepare the food which Parmeno sends them. Lauretta’s Chimera and Fiammetta’s Stratilia shall take care of the ladies’ rooms and see that the whole house is clean. Moreover we will and command that everyone who values our good grace shall bring back only cheerful news, wherever he may go or return from, and whatever he may hear or see.”

Having given these orders, which were approved by everyone, she jumped gaily to her feet and said:

“Here are gardens and lawns and other delicious places, where each of us can wander and enjoy them at will. But let everyone be here at the hour of Tierce so that we can eat together while it is still cool.”

The company of gay young men and women, thus given the queen’s permission, went off together slowly through the gardens, talking of pleasant matters, weaving garlands of different leaves, and singing love songs. After the time allotted by the queen had elapsed they returned to the house and found that Parmeno had carefully carried out the duties of his office. Entering a ground floor room decorated everywhere with broom blossoms, they found tables covered with white cloths and set with glasses which shone like silver. They washed their hands and, at the queen’s command, all sat down in the places allotted them by Parmeno.

Delicately cooked food was brought, exquisite wines were at hand, and the three men servants waited at table. Everyone was delighted to see things so handsome and well arranged, and they ate merrily with much happy talk.

All the ladies and young men could dance and many of them could play and sing; so, when the tables were cleared, the queen called for musical instruments. At her command Dioneo took a lute and Fiammetta a viol, and began to play a dance tune. The queen sent the servants to their meal, and then with slow steps danced with the two young men and the other ladies. After that, they began to sing gay and charming songs.

In this way they amused themselves until the queen thought it was time for the siesta. So, at the queen's bidding, the three young men went off to their rooms (which were separated from the ladies') and found them filled with flowers as the dining hall had been. And similarly with the women. So they all undressed and went to sleep.

Not long after the hour of Nones the queen arose and made the other women and the young men also get up, saying that it was harmful to sleep too long during the daytime. Then they went out to a lawn of thick green grass entirely shaded from the sun. A soft breeze came to them there. The queen made them sit down in a circle on the grass, and said:

"As you see, the sun is high and the heat great, and nothing can be heard but the cicadas in the olive trees. To walk about at this hour would be foolish. Here it is cool and lovely, and, as you see, there are games of chess and draughts which everyone can amuse himself with, as he chooses. But, if my opinion is followed, we shall not play games, because in games the mind of one of the players must necessarily be distressed without any great pleasure to the other player or the onlookers. Let us rather spend this hot part of the day in telling tales, for thus one person can give pleasure to the whole company. When each of us has told a story, the sun will be going down and the heat less, and we can then go walking anywhere we choose for our amusement. If this pleases you (for here I am ready to follow your pleasure) let us do it. If it does not please you, let everyone do as he likes until evening."

The women and men all favoured the telling of stories.

"Then if it pleases you," said the queen, "on this first day I order that everyone shall tell his tale about any subject he likes."

She then turned to Pamfilo, who was seated on her right, and ordered him to begin with a tale. Hearing this command, Pamfilo at once began as follows, while all listened.

First Tale

SER CIAPPELLETTO DECEIVES A HOLY FRIAR WITH A FALSE CONFESSION AND DIES; AND THOUGH HE HAD BEEN A MOST WICKED MAN IN HIS LIFETIME, IN DEATH HE IS DEEMED A SAINT, AND CALLED SAINT CIAPPELLETTO

It is befitting, most dear ladies, that in everything a man does, he should begin with the excellent and Holy name of Him that was maker of all things. Wherefore, since I am the first to begin this telling of tales, I intend to start with one of His marvelous deeds, to the end that when you have heard it our faith in Him may rest unshakeable and His Name be ever praised among us.

Since all things in this world are mortal and transitory, even so it is plain that within and without they are full of bitterness and woe and weariness and subject to infinite perils, so that we who live mingled with them and are a part of them could verily neither endure nor remedy them, if God's especial grace did not lend us strength and foresight. Nor should we believe that this grace descends upon us through any merit of our own, but from the motion of His own benignity and the prayers of those His Saints, who once were mortals as we are; and while they were alive they were obedient to His will, and now have become eternal and blessed with Him. And we ourselves address our prayers concerning those things we consider desirable for ourselves to the Saints, as unto advocates

who by experience are aware of our fragility, when perhaps we dare not utter our prayers in the presence of so great a Judge.

Towards us He abounds in merciful bounty; and we may perceive that, since the gaze of mortal eye can in no wise pierce the secret of the Divine Mind, we, deceived by false opinion, may choose as advocate before His majesty one that is exiled from before Him forever. Nevertheless He, from Whom nothing is hidden, considering more His petitioner's purity of heart than ignorance or the eternal exile of the advocate, hearkens to those who pray to this advocate as if he stood before His Sacred Presence.

Manifestly will this appear in the tale I am about to tell; I say "manifestly" in accordance, not with God's judgment, but with that of men.

Now there was a great and very rich merchant, named Musciatto Franzesi, who became a knight. He was compelled to journey into Tuscany with Messer Carlo Senzaterra, brother to the King of France, at the request of Pope Boniface. Musciatto discovered that his affairs, like those of most merchants, were so involved in all directions that he could not lightly and abruptly cut free from them. He therefore determined to entrust them to different persons, and found means to dispose of everything. Only one difficulty remained—to find a trustworthy person to receive on his behalf the repayment of money he had lent to many Burgundians. The reason for his hesitation was that he knew the Burgundians to be quarrelsome, perfidious, ill-conditioned men; and he could not think of any man he could trust who would be sufficiently artful to hold his own against their artfulness.

After much cogitation, he remembered one Ser Ciapperetto da Prato who had often visited his house in Paris. This man was very short and always dapperly dressed. The French did not know what Ceparello means, and thinking it was a chaplet (that is, in their tongue, a garland) they did not call him Capello but Ciappelletto, because he was such a little fellow. So he was known to everyone as Ciappelletto, and very few knew him as Ser Ciapperetto.

The life of this Ciappelletto was in this wise. He was a notary, and was mightily ashamed when any document he had drawn (and he drew

up many) was discovered to be anything but fraudulent. He had drawn as many of these as he had been asked to do, and he did such things more willingly for nothing than another man would do for a large reward. He bore false witness with the greatest delight, whether he was asked to do so, or not. In those days the French had the greatest trust in oaths and cared not to utter false ones, and so he wickedly gained every lawsuit where he was called upon to swear to tell the truth upon his faith and his life.

He had other pleasing ways, and took great pains to cause mischief, scandals and enmities between friends and relatives and anybody else; and the more evil resulted from all this, the more he was delighted. If he was bidden to a murder or some other questionable affair, he went most willingly and never refused. And often he gladly wounded or slew men with his own hands. He was a mighty blasphemer of God and the Saints, and on the smallest occasions, like a man who is more irascible than others.

He never went to church. He scoffed at all the sacraments with abominable words as if they were vile things. On the other hand, he cheerfully frequented taverns and other ungodly haunts. He was as attractive to women as sticks are to dogs; but he delighted in them more than any other vile man. He would rob and purloin with the clear conscience of a holy man making an offering. He was most gluttonous and a great drunkard, so that sometimes he foully injured himself. He was a gambler, and made use habitually of loaded dice.

Why do I expatiate at such length? He was perhaps the wickedest man ever born. For a long time his cunning was of service to the power and position of Messer Musciatto, by whom he was often saved from private persons whom he frequently injured, and from the Court which he also had offended.

When Ser Ciappelletto came into the mind of Messer Musciatto—who was perfectly aware of his whole life—he concluded that Ser Ciappelletto was the one man required to meet the artfulness of the Burgundians. So, having sent for him, he spoke to him as follows:

“Ser Ciappelletto, as you know, I am retiring from everything here.

Among others, I have to deal with those artful Burgundians, and I do not know of any person more suitable than yourself for me to leave to receive my money from them. And since this is something you have never done before, I purpose to obtain you the favour of the Court and to give you a reasonable share of the money you get in.”

Ser Ciappelletto, who was a spendthrift and ill-provided with this world's goods, having to face the departure of the man who had long been his refuge and support, made up his mind without delay, being practically compelled by necessity, and replied that he would gladly agree.

So, having made their agreement, Messer Musciatto departed, and Ser Ciappelletto, having received his power of attorney and letters of protection from the King, went off to Burgundy, where scarcely anyone knew him. And there, contrary to his nature, he began mildly and gently to collect the money due, and to do what he had been sent to do, as if he were reserving his wickedness until the end.

While doing all this he lodged in the house of two Florentines, brothers, who there lent out money at usury, and who honoured him much, out of their respect for Messer Musciatto. In their house he fell ill. The brothers at once sent for doctors and servants to look after him, and for everything needed to restore him to health.

But all aid was useless since (according to what the doctors said) the good man was old and had lived a disorderly life, and so was daily going from bad to worse, like a man stricken with death; for which the two brothers felt great regret.

And one day they began to discuss the matter quite close to the room where Ser Ciappelletto lay ill:

“What shall we do about this man?” said they to each other. “On his account we have a bad business on our hands. To send him sick out of our house would be a great reproach to us and an obvious sign of lack of sense, for people would see that we had at first received him, and then most solicitously procured him doctors and servants, and afterwards when he could not have done anything to displease us, they would see him, at the point of death, suddenly cast out of our house. On the

other hand, he has been such a wicked man that he will not confess himself or take any sacrament of the Church. So if he dies without confession, no church will receive his body and it will be cast into the ditch like a dog's. And suppose he did confess, his sins are so numerous and so horrible that the same thing will happen, for there is neither priest nor friar who can or will absolve him; and if he dies without absolution, he will also be cast into a ditch. And if that happens, the people of this country, partly on account of our occupation which they abuse every day as an iniquitous one, and partly on account of their eagerness to rob others, will rise up in tumult, yelling:

"'These dogs of Lombards, no church will receive them, we won't endure them any longer.'

"And they will run to our house, and perhaps they will not only steal the goods in it but, in addition, burn the inhabitants. So, in any event we are in an unpleasant situation if he dies."

Ser Ciappelletto, as I said, was lying near where they were talking, and, as we often see with sick men, his hearing had become more acute, so that he heard what they said about him. Therefore he sent for them and said:

"I do not wish you to feel any doubts about me or to dread receiving any injury through me. I heard what you said about me, and I am certain it would turn out as you say, if the matter went as you think it will; but it will turn out quite differently. In my lifetime I have committed so many sins against God that if I commit another on my death-bed it can make no difference. Therefore, procure me a wise and holy friar, as wise and holy as possible, if one of the kind exists, and leave the rest to me. I shall arrange your affairs and mine in such a manner that all will be well, and you will be satisfied."

Although the two brothers did not feel very hopeful about this, still they went off to a friary, and asked for a holy and learned man to hear the confession of a Lombard lying sick in their house. They were given an old friar, of a good and holy life, a great master of the Scriptures, a most venerable man, for whom all the citizens felt a very great and special devotion; and they took him with them.

Now when the friar reached Ser Ciappelletto's room, he sat down beside him and began gently to comfort him. Then the friar asked how long it was since he had been to confession. Ser Ciappelletto, who had never been to confession in his life, replied:

"Father, it has been my custom to go to confession at least once a week, although there were many weeks when I confessed oftener. It is true that during the eight days which have passed since I fell sick, I have not confessed myself, so much have I been distressed by my sickness."

Then said the friar:

"My son, you have done well, and thus one should do as an example. Since you have confessed so often, I see I shall have little labour in asking and hearkening."

Said Ser Ciappelletto:

"Messer friar, say not so; I have not confessed so many times nor so often but that I ever desire to confess altogether all the sins I remember from the day I was born until the time when I am confessing. And therefore, good father, I beg that you will question me about everything as closely as if I had never been to confession. And do not spare me because I am sick, for I would much rather mortify my flesh than, by doing its will, do anything which might cause the perdition of my soul which my Saviour redeemed with His precious blood."

These words greatly pleased the holy man and seemed to him proofs of a well-disposed mind. After he had highly commended Ser Ciappelletto for this behaviour, he began by asking him if he had never sinned in lechery with any woman. To which Ser Ciappelletto replied with a sigh:

"Father, I am ashamed to tell you the truth concerning this matter, for fear of the sin of vainglory."

Whereupon the holy friar said:

"Speak out boldly, for never is there any sin in speaking the truth either in confession or anywhere else."

Then said Ser Ciappelletto:

"Since you assure me of this, I will tell you: I am as virgin as when I came out from my mother's body."

"Oh, blessed are you of God!" exclaimed the friar. "Well indeed have

you done! And by so doing you have acquired the more merit, since you had more liberty to do the opposite than have we and others that are subject to a rule of discipline.”

After this, he asked whether he had not displeased God by the sin of gluttony. Whereunto Ser Ciappelletto, sighing deeply, replied that he had many times done so, because, as well as the Lenten fasts which devout persons keep during the year, he had been wont to eat only bread and water for at least three days of each week, but he had drunk the water with the same appetite and delight—especially when he had endured any fatigue either in prayer or going on pilgrimage—as great drinkers find in their wine. And he had often longed for those gross salads of coarse herbs, such as the women make when they go to town. And sometimes eating had seemed to him better than he thought it ought to seem to someone fasting from devotion, as he had fasted.

To which the friar said:

“My son, these are natural sins and quite venial; and therefore I do not wish you to burden your conscience with them more than is needful. It happens to every man, howsoever holy he may be, that eating seems good to him after a long fast, and drinking after labour.”

“O father,” said Ser Ciappelletto, “do not say this only to comfort me. Well do you know that I know that everything which is done by a servant of God should be done frankly and with no grudging of spirit; and he that does otherwise, sins.”

The friar in great delight replied:

“And I am glad that you think thus in your soul, and I am greatly pleased by your pure and good conscience in this matter. But, tell me, have you not sinned in avarice, either by desiring more than was befitting or by withholding that which you ought not to withhold?”

Unto which Ser Ciappelletto said:

“Father, I would not have you misjudge me because I am in the house of these usurers. I have nothing to do with them. I came hither only to admonish and chastise them, and to save them from this abominable lucre; and I believe I should have done so, if God had not thus visited me. But you must know that my father left me a rich man, and when he died

I gave the greater portion of his goods to God's works. And then, to sustain my own life and to aid Christ's poor, I have carried on my little traffickings, and therein I have desired gain, but I have ever shared what I earned with God's poor, keeping one half for my own needs, and giving the other half to them. And herein so well has my Creator aided me that my affairs have ever prospered more and more."

"Well have you done," said the friar, "but have you not often been angry?"

"Oh," said Ser Ciappelletto, "there I must say I have often erred. For who can contain his anger, when every day he sees men doing foul deeds, neglecting God's commandments and going in no fear of His judgments? Many a time have there been days when I would rather have been dead than alive, when I saw the young men plunging into vanities, and beheld them swearing and perjuring themselves, going to taverns, never entering churches, and following rather the ways of this world than the Way of God."

Then said the friar:

"My son, this is a worthy anger, and I can lay no penitence upon you because of it. But was there never any time when anger led you to commit homicide or to insult someone or to commit any other sin?"

To which Ser Ciappelletto replied:

"Alas, Messer! Oh, you seem to me a man of God, but how can you utter such words? If I had ever had the least thought of committing one or other of the things you speak of, do you think I should believe that God would have aided me so much? These are things committed by brigands and men of Belial, unto whom, whenever I have seen one of them, I have said: 'Go, and may God convert you.'"

"May the blessing of God be on you," said the friar, "but tell me, have you never borne false witness against another, have you never spoken ill of others, have you never deprived others of their goods against their will?"

"Indeed, Messer, aye, indeed," answered Ser Ciappelletto, "have I spoken ill of others. For once there was a neighbour of mine that for no reason in the world did nothing but beat his wife, and once I spoke ill of

him to the wife's relatives, so much did I pity the poor wretched little woman, whom he tanned, as God be witness, whenever he had drunk too much."

Then said the friar:

"Now, you told me you have been a merchant. Did you never trick anyone, as merchants are wont to do?"

"Aye indeed, Messer," said Ser Ciappelletto, "but I do not know who they were, save for one man, and he brought me the money to pay for some cloth I had sold him, and I put the money in a chest without counting it, and a month later I found it was four farthings more than it should have been. But, not seeing the man again, after keeping the money a whole year to return to him, I gave it away for the love of God."

Said the friar:

"That was a small thing; and you did well to do what you did do."

And after this the holy friar questioned him about many other matters, to all of which he made answer in the same manner. But, when he was about to proceed to give absolution, Ser Ciappelletto said:

"Messer, I have yet another sin I have not confessed to you."

The friar asked what it was, and he replied:

"I remember that one Saturday after Nones I made the servant sweep out the house, and I have not held the Holy Sabbath in all the reverence I should have done."

"Oh," said the friar, "that is a small thing, my son."

"Nay," said Ser Ciappelletto, "say not that it is a small thing, for the Sabbath is to be greatly honoured, since on that day our Saviour rose from the dead to life."

Then said the friar:

"Well, have you any other sins?"

"Aye, Messer," answered Ser Ciappelletto, "for once, without realising what I was doing, I spat in a church of God."

The friar began to smile and said:

"That is nothing to trouble about, my son; for we monks spit in church all day long."

Then said Ser Ciappelletto:

"Then you do great ill, for nothing should be kept cleaner than the holy temple where we offer sacrifice to God."

And, in brief, he told him many such things, and finally began to sigh and then to weep, being one who knew full well how to do so when he wanted.

Said the holy friar:

"What is it, my son?"

"Alas, Messer, a sin remains with me which I have never confessed, so greatly am I ashamed to tell it. And every time I remember it, I weep as you see, and it seems to me most certain that God will never pardon me this sin."

Then the holy friar said:

"Come, come, my son, what are you saying? If all the sins that all men have ever committed, or all those which will be committed by men until the end of the world, were all in one man, yet if he were penitent and contrite as I see you are, God's mercy and loving kindness are so great that if that man confessed them, He would freely pardon them to him. Therefore speak out with good assurance."

Ser Ciappelletto, still weeping bitterly, said:

"Alas, father, my sin is too great. And unless your prayers are devoted to it, I can scarcely believe that God will ever forgive me."

To which the friar answered:

"Speak out boldly, and I promise you I will pray to God for you."

Ser Ciappelletto went on weeping and said nothing. And the friar exhorted him to speak out. Ser Ciappelletto went on weeping and for a long time kept the friar in suspense; then he heaved a deep sigh, and said:

"Father, since you have promised to pray to God for me, I will tell it you. You must know that once when I was a little child I cursed my mother."

And, having said this, he began to weep bitterly again.

Said the friar:

"Oh, does that seem so great a sin to you, my son? Oh, men grievously curse God all day long and he gladly pardons those who repent of having cursed Him; and do you think He will not forgive you this? Weep not,

be comforted, for with the contrition I perceive in you He would certainly pardon you, even if you had been one of those who laid Him on the Cross."

Said Ser Ciappelletto:

"Alas, father, what is this you are saying? It was too great a sin, too great evil did I commit by cursing my sweet mother, who night and day carried me in her body for nine months, and bore me on her breast more than a hundred times! And if you do not pray God for me, I shall never be pardoned."

When the friar saw that Ser Ciappelletto had nothing more to confess, he absolved him and gave him his blessing, looking upon him as a most holy man, for he fully believed everything that Ser Ciappelletto had said was true. And who would not have thought so, when he beheld a man on his death-bed speak in this way? And after all this, the friar said:

"Ser Ciappelletto, with God's aid you will soon be well again. But if it should happen that God should call to Himself your blessed and well-disposed soul, are you willing that your body should be buried in our convent?"

To which Ser Ciappelletto replied:

"Aye indeed, Messer. Nor do I wish to be anywhere else, since you have promised to pray God for me; and moreover I have always felt a special devotion to your Order. Wherefore I beseech you, when you return to your convent, to send me that most true Body of Christ which you consecrate upon the altar in the morning. For, although I am not worthy, I intend, with your permission, to partake of it, and afterwards to receive the holy Extreme Unction, so that though I have lived a sinner, I may at least die like a Christian."

The holy man said that he was well pleased with this, and that Ser Ciappelletto spoke well, and that they should be brought to him immediately. And so it was.

The two brothers, who greatly suspected that Ser Ciappelletto would deceive them, had hidden behind a partition which divided another room from that in which Ser Ciappelletto was lying. They listened, and easily heard and understood what Ser Ciappelletto said to the friar. And when

they heard the things which he confessed he had done they sometimes had so great a desire to laugh that they almost burst out loudly, and said to themselves:

“What a man is this, whom neither old age nor sickness nor the fear of death (to which he sees himself close) nor even the fear of God (before Whose judgment he must expect to come within a few hours) can remove from his wickedness or make him wish to die otherwise than he has lived!”

But seeing that it had been said that he should be received for burial in the church, they cared nothing about the rest.

A little after this Ser Ciappelletto received the communion and, growing ever worse, Extreme Unction. And a little after vespers on the same day that he had made this good confession, he died. Wherefore the two brothers took measures (with the man's own money) for him to be honourably buried, and sent the news to the friars' convent for them to watch over the body that night, as is customary, and to come for it in the morning with all things befitting.

When the holy friar who had confessed him, heard that he was dead, he went to the prior of the convent and called the chapter together by sound of bell. And when the friars were gathered together he told them what a holy man Ser Ciappelletto had been, according to the opinion which the friar had formed from hearing his confession. And, with the hope that God through him would perform many miracles, the friar persuaded them that they ought to receive his body with the greatest reverence and devotion. To this the prior and the other credulous friars agreed. That evening they all went to the place where Ser Ciappelletto's body lay, and kept great and solemn vigils over it. Next morning, dressed in their albs and copes, with books in their hands and crosses borne before them, they set out chanting to fetch the body and brought it to their church with great pomp and solemnity, followed by nearly all the people, both men and women, of the town. When they had set him down in the church, the holy friar who had heard his confession, went up into the pulpit and began to preach marvelous things about him, his life, his fasts, his virginity, his simplicity and innocence and sanctity. And among other things

he related that which Ser Ciappelletto had confessed to him, weeping, as his greatest sin, and how the friar could scarcely bring him to believe that God would pardon him. From this he turned aside to reprove the people listening to him, and said:

“But you, accursed of God, at every wisp of straw that catches your feet you curse God and His Mother and the whole Court of Paradise.”

Besides this, he said a lot more about his probity and purity. In short, with his words—in which the country folk had complete faith—the friar so beat him into their heads and devotion that, as soon as the service was over, all those present went crowding up to kiss his hands and feet, and the clothes were torn off his back; and happy was he who could get a fragment of them. And it was agreed that he should remain there all day, so that all could visit and behold him. Then, when night came, he was honourably buried in a marble tomb within a side chapel. And little by little on the following day the people began to go and light candles to him and to adore him, and afterwards to make vows to him, and to hang up waxen images, when leave was granted.

The fame of his sanctity and of the devotion to him increased so much that almost everyone who fell into adversity made vows to him rather than to any other Saint. They called him and still call him Saint Ciappelletto; and they declare that through him God has performed and every day still performs many miracles on behalf of those who devoutly beseech his aid.

Thus lived and died Ser Ciappelletto da Prato, and thus became a Saint, as you have heard. I am unwilling to deny that it is possible he may be among the Blessed in God's presence; for though his life was evil and wicked, he may have repented at his last hour and God may have been merciful to him and have received him into His Kingdom. But since this is hidden from us, I conclude from what appears that he must rather be in the hands of the Devil in Hell, than in Paradise. If this is so, we may recognize the greatness of God's mercy towards us, Who looks not at our errors but at the purity of our faith; and when we, believing him to be God's friend, make His enemy our mediator, He grants our requests as though we had appealed to a true Saint as a mediator for His mercy.

And therefore, since in this present calamity through His grace we are kept safe and sound and in such pleasant company, praising His Name (wherein we have begun this) and keeping Him in all reverence, let us in all our needs devoutly beseech Him in the certainty that we shall be heard.

Whereupon he was silent.

Second Tale

A JEW CALLED ABRAHAM, URGED BY GIANNOTTO DI CIVIGNI, GOES TO ROME AND, BEHOLDING THE WICKEDNESS OF THE CLERGY THERE, RETURNS TO PARIS AND BECOMES A CHRISTIAN

THE ladies commended the whole of Pamfilo's tale and laughed at parts of it. After this tale had been listened to eagerly and had come to an end, the queen commanded Neifile (who sat next to Pamfilo) to tell a story to follow the order of the entertainment thus begun. She, even as one that is no less ornamented with all courteous manners than with beauty, cheerfully replied that she would gladly do so, and began thus:

In his tale Pamfilo has showed us that God's mercy regards not our errors when they proceed from matters which are beyond our knowledge. Now, I mean to show how this same mercy patiently endures the faults of those who by their words and deeds should bear true witness to His mercy and yet do the exact contrary; nay, more, makes these things an argument of His infallible truth, in order that with more constancy of mind we may follow those things we believe.

Gracious ladies, I have heard it told that in Paris there dwelt a great merchant and good man named Giannotto di Civigni, a man of the utmost honesty and probity, with a large business in silk goods. He was the intimate friend of a rich Jew called Abraham, who was also a merchant and a very upright, honest man. Now, when Giannotto saw

the man's honesty and goodness he began to feel great regret that through lack of faith the soul of such a wise, learned and good man should go to Hell. Wherefore, Giannotto began in a friendly way to beg him to abandon the errors of the Jewish faith and to return to Christian truth. For, as he said, the Jew might see that Christianity is so holy and so good that it continually prospers and increases, whereas, on the other hand, he could perceive that Judaism is diminishing and will soon vanish.

The Jew replied that he thought Judaism was the only holy and good faith, that he had been born in it, and intended to live and die in it. Nor could anything ever shift him from it. This did not prevent Giannotto from bringing up the subject again a few days later, and from pointing out to him, in the clumsy way most merchants would do, the reasons why our faith is better than Judaism. Although he was a great master of the Jewish law, yet, either because he was moved by his friendship for Giannotto or because the words which the Holy Spirit puts in the mouth of an ignorant man acted upon him, the Jew began to take a pleasure in Giannotto's explanations. However, he remained obstinate in his belief and did not allow himself to change. But the more stubborn he remained the more Giannotto continued to urge him, until at last the Jew was overcome by so much insistence and said:

"Look here, Giannotto, you want me to become a Christian, and I am quite prepared to do so. So much so, that I want first to go to Rome and see him whom you call God's Vicar on earth, to observe the ways and customs of him and his brother Cardinals. And if they seem to me such that, what between your words and them, I can come to see that your faith is better than mine, as you have laboured to prove to me, then I will do what I have said. But if not, I shall remain a Jew as I am."

When Giannotto heard this he was deeply pained and said to himself:

"I have wasted my labour, which I thought I had employed so well, in the belief that I had converted him. Now, if he goes to the Court of Rome and sees the filthy and rascally life of the clergy, not only will he not turn from a Jew to a Christian, but if he had turned Christian he would inevitably become a Jew again."

So he turned to Abraham and said:

“My dear friend, why undertake all the trouble and expense of going to Rome? Especially since the journey by sea and land is full of dangers for a rich man like you. Do you think you can find nobody here to baptise you? If you have any doubts concerning the faith I have expounded to you, where will you find greater masters and men more learned in these matters than those here, who will enlighten you concerning anything you wish or enquire about? In my opinion this journey is superfluous. The prelates there are like those you can see here, if not better, because they are nearer to the chief Shepherd. In my opinion, this troublesome journey will be of more avail to you later on as a pilgrimage to obtain remission of sins, and perhaps I will then accompany you.”

To this the Jew replied:

“Giannotto, I believe that things are as you say. But, to condense many words in a few—if you want me to do what you have so often asked of me, I am determined to go to Rome; otherwise I shall do nothing.”

Seeing he was obstinate, Giannotto said:

“Go then, and good luck to you.”

But he thought to himself that the Jew would never become a Christian when he had seen the Court of Rome. However, having nothing to lose by it, he said nothing.

The Jew got to horse as soon as possible and went off to the Court of Rome, where he was honourably received by his Jewish friends. He told nobody why he had come there, but began cautiously to examine the behaviour of the Pope, the Cardinals, the other prelates and all the courtiers. From his own observation—for he was a very acute man—and from what he heard through others, he discovered that from the highest to the lowest they all generally and most unworthily indulged in the sin of lechery, not only in the natural way but sodomitically, without the slightest remorse or shame. And this to such an extent that the power of courtezans and boys was of considerable importance in obtaining any favour. Moreover, he observed that they were openly gluttons, wine-bibbers and drunkards, and after lechery were, like brute beasts, more servants of their bellies than of anything else.

Looking more closely, he saw that they were all avaricious and grasping

after money, and that for money they bought and sold human, and even Christian, blood, and also every sort of divine thing whether appertaining to the sacraments or to benefices. They did more trade and had more brokers than there were for all the silks and other goods of Paris, and gave the name of "Procurator" to the most flagrant simony and that of "Maintenance" to gluttony; as if God, like us, suffered the meaning of words to impose on Him, and did not know the motives of evil souls, and, like men, let Himself be deceived by the names of things. These, and many other matters which must be kept in silence, grievously displeased the Jew, who was a sober and modest man; and when he thought he had seen enough, he determined to go back to Paris, which he did.

When Giannotto heard that the Jew had returned, he did not feel the slightest hope that he had become a Christian; but he went to see him, and they rejoiced together. And when the Jew had rested for a few days, Giannotto asked him what he thought of the Holy Father and the Cardinals and the other courtiers.

To this the Jew immediately replied:

"It seemed to me that God is very kind to them all. For, if my observation is of any value, I saw there no sanctity, no devotion, no good works or examples of life or otherwise among any of the clergy. But it seemed to me that lechery, avarice, gluttony and such like things, aye and worse (if there can be any worse) were so much in grace with them all that I consider Rome a forge of devilish rather than divine labours. In my opinion your Shepherd (and consequently all the others) endeavour with all haste and talent and art to reduce the Christian religion to nothing and to thrust it out of the world, in the very place where they ought to be its support and foundation.

"Now, since I perceive that what they endeavour to achieve does not occur, but that your religion continually increases and becomes brighter and more illustrious, I justly am of opinion that the Holy Spirit is its support and foundation, inasmuch as it is truer and more holy than any other. So, whereas I remained formerly unmoved by your exhortations and would not become a Christian, I now tell you openly that nothing shall prevent me from becoming a Christian. Let us go to a church, and

there I will be baptised in accordance with the usual rites of your Holy Faith.”

Giannotto had expected a completely contrary conclusion, and when he heard the Jew say this he was as happy as a man could be. So they went together to Nôtre Dame of Paris, and asked the clergy there to baptise Abraham. And when they heard what was requested, they did so immediately. Giannotto held the Jew at the font and gave him the name of Giovanni. Immediately afterwards Giannotto caused him to be perfectly instructed in our faith by the most eminent doctors. This he learned speedily and became a good and worthy man, of holy life.

Third Tale

BY MEANS OF A TALE ABOUT THREE RINGS, A JEW NAMED MELCHISEDECH ESCAPES A TRAP LAID FOR HIM BY SALADIN

WHEN Neifile was silent, her tale was praised by them all; and then, at the queen's command, Filomena began to speak as follows:

Neifile's tale brings back to my mind a dangerous adventure which once happened to a Jew. Now since God and the truth of our faith have already been well dealt with among us, we should not be forbidden to come down to the adventures and actions of men. I shall tell you this tale, and when you have heard it perhaps you will become more cautious in answering the questions which are put to you. You must be aware, my loving friends, that stupidity often drags people out of happiness into the greatest misery, while good sense saves the wise man from the greatest dangers and puts him in complete security. That stupidity brings people from happiness to misery may be seen from many examples, which I do not intend to relate now, seeing that a thousand instances of it occur every day. But, as I have promised, I will briefly show you by a little tale how wisdom may be the cause of joy.

Such was the valour of Saladin that not only did he rise from the people to be Sultan of Babylon but he won many victories over Saracen and Christian Kings. He found one day that he had spent the whole of his treasure in divers wars and magnificent displays, while something had occurred which made him need a large sum of money. He did not know where to get it as speedily as he needed, when he remembered a rich Jew named Melchisedech who lent money at usury in Alexandria; and Saladin thought that this Jew could be of use to him if he wanted. But the Jew was so miserly that he would never do it of his own free will, while Saladin did not wish to use force. Since necessity pressed him, Saladin tried to think of some means whereby the Jew would come to his aid, and finally decided that he would devise some colourable pretext for compelling Melchisedech. So he sent for the Jew, received him in a friendly way, made him sit down, and then said:

“Worthy man, I have heard from many people that you are very wise, and that you have a deep understanding of God’s ways. So I should very much like to know from you which of the three Laws you think the true one—Judaism, Mohammedanism or Christianity?”

The Jew, who really was a wise man, saw at once that Saladin intended to catch him by his words in order to draw him into a dispute. So he thought he must not praise one of the three above another, otherwise Saladin would attain his object. So he sharpened his wits, like a man who needs to make an answer which will not entrap him, realised excellently beforehand what he ought to say, and said:

“My Lord, you have asked me a very good question, but if I am to tell you what I think about it I shall have to relate a little story, which you will now hear.

“If I err not, I remember that I have often heard that once upon a time there was a great and rich man who possessed a most beautiful and valuable ring among the other very precious jewels in his treasure. Being desirous to do honour to it on account of its value and beauty and to make it a perpetual heirloom among his descendants, he commanded that whichever of his sons should be found in possession of the ring, which he would leave to him, should be looked upon as his heir, and that all his

other children should reverence and honour this son as the greatest among them.

“The son to whom the ring was left gave similar orders to his descendants, and acted as his predecessor had done. In short, this ring passed from hand to hand through many succeeding generations, and finally came into the hands of a man who had three fine and virtuous sons who were all very obedient to their father. For which reason he loved all three of them equally. The young men knew the custom attached to the ring and each was desirous to be the most honoured, and therefore each of them to the best of his ability besought the father—now grown old—to leave him the ring when he died.

“The worthy man, who loved them all three equally, did not himself know which of the three he would choose to leave the ring, and, as he had promised it to each of them, he thought he would satisfy all three. So he caused a good artist secretly to make two other rings, which were so much like the first that even the man who had made them could scarcely tell which was the real one. When the old man was dying, he secretly gave one of the rings to each of his sons. And after their father’s death, each of them claimed the honour and the inheritance, and each denied it to the others; and to prove that they were acting rightly, each one brought forth his own ring. And the rings were found to be so much alike that no one could tell which was the true one, so the question as to which was the father’s real heir remained unsettled and is not settled yet.

“My Lord, I say it is the same with the three Laws given by God our Father to three peoples, concerning which you have questioned me. Each of them thinks it has the inheritance, the true Law, and carries out His Commandments; but which does have it is a question as far from being settled as that of the rings.”

Saladin perceived that the Jew had most skilfully avoided the snare which he had woven to catch his feet. And therefore he decided to tell the man of his necessity and to find out whether he would aid him. And this Saladin did, telling the Jew what he had thought of doing if the Jew had not replied so discreetly.

The Jew freely put at Saladin’s disposal all the money he needed, and

Saladin afterwards repaid him in full. Moreover, Saladin gave him very great gifts and always looked upon him as a friend and kept the Jew near his person in great and honourable state.

Fourth Tale

A MONK FALLS INTO A SIN DESERVING THE MOST SERIOUS PUNISHMENT, SKILFULLY PROVES HIS ABBOT GUILTY OF THE SAME FAULT, AND ESCAPES THE PENALTY

FILOMENA ended her tale, and was silent. Dineo, who sat next her, saw that he was next in order, and, without waiting for the queen's command, began as follows:

If I have understood your intention rightly, amorous ladies, we are here to amuse ourselves by telling stories. So long as we achieve that, I think each of us should be allowed to tell the story he thinks most likely to be amusing; and just now the queen said that we could do this. Well, we have heard how Abraham saved his soul through Giannotto di Civignì's good advice, and how Melchisedech defended his money from Saladin's wiles by his wisdom. So, without any fear of censure from you, I am going to tell you briefly how a monk's prudence saved his hide from serious punishment.

In Lunigiana, a district not far from here, there was a monastery which in the past abounded more in monks and sanctity than it does today. Among them was a young monk, whose virility and youth were unsubdued by fasts and vigils. One day he chanced to go out about noon when the other monks were asleep. He was walking round the church by himself—it was in a rather isolated spot—when he saw a very pretty girl, probably the daughter of one of the peasants, who was picking flowers in the meadows. As soon as he saw her, he was violently attacked by carnal desire.

He went up and began talking to her; he got on so well that they came to an understanding, and he took her up to his cell without anyone seeing them. Carried away by overmuch good will, he was enjoying her too vigorously when the Abbot arose from sleep and, as he passed softly by the cell, heard the noise they were making together. To make certain of the voices, the Abbot stopped outside the cell to listen, and realised that a woman was there. At first, he was tempted to make them open the door; then he changed his mind and decided to act differently. So he went back to his own cell to wait until the monk came out.

Now, although the monk was extremely preoccupied with his pleasure and delight in the girl, he thought he heard a shuffling of feet in the dormitory. He looked through a crack and plainly saw the Abbot there listening, which meant that the Abbot knew he had a girl in his cell. This troubled him greatly, for he knew quite well he would be severely punished. However, he did not let the girl see his anxiety, but at once tried to think how he could escape. He hit upon a new scheme, which exactly achieved the end he wanted.

He pretended that he thought he had been long enough with the girl, and said:

"I must go and find some means for you to get away without being seen, so stay here quietly till I get back."

He went out, locking the cell behind him, and went straight to the Abbot's room, as every monk does when he wants to go out. He presented himself to the Abbot, and, putting a good face on things, said:

"Messer, this morning I couldn't get in all the logs needed, so with your permission I am going to the wood to fetch them."

The Abbot thought the monk did not know he had been seen and, glad of the opportunity to enquire more closely into the monk's offence, gave him the key and permission to go out. When the monk had gone, the Abbot began to wonder what he should do next. Should he open the cell in the presence of all the monks for them to see the crime and thereby prevent them from grumbling about him when he punished the monk? Or should he first go and ask the girl how it had happened? It then occurred to him that she might be the wife or daughter of some respect-

able man, whom he would prefer not to hold up to shame before all the monks; so he thought he would see her first, and then decide what to do. He went stealthily to the cell, opened it, went in, and shut the door.

The girl was frightened when she saw the Abbot, felt she would be shamed, and began to cry. Messer Abbot cast his eye upon her, and saw that she was fresh and pretty. Although he was an old man, he suddenly felt the warm stings of the flesh, just as the young monk had, and said to himself:

“Ah now, why shouldn't I take a little pleasure when I can get it? I have enough worry and trouble every day, without adding this. She's a pretty girl, and no one knows she's here. If I can persuade her to pleasure me, I don't know why I shouldn't do so. Who's to know? Nobody will ever know it—and sin hidden is half forgiven. This chance may never happen again. I think him a wise man who can pick his own pleasure from what God sends to others.”

Having entirely changed his mind in this way, he went nearer to the girl, gently comforted her and begged her not to cry. So, going from one thing to another, he finally expressed his desires.

The girl was not made of iron or adamant, and willingly yielded to the Abbot's pleasure. When he had fondled and kissed her, he lay down on the monk's bed. It may be that he thought of the weight of his own dignity, and the girl's tender age, and was afraid to lay too much weight on her; in any case, he did not lie on her breast but made her lie on his, and for a long time enjoyed himself with her.

Meanwhile the monk, after pretending to go to the wood, had hidden himself in the dormitory, and saw the Abbot enter the cell alone. Completely reassured, he felt that his little plan would succeed; and when he heard the Abbot lock the door, he was quite sure of it. He left his hiding-place, and through a crack heard and saw all the Abbot said and did.

When the Abbot thought he had had enough of the girl, he locked her in the cell and went back to his own room. A little later he saw the monk and thought he had come back from the wood. The Abbot's plan was to reprimand him severely, and imprison him, to enjoy the well-earned prize all to himself. Therefore he called the monk up, frowned

on him, severely reprimanded him, and ordered him to be imprisoned. But the monk promptly replied:

“Messer, I have not been long enough in the Order of Saint Benedict to know every particular connected with it; you did not tell me that monks should humble themselves beneath women, as with fasts and vigils. But now you have showed me, I promise you, if I am forgiven this time, that I will not go wrong again here, but will always do exactly as I saw you do.”

The Abbot was a sharp fellow and saw at once that the monk was smarter than he was, and moreover had seen what he did. Remorseful at his own slip, he was ashamed to give the monk a punishment he deserved himself. So he pardoned him and told him to say nothing about what he had seen. He had the girl secretly sent out of the monastery, and it may be well supposed that he often had her brought back.

Fifth Tale

WITH A DINNER OF FOWLS AND A FEW WITTY WORDS THE MARCHIONESS OF MONFERRATO REPRESSES THE KING OF FRANCE'S INDECENT PASSION FOR HER

THE tale told by Dioneo at first pricked the hearts of the listening ladies with a little modest shame, which appeared by their chaste blushes. But, as they glanced at each other, they could scarcely keep from laughing. However, they smiled to themselves as they listened. When the tale was finished, the queen reproved him with a few gentle words, just to show him that such tales should not be told before ladies, and then, turning to Fiammetta who sat next him on the grass, commanded her to follow on in her turn. So with a cheerful look she gracefully began:

I am glad that in our tales we have begun to show the power of quick and witty retorts. Now, in men it is always wise to love women of better

families than themselves; and in women it is prudent to know how to preserve themselves from the love of men of higher station than they are. So it has occurred to me, fair ladies, to show you in the tale I have to tell how a gentlewoman saved herself by her action and words from such a man, and sent him off.

The Marquess of Monferrato, Standard-bearer to the Church, was a man of great valour, and went overseas with the army of the Crusaders. There was talk of his bravery at the Court of Philip the One-eyed, who was preparing to leave France on the same Crusade. One of the knights said there was not another couple under the stars like the Marquess and his wife; for, just as the Marquess excelled all knights in courage, so did his wife exceed all other ladies in beauty and virtue.

These words entered the King of France's mind so deeply that, although he had never seen her, he fell violently in love with her, and made up his mind that he would sail from nowhere but Genoa. If he went to that port by land he would have a reasonable pretext for going to see the Marchioness; and, as the husband was away, he thought he would be able to get what he wanted from her.

He proceeded to carry out his plan. He sent his army on ahead, and started out himself with only a few gentlemen. When he was one day's march from the Marquess's lands, he sent to tell the lady that he meant to dine with her next day. The lady, who was prudent and wise, cheerfully answered that she considered it a very great honour, and that he would be welcome. Then she began to wonder why a King should come to visit her when her husband was away. Nor was she wrong when she concluded that he was attracted by the fame of her beauty.

However, as she was a great lady, she determined to show him all honour, and called together all the eminent men remaining with her to make all suitable arrangements with their advice. But she reserved to herself the banquet and the food. Without delay she got together all the fowls in the countryside, and ordered her cooks to use them only for the different courses at the royal banquet.

The King arrived at the time appointed, and the lady received him with all honour and rejoicing. When he observed her, he found that she

was far more beautiful and virtuous and polite than the knight had said. He marvelled at her, and praised her highly; and, finding that the lady was so much more excellent than he had imagined, his desires increased proportionately. He then went to take his repose in apartments richly furnished with everything necessary for a King's reception. When dinner time came, the King and the Marchioness sat down together at one table, and the rest, according to their rank, were served at other tables.

Here the King was highly delighted, for he was served successively with many courses and the finest wines, while in addition he kept gazing at the beautiful Marchioness with the greatest pleasure. However, as one course succeeded another, the King began to wonder, for however differently they were served up, they were all made of chicken. He knew that the country round about must be filled with game, and, since he had warned the lady that he was coming, there had been plenty of time to hunt and shoot. He marvelled so much at this, that he wanted to make her talk about nothing but her fowls, and so turned to her gaily, saying:

"Why, Madam, are there only hens and no cocks born in this part of the country?"

The Marchioness perfectly understood what he meant, and felt that, just as she had wished, God had given her an opportunity to show the King her intentions. So, at the King's question, she turned bravely upon him and said:

"No, Sire, but the women are the same here as elsewhere, although they may differ in clothes and rank."

When the King heard her words, he understood the reason for the banquet of fowls and the virtue hidden in her words. He realised that words would be useless with such a woman, and he could not use force. And since he had so incautiously flamed up for her, the wisest thing to do for his own honour would be to extinguish this unlucky fire of passion. So he continued his dinner with no hope of success, and did not attempt to jest further with her, for he was afraid of her retorts. To cover up the cause of his unseemly visit by a swift departure, he thanked her immediately after dinner for the honour she had done him, commended her to God, and departed at once for Genoa.

Sixth Tale

A WORTHY MAN CENSURES THE VILE HYPOCRISY OF THE CLERGY WITH A JEST WORTHY OF PRAISE AND LAUGHTER

THEY all praised the Marchioness's virtue and her pretty slap at the King of France. Emilia, who sat next to Fiammetta, at the queen's pleasure, began cheerfully to speak.

I mean to tell you how an honest layman scored off a grasping monk with a jest worthy your praise and laughter.

Not long ago, my dear friends, there lived in our city a Minor Friar, attached to the Inquisition. Although he pretended to be a holy man and a tender lover of the Christian faith—as they all do—he was a no less expert Inquisitor of those with fat purses than of those that were lukewarm in the faith. He happened to come upon a good man, with more money than sense, who, out of no disrespect to the faith, but possibly a little warm with wine or overmuch merriment, thoughtlessly remarked in company that he had a better wine than Christ himself ever had drunk. This came to the ears of the Inquisitor, who knew the man's farms were large and his purse fat. So he descended upon the poor man with sword and staves and brought a serious charge against him, not so much with the idea of strengthening his faith by the Holy Inquisition as of filling his own hand with the man's money; which he succeeded in doing.

He called the man before him and asked him if the charge made against him were true. The poor man said "Yes," and explained how it happened. And the Inquisitor, a most holy man, greatly devoted to Saint George Goldbeard, answered:

"So you made Christ a drinker and a judge of good wines, as if he were a swashbuckler or one of your drunken sots and tavern-mates? And now you speak humbly and try to prove that it was of no importance. It's far worse than you think. If I treated you as you deserve, you would be burned at the stake."

With a fierce countenance he spoke these and other words to the poor

man, as if the fellow had been Epicurus denying the immortality of the soul. In short, he so terrified the man that, by the aid of certain mediators he anointed the monk's palms with a large quantity of Saint George Goldbeard's grease (which vastly calms that malady of pestilent avarice which afflicts the clergy, and particularly the Minor Friars who are forbidden to touch money) and thereby persuaded the Inquisitor to deal mercifully with him. Although this ointment is nowhere mentioned by Galen in his treatise on medicine, yet it is so potent that the threatened stake was graciously changed into a cross. This was made of yellow on black, as if they were giving him a banner to go on a Crusade. In addition, after the money was paid, the Inquisitor kept the man by him for a few days; then, as penitence, made him go every morning to hear Mass in Santa Croce and appear before the Inquisitor at meal time. After which, he was free to do as he pleased for the remainder of the day.

All this he diligently performed, and one morning at Mass he heard the Gospel sung, containing the words: "You shall receive a hundred for one, and possess eternal life." These words stuck in his mind. Later on, according to his orders, he went to the Inquisitor at meal time, and found him dining. The Inquisitor asked if he had heard Mass that morning.

"Messer, yes," he replied promptly.

Then said the Inquisitor:

"Did you hear anything which raised any doubts in you, anything you would like to enquire about?"

"Indeed," replied the good man, "I doubted nothing that I heard, and I believe firmly that it is all true. But I heard one thing which filled me with the greatest pity for you and all other friars, on account of the sad plight you will be in when you get into the next world."

Said the Inquisitor:

"What was it you heard that made you pity us?"

"Messer," replied the good man, "it was the sentence from the Gospel, which says: 'You shall receive a hundred for one.'"

"That's true," said the Inquisitor. "But why did it trouble you?"

"Messer," replied the good man, "I will tell you. Since I have been coming here, every day I see the poor people outside are given one or two large

cauldrons of soup, which are simply the leavings of the other friars and yourself. So, if you are to receive a hundred for every one of these, you will get so much soup that you will all be drowned.”

All those at the Inquisitor's table laughed at this, but the Inquisitor was enraged, for he felt it was a stab at their thick-soup hypocrisy. And the Inquisitor would have started another suit against him, if he had not already been blamed for bringing the first one—simply because the man had amusingly scored off him and other lazy rogues. And so in a rage he told the man to go about his business and not show his face there again.

Seventh Tale

WITH A TALE ABOUT PRIMASSO AND THE ABBOT OF CLUNY,
BERGAMINO WITTILY SATIRISES THE AVARICE WHICH HAD BE-
GUN TO APPEAR IN MESSER CANE DELLA SCALA

EMILIA's manner and the tale she told made the queen and the others laugh, and praise the jest of the man dressed out with a cross. But when the laughter was ended and everyone was silent, Filostrato, whose turn to speak came next, began thus:

To hit a fixed mark, virtuous ladies, is good, but when something unexpected suddenly appears and is brought down by an archer, then the shot is almost marvellous. The foul and scandalous life of the clergy, a sure sign of rottenness in many things, gives an easy opportunity for talk, satire and reproof to anyone who likes to take the trouble. I approve the good man who hit at the Inquisitor by way of the hypocritical charity of the friars, who give the poor what ought to be thrown away or fed to the pigs. But I think more praise is due to the man I am going to tell you about, of whom I was reminded by the last tale. By means of an amusing tale which put what he wanted to say into other persons' mouths, he satirised Messer Cane della Scala, a magnificent lord who had

suddenly and unwontedly become miserly. And this was how he did it.

As almost everyone in the world knows Messer Cane della Scala was favoured by Fortune in many things, and was one of the greatest and most magnificent lords known in Italy since the Emperor Frederick II. Now, he had arranged to give a wonderful feast in Verona, and many people, especially all sorts of Courtiers, came from all parts to it. Suddenly, for some reason, he changed his mind, and sent all these people away after he had compensated them. There was a man named Bergamino, whose wit and ready tongue will hardly be believed by those who did not know him. He alone remained without receiving any compensation or permission to leave, but in hopes that this would be of some future use to him. But Messer Cane had taken it into his head that anything given to Bergamino was as much wasted as if it had been thrown into the fire; and therefore said nothing to him directly or indirectly.

Some days passed and Bergamino saw he was not sent for or required for any service, while his horses and servants and himself were spending all his money at his inn. This made him very melancholy, but he continued to stay on, thinking it better not to leave. He had brought with him three handsome suits of clothes, given him by other lords so that he could cut a figure at their feasts. When the landlord of the inn insisted on payment, Bergamino gave him one of these suits. He stayed on, and had to give another suit to the landlord to pay his expenses. Finally, he was living on the third suit, and made up his mind that he would stay as long as it lasted, to see what might happen, and then depart.

While he was living on his third suit, and looking very gloomy, he happened one day to be in the presence of Messer Cane, who was at dinner. Messer Cane saw him, and with the idea of sneering at him rather than getting any amusement out of what he might say, remarked:

“What’s the matter, Bergamino? You look very gloomy. Tell us what’s the matter.”

Quite spontaneously, but as skilfully as if he had long thought it out, Bergamino promptly told the following tale relevant to his affairs:

“My Lord, you must know that Primasso was a man very learned in Latin and wrote verses better and more easily than anyone else. These

gifts made him so famous that, although very few people knew him by sight, almost everyone knew the name and fame of Primasso.

"On one occasion he was in Paris. He was poor, as he remained most of his life, for the rich take small interest in learning. He heard much talk of the Abbot of Cluny, who was supposed to be the richest prelate in revenues in the Church, except for the Pope. He heard wonderful and magnificent things about him, how he always kept his court, and how nobody was ever refused food and drink if he went and asked for it when the Abbot was at table. Primasso was a man who liked to see worthy men and lords, and when he heard this he decided to go and see the Abbot's magnificence. He asked how far the Abbot lived from Paris, and was told that it might be about six miles to his house. Primasso thought that if he started out early enough he could get there in time for dinner.

"He enquired the road, but did not find anyone going that way. He was afraid he might lose himself and arrive somewhere else, where a dinner would be harder to find. Therefore he took three bread rolls with him to have something to eat in case this happened, reflecting that you can find water everywhere, although that was a drink that gave him small pleasure. He put the rolls in his gown, started out, and made such good progress that he arrived before dinner.

"He entered and looked about him, and saw a multitude of tables set out and great preparations in the kitchen and other things preparing for dinner. And he said to himself: 'This is really as magnificent as people said.' While he was gazing about him, dinner time arrived, and the Abbot's steward ordered in the water for everyone to wash his hands; after which, they all sat down at table. It happened that Primasso found a seat just by the door, which the Abbot had to come through to the dining hall.

"Now in that Court the custom was to serve no bread and wine or any other food or drink until the Abbot was seated. So when the Steward had arranged the tables, he sent word to the Abbot that dinner awaited his pleasure. The Abbot had the door opened for him to enter the hall, but, as he glanced in, the first man he saw was Primasso, who was ill-dressed and unknown to the Abbot by sight. When the Abbot saw him, an un-

generous thought which had never struck him before, came into his mind; and he said to himself: 'Is that the sort of man who eats my food?' So he turned back and commanded the door to be locked, and asked those about him if they knew who the ruffian was sitting at the table just by the door. And everyone said 'No.'

"Primasso had the appetite of a man who has travelled some distance and is not used to fasting. After waiting a little time for the Abbot, he pulled out one of his three rolls and began to eat. When the Abbot had delayed a while, he told one of his attendants to go and see whether Primasso had left. The attendant replied:

"'No, Messer, he is eating bread which he must have brought with him.'

"Then said the Abbot:

"'Well, he can eat his own, if he has any, but he shan't eat mine today.'

"The Abbot hoped that Primasso would go away on his own, for he did not like to send him away. But when Primasso had eaten one roll, and still the Abbot did not arrive, he began to eat another; and this was told the Abbot, who had sent someone again to see if Primasso had gone.

"Finally, as the Abbot still did not arrive, Primasso having finished the second roll, began on the third. This also was told the Abbot, who began to think to himself:

"'What new idea is this which has come into my mind? Why this avarice and scorn? And for whom? For many years now I have given food to anyone who asked for it, without enquiring whether he was a gentleman or a peasant, rich or poor, a merchant or a swindler. With my own eyes I have seen my food devoured by all sorts of ruffians, yet the thought which came to me about this man never occurred to me. Such avarice would not have attacked me for a nobody; this man I thought a scoundrel must be someone important, since I refused to do him honour.'

"Whereupon he made enquiries and found the man was Primasso, who, having long heard that the Abbot was a great man, had come there on purpose to see the magnificence of which he had heard so much. This made the Abbot feel ashamed, and, desirous to make amends, he strove to

honour Primasso in every way. After a dinner befitting Primasso's honourable condition, the Abbot clothed him nobly, gave him money and a horse, and left him free to stay or depart. Primasso was highly pleased, gave the Abbot the greatest thanks possible, and returned on horseback to Paris whence he had come on foot."

Messer Cane, who was an intelligent lord, needed no further explanation to understand exactly what Bergamino meant. He smiled and said:

"Bergamino, you have skilfully exposed your wrongs, your worth, my avarice, and what you desire of me. I never was attacked by avarice before, but only in your case. But I shall drive it away with the stick you have invented."

Messer Cane paid Bergamino's landlord, most nobly clothed him in one of his own suits, gave him money and a horse, and this time allowed him to stay or leave as he chose.

Eighth Tale

WITH A WITTY SAYING GUIGLIELMO BORSIERE, A COURTIER,
OVERCOMES THE AVARICE OF MESSER ERMINO DE' GRIMALDI

NEXT to Filostrato sat Lauretta who, after listening to the praise of Bergamino's adroitness, realised that it was her turn to speak; so without waiting the order, she began pleasantly to say as follows:

This tale, dearest friends, makes me wish to tell how an excellent courtier similarly, and not without results, attacked the covetousness of a very rich merchant. Although its purpose is like that of the preceding tale, it ought none the less to please you, since good came of it in the end.

Some time ago there lived in Genoa a gentleman named Messer Ermino de' Grimaldi. According to everyone's belief, in wealth and great possessions he vastly surpassed any other rich citizen then known in Italy. Now, just as he excelled every Italian in wealth, so he was more avaricious and miserly than any other miser on earth. He not only kept his purse

shut against other people, but, contrary to the usual custom of the Genoese who like to dress handsomely, he deprived himself of what was needed for his own person, simply to save money. And he did the same with food and drink. So he deservedly lost the surname of Grimaldi, and everybody called him Messer Ermino Miser.

While by spending nothing he was increasing his wealth, there arrived in Genoa one Guiglielmo Borsiere, a valiant, well-bred and witty courtier. He was quite unlike the courtiers of today who, rather than be called courtiers, to their shame, wish to be considered gentlemen and lords in spite of their corrupt and vile habits, when they should rather be called asses, bred in the filth of all the wickedness of the vilest men. Of old, gentlemen were wont to consider it a duty to labour to keep the peace when wars or quarrels occurred between other gentlemen; or they arranged marriages, alliances and friendships, enlivening unhappy persons and amusing the Court with fine and witty remarks; or, like fathers, they earned little that way. But today they speak ill of one another, they sow discord, they say wicked and malevolent things, and, which is worse, perform them in men's sight; they accuse each other of true and false wrongs, shameful things and wickedness. With false allurements they drag gentlemen down to base and wicked things, and devote all their ingenuity to wasting their time. The man who says and does the most abominable things is most beloved and honoured and richly rewarded by these lewd worthless lords. This indeed is a shame and reproach to the modern world and an evident proof that the virtues have departed from us and have left the wretched living to the dregs of vice.

But to return to what I was saying—for my just scorn has led me a little further out of my way than I thought—this Guiglielmo was honoured and eagerly entertained by all the gentlemen of Genoa. After he had remained a few days in the city, he heard so much about Messer Ermino's avarice and miserliness, that he wished to see him.

Messer Ermino had heard the report of Guiglielmo's worth; and since, despite his avarice, he still retained some small spark of honour, he received the gentleman with a cheerful visage and friendly words. They entered upon various discourse and, as they conversed, Messer Ermino

took him and other Genoese there present, to a new house of his which he had had very handsomely built. After he had showed them all over it, he said:

“Messer Guiglielmo, you have heard and seen much of the world; now, can you tell me of something which has never been seen which I can have painted in the hall of my house?”

To this inept speech, Guiglielmo replied:

“Messer, I do not think I can suggest any subject never seen before, unless it were people sneezing or something like that. But, if you wish, I will tell you of something which I believe you have never seen.”

Messer Ermino, not expecting the retort he was bringing down on himself, said:

“Oh, please tell me what it is, I beg you.”

To which Guiglielmo promptly replied: “Paint ‘Liberality’ on the wall.”

When Messer Ermino heard that, he was so much ashamed of himself that the emotion changed his nature from what it had been almost to the contrary, and he said:

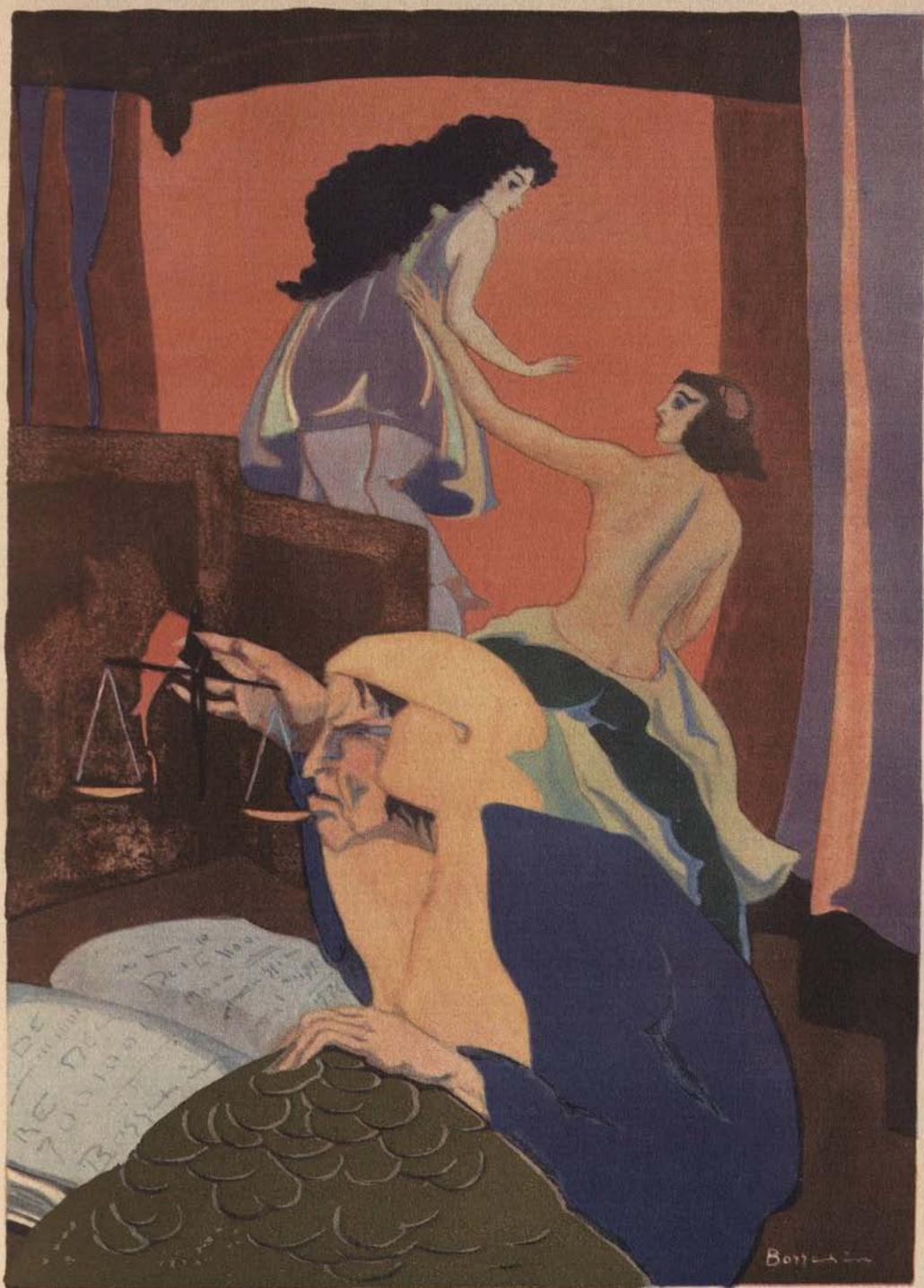
“Messer Guiglielmo, I will have ‘Liberality’ painted in such a manner that neither you nor anyone else will be able to say again that I have not seen and known it.”

Such virtue was in Guiglielmo’s remark that henceforth he became a most liberal and gracious gentleman, entertaining strangers and his own countrymen beyond any man in Genoa.

Ninth Tale

THE KING OF CYPRUS, TAUNTED BY A LADY OF GASCONY,
CHANGES FROM A BAD TO AN ENERGETIC MONARCH

ELISA was the only one left to receive the queen’s command, and, without waiting for it, she began cheerfully.



Fair ladies, it often happens that a remark made accidentally and without design may succeed where various reproofs and much pains have been wasted. This appears plainly from the tale told by Lauretta, and I mean briefly to show you this with another tale. Whoever the speaker may be, these things always rejoice the virtuous and should be heedfully gathered together.

In the reign of the first King of Cyprus, after the conquest of the Holy Land by Godfrey of Boulogne, a gentlewoman of Gascony went on a pilgrimage to the Sepulchre. As she was returning, she was basely raped by certain villains in Cyprus. Having complained without receiving any redress, she thought she would go and complain to the King. But someone told her that she would be wasting her pains, for the King lived a very base and mean life, not only failing to avenge with justice the wrongs done to others, but enduring with shameful cowardice an infinity of insults to himself. So that if anyone was angry, he vented it without causing the King any shame or irritation.

When the lady heard this, she despaired of vengeance, but as some consolation to her woes she thought she would go and taunt the King with his baseness. So she came weeping before him, and said:

“Sire, I have not come to you for vengeance of the wrongs done me, but as some amends for them I beg that you will tell me how you endure those which I hear are done you. In this way I may learn from you patiently to bear my wrong, and, God knows, I would gladly give it to you if I could, since you bear them so well.”

