

IL PENTAMERONE

IL PENTAMERONE; OR, THE TALE  
OF TALES. BEING A TRANS-  
LATION BY THE LATE SIR  
RICHARD BURTON, K.C.M.G., OF  
IL PENTAMERONE; OVERO LO  
CUNTO DE LI CUNTE, TRAT-  
TENIMIENTO DE LI PECCERILLE,  
OF GIOVANNI BATTISTA BASILE,  
COUNT OF TORONE (GIAN  
ALESSIO ABBATTUTIS).

*IN TWO VOLUMES.*

VOLUME THE FIRST.



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## PUBLISHERS' NOTE.

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**I**N issuing "Il Pentamerone" to the subscribers, the Publishers desire to say that the manuscript was placed in their possession by Lady Burton in pursuance of agreement. In no respect has the text been abbreviated; it represents a faithful and unexpurgated rendering of these Neapolitan tales. The reading of the proofs has fallen to the Publishers; and if there be aught amiss in the work, it should be attributed to the reverential spirit in which they have attempted to fulfil the duty committed to their care.

TO THE VIRTUOUS NEAPOLITAN  
READERS!

MASILLO REPPONE.

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**M**OST illustrious gentlemen, and my most reverend patrons. The what-do-you-call-it is so full of pulp and solid, that it hath thrust the pen into my hand, and maketh me write without shame this scrawl in form of a petition, so that in your mercy ye may defend a poor man, who, being a foreigner, hath gone from door to door seeking for alms of some Neapolitan words.

Therefore be ye informed that a certain printer, who hath become a foe to Naples, although he was born ten hundred miles distant therefrom, would once more print the Tale of Tales for the Diversion of Little Ones by Cav. John the Baptist Basile, who would call himself Gian Alessio Abbatutis: and, knowing not whom he should chance to meet, laid hold of me, so that I should correct it, because the ink in the last print had



daubed it in such a manner that not even the father (and may Heaven receive him in glory), if he were alive, would have recognised it for his own son. Now I, who am possessed of an heart like the lungs, and a door to my will, which, if any one knocks at it, at once is opened wide, promised with every charity at a simple opening of the mouth to do him this service: and so much the more in that it concerned a poor pupil, son of such a very learned father, awakened about an hundred miles behind by the evil practice of the players. I have done my best and all, that I might to force into its body what was missing, so that it should be mended, and be known again even as when it was born.

And what have I not done? I have put myself in torments all the night and the day, to rid him of so much filthiness. But after having done this, and many more charitable fatigues, certain young masters, who wear glasses upon their noses, and believe they can carry all the world behind them, have gone about with a twist of the muzzle, and a casting up of the eyes, saying, 'And how can one who hath been born in the ice have dared to come and be the corrector in this city, and set a price upon a cabbage stump? The presumptuous man would deserve a most cruel stripping. A Pugliese flat-cap wanting to make fine love in a Naples where are to be found folk who weigh a

ton each, and perhaps more. Look ye if he knoweth how to write, and if he wanteth to pass for learned in the Partenopean language? Here two m's are lacking, again two s's are missing, and here two other e's, and so on!'

Now these folk believe that they have found me alone, broken down, and mournful, with no friends on my side. And therefore I will scorn and affront them, and let them know they speak at random, and they know naught of tum and bus,\* and of this quarrel I appeal myself straightly to the just tribunal of your genius: and so that ye may give me reason if I am wrong, I present to you these writings as proof of these facts. And first and foremost know ye, O most illustrious gentlemen, that I, although I am not a Neapolitan, neglected naught to learn well this language, for when I came to this country (that with another eight will be nineteen years), I fell in love with these pretty words, and they seemed to me as so many coins with which I could enrich my brain, and the much more so in that I bethought me of having read in Cicerone's Epistles to Atticus that Pompeius, the great Roman emperor, left off speaking the Latin language and would speak the Neapolitan, as that great man Sommonte found

\* In the old a. b. c. books the alphabet ended in cyphers 'et, con, rum, bus,' like those that very often are used in the ancient Latin books. And from that the last of these cyphers was thought of great importance, like a full stop at the end.

out, and noted down in the History of Naples, Chap. VI., Book 1., because the Neapolitan language being half Greek and half Latin, it seemed to him a more tasteful mixture. Now I, who have always followed after the Greek to fill myself to bursting with it—I have not left quarters, squares, warehouses, streets, little streets and even those without an issue: and although the washerman speaketh one way, and washeth worse, he hath changed in all the way of speaking, and he of the little pier in another way: but, thanks be to Heaven! I have eaten cabbage-stumps and broccoli, that is to say, I have read good authors, and I understand them a little. And I will now say that I know also how wrote those men of ancient date, and how the moderns write. But because the Neapolitan speech carrieth not dictionaries with it as do the other languages—viz., the Latin hath Colapino, the Tuscan hath la Crusca, the Greek studieth the Lexicon, and thus do also all the other nations—it seemed to me most convenient to let this poor pupil rest with that orthography which his father had left him, that is to say, as I found it in the first book, and as it was printed by several printers, day by day, when it came forth. And his good father liked not the superfluous, which breaketh the lid, nor the two m's, and two n's, and other such things, which were sought by the sages. Those words, therefore, that

it has not by nature I have signed with a sign, which a Greek would call spirit, so that they could gently hit them, in the same way that these folk do hit us with so many m's and n's. And without that only one who is a Neapolitan can well read it, and who is a foreigner let him add as many letters as he liketh, for never will he read it well, if he doth not hear it read by a Neapolitan, or by some other who is an expert in this language. And besides, the other languages would spoil it, because they pronounce an hundred miles distant of what they write. But this is a ball which if I would unwind there would be enough for to-morrow, and after to-morrow, and the day after, and the day thereafter. Enough: another day, if time carrieth away certain sickness from mine head and certain scab from my neck, I will prove this to you with an hundred rules of orthography, and perhaps I will let you read the phenomena and the phrases of the Neapolitan speech that I have gathered until now, with an hundred thousand observations, and I will make you say, 'Oh, 'tis good indeed: this man deserveth great praise, because he hath done things that our countrymen cared not to do.'

Now, my most reverend, these are my writings in the style of Rome, brief and to the point, and if ye will judge it spurious and will call me to good purpose, be sure that I shall not prove

myself contumacious. And with this I expect the sentence in my favour, and if for naught else, only because I have been charitable so readily that from a maimed book I have made it cast away its crutches: and with this I take my leave. May your lordships well maintain yourselves, whilst I pray Heaven, to pour upon you a deluge of happy days. I give myself peace.

YE ARE INVITED TO READ

THE TALE OF TALES.

CORRECTED BY MASTER MASILLO REPPONE.

ALL AGES ARE FOUND IN THIS SONNET

BY M.R.S.D.

REST ye for a little, and a-pleasuring we'll go:  
Come my merry little ones and hasten with all speed;  
Gossiping Masillo hath a fairy book to show,  
Written and re-written so that all the world may read.

Know, both youths and maidens, an ye yield ye to my wiles—  
Whether ye be churlish or light laughter is your cheer—  
Not e'en Master Grillo with his smirking and his smiles  
At your new-found knowledge can himself afford to sneer.

But no bush for my wine's needed. Here's enjoyment with good fruit:  
In the vineyard of my narratives no weed hath taken root;  
Tuneful, always tuneful, is the music of my lute.

Last of all, ye elders, with your growing weight of years,  
Smile the smile of comfort through the tempest of your tears,  
And listen as in childhood with your childhood's hopes and fears!

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## INTRODUCTION TO THE DIVERSION OF THE LITTLE ONES.

### I.

IT was a proverb established after those of an antique usage that whoso seeketh what he should not findeth what he would not; and clear thing it is that the ape, for drawing on boots, was trapped by the foot. This also befell a beggarly handmaid, who, never having worn shoes to her feet, must needs wear a crown on her head; but, as all wrongs meet their requital, and anon comes one that compensates for each and every, at last, having by wicked ways usurped what belonged to others, she was caught at the wheel, even as says the by-word, 'The higher the height, the lower the lapse': and this shall be shown after the fashion that follows.

