THE TUDOR TRANSLATIONS
EDITED BY
W. E. HENLEY
XLII
THE TABLE

The third Day governed by Madam Neiphila.

NOVELL I

Massetto di Lamporechio, by counterfeiting himselfe dumb, became a Gardiner in a Monastery of Nunnes, where hee had familiar conversation with them all

NOVELL II

A Querry of the stable belonging to Agilulffo, King of the Lombards, found the meanes of accesse to the Queens bed, without any knowledge or consent in her. This being secretly discovered by the King, and the partie knowne, he gave him a marke, by shearing the haire of his head. Whereupon, he that was so shorne, sheared likewise the heads of all his fellowes to the lodging, and so escaped the punishment intended to him

NOVELL III

Under colour of confession, and of a most pure conscience, a fair yong Gentlewoman beeing amorously affected to an honest man, induced a devout and solemne religious Friar, to advise her in the meanes (without his suspition or perceiving) how to enjoy the benefit of her friend, and bring her desires to effect

NOVELL IV

A yong Scholler named Felice, enstructed Puccio di Rinieri, how to becom rich in a very short time. While Puccio made experience of the instruction taught him; Felice obtained the favour of his daughter
Ricciardo, surnamed the Magnifico, gave a horse to Signior Francesco Vergillisi, upon condition, that by his leave and license, he might speak to his wife in his presence, which hee did, and shee not returning him any answere, made answere to himselfe on her behalfe, and according to his answer, so the effect followed.

Ricciardo Minutolo, fell in love with the wife of Philippello Fighinolfi, and knowing her to bee very jealous of hir husband, gave her to understand, that he was greatly enamored of his wife, and had appointed to meete her privately in a bathing house on the next day following: where shee hoping to make him tardy with his close compacted Mistresse, found her selfe to be deceived.

Theobaldo Elisei, having receyved an unkinde repulse by his beloved, departed from Florence, and returning thither (a long while after) in the habite of a Pilgrime hee spake with her, and made his wrongs knowne unto her. He delivered her Father from the danger of death, because it was proved, that he had slaine Theobaldo: he made peace with his brethren, and in the end, wisely enjoyed his hearts desire.

Ferando, by drinking of a certaine kind of pouder, was buried for dead: and by the Abbot who was enamoured of his wife, was taken out of his grave, and put into a darke prison, where they made him beleeeve that he was in purgatory: afterward when time came that he should be raised to life againe, he was made to keepe a childe, which the Abbot got by his wife.
THE DECAMERON

NOVELL IX

Juliet of Narbona, cured the King of a Fistula: in recompence whereof, she requested to enjoy in marriage, Bertrand the Count of Roussillon. He having married her against his will, despising her; went to Florence, where he loved a young Gentlewoman. Juliet by a cunning policy compassed the meanses (insted of his chosen friend) to lye with her husband, by whom shee had two sonnes; which afterward being made knowne, the Count accepted her againe for his wife.

NOVELL X

The chaste resolved continencie of Serictha Daughter to Siwalde King of Denmarke, being sued unto by many worthy persons, that loved her, would not looke any man in the face, till the time she was maried.

The IV. Day, governed by Philostratus

NOVELL I

Tancrede, Prince of Salern, caused the amorous friend of his daughter to be slaine, and sent her his heart in a cup of Golde: which afterward she steeped in an impoysoned water, and then drinking it, so dyed.

NOVELL II

Friar Albert made a young Venetian Gentlewoman believe, that God Cupid was faine in love with her, and he resorted oftentimes unto her, in disguise of the same God: afterward, being frighted by the Gentlewomans kindred and friends, hee cast himselfe out of her Chamber window, and was hidden in a poore mans house. On the day following, in shape of a wilde or savage man, he was brought upon the Rialto of Saint Marke, and being there publikey knowne by the Brethren of his Order, he was committed to prison.
Three young Gentlemen affecting three Sisters, fled with them into Candy. The eldest of them (through jealousie) becommeth the death of her Lover. The second, by consenting to the Duke of Candy, saveth her life. Afterward, her owne friend killeth her, and fieth away with the elder Sister. The third couple, both man and woman are charged with her death, being cast into prison, confesse the fact: but corrupting the keepers with money escaping thence to Rhodes, ther died poore.

Gerbino, contrary to the former plighted faith to Gulielmo, fought with the King of Thunis, to take away his daughter. She being slaine by them that had the possession of her, he likewise slew them; and afterward had his owne head smitten off, by the command of Gulielmo.

Isabellaes three Brethren, slew a Gentleman that secretly loved her. His ghost appearing to her, shewed her in what place they had buried his bodie, etc.

Andreana falling in love with Gabriello, she declared a dreame of hers to him, and he another of his unto her; whereupon Gabriello fel downe sodainly dead, etc.

Faire Simonida affecting Pasquino, and walking with him in a pleasant garden, it fortuned, that Pasquino rubbed his teeth with a leafe of Sage, and immediately fell downe dead. Simonida being brought before the bench of Justice, and charged with the death of Pasquino, she rubbed her teeth likewise with one of the leaves of the same Sage, as declaring what shee saw him do, and thereon shee dyed also in the same manner.
<table>
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<th>NOVELL VIII</th>
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<td>Jeronimo affecting Silvestra, went by the earnest entreaty of his mother to Paris. Returning backe, hee found his Love Silvestra married. By secret meanes he got into her house, and dyed upon the bed by her. His body being to be buried, she likewise died upon his coarse</td>
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<td>Messer Guigielmo having slayne Messer Guigielmo Guardastagno whom hee imagined to love his wife, gave her his heart to eate. Which shee knowing afterward, threw her selfe out of an high window to the ground: and being dead, was then buried with her friend</td>
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<td>A Physitians wife, had a Lover of her maids, supposing him to bee dead, in a Chest; by reason that he had drunk a sleeping water. Two Lombard Usurers stealing away the chest, caried it to their owne house, where the man awaking, was apprehended for a theef, etc.</td>
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THE THIRD DAY

Upon which Day, all matters to be discoursed on, doe passe under the regiment of Madam Neiphila: concerning such persons as (by their wit and industry) have attained to their long wished desires, or recovered something, supposed to be lost.

THE INDUCTION TO THE ENSUING DISCOURSES

THE morning put on a vermillion countenance and made the Sunne to rise blushing red, when the Queene (and all the faire com- pany) were come abroad forth of their Chambers; the Seneshall or great Master of the Houshold, having (long before) sent all things necessary to the place of their next intended meeting. And the people which prepared there every needfull matter, sud- dainely when they saw the Queene was setting forward, charged all the rest of their followers, as if it had beene preparation for a Campe; to make hast away with the carriages, the rest of the Familie remaining behind, to attend upon the Ladies and Gentlemen.

With a milde, majesticke, and gentle pace, the Queene rode on, being followed by the other Ladies, and the three young Gentlemen, taking their way towards the West;
conducted by the musicall notes of sweete singing Nightingales, and infinite other pretty Birds beside, riding in a tract not much frequented, but richly abounding with faire hearbes and flowres, which by reason of the Sunnes high mounting, beganne to open their bosome, and fill the fresh Ayre with their odoriferous perfumes. Before they had travelled two small miles distance, all of them pleasantly conversing together; they arrived at another goodly Palace, which being somewhat mounted above the plaine, was seated on the side of a little rising hill.

When they were entred thereinto, and had seen the great Hall, the Parlors, and beautifull Chambers, every one so stupendiously furnished, withall convenient commodities to them belonging, and nothing wanting, that could be desired; they highly commended it, reputing the Lord thereof for a most worthy man, that had adorned it in such Princely manner. Afterward, being descended lower, and noting the most spacious and pleasant Court, the Sellars stored with the choysest Wines, and delicate Springs of waters every where running, their prayses then exceeded more and more. And being weary with beholding such variety of pleasures, they sate downe in a faire Gallery, which tooke the view of the whole Court, it being round engirt with trees and flowres, whereof the season then yeelded great plenty. And then came the discreete Master of the Houishold, with divers servants attending on him, presenting them with Comfits, and other Banquetting, as also very singular Wines, to serve in stead of a breakefast.

Having thus reposed themselves a while, a Garden gate was set open to them, coasting on one side of the Pallace, and round enclosed with high mounted walles. Whereinto when they were entred, they found it to be a most beautifull Garden, stored with all varieties that possibly could be devised; and therefore they observed it the more respectively. The walkes and allyes were long and spacious, yet directly straite as an arrow, environed with spreading vines, whereon the grapes hung in copious clusters; which being come to their full ripenesse, gave so rare a smel throughout
THE THIRD DAY

the Garden, with other sweete savours intermixed among, that they supposed to feele the fresh spiceries of the East.

It would require large length of time, to describe all the rarities of this place, deserving much more to be commended, then my best faculties will afford me. In the middest of the Garden, was a square plot, after the resemblance of a Meadow, flourishing with high grasse, hearbes, and plants, beside a thousand diversities of flowres, even as if by the Art of painting they had beene there deputed. Round was it circled with very verdant Orenge and Cedar Trees, their branches plentiously stored with fruit both old and new, as also the flowres growing freshly among them, yeelding not onely a rare aspect to the eye, but also a delicate savour to the smell.

In the middest of this Meadow, stood a Fountaine of white Marble, whereon was engraven most admirable workmanship, and within it (I know not whether it were by a naturall veine, or artificiall) flowing from a figure, standing on a Collumne in the midst of the Fountaine, such abundance of water, and so mounting up towards the Skies, that it was a wonder to behold. For after the high ascent, it fell downe againe into the wombe of the Fountaine, with such a noyse and pleasing murmure, as the streame that glideth from a mill. When the receptacle of the Fountaine did over-flow the bounds, it streamed along the Meadow, by secret passages and chanels, very faire and artificially made, returning againe into every part of the Meadow, by the like wayes of cunning conveyhance, which allowed it full course into the Garden, running swiftly thence down towards the plaine; but before it came thether, the very swift current of the streame, did drive two goodly Milles, which brought in great benefit to the Lord of the soile.

The sight of this Garden, the goodly grafts, plants, trees, hearbes, frutages, and flowres, the Springs, Fountaines, and pretty rivolets streaming from it, so highly pleased the Ladies and Gentlemen, that among other infinite commendations, they spared not to say: if any Paradise
remayned on the earth to be seen, it could not possibly be in any other place, but onely was contained within the compasse of this Garden. With no meane pleasure and delight they walked round about it, making Chaplets of flowers, and other faire branches of the trees, continually hearing the Birds in melodious notes, echoing and warbling one to another, even as if they envied each others felicities.

But yet another beauty (which before had not presented it selfe to them) on a sodaine they perceyved; namely divers pretty creatures in many parts of the Gardens. In one place Conies tripping about; in another place Hares; in a third part Goats browsing on the hearbes, and little yong Hindes feeding every where: yet without strife or warring together, but rather living in such a Domesticke and pleasing kinde of company, even as if they were appointed to enstruct the most noble of all creatures, to imitate their sociable conversation.

When their senses had sufficiently banquetted on those severall beauties, the tables were sodainly prepared about the Fountaine; where first they sung six Canzonets; and having paced two or three dances, they sate downe to dinner, according as the Queene ordained, being served in very sumptuous manner, with all kinde of costly and delicate viands, yet not any babling noise among them. The Tables being withdrawne, they played againe upon their instruments, singing and dancing gracefully together: till, in regard of the extreame heate, the Queene commanded to give over, and permitted such as were so pleased, to take their ease and rest. But some, as not satisfied with the places pleasures, gave themselves to walking: others fell to reading the lives of the Romanes; some to the Chesse, and the rest to other recreations.

But, after the dayes warmth was more mildly qualified, and every one had made benefit of their best content: they went (by order sent from the Queene) into the Meadow where the Fountaine stood, and being set about it, as they used to do in telling their Tales (the argument appointed
THE THIRD DAY

by the Queene being propounded) the first that had the charge imposed, was Philostratus, who began in this manner.

Massetto di Lamporechio, by counterfetting himselfe to be dumbe, became a Gardiner in a Monastery of Nunnes, where he had familiar conversation with them all.

THE FIRST NOVELL

Wherein is declared, that Virginity is very hardly to be kept in all places.

MOST worthy Ladies, there wants no store of men and women, that are so simple, as to credit for a certainty, that so soon as a yong virgin hath the veile put on hir head, and the black Cowle given to cover her withall, she is no longer a woman, nor more sensible of feminine affections, then as if in turning Nun, shee became converted to a stone. And if (perchance) they heard some matters, contrary to their former perswasion; then they grow so furiously offended, as if one had committed a most foule and enormous sinne, directly against the course of Nature. And the torrent of this opinion hurries them on so violently, that they wil admit no leisure to consider, how (in such a scope of liberty) they have power to doe what they list, yea beyond all means of sufficient satisfying, never remembring how potent the priviledge of idlenes is, especially when it is backt by solitude. In like manner, there are other people now, who verily beleeve, that the Spade and Pickaxe, grosse feeding and labour, do quench al sensual and fleshly concupiscence, yea in such as till and husband the ground, by making them dull, blockish, and (almost) meere senslesse of understanding. But I will approve (according as the Queene hath commanded me,
and within the compasse of her direction) by a short and pleasant Tale; how greatly they are abused by errour, that build upon so weake a foundation.

Not farre from Alexandria, there was a great and goodly Monasterie, belonging to the Lord of those parts, who is termed the Admirall. And therein, under the care and trust of one woman, divers virgins were kept as recluses, or Nuns, vowed to chastity of life; out of whose number, the Soldan of Babylon (under whom they lived in subjection) at every three yeers end, had usually three of these virgins sent him. At the time wherof I am now to speake, there remained in the Monastery, no more but eight religious Sisters only, beside the Lady Abbesse, and an honest poor man, who was a Gardiner, and kept the Garden in commendable order.

His wages being small, and he not well contented therewith, would serve there no longer: but making his accounts even, with the Factotum or Bayliffe belonging to the house, returned thence to the village of Lamporechio, being a native of the place. Among many other that gave him welcom home, was a yong Hebrew pezant of the country, sturdy, strong and yet comely of person, being named Masset. But because he was born not farre off from Lamporechio, and had there bin brought up all his yonger dayes, his name of Masset (according to their vulgar speech) was turned to Massetto, and therefore he was usually called and knowne by the name of Massetto of Lamporechio.

Massetto, falling in talke with the honest poore man, whose name was Lurco, demanded of him what services hee had done in the Monasterie, having continued there so long a time? Quoth Lurco, I laboured in the Garden, which is very faire and great; then I went to the Forest to fetch home wood, and cleft it for their Chamber fuell, drawing up all theyr water beside, with many other toilsome services else: but the allowance of my wages was so little, as it would not pay for the shoes I wore. And that which was worst of all, they being all yong women, I thinke the divel dwels among them, for a man cannot doe any thing to
THE THIRD DAY

please them. When I have bene busie at my worke in the garden, one would come and say, Put this heere, put that there; and others would take the dibble out of my hand, telling me, that I did not performe any thing well, making me so weary of their continuall trifling, as I have lefte all busines, given over the Garden, and what for one molestation, as also many other; I intended to tarry no longer there, but came away, as thou seest. And yet the Factotum desired me at my departing, that if I knew any one who would undertake the aforesaid labours, I should send him thither, as (indeed) I promised to do: but let mee fall sicke and dye, before I helpe to send them any.

When Massetto had heard the words of Lurco, hee was so desirous to dwell among the Nunnes, that nothing else now hammered in his head: for he meant more subtilly than poore Lurco did, and made no doubt to please them sufficiently. Then considering with himselfe, how best he might bring his intent to effect; which appeared not easily to bee done. He could question no further therein with Lurco, but onely demaunded other matter of him, saying: Introth thou didst well Lurco, to come away from so tedious a dwelling, had he not need to be more then a man that is to live with such women? It were better for him to dwell among so many divels, because they understand not the tenth part that womens wily wits can dive into.

After their conference was ended, Massetto began to beate his braines how he might compasse to dwell among them, and knowing that he could wel enough performe all the labours whereof Lurco had made mention, he cared not for any losse he should sustaine thereby, but onely stood in doubt of his entertainment, because he was too yong and sprightly. Having pondered on many imaginations, he said to himselfe. The place is farre enough distant hence, and none there can take knowledge of mee; if I have wit sufficient, cleanly to make them beleeve that I am dumbe, then (questionles) I shal be received. And resolving to
prosecute this determination, he tooke a Spade on his shoulder, and without revealing to any body whether hee went, in the disguise of a poore labouring Countryman, he travelled to the Monastery.

When he was there arrived, he found the great gate open, and entering in boldly, it was his good hap to espy the Fac-totum in the court, according as Lurco had given description of him. Making signes before him, as if he were both dumbe and deafe; he manifested, that he craved an Almes for Gods sake, making shewes beside, that if need required, he could cleave wood, or doe any reasonable kinde of service. The Fac-totum gladly gave him food, and afterward shewed him divers knotty logs of wood, which the weake strength of Lurco had left uncloven; but this fellow being more active and lusty, quickly rent them all to pieces. Now it so fell out, that the Fac-totum must needs go to the Forrest, and tooke Massetto along with him thither: where causing him to fell divers Trees, by signes he bad him to lade the two Asses therewith, which commonly carried home all the wood, and so drive them to the Monasterie before him, which Massetto knew well enough how to do, and performed it very effectually.

Many other servile Offices were there to bee done, which caused the Fac-totum to make use of his paines divers other dayes beside; in which time, the Lady Abbesse chancing to see him, demanded of the Fac-totum what he was? Madam (quoth hee) a poore labouring man, who is both deafe and dumbe, hither he came to crave an almes the other day, the which in charity I could do no lesse but give him; for which, hee hath done many honest services about the house. It seemes beside, that hee hath pretty skill in Gardening, so that if I can perswade him to continue here, I make no question of his able services: for the old silly man is gon, and we have need of such a stout fellow, to do the busines belonging to the Monastery, and one fitter for the turne, comes sildome hither. Moreover, in regard of his double imperfections, the Sisters can sustaine no impeachment by him. Whereunto the Abbesse answered,
saying; By the faith of my body, you speake but the
truth: understand then, if hee have any knowledge in
Gardening, and whether hee will dwell heere, or no: which
compasse so kindly as you can. Let him have a new paire
of shoes, fill his belly daily full of meate, flatter, and make
much of him, for wee shall finde him worke enough to do.
All which, the Fac-totum promised to fulfill sufficiently.

Massetto, who was not far off from them all this while,
but seemed seriously busied about sweeping and making
cleane the Court, heard all these speeches; and being not a
little joyfull of them; said to himselfe. If once I come to
worke in your Garden, let the profe yeeld praise of my
skill and knowledge. When the Fac-totum perceived, that
he knew perfectly how to undergo his businesse, and had
questioned him by signes, concerning his willingnesse to
serve there still, and received the like answere also, of his
dutifull readinesse thereto; he gave him order to worke in
the Garden, because the season did now require it; and to
leave all other affayres for the Monastery, attending now
only the Gardens preparation.

As Massetto was thus about his Garden emploiment, the
Nunnes began to resort thither, and thinking the man to
be dumbe and deafe indeede, were the more lavish of their
language, mocking and flowting him very immodestly, as
being perswaded, that he heard them not. And the Lady
Abbesse, thinking he might as well be an Eunuch, as
deprived both of hearing and speaking, stood the lesse in
feare of the Sisters walkes, but referred them to their owne
care and providence. On a day, Massetto having laboured
somewhat extraordinarily, lay downe to rest himselfe awhile
under the trees, and two delicate yong Nunnes, walking
there to take the aire, drew neere to the place where he
dissembled sleeping; and both of them observing his come-
linesse of person, began to pity the poverty of his con-
dition; but much more the misery of his great defectes.
Then one of them, who had a little livelier spirit then the
other, thinking Massetto to be fast asleepe, began in this
manner.

2: B
Sister (quoth she) if I were faithfully assured of thy secrecie, I would tell thee a thing which I have often thought on, and it may (perhaps) redound to thy profit. Sister, replyed the other Nun, speake your minde boldly, and beleeve it (on my Maiden-head) that I will never reveale it to any creature living. Encouraged by this solemne answere, the first Nun thus prosecuted her former purpose, saying. I know not Sister, whether it hath entred into thine understanding or no, how strictly we are here kept and attended, never any man daring to adventure among us, except our good and honest Fac-totum, who is very aged; and this dumbe fellow, maimed, and made imperfect by nature, and therefore not worthy the title of a man. Ah Sister, it hath oftentimes bin told me, by Gentlewomen comming hither to visite us, that all other sweetes in the world, are mockeries, to the incomparable pleasures of man and woman, of which we are barred by our unkind parents, binding us to perpetuall chastity, which they were never able to observe themselves.

A Sister of this house once told me, that before her turne came to be sent to the Soldane, she fell in frailty with a man that was both lame and blinde, and discovering the same to her Ghostly Father in confession; he absolved her of that sinne; affirming, that she had not transgressed with a man, because he wanted his rationall and understanding parts. Behold Sister, heere lyes a creature, almost formed in the self-same mold, dumbe and deafe, which are two the most rationall and understanding parts that do belong to any man, and therefore no Man, wanting them. If folly and frailty would be committed with him (as many times since hee came hither it hath run in my minde) hee is by Nature, sworne to such secrecie, that he cannot (if he would) be a blabbe thereof. Beside, the Lawes and constitution of our Religion doth teach us, that a sinne so assuredly concealed, is more then halfe absolved.

Ave Maria Sister (saide the other Nun) what kinde of
words are these you utter? Doe not you know, that we have promised our virginity to God? Oh Sister (answered the other) how many things are promised to him every day, and not one of a thousand kept or performed? If wee have made him such a promise, and some of our weaker-witted sisters do performe it for us, no doubt but he will accept it in part of payment. Yea but Sister, replied the second Nun againe, there is another danger lying in the way: If we prove to be with childe, how shall we doe then? Sister (quoth our courageous wench) thou art affraide of harme before it happen: if it come so to passe, let us consider on it then: thou art but a Novice in matters of such moment, we are provided of a thousand meanes, whereby to prevent conception. Or, if they should faile, we are so surely fitted, that the world shall never know it. Let it suffice, our lives must not be by any so much as suspected, our Monastery questioned, or our Religion rashly scandalized. Thus she schooled her younger Sister in wit, albeit as forward as shee in will, and longed as desirouslie, to know what kinde of creature man was.

After some other questions, how this intention of theirs might bee safely brought to full effect: the sprightly Nun that had wit at will, thus answered. You see Sister (quoth she) it is now the houre of midday, when all the rest of our sisterhood are quiet in their Chambers, because we are then allowed to sleep, for our earlier rising to morning Mattins. Here are none in the Garden now but our selves, and while I awake him, bee you the watch, and afterward follow mee in my fortune, for I will valiantly leade you the way. Massetto immitating a Dogges sleepe, heard all this conspiracie intended against him, and longed as earnestly till shee came to awake him. Which being done, he seeming very simple and sottish, and she chearing him with flattering behaviour: into the close Arbour they went, which the Sunnes bright eye could not pierce into, and there I leave it to the Nunnes owne approbation, whether Massetto was a man rationall, or no. Ill deeds
THE DECAMERON

NOVELL I

require longer time to contrive, then act; and both the Nuns having bene with Massetto at this new forme of confession, were enjoyned (by him) such an easie and silent penance, as brought them the oftner to shrift, and made him to proove a very perfect Confessour.

Desires obtayned, but not fully satisfied, doe commonly urge more frequent accesse, then wisedome thinkes expedient, or can continue without discovery. Our two joviall Nunnes, not a little proud of their private stolne pleasures, so long resorted to the close Arbour, till another Sister, who had often observed their haunt thither, by meanes of a little hole in her Window; that shee began to suspect them with Massetto, and imparted the same to two other Sisters, all three concluding, to accuse them before the Lady Abbesse. But upon a further conference had with the Offenders, they changed opinion, tooke the same oath as the forewomen had done; and because they would be free from any taxation at all: they revealed their adventures to the other three ignorants, and so fell all eight into one formall confederacie, but by good and warie observation, least the Abbesse her selfe should descry them; finding poore Massetto such plenty of Garden-worke, as made him verie doubtfull in pleasing them all.

It came to passe in the end, that the Lady Abbesse who all this while imagined no such matter, walking all alone in the garden on a day, found Massetto sleeping under an Almond tree, having then very little businesse to doe, because he had wrought hard all the night before. She observed him to be an hansome man, young, lusty, well-limbde and proportioned, having a mercifull commisseration of his dumbenesse and deafenes, being perswaded also in like manner, that if hee were an Eunuch too, hee deserved a thousand times the more to be pittied. The season was exceeding hot, and he lay downe so carelesly to sleepe, that somthing was noted, wherein shee intended to be better resolved, almost falling sicke of the other Nunnes disease. Having awaked him, she commanded him by signes that he should follow her to her chamber, where he was kept
THE THIRD DAY

close so long, that the Nunnes grew offended, because the Gardiner came not to his daily labour.

Well may you imagine that Massetto was no misse-proud man now, to be thus advanced from the Garden to the Chamber, and by no worse woman then the Lady Abbesse her selve: what signes, shews, or what language he speaks there, I am not able to expresse; onely it appeared, that his behaviour pleased her so well, as it procured his daily repairing thether; and acquainted her with such familiar conversation, as she would have condemned in the Nunnes her daughters, but that they were wise enough to keepe it from her. Now began Massetto to consider, that hee had undertaken a taske belonging to great Hercules, in giving content to so many, and by continuing dumbe in this maner, it would redound to his no meane detriment. Whereupon, as he was one night sitting by the Abbesse, the string that retained his tongue from speech, brake on a sodaine, and thus he spake.

Madam, I have often heard it said, that one Cocke may doe service to ten several Hennes, but ten men can very hardly even with all their best endeavours, give full satisfaction every way to one woman; and yet I am tied to content nine, which is farre beyond the compass of my power to do. Already have I performed so much Garden and Chamber-work, that I confesse my selfe starke tired, and can travaile no further, and therefore let me entreat you to lycense my departure hence, or finde some meanes for my better ease. The Abbesse hearing him speake, who had so long bene there dumbe, being stricken into admiration, and accounting it almost a miracle, said. How commeth this to passe? I verily beleaved thee to be dumbe. Madam (quoth Massetto) so I was indeed, but not by Nature; onely I had a long lingering sicknes which bereft me of speech, and which I have not onely recovered againe this night, but shal ever remaine thankfull to you for it.

The Abbesse verily credited his answer, demanding what he meant in saying, that he did service to nine? Madam,
quoth he, this were a dangerous question, and not easily answered before all the eight Sisters. Upon this reply, the Abbesse plainly perceived, that not onely she had fallen into folly, but all the Nunnes likewise cried guilty too: wherfore being a woman of sound discretion, she would not grant that Massetto should depart, but to keepe him still about the Nunnes businesse, because the Monastery should not be scandalized by him. And the Fac-totum being dead a little before, his strange recovery of speech revealed, and some things else more neerely concerning them: by generall consent, and with the good liking of Massetto, he was created the Fac-totum of the Monasterie.

All the neighboring people dwelling thereabout, who knew Massetto to be dumbe, by fetching home wood daily from the Forest, and divers employments in other places, were made to beleeve, that by the Nunnes devout prayers and discipline, as also the merite of the Saint, in whose honour the Monastery was buiht and erected, Massetto had his long restrained speech restored, and was now become their sole Fac-totum, having power now to employ others in drudgeries, and ease himselfe of all such labours. And albeit he made the Nunnes to be fruitfull, by encreasing some store of yonger sisters, yet all matters were so close and cleanly carried, as it was never talkt of, till after the death of the Ladie Abbesse, when Massetto beganne to grow in good yeeres, and desired to returne home to his native abiding, which (within a while after) was granted him.

Thus Massetto being rich and olde, returned home like a wealthy father, taking no care for the nursing of his children, but bequeathed them to the place where they were bred and borne, having (by his wit and ingenious apprehension) made such a benefit of his youthfull yeeres, that now he merrily tooke ease in his age.
THE THIRD DAY

A Querry of the Stable, belonging to Agilulpho, King of the Lombardes, found the meanes of accesse to the Queenes bed, without any knowledge or consent in her. This being secretly discovered by the King, and the party known, he gave him a marke, by shearing the haire of his head. Whereupon, he that was so shorne, sheared likewise the heads of all his fellowes in the lodging, and so escaped the punishment intended towards him.

THE SECOND NOVELL

Wherein is signified, the providence of a wise man, when he shall have reason to use revenge. And the cunning meanes of another, when hee compasseth craft to defend himselfe from perill.

WHEN the Novel of Philostratus was concluded, which made some of the Ladies blush, and the rest to smile: it pleased the Queene, that Madam Pampinea should follow next, to second the other gone before; when she, smiling on the whole assembly, began thus. There are some men so shallow of capacity, that they will (neverthelesse) make shew of knowing and understanding such things, as neither they are able to doe, nor appertaine to them: whereby they will sometimes reprehend other new errours, and such faults as they have unwillingly committed, thinking thereby to hide their owne shame, when they make it much more apparant and manifest. For prooffe whereof, faire company, in a contrary kinde I will shew you the subtill cunning of one, who
THE DECAMERON

NOVELL II

(perhaps) may bee reputed of lesse reckning then Massetto; and yet he went beyond a King, that thought himselfe to be a much wiser man.

Agilulffo, King of Lombardie, according as his Predecessours had done before him, made the principall seate of his Kid dome, in the Citie of Pavia, having embraced in mariage, Tendelinga, the late left wid dow of Vetario, who likewise had bee King of the Lombards; a most beauti-

The occurrences and estate of the whole Realme, being in an honourable, quiet and well setled condition, by the discreete care and providence of the King; a Querrie appertaining to the Queenes Stable of Horse, being a man but of meane and low quality, though comely of person, and of equall stature to the King; became immeasurably amorous of the Queene. And because his base and servile condition, had endued him with so much understanding, as to know infallibly, that his affection was mounted beyond the compasse of conveniencie: wisely he concealed it to himselfe, not acquainting any one therewith, or daring so much, as to discover it either by lookes, or any other affectionate behaviour.

And although hee lived utterly hopelesse, of ever attaining to his hearts desires; yet notwithstanding, hee proudly gloried, that his love had soared so high a pitch, as to be enamoured of a Queene. And dayly, as the fury of his flame encreased; so his cariage was farre above his fellows and companions, in the performing of all such serviceable duties, as any way he imagined might content the Queene. Whereon ensued, that whensoever shee roade abroad to take the ayre, shee used ofter to mount on the Horse, which this Querrie brought when shee made her choise, then any of the other that were led by his fellowes. And this did he esteeme as no meane happinesse to him, to order the stirrope for her mounting, and therefore gave dayly his due attendance: so that, to touch the Stirrop, but (much more) to put her foote into it, or touch any part of her garments, he thought it the onely heaven on earth.
THE THIRD DAY

But, as we see it oftentimes come to passe, that by how much the lower hope declineth, so much the higher love ascendeth; even so fell it out with this poore Querry; for, most irkesome was it to him, to endure the heavy weight of his continuall oppressions, not having any hope at all of the very least mitigation. And being utterly unable to relinquish his love divers times he resolved on some desperate conclusion, which might yet give the world an evident testimony, that he dyed for the love he bare to the Queene. And upon this determination, hee grounded the successe of his future fortune, to dye in compassing some part of his desire, without either speaking to the Queene, or sending any missive of his love; for to speake or write, were meerely in vaine, and drew on a worser consequence then death, which he could bestow on himselfe more easily, and when he listed.

No other course now beleagers his braines, but onely for secret accesse to the Queenes bed, and how he might get entrance into her Chamber, under colour of the King, who (as he knew very well) slept many nights together from the Queene. Wherefore, to see in what manner, and what the usuall habit was of the King, when he came to keepe companie with his Queene: he hid himselfe divers nights in a Gallery, which was betweene both their lodging Chambers. At length, he saw the King come forth of his Chamber, himselfe all alone, with a faire night-mantle wrapt about him, carrying a lighted Taper in the one hand, and a small white Wand in the other, so went he on to the Queenes lodging; and knocking at the doore once or twice with the wand, and not using any word, the doore opened, the light was left without, and he entered the Chamber, where he stayed not long, before his returning backe againe, which likewise very diligently he observed.

So familiar was he in the Wardrobe, by often fetching and returning the King and Queenes furnitures; that the fellowes to the same Mantle which the King wore when he went to the Queene, very secretly he conveighed away thence with him, being provided of a Light, and the very
like Wand. Now bestowes he costly bathings on his body, that the least sent of the Stable might not be felt about him; and finding a time suitable to his desire, when he knew the King to bee at rest in his owne Lodging, and all else sleeping in their bed; closely he steals into the Gallery, where alighting his Taper, with the Tinder purposely brought thither, the Mantle folded about him, and the Wand in his hand, valiantly he adventures upon his lives peril. Twice hee knockt softly at the doore, which a wayting woman immediately opened, and receyving the Light, went forth into the Gallery, while the supposed King, was conversing with the Queene.

Alas good Queene, heere is a sinne committed, without any guiltie thought in thee, as (within a while after) it plainly appeared. For, the Querry having compassed what he most coveted, and fearing to forfeiture his life by delay, when his amorous desire was indifferently satisfied: returned backe as he came, the sleepy waiting woman not so much as looking on him, but rather glad, that she might get her to rest againe. Scarceely was the Querrie stept into his bed, unheard or discerned by any of his fellowes, divers of them lodging both in that and the next Chamber: but it pleased the King to visite the Queene, according to his wonted manner, to the no little mervaile of the drowsie wayting woman, who was never twice troubled in a night before. The King being in bed, whereas always till then, his resort to the Queene, was altogether in sadnesse and melancholly, both comming and departing without speaking one word: now his Majestie was become more pleasantly disposing, whereat the Queene began not a little to mervaile. Now trust mee Sir, quoth shee, this hath beene a long wished, and now most welcome alteration, vouchsafing twice in a night to visite me, and both within the compasse of one houre; for it cannot be much more, since your being here, and now comming againe.

The King hearing these words, sodainely presumed, that by some counterfeit person or other, the Queene had beene this night beguiled: wherefore (very advisedly) hee con-
THE THIRD DAY

sidered, that in regard the party was unknowne to her, and all the women about her; to make no outward appearance of knowing it, but rather concealed it to himselfe. Farre from the indiscretion of some haire-braind men, who presently would have answered and sworne; I came not hither this night, till now. Whereupon many dangers might ensue, to the dishonour and prejudice of the Queene: beside, her error being discovered to her, might afterward be an occasion, to urge a wandring in her appetite, and to covet after change againe. But by this silence, no shame redounded to him or her, whereas prating, must needs be the publisher of open infamie: yet was hee much vexed in his minde, which neither by lookes or words hee would discover, but pleasantly said to the Queene, Why Madam, although I was once heere before to night, I hope you mislike not my second seeing you, nor if I should please to come againe. No truly Sir, quoth she, I onely desire you to have care of your health. Well, said the King, I will follow your counsaile, and now returne to mine owne lodging againe, committing my Queene to her good rest.

His blood boyling with rage and distemper, by such a monstrous injurie offered him; he wrapt his night-mantle about him, and leaving his Chamber, imagining, that whatsoever he was, needs he must be one of his owne house: he tooke a light in his hand, and conveyed it into a little Lanthorne, purposing to be resolved in his suspition. No guests or strangers were now in his Court, but onely such as belonged to his houshold, who lodged altogether about the Escurie and Stables, being there appointed to divers beds. Now, this was his conceite, that whosoever had beene so lately familiar with the Queene, his heart and his pulse could (as yet) be hardly at rest, but rather would be troubled with apparant agitation, as discovering the guilt of so great an offender. Many Chambers had he passed thorow, where all were soundly sleeping, and yet he felt both their brests and pulses.

At last he came to the lodging of the man indeede, that had so impudently usurped his place, who could not as yet
sleepe, for joy of his atchieved adventure. When he espied the King come in, knowing well the occasion of his search, he began to waxe very doubtfull, so that his heart and pulse beating extremely, he felt a further addition of feare, as being confidently persuadéd, that there was now no other way but death, especially if the King discovered his agony. And although many considerations were in his braine, yet because he saw that the King was unarmed, his best refuge was, to make shew of sleepe, in expectation what the King intended to doe. Among them all he had sought, yet could not find any likelihood, whereby to gather a grounded probability; untill he came to this Querry, whose heart and pulses laboured so strongly, that he said to himself, Yea mary, this is the man that did the deede.

Nevertheless, purposing to make no apparence of his further intention, he did nothing else to him, but drawing forth a paire of sheares, which purposely he brought thither with him, he clipped away a part of his lockes, which (in those times) they used to weare very long, to the end that he might the better know him the next morning, and so returned backe to his lodging againe. The Querry, who partly saw, but felt what was done to him; perceived plainely (being a subtill ingenious fellow) for what intent he was thus marked. Wherefore, without any longer dallying, up he rose, and taking a paire of sheares, where-with they used to trim their Horses; softly he went from bed to bed, where they all lay yet soundly sleeping, and clipt away each mans locke from his right eare, in the selfe same manner as the King had done his, and being not perceived by any one of them, quietly he laide him downe againe.

In the morning, when the King was risen, he gave command that before the Pallace gates were opened, all his whole Family should come before him, as instantly his will was fulfilled. Standing all uncoveréd in his presence, he began to consider with himselfe, which of them was the man that he had marked. And seeing the most part of them to have their lockes cut, all after one and the selfe same
manner; marvailing greatly, he saide to himselfe. The man whom I seeke for, though he be but of meane and base condition, yet it plainly appeareth, that he is of no deject or common understanding. And seeing, that without further clamour and noyse, he could not find out the party he looked for, he concluded, not to win eternall shame, by compassing a poore revenge: but rather (by way of admonition) to let the offender know in a word, that he was both noted and observed. So turning to them all, he saide; He that hath done it, let him be silent, and doe so no more, and now depart about your businesse.

Some other turbulent spirited man, no imprisonments, tortures, examinations, and interrogations, could have served his turne; by which course of proceeding, he makes the shame to be publike knowne, which reason requireth to keepe concealed. But admit that condigne vengeance were taken, it diminishe not one tittle of the shame, neither qualifieth the peoples bad affections, who will lash out as liberally in scandal, and upon the very least babling rumor. Such therfore as heard the Kings words, few though they were, yet truly wise; marvelled much at them, and by long examinations among themselves, questioned, but came far short of his meaning; the man onely excepted whom indeed they concerned, and by whom they were never discovered, so long as the King lived, neither did he dare at any time after, to hazard his life in the like action, under the frownes or favour of Fortune.
Under colour of Confession, and of a most pure conscience, a faire yong Gentlewoman, being amourously affected to an honest man, induced a devoute and solemn religious Friar, to advise her in the meanes (without his suspition or perceiving) how to enjoy the benefit of her friend, and bring her desires to their full effect.

THE THIRD NOVELL

Declaring, that the lewd qualities of some persons, oftentimes misguide good people, into great and greevous errors.

WHEN Madam Pampinea sate silent, and the Querries boldnesse equalled with his crafty cunning, and great wisedom in the King had passed amongst them with a generall applause; the Queene turning her selfe to Madam Philomena, appointed her to follow next in order as the rest had done before her: whereupon Philomena began after this maner.

It is my purpose, to acquaint you with a notable mockerie, which was performed (not in jest, but earnest) by a faire Gentlewoman, to a grave and devoute Religious Friar, which will yelde so much the more pleasure and recreation, to every secular understander, if but diligently he or she doe observe, how commonly those Religious persons (at least the most part of them) like notorious fooles, are the inventers of new courses and customes, as thinking themselves more wise and skilful in all things then any other; yet prove to be of no worth or validity, addicting the verie best of all their devices, to expresse their owne vilenesse of mind, and fatten themselves in their styes like
THE THIRD DAY

to pampered Swine. And assure your selves worthy Ladies, that I doe not tell this tale onely to follow the order enjoyned me; but also to informe you that such Saint-like holy Sirs, of whom we are too opinionate and credulous, may be, yea and are (divers times) cunningly met withall, in theiry craftiness, not onely by men, but likewise some of our owne sexe, as I shall make it apparant to you.

In our owne City (more full of craft and deceit, then love or faithfull dealing) there lived not many yeeres since, a Gentlewoman of good spirit, highly minded, endued with beauty and all commendable qualities, as any other woman (by nature) could be. Her name, or any others, concerned in this Novel, I meane not to make manifest, albeit I know them, because some are yet living, and thereby may be scandalized; and therefore it shall suffice to passe them over with a smile. This Gentlewoman, seeing her selfe to be descended of very great parentage, and (by chance) married to an Artezan, a Cloathyer or Draper, that lived by the making and selling of cloth. Shee could not (because he was a Tradesman) take downe the height of her minde; conceiving, that no man of meane condition (how rich soever) was worthy to enjoy a Gentlewoman in marriage. Observing moreover, that with all his wealth and treasure, he understood nothing better, then to open skeines of yarne, fill shuttles, lay webbes in his Loomes, or dispute with his Spinsters, about their businesse.

Being thus over-swayed with her proud opinion, she would no longer be embraced or regarded by him in any manner, saving only because she could not refuse him, but would find some other for her better satisfaction, who might seeme more worthy of her respect, then the Draper her Husband did. Heereupon shee fell so deepe in love with a verie honest man of our City also, and of indifferent yeeres, as what day shee saw him not, shee could take no rest the night ensuing. The man himselfe knew nothing hereof, and therefore was the more carelesse: and she being curious, nice, yet wisely considerate, durst not let him understand it, neither by any womens close conveyed message, nor yet
by Letters, as fearing the perils which happen in such cases. But her eye observing his dayly walkes and resorts, gave her notice of his often conversing with a religious Friar, who albeit he was a fat and corpulent man, yet notwithstanding, because he seemed to leade a sanctimonious life, and was reported to be a most honest man, she perswaded her selfe, that he might be the best meanes betwenee her and her friend.

Having considered with her selfe, what course was best to be observed in this case; uppon a day apt and convenient, she went to the Convent where he kept, and having caused him to be called, shee told him, that if his leysure so served, very gladly would she be confessed, and onely had made her choice of him. The holy man seeing her to be a Gentle-woman (as indeed she was) willingly heard her; and when she had confessed what she could, she had yet another matter to acquaint him withall, and thereupon thus she began.

Holy Father, it is no more then convenient that I should have recourse to you, to be assisted by your helpe and counsell, in a matter which I will impart unto you. I know, that you are not ignorant of my parents and husband, of whom I am affected as deerely as his life, for proofe whereof, there is not any thing that I can desire, but immediately I have it of him, he being a most rich man, and may very sufficiently affoord it. In regard whereof, I love him equally as my selfe, and (setting aside my best endeavours for him) I must tell you one thing quite contrary to his liking and honour: no woman could more worthily deserve death, then my selfe. Understand then (good Father) that there is a man, whose name I know not, but he seemeth to be honest, and of good worth; moreover (if I am not deceived) he resorteth oftentimes to you, being faire and comely of person, going alwayes in blacke garments of good price and value. This man, imagining (perhaps) no such minde in mee, as truely there is; hath often attempted mee, and never can I be at my doore, or window, but hee is alwayes present in my sight, which is
not a little displeasing to me; he watcheth my walks, and much I mervaile, that he is not now heere.

Let me tell you holy Sir, that such behaviours doe many times lay bad imputations upon very honest women, yet without any offence in them. It hath often run in my mind, to let him have knowledge thereof by my brethren: but afterward I considered, that men (many times) deliver messages in such sort, as draw on very ungentle answers, whereon grow words, and words beget actions. In which regard, because no harme or scandall should ensue, I thought it best to be silent; determining, to acquaint you rather therewith, then to any other, as wel because you seem to be his friend, as also in regard of your office, which priviledgeth you to correct such abuses, not onely in friends, but also in strangers. Enow other women there are, (more is the pitty) who perhaps are better disposed to such suites then I am, and can both like and allow of such courting, otherwise then I can doe; as being willing to embrace such offers, and (happily) loath to yeeld deniall. Wherefore, most humbly I entreate you good Father (even for our blessed Ladies sake) that you would give him a friendly reprehension, and advise him to use such unmanly meanes no more heereafter. With which words, she hung downe her head in her bosome, cunningly dissembling, as if shee wept, wiping her eyes with her Handkerchife, when not a teare fel from them, but indeed were dry enough.

The holy Religious man, so soone as he heard her de-
scription of the man, presently knew whom shee meant, and highly commending the Gentlewoman for her good and vertuous seeming disposition, beleeved faithfully all that shee had said: promising her, to order the matter so well and discreetly, as shee should not any more bee offended. And knowing her to be a woman of great wealth (after all their usuall manner, when they cast forth their fishing nets for gaine:) liberally he commeuend Almes-deeds, and dayly workes of Charity, recounting to her beside his owne particular necessities. Then, giving him two peeces of Gold, she said: I pray you (good Father) to be mindfull of
me, and if he chance to make any deniall, tell him, that I
spake it my selfe to you, and by the way of a sad complaint
her confession being ended, and penance easie enough en-
joyed her, she promised to make her parents bountifull
Benefactors to the Convent, and put more money into his
hand, desiring him in his Masses, to remember the soules of
her deceased friends, and so returned home to her house.

Within a short while after her departure, the Gentleman,
of whom she made this counterfeit complaint, came thither,
as was his usuall manner, and having done his duty to the
holy Father, they sate downe together privately, falling out
of one discourse into another. At the length, the Friar (in
very loving and friendly sort) mildly reproved him for such
amorous glaunces, and other pursuits, which (as he thought)
he dayly used to the Gentlewoman, according to her owne
speeches. The Gentleman mervailed greatly thereat, as
one that had never seene her, and very sildome passed by
the way where shee dwelt, which made him the bolder in
his answeres; wherein the Confessour interrupting him,
saide. Never make such admiration at the matter, neyther
waste more words in deniall, because they cannot serve thy
turne; I tell thee plainly, I heard these words even from
her owne selfe, in a very sorowfull and sad complaint.
And though (perhaps) heereafter, thou canst very hardly
refraine such follies; yet let me tell thee so much of her
(and under the seale of absolute assurance) that she is the
onely woman of the world, who to my judgement, doth ab-
horre all such base behaviour. In regard therefore of thine
owne honour, as also not to vex and prejudice so vertuous
a Gentlewoman, I pray thee refraine such idlenesse hence-
forward, and suffer her to live in peace.

The Gentleman being a little wiser then his ghostly
Father, perceived immediately, the notable pollicy of the
Woman. Whereupon, making somewhat bashfull appear-
ance of any error already committed, he said; He would
afterward be better advised. So departing from the Friar,
hee went on directly, to passe by the house where the Gentle-
woman dwelt, and shee stood alwayes ready on her watch,
at a little Window, to observe when he would walke that way. And seeing him comming, shee shewed her selfe so joyfull and gracious to him, as he easily understood, whereto the substance of the holy Fathers chiding tended. And from that time forward, he used dayly though in covert manner (to the no litle liking of the Gentlewoman and himselfe) to make his passage thorough that street, under colour of some important occasions there concerning him.

Soone after, it being plainely discerned on either side, that the one was as well contented with these walkes, as the other could be: she desired to enflame him a little further, by a more liberall illustration of her affection towards him, when time and place afferorded convenient opportunity. To the holy Father againe she went, (for she had beene too long from shrift) and kneeling downe at his feete, intended to begin her confession in teares; which the Friar perceiving, sorrowfully demanded of her; what new accident had happened? Holy Father (quoth shee) no novell accident, but only your wicked and ungracious friend, by whom (since I was heere with you, yea, no longer aгое then yesterday) I have been so wronged, as I verily beleeve that he was borne to bee my mortall enemy, and to make me do somthing to my utter disgrace for ever; and whereby I shall not dare to be seene any more of you my deare Father. How is this? answered the Friar, hath he not refrained from afflicting you so abusively?

Pausing a while, and breathing foorth many a disssembled sighe, thus shee replied. No truely, holy Father, there is no likelyhood of his abstaining: for since I made my complaint to you, he belike taking it in evil part, to bee contraried in his wanton humours, hath (meerely in despight) walked seaven times in a day by my doore, whereas formerly he never used it above once or twice. And well were it (good Father) if he could be contented with those walkes, and gazing glances which hee dartes at me: but growne he is so bolde and shamelesse, that even yesterday, (as I tolde you) hee sent a woman to me, one of his Pandoraes, as it appeared, and as if I had wanted either Purses or Girdles,
he sent me by her, a Purse and a Girdle. Whereat I grew so greeevously offended, as had it not bene for my due respect and feare of God, and next the sacred reverence I beare to you my ghostly Father, doubtlesse I had done some wicked deede. Neverthelesse, happily I withstood it, and wil neither say or do any thing in this case, till first I have made it knowne to you.

Then I called to minde, that having redelivered the Purse and Girdle to his shee-Messenger, which brought them with lookes sufficient to declare my discontentment: I called her backe againe, fearing lest she would keep them to her selfe, and make him beleive that I had received them (as I have heard such kinde of women use to do sometimes) and in anger I snatcht them from her, and have brought them you, to the end, that you may give him them againe; and tell him, I have no need of any such things, thankes be to heaven and my husband, as no woman can be better stored then I am. Wherefore good Father, purposely am I now come to you, to let him know, that if he will not abstaine from thus molesting me, I will disclose it to my Husband, Father, and Brethren, whatsoever befall. For I had rather he should receive the injury, then I to be causelessly blamed for him; wherein good Father tell me, if I dooe not well. With many counterfet sobbes, sighes, and teares these words were delivered; and drawing forth from under her gowne, a very faire and rich purse, as also a Girdle of great worth, she threw them into the Friars lappe.