The King, who hitherto had been dull and lazy, seemed to awake from a dream. He began by sharply avenging the injury done this lady, and from that time forward became very severe in punishing those who did anything contrary to the honour of his crown.

Tenth Tale

MASTER ALBERTO DA BOLOGNA MODESTLY SHAMES A LADY WHO HAD TRIED TO DO THE SAME TO HIM WHEN SHE SAW HE WAS IN LOVE WITH HER

WHEN Elisa was silent, it fell to the queen to tell the last tale; and she, in a womanly fashion, began to speak as follows:

Young and virtuous ladies, even as the stars in the bright cloudless sky are the ornaments of heaven, even as the spring flowers to the green meadows, so are graceful jests to good manners and pleasing conversation. And since they are brief, they are more befitting women than men. Much and long speech (especially when it might be avoided) is far more unseemly in women than in men. Nowadays few or no women understand a witty thing, or if they do understand it, do not know how to reply. This is a disgrace to us and all living women. That which the women of the past possessed in their minds, is placed by modern women in the ornaments of the body. She whose clothes are most variegated and striped, with most ornaments, feels she ought to be much more esteemed and honoured than other women, forgetting that if such things were put on an ass it could carry far more than any of them, and yet be esteemed no more than an ass.

I am ashamed to say this, for I cannot speak against other women without speaking against myself. These dressed-up, painted, gaudy things either stand mute and senseless as marble statues, or, if questioned, make such answers that would do much better to remain silent. And they pretend that this ignorance of how to talk with ladies and men of worth is the result of purity of soul. Their stupidity they call modesty, as if the only modest women were those who talk with their maid or their washer-woman or the baker's wife. If Nature had meant this, as they pretend, she would have nipped short their chattering altogether.

True it is that here, as in other matters, we must consider time and place and the person with whom we talk. For it often happens that a

woman or a man tries to make someone blush by a witty jest; but, having misjudged the other person's powers, she finds the blush she tried to put on another is put on her. So, that you may learn to take heed and, moreover, not verify the common proverb which says that women always choose the worst in everything, I mean to instruct you by means of to-day's last tale, which it is my turn to tell. And I shall show you how we may excel other women in nobility of soul as well as in good manners.

Not many years ago there lived in Bologna—and perhaps still lives—a great and famous doctor named Master Alberto. He was nearly seventy years old, but such was the nobility of his spirit that, although nearly all the natural heat had left his body, he did not reject the flames of love. One day at a feast he saw a beautiful widow whose name, according to some, was Madonna Malgherida de' Ghisolieri. She was most pleasing to him, and he received these love-flames in his elderly bosom as if he had been a young man; so much so that he could not sleep well at night unless during the day he had seen the lovely and delicate face of his beautiful lady.

To this end he was continually passing in front of the lady's house, afoot or on horseback, whenever the opportunity arose; and she and other ladies naturally perceived the reason of his going to and fro. They often laughed together to see a man so old in years and wisdom fallen in love, as if they thought the delicious passion of love should only dwell in the foolish minds of young men, and nowhere else.

Master Alberto continued to pass in front of the house, and one feast day when the widow and other ladies were seated at her door, they saw Master Alberto in the distance coming towards them. So they proposed that they should receive and entertain him, and afterwards jest at him for being in love. They all stood up and invited him in. He was taken to a cool courtyard and served with sweetmeats and the finest wines. Finally they asked him as gently and politely as possible how he could be in love with such a beautiful lady when he knew she was beloved by numerous handsome, courteous and witty young men.

The Doctor at once saw they were quietly making fun of him, and with a cheerful countenance replied:

"Madonna, no wise person should be surprised that I am in love, especially with you who are so deserving of love. And although old men are naturally lacking in the powers required for amorous exercises, they are not lacking in good will or in judgment as to whom they should love; for since they are more experienced, they have more knowledge than young men. I am an old man in love with a woman who is beloved by many young men; and this is why I feel hopeful about it. I have often seen women at lunch, eating lentils and leeks; and although leeks are not very good, still the bulb portion is the least unpleasant and the most agreeable to the taste. Now, you women have such perverse appetites that you hold the bulb in your hands and eat the leaves, which are not only worthless but taste unpleasant. Well, Madonna, how do I know that you will not do exactly the same in choosing a lover? If you did so, I should be the chosen lover, and the others would be sent about their business."

The lady, as well as all the others present, felt greatly ashamed, and said:

"Doctor, you have well and courteously punished our presumptuous attempt. Yet your love is dear to me, for it is the love of a wise and good man. Therefore, save for my honour, you may command me in all things."

The Doctor arose with the company, thanked the lady, cheerfully took leave of her, and departed.

In this way, by not being careful to estimate the man she was jesting at, the lady, in trying to bring him down, was herself brought down. And if you are wise, you will yourselves take care to avoid doing this.

When the ladies and the three young men had finished their tales, the sun was declining towards evening and the heat much less. So the queen said gaily:

"And now, dear companions, there is nothing left for me to do during today's reign save to provide you with a new queen, who will arrange our lives and hers tomorrow in all such virtuous amusements as she thinks fit. My reign should last until night, but those who have no time beforehand cannot well prepare what is to come; so, I think the future days should

begin at this hour, to give the new queen time to prepare what she thinks fitting for the morrow. Therefore that most discreet young lady, Filomena, shall be queen of our kingdom tomorrow and guide us for our own amusement and in reverence to Him through Whom all things live."

So saying, she arose, put off her garland and reverently placed it on Filomena, saluting her first as queen, followed by the other ladies and young men, who cheerfully submitted themselves to her rule.

Filomena modestly blushed a little when she found herself crowned, but remembering the words just uttered by Pampinea, she plucked up courage and, in order not to be remiss, first confirmed all the orders given by Pampinea, then arranged for the following morning and the supper that was to come. After which she said:

"Most dear companions, although Pampinea has made me your queen—more from her courtesy than my worth—I do not intend to follow my own judgment alone, but yours also, in arranging our life together. I shall tell you in a few words what I intend to do, and you can make any alterations you choose. If I have rightly observed Pampinea's arrangements for today, they are both praiseworthy and pleasant. So, unless they become tedious by repetition or for some other reason, I do not think they should be altered.

"Let us continue in the way we have begun. We will first get up from here and amuse ourselves. When the sun is setting we will dine in the open air and then, after a few songs and other pleasures, we shall do well to go to bed. Tomorrow, we will get up early, and walk somewhere for our pleasure, everyone to his choice. Then, at the proper time, we will come back for lunch, and afterwards dance. After the siesta, we will do as we did today, and tell stories, which seems to me equally useful and pleasant.

"Pampinea was elected queen so late that she could not limit our tales to a given subject, as I intend to do. This will give time for each of you to think of a good tale about the subject agreed on. Now, since the beginning of the world people have been led by Fortune into various adventures, and will be until the world ends. So each is to tell a tale about someone who after passing through various adventures reaches a happy end he had not hoped for."



The ladies and the men all praised this command and agreed to follow it. But when the others were silent, Dioneo said:

"Madonna, I agree with what the others have said, that the order you have just given is commendable and pleasant. But as a special grace I ask one privilege, which I want to enjoy as long as we are together. I ask that I shall not be compelled by this law to tell a tale on the given subject if I do not want to, but to take any subject I like. And so that no one may suppose I ask this grace because I am short of tales, I am quite willing that henceforth I shall always be the last to speak."

The queen knew he was a gay and amusing man, and also knew that he only asked this with a view to livening up the party with a merry tale if they grew tired of the same subject; and so, with the others' consent, gladly gave him this permission.

They then arose from their seats and walked slowly towards a stream of the clearest water, which flowed down a slope into a valley shaded with many trees, among natural rocks and green plants. Bare-footed and with naked arms, they amused themselves in the water. And when supper time drew near, they returned to the house, and supped gaily.

After supper, musical instruments were brought and the queen ordered Lauretta to dance and Emilia to sing a song, accompanied by Dioneo on the lute. In obedience to which Lauretta immediately began to dance and Emilia tenderly sang the following song:

*"So much my beauty doth delight me, I shall never heed another love,
nor seek delight therein.*

*Whenever I gaze upon that mirrored beauty I behold the sovereign good
which charms the mind; and no new hap or ancient thought can
cheat me of this dear delight. What other lovely thing could I behold
to waken new delight within my heart?*

*This good flies not whenever I desire once more to gaze upon my solace;
and to my pleasure this beauty is so delicate no words may speak it,
and no mortal ever comprehend, save those who burn with like de-
light.*

*Each hour, the more I fix my sight upon this loveliness, the more I burn;
I give it all myself, yield myself wholly, enjoying now all it has
promised me, and greater joy I trust shall soon be mine, that never
such delight was felt by any."*

All gaily responded to this song, though some pondered greatly over its words. After they had spent part of the night with other songs, the queen was pleased to put an end to the First Day. Torches were lighted, and she ordered everyone to rest until the next day. And so all went to their bedrooms.

END OF THE FIRST DAY

The Second Day

HERE BEGINS THE SECOND DAY OF THE *DECAMERON*, WHEREIN, UNDER THE RULE OF FILOMENA, STORIES ARE TOLD OF THOSE WHO AFTER PASSING THROUGH VARIOUS ADVENTURES REACH A HAPPY END THEY HAD NOT HOPED FOR

THE SUN had already brought in a new day with his light, and the birds singing their pleasant verses among the green boughs bore witness thereof to men's ears, when the ladies and the three young men arose and went into the garden. There, with slow steps treading the dewy grass, they wove fair garlands, and for a long time walked for their delight. And as they had spent the previous day, so did they spend this. For having eaten in the open air, they danced, and then went to their siesta; and waking about the hour of Nones, as the queen had ordered, they went out to the greensward and sat down round about her.

Crowned with her garland the queen was beautiful and pleasant to look upon. And as they all gazed at her where she sat, she ordered Neifile to begin the first tale. And she, without making any excuse, gaily began to speak.

First Tale

MARTELLINO PRETENDS TO BE A CRIPPLE AND FEIGNS THAT HE IS CURED BY THE BODY OF SAINT ARRIGO. HIS DECEIT IS DISCOVERED AND HE IS BEATEN; HE IS ARRESTED AND IN DANGER OF BEING HANGED BY THE NECK, BUT FINALLY ESCAPES

Most dear ladies, it often happens that he who tries to mock others—especially in those matters which should be revered—often finds that he is mocked himself to his own hurt. To obey the queen and to start on the subject proposed with my tale, I mean to tell about one of our own

citizens, and how things first fell out most unpleasantly for him but afterwards, contrary to his hopes, very luckily.

Not long ago there lived in Treviso a German named Arrigo. He was very poor, and hired himself out as a porter. But he was a man of most holy life and everyone thought him a good man. Whether this was so or not, the people of Treviso say that when he was dying the bells in the largest church of Treviso began to ring miraculously, untouched by human hand.

Considering this a miracle, they all said Arrigo was a saint. And all the people of the town went in a crowd to the house where his body lay, and bore it to their principal church as if it were a saint's body. Then they brought the lame and the blind and the crippled and everyone else diseased or deformed, almost all of whom became well when they touched Arrigo's body.

During this tumult and concourse of the people, three of our fellow countrymen happened to be in Treviso, whose names were Stecchi, Martellino and Marchese. These men were mummers, and went about to the courts of great lords, amusing people by acting and mimicking others. This was their first visit to Treviso, and they were greatly surprised to see everybody running about. When they heard the reason they wanted to go and see what was happening. So they left their baggage at an inn, and Marchese said:

"We want to see this Saint, but I don't see how we can get to see him. I am told the square is full of Swiss and other troops, placed there by the Lord of this city to prevent riots. Moreover, according to what they say, the church itself is so full of people that hardly anyone else can enter."

Martellino, who loved to look at things, then said:

"Don't let that worry you. I'll find some way to reach the Saint's body."

Said Marchese:

"How?"

And Martellino replied:

"I'll tell you. I will pretend to be a cripple. You and Stecchi will sup-

port me on either side as if I couldn't walk, and you will pretend to be taking me for the Saint to cure. Everyone who sees us will make way and let us pass."

This idea greatly pleased Marchese and Stecchi. Without delay they left the inn all three, and found a lonely place; there Martellino contorted his hands, fingers, arms and legs, and his eyes, mouth and whole face as well, until he was a fearful sight. Anyone who saw him would have said that he was really crippled in his whole person. Marchese and Stecchi took him up and went towards the church, with visages full of piety, asking everyone humbly and for the love of God to make way for them; which they easily obtained.

Everyone stared at them and almost everyone kept shouting, "Make way, make way!"; and so they came to Saint Arrigo's body. Martellino was lifted up and laid on the Saint's body for him to receive the gift of health.

Everyone gazed at Martellino to see what would happen. Martellino, who knew exactly what he was about, began to straighten out first a finger, then a hand, then one of his arms, and finally his whole body. When the people saw this they made such a clamour in honour of Saint Arrigo that you could not have heard a roll of thunder.

Now there happened to be present a Florentine who knew Martellino quite well, but had not recognised him when he was brought in so deformed. But when Martellino straightened himself out, the man recognised him and began to laugh, saying:

"God damn the man! Seeing him come in like that, who would not have believed that he was really crippled?"

Some of the people of Treviso heard what he said, and immediately asked:

"Why! Wasn't he a cripple?"

To which the Florentine replied:

"No, by God's grace! He has always been as well as any one of us. But, as you have just seen, he is more skilful than anyone in playing monkey-tricks and contorting himself into any shape he chooses."

When they heard this, it was quite enough. They forced a way forward, shouting:

"He's a traitor, a mocker of God and the Saints! He wasn't a cripple! He pretended to be a cripple to scorn us and our Saint!"

So saying, they seized him and dragged him away, pulled him by the hair, tore the clothes off his back, and began to punch and kick him. And everyone present who thought himself a man took his whack at him. Martellino shrieked for mercy in the name of God and defended himself as best he could. Useless—the crowd only grew thicker.

When Stecchi and Marchese saw this they began to think that things were going wrong, and fearing for their own skins, were in no hurry to help him. So they shouted, "Kill him!" with the rest of the people, but tried to think how they could get him out of the hands of the mob. They would certainly have killed him, if Marchese had not invented a plan. The whole of the police-forces were there outside, and Marchese made his way as quickly as he could to the Podestà, and said:

"Help, for God's sake. A thief has cut off my purse with a hundred gold florins in it. Come and seize him, and get me my money back."

As soon as they heard this, about a dozen sergeants rushed off to where the luckless Martellino was being carded without combs, beat off the mob with the greatest difficulty, snatched him all broken and bruised from their hands, and took him to the palace. Thither he was followed by many who considered he had mocked them; but, hearing he had been arrested as a cut-purse, they thought this a good way of harming him, and so they all began to say he had stolen their purses.

The police magistrate was a rough fellow, and when he heard this, he had Martellino brought in at once and began to question him. Martellino answered him with jests, as if he had been arrested for nothing. This angered the judge so much that he ordered him to be bound on the rack and given several good turns to make him confess to what they said in order to hang him up by the neck. When he was laid on the ground, the judge asked him if what he was charged with was true. And since it was useless to say no, he said:

“My lord, I am ready to confess the truth; but if you will order each person who accuses me to say when and where I took his purse, I will tell you which I took and which I did not take.”

Said the judge:

“I am content.”

He called some of them up, and one said that Martellino had cut his purse a week before, another six days, another four days, and some said that very day.

Hearing this, Martellino said:

“My lord, they all lie in their throats. And I can give you a proof that what I say is true, for I was never in this country before, and only arrived here a very short time ago. As soon as I arrived, as ill luck would have it, I went to see the Saint’s body, where I was beaten and scratched as you may see. That I speak truth may be verified by the official who interviews foreigners, and by his book, and by the inn landlord. Now if I speak truth you will surely not have me tortured and killed at the instigation of these base fellows.”

While things were in this state, Marchese and Stecchi perceived that the judge was dealing harshly with Martellino and putting him on the rack. They were alarmed and said to themselves: “We’ve done this badly; we’ve pulled him out of the frying-pan into the fire.” While their attention was wholly given up to this, they came upon their landlord, and told him what had happened. He laughed heartily at it, and took them to one Sandro Agolanti, a man living in Treviso who had great influence with the Governor, to whom he told the whole story, begging him with the others to interest himself in Martellino’s affair.

After much laughter, Sandro went off to the Governor, and asked that Martellino should be sent for; which was done. Those who went for him found him still in his shirt before the judge, bewildered and terrified because the judge would not listen to any excuse. Perhaps he hated the Florentines, for he had made up his mind to hang Martellino, and refused to give him up to the Governor, until he was compelled to yield against his will. When Martellino came before the Governor, he related exactly all that had happened, and begged as a supreme favour that he should

be allowed to go away, "For," said he, "until I get back to Florence I shall always feel that halter round my neck." The Governor laughed extremely at all that had occurred, and gave them each a suit of clothes. Thus, beyond all their hopes, all three escaped this great danger and returned home safe and sound.

Second Tale

RINALDO D'ASTI IS ROBBED, COMES TO CASTEL GUIGLIELMO, IS SHELTERED BY A WIDOW, RECOVERS WHAT HE HAD LOST, AND GOES HOME SAFE AND SOUND

THE ladies laughed greatly at Neifile's account of Martellino's misfortunes, and among the young men Filostrato was most amused. As he sat next to Neifile, the queen commanded him to tell the next tale. And he began without any delay.

Fair ladies, the tale I am about to tell you concerns the duties of a Catholic; it is composed partly of misfortunes and partly of love; and to hear it may be useful to you, especially to those who travel love's debatable lands, wherein, if they have not said their prayer to Saint Giuliano, they may find a good bed but a bad lodging.

In the days of the Marquess Azzo da Ferrara, a merchant named Rinaldo d'Asti came to Bologna on business. He was returning home after completing his business when, on the road from Ferrara to Verona he fell in with some pretended merchants, who in fact were highwaymen and men of base life and condition, whom he incautiously talked to and allowed to accompany him.

They saw he was a merchant and supposed he must have money upon him; and so they determined to rob him at the first opportunity. To prevent any suspicion in him, they pretended to be modest, well-conditioned men, went along talking about honesty and fair dealing, and as far as

they knew how, acted courteously and modestly towards him. And he believed that he was very fortunate to have met them, since he was alone with only one servant on horseback. As they went along talking of one thing and another, the conversation fell upon the subject of what prayers men make to God; and one of the three highwaymen said to Rinaldo:

“And what prayer do you make, Sir, when you are on a journey?”

To which Rinaldo replied:

“Indeed, I am a rough and awkward man in such matters and I know very few prayers; I live in the old-fashioned way. But still when I am travelling, every morning when I leave my inn I say an Our Father and a Hail Mary for the souls of Saint Giuliano’s father and mother; and then I pray God and Saint Giuliano to give me a good lodging that night. And it has often happened to me when travelling that I have been in great danger, and yet have escaped and reached a good lodging for the night. And I firmly believe that Saint Giuliano, in whose honour I tell this, has begged this grace for me from God; and if I did not pray to him in the morning I do not think I should travel well by day nor lodge well at night.”

And the highwayman said:

“Did you say your prayer today?”

And Rinaldo replied:

“I did indeed.”

Then he, who knew how things would turn out, said to himself: “You’ll need it; for if I’m not mistaken, you’ll spend the night in rather a bad inn.” But aloud he said:

“I have travelled a lot myself, but I never say that prayer though I have often heard it recommended; however, I have always come to a good lodging. And perhaps this very evening you will see which of us two has the better lodging—you who say the prayer or I who do not. But it’s true that instead of your prayer I say the ‘Dirupisti’ or the ‘Intemerata’ or the ‘De profundi’ which, as my grandmother used to tell me, are very useful prayers.”

Thus talking they went on their way, awaiting time and place to carry out their base plot. When they came to a ford near Castel Guig-

lielmo they saw the place was deserted and the hour late; so they fell upon him, robbed him, and left him afoot in nothing but his shirt. And as they departed, they said:

“Go, and if your Saint Giuliano gives you a good lodging tonight, remember ours will give us a good one too.”

And they crossed the ford, and rode away. When Rinaldo's servant saw his master attacked, like a base fellow he did nothing to help him, but turned his horse round and rode hard till he came to Castel Guiglielmo. He entered the town, and without further ado, went to an inn. The weather was very cold and it began to snow. Rinaldo was barefoot and in nothing but his shirt, and did not know what to do. Night was coming on, he was shivering, his teeth were chattering, so he began to look about for some shelter where he could pass the night without perishing of cold. He saw none, for war had passed over that country not long before and everything had been burned. Urged by the cold, he set off at a jog-trot in the direction of Castel Guiglielmo, not knowing whether his servant had fled there or elsewhere, but hoping that if he could enter the town God would send him some help.

The darkness of night fell on him when he was still about a mile from the town, and when he arrived there it was so late that the drawbridges were raised and the gates shut, and he could not enter. Weeping and in despair he looked about for some shelter from the snow at least, and saw a house built on the town wall and jutting out a little. He determined to shelter under this pent-house until dawn. Under the pent-house he found a locked door, and, gathering together some straw, he lay down on it, complaining frequently to Saint Giuliano that all this was a poor return for his faith in the Saint. But Saint Giuliano had an eye on him, and soon found him a better lodging.

In this town there lived a widow of great beauty whom the Marquess Azzo loved more than life itself and kept there for his pleasure. And this lady lived in the house under whose pent Rinaldo had taken shelter. The Marquess had come there that day to lie with the lady, and she had secretly provided a bath and a good dinner for him. Everything was ready, and she was awaiting the Marquess, when a messenger arrived at the gate

bringing news which compelled him to go to horse at once. He sent a message to the lady, and immediately rode away. The lady was somewhat displeased, and not knowing what to do, decided to take a bath herself, have dinner and go to bed. And so she got into the bath.

The bath was near the doorway where the unhappy Rinaldo was lying outside on the ground, and, while the lady was bathing, she heard Rinaldo complaining, and his teeth chattering with a noise like a stork's bill. Calling her maid-servant, she said:

"Go and look at the man in the doorway outside the wall, see who he is and what he is doing."

The maid went and saw in the dim light a shivering man sitting there bare-footed and in his shirt. She asked him who he was. Rinaldo was shivering so much that he could scarcely utter the words, but in a few words he managed to tell who he was and how and why he happened to be there. And then he piteously besought her not to leave him there all night to die of cold.

The maid felt sorry for him, went back to her mistress and told her everything. The widow also pitied him, and, remembering there was a key to the door which the Marquess sometimes used to enter secretly, she said:

"Go and open the door for him. Here is a dinner and nobody to eat it, and we can easily find room for him."

The maid highly commended her mistress's charity, went down and opened the door and brought him in. The lady saw he was nearly frozen, and said to him:

"Quick, good man, get into that bath—it's still warm."

Without waiting any further invitation he gladly did so, and, as he felt the warmth reviving him, it was as if he were coming back from death to life. The lady lent him some clothes of her husband, who had recently died, and when Rinaldo put them on, they fitted him as if they had been made for him. While waiting the lady's next orders, he thanked God and Saint Giuliano for saving him from the bad night he had been dreading and for bringing him to what seemed like a good lodging.

The lady rested a little and ordered a large fire to be lighted in her main room. When she came down to it, she asked what kind of a man he was. And the maid said:

"Madonna, he has dressed himself, and he's a good-looking man, and seems well-mannered and a gentleman."

"Go then," said the lady, "and call him, and tell him to come up by the fire here and dine, for I know he has had no dinner."

Rinaldo entered the room, and, seeing the lady (apparently of quality), respectfully greeted her and gave her his warmest thanks for the favour she did him. The lady observed him and thought the maid was right about him; so she received him gaily, sat down by the fireside with him, and questioned him about his misfortune. And Rinaldo told her everything that had happened.

The lady believed what he said, for she had heard something about it, through Rinaldo's servant having come to the town. She told him what she knew about his servant, and that he could easily find the man next day. And when the table was ready Rinaldo and the lady washed their hands and, at her invitation, sat down to dinner.

Rinaldo was a tall man, handsome, with a pleasant face and good manners, in the prime of life. The lady kept throwing appreciative glances at him, and as her carnal desire had already been made lively by the prospect of the Marquess's lying with her, she let it occupy her mind.

When they left the table after dinner, she asked the maid whether, since the Marquess had abandoned her, she might not enjoy the gift which Fortune had sent her. The maid perceived the lady's desire, and urged her to gratify it; so the lady returned to the fireside where she had left Rinaldo seated alone, and, gazing amorously at him, said:

"Come, Rinaldo, why do you sit there so pensive? Are you so much worried by the loss of a horse and a few clothes? Console yourself and cheer up, you are in your own house here. I meant to tell you before, that when I see you here in my husband's clothes, you seem like him, and a hundred times tonight I have wanted to embrace and kiss you; which I should certainly have done, if I had not been afraid of displeasing you."

Hearing these words and seeing the gleam in the lady's eyes, Rinaldo,

who was no fool in such affairs, went towards her with open arms, and said:

“Madonna, henceforth I may say I owe my life to you, considering what you saved me from, and it would be base in me not to do anything I can to please you. Therefore embrace and kiss me as much as you like, for I shall be more than willing to embrace and kiss you.”

After this, no more words were needed. The lady, all on fire with amorous desire, threw herself into his arms. Holding him amorously, she kissed him a thousand times, and was kissed by him. Then they arose and went to her bedroom, and with no delay got to bed. And there they fully satisfied their desires many times, until daybreak.

When the dawn came, he arose, as the lady wished him to do. So that nobody should know what had happened, she gave him some old clothes and filled his purse with money, begging him to keep the secret; then she told him how he could find his servant, and let him out by the door through which he had entered.

When it was full day, he pretended to be coming from a distance, entered the city after the gates were opened, and found his servant. He put on some of his own clothes and was about to mount his servant's horse, when as if by a divine miracle the three highwaymen who had robbed him were brought into the town, having been arrested for another crime they had committed. They confessed the robbery, and Rinaldo regained his horse, his clothes and his money; and the only thing he lost was a pair of garters, which the highwayman had mislaid.

Wherefore Rinaldo gave thanks to God and Saint Giuliano, mounted his horse, and rode off homeward, safe and sound. As for the thieves, the next day they were dangling their heels in the air.

Third Tale

THREE YOUNG MEN WASTE THEIR MONEY FOOLISHLY AND FALL INTO POVERTY. AS HE IS RETURNING HOME IN DESPAIR, THEIR NEPHEW MEETS A YOUNG ABBOT, WHO TURNS OUT TO BE THE DAUGHTER OF THE KING OF ENGLAND; SHE MARRIES HIM, AND HE RESTORES HIS UNCLES' FORTUNES

THE ladies listened in wonderment to the adventures of Rinaldo d'Asti, giving thanks to God and Saint Giuliano who had helped him in his great need, and praising his devotion. Nor—though they only half admitted it—did they blame the lady for having enjoyed the good thing God sent to her house. While they were talking and laughing about Rinaldo's pleasant night, Pampinea, who sat next to Filostrato, saw that her turn was next, and thought over what she should say. When the queen ordered her, she began to speak no less confidently than gaily.

Virtuous ladies, when we look at things closely we see that the more we say about Fortune's deeds, the more remains to be said. No one should be surprised at this if he remembers that everything we foolishly call ours is in the hands of Fortune. Consequently, in her blind judgment she passes them successively from one person to another, without any method visible to us. Now, although this is plainly showed everywhere every day and has again been demonstrated in the former tales, yet, since the queen wishes us to take this subject, I propose to add my tale which I think should please and perhaps be useful.

Once there lived in our city a knight whose name was Messer Tedaldo. Some say he was of the de Lamberti family; others, perhaps influenced by his sons' trade, say he belonged to the Agolanti, since they always did and still do follow the same trade. But, whichever family he came from, he was a very rich knight in his day, and had three sons, the eldest of whom was named Lamberto, the second Tedaldo, and the youngest Agolante. They were already handsome and fashionable young men, although the

eldest was not eighteen, when this rich Messer Tedaldo died, leaving all his goods and chattels to them as his lawful heirs.

When they found themselves very rich and with such great possessions, they began to spend money with no purpose but their own pleasure, and with no sort of control or restraint. They kept numerous servants, many good horses, dogs and hawks; they kept open house, gave tournaments, and not only did everything gentlemen should do but anything else which appealed to their youthful appetites. They had not lived this life long, when the money left by their father began to disappear. Since their income would not meet their expenses, they began to mortgage and sell their lands. Selling one thing one day and another the next, they were soon reduced to almost nothing; and their eyes, which had been closed by wealth, were opened by poverty.

Therefore Lamberto one day called his two brothers together, pointed out to them the splendour in which their father had lived, and they also, and how through their extravagance they were reduced to poverty. Consoling them to the best of his ability, he advised that they should sell the little they had left before they fell into misery, and go away. Without taking leave and with no display, they left Florence and went to London, where they took a small house. Spending as little as possible they began to lend out money on harsh terms of interest, and Fortune was so favourable to them that in a few years they made a great deal of money.

They returned one by one to Florence and with this money bought back a great portion of their estates and others as well, and married. Since they were still lending out money in England, they sent a young nephew named Alessandro to look after their affairs. All three remained in Florence, and though they now had families, they quite forgot the plight into which their former extravagance had brought them, and began to spend more excessively than ever, having credit up to almost any sum with every merchant. For some years these expenses were met by the sums Alessandro sent them, for he had lent money to the English barons on their castles and other revenues, which brought him in a large profit.

Meanwhile the three brothers went on spending freely, and being

short of money, began to borrow, always relying on England. Now, contrary to everyone's expectation, a war broke out in England between the King and one of his sons, which split the whole island in two, some holding for one side and some for the other. Thereby all the barons' castles were taken from Alessandro, and he received no income at all. Alessandro did not leave the island, for every day he hoped that peace would be made between father and son, and that he would regain both his interest and his capital. And the three brothers in Florence went on spending at the same rate, and getting deeper into debt every day.

Several years passed, and their hopes were still disappointed. The three brothers not only lost their credit but were arrested by their creditors, and, since their estates were insufficient to meet their debts, they had to remain in prison. Their wives and little children were dispersed in various country places in a very poor state, with no prospects but that of a life of continual poverty.

Alessandro had waited several years in England hoping for peace, but seeing it did not come and that by lingering on he only endangered his own life, he decided to return to Italy. He set out by himself, and, as he left Bruges, he saw a young Abbot in white leaving the city with a long train of monks and numerous servants and a long baggage train. Behind him rode two elderly knights, relatives of the King; and since Alessandro knew them, he spoke to them, and was allowed to ride with them.

As Alessandro rode along with them, he politely asked who were the monks riding on ahead with so many servants, and where they were going. One of the knights replied:

"The young man riding on ahead is a relative of ours, recently elected Abbot of one of the largest abbeys in England. Now, since he is too young to be legally inducted into such a See, we are going to Rome with him to request the Holy Father to grant him a dispensation, and to confirm the election in spite of his youth. But no one must know this."

The new Abbot rode sometimes ahead and sometimes with his attendants, as we see lords do every day; and on the road he saw Alessandro near him. Now Alessandro was still young, handsome in face and person, and as well-mannered and polite and pleasant as a man can be. At first

glance he pleased the Abbot more than anything else had ever pleased him; so he called Alessandro over and began to talk pleasantly to him, asking him who he was, where he came from, and where he was going. In reply Alessandro explained his whole situation, and offered his services to the Abbot in any capacity, however slight.

The Abbot hearkened to his well-ordered talk and noticed his polite behaviour, and, considering that he must be a gentleman in spite of his servile occupation, was better pleased with him than ever. Already full of pity for him, the Abbot tried to console him for his misfortunes, telling him that since he was a man of worth, God would restore him to the position from which he had fallen, and perhaps even higher. And since they were both travelling in the direction of Tuscany, the Abbot asked him to stay in their company. Alessandro thanked him for his consolation, and said he was ready to obey his commands.

As the Abbot rode along, the sight of Alessandro seemed to have put new ideas into his head. A few days later they came to a town none too well furnished with inns. Here the Abbot insisted on stopping, and Alessandro made him stay at an inn whose landlord had once been his servant, and gave him the least uncomfortable room in the house. In this way he became the Abbot's steward, and, as the most practical member of the party, billeted out the remainder as well as he could. The Abbot had dined, it was late, and everyone else had already gone to bed when Alessandro asked the landlord where he should sleep. And the landlord replied:

"Truly, I don't know. You see everywhere is full, and my family and I are sleeping on benches. But there are some grain chests in the Abbot's room, where I can make you up a bed, and you can manage to spend the night there."

To this Alessandro said:

"How can I share the Abbot's room? You know it's small, and so narrow that none of his monks could lodge there. If I had known this at bed time, I should have put the monks on the grain chests, and have taken the place where they are sleeping."

Said the host:

"Well, that's how it is; if you like, you can be quite comfortable there. The Abbot is asleep and his curtains drawn. I can put you a mattress quietly there, and you can go to sleep."

Seeing that this could be done without any annoyance to the Abbot, Alessandro agreed, and lay down as quietly as he could. But the Abbot was not asleep. He had been thinking of the new desires which had come to him, and had heard Alessandro talking to the landlord and where Alessandro had lain down. In great delight, he said to himself:

"God has provided me with the opportunity I desired. If I do not take it, the like may not occur again for a long time."

Determined therefore to take the opportunity, the Abbot waited till all was quiet in the inn, and then called to Alessandro in a low voice, telling him to come and share the bed. After many polite refusals, Alessandro finally consented.

As soon as he was in bed, the Abbot laid a hand on his chest and began to touch him as girls touch their lovers. This greatly astounded Alessandro, and he began to think the Abbot was a person of unnatural tastes. Either from intuition or from Alessandro's movements, the Abbot guessed what he was thinking, and smiled. Then he quickly opened his shirt, laid Alessandro's hand on his breast, and said:

"Alessandro, get rid of that silly idea; seek, and find out what I am hiding."

Alessandro laid his hand on the Abbot's chest, and found two round, firm, delicate woman's breasts, as if carved out of ivory. When he touched them and realised the Abbot was a woman, he stayed for no further invitation, but quickly embraced and tried to kiss her. But she said:

"Before you come any nearer, wait and hear what I have to say. As you see, I am a girl and not a man. I left home a virgin and I am going to the Pope to be married. Your good luck or my misfortune, as time will show, made me fall in love with you deeper than ever woman loved a man. I want you more than any other man as my husband; if you do not want me as your wife, get out of bed at once and return to where you were."

Now although Alessandro knew nothing about her, he judged from her companions that she must be noble and rich, and he could see that she

was most beautiful. So, without hesitation, he replied that if such were her pleasure, it was his also.

She then sat up in bed opposite a little table bearing an image of Our Lord, and, giving Alessandro a ring, made him take her as his wife. After which they kissed each other, and spent the remainder of the night with great pleasure to both parties. And, having made certain arrangements, Alessandro got up at dawn, and left the room as silently as he had entered, without anyone knowing where he had spent the night. In great happiness he rode along with the Abbot and his companions, and after many days' travel they reached Rome.

A few days later the Abbot took the two knights and Alessandro to visit the Pope, and, after the customary reverence, she said:

"Holy Father, you should know better than anyone else that those who desire to live virtuously and well should avoid everything which might lead them to the opposite. To this end, I am sent to you in the dress of an abbot by my father, the King of England, with the greater part of his treasure, for your Holiness to marry me to the old King of Scotland whom my father wishes me to marry, young as I am. I am not so much repelled by the King of Scotland's age as by the fear that, if I marry him, the fragility of my youth may cause me to do something contrary to the laws of God and my father's royal blood.

"God knoweth what is best fitting for us all; and, as I came hither, He in His mercy (as I believe) brought to sight the man I should like to marry. It is this young man." (And she pointed to Alessandro.) "His virtue and his manners are worthy of any great lady, although perhaps his blood is not so noble as the blood royal. Him have I taken and him do I desire; nor will I ever take another man, whatever my father and other men may think. Thus the chief cause for my journey is already settled; but I choose to continue my journey, to visit the sacred places with which this town is filled, to see your Holiness, and to arrange that the contract of marriage made between Alessandro and me in the presence of God alone should be made also in your presence and in the presence of others. Humbly then do I beg you to accept him who is pleasing to God and to me, and to give us your blessing, so that we may live and at the last

die together, honouring God and your Holiness, with more certainty of pleasing Him whose Vicar upon earth you are."

Greatly did Alessandro marvel to hear that his wife was the King of England's daughter, and he was filled with a wonderful secret joy. But the two knights were even more astounded, and, if they had not been in the Pope's presence, they would have slain Alessandro and perhaps the lady as well.

The Pope also was amazed both by the lady's clothes and her choice of a husband. But, since he saw there was nothing else to be done, he determined to grant the lady's request. First of all he soothed down the knights who, he could see, were very angry; and having made their peace with Alessandro and the lady, he gave the necessary orders.

On the day appointed, the Pope made a great feast to which he invited all the cardinals and many other great nobles. Thither also came the lady royally dressed, so beautiful and of such pleasant aspect that she was deservedly praised by all; Alessandro came too, so splendidly apparelled that he seemed rather of royal blood than an ordinary young man who had lent out money at usury, and he was much honoured by the two knights. Then the Pope solemnly celebrated the marriage, and, after the magnificent service, sent them away with his blessing.

Alessandro and the lady chose to leave Rome and to go to Florence, where the news of their marriage had already arrived, and where the citizens received them with the highest honours. The lady paid the creditors of the three brothers, freed them from prison, and restored them and their wives to their estates; for which they thanked her heartily. Alessandro and his wife then left Florence, taking Agolante with them, and came to Paris, where they were honourably received by the King.

Meanwhile the two knights went over to England and so worked upon the King that he forgave his daughter, and received her and his son-in-law with great festivity.

A little later the King knighted Alessandro with great pomp, and made him Earl of Cornwall. Alessandro acted so skilfully that he reconciled the King and his son, which was of great benefit to the island and obtained him the love and esteem of all the inhabitants.

Agolante recovered everything that was owing to him, and, after he had been knighted by Lord Alessandro, returned to Florence with very great wealth. The Earl lived gloriously with his Lady; and some say that by his wisdom and valour, and with the aid of his father-in-law, he conquered Scotland and was crowned King.

Fourth Tale

LANDOLFO RUFFOLO BECOMES POOR, TURNS PIRATE, IS CAPTURED BY THE GENOESE, AND SHIPWRECKED, BUT ESCAPES ON A WOODEN CHEST FULL OF JEWELS; IN CORFU HE IS SAVED BY A WOMAN AND RETURNS HOME A RICH MAN

LAURETTA sat next to Pampinea, and, seeing her come to the glorious end of her tale, began to speak without further delay.

Most gracious ladies, in my judgment no greater act of Fortune may be seen than to watch a man rise from miserable poverty to a royal estate, as Pampinea's tale has showed us in the case of Alessandro. Now since each of us is to tell a story on the same subject and must necessarily keep within these limits, I feel no shame in telling you a tale which has no such splendid ending, although it contains greater misfortunes. For this reason I feel sure my tale will be listened to less eagerly; but as I can do no better, you will forgive me.

I think that the coast from Reggio to Gaeta is about the most beautiful part of Italy. Near Salerno there is a part which the inhabitants call the Amalfi Coast. It is filled with small towns, gardens and fountains, and rich men who gain more by trading than the people in any other country. Among these towns is one called Ravello, which has rich men today and, in the past, had a very rich man called Landolfo Ruffolo, who, not content with the wealth he had, tried to double it, and came near to losing it all and himself as well.

Having made his calculations, as a merchant does, he bought a very large ship, spent all the rest of his money in purchasing cargo, and set sail for Cyprus. There he found several other ships which had brought the same sort of cargo as he had. Consequently, he not only had to lower his prices but almost to give away his merchandise to get rid of it; which brought him to the verge of ruin.

He was exceedingly perturbed by this and did not know what to do. From a very rich man, within a short time he had become a poor man, and he decided that he must either kill himself or make up his losses by robbery, to avoid returning home poor after leaving rich. He found a purchaser for his large ship, and with this money and the money he had received for his cargo he bought a small, very swift ship, suitable for a pirate. He armed and fitted it out in every way necessary for this purpose, with the intention of stealing other men's goods, especially the Turks. And Fortune was far more favourable to him as a pirate than as a merchant.

Within a year he robbed so many Turkish ships that he regained all he had lost as a merchant and more than double that. Warned by his first loss he determined not to risk a second, and decided that what he had was sufficient. So he made up his mind to return home and, as he was still afraid of merchandise, he did not trouble to lay out his money, but set out homewards in the little boat whereby he had captured it. When he came to the Archipelago, a sirocco wind began to blow one evening, dead in their faces, making the sea very rough. His small ship could not ride out such a storm at sea, so he ran in under the lee of an island to a bay, intending to wait there for better weather. Soon afterwards two large Genoese merchantmen, coming from Constantinople, with difficulty got into the same bay to avoid the storm.

These two ships blocked up the entrance to the bay and the people on board, seeing the small ship and hearing it was Landolfo's (whom they knew to be very rich), determined to seize it, like the rapacious, money-loving men they were. They sent a landing party ashore with cross-bows, and posted them in such a position that no one could leave the ship without being shot down. The remainder got out their boats and, with the aid

of the tide, soon came alongside Landolfo's ship, and in a very short time without much trouble they seized it and the whole crew, without the loss of a single man. They sent Landolfo on board one of the merchantmen dressed in an old jacket. And after taking everything out of the ship, they sank her.

Next day the wind changed, the carracks set sail on a westerly course, and everything that day went well. But towards evening a gale began to blow, with a very rough sea, and the two carracks were separated. The force of the wind was so great that the carrack with poor wretched Landolfo on board struck with a terrific shock on a sandbank off the island of Cephalonia, and broke up like a glass dashed against a wall. The sea was full of merchandise, of chests and tables, as usually happens at such moments. Although it was very dark and the sea raging, such of the poor wretches on board as could take notice of anything began to clutch at whatever was near them.

Among them was the unhappy Landolfo. Many times that day he had called upon death and had determined to kill himself rather than return home in such poverty; but when he saw death face to face, he was afraid. He did as the others did, and when a table came to his hands he clutched it, as though God, by delaying his being drowned, had sent him a means of safety. He lay straddled on it as best he could, and, tossed hither and thither by wind and waves, kept himself afloat until daylight. As he gazed around he could see nothing but clouds and sea and a chest he noticed floating on the water near him. With terror he found this chest coming nearer to him, for he was afraid that if the chest hit him he should be drowned. And each time it came very close he thrust it away with his hand as far as his weakness allowed.

Suddenly a blast of wind and a huge wave threw the chest on to Landolfo's table, which upset and plunged him under the waves. He came up again, more through terror than strength, and saw the table already drifting away in the distance. Fearing he could not reach it, he swam to the chest which was close at hand, resting his body on top of it and keeping it upright with his arms, as best he could. All that day and all the next night he was tossed about on the sea in this manner, with nothing to eat

and a great deal too much to drink, not knowing where he was, and seeing nothing but the waves.

Next day, when he was nearly as waterlogged as a sponge, clinging on to the handles of the chest with both hands (as we see drowning men always clutch at anything near them), he was driven towards the coast of Corfu, either by the will of God or the force of the wind. A poor woman happened to be on the shore, scouring her pots with sand and sea water; and when she saw this shapeless object coming near, she screamed in terror and made off.

Landolfo could not speak and could hardly see, and therefore said nothing. But, as the waves brought him nearer to shore, the woman made out the form of the chest; then, looking more intently, she first saw his arms on the chest and then his face, and guessed what he was. Moved by pity, she waded into the sea which was already calm, clutched him by the hair, and dragged him and the chest to land. With great difficulty she loosened his fingers from the chest, which she placed on the head of her daughter for her to carry. She herself bore Landolfo as if he were a little boy, put him in a bath of warm water, and washed and rubbed him until a little warmth came back and he recovered some of his strength. She took him out of the water when she thought it was time, and fed him with good wine and sweet macaroni, tending him for several days until his strength came back and he knew where he was. The good woman thought she ought to give him the chest which she had saved with him, and then told him to go and seek his fortune.

Landolfo had forgotten all about the chest, but took it when the woman offered it, thinking it could not be so valueless but that he could live for a few days from it. But when he found it very light, his hopes began to sink. However, when the woman was out of the house, he forced it open to see what was inside, and found it full of precious stones, some set and some unset. He had a knowledge of such things, and when he looked at them, he saw they were of value; wherefore he praised God who had not abandoned him, and felt entirely consoled. But since in a short time he had twice been badly buffeted by Fortune, he felt that great caution would be needed in getting these stones home, if he were to avoid a

third misfortune. So he wrapped up the jewels in some rags and told the woman he did not need the chest, but that she could have it, if she would give him a sack.

This she willingly gave him, and, after he had thanked her heartily for what she had done for him, he threw his sack on his shoulder and departed. He found a ship to take him to Brindisi and thence coasted along to Trani, where he came upon some drapers, fellow countrymen of his. He told them all his adventures, except for the matter of the chest; and they, for the love of God, gave him clothes and lent him a horse and found him company to return to Ravello, where he said he wanted to go.

When he found himself safe home, he gave thanks to God who had guided him. Then he opened the sack and carefully examined everything in it. He found he had so many valuable stones that by selling them at a reasonable price or even less he would be twice as rich as when he set forth. When he had managed to sell the jewels, he sent a large sum of money to the poor woman of Corfu who had saved him from the sea, and he also sent money to the men who had given him clothes at Trani. He kept the rest without ever wishing to go adventuring again, and lived handsomely until his death.

Fifth Tale

ANDREUCCIO DA PERUGIA GOES TO NAPLES TO BUY HORSES, FALLS INTO THREE UNPLEASANT ADVENTURES IN ONE NIGHT, ESCAPES FROM THEM ALL, AND RETURNS HOME WITH A RUBY

THE jewels found by Landolfo (said Fiammetta, whose turn it was to tell the next tale) remind me of a tale containing as many dangers as the one Lauretta has told; but with the difference that whereas in hers the adventures are spread over years, those I am about to relate occurred in one night.

According to what I have been told, there was a young horse-dealer in Perugia named Andreuccio di Pietro. He heard that Naples was a very good horse-market and, though he had never been away from home before, he put five hundred gold florins in his purse, and set out for Naples with several other tradesmen. He arrived one Sunday evening, and, on his landlord's advice, went next morning to the market where he saw a great many horses he liked, though after much chaffering he was not able to strike a bargain. To show that he was a genuine buyer he kept pulling out his purse of florins to show everybody coming and going, like the foolish rustic he was. As he was there displaying his purse, a very beautiful Sicilian girl (one of those who will please any man for a small sum) happened to pass by without his noticing her, and saw the purse. Said she to herself: "If that money were mine who would be better off than me?"

With this girl was an old woman, likewise a Sicilian, who when she saw Andreuccio left the girl and ran up to embrace him. When the girl saw this, she said nothing but waited for the old woman. Andreuccio turned round, recognised the old woman, greeted her warmly, and arranged for her to come and see him at his inn. They then parted without further words. Andreuccio returned to his market, but bought nothing that morning.

The girl who had first noticed the purse and then the old woman's friendship with Andreuccio, meant to try to get hold of some or all his money, and therefore began cautiously to ask her who he was, where he came from, what he was doing in Naples, and how she knew him. The old woman told her all about Andreuccio as well as he could have done himself, how she had lived with his father for a long time in Sicily and then in Perugia. She also explained where he lived and what he had come for.

Having obtained full information about his relatives and their names, the girl determined to use what she had learned, to cheat him of his money by a cunning trick. On returning home she found work to keep the old woman occupied all day long, so that she could not return to Andreuccio. Towards evening she sent another girl, whom she had trained in such affairs, to Andreuccio's inn. By chance she arrived there when he

was standing alone by the door, and asked for him of himself. When he said he was Andreuccio, she drew him aside and said:

"Messer, a lady of this town would like to speak with you at your leisure."

Hearing this and seeing the maid was a comely creature, he immediately concluded the lady must be in love with him, for he thought Naples did not contain another young man as handsome as he. He replied that he was ready, and asked her where and when the lady wished to speak to him. To which the maid replied:

"Whenever you like to come, Messer; she is waiting for you in her house."

Whereupon, without saying anything to the inn-keeper, Andreuccio said:

"Lead on then, and I'll follow."

The maid took him to the girl's house, which was in the Malpertugio quarter, whose ill-fame may be seen from its very name. But he knew and suspected nothing, and thought himself going to a lovely lady in a respectable quarter, and so, calmly, followed the maid into the house. As he went up the stairs, the maid called to her mistress: "Here's Andreuccio," and he saw her waiting on the landing.

She was still young, tall and very pretty, quite well dressed and adorned. As Andreuccio came up, she descended three stairs towards him with open arms, clasped them round his neck without saying a word, as if overwhelmed by emotion. Then she wept, kissed his forehead and said in a broken voice:

"O my Andreuccio, welcome, welcome!"

He was quite amazed by these tender caresses, and replied in astonishment:

"Glad to meet you, Madonna."

She then took him by the hand and, without saying another word, led him into her sitting room and from there straight to her bedroom, which was all scented with roses and orange blossom. He saw there was a handsome curtained bed and many dresses on pegs and other rich and beautiful things. As they were all new to him, he was firmly convinced that the girl

must be some great lady. She made him sit down beside her on a chest at the foot of the bed, and said:

“Andreuccio, I am quite certain you must be surprised by my tears and caresses, since you do not know me, and perhaps do not remember to have heard of me. But you will soon hear something which will greatly surprise you—I am your sister! Since God has granted me the grace to see one of my brothers before I die (how much I should like to see them all!), if I died at this moment, I should die content. If you have never heard about this, I will tell you. Pietro, your father and mine, as I think you know, lived for a long time in Palermo. His kindness and pleasantness made and still make him beloved by all who know him. But among all who loved him, my mother, who was a lady and at that time a widow, loved him most. Setting aside her fear of her father and brothers, and her own honour, she became so familiar with him that I was born, and am as you see me.

“When Pietro went from Palermo to Perugia, he left me as a little girl with my mother, and for all I know never thought of me and her again. Were he not my father I should blame him severely for his ingratitude to my mother (quite apart from the fact that he owed me his love as his daughter by no servant or vile woman), since she had placed herself and everything she had freely in his hands, out of her great love for him, without knowing who he was.

“But there it is. Things ill done and long passed by are more easily blamed than amended. But so it was. He left me as a little girl in Palermo where I grew up to be much as I am now. My mother, who was rich, gave me as wife to a wealthy gentleman of Girgenti, who for love of me and my mother came to live at Palermo. He was a strong Guelf and began to intrigue with our King Charles, but was discovered before the plot took effect. So he had to fly from Sicily, when I was expecting to be the greatest lady ever known in the island. Taking the few things we could (I say “few” in comparison with what we had), we left estates and palaces and took refuge here, where King Charles has been very generous to us, restoring to us part of what we lost in his cause, and has given us possessions and houses. He makes ample provision for my husband and your

brother-in-law, as you may see. This is how I come to be here, my sweet brother, where thanks to God rather than to you, I have at last met you."

So saying, she embraced him once more, and softly weeping kissed him once more on the forehead. Andreuccio, hearing this well-composed fable uttered so cleverly with no hesitation over a single word, remembered it was true that his father had lived in Palermo. From his own experience he knew how apt young men are to fall in love, while her tears, her embracings and modest kisses all combined to make him believe what she said. Therefore he replied:

"Madonna, you must not wonder that I am surprised. Indeed, either my father never spoke of you and your mother, or, if he did, I never heard of it, for I knew no more of you than if you did not exist. It gives me the more happiness to have found a sister because I am quite alone here, and did not hope for any such thing. I think you should be dear to any man however important, let alone a little tradesman like me. But tell me one thing—how did you know I was here?"

To this she answered:

"I learned it this morning from a poor woman whom I often see. According to what she says, she lived for a long time with our father in Palermo and Perugia. And if I had not thought it more fitting that you should come to my house than that I should go to you in a stranger's house, I should almost certainly have come to you."

After this, she enquired after his relatives by name, to all of which Andreuccio replied; and her questions made him believe the more firmly in what he should not have believed at all. They had talked for a long time and it was very hot, so she served him with sweetmeats and Greek wine. After which, Andreuccio got up to go, since it was time for supper. This she would not allow, and, pretending to be greatly offended, she embraced him and said:

"Alas! Now I see how little you care about me! Here you are with a sister you never saw before, in her own house, where you ought to be staying, and you want to sup at an inn! Indeed you shall sup with me. I am very sorry that my husband is not here, but I shall honour you as much as a woman can."

Not knowing what else to say, Andreuccio replied:

"You are as dear to me as a sister can be, but if I don't go, they'll wait all evening for me to come to supper, which will be very bad manners on my part."

Then she said:

"Let me send someone to tell them not to wait for you. But you would do better and show more courtesy to me if you would invite all your companions to sup here, and then if you must leave you can all leave together."

Andreuccio replied that he did not want his companions that evening, but that he would stay as she wished. She pretended to send a messenger to the inn to tell them not to wait supper for him. Then, after a lot more talk, she gave him a supper of several courses, which she skilfully prolonged until night had fallen. When Andreuccio got up to leave she told him she would not allow it, because Naples was not a town for anyone, especially a stranger, to walk about in at night. Moreover, she said that when she had sent the message about his staying for supper, she had also said he would stay the night.

He believed it all, and, delighted by his false belief and at being with her, remained. They went on talking for a long time, as she intended they should. Late at night she left Andreuccio to sleep in her room, with a little boy servant to show him anything he needed, while she went to another room with her women.

The night was very hot. When Andreuccio was alone, he stripped to his doublet and laid his breeches at the head of the bed. He then felt a natural necessity to relieve himself, and asked the boy where he should go. The boy pointed to a door in one corner of the room, and said:

"Go in there."

Andreuccio unsuspectingly entered, but at once trod on a board which was not secured to the rafter, and fell through the floor with it. By God's providence he did himself no harm, although the fall was a long one, but he was all daubed with the filth in the place. For you to understand what happened and what is to follow, I shall describe this place. It was in a narrow space, such as we see between two houses, on two beams laid

from one house to the other, with the place to sit down and a few planks, one of which had fallen down with him. Finding himself at the bottom of this place in great discomfort, Andreuccio called to the boy. But the boy had run to tell his mistress as soon as he heard him fall. She ran to the room and immediately looked to see whether his breeches were there. She found the clothes and the money, which he had always carried about with him, in his mistrust of others. Once this Palermo lady who had pretended to be sister to a man of Perugia had got hold of the money for which she had laid this snare, she cared no more about him, but at once went and locked the door he had gone through when he fell.

When the boy did not answer, Andreuccio called louder, but with no result. He then began to feel suspicious and to realise that he had been tricked. He climbed over the wall which separated the place he was in from the street, and ran to the door of the house which he recognised easily. He shouted and knocked for a long time, but in vain. He then saw his misfortune clearly and began to weep, saying:

“Alas! In how short a time have I lost five hundred florins and a sister!”

After many more such exclamations, he began to beat his head against the door and to scream. He made such a din that many of the neighbours could not endure it, and got out of bed. One of the lady’s servants came to a window, pretending to be very sleepy, and said angrily:

“Who’s knocking down there?”

“Oh!” said Andreuccio. “Oh! Don’t you know me? I am Andreuccio, brother to Madonna Fiordaliso.”

To this she replied:

“Good man, if you have drunk too much, go home and sleep, and come back tomorrow. I know nothing about Andreuccio and the other nonsense you’re talking. Get along with you, and let us sleep, if you please.”

“What!” said Andreuccio, “you don’t know what I’m talking about? Well, if these are your relatives from Sicily who forget a man so soon, give me back the clothes I left there, and I’ll gladly go, in God’s name.”

But she replied, half laughing:

“You must be dreaming, my good man.”

So saying, she went in and shut the window in a flash. Andreuccio, now

certain of his misfortune, was so grieved that his anger became rage, and he attempted to get back by force what he could not recover with words. He picked up a large stone and began to batter at the door with it, much more violently than before. Many of the neighbours whom he had already awakened thought he was some disturber of the peace, who had invented all this to annoy the woman. Angry at the noise he made in knocking, they went to the windows and began to shout at him, as all the dogs of a countryside bark at a strange dog:

"It's a foul thing to come and talk nonsense like this outside a good woman's house at this hour of night. Go away, good man, in God's name. Let us sleep, if you please. If you have any business with her, come back tomorrow, but don't make all this uproar tonight."

The good woman's bully, whom Andreuccio had neither seen nor heard about, was in the house. Emboldened perhaps by his neighbours' voices, this bully came to the window and exclaimed in a deep, rough, threatening tone:

"Who's there?"

Hearing this voice Andreuccio gazed up and saw what seemed to be a foul ruffian with a great black beard, looking as if he had just got out of bed, yawning and rubbing his eyes. Somewhat fearfully, Andreuccio replied:

"I am a brother of the lady of the house . . ."

But the man did not wait for him to finish, and interrupted him even more rudely than before:

"I'll come down to you and give you such a beating that you'll soon move along, you drunken tedious ass, keeping people awake!"

And going in, he slammed the window. Some of the neighbours, who knew the man well, said to Andreuccio in low tones:

"For God's sake, good man, don't stay here to be killed; be off, for your own good."

Terrified by the man's voice and urged by the entreaties of the neighbours who seemed moved by charity towards him, Andreuccio, in despair at the loss of his money, went down the street along which the maid had led him the day before, trying to find his inn. He was revolting to himself

from the stink of the filth on him, and thought he would go down to the sea and wash. So he turned to the left down a street called Ruga Catalana. As he went towards that end of the city he saw two men with a lantern coming towards him. Thinking they might be the watch or other men likely to harm him, he crept into a hut nearby to avoid them. But they came straight to the same place and went into that very hut. Putting down some iron instruments they were carrying, they began to look at them and to discuss them. While they were talking, one said to the other:

“What’s the meaning of this? I can smell the worst stink I ever smelled in my life.”

So saying, he turned up the lantern and saw the unfortunate Andreuccio, to whom he said in amazement:

“Who are you?”

Andreuccio said nothing, but they came up to him with the lantern and asked what he was doing there in such a state. Andreuccio then told them what had happened to him. They guessed where this must have taken place, and said to each other: “It must have been in Scarabone Buttafuoco’s house.” Then one of them turned to Andreuccio and said:

“Good man, although you lost your money, you ought to thank God that you fell down and could not get back into the house. For, if you had not fallen down you may be quite sure that you would have been murdered as soon as you went to sleep, and would have lost your life as well as your money. But what is the use of lamenting? You can no more recover a farthing of it than you can take the stars out of the sky. You even run a risk of being killed if the girl’s lover knows that you’ve said a word about what happened.”

After consulting with his companion, he went on:

“Look here, we’re sorry for you. If you will come along and share in what we are going to do, it is quite certain that your part of the spoils will be worth much more than you have lost.”

Since Andreuccio was in despair, he said he was ready.

That day Messer Filippo Minutolo, Archbishop of Naples, had been buried in very rich vestments and with a ruby ring on his finger worth

more than five hundred florins. These things they meant to steal, and told Andreuccio their plan. With more greed than sense Andreuccio started out with them. As they went along towards the church Andreuccio stank so much that one of them said:

"Can't we find some means for this fellow to wash himself, so that he won't stink so abominably?"

Said the other:

"Near here is a well with a pulley and a large bucket. We'll go there and soon wash him."

When they got to the well they found the rope, but the bucket had been taken away. So they decided to tie the rope round him, lower him into the well to wash, and then when he had washed he was to shake the rope, and they would pull him up. While Andreuccio was down the well, certain of the watch came there for a drink, being thirsty with the heat and running after someone. When the two men saw them, they fled at once, before the watch noticed them.

Andreuccio down in the well had now washed himself, and shook the rope. The watch had laid down their arms and halberds, and began to haul up the rope, thinking they were bringing up a large bucket of water. When Andreuccio came level with the well-head, he let go the rope and grasped the brickwork. The watch saw him and, seized with sudden terror, dropped the rope without a word, and made off as fast as they could. Andreuccio was greatly surprised by this, and would have fallen back into the well if he had not clung on tightly, and might have hurt or killed himself. However, he managed to get out, and then came upon the weapons. Since he knew they did not belong to his companions, he was still more perplexed. Not knowing what to think and grieving for his fate, he decided to leave without touching anything, and went off not knowing where he was going.

As he went along, he fell in with his two companions, who were coming back to draw him out of the well. When they saw him they were amazed, and asked him who had pulled him out of the well. Andreuccio replied that he did not know, told them what had happened and what he had found lying near the well. They then saw what had happened, and,

laughing heartily, they told him why they had run away and who the men were who had pulled him up. As it was now midnight they went to the cathedral without further talk, and easily got into it. They went to the tomb, which was a large one built of marble, and by the aid of their crowbars they managed to lift the heavy top slab high enough for a man to get in, and propped it up. Having done this, one of them said:

"Who'll get in?"

Said the other:

"Not I."

"Nor I," said the first. "You get in, Andreuccio."

"That I won't do," said Andreuccio. Whereupon they both turned on him, saying:

"You won't go in, won't you? Well, if you don't, by God's faith, we'll give you such a knock on the head with one of these crowbars that you'll fall dead."

Andreuccio in terror got into the tomb, but as he entered he thought to himself: "These two make me get in to cheat me. After I've handed everything out to them and am struggling to get out myself, they will run off with the spoil and leave me with nothing."

So he thought he would make certain of his share at once. He remembered the valuable ring they had talked about, and, as soon as he got into the tomb, he took it from the Archbishop's finger and hid it in his clothes. Then he handed out the crozier, the mitre, the gloves, and everything down to the shirt, when he said that nothing else remained. The other two swore the ring must be there, and told him to look everywhere for it. He said he could not find it, and kept them waiting while he pretended to look for it. But they were more artful than he was, for, while they told him to look carefully, they suddenly pulled away the prop which held up the top of the tomb and ran away, leaving him shut up inside.

When Andreuccio heard this, you may imagine his state. He tried several times to lift the slab with his head and shoulders, but his labour was in vain. Overcome with despair, he fell down senseless on the Archbishop's dead body. And anyone who had looked in would have found it

hard to tell whether he or the Archbishop was the dead man. When he regained consciousness, he began to weep floods of tears, seeing only two possible fates awaiting him: if nobody came to open the tomb he would die of hunger and the smell of the dead body; and if the tomb were opened, he would be arrested as a thief.

Filled with these gloomy thoughts and his agony, he heard some men come into the church and several persons talking. From this he gathered that they were about to attempt what he and his companions had done, which increased his terror. But when they had opened the tomb and propped up the slab, the question arose who should get in—which nobody wanted to do. After a long discussion, one of them, a priest, said:

“Why are you afraid? Do you think he’ll eat you? Dead men don’t eat people—I’ll get in.”

Seeing this, Andreuccio stood up, seized the priest by one of his legs and pretended to pull him in. Whereupon the priest uttered a piercing yell and scrambled rapidly out of the tomb. The rest were so much terrified that, leaving the tomb open, they ran off as if a hundred thousand devils were after them. Seeing this Andreuccio was delighted far beyond his wildest hopes, and at once climbed out, leaving the church by the way he had come in.

It was now nearly dawn and, as he wandered about with the ring on his finger, he came to the seashore, and from there made his way to the inn, where he found his companions and the inn-keeper who had been awake all night in their anxiety about him. When he had told them his adventures, the landlord advised that he should leave Naples at once. This he did without delay, and returned to Perugia, having invested his money in a ring when he had set out to buy horses.

Sixth Tale

MADONNA BERITOLA, HAVING LOST HER TWO SONS, IS FOUND ON AN ISLAND WITH TWO GOATS, AND GOES TO LUNIGIANA. ONE OF HER SONS ENTERS THE SERVICE OF THE LORD OF THAT PLACE, LIES WITH THE LORD'S DAUGHTER, AND IS IMPRISONED. SICILY REBELS AGAINST KING CHARLES, THE SON IS RECOGNISED BY THE MOTHER, FINDS HIS BROTHER AND THEY ALL RETURN TO GREAT WEALTH

THE ladies and the young men all laughed at Fiammetta's account of Andreuccio's adventures, and then, at the queen's command, Emilia began as follows:

Sad and painful are the various revolutions of Fortune, and whenever we hear them spoken of, it awakens our minds which are inclined to sleep under her flatteries. I think that to hear of them should please both the fortunate and the unhappy; since this is a warning to the former, a consolation to the latter. Although much has already been said about them, I mean to tell you a tale both piteous and true, wherein, although the end was happy, the bitterness was so great and lasted so long that I can scarcely believe it was sweetened by the happiness which came at length.