It is said that once upon a time there was a king of the Bushy Valley that had a daughter named Zoza, and she, like another Zoroaster or Anacretus,\* was never seen to smile. The afflicted father, having none other life and spirit than this his only daughter, left nothing undone to lighten her melancholy. The better to provoke from her a laugh, he summoned now drolls who walk upon mace-

\* Heraclitus.

heads, and then fellows who jump through circles, and anon boxers, and rivals of Master Roger the juggler, and workers of legerdemain, and anon fellows strong as Hercules, and now the dancing dog and the leaping old man, and then the ass that drinks from a tumbler and the bitch Lucia Conazza\*: briefly, now one thing, and then another. But 'twas all lost time, for neither the remedy of Master Grillo,† nor the herb sardonion, nor a dig in the diaphragm would make her smile in the least.

At length the unfortunate father, wishing to make a last attempt and not knowing what else to do, gave orders to build a great fountain of oil fronting the palace gate, with design by so doing that the folk who crowded like ants passing to and fro that way should be obliged, so as not to soil their clothes, to skip like crickets, and buck-jump like goats, and scurry like hares, pushing and knocking one against another: thus hoping that somewhat might occur which would make his daughter laugh.

So this fountain being built, as Zoza was standing at her lattice window, looking sour as vinegar, she saw an ancient woman coming to the fountain, and soaking up the oil with a sponge, filling therewith an earthen ewer she had brought with her; and whilst so doing, a certain court page threw a stone so true to an hair that he hit the ewer and broke it to bits. Hereat the old woman, who was by no means hairy of tongue, nor held herself from speaking her mind, turned to the page, and thus began to say: 'Ah, kindchen, scatter-brains, piss-a-bed, goat-dancer, petticoat-catcher, hangman's rope, mongrel mule, spindle-shanks, whereat if ever the fleas cough, go where a palsy

\* A Neapolitan dame.

† A noted medico of the day.

catch thee; and may thy mammy hear the ill news! Never mayest thou see the first of May! May a Catalan lance thrust thee through! Mayest thou be touched with the rope and never lose a drop of blood! A thousand miseries reach thee, with the rest to boot; and, in short, may the wind blow away thy sail, so that the seed may be lost, thou knave, pimp, son of a whore!

The lad, who had little beard and less discretion, hearing this flow of abuse, repaid her with the same coin, saying, 'Wilt thou not hold thy tongue, devil's grandam, bull's-vomit, children-smotherer, turd-clout, farting crone?' The old woman, hearing all the news of her household thus cried aloud, waxed so wroth that, losing all patience, she raised the curtain of her clothes, and showed a truly rural scene, whereof Silvio\* might have said, 'Go, wake the eyes with the horn.' When this spectacle was beheld by Zoza, she fell backwards, laughing so much that she had well-nigh fainted. Hereupon the old woman became even more furious, and turning a fierce look upon Zoza, cried, 'Go! and mayest thou never see the bed of an husband, unless thou take the Prince of Campo Rotundo!' Zoza, who heard these words, summoned the crone and perforce would learn if she had meant to lay a curse upon her, or only to abuse her; and the other answered, 'Now thou must know that the prince I have named is a wonderful creature, Thaddeus hight, who, having been cursed by a fairy, came to the last picture of life, and was laid in a tomb outside the city walls, and upon his tombstone an inscription is graven: "Whosoever of womankind will in three days fill with tears an earthen vessel which hangs upon an hook, she will bring him to life and strength, and will take him to husband." But

\* *Dialectic*, Sirvio: a personage in some pastoral, perhaps the pastor.

as it is impossible for two human eyes to run so much with weeping as to fill an earthen vessel which holds half a flagon, save, as I have heard recounted, it were a certain Jinniyah who became at Rome a fountain of tears, I, because I saw myself derided, have given you this curse, which I pray Heaven may fall upon you in revenge for the injury done me.' And thus saying, the old woman ran down the steps and went her way, being afraid that something might happen to her.

Meanwhile the princess pondered over the words of the old woman, and meditated, and doubted, and feared, and at length drew from them that passion which blindeth our judgment and darkeneth the mind; and she determined to fly from her father's house, and taking with her many thousand crowns and jewels, left the palace, and fared along until she reached the castle of a fairy, to whom she told her story. The fairy, taking compassion of such a beautiful young maiden, and desiring to help her on account of her youth and her great love to an unknown being, gave her a letter of recommendation to her own sister, who was also a fairy; and taking kindly leave of her, presented her with a walnut, saying, 'Take this, O my daughter, and keep it by thee, but open it not save in time of great stress.' The princess took the gift and the letter, and proceeding on her journey, ceased not wayfaring until she arrived at the castle of the second fairy, who also received her graciously, and well entreated her. And on the next morning, before taking leave, the fairy gave her a letter for another sister of hers, and presented to her a chesnut, with the same advice which had been given to her before. She fared on until she reached the castle of the third fairy, who also welcomed her, and entreated her kindly. The following morning,

before her departure, the fairy presented her with an hazel-nut and the same injunctions as the other sisters.

Having received these things, Zoza fared on through cities and villages, wilds and wolds, passing seas and rivers, until after seven years she arrived, tired and worn by so much wayfaring, at Campo Rotundo, where, before entering the city, she perceived a mausoleum of marble at the foot of a fountain where a porphyry criminal wept tears of crystal: and hung thereon was the earthenware flagon. Taking the vessel down, and putting it before her, she shed two rivulets of tears rivalling the fountain, never lifting her head from its mouth, so that at the end of two days the tears had filled it to the neck, and there remained only two inches more. But, wearied by so much stress and trouble, she was taken by a deep sleep, so that she lay perforce under a tent close by for well-nigh two hours. In the meantime a certain slave, Cricket-legs hight, who came often to that fountain to fill an hogshhead, and who knew well the matter of the inscription, which was spoken of everywhere, hid herself when she beheld Zoza weeping, awaiting that the earthen flagon should be nearly full, hoping by some wile to win the remainder to herself, and thus leave the princess with a handful of flies. And as she beheld her asleep, she thought the time had come for her advantage, and dexterously taking the earthen juglet, and putting her eye upon its mouth, filled it to the brim in a short time. Hardly was it full when the prince, awaking as from heavy sleep, arose from the marble sarcophagus, and threw his arms around that mass of black flesh, and leading her to his palace, with feasts, and joyance, and revelry took her to wife. But no sooner did Zoza awake to find the grave open, and the juglet gone, and with it all her hopes and joys, than she came near to unpacking

the bales of her soul at the custom-house of death. At last, seeing that for this evil there was no remedy, and that she could blame nought but her own eyes which had watched so ill that which held her desire, she arose, and fared on, and entered the city. And when she heard of the bridal feasts of the prince and of the fine wife he had taken to himself, she imagined how the misfortune had come to pass, and said to herself, sighing, 'Alas! two black things have crushed me to the earth: black sleep and a black slave.' Then, desiring to struggle against death, from which every kind of animal trieth to defend itself, Zoza took a fine house fronting the prince's palace, from within which she could not behold the idol of her heart, but could at least look upon the walls of the temple which held him for whom she longed with excessive longing.

Herewhile Zoza was seen one day of the days by Thaddeus, who had been flying until then like a moth around that black, hideous slave. When he beheld her, he became as an eagle, and held ever present in mind the beauty and comeliness of Zoza, even as it is one of the privileges of nature to be taken by a beauteous form and face. The slave failed not to perceive of what had taken place in the prince's mind, and she was wroth with exceeding wrath, and being with child by Thaddeus, threatened him, saying thus: 'If thou wilt not close the window, I will punish my belly and murder little George.' The prince, who loved his race, trembled like a leaf, and liked not to anger his wife, and therefore shut himself in, although it seemed to him he had taken the life out of his body in depriving himself of the sight of Zoza's beauty. The princess, perceiving herself deprived of the only means of beholding Thaddeus,

and having lost every hope, not knowing what to do in this her time of need, bethought herself of the three gifts of the fairies, and cracking the walnut, out flew a handsome bird, the handsomest that had ever been seen in the world. The bird began to sing, and trill, and quaver at the window as no other bird had done before, and having been seen and heard by the slave, she could not rest without it, and so, calling the prince, said to him, 'If thou wilt not get for me that bird that sings so well, I will punish my belly and murder little George.' Thaddeus, who had let himself be ridden by her, sent at once to the princess to ask if she would sell it. Zoza made answer that she was not a seller of birds, but if he would accept it as a gift, she would present it to him. The prince, desiring to please his wife on account of the child she would bring to light, accepted the offer; but about four days after, Zoza opened the chesnut, and out of it stalked a fowl with twelve chicks of gold, which were seen by the slave upon the same window-sill, who at once longed to have them, and sending for the prince, pointed to them, saying, 'If thou bring me not that fowl and chicks, I will punish my belly and murder little George'; and Thaddeus, who allowed this bitch to pull him by the nose, sent again to the princess, offering her whatever she chose for such a priceless fowl, and he received the same answer as before: that he might have it as a gift, but to ask of buying it would be but lost time. And as he could not, and dared not, refuse, necessity had the best of his discretion; and he was humbled by the generosity of a woman, their liberality being very scarce, as they are never spoiled, not even by owning all the ores of India. But having passed other four days, Zoza opened the hazel-nut, from which came