He verily beleeving all this false report, being troubled in his minde thereat beyond measure, tooke the Gentlewoman by the hand, saying: Daughter, if thou be offended at these impudent follies, assuredly I cannot blame thee, nor will any wiseman reprove thee for it; and I commend thee for following my counsell. But let me alone for schooling of my Gentleman, ill hath he kept his promise made to me; wherefore, in regard of his former offence, as also this other so lately committed, I hope to set him in such a heate, as shall make him leave off from further injuring thee. Suffer not thy selfe to be conquerd by choller, in disclosing
THE THIRD DAY

this to thy kindred or husband, because too much harme may ensue thereon. But feare not any wrong to thy selfe; for I am a true witnesse of thine honesty and vertue.

Now began she to seeme better comforted, and forbearing to play on this string any longer, as well knowing the covetousnes of him and his equals, she said: Holy Father, some few nights past, me thought in my sleepe, that divers spirits of my kindred appeared to me in a vision, who me thought were in very great pains, and desired nothing els but Almes; especially my Godmother, who seemed to be afflictid with such extrem poverty, that it was most pittifull to behold. And I am halfe perswaded, that her torments are the greater, seeing me troubled with such an enemy to goodnesse. Wherefore (good Father) to deliver her soule and the others out of those fearfull flames, among your infinite other devout prayers, I would have you to say the forty Masses of S. Gregory, as a means for their happy deliverance, and so she put ten ducates into his hand. Which the holy man accepted thankfully, and with good words, as also many singular examples, confirmed her bountifull devotion: and when he had given her his benediction, home she departed.

After that the Gentlewoman was gone, hee sent for his friend whom she so much seemed to be troubled withall; and when he was come, hee beholding his Holy Father to looke discontentedly, thought, that now he should heare some newes from his Mistresse, and therefore expected what he would say. The Friar, falling into the course of his former reprehensions, but yet in more rough and impatient manner, sharply checkt him for his immodest behaviour towards the Gentlewoman, in sending her the Purse and Girdle. The Gentleman, who as yet could not guesse whereto his speeches tended; somewhat coldly and temperately, denied the sending of such tokens to her, to the end that he would not bee utterly discredited with the good man, if so bee the Gentlewoman had shewne him any such things. But then the Friar, waxing much more angry, sternly said. Bad man as thou art, how canst thou deny a manifest truth? See
THE DECAMERON

NOVELL III

sir, these are none of your amorous tokens? No, I am sure you doe not know them, nor ever saw them till now.

The Gentleman, seeming as if he were much ashamed, saide. Truely Father I do know them, and confesse that I have done ill, and very greatly offended: but now I will sweare unto you, seeing I understand how firmely she is affected, that you shall never heare any more complaint of me. Such were his vowes and protestations, as in the end the ghostly Father gave him both the Purse and Girdle: then after he had preached, and severely conjured him, never more to vexe her with any gifts at all, and he binding himselfe thereto by a solemne promise, he gave him license to depart. Now grew the Gentleman very jocond, being so surely certifyed of his Mistresses love, and by tokens of such worthy esteeme; wherefore no sooner was he gone from the Frier, but he went into such a secret place, where he could let her behold at her Window, what precious tokens he had received from her, whereof she was extraordinarly joyfull, because her devices grew still better and better; nothing now wanting, but her husbands absence, upon some journey from the City, for the full effecting of her desire.

Within a few dayes after, such an occasion hapned, as her husband of necessity must journey to Geneway; and no sooner was he mounted on horsebacke, taking leave of her and all his friends: but she, being sure he was gone, went in all hast to her Ghostly Father; and, after a few faigned outward shewes, thus she spake. I must now plainlye tell you, holy Father, that I can no longer endure this wicked friend of yours; but because I promised you the other day, that I would not do any thing, before I had your counsell therein, I am now come to tell you, the just reason of my anger, and full purpose to avoid all further mollestation.

Your friend I cannot terme him, but (questionlesse) a very divell of hell: this morning, before the breake of day, having heard (but how, I know not) that my husband was ridden to Geneway: got over the wall into my Garden, and climbing up a tree which standeth close before my Chamber window, when I was fast asleepe, opened the Case-
ment, and would have entred in at the window. But, by great good fortune, I awaked, and made shew of an open out-cry: but that he entreated me, both for Gods sake and yours, to pardon him this error, and never after he would presume any more to offend me. When he saw, that (for your sake) I was silent, he closed fast the window againe, departed as he came, and since I never saw him, or heard any tidings of him. Now judge you, holy Father, whether these be honest courses, or no, and to be endured by any civill Gentlewoman; neither would I so patiently have suffered this, but onely in my dutifull reverence to you.

The Ghostly Father hearing this, became the sorrowfullest man in the world, not knowing how to make her any answere, but only demanded of her divers times, whether she knew him so perfectly, that she did not mistake him for some other? Quoth she, I would I did not know him from any other. Alas deere daughter (replied the Frier) what can more be sayd in this case, but that it was over-much boldnesse, and very ill done, and thou shewedst thy selfe a worthy wise woman, in sending him away so mercifully, as thou didst. Once more I would entreat thee (deere and vertuous daughter) seeing grace hath hitherto kept thee from dis-honor, and twice already thou hast credited my counsell, let me now advise thee this last time. Spare speech, or complaining to any other of thy friends, and leave it to me, to try if I can overcome this unchained divell, whom I tooke to be a much more holy man. If I can recall him from this sensuall appetite, I shall account my labour well employed; but if I cannot do it, henceforward (with my blessed benediction) I give thee leave to do, even what thy heart will best tutor thee to. You see Sir (said shee) what manner of man he is, yet would I not have you troubled or disobeyed, only I desire to live without disturbance, which worke (I beseech you) as best you may: for I promise you, good Father, never to solicite you more uppon this occasion: And so, in a pretended rage, she returned backe from the ghostly Father.
Scarsely was she gone forth of the Church, but in commeth the man that had (supposedly) so much transgressed; and the Fryer taking him aside, gave him the most injurious words that could be used to a man, calling him disloyall, perjured, and a traitor. He who had formerly twice perceived, how high the holy mans anger mounted, did nothing but expect what he would say; and, like a man extremly perplexed, strove how to get it from him, saying; Holy Father, how come you to be so heinously offended? What have I done to incense you so strangely? Heare me dishonest wretch answered the Frier, listen what I shall say unto thee. Thou answerest me, as if it were a yeare or two past, since so foule abuses were by thee committed, and they almost quite out of thy remembrance. But tell me wicked man; where wast thou this morning, before breake of the day? Wheresoever I was, replied the Gentleman, mee thinkes the tidings come very quickly to you. It is true, said the Frier, they are speedily come to me indeed, and upon urgent necessity.

After a little curbing in of his wrath, somewhat in a milder straine, thus he proceeded. Because the Gentlewomans husband is journeyed to Geneway, proves this a ladder to your hope, that to embrace her in your armes, you must climbe over the Garden wall, like a treacherous robber in the night season, mount up a tree before her Chamber window, open the Casement, as hoping to compass that by importunity, which her spotlesse chastity will never permit. There is nothing in the world, that possibly she can hate more then you, and yet you will love her whether [she] will or no. Many demonstrations her selue hath made to you, how retrograde you are to any good conceit of her, and my loving admonishments might have had better successe in you, then as yet they shew of outward appearance. But one thing I must tell you, her silent sufferance of your injuries all this while, hath not bin in any respect of you, but at my earnest entreaties, and for my sake. But now she will be patient no longer, and I have given her free license, if ever heereafter you offer to attempt her any more, to make her
THE THIRD DAY

complaint before her Brethren, which will redound to your no meane danger.

The Gentleman, having wisely collected his Love-lesson out of the Holy Fathers angry words, pacified the good old man so well as he could with very solemne promises and protestations, that he should heare (no more) any mis-behaviour of his. And being gone from him, followed the instructions given in her complaint, by climbing over the Garden Wall, ascending the Tree, and entering at the Case-ment, standing ready open to welcome him. Thus the Friars simplicity, wrought on by her most ingenious subtltie, made way to obtaine both their longing desires.

A yong Scholler, named Felice, enstructed Puccio di Rinieri, how to become rich in a very short time. While Puccio made experience of the instructions taught him; Felice obtained the favour of his Daughter.

THE FOURTH NOVELL

Wherein is declared, what craft and subtilty some wily wits can devise, to deceive the simple, and compasse their owne desires.

AFTER that Philomena had finished her Tale, she sate still; and Dioneus (with faire and pleasing Language) commended the Gentlewomans quaint cunning, but smiling at the Confessors witlesse simplicity. Then the Queene, turning with chearefull looks towards Pamphilus, commaunded him to continue on their delight; who gladly yeelded, and thus began. Madame, many men there are, who while they strive to climbe from a good estate, to a seeming better; doe become in much worse condition then they were before. As happened to a neigh-
According as I have heard it reported, neere to Saint Brancazio, there dwelt an honest man, and some-what rich, who was called Puccio di Rinieri, and who addicted all his paines and endeavours to Alchimy: wherefore, he kept no other family, but onely a widdowed daughter, and a servant; and because he had no other Art or exercise, he used often to frequent the market place. And in regard he was but a weake witted man and a gourmand or grosse feeder; his language was the more harsh and rude; like to our common Porters or sottish men, and his carriage also absurd, boore-like, and clownish. His daughter, being named Monna Isabetta, aged not above eight and twenty, or thirty yeeres; was a fresh indifferent faire, plume, round woman, cherry cheekt, like a Queene-Apple; and, to please her Father, fed not so sparingly, as otherwise she would have done, but when she communed or jested with any body, she would talke of nothing, but onely concerning the great vertue in Alchimy, extolling it above all other Arts.

Much about this season of the yeare, there returned a young Scholler from Paris, named Felice, faire of complexion, comely of person, ingeniously witted, and skilfully learned, who (soone after) grew into familiarity, with Puccio: now because he could resolve him in many doubts, depending on his profession of Alchimy, (himselfe having onely practise, but no great learning) he used many questions to him, shewed him very especiall matters of secrecy, entertaining him often to dinners and suppers, whenssoever he pleased to come and converse with him; and his daughter likewise, perceiving with what favour her Father respected him, became the more familiar with him, allowing him good regard and reverence.

The young man continuing his resort to the House of Puccio, and observing the widdow to be faire, fresh, and prettily formall; he began to consider with himselfe, what those things might be, wherein she was most wanting; and (if he could) to save anothers labour, supply them by his
best endeavours. Thus not alwayes carrying his eyes before

him, but using many backe and circumspect regards, he pro-

ceeded so farre in his wylie apprehensions, that (by a few

sparkes close kept together) he kindled part of the same fire

in her, which began to flame apparantly in him. And hee

very wittily observing the same, as occasion first smiled on

him, and allowed him favourable opportunity, so did hee

impart his intention to her.

Now albeit he found her plyant enough, to gaine physicke

for her owne griefe, as soone as his; yet the meanes and

manner were (as yet) quite out of all apprehension. For

shee in no other part of the World, would trust her selfe in

the young mans company, but onely in her Fathers house;

and that was a place out of all possibility, because Puccio

(by a long continued custome) used to watch well-neere all

the night, as commonly he did, each night after other, never

stirring fourth of the roomes, which much abated the edge

of the young mans appetite. After infinite intricate re-

volvings, wheeling about his busied braine, he thought it

not altogether an Herculian taske, to enjoy his happinesse

in the house, and without any suspition, albeit Puccio

kept still within doores, and watched as hee was wont to
do.

Upon a day as he sate in familiar conference with Puccio,

he began to speake unto him in this manner; I have many
times noted, kinde friend Puccio, that all thy desire and
endeavour is, by what meanes thou mayst become very rich,
wherein (me thinkes) thou takest too wide a course, when

there is a much neerer and shorter way, which Mighell

Scotus, and other his associates, very diligently observed
and followed, yet were never willing to instruct other men

therein; whereby the mysterie might bee drowned in

oblivion, and prosecuted by none but onely great Lords,

that are able to undergoe it. But because thou art mine

especiall friend, and I have received from thee infinite kind
favours; whereas I never intended, that any man (by me)
should be acquainted with so rare a secret; if thou wilt
imitate the course as I shall shew thee, I purpose to teach it
NOVELL \textsc{iv}  

thee in full perfection. Puccio being very earnestly desirous to understand the speediest way to so singular a mysterie, first began to entreat him (with no meane instance) to acquaint him with the rules of so rich a Science; and afterward sware unto him, never to disclose it to any person, except hee gave his consent thereto; affirming beside, that it was a rarity, not easie to bee comprehended by very apprehensive judgements. Well (quoth Felice) seeing thou hast made me such a sound and solemne promise, I will make it knowne unto thee.

Know then friend Puccio, the Philosophers do hold, that such as covet to become rich indeed, must understand how to make the Stone: as I will tell thee how, but marke the manner very heedfully. I do not say, that after the Stone is obtained, thou shalt bee even as rich as now thou art; but thou shalt plainly perceive, that the very grossest substances, which hitherto thou hast seene, all of them shalbe made pure golde: and such as afterward thou makest, shall be more certaine, then to go or come with \textit{Aqua fortis}, as now they do. Most expedient is it therefore, that when a man will go diligently about this businesse, and purposeth to prosecute such a singular labour, which will and must continue for the space of 40 nights, he must give very carefull attendance, wholly abstaining from sleepe, slumbering, or so much as nodding all that while.

Moreover, in some apt and convenient place of thy house, there must be a forge or furnace erected, framed in decent and formall fashion, and neere it a large table placed, ordered in such sort, as standing upright on thy feete, and leaning the reines of thy backe against it; thou must stande stedfastly in that manner every night, without the least motion or stirring, untill the breake of day appeareth, and thine eyes still uppon the Furnace fixed, to keepe ever in memory, the true order which I have prescribed. So soone as the morning is seene, thou mayest (if thou wilt) walke, or rest a little upon thy bed, and afterward go about thy businesse, if thou have any. Then go to dinner, attending readily till the evenings approch, preparing such things as
THE THIRD DAY

I will readily set thee downe in writing, without which there is not any thing to bee done; and then returne to the same taske againe, not varying a jot from the course directed. Before the time be fully expired, thou shalt perceive many apparant signes, that the stone is still in absolute forwardnesse, but it will bee utterly lost if thou fayle in the least of all the observances. And when the experience hath crowned thy labour, thou art sure to have the Philosophers stone, and thereby shalt be able to enrich all, and worke wonders beside.

Puccio instantly replyed. Now trust me Sir, there is no great difficultie in this labour, neither doth it require any extraordinary length of time: but it may very easily be followed and performed, and (by your friendly favor, in helping to direct the Furnace and Table, according as you imagine most convenient) on Sunday at night next, I will begin my taske. The Scholler being gone, he went to his daughter, and tolde her all the matter, and what he had determined to do: which shee immediately understood sufficiently, and what would ensue on his nightly watching in that manner, returning him answer; that whatsoever he liked and allowed of, it became not her way to mislike. Thus they continued in this kinde concordance, till Sunday night came. When Puccio was to begin his experience, and Felice to set forward upon his adventure. Concluded it was, that every night the Scholler must come to Supper, partly to bee a witnesse of his constant performance, but more especially for his owne advantage.

The place which Puccio had chosen, for his hopefull attaining to the Philosophers Stone, was close to the Chamber where his daughter lay having no other separation or division, but an old ruinous tottring wall. So that, when the Scholler was playing his prize, Puccio heard an unwonted noise in the house, which he had never observed before, neither knew the wall to have any such motion: wherefore, not daring to stirre from his standing, least all should be marrd in the very beginning, he called to his daughter, demanding, what busie labour she was about?
The widdow, being much addicted to frumping, according as questions were demanded of her, and (perhaps) forgetting who spake to her, pleasantly replied: Whoop Sir, where are we now? Are the Spirits of Alchimy walking in the house, that we cannot lye quietly in our beds?

Puccio mervailing at this answere, knowing she never gave him the like before; demanded againe, what she did? The subtle wench, remembring that she had not answered as became her, said: Pardon mee Father, my wits were not mine owne, when you demanded such a sodaine question; and I have heard you say an hundred times, that when folke go supperles to bed, either they walke in their sleepe, or being awake, talke very idely, as (no doubt) you have discern'd by me. Nay daughter (quoth he) it may be, that I was in a waking dreame, and thought I heard the olde wall totter: but I see I was deceived, for now it is quiet and still enough. Talke no more good Father, saide she, least you stirre from your place, and hinder your labour: take no care for mee, I am able enough to have care of my selfe.

To prevent any more of these nightly disturbances, they went to lodge in another part of the house, where they continued out the time of Puccioes paines, with equall contentment to them both, which made her divers times say to Felice: You teach my father the cheefe grounds of Alchimy, while we helpe to waste away his treasure. Thus the Scholler being but poore, yet well forwarded in Learning, made use of Puccioes folly, and found benefit thereby, to keepe him out of wants, which is the bane and overthrow of numberlesse good wits. And Puccio dying, before the date of his limited time, because he failed of the Philosophers Stone, Isabetta joyned in marriage with Felice, to make him amends for instructing her father, by which meanes he came to be her husband.
THE THIRD DAY

Ricciardo surnamed the Magnifico, gave a Horse to Signior Francesco Vergullisi, on condition that he might speake to his wife in his presence; which he did, and she not returning him any answer, made answer to himselfe on her behalfe, and according to his answer, so the effect followed.

THE FIFTH NOVELL

Wherein is described the frailety of some Women, and folly of such Husbands, as leave them alone to their owne disposition.

PAMPHILUS having ended his novell of Puccio the Alchimist, the Queene fixing her eye on Madam Eliza, gave order, that shee should succeed. She looking somewhat more austerely then any of the rest not in any spleen, but as it was her usuall manner, thus began. The world containeth some particular people, who beleeeve (because they know something) that others are ignorant in all things, who for the most part, while they intend to make a scorne of other men, upon triall, finde themselves to carry away the scorne. Therefore, I account it no meane folly in them, who (upon no occasion) wil tempt the power of another mans wit or experience. But because all men and women are not of my opinion; I meane that you shall perceive it more apperantly, by an accident happening to a Knight of Pistoia, as you shall heare by me related.

In the Town of Pistoia, bordering upon Florence, there lived not long since, a Knight named Signieur Francesco, descended of the linage or family of the Vergellisi, a man very rich, wise, and in many things provident, but griple, covetous, and too close handed, without respect to his worth and reputation. He being called to the Office of Podesta
THE DECAMERON

in the City of Millaine, furnished himselfe with all things (in honourable manner) beseeming such a charge; onely, a comely horse for his owne saddle excepted, which he knew not by any means how to compass, so loath hee was to lay out money, albeit his credit much depended thereon.

At the same time, there lived in Pistoya likewise, a young man, named Ricciardo, derived of meane birth, but very wealthy, quicke witted, and of commendable person, alwayes going so neate, fine, and formall in his apparrell, that he was generally tearmed the Magnifico, who had long time affected, yea, and closely courted, (though without any advantage or successe) the Lady and wife of Signior Francesco, who was very beautifull, vertuous, and chaste. It so chanced, that this Magnifico had the very choisest and goodliest ambling Gelding in all Tuscany, which hee loved dearely, for his faire forme, and other good parts. Upon a flying rumor throughout Pistoia, that he daily made love to the foresaid Ladie, some busie-body put it into the head of Signior Francesco, that if he pleased to request the Gelding, the Magnifico would frankly give it him, in regard of the love he bare to his wife.

The base-minded Knight, coveting to have the Horse, and yet not to part with any money, sent for the Magnifico, desiring to buy his fayre Gelding of him, because he hoped to have him of free gift. The Magnifico hearing this request, was very joyfull, and thus answered; Sir, if you would give me all the wealth which you possesse in this world, I wil not sell you my horse, rather I wil bestow him on you as a Gentlemans gift: but yet upon this condition, that before you have him delivered, I may with your license, and in your presence speake a few words to your vertuous Ladie, and so farre off in distance from you, as I may not be heard by any, but onely her selfe. Signior Francesco, wholly conducted by his base avaricious desire, and meaning to make a scorne at the Magnifico, made answer, that he was well contented to let him speak with her when he would; and leaving him in the great Hall of the house, went to his wives Chamber, and told her how easily he
might enjoy the horse, commanding her forthwith to come and heare what he could say to her, only she should abstaine, and not returne him any answer. The Lady with a modest blush, much condemned this folly in him, that his covetousnes should serve as a cloake to cover any unfitting speeches which her chaste eares could never endure to heare. Nevertheless being to obey her husbands will, she promised to do it, and followed him down into the Hall, to heare what the Magnifico would say. Againe he there confirmed the bargaine made with her husband, and sitting downe by her in a corner of the Hall, farre enough off from any ones hearing, taking her curteously by the hand, thus he spake.

Worthy Lady, it seemeth to me, that you are so truly wise, as no doubt you have long since perceived, what unfeigned affection your beauty (far excelling) hath compelled me to beare you. Setting aside those commendable qualities and singular vertues gloriously shining in you, and powerfull enough to make a conquest of the stoutest courage, I held it utterly needless, to let you understand by words, how faithfull the love is I bear you, were it not much more fervent and constant, then ever any other man can expresse to a woman. In which condition it shall still continue, without the least blemish or impayre, so long as I enjoy life or motion; yea, and I dare assure you, that if in the future world, affection may containe the same powerfull dominion, as it doth in this; I am the man borne to love you perpetually. Whereby you may rest confidently persuaded, that you enjoy not any thing, how poore or precious soever it be, which you can so solemnely account to be your owne, and in the truest title of right, as you may my selfe, in all that I have, or for ever shall be mine.

To confirme your opinion in this case by any argument of greater power, let me tell you, that I should repute it as my fairest and most gracious fortune, if you would command me some such service, as consisteth in mine ability to performe, and in your courteous favour to accept, yea, if it were to travaile thorow the whole world, right willing am
I, and obedient. In which regard faire Madam, if I be so much yours, as you heare I am, I may boldly adventure (and not without good reason) to acquaint your chaste eares with my earnest desires, for on you onely depends my happinesse, life, and absolute comfort, and as your most humble servant, I beseech you (my dearest good, and sole hope of my soule) that rigour may dwell no longer in your gentle brest, but Lady-like pitty and compassion, whereby I shall say, that as your divine beauty enflamed mine affections, even so it extended such a merciful qualification, as exceeded all my hope, but not the halfe part of your pitty.

Admit (myracle of Ladies) that I should die in this distresse: Alas, my death would be but your dishonour; I cannot be termed mine owne murtherer, when the Dart came from your eye that did it, and must remaine a witnes of your rigor. You cannot then chuse but call to minde, and say within your owne soule: Alas, what a sinne have I committed, in being so unmercifull to my Magnifico. Repentance then serves to no purpose, but you must answer for such unkinde cruelty. Wherefore, to prevent so blacke a scandall to your bright beauty, beside the ceaselesse acclamations, which will dog your walkes in the day time, and breake your quiet sleepe in the night season, with fearefull sights and gastly apparitions, hovering and haunting about your bed; let all these moove you to milde mercy, and spill not life, when you may save it.

So the Magnifico ceasing, with teares streaming from his eyes, and sighes breaking from his heart, hee sate still in expectation of the Ladies answere, who made neither long or short of the matter, neither Tilts nor Tourneying, nor many lost mornings and evenings, nor infinite other such like Offices, which the Magnifico (for her sake) from time to time had spent in vaine, without the least shew of acceptation, or any hope at all to winne her love: mooved now in this very houre, by these solome protestations, or rather most prevailing asseverations, she began to finde that in her, which (before) she never felt, namely Love. And
THE THIRD DAY

although (to keepe her promise made to her husband) shee spake not a word: yet her heart heaving, her soule throb-bing, sighes intermixing, and complexion altering, could not hide her intended answer to the Magnifico, if promise had beene no hinderance to her will. All this while the Magnifico sate as mute as she, and seeing she would not give him any answere at all, he could not choose but wonder thereat, yet at length perceived, that it was thus cunningly contrived by her husband. Notwithstanding, observing well her countenance, that it was in a quite contrary temper, another kinde of fire sparkling in her eye, other humours flowing, her pulses strongly beating, her stomacke rising, and sighes swelling, all these were arguments of a change, and motives to advance his hope. Taking courage by this ticklish perswasion, and instructing his mind with a new kinde of counsell; he would needes answer himselfe on her behalfe, and as if she had uttered the words, thus he spake.

Magnifico, and my friend, surely it is a long time since, when I first noted thine affection toward me to be very great and most perfect, but now I am much more certain thereof, by thine owne honest and gentle speeches, which content me as they ought to do. Nevertheless, if heretofore I have seemed cruell and unkinde to thee, I would not have thee thinke, that my heart was any way guilty of my outward severity, but did evermore love thee, and held thee deerer then any man living. But yet it became me to do so, as well in feare of others, as for the renowne of mine owne reputation. But now is the time at hand, to let thee knowe more clearly, whether I do affect thee or no: as a just guerdon of thy constant love which long thou hast, and still doest beare to me. Wherefore, comfort thy selfe, and dwell on this undoubted hope, because Signior Francesco my husband, is to be absent hence for many dayes, beeing chosen Podesta at Millaine, as thou canst not choose but heare, for it is common through the Country.

I know (for my sake) thou hast given him thy goodly ambling Gelding, and so soone as he is gone, I promise thee upon my word, and by the faithfull love I beare thee; that
I will have further conference with thee, and let thee understand somewhat more of my minde. And because this is neither fitting time nor place, to discourse on matters of such serious moment: observe heereafter, as a signall, when thou seest my Crimson Skarfe hanging in the window of my Chamber, which is upon the Garden side, that evening (so soone as it is night) come to the Garden gate, with wary respect that no eye do discover thee, and there thou shalt finde me walking, and ready to acquaint thee with other matters, according as I shall finde occasion.

When the Magnifico in the person of the Lady, had spoken thus, then he returned her this answer. Most vertuous Lady, my spirits are so transported with extraordinary joy, for this your gracious and welcome answer, that my sences faile me, and all my faculties quite forsake me, that I cannot give you such thankes as I would. And if I could speak equally to my desire, yet the season suites not therewith, neither were it convenient that I should be so troublesome to you. Let me therefor humbly beseech you, that the desire I have to accomplish your will (which wordes availe not to expresse) may remaine in your kinde consideration. And as you have commanded me, so will I not faile to performe it accordingly, and in more thankfull manner, then (as yet) I am able to let you know. Now there resteth nothing else to do, but under the protection of your gracious pardon, I to give over speech, and you to attend your woorthy Husband.

Notwithstanding all that hee had spoken, yet shee replyed not one word; wherefore the Magnifico arose, and returned to the Knight, who went to meete him, saying in a lowd laughter. How now man? Have I not kept my promise with thee? No Sir, answered the Magnifico, for you promised I should speake with your wife, and you have made mee talke to a marble Statue. This answere, was greatly pleasing to the Knight, who, although hee had an undoubted opinion of his wife; yet this did much more strengthen his beliefe, and hee said. Now thou confessest thy Gelding to bee mine? I doe, replied the Magnifico,
THE THIRD DAY

but if I had thought, that no better successese would have ensued on the bargaine; without your motion for the horse, I would have given him you: and I am sorie that I did not, because now you have bought my horse, and yet I have not sold him. The Knight laughed heartily at this answer, and being thus provided of so faire a beast, hee rode on his journey to Millaine, and there entred into his authority of Podesta.

The Lady remained now in liberty at home, considering on the Magnificoes words, and likewise the Gelding, which (for her sake) was given to her husband. Oftentimes shee saw him passe too and fro before her windowe, still looking when the Flagge of defiance should be hanged forth, that hee might fight valiantly under her Colours. The Story saith, that among many of her much better meditations, shee was heard to talke thus idely to her selfe. What doe I meane? Wherefore is my youth? The olde miserable man is gone to Millaine, and God knoweth when hee comes backe againe, ever, or never. Is dignity preferred before wedlockes holy duty, and pleasures abroade, more then comforts at home? Ill can age pay youths arrerages, when time is spent, and no hope sparde. Actions omitted, are oftentimes repented, but done in due season, they are sildome sorrowed for. Upon these un-Lady-like private consultations, whether the window shewed the signall or no; it is no matter belonging to my charge: I say, husbands are unwise, to graunt such ill advantages, and wives much worse, if they take hold of them, onely judge you the best, and so the Tale is ended.
Ricciardo Minutolo fell in love with the wife of Philippello Fighinolfi, and knowing her to be very jealous of her Husband, gave her to understand, that hee was greatly enamoured of his Wife, and had appointed to meete her privately in a Bathing house, on the next day following: where shee hoping to take him tardie with his close compacted Mistresse, found her selfe to be deceived by the said Ricciardo.

THE SIXTH NOVELL

Declaring, how much perseverance, and a courageous spirit is available in love.

No more remained to be spoken by Madame Eliza, but the cunning of the Magnifico, being much commended by all the company: the Queene commanded Madame Fiammetta, to succeed next in order with one of her Novels, who (smiling) made answer that shee would, and began thus. Gracious Ladies, mee thinkes wee have spoken enough already, concerning our owne Citie, which as it aboundeth copiously in all commodities, so is it an example also to every convenient purpose. And as Madam Eliza hath done, by recounting occasions happening in another World, so must we now leape a little further off, even so far as Naples, to see how one of those Saint-like Dames that nicely seemes to shun loves allurings, was guided by the good spirit to a friend of hers, and tasted of the fruite, before she knew the flowers. A sufficient warning for you to apprehend before hand what may follow after, and to let you see beside, that when an error is committed, how to bee discreet in keeping it from publike knowledge.
THE THIRD DAY

In the Citie of Naples, it being of great antiquity, and (perhaps) as pleasantly situated, as any other City in all Italy, there dwelt sometime a yong Gentleman, of noble parentage, and well knowne to bee wealthy, named Ricciardo Minutolo, who although hee had a Gentlewoman of excellent beuty, and worthy the verie kindest affecting to his wife; yet his gadding eye gazed elsewhere, and he became enamored of another, which (in generall opinion) surpassed all the Neapolitane Women else, in feature, favour, and the choyst perfections, shee being named Madam Catulla wife to as gallant a young Gentleman, called Philippello Fighinolfi, who most dearly he loved beyond all other, for her vertue and admired chastity.

Ricciardo loving this Madam Catulla, and using all such means whereby the grace and liking of a Lady might be obtained; found it yet a matter beyond possibility, to compasse the height of his desire: so that many desperate and dangerous resolutions beleagred his braine, seeming so intricate and unlikely to affoord any hopefull yssue, as hee wished for nothing more then death. And death (as yet) being deafe to all his earnest imprecations, delayed him on in lingering afflictions: and continuing still in such an extreame condition, he was advised by some of his best friends, utterly to abstaine from this fond pursuit, because his hopes were meerely in vaine, and Madam Catulla prized nothing more precious to her in the World, then unstayned loyalty to her Husband: and yet shee lived in such extreame jealousie of him, as fearing least some bird flying in the ayre should snatch him from her.

Ricciardo not unacquainted with this her jealous humour, as well by credible hearing thereof, as also by daily observation, began to consider with himselfe, that it were best for him, to dissemble amorous affection in some other place, and (henceforward) to set aside all hope, of ever enjoying the love of Madam Catulla, because he was now become the servant to another Gentlewoman, pretending (in her honour) to performe many worthy actions of Armes, Joustes, Tournaments, and all such like noble exercises, as he was
wont to doe for Madam Catulla. So that most of the people of Naples, but especially Madam Catulla, became verily persuaded, that his former fruitlesse love to her was quite changed, and the new elected Lady had all the glory of his best endeavours, persevering so long in this opinion, as now it passed absolutely for currant. Thus seemed he now as meere a stranger to her, whose house before he familiarly frequented, yet as a neighbour gave her the daies salutations, according as he chanced to see her, or meet her.

It came so to passe, that it being now the delightfull Summer season, when all Gentlemen and Gentlewomen used to meete together (according to a custome long observed in that Country) sporting along on the Sea Coast, dining and supping there very often, Ricciardo Minutolo happened to heare, that Madam Catulla (with a company of her friends) intended also to be present there among them; at which time, consorted with a seemely traine of his confederates, he resorted thither, and was graciously welcommed by Madam Catulla, where he pretended no willing long time of tarrying, but that Catulla and the other Ladies were faine to entreate him, discoursing of his love to his new elected Mistresse: which Minutolo graced with so solemne a countenance, as it ministred much more matter of conference, all coveting to know what she was.

So farre they walked, and held on this kinde of discoursing, as every Lady and Gentlewoman, waxing weary of too long a continued argument, began to separate her selfe with such an associate as shee best liked, and as in such walking women are wont to doe; so that Madam Catulla having few females left with her, stayed behind with Minutolo, who sodainly shot forth a word concerning her husband Philipello, and of his loving another woman beside her selfe. She that was overmuch jealous before, became so sodainely set on fire to know what shee was of whom Minutolo spake, as she sat silent a long while, til being able to conteine no longer, shee entreated Ricciardo even for the Ladies sake, whose love he had so devoutly embraced,
to resolve her certainly in this strange alteration of her husband; whereunto thus he answered.

Madam, you have so straitly conjured me, by urging the remembrance of her; for whose sake I am not able to deny any thing you can demand, as I am readie therein to pleasure you. But first you must promise me, that neither you, or any other person for you, shall at any time disclose it to your Husband, untill you have seene by effect, that which I have told you proveth to be true: and when you please, I wil instruct you how your selfe shall see it. The Ladie was not a little joyfull to be thus satisfied in her Husbands folly, and constantly crediting his words to be true, shee sware a solemne oath, that no one alive should ever know it. So stepping a little further aside, because no listening eare should heare him, thus he beganne.

Lady, if I did love you now so effectually as heeretofore I have done, I should be very circumspect, in uttering any thing which I imagined might distast you. I know not whether your husband Philipello, were at any time offended, because I affected you, or beleved that I received any kindnes from you: but whether it were so or no, I could never discerne it by any outward apperance. But now awaiting for the opportunity of time, which he conceived should affoord me the least suspition, he seekes to compasse that, which (I doubt) he feares I would have done to him, in plaine termes Madam, to have his pleasure of my wife. And as by some carriages I have observed, within few daies past he hath solicited and pursued his purpose very secretly, by many Ambassages, and meanes, as (indeed) I have learned from her selfe, and alwaies she hath returned in such answers, as she receyved by my direction.

And no longer ago Madam, then this very morning, before my comming hither, I found a woman-messenger in my house, in very close conference with my Wife, when growing doubtfull of that which was true indeede, I called my Wife, enquiring, what the woman would have with her; and she told me, it was another pursuite of Philipello Fighinolfi, who (quoth shee) upon such answers as you
have caused me to send him from time to time, perhapses doth gather some hope of prevailing in the end, which maketh him still to importune me as he doth. And now he adventureth so farre, as to understand my finall intension, having thus ordered his complot, that when I please, I must meet him secretly in a house of this City, where he hath prepared a Bath ready for me, and hopeth to enjoy the end of his desire, as very earnestly he hath solicited me thereto. But if you had not commanded me, to hold him in suspense with so many frivolous answers, I would ere this, have sent him such a message, as should have bene little to his liking.

With patience Madam I endured all before, but now (me thinkes) he proceedeth too farre, which is not any way to be suffered; and therefore I intended to let you know it, that you may perceive, how wel you are rewarded for the faithfull and loyall love you beare him, and for which, I was even at deaths doe. Now, because you may be the surer of my speeches, not to be any lyes or fables, and that you may (if you please) approve the truth by your owne experience, I caused my wife to send him word, that she would meet him to morrow at the Bathing-house appointed, about the houre of noone-day, when people repose themselves in regard of the heats violence; with which answer the woman returned very jocondly. Let me now tell you Lady, I hope you have better opinion of my wit, then any meaning in me, to send my wife thither; I rather did it to this end, that having acquainted you with his treacherous intent, you should supply my wives place, by saving both his reputation and your owne, and frustrat-ing his unkind purpose to me. Moreover, upon the view of his owne delusion, wrought by my wife in meere love to you, he shall see his foule shame, and your most noble care, to keepe the rites of marriage betweene you still unstained.

Madame Catulla, having heard this long and unpleasing report, without any consideration, either what he was that tolde the tale, or what a treason he intended against her:
immediately (as jealous persons use to doe) she gave faith to his forgerie, and began to discourse many things to him, which imagination had often misguided her in, against her honest minded husband, and enflamed with rage, suddenly replied; that shee would doe according as he had advised her, as being a matter of no difficulty. But if he came, she would so shame and dishonour him, as no woman whatsoever should better schoole him. Ricciardo highly pleased here-with, and being perswaded, that his purpose would take the full effect: confirmed the Lady in her determination with many words more; yet putting her in memory, to keepe her faithfull promise made, without revealing the matter to any living person, as shee had sworne upon her faith.

On the morrow morning, Ricciardo went to an auncient woman of his acquaintance, who was the Mistresse of a Bathing-house, and there where he had appointed Madame Catulla, that the Bath should bee prepared for her, giving her to understand the whole businesse, and desiring her to be favourable therein to him. The woman, who had beene much beholding to him in other matters, promised very willingly to fulfill his request, concluding with him, both what should be done and said. She had in her house a very darke Chamber, without any window to affoord it the least light, which Chamber she had made ready, according to Ricciardoes direction, with a rich Bed therein, so soft and delicate as possible could bee, wherein he entred so soone as he had dined, to attend the arrivall of Madame Catulla. On the same day, as she had heard the speeches of Ricciardo, and gave more credit to them then became her; she returned home to her house in wonderfull impatience. And Philippello her husband came home discontentedly too, whose head being busied about some worldly affaires, perhaps he looked not so pleasantly, neither used her so kindly, as he was wont to doe. Which Catulla perceiving, shee was ten times more suspicious then before, saying to her selfe. Now apparent trueth doth disclose it selfe, my husbands head is troubled now with nothing else, but Ricciardoes wife, with whom (to morrow) he purposeth his meeting;
THE DECAMERON

NOVELL VI

wherein he shall be disappointed, if I live; taking no rest at all the whole night, for thinking how to handle her husband.

What shall I say more? On the morrow, at the houre of mid-day accompanied onely with her Chamber-mayde, and without any other alteration in opinion; shee went to the house where the Bath was promised, and meeting there with the olde woman, demaunded of her, if Philippello were come thither as yet or no? The woman, being well instructed by Ricciardo, answered: Are you shee that should meete him heere? Yes, replied Catulla. Goe in then to him (quoth the woman) for he is not farre off before you.

Madame Catulla, who went to seeke that which shee would not finde, being brought vailed into the darke Chamber where Ricciardo was, entred into the Bath, hoping to finde none other there but her husband, and the custome of the Country, never disallowed such meetings of men with their wives, but held them to be good and commendable. In a counterfeit voyce he bad her welcome, and she, not seeming to be any other then shee was indeed, entertained his imbracings in as loving manner; yet not daring to speake, least he should know her, but suffered him to proceede in his owne errour.

Let passe the wanton follies passing betweene them, and come to Madame Catulla, who finding it a fit and convenient time, to vent forth the tempest of her spleene, began in this manner. Alas! how mighty are the misfortunes of women, and how ill requited is all the loyall love of many wives to their husbands? I, a poore miserable Lady, who, for the space of eight yeeres now fully compleated, have loved thee more dearely then mine owne life, finde now (to my hearts endlesse griefe) how thou wastest and consumest thy desires, to delight them with a strange woman, like a most vile and wicked man as thou art. With whom doest thou now imagine thy selfe to be? Thou art with her, whom thou hast long time deluded by false blandishments, feigning to affect her, when thou doatest in thy desires else-where. I am thine owne Catulla, and not the wife of Ricciardo,
THE THIRD DAY

trayterous and unfaithfull man, as thou art. I am sure thou knowest my voyce, and I thinke it a thousand yeerees, untill wee may see each other in the light, to doe thee such dishonour as thou justly deservest, dogged, disdainfull, and villainous wretch. By conceiving to have another woman in thy wanton embraces, thou hast declared more joviall disposition, and demonstrations of farre greater kindnesse, then domesticke familiarity. At home thou lookest sower, sullen or surly, often froward, and seldom well pleased. But the best is, whereas thou intendest this husbandrie for another mans ground, thou hast (against thy will) bestowed it on thine owne, and the water hath runne a contrary course, quite from the current where thou meantst it.

What answer canst thou make, devill, and no man? What, have my words smitten thee dumbe? Thou mayest (with shame enough) hold thy peace, for with the face of a man, and love of an husband to his wife, thou art not able to make any answer.

Ricciardo durst not speake one word, but still expressed his affable behaviour towards her, bestowing infinite embraces and kisses on her: which so much the more augmented her rage and anger, continuing on her chiding thus. If by these flatteries and idle follies, thou hopest to comfort or pacifie me, thou runnest quite by as from thy reckoning; for I shall never imagine my selfe halfe satisfied, untill in the presence of my parents, friends, and neighbours, I have revealed thy base behaviour. Tell mee, treacherous man, am not I as faire, as the wife of Ricciardo? Am I not as good a Gentlewoman borne, as shee is? What canst thou more respect in her, then is in mee? Villaine, monster, why doest thou not answere mee? I will send to Ricciardo, who loveth mee beyond all other women in Naples, and yet could never vaunt, that I gave him so much as a friendly looke: he shall know, what a dishonour thou hadst intended towards him; which both he and his friends will revenge soundly upon thee.

The exclamations of the Lady were so tedious and irksome, that Ricciardo perceiving, if shee continued longer in
these complaints, worse would ensue thereon, then could bee easily remedied: resolved to make himselfe knowne unto her, to reclaime her out of this violent extasie, and holding her somewhat strictly, to prevent her escaping from him, he said. Madam, afflict your selfe no further, for, what I could not obtained by simply loving you, subtilty hath better taught me, and I am your Ricciardo: which she hearing, and perfectly knowing him by his voyce; shee would have leapt out of the Bath, but shee could not, and to avoyde her crying out, he layde his hand on her mouth, saying. Lady, what is done, cannot now be undone, albeit you cried out all your life time. If you exclaime, or make this knowne openly by any meanes; two unavoydable dangers must needes ensue thereon. The one (which you ought more carefully to respect) is the wounding of your good renowne and honour, because, when you shall say, that by treacherie I drew you hither: I will boldly maintaine the contrary, avouching, that having corrupted you with gold, and not giving you so much as covetously you desired; you grew offended, and thereon made the out-cry, and you are not to learne, that the world is more easily induced to beleive the worst, then any goodnesse, be it never so manifest. Next unto this, mortall hatred must arise betwene your husband and mee, and (perhaps) I shall as soone kill him, as he me; whereby you can hardly live in any true contentment after. Wherefore, joy of my life, doe not in one moment, both shame your selfe, and cause such perill betwene your husband and me: for you are not the first, neither can be the last, that shall be deceived. I have not beguiled you, to take any honour from you, but onely declared, the faithfull affection I beare you, and so shall doe for ever, as being your bounden and most obedient servant; and as it is a long time agoe, since I dedicated my selfe and all mine to your service, so hence-forth must I remaine for ever. You are wise enough (I know) in all other things; then shew your selfe not to be silly or simple in this.

Ricciardo uttered these words, teares streaming abundantly downe his cheekes, and Madame Catulla (all the
while) likewise showed forth her sorrowes equally to his, now, although she was exceedingly troubled in mind, and saw what her owne jealous folly had now brought her to, a shame beyond all other whatsoever: in the middest of her tormenting passions, she considered on the words of Ricciardo, found good reason in them, in regard of the unavoydable evils, whereupon she thus spake. Ricciardo, I know not how to beare the horrible injurie, and notorious treason used by thee against me, grace and goodnesse having so for-saken me, to let me fall in so foule a manner. Nor becometh it me, to make any noyse or out-cry heere, whereto simplicity, or rather devillish jealousie, did conduct me. But certaine I am of one thing, that I shall never see any one joyfull day, till (by one means or other) I bee revenged on thee. Thou hast glutted thy desire with my disgrace, let me therefore go from thee, never more to looke upon my wronged husband, or let any honest woman ever see my face.

Ricciardo perceiving the extremity of her perplexed minde, used all manly and milde perswasions, which possibly he could devise to doe, to turne the torrent of this high tide, to a calmer course; as by outward shew shee made appearance of, untill (in frightfull feares shunning every one shee met withall, as arguments of her guiltinesse) shee recovered her owne house, where remorse so tortured her distressed soule, that shee fell into so fierce a melancholy, as never left her till shee died. Upon the report whereof, Ricciardo becoming likewise a widdower, and grieving extraordinarily for his haynous transgression, penitently betooke himselfe to live in a wildernesse, where (not long after) he ended his dayes.
Theobaldo Elisei, having received an unkinde repulse by his beloved, departed from Florence, and returning thither (a long while after) in the habite of a Pilgrime; he spake with her, and made his wrongs knowne unto her. He delivered her Father from the danger of death, because it was proved, that he had slaine Theobaldo: he made peace with his brethren, and in the end, wisely enjoyed his hearts desire.

THE SEAVENTH NOVELL

Wherein is signified the power of Love, and the diversity of dangers, whereinto men may dayly fall.

So ceased Fiammetta her discourse, being generally commended, when the Queene, to prevent the losse of time, commanded Emilia to follow next, who thus began. It liketh me best (gracious Ladies) to returne home againe to our owne City, which it pleased the former two discoursers to part from: And there I will shew you, how a Citizen of ours, recovered the kindnesse of his Love, after hee had lost it.

Sometime there dwelt in Florence a young Gentleman, named Theobaldo Elisei, descended of a noble House, who became earnestly enamoured of a Widdow, called Hermelina, the daughter to Aldobrandino Palermimi: well deserving, for his vertues and commendable qualities, to enjoy of her whatsoever he could desire. Secretly they were espoused together, but Fortune, the enemy to Lovers felicities, opposed her malice against them, in depriving Theobaldo of those deere delights, which sometime he held in free posses-
sion, and making him as a stranger to her gracious favours. Now grew shee contemptibly to despise him, not onely denying to heare any message sent from him, but scorning also to vouchsafe so much as a sight of him, causing in him extreme griefe and melancholy, yet concealling all her unkindnesse so wisely to himselfe, as no one could understand the reason of his sadnesse. After he had laboured by all hopefull courses, to obtaine that favour of her, which he had formerly lost, without any offence in him, as his innocent soule truly witnessed with him, and saw that all his further endeavours were fruitlesse and in vaine; he concluded to retreate himselfe from the World, and not to be any longer irkesome in her eye, that was the onely occasion of his unhappinesse. Hereupon, storing himselfe with such summes of money, as suddenly he could collect together, secretly he departed from Florence, without speaking any word to his friends or kindred; except one kinde companion of his, whom he acquainted with most of his secrets, and so travelled to Ancona, where he termed himselfe by the name of Sandoloscio. Repairing to a wealthy Merchant there, he placed himselfe as his servant, and went in a Ship of his with him to Cyprus; his actions and behaviour proved so pleasing to the Merchant, as not onely he allowed him very sufficient wages, but also grew into such association with him; as he gave the most of his affaires into his hands, which he guided with such honest and discreete care, that hee himselfe (in few yeeres compasse) proved to be a rich Merchant, and of famous report. While matters went on in this successfull manner, although he could not chuse, but still he remembred his cruell Mistresse, and was very desperately transported for her love, as coveting (above all things else) to see her once more; yet was he of such powerfull constancy, as 7 whole yeeres together, he vanquished all those fierce conflicts. But on a day it chanced he heard a song sung in Cyprus, which he himselfe had formerly made, in honour of the love he bare to his Mistresse, and what delight he conceived, by being dayly in her presence; whereby he gathered, that it was
impossible for him to forget her, and proceeded on so desirously, as he could not live, except he had a sight of her once more, and therefore determined on his returne to Florence. Having set all his affaires in due order, accompanied with a servant of his onely, he passed to Ancona, where when he was arrived, he sent his Merchandises to Florence, in name of the Merchant of Ancona, who was his especiall friend and partner; travayling himselfe alone with his servant, in the habite of a Pilgrime, as if he had beene newly returned from Jerusalem.

Being come to Florence, he went to an Inne kept by two brethren, neere neighbours to the dwelling of his Mistresse, and the first thing he did, was passing by her doore, to get a sight of her if he were so happie. But he found the windowes, doores, and all parts of the house fast shut up, whereby he suspected her to be dead, or else to be changed from her dwelling: wherefore (much perplexed in minde) he went on to the two brothers Inne, finding four persons standing at the gate, attired in mourning, whereat he marvelled not a little; knowing himselfe to be so transfigured, both in body and habite, farre from the manner of common use at his parting thence, as it was a difficult matter to know him: he stept boldly to a Shooe-makers shop neere adjoyning, and demanded the reason of their wearing mourning. The Shooe-maker made answer thus; Sir, those men are clad in mourning, because a brother of theirs, being named Theobaldo (who hath beene absent hence a long while) about some fifteene dayes since was slaine. And they having heard, by proofe made in the Court of Justice, that one Aldobrandino Palermini (who is kept close prisoner) was the murtherer of him, as he came in a disguised habite to his daughter, of whom he was most affectionately enamoured; cannot chuse, but let the World know by their outward habits, the inward affliction of their hearts, for a deede so dishonourably committed.