Most dear ladies, you must know that after the death of the Emperor Frederick II, Manfred was crowned King of Sicily. One of the most powerful of his barons was a gentleman of Naples named Arrighetto Capece, whose wife was also a Neapolitan, by name Beritola Caracciola. This Arrighetto was governor of the island, when he heard that King Charles I had conquered and slain Manfred at Benivento, and that the whole kingdom had gone over to him. Having very little belief in the fidelity of the Sicilians, and being unwilling to become a subject of his Lord's enemy, Arrighetto prepared to fly.

But when the Sicilians heard of this, they immediately sent him and many other friends and servants of King Manfred as prisoners to King Charles, who took possession of the whole island.

In this sudden change of affairs Madonna Beritola lost sight of Arrighetto. Frightened by what had happened and dreading disgrace, she left everything she possessed, although pregnant and without money, and, taking with her an eight-year-old son named Giusfredi, she fled to Lipari on a small boat. There she brought forth another son, whom she named Scacciato. She hired a nurse, and then they all took ship to return to her relatives in Naples. But events turned out contrary to their hopes. Instead of reaching Naples, the boat was driven by a gale into a bay in the island of Ponza, where they waited for calm weather to continue the voyage. Like the others, Madonna Beritola went on shore, and, finding there a remote and solitary place, began to lament by herself over the fate of Arrighetto.

This she did every day. And then one day when she was thus plunged in her grief, unaccompanied by any of the sailors or passengers, a pirate ship swooped down, captured everybody else without striking a blow, and immediately departed.

Having finished her daily lament, Madonna Beritola returned to the shore to see her children, as her custom was, but found nobody there. At first she was amazed but then, suspecting what had happened, she gazed out to sea and saw the pirate galley still not very distant, towing the other ship behind. Thus she perceived that she had lost her children as well as her husband. There she was, poor, alone and abandoned, not knowing whether anyone would ever come to the island and find her; and, uttering the names of her husband and children, she fell fainting on the shore.

Nobody was there to bring her round with cold water and other aids, so that her spirit could go wandering at will. But when her senses at last returned, along with tears and lamentation, she kept calling for her children and for a long time sought them in every cave on the island. But when she saw her labour was vain and that night was coming on, she began to think of herself, and, hoping she knew not what, she returned to the cave where she had been wont to lament and weep.

When at last the night with all its fears and infinite grief had passed and a new day dawned, she began to feel hungry, since she had eaten noth-

ing the day before, and was forced to feed upon herbs. As she ate them weeping, her mind was filled with conflicting thoughts about her future life. While she was lost in thought she saw a goat enter a cave near at hand and then come out again and disappear in the wood. She got up and entered this cave, where she found two kids, perhaps born that same day, who seemed to her the most graceful and charming creatures imaginable. Her breasts had not yet lost the milk of her last baby, and she tenderly picked up the two little creatures and held them to her breasts. They did not refuse the offer, and began to milk her as they would have suckled their own mother. And thereafter they made no distinction between their mother and her. In this way the lady felt that she had found some company on this desert island. She had only herbs to eat and water to drink, and she wept whenever she thought of her husband and her children and her past life. She made up her mind to live and die there, and became as fond of the goats as if they had been her children. The lady lived this wild life for several months until another gale brought to the island a ship from Pisa, which remained there several days.

On this ship was a gentleman named Currado de' Malespini with his saintly and virtuous wife. They had been on a pilgrimage to all the holy places in Puglia, and were returning home. To ward off melancholy, this gentleman and his wife and some of their friends set out to explore the island with their dogs. At a short distance from where Madonna Beritola was, the dogs began to chase the two goats, which were already large enough to feed outside. Pursued by the dogs, they rushed back to the cave where Madonna Beritola was sitting. When she saw the dogs, she jumped up, got a stick and drove them out. Currado and his wife, following up their dogs, arrived and were amazed to see this sunburned, thin, shaggy woman, who was still more amazed to see them. When Currado at her request had called off the dogs, he began to ask who she was and what she was doing there, and she plainly told him all about herself and her misfortunes and the bitter determination she had formed. Hearing this, Currado, who had known Arrighetto Capece very well, wept with pity and attempted to dissuade her from her intention, offering to take her to his own house and to treat her as his sister until God



sent her better fortune. When the lady refused these offers, Currado left his wife with her and said he would send food up to her; at the same time he asked his wife to give her some of her own clothes (since Beritola was in rags) and to do all she could to persuade her to come with them. Left behind with Madonna Beritola, the gentlewoman first wept over her misfortunes with her, then brought clothes and food, and with extreme difficulty at last persuaded her to dress and eat. After she had repeated many times that she would never go anywhere where she was known, they finally persuaded her to come with them to Lunigiana, together with the two kids and the mother goat which meanwhile had returned and greeted Beritola most affectionately, to the great amazement of Currado's wife.

When the weather became fine, Madonna Beritola, Currado and his wife went on board ship, taking with them the she-goat and the two kids. Many of those on board did not know Beritola's name and they called her "the Goatherd." They sailed with a good wind and at last came to the mouth of the Magra, where they landed and went to their castle. There Madonna Beritola lived with Currado's wife like a waiting-woman, modest, humble and obedient, dressed in widow's weeds, and affectionately looking after her goats.

The pirates who captured Madonna Beritola's ship and unwittingly left her on the island, went to Genoa with everyone on board. The spoils were there divided among the owners of the galleys, and Madonna Beritola's nurse and two children fell, along with other things, to the share of one, Messer Guasparrino d'Oria, who sent them to his house to make use of them as servants. The nurse wept for a long time at the loss of her mistress and the unhappy fate of herself and the two children. Although a poor woman she was shrewd and prudent, and when she saw that tears were useless and that she and the children were all servants together, she did her best to cheer up. Pondering over their present condition, she felt that if the children's real names were known it might harm them. She thought too that Fortune might change and that if they lived they might regain their former station in life. She therefore decided not to reveal their names to anyone until the right moment, and told

everyone who questioned her that they were her own children. She changed the elder boy's name from Giusfredi to Giannotto di Procida, but did not think it necessary to change the baby's name. She was most careful to impress on Giusfredi the reasons why she changed his name and how dangerous it might be for him if he were recognised. She repeated these, not once, but many times; and, since the boy was intelligent, he carried out her instructions perfectly.

Ill-dressed and worse shod, the two boys spent several years with the nurse in Messer Guasparrino's household, condemned to the most servile tasks. At the age of sixteen, Giannotto, who had more spirit than a servant and scorned the baseness of a servile state, left the service of Messer Guasparrino and went on board the galleys which made the voyage to Alexandria. He travelled about in various lands but failed to advance himself.

Within three or four years of leaving Messer Guasparrino, Giannotto became a tall and handsome young man. As he wandered about, despairing of his fortune, he heard that his father was not dead, as he had thought, but kept alive in prison by King Charles; and, coming to Lunigiana, he fell in with Currado Malespina, and was thankful enough to take service with him. He rarely saw his mother, who was always with Currado's wife, and when he did, neither recognised the other, so much had time changed them from what they had been when they last saw each other.

While Giannotto was in Currado's service, the latter's daughter (named Spina) was left a widow by Niccolò da Grignano, and returned to her father's house. She was a handsome, pleasant girl, not yet sixteen, and, after she and Giannotto had looked upon each other, they both fell passionately in love. This love soon led to the usual result, and lasted thus several months without anyone noticing it. But they became too confident and behaved in a less cautious manner than is required in these affairs. One day when they were out, Giannotto and the girl left their companions and went into a thick wood. Thinking the others had gone on far ahead, they lay down in a place covered with grass and flowers and screened by trees, and began to take lovers' pleasure. They remained

there a very long time (which their great delight made them think very short) and were surprised first by the girl's mother and then by Currado. Outraged by the sight, Currado without a word of explanation had them seized and bound by three of his servants and sent to one of his castles, intending in his rage to put them to a shameful death.

The girl's mother was also greatly angered and thought the daughter should be made to suffer cruelly for her slip; but when from certain words of Currado's she perceived his intentions towards the two sinners, she could not endure the thought. She went to her angry husband and besought him not to rush madly upon the murder of his own daughter in his old age nor to stain his hands with the blood of one of his servants. She said he could wreak his anger on them in other ways, by shutting them up in prison and making them labour and weep for their sin. These and many other things this holy lady said to her husband, and thus diverted him from murdering them. He ordered that each should be imprisoned in a separate cell, closely guarded, served with little food and much discomfort, and so kept until he had decided what further to do. Everyone may imagine for himself what their lives were, thus imprisoned, with many tears and much more fasting than they had been accustomed to.

Giannotto and Spina had spent a year in this painful life and Currado had taken no further notice of them, when King Pedro of Aragon (through the treachery of Messer Gian di Procida) stirred up a rebellion in Sicily and captured the island from King Charles; an event which greatly pleased Currado, who was a Ghibelline. Giannotto heard this news from some of his warders, and, heaving a deep sigh, said:

"Alas! For fourteen years I have been wandering the world waiting only for this to happen. Now it has occurred; but, to keep me always void of hope, it happens when I am in a prison which I cannot hope to leave until I am dead."

"What!" said the gaoler. "How can it matter to you what great Kings do? What have you to do with Sicily?"

To which Giannotto replied:

"My heart feels as if it would break when I remember what my

father once was there. I was only a child when I fled from Sicily, but I remember that I saw him Governor of Sicily when King Manfred was alive."

Said the gaoler:

"Who was your father?"

"I can now tell you who my father was," said Giannotto, "since I am in the danger I feared if I told it. His name was and still is, if he is alive, Arrighetto Capece, and my name is not Giannotto but Giusfredi. If I were free and could return to Sicily I have no doubt I could get some important post."

Without enquiring further, the worthy man related all this to Currado on the first opportunity. When Currado heard this he pretended to the warden that it was of no importance, but he went straight to Madonna Beritola and asked her if Arrighetto had a son named Giusfredi. The lady wept and said that if her elder son were alive that would be his name and his age about twenty-two. On hearing this Currado felt Giannotto must be the same person. It also occurred to him that he might at one and the same time perform a great act of mercy and wipe out his own and his daughter's shame by marrying her to Madonna Beritola's son. He therefore sent for Giannotto and questioned him closely about his past life. Finding from many plain indications that Giannotto was Giusfredi, son of Arrighetto Capece, Currado said to him:

"Giannotto, you know what wrong you have done me through the person of my daughter, whereas, since I always treated you well, you ought always to have defended my honour and my property, as becomes a servant. If you had done the like to many other men they would have slain you in some shameful way; but this my pity would not allow. Now, since things are as you say and you are the son of a gentleman and a gentlewoman, I shall be glad to put an end to your sufferings whenever you yourself wish, to bring you out of misery and captivity and at once restore your honour and mine. Spina, for whom you felt such amorous friendship (though unseemly in you both) is a widow, and her dowry a large one. What she is, and what her father and mother, you know. Of your present condition I say nothing. Therefore if you are willing, I too

am willing to make her your chaste spouse instead of your unchaste mistress, and to have you live here as my son with her and me as long as you wish."

Prison had wasted away Giannotto's flesh but had not diminished the noble spirit he had inherited nor the love he bore his lady. Although he eagerly desired what Currado offered and knew he was in the man's power, yet he abated nothing of what his greatness of soul bade him say, and replied:

"Currado, neither desire of lordship nor eagerness for money nor any other cause has ever made me traitor to you or your possessions. I loved your daughter, I love her and always shall, because I think her worthy of my love. If I committed with her what the ignorant consider a sin, it is a sin which always goes with youth; and if you want to abolish it you will have to abolish youth as well. If old men would remember that they were once young and would measure their own faults and compare them with those of youth, they would see that this sin is not so serious as you and many others make it out to be. Moreover, I committed it as a friend, not as an enemy. I have always desired to do what you offer me, and if I had thought you would grant it I should long ago have asked for it. Now it is the more precious to me since I had so little hope of it. But if you do not really mean what you say, do not feed me on vain hopes. Send me back to prison and treat me as harshly as you please, for just as I love Spina, so out of love for her shall I always love and reverence you, whatever you may do to me."

Currado was amazed to hear this and thought him a man of great spirit and a true lover, and esteemed him greatly for it. Therefore he stood up and embraced and kissed Giannotto, and without any further delay ordered that Spina should be brought before him.

Imprisonment had made her thin, pale and weak, quite another woman from what she had been, just as Giannotto was another man. And they two, in the presence of Currado, by mutual consent took each other as man and wife, in accordance with our customs.

Currado furnished them with everything they needed and asked for, but told nobody what had happened. But after a few days he thought it

time to make the two mothers happy, and therefore sent for his wife and "the Goatherd," and said:

"What would you say, Madonna, if I brought back to you your elder son married to one of my daughters?"

To which "the Goatherd" replied:

"I could only say that you would be dearer to me than ever, if that is possible, because you would have given me back someone who is more precious to me than myself. And if you bring him back in the way you say, to some extent you will give me back my lost hopes."

And then tears made her silent.

Then said Currado to his wife:

"And what would you say, wife, if I brought you such a son-in-law?"

To which the lady replied:

"Not only should I be pleased with one of that family, who are gentlemen, but with a peasant, if such were your pleasure."

Then said Currado:

"In a few days I hope to make you happy women."

When the two young people had recovered their health and were honourably dressed, he said to Giusfredi:

"Would it add to your present happiness if you saw your mother here?"

And Giusfredi replied:

"I cannot believe that she is still alive after all this unhappiness and misfortune. But if she is alive, she would be most dear to me, since by her advice I believe I could recover a large portion of my estate in Sicily."

Currado then sent for the two ladies. They both greeted the newly-married pair with great joy, although they wondered what could have inspired such benevolence in Currado to make him marry his daughter to Giannotto. But, remembering Currado's former words, Madonna Beritola gazed at Giannotto. Some hidden virtue within her brought back some recollection of her son's childish features, and, waiting for no further proof, she threw her arms round his neck. The excess of her emotion and maternal love prevented her from uttering a word; indeed her senses left her and she fell as if dead in her son's arms. He was greatly surprised, for he remembered how he had often seen her before in that same castle

and had never recognised her; yet now he immediately knew his mother's smell and blamed himself for his former neglect, and taking her in his arms kissed her tenderly and with tears. Currado's wife and Spina at once went to her aid with cold water and other assistance, and, when Madonna Beritola had recovered her senses, she embraced her son again with many tears and many gentle words. Filled with maternal feeling she kissed him again and again, and he gazed at her and responded most tenderly.

These glad and virtuous greetings were repeated three or four times to the great delight of the onlookers, and then each related his adventures to the other. Currado then announced the new marriage to his friends, and ordered a magnificent feast. Whereupon Giusfredi said:

"Currado, you have made me happy in many ways, and for a long time you have honoured my mother. Now, so that nothing which is in your power to do remains undone, I beg that you will make me and my mother and my wedding feast happy with the presence of my brother, who is kept a servant in the house of Messer Guasparrino d'Oria. As I have already told you, it was he who captured us both on the high seas. Also I beg you will send someone to Sicily, to enquire into the state and condition of the country, and to find out whether my father Arrighetto is alive or dead; and, if he is alive, in what state he lives. And so bring us back full information."

Giusfredi's request pleased Currado, who at once sent very prudent persons to Genoa and Sicily. The man who went to Genoa found Messer Guasparrino and, in Currado's name, requested him to send back Scacciato and his nurse, telling him fully what Currado had done for Giusfredi and his mother. Messer Guasparrino was greatly surprised to hear this, and said:

"It is true I would do anything I could to please Currado. And for fourteen years I have had the boy you ask for and his mother in my house, and I will gladly send them to him. But tell him from me to beware how he trusts in the tales of Giannotto, who now calls himself Giusfredi, because he is far more of a rogue than Currado thinks."

Having said this, he did all honour to Currado's messenger. He then had the nurse brought secretly before him and began cautiously to ques-

tion her. Now, she had heard of the rebellion in Sicily and believed Arrighetto to be alive; so she dismissed her former fears and told him everything as it had happened and why she had kept it all secret. When Messer Guasparrino found that the nurse's account was perfectly in harmony with that of Currado's messenger, he began to believe there was something in it. He enquired into it all very astutely and kept finding additional proofs of the facts, so that he grew ashamed of his vile treatment of the boy. To atone for this, and knowing what Arrighetto was and had been, he gave Scacciato his own daughter (who was aged eleven) as his wife, with a large dowry. After a great wedding feast, he went on board a well armed galley with the boy and his daughter and Currado's messenger and the nurse, and sailed to Lerici. Then he was received by Currado and the whole company rode to one of Currado's castles, which was not far away, where a great feast had been prepared.

No words can express, and I leave it to you, ladies, to imagine, the mother's joy at seeing her other son again, and the joy of the two brothers, and the greeting of all three to the faithful nurse, and the greeting of them all to Messer Guasparrino and his daughter, and his joy at them all, and the happiness of them all with Currado and his wife and the sons and the friends!

To fill up full their cup of joy, God (who is a most generous giver once He has begun) allowed news to arrive that Arrighetto Capece was alive and well. For, as the feast ran high and men and women were still at the first courses, there returned the messenger sent into Sicily. Among other things he related that Arrighetto was in prison when the revolt against King Charles started; the people slew the gaolers, took him out of prison, made him their leader (since he was an enemy of King Charles) and with his aid slew and drove out the French. This had set him high in the good graces of King Pedro, who had restored him to all his honours and estates. The messenger added that Arrighetto had received him with the greatest respect and had shown extreme happiness when he heard about his wife and son, of whom he had received no news since his imprisonment. Arrighetto had therefore sent a swift ship and some of his gentlemen to take them to Sicily. The messenger was greeted and listened

to with great delight and rejoicing. Currado immediately went out with his friends to meet the gentlemen who had come for Madonna Beritola and Giusfredi, received them courteously, and brought them in to the banquet, which was not yet half over.

The gentlemen were greeted by Giusfredi and his mother and all the others with such joy that the like has never been heard. Before they sat down to meat, the gentlemen, on Arrighetto's behalf, returned thanks to Currado and his wife for the honour they had done his wife and son; placing Arrighetto and all he had at their disposal. Then they turned to Messer Guasparrino (whose kindness was something unexpected) and told him they were certain that when Arrighetto knew what he had done for Scacciato, he would receive similar or even greater thanks.

After this they feasted most merrily with the new brides and bridegrooms. And not that day alone did Currado feast his son-in-law and his relatives and friends, but many others as well.

At last Madonna Beritola and Giusfredi and the others felt they ought to depart. And, taking Spina with them, they went on board ship and sailed away, with many tears on the part of Currado and his wife and Messer Guasparrino. A favourable wind soon brought them to Sicily, where Arrighetto received his wife and children at Palermo with such rejoicing that words cannot describe it. There they lived happily for a long time, grateful to Almighty God for the benefits received from Him.

Seventh Tale

THE SULTAN OF BABYLON SENDS HIS DAUGHTER TO MARRY THE KING OF GARBO. IN THE SPACE OF FOUR YEARS SHE PASSES THROUGH MANY ADVENTURES IN DIFFERENT LANDS AND LIES WITH NINE MEN. SHE IS FINALLY RESTORED TO HER FATHER WHO IS MADE TO BELIEVE SHE IS STILL A VIRGIN, AND MARRIES THE KING OF GARBO

THE pity felt by the ladies for Madonna Beritola's misfortunes would have made them shed tears perhaps if Emilia's tale had lasted much longer. But when it was ended the queen ordered Pamfilo to follow, which he obediently did.

Fair ladies, it is difficult for us to know what is truly useful to us. Thus, as we often see, there are many men who think they would live secure and carefree if only they were rich. To this end, they not only send up urgent prayers to God but eagerly brave every danger and fatigue to acquire wealth. And then when they are rich, it sometimes happens that they are slain by those who in poverty were their friends, but who are tempted by the hope of acquiring their riches. Again, men of humble birth have risen to the dignity of Kings through a thousand battles and the blood of their brothers and friends, thinking that all happiness lies in ruling. But they have found their thrones surrounded with cares and fears, and have learned at the cost of their lives that at royal tables poison may be drunk in gold cups. Others have ardently desired such gifts as bodily strength and beauty; and yet these very things have caused them misfortune or even death.

But I do not wish to name every human desire one by one; so I shall only add that we can choose no desire which will certainly bring us happiness. Wherefore, if we desire to labour rightly, we should resign ourselves to accept what is given us by Him Who alone knows what is necessary to us, and is able to give it. Men indeed sin by desiring many things; but you, most gracious ladies, are especially given to one sin, which is the

desire to be beautiful. So much so that the beauties Nature gives do not suffice you, and you seek to increase them by wonderful arts. I shall therefore tell you a tale of the misfortunes of a beautiful Saracen girl, whose beauty caused her to lie with no less than nine men in the space of four years.

Long ago there was a Sultan of Babylon named Beminedab, fortunate in all his enterprises. Among his many male and female children he had a daughter called Alatiel, the most beautiful woman to be seen in the world in that age, if we may believe those who saw her. Now, the King of Garbo had given valuable aid to the Sultan in a fierce war he had waged with a vast horde of invading Arabs; and, at his request, the Sultan as a special favour granted him Alatiel as his wife. So the Sultan sent her on board a well-equipped and well-armed ship with an honourable escort of men and women and many rich and noble presents; and, having commended her to God's care, despatched her to the King.

The weather was fine, the sailors set every sail as they came out of the port of Alexandria, and for many days their voyage was prosperous. They had passed Sardinia and saw the end of their journey in sight when suddenly one day furious and contrary winds arose and beat so heavily on the ship that more than once they gave themselves up for lost. But, like brave men, they made use of all their strength and every device, and for two days endured the infinite onslaught of the waves. The third night of the storm only increased its violence. The sailors did not know their position; all observation was impossible, for the sky was blotted out with clouds and mist; but they had drifted somewhere near Majorca when they found the ship had sprung a leak.

Seeing no other way of escape and everyone thinking of himself, the officers launched the long-boat and got into it, thinking they had better trust to it than a leaky ship. But although those first in the long-boat tried to fight the others off with knives, every man on the ship tried to jump into it; and, in trying to avoid death, fell into it. In such weather the long-boat could not hold so many; it capsized and everyone in it perished. Nobody was left on the ship but the lady and her women, who lay half dead with fear and the violence of the storm. Although the ship

was leaking badly and was nearly full of water, it was driven rapidly by the force of the wind and struck on the coast of Majorca. So great was the shock that it stuck firmly in the sand about a stone's throw from the shore, and there remained all night beaten but not moved by the force of wind and sea.

At daybreak the storm calmed down somewhat. The lady, although almost half dead, weakly lifted her head and called one after another of her attendants by name; but she called in vain, for they were far away. Getting no reply and seeing no one, she was greatly amazed and began to feel terrified. She stood up as well as she was able, and saw the ladies in attendance on her and the other women lying about. She called first one and then another, but found that sea-sickness and fear had so exhausted them that most of them seemed dead, which greatly increased her terror. However, seeing that she was quite alone and did not know where she was, she took council of necessity and so shook those who were alive that she made them get up. Finding they did not know where the men were and seeing that the ship had struck and was full of water, she began to weep most piteously with them.

It was past the hour of Nones before they saw anyone on the shore or elsewhere from whom they could hope for assistance. About that hour a gentleman named Pericone da Visalgo was returning home that way on horseback with his attendants. He saw the ship, realised what had happened, and ordered one of his servants to get on board without delay and to report what he found there. With great difficulty the servant climbed on to the ship and found the lady with her few attendants hiding timorously under the bowsprit. When they saw the man they besought his pity with many tears; but finding he did not understand their language nor they his, they tried to communicate their plight by signs.

The servant went back and told Pericone what he had seen, and Pericone immediately had the ladies and the most valuable things in the ship brought on shore and carried to his castle. He saw that the women were given food and rest, and judged from Alatiel's rich clothes and the respect showed her by the other women that she was a lady of high birth. Although she was pale and dishevelled from the sea, yet her features seemed

most beautiful to Pericone. So he immediately determined to make her his wife if she was not married, or, if he could not marry her, to have her as his mistress.

Pericone was a strong, haughty-looking man. For several days the lady was most carefully tended, and thus perfectly recovered. He saw that she was indeed extremely beautiful, and grieved that he could not understand her language, nor she his. But as her beauty moved him immensely he attempted by amorous and pleasant signs to induce her to yield to his pleasures without resistance. But to no avail. She flatly refused to lie with him, which merely inflamed Pericone's ardour. This the lady perceived. She had now been there for some days and guessed from the clothes of those about her that she was among Christians, and also approximately where she was. She saw that it was of no avail therefore to make known who she was, and she also saw that in the long run she would have to submit willingly or unwillingly to Pericone's desires; she therefore proudly resolved to spurn the misery of her fate. She ordered her women (only three of whom remained alive) never to reveal who she was, unless they found themselves in a position where they might reasonably expect some help towards getting free. In addition she urged them to preserve their chastity, asserting that she herself had made up her mind that no man should enjoy her save only her husband. Her women praised her, and said they would obey her faithfully.

Pericone, having the woman he desired ever before his eyes but yet denied him, became daily more ardent. He saw his allurements were useless, so had recourse to cunning and art, leaving force as a final resource. He had several times noted that the lady liked wine, as happens with those who are unaccustomed to it because their laws forbid it; and he thought he would use wine as an aid to Venus. Pretending not to care that she rejected him, he gave a fine supper one evening, to which the lady came. Everyone was very gay, and Pericone ordered the servant who waited upon her to give her various mixed wines to drink; which he did very skilfully. Attracted by the pleasure of drinking and not knowing what she was about, she took more than befitted her chastity. She forgot all about her misfortunes and became very merry; and when she saw some

of the women dancing in the fashion of Majorca, she danced for them in the Alexandrian style.

When Pericone observed this, he felt he was drawing near the desired end. He therefore prolonged the supper far into the night, with abundance of food and drink. Finally, when the guests had all gone, he went alone with her to her bedroom. She, being hotter with wine than cool with chastity, unreservedly undressed herself before Pericone as if he had been one of her women, and got into bed. Pericone was not long in following her. He put out every light, nimbly got into bed with her, took her in his arms, and, without any resistance on her part, began to enjoy her amorously. She had never known before the horn with which men butt, but when she felt it she regretted that she had formerly refused Pericone's advances; and, thereafter she did not wait to be invited to such sweet nights, but herself often invited him, not with words (which he could not understand) but by actions. While she and Pericone thus enjoyed life, Fortune, not content with making a King's wife into a gentleman's mistress, was preparing a yet worse bed-mate for her.

Pericone had a brother named Marato, aged twenty-five, as handsome and fresh as a rose. He saw Alatiel and she pleased him mightily, while, from what he could gather by her signs, he was well in her good graces. In his opinion nothing kept them apart but Pericone's very strict watch over her, and so he devised a cruel plan to which he wickedly gave effect.

At that moment there happened to be in the harbour, a ship laden with merchandise, owned by two young Genoese, just about to sail for Chia-renza in the Greek Empire. Marato arranged with them to take him and the lady with them. That night he went to the castle of the unsuspecting Pericone together with several companions, to whom he had revealed his project, and hid them in the house as he had planned. In the middle of the night he called his companions and went with them to the room where Pericone was sleeping with the lady. They murdered Pericone in his sleep, and threatened the weeping lady with instant death if she made any noise. Unobserved they stole Pericone's most valuable goods, and fled to the shore, where Marato and the lady went on board, and the rest went to their homes. The sailors at once started out before a fresh breeze.

The lady grieved bitterly over this her second misfortune, as well as the first. But Marato, producing that holy crescent which God had given him, soon consoled her in such a manner that she forgot all about Pericone and settled down comfortably with him. But just as she began to feel happy again, Fortune, not content with her former woes, prepared her a new experience. As I have already said more than once, Alatiel was most beautiful and her manners graceful; consequently the two young Genoese fell in love with her, and thought of nothing but trying to please and serve her, though they took care that Marato should not notice anything.

Each perceived the other's love, and, after a secret discussion, they agreed to share her between them, as if love could be shared like money or merchandise. But they found that Marato watched her so carefully that they could not carry out their intentions. So one day when the ship was sailing very fast and Marato was standing at the poop looking out to sea and not noticing them, they crept up behind him and together threw him into the water. The ship had already gone over a mile before anyone noticed that Marato had fallen overboard. When the lady heard of this and saw there was no way to save him, she began to lament once more on the ship. The two lovers at once went to her and tried to comfort her with soft words and big promises; she understood little of what they said, and, as a matter of fact, was grieving far more over her own misfortunes than the loss of her lover. After they had talked to her for a long time and felt they had consoled her, they began to argue as to which of them should lie with her first.

Each wished to be first, and neither could agree with the other. So from high words they fell into a rage, drew their knives and attacked each other. Before the other men on board could separate them, they both fell, one dead and the other seriously wounded. This greatly grieved the lady, for she saw herself left without any help and advice, while she dreaded lest the anger of the two Genoese's relatives and friends should fall on her. But the wounded man's entreaties and their speedy arrival at Chiarenza saved her from the danger of death. She landed with the wounded man and went to an inn with him. The fame of her beauty immediately ran through the town and reached the ears of the Prince of

the Morea, who was in Chiarenza at that time. He therefore desired to see her; and, when he saw her, she seemed to him far more beautiful than common report had said, and he fell so deeply in love with her that he could think of nothing else.

The Prince discovered how she had come to Chiarenza, and began to wonder how he could get hold of her. While he was examining ways and means, the wounded man's relatives heard of it, and immediately sent her to him without any delay. This delighted the Prince and the lady too, for she felt she had escaped a great danger. The Prince saw that she possessed royal manners as well as great beauty; he felt she must be a noblewoman (although he could not find out who she was), and this increased his love for her. He felt such love for her that he treated her as if she were his wife, and not his mistress.

Thinking over her past misfortunes, the lady felt she was now happily situated. She felt quite consoled and cheerful again, so that all her beauties blossomed out, and nothing but her beauty was talked about in all Greece. The young and handsome Duke of Athens, a relative and friend of the Prince, greatly desired to see her; and sending notice of his visit, as he was accustomed to do, he arrived with a numerous company at Chiarenza, where he was honourably received with great joy.

Some days later, when the beauties of the lady were being discussed, the Duke asked if she were as wonderful as people said. To which the Prince replied: "Far more so. But you shall judge with your own eyes, not from my words!"

The Duke eagerly accepted, and the Prince conducted him to her. Being warned of their visit, she received them politely and with a cheerful visage, and sat down with them; but as she understood little or nothing of their language, they could not enjoy the pleasures of conversation. Therefore everyone gazed at her in wonderment, especially the Duke, who could scarcely believe that she was a mortal woman. Gazing at her, he failed to realise how the poison of love was working upon him, and, thinking he was merely satisfying his curiosity, he found he was deep in love with her. When he had left her and the Prince, and had time to think matters over, he concluded that the Prince was the happiest man in the

world to have such a beautiful woman at his pleasure. Then, after a great many agitated reflections, his love got the better of his honesty, and he decided to deprive the Prince of this felicity and to get it for himself.

Having a mind to accomplish this, he put aside all reason and justice, and devoted his whole attention to deceit. One day, in collaboration with one of the Prince's most confidential servants (whose name was Ciuriaci) he secretly prepared his horses and everything else for departure. That night, with an accomplice, he was let into the Prince's apartment by the treacherous servant, and, since it was very hot, he found the lady asleep and the Prince naked at a window overlooking the sea, enjoying the faint sea breezes. His accomplice, knowing what was to be done, crept quietly to the window, stabbed the Prince in the back with a dagger and threw him out the window.

The palace overlooked the sea from a great height, and the window where the Prince had been standing was directly above some small houses which had been destroyed by the sea and were therefore rarely or never visited. Thus things turned out as the Duke had expected, and the fall of the Prince's body was not heard by anyone.

When the Duke's bravo saw that this murder was successful, he pretended to embrace Ciuriaci, but in fact threw a rope (which he had concealed for the purpose) round his neck so that he could not utter a sound. Then as the Duke came in, he strangled Ciuriaci and threw his body after the Prince's. When this had been done without arousing the attention of the lady or of anyone else, the Duke took a light in his hand and secretly examined all the charms of the sleeping beauty. He looked at everything and was highly delighted; she had charmed him when clothed, but when naked she delighted him beyond all expression. Therefore, heated with desire and caring nothing for the crime he had just committed, although his hands were still bloody he got into bed and lay with her, while she was heavy with sleep and thought he was the Prince.

After he had lain with her in the greatest delight, he got up and let in some of his attendants. He warned the lady not to make any noise, led her out by the secret door through which he had entered, put her on horseback as quietly as possible, and set off full speed for Athens with all his

train. But he had a wife, and therefore did not take Alatiel to Athens, but to a very handsome residence he had on the seashore not far from the town. There he secretly hid the grieving lady, and arranged for her to be served with every honour.

Next morning the Prince's courtiers waited until Nones for him to get up. Hearing nothing, they softly opened the doors of his apartments (which were not locked), but found no one there. But they felt no alarm, thinking that the Prince had gone off secretly somewhere to enjoy the lady all to himself for a few days.

The next day it happened that a madman wandered among the ruins where lay the bodies of the Prince and Ciuriaci, and came out dragging Ciuriaci behind him by the rope. The attendants were amazed at this sight and persuaded the madman to take them to the place where he had found the body; and there, to the great grief of the whole city, they found the body of the Prince, which they buried with all honours. They then enquired into the authors of this crime, and, seeing that the Duke of Athens was not there but had secretly departed, they realised that he had murdered the Prince and carried off the lady. They immediately elected the dead man's brother as their new Prince, and urged him to avenge the murder. Having collected further proofs of the crime, this new Prince called upon his friends, relatives and servants, and gathered together a large and powerful army to make war on the Duke of Athens.

Hearing of this, the Duke at once began to gather forces for his defence, and many gentlemen came to his aid, including Constantine and Manuel, son and nephew of the Emperor of Constantinople, with a large contingent. They were received with the greatest honour by the Duke and by the Duchess, who was their sister.

Day by day the war became more imminent. The Duchess invited both her relatives to her apartment and there, with many tears, told them the whole story and the reason for the war, and showed how she had been insulted by the Duke who was keeping this woman secretly hidden somewhere. And in great grief she begged them to advise her for the best, in regard to the Duke's honour and her own satisfaction. The two young men already knew all about the matter and therefore, without asking

many questions, comforted her as best they could and bade her be of good cheer; they found out from her where the lady was concealed, and then departed. They had often heard praise of the lady's marvellous beauty, which they desired to see, and they asked the Duke to let them see her. Forgetting what had been the Prince's fate through letting him see her, he promised to do so. He ordered a magnificent dinner in a most beautiful garden, belonging to the house where the lady was lodged, and next day took them and a few companions to dine with her.

As Constantine sat beside her, he looked at her with amazement, telling himself that he had never seen so beautiful a woman and feeling that there was every excuse for the Duke or anyone else who committed any treacherous crime to get possession of her. And as he kept gazing at her time after time, the same thing occurred to him as had happened to the Duke. He fell hopelessly in love with her, abandoned all thought of the war, and began to ponder over means of getting her away from the Duke, while he carefully concealed his love from everyone.

While he was burning with desire, the time came to meet the Prince's forces which were drawing near the Duke's territories. So the Duke and Constantine and all the rest left Athens and marched to the frontier to prevent the Prince from advancing any further. While they were there, Constantine's mind and thoughts were filled with the lady. He thought that, since the Duke was away, he could easily achieve his desire, and therefore pretended to be ill in order to have an opportunity for returning to Athens. With the Duke's permission he handed over his command to Manuel, and returned to his sister in Athens. A few days later he turned the conversation on the insult done her by the Duke in keeping a mistress, and told her that if she wished, he was ready to help her by taking Alatiel away.

The Duchess thought Constantine was doing this for love of her and not love of the lady, and told him that she liked the idea greatly, if only it could be carried out in such a way that the Duke would never know she had consented to it. Constantine immediately gave her a promise, and she consented that he should act as seemed best to him.

Constantine secretly equipped a fast ship and sent it one evening to lie

off the garden where the lady was living. He arranged with his friends on board what they were to do, and then went with other friends to call on the lady. There he was greeted by the attendants and by the lady herself, and they all went into the garden. Pretending that he had a private message from the Duke to Alatiel, he went alone with her through a gate which opened to the sea. One of his companions had already unlocked it and gave the signal to the boat; and Constantine immediately had the lady seized and carried on board. Then he turned to her attendants, and said:

“Let no man move or say a word, unless he wants to die. I am not robbing the Duke of a woman, but wiping out the shame he has put upon my sister.”

Nobody was eager to reply to this, and Constantine and his attendants then went on board the ship. He sat beside the weeping lady, and ordered the rowers to start at once, which they did with such speed that the boat reached Ægina the next day. They landed there to rest, and Constantine enjoyed the lady, who wept over her unlucky beauty. They boarded the ship again, and in a few days reached Chios. Fearing his father's reproofs and also that the abducted lady might be taken from him, Constantine decided to remain there, and for many days Alatiel wept over her misfortunes. But Constantine comforted her, just as the others had, and she began to feel content with what Fortune had prepared for her.

While things were going on in this way, Osbech, King of Turkey, who was continually at war with the Emperor, happened to arrive at Smyrna. There he heard how Constantine was living a lascivious life with a lady he had abducted, and was quite unguarded. Osbech armed a number of small ships and sailed to Chios by night, where he silently landed his troops and surprised many of the Greeks in their beds, before they knew the enemy was upon them. The rest, who had rushed to arms, were slain. He burned the whole island, put the spoils and prisoners on the ships, and returned to Smyrna.

Osbech was a young man, and, as he was looking over the spoils, he came upon the woman who had been found sleeping in bed with Constantine, and was highly delighted with her. Without any delay he made her

his wife, celebrated the marriage, and lay happily with her for several months.

Before this event occurred the Emperor had been treating with Basano, King of Cappadocia, for them both to attack Osbech simultaneously from different quarters. But they had not come to an agreement because the Emperor would not grant some of Basano's demands, which he thought excessive. However, when he heard what had happened to his son he was filled with grief, and immediately did what the King of Cappadocia had required of him. Urging him to attack Osbech with all his forces, the Emperor prepared to invade him from the other side.

Hearing of this, Osbech collected an army and, to avoid being caught between the forces of two great monarchs, he marched against the King of Cappadocia, leaving the beautiful lady in Smyrna under the guardianship of a trusted friend. Before long, Osbech gave battle to the King of Cappadocia, but his army was defeated and scattered, and he himself slain. The victorious Basano immediately marched on Smyrna, and as he advanced everyone submitted to him as conqueror.

The name of Osbech's friend, who was looking after the lady, was Antioco. Although he was elderly, he also fell in love with her great beauty, forgetting the faith pledged to his lord and friend. He could speak her language, which was delightful to her, since for several years she had been compelled to live as if she were a deaf-mute, for nobody had understood her language nor she theirs. Urged by his desire, Antioco became so familiar with her that in a few days they both forgot their lord away at the war, and became intimate in an amorous as well as a friendly manner, both taking great delight in each other between the sheets. But when they heard Osbech was conquered and slain, and that Basano was coming to pillage everything, they agreed not to await his coming. Taking the greater part of Osbech's treasure, they secretly fled to Rhodes; but they had not been there very long, when Antioco fell mortally sick. A merchant of Cyprus, his friend, whom he greatly loved, was living there; and Antioco, feeling he was drawing near his end, determined to leave this man his wealth and his dear lady. Being come near to death, he called them both before him, and said:

"I see I am certainly failing, which grieves me, for I never enjoyed life so much as I have done recently. One thing will make me die happy. Since I must die, at least I shall die in the arms of the two persons I love most in the world—in yours, my dear friend, and in those of this lady whom I have loved more than myself ever since I have known her. It grieves me to die and leave her here, a stranger, without help and without advice. And it would grieve me still more, if I did not know you are here and did not believe you would take the same care of her as of me. Therefore I beseech you, if I die, take my goods and her, and do with them both what you think will be a consolation to my soul. And you, dearest lady, after I am dead do not forget me, so that I may boast there that I am loved here by the most beautiful woman Nature ever created. If you will give me hope of these two things, I shall depart in peace."

The merchant friend and the lady both wept when they heard these words. They tried to comfort him, and solemnly promised they would do what he asked, if he should die. Very soon he did die, and they buried him honourably.

Soon after this the Cyprus merchant finished all his business in Rhodes, and determined to return to Cyprus on a Catalan ship making the voyage. He therefore asked the lady what she wanted to do, and whether she would return to Cyprus with him. The lady replied that she would gladly go with him and hoped that for Antioco's sake he would treat her as a sister. The merchant replied that this would give him the greatest pleasure; and so that he might protect her from any insult on the voyage, he gave out that she was his wife. They went on board ship and were given a small cabin in the stern, where they slept together in the same bed in order to keep up the pretence. In this way occurred something which neither of them had intended when they left Rhodes. They forgot their love and friendship to dead Antioco, and, stimulated by the darkness, convenience and warmth of bed, they began to feel excited with mutual desires, and before they had reached Baffa (where they were going) they were lying together. After they reached Baffa she remained for some time with the merchant.

There happened to come to Baffa on business one Antigono, a very

elderly gentleman of great wisdom and little wealth. He had involved himself in the service of the King of Cyprus, and Fortune had been against him. One day, when the merchant had gone on a voyage to Armenia, this Antigono happened to pass by the lady's house just at the moment when she came to the window. As she was very beautiful, he gazed at her, and remembered that he had seen her somewhere before, though he could not recollect where.

The beautiful lady, who had long been Fortune's plaything, now saw the end of her misfortunes drawing near. As soon as she saw Antigono she remembered that she had seen him in an important position among her father's servants. A sudden hope came to her that through his advice she might return to her royal estate; and so, since the merchant was away, she sent for Antigono as soon as she could. When he arrived, she blushing asked him if he were Antigono of Famagusta, as she believed. Antigono said "yes," and added:

"Madonna, I seem to recognise you but I can't remember where I saw you. If it is not displeasing to you, I beg you will recall yourself to my memory."

Hearing this, the lady wept, threw her arms round his neck (to his great amazement) and then asked him if he had never seen her in Alexandria. On hearing this question, Antigono immediately recognised that she was Alatiel, the Sultan's daughter, who was thought to be drowned. He wished to pay her the customary respect, but she refused, and asked him to sit down with her. Antigono did so, and then respectfully asked how, when and by what means she came there, since the whole of Egypt was convinced that she had been drowned at sea several years before. To this the lady replied:

"I wish I had been drowned, rather than go through the sort of life I have endured, and I think my father will wish the same, if he ever knows about it."

Whereupon she began to weep bitterly again. And Antigono said:

"Madonna, do not despair before it is time. Tell me, if you please, your misfortunes and the life you have led. Perhaps with God's help we may find some remedy."

"Antigono," said the beautiful lady, "when I see you, I seem to see my own father, and feel for you the love and tenderness I am bound to feel for him. I therefore spoke to you, when I could have concealed myself. There are very few persons whom it would give me as much pleasure to see as yourself. And so I shall tell you, as if you were my father, all the misfortunes which I have kept secretly to myself. If, when you have heard them, you can think of any means by which I can return to my former state, I beg you to make use of them; if not, I beg you will never tell anyone that you have seen me here or heard anything about me."

Having said this she then told him with many tears all that had happened to her from the time when she was wrecked in Majorca to that moment. Antigono wept with pity, and then, after some thought, said:

"Madonna, since you have always concealed your identity in your troubles, I can certainly restore you to your father, dearer than ever, and see you married to the King of Garbo."

She asked him how, and he carefully explained his plan to her in detail. And to prevent any delay, Antigono immediately returned to Famagusta, and went to the King, to whom he said:

"Sire, may it please your Majesty, you can do yourself great honour and be of great service to me, who am a poor man on your account, without much cost to yourself."

The King asked how, and Antigono then said:

"There has arrived at Baffa the beautiful young daughter of the Sultan, who for so long was thought to be drowned. To preserve her chastity she has suffered great hardships. She is now in poverty, and desires to return to her father. If you will send her to him under my protection, this will do you great honour and be of vast service to me. I think that the Sultan will never forget such a service."

Moved by his royal virtue, the King at once consented. He sent for Alatiel and had her brought honourably to Famagusta, when she was received by himself and the Queen with the greatest festivity and magnificence. When the King and Queen questioned her about her adventures, she replied exactly as Antigono had advised her. A few days later, at her request, the King sent her with an honourable attendance of ladies and

gentlemen, under the care of Antigono, to her father the Sultan. It is needless to ask whether he received her and Antigono and the rest with delight. After she had rested, the Sultan desired to know how she chanced to be still alive, and where she had been for so long without ever sending any news of herself. The lady had most carefully got into her mind what Antigono had advised her to say, and answered her father as follows:

“About the twentieth day after my departure from you, father, our ship was wrecked in a storm and driven on to the shores of a place in the West not far from Aiguesmortes. What happened to the men on board I have never known; all I know is that next day I seemed to return from death to life. The inhabitants had already seen the wrecked ship, and were hastening from every direction to rob it. I got down on to the shore with two of my women, who were immediately seized by young men and taken off in different directions. What happened to them I never learned. I was caught by two young men and dragged along by the hair, weeping loudly. They were dragging me along a track towards a large wood when four men on horseback passed that way, and when the men dragging me along saw them, they at once released me and fled.

“Seeing this, the four men, who appeared to me persons of authority, rode up to me and asked me many questions. I talked a great deal, but they did not understand my speech, nor I theirs. After a long discussion they set me on one of their horses and took me to a convent of women, living in accordance with their religious laws. There I was kindly received and always honourably treated, and together with them I served with great devotion the Holy Crescent in the Hollow Vale, which is much honoured by the women of that country. After I had been with them for some time and had learned something of their language, they asked me who I was and where I came from. Knowing where I was and fearing that if I told them the truth they might do me some injury as an enemy of their faith, I replied that I was the daughter of a great nobleman in Cyprus, who was sending me to Crete to be married when the ship was thus driven out of its course and wrecked.

“For fear of trouble I often followed their customs in many respects. The chief of these ladies, who was called Abbess, asked me if I wished to

return to Cyprus, and I replied that I desired it above everything. But she was so tender of my honour that she would never entrust me to any person travelling to Cyprus until two months ago. At that time certain good men of France with their wives, among whom were relatives of the Abbess, passed through on their way to Jerusalem to visit the Sepulchre, where He whom they believe to be God was buried after the Jews had slain Him. She entrusted me to them and begged them to deliver me to my father in Cyprus.

“It would take long to relate how much these gentlemen honoured me and the joy with which their wives received me. We went on board ship and after many days arrived at Baffa. When we arrived there, of course I did not know anyone and did not know what to say to the gentlemen who were to hand me over to my father, as the venerable Abbess had instructed them. But God perhaps was sorry for me, since He brought Antigono to the shore at the very hour when we were disembarking. I called to him immediately and told him in our language (so that the gentlemen and their wives would not understand) that he must receive me as his daughter. He immediately understood, and greeted me with the greatest joy, showing every honour his poverty permitted to the gentlemen and ladies. He then took me to the King of Cyprus, who received me with honour such as I can never fully relate, and has now sent me to you. If there is anything more to know, Antigono will tell you, for he has often heard me tell the story of my adventures.”

Antigono then turned to the Sultan and said:

“Sire, what she has now related she has several times told me, and the ladies and gentlemen with whom she returned said the same. She has only omitted one thing, because she did not think it fitting for her to speak of it. And this is what the gentlemen and ladies who accompanied her said of the virtuous life she led with the nuns, and her praiseworthy behaviour, and the tears and the regrets of the ladies and gentlemen when they handed her over to me and left her. If I tried to tell you all that they said about her, I should need all the rest of today and the night as well, and then not finish. It must be enough if I say that, according to what they told me and I have observed for myself, you may boast that

you possess the most beautiful, the most chaste and most virtuous daughter of any living monarch.”

The Sultan was marvellously delighted with all these things, and piously prayed God to grant him grace to reward fittingly everyone who had done her honour, particularly the King of Cyprus who had sent her to him so honourably. After a few days he presented Antigono with very great gifts, and gave him permission to return to Cyprus, returning the warmest thanks to the King both by letter and by special ambassadors for the kindness shown to his daughter. After this, he determined to carry out the original plan and marry Alatiel to the King of Garbo. He therefore wrote to that King all that had happened and said that if he still wished to marry Alatiel he must send for her. The King of Garbo was delighted, sent an honourable company for her, and received her with joy. And thus she, who had lain perhaps ten thousand times with eight different men, went to bed with him as if a virgin and made him think she was one. And thereafter she lived with him happily as Queen. Hence the saying: A kissed mouth loses no savour, but is renewed like the moon.

Eighth Tale

THE COUNT OF ANTWERP IS FALSELY ACCUSED, IS EXILED AND LEAVES HIS TWO CHILDREN IN DIFFERENT PARTS OF ENGLAND. HE RETURNS IN DISGUISE, FINDS THEM WELL, JOINS THE KING OF FRANCE'S ARMY AS A GROOM, HIS INNOCENCE IS PROVED, AND HE IS RESTORED TO HIS RANK

THE ladies sighed much over the adventures of the beautiful Alatiel, but who knows what was the cause of their sighs? Perhaps some of them sighed as much with longing for such frequent marriages as from pity for the lady. But I shall not enquire into this. When they had all laughed at Pamfilo's last words and the queen saw his tale was ended, she turned

to Elisa and ordered her to tell the next story. And she began cheerfully as follows:

The field in which we are wandering today is a very wide one, and each of us could run, not one but ten courses, so wide are Fortune's strange and grievous changes. Since I am to tell one among these infinite happenings, it shall be this.

When the Empire of Rome passed from the French to the Germans, there was bitter enmity and continual war between the two nations. Therefore, to defend his country and attack his enemy's, the King of France together with his son and all his friends and relatives gathered together all the forces of the kingdom into one large army. Before leaving he had to appoint a regent. He knew that Walter, Count of Antwerp, was a good and wise man, and a loyal friend and subject; and, although the Count was skilled in warfare, the King preferred to give him a more delicate task, and appointed him regent of the whole realm of France.

The Count entered upon his office in a wise and orderly way, consulting the queen and her daughter-in-law about everything. And although they had been left under his jurisdiction, he chose to honour them as his superiors. Walter was a very handsome man of about forty, as pleasant and as polite as any nobleman could be. In addition, he was the most graceful and delicate knight of that age, and the best dressed.

Now, while the King of France and his son were away at the war, the Count's wife died, leaving him with two young children, a boy and a girl. He spent much time with the two royal ladies discussing with them the affairs of the kingdom. The wife of the King's son gazed much at him, observing his person and manners with great affection, and fell passionately in love with him. Since she was young and fresh, and he had no wife, she thought her desires could be easily satisfied with no hindrance but the shame of confessing them to him, which she soon got rid of. And one day when she was alone and thought the time fitting, she sent for him as though she had some business to discuss.

The Count, who was very far from sharing the lady's passion, at once went to her. He found her lying on a couch alone, and she made him sit down beside her. He twice asked her why she had sent for him, and she

made no reply. At length her love overcame her; she blushed scarlet with shame, trembled, and nearly wept, and she began to speak in broken words:

"Most dear and sweet friend and my lord, a wise man like you must know the frailty of men and women, how for different reasons it is greater in one than another. A just judge will not give the same punishment for the same sin in different persons. Who would not say that a poor man or woman, who should give all their energy to earning a living, should be more heavily reprov'd for feeling and following love's appetites than a rich and idle lady who lacked nothing that could please her desires? No one, I am sure.

"Therefore I think that these things do much to excuse a lady if by chance she allows herself to fall in love; and if the lover she chooses is wise and brave she may be wholly excused. Both these apply to me, and, in addition my youth and my husband's absence should serve to defend my ardent love in your sight. If these things have that weight with the wise which they ought to have, I beg you will give me the advice and help I am about to ask of you.

"Owing to my husband's absence I cannot withstand the force of love and the desires of the flesh, which are so powerful that every day they overcome the strongest men as well as weak women. The comfort and idleness in which I live assist the pleasures of love, and I have allowed myself to fall in love. I know that if such a thing were known it would not be modest, but if nobody knows about it I think it is scarcely immodest at all. And Love has been very gracious to me, for it has not deprived me of my good sense in choosing a lover but has rather enlightened it, by showing me that you are a person worthy to be loved by a woman like me. For, if I am not deceived, you are the most handsome, the most charming, the most attractive and the wisest knight in the whole realm of France. And just as I can now say that I have no husband, so are you now without a wife. I beg you, by the great love I feel for you, not to deny me your love, and to pity my youth which melts for you like ice at a fire."

At this point she was so overcome with tears that she could not say

another word, although she had meant to implore him at much greater length. Overcome, weeping, ashamed, she could do nothing but let her head fall on the Count's shoulder.

The Count, who was a most loyal knight, reproved her wild love with severe reproaches, and repulsed her when she tried to throw her arms round his neck. He swore a solemn oath that he would rather be rent asunder than do such a wrong to the honour of his over-lord.

When the lady heard this, she forgot her love and fell into a rage.

"Base knight!" said she, "shall I let my desire be so scorned by you? God forbid! Since you would let me die, I will either have you killed or hounded out of the land!"

So saying, she pulled down her hair, tore open her clothes at her breasts, and shrieked:

"Help! Help! The Count of Antwerp is trying to rape me!"

The Count had more fear of the courtier's envy than of his own conscience and felt that more belief would be given to the lady's malevolence than to his innocence. He therefore left the room and the palace as quickly as he could, hurried to his own house, threw his two children on to a horse, mounted himself, and galloped towards Calais as fast as he could.

Many attendants rushed in when the lady screamed, and when they saw her and heard what she said, they believed her words. Moreover they thought that the Count's politeness and attentions in the past had simply been a means to this end. So they rushed in fury to the Count's house to arrest him. Not finding him, they first stole everything of value in it, and then pulled it down.

The news in its worst form reached the King and his son with the army; and in great anger they condemned him and his descendants to perpetual exile, and offered a large reward to anyone who captured him dead or alive.

Regretting that flight made his innocence appear guilt, the Count arrived at Calais with his children, unrecognized, took ship for England and set out for London dressed as a poor man. Before entering the city he talked to his children at great length, principally on two subjects:



first, he told them to endure patiently the poverty into which they and he had been thrown by Fortune through no fault of theirs; and, second, he warned them never to tell anyone where they came from or whose children they were, if they valued their lives.

The boy, named Louis, was about nine; and Violante, the girl, about seven. As far as their childish years allowed, they fully understood their father's warning, and proved it by deeds later on. To achieve this end the Count thought it best to change their names, and called the boy Perotto and the girl Giannetta. And coming poorly clothed into London, like French beggars, they went about asking alms.

One morning when they were outside a church, the wife of one of the King of England's generals came out and saw the Count and his two children begging. She asked him where he came from and if they were his children. He replied that he came from Picardy, that the misdeeds of his ne'er-do-well eldest son had forced him to go away with his other two children. The pious lady looked at the little girl and liked her greatly, because she was pretty and charming and attractive, and said:

"Worthy man, if you are willing to leave your little daughter with me I will look after her, for she looks a good child. And if she turns out a good girl I will marry her to someone suitable when the time comes."

This request pleased the Count, who immediately said "yes" and gave her the child with many tears and recommendations. Having thus provided for his daughter with someone he knew about, he decided to stay there no longer. So he and Perotto begged their way across the island and finally reached Wales, quite worn out, for they were unused to travelling on foot. Here, in great state, lived another of the King's generals with many attendants, and the Count and his little boy often went to his house to beg for food.

In this courtyard they found one of the general's sons and other boys of gentlemen's families who indulged in boyish sports, like running and jumping. Perotto mingled with them and at every game was the equal or the superior of them all. The general happened to see this more than once, liked the boy's manner and behaviour, and asked who he was. The reply was that he was the son of a poor man who sometimes came there

to ask alms. The general thereupon asked him for the boy, and the Count, who prayed God for nothing better, freely gave him, although it was bitter to him to part from his son.

Thus the Count disposed of his son and daughter. He then decided he would stay in England no longer, and somehow or other managed to pass over to Ireland, and came to Standford, where he took service with a knight who was part of an earl's household, and did all the jobs of a servant or groom. And there he remained, unknown to anyone, for many years, in poverty and hard work.

Violante, now called Giannetta, stayed in London with the lady, and grew in years and in body and in beauty, so much delighting the lady and her husband and everyone else in the house and all who knew her that it was marvellous to behold. And everyone who saw her manners and behaviour said she was worthy of the highest honour and wealth. And so the lady who had taken her from her father, without knowing anything about him except what she had heard from him, decided to marry the girl honourably, according to the station in life she believed the girl occupied. But God, the just observer of merits, knowing her to be a noblewoman and guiltlessly bearing the burden of another's sin, disposed otherwise. And we must believe that His mercy permitted what happened, in order that the noble girl should not fall into the hands of a man of vile condition.

The lady with whom Giannetta lived had an only son, greatly beloved by his father and mother, not only because he was a son but because of his virtues and merits, for he was well behaved and valiant and bold and handsome of person. He was about six years older than Giannetta, and seeing her most beautiful and graceful, he fell so deeply in love with her that he had eyes for no one else. Since he imagined her to be of low condition he was unwilling to ask her as his wife from his father and mother; moreover, dreading lest he should be reproved for having set his love so low, he kept it a secret to himself, whereby he increased his love more than if he had spoken of it.

All this caused him so much distress that he fell seriously ill. Doctors were called in, examined his water, but could not discover what his illness

was; so that they all despaired of curing him. His father and mother felt inexpressible pain and sorrow at this, and often begged him piteously to tell them the cause of his illness, to which he either replied by sighs or said that he felt wasting away.

One day a young but very learned doctor happened to be sitting beside him, holding his pulse, when Giannetta (who carefully nursed him out of her respect for his mother) came into the room. When the young man saw her, without saying or doing anything he felt the fire of love spring up more fiercely in his heart, which caused his pulse to beat more rapidly than usual. The doctor immediately noticed it with great surprise, and remained as he was to see how long this beating would last.

When Giannetta went out of the room, the beating of the pulse slackened, which suggested to the doctor the true cause of his illness. Therefore, while still holding the pulse, he called for Giannetta as if he wanted to ask her something. She immediately returned, and as soon as she came into the room, the young man's pulse beat higher; and when she left, it slackened. The doctor now felt certain, left the room, and, drawing the young man's mother and father aside, said to them:

"Your son's health does not depend upon the aid of doctors but lies in the hands of Giannetta. From certain signs I have discovered that your son ardently loves her, although, so far as I could see, she does not know it. You now know what you have to do if you value his life."

The gentleman and his wife were happy to hear this, since it showed one way to save their son's life, but they greatly dreaded lest they might have to give him Giannetta as his wife. So when the doctor had gone, they went to the sick man, and the lady said:

"My son, I should never have thought you would have concealed any desire from me, especially when through not obtaining it you found yourself in a decline. You may be certain that I would do anything for you as I would for myself, even if it were less than virtuous. But, since you have done so, it happens that God has pitied you more than you yourself, and to prevent your dying of this illness He has showed us the cause of it, which is simply the extreme love you feel for some girl, whoever she may be. There is no reason for you to be ashamed to tell it, for it is

natural at your age, and if you did not fall in love I should think the less of you. So, my son, do not be restrained with me but tell me all that you desire. Throw off the melancholy and pining which comes from this sickness, be comforted, and be certain that you can propose to me nothing for your satisfaction which I shall not do to the best of my ability, since I love you more than life itself. Away with shame and fear, and tell me if I can do something in aid of your love. And if you do not find me eager to do this and to carry it out, consider me the cruelest mother that ever bore child."

When the young man heard what his mother said, he was at first ashamed; but then he recollected that no one else was better able to satisfy his wishes. So he banished shame, and said:

"Madonna, nothing has caused me to conceal my love so much as the fact that I have noticed that most elderly people will not remember they were once young themselves. But since I see you are so considerate, I do not deny that what you say is true; moreover, I will tell you with whom I am in love, so that you may carry out your promise and thus make me well again."

The lady, trusting too much that she could achieve this end in a manner different from what he expected, told him cheerfully to make plain his desires and that she would act without delay in such a manner that he would be satisfied.

"Madam," said the young man, "the great beauty and praiseworthy behaviour of our Giannetta, and her not pitying me or even noticing it, and my unwillingness to tell anyone, have brought me to this state. And if you do not keep your promise in one way or another, be certain my life will be short."

The lady thought this was more a time for comforting than for reproving him, so she smiled and said:

"Ah, my son, have you let yourself get ill on this account? Be comforted and leave things to me, as soon as you are well."

Filled with new hope, the young man very soon showed signs of the greatest improvement, to the delight of his mother, who then attempted to carry out her promise. One day, talking with Giannetta, she asked her

jestingly but courteously if she had a lover. Giannetta went very red and answered:

“Madam, to expect love is not befitting a poor girl like me, driven from her home and compelled to serve others.”

To which the lady replied:

“If you haven’t one, we wish to give you one with whom you will live joyously, and you will take more delight in your beauty. It is wrong that so handsome a girl as you should be without a lover.”

Giannetta answered:

“Madam, you rescued me from the poverty of my father, and brought me up as your own daughter, and therefore I ought to obey you in everything. But in this respect I think I shall be doing right never to obey you. If you are pleased to give me a husband I mean to love him, but otherwise not; for nothing is left me from the possessions of my ancestors except virtue, and that I mean to keep and to serve as long as my life endures.”

This remark seemed to the lady a serious obstacle to what she had meant to say in order to carry out her promise to her son. But, being a clever woman, she inwardly approved of the girl, and said:

“What! Giannetta! Now suppose our lord the King, who is a young knight, while you are a very beautiful girl, should want to enjoy your love—would you refuse him?”

To this she replied immediately:

“The King might force me, but he would never make me consent to anything I did not think right.”

The lady saw her determination and said no more, thinking she would put her to the proof. So she told her son that when he was well she would put him and Giannetta in the same room and he could do his best to have his pleasure of her; adding that she thought it unseemly that she should play the bawd to her own son, and ask her maid-servant to lie with him.

This did not please the young man at all, and he suddenly grew worse. Whereupon his mother spoke openly to Giannetta, but found her more constant than ever. She then told her husband what she had done, and,

although it was a grief to them, they agreed together to let him marry her, preferring that their son should live with a wife unbefitting him rather than die with no wife at all. This was carried out after all this talk. Giannetta was delighted, and with a devout heart gave thanks to God who had not forgotten her. And yet, for all this, she never claimed to be more than the daughter of a plain man of Picardy. The young man got better and married her most happily and began to enjoy life with her.

Meanwhile Perotto, who had remained in Wales with the King of England's general there, likewise grew in grace with his lord, and became very handsome, and no one in the whole island was his equal in tourneys and jousts and other feats of arms; wherefore he was famous and known to everybody as Perotto the Picard. And as God did not forget his sister, so likewise He showed that He remembered Perotto. For, there came a dreadful plague to that country which carried off nearly half the inhabitants, while the greater part of the remainder fled to other places in terror; so that the land seemed abandoned. In this plague there perished the general, his lord, and the general's wife and son and brothers and grandchildren and many other relatives. All that remained alive were a daughter just of age to marry and Perotto and a few other servants. When the plague was over, this girl, with the consent and advice of the few inhabitants left alive, took Perotto as her husband, since he was a brave and valiant man, and made him lord of all that she had inherited. Not long afterwards the King of England heard of the general's death, and, knowing Perotto's valour, made him general in the dead man's place. This, briefly, is what happened to the Count of Antwerp's two innocent children, whom he had left and lost.

Eighteen years had now passed since the Count fled from Paris. He had endured much during his miserable life in Ireland, and, feeling he was growing old, he thought he would like to find out what had happened to his children, if he could do so. He was quite changed from his former appearance and through long habit was stronger in body than when he lived in idleness in his youth. He set out poor and ill-furnished from the place where he had lived so long, and arrived in England. He then went to the place where he had left Perotto, and found him a general and a great

lord, and saw he was healthy and strong and handsome. This greatly delighted the Count, but he would not make himself known until he had learned the fate of Giannetta.