forth a doll, who was spinning gold, a most marvellous thing. No sooner was she put at the same window than the slave saw her, and sending for the prince, said to him, 'If thou bring me not that doll, I will punish my belly and murder little George'; and Thaddeus, who let his wife swing him about as yarn-blades, by whom he was ridden at her pleasure and crushed by her pride, not having courage to send for the third time to the king's daughter for the doll, thought it best to go himself, remembering the old saws, 'There is no better messenger than thyself,' and 'Who wanteth goeth, and who wanteth not sendeth,' and 'Who will eat fish must take it by the tail,' and beseeching her to forgive his boldness for begging these things because of the whims of a woman great with child, asked for the doll. Zoza, who was nigh a-fainting because of the cause of all her travail, hardened her heart, and allowed him to pray and beseech of her the gift of the doll, so as to have her lord near her and hear his voice, and to enjoy the light of his presence a little longer—he who had been stolen from her by an hideous slave. At last she gave him the doll, as she had done all the other things; but before she handed it to him, she begged the doll to make the slave long to hear tales and stories. Thaddeus, who beheld the doll in his hand without spending a single crown, felt crushed by so much kindness, and he offered Zoza his kingdom and his life in exchange for so much pleasure; then returning to his palace, he gave the doll to his wife.

No sooner did she place it in her bosom to play with it than it appeared as Cupid in the form of Ascanius before Dido, and lit a fire in her heart, and great desire to hear stories and tales, so that at last, fearing to lose her life on account of her great longing, and to give birth to a man-

child who would corrupt a shipful of beggars, she sent for her husband, and said to him, 'If thou wilt not call folk to tell me stories, I will punish my belly and murder little George.' Thaddeus, desiring to get rid of this March nuisance, gave orders to the crier to publish that all the women of the city should come to the palace on such a day, and on the appointed day, at the shooting forth of the star Diana, which forerunneth the dawn to prepare the way by which the sun must pass, they should meet all at the same place. But the prince, unaccustomed to see such a crowd, and having no particular taste for the whims of his wife now that she longed to see so many folk around her, chose only ten of the noblest in the city, who seemed to him the more provoking and full of talk. And there were limping Zeza, crooked Cecca, wen-necked Meneca, long-nosed Tolla, hunchbacked Popa, flabbering Antonella, musty Ciulla, checkless Paola, hairless Ciomettella, and rough-hewn Giacova; and, having written their names on a paper, he discharged the others.

Then they arose with the slave from under the daïs, and all fared slowly to the palace garden, where the trees and boughs were so well interlaced one with another that the sun's rays could not penetrate underneath their leafy screen, and they seated themselves under a pavilion covered with a creeping vine, amiddlemost of which played a fountain. Grand Master of the School of Courtiers Prince Thaddeus thus began to say: 'There is nothing more pleasing and glorious in the world, O my noble women, than to hearken to the deeds of others; and not without reason did Aristoteles, that great philosopher, place man's greatest happiness in listening to pretty stories, since in hearkening to them care and gloom vanish, and life is lengthened. And with this desire doth the artisan leave his workshop.

the merchant his traffic, the doctor his patient, the druggist his business ; and they all go abroad in search of those clever story-tellers, whose tales can rival the best gazette ever written. By which reason I must excuse my wife, who, having become of a melancholic mood, desireth so much to listen to some pleasant tale : and therefore, if ye are willing to fulfil her wants and to catch mid-air also my desire, ye will be pleased in these four or five days that ye will remain to empty your stomachs and recount every day a story, such as those old women tell for the entertainment of the children, meeting always in this same site, where, after having eaten, ye will begin by recounting, and will end the day by reciting an eclogue, and thus we will spend joyously our life, and all the worse for him who dieth.' Hearing these words, all bowed their heads downwards in humble assent to Thaddeus's command.

In the meanwhile the tables were spread, and food was laid upon them, and they all began to eat ; and having ended, the prince made a sign to Zeza the limping that she should open the fire. Rising and bowing low to the prince and his wife, Zeza thus began her say :

## STORY OF THE GHUL.

### FIRST DIVERSION

#### Of the First Day.

Antony of Maregliano, being a clownish prattler, is expelled by his mother. He taketh service with a ghul, and as he desireth to visit his house, is regaled with a sound bastinado. Quarrelling with a tavern-keeper, at last he is presented with a club, which punisheth his ignorance, and maketh the tavern-keeper pay the penance for his trickery : and thus he enricheth himself and family.

THOSE who said that fortune is blind spake sooth (and knew more than Master Lanza, who truly passed some of these matters), for she raiseth some folk to greatest height who should be kicked out of a field of beans, and throweth to the ground folk who are the best and noblest of men, as I will now relate.

It is said that once upon a time there lived in the country of Maregliano a good woman, Masella hight, who had, besides six virgin daughters, a son so clownish and idle that he was not worth even a snow game, and no day passed but that she said to him, 'Why do you stay at home, accursed bread-eater? Disappear, lump of laziness, dirty Maccabeus, depriver of sleep, carrier of evil news, chesnut-boiler, thou who must have been exchanged for me in the cradle, where instead of a pretty, dearling child was put a pig lasagne-cater.' And whilst Masella thus

apostrophised him, he kept whistling, showing that there was no hope that Antony (thus was the son hight) would turn his mind to any good. And one day of the days it happened that his mother washed his head without soap, and hending a stick in hand, took measure of his doublet. Antony, who when least expecting it found himself well warmed, as soon as he could escape from her hands, took to his heels, and walked till the twenty-four hours had elapsed and the stars began to peep out, at which time he reached the foot of a mountain so high that its head touched the clouds, where, in an avenue of poplar-trees, at the entrance of a grotto built of pumice-stone, was sitting a ghul. O mother mine, how hideous was he! His head was larger than an Indian vegetable-marrow, his forehead full of bumps, his eyebrows united, his eyes crooked, his nose flat, with nostrils like a forge, his mouth like an oven, from which protruded two tusks like unto a boar's; a hairy breast had he, and arms like reels; and bandy-legged was he, and flat-footed like a goose; briefly he was an hideous monster, frightful to behold, who would have made a Roland smile, and would have frightened a Scannarebecco; but Antony, who cared not for ugliness or aught else, nodding his head slightly to him, said, 'Good-day, master; what mayest thou be doing? How dost thou do? Dost thou want anything? How far is it from here to the place where-to I am bound?' The ghul, hearing such foolish queries addressed to him, burst out a-laughing, and because he was pleased with that humourous beast, said to him, 'Wilt thou be my servant?' and Antony rejoined, 'And how much wilt thou give me a month?' and the ghul answered, 'Mind and serve me honourably, and we will not dispute about the wage.' Thus, having concluded this accord, Antony remained to serve the ghul.

With him was abundance of food, and of work very little, so much so that in four days Antony found himself in such good condition that he became as a Turk for stoutness, an ox for roundness, courageous as a game-cock, red like a lobster, green as garlick, and flat like a whale. But nearly two years had gone by when his pleasant life began to weary him, and he became sad and sore at heart, thinking of his home, and for stress of longing had nearly come to his first state. The ghul, who could see into his innermost thoughts by a look at his nose and a move of his back parts, called him to his presence, and said to him, 'Antony mine, I know that thou art sickening with a great longing and desire to behold once more thine own flesh; and because I love thee as mine own entrails, I will permit thee to fare forth and take thy pleasure; and I will give thee this ass, which will spare thee from the fatigue of the journey: but be very careful never to say to it, "Arse shit!" or thou shalt repent it, by my ancestor's soul.'