Theobaldo wondered greatly hereat, imagining, that some man belike resembling him in shape, might be slaine in this manner, and by Aldobrandino, for whose misfortune he
grieved marvellously. As concerning his Mistresse, he understood that shee was living, and in good health; and night drawing on apace, he went to his lodging, with infinite molestations in his minde, where after supper, he was lodged in a Corne-loft with his man. Now by reason of many disturbing imaginations, which incessantly wheeled about his braine, his bed also being none of the best, and his supper (perhaps) somewhat of the coursest; a great part of the night was spent, yet could he not close his eyes together. But lying still broade awake, about the dead time of night, he heard the treading of divers persons over his head, who discended down a pair of stayres by his Chamber, into the lower parts of the house, carrying a light with them, which he discerned by the chinkes and crannies in the wall. Stepping softly out of his bed, to see what the meaning hereof might be, he espied a faire young woman, who carried a light in her hand, and three men in her company, descending downe the stayres together, one of them speaking thus to the young woman. Now we may boldly warrant our saftey, because we have heard it assuredly, that the death of Theobaldo Elisei, hath beene sufficiently approved by the Brethren, against Aldobrandino Palermimi, and he hath confessed the fact; whereupon the sentence is already set downe in writing. But yet it behoveth us notwithstanding, to conceale it very secretly, because if ever hereafter it should be knowne, that we are they who murthered him, we shall be in the same danger, as now Aldobrandino is. When Theobaldo had heard these words, hee began to consider with himselfe, how many and great the dangers are, wherewith mens minds may dayly be molest. First, he thought on his owne brethren in their sorrow, and buried a stranger instead of him, accusing afterward (by false opinion, and upon the testimony of as false witnesses) a man most innocent, making him ready for the stroke of death. Next, he made a strict observation in his soule, concerning the blinded severity of Law, and the Ministers thereto belonging, who pretending a diligent and carefull inquisition for truth, doe oftentimes (by their tortures and torments) heare lies
avouched (onely for ease of paine) in the place of a true
confession, yet thinking themselves (by doing so) to be the
Ministers of God and Justice, whereas indeede they are the
Divels executioners of his wickednesse. Lastly, converting
his thoughts to Aldobrandino, the imagined murtherer of a
man yet living, infinite cares beleagured his soule, in devising
what might best be done for his deliverance.

So soone as he was risen in the morning, leaving his
servant behind him in his lodging, he went (when he
thought it fit time) all alone toward the house of his
Mistresse, where finding by good fortune the gate open, he
entred into a small Parlour beneath, and where he saw his
Mistresse sitting on the ground, wringing her hands, and
wofully weeping, which (in meere compassion) moved him
to wepee likewise; and going somewhat neere her, he saide.
Madame, torment your selfe no more, for your peace is not
farre off from you. The Gentlewoman hearing him say so,
lifted up her head, and in teares spake thus. Good man,
thou seemest to me to be a Pilgrime stranger; what doest
thou know, either concerning my peace, or mine affliction?
Madame (replied the Pilgrime) I am of Constantinople,
and (doublesse) am conducted hither by the hand of
Heaven, to convert your teares into rejoycing, and to
deliver your Father from death. How is this? answered
shee: If thou be of Constantinople, and art but now
arrived here; doest thou know who we are, either I, or
my Father?
The Pilgrime discoursed to her, even from the one end
to the other, the history of her husbands sad disasters,
telling her, how many yeeres since she was espoused to
him, and many other important matters, which well shee
knew, and was greatly amazed thereat, thinking him verily
to be a Prophet, and kneeling at his feete, entreated him
very earnestly, that if he were come to deliver her Father
Aldobrandino from death, to doe it speedily, because the
time was very short. The Pilgrime appearing to be a
man of great holinesse, saide. Rise up Madame, refraine
from weeping, and observe attentively what I shall say;
yet with this caution, that you never reveale it to any
person whatsoever. This tribulation whereinto you are
falne, (as by revelation I am faithfully informed) is for a
grievous sinne by you heretofore committed, whereof divine
mercy is willing to purge you, and to make a perfect
amends by a sensible feeling of this affliction; as seeking
your sound and absolute recovery, least you fall into farre
greater danger then before. Good man (quoth shee) I am
burthened with many sinnes, and doe not know for which
any amends should be made by me; any one sooner then
other: wherefore if you have intelligence thereof, for
charities sake tell it me, and I will doe so much as lieth
in me, to make a full satisfaction for it. Madame, answered
the Pilgrime, I know well enough what it is, and will
demand it no more of you, to winne any further knowledge
thereof, then I have already: but because in revealing it
your selfe, it may touch you with the more true com-
punction of soule; let us goe to the point indeede, and tell
mee, doe you remember, that at any time you were married
to an Husband, or no?

At the hearing of these words, shee breathed foorth a
very vehement sigh, and was stricken with admiration at
this question, beleeving that not any one had knowledge
thereof. Howbeit, since the day of the supposed Theo-
baldaes buriall, such a rumour ran abroade, by meanes
of some speeches, rashly dispersed by a friend of Theobaldoes,
who (indeede) knew it; whereupon shee returned him this
answer. It appeareth to me (good man) that divine ordi-
nativation hath revealed unto you all the secrets of men;
and therefore I am determined, not to conceale any of
mine from you. True it is, that in my younger yeeres,
being left a widdow, I entirely affected an unfortunate
young Gentleman, who (in secret) was my Husband, and
whose death is imposed on my Father. The death of him
I have the more bemoaned, because (in reason) it did
neerely concerne me, by shewing my selfe so savage and
rigorous to him before his departure: nevertheless, let me
assure you Sir, that neither his parting, long absence from
me, or his untimely death, never had the power to bereave my heart of his remembrance.

Madame, saide the Pilgrime, the unfortinate young Gentleman that is slaine, did never love you; but sure I am, that Theobaldo Elisei loved you deerely. But tell me, what was the occasion whereby you conceived such hatred against him? Did he at any time offend you? No truly Sir, quoth shee; but the reason of my anger towards him, was by the words and threatnings of a religious Father, to whom once I revealed (under confession) how faithfully I affected him, and what private familiarity had passed betweene us. When instantly he used such dreadfull threatnings to me, and which (even yet) doe afflict my soule, that I did not abstaine, and utterly refuse him, the Divell would fetch me quicke to Hell, and cast me into the bottome of his quenchlesse and everlasting fire.

These menaces were so prevailing with me, as I refused all further conversation with Theobaldo, in which regard, I would receive neither letters or messages from him. Howbeit, I am perswaded, that if he had continued here still, and not departed hence in such desperate manner as hee did, seeing him melt and consume dayly away, even as Snow by power of the Sunne-beames: my austere deliberation had beene long agoe quite altered, because not at any time (since then) life hath allowed me one merry day, neither did I, or ever can love any man like unto him.

At these wordes the Pilgrime sighed, and then proceeded on againe thus. Surely Madame, this one onely sin, may justly torment you, because I know for a certainty, that Theobaldo never offered you any injury, since the day hee first became enamoured of you; and what grace or favour you afforded him, was your owne voluntary gift, and (as he tooke it) no more then in modesty might well become you; for hee loving you first, you had beene most cruell and unkinde, if you should not have requited him with the like affection. If then he continued so just and loyall to you, as (of mine owne knowledge) I am able to say he did;
what should move you to repulse him so rudely? Such matters ought well to bee considered on before hand; for if you did imagine, that you should repent it as an action ill done, yet you could not doe it, because as hee became yours, so were you likewise onely his; and he being yours, you might dispose of him at your pleasure, as being truely obliged to none but you. How could you then with-draw your selfe from him, being onely his, and not commit most manifest theft, a farre unfitting thing for you to doe, except you had gone with his consent.

Now Madame, let me further give you to understand, that I am a religious person, and a pilgrime, and therefore am well acquainted with all the courses of their dealing; if therefore I speake somewhat more amply of them, and for your good, it can not be so unseeming for mee to doe it, as it would appeare ugly in another. In which respect, I will speake the more freely to you, to the ende, that you may take better knowledge of them, then (as it seemeth) hitherto you have done. In former passed times such as professed Religion, were learned and most holy persons; but our religious professours now adayes, and such as covet to bee so esteemed; have no matter at all of Religion in them, but onely the outward shew and habite. Which yet is no true badge of Religion neither, because it was ordained by religious institutions, that their garments should bee made of narrow, plaine, and coursest spun cloth, to make a publike manifestation to the world, that (in meere devotion, and religious disposition) by wrapping their bodies in such base clothing, they condemned and despised all temporall occasions. But now adayes they make them large, deepe, glistering, and of the finest cloth or stuffes to bee gotten, reducing those habites to so proude and pontificall a forme, that they walke Peacock-like, rustling, and strouting with them in the Churches; yea, and in open publike places, as if they were ordinary secular persons, to have their pride more notoriously observed. And as the Angler bestoweth his best cunning, with one line and baite to catch many fishes at one strike;
even so do these counterfeited habit-mongers, by their dissembling and crafty dealing, beguile many credulous widdowes: simple women, yea, and men of weake capacity, to credit whatsoever they doe or say, and herein they doe most of all exercise themselves.

And to the end, that my speeches may not savor of any untruth against them; these men which I speake of, have not any habite at all of religious men, but onely the colour of their garments, and whereas they in times past, desired nothing more then the salvation of mens soules; these fresher witted fellowes, covet after women and wealth, and employ all their paines by their whispering confessions, and figures of painted fearefull examples, to affright and terrifie unsettled and weake consciences, by horrible and blasphemous speeches; yet adding perswasion withall, that their sinnes may be purged by Almes-deedes and Masses. To the end, that such as credit them in these their dayly courses, being guided more by apparance of devotion, then any true compunction of heart, to escape severe penances by them enjoyned: may some of them bring bread, others wine, others coyne, all of them matter of commoditie and benefit, and simply say, these gifts are for the soules of their good friends deceased.

I make not any doubt, but almes-deedes and prayers, are very mighty; and prevailing meanes, to appease heavens anger for some sinnes committed; but if such as bestow them, did either see or know, to whom they give them: they would more warily keepe them, or else cast them before Swine, in regard they are altogether so unworthy of them. But come we now to the case of your ghostly father, crying out in your eare, that secret mariage was a most greevous sinne: Is not the breach thereof farre greater? Familiar conversation betweene man and woman, is a concession meerely naturall: but to rob, kill, or banish any one, proceedeth from the mindes malignity. That thou did rob Theobaldo, your selfe hath already sufficiently witnessed, by taking that from him, which with free consent in mariage you gave him. Next I must say, that by all
the power remaining in you, you kild him, because you would not permit him to remaine with you, declaring your selfe in the very height of cruelty, that hee might destroy his life by his owne hands. In which case the Law re-
quireth, that whosoever is the occasion of an ill act com-
mitted, hee or she is as deepe in the fault, as the party that did it. Now concerning his banishment, and wandring seaven yeeres in exile thorow the world; you cannot deny, but that you were the onely occasion thereof. In all which three severall actions, farre more capitally have you offended; then by contracting of mariage in such clandestine manner.

But let us see, whether Theobaldo deserved all these severall castigations, or not. In trueirth he did not, your selfe have confessed (beside that which I know) that hee loved you more deereely then himselfe, and nothing could be more honoured, magnified and exalted, then dayly you were by him, above all other women whatsoever. When hee came in any place, where honestly, and without suspition hee might speake to you: all his honour, and all his liberty, lay wholly committed into your power. Was hee not a noble young Gentleman? Was he (among all those parts that most adorne a man, and appertaine to the very choycest respect) inferiour to any one of best merit in your Citie? I know that you cannot make deniall to any of these demands. How could you then by the perswasion of a beast, a foole, a villaine, yea, a vagabond, envying both his happinesse and yours, enter into so cruell a minde against him? I know not what error misguideth women, in scorning and despising their husbands: but if they entred into a better consideration, understanding truely what they are, and what nobility of nature God hath endued man withall, farre above all other creatures; it would bee their highest title of glory, when they are so preciously esteemed of them, so dearely affected by them, and so gladly embraced in all their best abilities.

This is so great a sinne, as the divine Justice (which in an equall Ballance bringeth all operations to their full

2:1

65
THE DECAMERON

NOVELL VII

effect) did not purpose to leave unpunished; but as you enforced against all reason, to take away Theobaldo from your selfe: even so your father Aldobrandino, without any occasion given by Theobaldo, is in perill of his life, and you a partaker of his tribulation. Out of which if you desire to be delivered, it is very convenient that you promise one thing which I shall tell you, and may much better be by you performed. Namely, that if Theobaldo do returne from his long banishment, you shall restore him to your love, grace, and good acceptation; accounting him in the selfe-same degree of favour and private entertainment, as he was at the first, before your wicked ghostly father so hellishly incensed you against him.

When the Pilgrim had finished his speeches, the Gentlewoman who had listned to them very attentively (because all the allledged reasons appeared to be plainly true) became verily perswaded, that all these afflictions had falne on her and her father, for the ingratefull offence by her committed, and therefore thus replied. Worthy man, and the friend to goodnesse, I know undoubtedly, that the words which you have spoken are true, and also I understand by your demonstration, what manner of people some of those religious persons are, whom heretofore I have reputed to be Saints, but find them now to be far otherwise. And to speake truly, I perceive the fault to be great and greevous, wherein I have offended against Theobaldo, and would (if I could) willingly make amends, even in such manner as you have advised. But how is it possible to be done? Theobaldo being dead, can be [no] more recalled to this life; and therefore, I know not what promise I should make, in a matter which is not to bee performed. Whereto the Pilgrime without any longer pausing, thus answered.

Madam, by such revelations as have bee shewne to me, I know for a certainey, that Theobaldo is not dead, but living, in health, and in good estate; if he had the fruition of your grace and favour. Take heede what you say Sir (quoth the Gentlewoman) for I saw him lye slain before
my doore, his bodie having received many wounds, which I folded in mine armes, and washed his face with my brinish teares; whereby (perhaps) the scandall arose, that flew abroad to my disgrace. Beleeve me Madam, replyed the Pilgrim, say what you will, I dare assure you that Theobaldo is living, and if you dare make promise, concerning what hath bin formerly requested, and keepe it inviolably, I make no doubt, but you your selfe shall shortly see him. I promise it (quoth she) and binde my selfe thereto by a sacred oath, to keepe it faithfully: for never could any thing happen to yeeld me the like contentment, as to see my Father free from danger, and Theobaldo living.

At this instant Theobaldo thought it to be a very apt and convenient time to disclose himselfe, and to comfort the Lady, with an assured signall of hope, for the deliverance of her Father, wherefore he said: Lady, to the end that I may comfort you infallibly in this dangerous perill of your fathers life, I am to make knowne an especiall secret to you, which you are to keepe carefully (as you tender your owne life) from ever being revealed to the world. They were then in a place of sufficient privacie, and by themselves, because she reposed great confidence in the Pilgrims sanctity of life, as thinking him none other then he seemed to be. Theobaldo tooke out of his Purse a Ring, which she gave him the last night of their conversing together, and he had kept with no meane care: and shewing it to her, said; Do you know this Ring Madam? So soone as she saw it, immediatly she knew it, and answered, Yes Sir, I know the Ring, and confesse that heretofore I gave it to Theobaldo.

Heereupon the Pilgrime stood up, and sodainly putting off his poore linnen Frock, and the Hood from his head, using his Florentine tongue, he said; Tell me Madam, do you not know me? When she had advisedly beheld him, and knew him indeed to be Theobaldo, she was stricken into a wonderfull astonishment, being as fearfull of him, as she was of the dead body which she saw lying in the street. And I dare assure you, that she durst not go neere him, to
respect him as Theobaldo lately come from Cyprus, but (in terror) fled away from him; as if Theobaldo had bin newly risen out of his grave, and came thither purposely to affright her; wherefore he said. Be not affraid Madam, I am your Theobaldo, in health, alive, and never as yet died, neither have I received any wounds to kill mee, as you and my brethren had formerly imagined.

Some better assurance getting possession of her, as knowing him perfectly by his voice, and looking more stedfastly on his face, which constantly avouched him to be Theobaldo; the teares trickling amaine downe her faire cheekes, shee ran to embrace him, casting her armes about his necke, and kissing him a thousand times, saying; Theobaldo, my faithfull husband, nothing in the world can be so welcom to me. Theobaldo having most kindily kissed and embraced her, said; Sweet wife, time wil not now allow us those ceremonious courtesies, which (indeed) so long a separation do justly challenge; for I must about a more weighty busines, to have your Father safely delivered, which I hope to do before to morow night when you shall heare tydings to your better contentment. And questionlesse, if I speed no worse then my good hope perswadeth me, I will see you againe to night, and acquaint you at better leysure, in such things as I cannot do now at this present.

So putting on his Pilgrimes habit againe, kissing her once more, and comforting her with future good successe, he departed from her, going to the prison where Aldobrandino lay, whom hee found more pensive, as being in hourly expectation of death, then any hope he had to be freed from it. Being brought neerer to him by the prisoners favour, as seeming to be a man come onely to comfort him: sitting downe by him, thus he began. Aldobrandino, I am a friend of thine, whom Heaven hath sent to doe thee good, in meere pittie and compassion of thine innocency. And therefore, if thou wilt grant me one small request, which I am earnestly to crave at thy hands, thou shalt heare (without any failing) before to
morrow at night, the sentence of thy free absolution, whereas now thou expectest nothing but death; whereunto Aldobrandino thus answered. Friendly man, seeing thou art so carefull of my safety (although I know thee not, neither doe remember that ere I saw thee till now) thou must needs be some especiall kinde friend of mine. And to tell thee the truth, I never committed the sinful deed for which I am condemned to death. True it is, I have other heinous and greevous sins, which (undoubtedly) have throwne this heavy judgement on me, and therefore I am the more willing to undergo it. Nevertheless, let me thus farre assure thee, that I would gladly not onely promise something which might be to the glory of God, if he were pleased in this case to have mercy on me; but also would as willingly performe and accomplish it. Wherefore, demaund whatsoever thou pleasest, for unfainedly (if I escape with life) I will truly keepe promise with thee.

Sir, replied the Pilgrime, I desire nor demand any thing of you, but that you would pardon the foure Brethren of Theobaldo, that brought you to this hard extremity, as thinking you to be guilty of their brothers death, and that you would also accept them as your brethren and friends upon their craving pardon for what they have done. Sir, answered Aldobrandino, no man knoweth how sweet revenge is, nor with what heate it is to be desired, but onely the man who hath bene wronged. Notwithstanding, not to hinder any hope, which onely aymeth at Heaven, I freely forgive them, and henceforth pardon them for ever, intending moreover, that if mercy give me life, and cleere me from this bloody imputation, to love and respect them so long as I shall live. This answere was most pleasing to the Pilgrime, and without any further multiplication of speeches, he entreated him to be of good comfort, for he feared not but before the time prefixed, he should heare certaine tydings of his deliverance.

At his departing from him, hee went directly to the Signoria, and prevailed so farre, that he spoke privately with a Knight, who was then one of the States chiefest Lords,
to whom he saide. Sir, a man ought to bestow his best paines and diligence, that the truth of things should be apparantly knowne, especially, such men as hold the place and office as you doe: to the end, that those persons which have committed no foule offence, should not bee punished, but onely the guilty and haynous transgressors. And because it will be no meane honor to you, to lay the blame where it worthyly deserveth, I am come hither purposely, to informe you in a case of most weighty importance. It is not unknowne to you, with what rigour the State hath proceeded against Aldobrandino Palermini, and you think verily he is the man that hath slaine Theobaldo Elisei, wherupon your Law hath condemned him to die. I dare assure you Sir, that a very unjust course hath beene taken in this case, because Aldobrandino is falsly accused, as you your selfe will confesse before midnight, when they are delivered into your power, that were the murderers of the man.

The honest Knight, who was very sorrowfull for Aldobrandino, gladly gave attention to the Pilgrime, and having conferred on many matters, appertaining to the fact committed: the two Brethren who were Theobaldoes Hostes, and their Chamber-maid, upon good advice given, were apprehended in their first sleep, without any resistance made in their defence. But when the tortures were sent for, to understand truly how the case went, they would not endure any paine at all, but each aside by himselfe, and then altogether confessed openly, that they did the deede, yet not knowing him to be Theobaldo Elisei. And when it was demanded of them, upon what occasion they did so foule an act, they answered, that they were so hatefull against the mans life, because he would luxuriouslie have abused one of their wives, when they both were absent from their owne home.

When the Pilgrim had heard their voluntary confession, he tooke his leave of his Knight, returning secretly to the house of Madam Hermelina, and there (because all her people were in their beds) she carefully awaited his returne,
to heare some glad tydings of her father, and to make a further reconciliation betwene her and Theobaldo, when sitting downe by her, he said: Deare Love, be of good cheere, for (upon my word) to morrow you shall have your father home safe, well, and delivered from all further danger: and to confirme her the more confidently in his words, he declared at large the whole carriage of the businesse. Hermelina being wondrously joyfull, for two such sodaine and successfull accidents to injoy her husband alive and in health, and also to have her father freed from so great a danger; kissed and embraced him most affectionately, welcomming him lovingly into her bed, whereto so long time hee had beene a stranger.

No sooner did bright day appeare, but Theobaldo arose, having acquainted her with such matters as were to be done, and once more earnestly desiring her, to conceale (as yet) these occurrences to her selfe. So in his Pilgrims habit, he departed from her house, to awaite convenient opportunity, for attending on the businesse belonging to Aldobrandino. At the usuall houre appointed, the Lords were all set in the Signioria, and had received full information, concerning the offence imputed to Aldobrandino, setting him at liberty by publique consent, and sentencing the other malefactors with death, who (within a few dayes after) were beheaded in the place where the murther was committed. Thus Aldobrandino being released, to his exceeding comfort, and no small joy of his daughter, kindred, and friends, all knowing perfectly, that this had happened by the Pilgrims meanes, they conducted him home to Aldobrandinoes house, where they desired him to continue so long as himselfe pleased, using him with most honourable and gracious respect, but especially Hermelina, who knew (better then the rest) on whom she bestowed her liberall favours, yet concealing all closely to her selfe.

After two or three dayes were over-past, in these complementall entercoursings of kindnesse, Theobaldo began to consider, that it was high time for reconciliation, to be solemnly past betweene his brethren and Aldobrandino.
For, they were not a little amazed at his strange deliverance, and went likewise continually armed, as standing in feare of Aldobrandino and his friends; which made him the more earnest, for accomplishment of the promise formerly made unto him. Aldobrandino lovingly replied, that he was ready to make good his word. Whereupon, the Pilgrime provided a goodly Banquet, whereat he pursued to have present Aldobrandino, his Daughter, Kindred, and their wives. But first, himselfe went in person, to invite them in peace to his banquet, using many pregnant and forcible reasons to them, such as are requisite in the like discordant cases. In the end, they were so wise and prevailing with them that they willingly condiscended, and thought it no disparagement unto them, for the recovery of Aldobrandinoes kindnesse againe, to crave pardon for their great error committed.

On the morrow following, about dinner time, the foure brethren of Theobaldo, attired in their mourning garments, with their wives and frends came first to the house of Aldobrandino, who purposely stayed for them; and having laid downe their weapons on the ground, in the presence of all such as Aldobrandino had invited as his witnesses, they offered themselves to his mercy, and humbly required pardon of him, for the matter wherein they had offended him. Aldobrandino shedding teares, most lovingly embraced them, and (to be briefe) pardoned whatsoever injuries he had received. After this, the sisters and wives, all clad in mourning, courteously submitted themselves, and were graciously welcommed by Madame Hermelina, as also divers other Gentlewomen there present with her. Being all seated at the Tables, which were furnished with such rarities as could be wished for; al things else deserved their due commendation, but onely sad silence, occasioned by the fresh remembrance of sorow, appearing in the habites of Theobaldoes friends and kindred, which the Pilgrim himselfe plainly perceived, to be the onely disgrace to him and his feast. Wherefore, as before he had resolved, when time served to purge away this melancholly, he arose from the
THE THIRD DAY

Table, when some (as yet) had scarce begun to eate, and thus spake.

Gracious company, there is no defect in this Banquet, or more debaris it of the honour it might else have, but onely the presence of Theobaldo, who having bin continually in your company, it seemses you are not willing to take knowledge of him, and therefore I meane my selfe to shew him. So, uncasing himselfe out of his Pilgrimes clothes, and standing in his Hose and Doublet, to their no little admiration, they all knew him, yet doubted whether it were he, or no. Which he perceiving, he repeated his brethrens and absent kindreds names, and what occurrences hapned betweene them from time to time, beside the relation of his owne passed fortunes, inciting teares in the eyes of his brethren, and all else there present, every one hugging and embracing him, yea, many beside, who were no kin at all to him, Hermelina onely excepted: which when Aldobrandino saw, he said unto her; How now Hermelina? Why doest thou not welcome home Theobaldo, so kindly as the rest have done?

She making a modest courtesie to her Father, and answering so loude as every one might heare her, said. There is not any in this assembly that more willingly would give him all expression of a joyfull welcom home and thankesfull gratitude for such especiall favours received, then in my heart I could affoord to do, but onely in regard of those infamous speeches noysed out against me, on the day when we wept for him, who was supposed to be Theobaldo, which slander was to my great discredit. Go on boldly, replied Aldobrandino, doest thou think that I regard any such praters? In the procuring of my deliverance, he hath approved them to be manifest lyars, albeit I my selfe did never credit them. Go then I command thee, and let me see thee both kisse and embrace him. She who desired nothing more, shewed her selfe not slothfull in obeying her father to do but her duty to her husband. Wherefore being risen, as all the rest had done, but yet in farre more effectuall manner, she declared her unfained love to Theo-

NOVELL VII

2 K

73
THE DECAMERON

NOVELL VII

baldo. These bountiful favours of Aldobrandino, were joyfully accepted by Theobaldoes brethren, as also to every one there present; so that all former rancour and hatred which had caused heavi variances betweene them, was now converted to mutuall kindnesse and solemne friendship on every side.

When the feasting dayes were finished, the garments of sad mourning were quite laid aside, and those (becoming so generall a joy) put on, to make their hearts and habites suteable. Now, concerning the man slaine, and supposed to be Theobaldo, hee was one, that in all parts of body, and truenesse of complexion so neerely resembled him, as Theobaldoes owne brethren could not distinguish the one from the other: but hee was of Lunigiana, named Fatinolo, and not Theobaldo, whom the two Brethren Inne-keepers maliced, about some idle suspition conceived, and having slaine him, layde his body at the doore of Aldobrandino, where by reason of Theobaldoes absence, it was generally reputed to be hee, and Aldobrandino charged to doe the deede, by vehement perswasion of the brethren, knowing what love had passed betweene him and his daughter Hermelina. But happy was the Pilgrims returne, first to heare those words in the Inne, the meanes to bring the murther to light, and then the discreet carriage of the Pilgrime, untill he plainly approved himselfe, to bee truely Theobaldo.
THE THIRD DAY

Ferando, by drinking a certaine kinde of powder, was buried for dead. And by the Abbot, who was enamored of his Wife, was taken out of his Grave, and put into a darke prison, where they made him beleeve, that hee was in Purgatorie. Afterward, when time came that hee should bee raised to life againe; he was made to keepe a childe which the Abbot had got by his Wife.

THE EIGHT NOVELL

Wherein is displayed, the apparant folly of jealousie: And the subtility of some religious carnall minded men, to beguile silly and simple maried men.

WHEN the long discourse of Madame Æmilia was ended, not displeasing to any, in regard of the length, but rather held too short, because no exceptions could bee taken against it, comparing the raritie of the accidents, and changes together: the Queene turned to Madame Lauretto, giving her such a manifest signe, as she knew, that it was her turne to follow next, and therefore shee tooke occasion to begin thus. Faire Ladies, I intend to tell you a Tale of trueth, which (perhaps) in your opinions, will seeme to sound like a lye: and yet I heard by the very last relation, that a dead man was wept and mournd for, in sted of another being then alive. In which respect, I am now to let you know, how a living man was buried for dead, and being raised againe, yet not as living, himselfe, and divers more beside, did beleeve that he came forth of his grave, and adored him as a Saint, who was the occasion thereof, and who (as a bad man) deserved justly to be condemned.
NOVELL     VIII

In Tuscanie there was sometime an Abbey, seated, as now we see commonly they are, in a place not much frequented with people, and thereof a Monke was Abbot, very holy and curious in all things else, save onely a wanton appetite to women: which yet he kept so cleanly to himselfe, that though some did suspect it, yet it was knowne to very few. It came to passe, that a rich Country Franklin, named Ferando, dwelt as neere neighbour to the said Abby, he being a man materiall, of simple and grosse understanding, yet he fell into great familiaritie with the Abbot; who made use of this friendly conversation to no other end, but for divers times of recreation; when he delighted to smile at his silly and sottish behaviour.

Upon this his private frequentation with the Abbot, at last he observed, that Ferando had a very beautifull woman to his Wife, with whom he grew so deeply in love, as he had no other meditations either by day or night, but how to become acceptable in her favour. Nevertheless, he concealed his amorous passions privately to himselfe, and could plainly perceive, that although Ferando (in all things else) was meerely a simple fellow, and more like an Idiot, then of any sensible apprehension: yet was he wise enough in loving his Wife, keeping her carfully out of all company, as one (indeede) very jealous, least any should kisse her, but onely himselfe, which drove the Abbot into despaire, for ever attaining the issue of his desire. Yet being subtil, crafty, and cautelous, he wrought so on the flexible nature of Ferando, that he brought his wife with him divers dayes to the Monasterie; where they walked in the goodly Garden, discoursing on the beatitudes of eternall life, as also the most holy deedes of men and women, long since departed out of this life, in mervailous civill and modest manner. Yet all these were but traines to a further intention, for the Abbot must needes be her ghostly Father, and she come to be confessed by him; which the foole Ferando tooke as an especiall favour, and therefore he gave his consent the sooner.

At the appointed time, when the woman came to con-
profession to the Abbot, and was on her knees before him, to his no small contentment, before she would say any thing else, thus she began: Sacred Father, if God had not given me such an husband as I have, or else had bestowed on me none at all; I might have beene so happy, by the meanes of your holy doctrine, very easily to have entred into the way, whereof you spake the other day, which leadeth to eternall life. But when I consider with my selfe, what manner of man Ferando is, and thinke upon his folly withall; I may well terme my selfe to be a widow, although I am a maried wife, because while he liveth, I cannot have any other husband. And yet (as sottish as you see him) he is (without any occasion given him) so extremely jealous of me; as I am not able to live with him, but only in continuall tribulation and hearts griefe. In which respect, before I enter into confession, I most humbly beseech you, that you would vouchsafe (in this distresse) to assist me with your fatherly advice and counsell, because, if thereby I cannot attaine to a more pleasing kinde of happinesse; neither confession, or any thing else, is able to doe me any good at all.

These words were not a little welcome to my Lord Abbot, because (thereby) he halfe assured himselfe, that Fortune had laid open the path to his hoped pleasures. Whereupon he said. Deare daughter, I make no question to the contrary, but it must needes be an exceeding infelicity, to so faire and goodly a young woman as you are, to be plagued with so sottish an husband, brain-sick, and without the use of common understanding; but yet subject to a more hellish affliction then all these, namely jealousie, and therefore you being in this wofull manner tormented, your tribulations are not only so much the more credited, but also as amply grieved for, and pittied. In which heavy and irksome perturbations, I see not any meanes of remedy, but onely one, being a kinde of physicke (beyond all other) to cure him of his foolish jealousie; which medicine is very familiar to me, because I know best how to compound it, alwayes provided, that you
THE DECAMERON

NOVELL VIII can be of so strong a capacity, as to be secret in what I shall say unto you.

Good Father (answered the Woman) never make you any doubt thereof, for I would rather endure death it selfe, then disclose any thing which you enjoyne me to keepe secret: wherefore, I beseech you Sir to tell me, how, and by what meanes it may be done. If (quoth the Abbot) you desire to have him perfectly cured, of a disease so dangerous and offensive, of necessity he must be sent into Purgatory. How may that be done, saide the woman, he being alive? He must needs die, answered the Abbot, for his more speedy passage thither; and when he hath endured so much punishment, as may expiate the quality of his jealousie, we have certaine devout and zealous prayers, whereby to bring him backe againe to life, in as able manner as ever he was. Why then, replied the woman, I must remaine in the state of a Widdow? Very true, saide the Abbot, for a certaine time, in all which space, you may not (by no meanes) marrie againe, because the heavens will therewith be highly offended: but Ferando being returned to life againe, you must repossesse him as your Husband, but never to be jealous any more. Alas Sir (quoth the woman) so that he may be cured of his wicked jealousie, and I no longer live in such an hellish imprisonment, do as you please.

Now was the Abbot (well neere) on the highest step of his hope, making her constant promise, to accomplish it: But (quoth he) what shall be my recompence when I have done it? Father, saide she, whatsoever you please to aske, if it remaine within the compasse of my power: but you being such a vertuous and sanctified man, and I a woman of so meane worth or merit; what sufficient recompence can I be able to make you? Whereunto the Abbot thus replied. Faire woman, you are able to do as much for me, as I am for you, because I doe dispose my selfe, to per-forme a matter for your comfort and consolation, even so ought you to be as mindfull of me, in any action concerning my life and welfare. In any such matter Sir (quoth she)
THE THIRD DAY

depending on your benefit so strictly, you may safely presume to command me. You must then (saide the Abbot) grant me your love, and the kinde embracing of your person; because so violent are mine affections, as I pine and consume away daily, till I enjoy the fruition of my desires, and none can helpe me therein but you.

When the woman heard these words, as one confounded with much amazement, thus shee replied. Alas, holy Father! What a strange motion have you made to me? I beleevd very faithfully, that you were no lesse then a Saint, and is it convenient, that when silly women come to aske counsell of such sanctified men, they should returne them such unfitting answeres? Be not amazed good woman, saide the Abbot, at the motion which I have made unto you, because holinesse is not thereby impaired a jot in me; for it is the inhabitant of the soule, the other is an imperfection attending on the body: but be it whatsoever, your beauty hath so powerfully prevailed on me, that entire love hath compell'd me to let you know it. And more may you boast of your beauty, then any that ever I beheld before, considering, it is so pleasing to a sanctified man, that it can draw him from divine contemplations, to regard a matter of so humble an equalitie.

Let me tell you moreover, worthy Woman, that see me reverenced here as Lord Abbot, yet am I but as other men are, and in regard I am neither aged, nor mishapen, me thinkes the motion I have made, should be the lesse offensive to you, and therefore the sooner granted. For, all the while as Ferando remaineth in Purgatory, doe you but imagine him to be present with you, and your perswasion will the more absolutely be confirmed. No man can, or shall be privy to our close meetings, for I carry the same holy opinion among all men, as you your selfe conceived of me, and none dare be so saucie, as to call in question whatsoever I doe or say, because my words are Oracles, and mine actions more then halfe miracles; doe you not then refuse so gracious an offer. Enow there are, who would gladly enjoy that, which is francke and freely
THE DECAMERON

NOVELL

VIII

presented to you, and which (if you be a wise Woman) is meerely impossible for you to refuse. Richly am I possessed of Gold and Jewels, which shall be all yours, if you please in favour to be mine, wherein I will not be gaine-saide, except your selfe do deny me.

The Woman having her eyes fixed on the ground, knew not well how shee should deny him; and yet in plaine words, to say shee consented, shee held it to be over-base and immodest, and ill agreeing with her former reputation: when the Abbot had well noted this attention in her, and how silent shee stood without returning any answere; he accounted the conquest to be more then halfe his owne: so that continuing on his former persuasions, hee never ceased, but allured her still to beleive whatsoever he saide. And shee much ashamed of his importunity, but more of her owne flexible yeelding weaknesse, made answere, that shee would willingly accomplish his request; which yet shee did not absolutely grant, untill Ferando were first sent into Purgatory. And till then (quoth the Abbot) I will not urge any more, because I purpose his speedy sending thither: but yet, so farre lend me your assistance, that either to morrow, or else the next day, he may come hither once more to converse with me. So putting a faire gold Ring on her finger, they parted till the next meeting.

Not a little joyfull was the Woman of so rich a gift, hoping to enjoy a great many more of them, and returning home to her neighbours, acquainted them with wonderfull matters, all concerning the sanctimonious life of the Abbot, a meere miracle of men, and worthy to be truely termed a Saint. Within two dayes after, Ferando went to the Abbey againe, and so soone as the Abbot espyed him, he presently prepared for his sending of him into Purgatorie. He never was without a certaine kinde of drugg, which being beaten into powder, would worke so powerfully upon the braine, and all the other vitall senses, as to entrance them with a deadly sleepe, and deprive them of all motion, either in the pulses, or in any other
part else, even as if the body were dead indeede; in which operation, it would so hold and continue, according to the quantity given and drunke, as it pleased the Abbot to order the matter. This powder or drugge, was sent him by a great Prince of the East, and therewith he wrought wonders upon his Novices, sending them into Purgatory when he pleased, and by such punishments as he inflicted on them there, made them (like credulous asses) beleeeve whatsoever himselfe listed.

So much of this powder had the Abbot provided, as should suffice for three dayes entrancing, and having compounded it with a very pleasant Wine, calling Ferando into his Chamber, there gave it him to drinke, and afterward walked with him about the Cloyster, in very friendly conference together, the silly sot never dreaming on the treachery intended against him. Many Monkes beside were recreating themselves in the Cloyster, most of them delighting to behold the follies of Ferando, on whom the potion beganne so to worke, that he slept in walking, nodding and reeling as hee went, till at the last he fell downe, as if he had bene dead.

The Abbot pretending great admiration at this accident, called his Monkes about him, all labouring by rubbing his temples, throwing cold water and vinegar in his face, to revive him againe; alleging that some fume or vapour in the stomacke, had thus over-awed his understanding faculties, and quite deprived him of life indeede. At length, when by tasting the pulse, and all their best employed paines, they saw that their labour was spent in vaine; the Abbot used such perswasions to the Monkes, that they all beleeeved him to be dead: whereupon they sent for his wife and friends, who crediting as much as the rest did, were very sad and sorrowfull for him.

The Abbot (cloathed as he was) laide him in a hollow vault under a Tombe, such as there are used instead of Graves; his Wife returning home againe to her House, with a young Sonne which shee had by her Husband, protesting to keepe still within her House, and never more to
be scene in any company, but onely to attend her young Sonne, and be very carefull of such wealth as her Husband had left unto her.

From the City of Bologna, that very instant day, a well staide and governed Monke there arrived, who was a neere kinsman to the Abbot, and one whom he might securely trust. In the dead time of the night, the Abbot and this Monke arose, and taking Ferando out of the vault, carried him into a darke dungeon or prison, which he termed by the name of Purgatory, and where hee used to discipline his Monkes, when they had committed any notorious offence, deserving to be punished in Purgatory. There they tooke off all his usuall wearing garments, and cloathed him in the habite of a Monke, even as if he had beeone one of the house; and laying him on a bundle of straw, so left him untill his senses should be restored againe. On the day following, late in the evening, the Abbot, accompanied with his trusty Monke, (by way of visitation) went to see and comfort the supposed widow, finding her attired in blacke, very sad and pensive, which by his wonted perswasions, indifferently he appeased; challenging the benefit of her promise. Shee being thus alone, not hindered by her Husbands jealousie, and espying another goodly gold Ring on his finger, how fraiely and folly over-ruled her, I know not, shee was a weake woman, he a divelish deluding man; and the strongest holdes by over long battery and besieging, must needs yeeld at the last, as I feare shee did: for very often afterward, the Abbot used in this manner to visit her, and the simple ignorant Country people, carrying no such ill opinion of the holy Abbot, and having seene Ferando lying for dead in the vault, and also in the habite of a Monke; were verily perswaded, that when they saw the Abbot passe by to and fro, but most commonly in the night season, it was the ghost of Ferando, who walked in this manner after his death, as a just pennisance for his jealousie.

When Ferandoes senses were recovered againe, and he found himselfe to be in such a darkesome place; not
knowing where he was, he beganne to crie and make a noyse. When presently the Monke of Bologna (according as the Abbot had tutored him) stept into the dungeon, carrying a little waxe candle in the one hand, and a smarting whip in the other, going to Ferando, he stript off his cloathes, and began to lash him very soundly. Ferando roaring and crying, could say nothing else, but where am I? The Monke (with a dreadfull voyce) replied: Thou art in Purgatory. How? saide Ferando; what? Am I dead? Thou art dead (quoth the Monke) and began to lash him lustily againe. Poore Ferando, crying out for his Wife and little Sonne, demanded a number of idle questions, whereto the Monke still fitted him with as fantastick answers. Within a while after, he set both foode and wine before him, which when Ferando saw, he saide; How is this? Doe dead men eate and drinke? Yes, replied the Monke, and this foode which here thou seest, thy Wife brought hither to the Church this morning, to have Masses devoutly sung for thy soule, and as to other, so must it be set before thee, for such is the command of the Patrone of this place.

Ferando having lyen entranced three dayes and three nights, felt his stomacke well prepared to eate, and feeding very heartily, still saide; O my good Wife, O my loving Wife, long mayest thou live for this extraordinary kindnesse. I promise thee (sweete heart) while I was alive, I cannot remember, that ever any foode and wine was halfe so pleasing to me. O my deare Wife; O my hony Wife. Canst thou (quoth the Monke) prayse and commend her now, using her so villainously in thy life time? Then did he whip him more fiercely then before, when Ferando holding up his hands, as craving for mercy, demanded wherefore he was so severely punished? I am so commanded (quoth the Monke) by supreme power, and twice every day must thou be thus disciplinde. Upon what occasion? replied Ferando. Because (quoth the Monke) thou wast most notoriously jealous of thy Wife, shee being the very kindest woman to thee, as all the Countrey containeth
THE DECAMERON

NOVELL VIII

not her equall. It is too true, answered Ferando, I was over-much jealous of her indeede: but had I knowne, that jealousie was such a hatefull sinne against Heaven, I never would have offended therein.

Now (quoth the Monke) thou canst confesse thine owne wilfull follie, but this should have beene thought on before, and whilst thou wast living in the World. But if the Fates vouchsafe to favour thee so much, as hereafter to send thee to the World once more; remember thy punishment here in Purgatory, and sinne no more in that foule sinne of jealousie. I pray you Sir tell me, replied Ferando, after men are dead, and put into Purgatory, is there any hope of their ever visitmg the World any more? Yes, saide the Monke, if the fury of the Fates be once appeased. O that I knew (quoth Ferando) by what meanes they would be appeased, and let me visite the World once againe: I would be the best Husband that ever lived, and never more be jealous, never wrong so good a Wife, nor ever use one unkind word against her. In the meane while, and till their anger may be qualified; when next my Wife doth send me food, I pray you worke so much, that some Candles may be sent me also, because I live here in uncomfortable darke-

nesse; and what should I doe with food, if I have no light. Shee sends Lights enow, answered the Monke, but they are burnt out on the Altar in Masse-time, and thou canst have none other here, but such as I must bring my selfe; neither are they allowed, but onely for the time of thy feeding and correcting.

Ferando breathing foorth a vehement sigh, desired to know what he was, being thus appointed to punish him in Purgatory? I am (quoth the Monke) a dead man, as thou art, borne in Sardignia, where I served a very jealous Master; and because I soothed him in his jealousie, I had this penance imposed on me, to serve thee here in Purgatory with meate and drinke, and (twice every day) to discipline thy body, untill the Fates have otherwise determined both for thee and me. Why? saide Ferando, are any other persons here, beside you and I? Many thousands, replyed
the Monke, whom thou canst neither heare nor see, no more then they are able to doe the like by us. But how farre, saide Ferando, is Purgatory distant from our native Countries? About some fifty thousand leagues, answered the Monke; but yet passable in a moment, whenssoever the offended Fates are pleased: and many Masses are daily saide for thy soule, at the earnest entreaty of thy Wife, in hope of thy conversion; and becoming a new man, hating to be jealous any more hereafter.

In these and such like speeches, as thus they beguiled the time, so did they observe it for a dayly course, sometime discipling, other whiles eating and drinking, for the space of ten whole moneths together: in the which time, the Abbot sildome failed to visite Ferandoes wife, without the least suspition in any of the neighbours, by reason of their setled opinion, concerning the nightly walking of Ferandoes ghost. But, as all pleasures cannot bee exempted from some following paine or other, so it came to passe, that Ferandoes wife proved to be conceived with childe, and the time was drawing on for her deliverance. Now began the Abbot to consider, that Ferandoes folly was sufficiently chastised, and he had bee long enough in Purgatory: wherefore, the better to countenance all passed inconveniences, it was now thought high time, that Ferando should be sent to the world againe, and set free from the pains of Purgatory, as having payed for his jealousie dearely, to teach him better wisedome hereafter.

Late in the dead time of the night, the Abbot himselfe entred into the darke dungeon, and in an hollow counterfeited voyce, called to Ferando, saying. Comfort thy selfe Ferando, for the Fates are now pleased, that thou shalt bee released out of Purgatory, and sent to live in the world againe. Thou didst leave thy wife newly conceived with childe, and this very morning she is delivered of a goodly Sonne, whom thou shalt cause to be named Bennet: because, by the incessant prayers of the holy Abbot, thine owne loving Wife, and for sweet Saint Bennets sake, this grace and favour is afforded thee. Ferando hearing this,
NOVELL VIII

was exceeding joyfull, and returned this answere: For ever
honored be the Fates, the holy Lord Abbot, blessed Saint
Bennet, and my most dearely beloved Wife, whom I will
faithfully love for ever, and never more offend her by any
jealousie in me.

When the next foode was sent to Ferando, so much of
the powder was mingled with the wine, as would serve
onely for foure houres entrauncing, in which time, they
clothed him in his owne wearing apparell againe, the
Abbot himselfe in person, and his honest trusty Monke of
Bologna, conveying and laying him in the same vault under
the Tombe, where at the first they gave him buriall. The
next morning following, about the breake of day, Ferando
recovered his senses, and thorow divers chinkes and crannies
of the Tombe, descried day-light, which hee had not seene
in tenne moneths space before. Perceiving then plainly,
that he was alive, he cryed out aloude, saying: Open, open,
and let mee forth of Purgatory, for I have beene heere long
enough in conscience. Thrusting up his head against the
cover of the Tombe, which was not of any great strength,
neither well closed together; hee put it quite off the
Tombe, and so got forth upon his feete: at which instant
time, the Monks having ended their morning Mattins, and
hearing the noyse, ran in hast thither, and knowing the voyce
of Ferando, saw that he was come forth of the Monument.

Some of them were ancient Signiors of the house, and
yet but meere Novices (as all the rest were) in these cunning
and politique stratagems of the Lord Abbot, when hee
intended to punish any one in Purgatory: and therefore,
being affrighted, and amazed at this rare accident; they
fled away from him, running to the Abbot, who making a
shew to them, as if he were but new come forth of his
Oratory, in a kinde of pacifying speeches, saide; Peace my
deare Sonnes, be not affraide, but fetch the Crosse and
Holy-water hither; then follow me, and I will shew you,
what miracles the Fates have pleased to shew in our
Convent, therefore be silent, and make no more noise; all
which was performed according to his command.
THE THIRD DAY

Ferando looking leane and pale, as one, that in so long time hadde not seene the light of heaven, and endured such strict discipline twice every day: stood in a gastly amazement by the Tombesside, as not daring to adventure any further, or knowing perfectly, whether he was (as yet) truly alive, or no. But when he saw the Monkes and Abbot comming, with their lighted Torches, and singing in a solemn manner of Procession, he humbled himselfe at the Abbots feete, saying. Holy Father, by your zealous prayers (as hath bin miraculously revealed to me) and the prayers of blessed S. Bennet; as also of my honest, deare, and loving Wife, I have bin delivered from the paines of Purgatory, and brought againe to live in this world; for which unspeakable grace and favour, most humbly I thanke the well-pleased Fates, S. Bennet, your Father-hood, and my kinde Wife, and will remember all your loves to me for ever. Blessed be the Fates, answered the Abbot, for working so great a wonder heere in our Monastery. Go then my good Son, seeing the Fates have bin so gracious to thee; Go (I say) home to thine owne house, and comfort thy kind wife, who ever since thy departure out of this life, hath lived in continuall mourning, love, cherish, and make much of her, never afflicting her henceforth with causlesse jealousie. No I warrant you good Father, replyed Ferando; I have bin well whipt in Purgatory for such folly, and therefore I might be called a starke foole, if I should that way offend any more, either my loving wife, or any other.

The Abbot causing Miserere to be devoutly sung, sprinkling Ferando well with Holy-water, and placing a lighted Taper in his hand, sent him home so to his owne dwelling Village: where when the Neighbours beheld him, as people halfe frighted out of their wits, they fled away from him, so scared and terrified, as if they had seene some dreadfull sight, or gastly apparition; his wife being as fearfull of him, as any of the rest. He called to them kindly by their severall names, telling them, that he was newly risen out of his grave, and was a man as he had bin before. Then
they began to touch and feele him, growing into more
certaine assurance of him, perceiving him to be a living
man indeede: whereupon they demanded many questions
of him; and he, as if he were become farre wiser then
before, told them tydings, from their long deceased Kindred
and Friends, as if he had met with them all in Purgatory,
reporting a thousand lyes and fables to them, which (never-
thelessse) they beleeved.

Then he told them what the miraculous voice had said
unto him, concerning the birth of another young Sonne,
whom (according as he was commanded) he caused to be
named Bennet Ferando. Thus his returne to life againe,
and the daily wonders reported by him, caused no meane
admiration in the people, with much commendation of the
Abbots holinesse, and Ferandoes happy curing his
jealousie.
THE THIRD DAY

Juliet of Narbona, cured the King of France of a daungreous Fistula, in recompence whereof, she requested to enjoy as her husband in marriage, Bertrand Count of Roussilion. Hee having married her against his will, as utterly despising her, went to Florence, where hee made love to a young Gentlewoman. Juliet, by a queint and cunning policy, compassed the meanes (insted of his chosen new friend) to lye with her owne husband, by whom shee conceived, and had two Sonnes; which being afterward made knowne unto Count Bertrand, he accepted her into his favour againe, and loved her as his lойall and honourable wife.

THE NINTH NOVELL

Commending the good judgement and understanding in Ladies or Gentlewomen, that are of a quicke and apprehensive spirit.