He therefore set out, and did not rest until he reached London. There he prudently enquired about the lady with whom he had left his daughter, and found that Giannetta was married to her son. This greatly delighted him, and he counted all his former suffering a small thing since he had found both his children alive and successful. Since he wanted to see her, he began to hang about the house like a beggar. One day Giachetto Lamien—such was the name of Giannetta's husband—saw and pitied him because he saw he was a poor old man, and therefore ordered one of the servants to take him into the house and give him something to eat; which the servant willingly did.

Giannetta and Giachetto already had several children, the eldest of whom was not more than eight, and they were the prettiest and most charming children in the world. When they saw the Count eating, they all gathered round him, and began to make merry with him, as if some secret virtue had told them he was their grandfather. Recognising his grandchildren, he showed them love and began to caress them, wherefore the children would not leave him, however much their tutor called them. Hearing this, Giannetta came out of her room to that where the Count was, and threatened to beat them if they disobeyed their tutor. The children began to cry, and said they wanted to stay with the kind man who loved them more than their tutor; at which both the Count and the lady laughed. The Count had stood up, not like a father but like a poor man, to honour his daughter as a lady; and at seeing her he had felt great delight. But neither at that moment nor later did she recognise him, because he was quite changed from what he had been—old, white-haired, bearded, thin and sun-burned, so that he seemed a man quite different from the Count. Seeing that the children wanted to stay near him and cried when they were taken away, she told the tutor to let them remain.

While the children were standing round the old man, Giachetto's father happened to come in and heard about this from the tutor; and, as he disliked Giannetta, he said:

“Let them stay there, with the bad luck God gave them! They are only copying the person they are born from. By their mother they are descended from beggars—small wonder if they want to stay with beggars.”

The Count heard these words and suffered at them; but he took the insult in silence, as he had taken many another.

Although Giachetto was displeased when he heard of the delight his children took in the old man (that is, the Count), still, he loved them so much that, rather than see them weep, he ordered that the old man should be received into the house as a servant, if he wished to remain. He replied that he would gladly stay, but that he could do nothing but attend to horses, to which he had been accustomed all his life. He was therefore allotted a horse, and when he had finished work he played with the children.

While Fortune had treated the Count of Antwerp and his children as I have related, the King of France died, after making many treaties with the Germans, and was succeeded by his son, whose wife had caused the Count's exile. The last truce with the Germans expired, and the new King began a very bitter war. His relative, the King of England, sent him the assistance of a large army, commanded by his General Perotto and by Giachetto Lamien, the son of his other general. With him went the old man (that is, the Count) still unrecognised by anybody, and remained with the army for a considerable time as a groom. And, as he was a good soldier, he did more service both by his deeds and advice than was expected of him.

During this war the Queen of France fell seriously ill, and, finding she was dying, she repented of her sins and confessed to the Archbishop of Rouen, who was considered by all a good and most saintly man. Among other things she told him of the great wrong she had done the Count of Antwerp. Nor was she satisfied with telling him only, but related all that had happened in the presence of many men of worth, and besought them to intercede with the King so that the Count if living, or, if not, his children, might be restored to their rank. Soon after which she departed this life, and was honourably buried.

When the King was told of this confession, he sighed to think of the

wrong done this good man. He then proclaimed throughout his whole army and in many other places that he would give a large reward to anyone who could give him information concerning the Count of Antwerp and his children, because he had now learned from the Queen's confession that the Count was innocent of the crime for which he had been exiled, and the King intended to restore him to his former or greater rank. When the disguised Count heard of this and found out that it was true, he went straight to Giachetto and begged him to come with him to Perotto, since he could give them the information the King wanted. And when they were all three together, the Count said to Perotto, who was just about to question him:

"Perotto, Giachetto here married your sister, and has never had any dowry with her. Therefore, so that your sister may not be dowerless, I intend that he and no one else shall receive the reward promised by the King, for yourself who are son to the Count of Antwerp, and for Violante your sister and his wife, and for me who am the Count of Antwerp and your father."

When Perotto heard this he gazed fixedly at him and suddenly recognising him, threw himself at the Count's feet, wept, embraced him and said:

"Father, you are indeed welcome."

When Giachetto heard what the Count said, and then saw what Perotto did, he was so amazed and delighted that he scarcely knew what to do. He felt ashamed of the insults he had given the Count when he was a groom, and threw himself weeping at the Count's feet, humbly asking his pardon for all past injuries, which the Count benignly granted and raised Giachetto to his feet. And when they had all three talked over their various adventures and wept and rejoiced much together, Perotto and Giachetto wanted to give the Count new clothes. But he utterly refused and said that Giachetto should first obtain the reward, and then present the Count to the King dressed as he was in order to shame him more.

Giachetto then went to the King with Perotto and the Count, and offered to bring him the Count and his children for the reward promised. The King immediately had the great reward placed before Giachetto's

eyes, and ordered Giachetto to take it with him when he had truly told him where the Count and his children were living. Giachetto then turned round and, pointing to the Count his groom and to Perotto, said:

“Sire, there are the father and son; the daughter, who is my wife, is not here, but by God’s grace you shall soon see her.”

The King then gazed at the Count, and, after looking at him for some time, recognised him, although he was so greatly altered from what he had been. With tears in his eyes the King raised the Count from his knees, kissed and embraced him, and received Perotto affably. He then ordered that the Count should be furnished with clothes, servants, horses and equipment befitting his nobility; which was done at once. Beyond this, the King greatly honoured Giachetto, and asked to hear all about their adventures.

When Giachetto took the rich reward for having given information about the Count and his children, the Count said to him:

“Take these things from the munificence of my lord the King, and remember to tell your father that your children, his grandchildren and mine, did not have a beggar for their mother.”

Giachetto took the gifts, and afterwards called his wife and mother to Paris, and Perotto’s wife came also. There they rejoiced with the Count, whom the King had restored to all his estates and had made greater than ever. Then everyone returned to his own home, and the Count dwelt in Paris more gloriously than before until his death.

Ninth Tale

BERNABÒ DA GENOVA IS TRICKED BY AMBROGIUOLO, LOSES HIS MONEY AND ORDERS HIS INNOCENT WIFE TO BE MURDERED. SHE ESCAPES AND, DRESSED AS A MAN, ENTERS THE SULTAN'S SERVICE. SHE MEETS THE TRICKSTER; BRINGS BERNABÒ TO ALEXANDRIA; THE TRICKSTER IS PUNISHED; SHE RETURNS TO WOMAN'S CLOTHES; AND THEY GO HOME WEALTHY TO GENOA

WITH this piteous tale Elisa performed her task, and then Filomena the queen, who was tall and beautiful, neat-waisted, with a pleasant smiling face, said:

We must keep our promise to Dioneo, and since only he and I are left to tell a tale, I will tell mine first, and then he shall tell his last, as he wished. So saying, she began as follows:

There is a common proverb among the people to the effect that the deceiver is at the mercy of the deceived. This does not seem as if it could be proved true, if it were not showed to be so by certain events. And so, most dear ladies, I propose to show you that this is true, while keeping to the subject proposed. And I think it should not be disagreeable to you to hear this, for you may learn to be on your guard against deceivers.

At a certain Parisian inn were gathered several important Italian merchants, some on one errand, some on another, according to their custom. One evening they had dined merrily together, and then began to discuss various topics. Passing from one subject to another, they began to talk of their wives, whom they had left at home, and one of them said jokingly:

"I don't know what my wife does, but I do know that when I come across a girl I like, I put on one side the love I have for my wife, and enjoy the girl as much as I can."

Said another:

"So do I, for whether I believe it or not, my wife takes any chance

she can get; so we act reciprocally. The ass receives what he gives at home."

A third was of much the same opinion; in short, all seemed to agree that the wives they had left at home did not waste their time. But one man there, named Bernabò Lomellin da Genova, denied this, and asserted that by a special grace of God he had a wife who possessed all the virtues which a woman or even, to a great extent, a knight or a young man should possess, so that perhaps in all Italy there was not another like her. She was beautiful and still young, straight and strong of body, while she was more skilful than other women at all feminine work, such as working in silk and the like. Moreover, he said that no squire or gentleman's servant could better serve a gentleman's table than she, since she was well bred, educated and discreet. In addition he praised her because she could ride a horse, hold a hawk, read and write and argue as well as any merchant. After much other praise, he came to the topic under discussion, and asserted that no chaster or more modest woman could be found anywhere. Wherefore he certainly believed that if he remained away from home for ten years or forever, she would never have anything to do with another man.

Among the merchants talking thus was a young man named Ambrogiuolo da Piacenza, who laughed heartily when he heard the last praise Bernabò gave his wife, and jestingly asked if the Emperor had granted him this privilege more than to other men.

Bernabò, in some annoyance, replied that this grace had been given him, not by the Emperor, but by God, who was a little more powerful than the Emperor.

Then said Ambrogiuolo:

"Bernabò, I do not doubt for one moment that you think you are speaking the truth, but it seems to me that you have not closely considered the nature of things. If you had done so, I do not think you are so obtuse that you would have failed to perceive certain things which would make you talk more reasonably on this topic. I should like to discuss the matter a little further with you, so that you may not think that we, who have spoken freely of our wives, suppose they are made differently from

yours, but that what we have said comes from our knowledge of their common nature.

"I have always heard that man is the most noble animal among the mortal beings created by God, and after him, woman. But, as we usually believe, and see from deeds, man is the more perfect. Since he is more nearly perfect, he must assuredly have more firmness and constancy, since women are universally more fickle; and this might be proved by many natural causes, which at present I do not intend to discuss. If man has more strength of mind and yet cannot prevent himself from yielding to any woman who asks him or even from desiring one who pleases him, and moreover from doing all he can to be with her, not once in a month but a thousand times a day; how can you expect a naturally fickle woman to resist the entreaties, the flatteries, the gifts, the thousand other methods used by a clever man who is in love with her? Do you think she can resist? However much you may assert it, I do not believe that you do believe it. You yourself say that your wife is a woman, that she is made of flesh and bones like other women. If this is so, she must have the same desires as other women and the same powers of resistance to her natural appetites. So it is quite possible that she may be most modest, and yet do what other women do; and when a thing is merely possible, you should not deny it so sharply or assert the contrary, as you do."

To this Bernabò replied:

"I am a merchant and not a philosopher, and I shall answer like a merchant. And I say I know quite well that what you say does occur with foolish women who are without any shame. But wise women are so careful of their honour that they become much stronger in guarding it than men, who do not trouble about it. And my wife is just such a one."

Said Ambrogiuolo:

"If every time they had to do with a different man there grew a horn on their heads to show what they had done, I think indeed that few would choose to do it. But, so far from a horn growing, there is neither trace nor track appears, if they are wise. Shame and loss of honour only occur, if things are talked about. So, when they can do it secretly, they do it; or else abstain out of stupidity. And you may take this as certain, that the

only chaste woman is one who has never been asked, or was refused if she herself asked. And although I know such things must be so from natural and true reasons, yet I should not speak as fully as I do if I had not often proved them to be true with many women. And I maintain that if I were near your most chaste wife, I think I could very soon bring her to the point where I have already brought others."

Bernabò replied angrily:

"Wordy argument can go on forever; you will talk and I shall talk, and in the end nothing will be proved. But since you say all women are so yielding and that you have such a genius in this matter, while I want to show you that my wife is a chaste woman—I am ready to have my head cut off if you can ever bring her to commit this act with you. And if you can't, I will not make you lose more than a thousand gold florins."

Ambrogiuolo began to grow heated, and said:

"Bernabò, I don't know what I should do with your blood if I won. But if you want to test what I have said, put five thousand florins (which should be less valuable to you than your head) against my thousand. You set no time limit, but I will agree to go to Genoa and within three months from the day I leave here I will have my will of your wife, and as a proof I will bring back with me something that she values most highly and will give you such proofs that you yourself will admit them, on condition, however, that during that period you do not go to Genoa and do not write her any information about this matter."

Bernabò at once agreed; and, although the other merchants present tried to break off the bet, since they knew that great ill might come of it, yet the two merchants were so heated that, against the will of the others, they set down their mutual agreement in fair script of their own handwriting.

When the agreement was drawn, Bernabò remained where he was, and Ambrogiuolo went to Genoa as quickly as he could. He remained there a few days cautiously enquiring about the street where the lady lived and about her behaviour, and what he heard was the same, or more than Bernabò had told him; which made him think that he had come on a

fool's errand. However, he got into touch with a poor woman who often went to the lady's house and whom the lady liked. He was unable to persuade her to do anything else, but corrupted her with money to carry him hidden in a chest to the lady's house and into her bedroom. And then, in accordance with Ambrogiuolo's orders, the woman pretended that she had to go away, and left the chest there for several days.

The chest remained in the bedroom until night-time, and when Ambrogiuolo thought that the lady was asleep, he opened the chest by a secret device, and gently stepped out into the room where a light was burning. By means of this light he examined and firmly fixed in his memory the shape of the room, its frescoes and everything particularly worthy of note in it. He then went towards the bed where the lady was lying fast asleep with a little maid servant, turned back the bed clothes from her and perceived that she was as beautiful naked as when clothed. But he could find no special mark to report, except that under her left breast was a mole surrounded by a few downy hairs as bright as gold. After noting this he gently covered her up again, for when he saw she was so beautiful he was tempted to risk his life and get into bed beside her. But, since he had heard she was so cruel and sharp to lovers, he did not risk it. He spent the greater part of the night in the bedroom at his leisure, and took a purse and a gown from a wardrobe, and then a ring and a girdle, all of which he put into his chest, and then got in himself, and shut it as it had been before. And in this way he passed two nights, without the lady noticing anything unusual.

On the third day, the woman returned for the chest, as they had arranged, and had it taken back to the place whence it had been brought. Ambrogiuolo got out, satisfied the old woman in accordance with his promise, and returned to Paris before the expiration of the time agreed, taking with him the articles mentioned. There he called together the merchants who had been witnesses of their words and wager, and in the presence of Bernabò he claimed to have won the wager, because he had done what he had boasted he would do. To prove his words, he first described the bedroom and its frescoes, and then showed the things he had brought back with him, vowing that the lady had given them to him.

Bernabò admitted that the bedroom was such as he described and also recognised that these objects were really his wife's; but he said that Ambrogiuolo might have learned the description of the bedroom from one of the servants of the house, and might have obtained the articles in the same manner. Therefore, if Ambrogiuolo had nothing more to say, Bernabò did not think this sufficient to win the wager. Whereupon Ambrogiuolo said:

"Indeed this would not be sufficient, but since you wish me to give further proof, I will do so. And I say that Madonna Zinevra, your wife, has a rather large mole under her left breast, and round about it are perhaps six downy hairs as bright as gold."

When Bernabò heard this, he felt as much pain as if he had been stabbed in the heart with a dagger. Even if he had said nothing, the change in his countenance would have showed plainly that what Ambrogiuolo said was true. And after a little time he said:

"Gentlemen, what Ambrogiuolo says is true; therefore since he has won, let him come at any hour he chooses, and he shall be paid."

And the next day Ambrogiuolo was paid in full. Bernabò then left Paris and returned to Genoa, full of rage against his wife. When he came near the town, he would not enter it, but went to an estate he possessed about twenty miles away. He then sent a servant whom he trusted to Genoa with two horses and a letter, informing his wife that he had returned and telling her to come to him; but he secretly ordered the servant to kill the lady in some suitable place, and then to return to him. The servant reached Genoa and gave the letter and the message, which the lady joyfully received. Next morning, she and the servant mounted their horses and set out for the estate. As they rode along, talking of various matters, they came to a deep solitary valley, shut in with steep rocks and trees, which seemed to the servant a place where he could safely carry out his master's orders. So he drew his dagger, grasped the lady by the arm, and said:

"Madonna, recommend your soul to God, for you shall go no further; here you must die."

Seeing the dagger and hearing these words, the lady exclaimed in terror:

"Mercy of God! Before you kill me, tell me how I have offended you that you should want to murder me?"

"Madonna," said the servant, "you have in no wise offended me. How you have offended your husband I do not know, but he bade me kill you on this road without any pity; and if I did not do it, he threatened to hang me up by the neck. You know how much I am bound to him and how I can refuse nothing he commands me. God knows I am sorry for you, but I can do nothing else."

To this the lady replied, weeping:

"Ah! God's mercy! Do not murder a woman who never harmed you, only to serve another. God, Who knoweth all things, knows that I never did anything for which my husband should thus reward me. But never mind that now. If you are willing, you can please God, your lord and me, in this way: take my clothes, and give me your doublet and cloak; return with my clothes to your lord and say you have killed me; and in exchange for the life you give me, I swear to you I will disappear and go so far away that no news of me shall ever reach him or you or this country."

The servant did not want to kill her, and was easily persuaded to pity. So he took her clothes, gave her his doublet and cloak, allowed her to keep the money she had, begged her to disappear from that country, and left her on foot in the valley. He then returned to his master, and told him that he had not only carried out his orders but had left her dead body to several wolves.

Some time later Bernabò returned to Genoa, and was severely blamed when the affair became known.

The lady was left alone and disconsolate, and when night came on she disguised herself as well as she could and went to a little neighbouring village, and there obtained what she needed from an old woman. She shortened the doublet and altered it to fit her, made a pair of short drawers out of her chemise, cut off her hair, and thus made herself look like a sailor. She then walked to the sea and happened upon a Catalan gentleman, whose name was Segner Encararch; he had left his ship at a distance and had come to a fountain at Alba to refresh himself. She entered into conversation with him, giving the name of Sicuran da

Finale, was taken into his service, and went on board ship. There she was supplied by the gentleman with better clothes, and served him so well and exactly that he was delighted.

Soon after this the Catalan sailed to Alexandria, taking with him some peregrine falcons which he presented to the Sultan. He dined several times with the Sultan, who noticed and was pleased by Sicuran's behaviour as he waited on his master, and therefore the Sultan asked for him as his own servant. And although this was a grief to the Catalan, he left Sicuran with the Sultan. And in a short time Sicuran acquired the affection and good graces of the Sultan by his good conduct, just as he had done with the Catalan.

Time passed by, and at a certain period of the year there was a fair and great gathering of Christian and Saracen merchants at Acre, which was under the Sultan's government. To protect the merchants and their goods, the Sultan was accustomed to send, along with other officials, certain important officers and sufficient soldiers to guard them. When the time came, the Sultan determined that this duty should be carried out by Sicuran, who was already thoroughly acquainted with the language.

Thus Sicuran came to Acre as lord and Captain of the Guard of merchants and their goods; and well and diligently performed everything connected with his office. As he went to and fro on his duties, he came upon many merchants from Sicily, Pisa, Genoa, Venice and other parts of Italy, and gladly became familiar with them for the sake of his memories of his own land. One day he went into a Venetian clothes shop and there to his amazement saw, among other trinkets, a purse and girdle he recognised as his own. Without showing any signs of surprise, he politely asked from whom they came, and if they were for sale. Now, Ambrogiuolo da Piacenza had come thither in his ship with much merchandise from Venice, and hearing the Captain of the Guard ask who was the owner of these things, he stepped forward and said laughing:

"Messer, these things are mine, and are not for sale. But if they please you, I will gladly give them to you."

Seeing him laugh, Sicuran suspected that the man had recognised him by something he had done; but, keeping his countenance, he said:

"Perhaps you are laughing because you see a soldier like myself asking about such feminine things?"

Said Ambrogiuolo:

"I am not laughing at that, but at the manner in which I got them."

And Sicuran then said to him:

"Ah! God give you good luck; but if it is not unseemly, tell us how you got possession of them."

"Messer," said Ambrogiuolo, "these, with other things, were given me by a lady of Genoa, named Madonna Zinevra, wife of Bernabò Lomellin, one night when I lay with her, and I promised to keep them for love of her. I was laughing because I remembered what a fool Bernabò was to wager five thousand gold florins against one thousand that I should not bring his wife to serve my pleasure. But this I did, and won the wager. And he, who should have been punished for his stupidity rather than she for doing what all women do, returned from Paris to Genoa and killed her, according to what I have heard."

When Sicuran heard this, he saw at once the reason for Bernabò's anger, and plainly perceived that Ambrogiuolo was the cause of all the trouble. And Sicuran determined that he should not escape unpunished. However, he pretended to think the story an excellent one, and artfully established such close relations with the man that, when the fair was over, he persuaded him to come to Alexandria, bringing all his goods with him. There Sicuran secured him a shop and gave him a considerable sum of money. And Ambrogiuolo, perceiving how useful this would be to him, willingly remained there.

Sicuran was eager to prove his innocence to Bernabò, and did not rest until he had found an opportunity of bringing him to Alexandria, through the influence of certain great mechants of Genoa in that city. Bernabò arrived in poverty, and Sicuran secretly had him looked after by a friend until the time came to do what he meant to do. Now, Sicuran had already caused Ambrogiuolo to relate the story in the Sultan's presence and made him take pleasure in it. But when Bernabò arrived, he thought he would delay no further. So, at a suitable time, he besought the Sultan to order Bernabò and Ambrogiuolo into his presence, and there

in the presence of Bernabò to compel Ambrogiuolo by gentle means—and if they failed, by force—to tell the truth about what had happened (as he boasted) with Bernabò's wife.

Ambrogiuolo and Bernabò arrived, and, in the presence of many witnesses, the Sultan sternly commanded Ambrogiuolo to tell truly how he had obtained the five thousand gold florins from Bernabò. Sicuran, in whom Ambrogiuolo had put his trust, was also present and with a very angry countenance threatened him with the direst torture if he did not confess. Ambrogiuolo, thus threatened on both sides, and to some extent compelled, related everything that had happened, in the presence of Bernabò and many others, expecting no greater punishment than having to return the five thousand florins and the other articles. And, when Ambrogiuolo had finished speaking, Sicuran, as the Sultan's officer, turned to Bernabò, and said:

“And what did you do to your wife through this trick?”

Bernabò replied:

“Overcome by anger at the loss of my money and by shame for the disgrace I felt my wife had brought upon me, I caused my wife to be killed by one of my servants. And, according to what he told me, she was immediately devoured by a number of wolves.”

All these things were thus related in the presence of the Sultan, who could not yet understand what was Sicuran's reason for arranging the meeting and explanation. But Sicuran said to him:

“Sire, now you may clearly perceive how much that lady should rejoice in her husband and lover. In an hour the lover reft her of honour, blasted her fame with lies, and ruined her husband. And her husband, putting more faith in the lies of others than in her truth, which from long experience he ought to have known, had her killed and eaten by wolves. In addition to this, the lover and husband bear her so much love and good will that they do not recognise her, although they have long dwelt with her. But in order that you may fully understand what each of them deserves, and if, as a special grace to me, you will punish the deceiver and pardon the deceived, I will bring her into the presence of you and them.”

The Sultan was willing to do anything to please Sicuran in this affair, and therefore granted his request and told him to bring in the lady. Bernabò was amazed, for he firmly believed his wife was dead. As for Ambrogiuolo, he began to suspect his misfortune, and feared worse things than having to pay back money; he did not know whether to hope or fear that the lady should appear there, but awaited her coming in consternation.

When the Sultan had granted his request, Sicuran threw himself weeping at the Sultan's feet, abandoned his masculine voice and demeanour, and said:

"Sire, I am the wretched, unfortunate Zinevra, and for six years I have wandered about the world disguised as a man. That traitor Ambrogiuolo falsely and wickedly slandered me; and that other cruel and wicked man gave me to a servant to be murdered and eaten by wolves."

Tearing open her clothes and displaying her breasts, she showed the Sultan and everyone else that she was a woman. She then turned to Ambrogiuolo and scornfully asked him when she had ever lain with him, as he had formerly boasted. But he, having recognised her, was mute with shame, and said not a word.

The Sultan, who had always believed her to be a man, was so much amazed by what he saw and heard that he thought it must be rather a dream than reality. But when he recovered from his amazement, he recognised the truth, and gave the highest praise to the life and constancy and behaviour and virtue of Zinevra, who till that time he had known as Sicuran. He gave her most handsome woman's clothes and women to wait upon her; and, at her request, pardoned Bernabò the hanging he deserved. When Bernabò recognised her, he threw himself at her feet, weeping and asking pardon, which, although he was unworthy of it, she granted him and raised him to his feet, and tenderly embraced him as her husband.

The Sultan then commanded that Ambrogiuolo should immediately be tied to a stake in the most conspicuous part of the city, and smeared with honey and left there in the sun, and never taken thence until he crumbled away. After this he ordered that all Ambrogiuolo's riches should be

given to the lady; and this amounted to more than ten thousand double ducats. He then gave a most magnificent banquet, where he did honour to Bernabò as the husband of Madonna Zinevra, and to Madonna Zinevra as the most worthy of women. And he gave them more than another ten thousand double ducats in jewels, and vessels of gold and silver, and in money.

After the banquet, he had a ship prepared for them and gave them leave to return to Genoa when they pleased. Thither they returned with great wealth and in great joy, and were received with very great honour, especially Madonna Zinevra, who was thought to be dead by everybody. And ever after, as long as she lived, she had a reputation for great virtue.

The same day Ambrogiuolo was tied to a stake and smeared with honey, and, after enduring great agony, was killed and eaten to the bones by the multitudes of flies, wasps and gad-flies which swarm in that country. His white bones, strung together by the sinews, remained there a long time and bore witness of his wickedness to all who saw them. And thus the deceiver lay at the mercy of the deceived.

Tenth Tale

PAGANINO DA MONACO STEALS THE WIFE OF MESSER RICCIARDO DI CHINZICA, WHO FINDS OUT WHERE SHE IS AND FOLLOWS HER; HE BECOMES FRIENDLY WITH PAGANINO AND ASKS FOR HIS WIFE BACK. PAGANINO SAYS SHE MAY RETURN TO HIM, IF SHE WANTS TO; BUT SHE WILL NOT DO SO, AND, ON THE DEATH OF MESSER RICCIARDO, BECOMES THE WIFE OF PAGANINO

EACH member of the happy band highly praised the tale told by their queen, and, above all Dioneo, who was the only one left to tell a tale that day. After highly commending her story, he spoke as follows:

Fair ladies, part of the queen's tale has made me change my mind as

to the story I shall tell, and forces me to tell another. I am thinking of the stupidity of Bernabò (although matters turned out well for him) and of all the other men who make us see that they believe what he believed; which is, that while they go to and fro in the world and take their pleasure here and there first with one woman and then with another, they imagine that their wives are sitting at home with their hands in their girdles, as if we who are born and grow up under their hands did not know the contrary. I shall show you the stupidity of all such men and especially of those who think themselves more powerful than Nature, and believe that fictitious arguments will achieve what they are unable to do themselves, forcing others to what they are themselves, however contrary to the nature of those who are thus compelled.

In Pisa there was once a judge, more endowed with mental ability than bodily strength, whose name was Messer Ricciardo di Chinzica. He was very rich and got it into his head, perhaps, that he could satisfy a wife with the same sort of work he gave his studies; in any case, he sought with great earnestness to get a young and beautiful woman as his wife. Whereas, if he had known how to advise himself as he advised others, he would have avoided both youth and beauty. And so it came about that Messer Lotto Gualandi gave him to wife his daughter, Bartolomea, one of the most beautiful and charming girls of Pisa, although most of the girls in that town are as thin as worm-eating lizards. . . . The judge brought her to his house with the greatest rejoicing and gave a magnificent wedding feast; and on the first night managed to consummate the marriage once with her, although he very nearly failed to do even that. Next morning, since he was thin and dry and out of spirits he had to cheer himself up with white wine and sweetmeats, and other restoratives.

The judge now formed a better estimate of his powers than he had done before, and began to teach his wife a calendar fit for boys who stand up to read, perhaps the calendar made at Ravenna. According to what he told her, each holiday was not only the feast day of some saint but of many; and he proved to her by numerous arguments that out of reverence to them a man and wife should abstain from carnal embraces. To these he added Fasts, Ember Days, vigils of the Apostles and a thousand

other Saints, Friday and Saturday and the Lord's Sabbath, and the whole of Lent, certain phases of the moon and many other exceptions, thinking perhaps that there should be the same delays with women in bed as he often arranged in lawsuits.

He continued in this manner for a long time, not without grievous melancholy in the lady, whom he scarcely lay with once in a month; but he watched over her jealously in case someone else should teach her the working days, as he had taught her the holidays.

During the hot weather Messer Ricciardo happened to take it into his head to visit a beautiful property he possessed near Monte Nero, where he went to stay for several days with his wife to enjoy the cool air. While they were there he arranged a fishing expedition one day to provide her with some amusement; he went out in a small boat with some fishermen and she followed in another boat with other women to watch them. And in the excitement of fishing they went several miles out to sea, without realising it.

While they were all eagerly watching the fishermen there suddenly appeared a galley of Paganino da Mare, a very famous pirate of that time. Seeing the small boats, he came after them, and although they fled as swiftly as they could, Paganino captured the boat containing the women. When Paganino saw the beautiful lady, he wanted nothing more of them, but put her on his galley and sailed away, in full view of Messer Ricciardo who was already on shore.

No need to enquire whether the judge was infuriated when he saw this, since he was so jealous that he dreaded the very air itself. In Pisa and elsewhere he complained bitterly of the wickedness of pirates, although he did not know who had carried off his wife or where she had been taken.

As Paganino gazed upon her beauty, he felt all was well; and, since he had no wife, he determined to keep her with him, and therefore tried to comfort her as she wept bitterly. During the day words did not seem of much avail, but when night came the calendar fell from her girdle and every saint's day and holiday went out of her head when he began to comfort her with deeds. Long before they reached Monaco, she had forgotten

all about the judge and his laws, and was living most happily with Paganino. And when they reached Monaco he not only gave her pleasure both day and night, but honoured her as his wife.

Some time later Messer Ricciardo heard where his wife was, and, feeling that no intermediary could do what was necessary, he set off to find her with the greatest impatience, quite prepared to spend any amount of money to get her back. He took ship and went to Monaco, where he saw her and she saw him; and that evening she told Paganino that her husband was there, and what she intended to do. The next morning Messer Ricciardo saw Paganino and accosted him, and in a short time struck up a warm acquaintance with him. Paganino pretended not to recognise the judge, and waited to see what he wanted to do. When Messer Ricciardo thought the right moment had arrived, he spoke to Paganino as politely and ably as he could, explaining why he had come there, and begging him to name any sum he pleased for the ransom of his wife. To this Paganino replied with a cheerful countenance:

"Messer, you are welcome, and I will give you an answer in few words. It is true I have a girl in my house, but I do not know whether she is your wife or anyone else's, because I don't know you, nor do I know her either, except that she and I have lived together for some time. If you are her husband, as you say, I will take you to her, since you seem to me a worthy gentleman, and I am sure she will recognise you. If she admits that matters are as you say, and if she wants to go away with you, then out of respect for your worship I will accept any ransom for her you like to give. But if this is not so, you are behaving basely in trying to take her away from me, since I am a young man and can look after a woman as well as anyone, especially a woman like her, for she is the loveliest I ever saw."

Then said Messer Ricciardo:

"Certainly she is my wife, and you will see it is so, if you will take me to her. She will at once throw her arms round my neck. And I ask nothing better than what you suggest."

"Very well," said Paganino, "let us go."

They then went to a room in Paganino's house, and he sent for her.

She was dressed and prepared, came out of her room and went towards Ricciardo and Paganino, but said nothing to Ricciardo which she would not have said to any other stranger Paganino had brought to the house. The judge, who had expected her to receive him with the greatest delight, was amazed at this, and said to himself: "Perhaps the melancholy and long suffering I have endured since I lost her have so altered me that she does not recognise me." So he said:

"Lady, it cost me dear to take you fishing, for I never felt such grief as I have suffered since I lost you; and now you greet me so shyly that you appear not to recognise me. Do you not see that I am Messer Ricciardo, come to pay anything required by this gentleman, in whose house we are, in order to get you back and take you away? And he has graciously offered to restore you to me for any sum I choose to name."

The lady turned to him with a slight smile, and said:

"Messer, are you speaking to me? Beware lest you are making a mistake about me, for I do not remember that I ever saw you before."

Said Messer Ricciardo:

"Beware what you are saying! Look closely at me. If you will recollect, you will see that I am your husband, Ricciardo di Chinzica."

The lady said:

"Pardon me, Messer, it is perhaps not so modest for me to look closely at you as you suppose; however, I have looked at you sufficiently to know that I never saw you before."

Messer Ricciardo imagined that she was afraid to confess in Paganino's presence that she knew him. So he asked Paganino to allow him to speak privately with her alone in a room. Paganino gave permission, but said he was not to kiss her against her will. And he ordered the lady to go into a room with Ricciardo, to listen to what he had to say, and to reply as she wished. The lady and Messer Ricciardo then went alone into the room, and, when they had sat down, he said:

"Ah! Heart of my body, my sweet soul, my hope, do you not recognise Ricciardo who loves you more than he loves himself? How can this be? Am I so much altered? Ah! Beautiful apple of my eye, look at me a moment."

The lady began to laugh, and, without allowing him to go any further, said:

"You know quite well that I am not so forgetful as not to know that you are Messer Ricciardo di Chinzica, my husband. But when I lived with you, you showed that you knew little of me; for, if you had been as wise or eager as you claimed to be, you ought to have been wise enough to see that I was a young, fresh, vigorous girl, and consequently you should have known that young women require something else beside food and clothes, although they are too modest to say so. And you know quite well how you performed this.

"If you preferred the study of the law to a wife, you should not have married. However, you did not seem to me to be a judge, but a town-crier of holy days and fasts and vigils, so thoroughly did you know them. And I tell you that if you had given as many holidays to the peasants on your land as you gave the worker who should have ploughed my little field, you would not have reaped one grain of wheat. God has beheld my youth with pity, and has allowed me to meet a man with whom I lie in this room, where nothing is known of holidays (I mean the sort of holiday so much praised by you, who are more devoted to God than the service of ladies), and through that door never come Saturdays or Fridays or vigils or Ember Days or Lent (which is so long), but we work and beat our wool day and night. And since matins rang this morning I had one more experience of this work. Therefore I intend to remain with him and to work while I am young; and saints' days and pardons and fasts I shall keep for when I am old. So go away, and good luck to you, as quickly as you can, and keep as many saints' days as you like, but without me."

When Messer Ricciardo heard this, he was filled with grief, and as soon as she was silent, he said:

"Alas, my sweet soul, what words are these? Have you no thought for your honour and the honour of your family? Will you stay here in mortal sin as this man's whore, when you are my wife in Pisa? When you grow tiresome to him, he will turn you out of the house with great disgrace to yourself; whereas you will always be dear to me, and, even if I

did not wish it, you would always be mistress of my house. Shall this inordinate and immodest appetite cause you to abandon your honour and me, who love you more than life itself? Ah! My dear hope, do not say so, but come away with me. Now that I know your desires, I shall henceforth try to satisfy them. And so, my sweet, change your mind and come away with me, for I never felt at ease since you were taken from me."

To this the lady replied:

"I do not want anyone to be more tender of my honour than I am myself. My parents should have done that when they gave me to you; but since they were unconcerned about my honour then, I shall be unconcerned about theirs now. If I am in mortal sin here, I should also be so with a cold pestle. So don't be more tender of my honour than I am. And I tell you this—here I feel I am Paganino's wife, whereas in Pisa I seemed to be your whore when I remember what phases of the moon and what geometrical quadratures were needed for a conjunction of my planet and yours. Here Paganino holds me all night in his arms and embraces me and bites me, and if you want to know how often he mounts me, God will tell you for me. You say you will try to satisfy me—but how? Will you do it three times and then stand up erect again like a club? Have you become a bold cavalier since I last saw you? Go away and try to live, for you seem to me so consumptive and pale that you must be hanging on to life by the skin of your teeth. And I tell you this also—even if this man does leave me (which he does not seem likely to do if I want to remain) I do not intend to return to you, for however much you were squeezed you would not make a single drop of sauce. I stayed with you once to my own sorrow, and I should seek my living somewhere else. Once more I tell you that there are no saints' days and vigils here, and so I mean to stay. Therefore, in God's name go away, for, if you don't, I shall scream and say you are trying to rape me."

Messer Ricciardo saw he was in a bad way, and now perceived his folly in having married a young wife. Sadly and dolefully he left the room in exhaustion, and had a long talk with Paganino, all to no avail. Finally, having achieved nothing, he left his wife and returned to Pisa, where his grief brought him to such a state of insanity that whenever anyone

greeted him or asked him something as he went about the city, his only answer was: "The vile thief has no holidays." And not long afterwards he died. Hearing of this and knowing how much the lady loved him, Paganino took her as his lawful wife; and as long as their legs would carry them they worked together and enjoyed themselves, without ever observing saints' days or vigils or Lent. And so, my dear ladies, when Bernabò argued with Ambrogiuolo I think he was putting the cart before the horse.

This tale made them all laugh until their jaws ached, and all the ladies unanimously agreed that Dioneo was right and that Bernabò was a fool. But when the tale was done and the laughter had died down, the queen saw that the hour was late, that everyone had told a tale, and that the end of her reign was at hand. So, in accordance with their agreement, she took the garland from her hair, set it upon Neifile's head, and said gaily:

"Now, my dear, you are the ruler of this little nation." And then sat down again.

Neifile blushed slightly at the honour, and her face was like a fresh rose of April or May when morning begins to glow; her eyes were bright and lovely as the morning star, though she kept them a little lowered. But when she had collected herself and the congratulations of the others to their queen had subsided, she sat up a little more erect than usual and said:

"Since I am your queen I shall not depart from the customs of those who went before me, as you have approved them by obeying them; and I shall tell you in a few words what I think, and, if you agree, we will carry it out.

"As you know, tomorrow is Friday and the next day is Saturday, which are somewhat tedious days to most people on account of the fasting. Since He who died that we might live suffered His Passion on Friday, that day is worthy of all reverence; wherefore it would be considered far more right and fitting that we should spend the day in prayers to the honour of God than in telling of tales. On Saturday women are accustomed to wash their heads and get all the dust out of their hair and all the dirt

caused by the work of the preceding week. And many people are accustomed to fast on Saturday out of reverence to the Virgin Mother of the Son of God, and thereafter to rest from all work in honour of the ensuing Sunday. Therefore, since we cannot fully carry out the life we have planned on those days, I think we should do well to refrain from telling stories on those two days.

“Moreover, we shall then have been here four days, and, if we wish to avoid other people coming here, I think we should do well to change and go somewhere else. I have already thought of a place and have made all arrangements. When we meet together there, after our siesta on Sunday, in order to give you more time to think (for today we have spent a long time in talk) and because it is perhaps better to restrict the subject of our tales, we will talk about one of the many acts of Fortune. What this shall be I have already thought; we will tell tales of those who have acquired by their wits something they wanted or recovered something they had lost. Let everyone think of something to say on this subject which will be useful or at least amusing to the whole band, excepting always Dioneo’s privilege.”

All commended the queen’s speech and plan, and agreed to them. After this, she called for her steward and discussed with him where the tables should be placed that evening and everything else which would be done during the period of her reign. Then she and all her subjects stood up, and she gave them permission to do anything they chose.

The ladies and men walked towards a little garden, and when dinner time came after they had enjoyed themselves there, they dined joyfully together. After dinner, the queen ordered Emilia to dance, and Pampinea sang the following song, in which the others joined:

What lady should sing, if I do not sing, since I am contented in all my desires?

Come then, Love, the cause of all my joy, of every hope and every happy thing. Together let us sing, not of sighs nor of the bitter pain which now makes sweeter for me your delight, but of that clear flame

wherein I burn and live and do rejoice, adoring you as very God to me.

The first day when I came within your flame, O Love, you brought into my sight a man whose youth and beauty, ardour and valour could never be surpassed or even equalled. He so enflamed me that henceforth gaily I sing with you, my Lord.

And this to me is the supreme delight—that he loves me even as I love him, thanks be to you, O Love. In this world I possess what I desire, and in the next I trust to rest in peace through that unbroken faith I bear to him. God, who sees this, will bring me to His kingdom.

After this they sang other songs and danced more dances and played various musical instruments. And when the queen thought it was time to go to bed, each one went to his room with torches borne before him. The two next days they busied themselves with the matters of which the queen had spoken, and eagerly awaited the Sunday.

END OF THE SECOND DAY

The Third Day

HERE BEGINS THE THIRD DAY OF THE *DECAMERON*, WHEREIN, UNDER THE RULE OF NEIFILE, TALES ARE TOLD OF THOSE WHO BY THEIR WITS OBTAINED SOMETHING THEY GREATLY DESIRED OR REGAINED SOMETHING THEY HAD LOST

THE rising sun had already turned the crimson dawn to orange when the queen arose on Sunday, and had the whole band awakened. The steward had already sent on ahead to the place they were going many necessary things and servants to prepare what was needed. When he saw the queen had started, he immediately had everything else packed up, struck camp, and followed the ladies and gentlemen with the baggage and remaining servants.

Accompanied and followed by her ladies and the three young men, the queen struck off slowly in a westerly direction along a not very frequented path, full of plants and flowers, which were beginning to open to the rising sun, where they were led by the song of some twenty nightingales and other birds. She went along jesting and laughing with her band, and, between Prime and Terce, when they had not gone more than two miles, she brought them to a rich and beautiful mansion, set above the plain on a little hill. They entered, and went all over it; and when they had seen the great hall and the fine decorated rooms filled with everything befitting, they greatly praised the house and said its owner must be a man of great magnificence. They then went down and saw its vast cheerful courtyard, its cellars filled with the finest wines, and the great plenty of very cool water there; all of which made them praise the place still more.

They then sat down to rest in an open loggia overlooking the courtyard, where boughs and the flowers in season had been thickly strewn. Thither came the discreet steward, and served them with the most exquisite sweetmeats and the finest wines as refreshment. After this they went into a walled garden beside the mansion, which at a first glance

seemed to them so beautiful that they began to examine it more carefully in detail. On its outer edges and through the centre ran wide walks as straight as arrows, covered with pergolas of vines which gave every sign of bearing plenty of grapes that year. These were in full flower, and filled the garden with a perfume which mingled with the scents of many other flowers, and made them feel they were among all the spicery of the East. The sides of these walks were almost closed in with jasmin and red and white roses, so that it was possible to walk in the garden in a perfumed and delicious shade, untouched by the sun, not only in the early morning, but when the sun was high in the sky.

It would take long to tell how many plants there were and of what sort and how they were arranged; but there was an abundance of every pleasant plant which grows in our climate. In the midst of this garden was something which they praised even more than all the rest; this was a lawn of very fine grass, so green that it seemed nearly black, coloured with perhaps a thousand kinds of flowers. This lawn was shut in with very green citron and orange trees bearing at the same time both ripe fruit and young fruit and flowers, so that they pleased the sense of smell as well as charmed the eyes with shade. And in the midst of this lawn was a fountain of very white marble most marvellously carved. A figure standing on a column in the midst of this fountain threw water high up in the air, which fell back into the crystal-clear basin with a delicious sound; and, whether this water was conveyed by natural or artificial means, a mill could have been turned with less. The water which overflowed from the fountain basin ran out of the lawn by some hidden way, where it reappeared again in cunningly made little channels which surrounded the lawn. It then ran all through the garden in many similar canals which all finally met in one place where the water emerged from the garden, though before it ran down to the plain it turned two mill-wheels at great speed, which was of no small utility to the owner.

The sight of this garden, of its beautiful plan, of the plants and the fountain and the little streams flowing from it, so much pleased the ladies and the three young men that they said, if Paradise could be formed on earth, it could be given no other form than that of this garden, nor could

any further beauty be added to it. As they walked in delight about the garden, weaving most beautiful garlands from various tree branches and listening to the song of some twenty different kinds of birds who seemed to be singing one against another, they came upon a new delightful beauty which they had not thought of. They found that the garden contained about a hundred kinds of beautiful animals, and began pointing them out to each other. In one direction rabbits emerged, in another hares were running, elsewhere goats were lying down and young deer were grazing. In addition, many other kinds of harmless animals were running gaily about as if they were tame. All of which added a greater pleasure to all the other pleasures.

When they had walked about enough, looking at one thing and another, they had tables set around the beautiful fountain, and there, at the queen's command, they sang six songs and danced several dances. After this they sat down to eat and were excellently and attractively served with fine, delicate food. Enlivened by this, they rose from the table and gave themselves up once more to music and singing and dancing, until the heat increased so far that the queen thought it was time for a siesta for those who wanted it. Some went to their siesta, but others, charmed by the beauty of the garden, would not leave it, but remained there, either reading romances or playing chess or checkers while the others were asleep. After Nones they got up and refreshed their faces with cool water and, at the queen's command, sat down on the lawn near the fountain in their usual order, waiting to begin to tell stories on the subject suggested by the queen. The first to whom the queen allotted this task was Filostrato, who began as follows:

First Tale

MASETTO DA LAMPORECCHIO PRETENDS TO BE DEAF AND DUMB IN ORDER TO BECOME GARDENER TO A CONVENT OF NUNS, WHERE ALL THE WOMEN EAGERLY LIE WITH HIM

MOST fair ladies, there are many men and women so stupid that they think when a girl has put a white veil over her forehead and a black cowl on her back, she ceases to be a woman and to feel a woman's desires, as if making her a nun had turned her to stone. If they hear anything contrary to this belief they become as angry as if some huge and wicked crime against nature had been committed. They forget that they themselves are unsatisfied although they have full liberty to do as they please, nor will they take into account the great influence of idleness and solitude. Similarly, there are many people who think that the hoe, the spade, coarse food and poverty take away all carnal desires from those who work on the land, and make them heavy in mind and understanding. Now the queen has ordered me to tell a tale, and, without departing from the subject allotted, I shall be glad to show by a little tale how much such persons are deceived.

In our countryside there was, and still is, a convent of nuns, renowned for their sanctity, the name of which I shall not mention to avoid diminishing that fame. Not long ago it contained only eight nuns and an abbess, all young women. And it happened that the fellow who looked after their very beautiful garden became discontented with his wages, made up his accounts with the steward, and returned to Lamporecchio, whence he had come. Among others who welcomed him was a robust young working man, handsome enough for a peasant, whose name was Masetto. He asked the gardener, whose name was Nuto, how long he had been there, and Nuto told him. Then Masetto asked him what he did at the convent. And Nuto replied:

"I worked in their fine large garden, sometimes went to get wood in the forest, drew water, and did other jobs for them. But the nuns gave

me such small wages that I could scarcely afford to buy shoes. Besides, they were all young and seemed to have the very devil in them, for I could do nothing to please them. Once, when I was working in the garden, one of them said: 'Put this here,' and another said: 'Put that here,' and another took the hoe out of my hand, and said: 'That's not right.' They were such a nuisance that I gave up working, and went out of the garden. So, what with one thing and another, I wouldn't stay there any longer, and came back here. The steward there asked me to send him someone from here when I arrived, and I promised I would; but God make him the saint of buttocks before I find or send him anyone."

Nuto's words gave Masetto such a desire to be with these nuns that he felt quite faint, for he saw by what Nuto said that he would be able to do what he desired. He also saw that it would be better to say nothing about it to Nuto, so he remarked:

"Ah! You did well to come away. What can a man do with women? He had much better be with devils. Six times out of seven they don't know what they want themselves."

When their conversation was over, Masetto began to ponder how he should go about getting taken on by the nuns. He knew quite well that he could do the jobs Nuto had told him about, but he was afraid he might not be taken because he was too young and good looking. So after much inward debate he thought: "The place is a long way from here and no one there knows me. If I pretend to be dumb they will certainly take me on." With this plan in mind, he took an axe on his shoulder, and set out for the convent dressed as a poor man, without telling anyone where he was going. On his arrival, he went in and by chance found the steward in the courtyard. He feigned that he was dumb, and by signs asked for food for the love of God, and offered to split logs if needed.

The steward gave him some food, and then took him to some logs which Nuto had not been able to split, but which Masetto, who was very strong, split up in a very short time. The steward then had to go into the forest, and took Masetto with him, and there made him cut wood, load it on an ass, and then signed to him to drive the animal back. All this he did very well, and the steward kept him there several days to help with

certain work. One day it happened that the abbess saw him, and asked the steward who he was. And the steward replied:

"Madonna, he is a poor deaf-mute who came here begging one day, and I gave him food, and have made him do what work was needed. If he knows how to work in the garden and wants to stay, I think he would make a good servant, and we can do what we like with him. Moreover, there is no need to fear that he would start joking with your young ladies."

Said the abbess:

"God's faith, you speak truly. Find out if he is a gardener, and try to keep him. Give him a pair of shoes and an old gown, flatter him, and give him plenty to eat."

The steward said he would do so.

Meanwhile, Masetto had not been far off, and had heard everything they said while he was pretending to sweep the courtyard; and he said to himself in great delight: "If you put me in there, I'll work your garden in a way it was never worked before."

The steward, who had seen how well Masetto worked, asked him by signs if he would stay there, and Masetto made signs that he would do what he wanted; so the steward took him on, ordered him to work in the garden, and showed him what he had to do. The steward then left him, and went to do other tasks in the convent. As he worked there day after day the nuns began to tease him and to sing songs about him, as often happens to deaf-mutes, and said the most naughty words they knew to him, never dreaming that he could hear them. The abbess paid little or no attention to this, thinking perhaps that he lacked a tail in front as well as speech. One day he was resting after he had been hard at work, when two very young nuns came into the garden. They approached him as he lay pretending to be asleep, and began to look at him. One of them, who was a little more daring than the other, said:

"If I thought you would keep it a secret, I would tell you something I have often thought of, which might be pleasant to you also."

The other replied:

"Speak out, I shall certainly never speak of it to anyone."

Then the bolder one said: "I don't know if you have ever thought how we are imprisoned here, where no man ever dares to enter except the old steward and this deaf-mute. I have often heard from many women who come to see us here that all the other pleasures in the world are hollow in comparison with that a woman feels with a man. I have often thought I would try it with this deaf-mute, since I can do so with nobody else. He is the best person possible for it, because, even if he wanted to, he could not hold us up to scorn. You see he is a great stupid youth, grown up except in mind. I should like to know what you think about this."

"Oh!" said the second, "what are you saying? Don't you know we have promised our virginity to God?"

"Bah!" said the first, "how many promises are made every day, and never kept? We may have promised, and no doubt others will keep the promise."

Then her companion said:

"And what shall we do if we become pregnant?"

The first replied:

"You think of trouble before it comes to you. When that happens, we'll begin to think about it. There are a thousand ways of keeping it secret, if we ourselves do not speak of it."

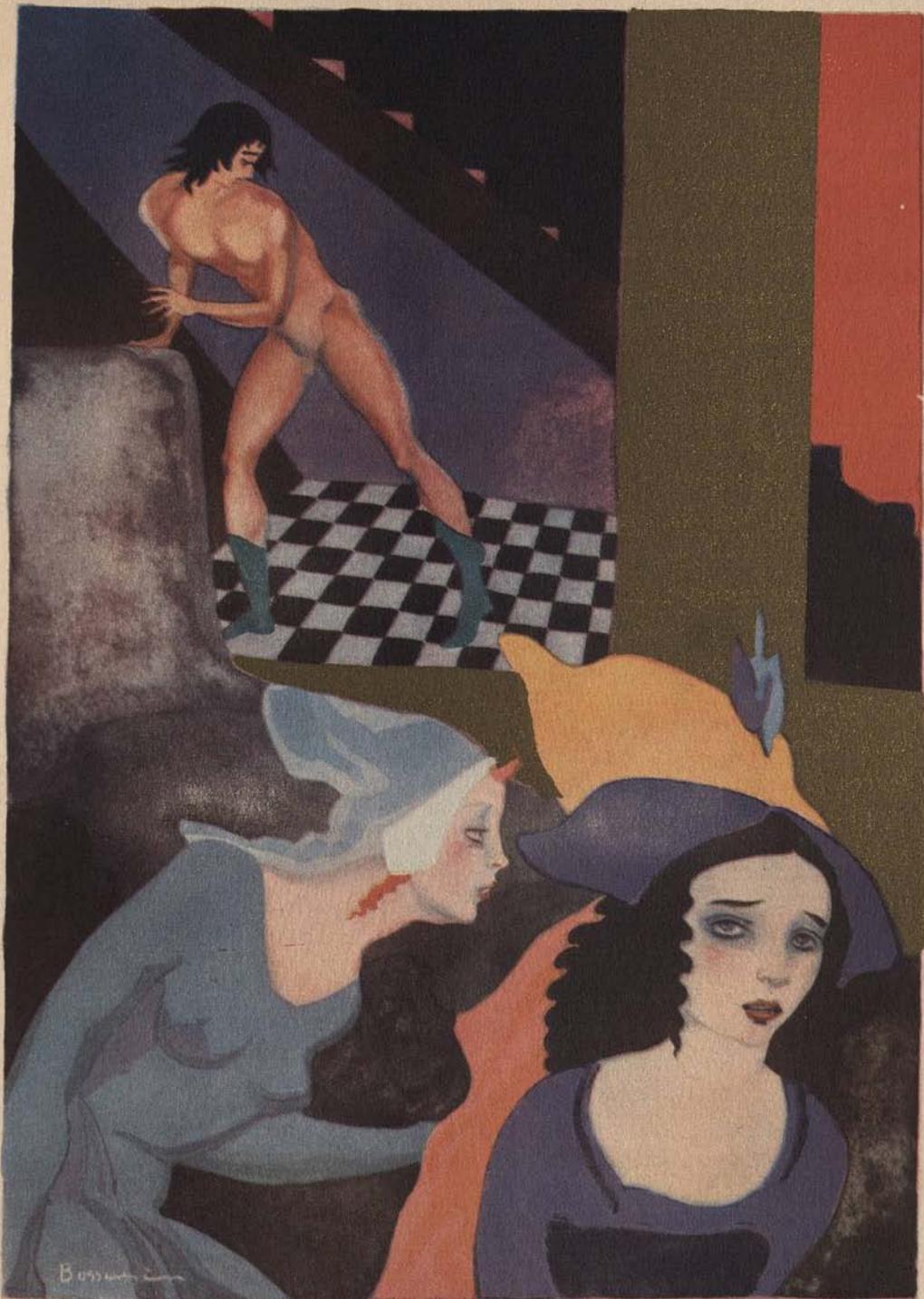
The second nun was already more eager than the first to find out what kind of an animal man is, and said:

"Well, how shall we go about it?"

The first answered:

"You see it is now Nones, and I think all the sisters are asleep, except ourselves. Let us search the garden to see if there is anyone in it, and, if not, all we have to do is to take him by the hand into that little hut, where he shelters from the rain. While one is with him, the other can keep watch. He is so stupid that he will do anything we want."

Masetto heard everything they said, and, being perfectly willing to obey them, only waited to be taken by one of them. When they had searched all about, and found that there was nowhere from which they could be observed, the nun who had started the project went up to



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Masetto and woke him, whereupon he immediately stood up. She took him by the hand with flattering caresses, while he uttered a foolish laugh, and led him into the little hut, where Masetto did what she wanted without waiting for an invitation. When she had had what she wanted, she gave place to her companion, like an honest friend, and Masetto, pretending to be simple-minded, did what she wanted. And, before they departed, they each wanted to find out again how the deaf-mute could ride them. Afterwards, when they talked it over, they agreed that it was even more pleasant than they had heard. So henceforth, at suitable times, they enjoyed themselves with the deaf-mute.

One day it happened that another nun saw what they were doing from the little window of her cell, and showed them to two others. At first they proposed to denounce them to the abbess, but then changed their minds and came to an understanding with the first two, whereby they became sharers in Masetto's farm. Later on, three more nuns joined them, owing to various occurrences.

Finally the abbess, who had not noticed anything of what had been going on, was walking alone in the garden one day when she came upon Masetto. Through riding so hard at nights he was now soon tired by a little work in the day, and was lying fast asleep in the shade of an almond tree. The wind had blown up the skirts of his shirt and left him quite exposed. The abbess gazed at him and was taken with the same desires as the nuns. She woke Masetto, and took him to her room and kept him there several days, enjoying and re-enjoying those pleasures which she had formerly condemned in others, while the nuns complained bitterly that the gardener did not come to work in the garden.

At last she sent him back to his own room but often wanted him again and took more than her share, so that Masetto was not able to satisfy so many. He saw that it would be troublesome to him if he pretended to be mute any longer; so, one night, when he was with the abbess, the ligament of his tongue broke and he said:

"Madonna, I have heard that one cock can satisfy ten hens, but that ten men can scarcely satisfy one woman. I have to satisfy nine women, and cannot keep going much longer. So I have reached such a state

through what I have done that I can no longer do anything. You must either let me go away, or find some remedy.”

When the abbess heard the dumb man speak, she was stupified, and said: “What is this? I thought you were dumb?”

“Madonna,” said Masetto, “I was dumb, but not born so. My dumbness came from an illness which deprived me of speech, and I have only recovered it tonight, for which I give thanks to God.”

The abbess believed him, and asked him what he meant by saying he had to satisfy nine women. Masetto told her the truth. When the abbess heard it, she perceived that everyone of her nuns knew more than she did. She discreetly would not allow Masetto to leave, and determined to make some arrangement with the nuns so that Masetto would not bring contempt on the convent.

It was made plain to all what they all had done behind each other's backs, and it was unanimously agreed (with Masetto's consent and complete belief on the part of the people in the district) that they should give out that Masetto's speech had been restored to him after many years by their prayers and the merits of the Saint to whom the convent was dedicated. And, as the old steward happened to die shortly after, Masetto was made steward in his place. Thus his labours were shared out in such a way that he could perform them. In the said labours he begot a large quantity of little nuns, but things were so carefully concealed that nothing was known about them until after the abbess' death, when Masetto was getting old and eager to return home with the money he had saved. And, when the whole thing came out, he easily obtained permission.

Thus Masetto, who had left home with nothing but an axe on his shoulder, returned old, rich and a father without having the expense and trouble of rearing his children, because he had been smart enough to make good use of his youth. And he often used to say that he had treated Christ in such a fashion that he had put many a horn on His head.

Second Tale

A GROOM LIES WITH THE WIFE OF KING AGILULF AND THE KING SECRETLY DISCOVERS IT. HE FINDS THE MAN AND CUTS OFF SOME OF HIS HAIR; BUT THE GROOM CUTS OFF THE HAIR OF ALL THE OTHERS AND SO ESCAPES PUNISHMENT

SOMETIMES the ladies blushed and sometimes laughed at Filostrato's tale; when it was ended the queen ordered Pampinea to speak next, and so, with a laughing face, she began as follows:

There are some persons so indiscreet in showing they know what they had better not know, that sometimes, when they think they are concealing their own shame by reprovng the hidden faults of others, they merely increase it extremely. That this is true, fair ladies, I intend to show you by its contrary, in the cunning of a man of even lower station than Masetto, and in the wisdom of a great King.

Agilulf, King of the Lombards, established his throne in Pavia, a city of Lombardy, as his predecessors had done. He took as his wife Teudelinga, widow of Autari, formerly King of the Lombards, a modest and educated woman of the greatest beauty, but unfortunate in her lovers. Through the courage and wisdom of this King Agilulf, the affairs of Lombardy were in a state of peace and prosperity, when it happened that one of the Queen's grooms—a man of the lowest birth but in other respects far above his station in life, rather like the King in height and good looks—fell violently in love with the Queen.

His humble station in life did not prevent his realising the indecency of his love, and, like a wise man, he spoke of it to nobody, nor even did he express it to her by his eyes. Although he lived without any hope of finding favour in her sight, yet he felt proud to think that he had set his desires so high; and, as he was burned up with the fire of love, he was far more eager than any of his fellow-servants to do everything which he thought might please the Queen. Thus it happened that when the Queen rode, she more often chose the horse looked after by this groom than any

other. Whenever this happened, the man considered it a very great favour, and never left her stirrup-side, thinking himself blessed whenever he could touch her skirts.

But, as we often see, the less hope there is, the greater the love becomes; and so it was with this poor groom, the more so since it was most painful for him to go about with this great desire concealed within him, when he had no hope to support him. Many times he determined to kill himself, since he could not get free from this love. Pondering on this, he decided to die in such a way that it would be known he did it for love of the Queen; and, moreover, he determined that he would risk his life in trying to satisfy his desire wholly or in part. He did not attempt to speak to the Queen or to tell her of his love by letter, for he knew that it would be useless to say or write anything; but he meant to try to lie with her by a trick. The only way he could think of, was to personate the King—who, as he knew, did not lie with her every night—and in this way enter her room and get at her.

During several nights he hid himself in a great hall of the King's palace, which was midway between the King's apartments and the Queen's, so that he might see how the King was dressed and how he behaved when he went to her. One night he saw the King come out of his apartments, wrapped in a large mantle, carrying a small lighted torch in one hand and a small rod in the other. Without saying a word, the King knocked once or twice with the rod at the Queen's apartment, the door was immediately opened, and the torch taken from his hand. Having observed this and that the King returned in the same way, the groom thought he would do likewise. He contrived to get hold of a mantle like that he had seen the King wearing and a small torch and a rod; and then he carefully bathed himself so that the smell of the horse manure should not be offensive to the Queen or lead her to suspect the deceit. After which, he hid himself with these objects in the great hall.

When everyone was asleep, he thought it time either to succeed in his desire or to go to a longed for death in a high cause; he therefore lighted his torch with a flint and tinder he had brought for the purpose, wrapped himself in the mantle, went to the door of the apartment and knocked

twice with the rod. The door was opened by a sleepy chamber-maid, who took the light and put it aside. Without saying a word, he took off the mantle, opened the curtains of the Queen's bed where she was asleep, and got in beside her. He pretended to be angry, because he knew that when the King was angry he would not hear a word from anybody; and so, without saying a word to her, or her saying anything to him, he took her lustfully in his arms and knew her carnally several times. Although it was bitter to him to leave, yet, since he was afraid that by staying there too long the delight he had had would be turned to woe, he got up, took the mantle and the light, went off without saying a word, and returned to his own bed as quickly as possible.

The groom had scarcely gone when the King arose and went to the Queen's room, greatly to her surprise. When he got into bed with her and merrily greeted her, she took courage from his good humour, and said:

"What is the meaning of this novelty tonight, Sire? You have only just left me, after taking your pleasure of me more than usual, and now you return immediately! Be careful of what you are doing."

When the King heard these words he immediately guessed that the Queen had been deceived by a similarity of person and dress; but, as he was a wise man, he also thought that he would pretend to notice nothing, since neither the Queen nor anyone else had perceived it. Many a foolish man would not have done this, but would have said: "I wasn't here. Who was here? Where did he go? How did he get in?" Such remarks would have given rise to many things, which would have grieved the lady unnecessarily and would have given her occasion to desire at other times what she had just felt. Thus by keeping silent, he avoided shame, whereas by exclaiming he would have brought it on them. So, far more angry within than appeared by his face or words, the King replied:

"Do you think I am incapable of being with you once and then coming back to you again?"

Said the Queen: "No, Sire; but I beg you will consider your health."

To this the King replied: "I will follow your advice; and I will leave, without troubling you any further."

Filled with anger and fury on account of what he saw had been done

to him, he took up his mantle and left the room, intending to find secretly the person who had done it. He knew the man must be some person of his own household and that, whoever he was, he could not have got away. So he lighted a very dim lantern and went to a long room in the palace built over the stables, where most of his servants slept in different beds. He considered that the man who had done what his wife had told him, would still have a beating heart and a rapid pulse; so, beginning at one end of the room, he went along feeling their hearts, to find out which was beating.

Everyone in the room was asleep, except the groom who had been with the Queen. He saw the King come into the room and that he was looking for somebody; and this created such fear in the groom that his heart beat faster than ever. He plainly saw that if the King perceived this, he would infallibly be killed without delay. Several possible things to do flashed through his mind, but when he noticed that the King was unarmed he determined he would pretend to be asleep, and would wait and see what the King did.

The King had touched many of them, but had found no one he thought was the man; but as soon as he came to the groom and felt the beating of his heart, he said to himself: "This is the man." But, as he did not want anyone to know about what he intended doing, the King did nothing to the man but took a pair of scissors he had with him, and cut off one side of his hair—which at that time was worn very long—so that he might recognise him next morning. After which, the King returned to his own room.

The cunning groom had noticed everything and at once perceived why he was marked. Without the least delay, he arose, found a pair of shears—of which there were several lying about in the room for use on the horses—went softly along to all those asleep in the room, and cut off part of the hair of each man in exactly the same way, just above the ear. After which, he went back to sleep, without anyone having noticed him.