Antony took the ass, without even saying good-evening, and vaulting into the saddle, put it to the trot; and he had not gone yet a hundred paces when, dismounting, he began to cry to the ass, 'Arse shit!' and hardly had he opened his mouth to say so, when the beast began to ease itself, and pearls came out of it, and rubies, and emeralds, and sapphires, and diamonds, each of the size of a walnut. Antony watched all this with mouth wide open, and a feeling of great joy at the rich evacuation of the ass; and he took down the saddle-bags, and filled them with the jewels, and mounting again, continued faring on till he arrived at a tavern, and there dismounting, the first thing he said to the innkeeper was, 'Make fast this ass to the manger, and give it good food; but be thou careful not to say to it, "Arse shit!" as thou shalt repent so doing;

and also put these things in a safe place for me.' The innkeeper, who was not wanting in cunning, hearing these words, and beholding the jewels which glimmered and glittered in the saddle-bags, was overcome by curiosity, and longed to know the meaning of the words forbidden him by Antony: therefore giving to Antony a plentiful supper and wines to drink, awaited until he saw him overtaken by sleep and snoring loudly, when he made his way to the stable, and said to the ass, 'Arse shit!' At the sound of those words the ass eased itself again of gold and jewels. The innkeeper, beholding this evacuation, bethought himself of exchanging the ass and of befooling Antony, thinking that he could easily blind and deceive him, and make him take a glow-worm for a lantern, believing him a simpleton who had come to his hand.

Therefore as soon as Antony arose, when morning dawned, and Dame Aurora appeared at the east window, all rose-hued, to empty the night-vase of her old man, stretching, himself and talking the while, Antony at last called the innkeeper, and said to him, 'Come here, comrade, short accounts and long friendship! friends are we, and our purse let us combat: give me my bill, and let me pay.' And this was done, so much for bread, so much for wine, so much for soup, and so much for meat, for stabling five, and ten for the bed, and fifteen for thanks: he paid his account, and taking the ass with a load of pumice-stone in the saddle-bags instead of jewels, fared on towards his village, and before entering his house he began crying, 'Run, mother, run; we are rich: display towels and spread bed-linen, and thou wilt behold treasures.' The mother, with great joy, opening a large coffer where she held all her daughters' linen, brought out all the bed-linen, and covered the floor with it. Antony drew the ass upon it, and began

to cry out, 'Arse shit!' but he could say, 'Arse shit!' as much as he liked: the ass took no notice of the words, no more than if they had been sounds of music; moreover he returned three or four times to repeat the words, but all was thrown to the winds. Thinking the beast obstinate, he took a strong stick, and began belabouring it therewith, until the poor animal let go a run of yellowish matter upon the white bed-linen. The unhappy Masella, beholding this evacuation of the ass, and scenting enough stink to infect all the house when she expected to enrich her poverty, was wroth with exceeding wrath, and hending a staff, let Antony feel its weight on his shoulders, without awaiting to look at the pumice-stone, for which warm reception he again took to his heels, and the ghul beheld him returning to him faster than he had seen him depart. But the ghul already knew what had happened to him, because he was a sorcerer, and gave him a good scolding because he had let himself be tricked by the innkeeper, calling him Ascadeo, foolish, simpleton, deformed, silly, brainless, that for an ass full of treasures he had taken a vulgar beast full of dung. Antony was obliged to swallow in silence all these pills, and swore to himself that nevermore, no never, would he allow any man living to laugh at him.

A year passed by, and the same longing came in his heart as heretofore, and he became once more desirous to behold his kith and kin. The ghul, who was hideous of favour but handsome of heart, gave him permission to go, and presented him with a fine napkin, saying, 'Take this to thy mother, and take care not to be a simpleton, as thou wert with the ass; and till thou comest to thy house, mind and do not say, "Open and shut, thou napkin," because maybe some great mishap will befall

thee, and all the loss will be thine; now go, and good speed, and come back soon': and thus Antony took his leave. But having fared not very far from the cave, he at once put the napkin on the ground, and said, 'Open and shut, thou napkin,' whereupon in opening the napkin displayed many precious things which were marvellous to behold. As Antony saw them, he said at once, 'Shut, napkin,' and everything being shut inside it, he fared on to the same tavern, where on entering he said to the innkeeper, 'Put away for me in a safe place this napkin, and be careful not to say, "Open and shut, thou napkin."' The astute host, who knew a thing or two, answered, 'Let me do it for thee'; and having given him a plenteous repast and copious draughts of wine, watched till he slept soundly, and then, taking the napkin, said, 'Open thou, O napkin,' and the napkin opened, and showed to sight all kinds of precious things which were marvellous to behold. And having found another napkin similar to that one, he put it in its place.

When Antony awoke in the morning, he rose, and thanked the host, and went his way, and after a time arrived at his mother's house, and as soon as he saw her exclaimed, 'Now indeed, O my mother, will we bid adieu to our beggarly lot; now in very sooth shall we have the wherewithal to remedy all our wants'; and thus saying, he laid the napkin upon the ground, and cried, 'Open thou, O napkin:' but he could cry out as much as he liked, all was time lost. At last, perceiving that it was useless, turning to his mother, he said, 'Well, I wot that again have I been befooled by that innkeeper: but never mind. I and he, we are two; better for him not to have done it: far better if he had gone under a cart-wheel. May I lose the best house-furniture

if, when I pass that way, I do not smash to atoms all his belongings in payment for the jewels from the ass and the napkin he hath stolen.' The mother, hearing this new silliness, became greatly enraged, and said to him, 'Decamp, accursed son! break thy neck, take thyself off. I cannot bear the sight of thee. Begone at once, and think of this house just as if it were fire. I shake the dust off my clothing of thee, and I will think as if I never had given birth to thee.'

The ill-treated Antony, seeing the lightning-flash, would not await the thunder, and, like a thief, lowering his head and lifting his heels, he wended his way towards the abode of the ghul, who, on seeing him coming quite quietly, gave him another good dressing, saying, 'I know not what holds me that I do not kill thee, ass, beast, blister, farting mouth, rotten throat, gaol's trumpet, that of all things thou publishest the banns, and vomitest all that is in thy body, and canst not hold a bean in thy mouth. If thou hadst held thy tongue at the tavern, it would not have happened; but having a tongue like the sail of a windmill, thou hast been grinding the happiness which came to thee by my hands.' The ill-fated Antony, putting his tail between his legs, swallowed all this music, and lived quietly on another three years in the ghul's service, thinking about his house as much as he thought of being an earl; but after all this time came to him again the fever of longing and desire to wend home, and he asked leave to go from his master, who, desiring to rid himself of this lack-wit, gave his consent, and presented him with a finely chiselled mace, and said to him, 'Take this mace and keep it in remembrance of me, but be careful not to say, "Lift thyself mace," or "Lie down, mace," for I want no part with thee.' Antony,

taking the gift, answered, 'Thou mayest rest in peace. I have grown the wisdom-tooth, and I know full well how many pair make three oxen ; I am no longer a child : who desireth to cheat Antony must kiss his elbow.' To this the ghul rejoined, 'The work praiseth the worker ; words are females, and deeds are males : we will wait and see ; thou hast heard me more than a deaf man, and man forewarned is man forearmed.' And whilst his master continued thus to speak, Antony sneaked off towards his dwelling-place ; but he had not gone half a mile, when he said, 'Lift thyself, mace.' But far better had he not spoken those words. At once the mace uplifted, and belaboured Antony's shoulders with a good will, so much so that the blows rained faster than hailstone in the open sky. The unlucky man, seeing himself so much ill-treated, said, 'Lie thee down, O mace,' and the mace ceased to punish him : and therefore, having learnt a lesson at his own expense, he said to himself, 'And lame may he be who tries to escape ! I will not leave this mace a single moment : yet he is not abed who is to have a bad evening' : and so saying, he arrived at the usual tavern, where he met with the greatest of welcomes, because they knew what sap could be drawn from the root.