NOW there remained no more (to preserve the priviledge granted to Dioneus uninfringed) but the Queene onely, to declare her Novell. Wherefore, when the discourse of Madam Lauretta was ended, without attending any motion to bee made for her next succeeding, with a gracious and pleasing disposition, thus she began to speake. Who shall tell any Tale heereafter, to carry any hope or expectation of a liking, having heard the rare and wittie discourse of Madame Lauretta? Believe me, it was very advantageable to us all, that she was not this dayes first beginner, because few or none would have had any courage to follow after her; and therefore
THE DECAMERON

IX

the rest yet remaining, are the more to be feared and suspected. Nevertheless, to avoid the breach of order, and to claim no privilege by my place, of not performing what I ought to do: prove as it may, a Tale you must have, and thus I proceed.

There lived sometime in the kingdom of France, a Gentleman named Isnarde, being the Count of Roussillion: who because hee was continually weake, crazie, and sickly, kept a Physician daily in his house, who was called Master Gerard of Narbona. Count Isnarde had one only Sonne, very young in yeares, yet of towardly hope, faire, comely, and of pleasing person, named Bertrand; with whom, many other children of his age, had their education: and among them, a daughter of the fore-named Physician, called Juliet; who, even in these tender yeares, fixed her affection upon young Bertrand, with such an earnest and intimate resolution, as was most admirable in so young a Maiden, and more then many times is noted in yeares of greater discretion. Old Count Isnarde dying, young Bertrand fell as a Ward to the King, and being sent to Paris, remained there under his royall custodie and protection, to the no little discomfort of young Juliet, who became greevously afflicted in minde, because she had lost the company of Bertrand.

Within some few yeares after, the Physician her Father also dyed, and then her desires grew wholly addicted, to visite Paris her selfe in person, onely because she would see the young Count, awaiting but time and opportunitie, to fit her stolne journey thither. But her kindred and friends, to whose care and trust she was committed, in regard of her rich dowrie, and being left as a fatherlesse Orphane: were so circumspect of her walks and daily behaviour, as she could not compasse any meanes of escaping. Her yeares made her now almost fit for marriage, which so much more encreased her love to the Count, making refusall of many woorthy husbands, and laboured by the motions of her friends and kindred, yet all denied, they not knowing any reason for her refusalles. By this time
the Count was become a gallant goodly Gentleman, and able to make election of his wife, whereby her affections were the more violently enflamed, as fearing least some other should be preferred before her, and so her hopes be utterly disappointed.

It was noysed abroad by common report, that the King of France was in a very dangerous condition, by reason of a strange swelling on his stomacke, which failing of apt and convenient curing, became a Fistula, afflicting him daily with extraordinary paine and anguish, no Chirurgeon or Physitian being found, that could minister any hope of healing, but rather encreased the greefe, and drove it to more vehement extreamitie, compelling the King, as dispairing utterly of all helpe, to give over any further counsell or advice. Heereof faire Juliet was wondrously joyfull, as hoping that this accident would prove the meanes, not onely of her journey to Paris, but if the disease were no more then she imagined; she could easily cure it, and thereby compasse Count Bertrand to be her husband. Hereupon, quickning up her wits, with remembrance of those rules of Art, which (by long practise and experience) she had learned of her skilfull Father, she compounded certaine hearbes together, such as she knew fitting for that kinde of infirmity, and having reduced her compound into powder, away she rode forthwith to Paris.

Being there arrived, all other serious matters set aside, first shee must needs have a sight of Count Bertrand, as being the onely Saint that caused her pilgrimage. Next she made meanes for her accessse to the King, humbly entreating his Majesty, to vouchsafe her the sight of his Fistula. When the King saw her, her modest lookes did plainly deliver, that she was a faire, comely, and discreet young Gentlewoman; wherefore, he would no longer hide it, but layed it open to her view. When shee had scene and felt it, presently she put the King in comfort; affirming, that she knew her selfe able to cure his Fistula, saying: Sir, if your Highnesse will referre the matter to me, with-
out any perill of life, or any the least paine to your person, I hope (by the helpe of heaven) to make you whole and sound within eight dayes space. The King hearing her words, beganne merrily to smile at her, saying: How is it possible for thee, being a yong Maiden, to do that which the best Physitians in Europe, are not able to performe? I commend thy kindnesse, and will not remaine unthankefull for thy forward willingnesse: but I am fully determined, to use no more counsell, or to make any further triall of Physicke or Chirurgery. Whereeto faire Juliet thus replying: Great King, let not my skill and experience be despised, because I am young, and a Maiden; for my profession is not Physicke, neither do I undertake the ministering thereof, as depending on mine owne knowledge; but by the gracious assistance of heaven, and some rules of skilfull observation, which I learned of reverend Gerard of Narbona, who was my worthy Father, and a Physitian of no meane fame, all the while he lived.

At the hearing of these words, the King began somewhat to admire at her gracious carriage, and saide within himselfe. What know I, whether this Virgin is sent to me by the direction of heaven, or no? Why should I disdaine to make proffe of her skill? Her promise is, to cure me in a small times compass, and without any paine or affliction to me: she shall not come so farre, to returne againe with the losse of her labour, I am resolved to try her cunning, and thereon saide. Faire Virgin, if you cause me to breake my setled determination, and faile of curing me, what can you expect to follow thereon? Whatsoever great King (quoth she) shall please you. Let me be strongly guarded, yet not hindered, when I am to prosecute the businesse: and then if I do not perfectly heale you within eight daies, let a good fire be made, and therein consume my body unto ashes. But if I accomplish the cure, and set your Highnesse free from all further greevance, what recompence then shall remaine to me?

Much did the King commend the confident perswasion which she had of her owne power, and presently replied.
Faire beauty (quoth he) in regard that thou art a Maide and unmaried, if thou keepe promise, and I finde my selfe to be fully cured: I will match thee with some such Gentleman in marriage, as shall be of honourable and worthy reputation, with a sufficient dowry beside. My gracious Soveraigne saide she, willing am I, and most heartily thankfull withall, that your Highnesse shall bestow me in marriage: but I desire then, to have such a husband, as I shall desire or demand by your gracious favour, without presuming to crave any of your Sonnes, Kindred, or Alliance, or appertaining unto your Royal blood. Whereunto the King gladly granted. Young Juliet began to minister her Physicke, and within fewe dayes then her limited time, the King was sound and perfectly cured; which when he perceived, he saide unto her. Trust me vertuous Mayde, most woorthily hast thou wonne a Husband, name him, and thou shalt have him. Royall King (quoth she) then have I won the Count Bertrand of Roussillion, whom I have most entirely loved from mine Infancy, and cannot (in my soule) affect any other. Very loath was the King to grant her the young Count, but in regard of his solemne passed promise, and his royal word engaged, which he would not by any meanes breake; he commanded, that the Count should be sent for, and spake thus to him.

Noble Count, it is not unknowne to us, that you are a Gentleman of great honour, and it is our Royall pleasure, to discharge your wardship, that you may repaire home to your owne House, there to settle your affaires in such order, as you may be the readier to enjoy a Wife, which we intend to bestowe upon you. The Count returned his Highnesse most humble thankes, desiring to know of whence, and what she was? It is this Gentlewoman, answered the King, who (by the helpe of Heaven) hath beene the meanes to save my life. Well did the Count know her, as having very often before scene her; and although she was very faire and amiable, yet in regard of her meane birth, which he held as a disparagement to
IX  NOVELL

his Nobility in blood; he made a scorne of her, and spake thus to the King. Would your Highnesse give me a Quacksalver to my Wife, one that deales in drugges and Physicarie? I hope I am able to bestowe my selfe much better then so. Why? quoth the King, wouldst thou have us breake our faith; which for the recovery of our health, we have given to this vertuous virgin, and she will have no other reward, but onely Count Bertrand to be her husband? Sir, replied the Count, you may dispossesse me of all that is mine, because I am your Ward and Subject, and any where else you may bestow me: but pardon me to tell you, that this marriage cannot be made with any liking or allowance of mine, neither will I ever give consent thereto.

Sir, saide the King, it is our will that it shall be so, vertuous she is, faire and wise; she loveth thee most affectionately, and with her mayest thou lead a more Noble life, then with the greatest Lady in our Kingdome. Silent, and discontented stoode the Count, but the King commanded preparation for the marriage; and when the appointed time was come, the Count (albeit against his will) received his wife at the Kings hand; she loving him deerly as her owne life. When all was done, the Count requested of the King, that what else remained for further solemnization of the marriage, it might be performed in his owne Country, reserving to himselfe what else he intended. Being mounted on horseback, and humbly taking their leave of the King, the Count would not ride home to his owne dwelling, but into Tuscany, where he heard of a warre betweene the Florentines and the Senesi, purposing to take part with the Florentines, to whom he was willingly and honourably welcomed, being created Captaigne of a worthy Company, and continuing there a long while in service.

The poore forsaken new married Countesse, could scarcely be pleased with such dishonourable unkindnesse, yet govern-ing her impatience with no meane discretion, and hoping by her vertuous carriage, to compasse the meanes of his
THE THIRD DAY

recall: home she rode to Roussillion, where all the people received her very lovingly. Now, by reason of the Counts so long absence, all things were there farre out of order; mutinies, quarrels, and civill dissentions, having procured many dissolute irruptions, to the expence of much blood in many places. But she, like a jolly stirring Lady, very wise and provident in such disturbances, reduced all occasions to such civility againe, that the people admired her rare behaviour, and condemned the Count for his unkindnesse towards her.

After that the whole Country of Roussillion (by the policy and wisedome of this worthy Lady) was fully reestablished in their ancient liberties; she made choise of two discreet knights, whom she sent to the Count her husband, to let him understand, that if in displeasure to her, hee was thus become a stranger to his owne Country: upon the returne of his answer, to give him contentment, she would depart thence, and by no meanes disturbe him. Roughly and churlishly he replied; Let her do as she list, for I have no determination to dwell with her, or neere where she is. Tell her from me, when she shall have this Ring, which you behold heere on my finger, and a Sonne in her armes begotten by me; then will I come live with her, and be her love. The Ring he made most precious and deere account of, and never tooke it off from his finger, in regard of an especiall vertue and property, which he well knew to be remaining in it. And these two Knights, hearing the impossibility of these two strict conditions, with no other favour else to be derived from him; sorrowfully returned backe to their Lady, and acquainted her with this unkinde answer, as also his unalterable determination, which well you may conceive, must needs be very unwelcome to her.

After she had an indifferent while considered with her selfe, her resolution became so undauntable; that she would adventure to practise such meanes, whereby to compasse those two apparant impossibilities, and so to enjoy the love of her husband. Having absolutely concluded what
was to be done, she assembled all the cheifest men of the
country, revealing unto them (in mournfull manner) what
an attempt she had made already, in hope of recovering
her husbands favour, and what a rude answer was thereon
returned. In the end, she told them, that it did not sute
with her unworthinesse, to make the Count live as an exile
from his owne inheritance, upon no other inducement, but
onely in regard of her: wherefore, she had determined
betweene heaven and her soule, to spend the remainder of
her dayes in Pilgrimages and prayers, for preservation of
the Counts soule and her owne; earnestly desiring them,
to undertake the charge and government of the Country,
and signifying unto the Count, how she had forsaken his
house, and purposed to wander so farre thence, that never
would she visit Roussillion any more. In the deliverie of
these words, the Lords and Gentlemen wept and sighed
extraordinarily, using many earnest imprecations to alter
this resolve in her, but all was in vaine.

Having taken her sad and sorrowfull farewell of them
all, accompanied onely with her Maide, and one of her
Kinsmen, away she went, attired in a Pilgrimes habit, yet
well furnished with money and precious Jewels, to avoyde
all wants which might befall her in travaile; not acquaint-
ing any one whether she went. In no place stayed she,
untill she was arrived at Florence, where happening into
a poore Widdowes house, like a poore Pilgrime, she seemed
well contented therewith. And desiring to heare some
tydings of the Count, the next day shee saw him passe
by the house on horse-backe, with his company. Now,
albeit shee knew him well enough, yet shee demanded of
the good old Widdow, what Gentleman he was? She
made answer, that he was a stranger there, yet a Noble-
man, called Count Bertrand of Roussillon, a very courteous
Knight, beloved and much respected in the City. More-
over, that he was farre in love with a neighbour of hers,
a young Gentlewoman, but very poore and meane in sub-
stance, yet of honest life, vertuous, and never taxed with
any evill report: onely her poverty was the maine imbar-
THE THIRD DAY

ment of her marriage, dwelling in house with her mother, who was a wise, honest, and worthy Lady.

The Countesse having well observed her words, and considered thereon from point to point; debating soberly with her owne thoughts, in such a doubtfull case what was best to be done. When she had understood which was the house, the ancient Ladies name, and likewise her daughters, to whom her husband was now so affectionately devoted; she made chiose of a fit and convenient time, when (in her Pilgrimes habit) secretly she went to the house. There she found the mother and daughter in poore condition, and with as poore a family: whom after she had ceremoniously saluted, she told the old Lady, that she requested but a little conference with her. The Lady arose, and giving her kinde entertainement, they went together into a withdrawing Chamber, where being both set downe, the Countesse began in this manner.

Madame, in my poore opinion, you are not free from the frownes of Fortune, no more then I my selfe am: but if you were so well pleased, there is no one that can comfort both our calamities in such manner, as you are able to do. And beleeve me answered the Lady, there is nothing in the world that can be so welcome to me, as honest comfort. The Countesse proceeding on in her former speeches said: I have now need (good Madame) both of your trust and fidelity, whereon if I should rely, and you faile me, it will be your owne undoing as well as mine. Speake then boldly, replied the old Lady, and remaine constantly assured, that you shall no way be deceived by me. Hereupon, the Countesse declared the whole course of her love, from the very originall to the instant, revealing also what she was, and the occasion of her comming thither, relating every thing so perfectly, that the Lady verily beleeved her, by some reports which she had formerly heard, and which mooved her the more to compassion. Now, when all circumstances were at full discovered, thus spake the Countesse.

Among my other miseries and misfortunes, which hath
THE DECAMERON

NOVELL IX

halfe broken my heart in the meere repetition, beside the sad and afflicting sufferance; two things there are, which if I cannot compasse to have, all hope is quite frustrate for ever, of gaining the grace of my Lord and Husband. Yet these two things may I obtaine by your helpe, if all be true which I have heard, and you can therein best resolve mee. Since my comming to this City, it hath credibly bene told me, that the Count my husband, is deeply in love with your daughter. If the Count (quoth the Ladie) love my daughter, and have a wife of his owne, he must thinke, and so shall surely finde it, that his greatnesse is no priviledge for him, whereby to worke dishonour upon her poverty. But indeede, some apparances there are, and such a matter as you speake of, may be so presumed; yet so farre from a very thought of entertaining in her or me; as whatsoever I am able to doe, to yeeld you any comfort and content, you shall find me therein both willing and ready: for I prize my daughters spotlesse poverty at as high a rate, as he can doe the pride of his honour.

Madame, quoth the Countesse, most heartily I thanke you. But before I presume any further on your kindnesse, let me first tell you, what faithfully I intend to do for you, if I can bring my purpose to effect. I see that your daughter is beautifull, and of sufficient yeeres for marriage; and is debarred thereof (as I have heard) onely by lack of a competent dowry. Wherefore Madame, in recompence of the favour I expect from you, I will enrich her with so much ready money as you shall thinke sufficient to match her in the degree of honour. Poverty made the poore Lady, very well to like of such a bountifull offer, and having a noble heart shee said: Great Countesse say, wherein am I able to do you any service, as can deserve such a gracious offer? If the action be honest; without blame or scandall to my poore, yet undetected reputation, gladly I will do it; and it being accomplished, let the requitall rest in your owne noble nature.

Observe me then Madame, replied the Countesse. It is most convenient for my purpose, that by some trusty and
faithfull messenger, you should advertise the Count my husband, that your daughter is, and shall be at his command: but that she may remaine absolutely assured, that his love is constant to her, and above all other: shee must entreat him, to send her (as a testimony thereof) the Ring which he weareth upon his little finger, albeit shee hath heard, that he loveth it deerly. If he send the Ring, you shall give it me, and afterward send him word, that your daughter is ready to accomplish his pleasure; but, for the more safety and secrecie, he must repaire hither to your house, where I being in bed instead of your daughter, faire Fortune may so favour mee, that (unknowne to him) I may conceive with childe. Upon which good successe, when time shall serve, having the Ring on my finger, and a childe in my armes begotten by him, his love and liking may be recovered, and (by your meanes) I continue with my Husband, as every vertuous Wife ought to doe.

The good old Lady imagined, that this was a matter somewhat difficult, and might lay a blamefull imputation on her daughter. Neverthelesse, considering, what an honest office it was in her, to bee the meanes, whereby so worthy a Countesse should recover an unkinde husband, led altogether by lust, and not a jot of cordiall love; she knew the intent to be honest, the Countesse vertuous, and her promise religious, and therefore undertooke to effect it. Within few dayes after, verie ingeniously, and according to the instructed order, the Ring was obtayned, albeit much against the Counts will; and the Countesse, in sted of the Ladies vertuous daughter, was embraced by him in bed: the houre proving so auspicious, and Juno being Lady of the ascendent, conjoyned with the witty Mercury, shee conceived of two goodly Sonnes, and her deliverance agreed correspondently with the just time.

Thus the old Lady, not at this time onely, but at many other meetings besides; gave the Countesse free possession of her husbands pleasures, yet alwayes in such darke and concealed secrecie, as it was never suspected, nor knowne by any but themselves, the Count lying with his owne wife,
and disappointed of her whom he more dearly loved. Alwayes at his uprisings in the mornings (which usually was before the breake of day, for preventing the least scruple of suspicion) many familiar conferences passed betweene them, with the gifts of divers faire and costly Jewels; all which the Countesse carefully kept, and perceiving assuredly, that she was conceived with childe, shee would no longer bee troublesome to the good old Lady; but calling her aside, spake thus to her. Madame, I must needs give thankes to heaven and you, because my desires are amply accomplished, and both time and your deserts doe justly challenge, that I should accordingly quite you before my departure. It remaineth now in your owne power, to make what demand you please of me, which yet I will not give you by way of reward, because that would seeme to bee base and mercenary: but onely whatsoever you shall receive of me, is in honourable recompence of faire and vertuous deserved, such as any honest and well-minded Lady in the like distresse, may with good credit allow, and yet no prejudice to her reputation.

Although poverty might well have tutored the Ladies tongue, to demand a liberall recompence for her paines; yet shee requested but an 100 pounds, as a friendly helpe towards her daughters marriage, and that with a bashfull blushing was uttered too; yet the Countesse gave her five hundred pounds, besides so many rich and costly Jewels, as amounted to a farre greater summe. So shee returned to her wonted lodging, at the aged widowes house, where first shee was entertained at her comming to Florence; and the good old Lady, to avoyde the Counts repairing to her house any more, departed thence sodainly with her daughter, to divers friends of hers that dwelt in the Country, whereat the Count was much discontented; albeit afterward, he did never hear any more tidings of hir or her daughter, who was worthily married, to her Mothers great comfort.

Not long after, Count Bertrand was re-called home by his people: and he having heard of his wives absence, 100
THE THIRD DAY

went to Roussillion so much the more willingly. And the Countesse knowing her husbands departure from Florence, as also his safe arrivall at his owne dwelling, remained still in Florence, untill the time of her deliverance, which was of two goodly Sonnes, lively resembling the lookes of their Father, and all the perfect lineaments of his body. Perswade your selves, she was not a little carefull of their nursing; and when she saw the time answerable to her determination, she tooke her journey (unknowne to any) and arrived with them at Montpellier, where she rested her selfe for divers dayes, after so long and wearisome a journey.

Upon the day of all Saints, the Count kept a solemne Feastivall, for the assembly of his Lords, Knights, Ladies, and Gentlewomen: upon which Joviall day of generall rejoyning, the Countesse attired in her wonted Pilgrimes weed, repaired thither, entring into the great Hall where the Tables were readily covered for dinner. Preassing through the throng of people, with her two children in her armes, she presumed unto the place where the Count sate, and falling on her knees before him, the teares trickling abundantly downe her cheekes, thus she spake. Worthy Lord, I am thy poore, despised, and unfortunate wife; who, that thou mightst returne home, and not be an exile from thine owne abiding, have thus long gone begging through the world. Yet now at length, I hope thou wilt be so honourably-minded, as to performe thine owne too strict imposed conditions, made to the two Knights which I sent unto thee, and which (by thy command) I was enjoyned to do. Behold here in mine armes, not onely one Sonne by thee begotten, but two Twins, and thy Ring beside. High time is it now, if men of honour respect their promises, and after so long and tedious travell, I should at last be welcommed as thy true wife.

The Count hearing this, stooed as confounded with admiration; for full well he knew the Ring: and both the children were so perfectly like him, as he was confirmed to be their Father by generall judgement. Upon his urging
THE DECAMERON

NOVELL IX

by what possible means this could be brought to passe: the Countesse in presence of the whole assembly, and unto her eternall commendation, related the whole history, even in such manner as you have formerly heard it. Moreover, she reported the private speeches in bed, uttered betweene himselfe and her, being witnessed more apparently, by the costly Jewels there openly shewne. All which infallible proofes, proclaiming his shame, and her most noble carriage to her husband; he confessed, that she had told nothing but the truth in every point which she had reported.

Commending her admirable constancy, excellency of wit, and sprightly courage, in making such a bold adventure; he kissed the two sweete boyes, and to keepe his promise, whereto he was earnestly importuned, by all his best esteemed friends there present, especially the honourable Ladies, who would have no denial, but by forgetting his former harsh and uncivill carriage towards her, to accept her for ever as his lawfull wife, folding her in his armes, and sweetly kissing her divers times together, he bad her welcome to him, as his vertuous, loyall, and most loving wife, and so (for ever after) he would acknowledge her. Well knew hee that she had store of better beseeing garments in the house, and therefore requested the Ladies to walke with her to her Chamber, to uncase her of those Pilgrimes weeds, and cloath her in her owne more sumptuous garments, even those which shee wore on her wedding day, because that was not the day of his contentment, but onely this; for now he confessed her to be his wife indeede, and now he would give the king thanks for her, and now was Count Bertrand truly married to the faire Juliet of Narbona.
THE THIRD DAY

The wonderfull and chaste resolved continency of faire Serictha, daughter to Siwalde King of Denmarke, who being sought and sued unto by many worthy persons that did affect her dearly, would not looke any man in the face, until such time as she was married.

THE TENTH NOVELL

A very worthy president for all yong Ladies and Gentlewomen, not rashly to bestowe themselves in marriage, without the consent of their Parents and Friends.

DIONEUS having diligently listened to the Queenes singulare discourse, so soone as she had concluded, and none now remayned but himselfe, to give a full period unto that dayes pleasure, without longer trifling the time, or expecting any commaund from the Queene, thus he began. Gracious Ladies, I know that you now expect from mee, some such queint tale as shalbe suteable to my merry disposition, rather savouring of wantonnesse, then any discreet and sober wisedome; and such a purpose indeede I once had entertayned. But having well observed all your severall relations, grounded on grave and worthy examples, especially the last, so notably delivered by the Queene, I cannot but commend faire Juliet of Narbona, in performing two such strange impossibilities, and conquering the kindnesse of so cruel a Husband. If my Tale come short of the precedent excellency, or give not such content, as you (perhaps) expect, accept my good will, and let mee stand engaged for a better hereafter.

The Annals of Denmarke do make mention, that the King of the said country, who was first set downe as Prince,
contrary to the ancient custom and lawes observed among the Danes, namely Hunguinus; had a son called Siwalde, who succeeded him in the estates and kingdome, belonging to his famous predecessors. That Age, and the Court of that Royall Prince, was verie highly renowned, by the honour of faire Serictha, Daughter to the saide Siwalde; who beside her generall repute, of being a myracle of Nature, in perfection of beautie, and most compleate in all that the heart of man could desire to note, in a body full of grace, gentlenesse, and whatsoever else, to attract the eyes of everie one to beholde her: was also so chaste, modest, and bashfull, as it was meerely impossible to prevaile so farre with her, that any man should come to speake with her. For in those dayes, marriages were pursued and sought by valour, and by the onely opinion which stout Warriours conceived of the vertuous qualities of a Lady. Notwithstanding, never could any man make his vaunt, that she had given him so much as a looke, or ever any attained to the favour, to whisper a word in her eare. Because, both the custome and will of Parents then (very respectively kept in those Northerne parts of the world) of hearing such speake, as desired their daughters in marriage, grew from offering them some worthy services; and thereby compassed meanes to yeeld their contentation, by some gracious and kinde answers.

But she, who was farre off from the desire of any such follies, referring her selfe wholly to the will and disposition of the King her Lord and Father; was so contrary to give any living man an answer, that her eye never looked on any one speaking to her, appearing as sparing in vouchsafing a glance, as her heart was free from a thought of affection. For she had no other imagination, but that Maids both in their choice and will, ought to have any other disposition, but such as should bee pleasing to their Parents, either to graunt, or deny; according as they were guided by their grave judgement. In like manner, so well had she brideled her sensuall appetites, with the curbe of Reason, Wisedom, and Providence, setting such an extra-
ordinary severe and constant restraint, on the twinkling or motions of her eyes, in absolute obedience to her Father, as never was she seen to turn her head aside, to lend one looke on any man of her age.

A worthy sight it was, to behold Knights errant, passing, repassing to Denmarke, and backe againe, labouring to conquer those setled eyes, to win the least signe of grace and favor, from her whom they so dutiously pursued, to steale but a silly glimpse or glance, and would have thought it a kind of honorable theft. But this immovable rock of beauty, although she knew the dissignes of them which thus frequented the Court of the King her Father, and could not pretend ignorance of their endeavour, ayming onely at obtaining her in marriage: yet did not lend any looke of her eye, yeelding the least signall of the hearts motion, in affecting any thing whatsoever, but what it pleased her Father she should do.

Serictha living in this strange and unusuall manner, it mooved manie Princes and great Lords, to come and court her, contending both by signes and words, to change her from this severe constancie, and make knowne (if possible it might be) whether a woman would or could be so resolute, as to use no respect at all towards them, comming from so many strange countries, to honor her in the Courts of the King her father. But in these dayes of ours, if such a number of gallant spirits should come, to aske but one looke of some of our beauties, I am halfe affraide, that they should finde the eyes of many of our dainty Darlings, not so sparing of their glances, as those of Serictha were. Considering, that our Courtiers of these times, are this way emulous one of another, and Women are so forward in offering themselves, that they performe the Office of suters, as fearing least they should not be solicited, yea, though it be in honest manner.

The King, who knew well enough, that a Daughter was a treasure of some danger to keepe, and growing doubtfull withall least (in the end) this so obstinate severity would be shaken, if once it came to passe, that his daughter should
feele the piercing apprehensions of love, and whereof (as yet) she never had any experience; he determined to use some remedy for this great concourse of lovers, and strange kinde of carriage in the Princesse his daughter. For, hee apparently perceived, that such excelling beauty as was in Serictha, with those good and commendable customes, and other ornaments of his daughters mind, could never attayne to such an height of perfection; but yet there would be found some men, so wittily accute and ingenious, as to convert and humor a maid, according to their will, and make a mockery of them, who were (before) of most high esteeme. Beside, among so great a troope of Lords, as dayly made tender of their amorous service, some one or other would proove so happy, as (at the last) she should be his Mistresse. And therefore forbearing what otherwise hee had intended, as a finall conclusion of all such follies: calling his daughter alone to himselfe in his Chamber, and standing cleere from all other attention, hee used to her this, or the like Language.

I know not faire daughter, what reason may move you to shew your selfe so disdainfull towards so many Noble and worthy men, as come to visite you, and honour my Court with their presence, offering me their love and loyall service, under this onely pretence (as I perceive) of obtaining you, and compassing the happinesse (as it appeareth in plaine strife among them) one day to winne the prize, you being the maine yssue of all their hope. If it be bashfull modesty, which (indeede) ought to attend on all virgins of your yeares, and so veyles our eyes, as (with honour) you cannot looke on any thing, but what is your owne, or may not justly vouchsafe to see: I commend your maidenly continency, which yet nevertheless, I would not have to bee so severe, as (at length) your youth falling into dislike thereof, it may bee the occasion of some great misfortune, either to you, or mee, or else to us both together: considering what rapes are ordinarily committed in those quarters, and the Ladies equall every way to your selfe; which happening, would presently be the cause of my death.
THE THIRD DAY

If it be in regard of some vowe which you have consecrated to virginity, and to some one of our Gods: I seeke not therein to hinder your diseignes, neither will bereave the celestiall powers, of whatsoever appertaineth to them. Albeit I could wish, that it should be kept in a place more straited, and separate from the resort of men; to the end, that so bright a beauty as yours is, should cause no discords among amorous suiters, neither my Court prove a Campe destined unto the conclusion of such quarrels, or you be the occasion of reviving so many, whose service would beseeme a much more needfull place, then to dye heere by fond and foolish opinion of enjoying a vaine pleasure, yet remaining in the power of another body to grant. If therefore I shall perceive, that these behaviours in you do proceede from pride, or contempt of them, who endeavour to do you both honour and service, and insted of granting them a gracious looke, in arrogancie you keepe it from them, making them enemies to your folly and my sufferance: I sweare to you by our greatest God, that I will take such due order, as shall make you feele the hand of an offended Father, and teach you (henceforth) to bee much more affable.

Wherefore deere daughter, you shall do me a singular pleasure, freely to acquaint me with your minde, and the reasons of your so stricte severity: promising you, upon the word and faith of a King, nay more, of a loving and kinde Father, that if I finde the cause to be just and reasonable, I will desist so farre from hindering your intent, as you shall rather perceive my fatherly furtherance, and rest truly resolved of my helpe and favour. Wherefore faire daughter, neither blush or dismay, or feare to let me understand your will; for evidently I see, that meere virgin shame hath made a rapture of your soule, being nothing else but those true splendors of vertue derived from your Auncestors, and shining in you most gloriously, gracing you with a much richer embellishing, then those beauties bestowed on you by Nature. Speake therefore boldly to your Father, because there is no law to prohibit
your speech to him: for when he commandeth, he ought to be obeyed: promising upon mine oath once againe, that if your reasons are such as they ought to be, I will not faile to accommodate your fancy.

The wise and vertuous Princesse, hearing the King to alledge such gracious reasons, and to lay so kinde a command on her; making him most lowe and humble reverence, in signe of dutifull accepting such favour, thus she answered. Royall Lord and Father, seeing that in your Princely Court, I have gathered whatsoever may be termed vertuous in me, and you being the principall instructer of my life, from whom I have learned those lessons, how maides (of my age) ought to governe and maintaine themselves: you shall apparanly perceive, that neither gazing lookes, which I ought not to yeelde without your consent, nor pride or arrogancie; never taught mee by you, or the Queene my most honourable Lady and Mother, are any occasion of my cariage towards them, which come to make ostentation of their folly in your Court, as if a meere look of Serictha, were sufficient to yeeld assurance effectually of their desires victory.

Nothing (my most Royall Lord and Father) induceth me to this kind of behaviour, but onely due respect of your honour and mine owne: and to the end it may not be thought that I belye my selfe, in not eying the affectionate offers of amorous pursuers, or have any other private reserved meaning, then what may best please King Siwalde my Father, let it suffice Sir, that it remaineth in your power onely, to make an apt election and choice for mee: for I neither ought, nor will allowe the acceptance of any suiters kindnesse, so much as by a looke (much lesse then by words) untill your Highnesse shall nominate the man, to be a meet husband for Serictha. It is onely you then (my Lord) that beares the true life-blood of our Ancestors. It is the untainted life of the Queene my Mother, that sets a chaste and strict restraint on mine eyes, from estranging my heart, to the idle amorous enticements of young giddy-headed Gentlemen, and have sealed up my soule with an
absolute determination, rather to make choice of death, then any way to alter this my warrantable severity.

You being a wise King, and the worthy Father of Serictha, it is in you to mediate, counsell, and effect, what best shall beseeme the desseignes of your daughter, because it is the vertue of Children, yea, and their eternall glory and renowne, to illustrate the lives and memories of their parents. It consisteth in you, either to graunt honest license to such Lords as desire me, or to oppose them with such discretee conditions, as both your selfe may sit free from any further afflicting, and they rest defeated of daungerous dissentions, according as you foresee what may ensue. Which yet (nevertheless) I hold as a matter impossible, if their discord should be grounded on the sole apprehension of their soules: and the only prevention thereof, is, not to yeeld any signe, glance of the eye, or so much as a word more to one man then another: for such is the setled disposition of your daughters soule, and which shee humbly entreateth, may so still be suffered.

Many meanes there are, whereby to winne the grace of the greatest King, by employing their paines in worthy occasions, answerable unto their yeeres and vertue, if any such sparkes of honour doe shine in their soules; rather then by gaining heere any matter of so meane moment, by endeavouring to shake the simplicity of a bashfull Maide: Let them cleare the Kings High-ways of Theeves, who make the passages difficult; or let them expell Pyrates from off the Seas, which make our Danish coasts every way inaccessible. These are the Noble meanes to merite, as may throw deserved recompence upon them, and much more worthily, then making Idolles of Ladies lookes, or gazing for Babies in their wanton eyes. So may you bestowe on them what is your owne, granting Serictha to behold none, but him who you shall please to give her: for otherwise, you know her absolute resolve, never to looke any living man in the face, but onely you my gracious Lord and Father.

The King hearing this wise and modest answer of his
daughter, could not choose but commend her in his heart; and smiling at the counsell which she gave him, returned her this answer. Understand me well, faire daughter; neither am I minded to breake your determination wholly, nor yet to governe my selfe according to your fancy. I stand indifferently contented, that until I have otherwise purposéd, you shall continue the nature of your ancient custome: yet conditionally, that when I command an alteration of your carriage, you faile not therein to declare your obedience. What else remaineth beside, for so silly a thing as a Woman is, and for the private pleasing of so many great Princes and Lords, I will not endanger any of their lives, because their parents and friends (being sensible of such losses) may seeke revenge, perhaps to their owne ruine, and some following scourge to my indiscretion. For I consider (daughter) that I have neighbours who scarcely love me, and of whom (in time) I may right my selfe, having received by their meanes, great wrongs and injuries. Also I make no doubt, but to manage your love-sute with discretion, and set such a pleasing proceeding betwene them, as neyther shall beget any hatred in them towards me, nor yet offend them in theyr affections pursuite, till fortune may smile so favourably uppon some one man, to reach the height of both our wished desires.

Siwalde was thus determinately resolved, to let his daughter live at her owne discretion, without any alteration of her continued severitie, perceiving day by day, that many came still to request her in mariage, and he could not give her to them all, nor make his choyse of any one, least all the rest should become his enemies, and fall in quarrell one with another. Onely this therefore was his ordination, that among such a number of amorous suiters, he onely should weare the Lawrell wreath of victory, who could obtaine such favour of Serictha, as but to looke him in the face. This condition seemed to be of no meane difficulty, yea, and so impossible, that many gave over their amorous enterprize: whereof Serictha was wondrously joyfull, seeing her selfe eased of such tedious importunitie, dulling her
eares with their proffered services, and foppish allegations of fantastick servitude: such as idle-headed Lovers do use to protest before their Mistresses, wherein they may beleeeve them, if they list.

Among all them that were thus forward in their heate of affection, there was a young Danish Lord, named Ocharus, the sonne of a Pyrate, called Hebonius, the same man, who having stolne the Sister unto King Hunguinus, and sister to Siwalde, and affiancing himselfe to her, was slaine by King Haldune, and by thus killing him, enjoyed both the Lady, and the kingdome of the Gothes also, as her inheritance. This Ocharus, relying much on his comelinesse of person, wealth, power, and valour, but (above all the rest) on his excellent and eloquent speaking; bestowed his best endeavours to obtaine Serictha, notwithstanding the contemptible carriage of the rest towards him: whereupon prevailing for his accesse to the Princesse, and admitted to speake, as all the other did, he reasoned with her in this manner.

Whence may it proceede, Madam, that you being the fairest and wisest Princesse living at this day in all the Northerne parts, should make so smal account of your selfe, as to denye that, which with honour you may yeeld to them, as seeke to doe you most humble service; and forgetting the rank you hold, doe refuse to deigne them recom pense in any manner whatsoever, seeking onely to enjoy you in honourable marriage? Perhaps you are of opinion, that the Gods should become slaves to your beauty, in which respect, men are utterly unworthy to crave any such acquaintance of you. If it be so, I confesse my selfe conquered: But if the Gods seeke no such association with women, and since they forsooke the World, they left this legacy to us men; I thinke you covet after none, but such as are extracted of their blood, or may make vaunt of their neere kindred and alliance to them. I know that many have wished, and do not desire you: I know also, that as many have requested you of the King your Father, but the choice remaineth in your power, and you being ordained the Judge, to distin-
guish the merit of all your Sutors; me thinkes you do wrong
to the office of a Judge; in not regarding the parties which
are in suite, to sentence the desert of the best and bravest,
and so to delay them with no more lingering.

I cannot thinke Madam, that you are so farre out of
your selfe, and so chill cold in your affection, but desire of
occasions, equall to your vertue and singular beauty, do
sometime touch you feelingly, and make you to wish for
such a man, answerable to the greatnesse of your excellency.
And if it should be otherwise (as I imagine it to be impos-
sible) yet you ought to breake such an obstinate designe,
onely to satisfie the King your Father, who can desire
nothing more, then to have a Sonne in Law, to revenge him
on the Tyrant of Swetia; who, as you well know, was some-
time the murtherer of your Grand-father Hunguinus, and
also of his Father. If you please to vouchsafe me so much
grace and favour, as to make me the man, whom your heart
hath chosen to be your Husband; I sweare unto you by the
honour of a Souldier, that I will undergoe such service, as
the King shall be revenged, you royally satisfied, and my
selfe advanced to no meane happinesse, by being the onely
fortunate man of the World. Gentle Princesse, the most
beautifull Daughter to a King, open that indurate heart,
and so soften it, that the sweete impressions of love may be
engraven therein; see there the joyfull pursuite of your
Ocharus, who, to save his life, cannot so much as winne one
looke from his divine Mistresse.

This nicenesse is almost meerely barbarous, that I,
wishing to adventure my life prodigally in your service, you
are so cruell, as not to deigne recompence to this duty of
mine, with the least signe of kindnes that can be imagined.
Faire Serictha, if you desire the death of your friendly
servant Ocharus, there are many other meanes whereby to
performe it, without consuming him in so small a fire, and
suffering him there to languish without any answer. If you
will not looke upon me; if my face be so unworthy, that
one beame of your bright Sunnes may not shine upon it: If a
word of your mouth be too precious for me; make a
signe with your hand, either of my happinesse or disaster. If your hand be envious of mine ease, let one of your women be she, to pronounce the sentence of life or death; because, if my life be hatefull to you, this hand of mine may satisfie your will, and sacrifice it to the rigour of your disdaine. But if (as I am rather perswaded) the ruine of your servants, be against your more mercifull wishes; deale so that I may perceive it, and expresse what compassion you have of your Ocharus, who coveteth nothing more, then your daily hearts ease and contentment, with a priviledge of honour above other Ladies. All this discourse was heard by Serictha, but so little was she moved therewith, as she was farre enough off from returning him any answer, neither did any of the Gentlewomen attending on her, ever heare her use the very least word to any of her amorous sollicitors, nor did she know any one of them, but by speech onely, which drove them all into an utter despaire, perceiving no possible meanes whereby to conquer her.

The Histories of the Northerne Countries doe declare, that in those times, the rapes of women were not much respected; and such as pursued any Lady or Gentlewoman with love, were verily perswaded, that they never made sufficient proofe of their amourous passions, if they undertooke not all cunning stratagems, with adventure of their lives to all perils whatsoever, for the rape or stealth of them, whom they purposed to enjoy in marriage. As we read in the Gothes History of Gramo, Sonne to the King of Denmarke, who being impatiently amorous of the daughter to the King of the Gothes, and winning the love of the Lady; stole her away, before her Parents or friends had any notice thereof; by meanes of which rape, there followed a most bloody warre betweene the Gothes and the Danes. In recompence of which injury, Sibdagerus, King of Norway, being chosen chiefe Commander of the Swetians and Gothes, entred powerfully into Denmarke, where first he violated the Sister to King Gramo, and led away her Daughter, whom in the like manner he made his Spouse as the Dane had the Daughter of Sigtruge, Prince of the Gothes.
I induce these briefe narrations, onely to shew, that while Ocharus made honest and affable meanes, to win respect from Serictha, and used all honourable services to her, as the Daughter of so great a Prince worthily deserved: some there were, not halfe so conscientious as he, especially one of the amourous sutors, who being weary of the strange carriages of Serictha, dissembling to prosecute his purpose no further; prevailed so far, that he corrupted one of her Governesses, for secretly training her to such a place, where the ravisher should lie in ambush to carry her away, so to enjoy her by policy, seeing all other meanes failed for to compasse his desire.

Behold to what a kind of foolish rage, which giddy headed dullards do terme a naturall passion, they are led, who, being guided more by sensuality, then reason or discretion, follow the braine-sicke motions of their rash apprehensions. He which pursueth, and protesteth to love a Lady for her gentility and vertue; knoweth not how to measure what love is, neither seeth nor conceiveth how farre the permission of his owne endeavour extendeth. Moreover, you may observe, that never any age was so grosse, or men so simple, but even almost from the beginning, avarice did hood-winke the hearts of men, and that (with gold) the very strongest Fortification in the World hath beene broken, yea, and the best bard gates laide open. Serictha, who shunned the sight of all men, and never distrusted them which kept about her; she who never knew (except some naturall speare gave light to her understanding) what belonged to the embracements of men, must now (without dreaming thereon) fall as foode to the insatiable appetite of a wretch, who compassed this surprisall of her, to glory in his owne lewdnesse, and make a mocke of the Princesses settled constancy.

She, good Lady, following the councell of her trayterous guide, went abroad on walking, but weakely accompanied, as one that admitted no men to attend her, which she might have repented very dearely, if Heaven had not succoured her innocency, by the helpe of him, who wished
THE THIRD DAY

her as well as the ravisher, though their desires were quite contrary; the one to enjoy her by violence, but the other affected rather to die, then do the least act which might displease her. No sooner was Serictha arrived at the destined place, where her false Governesse was to deliver her; but a second Paris came, and seized on her, hurrying her in hast away, before any helpe could possibly rescue her; the place being farre off from any dwelling.

Now the ravisher durst not convey her to his owne abiding, to enjoy the benefit of his purchase; but haled her into a small thicket of trees, where although she knew the evident peril, whereinto her severe continency had now throwne her: yet notwithstanding, she would not lift up her eyes, to see what he was that had thus stolne her, so firmly she dwelt upon grounded deliberation, and such was the vigor of her chast resolve. And albeit she knew a wickednesse (worse then death) preparing for her, who had no other glory then in her vertue, and desire to live contentedly; yet was she no more astouned thereat, then if he had led her to the Palace of the King her Father: persuading her selfe, that violence done to the body, is no prejudice to honor, when the mind is free and cleere from consent.

As thus this robber of beauty was preparing to massacre the modesty of the faire Princesse, she resisted him with all her power, yea, and defended her selfe so worthily, that he could not get one looke of her eye, one kisse of her cheeke, nor any advantage whatsoever, crying out shrilly, and struggling against him strongly: her outcryes were heard by one, who little imagined that she was so neere, whom he loved more dearely then his owne life, namely, Ocharus; who was walking accidentally alone in this wood, devising by what meanes he might winne grace from his sterne Mistresse. No sooner tooke he knowledge of her, and saw her (in the armes of another) to be ravished; but he cryed out to the thiefe, saying, Hand off villaine, let not such a slave as thou, prophane with an unreverend touch the sacred honour
of so chaste a Princesse, who deserveth to be more royally respected, then thus rudely hurried: Hand off I say, or else I sweare by her divine perfections, whom I esteeme above all creatures in this World, to make thee die more miserably, then ever any man as yet did.

Whosoever had seene a Lyon or an Ounce rouse himselfe, chafing when any one adventureth to rob him of his prey; and these with fierce eyes, mounted creasts, writhed tayles, and sharpened pawes, make against him that durst so mollest him. In the like manner did the ravisher shew himselfe, and one while snarling, another while bristling the darted disdainefull lookes at Ocharus, and spake to him in this manner. Vile and base Sea-theife, as thou art, welcome to thy deserved wages, and just repayment for thy proud presuming. It glads my heart not a little, to meete thee here, where thou shalt soone perceive what good will I beare thee, and whether thou be worthy or no to enjoy the honour of this Lady, now in mine owne absolute possession. It will also encrease her more ample perswasion of my worth, and pleade my merit more effectually in her favour; when she shall see what a powerfull arme I have, to punish this proud insolence of a Pirate.

This harsh language was so distastfull to Ocharus, that like a Bull, made angry by the teeth of some Mastive Dogge, or pricked by the point of a weapon, he ran upon his enemy, and was so roughly welcommed by him, as it could not easily be judged which of them had the better advantage. But in the end Fortune favoured most the honest man, and Ocharus having overthowne the robber, he smote the head of him quite from his shoulders, which he presented to her, whom he had delivered out of so great a perill, and thus he spake. You may now behold Madam, whether Ocharus be a true lover of Serichthae's vertues, or no, and your knowledge fully resolved, at what end his affeccion aimeth; as also, how farre his honest desert extendeth, for you both to love him, and to recompence the loyall respect he hath used towards you. Never looke on the villaines face, who strove to shame the King your Fathers Court, by violation of theevery,
THE THIRD DAY

the chastest Princesse on the Earth; but regard Ocharus, who is ready to sacrifice himselfe, if you take as much pleasure in his ruine, as (he thinketh) he hath given you contentment, by delivering you from this Traytor.

Doth it not appeare unto you Madam, that I have as yet done enough, whereby to be thought a worthy Husband, for the royall Daughter of Denmarke? Have I not satisfied the Kings owne Ordinance, by delivering his Daughter, as already I have done? Will Serictha be so constant in her cruelty, as not to turne her eye towards him, who exposed his life, to no meane peril and danger, onely in the defence of her Chastity? Then I plainly perceive, that the wages of my devoire, is ranked amongst those precedent services, which I have performed for so hurtfull a beautie. Yet gentle Princesse, let me tell you, my carriage hath bin of more importance, then all the others can be, and my merit no way to be compared with theirs; at least, if you pleased to make account of him, who is an unfeigned lover of your modesty, and devoutly honoureth your vertuous behaviour. And yet Madame, shall I have none other answere from you, but your perpetuall silence? Can you continue so obstinate in your opinion, in making your selfe still as strange to your Ocharus, as to the rest, who have no other affection, but onely to the bare outside of beauty? Why then, Royall Lady, seeing (at this instant time) all my labour is but lost, and your heart seemeth much more hardned, in acknowledging any of my honest services: at least yet let me be so happy, as to conduct you backe to the Palace, and restore you to that sacred safetie, which will be my soules best comfort to behold.

No outward signe of kinde acceptation, did any way expresse it selfe in her, but rather as fearing, lest the commodiousnesse of the place should incite this yong Lord, to forget all honest respect, and imitate the other in like basenesse. But he, who rather wished a thousand deaths, then any way to displease his Mistresse, as if he were halfe doubtfull of her suspition, made offer of guiding her backe to the place, from whence she had before bene stolne, where
she found her company still staying, as not daring to stirre thence, to let the King know his daughters ill fortune; but when they saw her returne, and in the company of so worthy a Knight, they grew resolved, that no violence had bene done unto her.

The Princesse sharply rebuked her women, for leaving her so basely as they had done, gave charge to one of them (because she would not seeme altogether negligent and discourteous) that she being gone thence, she should not faile to thanke Ocharus, for the honest and faithfull service he had done unto her, which she would continually remem-ber, and recompence as it lay in her power. Nevertheless, she advised him withall, not to hope of any more advantage thereby, then reason should require. For, if it were the will of the Gods, that she should be his wife, neither she or any other could let or hinder it: but if her destiny reserved her for another, all his services would availe to no purpose, but rather to make her the more rigorous towards him.

This gracious answer, thus given him by her Gentlewoman, although it gave some small contentment to the poore languishing lover, yet he saw no assured signe whereon to settle his resolve, but his hopes vanished away in smoake, as fast as opinion bred them in his braine. And gladly he would have given over all further amorous solicitings, but by some private persuasions of her message sent him, which in time might so advance his services done for her sake, as would derive far greater favours from her. Whereupon, he omitted no time or place, but as occasion gave him any gracious permission, still plied her memorie, with his manly rescuing her from the ravisher, sufficient to plead his merit to her Father, and that (in equity) she ought to be his wife, by right both of Honour and Armes; no man being able to deserve her, as he had done.

So long he pursued her in this manner, that his speeches served hatefull to her, and devising how to be free from his daily importunities, at length, in the habite of a poore Chamber-maide, she secretly departed out of the Court, wandering into the solitary parts of the country; where she
THE THIRD DAY

entered into service, and had the charge of keeping Sheepe. It may seeme strange, that a Kings onely daughter should stray in such sort, and despising Courtly life, betake her selfe to paines and servility: but such was her resolution, and women delighting altogether in extremes, spare no attempts to compasse their owne wils. All the Court was in an uproare for the Ladies losse, the Father in no meane affliction, the Lovers well-neere beside their wits, and every one else most greevously tormented, that a Lady of such worth should so sodainly be gone, and all pursuit made after her, gaine no knowledge of her.