Next morning the King arose and ordered all his servants to come into his presence before the gates of the palace were opened. When all were standing bare-headed before him, he began to look at their heads to find

the man whose hair he had cut; but he was amazed to find that nearly all of them had their hair cut in exactly the same way. Whereupon the King said to himself: "The man I am looking for is of base condition, but he has his wits about him." The King saw that he could not get hold of the man he was looking for without a great disturbance, and, since he did not want to purchase a small revenge with a great shame, he determined to give him a word of warning and to show him that he was observed. So the King turned to them all and said:

"Let the man who did it never do it again, and go all of you in peace."

Another man would have racked them, tortured them, questioned them, made investigations; and by doing so he would only have revealed what every man should try to keep secret. And, suppose he had discovered the man and taken full vengeance on him, he would not have wiped out his shame but would have greatly increased it, and would have damaged his wife's good name.

Those who heard what the King said were greatly surprised, and for a long time tried to discover what he had meant; but nobody understood it, except the one man for whom it was meant. And the groom, like a wise man, never revealed the secret during the King's lifetime, and never again risked his own life in such a bold deed.

Third Tale

UNDER PRETENCE OF CONFESSION AND PURITY OF CONSCIENCE,
A LADY, WHO IS IN LOVE WITH A YOUNG MAN, DECEIVES A
HOLY AND UNSUSPECTING FRIAR INTO ARRANGING THE COM-
PLETE SATISFACTION OF HER PLEASURE

AFTER Pampinea was silent, several of the band praised the groom's courage and prudence as well as the King's wisdom; the queen then turned to Filomena and ordered her to follow next, whereupon Filomena began gracefully to speak as follows:

I intend to tell you of a trick played by a fair woman on a stupid friar, which will be the more pleasing to laymen since most of these monks are fools and men unpractised in manners and yet think themselves wiser and better than everyone else, where as in fact they are far less so. You may see how stupid-minded they are by the fact that they cannot get on in the world like other men, but find out a refuge where they can obtain food, like pigs. This I shall tell you, charming ladies, not only to carry out our plan but to show you how the monks—in whom we credulously put too much faith—can be and sometimes are cleverly tricked, not only by men, but even by one of us women.

Not many years ago in our city—which contains more tricks than love or faith—there lived a gentlewoman endowed by nature with beauty and fine manners and high spirits and keen wits. Her name has no importance in this tale, and, although I know it, I do not intend to tell it, because there are still some people alive who would then be offended, whereas they will otherwise let it pass with a laugh.

This lady was of high birth, but married to a wool merchant. She despised him for being a merchant, because she thought that no man of low birth, however rich he might be, was worthy of a gentlewoman. Moreover, when she saw that, with all his wealth, he could do nothing but design a wool mixture pattern or weave cloth or argue about thread with a spinning-girl, she determined to accept no more of his embraces than she was compelled. For her own satisfaction she decided to find somebody whom she thought more worthy of her than the wool merchant; and thus she fell in love with a gentleman in the prime of life, to such an extent that if she did not see him during the day she could not sleep at night. But the gentleman did not notice it, and so paid no attention to her. She, on the other hand, was extremely cautious, and would not let him know either by letter or some female messenger, for fear of possible danger. Then she discovered that this gentleman frequented a friar who was considered a most worthy friar by everybody on account of his holy life, although he was a gross fat man; and she felt he would make an excellent go-between for her and her lover. After much thought as to how she should proceed, she went at a convenient hour to the church where he

lived, sent a message to him, and told him that she wished to make her confession to him. The friar guessed she was a gentlewoman, and willingly listened to her. After she had made her confession, she said:

"Father, I have come to you for help and advice in the matter I am about to tell you. Since I have told you about them, you know my parents and my husband, who loves me more than life itself. He is a very rich man and can do what he likes, and always gives me immediately anything I want; for which reason I love him more than I love myself. Apart from anything I might do, I should deserve to be burned alive more than any other woman, if I even thought anything contrary to his honour and pleasure.

"Now, there is a man whose name I don't know, but he seems to be a gentleman and (if I am not mistaken) a great friend of yours, a tall handsome man, dressed in good brown clothes. Perhaps he does not understand my intentions, but he seems to have laid siege to me. If I go to the door or window or leave the house, he immediately appears; in fact, I am greatly surprised that he is not here now. This greatly distresses me, because such behaviour often brings unmerited disgrace on virtuous women.

"I have sometimes thought that I would speak of it to my brothers; but then I recollected that men sometimes deliver messages in such a way as to bring a sharp answer, which leads to words, and words lead to blows. To prevent misfortune and scandal I have kept silence and decided rather to speak to you about it, both because you are his friend and because it is your duty to reprimand such things even in strangers, as well as in friends. I beg that you will reprove him for this, and ask him not to continue in this way. There are enough other women quite ready for such things, who would be delighted to have him gaze at them and court them, which to me is most displeasing since I am entirely averse to such matters."

So saying, she lowered her head as if she were crying. The holy friar at once guessed rightly of whom she was speaking, and fully believed that what she said was true. He highly praised the lady for her virtuous intentions, and promised to act in such a way that she should have no further

annoyance from the man. Then, as he now knew she was rich, he praised charity and alms-giving, and told her of his necessities. To which the lady said: "If he denies the thing, I beg you will let him know that I myself told you about it, and that I am distressed by it."

Having thus confessed and made her penitence, she recollected the friar's praise of alms-giving and deftly filled his hand with money, asking him to say masses for the souls of her dead relatives. After which, she arose and made her way home.

Not long afterwards the gentleman came to see the friar, as he was accustomed to do, and after they had talked about several different matters, the friar drew him to one side and courteously reproved him for his designs on the lady, as she had made the friar believe. The gentleman was greatly surprised, since he had never stared at her and very rarely passed her house. He began to justify himself, but the friar would not listen to him, and said:

"Don't pretend to be surprised and don't waste words in denying it, because you cannot do so. I did not hear about this from neighbours, but she told me herself, in great distress. Such nonsense is most unseemly in you; moreover, I can tell you that if ever a woman scorned such follies, she does. So, for your own honour and her satisfaction, stop, and leave her in peace."

The gentleman, who was smarter than the holy friar, was not long in seeing the lady's shrewd device. He therefore pretended to be ashamed and said he would not meddle with her again. Leaving the friar, he walked towards the lady's house, where she was standing at a little window to see him if he passed by. When she saw him coming, she looked at him so graciously and gaily that he knew he had rightly understood the friar's words. From that day onwards, under pretext of other business, he continually but prudently went up and down the street, to his own pleasure and the great delight and satisfaction of the lady. But when the lady had found out that he liked her as much as she liked him, she was anxious to give him more proof of the love she felt for him; so, she returned to the holy friar, and, kneeling down at his feet, began to weep. The friar pityingly asked her what was the matter, and she replied:

"Father, the matter is that man accursed of God, your friend, of whom I complained the other day. I think he was born to be a thorn in my flesh, and to make me do something which will destroy my happiness, and make me unworthy ever to lay myself at your feet again."

"What!" said the friar. "Has he not stopped annoying you?"

"No, indeed," said the lady, "and since I complained to you, which perhaps he took in ill part, he seems to continue out of spite, and now every day passes the house at least seven times where he used to pass once. Would to Heaven that passing by and staring would suffice him, but he is so ardent and so impudent that yesterday he sent a woman to my house with a message and trinkets—a purse and a girdle, as if I needed purses and girdles! I took it so ill that if I had not considered the sin and also your friendship I should have raised an outcry, but I controlled myself and determined to do nothing about it until I had consulted you.

"Moreover, I had at first immediately given back the purse and girdle to the woman who brought them, and harshly dismissed her, telling her to take them back. But then I felt afraid that she would keep them for herself and tell him that she had given them to me, as I have heard such women sometimes do; so I called her back, and angrily snatched them out of her hand. I have brought them to you, so that you can return them to him, and tell him that I don't need such things, for, thanks to God and my husband, I have enough purses and girdles to suffocate him. You will pardon me, Father, but if he does not cease, I shall tell my husband and brothers, and let come what may. And if he must suffer, I had much rather he did, than that I should be blamed on his account. So there you are!"

She said all this with much weeping, and then from under her petticoat drew a rich, handsome purse and a fine, valuable girdle, and threw them into the friar's lap. The friar, believing all she said, was exceedingly angry, and said:

"Daughter, I am not surprised that these things anger you, nor can I reprove you, but highly praise you for having followed my advice. I reprimanded him the other day, and he has not carried out what he promised me. So, what between that and his new offence to you, I shall so warm

his ears that he will annoy you no more. But, by the blessing of God, do not let yourself be so carried away with anger that you speak of this to any of your relatives, for great ill might come of it. And never fear that any blame will fall upon you; in the presence of God and man I shall always bear witness to your chastity."

The lady pretended to be a little comforted, and, knowing his avarice and that of others, turned to different topics, saying:

"Messer, last night I saw the spirits of several of my dead relatives, and it seemed to me that they were in great anguish and asked for alms, especially my mamma who seemed so afflicted and miserable that it was pitiful to see her. I think she suffers great pain at seeing me so distressed by this enemy of God, and therefore I wish you to say prayers and the forty masses of Saint Grigorio for their souls, so that God will remove them from penal fire."

So saying, she put a florin into his hand, which the holy friar most willingly took, and approved her devotion with many good words and devout examples. Then he gave her his blessing, and sent her away.

After she had gone, he failed to perceive that she had hoodwinked him, and sent for his friend. When the gentleman saw the friar was angry, he immediately guessed that he had a message from the lady, and so waited to hear what the friar would say. The friar repeated what he had said before, and added new and stronger reproofs, reprimanding him harshly for what the lady had said he had done. The gentleman, who did not yet see to what point the friar was coming, faintly denied having sent the purse and girdle so that the friar would not lose all faith in him if, by chance, the lady had given them to the friar. But the friar flew into a rage, and said:

"O wicked man! How can you deny it? Here they are, just as she returned them to me, with tears. See whether you recognize them."

The gentleman pretended to be greatly ashamed, and said:

"Yes, I do recognize them, and confess that I did wrong. But since I see what her intentions are, I swear to you that you shall never hear another word about this."

Then followed many words, and finally the silly friar gave his friend the purse and girdle. After many admonitions and requests that he would

refrain from these things, the friar sent the gentleman away on receiving his promise.

The gentleman was delighted both by the certainty he felt that the lady loved him, and by the handsome gift. After he had left the friar he went to a place where he could prudently show his lady that he had received both gifts. This greatly pleased the lady, especially since she felt that her plot would succeed. To crown her labours she only needed her husband to go away; and not long afterwards it happened that her husband had to go to Genoa on business. The morning that he got to horse and rode away, the lady went to the holy friar, and after much weeping and wailing, said:

“Father, I tell you I can no longer endure this, but since I promised you the other day that I would do nothing without telling you, I have come to justify myself. You will see what reason I have to weep and complain when I tell you what your friend, that devil from hell, did to me a little before dawn this morning.

“I don’t know by what ill luck he heard that my husband went yesterday morning to Genoa, but this morning at the time I mentioned your friend came into my garden and climbed up a tree to my bedroom window which looks over the garden. He had already opened the window and was getting into the bedroom when I awoke and jumped out of bed. I was about to scream for help when he besought my mercy for the love of God and yourself, telling me who he was. Whereupon, out of my friendship for you, I hearkened to him, and ran to the window as naked as when I was born and slammed it in his face. I think he then went away, for I heard no more of him. See for yourself whether such things are to be endured. For my part, I shall put up with them no longer, and I have already suffered too much out of my friendship for you.”

When the friar heard this, he was as angry as a man can be, and did not know what to say, except that he several times asked her if she was quite certain it was not someone else. The lady replied:

“Praised be God, I can distinguish him from another. I tell you it was he, and if he denies it, do not believe him.”

Then said the friar:

"Daughter, there is nothing to say except that this is too much impudence and a most wicked attempt. You did your duty in sending him away as you did. But, since God has twice saved you from disgrace when you have followed my advice, I beg that you will once more do so, and allow me to act without complaining to your relatives. Let me see if I can curb this devil unchained, whom I thought a very saint. If I can manage to withdraw him from this vileness, all is well. If I cannot do so, I now give you permission, with my blessing, to do whatever your conscience tells you is right."

"Well," said the lady, "this time I will not anger or disobey you. But take care that he annoys me no more, for I promise you I shall never come to you again on this matter."

So saying, she left the friar abruptly, as if she were angry. She had scarcely left the church when the gentleman appeared and was called aside by the friar, who began to abuse him violently, calling him perfidious, perjurer and traitor. The gentleman, who had twice before learned whither the friar's reprimands tended, waited attentively and tried by ambiguous answers to make him speak out plainly, saying:

"Why this anger, Messer? Have I crucified Christ?"

Said the friar:

"O impudence! Hear what he says! He talks as if a year or two had passed and the lapse of time had made him forget his villainy and baseness. Have you forgotten how you outraged somebody this morning? Where were you a little before dawn?"

The gentleman replied:

"I don't know where I was. The news has soon reached you."

"It is true," said the friar, "that the news has reached me. I hear that you think that the lady ought to take you straight into her arms because the husband is away. Look, gentlemen, here's an honest man! What! So you've become a night-walker, a scaler of gardens and a tree-climber. Do you think that your importunity will overcome this saintly woman, and so climb up to her window by a tree at night? Nothing in the world is so displeasing to her as you, and yet you persist. Truly, apart from the fact that she has plainly showed it, you might have been reformed by

my reproofs. Now, listen to me. Hitherto, not out of love for you but in consideration of my requests, she has kept silence about what you have done, but she will do so no longer. I have given her permission to do whatever she likes if you ever displease her again. What will you do if she tells her brothers?"

The gentleman now saw what he was to do, and soothed down the friar as best he could with many fair promises. The next night he entered the garden, climbed up the tree, found the window open, and was in his lady's arms as quickly as possible. She had been awaiting him with extreme desire and received him gaily, saying:

"Many thanks to messer friar, who showed you so well how to get here!"

After they had enjoyed each other, they talked and laughed over the stupidity of the silly friar, and spoke scornfully of wool-combers and carders and weavers, and gave each other mutual delight. And they so arranged matters that, without having to return to messer friar, they spent many another night together with the same joy. Unto which I pray God in His mercy soon to bring me and all other Christian souls who desire it.

Fourth Tale

DON FELICE SHOWS BROTHER PUCCIO HOW TO BECOME A SAINT BY CARRYING OUT A CERTAIN FORM OF PENANCE. THIS BROTHER PUCCIO DOES, AND AT THE SAME TIME DON FELICE ENJOYS HIMSELF WITH BROTHER PUCCIO'S WIFE

FILOMENA finished her tale, and Dioneo with honied words praised the lady's device and also the prayer uttered by Filomena herself at the end. The queen laughed, and looking at Pamfilo, said:

"And now, Pamfilo, continue our amusement with some pleasant tale."

Pamfilo immediately replied that he was quite willing, and began:

Madonna, there are many people who strive to go to Heaven, and, without meaning to, send others there. And this, as you are about to hear, happened to a woman neighbour of ours not long ago.

According to what I have heard, there lived near San Pancrazio a good, rich man named Puccio di Rinieri, who, being given wholly to spiritual things, joined the Third Order of Saint Francis, and was called Brother Puccio. His whole household consisted of his wife and a maid servant and he had no need to work at any trade; for which reason, and because he cultivated the spiritual life, he was frequently at church. He was a foolish, thick-witted man, said his prayers, went to sermons, attended mass, never failed to be at Lauds where laymen sing, and fasted and whipped and pricked himself as if he had belonged to the flagellant orders.

His wife, Monna Isabetta, was a young woman of about twenty-nine or thirty, fresh and pretty and plump as a ripe apple. Owing to her husband's saintliness, and perhaps his age, she was often condemned to much more abstinence than she liked. When she wanted to go to sleep or perhaps to be a little jocose with him, he would tell her about the life of Christ and the sermons of Friar Nastigo or the lamentations of Mary Magdalen and similar things.

About this time there returned from Paris a monk named Don Felice, a brother of San Pancrazio, a handsome young man both intelligent and very learned, with whom Brother Puccio struck up a close friendship. Since the monk was able to remove easily all his doubts and, moreover, seemed to be a man of most holy life, Brother Puccio often brought him home to dinner or supper, as the case might be. And the wife was friendly to him and entertained him out of love for Brother Puccio.

As the monk continued to frequent Brother Puccio's house and saw how fresh and plump his wife was, he perceived what it was she lacked, and determined, if he could, to supply her with it, to spare Brother Puccio the trouble. He made cunning play with his eyes at her, and in a short time she felt the same desires that he felt; and, at the first opportunity after he was sure of this, the monk spoke to her. But, although he found her quite ready to complete the good work, they could discover no way

to do it, because she would trust herself with the monk nowhere but in her own house, and there it was impossible because Brother Puccio never left the place. This made the monk very melancholy. But after much thought he hit upon a way to lie with the lady in her own house, without any suspicion, even though Brother Puccio was there all the time. So, one day, when he went to call on Brother Puccio, he said:

"I have often perceived, Brother Puccio, that your greatest desire is to become a saint. But it seems to me that you are taking the longest road, when there is a much shorter one used by the Pope and the great prelates, which they do not permit to be taught. The reason for this is that the clergy, who live chiefly upon alms, would be ruined, because the laymen would not then need to give them alms or anything else. But you are my friend and have done me much honour, I believe you would follow this rule and tell it to nobody else, and so I will teach it to you."

Brother Puccio immediately became most interested, and earnestly besought the monk to teach it to him, swearing that he would not tell anyone about it without the monk's consent, and promising that he would at once carry out the rule, if he could.

"Since you make this promise," said the monk, "I will tell you about it. Now, you must know that the holy Doctors of the Church hold that those who wish to become saints must perform the penance I am about to describe to you. But understand this correctly—I do not say that after this penance you will not be a sinner as you are now; but all the sins you have committed up till the time of this penance will be purged away and forgiven you, and the sins you commit afterwards will not be recorded to your damnation, but will be washed away with the holy water, as your venial sins are now.

"When a man begins this penance he must first of all confess his sins with the greatest diligence. After which he must start upon a severe fast and abstinence of forty days, during which time you must abstain, not only from other women, but even from your own wife. In addition to this, you must have some place in your house from which you can see the sky, and retire there at the hour of Complines. You must have a large table there, arranged so that you can rest your buttocks against it while

your feet are on the ground and your arms stretched out as if on a crucifix. If you like to rest your arms on some support, you may do so. In this way you must remain gazing at the sky, without moving, until daylight. If you were a man of learning, you would need to repeat certain prayers which I would tell you; but, since you are not learned, you must say three hundred Paternosters and three hundred Ave Marias in honour of the Holy Trinity. And, as you gaze at the sky, you must ever keep God in mind, the Creator of heaven and earth, and think upon the Passion of Christ as you stand in the position He hung upon the cross.

“Then, when Matins ring, you can leave this place if you wish, and lie down on your bed in your clothes, and sleep. After that, you must go to church and hear at least three masses, and say fifty Paternosters and as many Ave Marias. After that you may go about any business you have with simplicity, dine, and remain in church until Vespers, when you must recite certain prayers which I shall give you in writing, without which the penance is worthless. And then at Complines, you must start all over again. If you do this, as I once did, I hope that when you come to the end of the penance you will feel a marvellous sense of eternal beatitude, if you have carried out the penance devoutly.”

Then said Brother Puccio:

“This is neither too severe nor too long, and can easily be carried out. I shall begin on Sunday, in the name of God.”

Brother Puccio went home, and, with the monk's permission, related everything to his wife. The lady at once understood the monk's intention in keeping Brother Puccio fixed all night in one place. It seemed to her a good plan, so she said she was glad of this and anything else he did for the sake of his soul, and added that, in order that God might make his penance profitable, she would fast with him, but not attempt the remainder.

They were thus all in accord, and when Sunday came Brother Puccio began his penance, and messer monk went to the lady as soon as it was too dark for him to be seen, and spent most of the night with her. They dined together, eating and drinking well, and then he lay with her until morning, when he got up and left, and Brother Puccio went to bed.

The place which Brother Puccio had chosen for his penance was beside the lady's bedroom, and only divided from it by a very thin wall. One night as messer monk was frolicking unrestrainedly with the lady, and she with him, Brother Puccio thought he felt the floor of the house shaking. So, having come to the end of his first hundred Paternosters, he halted, and without moving called to his wife and asked what she was doing. The lady was witty, and, as she was then riding the ass of San Benedetto, or rather of San Giovanni Gualberto, she replied:

"Faith, husband, I am tossing about as much as I can."

Said Brother Puccio:

"Why are you tossing about? What do you mean by tossing about?"

This excellent woman, who was laughing—and no doubt had excellent reasons for laughing—then said:

"How is it you don't know what I mean? I have heard you say a thousand times that those who have no supper toss about all night."

Brother Puccio believed that it was fasting which kept her from sleeping and made her toss about in bed, so in all good faith he said:

"Wife, I told you not to fast; but since you would do it, stop thinking about it and try to go to sleep. You are leaping about in bed so much that you make everything shake in here."

Then said the lady:

"Don't you trouble about that. I know quite well what I'm doing. You attend to what you are doing, which I would do if I could."

Brother Puccio was then silent, and went on with his Paternosters. But after that night the lady and messer monk made up a bed in another part of the house, wherein they lay together with the greatest delight as long as Brother Puccio's penance lasted.

Early each morning the monk went away, and the lady returned to her own bed, and a little later Brother Puccio came to the same bed from his penance. In this way the brother went on with his penance and the lady continued her pleasures with the monk, to whom she often said laughingly:

"You made Brother Puccio do the penance, and we have gone to Heaven!"

From the good food which the monk gave her, the lady perceived that her husband had long kept her on a meagre diet; so, when Brother Puccio's penance was over, she found means to dine with the monk elsewhere, and for a long time discreetly took her pleasure with him. And thus, to make my last words agree with my first, it came about that while Brother Puccio thought he was going to Heaven by doing penance, he sent to Heaven the monk who had showed him the way, and his own wife who had lived with him in great want of that substance which the monk in pity most abundantly gave her.

Fifth Tale

ZIMA GIVES MESSER FRANCESCO VERGELLESÌ ONE OF HIS HORSES, ON CONDITION THAT HE IS ALLOWED TO SPEAK IN PRIVATE TO MESSER FRANCESCO'S WIFE. SHE SAYS NOT A WORD, BUT ZIMA ANSWERS HIMSELF FOR HER, AND THINGS TURN OUT IN ACCORDANCE WITH HIS REPLIES

PAMFILO finished the tale of Brother Puccio, with much laughter from the ladies; and then the queen ordered Elisa to follow next. She immediately began to speak sharply, not from malice but from long custom:

Many people who know a great deal think that other people know nothing at all; and often when they think they are hoodwinking others they afterwards discover that they have themselves been hoodwinked. Therefore I think it very foolish of anyone to match himself unnecessarily with another person's wits. But since everyone may not share my opinion I shall relate, since it is now my turn, what happened to a knight of Pistoia.

Among the family of the Vergellesi in Pistoia there was a knight named Messer Francesco, a very rich man, both wise and shrewd, but exceedingly mean. He had been named podestà of Milan, and had furnished himself

with everything necessary for his journey, except that he could not find a horse good enough for him, and was in some perplexity.

At that time there was living in Pistoia a young man named Ricciardo. He was of humble birth but very rich, and went about so neatly and handsomely dressed that most people called him "Zima," or the Beau. For a long time he had been in love with Messer Francesco's most beautiful and virtuous wife, whom he had courted in vain. Now he happened to possess one of the finest horses in Tuscany, which he greatly valued for its beauty. Everyone knew that he was courting Messer Francesco's wife, and told Messer Francesco that if he asked for the horse, Zima would let him have it out of the love he bore the lady. Drawn by his avarice, Messer Francesco sent for Zima and offered to purchase the horse in the hope that Zima would give it to him. Zima was glad to hear of this, and said to the knight:

"Messer, if you gave me everything you have in the world, you could not purchase my horse from me. But, if you wish, you shall have him as a gift, on condition that before you take him I may say a few words to your wife, with your permission and in your presence, but at such a distance from anyone else that nobody can overhear what I say."

Urged on by his avarice and hoping to make a fool of the other man, Messer Francesco replied that he might say as much as he liked. Leaving Zima in the great hall of his palace, he went up to his wife's room, told her how easily he was obtaining the horse, and ordered her to come and hear what Zima had to say, but to take care that she made no reply whatever to anything he said. The lady greatly disapproved of all this, but as she was bound to carry out her husband's wishes, she said she would do so; and then went with her husband to the great hall to hear what Zima had to say. After confirming the bargain with the knight, Zima sat down with the lady in another part of the hall, at a distance from everyone else, and said:

"Most fair lady, I feel sure that you are keen enough to have known for a long time how much love I bear you, compelled to this by your beauty, which is certainly beyond that of any woman I ever saw. I say nothing of your noble manners and the singular virtues you possess, any

one of which is sufficient to match the high spirit of any man. There is no need for me to tell you in words that my love is the greatest and most ardent that ever a man felt for any woman, and will continue as long as my wretched life supports these limbs, and even longer. And if you loved me as I love you, we should love for eternity. And therefore you may rest assured that you possess nothing, however vile or precious, which you can hold and count upon in every respect as upon me, whatever I may be worth, and upon everything I possess. To give you full proof of this, I tell you now that I should think it the greatest of favours if you would be pleased to command anything I can do to please you; for, I am sure that when I ordered it, the whole world would swiftly obey me.

“Therefore, since I am all yours as you hear me say, not undeservedly do I yearn to offer up my prayers to you on high, from whom alone and from no other can come all my peace, all my happiness and all my salvation. As your most humble servant I beseech you, my dear delight and the one hope of my soul, which, hoping in you, is nurtured in the fire of love, that your mercifulness may be so great and your former harshness to me (who am yours) so much softened that I may be comforted by your pity so that I may say that, since I fell in love with your beauty, so through your beauty do I receive life. If your lofty spirit does not bow to my prayers, my life will fade away, and I shall die, and you may be called my murderess. Apart from the fact that my death would do you no honour, I believe that your conscience would sometimes prick you for having done this, and that sometimes you would feel more kindly towards me, and say to yourself: ‘Alas! How wrong I was not to pity my Zima!’ And, as this repentance would be useless, it would but cause you the more pain.

“Wherefore, in order that this should not happen, I beseech you, while you can still help me, to have pity upon me rather than to let me die, for you alone can make me the happiest or most wretched of mankind. I hope that your graciousness will not permit me to receive death as the reward for so great a love, but that you will revive my spirits (now trembling with terror in your presence) with a gentle and favourable reply.”

He was then silent, heaving several deep sighs and shedding a few tears, and waited for the lady's reply. The lady, who had hitherto been quite unmoved by the long courtship, the striving, the serenades and other such things which Zima had done for her sake, was now touched by the ardent words of her eager lover, and began to feel what she had never felt before—love. In obedience to her husband's order she remained silent, yet she could not check a little sigh which showed what she would gladly have replied to Zima. He was surprised to find, after waiting a short time, that she made no answer, and then began to realise the trick played upon him by the knight. But as he gazed into her face he saw a light in her eyes as she looked at him from time to time; moreover he noticed the sighs which gently came from her breast, and so took hope again. Hope made him resourceful, and so, while the lady listened, he began to answer himself, as if she were speaking, as follows:

“Dear Zima, of course I have long perceived that your love for me is great and perfect, and your words to me today make it plainer than ever. I am glad of your love, as I ought to be. Yet, however harsh and cruel I have been to you, you must not think that what I feel for you in my heart is what appeared in my face. I have always loved you and held you dearer than any other man. But I have had to behave as I have done, from fear of others and to keep my reputation. But the time has now come when I can plainly show you that I love you, and reward you for the love you bore and bear me. So, cheer up, and be of good hope, since Messer Francesco is going as podestà to Milan in a few days, as you know, for you have given him your beautiful horse for love of me. When he has gone away, I promise you faithfully, by the love I bear you, that in a few days you shall be with me, and we will enjoy a complete and delicious fulfillment of our love.

“I shall not be able to speak to you about this again, so when you see two towels hanging out my bedroom window, which looks over the garden come that night to me at the entrance to the garden, and take good care you are not seen. You will find me there waiting for you, and we will spend the whole night together in delight and pleasure with each other, as we desire.”

When Zima had spoken in this way on behalf of the lady, he replied in his own person:

"Most dear lady, my whole soul is so filled with supreme joy at your gracious answer that I am scarcely able to give you fitting thanks. If I could speak as I wish, no amount of speech would suffice for me to thank you fully as I should like and as I ought to do. So I leave it to you to imagine all that I am unable to express in words. This only I will say, that I shall certainly carry out what you have ordered me to do. Perhaps I shall then be more emboldened by the great favour you have granted me, and I shall try as much as I can to return you the greatest thanks possible. Now there is nothing more to be said at present. And so, my dearest lady, God grant you happiness and the good things you most desire; and so I commend you to God."

For all this, the lady said not a word. Zima then arose and walked towards the knight, who, seeing him advancing, also stood up and came towards him laughing, and said:

"Well? Have I kept my promise?"

"No, messer," said Zima, "you promised I should speak with your wife, and you brought me to talk to a marble statue."

These words greatly pleased the knight, and gave him an even higher opinion of his wife's virtue than he had had before. He said:

"Well, the horse that was yours is now mine."

"Yes, messer," replied Zima, "but if I had known that the favour I asked was to bring such meagre fruit, I would have given you the horse without asking for the favour in return. But God willed that I should do so, and thus you have bought the horse while I have not sold him."

The knight only laughed at this. Being thus fitted with a horse, he set out for his governorship of Milan a few days later.

The lady was left alone in the house, and kept thinking about what Zima had said to her and about his love for her and the horse he had given for love of her. And as she saw him continually passing by the house, she said to herself: "What am I about? Why should I waste my young years? My husband has gone to Milan and will not be back for six months, and when will he ever make up for them? When I am an old woman? Besides,



when shall I ever find such a lover as Zima? I am alone, and there is nobody to be afraid of. I don't know why I don't enjoy this good time while I can. I shall never again have such an opportunity. Nobody will ever know it. And if it ever should come out—better to do it and repent of it, than not do it and repent.”

After this discussion with herself, she one day hung two towels at the window overlooking the garden, as Zima had said. And when Zima saw them, he was overjoyed. That night he came secretly and alone to the entrance into the lady's garden, and found the gate open. From there he went on to another door which opened into the house, where he found the lady awaiting him. When she saw him, she arose and greeted him with the greatest delight, and he went with her up the stairs, embracing and kissing her a hundred thousand times. Without any delay they went to bed, and enjoyed the last limits of love. Nor was this first time the last, for, as long as the knight was in Milan, and after his return, Zima came to her many and many a time, with the greatest pleasure to them both.

Sirth Tale

RICCIARDO MINUTOLO FALLS IN LOVE WITH THE WIFE OF FILIPPELLO FIGHINOLFI. HE DISCOVERS SHE IS JEALOUS OF HER HUSBAND AND TELLS HER THAT FILIPPELLO IS GOING TO LIE WITH RICCIARDO'S WIFE IN A BAGNIO. SHE GOES THERE, THINKS SHE IS LYING WITH HER HUSBAND, BUT FINDS IT WAS RICCIARDO

ELISA had no more to say; and the queen, after praising Zima's cleverness, ordered Fiammetta to tell the next tale. She smilingly replied: "Willingly, madonna," and so began:

Sometimes it will be good to get away from our own city, although it has abundance of everything and produces types of every subject, and, as Elisa has done, to relate what has happened in other parts of the world.

Therefore I shall shift the scene to Naples, and tell you how one of these prudes—who are so rebellious to love—was led by her lover's cunning to taste the fruit of love before she knew its flowers. And this will warn you of things which might happen and give you pleasure in those which have occurred.

The very ancient city of Naples is perhaps the most delightful of all Italian towns. There once lived in it a young man named Ricciardo Minutolo, renowned for the nobility of his blood and the splendour of his wealth. Although his wife was a charming and most beautiful girl, Ricciardo fell in love with another woman who, in everyone's opinion, was far more beautiful than any of the other Neapolitan ladies. She was named Catella, the wife of a gentleman named Filippello Fighinolfi, whom she most chastely loved beyond everything else.

Ricciardo Minutolo, being in love with this Catella, did everything which can be done to gain the love and favour of a lady; but since all this failed to gain him the least part of what he desired, he fell into despair. He could not get free from his love, and could neither die nor take any pleasure in life. While he was in this state of mind, certain ladies among his relatives urged him to abandon this love, telling him he laboured in vain because Catella cared for nobody but Filippello, of whom she was so jealous that she feared every bird of the air would take him away from her.

When Ricciardo heard of Catella's jealousy, he suddenly thought of a way to satisfy his desires. He began to pretend that he despaired of getting Catella's love and that he had fallen in love with another lady, for whom he gave serenades and jousts and did everything which he had formerly done for Catella. Before very long almost all the Neapolitans, including Catella, believed that he had ceased to love her and was deep in love with the other lady. He persevered so much, and everyone was so thoroughly convinced, that even Catella abandoned the frigidity she had opposed to his love, and greeted him as a neighbour in a friendly way when they happened to meet, just as she greeted other men.

In the hot weather many knights and ladies made up groups, according to the Neapolitan custom, to make holiday at the sea shore, and to

dine and sup there. Ricciardo, knowing that Catella had gone to the seaside with her friends, also went with his friends, and was invited to join the group of Catella and her women friends, after he had first let himself be urged as if he did not particularly want to stay. The ladies, including Catella, soon began to jest with him about his new love, which he pretended was very great, and so gave them the more chance to talk. At length, some of the ladies went one way and some another, as usually happens in such places, and Catella was left with Ricciardo and a few ladies. Ricciardo then let drop a jest about some love affair of her husband, which immediately aroused Catella's jealousy, and made her burn with desire to know what Ricciardo meant. In a little time her self-restraint gave way, and she begged Ricciardo, by his love for the other lady, to make clear to her just what he meant about Filippello. Said Ricciardo:

"You have implored me in the name of a person for whose sake I cannot refuse anything you ask me. I am ready to tell you, but you must promise me never to say a word about it to him or anyone else until you have seen for yourself that what I say is true. And, whenever you like, I will show you how you can see it."

The lady agreed to this request which made her believe more than ever that what he said was true, and swore that she would never speak of it. Ricciardo then took her aside, so that the others could not overhear them, and spoke as follows:

"Madonna, if I still loved you as I once did, I should not be eager to tell you something which I feel must give you pain; but, since that love is over and gone, I do not mind telling you the whole truth. I do not know whether Filippello was ever annoyed by my love for you or whether he thought you were in love with me—in any case, I myself never showed him anything—but now, having perhaps bided his time until I was less likely to be suspicious, he is trying to do to me what I think he feared I did to him; which is, to have his pleasure of my wife. According to what I hear, he has been very secretly urging her to this by messages for some time, all of which I have been showed by my wife who has returned him the answers I have dictated.

"This morning, just before I started out, I found my wife in close consultation with a woman, whom I immediately guessed to be what she was. I called my wife, and asked her what the woman wanted of her, and she said: 'This woman is Filippello's go-between, whom you made to carry my replies and give him hopes; and she says that he wants to know what I mean to do, and that, whenever I like, I can meet him secretly in a bagnio here. He begs and worries me to do this. If you had not made me keep up this correspondence—I don't know why—I would have got rid of him in such a way that he would never have looked at me again.' I then thought that this was going too far and could no longer be endured, and I felt I must tell you about it, so that you might know how he rewards your fidelity, which was nearly the cause of my death.

"In order that you might not think all this empty words and fables, and to give you the chance of seeing and touching the truth whenever you wanted, I made my wife answer the waiting messenger that she was ready to come to the bagnio tomorrow, at Nones, when everyone is asleep. The messenger went off, delighted with this answer. Now, I do not suppose you think I shall let my wife go; but if I were you, I should arrange for him to find you there instead of her. When he has lain with you, let him know with whom he has been, and honour him in a befitting way. If you do this, I think he will be so much ashamed that you will avenge at one and the same time the injuries he is trying to do both you and me."

Catella listened eagerly to all this, without considering who was talking to her or noticing his deceits, and like all jealous people immediately believed what he said, and began to twist certain things which had happened to fit in with this tale. In a rage she said she would certainly do what he suggested, since it was no great trouble, and that if he did come she would make him so much ashamed that he would always remember it whenever he saw another woman. Ricciardo was delighted at this, and felt his plot was a good one and proceeding well. He urged her on with much more talk, and, to strengthen her belief, begged her never to say that she had heard about it from him, which she faithfully promised.

The next morning Ricciardo went to the woman who kept the bagnio he had mentioned to Catella, told her what he intended to do, and asked

her to help him as much as she could. The woman, who was under great obligations to him, said she would gladly do so, and arranged with him what she was to do and say. In this bagnio she had a room which was very dark, since it had no window to let in the light. In accordance with Ricciardo's instructions, she prepared this room and made up a bed in it as well as she could; and after he had dined, Ricciardo got into this bed and waited for Catella.

The lady, who had listened to Ricciardo and believed what he said more than she ought to have done, returned home full of anger. It happened that Filippello came home in a preoccupied mood, and did not treat her as affectionately as usual. She noticed this, and became more suspicious than ever, saying to herself: "He is thinking about that woman, with whom he thinks he shall have delight and pleasure tomorrow, but he shall certainly not have it." With this in her mind, she lay awake nearly all night, wondering what she should say to him in the bagnio.

What more? At Nones, Catella took her attendant, and, without changing her plan, went to the bagnio Ricciardo had told her about. There she found the woman, and asked her if Filippello had been there that day. Following Ricciardo's instructions, the woman said:

"Are you the lady who was to come here to speak to him?"

Catella replied:

"I am."

"Then," said the woman, "go to him in there."

Catella, who was looking for something she would not be glad to find, let herself be taken to the room where Ricciardo was lying, entered with her head wrapped in a veil, and locked the door. Seeing her come in Ricciardo sprang to his feet joyfully, clasped her in his arms, and said softly:

"How good that you have come, my delight!"

To pretend that she was the other woman, Catella embraced and kissed him and caressed him, without uttering a word, for fear he would recognise her if she spoke. The room was very dark, which pleased both parties; nor did they remain gazing at each other for long. Ricciardo led her to the bed and there, not speaking in such a way that she would recognise his voice, lay with her for a very long time with the greatest delight and

pleasure to them both. But when Catella thought the time had come to show her fury, she began to speak angrily, as follows:

“Ah! How wretched is the fate of women, and how ill-placed is the love of many of them in their husbands! Alas! Alas! I have loved you more than my life for eight years; and you, as I have just felt, are burned and consumed with love for another woman, vile and wicked man that you are. Whom do you think you have been lying with? You have lain with her whom you have deceived with false flatteries, pretending love to her when you are in love with another.

“Faithless betrayer, I am not Ricciardo’s wife, I am Catella. Listen, and you will recognise my voice, and know I am she. It seems to me a thousand years until we can be in the light and I can shame you as you deserve, you filthy disgraceful hound. Oh! Alas! Whom have I loved all these years with such love? You, you treacherous hound, who, thinking you held another woman in your arms, have given me more caresses and amorous pleasures in this short time than in all the rest of the time we have been together.

“You were ardent enough here today, you renegade hound, while in your own home you are weak and tired and impotent. Thank God, you have been ploughing your own field and not another man’s field, as you thought. I am not surprised that you didn’t come near me last night. You were waiting to unload yourself elsewhere, and you wanted to come into battle a very fresh soldier. Thanks to God and my wits, the water has flowed into the right channel. Why don’t you say something, vile man? Why don’t you answer? Have you become dumb listening to me? By God’s faith, I don’t know what keeps me from thrusting my fingers into your eyes, and tearing them out. You thought you were very secret in carrying out this betrayal. Ah! God! One person is as wise as another. It didn’t turn out as you thought. I had better arms round your neck than you thought.”

Ricciardo was inwardly greatly amused by these words, but made no reply; he kept embracing and kissing her and caressing her more than ever. So, continuing her denunciations, she went on:

“Oh! Yes! You now think you can deceive me with your feigned

caresses, you importunate hound, and console and pacify me. I shall never be consoled for this until I have denounced you in the presence of all our relatives and friends and neighbours. You wicked man, am I not as beautiful as Ricciardo Minutolo's wife? Am I not as much a lady? Why don't you answer, filthy hound? What has she got more than I have? Move over there, don't touch me, you have done enough feats of strength for one day. Now that you know me, I am quite sure everything you did to me would be forced. But, by God's grace, I will yet make you starve for it. I don't know what keeps me from sending for Ricciardo, who loved me more than himself, and could never boast that I even looked at him once. I don't know what ill there would be in it. You thought you had his wife here, which is as good as if you had had her, since it was your intention. If I had him, you could not blame me."

Many were her words, and great was the lady's complaining. At last Ricciardo began to think that if he allowed her to go away with these beliefs, great ill might follow; he therefore decided to speak and undeceive her. So, taking her tightly in his arms and holding her so that she could not escape, he said:

"My sweet soul, do not be angry. What I was unable to achieve by simply loving you, Love has taught me to obtain by guile—I am Ricciardo."

Recognising his voice as he spoke, Catella immediately tried to throw herself out of bed, but could not. She then tried to scream, but Ricciardo clapped one of his hands on her mouth, and said:

"Madonna, it is now too late to alter what has happened if you were to scream for the rest of your life. If you scream or if in any way you ever allow anyone to know about this, two things will happen. The first (which is of some importance to you) is that your honour and reputation will be destroyed, because when you say that I got you here by guile, I shall say that it is not true and that I got you here by promising you money and gifts, and that you became angry and made this disturbance and invented your story because I did not give you as much as you hoped. You know quite well that people are more ready to believe evil than good, and so they will more easily believe me than you. In

addition to which, there would be mortal enmity between your husband and me, and matters might so turn out that I should kill him or he me; and thus you would never be happy or contented again.

“And so, heart of my body, do not at one and the same time injure yourself and put your husband and me into mortal danger and dispute. You are not the first woman and will not be the last who has been tricked; I did not deceive you to rob you of your reputation, but from the sovereign love I have for you; and I am prepared always to have for you the same love and to become your most humble servant. For a long time, I and everything I possess or can do or am worth have been yours and at your service; and I mean that henceforth they shall be yours more than ever. Now, you are a wise woman in other matters, and I am certain you will be wise in this.”

While Ricciardo was talking, Catella wept bitterly and uttered many reproaches in her anger, but reason gave so much weight to the true words spoken by Ricciardo that she saw that what he said might possibly happen. So she said:

“Ricciardo, I do not know how God will help me to bear the injury and deceit you have done me. I will not scream here, where I have been brought by my own simplicity and extreme jealousy. But be certain that I shall never be happy until in one way or another I have revenged myself for what you have done to me. You have had what you desired, and you have ill-treated me as much as you liked. It is now time to leave me. Leave me, I beg you.”

Ricciardo, who saw how angry she was, had determined not to leave her until he had made his peace with her. So with the most honied words he humbled himself before her, and said so much and begged her so hard and besought her until at last she was overcome and made her peace with him. And with equal good will on both sides they lay together again for a long time with the greatest delight. The lady then found how much more savoury a lover's kisses are than those of a husband, and her harshness towards Ricciardo was changed into tender love for him. From that time forward she loved him most tenderly and by skilful arrangement they often enjoyed their love together. God grant that we may enjoy ours!

Seventh Tale

TEDALDO QUARRELS WITH HIS MISTRESS AND LEAVES FLORENCE. SOME TIME LATER HE RETURNS DISGUISED AS A PILGRIM; HE TALKS WITH HIS MISTRESS AND SHOWS HER HOW SHE WAS IN ERROR, LIBERATES FROM DEATH HIS MISTRESS' HUSBAND WHO WAS CONDEMNED FOR HAVING KILLED TEDALDO, AND RECONCILES HIM WITH HIS BROTHERS. THEREAFTER HE WISELY ENJOYS HIMSELF WITH THE LADY

FIAMMETTA was silent as they all praised her, when the queen, anxious to lose no time, gave the word to Emilia, who began thus:

It pleases me to return to our city, whereas the last two tale-tellers were pleased to depart from it, and to tell you how one of our fellow citizens regained his lost mistress.

In Florence there lived a noble young man, named Tedaldo degli Elisei, deeply in love with a lady named Monna Ermellina, the wife of Aldobrandino Palermini; and on account of his eminent virtues he fully deserved to enjoy his desires. But Fortune, the enemy of the happy, soon opposed this pleasure. Whatever the reason may have been, the lady for a time was charmed with Tedaldo, and then suddenly turned round and refused to listen to any messenger he sent her and even to see him at all. Consequently Tedaldo fell into deep melancholy and disgust, but this love of his was so much concealed that nobody knew it was the cause of his melancholy.

He laboured hard in different ways to regain the love which he had lost through no fault of his, but, finding all his efforts vain, he determined to leave the country and not give her—the cause of his woes—the satisfaction of seeing him waste away. He got together what money he could and, without saying a word to any of his friends and relatives except one intimate companion who knew the whole story, he secretly went to Ancona under the name of Filippo di Sanlodeccio. There he met with a rich merchant, whose service he entered and with whom he sailed to

Cyprus. Tedaldo's manners and behaviour so much pleased this merchant that he not only paid him a good salary, but made him his partner and left a large part of his business to Tedaldo's care; and Tedaldo worked so hard and so skilfully that in a very few years he became a rich and famous merchant. During these occupations he often remembered his cruel lady and was pierced with love and greatly desired to see her again; but such was his strength of mind that for seven years he conquered in this battle.

One day in Cyprus he heard someone singing a song he had himself made in the past, telling of the love he felt for his lady and her love for him and the delight he had in her, and he felt that she could not have forgotten him. And there came upon him so great a desire to see her again that he could not withstand it, and made ready to return to Florence. He set all his affairs in order and went to Ancona with only one servant. There he collected all his wealth and sent it to a friend of his partner in Florence, while he followed with his servant, disguised as a pilgrim returning from the Sepulchre. When he reached Florence, he went to a small inn kept by two brothers, which was near his mistress' house. The first place he went to was her house, in order to see her if possible. But he found all the doors and windows shut, which made him suspect that she was dead or had moved away. He returned pensively to the inn, and there to his great surprise saw four of his own brothers in mourning. Knowing that he was so greatly changed from what he had been when he went away that he was not easily recognizable, he went confidently to a shoemaker and asked him why these men were dressed in black. The cobbler replied:

"They are dressed in black because one of their brothers named Tedaldo was murdered about a fortnight ago. I have been told that they have proved in Court that he was murdered by one Aldobrandino Palermini (who is in prison) because this brother was in love with his wife and had returned in disguise to be with her."

Tedaldo was greatly surprised that anyone should so much resemble him as to be mistaken for him, and he was grieved at Aldobrandino's misfortune. He learned also that the lady was alive and well. It was now

night, and he returned to his inn, full of various thoughts; and, after he had dined with his servant, he was given a bedroom at the top of the house. Either he was kept awake by his thoughts or by the uncomfortable bed or perhaps by the bad supper he had eaten, but half the night had worn away and still Tedaldo had not fallen asleep. As he lay awake he heard some people enter the house under the roof, and then saw a light through the crack of the door. He went softly up to the door and peeped through the crack to find out who they were, and saw a handsome girl holding the light, and three men coming down from the roof towards her. After they had greeted her, one of the men said:

"Thank God, we can now feel safe, for we now know for certain that the death of Tedaldo Elisei is proved against Aldobrandino Palermini by Tedaldo's brothers. He has confessed it, and the sentence is recorded. But we must keep quiet, for if it were known that we are here, we should be in the same danger as Aldobrandino."

After saying this to the girl, who seemed delighted to hear it, they came down and went to bed. Tedaldo, after hearing this, began to think of the many errors which may come into men's minds, reflecting first on his brothers who had wept over and buried a stranger in his place, and then on the innocent man accused on a false suspicion and condemned to death by false witnesses. He then thought of the blind severity of the laws and their administrators, who in their eager investigation of the truth, often by their cruelty, prove something which is false, and while they call themselves ministers of justice and God are the workmen of iniquity and the devil. He then turned his thoughts towards saving Aldobrandino, and decided what he would have to do there.

He got up in the morning, left his servant behind, and went alone to his mistress' house. By chance he found the door open, went in, and found his mistress sitting on the floor of a little room weeping and bewailing, which almost made him weep with pity. He went towards her, and said:

"Madonna, do not lament; your peace is at hand."

Hearing this, the lady raised her head and said in tears:

"Good man, you seem to me to be a foreign pilgrim; what do you know of peace or of my woe?"

The pilgrim replied: "Madonna, I am from Constantinople, and I have just arrived as a messenger sent by God to change your tears into mirth and to rescue your husband from death."

"If you are from Constantinople," said the lady, "and have only just arrived, how can you know about me and my husband?"

The pilgrim then told her the whole story of Aldobrandino's suffering, informed her who she was, how long she had been married, and many other things which he knew perfectly well. The lady was so much surprised by this that she took him for a prophet and fell at his feet, beseeching him in God's name to hurry if he had come to save Aldobrandino, for time was short. The pilgrim, pretending to be a very holy man, said:

"Madonna, arise and do not weep, pay attention to what I am about to say, and take care not to speak of it to anyone. God has revealed to me that your present tribulation is due to a sin you committed, which God has willed that you should purge in part by this trouble, and that you should wholly amend. If not, you will fall into even worse distress."

Then said the lady:

"Messer, I have committed many sins, and I do not know which of them I should amend rather than another. If you know, tell me, and I will do what I can to make amends."

"Madonna," said the pilgrim, "I know quite well which sin it is, and I ask you about it, not to be informed myself, but to make you remember it. But let us come to the point. Tell me, do you remember ever to have had a lover?"

When the lady heard this, she heaved a deep sigh and was greatly amazed, for she thought nobody had ever known about it, although since the murder of the man who had been buried as Tedaldo there had been some talk about it, owing to certain words incautiously let drop by the friend of Tedaldo who knew about it. And so she replied:

"I see that God has revealed all men's secrets to you, and so I am ready not to conceal my own from you. It is true that in my youth I loved the unfortunate young man whose death has been laid upon my husband. His death has grieved me so much that I have bitterly wept for it; for,

although I was harsh and cruel to him before he went away, yet neither his departure nor his long absence nor his unhappy death could remove him from my heart."

Said the pilgrim:

"You never loved the unfortunate young man who is dead, but you did love Tedaldo Elisei. But tell me—why were you angry with him? Had he ever offended you?"

To this the lady replied:

"Indeed, he never did anything to offend me, and the reason for my harshness was the talk of a cursed friar to whom I once made my confession. When I told him of my love for this young man and of the intimacy between us, the friar made such a hubbub about it that I was terrified. He told me that if I continued I should go straight into the devil's mouth in the depths of hell, and be burned in penal fire. This frightened me so much that I determined to be intimate with him no longer. To avoid all temptation, I refused his letters and messages. I suppose he went away in despair, but if he had persevered a little longer I think I should have changed my harsh resolution towards him as I saw him wasting away like snow in the sun, for I desired nothing more than to be friends with him again."

Said the pilgrim:

"Madonna, this is the sin which now torments you. I know certainly that Tedaldo never forced you to anything. When you fell in love with him, you did so of your own free will, and he was glad of it. At your request, he came to you and was intimate with you, wherein you showed him so much affection both by words and deeds that, if he loved you first, you increased his love a thousandfold. If that was so (and I know it was) what could induce you to withdraw your love so harshly? Such things should be considered beforehand, and when you think you might repent of them, as of ill doing, you should not do them. Thus, even as he became yours, so you became his. When he was not yours you could do anything you pleased, since it only concerned yourself; but to take yourself away from him when you were his was an unseemly thing, a robbing of him, for it was against his will.

“Now, you must know that I am a friar and so know all about their habits; since it is for your good, I shall speak openly and not deny what I should deny to others. I am glad to speak of them to you, so that henceforth you may know them better, which you do not seem to have done in the past. At one time the friars were good and holy men, but those who call themselves friars today and wish to be esteemed as such have nothing of the friar about them but their gowns. And even their gowns are not friarly, because the founders of the friars ordered their gowns to be scant and poor and made of coarse stuff, to show that in their spirit they despised all temporal goods by clothing their bodies in such base garb, whereas the friars of today have ample, full glossy gowns of the finest stuffs which they have developed into an elegant and pontifical shape. Dressed in these gowns they are not ashamed to strut about like peacocks in churches and squares, showing off their clothes like laymen. Just as the fisherman tries to catch as many fish from the stream as possible with one cast of his net, so these friars give their greatest attention to snaring and entangling in the wide folds of their robes all the bigots and widows and other silly men and women they can get hold of. To speak truth, they do not even wear friars’ gowns, but only the colour of their gowns. Where their predecessors desired men’s salvation, the friars today want wealth and women. They give their whole thought to frightening the minds of silly people with noise and paintings and to telling them that sins are purged by almsgiving and masses. They say all this because they became friars, not out of devotion, but from baseness of soul and to avoid working, and because some people send them bread and others wine and others their portion of meat, for the souls of their deceased relatives.

“It is certain that sin is purged away by prayer and almsgiving; but if those who give alms saw or knew the persons they were giving to, they would much rather keep the money themselves or throw it to pigs. Because they know how inferior the possessors of great wealth are to other men (for they live in greater comfort), every friar labours with sermons and terrifying threats to isolate a rich man from others, so that he alone may be intimate with the wealthy. The friars denounce men’s lust, so that when the denounced are cleared away the women will be left to the

denouncers. They condemn usury and ill-gotten gains, so that when restitution is made to them, they can make larger gowns and procure bishoprics and other possessions greater than those which they asserted would lead their owners to damnation.

“When they are reprovèd for these and many other indecent actions, they reply: ‘Do as we tell you, and not as we do,’ thinking this a complete discharge of the most grievous charges, as if the sheep could be more constant and steadfast than the shepherds! And a large number of the friars know quite well that many of those to whom they make this reply do not understand it in the sense they mean it. When the friars of today tell you to do what they say, they want you to fill their purses, let them know your secrets, be chaste and patient, forgive injuries and refrain from evil-speaking—all good, honourable, holy things. But what is their motive? Simply that they may do those things which they could not do if the laymen did them. Who does not know that laziness cannot exist without money? If you spent your money on your own pleasures, the friar could not be idle in his Order. If you lay with the women you know, the friars would not have them. If you were not patient and forgiving of injuries, the friar would not be so anxious to come to your house to corrupt your family. But why do I go into all these details? Every time the friars make the excuse, ‘Do as we tell you, not as we do,’ they condemn themselves in the sight of all intelligent people. If they think they cannot be virtuous and abstain from wrong, why do they not stay in their cloisters? Or if they wish to be virtuous, why do they not follow the holy words of the Gospel: ‘Then Christ began to act and to teach’? Let them first do good actions, and then admonish others. With my own eyes I have seen hundreds of them who were visitors, lovers, seducers, not only of lay women, but of nuns. And yet these friars make the greatest noise about this in the pulpits. Are these the men to whom we should confess? Those who do so, do as they please, but God knows if they act wisely.

“But, let us grant that the friar who denounced you was right when he said it was a most deadly sin to break matrimonial faith. Is it not much worse to rob a man? Is it not much worse to murder him or to send him

wandering about the world in exile? Everyone will grant that. For a woman to lie with a man is a natural fault; to rob or kill or drive him away comes from wickedness of spirit.

"I showed you just now how you robbed Tedaldo by depriving him of yourself after you had become his of your own free will. I tell you moreover that, as far as you are concerned, you killed him; when you were so cruel to him it was not your fault that he did not kill himself with his own hands. And the law declares that he who is the cause of wrong is as guilty as he who actually commits wrong. You cannot deny that you were the cause of his exile and of his wandering about the world for seven years. Thus, by every one of these three things, you committed a far greater sin than by lying with him. But let us look more closely—perhaps Tedaldo deserved these things? He certainly did not. You yourself have confessed it, and I know that he loved you more than himself.

"No one was ever so much honoured, praised, commended as you were, above all other women, by him whenever he could do so honourably and without creating suspicion. He placed in your hands all his possessions, all his honour, all his liberty. Was he not a young noble? Was he not as handsome as any of his fellow citizens? Was he not accomplished in all things appertaining to young men? Was he not beloved? Was he not held dear? Was he not welcomed by all men? You will not deny all this.

"How then could you take such a cruel resolution against him, simply through the talk of a silly, stupid, envious friar? What is this error in women which makes them reject men and hold them in slight esteem? Whereas, women should remember what they themselves are, and how God has given man more nobility than any other animal, and should be proud when any man loves them, and hold him most dear, and take the greatest pains to please him, so that they may always be beloved. You know what you did at the instigation of a friar, who must certainly have been some fat-witted glutton, trying to worm himself into the place from which he strove to eject another.

"Divine justice, which weighs everything in exact scales and brings all things to a fitting end, would not allow this sin of yours to go unpunished. Without reason you withdrew yourself from Tedaldo; and there-

fore your husband is in danger without any fault in him and you are in great grief, on account of Tedaldo. If you desire to be freed from this, you must make me a promise and keep it. You must promise that if ever Tedaldo returns here from his long exile, you will restore to him your favour, your love, your kindness and your intimacy, and set him back exactly in the position he was in before you so foolishly listened to that raving friar."

The lady listened most attentively to the pilgrim's words, for his reasoning seemed to her most exact, and she felt convinced that she was now in trouble on account of the sin he described. So she said:

"O friend of God, I know that what you say is true, and I perceive from your explanation what these friars are, whom I have hitherto thought to be so saintly. I frankly admit that my fault was great in what I did to Tedaldo, and if I could, I would gladly make amends in the manner you say. But how can I do so? Tedaldo can return here no more. He is dead. Therefore, I do not see why I should promise to perform something which cannot be done."

Said the pilgrim:

"Madonna, Tedaldo is not dead, as God has revealed to me, but is alive and safe and sound, if only he may recover your favour."

Then said the lady:

"Beware what you are saying. I saw him lying dead at my door stabbed through and through; I held him in these arms and shed many a tear on his dead face, which perhaps caused the malicious talk about all this."

Said the pilgrim:

"Madonna, in spite of what you say, I assure you Tedaldo is alive. And when you make the promise I demand, I hope you will soon see him."

The lady replied:

"This I do and will do gladly. Nothing could make me so happy as to see my husband released without harm, and Tedaldo alive."

Tedaldo then thought it time to give the lady some comfort by speaking out, and more certain hope for her husband. So he said:

"Madonna, to give you some hopes for your husband I must tell you a secret, which you must be careful never to reveal."

They were alone in a remote room, and the lady had the fullest confidence in the sanctity of the man she thought was a pilgrim. Tedaldo then produced a ring which he had most zealously kept, because the lady had given it to him the last night he had lain with her; and said:

"Madonna, do you know this ring?"

The lady recognized it as soon as she saw it, and said:

"Yes, Messer, I gave it to Tedaldo in the past."

The pilgrim then stood up, swiftly threw off his hat and gown, and, speaking in Florentine dialect, said:

"And do you know me?"

As soon as she saw him, the lady recognized Tedaldo, but was as much terrified as if she had seen dead men walking about like the living. She did not greet him as Tedaldo returned from Cyprus, but in her fear turned to flee as if he were Tedaldo returned from the grave. But Tedaldo said:

"Have no fear, Madonna, I am your Tedaldo, alive and well. I was never dead, as you and my brothers thought."

The lady was partly reassured, partly frightened by his voice, but after looking more closely at him and finding that he really was Tedaldo, she threw herself weeping on his shoulder, and kissed him, exclaiming:

"My sweet Tedaldo, how glad I am you have come back!"

After embracing and kissing her, Tedaldo said:

"Madonna, this is not the time for more intimate greetings. I must go and see that Aldobrandino is released safe and sound, of which I hope you will hear good news before tomorrow evening. If, as I hope, I have good news of his safety, I shall come to see you tonight, and can then tell you all about myself more fully than I can now."

Putting on his pilgrim's hat and gown, he kissed the lady once more and cheered her with hopes, and then departed. He then went to the prison where Aldobrandino was sadly thinking more of his imminent death than of any hopes of safety. With the permission of the gaolers, Tedaldo was allowed in to give Aldobrandino spiritual comfort. He sat down beside him, and said:

"Aldobrandino, I am a friend, sent to save you by God, Who has had

pity upon your innocence. Therefore, if in reverence to God you will grant me a small gift I ask of you, I promise you without fail that to-morrow evening you shall hear your acquittal, instead of the sentence of death you expect."

Aldobrandino replied:

"Worthy man, since you are earnest to save me, you must be a friend, as you say, although I do not know you and do not remember ever to have seen you. Indeed I never committed the crime for which men say I should be condemned to death. I have committed other sins, which perhaps have brought me to this pass. But in all reverence to God I say that, if He now is merciful to me, I will both promise and perform, not only a small thing, but a great thing. If I escape, I will do anything you please to ask of me."

Then said the pilgrim:

"The only thing I want is that you will forgive Tedaldo's four brothers for having brought you to this pass, in the belief that you had murdered their brother, and that you will receive them as brothers and friends when they come and ask your pardon."

Said Aldobrandino:

"Only he who has been injured knows how sweet a thing is revenge and with what ardour it is desired. Nevertheless, since God designs my escape, I will gladly pardon them, and do now pardon them. If I escape alive and free from here, I will act in such a way in this matter that you shall be satisfied."

This delighted the pilgrim, who, without revealing anything more to him, urged him to be of good heart because he would undoubtedly hear certain news of his safety before the next day was over. Leaving Aldobrandino, Tedaldo then went to the Signoria, and went secretly to a knight who was in charge, and said:

"My lord, every man should labour for the truth to be made known, above all those who hold the position you hold, in order that those who have not sinned may go free and that sinners may be punished. In honour of you and in hatred of those who have deserved punishment, I have now come to you that justice may be done. As you know, you have proceeded

with rigour against Aldobrandino Palermini, you think you have proved that he murdered Tedaldo Elisei, and you are about to condemn him to death. I believe this to be entirely false, and before midnight I think I can put into your power the men who murdered the young man."

The worthy man, who was sorry for Aldobrandino, gladly lent an ear to what the pilgrim said. After they had discussed the matter together, by Tedaldo's means the two inn-keepers and their servant were arrested without resistance while in their first sleep. When threatened with torture to get at the truth of the matter, the prisoners could not face it, but each separately and all together confessed that they were the murderers of Tedaldo Elisei, who was personally unknown to them. When asked the reason, they said:

"Because when they were absent from the inn he had insulted the wife of one of them and had tried to force her to lie with him."

After this, with the knight's permission, the pilgrim departed, and went secretly to Madonna Ermellina's house. There he found everyone had gone to bed except his mistress, who was equally anxious to hear good news of her husband and to be fully reconciled with her Tedaldo. When he arrived, he said with a cheerful face:

"My dearest lady, be happy, for tomorrow you will certainly have your Aldobrandino here safe and sound."

And then he related fully what he had done, in order to convince her thoroughly. The lady was wildly happy at these two events which had happened so close together, for she once more saw Tedaldo alive after she had wept him as dead, and she saw Aldobrandino set free from danger when she believed that in a few days she would have to weep his death also. She embraced and kissed Tedaldo affectionately, and then they went to bed together, and in all good will made a merry and gracious peace pact, each enjoying delicious pleasure with the other. When morning came, Tedaldo arose and told his mistress what he intended to do, and once more warned her to keep everything secret. Then he left the lady's house in his pilgrim's garb, so that he could be present when Aldobrandino was released.

When day came the Governor, who had obtained full information

about the case, immediately set Aldobrandino at liberty, and shortly afterwards hanged up the malefactors by their necks in the place where they had committed the murder. Aldobrandino, being set free, to his own great joy and the delight of his wife and all his friends and relatives, recognised that this was the work of the pilgrim, and therefore took him home to stay with them as long as he chose to remain in the city. And once there, they could not sufficiently honour him, especially the lady who knew who he really was. After a few days he thought it was time to reconcile his brothers with Aldobrandino, for he heard they were not only scorned on account of his escape, but were in arms for fear of him. And so he asked Aldobrandino to carry out his promise, which he said he was perfectly ready to do. The pilgrim therefore arranged a great banquet for the next day and told Aldobrandino that he wished him and his relatives and all their wives to receive the four brothers and their wives, adding that he himself would go to them immediately and invite them on his behalf to this banquet and peace pact.