As soon as he entered, Antony said to the host, 'Put away in a safe place this mace ; and be thou careful not to say to it, "Lift thyself, mace," lest thou suffer a mishap : understand well what I tell thee, and afterwards do not blame Antony for what may befall thee, as I protest and advise thee beforehand.' The innkeeper, delighted at this third venture, sent him a goodly supper and the best of vintage ; and as soon as he beheld him asleep he took up the mace, and calling his wife to this new treat, said, 'Lift thyself, O mace,' and the mace did at once devoir on the man

and his wife's shoulders, down here and down there, piff-paff with lightning speed ; and finding themselves in a direful plight, they ran, and the mace after them thumping right and left, crying out with loud cries for Antony, who on awaking beheld that the macaroni had tumbled into the cheese, and the cabbages into the lard : therefore he said to them, 'There is no help for it but that ye both die under its blows unless ye return to me what ye stole.' The innkeeper, who had had enough, cried, 'Take all I have, but deliver me from this evil' ; and moreover, to assure Antony of his good will, he sent for all that which he had stolen from him. As soon as Antony had it between his hands, he said, 'Lie thee down, O mace,' and the mace lay still : and he, taking his ass, the napkin, and the treasure, wended his way homewards to his mother, where, after showing real proof of the ass's behind, and sure sight of the napkin, he hired good cooks for himself and lived right royally, and giving all his sisters in marriage, and enriching his mother, made the old saw come true that

'God helpeth madmen and children.'

## THE MYRTLE-TREE.

## SECOND DIVERSION

## Of the First Day.

A countrywoman of Miano giveth birth to a myrtle-tree. A prince falleth in love with it, and out of it issueth a beautiful fairy. The prince goeth out and leaveth her inside the myrtle-tree, with a little bell attached to it. Some light women enter the prince's chamber in his absence, and being jealous, they touch the myrtle-tree, and the fairy cometh forth, and they kill her. The prince returneth, and findeth this misfortune, and cometh near unto death for grief; but, by a strange adventure recovering his fairy, he commandeth the courtesans to be slain, and taketh the fairy to wife.

**D**EEPEST silence reigned whilst Zoza recounted her story; but no sooner had she ceased speaking than all began to talk, and no mouth would keep silent because of the evacuation of the ass and the charmed mace: they kept saying that it would be very useful to own such maces, that at least servants and cheaters would be rightly treated, since one commonly met with more asses than ground flour. And after discussing all these things, the prince ordered Cecca to continue the story-telling, at which command she began, saying thus:

If man could think what evils, and what ruin, and what loss of honour and home happen through the accursed women of the world, he would be more prudent, and would fly instead of following the footsteps of a dishonest woman,

as when sighting a scorpion, and would not lose his reputation for the dregs of a brothel, and his life for a lazaretto, and all his rent-rolls for a public whore, who for the smallest coin maketh him swallow disgusting pills and fits of anger: as you will hear from what happened to a prince who had had some traffic with this evil race.

In the village of Miano there lived a husband and wife who had no children, and they longed, and pined, and prayed God to grant them an heir; and the wife above all things kept saying, 'O God, could I bring to light something in the world, I would not care even though it were a myrtle-bough': and for so long did she sing this song that at last she tired Heaven with her prayers, and her belly began to swell, and became round, so that at the end of nine months she gave birth, in the arms of the midwife, instead of a pretty man-child, to a myrtle-bough which, with great affection, she had laid in a fine flower-pot, and carefully tended it morning and evening. But one day the son of the king, who had gone out a-hunting, passed that way; and he took a fancy for the pretty myrtle-bough, and sent a message to the owner, asking her to sell it to him, stating that he would pay her whatever she demanded. After much denial and opposition, at last, caught by great offers, and taken by good promises, and frightened by threats, and won by prayers, she gave to him the tree, beseeching him to hold it with care, as she loved it more than a child, and held it as dear as if it had come out of her entrails. The prince, with the greatest joy, had the tree brought into his chamber and put in the balcony: and with his own hands he tended, and watered, and dug around it.

Now it so happened that one night the prince went to

bed, and put out the candle, but could not sleep. All the folk around were slumbering, and all the world was quiet, when the prince heard a soft footstep pattering about the room. And it came towards the bed, and the prince bethought him that mayhap it was some servant who wanted to lighten his purse; but like the courageous youth that he was, whom Satan himself would not have frightened, he feigned sleep, and waited for what would follow. And he felt some one come near and touch him very lightly, and very gently he put forth his hands, and felt something soft and tender, with skin like velvet, and more tender and delicate than bullfinch's feathers, and softer than Barbary wool, and more flexible than a marten's tail; and believing that it must be a fairy (as it really was), he caught her in his arms, and began to play with her at dumb-sparrow. But before sunrise she arose and disappeared, leaving the prince full of all sweetness, and curiosity, and surprise. And this joyance continued for seven days; and he burned with great desire to know what good was this which rained on him from the stars, and what vessel loaded with sweetness and love had anchored at his bed. And one night, whilst the beauty slept, he tied a lock of her hair to his arm so that she could not escape, and calling one of his servants, bade him light the candles. He then beheld the princess and flower of beauties, the marvel of womankind, another Venus, goddess of love; perceived a doll, a dove, the Fairy Morgana, a golden bough, a huntress falcon-eyed, a full moon in her fourteenth night, a face of pigeon, a mouthful fit for kings, a jewel; he beheld, in fact, a being that made him lose his senses: and looking at her, he said, 'Now mayest thou hide thyself, O goddess of love: and thou, Helen, mayest return to Ilium and put a rope round

thy neck, as thy beauties, so much descanted, are as nought compared with this beauty by my side, beauty accomplished like a sun, worthy a throne, solid, graceful, and full of pride, wherein I cannot find a single blemish. O sleep, O sweet sleep, weighten down with poppy-juice the eyelids of this beautiful joy: deprive me not of the enjoyment of beholding this the end of all my desires, this triumph of beauty. O beautiful lock that closely binds me! O beautiful eyes that burn me! O sweet lips that give me such joy! O beautiful breasts that console me! O beautiful hand that holds me close! In which shop of the marvels of nature was made this perfect form? What part of India gave the threads of gold to that hair? What part of Ethiopia gave the ivory for that brow? which place the carbuncles for those eyes? what part of Tyre the purple for that face? and what part of the East the pearls to make those teeth? And from which mountain came the snow to cover that neck and breast: snow against nature, that maintaineth the flowers and warmeth the heart?' Thus saying, he put his arms around her as a creeping vine, to enjoy his life; and whilst he clung to her neck, she awoke from sleep, and answered with a trembling and soft sigh the enamoured prince, who, on seeing her awake, said to her, 'O my beloved, if, holding thee without candles, this temple of love was nearly burnt to ashes, what will there be now of my life, that I can behold those two lights? O dear eyes, that with a lightning glance rival the stars, ye, and ye alone, have burnt a hole in my heart, and ye alone may salve it, as new-laid eggs; and thou, O beauteous doctress mine, be moved to pity for this my stress, and be careful of one sickening for thy love, so that, for having changed the night to day and beheld the light of thy beauty, a direful fever burneth his entrails.



Put thine hand upon my breast; feel my pulse; order a prescription. But what do I say? what prescription do I seek? O my soul, kiss me on the lips with thy sweet mouth; I do not want other cure for my life than a handling of thy dear hand; and with the cordial of thy sweet grace, and the root of this thy tongue, I shall be well and free.' Hearing these words, she became red as a flame of fire, and answered, 'Do not praise me so much, O dear my lord. I am thy slave, and to serve thy kingly person I would throw myself into the privy; and I hold it great fortune that this myrtle-tree, planted in that earthen pot, hath become a branch of laurel, and hath found a resting-place in a heart of flesh, a heart where dwelleth so much greatness and virtue.' The prince, hearing these words, melted like a tallow candle, and again embracing her, sealed that letter with a kiss, and held out his hand to her, saying, 'Here I plight thee my troth: thou shalt be my wife, thou shalt hend the sceptre, and thou shalt have the key of my heart as thou holdest the wheel of my life.' And after this they continued their joyance, and then arose, and took food and drink, and continued so doing for about five days. But fate and fortune upset all play, and divide matrimony, and are always contrary to love, and are as a black dog which caseth itself amidst the pleasures of those who love: so it happened that the prince was called to go to the chase of a big wild boar that infested the country, for which cause he was obliged to quit his wife, and to leave behind two-thirds of his heart.