In this high tide of sorrow and disaster, what shall we say of the gentle Lord Ocharus? What judgement can sound the depth of his wofull extreamity? Fearing least some other theefe had now made a second stealth of his divine Goddesse, he must needs follow her againe, seeking quite throughout the world, never more returning backe to the Court, nor to the place of his owne abiding, untill he heard tidings of his Mistresse, or ended his dayes in the search of her. No Village, Towne, Cottage, Castle, or any place else of note or name, did he leave unsought, but diligently he searched for Serictha; striving to get knowledge, under what habit she lived thus concealed, but all his labour was to no effect: which made him leave the places so much frequented, and visite the solitary desert shades, entering into all Caves and rusticke habitations, whereon he could fasten his eye, to seake for the lost Treasure of his soule.

On a day, as he wandred along in a spacious valley, seated betweene two pleasant hilles, taking delight to heare the gentle murmure of the rivers, running by the sides of two neighbouring rockes, planted with all kinde of trees, and very thickely spread with mosse: he espied a flocke of Sheepe feeding on the grasse, and not farre off from them sate a Maide spinning on her Distaffe; who having got a sight of him, presently covered her face with a veile. Love, who sate as Sentinell both in the heart and eye of the gentle Norwegian Lord, as quickly discovered the subtilty of the faire Shephearddesse, enstructing the soule of Ocharus,
THE DECAMERON

NOVELL X

that thus she hid her face, as coveting not to be knowne: whereupon he gathered, that doubtlesse this was shee, for whom he hadde sought with such tedious travaile, and therefore going directly unto her, thus hee spake.

Gentle Princesse; wherefore do you thus hide your selfe from me? Why do you haunt these retreats and desolate abodes, having power to commaund over infinite men, that cannot live but by your presence? What hath moved you Madam, to flye from company, to dwell among desert Rockes, and serve as a slave, to such as are no way worthy of your service? Why do you forsake a potent King, whose onely daughter and hope you are; leaving your countrey and royall traine of Ladies, and so farre abasing your selfe, to live in the dejected state of a servant, and to some rusticke clowne or peazant? What reason have you, to despise so many worthy Lords, that dearely love and honor you, but (above them all) your poore slave Ocharus, who hath made no spare of his owne life for the safety of yours, and also for the defence of your honor? Royall maid, I am the same man that delivered you from the villaine, who would have violated your faire chastity; and since then, have not spared any paine or travell in your search: for whose losse, King Siwalde is in extreme anguish, the Danes in mourning habites, and Ocharus even at the doore of death, being no way able to endure your absence.

Are you of the minde, worthy Madam, that I have not hitherto deserved so much as one good looke or glance of your eye, in recompence of so many good and loyall services? If Alas! I am neither ravisher, nor demander of any unjust requests, or else incivill in my motions: I may merit one regard of my Mistresse, I require onely so silly a favour, that her eyes may pay me the wages for all which I have hitherto done in her service. What would you do Madam, if I were an importunate solicitor, and requested farre greater matters of you, in just recompence of my labours? I do not desire, that you should embrace me. I am not so bold, as to request a kisse of Sericthaes, more then immortall lips. Nor doe I covet, that she should any otherwise
THE THIRD DAY

entreat me, then with such severity as beseemeth so great a Princesse. I aske no more, but onely to elevate your chaste eyes, and grace me with one little looke, as being the man, who for his vertue and loyall affecction, hath deserved more then that favour, yea, a much greater and excellent recompence. Can you then be so cruell, as to denie me so small a thing, without regard of the maine debt, wherein you stand engaged to your Ocharus?

The Princesse perceiving that it availed nothing to conceale her selfe, being by him so apparrantly discovered; began now to speake (which she had never done before, either to him, or any other of her amorous suters) answerung him in this manner. Lord Ocharus, it might suffice you, that your importunity made me forsake my Fathers Court, and causeth me to live in this abased condition, which I purpose to prosecute all my life time; or so long (at the least) as you, and such as you are, pursue me so fondly as you have presumed to do. For I am resolved, never to favour you any otherwise, then hitherto I have done; desiring you therefore, that Serictha wanting an Interpreter to tell you her will, you would now receive sooner her owne mouth, determining soone to dye, then alter a jot of her intended purpose.

Ocharus hearing this unwelcome answere, was even upon the point to have slaine himselfe: but yet, not to lose the name of a valiant man, or to be thought of an effeminate or cowardly spirite, that a Woman should force him to an acte, so farre unfitting for a man of his ranke; he tooke his leave of her, solemnly promising, not to forget her further pursue but at all times to obey her so long as he lived, although her commaund was very hard for him to endure. So hee departed thence, not unto the Court, she being not there, that had the power to enjoyne his presence: but home to his owne house, where he was no sooner arrived, but he began to waxe wearie of his former folly: accusing himselfe of great indiscretion, for spending so much time in vaine; and in her service, who utterly despised him, and all his endeavours which he undertooke. He began to accuse
her of great ingratitude, laying over-much respect uppon her vertue, to have no feeling at all of his loyall sufferings; but meerely made a mockery of his martyrdome. Heere-uppon, he concluded to give over all further affection, to languish no longer for her sake, that hated him and all his actions.

While he continued in these melancholly passions, the Princesse, who all this while had persisted in such strict severity, as astonished the courages of her stoutest servants; considering (more deliberately) on the sincere affection of Ocharus, and that vertue onely made him the friend to her modesty, and not wanton or lascivious appetite; she felt a willing readinesse in her soule, to gratifie him in some worthy manner, and to recompence some part of his travailes. Which to effect, she resolved to follow him (in some counter-feite habite) even to the place of his owne abiding, to try, if easily he could take knowledge of her, whom so lately he saw in the garments of a Shepheardesse. Being thus minded, shee went to her Mistresse whom she served, and who had likewise scene Lord Ocharus (of whom she had perfect knowledge) when he conferred with the Shephearddesse, and enquiring the cause, why he resorted in that manner to her; Serictha returned her this answer.

Mistresse, I make no doubt, but you will be somewhat amazed, and (perhaps) can hardly credit which you heare, that she who now serveth you in the poore degree of Shepheardesse, is the onely daughter to Siwalde King of the Danes: for whose love, so many great Lords have continually laboured; and that I onely attracted hither Ocharus the Noble Sonne of valiant Hebonius, to wander in these solitary deserts, to finde out her that fled from him, and helde him in as high disdaine, as I did all the rest of his fellow-rivals. But if my words may not heerein sufficiently assure you, I would advise you to send where Ocharus dwelleth, and there make further enquiry of him, to the end that you may not imagine me a lyar. If my speeches do otherwise prevaile with you, and you remaine assured, that I am she, whom your Noble neighbour so deerely affecteth,
THE THIRD DAY

albeit I never made any account at all of him: then I do
earnestly intreat you, so much to stand my friend, as to
provide some convenient means for me, whereby I may
passe unknowne to the Castle of Ocharus, to revenge my
selfe on his civill honesty, and smile at him hereafter, if he
prove not so cleerely sighted, as to know her being so neere
him, whom he vaunteth to love above all women else.

The good Country - woman hearing these words, and
perceyving that she had the Princesse in her house, of whose
speeches she made not any doubt, in regard of her stout
countenance, gravity, and faire demeanor, began to relish
something in her minde, farre differing from matter of
common understanding, and therefore roundly replyed in
this kind of language.

Madam (for servant I may no longer call you) I make no
question to the contrary, but that you are derived of high
birth; having observed your behaviour, and womanly
carriage. And so much the more I remaine assured thereof,
having scene such great honor done unto you, by the Noble
Lord, and worthy Warriour Ocharus: wherefore, it lieth
not in my power, to impeach your desseignes, much lesse to
talke of your longer service, because you are the Princesse
Serictha, whom I am to performe all humble dutie unto, as
being one of your meanest subjects. And although you
were not shee, yet would I not presume any way to offend
you, in regard of the true and vertuous love, which that
good Knight Ocharus seemeth to beare you. If my company
be needfull for you, I beseech you to accept it: if not, take
whatsoever is mine, which may any way sted you; for, to make
you passe unknowne, I can and will provide sufficiently, even
to your owne contentment, and in such strange manner, as
Ocharus (were he never so cleerely sighted) shalbe deceived,
you being attired in those fashion garments, which here in
these parts are usually worne.

Serictha being wonderously joyfull at her answere, suffred
her to paint, or rather soile her faire face, with the juce of
divers hearbes and rootes, and cloathed her in such an habite
as those women use to weare that live in the mountaines of
Norway, upon the sea-coast fronting Great-Britaine. Being thus disguised, confidently she went, to beguile the eye of her dearest friend, and so to returne backe againe from him, having afforded him such a secret favour, in requitall of his honourable services; delivering her out of so great a danger, and comming to visite her in so solitarie a life. Nor would she have the womans company any further, then till she came within the sight of Ocharus his Castle; where when shee was arrived (he being then absent) the mother unto the Noble Gentleman, gave her courteous welcome; and, notwithstanding her grosse and homely outward appearance, yet she collected by her countenance, that there was a matter of much more worth in her, then to be a woman of base breeding.

When Ocharus was returned home, he received advertisement by his Mother, concerning the arrivall of this stranger, when as sodainely his soule halfe persuaded him, of some kinde courtesie to proceede from his sweet rebell, pretending now some feigned excuse, in recompence of all his travailes, and passed honest offices. Observing all her actions and gestures, her wonted rigour never bending one jot, or gave way to her eye to looke upon any man; he grew the better assured, that she was the daughter to King Siwalde. Yet feigning to take no knowledge thereof he bethought himselfe of a quient policy, whereby to make triall, whether secret kindnesse had conducted this Lady thither, or no, to conclude his torments, and give a finall end to his greevous afflictions.

Upon a watch-word given to his Mother, he pretended, and so caused it to be noised through the house, that he was to marry a very honorable Lady; which the constant and chaste maide verily beleved; and therefore gave the more diligent attendance (as a new-come servant) to see all things in due decency, as no one could expresse her selfe more ready, because she esteemed him above all other men. Yet such was the obstinate opinion she conceived of her owne precisenesse, as she would rather suffer all the flames of love, then expresse the least shew of desire to any man living. Nevertheless, she was inwardly offended, that any
other should have the honour, to make her vaunt of enjoying Ocharus; whom (indeede) she coveted, and thought him only worthy in her heart, to be Son in law to the King of Denmarke.

Now, as the Mother was very seriously busied in preparing the Castle, for receiving the pretended Bride; she employed her new Mayde (Serictha I meane) as busily as any of the rest. In the meane while, Ocharus was laid upon a bed, well noting all her carriage and behaviour, she having a lighted Candle in her hand, without any Candlesticke to hold it in. As all the servants (both men and maids) were running hastily from place to place, to cary such occasions as they were commanded, the Candle was consumed so neere to Sericthaes fingers, that it burned her hand. She, not to faile a jote in her height of mind, and to declare that her courage was invincible; was so farre off from casting away the small snuffe which offended her, that she rather graspt it the more strongly, even to the enflaming of her owne flesh, which gave light to the rest about their businesse. A matter (almost) as marvellous, as the act of the noble Romane, who gave his hand to be burned, in presence of the Tuscane King, that had besiedged Rome. Thus this Lady would needs make it apparantly knowne, by this generous act of hers, that her heart could not be enflamed or conquered, by all the fires of concupiscence, in suffering so stoutly and courageously, the burning of this materiall fire.

Ocharus, who (as we have already saide) observed every thing that Serictha did; perceiving that she spake not one word, albeit her hand burned in such fierce maner, was much astonished at her sprightly mind. And as he was about to advise her, to hurle away the fire so much offending her; Curiositie (meerely naturall unto Woman) made the Lady lift uppe her eyes, to see (by stealth) whether her friend had noted her invincible constancy, or no. Heereby Ocharus won the honour of his long expected victory; and leaping from off the bed, hee ranne to embrace her, not with any such feare as he had formerly used, in not daring so much...
as to touch her; but boldly now clasping his armes about her, he said. At this instant Madam, the King your Fathers decree is fully accomplished, for I am the first man that ever lookt you in the face, and you are onely mine, without making any longer resistance. You are the Princely Lady and wife, by me so constantly loved and desired, whom I have followed with such painefull travels, exposing my life to infinite perils in your service: you have seene and lookt on him; who never craved any thing of you, but onely this favour, whereof you cannot bereave me againe, because the Gods themselves, at such time as I least expected it, have bestowne it on me, as my deserved recompence, and worthy reward.

In the delivery of these words, he kissed and embraced her a thousand times, she not using any great resistance against him, but onely as somewhat offended with her selfe, either for being so rash in looking on him, or else for delaying his due merit so long; or rather, because with her good will she had falne into the transgression. She declared no violent or contending motion, as loath to continue so long in his armes; but rather evident signes of hearty contentment, yet in very bashfulfull and modest manner, willing enough to accept his loving kindnesse, yet not wandring from her wonted chaste carriage. He being favourably excused, for the outward expression of his amorous behaviour to her, and certified withall, that since the time freeing her from the wretch, who sought the violating of her chastity, she had entirely respected him, (albeit, to shun suspition of lightnesse, and to win more assurance, of what she credited sufficiently already, she continued her stiffe opinion against him) yet alwayes this resolution was set downe in her soule, never (with her will) to have any other Husband but Ocharus, who (above all other) had best deserved her, by his generosity, vertue, manly courage, and valiancy; whereof he might the better assure himselfe, because (of her owne voluntary disposition) she followed to find him out, not for any other occasion, but to revenge her selfe (by this honest Office) for all that
he had done or undertaken, to winne the grace and love of the King of Denmarkes Daughter, to whom he presented such dutifull service.

Ocharus, who would not loose this happinesse, to be made King of all the Northerne Illands, with more then a thankful heart, accepted all her gracious excuses. And being desirous to waste no longer time in vaine, lest Fortune should raise some new stratagem against him, to dispossesse him of so faire a felicity; left off his counterfet intended marriage, and effected this in good earnest, and was wedded to his most esteemed Serictha. Not long had these lovers lived in the lawfull and sacred rites of marriage, but King Siwalde was advertised, that his Daughter had given her consent to Ocharus, and received him as her noble Husband. The party was not a jot displeasing to him, he thought him to be a worthy Son in Law, and the condition did sufficiently excuse the match; onely herein lay the error and offence, that the marriage was sollemnized without his knowledge and consent, he being not called thereto, or so much as acquainting him therewith, which made him condemne Ocharus of over-bold arrogancy, he being such a great and powerfull King, to be so lightly respected by his Subject, and especially in the marriage of his Daughter.

But Serictha, who was now metamorphosed from a maide to a wife, and had lyen a few nights by the side of a Souldiour, was become much more valiant and adventurous then she was before. She tooke the matter in hand, went to her Father, who welcommed her most lovingly, and so pleasing were her speeches, carried with such wit and womanly discretion, that nothing wanted to approve what she had done. Matters which he had never knowne, or so much as heard of, were now openly revealed, how Ocharus had delivered her from the ravisher, what worthy respect he then used towards her, and what honour he extended to her in the deserts, where she tended her flocke as a Shepheardes, with many other honourable actions beside: that the Kings anger became mildly qualified, and so farre he entered into affection, that he would not do any thing thence-
forward, without the counsell and advise of his Sonne in Law, whom so highly he esteemed, and liked so respectively of him, and his race; that his Queene dying, he married with the Sister to Ocharus, going hand in hand with the gentle and modest Princesse Serictha.

This Novell of Dioneus, was commended by all the company, and so much the rather, because it was free from all folly and obsconsesse. And the Queene perceiving, that as the Tale was ended, so her dignity must now be expired: she tooke the Crowne of Laurell from off her head, and graciously placed it on the head of Philostratus, saying; The worthy Discourse of Dioneus, being out of his wonted wanton element, causeth me (at the resignation of mine Authority) to make chiose of him as our next Commander, who is best able to order and enstruct us all; and so I yeeld both my place and honour to Philostratus, I hope with the good liking of all our assistants: as plainly appeareth by their instant carriage towards him, with all their heartiest love and sufferages.

Whereupon Philostratus, beginning to consider on the charge committed to his care, called the Master of the houshold, to know in what estate all matters were, because where any defect appeared, every thing might be the sooner remedied, for the better satisfaction of the company, during the time of his authority. Then returning backe to the assembly, thus he began. Lovely Ladies, I would have you to know, that since the time of ability in me, to distinguish betweene good and evill, I have alwayes bene subject (perhaps by the meanes of some beauty heere among us) to the proud and imperious dominion of love, with expression of all duty, humility, and most intimate desire to please: yet all hath prooved to no purpose, but still I have bin rejected for some other, whereby my condition hath falne from ill to worse, and so still it is likely, even to the houre of my death. In which respect, it best pleaseth me, that our conferences to morrow, shall extend to no other argument, but only such cases as are most conformable to my calamity, namely of such, whose love hath had unhappy
THE THIRD DAY

ending, because I await no other issue of mine; nor willingly
would I be called by any other name, but only, the miserable
and unfortunate Lover.

Having thus spoken, he arose again; granting leave to
the rest, to recreate themselves till supper time. The
Garden was very faire and spacious, affording large limits
for their several walkes; the Sun being already so low
descended, that it could not be offensive to any one, the
Connies, Kids, and young Hindes skipping every where
about them, to their no meane pleasure and contentment,
Dioneus and Fiammetta, sate singing together, of Messire
Guiglielmo, and the Lady of Vertue. Philomena and
Pamphilus playing at the Chesse, all sporting themselves as
best they pleased. But the houre of Supper being come,
and the Tables covered about the faire fountaine, they sate
downe and spt in most loving manner. Then Philostratus,
not to swerve from the course which had beene observed by
the Queens before him, so soone as the Tables were taken
away, gave commaund, that Madam Lauretta should beginne
the dance, and likewise to sing a Song. My gracious Lord
(quoth she) I can skill of no other Songs, but onely a peece
of mine owne, which I have already learned by heart, and
may well beseeme this assembly: if you please to allow of
that, I am ready to performe it with all obedience. Lady,
replyed the King, you your selfe being so faire and lovely,
so needs must be whatsoever commeth from you, therefore
let us heare such as you have. Madam Lauretta, giving
enstruction to the Chorus prepared, and began in this
manner.

THE SONG

No soule so comfortlesse,
Hath more cause to expresse,
Like woe and heavinesse,
   As I poore amorous Maide.

He that did forme the Heavens and every Starre,
   Made me as best him pleased,
   Lovely and gracious, no Element at jarre,
NOVELL
X

THE DECAMERON

Or else in gentle breasts to moove sterne Warre,
But to have strifes appeased
Where Beauties eye should make the deepest scarre.
And yet when all things are confest,
Never was any soule distrest,
Like my poore amorous Maide.
No soule so comfortlesse, etc.

There was a time, when once I was held deare,
Blest were those happy dayes:
Numberlesse Love suites whispred in mine eare,
All of faire hope, but none of desperate feare;
And all sung Beauties praise.
Why should blacke cloudes obscure so bright a cleare?
And why should others swimme in joy,
And no heart drowned in annoy,
Like mine poore amorous Maide?
No soule so comfortlesse, etc.

Well may I curse that sad and dismall day,
When in unkinde exchange;
Another Beauty did my hopes betray,
And stole my dearest Love from me away:
Which I thought very strange,
Considering vowes were past, and what else may
Assure a loyall Maidens trust.
Never was Lover so unjust,
Like mine poore amorous Maide.
No soule so comfortlesse, etc.

Come then kinde Death, and finish all my woes,
Thy helpe is now the best.
Come lovely Nymphes, lend hands mine eyes to close,
And let him wander wheresoere he goes,
Vaunting of mine unrest;
Beguiling others by his treacherous showes.
Grave on my Monument,
No true love was worse spent,
Then mine poore amorous Maide.
No soule so comfortlesse, etc.

So did Madam Lauretta finish her Song, which being
well observed of them all, was understood by some in
130
divers kinds: some alluding it one way, and others according to their owne apprehensions, but all consenting that both it was an excellent Ditty, well devised, and most sweetly sung. Afterward, lighted Torches being brought, because the Stars had already richly spangled all the heavens, and the fit houre of rest approaching: the King commanded them all to their Chambers, where we meane to leave them untill the next morning.

THE END OF THE THIRD DAY
THE DECAMERON

THE FOURTH DAY

Wherein all the severall Discourses, are under the Government of Honourable Philostratus: And concerning such persons, whose Loves have had successelesse ending.

THE INDUCTION UNTO THE ENSUING NOVELLES

Most worthy Ladies, I have alwayes heard, as well by the sayings of the judicious, as also by mine owne observation and reading, that the impetuous and violent windes of envy, do sildome blow turbulent, but on the highest Towers and tops of the trees most eminently advanced. Yet (in mine opinion) I have found my selfe much deceived; because, by striving with my very uttermost endeavour, to shunne the outrage of those implacable winds; I have laboured to go, not onely by plaine and even pathes but likewise through the deepest vallies. As very easily may be seen and observed in the reading of these few small Novels, which I have written not only in our vulgar Florentine prose, without any ambitious title: but also in a most humble stile, so low and gentle as possibly I could. And although I have bene rudely shaken, yea, almost halfe unrooted, by the extreame agitation of
THE FOURTH DAY

those blustering winds, and torne in pieces by that base back-biter, Envy: yet have I not (for all that) discontinued, or broken any part of mine intended enterprize. Wherefore, I can sufficiently witnesse (by mine owne comprehension) the saying so much observed by the wise, to be most true: That nothing is without Envy in this world, but misery onely.

Among variety of opinions, faire Ladies; some, seeing these Novelties, spared not to say; that I have bene over-pleasing to you, and wandered too farre from mine owne respect, imbasing my credit and repute, by delighting my selfe too curiously, for the fitting of your humours, and have extolled your worth too much, with addition of worse speeches, then I meane to utter. Others, seeming to expresse more maturity of judgment, have likewise said, That it was very unsuteable for my yeares, to meddle with womens wanton pleasures, or contend to delight you by the very least of my labors. Many more, making shew of affecting my good fame and esteeme, say; I had done much more wisely, to have kept me with the Muses at Parnassus, then to confound my studies with such effeminate follies. Some other beside, speaking more despightfully then discreetly, said; I had declared more humanity, in seeking meanes for mine owne maintenance, and wherewith to support my continuall necessities, then to glut the world with gulleries, and feede my hopes with nothing but winde. And others, to calumniate my travailes, would make you beleive, that such matters as I have spoken of, are meerely disguised by me, and figured in a quite contrary nature, quite from the course as they are related. Whereby you may perceive (vertuous Ladies) how while I labour in your service, I am agitated and molested with these blusterings, and bitten even to the bare bones, by the sharpe and venomous teeth of envy; all which (as heaven best knoweth) I gladly endure, and with good courage.

Now, albeit it belongeth onely to you, to defend me in this desperate extremity; yet, notwithstanding all their utmost malice, I will make no spare of my best abilities, and,
THE DECAMERON

THE IN-
DUCTION

without answering them any otherwise then is fitting, will quietly keepe their slanders from mine eares, with some sleight reply, yet not deserving to be dreamt on. For I apparently perceive, that (having not already attained to the third part of my pains) they are growne to so great a number, and presume very farre uppon my patience: they may encrease, except they be repulsed in the beginning, to such an infinity before I can reach to the end, as with their very least paines taking, they will sinke me to the bottom-lesse depth, if your sacred forces (which are great indeede) may not serve for me in their resistance. But before I come to answer any one of them, I will relate a Tale in mine owne favour; yet not a whole Tale, because it shall not appeare, that I purpose to mingle mine, among those which are to proceed from a company so commendable. Onely I will report a parcell thereof, to the end, that what remaineth untold, may sufficiently expresse, it is not to be numbred among the rest to come.

By way then of familiar discourse, and speaking to my malicious detractors, I say, that a long while since, there lived in our City, a Citizen who was named Philippo Balduccio, a man but of meane condition, yet very wealthy, well qualified, and expert in many things appertaining unto his calling. He had a wife whom he loved most entirely, as she did him, leading together a sweet and peaceable life, studying on nothing more, then how to please each other mutually. It came to passe, that as all flesh must, the good woman left this wretched life for a better, leaving one onely Sonne to her husband, about the age of two yeares. The husband remained so disconsolate for the losse of his kinde Wife, as no man possibly could be more sorrowfull, because he had lost the onely jewell of his joy. And being thus divided from the company which he most esteemed: he determined also to separate himselfe from the world, addicting all his endeavours to the service of God, and applying his yong Sonne likewise, to the same holy exercises. Having given away all his goods for Gods sake, he departed to the Mountaine Asinaio, where he made him
THE FOURTH DAY

a small Cell, and lived there with his little Sonne, onely upon charitable almes, in abstinence and prayer, forbearing to speake of any worldly occasions, or letting the Lad see any vaine sight: but conferred with him continually, on the glories of eternall life, of God, and his Saints, and teaching him nothing else but devout prayers, leading this kinde of life for many yeeres together, not permitting him ever to goe forth of his Cell, or shewing him any other but himselfe.

The good old man used divers times to goe to Florence, where having received (according to his opportunities) the almes of divers well disposed people, he returned backe againe to his hermitage. It fortuned, that the boy being now about eighteene yeeres olde, and his Father growne very aged; he demanded of him one day, whether he went? Wherein the old man truly resolved him: whereupon, the youth thus spake unto him. Father, you are now growne very aged, and hardly can endure such painfull travell: why do you not let me go to Florence, that by making me knowne to your well disposed friends, such as are devoutly addicted both to God, and you; I, who am young, and better able to endure travaile then you are, may go thither to supply our necessities, and you take your ease in the mean while? The aged man, perceiving the great growth of his Sonne, and thinking him to be so well instructed in Gods service, as no worldly vanities could easily allure him from it; did not dislike the Lads honest motion, but when he went next to Florence, tooke him thither along with him.

When he was there, and had seene the goodly Palaces, Houses, and Churches, with all other sights to be seene in so populous a City: he began greatly to wonder at them, as one that had never seene them before, at least within the compasse of his remembrance; demanding many things of his Father, both what they were, and how they were named: wherein the old man still resolved him. The answers seemed to content him highly, and caused him to proceede on in further questions, according still as they
found fresh occasions: till at the last, they met with a
troope of very beautifull women, going on in seemely
manner together, as returning backe from a Wedding. No
sooner did the youth behold them, but he demanded of his
Father, what things they were; wherto the olde man
replied thus. Sonne, cast downe thy lookes unto the
ground, and do not seeme to see them at all, because they
are bad things to behold. Bad things Father? answered
the Lad. How do you call them? The good olde man,
not to quicken any concupisciable appetite in the young
boy, or any inclinable desire to ought but goodnesse; would
not terme them by their proper name of Women, but told
him that they were called young Gozlings.

Heere grew a matter of no meane mervaile, that he who
had never seene any women before now; appeared not to
respect the faire Churches, Palaces, goodly Houses, Golde,
Silver, or any thing else which he had seene; but, as fixing
his affection onely upon this sight, sodainly saide to the
old man. Good Father, do so much for me, as to let me
have one of these Gozlings. Alas Sonne (replied the
Father) hold thy peace I pray thee, and do not desire any
such naughtie thing. Then by way of demand, he thus
proceeded, saying. Father, are these naughtie things made
of themselves? Yes Sonne, answered the old man. I know
not Father (quoth the Lad) what you meane by naughti-
nesse, nor why these goodly things should be so badly
termed; but in my judgement, I have not seene any thing
so faire and pleasing in mine eye, as these are, who excell
those painted Angels, which here in the Churches you have
shewne me. And therefore Father, if ever you love me,
or have any care of me, let me have one of these Gozlings
home to our Cell, where we can make meanes sufficient for
her feeding. I will not (said the Father) be so much thine
enemy, because neither thou, or I, can rightly skill of
their feeding. Perceiving presently, that Nature had farre
greater power then his Sonnes capacity and understanding;
which made him repent, for fondly bringing his Sonne to
Florence.
THE FOURTH DAY

Having gone so farre in this fragment of a Tale, I am content to pause here, and will returne againe to them of whom I spake before; I meane my envious depravers; such as have saide (faire Ladies) that I am double blame-worthy, in seeking to please you, and that you are also over-pleasing to me; which freely I confesse before all the world, that you are singularly pleasing to me, and I have stroven how to please you effectually. I would demand of them (if they seeme so much a mazed hereat,) considering, I never knew what belonged to true love kisses, amorous embraces, and their delectuable fruition, so often received from your graces; but onely that I have yet seene, and do dayly behold, your commendable conditions, admired beauties, noble adornments by nature, and (above all the rest) your womenly and honest conversation. If he that was nourished, bred, and educated, on a savage solitary Mountaine, within the confines of a poore small Cell, having no other company then his Father: If such a one, I say, upon the very first sight of your sexe, could so constantly confesse, that women were onely worthy of affection, and the object which (above all things else) he most desired; why should these contumelious spirits so murmure against me, teare my credite with their teeth, and wound my reputation to the death, because your vertues are pleasing to me, and I endeavour likewise to please you with my utmost paines? Never had the auspicious heavens allowed me life, but onely to love you; and from my very infancie, mine intentions have alwayes bene that way bent: feeling what vertue flowed from your faire eyes, understanding the mellifluous accents of your speech, whereto the enkindled flames of your sighes gave no meane grace. But remembirng especially, that nothing could so please an Hermite, as your divine perfections, an unnurtured Lad, without understanding, and little differing from a meere brutish beast: undoubtedly, whosoever loveth not women, and desireth to be affected of them againe: may well be ranked among these women-haters, speaking out of cankred spleene, and utterly ignorant of the sacred power (as also the vertue) of naturall affection,
Concerning them that touch me with mine age; Doe not they know, that although Leeks have white heads, yet the blades of them are alwaies greene? But referring them to their flouts and taunts, I answere, that I shall never hold it any disparagement to me, so long as my life endureth, to delight my selfe with those exercises, which Guido Cavalconti, and Dante Alighieri, already aged, as also Messer Cino de Pistoia, older then either of them both, held it to be their chiepest honour. And were it not a wandering too farre from our present argument, I would alledge Histories to approve my words, full of very ancient and famous men, who in the ripest maturity of all their time, were carefully studious for the contenting of women, albeit these cock-braines neither know the way how to do it, nor are so wise as to leerne it.

Now, for my dwelling at Parnassus with the Muses, I confesse their counsell to be very good: but we cannot alwayes continue with them, nor they with us. And yet nevertheless, when any man departeth from them, they delighting themselves, to see such things as may be thought like them, do not therein deserve to be blamed. We finde it recorded, that the Muses were women, and albeit women cannot equall the performance of the Muses; yet in their very prime aspect, they have a lively resemblance with the Muses: so that, if women were pleasing for nothing else, yet they ought to be generall pleasing in that respect. Beside all this, women have bin the occasion of my composing a thousand Verses, whereas the Muses never caused me to make so much as one. Verie true it is, that they gave me good assistance, and taught me how I should compose them, yea, and directed me in writing of these Novels. And how basely soever they judge of my studies, yet have the Muses never scorned to dwell with me, perhaps for the respective service, and honourable resemblance of those Ladies with themselves, whose vertues I have not spared to commend by them. Wherefore in the composing
THE FOURTH DAY

of these varieties, I have not strayed so farre from Parnassus, nor the Muses; as in their silly conjectures they imagine.

But what shall I say to them, who take so great compassion on my povertie, as they advise me to get some thing, whereon to make my living? Assuredly, I know not what to say in this case, except by due consideration made with my selfe, how they would answer me, if necessitie should drive me to crave kindnesse of them; questionlesse, they would then say: Goe, seeke comfort among thy fables and follies. Yet I would have them know, that poore Poets have always found more among their fables and fictions; then many rich men ever could do, by ransacking all their bags of treasure. Beside, many other might be spoken of, who made their age and times to flourish, meerely by their inventions and fables: whereas on the contrary, a great number of other busier braines, seeking to gaine more then would serve them to live on; have utterly runne upon their owne ruine, and overthowne themselves for ever.

What should I say more? To such men, as are either so suspicious of their owne charity, or of my necessitie, wh enseover it shall happen: I can answer (I thanke my God for it) with the Apostle; I know how to abound, and how to abate, yea, how to endure both prosperity and want; and therefore, let no man be more carefull of me, then I am of my selfe.

For them that are so inquisitive into my discourses, to have a further construction of them, then agrees with my meaning, or their owne good manners, taxing me with writing one thing, but intending another; I could wish, that their wisedome would extend so farre, as but to compare them with their originals, to finde them a jot discordant from my writing; and then I would freely confess, that they had some reason to reprehend me, and I should endeavour to make them amends. But untill they can touch me with any thing else, but words onely; I must let them wander in their owne giddy opinions, and follow the course projected to my selfe, saying of them, as they do of me.
Thus holding them all sufficiently answered for this time, I say (most worthy Ladies) that by heavens assistance and yours, whereunto I onely leane: I will proceede on, armed with patience; and turning my backe against these impetuous windes, let them breath till they burst, because I see nothing can harme me, but onely the venting of their malice. For the roughest blasts, do but raise the smallest dust from off the ground, driving it from one place to another; or, carrying it up to the aire, many times it falleth downe againe on mens heads, yea, upon the Crownes of Emperours and Kings, and sometimes on the highest Palaces and tops of Towers; from whence, if it chance to descend againe by contrary blasts, it can light no lower, then whence it came at the first. And therefore, if ever I strove to please you with my uttermost abilities in any thing, surely I must now contend to expresse it more then ever. For, I know right well, that no man can say with reason, except some such as my selfe, who love and honour you, that we do any otherwise then as nature hath commanded us; and to resist her lawes, requires a greater and more powerfull strength then ours: and the contenders against her supreame priviledges, have either laboured meerely in vaine, or else incurred their owne bane. Which strength, I freely confesse my selfe not to have, neither covet to be possessed of it in this case: but if I had it, I would rather lend it to some other, then any way to use it on mine owne behalfe. Wherefore, I would advise them that thus checke and controule me, to give over, and be silent; and if their cold humors cannot learne to love, let them live still in their frostie complexion, delighting themselves in their corrupted appetites: suffering me to enjoy mine owne, for the little while I have to live; and this is all the kindnesse I require of them.

But now it is time (bright beauties) to returne whence we parted, and to follow our former order begun, because it may seeme we have wandered too farre. By this time the Sun had chased the Starre-light from the heavens, and the shadie moisture from the ground, when Philostratus the
THE FOURTH DAY

King being risen, all the company arose likewise. When being come into the goodly Garden, they spent the time in varietie of sports, dining where they had sup't the night before. And after that the Sunne was at his highest, and they had refreshed their spirits with a little slumbering, they sate downe (according to custome) about the faire Fountaine. And then the King commanded Madam Fiammetta, that she should give beginning to the dayes Novels: when she, without any longer delaying, began in this gracious manner.

Tancrede, Prince of Salerne, caused the amorous friend of his daughter to bee slaine, and sent her his heart in a cup of Gold: which afterwards she steeped in an impoysoned water, and then drinking it, so dyed.

THE FIRST NOVELL

Wherein is declared the power of Love, and their cruility justly reprehended, who imagine to make the vigour thereof cease, by abusing or killing one of the Lovers.

Our King (most Noble and vertuous Ladies) hath this day given us a subject, very rough and stearne to discourse on, and so much the rather, if we consider, that we are come hither to be merry and pleasant, where sad Tragicall reports are no way suteable, especially, by reviving the teares of others, to bedew our owne cheekes withall. Nor can any such argument be spoken of, without moving compassion both in the reporters, and hearers. But (perhaps) it was his Highnesse pleasure, to moderate the delights which we have already
had. Or whatsoever else hath provoked him thereto, seeing it is not lawfull for me, to alter or contradict his appointment; I will recount an accident very pittifull, or rather most unfortinate, and well worthy to be graced with our teares.

Tancrede, Prince of Salerne (which City, before the Consulles of Rome held dominion in that part of Italy, stood free, and thence (perchance) tooke the moderne title of a Principality) was a very humane Lord, and of ingenious nature; if, in his elder yeeres, he had not soiled his hands in the blood of Lovers, especially one of them, being both neere and deere unto him. So it fortuned, that during the whole life time of this Prince, he had but one onely daughter (albeit it had beene much better, if he had had none at all) whom he so choisely loved and esteemed, as never was any childe more deere affected of a Father: and so farre extended his over-curious respect of her, as he would seldom admit her to be forth of his sight; neither would he suffer her to marry, although she had outstept (by divers yeeres) the age meete for marriage. Neverthelesse, at length, he matched her with the Sonne to the Duke of Capua, who lived no long while with her; but left her in a widowed estate, and then she returned home to her father againe.

This Lady, had all the most absolute perfections, both of favour and feature, as could be wished in any woman, young, queintly disposed, and of admirable understanding, more (perhappes) then was requisite in so weake a body. Continuing thus in Court with the King her Father, who loved her beyond all his future hopes; like a Lady of great and glorious magnificence, she lived in all delights and pleasure. She well perceiving, that her Father thus exceeding in his affection to her, had no minde at all of re-marrying her, and holding it most immodest in her, to solicit him with any such suite: concluded in her mindes private consultations, to make choise of some one especiall friend or favourite (if Fortune would prove so furtherous to her) whom she might acquaint secretly,
THE FOURTH DAY

with her sober, honest, and familiar purposes. Her Fathers Court being much frequented, with plentifull accesse of brave Gentlemen, and others of inferiour quality, as commonly the Courts of Kings and Princes are, whose carriage and demeanor she very heedfully observed. There was a young Gentleman among all the rest, a servant to her Father, and named Guiscardo, a man not derived from any great descent by blood, yet much more Noble by vertue and commandable behaviour, then appeared in any of the other, none pleased her opinion, like as he did; so that by often noting his parts and perfections, her affections being but a glowing sparke at the first, grew like a Bavin to take flame, yet kept so closely as possibly she could; as Ladies are warie enough in their love.

The young Gentleman, though poore, being neither blocke nor dullard, perceived what he made no outward shew of, and understood himselfe so sufficiently, that holding it no meane happinesse to be affected by her, he thought it very base and cowardly in him, if he should not expresse the like to her againe. So loving mutually (yet secretly) in this manner, and she coveting nothing more, then to have private conference with him, yet not daring to trust any one with so important a matter; at length she devised a new cunning stratageme, to compasse her longing desire, and acquaint him with her private purpose, which proved to be in this manner. She wrote a Letter, concerning what was the next day to be done, for their secret meeting together; and conveying it within the joynt of an hollow Cane, in jesting manner threw it to Guiscardo, saying; Let your man make use of this, instead of a paire of bellowes, when he meaneth to make fire in your Chamber. Guiscardo taking up the Cane, and considering with himselfe, that neither was it given, or the wordes thus spoken, but doubtlesse on some important occasion: went unto his lodging with the Cane, where viewing it respectively, he found it to be cleft, and opening it with his knife, found there the written Letter enclosed.
After he had reade it, and well considered on the service therein concerned; he was the most joyfull man of the world, and began to contrive his aptest meanes, for meeting with his gracious Mistresse, and according as she had given him direction. In a corner of the Kings Palace, it being seated on a rising hill, a cave had long beene made in the body of the same hill, which received no light into it, but by a small spiracle or vent-loope, made out ingeniously on the hills side. And because it had not beene a long time frequented, by the accesse of any body, that vent-light was over-growne with briars and bushes, which almost engirt it round about. No one could descend into this cave or vault, but only by a secret paire of staires, answering to a lower Chamber of the Palace, and very neere to the Princesse lodging, as being altogether at her command, by meanes of a strong barred and defensible doore, whereby to mount or descend at her pleasure. And both the cave it selfe, as also the degrees conducting downe into it, were now so quite worne out of memory (in regard it had not beene visited by any one in long time before) as no man remembred that there was any such thing.

But Love, from whose bright discerning cies, nothing can be so closely concealed, but at the length it commeth to light, had made this amorous Lady mindefull thereof, and because she would not be discovered in her intention, many dayes together, her soule became perplexed; by what meanes that strong doore might best be opened, before she could compasse to performe it. But after that she had found out the way, and gone downe her selfe alone into the cave; observing the loope-light and had made it commodious for her purpose, she gave knowledge thereof to Guiscardo, to have him devise an apt course for his descent, acquainting him truly with the height, and how farre it was distant from the ground within. After he had found the souspirall in the hills side, and given it a larger entrance for his safer passage; he provided a Ladder of cords, with steppes sufficient for his descending and ascending, as also
THE FOURTH DAY

a wearing sute made of leather, to keepe his skinne unscratched of the thornes, and to avoyde all suspition of his resorting thither. In this manner went he to the saide loope-hole the night following, and having fastened the one end of his corded ladder, to the strong stumpe of a tree being closely by it; by means of the saide ladder, he descended downe into the cave, and there attended the comming of his Lady.

She, on the morrow morning, pretending to her waiting woman, that she was scarsly well, and therefore would not be diseased the most part of that day; commanded them to leave her alone in her Chamber, and not to returne untill she called for them, locking the doore her selfe for better security. Then opened she the doore of the cave, and going downe the staires, found there her amorous friend Guiscardo, whom she saluting with a chaste and modest kisse; causing him to ascend up the stayres with her into her Chamber. This long desired, and now obtained meeting, caused the two deereely affected Lovers, in kinde discourse of amorous argument (without incivill or rude demeanor) to spend there the most part of that day, to their hearts joy and mutuall contentment. And having concluded on their often meeting there, in this cunning and concealed sort; Guiscardo went downe into the cave againe, the Princesse making the doore fast after him, and then went forth among her Women. So in the night season, Guiscardo ascended up againe by his Ladder of cords, and covering the loope-hole with brambles and bushes, returned (unseene of any) to his owne lodging: the cave being afterward guilty of their often meeting there in this manner.

But Fortune, who hath alwayes bin a fatall enemy to lovers stolne felicities, became envious of their thus secret meeting, and overthrew (in an instant) all their poore happinesse, by an accident most spightfull and malicious. The King had used divers dayes before, after dinner time, to resort all alone to his daughters Chamber, there conversing with her in most loving manner. One unhappy
day amongst the rest, when the Princesse, being named Ghismonda, was sporting in her private Garden among her Ladies, the King (at his wonted time) went to his daughters Chamber, being neither heard or seene by any. Nor would he have his daughter called from her pleasure, but finding the windowes fast shut, and the Curtaines close drawne about the bed; he sate downe in a chaire behind it, and leaning his head upon the bed, his body being covered with the curtaine, as if he hid himselfe purposely; he mused on so many matters, untill at last he fell fast asleepe.

It hath bin observed as an ancient Adage, that when disasters are ordained to any one, commonly they prove to be inevitable, as poore Ghismonda could witnesse too well. For while the King thus slept, she having (unluckily) appointed another meeting with Guiscardo, left hir Gentle-women in the Garden, and stealing softly into her Chamber, having made all fast and sure, for being descryed by any person: opened the doore to Guiscardo, who stood there ready on the staire-head, awaiting his entrance; and they sitting downe on the bed side (according as they were wont to do) began their ususall kinde of conference againe, with sighes and loving kisses mingled among them. It chanced that the King awaked, and both hearing and seeing this familiarity of Guiscardo with his Daughter, he became extreamly confounded with greefe thereat. Once he intended, to cry out for helpe, to have them both there apprehended; but he helde it a part of greater wisedome, to sit silent still, and (if he could) to keepe himselfe so closely concealed: to the end, that he might the more secretly, and with farre lesse disgrace to himselfe, performe what he had rashly intended to do.

The poore discovered Lovers, having ended their amorous interparlance, without suspition of the Kings being so neere in person, or any else, to betray their over-confident trust; Guiscardo descended againe into the Cave, and she leaving the Chamber, returned to her women in the Garden; all which Tancred too well observed, and in a rapture of
THE FOURTH DAY

fury, departed (unseen) into his owne lodging. The same night, about the house of menes first sleepe, and according as he had given order; Guiscardo was apprehended, even as he was comming forth of the loope-hole, and in his homely leather habite. Very closely was he brought before the King, whose heart was swolne so great with griefe, as hardly was he able to speake: notwithstanding, at the last he began thus. Guiscardo, the love and respect I have used towards thee, hath not deserved the shamefull wrong which thou hast requited me withall, and as I have seene with mine owne eyes this day. Whereeto Guiscardo could answer nothing else, but onely this: Alas my Lord! Love is able to do much more, then either you, or I. Whereupon, Tancrede commanded, that he should be secretly well guarded, in a neere adjoyning Chamber, and on the next day, Ghismonda having (as yet) heard nothing hereof, the Kings braine being infinitely busied and troubled, after dinner, and as he often had used to do: he went to his daughters Chamber, where calling for her, and shutting the doores closely to them, the teares trickling downe his aged white beard, thus he spake to her.

Ghismonda, I was once grounded in a setled perswasion, that I truely knew thy vertue, and honest integrity of life; and this beleefe could never have beene altrd in mee, by any sinister reports whatsoever, had not mine eyes seene, and mine cares heard the contrary. Nor did I so much as conceive a thought either of thine affection, or private conversing with any man, but onely he that was to be thy husband. But now, I my selfe being able to avouch thy folly, imagine what an heart-breake this will be to me, so long as life remaineth in this poore, weake, and aged body. Yet, if needes thou must have yeelded to this wanton weaknesse, I would thou hadst made choise of a man, answerable to thy birth and Nobility: whereas on the contrary, among so many worthy spirits as resort to my Court, thou likest best to converse with that silly young man Guiscardo, one of very meane and base descent,
THE DECAMERON

NOVELL I

and by me (even for Gods sake) from his very youngest yeares, brought up to this instant in my Court; wherein thou hast given me much affliction of minde, and so over-throwne my senses, as I cannot well imagine how I should deale with thee. For him, whom I have this night caused to be surprized, even as he came forth of your close contrived conveyance, and detaine as my prisoner, I have resolved how to proceed with him: but concerning thy selfe, mine oppressions are so many and violent, as I know not what to say of thee. One way, thou hast meerly murthered the unfeigned affection I bare thee, as never any father could expresse more to his childe: and then againe, thou hast kindled a most just indignation in me, by thine immodest and wilfull folly, and whereas Nature pleadeth pardon for the one, yet justice standeth up against the other, and urgeth cruell severity against thee: nevertheless, before I will determine upon any resolution, I come purposely first to heare thee speake, and what thou canst say for thy selfe, in a bad case, so desperate and dangerous.

Having thus spoken, he hung downe the head in his bosome, weeping as abundantly, as if he had beene a childe severely disciplinde. On the other side, Ghismonda hearing the speeches of her Father, and perceiving withall, that not onely her secret love was discovered, but also Guiscardo was in close prison, the matter which most of all did torment her; she fell into a very strange kinde of extasie, scorning teares, and entreating tearmes, such as feminine frailety are alwayes aptest unto: but rather, with height of courage, controuling feare or servile base-nesse, and declaring invincible fortitude in her very lookes, she concluded with her selfe, rather then to urge any humble perswasions, she would lay her life downe at the stake. For plainlye she perceived, that Guiscardo already was a dead man in Law, and death was likewise as welcome to her, rather then the deprivation of her Love; and therefore, not like a weeping woman, or as checkt by the offence committed, but careless of any harme happening to her: stoutely and
THE FOURTH DAY

courageously, not a tear appearing in her eye, or her soul any way to be perturbed, thus she spake to her Father.

Tancred, to deny what I have done, or to entreat any favour from you, is now no part of my disposition: for as the one can little availe me, so shall not the other any way advantage me. Moreover, I covet not that you should extend any clemency or kindness to me, but by my voluntary confession of the truth; do intend (first of all) to defend mine honour, with reasons sound, good, and substantial, and then virtuously pursue to full effect, the greatness of my mind and constant resolution. True it is, that I have loved, and still do, honourable Guiscard, purposing the like so long as I shall live, which will be but a small while: but if it be possible to continue the same affection after death, it is for ever vowed to him onely. Nor did mine owne womanish weaknesse so much thereto induce me, as the matchlesse virtues shining clearly in Guiscard, and the little respect you had of marrying me againe. Why royall Father, you cannot be ignorant, that you being composed of flesh and blood, have begotten a Daughter of the selfe same composition, and not made of stone or iron. Moreover, you ought to remember (although now you are farre stept in yeeres) what the Lawes of youth are, and with what difficulty they are to be contradicted. Considering withall, that albeit (during the vigour of your best time) you evermore were exercised in Armes; yet you should likewise understand, that negligence and idle delights, have mighty power, not onely in young people, but also in them of greatest yeares.

I being then made of flesh and blood, and so derived from your selfe; having had also so little benefit of life, that I am yet in the spring, and blooming time of my blood: by either of these reasons, I must needs be subject to naturall desires, wherein such knowledge as I have once already had, in the estate of my marriage, perhaps might move a further intelligence of the like delights, according to the better ability of strength, which exceed-
ing all capacity of resistance, induced a second motive to affection, answerable to my time and youthfull desires, and so (like a yong woman) I became amorous againe; yet did I strive, even with all my utmost might, and best vertuous faculties abiding in me, no way to disgrace either you or my selfe, as (in equall censure) yet have I not done. But Nature is above all humane power, and Love commanded by Nature, hath prevailed for Love, joyning with Fortune: in meere pitty and commiseration of my extreame wrong, I found them both most benigne and gracious, teaching mee a way secret enough, whereby I might reach the height of my desires, howsoever you became instructed, or (perhaps) found it out by accident; so it was, and I deny it not.

Nor did I make election of Guiscardo by chance, or rashly, as many women doe, but by deliberate counsell in my soule, and most mature advise; I chose him above all other, and having his honest harmelesse conversation, mutually we enjoyed our hearts contentment. Now it appeareth, that I have not offended but by love; in imitation of vulgar opinion, rather then truth: you seeke to reprove me bitterly, alleaging no other maine argument for your anger, but onely my not choosing a Gentleman, or one more worthy. Wherein it is most evident, that you do not so much checke my fault, as the ordination of Fortune, who many times advanceth men of meanest esteeme, and abaseth them of greater merit. But leaving this discourse, let us looke into the originall of things, wherein we are first to observe, that from one masse or lumpe of flesh, both we, and all other received our flesh, and one Creator hath created all things; yea, all creatures, equally in their forces and faculties, and equall likewise in their vertue: which vertue was the first that made distinction of birth and equality, in regard, that such as have the most liberall portion thereof, and performed actions thereto answerable, were thereby tearmed noble; all the rest remaining unnoble: now although contrary use did afterward hide and conceale this Law, yet
THE FOURTH DAY

was it not therefore banished from Nature or good manners. In which respect, whosoever did execute all his actions by vertue, declared himselfe openly to be noble; and he that tearmed him otherwise, it was an error in the miscaller, and not in the person so wrongfully called; as the very same priviledge is yet in full force among us at this day.