Since Aldobrandino fell in with everything the pilgrim suggested, the latter immediately went to the four brothers and urged upon them the natural reasons which would occur to anyone in such a situation, so that at least he had little difficulty in persuading them to ask Aldobrandino's pardon and to request his friendship. He then invited them and their wives to dine with Aldobrandino the next day. And, having the security of his pledged word, they freely accepted the invitation.

Next day at dinner time, Tedaldo's four brothers, all dressed in black, came with their friends to the house where Aldobrandino was awaiting them. There, in the presence of all those whom Aldobrandino had invited, they cast their weapons on the floor and placed themselves in Aldobrandino's hands, beseeching his pardon for what they had wrought against him. Aldobrandino received them with tears, kissed each one on the mouth and spoke a few words to each, and so pardoned all injuries they had done him. After them came their sisters and wives, all dressed in brown, and were graciously received by Madonna Ermellina and the other ladies. Both men and ladies were magnificently served in the banquet, wherein everything was praiseworthy, save only one thing—the

silence which resulted from the recent mourning still represented by the dark clothes of Tedaldo's relatives. Indeed, some people on this account blamed the pilgrim's arrangement and banquet, of which he was quite aware. Therefore, when he thought the time had come to remove this mourning, he stood up while they were still eating dessert, and said:

"One thing only is lacking to the gaiety of this feast—the presence of Tedaldo. He has been with you the whole time, although you have not recognized him, and I shall now show him to you."

He threw off his gown and all his pilgrim's garb, and appeared in a suit of fine green silk. Everyone gazed long at him in amazement, before they could really believe that he was Tedaldo. Seeing their incredulity, Tedaldo related to them many things concerning family affairs, and what had happened to them and to him. This convinced his brothers and the other men, who ran to embrace him with tears of joy, and so did all the ladies, whether they were his relatives or not, save only Monna Ermellina. Aldobrandino noticed this, and said:

"Ermellina, what does this mean? Why do you not greet Tedaldo like the others ladies?"

To this the lady replied so that all could hear:

"There is no one I would greet more willingly, for I am more indebted to him than to any other man, since it was he who saved you for me. But I am restrained by the malicious words spoken in the days when we wept over the man we thought was Tedaldo."

Said Aldobrandino:

"Away! Do you think I believe in such yappers? By labouring to save me, Tedaldo has proved that this was false, although I never at any time believed it. Get up at once, and embrace him."

The lady, who asked nothing better, was not slow to obey her husband. She got up, as the others had done, and embraced and thanked him. Aldobrandino's generosity delighted Tedaldo's brothers and every man and woman present; and any suspicion created in their minds by the things which had been said in the past was entirely swept away. When everyone had thus made much of Tedaldo, he himself stripped the mourning garments from his brothers and sisters and other relatives, and

ordered other clothes to be brought for them. When these arrived, they sang and danced and amused themselves, so that the banquet, which had begun in silence, ended in merry noise. Then they all, just as they were, accompanied Tedaldo to his own house with the greatest joy, and dined there that evening. And in this way they kept up their rejoicings for several days.

For some time the Florentines looked upon Tedaldo as a man risen from the dead and a nine days' wonder. Many of them, including even his brothers, still felt a tiny doubt in their minds as to whether he really was Tedaldo, and perhaps this might have lingered a long time if something had not occurred to bring to light the identity of the man who had been murdered. It happened in this way. One day some men from Lunigiana passed by their house and saw Tedaldo; whereupon they immediately went up to him and said:

"Good health to Faziuolo."

Tedaldo, in the presence of his brothers, said to them:

"You have made a mistake."

They were confused when they heard him speak and asked his pardon, saying:

"Indeed, no two men ever resembled each other so closely as you resemble a friend of ours, named Faziuolo da Pontremoli, who came to Florence about a fortnight ago or more, and of whom we have heard no news whatever. It is true that we were surprised by your clothes, for he was only a soldier of fortune, as we are."

When Tedaldo's elder brother heard this he immediately asked them how Faziuolo had been dressed. They told him, and it turned out that the dead man had been dressed exactly as they said. What with this and other proofs, it was fully recognized that the murdered man was Faziuolo and not Tedaldo. And after this all suspicion vanished from his brothers and everyone else.

Tedaldo, who was now a very rich man, persevered in his love. The lady was never angry with him again, and, as they acted most discreetly, they long enjoyed their love together. May God so allow us to enjoy ours!

Eighth Tale

FERONDO EATS A CERTAIN POWDER AND IS BURIED AS IF DEAD. THE ABBOT, WHO IS IN LOVE WITH HIS WIFE, TAKES FERONDO OUT OF HIS GRAVE, PUTS HIM IN PRISON AND MAKES HIM BELIEVE HE IS IN PURGATORY. HE IS RESURRECTED AND BRINGS UP AS HIS OWN A CHILD BEGOTTEN ON HIS WIFE BY THE ABBOT

WHEN Emilia came to the end of her long tale—which displeased nobody by its length, but was considered by them all to have been told very briefly considering the quantity and variety of events treated—the queen made a sign to Lauretta, who began as follows:

Most dear ladies, I wish to tell you about a true event, which seems much more like fiction than what we have just heard. It has come into my mind through hearing about a man who was bewailed and buried in mistake for another man. I shall tell you, then, how a living man was buried for dead, and how he himself and many others believed that he was resurrected from the grave and not alive all the time; and how a man was adored as a saint in consequence, when he ought rather to have been punished.

There was in Tuscany a certain monastery, such as we see many to this day, in a place unfrequented by men. A certain monk was made Abbot, and he was a most holy man in every respect, except the usage of women. But he acted so cautiously in this respect, that nobody knew or even suspected it; so that he was held to be a most holy and just man in all things.

It happened that this Abbot was very friendly with a rich farmer, named Ferondo, a heavy and very stupid man, whose company was only pleasing to the Abbot because he sometimes amused himself with the man's stupidities. This Ferondo had a very beautiful wife, with whom the Abbot fell so much in love that he could think of nothing else day or night. But he almost fell into despair when he discovered that Ferondo, although simple-minded and stupid in other respects, was most alert in

loving his wife and guarding her from others. The Abbot went to work so skilfully, however, that he persuaded Ferondo to come with his wife to sit in the abbey garden. There the Abbot talked to them most devoutly of the blessedness of eternal life and the holy works of divers men and women, so much so that the wife wished to have him as her confessor, and got permission from Ferondo to do so. The woman therefore came to make her confession to the Abbot, to his great delight, and sat down at his feet as if she had come to say something else, and began thus:

"Messer, if God had given me a different husband or had not given me one at all, perhaps it would be easy for me to enter, under your instruction, upon that path which you told us leads other people to eternal life. But when I think how stupid Ferondo is, I feel I may call myself a widow; and yet I am a married woman, and can take no other husband while he is alive. Fool as he is, he is so unreasonably and excessively jealous of me that I can only live with him in trouble and misfortune. So, before I come to confession, I beg you in all humility to give me your advice about this, because it will be of small avail for me to confess or perform other good works unless I can do something about my husband."

This speech filled the Abbot's soul with joy, for he felt that Fortune had opened up the way to his greatest desire; so he said:

"My daughter, I consider it a great misfortune that a beautiful and delicate woman like you should have a fool for a husband, and still more so a jealous man. Since your husband is both, I can easily believe what you say. To speak briefly, the only advice or remedy I can see is that Ferondo shall be cured of his jealousy. I know quite well what medicine will cure him, but you must keep quite secret what I shall tell you."

Said the lady:

"Have no hesitation, Father; I would rather die than say anything you told me not to say. But how can this be done?"

The Abbot replied:

"If we want him to be cured, it is absolutely necessary for him to go to Purgatory."

"And how can he go there alive?" said the lady.

Said the Abbot:

"He will have to die and so go to Purgatory, and when he has endured sufficient punishment to be cured of his jealousy, we shall make certain prayers to God to bring him back to life, and this God will do."

"Then," said the lady, "I shall have to remain a widow?"

"Yes," replied the Abbot, "for a certain time, during which you must not marry anyone else, for God would be angry, and when Ferondo came back you would have to return to him, and he would be more jealous than ever."

Said the lady:

"If only he is cured and I do not have to stay always in prison, I am content. Do as you please."

"I will do so," said the Abbot, "but what reward shall I have from you for this service?"

"Father," said the lady, "anything you please that is in my power. But what can a woman like me do for such a man as you?"

"Madonna," said the Abbot, "you can do as much for me as I am about to do for you. Just as I am ready to do what will be for your good and comfort, so you can do something to save my life."

"If that is so," said the lady, "I am quite ready."

"Well," replied the Abbot, "will you give me your love and make me happy with you, for I am burning with love for you?"

The lady replied in great amazement:

"Oh! Father! What is this you ask for? I thought you were a saint! Is it seemly that holy men should ask such things of women who come to ask their advice?"

Said the Abbot:

"My sweet soul, do not be surprised. Sanctity is not diminished by this, because sanctity resides in the soul, and this is a sin of the body. But in any case, your delicious beauty has such power over me that love compels me to do this. You should be more proud of your beauty than other women, because it delights holy men who are accustomed to see the beauties of Heaven. Besides, although I am an Abbot, I am a man like other men, and you can see I am not yet old. You should not find any difficulty in doing this, but you should rather desire it, because while Ferondo

is in Purgatory, I shall come to you at night and give you the pleasures he ought to give you. Nobody will ever know about it, for everyone thinks I am as holy as you thought until just now. Do not refuse the favour which God sends you, for many a woman would eagerly desire what you may have and will have, and would wisely listen to my advice. Besides, I have some beautiful and valuable jewels which I mean shall be yours. So, my dear hope, do for me what I gladly do for you."

The lady hung her head and did not know how to refuse and yet thought it wrong to accept. The Abbot, seeing she had listened to him and hesitated to reply, went on talking to her and before he finished had convinced her that it was right to do what he asked. At last she said shamefacedly that she was ready to do what he wanted, but that she could not do anything until Ferondo was in Purgatory. To this the Abbot joyfully replied:

"We will arrange for him to go there immediately. See that tomorrow or the next day he comes to me."

And so saying, he nimbly put a most beautiful ring into her hand, and dismissed her. The lady, delighted with this gift and in full expectation of others, returned to her companions and told them marvels about the Abbot's sanctity, as they went home together.

A few days later Ferondo went to the abbey, and as soon as the Abbot saw him he determined to send him to Purgatory. He possessed a powder of marvellous virtue which he had received from a great Prince of the Levant, who asserted that this powder was used by the Old Man of the Mountain when he wished to put anyone asleep and send him to Paradise and then bring him back. According to the quantity administered, the person who took it slept a shorter or longer period without any harm, and as long as its virtue lasted everyone would swear the person who took it was dead. The Abbot measured out enough powder to make a man sleep three days and mixed it in a glass of rather cloudy wine in his cell. Ferondo drank this, without noticing anything amiss, and the Abbot then took him to the cloister, where he and his monks began to amuse themselves with Ferondo's foolish sayings. He had not been there long when the powder began to work and there came upon him so sudden and irre-

sistible a desire to sleep that he began to sleep as he stood, and suddenly fell down in a deep sleep.

The Abbot pretended great distress at this accident, made them loosen his clothes, called for cold water to throw on his face, and attempted other remedies for bringing him out of his swoon, as if he thought Ferondo was suffering from a disturbance of the stomach or some other illness. When the Abbot and the monks saw that nothing brought him to, they felt his pulse and found it motionless, so that they all believed him to be dead. They sent to tell his wife and relatives, who all came immediately; and, when the wife had bewailed him for a time, the Abbot had him put into a tomb dressed in all his clothes. The lady returned home, and declared that she would never leave a little boy she had had by Ferondo, and took over the control of Ferondo's child and possessions.

There was a Bolognese monk who had come from Bologna that day and was deep in the Abbot's confidence. That night they got up secretly and together lifted Ferondo out of his grave and carried him to a large, completely dark tomb which was used as a prison for erring monks. There they undressed him and re clothed him as a monk, laid him on a heap of straw and left him until he should regain consciousness. The Bolognese monk, informed by the Abbot of what had to be done, waited there for Ferondo's recovery, without anyone else knowing anything about what was going on.

The next day the Abbot and some of his monks paid a visit of condolence to the lady, whom they found all dressed in black and lamenting. After cheering her up, the Abbot boldly asked her to keep her promise. The lady, who was now free and without the hindrance of Ferondo, said she was ready, especially as she saw another valuable ring on the Abbot's finger, and agreed that he should come to her that night. The Abbot accordingly dressed himself in Ferondo's clothes and went to her, accompanied by the Bolognese monk. He lay with her until dawn in the greatest delight and pleasure, and then returned to the abbey; and often repeated the journey on a similar errand. As he went to and fro, he sometimes met one or other of the inhabitants, who thought he was Ferondo's ghost haunting the countryside as a penance. There was much talk of this

among the common people of the village, and more than once news of it was brought to the wife, who knew better what the apparition was.

When Ferondo recovered his senses and began to wonder where he was, the Bolognese monk went into the tomb, exclaiming in a terrifying voice, seized him and beat him with a birch. Ferondo yelled and wept, and kept shrieking:

"Where am I? Where am I?"

"You are in Purgatory," replied the monk.

"What!" exclaimed Ferondo. "Am I dead, then?"

"Of course you are," said the monk.

Ferondo then began to lament for himself and his wife and his child, uttering the most absurd things imaginable. The monk then brought him something to eat and drink, whereupon Ferondo said:

"Oh! Do the dead eat?"

"Yes," said the monk, "what I bring you was yesterday brought to the church by the woman who was your wife, for masses to be said for your soul; and God has willed that it should be handed on to you."

Then said Ferondo:

"God be good to her! I bore her such good will before I died that I held her all night in my arms and did nothing but kiss her, and did something else to her whenever I wanted."

Then, as his appetite was sharp set, he began to eat and drink. But, as he thought the wine rather bad, he said:

"God punish her for not giving the priest the wine from the cask next the wall!"

When he had eaten, the monk seized him again and gave him another severe thrashing with the same birch. Ferondo yelled again, and asked:

"But why do you do this to me?"

Said the monk:

"God has commanded that it shall be done to you twice a day."

"But why?" said Ferondo.

"Because you were jealous," said the monk, "although your wife was the best woman in the district."

"Alas! You say truly," said Ferondo, "and the sweetest. She was as

sweet as honey, but I never knew that God did not like a man to be jealous, or I shouldn't have been jealous."

"You ought to have known it before," said the monk, "and have amended your life. If you ever happen to return to life, remember what I am now doing to you, and never be jealous again."

"Do those who die ever return to life?" said Ferondo.

"Yes," said the monk, "if God wills it."

"Oh!" said Ferondo. "If I ever return to life, I shall be the best husband in the world. I'll never beat her, I'll never say anything unkind to her—except about the wine she sent me yesterday, and because she didn't send me a candle, so that I had to eat in the dark."

"She did send one," said the monk, "but it was burned at the mass."

"Oh!" said Ferondo. "You say truly. Certainly, if I ever return, I will let her do what she likes. But tell me, who are you?"

Said the monk: "I also am dead. I came from Sardinia, and because I praised my lord and master on account of his jealousy, God has condemned me to this punishment. I am to give you food and drink and beat you, until God decides what next shall be done with us."

"Is there nobody here but us?" asked Ferondo.

"Thousands," said the monk, "but you cannot see or hear them, nor can they see and hear you."

"How far are we from the village?" asked Ferondo.

"Ho!" said the monk. "Hokey-pokey abracadabra thousands of miles!"

"Faith," said Ferondo, "that's a long way. We must be right out of the world, it's so far."

With these and similar conversations, with eating and beating, Ferondo was kept in prison ten months, during all which time the Abbot continued to visit the lady scot-free, and enjoyed himself thoroughly with her. But, as misfortune would have it, the lady became pregnant, and as soon as she found it out, told the Abbot. They both decided that Ferondo must be brought back from Purgatory to life as soon as possible and return to her, and that she must say she was pregnant by him. Next night the Abbot called to Ferondo in his prison, and said in a counterfeited voice:



"Ferondo, be of good cheer. It has pleased God that you shall return to the earth. When you get back, you will have a son by your wife, and you shall call his name Benedetto, because this favour is granted you on account of the prayers of your holy Abbot and of your wife, and for love of San Benedetto."

Ferondo was overjoyed to hear this, and said:

"Glad indeed am I. God be good to the Lord God and to the Abbot and to San Benedetto and to my dear, sweet, honey wife!"

The Abbot mixed in the next wine he sent Ferondo enough of the powder to make him sleep for about four hours, dressed him in his own clothes again, and then with the monk's help secretly put him back in the tomb where he had first been buried. At dawn next morning, Ferondo awoke and saw, through a crack in the tomb, a ray of light, which he had not seen for ten months. He thought he had come to life again, and began to shout: "Let me out! Let me out!", beating his head so hard against the lid of the tomb that he moved it, for it was not very heavy, and began to climb out. The monks who were saying matins ran up and recognised Ferondo's voice, and saw him climbing out of the tomb. They were so terrified by the unexpectedness of the event that they fled in horror, and went to tell the Abbot. He pretended to have just risen from prayer, and said:

"Fear not, my sons; take the cross and the holy water, and come with me, and let us see what God's omnipotence has to show us."

Ferondo was very pale when he got out of the tomb, since he had not seen the light for ten months. When he saw the Abbot, he ran to his feet, and said:

"Father, it was revealed to me that your prayers and the prayers of San Benedetto and my wife have released me from the pains of Purgatory and brought me back to life; wherefore I pray that God may be good to you now and every day and always."

Said the Abbot:

"Praised be the omnipotence of God! Go, my son, since God has sent you back to life, and console your wife who, ever since you departed this life has dwelt in tears; and henceforth be the friend and servant of God."

"Messer," said Ferondo, "leave it to me; when I get at her, I'll kiss as much as I want!"

When the Abbot was left alone with his monks, he pretended to be greatly amazed by all this, and made them devoutly sing the Miserere. Ferondo returned to his house, and everyone who met him fled from him as a thing of horror, but he called out to them and vowed he was risen from the dead. His wife was also afraid of him. But when people were a little reassured about him and saw that he was alive, they kept asking him questions, as if he had come back a wise man. He answered everything, gave them news of the souls of their departed relatives, and told the most marvellous tales of what had happened to him in Purgatory, and then before everyone he related the revelation made to him through the mouth of the "Hangel Gubriel" before he was resurrected. He returned home with his wife and took possession of all his property, and, as he thought, made her pregnant. As chance would have it, at exactly the right time according to the opinion of those fools who think a woman carries a child exactly nine months, the lady produced a boy baby, who was named Benedetto Ferondi.

Ferondo's return and the things he said made nearly everyone believe that he was resurrected from the dead; which greatly increased the fame of the Abbot's sanctity. Ferondo, who had received many a beating for his jealousy, was cured of it, and, as the Abbot had promised the lady, was never jealous any more. The lady was so pleased that she lived chastely with him as of old, but in such a manner that, whenever she could, she rejoined the holy Abbot who had served her so well and diligently in her greatest need.

Ninth Tale

GILETTA DI NERBONA HEALS THE KING OF FRANCE OF A FISTULA. IN REWARD SHE ASKS FOR BELTRAMO DI ROSSIGLIONE AS HER HUSBAND, WHO MARRIES HER AGAINST HIS WILL, AND GOES OFF TO FLORENCE IN CONTEMPT OF HER. THERE HE FALLS IN LOVE WITH A GIRL, WHOM GILETTA IMPERSONATES, AND IN THIS WAY LIES WITH HIM AND HAS TWO CHILDREN BY HIM. WHEREBY SHE BECOMES DEAR TO HIM AND HE RECOGNISES HER AS HIS WIFE, TO THE GREAT JOY OF EVERYONE

WHEN Lauretta's novel was over, only the queen was left to tell a tale, if Dioneo's privilege was to be respected. So, without waiting to be urged by her subjects, she began to speak as follows:

Who can ever tell a tale to equal Lauretta's? It was an advantage to the others that she was not first, for then few would have been pleased with them; yet I hope that those which remain to be told today will also give pleasure. But, however that may be, I shall tell you the story which I have thought of, to illustrate the given subject.

In the realm of France there lived a gentleman, named Isnardo, Count of Rossiglione, who, because he was sickly, always retained near him a doctor named Master Gerardo di Nerbona. The Count had an only son named Beltramo, a handsome and charming boy, who was brought up with other children of his age, among whom was the Doctor's daughter, Giletta. This girl felt an infinite love for Beltramo, far beyond her tender years. When the Count died, Beltramo was left as the King's ward, and had to go to Paris; which left the girl very disconsolate. Not long afterwards her own father died, and, if she could have found any plausible pretext for going to Paris, she would most willingly have gone there to see Beltramo. But since she was rich, and alone in the world, she was most strictly guarded, and could find no reasonable pretext. When she reached marriageable age, Beltramo still remained in her memory and she refused many men to whom her relatives would have liked to marry her, without ever saying why.

Thus, as she was more than ever consumed with love for Beltramo, who (she heard) had become a most handsome young man, news arrived that the King of France was afflicted with a fistula, which had resulted from unskilful treatment of a tumour on his chest. This fistula caused him the greatest annoyance and pain, and no Doctor had been found to treat it properly; for, although many Doctors had tried, not one had been able to cure it, and all had made it worse. So the King in despair refused all further advice and treatment. This news greatly pleased Giletta, who thought that it not only gave her a reasonable pretext for going to Paris but that, if the illness were what she thought, she might easily obtain Beltramo as her husband.

She had learned much about such things from her father, and therefore made a powder from certain herbs which cured the disease she believed the King to be suffering from; and then took horse and rode to Paris. The first thing she did was to devise means of seeing Beltramo, after which, she managed to get admittance to the King and asked him as a favour to allow her to see his fistula. Since she was a young and charming girl, the King could not refuse, and showed it to her. When she had examined it, she knew at once that she could cure it, and said:

“Sire, whenever you are pleased to permit it, I am sure I can cure you of this illness in a week (with God’s help), and you will have neither pain nor trouble.”

The King inwardly was amused at her words, and said to himself: “How can a young woman know what the greatest Doctors in the world do not know?” He thanked her for her good intentions, and replied that he had determined never to follow a Doctor’s advice again. Then said Giletta:

“Sire, you scorn my skill, because I am young and a woman. But I must tell you that I am not a Doctor from my own knowledge, but with the aid of God and the knowledge of Master Gerardo Nerbonese, my father, a famous Doctor when he was alive.”

Then the King said to himself: “Perhaps she is sent me by God. Why should I not try what she can do, since she says she can cure me without pain in a short time?” And, being ready to give her a trial, he said:

"Young lady, suppose you do not cure me and thus break our agreement, what penalty will you agree to?"

"Sire," replied the girl, "put me under guard. If I do not cure you in a week, have me burned. But if I cure you, what reward shall I have?"

"You seem to me unmarried," replied the King, "if that is so, I will marry you well and nobly."

Said the girl: "Sire, I am happy that you should marry me, but I want the husband I shall ask for, except that I shall not ask for one of your sons or any of the royal family."

The King immediately gave her his promise. The girl then began her treatment, and in a short time the King was perfectly cured. And when the King saw he was well again, he said:

"Young lady, you have well earned your reward."

"Then, Sire," she replied, "I have earned Beltramo di Rossiglione, whom I began to love in my childhood and have loved deeply ever since."

The King felt this was a great gift to make her, but since he had promised and would not break his word, he sent for Beltramo and said to him:

"Beltramo, you are now grown up and your education complete. I now wish you to return home and to oversee your district, and to take with you a young lady whom I have chosen as your wife."

"And who is the lady, Sire?" said Beltramo.

"The girl who cured me of my illness," replied the King.

Beltramo, of course, knew her well, and when he had recently seen her had thought her beautiful, but scorned marrying her since he knew her family was not noble like his. He said:

"Sire, then you give me a she-Doctor as a wife? Please God, such a woman shall never be my wife."

Then said the King:

"Then you wish me to break the faith I pledged to the girl if she cured me? She has asked for you as her reward."

"Sire," said Beltramo, "I am your man, and you can take from me all I have, and give me to whomsoever you please; but I tell you plainly that I shall never be satisfied with such a marriage."

"Yes, you will," said the King, "because the girl is beautiful and sensible

and loves you deeply. Therefore I hope you will live a much happier life with her than you would have with a woman of nobler family."

Beltramo was silent, and the King gave orders to make great preparations for the wedding feast. When the appointed day came Beltramo married her against his will, and in the presence of the King married the girl, who loved him more than herself. After this, he did what he had made up his mind to do—he took leave of the King, saying that he intended to return to his home and there consummate the marriage. But, when he got to horse, he did not return home, but went to Tuscany. There he heard that the Florentines were at war with the Sieneese, and determined to join them. The Florentines received him honourably and joyfully, made him captain of a certain number of troops and paid him well, so that he remained for some time in their service.

The new wife was not much pleased with all this, but, hoping to bring him home by her good behaviour, she went to Rossiglione, where she was received by all as their lady. When she arrived she found everything ruined and in disorder, owing to the long period when there had been no Count there; and, like a sensible woman, she set everything in order with great diligence. Her subjects were greatly pleased by this, and held her very dear and in great esteem, condemning the Count because he was not satisfied with her. When the lady had thus set the whole estate in order, she sent two knights to the Count to inform him of it, and to say that if he did not wish to return home she begged he would tell her so and that she would come to him wherever he wished. To this Beltramo returned the following harsh reply:

"Let her do as she likes about that. I will never return to her until she can show me this ring on her finger and my child in her arms."

He prized the ring highly and never parted from it, because he had been told that it contained some occult virtue.

The knights saw the impossibly hard conditions he imposed and found that nothing they could say would shift him; so they returned to their lady and gave her the message. She was greatly grieved by this and after much thought determined to find out whether and where these two conditions could be satisfied, so that she might have her husband back. Hav-

ing decided what she would do, she called together the best and most important men of the district, and in piteous words related to them what she had done for love of the Count, and what had been the result. She finally said that she did not intend to keep the Count in perpetual exile, by living on his estate herself, and that therefore she meant to pass the remainder of her life in pilgrimages and good works for the salvation of her soul. She begged them to take over the guard and governorship of the district and to inform the Count that she had gone away and left him in free possession, and intended never to return to Rossiglione again.

As she spoke, the good men shed tears, and then earnestly besought her to change her mind and stay with them. But they entirely failed. She commended them to God, furnished herself with money and valuable jewels and, without knowing where she was going, set out with a cousin and a waiting-maid in the dress of pilgrims, and never paused until she reached Florence. There she chanced upon a little inn, kept by a good widow, and lived there quietly as a poor pilgrim, eager to hear news of her husband. It happened that the very next day she saw Beltramo and his company pass by the inn on horseback, and although she easily recognised him, she asked the good woman of the inn who he was. The innkeeper replied:

“He is a foreign gentleman, named Count Beltramo, a courteous pleasant man, much beloved in this town. He is wildly in love with a neighbour of mine, who is a gentlewoman but poor. She is a most chaste girl and is not yet married on account of her poverty, but lives alone with her good, prudent mother. Perhaps, if the mother were not there, she would before now have done the Count some pleasure.”

The Countess listened most carefully to all this, and after thinking over every detail and grasping firmly the whole situation, she made up her mind what she would do. She found out the house and the name of the lady whose daughter was beloved by the Count, and one day went there secretly in her pilgrim's garb. She found the lady and her daughter in very poor circumstances, and after greeting them, she told the mother that she wished to speak to her at her convenience. The gentlewoman

rose, and said she was ready to listen to her. They then went into a room alone together and sat down, and the Countess began as follows:

"Madonna, it seems to me that you are among Fortune's foes. So am I. But, if you wish, you may be able to help both yourself and me."

The lady replied that she desired nothing better than to be able to aid herself honestly. The Countess went on:

"I must have your pledged word. And if I put my trust in you and you deceive me, you will ruin yourself and me too."

"Tell me with confidence anything you wish to say to me," replied the lady, "and you will never be betrayed by me."

The Countess then told her who she was, and, beginning from the time when she first fell in love, related everything that had happened down to the present day in so moving a manner that the gentlewoman fully believed her, especially as she had already heard part of the story from others, and began to pity her. After telling her all this, the Countess went on:

"You have heard among all my other troubles, what are the two things I must have if I am to have my husband. And I do not know anyone who can help me to get them except yourself, if what I hear is true—that the Count, my husband, is deeply in love with your daughter."

"Madonna," said the gentlewoman, "I do not know whether the Count loves my daughter, but he makes a great show of doing so. But what can I do to help you to obtain what you want?"

"Madonna," replied the Countess, "I will tell you. But first of all I want to tell you what will happen if you do me this service. I see that your daughter is beautiful and of marriageable age, and according to what I am told and observe for myself, the reason you keep her at home is that you have no dowry for her. In repayment of the service you do me I intend to give you from my own money the dowry which you yourself consider fitting to marry her honourably."

The poor lady was delighted with the offer, but as her spirit was above the vulgar, she said:

"Madonna, tell me what I can do for you, and if I can do it honestly, I will gladly do it for you, and you shall then do what pleases you to do."

Then said the Countess: "By means of somebody in whom you can trust you must inform the Count, my husband, that your daughter is ready to do his pleasure when she can be sure that he loves her as much as he pretends; but that she will never believe him until he sends her the ring he wears on his finger, which she has heard he prizes so highly. If he sends her the ring, you will give it to me. Then you will send to tell him that your daughter is ready to pleasure him, and then you will bring him quietly here and secretly let him lie with me in place of your daughter. Perhaps God will so favour me that I shall become pregnant. And thus, with your help, I shall have his ring on my finger and his child in my arms, and shall thus win him back and live with him as a wife should live with her husband."

This seemed a great request to the lady, who feared that dishonour might fall upon her daughter. But then she thought that it was a virtuous deed to help the good lady to have her husband again and that she would be working towards a virtuous end. Confiding in her virtuous love, she not only promised to help the Countess but a few days later (with the utmost secrecy, as they had arranged) she got possession of the ring despite the Count's reluctance, and skilfully put the Countess to bed with the Count in place of her own daughter. In these first embraces, most eagerly sought by the Count, it pleased God that the Countess should become pregnant with two male twins, which was made manifest when the time came for her to bring them forth. Nor did the gentlewoman pleasure the Countess once only with her husband's embraces, but many times; and she arranged everything so skilfully that not a word was known about it, for the Count never dreamed he was with his own wife, but thought he was lying with the other girl. When the Count left in the morning he gave her valuable and beautiful jewels, all of which the Countess carefully preserved. But when she found she was pregnant, she was unwilling to impose this service on the gentlewoman any longer, and said to her:

"Madonna, thanks be to God and you, I now have what I desired. It is time for me to do what will please you, so that I can depart."

The gentlewoman replied that she was glad she had what pleased her,

but that she had not done this service for a reward, but because she felt she ought to do it for a virtuous object. Said the Countess:

“Madonna, this gives me great pleasure, and so I do not mean to give you what you ask as a reward, but to do good, as I feel I ought to do.”

Constrained by necessity, the gentlewoman then most shamefacedly asked for a hundred pounds to marry her daughter. Perceiving her bashfulness and hearing her courteous demand, the Countess gave her five hundred pounds and as many valuable jewels as amounted to the same sum. The gentlewoman was more than satisfied with this, and most warmly thanked the Countess, who then left her and returned to her inn.

To prevent Beltramo from sending to her any more and coming to the house, the gentlewoman and her daughter went away to a country house of their relatives. And a little later Beltramo was called home by his tenants and, having heard that the Countess had gone away, he returned home.

When the Countess learned that he had left Florence and gone home, she was very glad, and remained in Florence until the time of her delivery, when she brought forth two male children exactly like their father; and had them most carefully nursed. When she thought the right time had come, she set forth and, without being recognised by anyone, came to Montpellier. There she rested a few days, and made enquiries about the Count. She learned that on All Saints Day he was to give a great entertainment in Rossiglione for his knights and ladies; and she made her way there in her customary pilgrim’s garb. At the moment when the knights and ladies were about to sit down to table, she entered the great hall in her pilgrim’s robe, carrying her two children in her arms, and made her way to the Count. Throwing herself at his feet, she said weeping:

“My lord, I am your unhappy wife, who have been wandering about the world far and wide to allow you to return home. I beg you that you will observe the conditions brought me by the two knights I sent to you. See, here in my arms, not one of your children, but two. And, look, here is your ring. It is now time for me to be received as your wife, in accordance with your promise.”

The Count was amazed to hear this, for he recognised his ring and even the children, for they were so like him. But he said: "How can this have happened?"

Then, to the great surprise of the Count and all present, she related in order everything that had happened. The Count knew that what she said was true and saw her perseverance and her wisdom and the two beautiful children. Therefore, to keep his promise and to please all his men and the ladies, who all begged him to recognise and honour her as his legitimate wife, he threw aside his obstinate prejudice, lifted the Countess to her feet and kissed and embraced her and recognised her as his legitimate wife and the children as his own sons. Then he had her dressed in garments befitting her, and to the great joy of all there present and of all his vassals when they heard of it, he held high festival, not only that day but during many days. And from that day onwards he honoured her as his wife and spouse, and loved her and held her very dear.

Tenth Tale

ALIBECH BECOMES A HERMIT, AND THE MONK RUSTICO TEACHES HER HOW TO PUT THE DEVIL IN HELL. SHE IS AFTERWARDS TAKEN AWAY AND BECOMES THE WIFE OF NEERBALE

DIONE0 had listened closely to the queen's story, and, when it was over and only he remained to tell a story, he did not wait to be commanded, but smilingly began as follows:

Most gracious ladies, perhaps you have never heard how the devil is put into hell; and so, without departing far from the theme upon which you have all spoken today, I shall tell you about it. Perhaps when you have learned it, you also will be able to save your souls, and you may also discover that although love prefers to dwell in gay palaces and lovely rooms rather than in poor huts, yet he sometimes makes his power felt among thick woods and rugged mountains and desert caves.

Whereby we may well perceive that all of us are subject to his power.

Now, to come to my story—in the city of Capsa in Barbery there lived a very rich man who possessed among other children a pretty and charming daughter, named Alibech. She was not a Christian, but she heard many Christians in her native town crying up the Christian Faith and service to God, and one day she asked one of them how a person could most effectively serve God. The reply was that those best serve God who fly furthest from the things of this world, like the hermits who had departed to the solitudes of the Thebaid Desert.

The girl was about fourteen and very simple minded. Urged by a mere childish enthusiasm and not by a well ordered desire, she secretly set out next morning quite alone, without saying a word to anyone, to find the Thebaid Desert. Her enthusiasm lasted several days and enabled her with great fatigue to reach those solitudes. In the distance she saw a little hut with a holy man standing at its entrance. He was amazed to see her there, and asked her what she was seeking. She replied that by God's inspiration she was seeking to serve Him, and begged the hermit to show her the right way to do so. But the holy man saw she was young and pretty, and feared that if he kept her with him he might be tempted of the devil. So he praised her good intentions, gave her some roots and wild apples to eat and some water to drink, and said:

“Daughter, not far from here dwells a holy man who is a far greater master of what you are seeking than I am; go to him.”

And so he put her on the way. When she reached him, she was received with much the same words, and passing further on came to the cell of a young hermit named Rustico, to whom she made the same request as to the others. To test his spiritual strength, Rustico did not send her away, but took her into his cell. And when night came, he made her a bed of palm leaves and told her to sleep there.

Almost immediately after this, temptation began the struggle with his spiritual strength, and the hermit found that he had greatly over-estimated his powers of resistance. After a few assaults of the demon he shrugged his shoulders and surrendered. Putting aside holy thoughts and prayers and macerations, he began to think of her beauty and youth,

and then pondered how he should proceed with her so that she should not perceive that he obtained what he wanted from her like a dissolute man. First of all he sounded her by certain questions, and discovered that she had never lain with a man and appeared to be very simple minded. He then saw how he could bring her to his desire under pretext of serving God. He began by eloquently showing how the devil is the enemy of the Lord God, and then gave her to understand that the service most pleasing to God is to put the devil back into hell, to which the Lord God has condemned him. The girl asked how this was done, and Rustico replied:

“You shall soon know. Do what you see me do.”

He then threw off the few clothes he had and remained stark naked, and the girl imitated him. He kneeled down as if to pray and made her kneel exactly opposite him. As he gazed at her beauty, Rustico's desire became so great that the resurrection of the flesh occurred. Alibech looked at it with amazement, and said:

“Rustico, what is that thing I see sticking out in front of you which I haven't got?”

“My daughter,” said Rustico, “that is the devil I spoke of. Do you see? He gives me so much trouble at this moment that I can scarcely endure him.”

Said the girl:

“Praised be God! I see I am better off than you are, since I haven't such a devil.”

“You speak truly,” said Rustico, “but instead of this devil you have something else which I haven't.”

“What's that?” said Alibech.

“You've got hell,” replied Rustico, “and I believe God sent you here for the salvation of my soul, because this devil gives me great trouble, and if you will take pity upon me and let me put him into hell, you will give me the greatest comfort and at the same time will serve God and please Him, since, as you say, you came here for that purpose.”

In all good faith the girl replied: “Father, since I have hell in me, let it be whenever you please.”

Said Rustico: "Blessings upon you, my daughter. Let us put him in now so that he will afterwards depart from me."

So saying, he took the girl to one of their beds, and showed her how to lie so as to imprison the thing accursed of God. The girl had never before put any devil into her hell and at first felt a little pain, and exclaimed to Rustico:

"O father! This devil must certainly be wicked and the enemy of God, for even when he is put back into hell he hurts it."

"Daughter," said Rustico, "it will not always be so."

To prevent this from happening, Rustico put it into hell six times, before he got off the bed, and so purged the devil's pride that he was glad to rest a little. Thereafter he returned often and the obedient girl was always glad to take him in; and then the game began to give her pleasure, and she said to Rustico:

"I see that the good men of Capsa spoke the truth when they told me how sweet a thing is the service of God. I certainly do not remember that I ever did anything which gave me so much delight and pleasure as I get from putting the devil into hell. I think that everyone is a fool who does anything but serve God."

Thus it happened that she would often go to Rustico, and say:

"Father, I came here to serve God and not to remain in idleness. Let us put the devil in hell."

And once as they were doing it, she said:

"Rustico, I don't know why the devil ever goes out of hell. If he liked to remain there as much as hell likes to receive and hold him, he would never leave it."

The girl's frequent invitations to Rustico and their mutual pleasures in the service of God so took the stuffing out of his doublet that he now felt chilly where another man would have been in a sweat. So he told the girl that the devil must not be chastened or put into hell except when pride made him lift his head. "And we," he said, "have so quelled his rage that he prays God to be left in peace." And in this way he silenced the girl for a time. But when she found that Rustico no longer asked her to put the devil in hell, she said one day:

“Rustico, your devil may be chastened and give you no more trouble, but my hell is not. You should therefore quench the raging of my hell with your devil, as I helped you to quell the pride of your devil with my hell.”

Rustico, who lived on nothing but roots and water, made a poor response to this invitation. He told her that many devils would be needed to soothe her hell, but that he would do what he could. In this way he satisfied her hell a few times, but so seldom that it was like throwing a bean in a lion’s mouth. And the girl, who thought they were not serving God as much as she wanted, kept murmuring.

Now, while there was this debate between the excess of desire in Alibech’s hell and the lack of potency in Rustico’s devil, a fire broke out in Capsa, and burned Alibech’s father with all his children and servants. So Alibech became heir to all his property. A young man named Neerbale, who had spent all his money in riotous living, heard that she was still alive and set out to find her, which he succeeded in doing before the Court took over her father’s property as that of a man who had died without heirs. To Rustico’s great relief, but against her will, Neerbale brought her back to Capsa and married her, and together they inherited her large patrimony. But before Neerbale had lain with her, certain ladies one day asked her how she had served God in the desert. She replied that her service was to put the devil in hell, and that Neerbale had committed a great sin by taking her away from such service. The ladies asked:

“And how do you put the devil in hell?”

Partly in words and partly by gestures, the girl told them. At this they laughed so much that they are still laughing, and said:

“Be not cast down, my child, they know how to do that here, and Neerbale will serve the Lord God with you in that way.”

As they told it up and down the city, it passed into a proverb that the service most pleasing to God is to put the devil into hell. And this proverb crossed the seas and remains until this day.

Therefore, young ladies, when you seek God’s favour, learn to put the devil in hell, because this is most pleasing to God and to all parties concerned, and much good may come of it.

Dioneo's tale moved the chaste ladies to laughter hundreds of times, so apt and amusing did they find his words. When he had finished, the queen knew that the end of her reign had come, and therefore took the laurel wreath from her head and placed it upon Filostrato's, saying pleasantly:

"We shall soon find out if the wolf can guide the flock, as well as the flock has guided the wolves."

Filostrato laughingly replied:

"If my advice were followed, the wolves would have showed the flock how to put the devil in hell, as Rustico taught Alibech; and so they would not be called wolves, where you would not be the flock. However, since the rule now falls to me, I shall begin my reign."

Said Neifile:

"Filostrato, in trying to teach us, you might have learned wisdom, as Masetto da Lamporecchio learned it from the nuns, and you might have regained your speech when your bones were rattling together from exhaustion!"

Filostrato, finding the ladies' sickles were as good as his shafts, ceased jesting, and occupied himself with the government of his kingdom. Calling the steward, he made enquiries into everything, and gave orders to ensure the well being and satisfaction of the band during his kingship. He then turned to the ladies and said:

"Amorous ladies, to my own misfortune—although I was quite aware of my disease—I have always been one of Love's subjects owing to the beauty of one of you. To be humble and obedient to her and to follow all her whims as closely as I could, was all of no avail to me, and I was soon abandoned for another. Thus I go from bad to worse, and believe I shall until I die. Tomorrow then it is my pleasure that we tell tales on a theme in conformity with my own fate—that is, about those persons whose love ended unhappily. In the long run I expect a most unhappy end for myself, and the person who gave me the nickname of Filostrato, or the Victim of Love, knew what she was doing."

So saying, he rose to his feet, and gave them all leave to depart until supper time.

The garden was so delightful and so beautiful that they all chose to remain there, since no greater pleasure could be found elsewhere. The sun was now not so hot, and therefore some of them began to chase the deer and rabbits and other animals which had annoyed them scores of times by leaping in among them while they were seated. Dioneo and Fiammetta began to sing the song of Messer Guiglielmo and the Lady of Vergiu. Filomena and Pamfilo played chess. Thus, with one thing and another, time passed so quickly that supper time arrived long before they expected. The tables were set round the fountain, and there they ate their evening meal with the utmost pleasure.

When they rose from table, Filostrato would not depart from the path followed by the preceding queens, and so ordered Lauretta to dance and sing a song. And she said:

“My lord, I do not know any songs of other persons, and I do not remember any of my own which are fitting for this merry band. But if you wish to have one of those I remember, I will gladly sing it.”

“Nothing of yours could be anything but fair and pleasing,” said the king, “so sing it just as it is.”

Then to the accompaniment of the others, Lauretta sang as follows in a sweet but rather plaintive voice:

No helpless lady has such cause to weep as I, who vainly sigh, alas, for love.

He who moves the heavens and all the stars made me for His delight so fair, so sweet, so gracious and so lovely that I might show to every lofty mind some trace of that high Beauty which ever dwells within His presence. But a weak man, who knew not Beauty, found me undelightful and scorned me.

Once there was one who held me dear, and in my early years took me into his arms and to his thoughts, being quite conquered by my eyes. And time, that flies so swiftly, he spent in serving me; and I in courtesy made him worthy of me. But now, alas, he is taken from me.

Then came a proud presumptuous man, who thought himself both noble and valorous, and made me his, but through false belief became most

jealous of me. And then, alas, I came near to despair, for I saw that I, who came into the world to pleasure many, was possessed by one alone.

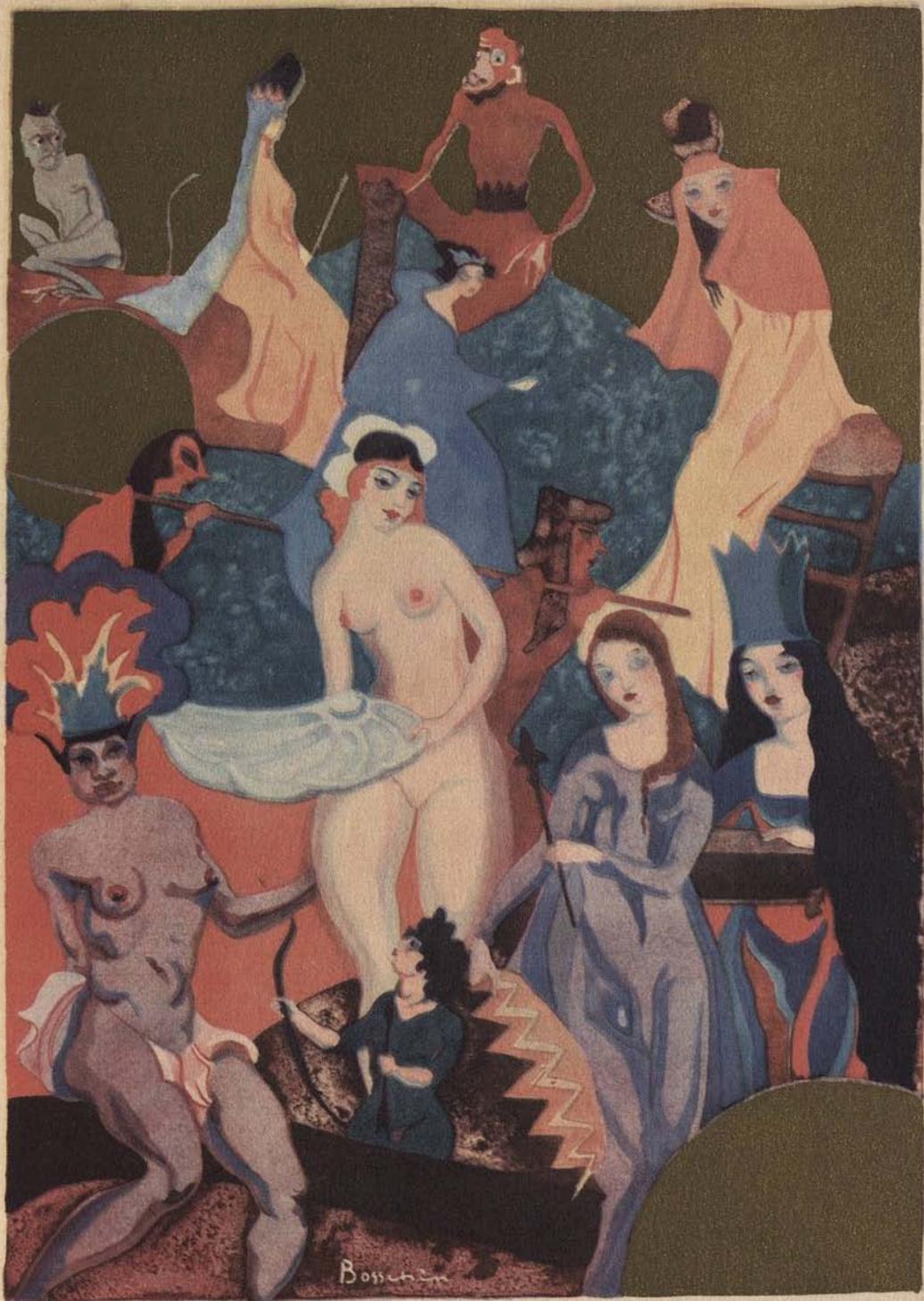
I curse my luckless fate that ever I said "yes" to man, and changed to a wife's garb. I was so gay in my old plain maiden's dress! Now in these finer clothes I lead so sad a life, reputed less than chaste. O hapless wedding feast! Would I had died before I knew the fate it held for me!

O my first love, with whom I was so happy, who now in Heaven do stand before Him who created it, have pity on me. I cannot forget you for another. Let me feel that the flame wherewith you burned for me is not extinct, and pray that I may soon return to you.

Here ended Laretta's song, which was noted carefully by them all, but interpreted differently. Some understood it in the Milanese sense—that it is better to be a good pig than a pretty girl. Others were of a better, more sublime and truer understanding, but of this I shall not now speak.

After this the king had many torches brought and made them sing other songs as they sat on the grass and flowers, until the rising stars began to turn towards the west. Then, thinking it time for sleep, he said good night and sent each one to his room.

END OF THE THIRD DAY



The Fourth Day

HERE BEGINS THE FOURTH DAY OF THE *DECAMERON*, WHEREIN, UNDER THE RULE OF FILOSTRATO, TALES ARE TOLD OF THOSE WHOSE LOVE HAD AN UNHAPPY ENDING

MOST dear ladies, both from the words I have heard from learned men and from the things I have often seen and read, I conceived that the swift impetuous wind of envy smote only high towers and the topmost branches of trees. But I was deceived. I flee and have ever striven to flee the fierce attacks of that raging spirit by seeking my way, not only in the plains, but in the deepest valleys. This may be perceived by all who read these tales, which I have written without signing, and in the vulgar tongue of Florence and in prose, and in addition have composed them in the most humble and modest style I could. Yet I have not desisted, though fiercely shaken by this wind until almost uprooted, and lacerated by the fangs of envy. Whereby you may easily see the truth of what wise men are wont to say—that in this world only misery is safe from envy.

Some who have read these tales, discreet ladies, have said that you are too pleasing to me and that it was not modest that I should take delight in pleasing and comforting you and—others have said worse than this—in commending you, as I do. Others, speaking more deliberately, said that at my age it was not good to indulge in such things as talking about ladies or trying to please them. And many, showing themselves most tender of my fame, say that I should be wiser to remain with the Muses on Parnassus than to thrust myself among you with such nonsense.

There are others again who, speaking more spitefully than wisely, say that I should act more discreetly by thinking of where I shall earn my bread than by “feeding on wind” with such twaddle. And there are others who have laboured to prove, in depreciation of my work, that the things I have related happened otherwise. Thus, worthy ladies, while I fight in your service, I am thrust at, harmed and wounded in life, by these and like blasts, and sharp fierce teeth. God knows I have listened to these

things with a tranquil mind, and although my defence entirely belongs to you, yet I do not intend to spare my own strength. Therefore, without making any formal reply, I intend to make without any delay some slight answer to reprimand them. For, if I have so many presumptuous enemies before I have completed a third of my labours, I see that long before I reach the end they will so multiply, if they are not confuted, that they will very easily overcome me; and even your power, great as it is, would be unable to resist them.

Before I come to my reply to them, I want to tell, not a whole story (because I would not seem to include my tales with those told by the laudable company I have described), but part of a story, so that its very defect may show that it is not one of theirs. And so I address this fable to my detractors:

A long time ago there dwelt in our city a man named Filippo Balducci. He was a man of low birth, but rich and expert in those things appertaining to his state of life. He had a wife whom he greatly loved, and who loved him, and they spent a happy life together, each striving to do what would please the other.

As happens to all of us, the good woman departed this life, leaving to Filippo nothing of herself but an only child of about two, whom he had begotten on her. Filippo was more disconsolate at the death of his wife than any other man at the loss of what he most loved. Seeing that he was deprived of the companionship he most loved, he made up his mind to renounce the world and to devote himself to the service of God, and to do the same for his little boy. He gave away to charities all he had, and straightway departed to Mount Senario where he found a little hut for himself and his child, and lived upon alms, in fasting and prayer. He was most careful never to speak to his son of temporal matters, so that he might not be withdrawn from God's service, but always spoke of the glory of eternal life and of God and the Saints, and taught him nothing but holy prayers. Many years they spent in this kind of life, where the son was never allowed out of the hut and never allowed to see anyone but his father.

This worthy man was accustomed to go occasionally to Florence, whence, after receiving the aid of God's friends in accordance with his needs, he returned to his hut. One day when Filippo was an old man and the boy about eighteen, he asked his father where he was going. Filippo told him, and the young man said:

"Father, you are now an old man, ill able to endure fatigue. Why do you not take me to Florence with you, and there make me known to the friends and devotees of God and yourself, so that I, who am young and far more able to work than you, may go to Florence for what you need, whenever you wish; and you can stay here?"

The worthy man, thinking that his son was now grown up and so accustomed to God's service that worldly things would have little effect on him, said to himself: "He is right." And so he took his son with him the next time he went. The young man had never seen anything like the palaces, houses, churches and other things with which Florence is filled, was astounded, and kept asking his father what they were and what they were called. The father told him; and when one question was satisfied, the son asked another. As they went along, the son questioning and the father answering, they chanced to meet a band of well dressed and handsome young women, returning from a couple of weddings. As soon as the son saw them, he asked his father what they were. And the father said:

"My son, cast your eyes upon the ground, look not upon them, they are evil."

"But what are they called?" asked the son.

The father did not want to tell him they were women, for fear of awakening some useless and mischievous desire in his carnal appetites, and therefore said:

"They are called Geese."

Wonderful to relate! He who had never seen a woman, indifferent to palaces, oxen, horses, asses, money and all the other things new to him, immediately said:

"Father, do let me have one of those geese."

"O my son!" said the father. "Be silent, they are wicked things."

"Are wicked things always made like that?" the son asked him.

"Yes," said the father.

Then said the son: "I do not know what you are talking about nor why they are wicked. For my part, I have never seen anything so beautiful and so lovely as they are. They are more beautiful than the painted angels you have often showed me. Ah! Let us take one of these geese home with us, and I'll feed it."

"I won't allow it," said the father; "you do not know how they are fed."

But he felt at once that Nature was stronger than his teaching, and regretted having brought his son to Florence. . . . But I do not mean to tell any more of this story, and so come back to those for whom I meant it.

Some of my censors, youthful ladies, say that I do ill by striving too much to please you, and that I take too much pleasure in you. This I most openly confess, viz., that you please me, and that I strive to please you. I should like to ask them if this is to be marvelled at? Quite apart from the amorous kisses and pleasant embraces and delicious couplings which are so often enjoyed with you, sweet ladies, they are to consider the pleasure of merely seeing you continually, your fine manners and your exquisite beauty and your charming dresses and, in addition, your womanly virtues. Thus we see that a youth bred up on a wild solitary mountain with no companion but his father, only asked for you, ladies, only desired you, only gave his affection to you. If you were above everything else pleasing to a young hermit, a youth without feelings, a sort of wild animal, will my critics blame me if I, whose body was by Heaven made most apt to love you and whose soul has been disposed thereto since my childhood, should feel the power of the light of your eyes, the sweetness of honied words and the flame lighted by piteous sighs? Will they blame me if you are pleasing to me, and if I strive to please you? I care little indeed if I am condemned by those who do not love you and have no desire to be loved by you, for they are persons who neither know nor feel the pleasures and strength of natural affection.

Those who go about talking of my age simply show that they do not know a leek may have a white head and a green tail. But, jesting apart, I reply seriously that I do not see why I should be ashamed of delighting in these things until the end of my life, since they and the pleasures they give were highly prized by Guido Cavalcanti and Dante Alighieri in their old age, and by Messer Cino da Pistoia in extreme old age.

If it were not a departure from the customary method of argument, I would here turn to history and show them many examples of the valiant men of old who strove eagerly to please ladies in their age. And if my critics do not know about them, let them go and look for them. I admit it is good advice to tell me to remain with the Muses on Parnassus, but we cannot always dwell with the Muses, nor they with us; and when a man leaves them he is not to be blamed if he delights to look upon those who resemble them. The Muses are women, and although women are not so much to be esteemed as the Muses, yet in their aspect they resemble the Muses. So, if they delighted me for no other reason, yet for this reason they ought to delight me. Moreover, women have been the cause of my writing thousands of verses wherein the Muses were in no wise the cause of my writing them. They aided me and showed me how to compose these verses. And perhaps when I wrote them, however feeble they may have been, the Muses visited me, perhaps in honour of the likeness which women have to them. Thus, when I composed these verses, I was not so far distant from Parnassus and the Muses as some people think.

But what shall we say to those who feel such compassion for my hunger that they advise me to get bread? Indeed, I do not know. But yet when I wonder what they would reply if in my need I asked them for bread, I feel they would answer: "Go, seek your bread among fables." Yet the poets of the past have found more bread in their fables than many a rich man in his treasures. And some by their fables have done honour to their time, while many who sought to have more bread than they needed have perished in bitterness.

What more? Let these persons drive me from them when I ask them for bread, which, thank God, I do not now lack. And if that need comes to me, I can, like the Apostle, endure both abundance and poverty. And,

after all, this concerns me more than anyone else. As for those who say that these tales did not happen as I say—I should be very glad if they would show me the originals, and if what I have written should prove to be different, I would admit their reproof to be just and would strive to amend. But so long as they can produce nothing but words, I shall leave them to their opinion and follow my own, saying of them what they say of me.

At present, I think I have said enough by way of retort, and so, most gentle ladies, I shall go on, armed with the help of God and yourselves and with patience, and turn my back to this blast of envy, and let it blow. For I do not see that anything worse can happen to me than happens to the dust in a storm of wind—either it is not moved from the ground or it is carried up into the air and often falls upon men's heads, upon the crowns of Kings and Emperors, and sometimes is left lying upon lofty palaces and high towers. And if it falls from them, it can fall no lower than the place whence it came.

If ever I were disposed to serve you in anything with all my power, I am more than ever so disposed now; because I know that anyone who speaks reasonably will say that I and others who love you are thereby acting naturally. And to thwart the laws of Nature requires too much strength, especially as those who labour to do so, not only labour in vain, but to their own great harm. I confess I do not possess that strength and do not want it. If I had it, I would rather lend it to another than use it for myself. Therefore let my censors be silent; and if they cannot warm themselves let them live cold, and, driving away corrupt appetite, let them live in their pleasure and me in mine for that short space of life which is granted me.

But we have wandered far enough, fair ladies, and it is time to return to the point from which we started, and to continue on our appointed way.

Already the sun had driven every star from heaven and the damp shadow of night from the earth, when Filostrato arose and with him all his company. They went into the fair garden, and there took their delight. When the time to eat came, they dined in the place where they had

supped the evening before. They took their siesta when the sun was at its highest, and then arose and, in their wonted manner, went and sat down by the fountain.

Filostrato then ordered Fiammetta to tell the first tale, and she, without waiting to be told again, in womanly fashion began as follows.

First Tale

TANCRED, PRINCE OF SALERNO, MURDERS HIS DAUGHTER'S LOVER AND SENDS HER THE HEART IN A GOLD CUP. SHE POURS POISON ON IT, WHICH SHE DRINKS; AND SO DIES

OUR king has given us a sad theme for tale-telling today, thinking that as we came here to enjoy ourselves it is befitting to speak of the tears of others, which cannot be heard without pity either by the teller or the listeners. Perhaps he did this to temper the happiness we have had in the past few days. But, whatever his motive, it is not for me to change his good pleasure, and so I shall tell you a piteous story of misadventure, worthy of your tears.

Tancred, Prince of Salerno, was a humane and kindly man, except that in his old age he stained his hands with the blood of lovers. In the whole of his life he had no child but one daughter, and it would have been happier for him if he had not had her. This girl was as much beloved by her father as any daughter ever was, and long after she had reached marriageable age this tender love of his prevented him from marrying her to anyone. At length he gave her to a son of the Duke of Capua, who died soon after the marriage; and she returned home a widow. In face and body she was most beautiful, and young and merry and perhaps cleverer than a woman should be. She lived with her father in great luxury like a great lady, and, when she saw that her father loved her so much that he cared little about marrying her again, while she thought it immodest to ask him to do so,

she determined that if she could she would secretly have a valiant lover.

Many men, both nobles and others, frequented her father's Court. She observed the manners and behaviour of many of these men, among them a young servant of her father's named Guiscardo, a man of humble birth but whose virtues and noble bearing pleased her so much that she fell secretly in love with him, and the more she saw him the more she admired him. The young man, who was no novice, soon perceived this and took her so deep into his heart that he could think of scarcely anything but his love for her.

Since they both were secretly in love with each other, the young widow desired nothing so much as to be alone with him, and, as she would trust nobody in this love affair, she thought of a new device for telling him where to meet her. She wrote him a letter telling him what he had to do the next day in order to be with her, and then put it into a hollow stick, which she laughingly gave him, saying:

"Make a bellows of this tonight for your servant to blow the fire."

Guiscardo took it, and realised that she would not have given it to him and have spoken these words without some reason. When he got to his lodging he looked at the stick, saw it was hollow and found her letter, which he read. When he discovered what he was to do, he was the happiest man alive, and prepared to meet her in the way she had arranged.

Near the Prince's palace was a cave, hollowed out of a hill in the remote past, and dimly lighted by a small opening cut in the hill-side. The cave had been so long abandoned that this opening was almost covered over with brambles and other plants. A secret stairway, secured by a very strong door, led to the cave from one of the rooms in the palace where the lady had her apartments. This stairway had been disused so long that scarcely anyone remembered its existence. But Love, from whose eyes nothing secret can be hidden, brought it to the remembrance of this enamoured lady.

To avoid anyone's knowing about all this, she exerted her wits for many days until she had succeeded in opening the door. Having opened it, she entered the cave alone and saw the outer entrance, and afterwards told Guiscardo to find some means of entering it, telling him about how

far it was from the ground. Guiscardo immediately prepared a rope with knots and loops so that he could climb up and descend. The next night he wrapped himself in a leather skin as protection against the brambles and, without allowing anyone to know about it, went to the cave entrance. There he fitted one of the rope loops round a strong tree stump which had grown up in the mouth of the cave entrance, and so let himself down into the cave, and waited for the lady.

Next day, under pretence of taking a siesta, she sent away her women and shut herself up alone in her room. Then, opening the door, she got into the cave where she found Guiscardo; and together they made much of one another. They afterwards went to her room and remained together with the greatest delight for a large portion of that day. They made the necessary arrangements to keep their love secret; Guiscardo returned to the cave, she locked the door, and returned to her waiting women. When night came Guiscardo climbed up his rope and got out by the same opening he had come in, and returned home. Having thus learned this way, he returned often in the course of time.

But Fortune, envious of this prolonged and deep delight, changed the lovers' joy into piteous lament by a grievous happening.

Tancred was sometimes accustomed to go alone to his daughter's room to talk to her for a time, and then depart. One day he went there while his daughter (whose name was Ghismonda) was in a garden with all her women. Unwilling to disturb her pleasure he went into the room unseen and unheard, and finding the windows of the room shut and the bed-curtains drawn, sat down at the foot of the bed on a low stool. He leaned his head on the bed, drew the curtain round him, as if he had been hiding himself, and went to sleep. As misfortune would have it, Ghismonda had bidden Guiscardo come that day, and therefore left her women in the garden and softly entered the room where Tancred was asleep. She locked the door without noticing that he was there, and opened the other door for Guiscardo, who was waiting for her. They went to bed together, as usual, and while they were playing together and taking their delight, Tancred awoke and saw and heard what his daughter and Guiscardo were doing. In his distress he nearly made an outcry, but then determined to

remain silent and hidden if he could, so that he could carry out with less shame what he had already determined to do.

The two lovers remained a long time together, as they were accustomed to do, without noticing Tancred; and when they thought it was time they got out of bed, Guiscardo returned to the cave, and she went out of the room. Tancred, although he was an old man, climbed out of a window into the garden, and returned to his own apartment almost dead with grief.

That night, by Tancred's orders, Guiscardo was arrested by two men as he came out of the cave opening still wrapped in the leather skin, and was secretly taken to Tancred. And when Tancred saw him, he said almost in tears:

"Guiscardo, my kindness to you has not merited the outrage and shame you have done me, as this day I saw with my own eyes."

But to this the only reply Guiscardo made was:

"Love is more powerful than either you or I."

Tancred then ordered that he should be closely guarded in a neighbouring room; which was done. The next day, while Ghismonda was still ignorant of what had happened, Tancred went to his daughter's room as usual after dinner, having turned over all kinds of thoughts in his mind. He had her called, locked himself in with her, and said to her in tears:

"Ghismonda, I thought I knew your virtue and modesty so well that, whatever had been said to me, it would never have come into my mind (if I had not seen it with my own eyes) that you would have yielded to any man who was not your husband, or even have thought of doing so. Whenever I think of it I shall always grieve during that short space of life left me in my old age.

"Since you had to come to this disgrace, would to God that you had taken a man who was worthy of your noble blood. But among all the men in my Court you chose Guiscardo, a young man of the basest extraction, bred in my Court from childhood, almost out of charity. You have plunged my mind in the greatest perplexity, and I do not know what to do. Last night I had Guiscardo arrested when he came out of the cave opening, and I have him in prison; and I know what I shall do with him.