And because he loved her better than his life, and saw her beauteous above all beauty and love, he burned and melted: for it was as a tempest in the sea of amorous joyance, a copious rain of the joy of love, a cobweb

dropping into a saucepan full of the butter of the pleasures of lovers: it was as a serpent that bites, a moth that nibbles, the gall which embitters, the coldness which freezes, that for which life wearies, and the mind becomes unstable, and the heart suspicious: therefore, calling the fairy, he said to her, 'O my heart, I am obliged to remain two or three nights away from home. God knoweth with what grief I fare forth from thee, who art my soul; Heaven knoweth if before I go to this chase I will be able to endure it; but I cannot avoid it, as I must go to satisfy my father: and therefore I must leave thee: and I beseech thee, for that love which thou bearest me, to enter inside the earthenware pot, and not come out of it until my return, which will be before long.' 'I will do so,' answered the fairy, 'because I know not, and I will not, and I cannot disobey what pleaseth thee: therefore go in peace, and God-speed, as I will serve thee as thou wilt: but do me a kindness, leave attached at the end of the myrtle-bough a silken thread tied to a small bell, and when thou shalt arrive, pull the thread and ring, and I will come forth and welcome thee.' And thus did the prince, and calling one of his valets, said to him, 'Come here, come here thou, open thine ears, and hearken to me well. Make this bed every evening, just as if in it had to take rest my own person; water always this myrtle-tree, and be careful that nothing should happen to it, as I have counted its leaves: and if I find only one missing, I will kick thee out.' And having thus spoken, he mounted his steed and departed, sad at heart, more like a sheep going to the slaughter-house than a hunter going to chase a boar.

In the meantime seven women of pleasure whom the prince had kept, seeing that he had cooled towards them, and had no more love for them, and worked no more in

their territory, began to suspect that he had in hand some new intrigue, which had made him forget the old friendship. And being desirous to discover country, they sent for a builder, and giving him a good sum of money, bade him build a passage under their house which reached to the chamber of the prince, where, as soon as it was ready, they quickly entered to see what new thing they could find, and if another wanton had taken their place and stopped accounts. But finding no one, and looking all round, they perceived only the beautiful myrtle-tree. Each one took a leaf from it, and the youngest took all the end to which was tied the tiny bell, which was no sooner touched than it rang; and the fairy, thinking it was the prince, came out at once; but the dirty bitches, as soon as they beheld the beauteous fairy, laid their claws upon her, saying, 'Thou art the one who drawest to thy mill all the waters of our hopes; thou art the one who hast won in thy hand a fine balance of the prince's good grace; thou art the splendid creature who hast put thyself in possession of our flesh. Mayest thou be welcome! Thou mayest go now, as thou hast reached to the last dregs; better, far better, had not thy mother shited thee! Go, for thou art ready: thou hast taken the bean, but thou art caught this time. May we not have been born at nine months if thou shalt escape!' And thus saying, they hit her a blow of the mace on her head, smashing her into five pieces, and each took a piece: but the youngest would have no part in this cruelty, and invited by her sisters to do as they had done, she would accept nothing else than a lock of the golden hair. And having done thus, they took their departure by the same way they had come.

In the meanwhile came the valet to make the bed, and to water the plant according to his master's orders;

and finding what had happened, nearly died with affright, and picking up the hands and teeth, lifted up what was left of the flesh and the bones, and wiping up the blood from the ground, he buried it inside the pot, and having watered the tree, made the bed, shut the door, and putting the key under it, took to his heels out of the country.

Now the prince, having returned from the chase, pulled the silken string and rang the bell: but ring and catch quails, and ring that the bishop passeth, he could ring as much as he liked, for the fairy was deaf, by which reason as he went to the door of the chamber, and being unable to keep cool and call the valet with the key, he kicked the lock and pushed the door open. And he entered and ran to the balcony, where he beheld the myrtle-tree despoiled of its leaves, at which sight he began to cry out with loud cries, and weep with bitter weeping and wailing, 'O unlucky, O unfortunate, O miserable that I am, who hath made me this tow-beard? who hath ruined and crushed a prince? O my leafless myrtle-tree! O my lost fairy! O my darkened life! O my joys ended in smoke! O my pleasures turned to vinegar! What wilt thou do, O unfortunate Cola Marcione? What will become of thee, O unhappy one? Jump over this pit; arise from this dunghill: thou art fallen from every good thing, and thou dost not kill thyself? thou hast lost every treasure, and thou canst live? thou hast lost all pleasure in life: why dost thou not end it? Where art thou, where art thou, O myrtle mine? And what hellish arm hath ruined thy beautiful head? O accursed chase, that hast been the cause of my great loss! Alas! I am forlorn, my days are ruined: it is impossible that I can live without my life, and there is no help for it but that I stretch my feet, as without

my love, sleep will not restore me; the food will be poison, and life and pleasure desert.' And thus weeping and lamenting enough to move to compassion even the very stones in the road, the prince, unable to take food or take rest, sickened, and his colour yellowed, and the carmine of his lips became white.

Now the fairy, being charmed, had begun to form herself again from the flesh and bones buried in the pot by the valet, and after a short time became the same as before; and seeing the sorrowful plight of her lover, who had become of the colour of a sick Spaniard, and like unto a lizard, and juice of leaven, and wolf's fart, had compassion upon him, and coming out of the pot, like the glimmer of candle out of a dark lantern, came in sight of Cola Marcione, and clasping him in her arms, said, 'Cheer up, cheer up, O my prince, leave off this lamenting, put an end to thy weeping, wipe thy tears, abate thine anger, show a happy visage. Here am I, alive and beautiful, in spite of those strumpets who brake my head, and did with my flesh that which Tesone did with the monk's.'

The prince, on beholding her when least he expected her, returned from death to life: the colour came back to his face, the warmth to his blood, the spirit to his breast, and after a thousand caresses, and sporting, and playing, he bade her tell him how all had happened, and hearing that the valet was not to blame, sent for him; and having ordered a banquet, with the consent of his father, he wedded the fairy: and having invited all the grandees of the realm, he ordered that the seven serpents who had so ill-treated that lamb should be present. And when they had eaten their fill, said the prince to each one of his guests, 'What would the persons deserve who would do

a damage to this beauteous girl?' pointing to the fairy, whose radiant loveliness shone, and glittered, and took all hearts by storm. Now all those that were sitting at table, beginning with the king, said, one that they deserved to be hanged, another that they should be put to the wheel, one decreeing one thing and the other another: and at last it came to the turn of the seven vipers. Although this discussion was not pleasing to them, still they dreamt not of the bad night which awaited them: and as all truth lieth where wine playeth, they answered that he who could have the heart even to touch that jewel embodiment of all the joys of love would deserve to be thrown into the privy. The bitches having given this sentence with their own mouth, the prince said, 'Yourselves have discussed the cause, and yourselves have decreed the sentence: it only remaineth that your orders should be executed, as ye are the ones that, with a heart like Nero's and cruelty similar to Medea's, wanted to make a fricassee of that graceful form and beauteous shape: therefore quick, we must lose no time: let them be thrown into a large public privy, where they will end their life.' And the prince's order was at once executed, sparing only the youngest, whom he married to his valet, giving her a good dowry; and then he sent for the father and mother of Myrtle, and presented them with the wherewithal to live in ease and plenty to the end of their days; and the prince and the fairy lived happily together; and those daughters of Satan, escaping with great difficulty with life, certified the truth of the old proverb,

'Passeth e'en a lame goat,  
If she findeth none to stop.'

## PERUONTO.

## THIRD DIVERSION

## Of the First Day.

Peruonto goeth to the forest to gather a fagot of wood, and behaveth kindly towards three girls whom he findeth sleeping in the sun, and receiveth from them a charm. The king's daughter mocketh him, and he calleth down a curse upon her that she should be with child of him, which cometh to pass. Knowing that he is the father, the king commandeth that he should be put inside a cask with his wife and little ones, and thrown into the sea : but in virtue of the charm he has received, he freeth himself of the danger, and becoming a handsome youth, is made king.

ALL were pleased with the recital, and heard with great satisfaction of the happiness of the prince, and of the punishment of the evil women. And now it was Meneca's turn to speak, and the chattering of the others was silenced, and she began recounting the story which followeth :

A good deed is never lost : whoso soweth the seed of kindness meeteth with due reward, and whoso soweth the seed of love gathereth love in return. The favour which is shown to a grateful heart is never barren, and gratitude giveth birth to gifts. Instances of these sayings occur continually in the deeds of mankind : and ye will meet with an example of it in the tale that I am about to relate to you.

A countrywoman of Casoria, Ceccarella hight, had a son named Peruonto, who was the silliest body and the ugliest lump of flesh that nature had ever created ; so that the unhappy mother always felt sad at heart, and cursed the day and the hour upon which she had given birth to this good-for-nothing, who was not worth a dog's hide. The unfortunate woman could cry out as much as she liked, but the ass never stirred to do her the lightest service. At last, after screaming herself hoarse, and assailing him with all the epithets she could think of, she induced him to go to the forest and gather a fagot of wood, saying, 'It is nearly time that we should have something to eat. Run for this wood, that I may get ready somewhat : and forget not yourself on the way, but come back at once, that I may cook the needful so as to keep the life in us.'