Cast an heedfull eye then (good Father) upon all your Gentlemen, and advisedly examine their vertues, conditions, and manner of behaviour. On the other side, observe those parts remaining in Guiscardo: and then if you will judge truly, and without affection, you will confesse him to be most Noble, and that all your Gentlemen (in respect of him) are but base Groomes and villaines. His vertues and excelling perfections, I never credited from the report or judgement of any person; but onely by your speeches, and mine owne eyes as true witnesses. Who did ever more commend Guiscardo, extolling all those singularities in him, most requisite to be in an honest vertuous man; then you your selfe have done? Nor neede you to be sorry, or ashamed of your good opinion concerning him: for if mine eyes have not deceived my judgement, you never gave him the least part of praise, but I have knowne much more in him, then ever your words were able to expresse: wherefore, if I have bee any way deceived, truly the deceit proceeded onely from you. How wil you then maintaine, that I have throwne my liking on a man of base condition? In troth (Sir) you cannot. Perhaps you will alledge, that he is but meane and poore; I confesse it, and surely it is to your shame, that you have not bestowne place of more preferment, on a man so honest and well deserving, and having bene so long a time your servant. Nevertheless poverty impayreth not any part of noble Nature, but wealth hurries it into horrible confusions. Many Kings and great Princes have heeretofore beene poore, when divers of them that have delved into the earth, and kept Flockes in the field, have beeene advanced to riches, and exceeded the other in wealth.
NOVELL

I

Now, as concerning your last doubt, which most of all affliceth you, namely, how you shall deale with me; boldly rid your braine of any such disturbance; for if you have resolved now in your extremity of yeres, to doe that which your younger dayes evermore despised, I meane, to become cruell; use your utmost cruelty against me: for I wil never intreat you to the contrary, because I am the sole occasion of this offence, if it doe deserve the name of an offence. And this I dare assure you, that if you deale not with me, as you have done already, or intend to Guiscardo, mine owne hands shall act as much: and therfore give over your teares to women; and if you purpose to be cruel, let him and me in death drinke both of one cup, at least if you imagine that we have deserved it.

The King knew well enough the high spirit of his Daughter, but yet (nevertheless) he did not beleve, that her words would prove actions, or she do as she said. And therefore parting from her, and without intent of using any cruelty to her, concluded, by quenching the heat of another to coole the fiery rage of her distemper, commanding two of his followers (who had the custody of Guiscardo) that without any rumour or noise at all, they should strangle him the night ensuing, and taking the heart forth of his body, to bring it to him, which they performed according to their charge. On the next day, the King called for a goodly standing cup of Gold, wherein he put the heart of Guiscardo, sending it by one of his most familiar servants to his Daughter, with command also to use these words to her. Thy Father hath sent thee this present, to comfort thee with that thing which most of all thou affectest, even as thou hast comforted him with that which he most hated.

Ghismonda, nothing altered from her cruell deliberation, after her Father was departed from her, caused certaine poisonous roots and hearbes to be brought her, which shee (by distillation) made a water of, to drinke sodainly, whenever any crosse accident should come from her Father;
THE FOURTH DAY

whereupon, when the Messenger from her Father had delivered her the present, and uttered the words as he was commaunded: shee tooke the Cup, and looking into it with a setled countenance, by sight of the heart, and effect of the message, she knew certainly, that was the heart of Guiscardo; then looking stearnely on the servant, thus she spake unto him. My honest friend, it is no more then right and justice, that so worthy a heart as this is, should have any worser grave then gold, wherein my Father hath dealt most wisely. So, lifting the heart up to her mouth, and sweetly kissing it, she proceeded thus. In all things, even till this instant, (being the utmost period of my life) I have evermore found my Fathers love most effectuall to me; but now it appeareth farre greater, then at any time heretofore: and therefore from my mouth, thou must deliver him the latest thankes that ever I shall give him, for sending me such an honourable present.

These words being ended, holding the Cup fast in her hand, and looking seriously upon the heart, she began againe in this manner. Thou sweete entertainer of all my dearest delights, accursed be his cruelty, that causeth me thus to see thee with my corporall eyes, it being sufficient enough for me, alwayes to behold thee with the sight of my soule. Thou hast runne thy race, and as Fortune ordained, so are thy dayes finished: for as all flesh hath an ending; so hast thou concluded, albeit too soone, and before thy due time. The travailes and miseries of this World, have now no more to meddle with thee, and thy very heaviest enemy hath bestowed such a grave on thee, as thy greatnesse in vertue worthily deserveth; now nothing else is wanting, wherewith to beautifie thy Funerall, but only her sighes and teares, that was so deare unto thee in thy life time. And because thou mightest the more freely enjoy them, see how my mercedesse Father (on his owne meere motion) hath sent thee to me; and truly I will bestow them frankly on thee, though once I had resolved, to die with drie eyes, and not shedding one teare, dreadlesse of their utmost malice towards me.
NOVELL I

And when I have given thee the due oblation of my teares, my soule, which sometime thou hast kept most carfully, shall come to make a sweet conjunction with thine: for in what company else can I travaile more contentedly, and to those unfrequented silent shades, but onely in thine? As yet I am sure it is present here, in this Cup sent me by my Father, as having a provident respect to the place, for possession of our equall and mutuall pleasures; because thy soule affecting mine so truly, cannot walke alone, without his deare companion.

Having thus finished her complaint, even as if her head had been converted into a well spring of water, so did teares abundantly flow from her faire eyes, kissing the heart of Guiscardo infinite times. All which while, her women standing by her, neither knew what heart it was, nor to what effect her speeches tended: but being moved to compassionate teares, they often demanded (albeit in vaine) the occasion of her sad complaining, comforting her to their utmost power. When she was not able to weepe any longer, wiping her eyes, and lifting up her head, without any signe of the least dismay, thus she spake to the heart. Deare heart, all my duty is performed to thee, and nothing now remaineth uneffect'd; but onely breathing my last, to let my ghost accompany thine.

Then calling for the glasse of water, which she had readily prepared the day before, and powring it upon the heart lying in the Cup, couragiously advancing it to her mouth, she dranke it up every drop; which being done, she lay downe upon her bed, holding her Lovers heart fast in her hand, and laying it so neere to her owne as she could. Now although her women knew not what water it was, yet when they had seene her to quaffe it off in that manner, they sent word to the King, who much suspecting what had happened, went in all haste to his Daughters Chamber, entring at the very instant, when she was laide upon her bed; beholding her in such passionate pangs, with teares streaming downe his reverend beard, he used many kinde words to comfort her: when boldly thus she
spake unto him. Father (quoth she) well may you spare these teares, because they are unfitting for you, and not any way desired by me; who but your selfe, hath seene any man to mourn for his owne wilfull offence. Neverthelesse, if but the least jot of that love do yet abide in you, whereof you have made such liberall profession to me; let me obtaine this my very last request, to wit, that seeing I might not privately enjoy the benefit of Guiscardoes love, and while he lived, let yet (in death) one publike grave containe both our bodies, that death may affoord us, what you so cruelly in life denied us.

Extremity of griefe and sorrow, with-held his tongue from returning any answer, and she perceiving her end approaching, held the heart still closer to her owne bare brest, saying; Here Fortune, receive two true hearts latest oblation; for, in this manner are we comming to thee. So closing her eyes, all sense forsooke her, life leaving her body breathlesse. Thus ended the haplesse love of Guiscardo, and Ghismonda, for whose sad disaster, when the King had mourned sufficiently, and repented fruitlesly; he caused both their bodies to be honourably embalmed, and buried in a most royall Monument; not without generall sorrow of the subjects of Salerne.
NOVELL II

Fryar Albert made a young Venetian Gentlewoman believe, that God Cupid was falne in love with her, and he resorted oftentimes unto her, in the disguise of the same God. Afterward, being frighted by the Gentlewomans kindred and friends, he cast himselfe out of her Chamber window, and was hidden in a poore mans House; on the day following, in the shape of a wilde or savage man, he was brought upon the Rialto of Saint Marke, and being there publikely knowne by the Brethren of his Order, he was committed to Prison.

THE SECOND NOVELL

Reprehending the lewd lives of dissembling hypocrites; and checking the arrogant pride of vaine-headed women.

THE Novell recounted by Madam Fiammetta, caused teares many times in the eyes of all the company; but it being finished, the King shewing a stearne countenance, saide; I should have much commended the kindnesse of fortune, if in the whole course of my life, I had tasted the least moity of that delight, which Guiscardo received by conversing with faire Ghismonda. Nor neede any of you to wonder thereat, or how it can be otherwise, because hourly I feel a thousand dying torments, without enjoying any hope of ease or pleasure: but referring my fortunes to their owne poore condition, it is my will, that Madam Pampinea proceed next in the argument of successesse love, according as Madam Fiam-
THE FOURTH DAY

metta hath already begun, to let fall more dew-drops on the fire of mine afflictions. Madam Pampinea perceiving what a taske was imposed on her, knew well (by her owne disposal) the inclination of the company, whereof shee was more respective then of the Kings command: wherefore, chusing rather to recreate their spirits, then to satisfie the Kings melancholy humour; she determined to relate a Tale of mirthfull matter, and yet to keepe within compasse of the purposed Argument.

It hath bene continually used as a common Proverbe; that a bad man taken and reputed to be honest and good, may commit many evils, yet neither credited, or suspected: which proverbe giveth me very ample matter to speake of, and yet not varying from our intention, concerning the hypocrisie of some religious persons, who having their garments long and large, their faces made artificially pale, their language meeke and humble to get mens goods from them; yet sowe, harsh and stearne enough, in checking and controuling other mens erreurs, as also in urging others to give, and themselves to take, without any other hope or meanes of salvation. Nor doe they endeavour like other men, to worke out their soules health with feare and trembling; but, even as if they were sole owners, Lords, and possessors of Paradice, will appoint to every dying person, place (there) of greater or lesser excellency, according as they thinke good, or as the legacies left by them are in quantity, whereby they not onely deceive themselves, but all such as give credit to their subtile persuasions. And were it lawfull for me, to make knowne no more then is meerely necessary; I could quickly disclose to simple credulous people, what craft lieth concealed under their holy habites: and I would wish, that their lies and deluding should speed with them, as they did with a Franciscane Friar, none of the younger Novices, but one of them of greatest reputation, and belonging to one of the best Monasteries in Venice. Which I am the rather desirous to report, to recreate your spirits, after your teares for the death of faire Ghismonda.
Sometime (Honourable Ladies) there lived in the City of Imola, a man of most lewd and wicked life; named, Bertho de la messa, whose shamelesse deeds were so well knowne to all the Citizens, and won such respect among them; as all his lies could not compass any beleefe, no, not when he delivered a matter of sound truth. Wherefore, perceiving that his lewdnesse allowed him no longer dwelling there; like a desperate adventurer, he transported himselfe thence to Venice, the receptacle of all foule sinne and abomination, intending there to exercise his wonted bad behaviour, and live as wickedly as ever he had done before. It came to passe, that some remorse of conscience tooke hold of him, for the former passages of his dissolute life, and he pretended to be surprized with very great devotion, becoming much more Catholike then any other man, taking on him the profession of a Franciscane Cordelier, and calling himselfe, Fryar Albert of Imola. 

In this habite and outward appearance, hee seemed to leade an austere and sanctimonious life, highly commending penance and abstinence, never eating flesh, or drinking wine, but when he was provided of both in a close corner. And before any person could take notice thereof, hee became (of a theefe) Ruffian, forswearer, and murtherer, as formerly he had beene a great Preacher; yet not abandoning the forenamed vices, when secretly he could put any of them in execution. Moreover, being made Priest, when he was celebrating Masse at the Altar, if he saw himselfe to be observed by any; he would most mournefullly reade the passion of our Saviour, as one whose teares cost him little, whensoever hee pleased to use them; so that, in a short while, by his preaching and teares, he fed the humours of the Venetians so pleasingly, that they made him executour (well-neere) of all their Testaments, yea, many chose him as depositary or Guardian of their monies; because he was both Confessour and Councellor, almost to all the men and women.

By this well seeing out-side of sanctity, the Wolfe became a Shepheard, and his renowne for holinesse was so...
famous in those parts, as Saint Frances himselfe had
hardly any more. It fortuned, that a young Gentlewoman,
being somewhat foolish, wanton and proud minded, named
Madam Lisetta de Caquirino, wife to a wealthy Merchant,
who went with certaine Gallies into Flanders, and there lay
as Lieger long time: in company of other Gentlewomen,
went to be confessed by this ghostly Father; kneeling at
his feete, although her heart was high enough, like a proud
minded woman, (for Venetians are presumptuous, vaine-
glorious, and witted much like to their skittish Gondoloes)
she made a very short rehearsal of her sinnes. At length
Fryar Albert demanded of her, whether shee had any
amorous friend or lover? Her patience being exceedingly
provoked, stearne anger appeared in her looks, which
caus'd her to returne him this answer. How now Sir
Domine? what? have you no eyes in your head? Can you
not distinguish between mine, and these other common
beauties? I could have Lovers enow, if I were so pleased;
but those perfections remaining in me, are not to be
affected by this man, or that. How many beauties have
you beheld, any way answerable to mine, and are more fit
for Gods, then mortals.

Many other idle speeches shee uttered, in proud opinion of
her beauty, whereby Friar Albert presently perceived, that
this Gentlewoman had but a hollow braine, and was fit
game for folly to flye at; which made him instantly
enamoured of her, and that beyond all capacity of resist-
ing, which yet he referred to a further, and more com-
modious time. Nevertheless, to shew himselfe an holy
and religious man now, he began to reprehend her, and
told her plainly, that she was vain-glorious, and over-
come with infinite follies. Heereupon, she called him a
logger headed beast, and he knew not the difference be-
tweene an ordinary complexion, and beauty of the highest
merit. In which respect, Friar Albert, being loth to
offend her any further; after confession was fully ended,
let her passe away among the other Gentlewomen, she
giving him divers disdainfull lookes.
Within some few dayes after, taking one of his trusty brethren in his company, he went to the House of Madam Lisetta, where requiring to have some conference alone with her selfe; shee tooke him into a private Parlor, and being there, not to be seene by any body, he fell on his knees before her, speaking in this manner. Madam, for charities sake, and in regard of your owne most gracious nature, I beseech you to pardon those harsh speeches, which I used to you the other day, when you were with me at confession: because, the very night ensuing thereon, I was chastised in such cruell manner, as I was never able to stirre forth of my bed, untill this very instant morning; whereto the weake-witted Gentlewoman thus replied. And who I pray you (quoth she) did chastise you so severely? I will tell you Madam, said Friar Albert, but it is a matter of admirable secrerie.

Being alone by my selfe the same night in my Dorter, and in very serious devotion, according to my usuall manner: suddenly I saw a bright splendour about me, and I could no sooner arise to discerne what it might be, and whence it came, but I espied a very goodly young Lad standing by me, holding a golden Bow in his hand, and a rich Quiver of Arrowes hanging at his backe. Catching fast hold on my Hood, against the ground he threw me rudely, trampling on me with his feete, and beating me with so many cruell blowes, that I thought my body to be broken in peeces. Then I desired to know, why he was so rigorous to me in his correction? Because (quoth he) thou didst so saucily presume this day, to reprove the celestiall beauty of Madam Lisetta, who (next to my Mother Venus) I love most dearely. Whereupon I perceived, he was the great commanding God Cupid, and therefore I craved most humbly pardon of him. I will pardon thee (quoth he) but upon this condition, that thou goe to her so soone as conveniently thou canst, and (by lowly humility) prevaile to obtaine her free pardon: which if she will not vouchsafe to grant thee, then shall I in stearne anger returne againe, and lay so many torturing afflictions
THE FOURTH DAY

on thee, that all thy whole life time shall be most hatefull—NOVELL
to thee. And what the displeased God saide else beside, I dare not disclose, except you please first to pardon me.

Mistresse shallow-braine, being swolne big with this wind, like an empty bladder; conceived no small pride in hearing these words, constantly crediting them to be true, and therefore thus answered. Did I not tel you Father Albert, that my beauty was celestiall? But I sweare by my beauty, notwithstanding your idle passed arrogancy, I am heartily sorry for your so severe correction; which that it may no more be inflicted on you, I do freely pardon you; yet with this proviso, that you tell me what the God else saide unto you; whereto Fryar Albert thus replyed. Madam, seeing you have so graciously vouchsafed to pardon me, I will thankfully tell you all: but you must be very carefull and respective, that whatsoever I shall reveale unto you, must so closely be concealed, as no living creature in the World may know it; for you are the onely happy Lady now living, and that happinesse relieth on your silence and secrecie: with solemne vowes and protestations she sealed up her many promises, and then the Fryar thus proceeded.

Madam, the further charge imposed on me by God Cupid, was to tell you, that himselfe is so extremely enamored of your beauty, and you are become so gracious in his affection; as, many nights he hath come to see you in your Chamber, sitting on your pillow, while you slept sweetly, and desiring very often to awake you, but onely fearing to affright you. Wherefore, now he sends you word by me, that one night he intendeth to come visite you, and to spend some time in conversing with you. But in regard he is a God, and meerely a spirit in forme, whereby neither you or any else have capacity of beholding him, much lesse to touch or feel him: he saith, that (for your sake) he will come in the shape of a man, giving me charge also to know of you, when you shall please to have him come, and in whose similitude you
would have him to come, whereof he will not faile; in which respect, you may justly thinke your selfe to be the onely happy woman living, and farre beyond all other in your good fortune.

Mistresse want-wit presently answered, shee was well contented, that God Cupid should love her, and she would returne the like love againe to him; protesting withall, that wheresoever shee should see his majestical picture, she would set a hallowed burning Taper before it. Moreover, at all times he should be most welcome to her, whencesoever hee would vouchsafe to visite her; for, he should alwayes finde her alone in her private Chamber: on this condition, that his olde Love Psyches, and all other beauties else whatsoever, must be set aside, and none but her selfe onely to be his best Mistresse, referring his personall forme of appearance, to what shape himselfe best pleased to assume, so that it might not be frightfull, or offensive to her.

Madam (quoth Friar Albert) most wisely have you answered, and leave the matter to me; for I will take order sufficiently, and to your contentment. But you may do me a great grace, and without any prejudice to your selfe, in granting me one poore request; namely, to vouchsafe the Gods appearance to you, in my bodily shape and person, and in the perfect forme of a man as now you behold me: so may you safely give him entertainment, without any taxation of the world, or ill apprehension of the most curious inquisition. Beside, a greater happinesse can never befall me: for, while he assumeth the soule out of my body, and walketh on the earth in my humane figure: I shall be wandering in the joyes of Lovers Paradise, feeling the fruition of their felicities; which are such, as no mortality can be capeable of, no, not so much as in imagination.

The wise Gentlewoman replied, that she was well contented, in regard of the severe punishment inflicted on him by God Cupid, for the reproachfull speeches he had given her; to allow him so poore a kinde of consolation, as he had
THE FOURTH DAY

requested her to grant him. Whereupon Friar Albert saide: Be ready then Madam to give him welcome to morrow in the evening, at the entering into your house, for comming in an humane body, he cannot but enter at your doores: whereas, if (in powerfull manner) he made use of his wings, he then would flye in at your window, and then you could not able to see him.

Upon this conclusion, Albert departed, leaving Lisetta in no meane pride of imagination, that God Cupid should be enamoured of her beauty; and therefore she thought each houre a yeare, till she might see him in the mortall shape of Friar Albert. And now was his braine wonderfully busied, to visite her in more then common or humane manner; and therefore he made him a sute (close to his body) of white Taffata, all poudred over with Starres, and spangles of Gold, a Bow and Quiver of Arrowes, with wings also fastened to his backe behinde him, and all cunningly covered with his Friars habit, which must be the sole meanes of his safe passage.

Having obtained licence of his Superiour, and being accompanied with an holy Brother of the Convent, yet ignorant of the businesse by him intended; he went to the house of a friend of his, which was his usuall receptacle, whencesoever he went about such deeds of darkness.

There did he put on his dissembled habit of God Cupid, with his winges, Bowe, and Quiver, in formall fashion; and then clouded over with his Monkes Cowle) leaves his companion to awaite his returning backe, while he visited foolish Lisetta, according to her expectation, readily attending for the Gods arrivall.

Albert being come to the house, knocked at the doore, and the Maide admitting him entrance, according as her Mistresse had appointed, she conducted him to her Mistresses Chamber, where laying aside his Friars habite, and she seeing him shine with such glorious splendour, adding action also to his assumed dissimulation, with majestieke motion of his body, wings, and bow, as if he had bene God Cupid indeede, converted into a body much
THE DECAMERON

bigger of stature, then Painters commonly do describe him, her wisedome was overcome with feare and admiration, that she fell on her knees before him, expressing all humble reverence unto him. And he spreading his wings over her, as with wiers and strings he had made them pliant; shewed how graciously he accepted her humiliation; folding her in his armes, and sweetly kissing her many times together, with repetition of his entire love and affection towards her. So delicately was he perfumed with odoriferous savours, and so compleat of person in his spangled garments, that she could do nothing else, but wonder at his rare behaviour, reputeing her felicity beyond all Womens in the world, and utterly impossible to be equalled, such was the pride of her presuming. For he told her divers tales and fables, of his awefull power among the other Gods, and stolne pleasures of his upon the earth; yet gracing her praises above all his other Loves, and vows made now, to affect none but her onely, as his often visitations should more constantly assure her, that she verily credited all his protestations, and thought his kisses and embraces, farre to exceed any mortall comparison.

After they had spent so much time in amorous discoursing, as might best fit with this their first meeting, and stand cleare from suspition on either side: our Albert Cupid, or Cupid Albert, which of them you best please to terme him, closing his spangled winges together againe behinde his backe, fastening also on his Bow and Quiver of Arrowes, overclouds all with his religious Monkes Cowle, and then with a parting kisse or two, returned to the place where he had left his fellow and companion, perhaps imploied in as devout an exercise, as he had bin in his absence from him; whence both repayring home to the Monastery, all this nightes wandering was allowed as tollerable, by them who made no spare of doing the like.

On the morrow following, Madam Lisetta immediately after dinner, being attended by her Chamber-maid, went to see Friar Albert, finding him in his wonted forme and fashion, and telling him what had hapned betweene her and
THE FOURTH DAY

God Cupid, with all the other lies and tales which hee had told her. Truly Madam (answered Albert) what your successe with him hath beene, I am no way able to comprehend; but this I can assure you, that so soone as I had acquainted him with your answer, I felt a sodaine rapture made of my soule, and visibly (to my apprehension) saw it carried by Elves and Fairies, into the floury fields about Elisium, where Lovers departed out of this life, walke among the beds of Lillies and Roses, such as are not in this world to be seene, neither to be imagined by any humane capacity. So super-abounding was the pleasure of this joy and solace, that, how long I continued there, or by what meanes I was transported hither againe this morning, it is beyond all ability in mee to expresse, or how I assumed my body againe after that great God had made use thereof to your service. Well Fryar Albert (quoth shee) you may see what an happinesse hath befalne you, by so grosse an opinion of my perfections, and what a felicity you enjoy, and still are like to do, by my pardoning your error, and granting the God accesse to me in your shape: which as I envy not, so I wish you heereafter to be wiser, in taking upon you to judge of beauty. Much other idle folly proceeded from her, which still he soothed to her contentment, and (as occasion served) many meetings they had in the former manner.

It fortuned within few dayes after that Madam Lisetta being in company with one of her Gossips, and their conference (as commonly it falleth out to be) concerning other women of the City; their beauty, behaviour, amorous suters and servants, and generall opinion conceived of their worth and merit; wherein Lisetta was over-much conceyted of her selfe, not admitting any other to be her equall. Among other speeches, savouring of an unseasoned braine: Gossip (quoth she) if you knew what account is made of my beauty, and who holds it in no meane estimation, you would then freely confesse, that I deserve to be preferred before any other. As women are ambitious in their owne opinions, so commonly are they covetous of one.
THE DECAMERON

NOVELL II

anthers secrets, especially in matter of emulation, where-
upon the Gossip thus replyed. Beleeve me Madam, I make
no doubt but your speeches may be true, in regard of your
admired beauty, and many other perfections beside; yet let
me tell you, priviledges, how great and singular soever they
be, without they are known to others, beside such as do
particularly enjoy them; they carry no more account, then
things of ordinary estimation. Whereas on the contrary,
when any Lady or Gentlewoman hath some eminent and
peculiar favour, which few or none other can reach unto, and
it is made famous by generall notion; then do all women else
admire and honor her, as the glory of their kinde, and a
miracle of Nature.

I perceive Gossip said Lisetta, whereat you aime, and
such is my love to you, as you should not lose your longing
in this case, were I but constantly secured of your secrecy,
which as hitherto I have bene no way able to taxe, so would
I be loth now to be more suspitious of then needs. But yet
this matter is of such maine moment, that if you will protest
as you are truly vertuous, never to reveale it to any living
body, I will disclose to you almost a miracle. The vertuous
oath being past, with many other solemne protestations be-
side, Lisetta then proceeded in this maner.

I know Gossip, that it is a matter of common and ordi-
ary custome, for Ladies and Gentlewomen to be graced
with favourites, men of fraile and mortall conditions, whose
natures are as subject to inconstancy, as their very best
endeavours dedicated to folly, as I could name no mean
number of our Ladies heere in Venice. But when Soveraigne
deities shall feel the impression of our humane desires, and
behold subjects of such prevailing efficacy, as to subdue their
greatest power, yea, and make them enamored of mortall
creatures: you may well imagine Gossip, such a beauty is
superiour to any other. And such is the happy fortune of
your friend Lisetta, of whose perfections, great Cupid the
awefull commanding God of Love himselfe, conceived such
an extraordinary liking: as he hath abandoned his seate of
supreme Majesty, and appeared to me in the shape of a

166
THE FOURTH DAY

mortall man, with lively expression of his amorous passions, and what extremities of anguish he hath endured, onely for my love. May this be possible? replied the Gossip. Can the Gods be toucht with the apprehension of our fraile passions? True it is Gossip, answered Lisetta, and so certainly true, that his sacred kisses, sweete embraces, and most pleasing speeches with proffer of his continuall devotion towards me, hath given me good cause to confirme what I say, and to thinke my felicity farre beyond all other womens, being honoured with his often nightly visitations.

The Gossip inwardly smiling at her idle speeches, which (nevertheles) she avouched with very vehement asseverations: fell instantly sicke of womens naturall disease, thinking every minute a tedious month, till she were in company with some other Gossips, to breake the obligation of her vertuous promise, and that others (as well as her selfe) might laugh at the folly of this shallow-witted woman. The next day following, it was her hap to be at a wedding, among a great number of other women, whom quickly she acquainted with this so strange a wonder; as they did the like to their husbands: and passing so from hand to hand, in lesse space then two dayes, all Venice was fully possessed with it.

Among the rest, the brethren to this foolish woman, heard this admirable newes concerning their Sister; and they discreetly concealing it to themselves, closely concluded to watch the walks of this pretended God: and if he soared not too lofty a flight, they would clip his wings, to come the better acquainted with him. It fortuned, that the Friar hearing his Cupidicall visitations over-publikely discovered, purposed to check and reprove Lisetta for her indiscretion. And being habited according to his former manner, his Friarly Cowle covering all his former bravery, he left his companion where he used to stay, and closely walked along unto the house. No sooner was he entred, but the Brethren being ambushed neere to the doore, went in after him, and ascending the staires, by such time as he had uncased himselfe, and appeared like God Cupid, with his spangled wings displayed: they rushed into the Chamber, and he having
THE DECAMERON

no other refuge, opened a large Casement, standing directly over the great gulfe or River, and presently leapt into the water; which being deepe, and he skilfull in swimming, he had no other harme by his fall, albeit the sodaine affright did much perplex him.

Recovering the further side of the River, he espied a light, and the doore of an house open, wherein dwelt a poore man, whom he earnestly intreated, to save both his life and reputation, telling him many lies and tales by what meanes he was thus disguised, and throwne by night-walking Villaines into the water. The poore man, being moved to compassionate his distressed estate, laid him in his owne bed, ministering such other comforts to him, as the time and his poverty did permit; and day drawing on, he went about his businesse, advising him to take his rest, and it should not be long till he returned. So, locking the doore, and leaving the counterfet God in bed, away goes the poore man to his daily labor. The Brethren to Lisetta, perceiving God Cupid to be fled and gone, and she in melancholly sadness sitting by them: they tooke up the Reliques he had left behind him, I meane the Friars hood and Cowle, which shewing to their sister, and sharply reproving her unwomanly behaviour: they left her in no meane discomfort, returning home to their owne houses, with their conquered spoile of the forlorne Friar.

During the times of these occurrences, broad day speeding on, and the poore man returning homeward by the Rialto, to visit his guest so left in bed: he beheld divers crouds of people, and a generall rumor noysed among them, that God Cupid had bene that night with Madam Lisetta, where being over-closely pursued by her Brethren, for feare of being surprized, he leapt out of her window into the gulfe, and no one could tell what was become of him. Heereupon, the poore man began to imagine, that the guest entertained by him in the night time, must needs be the same supposed God Cupid, as by his wings and other embellishments appeared: wherefore being come home, and sitting downe on the beds side by him, after some few speeches passing betweene
THE FOURTH DAY

them, he knew him to be Friar Albert, who promised to give him fifty ducates, if he would not betray him to Lisettaes Brethren.

Upon the acceptation of this offer, the money being sent for, and paid downe; there wanted nothing now, but some apt and convenient means, whereby Albert might safely be conveyed into the Monastery, which being wholly referred to the poore mans care and trust, thus he spake. Sir, I see no likely-hood of your cleare-escaping home, except in this manner as I advise you. We observe this day as a merry Festivall, and it is lawfull for any one, to disguise a man in the skin of a Beare, or in the shape of a savage man, or any other forme of better advice. Which being so done, he is brought upon S. Markes market place, where being hunted a while with dogs, upon the huntings conclusion, the Feast is ended; and then each man leads his monster whether him pleaseth. If you can accept any of these shapes, before you be scene heere in my poore abiding, then can I safely (afterward) bring you where you would be. Otherwise, I see no possible meanes, how you may escape hence unknown; for it is without all question to the contrary, that the Gentle-womans brethren, knowing your concealment in some one place or other, wil set such spies and watches for you throughout the City, as you must needs be taken by them.

Now, although it seemed a most severe imposition, for Albert to passe in any of these disguises: yet his exceeding-feare of Lisettaes brethren and friends, made him gladly yeele, and to undergo what shape the poore man pleased, which thus he ordered. Anointing his naked body with Hony, he then covered it over with downy small Feathers, and fastening a chaine about his necke, and a strange ugly vizard on his face, he gave him a great staffe in the one hand, and two huge Mastive dogs chained together in the other, which he had borrowed in the Butchery. Afterward, he sent a man to the Rialto, who there proclaimed by the sound of Trumpet: That all such as desired to see God Cupid, which the last nights had descended downe from the skies, and fell (by ill hap) into the Venetian gulfe, let them
repaire to the publike Market place of S. Marke, and there he would appeare in his owne likenesse.

This being done, soone after he left his house, and leading him thus disguised along by the chaine, he was followed by great crowds of people, every one questioning of whence, and what he was. In which manner, he brought him, to the Market place, where an infinite number of people were gathered together, as well of the followers, as of them that before heard the proclamation. There he made choice of a pillar, which stood in a place somewhat highly exalted, wherto he chained his savage man, making shew, as if he meant to awaite there, till the hunting should begin: in which time, the Flies, Wasps, and Hornets, did so terribly sting his naked body, being annointed with Hony, that he endured therby unspeakable anguish. When the poore man saw, that there needed no more concourse of people; pretending, as if he purposened to let loose his Salvage man; he tooke the maske or vizard from Alberts face, and then he spake aloud in this manner.

Gentlemen and others, seeing the wilde Boare commeth not to our hunting, because I imagine that he cannot easily be found: I meane (to the end you may not lose your labour in comming hither) to shew you the great God of Love called Cupid, who Poets feigned long since to be a little boy, but now growne to manly stature. You see in what maner he hath left his high dwelling, onely for the comfort of our Venetian beauties: but belike, the night-fogs over-flagging his wings, he fell into our gulfe, and comes now to present his service to you. No sooner had he taken off his vizard, but every one knew him to be Fryar Albert; and sodainely arose such shoutes and out-cries, with most bitter words breathed forth against him, hurling also stones, durt and filth in his face, that his best acquaintance then could take no knowledge of him, and not any one pittyng his abusing.

So long continued the offended people in their fury, that the newes therof was carried to the Convent, and six of his Religious Brethren came, who casting an habite about him, and releasing him from his chaine, they led him to the
THE FOURTH DAY

Monastery, not without much mollestation and trouble of the people; where imprisoning him in their house, severity of some inflicted punishment, or rather conceite for his open shame, shortned his dayes, and so he dyed. Thus you see (fayre Ladies) when licentious life must be clouded with a cloake of sanctitie, and evill actions daylie committed, yet escaping uncredited: there will come a time at length, for just discovering of all, that the good may shine in their true luster of glory, and the bad sinke in their owne deserved shame.

Three yong Gentlemen affecting three Sisters, fledde with them into Candie. The eldest of them (through jealousie) becommeth the death of her Lover; The second, by consenting to the Duke of Candies request, is the meanes of saving her life. Afterward, her owne Friend killeth her, and thence flyeth away with the elder Sister. The third couple, are charged with her death, and being committed prisoners, they confesse the fact; and fearing death, by corruption of money they prevaile with their Keepers, escaping from thence to Rhodes, where they dyed in great poverty.

THE THIRD NOVELL

Heerein is declared, how dangerous the occasion is, ensuing by anger and despight, in such as entirely love, especially being injuried and offended by them that they love.

WHEN the King perceyved that Madame Pampinea had ended her discourse, he sat sadly a pretty while, without uttering one word, but afterward spake thus. Little goodnesse appeared in the beginning of
this Novell, because it ministred occasion of mirth; yet the ending proved better, and I could wish, that worse infictions had falne on the venerious Friar. Then turning towards Madam Lauretta, he said; Lady, do you tell us a better tale, if possible it may be. She smiling, thus answered the King: Sir, you are over-cruelly bent against poore Lovers, in desiring, that their amourous processions should have harsh and sinister concludings. Nevertheless, in obedience to your severe command, among three persons amourously perplexed, I will relate an unhappy ending; whereas all may be saide to speede as unfortunately, being equally alike, in enjoying the issue of their desires, and thus I purpose to proceede.

Every Vice (choice Ladies) as very well you know, redoundeth to the great disgrace and prejudice of him, or her, by whom it is practised, and oftentimes to others. Now, among those common hurtfull enemies, the sinne or vice which most carrieth us with full carrere, and draweth us into unadvoydable dangers (in mine opinion) seemeth to be that of choller or anger, which is a sodain and inconsiderate moving, provoked by some received injury, which having excluded all respect of reason, and dimnd (with darke vapors) the bright discerning sight of the understanding, enflameth the minde with most violent fury. And albeit this inconvenience hapneth most to men, and more to some few then others, yet notwithstanding, it hath bene noted, that women have felt the selfesame infirmity, and in more extreme manner, because it much sooner is kindled in them, and burneth with the brighter flame, in regard they have the lesser consideration, and therefore not to be wondred at. For if we wil advisedly observe, we shall plainly perceive, that fire (even of his owne nature) taketh hold on such things as are light and tender, much sooner then it can on hard and weighty substances; and some of us women (let men take no offence at my words) are farre more soft and delicate then they be, and therefore more fraile. In which regard, seeing wee are naturally enclined hereto, and considering also, how much our affability and gentlenesse do shew themselves pleasing and full of content to those men
THE FOURTH DAY

with whom we are to live; and likewise, how anger and fury are compacted of extraordinary perils: I purpose (because we may be the more valiant in our courage, to outstand the fierce assaults of wrath and rage) to shew you by mine ensuing Novell, how the loves of three yong Gentlemen, and of as many Gentlewomen, came to fatall and fortunat successe by the tempestuous anger of one among them, as I have formerly related unto you.

Marseilles (as you are not now to learne) is in Provence; seated on the Sea, and is also a very ancient and most Noble Citty, which hath bene (heeretofore) inhabited with farre richer and more wealthy Merchants, then at this instant time it is. Among whom, there was one named Narnaldo Civida, a man but of meane condition, yet cleare in faith and reputation, and in lands, goods, and ready monies, immeasurably rich. Many children he had by his Wife, among whom were three Daughters, which exceeded his Sonnes in yeeres. Two of them being twinnnes, and borne of one body, were counted to be fiftene yeeres old; the third was fourteene, and nothing hindered marriage in their Parents owne expectation but the returne home of Narnaldo, who was then abroad in Spaine with his Merchandizes. The eldest of these Sisters was named Ninetta, the second Magdalena, and the third Bertella. A Gentleman (albeit but poore in fortunes) and called Restagnone, was so extraordinarily enamoured of Ninetta, as no man possibly could be more, and she likewise as earnest in affection towards him; yet both carrying their loves proceeding with such secrecy, as long time they enjoyed their hearts sweet contentment, yet undiscovered.

It came to passe, that two other young Gallants, the one named Folco, and the other Hugnetto, (who had attained to incredible wealth, by the decease of their Father) were also as far in love, the one with Magdalena, and the other with Bertella. When Restagnone had intelligence thereof, by the meanes of his faire friend Ninetta, he purposed to relieue his poverty, by friendly furthering both their love, and his owne: and growing into familiarity
with them, one while he would walke abroad with Folco, and then againe with Hugnetto, but oftner with them both together, to visite their Mistresses, and continue worthy friendship. On a day, when hee saw the time suteable to his intent, and that hee had invited the two Gentlemen home unto his House, he fell into this like Conference with them.

Kinde Friends (quoth he) the honest familiarity which hath past betweene us, may render you some certaine assurance, of the constant love I beare to you both, being as willing to worke any meanes that may tend to your good, as I desire to compasse mine owne. And because the truth of mine affection cannot conceale it selfe to you, I meane to acquaint you with an intention, wherewith my braine hath a long while travelled and now may soone be delivered of, if it may passe with your liking and approbation. Let me then tell you, that except your speeches savour of untruth, and your actions carry a double understanding, in common behaviour both by night and day, you appeare to pine and consume away, in the cordiall love you beare to two of the Sisters, as I suffer the same afflictions for the third, with reciprocall requitall of their deerest affection to us. Now, to qualifie the heate of our tormenting flames, if you will condescend to such a course as I shall advise you, the remedy will yeild them equall ease to ours, and we may safely injoy the benefit of contentment. As wealth aboundeth with you both, so doth want most extremely tyrannize over me: but if one banke might be made of both your rich substances, I embraced therein as a third partaker, and some quarter of the world dissigned out by us, where to live at hearts ease upon your possessions, I durst engage my credit, that all the sisters (not meanely stored with their Fathers treasure) shall beare us company to what place soever we please. There each man freely enjoying his owne deerest love, may live like three brethren, without any hinderance to our mutuall content: it remaineth now in you Gentlemen, to accept this comfortable offer, or to refuse it.
THE FOURTH DAY

The two Brothers, whose passions exceeded their best means for support, perceiving some hope how to enjoy their loves; desired no long time of deliberation, or greatly disputed with their thoughts what was best to be done: but readily replied, that let happen any danger whatsoever, they would joyne with him in this determination, and he should partake with them in their wealthiest fortunes. After Restagnone had heard their answer, within some few dayes following, he went to confer with Ninetta, which was no easie matter for him to compasse. Nevertheless, opportunity proved so favourable to him, that meeting with her at a private place appointed, he discoursed at large, what had passed betwecne him and the other two young Gentlemen, maintaining the same with many good reasons, to have her like and allow of the enterprize. Which although (for a while) he could very hardly doe; yet, in regard shee had more desire then power, without suspition to be daily in his company, she thus answered. My hearts chosen friend, I cannot any way dislike your advice, and will take such order with my Sisters, that they shall agree to our resolution. Let it therefor be your charge, that you and the rest make every thing ready, to depart from hence so soone, as with best convenient meanes we may be enabled.

Restagnone being returned to Folco and Hugnetto, who thought everie houre a yeare, to heare what would succeede upon the promise past between them; he told them in plain termes, that their Ladies were as free in consent as they, and nothing wanted now, but furnishment for their sodaine departing. Having concluded, that Candye should bee their harbour for entertainment, they made sale of some few inheritances which lay the readiest for the purpose, as also the goods in their Houses; and then, under colour of venting Merchandizes abroad, they bought a nimble Pinnace, fortified with good strength and preparation, and wayted but for a convenient winde. On the other side, Ninetta who was sufficiently acquainted with the forwardnesse of her Sisters desires, and her owne, had
THE DECAMERON

NOVELL III

so substantially prevailed with them, that a good Voyage now was the sole expectation. Whereupon, the same night when they should set away, they opened a strong barred Chest of their Fathers, whence they took great store of Gold and costly Jewels, wherewith escaping secretly out of the house; they came to the place where their Lovers attended for them, and going all aboard the Pinnace, the windes were so furtherous to them, that without touching any where, the night following, they arrived at Geneway.

There being out of perill or pursuit, they all knit the knot of holy wedlocke, and then freely enjoyed their long wished desires, from whence setting saile againe, and being well furnished with all things wanting; passing on from Port to Port, at the end of eight dayes, they landed in Candie, not meeting with any impeachment on the way. Determining there to spend their daies, first they provided themselves of goodly lands in the Countrey, and then of beautifull dwelling houses in the City, with al due furnish-ments belonging to them, and Families well beseeming such worthy Gentlemen, and all delights else for their daily re-creations, inviting their Neighbours, and they them againe in loving manner; so that no lovers could wish to live in more ample contentment.

Passing on their time in this height of felicity, and not crossed by any sinister accidents, it came to passe (as often wee may observe in the like occasions, that although delights doe most especially please us, yet they breede surfet, when they swell too over-great in abundance) that Restagnone, who most dearly affected his faire Ninetta, and had her now in his free possession, without any perill of loosing her: grew now also to bee weary of her, and consequently, to faile in those familiar performances, which formerly had passed betweene them. For, being one day invited to a Banket, hee saw there a beautifull Gentle-woman of that Countrey, whose perfections pleasing him beyond all comparison: he laboured (by painfull pursueit) to win his purpose; and meeting with her in divers private places, grew prodigall in his expences upon her. This
THE FOURTH DAY

could not be so closely carried, but being scene and ob-
served by Ninetta, she became possessed with such extreme
jealousie, that hee could not doe any thing whatsoever,
but immediately she had knowledge of it: which fire, grow-
ing to a flame in her, her patience became extremely
provoked, urging rough and rude speeches from her to
him, and daily tormenting him beyond power of sufferance.

As the enjoying of any thing in too much plenty, makes
it appeare irkesome and loathing to us, and the deniall of
our desires, do more and more whet on the appetite: even
so did the angry spleen of Ninetta proceede on in violence,
against this new commenced love of Restagnone. For,
in succession of time, whether he enjoyed the embrace-
ments of his new Mistresse, or no: yet Ninetta (by sinister
reports, but much more through her owne jealous imagina-
tions) held it for infallible, and to bee most certaine.
Heereupon, she fell into an extreme melancholly, which
melancholly begat implacable fury, and (consequently) such
contemptible disdaine, as converted her formerly kindely
love to Restagnone, into most cruell and bloudie hatred;
yea, and so strangely was reason or respect confounded in
her, as no revenge else but speedie death, might satisfie
the wrongs shee imagined to receive by Restagnone and
his Minion.

Upon enquiry, by what meanes shee might best compasse
her bloody intention, she grew acquainted with a Grecian
woman, and wonderfully expert in the compounding of
poysons, whom shee so perswaded by gifts and bounteous
promises, that at the length shee prevayled with her. A
deadly water was distilled by her, which (without any
other counsell to the contrary) on a day when Restagnone
had his blood some-what over-heated, and little dreamed
on any such Treason conspired against him by his Wife,
shee caused him to drinke a great draught thereof, under
pretence, that it was a most soveraigne and cordiall water;
but such was the powerful operation thereof, that the
very next morning, Restagnone was found to bee dead in
his bed. When his death was understoode by Folco,
Hugnetto, and their Wives, and not knowing how he came to bee thus empoysed (because their Sister seemed to bemoane his sodaine death, with as apparant shewes of mourning, as they could possibly expresse) they buried him very honourably, and so all suspition ceased.

But as Fortune is infinite in her fagaries, never acting disaster so closely, but as cunningly discovereth it againe: so it came to passe, that within a few dayes following, the Grecian Woman that had delivered the poyson to Ninetta, for such another deede of damnation, was apprehended even in the action. And being put upon the tortures, among many other horrid villainies by her committed, she confessed the empoysoning of Restagnone, and every particle thereto appertaining. Whereupon, the Duke of Candie, without any noyse or publication, setting a strong guard (in the night time) about the house of Folco, where Ninetta then was lodged; there sodainly they seized on her, and upon examination, in maintenance of her desperate revenge, voluntarily confessed the fact, and what else concerned the occasion of his death, by the wrongs which he had offered her.

Folco and Hugnetto understanding secretly, both from the Duke, and other intimate friends, what was the reason of Ninettaes apprehension, which was not a little displeasing to them, labored by all their best paines and endeavour, to worke such meanes with the Duke, that her life might not perish by fire, although she had most justly deserved it; but all theyr attempts proved to no effect, because the Duke had concluded to execute justice.

Heere you are to observe, that Magdalena (beeing a very beautifull Woman, yong, and in the choisest flower of her time:) had often before bene solicited by the Duke, to entertaine his love and kindnesse: whereto by no meanes she would listen or give consent. And being now most earnestly importuned by her for the safetie of her Sisters life, hee tooke hold on this her dayly suite to him, and in private told her, that if she was so desirous of Ninettaes life: it lay in her power to obtain it, by granting him the
fruition of her love. She apparently perceiving that Ninetta was not likely to live, but by the prostitution of her chaste honour, which she preferred before the losse of her owne life, or her sisters, concluded, to let her dye, rather then run into any such disgrace. But having an excellent ingenious wit, quicke, and apprehensive in perillous occasions, she intended now to make a triall of overreaching the lascivious Duke in his wanton purpose, and yet to be assured of her sisters life, without any blemish to her reputation.

Soliciting him still as shee was wont to doe, this promise passed from her to him, that when Ninetta was delivered out of prison, and in safetie at home in her house: hee should resort thither in some queint disguise, and enjoy his long expected desire; but untill then she would not yeeld. So violent was the Duke in the prosecution of his purpose, that under colour of altering the manner of Ninettaes death, not suffering her to bee consumed by fire, but to be drowned, according to a custome observed there long time, and at the importunity of her Sister Magdalena, in the still silence of the night, Ninetta was conveyed into a sacke, and sent in that manner to the House of Folco, the Duke following soone after, to challenge her promise.

Magdalena, having acquainted her Husband with her vertuous intention, for preserving her Sisters life, and disappointing the Duke in his wicked desire; was as contrary to her true meaning in this case, as Ninetta had formerly beene adverse to Restagnone, onely being over-ruled likewise by jealousie, and perswaded in his rash opinion, that the Duke had already dishonoured Magdalena, otherwise, he would not have delivered Ninetta out of prison. Mad fury gave further fire to this unmanly perswasion, and nothing will now quench this violent flame, but the life of poore Magdalena, suddenly sacrificed in the rescue of her Sister, such a divell is anger, when the understandings bright eye is thereby abused. No credit might bee given to her womanly protestations, or any thing seeme to alter his bloody purpose; but, having slaine Magdalena with
his Poniard (notwithstanding her teares and humble entreaties) he ranne in hast to Ninettaes Chamber, she not dreaming on any such desperate accident, and to her he used these dissembling speeches.

Sister (quoth he) my wife hath advised, that I should speedily convey you hence, as fearing the renewing of the Dukes fury, and your falling againe into the hands of Justice: I have a Barke readily prepared for you, and your life being secured, it is all that she and I doe most desire. Ninetta being fearefull, and no way distrusting what he had saide; in thankfull allowance of her Sisters care, and curteous tender of his so ready service; departed thence presently with him, not taking any farewell of her other Sister and her Husband. To the Sea-shore they came, very weakely provided of monies to defray their charges, and getting aboard the Barke, directed their course themselves knew not whether.

The amorous Duke in his disguise, having long daunced attendance at Folcoes doore, and no admittance of his entrance; angrily returned backe to his Court, protesting severe revenge on Magdalena, if she gave him not the better satisfaction, to cleare her from thus basely abusing him. On the morrow morning, when Magdalena was found murthered in her Chamber, and tidings thereof carried to the Duke; present search was made for the bloody offender, but Folco being fled and gone with Ninetta; some there were, who bearing deadly hatred to Hugnetto, incensed the Duke against him and his wife, as supposing them to be guilty of Magdalenaes death. He being thereto very easily perswaded, in regard of his immoderate love to the slaine Gentlewoman; went himselfe in person (attended on by his Guard) to Hugnettoes House, where both he and his wife were seized as prisoners.