But God knows what I am to do with you. On the one hand, I am urged by the love I feel for you, which is greater than any father ever felt for a daughter. On the other hand, I am urged by my indignation at your folly. The one urges me to forgive you, the other to punish you against my natural feeling. But before I make up my mind, I should like to hear what you have to say."

So saying he bowed his head, and wept like a beaten child. As Ghismonda listened to her father, she saw that her secret love was discovered, and that Guiscardo was in prison. This caused her inexpressible grief, which she was very near to showing by tears and shrieks, as most women do. But her lofty love conquered this weak feeling, she kept her countenance with marvellous strength of mind, and made up her mind that before she made any prayer for herself, she would not remain alive since she saw Guiscardo was already as good as dead. So she faced her father, not like a weeping woman detected in a fault, but like a brave and unconcerned one, and replied to him unperturbed, with a clear and open visage:

"Tancred, I am not prepared either to deny or to supplicate, because the former would not avail me and I do not want to avail myself of the latter. Moreover, I do not mean to make your love and gentleness of service to me, but to confess the truth, to defend my fame with good reasons and then with deeds to follow boldly the greatness of my soul. It is true that I have loved and do love Guiscardo. As long as I live—which will not be long—I shall love him. And if there is love after death, I shall continue to love him then. I was not drawn to this love so much by my womanish weakness as by your neglecting to marry me and by his virtues.

"Since you are flesh and blood, Tancred, you should know that you begot a daughter of flesh and blood, not of stone or iron. You should have remembered now and earlier, although you are now an old man, what and how powerful are the laws of youth. Although you spent the best years of your manhood in warfare, yet you should know the power of idleness and luxury upon the old as well as upon the young.

"Now, I was begotten by you and so am of flesh and blood, and I have

not lived so long that I am yet old. My youth and my flesh are the reasons why I am filled with amorous desires; and they have been greatly increased by my marriage, which showed what pleasure there is in satisfying these desires. I could not resist them, but yielded to them, as a young woman would do; and fell in love. As far as I could, I endeavoured to avoid shame to you and to me in doing what I was drawn to do by natural sin. Compassionate Love and kindly Fortune found and showed me a secret way to reach my desires, without anyone else knowing. Nor do I make any denial of all this, however you may have learned it or whoever told you.

“I did not take Guiscardo at a venture, as many women would have done, but I chose him above all others deliberately and with forethought, and he and I have long enjoyed our desires. Whereby it appears from your bitter reproof that, in addition to my sin of loving, you think (following, in this, rather common opinion than the truth) that I have erred in addition by choosing a man of low birth, as if you thought you need not be angry if I had chosen a nobleman. Here you should not reprove my error but that of Fortune, who often lifts the unworthy on high and casts down the most worthy.

“But let us leave all this, and look at the principles of things. You will see that we all have the same flesh, and that all souls were created by the same Creator with equal powers, equal strength and equal virtues. It was virtue which first introduced differences among us who were born and are born equal. Those who were most virtuous and most devoted themselves to virtue were called noble, and the others remained commoners. And although this law has been glossed over by contrary custom, yet it is neither repealed nor broken by Nature and good manners. Therefore, he who lives virtuously manifests himself noble; and if such a man is called other than noble, the fault rests not with him but with those who call him ignoble.

“Consider all your nobles, examine their virtues, their manners, their behaviour; and then look upon Guiscardo. If you will pass judgment without prejudice, you will see that Guiscardo is most noble, and that all your nobles are peasants. Concerning the virtue and valour of Guiscardo

I shall trust nobody's judgment save that of your words and my own eyes. Whoever praised him so much as you have praised him for all worthy deeds befitting a valiant man? And certainly you were not wrong. If my eyes did not deceive me, you never praised him for anything which I did not see him perform better than your words could express. If I was deceived here, I was deceived by you.

"Will you now say that I chose a man of base condition? You would speak falsely. You may say he is a poor man, and that is granted—to your shame, since you left one of your bravest servants in such a state. Poverty takes away nobleness from no man, but wealth does.

"Many Kings, many great Princes, were once poor. Many of those who plough and watch herds were once rich.

"Now, concerning your doubt as to what you should do to me—hesitate no further, if you are determined to be cruel, to do in your old age what you did not do in your youth. Wreak your cruelty upon me, for I will use no supplication to you, and it was I who was the real cause of this sin, if sin there is. And I tell you that if you do not do to me what you have done or may do to Guiscardo, my own hands shall perform it upon myself.

"Go, weep with women, and if you must be cruel and think we have deserved death, kill him and me with the same stroke."

The Prince saw his daughter's greatness of soul, but he did not believe she was as resolute as her words sounded. So he departed from her, and determined to use no cruelty upon her person but to cool her hot love with other punishment. He therefore commanded the two men who were guarding Guiscardo to strangle him the next night without any noise, to cut out his heart and send it to him. And they did as they were ordered.

Next day, the Prince sent for a large handsome gold cup and put Guiscardo's heart into it. This he sent to his daughter by a trusted servant, with orders to give it to her and to say: "Your father sends you this to console you for what you most loved, even as you consoled him for what he loved most."

When her father left her, Ghismonda did not abandon her desperate

resolution, but sent for poisonous herbs and roots and distilled them with water, to have poison ready in case what she feared should happen. When the servants came with the Prince's present, and repeated his words, she took the cup with a firm countenance, opened it, saw the heart, and knew for certain that it was Guiscardo's heart. She turned her face to the servant, and said:

"Gold alone is a fitting burial place for such a heart. Herein my father has done wisely."

So saying, she carried it to her mouth and kissed it and then said:

"Always, in every respect my father's love has been most tender towards me, and herein more than ever. For this princely present I render him the highest thanks, as I ought to do."

And then, holding the cup tightly, she gazed upon the heart, and said:

"Ah! Thou most sweet dwelling-place of all my delight, cursed be the cruelty of him who has made me look upon you with the eyes of my head! It was enough for me to gaze upon you hourly with the eyes of my spirit. You have run your race, you are now free from all that Fortune imposed upon you. You have reached that bourn to which all men run. You have left the labours and miseries of the world, and from your enemy have you received that burial your valour deserved. Nothing is lacking to your funeral rites, save only the tears of her you loved so dearly in your life. That you might have them, God inspired my pitiless father to send you to me. Those tears I shall give you, although I had determined to die dry-eyed and with a calm face. And when I have wept for you, I shall straightway act in such a way that my soul shall be joined with yours, and do you accept that soul which of old was so dear to you. In what company could I go more gladly or more securely to an unknown land than with your soul? I am certain that it is yet here, and looks upon the place of its delight and mine. And since I am certain your soul loves me, let it wait for mine by which it is so deeply beloved."

So saying, she bowed weeping over the cup, and with no womanish outcries shed as many tears as if she had had a fountain of water in her head, kissing the dead heart an infinite number of times, so that it was a marvel to behold. Her women did not know whose heart it was, and did

not understand her words, but all were filled with pity and began to weep, and pityingly but in vain asked her the cause of her lamentations, and strove to comfort her as best they could. But when she felt she had lamented long enough, she raised her head and dried her eyes, and said:

“O most beloved heart, I have performed all my duties to you; nothing now remains for me to do, save to come with my soul to bear company with yours.”

So saying, she took the phial containing the poison she had made, and poured it into the cup where the heart was wet with her tears. Fearlessly she lifted it to her mouth and drank; and having drunk, she lay down on her bed and arranged her body as modestly as she could, and placed the heart of her dead lover upon her heart, and thus awaited death without uttering a word.

Her women, having heard and seen these things, sent word of them to Tancred, although they did not know that she had drunk poison. Dreading what might happen, Tancred came at once to his daughter's room, and reached it just as she had laid herself down upon the bed. He tried to comfort her with sweet words too late; and seeing to what extremity she was come, he began piteously to weep. And the lady said:

“Tancred, spare your tears for a fate less longed for than this of mine; give them not to me, for I do not want them. Whoever saw anyone but you weep over what he willed should happen. And yet, if any of the love you once felt for me is still alive grant me one last gift—although it displeased you that I lived secretly and silently with Guiscardo, let my body lie openly with his in the place where you have cast it.”

The agony of his weeping prevented the Prince from replying. Then she felt her end was come, and holding the dead heart to her bosom, she said:

“God be with you, and let me go.”

She veiled her eyes and all sense left her and she departed this sad life.

Such, as you have heard, was the sad end of the love of Guiscardo and Ghismonda. Tancred wept much and repented too late of his cruelty; and, amid the general grief of all Salerno, buried them both honourably in the same grave.

Second Tale

FRATE ALBERTO PERSUADES A LADY THAT THE ANGEL GABRIEL IS IN LOVE WITH HER AND THUS MANAGES TO LIE WITH HER SEVERAL TIMES. FROM FEAR OF HER RELATIVES HE FLIES FROM HER HOUSE AND TAKES REFUGE IN THE HOUSE OF A POOR MAN, WHO NEXT DAY TAKES HIM TO THE PIAZZA AS A WILD MAN OF THE WOODS. HE IS RECOGNISED, ARRESTED AND IMPRISONED

THE tale told by Fiammetta many times drew tears from her companions' eyes, but when it was ended the king said with a stern face:

"I should value my life little in comparison with half the joy Ghismonda had with Guiscardo. Nor should you marvel at this, since while I am alive I suffer a thousand deaths hourly, and yet not one particle of delight is granted me. But, putting aside my life and its fate, it is my will that Pampinea should continue with a tale in part similar to my own fate. If she continues as Fiammetta has begun, doubtless some drops of dew will fall upon my amorous fire, and I shall feel them."

Pampinea felt the wishes of the company more through her own affection than through the king's words, and, being more willing to amuse them than to please the king, she determined to tell an amusing tale without departing from the subject given, and so began.

They say commonly in proverbial style: A wicked man who is thought to be good can do evil and yet not have it believed. This gives me ample material to speak on the subject proposed, and at the same time to show the hypocrisy of the monks. Their gowns are long and wide, their faces artificially pale, their voices humble and pleading when they ask something, loud and rude when they denounce their own vices in others, and when they declare how they obtain salvation of themselves and others by their gift. Not as men who seek Paradise, like ourselves, but as if they were its owners and lords, they allot a more or less eminent place there to everyone who dies, in accordance with the amount of money he leaves them; and thereby they first deceive themselves—if they really believe it

—and then deceive those who put faith in their words. If I were permitted to do so, I could soon show many simple minded persons what is hidden in their ample gowns. Would to God that all their lies had the same fate as befell a minor friar, who was no paltry fellow, but was considered one of the best casuists of Venice. It gives me the greatest pleasure to tell this tale, so that perhaps I may divert your minds with laughter and amusement from the pity you feel for Ghismonda's fate.

In Imola, most worthy ladies, there lived a man of wicked and corrupt life, named Berto della Massa. His evil deeds were so well known to many people of Imola that no one in Imola would believe him when he spoke truth, let alone when he lied. Seeing, then, that his tricks were useless there, he moved in despair to Venice, that welcomer of all wickedness, thinking that in that town he might make a different use of his vices than he had done before. As if conscience-stricken for his wicked deeds, he gave signs of the greatest humility. He became not only the most Catholic of men, but made himself a minor friar, and took the name of Friar Alberto da Imola. In this guise he began to pretend to a severe life, praising penitence and abstinence, and never eating flesh or drinking wine when he could not get them good enough for him.

Never before had a thief, a ruffian, a forger, a murderer turned into a great preacher without having abandoned those vices, even when he had practised them secretly. And after he had become a priest, whenever he was celebrating Mass at the altar in the presence of a large congregation, he always wept over the Saviour's Passion, for he was a man who could shed tears whenever he pleased. In short, what with his sermons and his tears, he so beguiled the Venetians that he was trustee and guardian of nearly everyone's will, the keeper of many people's money, the confessor and adviser of most men and women. Thus, from wolf he became shepherd, and in those parts the fame of his sanctity was greater than San Francesco's ever was at Assisi.

Now, it happened that a silly stupid young woman, named Madonna Lisetta da ca Quirino, the wife of a merchant who was away in Flanders with the galleys, went with other women to confess to this holy friar. As she knelt at his feet like the Venetian she was—and they are all fools—

he asked her half way through her confession if she had a lover. And she tartly replied:

“Why, messer friar, have you no eyes in your head? Do you think my beauties are no more than these other women’s? I could have as many lovers as I wanted. But my beauty is not to be yielded to the love of anybody. How many beauties do you see like mine, for I should be beautiful in Paradise?”

And she went on to say so many things about her beauties that it was tedious to listen to her. Friar Alberto at once saw her weakness, and, feeling that she was ready made to his hand, he fell in love with her. But, reserving his flatteries for another time, he put on his saintly air and began to reprove her, and to say this was vain-glory and other things of the kind. So the lady told him he was a fool, and did not know how to distinguish one beauty from another. And Friar Alberto, not wanting to anger her too much, finished off the confession and let her go with the others.

A few days later he went with a trusted friend to Madonna Lisetta’s house and took her aside into a room where they could not be seen. There he fell on his knees before her, and said:

“Madonna, I beseech you for God’s sake to forgive me for what I said to you on Sunday when you spoke of your beauty, because I was so severely punished that night I have not been able to get up until today.”

Then said Madonna Pot-stick: “And who punished you?”

“I will tell you,” said Friar Alberto. “While I was praying that night, as I always do, I suddenly saw a bright light in my cell. Before I could turn to see what it was, I beheld a most beautiful young man with a large stick in his hand, who took me by the cowl, dragged me to my feet and beat me as if to break my bones. I asked him why he did this, and he replied: ‘Because you presumed today to reprove the heavenly beauty of Madonna Lisetta whom I love more than anything except God himself.’ And I asked: ‘Who are you?’ And he said he was the Angel Gabriel. ‘O my lord,’ said I, ‘I beg you will pardon me.’ And he said: ‘I will pardon you on condition that you go to her as soon as you can and obtain her forgiveness. And if she does not forgive you I shall return here, and so deal

with you that you will be miserable for the rest of your days.' What he afterwards said to me I dare not tell you until you have pardoned me."

Donna Windy-noddle, who was as sweet as salt, was enchanted at these words, and thought them all true.

"I told you, Friar Alberto," said she, "that mine were heavenly beauties. But, so help me God, I am sorry for you, and to spare you any further trouble I forgive you, if only you will tell me truly what the Angel then said."

"Madonna," replied Friar Alberto, "since you have pardoned me, I will tell you willingly. But, you must not repeat a word of what I tell you to anyone in the world, if you do not want to destroy your happiness, you who are the luckiest woman in the world.

"The Angel Gabriel told me to tell you that he loves you so much he would often have come to spend the night with you, but for his fear of terrifying you. He now sends you a message through me to say that he wants to come to you one night and to spend part of it with you. But he is an Angel, and if he came to you in the form of an Angel you could not touch him; and so he says that for your delight he will come in a man's shape and bids you tell him when you want him to come and in whose shape, and he will come. And so you ought to think yourself more blessed than any other woman living."

Madonna Silly then said she was very glad to have the Angel Gabriel in love with her, because she loved him and always put up a fourpenny candle to him wherever she saw him painted. Whenever he liked to come to her he would be welcome and he would find her alone in her room, on one condition, which was that he would not abandon her for the Virgin Mary whom he was said to be very fond of; and she was inclined to believe this since whenever she saw his picture he was kneeling before the Virgin. In addition, she said that the Angel should come in any shape he pleased—she would not be afraid.

Then said Friar Alberto:

"Madonna, you speak wisely, and I will arrange with him as you say. But you can do me a great favour, which will cost you nothing. The favour is that you will allow him to come in my body. This will be a

very great favour because he will take the soul from my body and put it in Heaven, and he will enter into me, and my soul will be in Paradise as long as he remains with you."

Then said Madonna Littlewit:

"I am content. I want you to have this consolation for the stripes you received on my account."

Said Friar Alberto:

"Tonight leave the door of your house open, so that he can come in. Since he is coming in a human body, he can only enter by the door."

The lady replied that this should be done. Friar Alberto departed, and she remained in such a state of delight that her chemise did not touch her backside, and the time she had to wait for the Angel Gabriel seemed like a thousand years.

Friar Alberto thought it better to be a good horseman than an Angel that night, so he fortified himself with all sorts of good cheer, in order not to be unhorsed too easily. He obtained permission to be out that night, and went with his trusted friend to the house of a woman friend, which he had made his starting point more than once before when he was going to ride the mare. From there he went in disguise to the lady's house, and having transformed himself into an Angel with the fripperies he had brought with him, he went upstairs into the lady's bedroom. When she saw something white come in, she kneeled down. The Angel gave her his benediction, raised her to her feet, and signed to her to get into bed. She did so immediately in her willingness to obey, and the Angel got into bed with his devotee.

Friar Alberto was a robust and handsome man and in excellent health. Donna Lisetta was fresh and pretty and found him a very different person from her husband to lie with. That night he flew many times with her without wings, which made her call herself blessed; and in addition he told her a great many things about heavenly glory. Just before dawn, he collected his trappings and returned to his friend, who had kept friendly company with the other woman so that she should not feel afraid by sleeping alone.

After the lady had dined, she went with a woman friend to see Friar

Alberto, and gave him news of the Angel Gabriel, telling him how the Angel looked and what he had said about the glory of eternal life, to which she added all sorts of marvellous fables.

"Madonna," said Friar Alberto, "I know not how you were with him, all I know is that last night he came to me, and when I had delivered him your message, he suddenly took my soul to a place where there were more flowers and roses than ever I saw, one of the most delicious places that ever existed, where my soul remained until dawn this morning. But what happened to my body I do not know."

"Didn't I tell you?" said the lady. "Your body lay all night in my arms with the Angel Gabriel. And if you don't believe me, look under your left breast, where I gave the Angel such a kiss that the mark will remain for several days."

Then said Friar Alberto:

"I will do something today which I have not done for a very long time. I shall undress myself to see if what you say is true."

After a lot more chatter, the lady returned home. And Friar Alberto thereafter visited her many times in the guise of an Angel, without the slightest difficulty. But one day Madonna Lisetta was with one of her gossips, and as they were discussing their beauties, she said like the empty-pated fool she was, in order to show off:

"If you knew who was in love with my beauty you would not speak of anyone else's."

The gossip was anxious to hear about it, and knowing Lisetta well, said:

"Madonna, you may be right, but as I do not know whom you mean I shall not change my opinion so easily."

The lady, who had very little sense, then said:

"Gossip, he does not want it talked about, but the person I mean is the Angel Gabriel, who loves me more than himself, so he says, because I am the most beautiful person in the world or the Maremma."

The gossip felt like laughing outright, but restrained herself to keep the conversation going, and said:

"God's faith, Madonna, if you mean the Angel Gabriel and say so, it must be true, but I did not think the angels did such things."

"Gossip," said the lady, "you are wrong. By God's favour, he does it better than my husband, and he tells me they do it up above. But, because he thinks me more beautiful than anyone in Heaven, he has fallen in love with me, and often spends a night with me. So you see!"

As soon as the gossip had left Madonna Lisetta, it seemed like a thousand years to her before she had got into a company where she could laugh at all this. She went to a gathering of women, and told them the whole tale. These women told their husbands and other women, and they told others, and so in less than two days the story was all over Venice. Among others who heard it were the lady's cousins, and, without saying anything to her, they made up their minds to find this Angel and see whether he could fly. So they watched for him every night.

Some rumours of all this came to the ears of Friar Alberto, who went to the lady one night to scold her for it. He was scarcely undressed when her cousins, who had seen him come in, were at the door. Friar Alberto heard them, and guessed what they were. He jumped up, and, having no other means of escape, opened a window overlooking the Grand Canal, from which he threw himself into the water.

The water there was deep; he was a good swimmer, and so did himself no harm. He swam to the other side of the canal and immediately entered an open house there, begging the goodman for the love of God to save his life, and told him all sorts of lies to explain why he was there naked at that hour of night.

The goodman, who was just setting off on his business, pitied Friar Alberto and put him into bed, telling him to stop there until he came back. He then locked the friar in, and went about his business.

When the lady's cousins entered her room, they found the Angel Gabriel had left his wings behind and flown away. They abused the lady indignantly, and, leaving her very disconsolate, returned home with the Angel's trappings.

Meanwhile, soon after dawn, the goodman was on the Rialto and heard how the Angel Gabriel had gone to lie with Madonna Lisetta the night before, how he had been discovered by her relatives and had thrown himself into the canal, and nobody knew what had become of him. So he

immediately realised that this was the man in his own house. He went home and after much discussion arranged that the Friar should pay him fifty ducats not to hand him over to the cousins; and this was done. Friar Alberto then wanted to leave, but the goodman said:

“There is only one way of doing this. There is a festival today where one man leads another dressed like a bear or a wild man of the woods or one thing or another, and then there is a hunt in the Piazza di San Marco, and when that is over the festival ends. Then everyone goes off where he pleases with the person he has brought in disguise. Now, you may be spied out here, and so, if you like, I will lead you along in some disguise and can take you wherever you like. Otherwise I don’t see how you can leave here without being recognised. The lady’s relatives know you must be in some house in the neighbourhood, and have posted guards everywhere to catch you.”

Friar Alberto did not at all like the idea, but he was so much afraid of the lady’s relatives that he agreed to it, and told the man where he wanted to go, and how he should be led along. The goodman smeared him all over with honey and then covered him with feathers, put a chain round his neck and a mask on his face. In one hand he gave him a large stick and in the other two great dogs which he had brought from the butcher; and then he sent someone to the Rialto who announced that everyone who wanted to see the Angel Gabriel should go to the Piazza di San Marco. That was true Venetian good faith!

Having done this, he took the Friar out, and, walking before him, led him along on a chain; and everybody came round saying: “What’s this? What’s this?” And thus he took the Friar to the Piazza, where there was a great crowd of people, made up of those who had followed them and those who had come from the Rialto on hearing the announcement. He then led his wild man of the woods to a column in a conspicuous and elevated place, pretending that he was waiting for the hunt. The poor friar was greatly plagued by flies and gad-flies, because he was smeared all over with honey. And when the goodman saw that the Piazza was full of people, he pretended that he was going to unchain his wild man; but instead he took off Friar Alberto’s mask, and shouted:

“Gentlemen, since the pig has not come to the hunt and since the hunt is off, I don’t want you to have gathered here for nothing, and so I want you to see the Angel Gabriel who came down from Heaven to earth last night to console the ladies of Venice.”

As soon as the mask was off, Friar Alberto was recognized by everybody, and there went up a great shout against him, everybody saying the most insulting things that ever were said to any scoundrel. And first one and then another threw all sorts of filth in his face. There he was kept a long time until the news reached the other friars of his convent. Six of them came down to the Piazza, threw a gown on his back and bound him, and then in the midst of a great tumult took him back to the monastery, where he was imprisoned. And it is believed that he soon died there after a life of misery.

Thus a man who was thought to be good and acted evilly without being suspected, tried to be the Angel Gabriel and was turned into a wild man of the woods; and, in the long run, was insulted as he deserved and came to weep in vain for the sins he had committed. Please God that this may happen to all like him.



Third Tale

THREE YOUNG MEN ARE IN LOVE WITH THREE SISTERS AND FLY WITH THEM TO CRETE. THE ELDEST KILLS HER LOVER OUT OF JEALOUSY; THE SECOND SISTER YIELDS TO THE DUKE OF CRETE TO SAVE HER FROM DEATH, BUT IS MURDERED BY HER OWN LOVER WHO RUNS AWAY WITH THE FIRST SISTER. THE THIRD SISTER AND HER LOVER ARE INVOLVED IN THE AFFAIR, AND, WHEN ARRESTED, CONFESS TO IT; THEY BRIBE THE GUARD, AND ESCAPE TO RODI WHERE THEY DIE IN POVERTY

At the end of Pampinea's tale, Filostrato remained silent for a time and then said to her:

"One good thing which pleased me in your tale was the ending. But there was too much mirth in it, which I should have preferred not to be there."

He then turned to Laretta and said:

"Lady, do you now follow with a better tale, if that may be."

"You are too cruel to lovers," said Laretta, laughing, "since you want them to come to a sad end. To obey you, I shall tell you about three lovers who all came to a bad end after a very short enjoyment of their love."

So saying, she began as follows:

As you may easily perceive, youthful ladies, every vice can easily do the greatest harm to those who practise it and to others as well. I think that anger is one of the vices to which we give rein with most danger to ourselves. Anger is nothing but a sudden and unreflecting emotion aroused by the grief we feel, which expels our reason, blinds the eyes of the spirit with darkness, and consumes our souls with burning rage. This often occurs in men, and more often in one than another, but is far more dangerous in women, because they blaze up more easily, burn with a sharper flame and restrain it less. This should not surprise us, because, if we look carefully, we shall see that fire naturally kindles light and deli-

cate things more rapidly than those which are hard and weighty. And—let the men not take it in ill part—we women are more delicate and much more fickle than they are.

Therefore, since we are naturally inclined to this, and since our gentleness and kindness are most restful and pleasing to the men whom we frequent, and since anger and rage are dangerous and troublesome, and with a desire to make you guard against it more strictly, I shall tell you a tale of three young men and as many women, as I said before, to show you how their love fell from happiness to great misery on account of anger.

As you know, Marseilles is on the sea coast of Provence. It is an ancient and most noble city, and formerly contained more rich men and great merchants than it does now. Among them was one Narnald Cluada, a man of low birth but a true and honest merchant extremely rich in goods and money, who had several children by his wife, among them three girls who were older than the boys. The two eldest were twins aged fifteen, and the third was fourteen. Their marriage was only delayed until Narnald returned from Spain, where he had gone on a trading expedition.

The names of the two twins were Ninetta and Maddalena, and the third was named Bertella. Ninetta was beloved by a poor young gentleman named Restagnone, and she was in love with him. They had acted in such a way that they had enjoyed their love unknown to anyone; and they had enjoyed it for some time when two very rich young men named Folco and Ughetto, whose fathers were dead, fell in love respectively with Maddalena and Bertella.

When Restagnone learned of this through Ninetta he thought that he would be able to supply his poverty through their love. So he struck up a close friendship with them, and often accompanied them both when they went to visit their mistresses and his. And when he thought he had become sufficiently friendly with them, he invited them one day to his house, and said:

“My dear friends, our familiarity together must have proved to you my friendship for you and that I would do for you what I would do for myself. Since I am so fond of you, I intend to tell you what has

occurred to my mind, and then we will do together whatever seems best to you. If your words do not deceive me, and so far as I can judge from your acts both day and night, you are deeply in love with two of the sisters, as I am with the third. If you agree, I think I have found a sweet and pleasant remedy for your passion. You are very rich young men; I am not rich. If you will put all our wealth together and give me a third share of the whole and decide upon which part of the world we shall go to and live happily with these girls, I promise that the three sisters will take a large part of their father's money and come with us wherever we want to go. It is now for you to decide whether you will join in this, or not."

The two young men were so much in love that when they heard they should have their mistresses they were not long in making up their minds, and said they were ready to do it wherever it might lead. A few days after Restagnone had the young men's answer he was with Ninetta, whom he could only meet with the greatest difficulty. After he had spent some time with her he told her what he had discussed with the young men, and laboured with many arguments to persuade her to this enterprise. But he had very little difficulty, because she wanted to be with him undisturbed far more than he did. So she replied that she liked the plan and that her sisters would do whatever she wanted, especially in this matter; and told him to prepare everything necessary as quickly as possible.

Restagnone returned to the young men who urged him to do what he had discussed with them; and he told them that as far as their mistresses were concerned the matter was settled. They decided to go to Crete. Under pretext of setting up in trade, they sold the possessions they had, and turned everything they could into money. They then bought a swift ship, fitted it out secretly with a powerful armament, and awaited the event.

Ninetta, for her part, knowing her sister's desire, so worked upon them with honied words that they felt they could not live until they had carried out the plan. So, when the night came for them to go on board the ship, the three sisters opened a large chest of their father's and took

out a great quantity of jewels and money, and with this went softly out of the house, as had been arranged, and met their three lovers who were waiting for them. They went on board ship without delay, ordered out the oars, and were off. They stayed nowhere and reached Genoa the next evening, where the new lovers took the first joy and pleasure of their love.

Having taken the rest they needed, they went on from one port to another, and eight days later reached Crete without any hindrance. There they bought large and fine estates, and built very handsome and delightful houses near Candia. There, like the happiest men in the world, they lived like barons with their wives and many servants and dogs and hawks and horses, in banqueting and feasting and merriment. Thus they lived, when it happened (for we see every day that, although certain things are pleasant, too much plenty leads to disgust) that Restagnone, who had been very much in love with Ninetta, began to dislike her when he could have her whenever he wanted without any hindrance, and so his love for her diminished. One day at a feast he was charmed by a beautiful young woman of the island, and, pursuing her with the utmost eagerness, began to give entertainments for her. Ninetta found it out, and became so jealous that he could not take a step without her knowing about it, and then was always nagging at him about it.

But, as surfeit begets disgust, so thwarted desire increases appetite; and thus Ninetta's reproaches fanned the flame of Restagnone's new love. Whether Restagnone did or did not get the love of his new lady, Ninetta in the course of time was convinced that he had, in spite of everything he said. This plunged her into such grief and then into such anger and consequently into such a rage that her love for Restagnone changed into bitter hatred, and, embittered by her anger, she determined to avenge the insult she thought she had received, by killing Restagnone.

There was an old Greek woman who was very skilful in preparing poisons, and Ninetta persuaded her with gifts and promises to brew her a mortal poison. One evening, when Restagnone was very hot and therefore not very careful about what he was drinking, she gave him the poison. It was so powerful that before morning he was dead. Folco and

Ughetto and their wives, not suspecting that he had died of poison, wept bitterly for him with Ninetta, and buried him honourably.

Not long afterwards the old woman who had made the poison for Ninetta was arrested for some other crime, and under torture confessed this among her other wicked deeds, thus making plain what had happened. Without saying anything about it, the Duke of Crete one night entered Folco's mansion and arrested Ninetta, and took her away without any noise or opposition. And without any torture she very soon told the Duke all he wanted to hear about Restagnone's death.

Folco and Ughetto heard privately from the Duke why Ninetta had been arrested, and told their wives, who were greatly distressed. They exerted all their wits to think of some way of saving Ninetta from being burned, to which they knew she would be condemned since she had fully deserved it. But it all seemed useless, since the Duke was determined that justice should be done.

Maddalena, who was a very beautiful girl, had long been courted by the Duke, but had never consented to do his pleasure. She thought that if she yielded to him she would save her sister from burning. She therefore sent him a message secretly to say that she was at his disposal on two conditions: first, that her sister should come back to her safe and free, second, that the whole matter should be kept a secret. The message came to the Duke and pleased him. After a long debate with himself, he agreed to do it, and told her he was ready. One night therefore, with the lady's consent, the Duke had Folco and Ughetto arrested, as if he wanted to get information from them, and went to spend the night secretly with Maddalena. Before this he had pretended to have Ninetta sewed up in a sack to be thrown into the sea that same night, but instead took her back to her sister to whom he gave her as the price of that night. When he left in the morning he told Maddalena that this, their first night together, must not be the last. He also insisted that the guilty woman should be sent away so that no blame might fall upon him or he be compelled to proceed against her.

The next morning Folco and Ughetto were set at liberty, and heard that Ninetta had been drowned in a sack that night, which they believed.

They returned home to console their wives for the death of their sister, but although Maddalena did all she could to conceal Ninetta, Folco discovered she was there. This greatly amazed him, and he suddenly became suspicious, for he had noticed that the Duke was in love with Maddalena. So he asked her how Ninetta came to be there.

Maddalena tried to tell him a long story, but he was too wily to believe it, and compelled her to tell him the truth, which after much talk she did. Folco flew into a rage, drew his sword and killed her as she begged in vain for mercy. Then, dreading the Duke's anger and justice, he left her dead in the room, went to the room where Ninetta was, and very cheerfully said to her:

"Your sister has just decided that I shall take you away at once, so that you may not fall into the Duke's hands."

Ninetta believed him, and, being in a fright, was anxious to go. As it was already night, she started off at once with Folco, without taking leave of her sister. They went to the coast with the little money Folco could lay his hands on, went on board a small ship, and nobody ever heard where they went.

The next day Maddalena was found murdered, and certain persons who envied and hated Ughetto, immediately informed the Duke. He had loved Maddalena very much, and rushed immediately to the house and arrested Ughetto and his wife who knew nothing about the flight of Folco and Ninetta. And the Duke compelled them to confess that they were guilty of the murder of Maddalena.

They naturally feared that this confession would mean their death, so they bribed the guards set over them with a certain sum of money, which by chance they had concealed in the house. Without having time to take anything with them, they fled with their guards and went on board a ship, and fled by night to Rhodes where they lived only a short time longer in poverty and misery.

Such was the fate brought upon themselves and others by Restagnone's mad love and Ninetta's anger.

Fourth Tale

CONTRARY TO THE TREATY MADE BY HIS GRANDFATHER, KING GUIGLIELMO, GERBINO JOINS BATTLE WITH A SHIP OF THE KING OF TUNIS IN ORDER TO CAPTURE HIS DAUGHTER; SHE IS KILLED BY THOSE ON BOARD; HE KILLS THEM; AND HE IS EXECUTED

WHEN Lauretta had finished her tale, the different members of the party lamented one with another the lovers' sad fate. Some blamed Ninetta's anger, others said other things, when the king, as if roused from deep thought, turned to Elisa and signed to her to speak. She began modestly as follows:

Fair ladies, there are many people who think that Love speeds his shafts solely through the eyes, and scorn those who think that some people may fall in love by hearsay. That they are wrong will appear from the tale I am about to tell you. You will see from it how mere report can create love without the beloved person having ever been seen, and also how it can lead several people to a miserable end.

According to the Sicilians, Guiglielmo the Second, King of Sicily, had two children, one a boy named Ruggieri, the other a girl, Gostanza. Ruggieri died before his father, leaving a son named Gerbino, who was carefully brought up by his grandfather, and became a most handsome young man, renowned for his prowess and courtesy. His fame was not confined to the limits of Sicily, but was noised throughout various parts of the world, and especially in Barbary which at that time was tributary to the King of Sicily. Among others who heard the magnificent fame of Gerbino's virtue and courtesy was a daughter of the King of Tunis, who, according to what we are told by those who saw her, was one of the most beautiful creatures ever formed by Nature, and the most accomplished, with a great and noble spirit. She liked to hear talk of valiant men, and listened so eagerly to what one person and another said of Gerbino's valiant deeds that she tried to imagine what he was like and

fell deeply in love with him, so that she liked to talk and to hear about him better than anything else.

On the other hand, the fame of her beauty and worth came to Sicily, and, not in vain and not without delight to him, reached Gerbino's ears. So he was as eager for the girl as she was for him. Wherefore, being most desirous to see her, while awaiting some reasonable pretext for getting his grandfather's permission to go to Tunis, he charged some of his friends to go there and to let her know as well as they could his great and secret love for her, and to bring him back news of her. One of these friends, taking women's jewels as if he were a merchant, most skillfully succeeded in seeing her. He told her all about Gerbino's love and offered the Prince and all he had to her. She received message and messenger with a cheerful face, and replied that she felt a like love; in witness whereof, she sent him one of her most precious jewels. Gerbino received this with all the joy which can be felt on receiving a most precious gift, and wrote to her several times and sent her most valuable gifts, and made a pact with her to see and touch her, if Fate should permit.

Things went on in this way a little further than they should, each being very ardent towards the other, when the King of Tunis married his daughter to the King of Granada. This filled her with distress when she thought how she would be taken so far from her lover, and almost wholly deprived of him. To prevent this, she would gladly have fled from her father and have gone to Gerbino, if she had seen any way to do it. Similarly, when Gerbino heard of this marriage, he was immeasurably distressed, and determined that, if he could, he would carry her off by force if she went to her husband by sea.

The King of Tunis heard a rumour of Gerbino's love and intention, and was in some dread of his power and valour. So, when the time came to send his daughter away, he informed King Guiglielmo of what he intended to do, and asked for a pledge that he should not be intercepted either by Gerbino or anyone else on his behalf. King Guiglielmo was now an old man, and had heard nothing of Gerbino's love. He did not suspect that this pledge was asked on Gerbino's account, and so freely granted it; and, as a sign of good faith, he sent his glove to the King of Tunis.

As soon as he had received this pledge, the King of Tunis prepared a large and handsome ship in the port of Carthage, furnished it with everything needed by those who were to travel in it, ornamented and arranged it, and only waited for good weather to send his daughter to Granada.

The young princess saw and knew all about this, and sent secretly one of her servants to Palermo, ordering him to salute Gerbino from her and to tell him that she was sailing for Granada in a few days; whereby it would be known whether he was as brave a man as people said and if he loved her as much as he had often declared.

The message was exactly delivered, and the messenger returned to Tunis. When Gerbino received it, he did not know what to do; for he knew that King Guiglielmo had pledged his faith to the King of Tunis. But he was urged by love, and, after hearing his mistress's words, he could not be a poltroon; so he went to Messina, rapidly armed and manned two swift galleys, and set off in the direction of Sardinia, since he knew the lady's ship would pass that way.

It turned out as he had supposed. A few days later the ship appeared, sailing before a light breeze, close to the place where he was waiting. When he saw it, Gerbino said to his friends:

"Gentlemen, if you are as valiant as I suppose, there is not one of you who has not felt or now feels love, without which in my opinion no mortal can attain virtue or happiness. If you have been or are in love, you will easily understand my desire. I am in love, and love urged me to undertake this adventure. She whom I love is in the ship you see before you, which, together with the person I most desire, contains great wealth; and, if you fight like valiant men, we can obtain it all with little difficulty. For my share of the spoils of victory I ask only one woman, for love of whom I am under arms; all the rest I freely give to you. Let us go forward, and boldly attack the ship. God favours our enterprise, for he keeps them there without a wind."

Fair Gerbino had no need of so many words, for the men of Messina, eager for spoil, were panting to do what Gerbino exhorted them to do. They greeted the end of his speech with a great shout, the trumpets

sounded, they grasped their arms, the oars beat the sea, and they bore down upon the ship.

When those who were in the ship saw the galleys coming towards them, they prepared to defend themselves, since they could not escape. When the fair Gerbino came up with them, he ordered that the ship's commanders should come on board the galleys if they did not want to fight. As soon as the Saracens found out who had summoned them, they said they were being attacked in violation of King Guiglielmo's faith, in proof of which they displayed his glove, and said they would never yield themselves or anything on board their ship except by force. Gerbino saw the lady on the ship's poop and thought her more beautiful than he had been told; and so, more inflamed with love than ever, he replied that there was no need of gloves since there were no falcons there. And he added that they must either yield up the lady, or prepare for battle. Without further parley they straightway began to shoot arrows and stones at each other, and the battle lasted a long time with heavy casualties on both sides. Finally, when Gerbino saw he was making little progress, he made a fire-ship of a small boat he had brought with him from Sardinia, and with the two galleys brought it alongside the ship. When the Saracens saw it, they knew they must either yield or die; they brought up the lady from the under to the upper deck and took her to the ship's prow. They called to Gerbino and before his eyes cut her veins as she shrieked for help and mercy, and threw her into the sea, shouting:

"Take her, we give her to you such as we can and as your good faith deserves."

Seeing their cruelty, Gerbino boarded them as if he cared not for death or arrows or stones. In spite of those on board, he rushed on to the ship like a raging lion which gluts its rage before its hunger, now upon one now upon another of a herd. With a sword in his hand Gerbino cut down one Saracen after another, and killed many of them. As the fire increased in the burning ship, he ordered his sailors to take what spoils they could, and then left it after a very joyless victory over his enemies.

Afterwards, he recovered the lady's body from the sea, and wept many tears over it for a long time. He then returned to Sicily, and buried her

honourably on a tiny island almost opposite Trapani, called Ustica; and from there went home in the greatest sorrow.

When the King of Tunis heard the news, he sent ambassadors dressed in black to King Guiglielmo, to complain of the breach of faith and to relate what had happened. King Guiglielmo was greatly angered, and, seeing no other way of doing the justice they asked of him, he arrested Gerbino. And although every one of his barons begged him not to do so, the King himself condemned Gerbino to death, and had his head cut off in his own presence; preferring to be left without a grandson rather than be held a faithless King.

Thus, as I said, within a few days the two lovers died a violent death without enjoying any fruit of their love.

Fifth Tale

ISABETTA'S BROTHERS MURDER HER LOVER. HE APPEARS TO HER IN A DREAM, AND TELLS HER WHERE HE IS BURIED. SHE SECRETLY DIGS UP THE HEAD AND PUTS IT IN A POT OF BASIL. FOR A LONG TIME SHE WEEPS OVER IT EVERY DAY; HER BROTHERS TAKE IT AWAY, AND SOON AFTER SHE DIES OF GRIEF

WHEN Elisa had finished her tale, the king praised it, and then ordered Filomena to follow next. After a piteous sigh of compassion over the fate of the hapless Gerbino and his lady, she began as follows:

Gracious ladies, my tale will not be of persons so noble in rank as those Elisa has told us about, but perhaps the tale will be no less piteous. The mention of Messina brought it to my mind, for there it happened.

In Messina, then, were three brothers, merchants, who became rich men after the death of their father (a man from San Gimignano); and with them lived their sister, Isabetta, a beautiful and accomplished girl, who for some reason had not married. Besides the three brothers there

was a young man named Lorenzo in their shop, who overlooked all their business. He was handsome and graceful, and when Isabetta had seen him a few times she fell in love with him. And Lorenzo likewise, after meeting her a few times, put aside his other love affairs, and gave himself up to loving her. And, as they each pleased the other, it was not long before they were certain of it, and did what each of them desired above everything.

This went on for some time with pleasure to them both, but one night when Isabetta was going to the room where Lorenzo slept, she was seen by the eldest of the three brothers, although she did not see him. He was a prudent young man, and although the affair angered him, he restrained himself and said and did nothing then, but waited until the morning, turning over various plans in his mind. When the day came he told his brothers what he had observed between Isabetta and Lorenzo the previous night. After long debate, they agreed to pass it over in silence and to pretend that they had seen and knew nothing, in order that no shame might fall upon them or their sister, until a time came when without harm or inconvenience to themselves, they could wipe away the shame before it went further.

With this view, they went on joking and laughing with Lorenzo as usual, and one day, under pretext of recreation, they all three rode out of the city, taking Lorenzo with them. When they came to a very remote and solitary place which was suitable, they murdered the unsuspecting Lorenzo and buried him in such a way that no one would notice it. They then returned to Messina, and gave out that they had sent Lorenzo away on business, which was easily believed since they had often before sent him away in such a manner.

When Lorenzo did not return, Isabetta often and earnestly asked after him (for his absence was very grievous to her) and one day when she was asking eagerly after him, one of the brothers said to her:

“What do you mean? What business have you with Lorenzo that you keep asking about him? If you ask about him again, we’ll give you a fitting answer.”

This grieved and saddened Isabetta, who dreaded and did not know

what might have happened. She asked no more questions, but at night she often called piteously upon Lorenzo and begged him to come to her; sometimes she would lament his absence with tears and then suddenly become more cheerful and await his return. One night she had wept bitterly because Lorenzo did not return and after her tears, fell asleep, and then Lorenzo appeared to her in a dream, his face all pale and disordered and his clothes ragged and torn. And she thought he said:

“O Isabetta, you do nothing but call upon me and grieve for my long absence and accuse me with your tears. But I cannot return to you, because I was murdered by your brothers the last day you saw me.”

He then told her the place where he was buried, and said she must not call upon him nor wait for him longer, and so disappeared.

When the girl awoke, she believed in the vision, and wept bitterly. She got up in the morning, but said nothing about it to her brothers, for she had determined to go to the place mentioned and to see whether her dream was true. She had permission to go out of the town, for recreation, with a woman who had lived with them and knew all her affairs, and so set out for the place as soon as she could. Putting aside the dry leaves there, she dug where the ground seemed softer. She had only dug a little way when she came upon the body of her unhappy lover, which was not yet corrupted or rotten; and thereby knew that her vision was true. Sadder than any woman living, she realised that this was not the time to weep. If she had been able, she would have taken away the whole body to give it fitting burial. But, seeing she could not do this, with a knife she severed the head from the shoulders as well as she could. She reburied the rest of the body and wrapped the severed head in a cloth and gave it to the woman to carry. Then she returned home, without anyone having seen her.

She shut herself up in her room with the head, weeping over it long and bitterly until she had washed it all over with her tears, and kissed every part of it a thousand times. She then took a large handsome pot, the kind used to grow marjoram or basil, and put the head in it wrapped in fine cloth. She covered it with earth and planted several sprigs of the finest Salerno basil, which she watered only with her tears or rose water

or orange water. She then spent all her time near it, and wooed it with her desire since it contained her Lorenzo. And when she had looked at it a long time, she bent over it and wept until all the basil was wet with her tears.

From long and continual care and from the richness of soil resulting from the decaying head, the basil grew thickly and very scented. And, as the girl went on in this way, she was observed by several neighbours. They went to the brothers, who themselves had been surprised by the alteration in her looks and had noticed how her eyes seemed to be escaping from her head, and said to them:

“We are certain that she does the same thing every day.”

The brothers several times reproved her to no avail, and then secretly had the pot taken away from her. When she found it gone, she kept asking for it insistently. It was not given back to her, and with weeping and tears she at last fell ill, and throughout her illness asked for nothing but her pot of basil.

The brothers were greatly surprised by this, and so wanted to see what was in the pot. They took out the earth and saw the cloth and the head, which had not so rotted away but that they recognised it as Lorenzo's by the curled hair. This amazed them still more, and made them fear that the murder might be discovered. They therefore buried the head, and withdrawing their money, left Messina and went to Naples. The girl continued to weep and to ask for her pot of basil, and so weeping, died. And this was the end of her hapless love. But after a certain time the whole affair became known to many people, one of whom made the song which is still sung:

“Wicked was he that took away my pot of flowers.”



Sixth Tale

ANDREUOLA LOVES GABRIOTTO. SHE TELLS HIM A DREAM, AND HE TELLS HER ANOTHER. HE SUDDENLY DIES IN HER ARMS, AND WHILE SHE AND HER SERVANT ARE CARRYING HIM TO HIS HOUSE THEY ARE ARRESTED BY THE POLICE, AND SHE RELATES WHAT HAD HAPPENED. THE MAGISTRATE WANTS TO LIE WITH HER; SHE WILL NOT ALLOW IT. HER FATHER HEARS ABOUT IT, ESTABLISHES HER INNOCENCE AND GETS HER RELEASED. SHE REFUSES TO REMAIN IN THE WORLD AND BECOMES A NUN

FILOMENA'S tale delighted the ladies, because they had often heard the song sung, but had never been able to find out, for all their questioning, what was the occasion of its being written. But, when the king heard the end, he ordered Pamfilo to follow in his turn, who spoke thus:

The dream related in the previous tale gives me the opportunity to tell one which contains two dreams relating to future happenings, as the dream in the former tale related to the past. And scarcely had the two dreams been told by the persons who saw them, than they both came true. And yet, amorous ladies, you must know that everybody living sees various things in dreams which seem quite true when he is asleep, but when he wakes he thinks some true, some probable and some quite beyond the truth; and yet many are found to come true.

Wherefore many people pay as much attention to a dream as they would to anything they saw when awake; and so are depressed or made happy by their dreams, according to whether they are favourable or not. On the other hand, some people have no faith in dreams until they find themselves in the danger of which their dreams had warned them. I praise neither of these sorts of people, because all dreams are not true, neither are they all false. Everyone of us can see for himself that they are not all true; but Filomena's tale shows, and I intend by my tale to show, that all dreams are not false. Therefore I think we should not fear

any dream which is contrary to virtuous life and actions, and should not let it divert us from good intentions. But nobody should believe or take comfort from dreams which favour perverse and wicked deeds; yet give complete faith to dreams which are contrary to such things. But let me come to my tale.

In the city of Brescia there was formerly a gentleman named Messer Negro da Ponte Carrao, who among other children had a daughter named Andreuola. She was young and beautiful and unmarried, and fell in love with a neighbour called Gabriotto, a man of low estate but excellent behaviour, handsome and a pleasant man. By the help of a servant in the house, Gabriotto not only learned that Andreuola was in love with him, but many times met her in her father's garden to their great mutual delight.

So that nothing but death might separate them from their delicious love, they secretly became man and wife, and so carried on their love affair in secret. One night when the girl was asleep, she had a dream. She thought she was in the garden with Gabriotto and held him in her arms, to the joy of them both. While they were there she saw something dark and terrible, whose shape she could not distinguish, come out of his body. She thought this shape seized Gabriotto and clasped him violently in its arms against his will, and plunged with him underground; after which she saw neither of them again. This caused her such inexpressible anguish that she awoke, and although on awakening she was happy to find it was only a dream, yet it made her afraid.

When she found that Gabriotto wanted to come to her the next night, she did all she could to persuade him from coming that evening; but, finding that he wanted to come and being unwilling to make him feel suspicious, she received him that night in the garden. It was summer time, and after picking red and white roses, they went to sit down by a clear and beautiful fountain which was in the garden.

After they had taken their delight, Gabriotto asked her why she had not wanted him to come there. The girl then told him the dream she had had the night before and how it had made her anxious. When Gabriotto heard this, he laughed, and said it was great folly to put any faith

in dreams, because they were the result of excess or lack of food, while every day showed how false they were.

"If I followed dreams," he went on, "I should not have come here, less on account of your dream than of one I had myself a few nights ago. I dreamed I was in a beautiful and delightful forest hunting, and there I caught the most beautiful and charming little she-goat you ever saw. She was white as snow, and very soon she became so fond of me that she would never leave me. And I thought she was so dear to me that, to prevent her leaving me, I put a gold ring round her neck and held her by a chain of gold.

"After this I dreamed that I was resting beside the she-goat with my head against her, when suddenly there appeared a coal-black greyhound, hungry and terrifying to look at, which came towards me. I made no resistance, and I thought the greyhound thrust its muzzle into my left side and gnawed at it until it reached the heart, which it tore out of me to carry away. This made me feel such anguish that my dream broke, and as I awoke I clapped my hand to my side to make sure that nothing had been torn from it. But, as I found nothing wrong, I laughed at myself for looking.

"But what, after all, is the meaning of all this? I have seen similar and more terrible things before now, without the slightest thing different happening to me. So let them go, and let us enjoy ourselves."

The girl had been frightened by her own dream but was much more frightened when she heard his. But she hid her fear as well as she could, in order not to annoy Gabriotto. As they kissed and embraced each other, she felt a vague anxiety, and kept looking into his face more often than usual and gazing about the garden to see if something black was coming. And as they were doing this, Gabriotto heaved a deep sigh, clutched her and said:

"Ah, my soul! Help me, I am dying."

And so saying, he fell down on the grass. Andreuola lifted him on to her lap as he lay there and exclaimed, almost weeping:

"O my sweet lord, what is it you feel?"

Gabriotto made no reply, but gasped and broke out into perspira-

tion all over, and very soon died. Everyone can imagine how grievous and painful this was to the girl, who loved him more than herself. She wept over him and called to him in vain. She touched him all over his body, and found every part was cold; and so knew he was dead. Not knowing what to do or say, she went all in tears and agony of mind to call the maid servant who was her confidante in this love affair, and told her of this misfortune. After they had wept pitifully together for some time over Gabriotto's death, Andreuola said to the servant:

"Since God has taken him away from me, I do not intend to remain alive. But before I kill myself we must act in such a way as to save my honour and to conceal the secret love between us; and we must also bury the body from which the gracious soul has departed."

"My child," said the maid servant, "do not talk of killing yourself. You have lost him here and if you kill yourself you will lose him in the next world, because you will go to hell, and I am sure his soul is not there, for he was a good young man. It is much better to take comfort and to think of helping his soul with prayers and other pious deeds, in case he needs them for any sin he has committed. The quickest way to bury him is in this garden, which nobody will ever know, because no one knew he came here. If you do not want to do that, let us put him outside the garden and leave him; someone will find him tomorrow morning and take him home, and his relatives will bury him."

Although the girl was full of bitterness and continued weeping, yet she listened to the servant's advice. The first part she rejected, and replied to the second as follows:

"God forbid that a man so dear to me, my beloved husband, should be buried like a dog or left in the street. He has had my tears and he shall have those of his relatives, if possible. I have thought already what we must do."

She immediately sent the servant for a roll of silk stuff she had in a chest. She stretched it on the ground and laid Gabriotto's body on it with a pillow under his head. With many tears she closed his eyes and mouth, and made a garland of roses for his head and covered him with the roses they had plucked together, and then said to the servant:

"It is not far from here to the door of his house. You and I can carry him there as we have arranged him, and we can leave him at the door. It will soon be day, and then he will be taken in. And although this will be no consolation to his relatives, it will be some small pleasure to me, in whose arms he died."

So saying, she once more shed abundant tears on his face, and for a long time wept for him. The day was then near; and at the servant's urgent entreaties, she stood up, took from her finger the ring with which Gabriotto had wedded her and put it on his finger, saying plaintively:

"My dear lord, if your soul now sees my tears, or if any feeling or consciousness remains in your body after the departure of your soul, receive kindly this last gift from her whom you loved so much when you were alive."

So saying, she fell down swooning beside him. After she had recovered, she stood up, and she and the servant took the piece of silk on which the body was lying, went out of the garden, and made their way towards his house. As they went along, it chanced that they were met and arrested with the dead body by some of the watch who happened to be going that way. Andreuola, who was more eager to die than to live, recognized the police, and said frankly to them:

"I know who you are, and I know it is useless for me to try to fly. I am ready to go with you before the Magistrate, and to tell him all about it. But, if I obey you, let none of you dare to touch me nor remove anything from this body, if he does not want to be accused by me."

So nobody touched her, and they all went to the palace with Gabriotto's body. When the Magistrate was informed, he got up and had her brought into his room, and questioned her about what had happened. He had some doctors examine the body to see if the man had died of poison or otherwise, and they all said he had not, but that a tumour near the heart had burst and suffocated him. Hearing this and realising that she was guilty of a small offence, he tried to make her give him what she could not sell, and told her he would set her free if she would yield to his desires. But his words were of no avail, and, contrary to all decency, he tried to force her. But Andreuola, aroused and strengthened by anger,

defended herself vigorously, and rebuffed him with high scornful words.

Next day, Messer Negro was told about it. Grieved to the point of death he went to the palace with many of his friends, and there made enquiries about it of the Magistrate, and sadly asked that his daughter might be returned to him. The Magistrate wanted to confess that he tried to force her, before she accused him. So he praised the girl's constancy, and then admitted what he had done. Wherefore, seeing she was so virtuous, he had fallen in love with her, and was willing to marry her, if it pleased her father and herself, although she had been married to a man of low estate. While they were talking in this way, Andreuola came to her father, and threw herself weeping before him, saying:

"Father, it is not necessary for me to tell you the story of my love and its sad fate, for I am certain you have heard all about it. With all humility I ask your pardon for the fault I committed in taking as my husband the man I loved, without your knowledge. I do not ask this favour of you that my life may be saved, but so that I may die as your daughter and not as your enemy."

So saying, she fell at her father's feet. Messer Negro was old, and a man of gentle and kindly nature; and when he heard these words he began to weep, and tenderly raised his daughter to her feet, and said:

"Daughter, I should have been happier if you had taken a husband I thought fitting for you; but if you took a man whom you loved, he ought to have pleased me too. But it grieves me that from lack of confidence in me you concealed him from me, and still more that you have lost him before I knew about him. But, since this is as it is, to please you I will honour him as my son-in-law now he is dead, as I would gladly have honoured him in his lifetime."

Turning then to his sons and relatives, he bade them prepare great and honourable obsequies for Gabriotto. Meanwhile, the young man's relatives and nearly all the other men and women of the town had heard the news, and had gathered there. So the body was laid out in the courtyard on Andreuola's silk cloth and with all the roses, and was bewailed not only by her and his women relatives but by almost all the women of the town and many men. He was then taken from the courtyard like

a lord, not like a common man, on the shoulders of the noblest citizens, and carried to his grave with the utmost honour.

A few days later the Magistrate followed up his proposal, but when Messer Negro spoke of it to his daughter, she would not hear of it. But, desiring in all things to please her father, she and her servant became nuns in a convent famous for its sanctity, and there lived virtuously for many years.

Seventh Tale

SIMONA LOVES PASQUINO. THEY ARE TOGETHER IN A GARDEN, AND PASQUINO RUBS A LEAF OF SAGE ON HIS TEETH AND FALLS DEAD. SIMONA IS ARRESTED AND, WHILE EXPLAINING TO THE JUDGE HOW PASQUINO DIED, SHE RUBS ONE OF THE SAME LEAVES ON HER TEETH, AND DIES TOO

PAMFILO finished his tale, and the king, showing no compassion for Andreuola, looked at Emilia and signed to her that it was his pleasure she should continue next after those who had spoken. Without any delay, she began as follows:

My dear friends, Pamfilo's tale induces me to tell one which is in no respect like his, except that the person I shall speak of lost her lover in a garden, like Andreuola. She was arrested also like Andreuola, but escaped from the Court, not by force or virtue, but by an unexpected death. As we have often said, love frequently inhabits the houses of noblemen and yet does not scorn the dwellings of the poor, and there displays his power just as he makes himself dreaded by the rich as a most powerful lord. This will be seen to some extent from my tale. In telling it I shall return to our own city, from which we have departed today in relating different events in different parts of the world.

Not long ago there lived in Florence a girl named Simona, quite beautiful and charming for her state of life. Although she had to earn

her own bread by spinning wool, she was not so poor in spirit but that she longed to receive love into her soul. Love was born in her from the words and deeds of a young man, of the same state of life as herself, who was sent by his master to bring her wool to spin.

Love entered her soul through the pleasing aspect of this young man, who was named Pasquino; she greatly desired yet did not expect that it would go further, and, with every thread of wool she span she breathed a thousand sighs hotter than fire as she thought of the young man who had brought her the wool to spin. On the other hand he became very solicitous that his master's wool should be well spun, and came to see her more often than any other worker, as if she and nobody else were spinning all his master's cloth.

Thus, as he was always coming and she was anxious to have him come, it naturally happened that he became more ardent and she got rid of her accustomed shame and fear; and so they came together for their mutual pleasure. They liked each other so much that they contrived to meet each other without waiting to be invited. And as this went on from day to day increasing, Pasquino happened to say to Simona that above all things he wanted her to come with him to a garden, where they could be together more freely and with less suspicion.

Simona agreed to this. And one Sunday after dinner she told her father that she wanted to go to the festival of San Gallo, but instead went with a friend named Lagina to the garden Pasquino had mentioned. He was there with a friend named Puccino, who was nicknamed Stramba. A love affair was quickly struck up between Stramba and Lagina, who remained in one part of the garden, while the other two went off by themselves.

In that part of the garden where Pasquino and Simona were walking, there was a large and beautiful head of sage. They sat down beside it and talked gaily together, especially about a picnic they were planning to have in the garden. As they talked, Pasquino turned to the sage plant and picked off one of its leaves, with which he began to rub his teeth and gums, saying that sage cleaned them wonderfully from everything which might remain after eating. And while he was rubbing his teeth, he went

back to the picnic which they had been discussing before. He had not been talking long when his countenance altered, and soon after that he lost sight and speech, and in a short time died.

Simona then began to weep and scream and call for Stramba and Lagina. They came running up, and when Stramba saw that Pasquino was dead and already swollen up with dark patches on his face and body, he screamed out:

“You wicked woman, you’ve poisoned him!”

And he made such a disturbance that many of the people living near the garden heard him. They came running towards the noise, and found Pasquino dead and swollen up, and Stramba lamenting and accusing Simona of having poisoned him, and Simona almost beside herself with grief at the sudden death of her lover and quite unable to defend herself, so they all believed what Stramba said. They therefore seized the weeping Simona, and took her to the Magistrate’s palace.

There Stramba and two other friends of Pasquino’s, named Atticciato and Malagevole, preferred the accusation; and the judge immediately began to examine the case. He could not see how Simona could have committed a crime or be guilty, and, as he could not understand her explanations, he wanted to see the dead body and the place and manner of death in her presence, and there hear what she had to say. So without any disturbance he went with her to the place where Pasquino’s body still lay, swollen up like a tub, and went up to it marvelling at his death, and asked her how it had happened. She went up to the sage bush and there related the whole story, and to demonstrate what she was saying she copied Pasquino, and rubbed her teeth with a leaf of sage.

Stramba and Atticciato and the other friends and companions of Pasquino scoffed at all this in the judge’s presence, and continued urging her guilt and clamouring for nothing less than that she should be burned alive as a punishment for her crime. The poor girl in her confusion and distress at the death of her lover and with fear at the punishment asked for by Stramba, went on rubbing her teeth with the sage; and the same misfortune happened to her as to Pasquino, to the amazement of everybody present.

O happy spirits, whose ardent love and mortal life ended on the same day! And yet more happy if you went together to the same place! And happiest of all, if there is love in that place, and you love there as you did here! But in the judgment of us who remain here alive, most happy of all was the soul of Simona, whose innocence Fortune would not allow to suffer from the accusations of Stramba, Atticciato and Malagevole (no doubt wool-carders or even baser men), nor could find any better way of saving her from infamy than to involve her in the same fate as her lover, and to let her follow the beloved spirit of her Pasquino!

The judge was stupefied by this accident, as indeed were all those present, and, not knowing what to say, was silent for a long time. At last, recovering his wits, he said:

“Plainly this sage is poisonous, which is not usual with sage. Pull it up by the roots and burn it so that it cannot harm anyone else in the same way.”

Those who had charge of the garden immediately did this in the judge's presence. And they had no sooner plucked up this head of sage than the reason for the death of the two poor wretches became apparent. Under the sage was a huge toad whose venomous breath had poisoned the sage. Nobody was anxious to go near the toad, so they built a large brushwood fire all round and burned the toad and the sage. Thus ended the judge's enquiry into poor Pasquino's death. Stramba, Atticciato, Guccio Imbratta and Malagevole took up the swollen bodies of Pasquino and Simona and buried them in the church of San Paolo, of which perhaps they were parishioners.

Eighth Tale

GIROLAMO IS IN LOVE WITH SALVESTRA. COMPELLED BY HIS MOTHER'S ENTREATIES, HE GOES TO PARIS. WHEN HE RETURNS, HE FINDS HER MARRIED; HE SECRETLY ENTERS HER HOUSE AND DIES THERE. HIS BODY IS TAKEN TO A CHURCH, AND SALVESTRA DIES BESIDE HIM, AND BOTH ARE BURIED IN THE SAME GRAVE

WHEN Emily had finished, Neifile began at the king's command.

Most worthy ladies, in my opinion there are some persons who think they know more than other people, and in fact know less. They oppose their opinions not only to the advice of other men but even to the nature of things; and through their presumptuousness great evils have occurred, but never any good. Among all natural things, love least of all will endure contrary advice or action, for its nature is such that it can more quickly consume itself than be removed by foresight. So it occurs to me to tell you the tale of a woman who tried to be wiser than she was or than was befitting her or than the case in which she tried to show her wisdom needed; she attempted to expel love from an enamoured heart (a love set there perhaps by heavenly influence), and succeeded in driving out love and life at one and the same time from her son's body.

As old stories tell, there lived long ago in our city a very great and rich merchant, named Leonardo Sighieri, who had by his wife one son, named Girolamo, after whose birth he departed this life, leaving all his affairs in order. The child's guardians and mother brought him up well and scrupulously. The boy grew up with other children of the neighbourhood, and became attached to a girl of his own age, the daughter of a tailor. When he was older this familiarity developed into such love that Girolamo was never happy unless he saw her, and she loved him as much as he loved her.

The boy's mother of course noticed it, and often scolded and punished him for it; and as Girolamo could not be restrained she complained to the

guardians. And on account of her son's wealth she behaved like someone trying to turn a plum into an orange, and said to them:

"Our boy, though only just fourteen, is so much in love with a tailor's daughter, named Salvestra, that if we do not take him away from her, he may one of these days marry her without anyone's knowledge, and then I shall never be happy again. Or else he will pine away when he sees her married to someone else. So I think that to avoid this you should send him to some distant place on business among our factors, and when he gets away from her he will get her out of his mind, and we can then find him some well-born girl as a wife."