Peruonto departed, and fared on like a monk among his brethren in a procession. Away he went, stepping as one treading down eggs, with the gait of a jackdaw, counting his paces as he went. At last he reached a certain part of the forest through which ran a streamlet, and near by he espied three young girls lying on the grass, with a stone for a pillow, fast asleep, with the sun pouring his rays straight upon them. When Peruonto saw them like a fountain amid a roaring fire, he took compassion upon them ; and with the axe which he carried to cut the wood he severed some branches from the trees, and built a kind of arbour over them. Whilst he was busy so doing the young girls awoke (they were the daughters of a fairy), and perceiving the kindness and goodness of heart of Peruonto, in gratitude they gave him a charm, by which he might possess whatever he knew how to ask for.

Peruonto, having performed this action, continued faring

towards the forest, where he cut down a fagot of wood so large that it would require a cart to carry it. Seeing that it would be impossible for him to lift it, he sat upon it, saying, 'Would it not be a fine thing if only this fagot would carry me home?' and behold, the fagot began to trot like a Besignano horse, and arriving before the king's palace, it began to wheel round, and prance, and curvet, so that Peruonto cried out aloud, enough to deafen all hearers. The young ladies who attended the king's daughter, Vastolla hight, happening to look out of the window and behold this marvel, hastened to call the princess, who, glancing out and observing the freaks played by the fagot, laughed until she fell backwards, which thing was unusual, and the young ladies were astonished at the sight, as the Lady Vastolla was by nature so melancholy that they never remembered to have seen her smile. Peruonto lifted his head, and perceiving that they made a mock at him, said, 'O Vastolla, mayest thou be with child by me!' and thus saying, tightened his heels on the fagot, which at once moved away, and in an instant arrived home with a train of screaming children behind: and if his mother had not quickly shut the door, they would have slain him with stones.

In the meantime Vastolla, after a feeling of uneasiness, and unrest, and the hindering of the monthly ordinary, perceived that she was with child, and hid as long as possible her plight, until she was round as a cask. The king, discovering her condition, was wroth with exceeding wrath, and fumed, and swore terrible oaths, and convened a meeting of the council, and thus spake to them: 'Ye all know that the moon of mine honour is wearing horns, and ye all know that my daughter hath furnished matter of which to write chronicles, or, even better, to chronicle my

shame. Ye all know that to adorn my brow she hath filled her belly: therefore tell me, advise me what I had better do. Methinks I had rather have her slain than have her give birth to a bastard race. I have a mind to let her feel rather the agonies of death than the labour of child-bed: I have a mind to let her depart this world ere she bring bad seed into it.' The ministers and advisers, who had made use of more oil than vinegar, answered him, saying, 'Truly deserveth she a great punishment, and of the horns which she forceth on thy brow should the handle be made of the knife that shall slay her: but if we slay her now that she is with child, the villain who hath been the principal cause of thy disgust, and who hath dressed thee horns right and left will escape unhurt: he who, teaching thee the policy of Tiberius, hath put before him a Cornelius Tacitus, and to represent to thee true sleep, hath made thee issue forth from the horn-gate. Let us await, therefore, until it comes to port, and then we are likely to know the root of this dishonour: and afterwards we will think and resolve, with a grain of salt, which course we had best follow.'

The king was pleased with this rede, perceiving in it sound sense, and therefore held his hand, and said, 'Let us await the issue of events.' But as Heaven willed, the time came: and with little labour, at the first sound of the midwife's voice, and the first squeeze of the body, out sprang two men-children like two golden apples. The king, who was full of wrath, sent for his ministers and counsellors, and said to them, 'My daughter hath been brought to bed, and the time hath come for her to die.' Answered the old sages (and all to gain time upon time), 'No; we will tarry until the children get older, so as to be able by their favour to recognise their father.' The king,

not desiring his counsellors to think him unjust, shrugged his shoulders and took it quietly, and patiently tarried till the children were seven years of age, at which time he again sent for his counsellors, and asked them their rede: and one of them said, 'As thou hast not been able to know from thy daughter who was the false coiner that altered the crown from thy image, it is time that we seek to obliterate the stain. Command thou that a great banquet should be got ready, and ask all the grandees and noblemen of the city, and let us be watchful, and seek with our own eyes him to whom the children incline most by the inclination of nature: for that one without fail will be the father, and we will at once get hold of him like goat's excrement.' The king was pleased with this rede. He gave orders for the banquet, invited all folk of any consequence, and after they had eaten their fill he bade them stand in line and pass before the children: but they took as much notice of them as did Alexander's courser of the rabbits, so that the king became enraged and bit his lips with anger: and although he was not wanting in shoes, because of the tightness of those he was compelled to wear he stamped the ground with the excess of pain; but his advisers said to him, 'Softly, Your Majesty! Hearten your heart. We will give another banquet in a short while, no more inviting the noblest of the land, but instead folk of the lower class, as women are ever wont to attach themselves to the worst: and perchance we will meet with the seed of your wrath amid cutlers, comb-sellers, and other merchants of small wares, as we have not met with him among the noble and well-born.' The king was pleased with this rede, and commanded the second banquet to be got ready, whereto came, by ban invited, all folk from Chiaja, all the rogues, all adventurers and fortune-hunters,

all quick-witted, all ruffians, and villains, and apron-wights that were to be found in the city, who, taking seat like unto noblemen at a long table spread with rich abundance, began straightway to load themselves.

Now it so happened that Ceccarella, having heard the ban which invited folk to this banquet, began to urge Peruonto to go to it also, and so much did she say and do that at last she prevailed upon him to depart, and he went: and he had hardly entered the place of feasting, when the two pretty children ran to him, and embraced him, and received him with great joy, and sported and played with him. The king, beholding this sight, wrenched off all his beard, seeing that the good name of this lottery and this lump of copeta \* belonged to a sorcerer, scirpio,† hideous, and badly made, who sickened the sight so that one could not even gaze upon him without flinching. He was, besides, velvet-headed, owl-eyed, and had a nose like a parrot-beak, a mouth like that of a Luccerna fish, and was all in rags, so that, without reading, thou couldst have an insight into all the secrets; and sighing heavily, the king said, 'Hath ever any one seen anything like this, that that light-o'-brains daughter mine should have it in her head to fall in love with this sea-monster? hath ever any one seen one that could take to the heel of such an hairy foot? Ah, infamous woman, what blind and false metamorphoses are these: to become a strumpet for a pig, so that I should become a ram? But why do I tarry? what am I thinking of? Let them feel the weight of my

\* *Giuggiolena*, paste condensed with honey, hazel-nuts, and almonds, made in different shapes and figures, and seasoned with comfits.

† *Scirpio*, fem. *scirpia*, sour-looking, Lat. *scirpus*; a woman thin, lurid-looking, bronzed with shaggy hair, a witch.

just chastisement, let them be punished as they deserve, and let them bear the penalty that ye will adjudge: and take them out of my sight, for I cannot endure them.'