These newes were very strange to them, and their imprisonment as unwelcome; and although they were truly innocent, either in knowledge of the horrid fact, or the departure of Folco with Ninetta: yet being unable to endure the tortures extremity, they made themselves culp-
THE FOURTH DAY

able by confession, and that they had a hand with Folco in the murder of Magdalena. Upon this their forced confession, and sentence of death pronounced on them by the Duke himself; before the day appointed for their publike execution, by great summes of money, which they had closely hid in their House, to serve when any urgent extremitie should happen to them; they corrupted their keepers, and before any intelligence could be had of their flight, they escaped by Sea to Rhodes, where they lived afterward in great distresse and misery. The just vengeance of Heaven followed after Folco and Ninetta, he for murthering his honest wife, and she for poysoning her offending Husband: for being beaten a long while on the Seas, by tempestuous stormes and weather, and not admitted landing in any Port or creeke; they were driven backe on the Coast of Candie againe, where being apprehended, and brought to the City before the Duke, they confessed their severall notorious offences, and ended their loathed lives in one fire together.

Thus the idle and loose love of Restagnone, with the franticke rage and jealousie of Ninetta and Folco, overturned all their long continued happinesse, and threw a disastrous ending on them all.
Gerbino, contrary to the former plighted faith of his Grand-father, King Gulielmo, fought with a Ship at Sea, belonging to the King of Thunis, to take away his Daughter, who was then in the same Ship. She being slaine by them that had the possession of her, he likewise slew them; and afterward had his owne head smitten off.

THE FOURTH NOVELL

In commendation of Justice betwixt Princes; and declaring withall, that neither feare, dangers, nor death it selfe, can any way daunt a true and loyall Lover.

MADAM LAURETTA having concluded her Novel, and the company complaining on Lovers misfortunes, some blaming the angry and jealoous fury of Ninetta, and every one delivering their severall opinions; the King, as awaking out of a passionate perplexity, exalted his lookes, giving a signe to Madame Elisa, that shee should follow next in order, whereto she obeying, began in this manner. I have heard (Gracious Ladies, quoth she) of many people, who are verily persuaded, that Loves arrowes, never wound any body, but only by the eyes lookes and gazes, mocking and scorning such as maintaine that men may fall in love by hearing onely. Wherein (believe me) they are greatly deceived, as will appeare by a Novell which I must now relate unto you, and wherein you shall plainly perceive, that not onely fame or report is as prevailing as sight; but also hath conducted divers, to a wretched and miserable ending of their lives.

Gulielmo the second, King of Sicilie, according as the Sicilian Chronicles record, had two children, the one a
sonne, named Don Rogero, and the other a daughter, called Madame Constance. The saide Rogero died before his Father, leaving a sonne behind him, named Gerbino, who, with much care and cost, was brought up by his Grandfather, proving to be a very goodly Prince, and wonderously esteemed for his great valour and humanity. His fame could not containe it selfe, within the bounds or limits of Sicilie onely, but being published very prodigally, in many parts of the world beside, flourished with no meane commendations throughout all Barbarie, which in those dayes was tributary to the King of Sicilie. Among other persons, deserving most to be respected, the renowned vertues, and affability of this gallant Prince Gerbino, was understood by the beautious Daughter to the King of Tunis, who by such as had seene her, was reputed to be one of the rarest creatures, the best conditioned, and of the truest noble spirit, that ever Nature framed in her very choicest pride of Art.

Of famous, vertuous, and worthy men, it was continually her cheefest delight to heare, and the admired actions of valiant Gerbino, reported to her by many singular discoursers: such as could best describe him, with language answerable to his due deservings, won such honourable entertainment in her understanding soule, that they were most affectionately pleasing to her; and in recapitulating (over and over againe) his manifold and heroycall perfections; meere speech made her extremely amorous of him, nor willingly would she lend an eare to any other discourse, but that which tended to his honour and advancement.

On the other side, the fame of her incomparable beauty, with addition of her other infinite singularities beside; as the World had given eare to innumberlesse places, so Sicilie came at length acquainted therewith, in such flowing manner, as was truly answerable to her merit. Nor seemed this as a bare babling rumour, in the Princely hearing of royall Gerbino; but was embraced with such a reall apprehension, and the entire probation of a true understanding:
that he was no lesse enflamed with noble affection towards her, then she expressed the like in vertuous opinion of him. Wherefore, awaiting such convenient opportunity, when he might entreat license of his Grand-father, for his owne going to Thunis, under colour of some honourable occasion, for the earnest desire he had to see her: he gave charge to some of his especiall friends (whose affaires required their presence in those parts) to let the Princesse understand, in such secret manner as best they could devise, what noble affection he bare unto her, devoting himselfe onely to her service.

One of his chosen friends thus put in trust, being a Jeweller, a man of singular discretion, and often resorting to Ladies for sight of his Jewels, winning like admittance to the Princesse: related at large unto her, the honourable affection of Gerbino, with full tender of his person to her service, and that she onely was to dispose of him. Both the message and the messenger, were most graciously welcome to her, and flaming in the selfe-same affection towards him: as a testimony thereof, one of the very choisest Jewels which she bought of him, she sent by him to the Prince Gerbino, it being received by him with such joy and contentment, as nothing in the world could be more pleasing to him. So that afterward, by the trusty carriage of this Jeweller, many Letters and Love-tokens passed betweene them, each being as highly pleased with this poore, yet happy kind of entercourse, as if they had seene and conversed with one another.

Matters proceeding on in this manner, and continuing longer then their love-sick passions easily could permit, yet neither being able to finde out any other meanes of helpe; it fortuned that the King of Thunis promised his daughter in marriage to the King of Granada, whereat she grew exceedingly sorrowfull, perceiving, that not onely she should be sent further off, by a large distance of way from her friend, but also be deprived utterly, of all hope ever to enjoy him. And if she could have devised any meanes, either by secret flight from her Father, or any
way else to further her intention, she would have adventured it for the Princes sake. Gerbino in like maner hearing of this purposed marriage, lived in a hell of torments, consultting oftentimes with his soule, how he might be possessed of her by power, when she should be sent by Sea to her husband, or private stealing her away from her Fathers Court before: with these and infinite other thoughts, was he incessantly afflicted, both day and night.

By some unhappy accident or other, the King of Thunis heard of this their secret love, as also of Gerbinoes purposed policy to surprize her, and how likely he was to effect it, in regard of his manly valour, and store of stout friends to assist him. Hereupon, when the time was come, that he would convey his daughter thence to her marriage, and fearing to be prevented by Gerbino: he sent to the King of Sicilie, to let him understand his determination, craving safe conduct from him, without impeachment of Gerbino, or any one else, untill such time as his intent was accomplished. King Gulielmo being aged, and never acquainted with the affectionate proceedings of Gerbino, nor any doubtfull reason to urge this security from him, in a case convenient to be granted: yeelded the sooner thereto right willingly, and as a signall of his honourable meaning, he sent him his royall Glove, with a full confirmation for his safe conduct.

No sooner were these Princely assurances received, but a goodly ship was prepared in the Port of Carthagena, well furnished with all thinges thereto belonging, for the sending his daughter to the King of Granada, waiting for nothing else but best favouring windes. The young Princesse, who understood and saw all this great preparation; secretly sent a servant of hers to Palermo, giving him especiall charge, on her behalfe, to salute the Prince Gerbino, and to tell him withall, that (within few dayes) she must be transported to Granada. And now opportunity gave faire and free meanes, to let the world know, whether he were a man of that magnanimous spirit, or no, as generall opinion had formerly conceived of him, and whether he affected 2:AA
her so firmly, as by many close messages he had assured
her. He who had the charge of this embassie, effectually
performed it, and then returned backe to Thunis.

The Prince Gerbino, having heard this message from
his divine Mistresse, and knowing also, that the King his
Grand-father, had past his safe conduct to the King of
Thunis, for peaceable passage through his Seas: was at his
wits end, in this urgent necessity, what might best bee
done. Notwithstanding, moved by the settled constancy
of his plighted Love, and the speeches delivered to him
by the messenger from the Princesse: to shew himselfe a
man endued with courage, he departed thence unto Messina,
where he made ready two speedy gallies, and fitting them
with men of valiant disposition, set away to Sardignia,
as making full account, that the Ship which carried the
Princesse, must come along that Coast. Nor was his
expectation therein deceived: for, within few dayes after,
the Ship (not over-swiftly winded) come sailing neere to
the place where they attended for her arrivall; whereof
Gerbino had no sooner gotten a sight, but to animate the
resolutes which were in his company, thus he spake.

Gentlemen, if you be those men of valour, as heretofore
you have bene reputed, I am perswaded, that there are
some among you, who either formerly have, or now instantly
do feele, the all-commanding power of Love, without which
(as I thinke) there is not any mortall man, that can have
any goodnesse or vertue dwelling in him. Wherefore,
if ever you have bene amorously affected, or presently have
any apprehension thereof, you shall the more easily judge
of what I now aime at. True it is, that I do love, and
love hath guided me to be comforted, and manfully assisted
by you, because in yonder Ship, which you see commeth on
so gently under saile (even as if she offered her selfe to be
our prize) not onely is the Jewell which I most esteeme,
but also mighty and unvalewable treasure, to be wonne
without any difficult labour, or hazard of a dangerous fight,
you being men of suchundauntable courage. In the
honour of which victory, I covet not any part or parcell,
but onely a Ladie, for whose sake I have undertaken these Armes, and freely give you all the rest contained in the Ship. Let us set on them, Gentlemen, and my dearest friends; courageously let us assaile the ship, you see how the wind favours us, and (questionlesse) in so good an action, Fortune will not faile us.

Gerbino needed not to have spoken so much, in persuading them to seize so rich a booty, because the men of Messina were naturally addicted to spoile and rapine: and before the Prince began his Oration, they had concluded to make the ship their purchase. Wherefore, giving a lowde shout, according to their Country manner, and commanding their Trumpets to sound cheerfully, they rowed on a maine with their Oares, and (in meere despight) set upon the ship. But before the Gallies could come neere her, they that had the charge and managing of her, perceyving with what speede they made towards them, and no likely meanes of escaping from them, resolvedly they stood upon their best defence, for now it was no time to be slothfull.

The Prince being come neere to the Ship, commanded that the Patrones should come to him, except they would adventure the fight. When the Sarazines were thercof advertised, and understood also what he demanded, they returned answer: That their motion and proceeding in this manner, was both against Law and plighted faith, which was promised by the King of Sicilie, for their safe passage through the Sea by no meanes to be mollested or assailed. In testimony whereof, they shewed his Glove, avouching moreover, that neither by force (or otherwise) they would yeelde, or deliver him any thing which they had aboorde their Ship.

Gerbino espying his gracious Mistresse on the Ships decke, and she appearing to be farre more beautifull then Fame had made relation of her: being much more enflamed now, then formerly he had bin, replyed thus when they shewed the Glove. We have (quoth he) no Faulcon here now, to be humbled at the sight of your Glove: and
therefore, if you will not deliver the Lady, prepare your selves for fight, for we must have her whether you will or no. Hereupon, they began to let flie (on both sides) their Darts and arrowes, with stones sent in violent sort from their slings, thus continuing the fight a long while, to very great harme on either side. At the length, Gerbino perceiving, that small benefit would redound to him, if he did not undertake some other kinde of course: he tooke a small Pinnace, which purposely he brought with him from Sardignia, and setting it on a flaming fire, conveyed it (by the Gallies help) close to the ship. The Sarazines much amazed thereat, and evidently perceiving, that either they must yeeld or dye; brought their Kings daughter to the prow of the ship, most greevously weeping and wringing her hands. Then calling Gerbino, to let him behold their resolution, there they slew hir before his face, and afterward, throwing her body into the Sea, said: Take her, there we give her to thee, according to our bounden duty, and as thy perjury hath justly deserved.

This sight was not a little greevous to the Prince Gerbino, who madded now with this their monstrous cruelty, and not caring what became of his owne life, having lost her for whom he onely desired to live: not dreading their Darts, Arrowes, slinged stones, or what violence els they could use against him; he leapt aboord their ship, in despight of all that durst resist him, behaving himselfe there like a hunger-starved Lyon, when he enters among a heard of beasts, tearing their carkasses in pieces both with his teeth and pawes. Such was the extreme fury of this poore Prince, not sparing the life of any one, that durst appeare in his presence; so that what with the bloody slaughter, and violence of the fires encreasing in the Ship; the Mariners got such wealth as possibly they could save, and suffering the Sea to swallow the rest, Gerbino returned unto his Gallies againe, nothing proud of this so ill-gotten victory.

Afterward, having recovered the Princesse dead body out of the Sea, and enbalmed it with sighes and teares: he
THE FOURTH DAY

returned backe into Sicilie, where he caused it to be most
honourably buried, in a little Island, named Ustica, face to
face confronting Trapanum. The King of Thunis hearing
these disastrous Newes, sent his Ambassadors (habited in
sad mourning) to the aged King of Sicilie, complaining of
his faith broken with him, and how the accident had falne
out. Age being sodainly incited to anger, and the King
extreamly offended at this injury, seeing no way whereby
to deny him justice, it being urged so instantly by the
Ambassadors: caused Gerbino to be apprehended, and he
himselfe (in regard that none of his Lords and Barons
would therein assist him, but laboured to divert him by
their earnest importunity) pronounced the sentence of death
on the Prince, and commanded to have him beheaded in
his presence; affecting rather, to dye without an heire,
then to be thought a King voyde of justice. So these two
unfortunate Lovers, never enjoyed the very least benefite
of their long wished desires: ended both their lives in
violent manner.
The three Brethren to Isabella, slew a Gentleman that secretly loved her. His ghost appeared to her in her sleepe, and shewed her in what place they had buried his body. She (in silent manner) brought away his head, and putting it into a pot of earth, such as Flowers, Basile, or other sweete hearbes are usually set in; she watered it (a long while) with her teares. Wherefore her Brethren having intelligence; soone after she dyed, with meere conceite of sorrow.

THE FIFT NOVELL

Wherein is plainly proved, that Love cannot be rooted uppe, by any humane power or providence; aspecially in such a soule, where it hath bene really apprehended.

THE Novell of Madame Eliza being finished, and some-what commended by the King, in regard of the Tragical conclusion; Philomena was enjoyned to proceede next with her discourse. She being overcome with much compassion, for the hard Fortunes of Noble Gerbino, and his beatifull Princesse, after an extreme and vehement sigh, thus she spake. My Tale (worthy Ladies) extendeth not to persons of so high birth or quality, as they were of whom Madame Eliza gave you relation: yet (peradventure) it may prove to be no lesse pittifull. And now I remember my selfe, Messina so lately spoken of, is the place where this accident also happened.

In Messina there dwelt three young men, Brethren, and Merchants by their common profession, who becomming
THE FOURTH DAY

very rich by the death of their Father, lived in very good
fame and repute. Their Father was of San Gemignano,
and they had a Sister named Isabella, young, beautifull,
and well conditioned; who upon some occasion, as yet
remained unmarried. A proper youth, being a Gentleman
borne in Pisa, and named Lorenzo, as a trusty factor or
servant, had the managing of the brethrens businesse and
affaires. This Lorenzo being of comely personage, affable,
and excellent in his behaviour, grew so gracious in the eyes
of Isabella, that she afforded him many very respective
lookes, yea, kindnesses of no common quality. Which
Lorenzo taking notice of, and observing by degrees from
time to time, gave over all other beauties in the City,
which might allure any affection from him, and onely fixed
his heart on her, so that their love grew to a mutuall
embracing, both equally respecting one another, and enter-
taining kindnesses, as occasion gave leave.

Long time continued this amorous league of love, yet
not so cunningly concealed, but at the length, the secret
meeting of Lorenzo and Isabella, to ease their poore soules
of Loves oppressions, was discovered by the eldest of the
Brethren, unknowne to them who were thus betrayed. He
being a man of great discretion, although this sight was
highly displeasing to him: yet notwithstanding, he kept it
to himselfe till the next morning, labouring his braine what
might best be done in so urgent a case. When day was
come, he resorted to his other Brethren, and told them
what he had seene in the time past, betweene their sister
and Lorenzo.

Many deliberations passed on in this case; but after all,
thus they concluded together, to let it proceede on with
patient supportance, that no scandall might ensue to them,
or their Sister, no evill acte being (as yet) committed.
And seeming, as if they knew not of their love, had a wary
eye still upon her secret walkes, awaiting for some con-
venient time, when without their owne prejudice, or
Isabellaes knowledge, they might safely breake off this their
stolne love, which was altogether against their liking. So,
NOVELL V

shewing no worse countenance to Lorenzo, then formerly they had done, but employing and conversing with him in kinde manner; it fortuned, that riding (all three) to recreate themselves out of the City, they tooke Lorenzo in their company, and when they were come to a solitarie place, such as best suited with their vile purpose: they ran sodainly upon Lorenzo, slew him, and afterward enterred his body, where hardly it could be discovered by any one. Then they returned backe to Messina, and gave it forth (as a credible report) that they had sent him abroad about their affaires, as formerly they were wont to do: which every one verily beleived, because they knew no reason why they should conceite any otherwise.

Isabella, living in expectation of his returne, and perceiving his stay to her was so offensive long: made many demands to her Brethren, into what parts they had sent him, that his tarrying was so quite from all wonted course. Such was her importunate speeches to them, that they taking it very discontentedly, one of them returned her this frowning answer. What is your meaning Sister, by so many questionings after Lorenzo? What urgent affaires have you with him, that makes you so impatient upon his absence? If hereafter you make any more demands for him, we shall shape you such a reply, as will be but little to your liking. At these harsh words, Isabella fell into abundance of teares, where-among she mingled many sighes and groanes, such as were able to overthrow a farre stronger constitution: so that, being full of feare and dismay, yet no way distrusting her brethrens cruell deede; she durst not question any more after him.

In the silence of darke night, as she lay afflicted in her bed, oftentimes would she call for Lorenzo, entreating his speedy returning to her: And then againe, as if he had bene present with her, she checkt and reproved him for his so long absence. One night amongst the rest, she being grownen almost hopelesse, of ever seeing him againe, having a long while wept and greevously lamented; her senses and faculties utterly spent and tired, that she could not utter
any more complaints, she fell into a trance or sleepe; and dreamed, that the ghost of Lorenzo appeared unto her, in torne and unbefitting garments, his lookes pale, meager, and staring: and (as she thought) thus spake to her. My deere love Isabella, thou dost nothing but torment thy selfe, with calling on me, accusing me for overlong tarrying from thee: I am come therefore to let thee know, that thou canst not enjoy my company any more, because the very same day when last thou sawest me, thy brethren most bloodily murthered me. And acquainting her with the place where they had buried his mangled body: hee strictly charged her, not to call him at any time afterward, and so vanished away.

The young Damosell awaking, and giving some credite to her Vision, sighed and wept exceedingly; and after she was risen in the morning, not daring to say any thing to her brethren, she resolutely determined, to go see the place formerly appointed her, onely to make triall, if that which she seemed to see in her sleepe, should carry any likelihood of truth. Having obtained favour of her brethren, to ride a dayes journey from the City, in company of her trusty Nurse, who long time had attended on her in the house, and knew the secret passages of her love: they rode directly to the designed place, which being covered with some store of dried leaves, and more deeply sunke then any other part of the ground therabout, they digged not farre, but they found the body of murthered Lorenzo, as yet very little corrupted or impaired, and then perceived the truth of her vision.

Wisedome and government so much prevailed with her, as to instruct her soule, that her teares spent there, were meerley fruitelesse and in vaine, neither did the time require any long tarrying there. Gladly would she have carried the whole body with her, secretly to bestow honourable enterment on it, but it exceeded the compasse of her ability. Wherefore, in regard she could not have all, yet she would be possessed of a part, and having brought a keene razor with her, by helpe of the Nurse, she divided the 2: BB 193
head from the body, and wrapped it up in a Napkin, which
the Nurse conveyed into her lap, and then laide the body
in the ground againe. Thus being undiscovered by any,
they departed thence, and arrived at home in convenient
time, where being alone by themselves in the Chamber:
she washed the head over and over with her teares, and
bestowed infinite kisses thereon.

Not long after, the Nurse having brought her a large
earthen pot, such as we use to set Basile, Marjerom,
Flowers, or other sweet hearbes in, and shrouding the head
in a silken Scarfe, put it into the pot, covering it with
earth, and planting divers rootes of excellent Basile therein,
which she never watered, but either with her teares, Rose
water, or water distilled from the Flowers of Oranges.
This pot she used continually to sitte by, either in her
chamber, or any where else: for she carried it alwaies with
her, sighing and breathing foorth sad complaints thereto,
even as if they had beeene uttered to her Lorenzo, and day
by day this was her continuall exercise, to the no meane
admiration of her bretheren, and many other friends that
beheld her.

So long she held on in this mourning manner, that, what
by the continuall watering of the Basile, and putrifaction
of the head, so buried in the pot of earth; it grew very
flourishing, and most odorifferous to such as scented it, that
as no other Basile could possibly yeeld so sweete a savour.
The neighbours noting this behaviour in her, observing the
long continuance thereof, how much her bright beauty was
defaced, and the eyes sunke into her head by incessant
weeping, made many kinde and friendly motions, to under-
stand the reason of her so violent oppressions; but could
not by any meanes prevaile with her, or win any dis-
covery by her Nurse, so faithfull was she in secrecie to
her. Her brethren also waxed wearie of this carriage
in her; and having very often reproved her for it, with-
out any other alteration in her: at length, they closely
stole away the potte of Basile from her, for which she
made infinite wofull lamentations, earnestly entreating to
THE FOURTH DAY

have it restored againe, avouching that she could not live without it.

Perceiving that she could not have the pot againe, she fell into an extreame sicknesse, occasioned onely by her ceaselesse weeping: and never urged she to have any thing, but the restoring of her Basile pot. Her brethren grew greatly amazed thereat, because she never called for ought else beside; and thereupon were very desirous to ransacke the pot to the very bottome. Having emptied out all the earth, they found the Scarfe of silke, wherein the head of Lorenzo was wrapped; which was (as yet) not so much consumed, but by the lockes of haire, they knew it to be Lorenzoes head, whereat they became confounded with amazement.

Fearing least their offence might come to open publica-
tion, they buried it very secretly; and, before any could take notice thereof, they departed from Messina, and went to dwell in Naples, Isabella crying and calling still for her pot of Basile, being unable to give over mourning, dyed within a few dayes after. Thus have you heard the hard fate of poore Lorenzo and his Isabella. Within no long while after, when this accident came to be publikely knowne, an excellent ditty was composed thereof beginning thus.

Cruell and unkinde was the Christian,
That robd me of my Basiles blisse, etc.
A beautifull young Virgine, named Andreana, became enamoured of a young Gentleman called Gabriello. In conference together, she declared a dreame of hers to him, and he another of his to her; whereupon Gabriello fell downe sodainly dead in her armes. She, and her Chamber-maide were apprehended, by the Officers belonging to the Seigneur, as they were carrying Gabriello, to lay him before his owne doore. The Potestate offering violence to the Virgin, and she resisting him vertuously: it came to the understanding of her Father, who approved the innocence of his daughter, and compassed her deliverance. But she afterward, being weary of all worldly felicities, entred into Religion, and became a Nun.

**THE SIXTH NOVELL**

Describing the admirable accidents of Fortune; and the mighty prevailing power of Love.

The Novell which Madam Philomena had so graciously related, was highly pleasing unto the other Ladies; because they had oftentimes heard the Song, without knowing who made it, or upon what occasion it was composed. But when the King saw that the Tale was ended: he commanded Pamphilus, that he should follow in his due course: whereupon he spake thus.

The dreame already recounted in the last Novell, doth minister matter to me, to make report of another Tale, wherein mention is made of two severall dreames; which
THE FOURTH DAY

divined as well what was to ensue, as the other did what had hapned before. And no sooner were they finished in the relation, by both the parties which had formerly dreampt them, but the effects of both as soddainly followed.

Worthy Ladies, I am sure it is not unknowne to you, that it is, and hath bene a generall passion, to all men and women living, to see divers and sundry things while they are sleeping. And although (to the sleeper) they seeme most certaine, so that when he awaketh, he judgeth the truth of some, the likelyhood of others, and some beyond all possibility of truth: yet notwithstanding, many dreames have bene observed to happen; and very strangely have come to passe. And this hath bene a grounded reason for some men, to give as great credit to such things as they see sleeping, as they do to others usually waking. So that, according unto their dreames, and as they make construction of them, that are sadly distasted, or merrily pleased, even as (by them) they either feare or hope. On the contrary, there are some, who will not credit any dreame whatsoever, untill they be falne into the very same danger which formerly they saw, and most evidently in their sleepe.

I meane not to commend either the one or other, because they do not alwayes fall out to be true; neither are they at all times lyars. Now, that they prove not all to be true, we can best testifie to our selves. And that they are not alwayes lyars, hath already sufficiently bene manifested, by the Discourse of Madame Philomena, and as you shall perceive by mine owne, which next commeth in order to salute you. Wherefore, I am of this opinion, that in matters of good life, and performing honest actions; no dreame is to be feared presaging the contrary, neither are good works any way to be hindred by them. Likewise, in matters of bad and wicked quality, although our dreames may appeare favourable to us, and our visions flatter us with prosperous successe: yet let us give no credence unto the best, nor addict our minds to them of contrary Nature. And now we will proceed to our Novell.
In the Citie of Brescia, there lived somtime a Gentleman, named Messer Negro da Ponte Cararo, who (among many other children) had a daughter called Andreana, yong, and beautiful, but as yet unmarried. It fortuned, that she fell in love with a Neighbour, named Gabriello; a comely young Gentleman, of affable complexion, and graciously conditioned. Which love was (with like kindenesse) welcomed and entertained by him; and by the furtherance of her Chamber-maide, it was so cunningly carried, that in the Garden belonging to Andreanaes Father, she had many meetings with her Gabriello. And solemnne vows being mutually passed betwixt them, that nothing but death could alter their affection: by such ceremonious words as are used in marriage, they maried themselves secretly together, and continued their stolne chaste pleasures with equall contentment to them both.

It came to passe, that Andreana sleeping in her bed, dreamed, that shee met with Gabriello in the Garden, where they both embracing lovingly together, she seemed to see a thing blacke and terrible, which sodainely issued forth of his body, but the shape therof she could not comprehend. It rudely seized upon Gabriello, and in despyght of her utmost strength, with incredible force snatched him out of her armes, and sinking with him into the earth, they never after did see one another. Whereupon, overcome with extremitie of greefe and sorrow, presently she awaked, being then not a little joyfull, that she found no such matter as she feared, yet continued very doubtfull of her dreame. In regard whereof, Gabriello being desirous to visite her the night following: she laboured very diligently to hinder his comming to her; yet knowing his loyall affection toward her, and fearing least he should grow suspitious of some other matter, she welcommed him into the Garden, where gathering both white and Damaske Roses (according to the nature of the season) at length, they sate downe by a very goodly Fountaine, which stoode in the middest of the Garden.

After some small familiar Discourse passing betweene
them, Gabriello demanded of her, upon what occasion shee denied his comming thither the night before, and by such a sodaine unexpected admonition? Andreana told him, that it was in regard of a horrid Dreame, wherewith her soule was perplexed the precedent night, and doubt what might ensue thereon. Gabriello hearing this, began to smile, affirming to her, that it was an especial note of folly, to give any credit to idle dreames: because (oftentimes) they are caused by excesse of feeding, and continually are observed to be meere lies. For (quoth he) if I had any superstitious beleefe of Dreames, I should not then have come hither now: yet not so much as being dismayed by your dreame, but for another of mine owne, which I am the more willing to acquaint you withall.

Me thought, I was in a goodly delightfull Forrest, in the Noble exercise of sportfull hunting, and became there possessed of a young Hinde, the verie loveliest and most pleasing beast that was ever seene. It seemed to be as white as snow, and grew (in a short while) so familiar with me, that by no meanes it would forsake mee. I could not but accept this rare kindnes in the beast, and fearing least I should loose it, I put a collar of Gold about the necke thereof, and fastned it into a chaine of Gold also, which then I held strongly in my hand. The Hind afterward couched downe by me, laying his head mildely in my lap; and on the sodaine, a black Grey-hound bitch came rushing on us (but whence, or how, I could not imagine) seeming halfe hunger-starved, and very ugly to looke upon. At me she made her full carreere, without any power in me of resistance, and putting her mouth into the left side of my bosom, griped it so mainly with her teeth, that (me thought) I felt my heart quite bitten through, and she tugged on still, to take it wholly away from me; by which imagined paine and anguish I felt, instantly I awaked. Laying then my hand upon my side, to know whether any such harme had befalne me, or no, and finding none, I smiled at mine owne folly, in making such a frivolous and idle search. What can be said then in these or the like
cases? Divers times I have had as ill seeming dreames, yea, and much more to be feared, yet never any thing hurtfull to me, followed thereon; and therefore I have always made the lesse account of them.

The young Maiden, who was still dismayed by her owne Dreame, became much more afflicted in her minde, when shee had heard this other reported by Gabriello: but yet to give him no occasion of distast, she bare it out in the best manner she could devise to doe. And albeit they spent the time in much pleasing discourse, maintained with infinite sweete kisses on either side: yet was she still sus-pititious, but knew not whereof; fixing her eyes oftentimes upon his face, and throwing strange lookes to all parts of the Garden, to catch hold on any such blacke ugly sight, whereof he had formerly made description to her. As thus she continued in these afflicting feares, it fortuned, that Gabriello sodainly breathing forth a very vehement sighe, and throwing his armes fast about her, said: O helpe me dear Love, or else I dye; and, in speaking the words, fell downe upon the ground. Which the yong Damosel perceiving, and drawing him into her lappe, weeping saide: Alas sweete Friend, What paine doest thou feele?

Gabriello answered not one word, but being in an exceeding sweate, without any ability of drawing breath, very soon after gave up the ghost. How greevous this strange accident was to poore Andreana, who loved him as deerely as her owne life: you that have felt loves tormenting afflictions, can more easily conceive, then I relate. Wringing her hands, and weeping incessantly, calling him, rubbing his temples, and using all likely meanes to reduce life: she found all her labour to be spent in vaine, because he was starke dead indeed, and every part of his body as cold as ice: whereupon, she was in such wofull extremity, that she knew not what to do, or say. All about the Garden she went weeping, in infinite feares and distraction in soule, calling for her Chamber maid, the only secret friend to their stolne meetings, and told her the occasion of this sodaine sorrow. After they had sighed and mourned
THE FOURTH DAY

awhile, over the dead body of Gabriello, Andreana in this manner spake to her maide.

Seeing Fortune hath thus bereft me of my Love, mine owne life must needs be hatefull to me: but before I offer any violence to my selfe, let us devise some convenient means, as may both preserve mine honour from any touch or scandall, and conceal the secret love passing betweene us: but yet in such honest sort, that this body (whose blessed soule hath too soone forsaken it) may be honourably enterred. Whereto her Mayde thus answered: Mistresse, never talke of doing any violence to your selfe, because by such a blacke and dismall deed, as you have lost his kind company here in this life, so shall you never more see him in the other world: for immediately you sinke downe to hell, which foule place cannot be a receptacle for his faire soule, that was endued with so many singular vertues. Wherefore, I hold it farre better for you, to comfort your selfe by all good meanes, and with the power of fervent praier, to fight against all desperate intruding passions, as a truly vertuous minde ought to doe. Now, as concerning his enterrement, the meanes is readily prepared for you here in this Garden, where never he hath bene scene by any, or his resorting hither knowne, but onely to our selves. If you will not consent to have it so, let you and I convey his body hence, and leave it in such an apt place, where it may be found to morrow morning: and being then carried to his owne house, his friends and kindred will give it honest buryall.

Andreana, although her soule was extraordinarily sorrowfull, and teares flowed abundantly from her eyes; yet she listned attentively to hir maids counsell; allowing her first advice against desperation, to be truly good; but to the rest thus she replyed. God forbid (quoth she) that I should suffer so deere a loving friend, as he hath alwayes shewed himselfe to me; nay, which is much more, my husband; by sacred and solemnne vowes passed betweene us, to be put into the ground basely, and like a dog, or else to be left in the open street. He hath had the sacrifice of
my virgin teares, and if I can prevaile, he shall have some of his kindreds, as I have instantly devised, what (in this hard case) is best to be done. Forthwith she sent the maid to her Chamber, for divers elles of white Damaske lying in her Chest, which when she had brought, they spread it abroad on the grasse, even in the manner of a winding sheete, and therein wrapped the body of Gabriello, with a faire wrought pillow lying under his head, having first (with their teares) closed his mouth and eyes, and placed a Chaplet of Flowers on his head, covering the whole shrowd over in the same manner; which being done, thus she spake to her Maid.

The doore of his owne house is not farre hence, and thither (betweene us two) he may be easily caried, even in this maner as we have adorned him; where leaving him in his owne Porch, we may returne back before it be day: and although it will be a sad sight to his friends, yet because he dyed in mine armes, and we being so well discharged of the body, it will be a little comfort to me. When she had ended these words, which were not uttered without infinite teares, the maid entreated her to make hast, because the night swiftly passed on. At last, she remembred the Ring on her finger, wherewith Gabriello had solemnly espoused her, and opening the shroud againe, she put it on his finger, saying; My deere and loving husband, if thy soule can see my teares, or any understanding do remaine in thy body, being thus untimely taken from me: receive the latest guift thou gavest me, as a pledge of our solemne and spotlesse marriage. So, making up the shrowd againe as it should be, and conveighing it closely out of the Garden, they went on along with it, towards his dwelling house.

As thus they passed along, it fortuned, that they were met and taken by the Guard or Watch belonging to the Potestate, who had bin so late abroad, about very earnest and important businesse. Andreana, desiring more the dead mans company, then theirs whom she had thus met withall, boldly spake thus to them. I know who and what
THE FOURTH DAY

you are, and can tell my selfe, that to offer flight will nothing availe me: wherfore, I am ready to go along with you before the Seigneury, and there will tell the truth concerning this accident. But let not any man among you, be so bold as to lay hand on me, or to touch me, because I yeeld so obediently to you; neyther to take any thing from this body, except hee intend that I shall accuse him. In which respect, not any one daring to displease her, shee went with the dead bodie to the Seigneurie, there to answere all Objections.

When notice heereof was given to the Potestate, he arose; and shee being brought foorth into the Hall before him, he questioned with her, how and by what means this accident happened. Beside, he sent for divers Physitians, to be informed by them, whether the Gentleman were poysioned, or otherwise murthered? All of them affirmed the contrarie, avouching rather, that some Impostumation had engendered neere his heart, which sodainly breaking, occasioned his as sodaine death. The Potestate hearing this, and perceiving that Andreana was little or nothing at all faulty in the matter, her beauty and good carriage, kindled a villanous and lustful desire in him towards her, provoking him to the immodest motion, that upon granting his request, he would release her. But when he saw, that all his perswasions were to no purpose, hee sought to com-passe his will by violence; which like a vertuous and valiant Virago, shee worthily withstood, defending her honour Nobly, and reprooving him with many injurious speeches, such as a lustfull Letcher justlie deserved.

On the morrow morning, these newes being brought to her Father, Messer Negro da Ponte Cararo, greeving thereat exceedingly, and accompanied with many of his friends, he went to the Pallace. Being there arrived, and informed of the matter by the Potestate: he demanded (in teares) of his daughter, how, and by what means shee was brought thither? The Potestate would needs accuse her first, of outrage and wrong offered to him by her, rather then to tarry her accusing of him; yet, commending the yong
Mayden, and her constancie, proceeded to say, that onely to prove her, he had made such a motion to her; but finding her so firme, his liking was now so addicted to her, that if her Father were so pleased to forget the remembrance of her former secret husband, he willingly would accept her in marriage.

While thus they continued talking, Andreana comming before her Father, the teares trickling mainly downe her cheekes, and falling at his feete, she began in this manner. Deare Father, I shall not neede to make an Historicall relation, either of my youthfull boldnesse or misfortunes, because you have both seene and knowne them: rather most humbly, I crave your pardon, for another errour by mee committed, in that, both without your leave and liking, I accepted the man as my troth-plighted husband, whom (above all other in the world) I most intirely affected. If my offence heerein doe challenge the forfeite of my life, then (good Father) I free you from any such pardon; because my onely desire is to dye your daughter, and in your gracious favour: with which words, in signe of her humility, she kissed his feete. Messer Negro da Ponte, being a man well in yeeres, and of a gentle nature, observing what his daughter saide, could not refraine from teares, and in his weeping, lovingly tooke her from the ground, speaking thus to her.

Daughter, I could have wisht, that thou hadst taken such an Husband, as (in my judgement) had bene best fitting for thee: yet if thou madest election of one answerable to thine owne good liking, I have no just reason to be offended therewith. My greatest cause of complaint is, thy too severe concealing it from me, and the small trust thou didst repose in me, because thou hast lost him before I knew him. Nevertheless, seeing these occasions are thus come to passe, and accidents already ended, cannot possibly be re-called, it is my will, that as I would gladly have contented thee, by making him my Son in Law if he had lived, so I wil expresse the like love to him now he is dead. And so turning himselfe to his kindred and friends,
lovingly requested of them, that they would grace Gabriello with most honourable obsequies.

By this time, the kindred and friends to the dead man (upon noise of his death bruited abroad) were likewise come to the Pallace, yea, most of the men and women dwelling in the Cittie, the bodie of Gabriello being laide in the midst of the Court, upon the white Damaske shrowd given by Andreana, with infinite Roses and other sweet Flowers lying theron: and such was the peoples love to him, that never was any mans death, more to be bemoaned and lamented. Being delivered out of the Court, it was carried to buriall, not like a Burgesse or ordinary Citizen, but with such pompe as beseemed a Lord Baron, and on the shoulders of very noble Gentlemen, with great honor and reverence.

Within some few dayes after, the Potestate pursuing his former motion of mariage, and the father mooving it to his daughter, she would not by any meanes listen thereto. And he being desirous to give her contentment, delivered her and her Chamber-maid into a Religious Abbey, very famous for devotion and sanctity, where afterwards they ended their lives.
Faire Simonida affecting Pasquino, and walking with him in a pleasant garden, it fortuned, that Pasquino rubbed his teeth with a leaf of Sage, and immediately fell downe dead. Simonida being brought before the bench of Justice, and charged with the death of Pasquino, she rubbed her teeth likewise with one of the leaves of the same Sage, as declaring what shee saw him do, and thereon she dyed also in the same manner.

Whereby is given to understand, that love and death do use their power equally alike, as well upon poore and meane persons, as on them that are rich and Noble.

PAMPHILUS having ended his Tale, the King declaring an outward shew of compassion, in regard of Andreanaes disastrous Fortune; fixed his eye on Madam Æmilia, and gave her such an apparent signe, as expressed his pleasure, for her next succeeding in discourse; which being sufficient for her understanding, thus she began. Faire assembly, the Novell so lately delivered by Pamphilus, maketh me willing to report another to you, varying from it, in any kind of resemblance; onely this excepted: that as Andreana lost her lover in a Garden, even so did she of whom I am now to speake. And being brought before the seate of Justice, according as Andreana was, freed her selfe from the power of the Law; yet neither by force, or her owne vertue, but by her sodaine and inopinate death. And although the nature of Love is such (according as we have oftentimes heerefore maintained) to
THE FOURTH DAY

make his abiding in the houses of the Noblest persons; yet men and women of poore and farre inferiour quality, do not alwayes sit out of his reach, though enclosed in their meanest Cottages; declaring himselfe sometime as a powerfull commaunder in those humble places, as he doth in the richest and most imperious Palaces. As will plainly appeare unto you, either in all, or a great part of my Novell, whereto our Citie pleadeth some title; though, by the diversity of our discourses, talking of so many severall accidents; we have wandred into many other parts of the world, to make all answerable to our owne liking.

It is not any long time since, when there lived in our City of Florence, a young and beautifull Damosell, yet according to the nature of her condition; because she was the Daughter of a poore Father, and called by the name of Simonida. Now, albeit she was not supplied by any better means, then to maintaine her selfe by her owne painfull travell, and earne her bread before she could eate it, by carding and spinning to such as employed her; yet was she not so base or dejected a spirit, but had both courage and sufficient vertue, to understand the secret soliciting of love, and to distinguish the parts of well deserving, both by private behaviour and outward ceremony. As naturall instinct was her first tutor thereto, so wanted she not a second maine and urging motion, a chip hewed out of the like Timber, one no better in birth then her selfe, a proper young springall, named Pasquino, whose generous behaviour, and gracefull actions (in bringing her dayly wooll to spin, by reason his Master was a Clothier) prevailed upon her liking and affection.

Nor was he negligent in the observation of her amorous regards, but the Tinder tooke, and his soule flamed with the selfe same fire; making him as desirous of her loving acceptance, as possibly she could be of his: so that the commanding power of love, could not easily be distinguished in which of them it had the greater predominance. For every day as he brought her fresh supply of woolles, and found her seriously busied at her wheele: her soule would
vent forth many deepe sighes, and those sighes fetch floods of teares from her eyes, thorough the singular good opinion she had conceyved of him, and earnest desire to enjoy him. 

Pasquino on the other side, as leysure gave him leave for the least conversing with her: his disease was every way answerable to hers, for teares stood in his eyes, sighes flew abroad, to ease the poore hearts afflicting oppressions, which though he was unable to conceale; yet would he seeme to clowd them cleanly, by entreating her that his Masters worke might be neatly performed, and with such speed as time would permit her, intermixing infinite praises of her artificiall spinning; and affirming withall, that the Quilles of Yearte received from her, were the choisest beauty of the whole peece; so that when other worke-women played, Simonida was sure to want no employment.

Hereupon, the one soliciting, and the other taking delight in being solicited; it came to passe, that often accesse bred the bolder courage, and over-much bashfulness became abandoned, yet no immodesty passing betwene them: but affection grew the better setled in them both, by interchangeable vowes of constant perseverance, so that death onely, but no disaster else had power to divide them. Their mutuall delight continuing on in this manner, with more forcible encreasing of their Loves equall flame: it fortuned, that Pasquino sitting by Simonida, told her of a goodly Garden, whereto he was desirous to bring her, to the end, that they might the more safely converse together, without the suspition of envious eyes. Simonida gave answer of her well-liking the motion, and acquainting her Father therewith, he gave her leave, on the Sunday following after dinner, to go fetch the pardon of S. Gallo, and afterwards to visit the Garden.

A modest yong maiden named Lagina, following the same profession, and being an intimate familiar friend, Simonida tooke along in her company, and came to the Garden appointed by Pasquino; where she found him readily expecting her comming, and another friend also with him, called Puccino (albeit more usually tearmed Strambo) a
secret well-willer to Lagina, whose love became the more
furthered by this friendly meeting. Each Lover delighting
in his hearts chosen Mistresse, caused them to walke alone
by themselves, as the spaciousnesse of the Garden gave
them ample liberty: Puccino with his Lagina in one part,
and Pasquino with his Simonida in another. The walke
which they had made choise of, was by a long and goodly
bed of Sage, turning and returning by the same bed as
their conference ministred occasion, and as they pleased to
recreate themselves, affecting rather to continue still there,
then in any part of the Garden.

One while they would sit downe by the Sage bed, and
afterward rise to walke againe, as ease and wearinesse
seemed to invite them. At length, Pasquino chanced to
crop a leafe of the Sage, wherewith he both rubbed his
teeth and gummies, and champing it betweene them also,
saying; that there was no better thing in the world to
cleanse the teeth withall, after feeding. Not long had he
thus champed the Sage in his teeth, returning to his former
kinde of discoursing, but his countenance began to change
very pale, his sight failed, and speech forsooke him; so that
(in briefe) he fell downe dead. Which when Simonida
beheld, wringing her hands, she cried out for helpe to
Strambo and Lagina, who immediately came running to
her. They finding Pasquino not onely to be dead, but his
body swolne, and strangely over-spred with foule black
spots, both on his face, hands, and all parts else beside:
Strambo cried out, saying; Ah wicked maide, what hast
thou poisoned him?

These words and their shrill out-cries also were heard by
Neighbours dwelling neere to the Garden, who comming in
sodainly uppon them, and seeing Pasquino lying dead, and
hugely swoln, Strambo likewise complaining, and accusing
Simonida to have poysioned him; she making no answer,
but standing in a gastly amazement, all her senses meerely
confounded, at such a strange and uncouth accident, in
loosing him whom she so dearely loved: knew not how to
excuse her selfe, and therefore every one verily beleeved,
that Strambo had not unjustly accused her. Poore wofull maide, thus was she instantly apprehended, and drowned in her teares, they led her along to the Potestates Palace, where her accusation was justified by Strambo, Lagina, and two men more; the one named Atticciato, and the other Malagevole, fellowes and companions with Pasquino, who came into the Garden also upon the out-cry.

The Judge, without any delay at all, gave eare to the busines, and examined the case very strictly: but could by no meanes comprehend, that any malice should appeare in her towards him, nor that she was guiltie of the mans death. Wherefore, in the presence of Simonida, he desired to see the dead body, and the place where he fell downe dead, because there he intended to have her relate, how she saw the accident to happen, that her owne speeches might the sooner condemne her, whereas the case yet remained doubtfull, and farre beyond his comprehension. So, without any further publication, and to avoid the following of the turbulent multitude, they departed from the bench of Justice, and came to the place, where Pasquinoes body lay swolne like a Tunne. Demanding there questions, concerning his behaviour, when they walked there in conference together, and, not a little admiring the manner of his death, while he stood advisedly considering thereon.

She going to the bed of Sage, reporting the whole precedent history, even from the originall to the ending: the better to make the case understood, without the least colour of ill carriage towards Pasquino; according as she had seene him do, even so did she plucke another leaf of the Sage, rubbing her teeth therewith, and champing it as he formerly did. Strambo, and the other intimate friends of Pasquino, having noted in what manner she used the Sage, and this appearing as her utmost refuge, either to acquit or condemn her: in presence of the Judge they smiled thereat, mocking and deriding whatsoever she saide, or did, and desiring (the more earnestly) the sentence of 210
THE FOURTH DAY

death against her, that her body might be consumed with fire, as a just punishment for her abominable transgression.

Poore Simonida, sighing and sorrowing for her deere loves losse, and (perhappes) not meanly terrified, with the strict infliction of torment so severely urged and followed by Strambo and the rest standing dumb still, without answering so much as one word; by tasting of the same Sage, fell downe dead by the bed, even by the like accident Pasquino formerly did, to the admirable astonishment of all there present.

Oh poore infortuniate Lovers, whose Starres were so inauspicious to you, as to finish both your mortall lives, and fervent love, in lesse limitation then a dayes space. How to censure of your deaths, and happines to ensue thereon, by an accident so strange and inevitable: it is not within the compasse of my power, but to hope the best, and so I leave you. But yet concerning Simonida her selfe, in the common opinion of us that remaine living: her true vertue and innocency (though Fortune was otherwise most cruell to her) would not suffer her to sinke under the testimony of Strambo, Lagina, Atticciato, and Malagevole, being but carders of wool, or perhaps of meainer condition; a happier course was ordained for her, to passe clearely from their infamous imputation, and follow her Pasquino, in the very same manner of death, and with such a speedy expedition.

The Judge standing amazed, and all there present in his company, were silent for a long while together: but, uppon better re-collection of his spirits, thus he spake. This inconvenience which thus hath hapned, and confounded our senses with no common admiration; in mine opinion concerneth the bed of Sage, avouching it either to be venomous, or dangerously infected, which (neverthelesse) is seldom found in Sage. But to the end, that it may not be offensive to any more hereafter, I will have it wholly digd up by the rootes, and then to be burnt in the open Market place.
Hereupon, the Gardiner was presently sent for, and before the Judge would depart thence, he saw the bed of Sage digged up by the roots, and found the true occasion, whereby these two poore Lovers lost their lives. For, just in the middest of the bed, and at the maine roote, which directed all the Sage in growth; lay an huge mighty Toad, even weltring (as it were) in a hole full of poyson; by meanes whereof, in conjecture of the Judge, and all the rest, the whole bed of Sage became envenomed, occasioning every leafe thereof to be deadly in taste. None being so hardy, as to approach neere the Toade, they made a pile of wood directly over it, and setting it on a flaming fire, threw all the Sage thereinto, and so they were consumed together. So ended all further suite in Law, concerning the deaths of Pasquino and Simonida: whose bodies being carried to the Church of Saint Paul, by their sad and sorrowfull accusers, Strambo, Lagina, Atticciato and Malagevole, were buried together in one goodly Monument, for a future memory of their hard Fortune.
Jeronimo affecting a yong Maiden, named Silvestra, was constrained (by the earnest importunity of his Mother) to take a journey to Paris. At his return home from thence againe, he found his love Silvestra married. By secret means, he got entrance into her house, and dyed upon the bed lying by her. Afterward, his body being carried to Church, to receive buriall, she likewise died there instantly upon his coarse.

THE EIGHT NOVELL

Wherein is againe declared, the great indiscretion and folly of them, that think to constraine love, according to their will, after it is constantly setled before: With other instructions, concerning the unspeakeable power of Love.

Madam Aemilia had no sooner concluded her Novell, but Madam Neiphila (by the Kings command) began to speake in this manner. It seemeth to me (Gracious Ladies) that there are some such people to be found, who imagine themselves to know more, then all other else in the world beside, and yet indeede do know nothing at all: presuming (thorough this arrogant opinion of theirs) to imploy and oppose their senselesse understanding, against infallible grounded reason, yea, and to attempt courses, not only contrary to the counsell and judgement of men, but also to crosse the nature of divine ordination. Out of which saucy and ambitious presumption, many mighty harmes have already had beginning, and more are like to ensue uppon such boldnesse, because it is the ground of all evils.
Now, in regard that among all other natural things, no one is lesse subject to take counsell, or can be wrought to contrariety, then Love, whose nature is such, as rather to run upon his owne rash consumption, then to be ruled by admonitions of the very wisest: my memory hath inspired it selfe, with matter incident to this purpose, effectually to approve, what I have already said. For I am now to speake of a woman who would appeare to have more wit, then either she had indeed, or appertained to her by any title. The matter also, wherein she would needs shew her studious judgement and capacity, was of much more consequence then she could deserve to meddle withall. Yet such was the issue of her fond presuming; that (in one instant) she expelled both love, and the soule of her owne sonne out of his body, where (doubtlesse) it was planted by divine favour and appointment.