The guardians agreed, and said they would do what they could. They called the boy into the counting-house, and one of them talked kindly to him as follows:

"My boy, you are now grown up, and it is right that you should begin to learn something about your affairs. We should be very glad if you would go to Paris for a time, where a great part of your wealth is employed in trade; moreover, you will become more polished and accomplished than you can here, for you will frequent lords and barons and gentlemen and learn their habits, and then you can come back here."

The boy listened carefully, and replied that he did not want to go because he thought he would be as well off in Florence as anyone else. The good men then reproved him, but being unable to get any other reply from him, went and told his mother. She was extremely angry, not because he would not go to Paris, but on account of his love, and attacked him violently.

Then, soothing him down with soft words, she flattered him and begged him to do what his tutors wanted, to please her. And at last he agreed that he would go away for one year only.

So Girolamo went to Paris deeply in love, and by being put off from time to time was kept away two years. He then returned home more in love than ever, and found his Salvestra married to a young man who made tents, which filled him with grief. But, seeing that there was nothing else to do, he tried to possess his soul in peace. He discovered where her house was, and, as young men do when they are in love, he began to pass

to and fro in front of it, thinking that she had no more forgotten him than he her.

However, it turned out otherwise. She no more remembered him than if she had never seen him; or if she did recollect anything, she did not show it, but rather the contrary. In a very short time the young man discovered this, to his great grief. He nevertheless did everything he could to recall himself to her; but as he seemed to achieve nothing, he determined to speak to her himself, even at the risk of his life.

He found out the arrangement of her house from a neighbour, and one evening when she and her husband were out on a pleasure trip with their neighbours, he secretly went in and hid himself behind some rolls of canvas. There he waited until they came home and went to bed; and when the husband was asleep, he crept to the place where he had seen Salvestra lie down, and, putting his hand on her breast, said softly:

“O my sweet, are you asleep?”

The girl, who was not asleep, was about to scream, but the young man said quickly:

“For the love of God, don’t scream, I am your Girolamo.”

Hearing this, she began to tremble, and said:

“For God’s sake, go away, Girolamo. The time has gone when in our childhood we could be lovers. I am married, as you see, and it is wrong for me to think of any man but my husband. So in the name of God I beg you will go away. If my husband heard you, even suppose nothing worse happened, I should never live in peace and quiet with him again, whereas now he loves me, and we live happily together.”

The young man felt a sharp pang at these words; and he reminded her of past times and his love which had not been quenched by absence, and mingled entreaties with promises; but yet obtained nothing. So, longing for death, he finally asked as a reward for his great love that she would let him lie beside her until he was warm, since he was frozen with waiting for her. He promised her he would say nothing about it and not touch her and go away as soon as he was a little warmer. Salvestra was a little sorry for him, and on these conditions agreed to what he asked.

The young man then lay down beside her without touching her. He

gathered into one fixed thought his long love for her and her coldness and his lost hopes, and made up his mind to die. Without saying a word, he clenched his fists, held his breath, and died beside her.

After some time, the girl began to wonder at his stillness, and, fearing that her husband might awake, she said:

“Now, Girolamo, why don’t you go away?”

Not getting any reply, she thought he must have gone to sleep. So she stretched out her hand to wake him up and began to shake him, but she found him as cold as ice, which greatly amazed her. She touched him again, and, finding he did not move, realised that he was dead. So there she lay in great distress, not knowing what to do.

At last she determined to find out what her husband would say ought to be done if this had happened to someone else. So she woke him up, and told him what had just happened to her as if it had happened to somebody else, and then asked him what he would do if it had happened to her. The good man replied that he thought the dead body should be secretly carried home and left there, without any blame falling on the woman, who in his opinion had committed no sin. Then the young woman said:

“That is what we must do.”

She then took his hand, and made him feel the dead man. The husband jumped up in amazement and lighted a light; and without entering into any explanation with his wife he dressed the body in its own clothes and, aided by his innocence, at once lifted it on to his shoulders and carried it to the door of Girolamo’s house, where he left it.

Next morning when Girolamo was found lying dead before his own house, there was a great disturbance, and much uproar from the mother. He was carefully examined, and no wound or bruise was found upon him; so the doctors agreed that he had died of grief, as indeed he had.

The dead body was then carried to a church, and the grieving mother and many other women, both relatives and neighbours, began to weep and lament over him, as is customary with us. And while they were bewailing him, the good man in whose house Girolamo had died, said to Salvestra:

“Throw a cloak over your head, and go to the church where they have

taken Girolamo. Mingle with the women, and find out what they are saying about all this, and I will do the same among the men, so that we can find out if anything is being said about us."

The girl had become compassionate too late; and this proposal pleased her, because she wanted to see the dead man to whom she would not give one kiss in his lifetime; and so she went.

It is a marvellous thing to think how difficult it is to examine into the power of love! The heart, which Girolamo's good fortune could not move, was touched by his misery. When, hidden under her cloak among the women and girls, she saw his dead face, the old flame flared up and such pity came suddenly upon her that she did not rest until she got close to the body. There she uttered a shrill scream and threw herself on the young man, whose face she did not drench in tears, because no sooner had she touched him than grief took away her life as it had taken away the young man's life.

But, as the women crowded round to comfort her and to tell her to get up (although they did not know who she was), and still she did not get up, they tried to lift her and found her motionless. And when they did lift her up they discovered at one and the same time that she was Salvestra and that she was dead. And all the women who were there were overcome with pity and began to lament more loudly than before. The news ran through the church to the men outside and came to the husband's ears. He wept a long time without listening to comfort or consolation from anyone, and then related to those about him the story of what had happened the night before between his wife and the young man. Thus, everyone discovered the reason for the death of the two young people, and grieved for it.

They then took the dead girl and dressed her as dead bodies are customarily decked out, and laid her on the same bier with Girolamo. After long lamentation they were both buried in the same grave; and thus they whom love could not join together became inseparable companions in death.

Ninth Tale

MESSER GUIGLIELMO ROSSIGLIONE MAKES HIS WIFE EAT THE HEART OF MESSER GUIGLIELMO GUARDASTAGNO, HER LOVER, WHOM HE HAD SLAIN. WHEN SHE FINDS IT OUT, SHE THROWS HERSELF FROM A HIGH WINDOW AND KILLS HERSELF, AND IS BURIED WITH HER LOVER.

NEIFILE finished her tale, which aroused pity in the hearers, and then the king who had no intention of taking away Dioneo's privilege, began his tale, since he was the only one left to speak.

Pitiful ladies, since you are so much moved by sad happenings to lovers, you will feel as much pity at the tale I have prepared as at that we have just heard, because those I shall speak of were of nobler rank and their misfortune more terrible.

You must know then, that, according to the Provençals, there were once two noble knights of Provence, both with castles and vassals, one of whom was named Messer Guiglielmo Rossiglione and the other, Messer Guiglielmo Guardastagno. Both were valiant men at arms and therefore loved each other; and they were wont always to go together to jousts and tourneys and other feats of arms, bearing the same device.

As each dwelt in his castle, about ten miles apart, it happened that Messer Guiglielmo Guardastagno—despite the brotherhood of arms and friendship between them—fell deeply in love with Messer Guiglielmo's beautiful and charming wife. He behaved in such a way that the lady found it out, and, as she knew him to be a most valiant knight, she fell in love with him too, so much so that there was nothing she desired nor loved more, and above all wished to be wooed by him. This very soon happened, and, as they loved each other very much, they often came together.

But they were not sufficiently discreet in their behaviour, and the husband found it out. He was so much enraged that his old love for Guardastagno changed to mortal hatred; but he kept his hatred better

concealed than the lovers had kept their love, and determined to kill Guardastagno.

While Rossiglione was in this mood a great tournament was proclaimed in France, which Rossiglione immediately announced to Guardastagno, asking him to come and discuss whether they should go to it and how. To which Guardastagno cheerfully replied that he would come to sup with him the next day without fail.

Rossiglione then thought that the time had come to kill him. Next day he armed, and went to horse with some of his followers, and laid an ambush in a wood about a mile from his castle, through which he knew Guardastagno had to pass. After waiting for a time they saw the knight riding towards them unarmed with two unarmed attendants, like a man who suspected no danger. When he came up to the ambush, Rossiglione rushed at him furiously, lance in hand, shouting: "You are a dead man," and so saying thrust his lance through the knight's chest.

Guardastagno was pierced by the lance before he could make any defence or utter a word, and fell dead. His two servants, without recognising the enemy who had done this, turned their horses' heads and galloped back to their lord's castle as fast as they could. Rossiglione dismounted, cut open Guardastagno's breast with a dagger, tore out his heart with his own hands and, wrapping up the heart in a lance pennon, gave it to one of the attendants to carry. He ordered them not to dare to speak a word of what had occurred and then remounted his horse and returned to his castle as night fell.

The lady had heard that Guardastagno was to sup there that evening, and was awaiting him with the greatest desire. She was greatly surprised when she found he did not come, and said to her husband:

"How does it happen, Messer, that Guardastagno has not come?"

"Lady," replied the husband, "I have heard from him that he cannot get here until tomorrow."

The lady was a little angry at this. Rossiglione dismounted, and called for the cook, to whom he said:

"Take this boar's heart and make the best and most delicious dish of it you can; and when I am at table, send it to me in a silver dish."

The cook expended all his art and care on the dish, minced up the heart and spiced it, and made it into a most delicious dish.

At the usual time Messer Guiglielmo and his wife sat down at table. Food was served, but he ate little, for his thoughts were occupied by the crime he had just committed. The cook sent him up the dressed heart and he had it set before his wife, praising the dish to her while he pretended to be a little out of sorts himself. The lady had a good appetite, tasted the dish, and thought it good; and therefore ate it all up. When the knight saw that his wife had finished the heart, he said:

"Lady, what did you think of that dish?"

"My lord," she replied, "in good faith, it pleased me greatly."

"God be my helper," said the knight, "I can easily believe you; nor do I marvel that what gave you so much pleasure when alive should please you when dead."

At this the lady was silent for a moment, and then said:

"How? What is it you have made me eat?"

"What you have eaten," said the knight, "is verily the heart of Messer Guiglielmo Guardastagno, whom you, like a faithless woman, loved so dearly. And you may be certain that it is he, because I tore the heart from his breast with these hands, a short time before I returned home."

No need to ask whether the lady was in anguish when she heard this about the man whom she loved so much. After a little time she said:

"You have acted like a base and treacherous knight. If I, under no compulsion from him, made him lord of my love and thereby did you wrong, I should have borne the penalty, and not he. But, please God, no other food shall ever follow a food so noble as the heart of a knight so courteous and valiant as Messer Guiglielmo Guardastagno."

And jumping to her feet she ran to a window which was behind her and threw herself out of it without the slightest hesitation. This window was high above the ground so that the lady was not only killed by her fall but smashed to pieces.

Messer Guiglielmo was stunned by this event and felt he had done wrong, and, dreading the revenge of the Count of Provence and the peasants, he saddled his horses and fled. Next day the whole country-

side heard what had happened. The two bodies were taken up by the inhabitants of Messer Guiglielmo Guardastagno's castle and by the inhabitants of the lady's castle. With great grief and lamentation they were buried in the church of the lady's own castle and laid in the same grave, and over them were written verses telling who they were and the manner and the reason of their death.

Tenth Tale

A DOCTOR'S WIFE THINKS HER LOVER IS DEAD AND PUTS HIM INTO A CHEST WHICH IS CARRIED OFF BY TWO USURERS. HE WAKES UP AND IS ARRESTED AS A THIEF. THE LADY'S SERVANT TELLS THE MAGISTRATE HOW SHE HAD PUT HIM INTO THE CHEST, UNKNOWN TO THE USURERS; HE ESCAPES HANGING, AND THE MONEY-LENDERS ARE FINED FOR STEALING THE CHEST

WHEN the king had finished his tale, Dioneo alone was left to speak, so, at the king's command, he began thus:

The miseries told of unfortunate lovers, ladies, have so saddened my eyes and breast (and yours) that I have longed for the end to come. Now, thank God, they are done with—unless I should add another tale on this dreary topic, which God forbid—so without entering on such painful subjects, I shall begin on a better and more cheerful topic, which perhaps will serve as a guide to the tales we tell tomorrow.

You must know, fairest ladies, that not long ago there lived in Salerno a very great surgeon named Maestro Mazzeo della Montagna. Although he had reached extreme old age, he married a beautiful and noble girl of his city, whom he kept supplied with rich clothes and jewels and everything which could please a woman, beyond any other woman in the town. True, she was rather cold most of the time, since she was not well covered in the doctor's bed.

You remember Messer Ricciardo di Chinzica and how he taught his wife to keep holiday. Well, in the same way, this doctor told his wife that very many days were needed to recover from the strain of lying with a woman and the like twaddle; so that she lived in the greatest discontent. She was a prudent and high-minded woman, so, to save the household goods she determined to turn highwayman and spoil others. She looked at many young men, and at last one so occupied her mind that she set all her hopes and soul and possessions upon him. This the young man perceived, and, as she pleased him mightily, he returned her love.

This young man was named Ruggieri da Jeroli, of noble birth but of such a vicious life and blameworthy behaviour that he had not one friend or relative left who wished him well or ever wanted to see him again. He was ill-famed throughout Salerno for robberies and other vile deeds, about which the lady cared little since he pleased her for other reasons. And so she arranged with one of her maid servants in such a way that he and she could be together. After they had taken their delight, the lady began to deplore his past life and begged him for love of her to refrain from such things. To help him to do this she gave him sums of money from time to time.

They went on in this way very prudently for some time, when it happened that there came into the doctor's hands a patient with a diseased leg. After examination the doctor told the relatives that if a certain decayed bone were not taken out he would either lose his leg or his life; if the bone were removed he might recover, but he could only consider him as in a desperate condition. And his relatives acquiesced in this.

The doctor saw that the patient would not allow the operation and would be unable to endure the pain unless he had an opiate. He decided to perform the operation in the evening, and that morning he had distilled a certain preparation of his which when drunk would put a man to sleep for as long a period as he thought necessary for the operation. The preparation was brought to the house, and the doctor put it in his bedroom, without telling anybody what it was.

That evening, just as the doctor was going to this patient, there came a message from certain of his closest friends in Amalfi to say that nothing

must stop him from going there immediately, because there had been a big riot and many people had been wounded. The doctor postponed the operation on the leg until the next morning, went on board a small boat, and set out for Amalfi. His wife, knowing he would not be back home that night, had Ruggieri brought in secretly as usual, put him in her bedroom and there locked him in until such time as the other persons in the house should have gone to bed.

While Ruggieri was waiting for the lady in her bedroom, there came upon him a violent thirst, either from the exercise he had taken that day or from eating salt meat or perhaps from habit. He saw on the window-sill the bottle of opiate which the doctor had prepared for the sick man, and, thinking it was drinking water, he lifted it to his lips and drank it off. In a very short time a deep slumber came over him, and he fell fast asleep.

As soon as she could, the lady went to her bedroom, and, finding Ruggieri asleep, she shook him and in a low voice told him to get up; but nothing happened, he neither replied nor stirred. The lady then became rather annoyed and shaking him more roughly said:

"Get up, sleepy-head. If you want to sleep, you should go home and not come here."

The push she gave Ruggieri made him fall off the chest on which he was lying, but he gave no more signs of life than a corpse. The lady now became frightened, tried to lift him up, shook him harder, pulled his nose, tweaked his beard; but all to no effect. He was sleeping like a log. She then began to fear that he was dead, and pinched him and burned his flesh with a lighted candle, still with no result. So she, who was no doctor, although her husband was one, felt certain he was dead. No need to ask if she was in distress, since she loved him as much as she did. Not daring to make a noise, she wept over him silently, and lamented this misfortune.

After some time the lady began to remember that she might be publicly shamed in addition to her loss, and thought that some means must be found of getting him out of the house without delay. Not knowing what to do, she quietly called up the maid servant, told her what had happened and asked her advice. In great amazement the servant pulled and

shook him, and, finding he was without feeling, she agreed with the lady that he was dead, and advised that he should be put out of the house.

Then said the lady:

"But where can we take him so that when he is found tomorrow nobody will suspect that he has been brought from here?"

"Madonna," replied the servant, "late this evening I saw a fairly large chest outside the shop of the carpenter next door. If he has not taken it into his house, it will suit us perfectly, because we can put him inside, give him two or three slashes with a knife, and leave him there. I don't see why the person who finds him there should think he comes from here rather than from anywhere else. Since he is such a disorderly young man it will be thought that he was murdered by one of his enemies while on some dirty business, and then put in the chest."

The lady agreed to the servant's advice, except that relating to knife slashes, saying that she could not possibly allow it. She then sent the servant out to see if the chest were still there; and she came back and announced that it was.

The servant was young and strong, and, with the lady's help, raised Ruggieri on to her shoulders. The lady went in front to see if anyone was coming, and the servant carried Ruggieri to the chest, into which they put him and closed the lid and left him.

At that time two young men had recently returned home. They lent out money at usury and liked to make a lot of money and spend little. They needed household goods, and the day before had noticed this chest, and had planned together to steal it away to their house if it were left out that night. About midnight they left their house, found the chest, and without looking further into it (although it seemed rather heavy), took it home and put it into the room where their wives were asleep, without troubling to take it anywhere else. There they left it, and went to bed.

After sleeping a long time Ruggieri digested the potion and exhausted its strength; and towards dawn he awoke. Although he had come out of his sleep and had recovered his senses, yet his brain was still stupefied, and he remained deaf that night and for several days afterwards. He opened

his eyes, but saw nothing. He fumbled about with his hands, and finding himself in the chest, said to himself:

“What’s all this? Where am I? Am I asleep or awake? Now I begin to remember—this evening I went to my mistress’s bedroom, and I seem to be in a chest. What does it all mean? Has the doctor come home or something else happened so that the lady had to hide me here while I was asleep? I believe so; it must be that.”

He then lay silent, and listened whether he could hear anything. He remained still a long time, but being uncomfortable in the small chest and feeling stiff in the side on which he was lying, he tried to turn over on the other side. He did this so nimbly that he knocked his buttocks against one side of the chest which was standing unevenly, and so made it wobble and then fall over. It went down with a crash and woke the sleeping women, who were so terrified that they lay in silence.

Ruggieri was also frightened by the fall, but, finding the chest had opened, he thought that if anything happened he would be better off outside than in. And what between his not knowing where he was and one thing and another he began to fumble about the room, trying to find whether there was a door or a staircase by which he could escape. The women heard him fumbling as they lay awake, and said: “Who’s there?” Ruggieri, not recognizing the voice, made no reply. Then the women called to the two young men who were in a deep sleep, because they had sat up late, and heard nothing.

The women were still more frightened then, jumped out of bed, ran to the window and began to shriek: “Thieves! Thieves!” Several of the neighbours got into the house by way of the roof or otherwise and rushed into the room, and at the same time the two young men were awakened by the noise. When Ruggieri saw them all appear he was beside himself with amazement and did not know how or if he could escape. He was captured and handed over to the watch, who had also run up at the noise. He was taken before the Magistrate and, being known as a bad character, was immediately put to the torture, and confessed that he had entered the usurer’s house as a thief. So the Magistrate thought he would string him by the neck as soon as possible.

Next day the news ran through Salerno that Ruggieri had been arrested while robbing a usurer's house. When the lady and her servant heard it they were so amazed that they were not far from believing that they had not really done what they did the night before, but had only dreamed it. In addition, the lady was nearly mad with grief when she thought of the danger Ruggieri was in.

About the middle of Terce the doctor returned from Amalfi, and asked where his potion was, because he wanted to operate on his patient. When he found the bottle was empty, he made a great fuss, so that everything in the house was upside down. The lady, who had other things to trouble about, said to him angrily:

"Why do you make such a fuss, Doctor, as if the upsetting of a bottle of water was so important? Isn't there plenty more water in the world?"

"Woman," said the doctor, "you think it was pure water. It was not, it was a sleeping potion."

He then told her the reason why it had been prepared. As soon as the lady heard this, she guessed that Ruggieri had drunk it, and so had seemed dead to them. And she said:

"We did not know it. You'll have to make some more."

Seeing there was nothing else to do, the doctor ordered another potion. Soon afterwards, the maid servant went out to find what was being said about Ruggieri, and when she returned, said:

"Madonna, everyone speaks ill of Ruggieri, and as far as I could discover, he has not one friend or relative who will lift a finger to help him. Everyone thinks the judge will have him hanged tomorrow. In addition to this, I have one piece of news for you, for I think I have found out how he came to be in the usurers' house. You know the carpenter outside whose shop we found the chest to put Ruggieri in—well, he has had a long wrangle with a man who claims that the chest was his, and when the man asked for the value of the chest in money, the carpenter replied that he had not sold the chest, and that it had been stolen the night before. Then the other man said: 'That's not true, because you sold it to two young usurers, as they themselves told me last night when I saw it in their house at the time Ruggieri was arrested.' Said the car-

penter: 'They're liars. I never sold it to them, but they stole it from me last night. Let us go to them.' And so they went off together to the usurers' house, and I came back here. It is easy to see how Ruggieri was carried to the place where he was found, but how he got out of the chest, I don't see."

The lady now perfectly understood how it had all happened. She told the servant what she had heard from the doctor, and begged her to help Ruggieri to escape, for she wanted both to save Ruggieri and to keep her own reputation.

"Madonna," said the servant, "tell me what to do, and I will gladly do anything."

The lady realised that she must be quick off the mark, and had already decided what had to be done. This she told the servant in proper order. The servant first went weeping to the doctor, and said:

"Messer, I have come to ask your forgiveness for a great fault I have committed towards you."

"What's that?" said the doctor.

Shedding copious tears, the servant said:

"Messer, you know what a young man Ruggieri da Jeroli is, and he likes me, and what between being in love with him and being afraid of him I had to go with him this year. He knew you wouldn't be home last night, and got round me to let him come into my bedroom to sleep with me. And he got thirsty, and as there was nowhere I could get wine or water quickly, and I didn't want the mistress to see me in the parlour, I remembered I had seen a bottle of water in your bedroom. So I went and got it, and gave it him to drink, and put the bottle back where I had found it, and you afterwards made such a fuss about it. I do confess I did wrong, but then who doesn't do wrong sometimes? I am very sorry I did it, not only for this but because Ruggieri may lose his life in consequence. So I beg you to forgive me and to give me permission to go and try to help Ruggieri as far as I can."

Although the doctor was angry, he replied jokingly:

"You have forgiven yourself—you thought last night you were going to have a young man who would warm your fur for you, and you had a

sluggard instead. Be off with you, and try to save your lover, but don't you bring him into this house again, or I'll make you pay for that time and this!"

The girl felt she had brought off the first coup very well; and then went straight off to Ruggieri's prison, where she so worked upon the gaoler that he allowed her to speak to Ruggieri. Then, as soon as she had told Ruggieri what answers he had to make the judge, she got herself taken before him. Before the judge would listen to her, he wanted to grapple with such a fresh, buxom young Christian woman; and she, wanting a favourable audience, made no objection. When the milling was over, she said:

"Messer, you have arrested Ruggieri da Jeroli as a thief, and the charge is false."

Then, beginning at the beginning, she told him the whole story, how she, his mistress, had brought him into the doctor's house, and how she had given him the opiate to drink, and how she had thought he was dead and put him in the chest. After that she told him the conversation she had heard between the carpenter and the owner of the chest to show him how Ruggieri had got into the usurers' house.

The judge saw that it would be easy to find out if this story were true. So he first questioned the doctor about the potion, and found that was true; after that he sent for the carpenter and the owner of the chest and the usurers, and after much talk found that the usurers had stolen the chest the night before. Finally he sent for Ruggieri, and asked him where he had lodged the night before. Ruggieri replied that he did not know, but he remembered that he had gone to sleep with Doctor Matteo's servant, and that he had drunk some water in her bedroom because he was very thirsty; but he did not know what happened afterwards until he awoke and found himself in a chest in the usurers' house.

The judge was greatly amused at hearing all this, and made the servant and Ruggieri and the carpenter and the usurers repeat their tales several times. Finally, he recognised that Ruggieri was innocent and set him at liberty, and fined the usurers ten florins for stealing the chest. No need to ask whether Ruggieri was glad, and his mistress also was delighted. So

the lady and the lover continued their loves and pleasures better than before, and laughed over it all with the invaluable servant who had wanted to give him two or three slashes with a knife. May I have the same success in love—but not be put in a chest!

If the earlier tales had saddened the ladies' bosoms, this last tale of Dioneo's made them laugh so much, especially when the judge wanted to grapple with the servant, that they quite recovered from their sadness.

But the king now saw that the sun was turning yellow, and that the end of his reign was at hand. In a few graceful words he begged the ladies' pardon for having chosen as the topic of their tales a matter so sad as the misfortunes of lovers. After this he stood up, took the laurel wreath from his head, and as the ladies waited eagerly to see whom he would bestow it upon, he gracefully set it on the golden head of Fiammetta, saying:

"I give you this crown, since you better than anyone else can console the band for the harshness of today by what you will order tomorrow."

Fiammetta's hair was curled, long and golden, and fell about her delicate white shoulders; her oval face was the true colour of white lilies, mingled with all the splendour of red roses; her eyes were like a falcon's; she had a plump little mouth, with lips like twin rubies, and she smiled as she answered:

"Filostrato, I take it willingly; and, in order that you may perceive what you have done, I will and command that you all prepare yourselves to tell tales tomorrow of those lovers who have attained happiness after grief or misfortune."

This proposal pleased everyone. She then called the steward and made all necessary arrangements with him; after which the whole band stood up, and she gave them permission to do as they liked until supper time.

Some of them went into the garden, whose beauty was such that it could not soon pall; some went down to the mills which were turning outside the garden; and others went elsewhere, according to their whims, to amuse themselves until supper. They all gathered at supper as usual, and supped with great pleasure near the beautiful fountain. Then they

arose and sang and danced, and after Filomena had danced the queen said:

“Filostrato, I do not intend to alter the customs of my predecessors. Just as they did, I order that someone sing a song. Now I am quite sure your songs are like your tales, and as we don't want to have another day disturbed by your woes, I order you to sing any song you like.”

Filostrato replied that he would willingly do so, and immediately began to sing the following song:

*By tears I show how much, how rightly, the heart grieves when love's
faith is betrayed.*

*Love, when first you placed within my heart her for whom I sigh without
hope, you showed her to me so full of virtue that I should have held all
torture light that came through you into my mind, which now remains in
grief! But now I know my error, and know it to my cost.*

*I learned to know Love's cheat when she, in whom alone I hoped, abandoned
me; for, when I thought myself more forward in her favour, more her servant,
and did not see the coming of my future pain, I found she had given
welcome to another's worth, and driven me forth.*

*How great my comfortless grief is, Love, you know, and even so much I
call upon you with my plaints; I burn so fiercely that I crave for death,
as for a lesser pain. Come then, and end my madness and my cruel harsh
life with death's blow—for, wherever I may go, my suffering must be less.*

*No other way, no other comfort to my woe, remains, save death. Grant it
me then. End my calamities with death, O Love, and take the heart from
such a wretched life. Ah, I err, since wrongfully are joy and pleasure
taken from me. Yet when I die, O Lord, make her happy as you have
made her love anew.*

My song, if none should sing you, what care I, for none can sing you as I sing. One task alone I charge you with—go, seek out Love, and unto him alone reveal how tedious to me is my sad and bitter life, and pray him by his worth to bring me to a better port.

The words of this song clearly expressed Filostrato's state of mind, and the reason for it. Perhaps the face of one of the ladies dancing would have made it even plainer, if the darkness of oncoming night had not hidden the blushes on her cheeks.

When he had ended, many other songs were sung until it was time to go to bed, when, at the queen's command, each went to his room.

END OF THE FOURTH DAY

The Fifth Day

HERE BEGINS THE FIFTH DAY OF THE *DECAMERON*, WHEREIN, UNDER THE RULE OF FIAMMETTA, TALES ARE TOLD OF THOSE LOVERS WHO WON HAPPINESS AFTER GRIEF OR MISFORTUNE

THE eastern sky was already white, and the rising rays had lightened all our hemisphere when Fiammetta was aroused by the sweet songs of birds which were singing gaily from the bushes. She arose, and had the other women and the three young men called. She then walked slowly in the fields talking with her companions, and passed over the dewy grass of the open plain until the sun was fully risen. When they felt the sun's rays grow hot, they turned their steps towards their rooms; and having refreshed themselves there with excellent wines and sweetmeats, they went out to amuse themselves in the garden until dinner time.

After they had sung a song and one or two ballads, the time for dinner soon arrived; and, as everything had been prepared by the steward, they sat down to eat when the queen wished. After dinner, which passed off merrily, they did not forget their custom of dancing, and danced to songs and the music of instruments. The queen then gave them permission to depart until after the siesta; so some went to bed, and others remained in the beautiful garden.

A little after Nones they all gathered together as usual near the fountain. The queen occupied her throne, looked smilingly at Pamfilo and ordered him to tell the first of these merry tales, to which he willingly agreed, and thus began.

First Tale

THROUGH LOVE CIMONE BECOMES CIVILIZED AND CAPTURES HIS LADY ON THE HIGH SEAS. HE IS IMPRISONED IN RHODES, AND LIBERATED BY LISIMACO, AND THE TWO OF THEM ONCE MORE CARRY OFF THEIR MISTRESSES ON THEIR WEDDING DAY AND FLY WITH THEM TO CRETE. THEY MARRY THE LADIES AND RETURN HOME TO LIVE HAPPILY ON THEIR ESTATES

I THOUGHT of many tales, delightful ladies, each of which might have been told as the first on this happy day. But one especially pleased me because it will not only show you that happy ending which is to be the subject of our stories, but will also display how holy, how weighty and how full of good are love's powers, which many people wrongly condemn and insult, for they know not what they are saying. If I mistake not, this story will please you, because I think you are in love.

As I have read in the ancient chronicles of Cyprus, there lived once in the island a nobleman whose name was Aristippo, who possessed more wealth than any of the other inhabitants. And, but for one misfortune, he might have thought himself the happiest of men. Among his other children he had a son called Galeso, who was taller and more beautiful than all the others, but almost stupid and beyond hope. Now, neither the labours of his tutor nor the entreaties or floggings of his father could beat any knowledge or good manners into his head. Moreover, his voice was loud and uncouth, more like an animal's than a man's. And so everyone contemptuously nicknamed him "Cimone," which means in their language the same thing as "Brute" in ours. This waste of his life caused his father the greatest distress. He lost all hope in his son, and, in order to avoid having the cause of his trouble continually before him, he ordered Cimone to his country house to live among the labourers there. Cimone liked this very much, because the habits and behaviour of rough people were more to his taste than those of citizens.

So Cimone went to the country and there occupied himself with mat-

ters appropriate to that life. One day a little after noon he was going from one estate to another with a staff on his shoulder, and entered a small wood—they are very beautiful in that country—and since it was May the wood was in full leaf. As he went along, chance brought him to a little glade surrounded with tall trees, in one corner of which was a beautiful cool brook. On the green grass beside it he saw a beautiful girl lying asleep. Her dress was so thin that it concealed scarcely any of her white body, and from her waist downwards she was covered only by a very fine white garment. Two women and a man, her servants, were also lying asleep at her feet.

When Cimone saw her, he leaned upon his staff and gazed intently at her with the greatest admiration, as if he had never before seen a woman's form. In that rough bosom of his, which could not be made to feel any civilized pleasures no matter how much he was exhorted, there awoke a thought which whispered to his coarse material soul that she was the most beautiful thing ever seen by any living being. Then he began to notice her different beauties, admiring her hair, which he thought pure gold, her forehead, her nose, her mouth, her throat and her arms, and above all her yet undeveloped breasts. From a peasant he had suddenly become a judge of beauty, and longed to see her eyes which were closed in a deep sleep; and he was several times tempted to wake her so that he might see them. But, since he felt she was more beautiful than any other woman he had ever seen, he wondered whether she were not a Goddess. He yet had enough good sense to feel that divine things are more to be revered than worldly things, and therefore restrained himself, and waited for her to wake up of herself. Though the waiting seemed very long to him, yet he was so taken with this new delight that he could not leave her.

After a long time the girl, whose name was Efigenia, awoke before her servants, and as she opened her eyes and lifted her head she saw Cimone standing before her, leaning on his staff. So in great amazement she said:

“Cimone, what are you looking for in the wood at this time of the day?”

(Cimone was known to almost everyone in the whole country-side,

for his handsomeness, his brutality, and his father's nobility and wealth.)

He made no answer to Efigenia's words, but began to gaze fixedly into her now open eyes, and felt within himself such sweetness coming from them that he was filled with a delight he had never known before. So she called to her women, and stood up, saying:

"God be with you, Cimone."

To which he replied:

"I will come with you."

Although the girl excused herself from his company, for she was afraid of him, he was unable to leave her until he had accompanied her to her home. He then went to his father's town house, saying that he had determined never to return to the country. This was very troublesome to his father and other relatives, but they let him alone, waiting to see what was the reason for his change of mind.

Cimone's heart, which no teaching could ever enter, was pierced by love's dart through Efigenia's beauty; and in a very short time he passed from one way of thinking to another so that he amazed his father, his relatives, and everyone who knew him.

First of all he asked his father to allow him clothes and other refined things, such as his brothers had; which his father very gladly did. He then frequented worthy young men and listened to the ways befitting gentlemen and especially lovers; and in a very short time, to everyone's amazement, he not only learned the elements of literature but became esteemed among philosophers. Moreover—and the cause of all this was the love he felt for Efigenia—he not only changed his rough, rustic voice into one more civilized and pleasant, but became a master of singing and music and most expert and daring in horse-riding and fighting by land and sea.

In short (to avoid mentioning every detail of his accomplishments), within four years of his first falling in love, he came forth the gayest, most accomplished and most virtuous of all the young men in the island of Cyprus.

What are we to say of Cimone, most charming ladies? Indeed, nothing else than that the high virtues infused in his noble spirit by Heaven were

driven back and bound by envious Fortune in the smallest portion of his heart; and all these bonds were broken by love, which is the more powerful of the two. Love, the awakener of sleeping genius, by its power drew them forth into the light from their cruel overshadowing darkness, plainly showing whence it draws the minds which are subject to it and whither it leads them with its rays.

Now although Cimone in his love for Efigenia passed reasonable bounds in some things, as young men are wont to do, yet when Aristippo reflected that love had changed him from a sheep to a man, he not only endured them patiently but urged his son to follow his own pleasure. Cimone, who now refused the name of "Brute" and remembered that Efigenia had called him this, wished his desire to have a virtuous end, and so often asked Cipseo, the father of Efigenia, to give her to him as his wife. But Cipseo always replied that he had promised her to Pasimunda, a young noble of Rhodes, whom he did not mean to disappoint.

When the time came for this arranged marriage to be fulfilled, and the husband sent for her, Cimone said to himself:

"Now is the time to show you, O Efigenia, how much you are beloved by me. Through you I became a man; and if I can have you I do not doubt that I shall become more famous than any god. I will certainly have you or die."

Having said this, he quietly gathered together certain young men who were his friends, secretly armed a ship with everything necessary for giving battle, and put to sea where he waited to intercept the ship taking Efigenia to her husband in Rhodes. After Efigenia had done all honour to her husband's friends, she went on board ship, the prow was turned towards Rhodes, and away they went. Cimone was not napping, and the next day overhauled them in his ship. He went up on the prow and shouted to those on Efigenia's ship.

"Stop, lower your sails, or you may expect to be boarded and thrown into the sea."

Cimone's opponents had drawn their arms under cover, and prepared to defend themselves. Wherefore, after he had spoken, Cimone took a grappling iron, threw it on the prow of the Rhodians as they sped

along, and by main force attached it to the prow of his own ship. Then, bold as a lion, he leapt on board the Rhodians' ship with no one following him, so that almost all gave him up for lost. But love spurred him on. With a sword in his hand he dashed impetuously upon his enemies, wounding now one, now another, and bringing them down like cattle. The Rhodians then threw down their arms, and almost with one voice yielded themselves prisoners.

Cimone said to them:

"Young men, neither desire of spoil nor any hatred I have for you made me leave Cyprus to attack you on the high seas. What impelled me is something which to me would be a very great thing to possess, and is very easy for you to yield up peacefully. That is Efigenia, whom I love above all things; and since I could not obtain her from her father in friendship and peace, love has compelled me to take her from you as an enemy by force of arms. I mean to be to her what your Pasimunda was to have been. Give her to me, and depart with God's grace."

The young men, compelled more by force than generosity, yielded up the weeping Efigenia to Cimone. And he, seeing her weep, said:

"Noble lady, be not disconsolate; I am your Cimone, and I deserve you far more through my long love than Pasimunda from a promise."

Cimone took her on board his own ship without touching any of the Rhodians' possessions and, turning to her companions, permitted them to depart. Delighted above all men to have obtained so precious a prey, Cimone spent some time in trying to console the weeping lady, and then decided with his young friends not to return immediately to Cyprus. By unanimous consent they turned the ship's prow towards Crete, where almost all of them, especially Cimone, thought they would be in safety, on account of ancient and recent family ties and friendships.

But Fortune, which had gaily yielded Cimone the possession of the lady, suddenly changed the young man's extreme joy into sad and bitter lamentation.

Not four hours had passed since Cimone had left the Rhodians when night came on, which was more welcome to Cimone than any other he had ever awaited. But with night there came a very fierce storm, which

covered the sky with clouds and the sea with dangerous winds. It was so dark they could not see what they were doing or where they were going, nor could they carry out any of the ship's duties.

No need to ask whether Cimone was distressed by this. It seemed to him that God had granted him his desire so that he would feel more agony in death, for without this he would have cared little about dying. His companions likewise lamented, but above all Efigenia, who wept loudly and dreaded the shock of every wave. In her lamentation she bitterly cursed Cimone's love and his ardour, asserting that the only cause of this tempest was that God would not allow him to enjoy his presumptuous desire which had made him want her as his wife against their wills, but intended that he should see her die first and then himself die miserably afterwards.

Such and greater were their lamentations. The sailors did not know what to do, the wind grew stronger every hour, and, without knowing where they were going they came to Rhodes. Not knowing it was Rhodes, they exerted themselves to the utmost to reach land to save their lives. In this, Fortune was favourable to them and led them to a small bay, to which the Rhodians whom Cimone had released had brought their ship a little time before. They did not know they had anchored off Rhodes until dawn, when the sky became a little clearer, and they saw about a bow-shot from them the very ship they had set free. Cimone was much distressed by this and feared that the same thing would happen to him as had happened to them; so he gave orders to use every effort to get away and to go wherever Fortune took them, since they could not be in a worse place. They used every effort to get away, but in vain. The wind blew so strongly against them that not only were they unable to get out of the little bay but were driven willy-nilly on the shore.

They were recognised by the Rhodian sailors who had left their ship. Some of them immediately ran to a neighbouring town to which the noble young Rhodians had gone, and told them that Cimone and Efigenia in their ship had by chance arrived there, as they had done. They heard this news with delight, gathered together all the men of the town, and hurried to the sea. Cimone and his friends had landed and had made

up their minds to take to the woods, but they and Efigenia were all captured and taken to the town. Lisimaco, for that year chief magistrate of the Rhodians, came out with a great force of men-at-arms, and took Cimone and all his companions off to prison, as Pasimunda (who had heard the news) had arranged after complaining to the Senate.

In such wise the luckless and love-lorn Cimone lost his Efigenia soon after winning her, without having had anything from her but a few kisses. Efigenia was received and consoled by many noble ladies of Rhodes both for the anguish of being captured at sea and for the hardships she had endured in the tempest; and she remained with them until the day appointed for her marriage.

The lives of Cimone and his friends were spared (although Pasimunda did his utmost to have them condemned to death) because they had released the Rhodians the day before, but they were condemned to perpetual imprisonment. And, as you may well believe, they lay in prison miserably with no hope of any pleasure again. But Pasimunda urged the wedding as quickly as he could.

Fortune, as if repenting the injury done to Cimone, brought about a new event in his favour.

Pasimunda had a brother who was younger but no less brave than he, by name Ormisda. He had long been in treaty to take as wife a beautiful young woman of the city, named Cassandra, who was deeply beloved by Lisimaco; and the marriage had several times been delayed by different accidents.

When Pasimunda saw he was on the point of celebrating his marriage with great rejoicings, he thought it would be excellently done if Ormisda could be married at the same time, and so spare the expense of another marriage feast. So he reopened negotiations with Cassandra's parents, and they were successful; he and his brothers agreed with them that Ormisda should marry Cassandra on the same day that Pasimunda married Efigenia.

As soon as Lisimaco heard of this he was deeply annoyed, for he saw himself thwarted in his hopes; he firmly believed that if Ormisda did not marry Cassandra, he would get her. But like a wise man he kept his anger

to himself. He then began to think how he could prevent this marriage from being carried out, and saw no way but to carry her off.

This he thought would be easy on account of the office he held, but he considered it would be far more dishonourable than if he had not held this office. But after long consideration, honour gave way to love, and he made up his mind to carry off Cassandra, come what come might. Thinking over what assistance he would need and how he would go about it, he remembered Cimone, whom he held in prison together with his companions; and he came to the conclusion that he could have no better or more faithful ally than Cimone in such an affair. So next night he had Cimone brought secretly to his room, and spoke to him as follows:

“Cimone, even as the Gods are good and liberal givers of things to men, so they are most acute testers of men’s virtues. Those men whom they find firm and constant under all trials they make worthy of higher rewards, since they are more valorous. They desired a more certain test of your virtue than you could have shown of yourself within the limits of your father’s house, which I know abounds in riches. First, as I have been told, they changed you from a senseless beast to a man, by the sharp solicitude of love. Then with ill luck and your present tedious prison they wished to see whether your soul was changed from what it was, after you had for a brief time enjoyed the prize you won. Now, if your spirit is what it was, nothing will ever make you so happy as what they are preparing to give you. This I shall show you, so that you may regain strength and become bold-hearted.

“Pasimunda, delighted by your misfortune and the urgent solicitor of your death, is hastening to celebrate his marriage with your Efigenia, so that he may enjoy the prize which Fortune first granted you in a merry mood and then in anger snatched away. How much this must grieve you—if you love as I believe—I myself realise, because his brother Ormisda is preparing to do the same thing to me on the same day with Cassandra, whom I love before everything else in the world. No other way is left open by Fortune to escape this injury and misfortune save the strength of our spirits and of our right hands. We must take our swords

in our hands and cut a way, you to the second, I to the first, carrying-off of our ladies. I do not ask if your liberty is dear to you, because I know you care little for it without your lady, but if you wish to have her again the Gods have given her into your hands, if you will follow me in my attempt."

These words brought back his lost spirits to Cimone, and without taking much time to reply, he said:

"Lisimaco, you can have no stronger or more faithful companion than I in such a deed, if I shall obtain what you tell me. So let me know what you want me to do, and you will see yourself followed with the greatest energy."

Said Lisimaco:

"In two days' time the new wives will enter their husbands' houses for the first time. You, armed, with your companions, and I with some of mine in whom I can trust, will enter the houses towards evening. We will carry off the women in the middle of the banquet, and take them to a ship which I have secretly made ready, cutting down anyone who dares to oppose us."

Cimone liked the plan, and until the time came remained quietly in prison.

When the wedding day arrived, great and magnificent was the pomp, and every part of the two brothers' house was filled with merry-making. Lisimaco had prepared everything needed. Cimone and his friends and Lisimaco's companions were all armed under their clothes, and Lisimaco first gained them over to his cause by a long speech. He then divided them into three parts, one of which he sent quietly down to the port so that no one could prevent them from boarding the ship when it became necessary, and with the other two he went to Pasimunda's house. He left another party at the door, so that no one could shut it or hinder them from coming out; and he and Cimone went up the stairs with the remaining party. They came to the hall where the two brides were at table with many other ladies, rushed in and threw the tables on the floor; each took his own lady and put her in the arms of his followers, and commanded that they should at once be taken to the waiting ship.

The brides began to weep and shriek, and so did all the other ladies and servants; and suddenly everything was in an uproar and laments everywhere. Cimone, Lisimaco and their followers drew their swords, and made their way towards the outer stairway, with none to oppose them. As they went down, along came Pasimunda who had picked up a large stick when he heard the noise; but Cimone vigorously struck him in the head and split it in halves, so that he fell dead at his feet. The wretched Ormisda rushed to his aid, but was killed by another blow from Cimone. A few others who tried to approach were wounded and driven off by the followers of Cimone and Lisimaco.

Leaving the house full of blood, uproar, lamentation and grief, they made their way, unopposed, to their ship with their prizes. They put the women on board and followed with all their companions. The shore was filled with armed men coming up to the rescue of the women, but the conspirators put out their oars and departed, delighted with their deed. They reached Crete, where they were gladly welcomed by their many friends and relatives; they married the ladies and made a great feast, and enjoyed their prizes in happiness.

The uproar and tumult in Cyprus and Rhodes over this lasted a long time. Finally, after their parents and friends had interceded in one place and another, it was arranged that after a certain period of exile Cimone and Efigenia should return to Cyprus, and Lisimaco return to Rhodes with Cassandra. And each lived happily with his wife on his estate.

Second Tale

GOSTANZA LOVES MARTUCCIO GOMITO. SHE HEARS HE IS DEAD; IN DESPAIR SHE GETS INTO A BOAT WHICH IS CARRIED BY THE WIND TO SUSA. SHE FINDS HIM ALIVE AT TUNIS, MAKES HERSELF KNOWN TO HIM, AND, HE, WHO HAD BECOME THE KING'S FAVOURITE ON ACCOUNT OF HIS ADVICE, MARRIES HER, AND THEY RETURN RICH TO LIPARI

THE queen, after highly praising Pamfilo's tale, ordered Emilia to follow with the next, and she began as follows:

Everyone should take delight in those things wherein he sees recompenses follow affections; and since love more deserves happiness than affliction in the long run, I shall obey the queen in speaking of the present subject with much greater pleasure than I obeyed the king on the subject which went before.

You must know then, delicate ladies, that near Sicily is a little island called Lipari, wherein not long ago lived a very beautiful girl named Gostanza, the daughter of very common people in the island. There was a young man on the island named Martuccio Gomito, gay, well mannered and skilled in his occupation, who fell in love with her. And she likewise fell so much in love with him that she was never happy except when she saw him. Martuccio therefore wished to marry her, and asked her of her father; but he replied that Martuccio was poor and would not let him have her.

Martuccio was enraged to find himself refused on account of poverty, and swore with certain of his relatives and friends never to return to Lipari unless he were rich. He went away and coasted the shores of Barbary as a pirate, robbing everyone weaker than himself. Fortune was favourable to him if only he had known how to be moderate in his good luck. But it was not enough for himself and his companions that they had become very rich in a short time; they wanted to be extremely rich, and so it happened that after a long battle certain Saracen ships captured and

robbed him and his companions, most of whom were massacred by the Saracens. The ship was sunk, and Martuccio was taken to Tunis, put in prison, and for a long time was in misery.

The news came to Lipari, not through one or two persons but by many, that all who were on the ship with Martuccio had been drowned. The girl had grieved very much at Martuccio's departure, but when she heard he was dead with the others, she wept long and made up her mind to die. Her heart lacked strength for her to slay herself in some violent way, and she thought of a different way of death. One night she secretly left her father's house and went to the port, where she found a small fisherman's boat a little apart from the other ships. She found the mast, sail and oars in it, because its owners had only just left it. She immediately went on board and rowed out to sea. She had some knowledge of seafaring ways, like all the women in the island; so she hoisted the sail, threw away the oars and the rudder, and let the wind carry her along. She felt it was inevitable either that the rudderless and unballasted boat would capsize in the sea, or that it would strike on a rock and sink, so that even if she tried to save herself, she would fail, and would of necessity be drowned. She wrapped her head in a cloak, and lay down weeping in the bottom of the boat.

But it all turned out very differently from what she had imagined. The wind that carried her along was northerly and gentle, the sea was slight, the boat stout, and so the next day towards evening she was carried ashore near a city named Susa, about a hundred miles above Tunis.

The girl did not know whether she was on land or sea, because she had made up her mind to lie there without raising her head, whatever happened. When the boat ran ashore, a poor woman happened to be on the beach, rolling up the fishermen's nets. When she saw the boat she was surprised to see it run on shore under full sail. Thinking the fishermen might be sleeping on it, she went to the boat and saw no one in it but the girl, who was fast asleep. She called to her several times, and at last made her hear. She realised from the girl's clothes that she was a Christian, and asked her in Italian how it happened that she had arrived there all alone in the boat. Hearing Italian, the girl thought the wind must



have driven her back to Lipari. She started to her feet and looked around, and finding she was in a country she did not recognise, she asked the woman where she was. And the woman replied:

“You are near Susa in Barbary, my child.”

At this the girl felt sorry that God had not sent death to her, hesitated in shame, and did not know what to do; and so sat down beside the boat, and began to cry. The woman took pity on her, and after much entreaty managed to take her to a little hut, and there after much wheedling persuaded her to tell how it had happened. This made the woman see that she must be hungry, so she prepared fish and dry bread and water, and persuaded her to eat a little.

Gostanza then asked the woman who she was that she spoke Italian so well; and she replied that she came from Trapani, was named Carapresa (good omen) and was there the servant to some Christian fishermen. Hearing the name Carapresa, the girl felt it was a good omen, and although she was still very unhappy and herself did not know why, she began to hope she knew not what and ceased to desire death. Without saying why or wherefore, she earnestly begged the woman for the love of God to have pity on her youth and to advise her how she could escape any harm being done her. At this Carapresa, like a good-hearted woman, left her in the hut, quickly collected her nets, returned to the girl, and wrapping her up in her own cloak took her to Susa. Arrived there, she said:

“Gostanza, I am taking you to the house of a very kind Saracen lady, for whom I have often worked. She is old and gentle. I shall recommend you to her as well as I can, and I am sure she will gladly take you in and treat you like a daughter. Stay with her, and try to get into her good graces by serving her as well as you can, until God sends you better luck.” The old lady listened to the tale, gazed at the girl’s face, and began to weep. She kissed her forehead and then led her by the hand into her house, where she lived with several other women but no men, and where they all worked at handicrafts, some in silk, some in palm and some in leather. In a few days the girl learned one of these crafts and worked with them. She won the favour and good liking of the old lady and the

others to such an extent that it was amazing, and in a very short time she learned their language from them.

Now while the girl was in Susa and had already been lamented at home as lost and dead, it happened that the King of Tunis, by name Mariabdelá, was attacked by a young man of great family and power in Granada, who claimed the kingdom of Tunis, and came with a great multitude of men to drive the King out of his realm. The news of this came to the ears of Martuccio Gomito in prison, for he knew the Barbary tongue well; and hearing that the King of Tunis was making great preparations for defence, he said to one of the men who kept guard over him and his companions:

"If I could speak to the King, I have it in my heart that I could give him a piece of advice whereby he would win this war."

The guard mentioned this to his commander, who at once informed the King. And the King ordered Martuccio to be brought before him, and asked him what his advice was. To which he replied:

"Sire, if I well observed your manner of battle in the time when I frequented your country, I believe that battles are won more by the archers than by any other troops. And if some means could be found whereby the enemy archers lacked ammunition while your own were abundantly provided, I believe you would win the battle."

"Doubtless," said the King, "I believe I should win, if that could be done."

"Sire," said Martuccio, "if you wish, it can be done, and in this way. You must make your archers' bow-strings much thinner than those commonly used. Then you must manufacture arrows, whose notches will be useless except on thin strings. And this must be done so secretly that your enemy knows nothing about it, and is unable therefore to find any remedy. My reason for saying this is as follows: When the enemy archers have shot their arrows and your own archers theirs, you know that during the battle the enemy will have to collect the arrows your men have shot, while your men will have to pick up theirs. But the enemy will not be able to use your arrows, because the notches will be too small for the bow-strings; while the opposite will happen with your men and the

enemy's arrows, because the thin string will easily fit the large notch. And so your men will have an abundance of arrows, while the enemy will be short of them."

The King was a wise lord, and took Martuccio's advice which he followed exactly; and thus won the war. And so Martuccio was high in his favour, and consequently in a great and rich estate. The news of this went through the country, and it came to Gostanza's ears that Martuccio Gomito whom she had long thought to be dead, was alive. So that her love for him, which had already become cooler in her heart, blazed up again in a sudden flame and became greater, and revived her dead hopes. She told the good lady with whom she was living everything that had happened to her, and said she desired to go to Tunis to see with her eyes the man of whom report had spoken to her ears. The lady praised her desire, and, as if she were her mother, took her in a boat and went to Tunis, where she and Gostanza were honourably received in the house of a relative. Carapresa went with them, and they sent her out to get information about Martuccio. She came back and reported that he was alive and in great estate. So the lady thought it a pleasure to be the person to tell Martuccio that his Gostanza had come to him. One day she went to Martuccio and said:

"Martuccio, in my house lives captive a servant of yours from Lipari, who wants to speak to you in private. I was unwilling to trust anyone else, and so I came to tell you myself, as he wished."

Martuccio thanked her, and went after her to her house. When he saw Gostanza, she nearly died of joy, and, unable to restrain herself, she threw her arms round his neck and kissed him; she could not utter a word, but pity for past misfortunes and present joy made her weep softly. Martuccio gazed at her silently in astonishment, and then said with a sigh:

"O my Gostanza, then you are alive? Long ago I heard you were lost, and that nothing had been heard of you in your home."

So saying, he embraced and kissed her, weeping tenderly.

Gostanza told him all her adventures, and the kindness she had received from the gentlewoman with whom she was living. After much

talk, Martuccio left her and went to the King his master, and told him the whole story, all that had happened to him and to the girl. And he added that, with the King's permission, he intended to marry her in accordance with our law. The King marvelled at all this. He sent for the girl, and she confirmed everything that Martuccio had said.

"Then," said the King, "you have well earned him as your husband."

He then sent for great and noble gifts, part of which he gave to her and part to Martuccio, and gave them permission to do together whatever they wished. Martuccio did honour to the lady with whom Gostanza had lived, thanked her for taking the girl into her service, gave her such gifts as were suitable, recommended her to God and departed, not without many tears from Gostanza. Then, with the King's permission, they went on board a ship together with Carapresa, and returned to Lipari with a favourable wind, where there was such rejoicing that it cannot be described.

There Martuccio married her and gave a large and handsome wedding feast; and thereafter they long enjoyed their love together in peace and quietness.

Third Tale

PIETRO BOCCAMAZZA RUNS AWAY WITH AGNOLELLA. THEY FALL AMONG THIEVES; THE GIRL FLEES TO A WOOD AND IS TAKEN TO A VILLAGE. PIETRO IS CAPTURED AND ESCAPES FROM THE ROBBERS. HE IS TAKEN TO THE PLACE WHERE AGNOLELLA IS, MARRIES HER, AND RETURNS WITH HER TO ROME

THERE was not one of them but praised Emilia's tale. The queen turned to Elisa when it was finished, and ordered her to follow next. And she gladly obeyed, and began thus:

I have in mind, charming ladies, an unfortunate night which befell two imprudent young people, but as it was followed by many happy

days, the tale I want to tell falls within our subject. In Rome, which was once the world's head as it now is its tail, there lived not long ago a young man named Pietro Boccamazza, belonging to an honourable Roman family, who fell in love with a charming and very beautiful girl, named Agnolella, the daughter of one Gigluozzo Saullo, a plebeian, but beloved by the Romans. And he went to work in such a manner that the girl came to love him no less than he loved her. Urged by his burning love, and unable to endure longer his desire for her, Pietro asked for her as his wife.

When his relatives heard of it, they all went to him and sharply blamed him for what he wanted to do. Moreover they sent word to Gigluozzo Saullo not to pay any heed to Pietro's words, because if he did they would never consider him a friend or a relative.

When Pietro saw the only road blocked by which he had hoped to attain his desire, he wanted to die of grief. If Gigluozzo would have consented, he would have married his daughter, against the wishes of all his relatives. Then he thought of a way in which this could be done, if the girl consented. He sent her a message to say that he wanted her to fly from Rome with him, and she agreed. Having made arrangements, Pietro got up very early one morning, and she and he mounted horses and set out for Anagni, where Pietro had some friends in whom he had great confidence. They had no time to get married because they were afraid of being pursued, and as they rode along they talked together of their love, and from time to time kissed each other. It happened that Pietro was none too familiar with the way, and when they were about eight miles from Rome, he took a road to the left, when he should have gone to the right.

They had not ridden on for more than two miles when they came near a little fortified place, whence they were espied, and twelve men suddenly came out of it towards them. As they drew near the girl saw them, and shrieked:

"Pietro, we must fly, we are being attacked."

She turned her horse towards a large wood, struck spurs into him and, clinging to the saddle, was carried into the wood by the horse when it felt

the spur. Pietro had been looking more at her face than the road, and had not seen the men coming so soon as she had. While he went on looking for them without seeing them, they came upon him, captured him, and made him dismount from his horse. They asked him who he was, and when he told them, they discussed it among themselves, and said:

"He is one of the friends of our enemies. What else are we to do except take away his clothes and horse, and hang him up on one of these oaks in scorn of the Orsini?"

They all agreed to this, and told Pietro to undress. He had already done so with a premonition of his fate, when suddenly an ambush of about twenty-five men came upon them, shouting: "Death! Death!" In their surprise they left Pietro and thought of their own defence; but finding themselves greatly outnumbered by the attackers they began to flee while the others pursued them.

When Pietro saw this he at once picked up his clothes, jumped on his horse, and fled as fast as he could in the direction where he had seen the girl going. But he saw no road or path in the wood and saw no horse track, and could not find the girl; so as soon as he felt safe and out of reach of those who had attacked him, he gave way to his grief, and began to weep as he went to and fro in the wood calling to her. But no one answered him.

He did not want to turn back, and if he went forward he did not know where he would arrive; moreover, he was afraid of the wild beasts in the wood both for himself and the girl, whom he kept thinking he saw mangled by a wolf or a bear.

So Pietro went wandering all day through the wood, shouting and hallooing and going back over the same ground when he thought he was going forward. And what with shouting and weeping and fear and fasting he was so weary that he could not go one step further. Not knowing what else to do when night came on, he dismounted from his horse and tied it to a large oak, and then climbed up into it himself to avoid being eaten by wild animals during the night. Soon after, the moon rose. The weather was very fine and Pietro was anxious not to go to sleep in case he fell out of the tree, although even if he had wanted to sleep, his grief

and thinking about the girl would have kept him awake; so he remained awake, sighing and weeping and cursing his misfortune.

When the girl fled, she did not know where to go except by letting her horse take her where he wanted; and she went so deep into the wood that she could no longer see the opening by which she had entered. So she spent the day, like Pietro, wandering about the wild wood, sometimes going forward and sometimes waiting, weeping and calling to him and lamenting her woes. At last towards evening, when Pietro still was not to be seen, she came upon a little path. The horse followed it and when she had gone about two miles she saw a little house in the distance, to which she hastened as quickly as she could. There she found an aged man living with his old wife. And when they saw her alone they said:

"My child, what are you doing, going about the country alone at this hour?"

The girl replied weeping that she had lost her companions in the wood, and asked how far it was to Anagni.

"My child," replied the old man, "this is not the way to go to Anagni, and it's more than twelve miles from here."

"Is there any inn near," she asked, "where I can stay?"

"There is no inn near enough for you to reach today," he replied.

Then said the girl: "Since there is nowhere else I can go, will you shelter me here tonight for the love of God?"

"We are glad to have you stay the night with us," said the old man, "but I must tell you that in this country day and night there are robber bands, both friends and enemies, who often commit great outrages and havoc. If by ill luck any of them came while you were here and saw you so young and pretty, they might do you despite and shame, and we could not help you. I wanted to tell you, so that if it should happen, you could not reproach us."

Although the girl was frightened by the old man's words, it was so late at night that she said:

"Please God, He will guard both you and me from this misfortune; and if it happens to me, it is far worse to be mangled in the woods by wild beasts than to be slain by men."

So saying, she dismounted from her horse and entered the poor man's cottage, where she supped sparsely with them on what they had. Afterwards she lay down fully clothed with them on their low bed, and spent the whole night sighing and weeping her misfortune and Pietro's, for whom she dreaded the worst.

Towards dawn she heard a great trampling. She got up and went into a large courtyard behind the little house, where she saw a quantity of hay in which she hid, so that the men would not find her if they came there. Hardly had she hidden herself when a large band of thieves came to the door, made them open it, went in and found the girl's horse standing in its saddle. So they asked who was there. The old man, not seeing the girl about, replied:

"Nobody is here but ourselves. We caught the horse last night, when it must have run away from someone, and we took it into the house so that the wolves should not eat it."

"Well then," said the leader of the band, "it'll do for us, since it has no other owner."

They scattered all through the little house, and some went in to the courtyard and laid down their spears and wooden shields. One of them, not having anything better to do, thrust his lance into the hay and came near to killing the girl and she to crying out. The spear came so close to her left breast that it ripped open her clothes, and she was about to utter a shriek for fear of being wounded; but she remembered where she was, and lay still and silent. The band cooked their kids and other meat in various places, ate and drank, and then went about their business, taking the girl's horse with them. When they were some distance away, the old man said to his wife:

"What has happened to the girl we took in last night? I didn't see her here when we got up."

The wife replied that she did not know, and went to look for her. Realising that the robbers had gone, the girl emerged from the hay, to the old man's delight, since she had not fallen into their hands. It was now daylight, and he said to her:

"Now the day is here, we will take you, if you wish, to a village about

five miles away where you will be safe. But you will have to go on foot, since the thieves who have just left took away your horse."

Making the best of it, the girl begged them in God's name to take her to the village. So they set out and reached it about the middle of Terce. This place belonged to one of the Orsini named Liello di Campo di Fiore, and by chance his wife was there, a very good and saintly woman. She at once recognised the girl when she saw her, received her joyously, and wanted to know everything that had happened to her, which the girl related in full. The lady also knew Pietro, who was a friend of her husband's, and grieved over his plight. When she heard he had been captured, she thought he must be dead. So she said to the girl:

"Since you don't know what has happened to Pietro, stay here with me until I am able to send you safely to Rome."

Pietro remained on his oak in the greatest distress. Early in the night he saw at least twenty wolves, which all went for the horse as soon as they saw it. The horse jerked its head, broke the bridle and began to rush away. But the wolves surrounded it and made this impossible. The horse killed several of them with its teeth and hoofs, but at last they brought it down and killed it, tore it to pieces and finally went away after eating everything but the bones. Pietro, who felt his horse was a companion and a support in his troubles, was dismayed, and imagined he would never be able to get out of the wood.

Just before daylight, as he sat in his oak, dying of cold, he saw a large fire about a mile away. When it was full day he got down fearfully from his oak, and went towards the fire which he finally reached. There round about it he found some shepherds eating and making merry, and they took pity upon him and let him join them. After he had eaten and warmed himself, he told them all his misfortunes and how he came to be there alone, and asked them if there were any country house or fortified place near, where he could go.

The shepherds said that about three miles away was the stronghold of Liello di Campo di Fiore, whose wife was then living there. Pietro in delight begged that one of them would guide him to the place, which two of them gladly did. When Pietro arrived, he found nobody he knew, but

went about trying to find means for seeking the girl in the wood. The lady then sent for him, and he went to her at once; and when he saw Agnolella with her, there was never any joy like his.

He longed to go and kiss her, but refrained out of modesty in front of the lady. And if he was happy, the girl's happiness was no less. The lady welcomed him warmly and listened to his adventures. Then she sharply reproved him for wanting to act contrary to the wishes of his relatives. But seeing that he was determined, and that the girl liked him, she said to herself:

"Why do I take this trouble? They are in love, they know each other. Each is a friend of my husband, and their desires are chaste. I think God approves of them since He saved one of them from the gallows and the other from a spear, and both of them from wild beasts. Therefore, so let it be."

And turning to them, she said:

"It is in your minds, as in my own, for you to be husband and wife; let us do it and make the wedding here at the expense of Liello. I will make peace between you and your relatives."

Pietro was delighted and Agnolella even more so. They were married, and the lady made them as honourable a wedding as possible in a mountain town; and there most delightfully they enjoyed the first fruits of their love. A few days later they and the lady went to horse well guarded, and returned to Rome. There she found Pietro's relatives very angry at what he had done, but succeeded in making the peace with them. And he lived in peace and happiness with his Agnolella until their old age.

END OF VOLUME ONE