In our owne City (according to true and ancient testimony) there dwelt sometime a very worthy and wealthy Merchant, named Leonardo Sighiero, who by his wife had one onely Sonne, called Jeronimo; and within a short while after his birth, Leonardo being very sicke, and having setled all his affaires in good order; departed out of this wretched life to a better. The Tutors and Governours of the Childe, thought it fittest to let him live with his Mother, where he had his whole education, though schooled among many other worthy neighbours children, according as in most Cities they use to do. Yong Jeronimo growing on in yeares, and frequenting dayly the company of his Schoole-fellowes and others: he would often sport (as the rest did) with the neighbors children, and much pretty pastime they found together.

In the harmlesse recreations of youth, graver judgements have often observed, that some especiall matter received then such originall, as greater effect hath followed thereon. And many times, parents and kindred have bene the occasion (although perhaps beyond their expectation) of very strange and extraordinary accidents, by names of familiarity passing betweene Boyes and Girles, as King
THE FOURTH DAY

and Queene, sweet heart and sweet heart, friend and friend, husband and wife, and divers other such like kind tearmes, prooving afterwards to be true indeed. It fell out so with our yong Jeronimo; for, among a number of pretty Damosels, daughters to men of especiall respect, and others of farre inferiour quality: a Taylors daughter, excelling the rest in favour and feature (albeit her Father was but poore) Jeronimo most delighted to sport withall; and no other titles passed betweene them, even in the hearing of their parents and friends, but wife and husband: such was the beginning of their young affection, presaging (no doubt) effectually to follow.

Nor grew this familiarity (as yet) any way distasted, till by their daily conversing together, and enterchange of infinite pretty speeches, Jeronimo felt a strange alteration in his soule, with such enforcing and powerfull afflictions; as he was never well but in her company, nor she enjoyed any rest if Jeronimo were absent. At the length, this being noted by his Mother, she began to rebuke him, yea many times gave him both threatnings and blowes, which proving to no purpose, not hindering his accesse to her; she complained to his Tutors, and like one that in regard of her riches, thought to plant an Orange upon a blacke thorne, spake as followeth.

This Sonne of mine Jeronimo, being as yet but foureteene years of age, is so deeply enamoured of a yong Girle, named Silvestra, daughter unto a poore Tailor, our neere dwelling neighbour: that if we do not send him out of her company, one day (perhaps) he may make her his wife, and yet without any knowledge of ours, which questionlesse would be my death. Otherwise, he may pine and consume himselfe away, if he see us procure her marriage to some other. Wherefore, hold it good, that to avoid so great an inconvenience, we should send Jeronimo some far distance hence, to remaine where some of our Factors are employed: because, when he shall be out of her sight, and their often meetings utterly disappointed; his affection to her will the sooner cease, by frustrating his
THE DECAMERON

NOVELL VIII

hope for ever enjoying her, and so we shall have the better
means, to match him with one of greater quality. The
Tutors did like well of her advice, not doubting but it
would take answerable effect: and therefore, calling Jeron-
mino into a private Parlor, one of them began in this
manner.

Jeronimo, you are now growne to an indifferent stature,
and (almost) able to take government of your selfe. It
cannot then seeme any way inconvenient, to acquaint you
with your deceased Fathers affaires, and by what good
courses he came to such wealth. You are his onely sonne
and heire, to whom he hath bequeathed his rich possessions
(your Mothers moity evermore remembred) and travaile
would now seeme fitting for you, as well to gaine experi-
ence in Trafficke and Merchandize, as also to let you see
the worlds occurrences. Your Mother therefore (and we
have thought it expedient) that you should journey from
hence to Paris, there to continue for some such fitting
time, as may grant you full and free opportunity, to survey
what stocke of wealth is there employed for you, and to
make you understand, how your Factors are furtherous to
your affaires. Beside, this is the way to make you a man
of more solid apprehension, and perfect instruction in civill
courses of life; rather then by continuing here to see none
but Lords, Barons, and Gentlemen, whereof we have too
great a number. When you are sufficiently qualified there,
and have learned what belongeth to a worthy Marchant,
such as was Leonardo Sighiero your famous Father; you
may returne home againe at your owne pleasure.

The youth gave them attentive hearing, and (in few
words) returned them answer: That he would not give
way to any such travaile, because he knew how to dispose
of himselfe in Florence, as well as in any other place he
should be sent too. Which when his Tutors heard, they
reproved him with many severe speeches: and seeing they
could win no other answer from him, they made returne
thereof to his Mother. She storming extremly theretof,
yet not so much for denying the journey to Paris, as in
216
regard of his violent affection to the Maide; gave him very bitter and harsh language. All which availing nothing, she began to speake in a more milde and gentle straine, entreating him with flattering and affable words, to be governed in this case by his Tutors good advice. And so farre (in the end) she prevailed with him, that he yeelded to live at Paris for the space of a yeare, but further time he would not grant, and so all was ended.

Jeronimo being gone to remaine at Paris, his love daily increasing more and more, by reason of his absence from Silvestra, under faire and friendly promises, of this moneth, and the next moneth, sending for him home; there they detained him two whole yeares together. Whereupon, his love was growne to such an extremity, that he neither would, or could abide any longer there, but home he returned, before he was expected. His love Silvestra, by the cunning compacting of his Mother and Tutors, he found married to a Tent-makers Sonne; whereat he vexed and greeved beyond all measure. Nevertheless, seeing the case was now no way to be holpen; he strove to beare it with so much patience, as so great a wrong, and his hearts tormenting greefe, would give leave to doe.

Having found out the place where she dwelt, he began (as it is the custome of yong Lovers) to use divers daily walkes by her doore: as thinking in his minde, that her remembrance of him was constantly continued, as his was most intirely fixed on her. But the case was very strangely altred, because she was now growne no more mindfull of him, then if she had never seene him before. Or if she did any way remember him, it appeared to be so little, that manifest signes declared the contrary. Which Jeronimo very quickly perceivd, albeit not without many melancholy perturbations. Notwithstanding, he laboured by all possible meanes, to recover her former kindnesse againe: but finding all his paines frivolously employed; he resolued to dye, and yet to compasse some speech with her before.

By meanes of a neere dwelling neighbour (that was his 2:EE
very deare and intimate friend) he came acquainted with every part of the house, and prevailed so far, that one evening, when she and her husband supt at a neighbours house; he compassed accesse into the same bed chamber, where Silvestra used most to lodge. Finding the Curtaines ready drewne, he hid himselse behinde them on the further side of the bed, and so tarried there untill Silvestra and her husband were returned home, and laide downe in bed to take their rest. The husbands sences were soone overcome with sleepe, by reason of his painefull toyling all the day, and bodies that are exercised with much labour, are the more desirous to have ease. She staying up last, to put out the light, and hearing her husband sleepe so soundly, that his snoring gave good evidence thereof: layed her selfe downe the more respectively, as being very loath any way to disease him, but sweetly to let him enjoy his rest.

Silvestra lay on the same side of the bed, where Jeronimo had hid himselse behinde the Curtaines; who stepping softly to her in the darke, and laying his hand gently on her brest, saide: Deare Love, forbeare a little while to sleepe, for heere is thy loyall friend Jeronimo. The yong woman starting with amazement, would have cried out, but that he entreated her to the contrary; protesting, that he came for no ill intent to her, but onely to take his latest leave of her. Alas Jeronimo (quoth she) those idle dayes are past and gone, when it was no way unseemly for our youth, to entertaine equality of those desires, which then well agreed with our young blood. Since when, you have lived in forraine Countries, which appeared to me to alter your former disposition: for, in the space of two whole yeares, either you grew forgetfull of me (as change of ayre, may change affection) or (at the best) made such account of me, as I never heard the least salutation from you. Now you know me to be a married wife, in regard whereof, my thoughts have embraced that chaste and honourable resolution, not to minde any man but my husband; and therefore, as you are come hither without
my love or license, so in like manner I do desire you to be gone. Let this priviledge of my Husbandes sound sleeping, be no colour to your longer continuing here, or encourage you to finde any further favour at mine hand: for if mine husband should awake, beside the danger that thereon may follow to you, I cannot but loose the sweet Happinesse of peacefull life, which hitherto we have both mutually embraced.

The yong man, hearing these wordes, and remembrring what loving kindnesse he had formerly found, what secret love Letters he had sent from Paris, with other private intelligences and tokens, which never came to her receite and knowledge, so cunningly his Mother and Tutors had carried the matter: immediately felt his heart-strings to breake, and lying downe upon the beds side by her, uttered these his very last words. Silvestra farewell, thou hast kilde the kindest heart that ever loved a woman: and speaking no more, gave up the ghost. She hearing these words delivered with an entire sighe, and deepe-fetcht groane, did not imagine the strange consequence following thereon; yet was mooved to much compassion, in regard of her former affection to him. Silent she lay an indifferent while, as being unable to returne him any answer, and looking when he would be gone, according as before she had earnestly entreated him. But when she perceyved him to lye so still, as neither word or motion came from him, she saide: Kinde Jeronimo, why doest thou not depart and get thee gone? So putting forth her hand, it hapned to light upon his face, which she felt to be as cold as yce: whereat marvailing not a little, as also at his continued silence, she jogged him, and felt his hands in like manner, which were stiffely extended forth, and all his body cold, as not having any life remaining in him, which greatly amazing her, and confounding her with sorrow beyond all measure, she was in such perplexity, that she could not devise what to do or say.

In the end, she resolved to try how her husband would take it, that so strange an accident should thus happen in his house, and putting the case as if it did not concerne
them, but any other of the neighbours; awaking him first, demaunded of him what was best to be done, if a man should steale into a neighbours house, unknowne to him, or any of his family; and in his bed chamber to be found dead. He presently replyed (as not thinking the case concerned himselfe) that, the onely helpe in such an unexpected extremity, was to take the dead body, and convey it to his owne house, if he had any; whereby no scandall or reproach would follow to them, in whose house he had so unfortunately dyed. Hereupon she immediately arose, and lighting a candle, shewed him the dead body of Jeronimo, with protestation of every particular, both of her innocency, either of knowledge of his comming thither, or any other blame that could concerne her. Which he both constantly knowing and beleeving, made no more ceremony, but putting on his Garments, tooke the dead body upon his shoulders, and carried it to the Mothers doore, where he left it, and afterward returned to his owne house againe.

When day light was come, and the dead body found lying in the Porch, it moved very much greefe and amazement, considering, he had bin seene the day before, in perfect health to outward appearance. Nor neede we to urge any question of his Mothers sorrow upon this strange accident, who, causing his body to be carefully searched, without any blow, bruise, wound, or hurt uppon it, the Physitians could not give any other opinion, but that some inward conceyte of greefe had caused his death, as it did indeed, and no way otherwise. To the cheefe Church was the dead body carried, to be generally seene of all the people, his Mother and Friends weeping heavily by it, as many more did the like beside, because he was beloved of every one. In which time of universall mourning, the honest man (in whose house he dyed) spake thus to his wife: Disguise thy selfe in some decent manner, and go to the Church, where (as I heare) they have laide the body of Jeronimo. Crowde in amongst the Women, as I will do the like amongst the men, to heare what opinion passeth of his death, and whether we shall be scandalized thereby, or no.
THE FOURTH DAY

Silvestra, who was now become full of pitty too late, quickly condiscended, as desiring to see him dead, whom sometime she dearly affected in life. And being come to the Church, it is a matter to be admired, if advisedly we consider on the powerfull working of love; for the heart of this woman, which the prosperous fortune of Jeronimo could not pierce, now in his wofull death split in sunder; and the ancient sparks of love so long concealed in the embers, brake foorth into a furious flame; and being violently surprized with extraordinary compassion, no sooner did she come neere to the dead body, where many stood weeping round about it; but strangely shrieking out aloud, she fell downe shrieking out aloud, she fell downe: and even as extreamity of greefe finished his life, so did it hers in the same manner. For she moved neither hand nor foot, because her vitall powers had quite forsaken her. The women labouring to comfort her by all best meanes they could devise; did not take any knowledge of her, by reason of her disguised garments: but finding her dead indeed, and knowing her also to be Silvestra, being overcome with unspeakable compassion, and danted with no meane admiration, they stood strangely gazing each upon other.

Wonderfull crowds of people were then in the Church; and this accident being now noysed among the men, at length it came to her Husbands understanding, whose greefe was so great, as it exceeded all capacity of expression. Afterward he declared what had hapned in his house the precedent night, according as his wife had truly related to him, with all the speeches, which passed between Silvestra and Jeronimo; by which discourse, they generally conceived, the certaine occasion of both their sodaine deaths, which moved them to great compassion. Then taking the yong womans body, and ordering it as a coarse ought to be: they layed it on the same Biere by the yong man, and when they had sufficiently sorrowed for their disastrous fortune, they gave them honourable buriall both in one grave. So, this poore couple, whom love (in life) could not joyne together, death did unite in an inseparable conjunction.
Messer Guiglielmo of Rossiglione having slaine Messer Guiglielmo Guardastagno, whom hee imagined to love his wife, gave her his heart to eate. Which she knowing afterward, threw her selfe out of an high window to the ground; and being dead, was then buried with her friend.

The Ninth Novell

Whereby appeareth, what ill successe attendeth on them, that love contrary to reason: in offering injurie both to friendship and marriage together.

WHEN the Novell of Madam Neiphila was ended, which occasioned much compassion in the whole assembly; the King who wold not infringe the priviledge granted to Dioneus, no more remaining to speake but they two, began thus. I call to minde (gentle Ladies) a Novell, which (seeing we are so farre entred into the lamentable accidents of successesselese love, will urge you unto as much commiseration, as that so lately reported to you. And so much the rather, because the person of whom we are to speake, were of respective quality; which approveth the accident to be more cruell, then those whereof we have formerly discoursed.

According as the people of Provence do report, there dwelt sometime in that jurisdiction, two noble Knights, each well possessed of Castles and followers; the one being named Messer Guiglielmo de Rossiglione, and the other Messer Guiglielmo Guardastagno. Now, in regard that they were both valiant Gentlemen, and singularly expert in actions of Armes; they loved together the more mutually, and held it as a kinde of custome to be seen in all Tiltes and Tournaments, or any other exercises of Armes, going commonly alike in
their wearing garments. And although their Castles stood about five miles distant each from other, yet were they dayly conversant together, as very loving and intimate friends. The one of them, I meane Messer Guigielmo de Rossilione, had to wife a very gallant beautifull Lady, of whom Messer Guardastagno (forgetting the lawes of respect and loyall friendship) became over-fondly enamoured, expressing the same by such outward meanes, that the Lady her selfe tooke knowledge thereof, and not with any dislike, as it seemed, but rather lovingly entertained: yet she grew not so forgetfull of her honour and estimation, as the other did of faith to his friend.

With such indiscretion was this idle love carried, that whether it sorted to effect, or no, I know not: but the husband perceived some such maner of behaviour, as he could not easily digest, nor thought it fitting to endure. Whereupon, the league of friendly amity so long continued, began to faile in very strange fashion, and became converted into deadly hatred: which yet he very cunningly concealed, bearing an outward shew of constant friendship still, but (in his heart) he had vowed the death of Guardastagno. Nothing wanted, but by what meanes it might best be effected, which fell out to be in this manner. A publicke Joust or Tourney, was proclaimed by sound of Trumpet throughout all France, wherewith immediately, Messer Guigielmo Rossiglione acquainted Messer Guardastagno, entreating him that they might further conferre theron together, and for that purpose to come and visit him, if he intended to have any hand in the businesse. Guardastagno being exceeding glad of this accident, which gave him liberty to see his Mistresse, sent answer backe by the messenger, that on the morrow at night, he would come and sup with Rossiglione; who upon this reply, projected to himselfe in what maner to kill him.

On the morrow, after dinner, arming himselfe, and two more of his servants with him, such as he had solemnly swore to secrecy, he mounted on horsebacke, and rode on about a mile from his owne Castle, where he lay closely ambushed in a Wood, through which Guardastagno must
NOVELL IX

needs passe. After he had stayed there some two houres space and more, he espied him come riding with two of his attendants, all of them being unarmed, as no way distrusting any such intended treason. So soone as he was come to the place, where he had resolved to do the deed; hee rushed forth of the ambush, and having a sharpe Lance readily charged in his rest, ran mainly at him, saying: False villaine, thou art dead. Guardastagno, having nothing wherewith to defend himselfe, nor his servants able to give him any succour; being pierced quite through the body with the Lance, downe he fell dead to the ground, and his men (fearing the like misfortune to befall them) galloped mainely backe againe to their Lords Castle, not knowing them who had thus murthered their Master, by reason of their armed disguises, which in those martiall times were usually wore.

Messer Guiglielmo Rossiglione, alighting from his horse, and having a keene knife ready drawne in his hand; opened therewith the brest of dead Guardastagno, and taking foorth his heart with his owne hands, wrapped it in the Bandelote belonging to his Lance, commanding one of his men to the charge thereof, and never to disclose the deed. So, mounting on horse-backe againe, and darke night drawing on apace, he returned home to his Castle. The Lady, who had heard before of Guardastagnoes intent, to suppe there that night, and (perhaps) being earnestly desirous to see him; marvailing at his so long tarrying, saide to her husband: Beleeve me Sir (quoth she) me thinkes it is somewhat strange, that Messer Guiglielmo Guardastagno delayes his comming so long, he never used to do so till now. I received tidings from him wife (saide he) that he cannot be here till to morrow. Whereat the Lady appearing to be displeased, concealed it to her selfe, and used no more words.

Rossiglione leaving his Lady, went into the Kitchin, where calling for the Cooke, he delivered him the heart, saying: Take this heart of a wilde Boare, which it was my good happe to kill this day, and dresse it in the
THE FOURTH DAY

daintiest manner thou canst devise to do; which being so done, when I am set at the Table, send it to me in a silver dish, with sauce besemiing so dainty a morsell. The Cooke tooke the heart, beleeving it to be no otherwise, then as his Lord had saide: and using his utmost skill in dressing it, did divide it into artificiall small slices, and made it most pleasing to be tasted. When supper time was come, Rossiglione sate downe at the table with his Lady: but he had little or no appetite at all to eate, the wicked deed which he had done so perplexed his soule, and made him to sit very strangely musing. At length, the Cooke brought in the dainty dish, which he himselfe setting before his wife, began to finde fault with his owne lacke of stomacke, yet provoked her with many faire speeches, to tast the Cooks cunning in so rare a dish.

The Lady having a good appetite indeede, when she had first tasted it, fed afterward so heartily thereon, that she left very little, or none at all remaining. When he perceived that all was eaten, he said unto her: Tell me Madame, how you do like this delicate kinde of meate? In good faith Sir (quoth she) in all my life I was never better pleased. Now trust mee Madame, answered the Knight, I do verily beleeve you, nor do I greatly wonder thereat, if you like that dead, which you loved so dearly being alive. When she heard these words, a long while she sate silent, but afterward saide. I pray you tell me Sir; what meate was this which you have made me to eate? Muse no longer (saide he) for therein I will quickly resolve thee. Thou hast eaten the heart of Messer Guiglielmo Guardastagno, whose love was so deare and precious to thee, thou false, perfidious, and disloyall Lady: I pluckt it out of his vile body with mine owne hands, and made my Cooke to dresse it for thy diet.

Poore Lady, how strangely was her soule afflicted, hearing these harsh and unpleasing speeches? Teares flowed abundantly from her faire eies, and like tempestuous windes embowelled in the earth, so did vehement sighes breake mainly from her heart, and after a tedious time of silence, she spake in this manner. My Lord and husband, you have
done a most disloyall and damnable deede, misguided by
your owne wicked jealous opinion, and not by any just
cause given you, to murther so worthy and Noble a Gentle-
man. I protest unto you upon my soule, which I wish to
be confounded in eternall perdition, if ever I were unchaste
to your bed, or allowed him any other favour, but what
might well become so honourable a friend. And seeing my
body hath bene made the receptacle for so precious a kinde
of foode, as the heart of so valiant and courteous a Knight,
such as was the Noble Guardastagno; never shall any
other foode hereafter, have entertainment there, or my selfe
live the Wife to so bloody a Husband.

So starting up from the Table, and stepping unto a great
gazing Window, the Casement whereof standing wide open
beinde her: violently shee leaped out thereat, which beeing
an huge height in distance from the ground, the fall did
not onely kill her, but also shivered her body into many
peeces. Which Rossiglione perceiving, hee stoode like a
body without a soule, confounded with the killing of so
deare a friend, losse of a chaste and honourable wife, and
all through his owne over-credulous conceit.

Upon further conference with his private thoughts, and
remorsefull acknowledgement of his heinous offence, which
repentance (too late) gave him eyes now to see, though
rashnesse before would not permit him to consider; these
two extreamities inlarged his dulled understanding. First,
he grew fearfull of the friends and followers to murthered
Guardastagno, as also the whole Country of Provence, in
regard of the peoples generall love unto him; which being
two maine and important motives, both to the detestation
of so horrid an act, and immediate severe revenge to succeede
thereon: he made such provision as best he could, and as
so sodaine a warning would give leave, he fled away secretly
in the night season.

These unpleasing newes were soone spread abroad the next
morning, not only of the unfortunate accidents, but also of
Rossiglions flight; in regard whereof, the dead bodyes being
found, and brought together, as well by the people belong-
THE FOURTH DAY

ing to Guardastagno, as them that attended on the Lady: they were layed in the Chappell of Rossigliones Castle; where, after so much lamentation for so great a misfortune to befall them, they were honourably enterred in one faire Tombe, with excellent Verses engraven thereon, expressing both their noble degree, and by what unhappy means, they chanced to have buriall there.

A Physitians wife laide a Lover of her Maides (supposing him to be dead) in a Chest, by reason that he had drunke Water, which usually was given to procure a sleepy entrancing. Two Lombard usurers, stealing the Chest, in hope of a rich booty, carryed it into their owne house, where afterward the man awaking, was apprehended for a Theefe. The Chamber-maide to the Physitians wife, going before the bench of Justice, accuseth her selfe for putting the imagined dead body into the Chest, by which means he escapeth hanging. And the theeves which stole away the Chest, were condemned to pay a great summe of money.

THE TENTH NOVELL

Wherein is declared, that sometime by adventurous accident, rather then any reasonable comprehension, a man may escape out of manifold perilles, but especially in occurrences of Love.

fter that the King had concluded his Novell, there remained none now but Dioneus to tell the last: which himselfe confessing, and the King commandeing him to proceede, hee beganne in this manner. So many
THE DECAMERON

NOVELL

miseries of unfortunate Love, as all of you have already related, hath not onely swolne your eyes with weeping, but also made sicke our hearts with sighing: yea (Gracious Ladies) I my selfe finde my spirits not meanly afflicted thereby. Wherefore the whole day hath bene very irksome to me, and I am not a little glad, that it is so neere ending. Now, for the better shutting it up altogether, I would be very loath to make an addition, of any more such sad and mournfull matter, good for nothing but onely to feede melancholly humor, and from which (I hope) my faire Starres will defend me. Tragicall discourse, thou art no fit companion for me, I will therefore report a Novell which may minister a more joviall kinde of argument, unto whose Tales that must be told to morrow, and with the expiration of our present Kings reigne, to rid us of all heart-greeving hereafter.

Know then (most gracious assembly) that it is not many yeeres since, when there lived in Salerne, a very famous Physitian, named Signieur Mazzeo della Montagna, who being already well entred into yeeres, would (neverthelesse) marrie with a beautifull young Mayden of the City, bestowing rich garments, gaudie attyres, Ringes, and Jewelles on her, such as few Women else could any way equall, because hee loved her most deerely. Yet being an aged man, and never rememb-ring, how vaine and idle a thing it is, for age to make such an unsfitting Election, injurious to both; and therefore endangering that domestick agree-ment, which ought to be the sole and maine comfort of Marriage: it maketh me therefore to misdoubt, that as in our former Tale of Signiour Ricciardo de Cinzica, some dayes of the Calender did here seeme as distastefull, as those that occasioned the other Womans discontentment. In such unequall choyses, Parents commonly are more blame-woorthy, then any imputation, to bee layde on the young Women, who gladdely would enjoy such as in heart they have elected: but that their Parents, looking through the glasse of greedie lucre, doe overthrow both their owne hopes, and the faire fortunes of their children together.
THE FOURTH DAY

Yet to speake uprightly of this young married Wife, she declared her selfe to be of a wise and cheerfull spirit, not discouraged with her unequalitie of marriage: but bearing all with a contented browe, for feare of urging the very least mislike in her Husband. And he, on the other side, when occasions did not call him to visite his Patients, or to be present at the Colledge among his fellow-Doctours, would always bee chearing and comforting his Wife, as one that could hardly affoord to be out of her company. There is one especiall fatall misfortune, which commonly awaiteth on olde Mens marriages; when freezing December will match with flourishing May, and greene desires appeare in age, beyond all possibility of performance. Nor are there wanting good store of wanton Gallants, who hating to see Beauty in this manner betrayed, and to the embraces of a loathed bed, will make their folly scene in publike appearance, and by their daily proffers of amorous services (seeming compassionate of the womans disaster) are usually the cause of jealous suspitions, and very heinous houshold discontentments.

Among divers other, that faine would be nibling at this bayte of beautie, there was one, named Ruggiero de Jeroly, of honourable parentage, but yet of such a beboshed and disordered life, as neither Kindred or Friends, were willing to take any knowledge of him, but utterly gave him over to his dissolute courses: so that, throughout all Salerne, his conditions caused his generall contempt, and he accounted no better but even as a theeving and lewde company. The Doctours Wife, had a Chamber-maide attending on her; who, notwithstanding all the ugly deformities in Ruggiero, regarding more his person then his imperfections (because he was a compleate and well-featured youth) bestowed her affection most entirely on him, and oftentimes did supplie his wants, with her owne best meanes.

Ruggiero having this benefite of the Maides kinde love to him, made it an hopefull mounting Ladder, whereby to derive some good liking from the Mistresse, presuming
rather on his outward comely parts, then any other honest qualitie that might commend him. The Mistresse knowing what chose her Maide had made, and unable by any persuasions to remoue her, tooke knowledge of Ruggiero's private resorting to her house, and in meere love to her Maide (who had very many especiall deserves in her) oftentimes she would (in kinde manner) rebuke him, and advise him to a more settled course of life; which counsell, that it might take the better effect; she graced with liberall gifts: one while with Golde, others with Silver, and often with garments, for his comelier access to thither; which bounty, he (like a lewde mistaker) interpreted as assurances of her affection to him, and that he was more gracefull in her eye, then any man else could be.

In the continuance of these proceedings, it came to passe, that Master Doctor Mazzeo (being not onely a most expert Physitian, but likewise as skilfull in Chirurgerie beside) had a Patient in cure, who by great misfortune, had one of his legges broken all in pieces; which some weaker judgement having formerly dealt withall, the bones and sinewes were become so fowly putrified, as he tolde the parties friends, that the legge must be quite cut off, or else the Patient must needes dye: yet he intended so to order the matter, that the perill should proceede no further, to prejudice any other part of the body. The case beeing thus resolved on with the Pacient and his Friends, the day and time was appointed when the deede should be done: and the Doctor conceiving, that except the Patient were sleepily entranced, he could not by any meanes endure the paine, but must needes hinder what he meant to do: by distillation he made such an artificiall Water, as (after the Patient hath received it) it will procure a kinde of a dead sleepe, and endure so long a space, as necessity requireth the use there of, in full performance of the worke.

After he had made this sleepy water, he put it into a glasse, wherewith it was filled (almost) up to the brimme; and till the time came when he should use it, hee set it
in his owne Chamber-Window, never acquainting any one, to what purpose he had provided the water, nor what was his reason of setting it there; when it drew towards the evening, and he was returned home from his pacients, a Messenger brought him Letters from Malfy, concerning a great conflict happening there between two Noble Families, wherein divers were very dangerously wounded on either side, and without his speedy repairing thither, it would prove to the losse of many lives. Hereupon, the cure of the mans leg must needs be prolonged, untill he was returned backe againe, in regard that many of the wounded persons were his worthy friends, and liberall bounty was there to be expected, which made him presently go aboard a small Barke, and forthwith set away towards Malfy.

This absence of Master Doctor Mazzeo, gave opportunity to adventurous Ruggiero, to visite his house (he being gone) in hope to get more Crownes, and curtisie from the Mistresse, under formall colour of courting the Maide. And being closely admitted into the house, when divers Neighbours were in conference with her Mistresse, and held her with much pleasing discourse, as required longer time then was expected: the Maide, had no other roome to conceale Ruggiero in, but onely the bed Chamber of her Master, where she lockt him in; because none of the houshold people should descry him, and stayed attending on her Mistris, till all the Guests tooke their leave, and were gone. Ruggiero thus remayning alone in the Chamber, for the space of three long houres and more, was visited neither by Maide nor Mistris, but awaited when he should be set at liberty.

Now, whether feeding on salt meates before his coming thither, or customary use of drinking, which maketh men unable any long while to abstaine as being never satisfied with excesse; which of these two extreames they were, I know not: but drinke needs he must. And, having no other meanes for quenching his thirst, espied the glasse of water standing in the Window, and thinking it to be
some soveraigne kinde of water, reserved by the Doctor for his owne drinking, to make him lusty in his old yeeres, he tooke the glasse; and finding the water pleasing to his pallate, dranke it off every drop; then sitting downe on a Coffer by the beds side, soone after he fell into a sound sleepe, according to the powerfull working of the water.

No sooner were all the Neighbours gone, and the Maide at liberty from her Mistresse, but unlocking the doore, into the Chamber she went; and finding Ruggiero sitting fast asleepe, she began to hunch and punche him, entreat-ing him (softly) to awake: but all was to no purpose, for he neither moved, or answered one word; whereat her patience being somewhat provoked, she punched him more rudely, and angrily saide: Awake for shame thou drowsie dullard, and if thou be so desirous of sleeping, get thee home to thine owne lodging, because thou art not allowed to sleepe here. Ruggiero being thus rudely punched, fell from off the Coffer flat on the ground, appearing no other in all respects, then as if he were a dead body. Whereat the Maide being fearfully amazed, plucking him by the nose and young beard, and what else she could devise to do, yet all her labour proving still in vaine: she was almost beside her wits, stamping and raving all about the roome, as if sense and reason had forsaken her; so violent was her extreame distraction.

Upon the hearing of this noise, her Mistris came sodainely into the Chamber, where being affrighted at so strange an accident, and suspecting that Ruggiero was dead indeed: she pinched him strongly, and burnt his finger with a candle, yet all was as fruitelesse as before. Then sitting downe, she began to consider advisedly with her selfe, how much her honour and reputation would be endangered hereby, both with her Husband, and in vulgar opinion when this should come to publike notice. For (quoth she to her Maide) it is not thy fond love to this unruly fellow that can sway the censure of the monster multitude, in beleeving his accessse hither onely to thee: but my good
name, and honest repute, as yet untoucht with the very least taxation, will be rackt on the tenter of infamous judgement, and (though never so cleare) branded with generall condemnation. It is wisedome therefore, that we should make no noise but (in silence) consider with our selves, how to cleare the house of this dead body, by some such helpfull and witty device, as when it shall be found in the morning, his being here may passe without suspition, and the worlds rash opinion no way touch us.

Weeping and lamenting is now laid aside, and all hope in them of his lives restoring: onely to rid his body out of the house, that now requires their care and cunning: whereupon the Maide thus began. Mistresse (quoth she) this evening, although it was very late, at our next Neighbours doore (who you know is a Joyner by his trade) I saw a great Chest stand; and, as it seemeth, for a publike sale, because two or three nights together, it hath not bene thence removed: and if the owner have not lockt it, all invention else cannot furnish us with the like helpe. For therein will we lay his body, whereon I will bestow two or three wounds with my Knife, and leaving him so, our house can be no more suspected concerning his being here, then any other in the streete beside; nay rather farre lesse, in regard of your husbands credite and authority. Moreover, hereof I am certaine, that he being of such bad and disordered qualities: it will the more likely be imagined, that he was slaine by some of his own loose companions, being with them about some pilffering busines, and afterward hid his body in the chest, it standing so fitly for the purpose, and darke night also favouring the deed.

The Maids counsell past under the seale of allowance, only her Mistris thought it not convenient, that (having affected him so deerely) she should mangle his body with any wounds; but rather to let it be gathered by more likely-hood, that villaines had strangled him, and then conveyed his body into the Chest. Away she sends the Maide, to see whether the Chest stood there still, or no;
as indeede it did, and unlockt, whereof they were not a little joyfull. By the helpe of her Mistresse, the Maide tooke Ruggiero upon her shoulders, and bringing him to the doore, with dilligent respect that no one could discover them; in the Chest they laide him, and so there left him, closing downe the lidde according as they found it.

In the same streete, and not farre from the Joyner, dwelt two yong men who were Lombards, living upon the interest of their moneyes, coveting to get much, and to spend little. They having observed where the Chest stood, and wanting a necessary mooveable to houshold, yet loath to lay out money for buying it: complotted together this very night, to steale it thence, and carry it home to their house, as accordingly they did; finding it somewhat heavy, and therefore imagining, that matter of woorth was contained therein. In the Chamber where their wives lay, they left it; and so without any further search till the next morning, they laid them downe to rest likewise.

Ruggiero, who had now slept a long while, the drinke being digested, and the vertue thereof fully consummated; began to awake before day. And although his naturall sleepe was broken, and his senses had recovered their former power, yet notwithstanding, there remained such an astonishment in his braine, as not onely did afflict him all the day following, but also divers dayes and nights afterward. Having his eyes wide open, and yet not discerning any thing, he stretched forth his armes every where about him, and finding himselfe to be enclosed in the Chest, he grew more broad awake, and said to himselfe. What is this? Where am I? Do I wake or sleepe? Full well I remember, that not long since I was in my sweet-hearts Chamber, and now (me thinkes) I am mewed up in a Chest. What should I thinke hereof? Is Master Doctor returned home, or hath some other inconvenience happned, whereby finding me a sleepe, she was enforced to hide me thus? Surely it is so, and

234
THE FOURTH DAY

otherwise it cannot be: wherefore, it is best for me to lye still, and listen when I can heare any talking in the Chamber.

Continuing thus a longer while then otherwise he would have done, because his lying in the bare Chest was somewhat uneasie and painfull to him; turning divers times on the one side, and then as often againe on the other, coveting still for ease, yet could not finde any: at length, he thrust his backe so strongly against the Chests side, that (it standing on an un-even ground) it began to totter, and after fell downe. In which fall, it made so loud a noise, as the women (lying in the beds standing by) awaked, and were so overcome with feare, that they had not the power to speake one word. Ruggiero also being affrighted with the Chests fall, and perceiving how by that meanes it was become open, he thought it better, least some other sinister fortune should befall him, to be at open liberty, then inclosed up so strictly. And because he knew not where he was, as also hoping to meete with his Mistresse; he went all about groping in the darke, to finde either some staires or doore, whereby to get forth.

When the Women (being then awake) heard his trampling, as also his justling against the doores and windowes; they demanded, Who was there? Ruggiero, not knowing their voyces, made them no answer; wherefore they called to their husbands, who lay very soundly sleeping by them, by reason of their so late walking abroad, and therefore heard not this noise in the house. This made the Women much more timorous, and therefore rising out of their beddes, they opened the Casement towards the streete, crying out aloude, Theeves, Theeves. The neighbours arose upon this outcry, running up and downe from place to place, some engirting the house, and others entering into it: by means of which troublesome noise, the two Lombards awaked, and seizing there upon poore Ruggiero (who was well-neere affrighted out of his wittes, at so strange an accident, and his owne ignorance, how he happened thither, and how to escape from them) he stood gazing on them without any answer.
By this time, the Sergeants and other Officers of the City, ordinarily attending on the Magistrate, being raised by the tumult of this uproare, were come into the house, and had poore Ruggiero committed unto their charge: who bringing him before the Governor, was forthwith called in question, and known to be of a most wicked life, a shame to all his friends and kindred. He could say little for himselfe, never denying his taking in the house, and therefore desiring to finish all his fortunes together, desperately confessed, that he came with a fellonious intent to rob them, and the Governor gave him sentence to be hanged.

Soone were the newes spread throughout Salerne; that Ruggiero was apprehended, about robbing the house of the two usuring Lombardes: which when Mistresse Doctor and her Chamber-maide heard, they were confounded with most strange admiration, and scarcely credited what they themselves had done the night before, but rather imagined all matters past, to be no more then meerely a dreame, concerning Ruggieroes dying in the house, and their putting him into the Chest, so that by no likely or possible meanes, he could be the man in this perillous extreamitie.

In a short while after, Master Doctor Mazzeo was returned from Malfy, to proceede in his cure of the poore mans legge; and calling for his glasse of Water, which he left standing in his owne Chamber window, it was found quite empty, and not a drop in it: whereat he raged so extreamly, as never had the like impatience bene noted in him. His wife, and her Maide, who had another kinde of businesse in their braine, about a dead man so strangely come to life againe, knew not well what to say; but at the last, his Wife thus replyed somewhat angerly. Sir (quoth she) what a coyle is here about a paltry glasse of Water, which perhaps hath bene spilt, yet neyther of us faulty therein? Is there no more such water to be had in the world? Alas deere Wife (saide he) you might repute it to be a common kinde of Water, but indeed it was not so; for I did purposely compound it, onely to
procure a dead seeming sleepe: And so related the whole matter at large, of the Pacients legge, and his Waters losse.

When she had heard these words of her husband, presently she conceived, that the water was drunke off by Ruggiero, which had so sleepily entranced his senses, as they verily thought him to be dead, wherefore she saide. Beleeve me Sir, you never acquainted us with any such matter, which would have procured more carefull respect of it: but seeing it is gone, your skill extendeth to make more, for now there is no other remedy. While thus Master Doctor and his Wife were conferring together, the Maide went speedily into the City, to understand truly, whither the condemned man was Ruggiero, and what would now become of him. Being returned home againe, and alone with her Mistresse in the Chamber, thus she spake. Now trust me Mistresse, not one in the City speaketh well of Ruggiero, who is the man condemned to dye; and, for ought I can perceive, he hath neither Kinsman nor Friend that will doe any thing for him; but he is left with the Provost, and must be executed to morrow morning. Moreover Mistresse, by such instructions as I have received, I can well-neere informe you, by what meanes he came to the two Lombards house, if all be true that I have heard. You know the Joyner before whose doore the Chest stoode, wherein we did put Ruggiero; there is now a contention betweene him and another man, to whom (it seemeth) the Chest doth belong; in regard whereof, they are ready to quarrell extreamly each with other. For the one owing the Chest, and trusting the Joyner to sell it for him, would have him to pay him for the Chest. The Joyner denieth any sale thereof, avouching, that the last night it was stolne from his doore. Which the other man contrarying, maintaineth that he solde the Chest to the two Lombard usurers, as himselfe is able to affirme, because he found it in the house, when he (being present at the apprehension of Ruggiero) sawe it there in the same house. Hereupon, the Joyner gave him the lye, because
he never sold it to any man; but if it were there, they had robd him of it, as he would make it manifest to their faces. Then falling into clamorous speeches they went together to the Lombardes house, even as I returned home. Wherefore Mistresse, as you may easily perceive, Ruggiero was (questionlesse) carried thither in the Chest, and so there found; but how he revived againe, I cannot comprehend.

The Mistresse understanding now apparrantly, the full effect of the whole businesse, and in what manner it had bene carried, revealed to the Maide her husbands speeches, concerning the glasse of sleepie Water, which was the onely engine of all this trouble, clearly acquitting Ruggiero of the robbery, howsoever (in desperate fury, and to make an end of a life so contemptible) he had wrongfully accused himselfe. And notwithstanding this his hard fortune, which hath made him much more infamous then before, in all the dissolute behaviour of his life: yet it could not quaile her affection towards him; but being loath he should dye for some other mans offence, and hoping his future reformation; she fell on her knees before her Mistresse, and (drowned in her teares) most earnestly entreated her, to advise her with some such happy course, as might be the safety of poore Ruggieroes life. Mistresse Doctor, affecting her Maide dearely, and plainely perceiv-ing, that no disastrous fortune whatsoever, could alter her love to condemned Ruggiero; hoping the best hereafter, as the Maide her selfe did, and willing to save life rather then suffer it to be lost without just cause, she directed her in such discreet manner, as you will better conceive by the successe.

According as she was instructed by her Mistresse, she fell at the feete of Master Doctor, desiring him to pardon a great error, whereby she had over-much offended him. As how? said Master Doctor. In this manner (quoth the Maide) and thus proceeded. You are not ignorant Sir, what a Lewde liver Ruggiero de Jeroly is, and notwithstanding all his imperfections, how deere I love him,
THE FOURTH DAY

as he protesteth the like to me, and thus hath our love continued a yeere, and more. You being gone to Malfy, and your absence granting me apt opportunity, for conference with so kinde a friend; I made the bolder, and gave him entrance into your house, yea even into mine owne Chamber, yet free from any abuse, neither did he (bad though he be) offer any. Thirsty he was before his comming thither, either by salt meat, or distempered diet, and I being unable to fetch him wine or water, by reason my Mistresse sat in the Hall, seriously talking with her Sisters; remembred, that I saw a violl of Water standing in your Chamber Window, which he drinking quite off, I set it empty in the place againe. I have heard your discontentment for the said Water, and confesse my fault to you therein: but who liveth so justly, without offending at one time or other? And I am heartily sory for my transgression; yet not so much for the water, as the hard fortune that hath followed thereon; because thereby Ruggiero is in danger to lose his life, and all my hopes are utterly lost. Let me entreat you therefore (gentle Master) first to pardon me, and then to grant me permission, to succour my poore condemned friend, by all the best meanes I can devise.

When the Doctor had heard all her discourse, angry though he were, yet thus he answered with a smile. Much better had it bin, if thy follies punishment had falne on thy selfe, that it might have paide thee with deserved repentance, upon thy Mistresses finding thee sleeping. But go and get his deliverance if thou canst, with this caution, that if ever hereafter he be scene in my house, the perill thereof shall light on thy selfe. Receiving this answer, for her first entrance into the attempt, and as her Mistresse had advised her, in all hast she went to the prison, where she prevailed so well with the Jaylor, that hee granted her private conference with Ruggiero. She having instructed him what he should say to the Provost, if he had any purpose to escape with life; went thither before him to the Provost, who admitting her into his presence, and
THE DECAMERON

NOVELL X

knowing that shee was Master Doctors Maid, a man especially respected of all the City, he was the more willing to heare her message, he imagining that shee was sent by her Master.

Sir (quoth shee) you have apprehended Ruggiero de Jeroly, as a theefe, and judgement of death is (as I heare) pronounced against him: but hee is wrongfully accused, and is clearly innocent of such a heinous detection. So entring into the History, she declared every circumstance, from the originall to the end: relating truly, that being her Lover, shee brought him into her Masters house, where he dranke the compounded sleepy water, and reputed for dead, she laide him in the Chest. Afterward, she rehearsed the speeches betwenee the Joyner, and him that laide claime to the Chest, giving him to understand thereby, how Ruggiero was taken in the Lombards house.

The Provost presently gathering, that the truth in this case was easie to be knowne; sent first for Master Doctor Mazzeo, to know, whether he compounded any such water, or no: which he affirmed to be true, and upon what occasion he prepared it. Then the Joyner, the owner of the Chest, and the two Lombards, being severally questioned withall: it appeared evidently, that the Lombards did steale the Chest in the night season, and carried it home to their owne house. In the end, Ruggiero being brought from the prison, and demanded, where he was lodged the night before, made answer, that he knew not where. Onely he well remembred, that bearing affection to the Chamber-maide of Master Doctor Mazzeo della Montagna, she brought him into a Chamber, where a violl of water stoode in the Window, and he being extreamly thirsty, dranke it off all. But what became of him afterward (till being awake, he found himselfe enclosed in a Chest, and in the house of the two Lombards) he could not say any thing.

When the Provost had heard all their answers, which he caused them to repeate over divers times, in regard they were very pleasing to him: he cleared Ruggiero from
THE FOURTH DAY

the crime imposed on him, and condemned the Lombards in three hundred Ducates, to be given to Ruggiero in way of an amends, and to enable his marriage with the Doctors Mayde, whose constancie was much commended, and wrought such a miracle on penitent Ruggiero; that after his marriage, which was graced with great and honourable pompe, he regained the intimate love of all his kindred, and lived in most Noble condition, even as if he had never bene any disordered man.

If the former Novels had made all the Ladies sad and sighe, this last of Dioneus as much delighted them, as restoring them to their former jocond humor, and banishing Tragical discourse for ever. The King perceiving that the Sun was neere setting, and his government as neere ending, with many kinde and courteous speeches, excused himselfe to the Ladies, for being the motive of such an argument, as expressed the infelicity of poore Lovers. And having finished his excuse, up he rose, taking the Crown of Lawrell from off his owne head, the Ladies awaiting on whose head he pleased next to set it, which proved to be the gracious Lady Fiammetta, and thus he spake. Here I place this Crowne on her head, that knoweth better then any other, how to comfort this faire assembly to morrow, for the sorrow which they have this day endured.

Madame Fiammetta, whose lockes of haire were curled, long, and like golden wiers, hanging somewhat downe over her white and delicate shoulders, her visage round, wherein the Damaske Rose and Lilly contended for priority, the eyes in her head, resembling those of the Faulcon messenger, and a dainty mouth; her lippes looking like two little Rubyes, with a commendable smile thus she replied.

Philostratus, gladly I do accept your gift; and to the end that ye may the better remember your selfe, concerning what you have done hitherto: I will and command, that generall preparation be made against to morrow, for faire and happy fortunes hapning to Lovers, after former cruell and unkinde accidents. Which proposition was very pleasing to them all.

2:HH  241
Then calling for the Master of the Household, and taking order with him, what was most needfull to be done; she gave leave unto the whole company (who were all risen) to go recreate themselves untill supper time. Some of them walked about the Garden, the beauty whereof banished the least thought of weariness. Others walked by the River to the Mill, which was not farre off, and the rest fell to exercises, fitting their owne fancies, untill they heard the summons for Supper. Hard by the goodly Fountaine (according to their wonted manner) they supped altogether, and were served to their no meane contentment: but being risen from the Table, they fell to their delight of singing and dancing. While Philomena led the dance, the Queene spake in this manner.

Philostratus, I intend not to varie from those courses heretofore observed by my predecessors, but even as they have already done, so it is my authority, to command a Song. And because I am well assured, that you are not unfurnished of Songs answerable to the quality of the passed Novels: my desire is, in regard we would not be troubled hereafter, with any more discourses of unfortunate Love, that you shall sing a Song agreeing with your owne disposition. Philostratus made answer, that hee was ready to accomplish her command, and without all further ceremony, thus he began.

THE SONG

Chorus. My teares do plainly prove,
How justly that poore heart hath cause to greeve
Which (under trust) findes Treason in his Love.

When first I saw her, that now makes me sigh,
Distrust did never enter in my thoughts.
So many vertues clearly shin'd in her,
That I esteem'd all martyrdome was light
Which Love could lay on me. Nor did I greeve,
Although I found my liberty was lost.
But now mine error I do plainly see :
Not without sorrow, thus betray'd to bee.
My teares do, etc.
THE FOURTH DAY

For, being left by basest treachery
Of her in whom I most reposed trust:
I then could see apparant flatterie
In all the fairest shewes that she did make.
But when I strove to get forth of the snare,
I found my selfe the further plunged in.
For I beheld another in my place,
And I cast off, with manifest disgrace.

Then felt my heart such hels of heavy woes,
Not utterable.  I curst the day and houre
When first I saw her lovely countenance,
Enricht with beautie, farre beyond all other:
Which set my soule on fire, enflamde each part,
Making a martyrdome of my poore hart.
My faith and hope being basely thus betrayde;
I durst not moove, to speake I was affrayde.

Thou canst (thou powerfull God of Love) perceive,
My ceasselesse sorrow, voyde of any comfort:
I make my moane to thee, and do not fable,
Desiring, that to end my misery,
Death may come speedily, and with his Dart
With one fierce stroke, quite passing through my heart:
To cut off future fell contending strife,
An happy end be made of Love and Life.

No other means of comfort doth remaine,
To ease me of such sharpe afflictions,
But onely death.  Grant then that I may die,
To finish greefe and life in one blest houre.
For, being bereft of any future joyes,
Come, take me quickly from so false a friend.
Yet in my death, let thy great power approve,
That I died true, and constant in my Love.

Happy shall I account this sighing Song,
If some (beside my selfe) do learne to sing it,
And so consider of my miseries,
As may incite them to lament my wrongs.
And to be warned by my wretched fate;
Least (like my selfe) themselves do sigh too late.
Learne Lovers, learne, what tis to be unjust,
And be betrayed, where you repose best trust.
NOVELL

X

The words contained in this Song, did manifestly declare, what torturing afflictions poore Philostratus felt, and more (perhaps) had beene perceived by the lookes of the Lady whom he spake of, being then present in the dance; if the sodaine ensuing darknesse had not hid the crimson blush, which mounted up into her face. But the Song being ended, and divers other beside, lasting till the houre of rest drew on; by command of the Queene, they all repaired to their Chambers.

END OF VOLUME II
EDINBURGH
T. & A. CONSTABLE
Printers to His Majesty
1909