The ministers all took counsel together, and resolved that the princess and the malefactor, with the two children, should be put into a cask and thrown into the sea, so that they should thus end their days without the king soiling his hands with his own blood. No sooner was the sentence pronounced than the cask was brought, and all four were put therein; but before they were thrown in, some of the handmaidens of Princess Vastolla, who were weeping with bitter weeping, put inside the hogshead raisins and dried figs, so that they could live for a little time. Then the cask was closed, and taken away, and flung into the sea, and it kept sailing on whither the wind blew it. Meanwhile Vastolla, weeping with sore weeping, her eyes running two streamlets of tears, said to Peruonto, 'What great misfortune is ours that our grave should be Bacchus' cradle! Oh, could I but have known who it was that worked in this body to have me thrown into this prison! Alas! I am come to a sad end, without knowing the why or wherefore. O thou cruel one, tell me, tell me, what magic art didst thou use, what wand didst thou hend, to bring me to this pass, to be shut herein by this hogshead's hoops? tell me, tell me, what devil tempted thee to put into me the invisible pipe, and gain nothing by it but the spectacle of a blackened factor?' Peruonto, who had for a time listened and pretended not to hear (making merchant's ear), answered at last, 'If thou wilt know how it came to pass, give me some raisins and figs.' The princess, desiring to draw from him something, gave him a handful of each; and as soon as his desire was satisfied, he began to recount all

that had happened to him with the three young girls and the fagot of wood, and how at last he came under her window, and how, when she laughed at him, he wished her to be with child by him: which when the lady Vastolla heard, she heartened her heart, and said to him, 'Brother mine, why should we make exit of life inside this hogshead? Why not wish for this vessel to become a splendid ship, so that we may escape from this peril and arrive in good port?' And Peruonto rejoined, 'Give me figs and raisins, if it be thy desire to know.' And Vastolla at once satisfied his gluttony, so that he should be willing to speak: and like a carnival fisherwoman, with the raisins and figs she fished for the words fresh out of his body. And Peruonto said the words desired by the princess: and at once the cask became a ship, with all the sails ready for sailing, and with all the sailors that were needed for the ship's service; and there were to be seen some lowering the sheets, some hauling the shrouds, some holding the rudder, some setting the studding-sails, some mounting to the upper-main-topsail, one crying, 'Put the ship about!' and another, 'Put the helm up!' and one blowing the trumpet, and others firing the guns, and some doing one thing, and some another, so long as Vastolla remained on board the ship, swimming in a sea of sweetness.

It being now the hour when the moon played with the sun at going and coming, Vastolla said to Peruonto, 'Handsome youth mine, wish that this ship may become a palace, so that we may be more secure. Thou knowest what is usually said: "Praise the sea, but dwell on shore"'; and Peruonto answered, 'If it be thy desire that I should say so, give me some figs and raisins'; and she at once gave him what he asked, and Peruonto,

having eaten, wished his wish, and the ship became a beautiful palace, adorned in all points, and furnished with such splendour that nothing was wanting. So that the princess, who would have parted with life easily but a short time before, now would not have exchanged her place with the highest lady in the world, seeing that she was served and entreated as a queen. Then, to put a seal upon her good-fortune, she begged Peruonto to obtain the grace of becoming handsome and polished, so that they could joy together: remarking that, although saith the proverb, 'Better a pig for an husband than an emperor for a friend,' if he could change his looks she would take it as the greatest good-fortune: and Peruonto in the same way answered, 'Give me figs and raisins, if it be thy will that I should thus desire.' And Vastolla at once remedied the costiveness of his words with the raisins and figs, so that as soon as the wish was spoken he became from a sparrow a bullfinch, from a ghul a narcissus, and from an hideous mask a handsome youth. Vastolla, seeing such a transformation, was beside herself with excess of joy, and throwing her arms around him, tasted of the sweet juice of happiness.

Now it so happened that at this same time the king, who from the day on which he had pronounced the cruel sentence had not lifted his eyes from the ground, was entreated to the chase by his courtiers, who bethought themselves thus to cheer him. And he went; and night surprising him, sighting from afar a light from a lantern at one of the windows of the palace, he sent one of his followers to see if they would receive him there: and he was answered that he might not only break a glass, but he could also shatter a night vase. So the king accepted the invitation, and mounting the steps, entered:

and going from room to room, he could see no person living except the two children, who kept at his side, saying, 'Grandsire! grandsire! grandsire!' The king wondered with greatest wonder, and marvelled with greatest marvel: and being wearied, seated himself by a table, when he beheld spread on it by invisible hands a white cloth and divers dishes of food, of which he partook, and wines of good vintage, of which he drank truly as a king, served by the two pretty children, never ceasing: and whilst he was at meat, a band of calascioni\* and tambourines discoursed delicious music, touching even the marrow of his bones. When he had done eating, a bed suddenly appeared made of cloth of gold; and having had his boots pulled off, he took his rest, and all his courtiers did the same, after having well supped at an hundred tables, which were ready laid in other rooms.

As soon as morning came, the king got ready to depart, and was going to take with him also the little ones, when Vastolla and her husband appeared, and falling at his feet, asked his pardon, and recounted to him all their fortune. The king, seeing that he had won two nephews that were like two grains of gold and two priceless gems galore, and a son-in-law like a jinn, embraced first one and then the other, and took them with him to the city, and commanded great festivals and rejoicings to be made for this great gain, which lasted many days: solemnly confessing to himself that

'Man proposeth, but God disposeth.'

\* *Calascione* (Gr. *χάλυς*), an ancient and famous instrument with gut-strings.



## VARDIELLO.

## FOURTH DIVERSION

## Of the First Day.

Vardiello, being of a brutish disposition, after a hundred bad tricks played upon his mother, loseth for her a piece of cloth, and stupidly desireth to recover it from a statue, and in so doing becometh rich.

AS soon as Meneca had ended her story, which was praised and esteemed by all for the number of curious adventures, which held the hearer in suspense unto the end, Tolla, at the command of the prince, without any loss of time thus began her say :

If nature had made it necessary for the brute creation to think of dressing and of buying their food, by this time the race of quadrupeds would have been destroyed. But finding food readily, they have no need of gardener to gather it, buyer to buy it, cook to dress it, and carver to cut it up ; their hide defends them from the rain and the snow ; they need no merchant to sell them cloth, no tailor to make it, and no apprentice to ask for a gift. But man is ingenious, and Mother Nature cared not to give him the same indulgences, because she kenneth well that he can procure whatso he needeth. This is the reason why the wise are often needy, and the brainless rich : as ye will learn from the story that I will relate.

Grannonia of Aprano was a woman of sound judgment, but had a son, Vardiello hight, the greatest simpleton of the village : but as the eyes of the mother were charmed and saw not aright, she perceived no blemish in him, and loved him with a passionate love, and was for ever caressing him and fondling him, as if he were the handsomest creature in the world.

Now Grannonia kept a fowl, which was sitting upon a nest of eggs upon which she set all her hopes, expecting to have a good brood and thereby to derive some profit. And having one day to go on some needful errand, she called her son, and said to him, 'O beloved son of thy mother, listen to me : keep watch upon this hen, and if she cometh down from her nest, be careful and drive her back again, otherwise the eggs will grow cold, and we shall have neither eggs nor chicks.'

'Leave it to me,' said Vardiello ; 'thou hast not spoken to a deaf ear.' And another thing his mother begged of him, saying, 'O blessed son, in that cupboard there are several things in a jar which are poisonous : do not be tempted to touch them, for they would make you stretch your feet.'

Answered Vardiello, 'Far be it from me : poison will not catch me, and thou hast done well to forewarn me of it, for I might have been caught in it, and there would have been left neither thorn nor bone.' Thereupon his mother departed, and Vardiello remained ; and not knowing what to do to spend his time, he descended to the garden, and began to dig small pits, which he covered with straw and soil, so that the children might tumble into them. And as he was in the midst of this pleasant work, he perceived the fowl strutting outside the house, whereupon he began to say, 'Hish ! hish ! away from

here! march there!' but the fowl moved not, and Vardiello, seeing that she was as headstrong as an ass, after screeching, 'Hish! hish!' began to stamp with his feet, and to throw his cap at her, and picking up a stick, threw it also, and catching her in the middle, made the hen reel forward and stretch her feet.

When Vardiello saw what had happened, he bethought himself of what would be the best to do not to let the eggs get cold, and making a virtue of necessity, thought of remedying the evil by taking off his trousers and seating himself on the nest: but in doing so, his body being heavy, he quickly made an omelet of the eggs. Beholding this sight, he was ready to beat his head against the walls. At last, as all grief turns to the mouth, feeling an emptiness in his stomach, he resolved to feast upon the fowl. Therefore, plucking off the feathers and putting her on a spit, he lit a large fire, and began to roast her; and when she was cooked, to do all things in due order, he laid a fine-coloured cloth on an old chest, and taking an earthenware juglet, went down to the cellar, and filled it with wine. But whilst so doing, he heard a great noise, and a great crash, and a rushing about the house like the clattering of horses' hoofs. Whereat starting up in alarm and turning his eyes, he saw a large tom-cat running off with the fowl, spit and all, and another cat chasing after the first, swearing and miauwing for a share.

Vardiello, wishing to remedy the mishap, threw himself like an unchained lion upon the cat, and in his haste left the tap open and the wine running. And after racing after the cat all over the house, he recovered the fowl, but meanwhile all the wine was spilt; and when Vardiello returned and saw what had happened, he took the tap away from the cask; and because his sense helped him

to remedy all this damage, so that his mother would not perceive it, he dragged forward a sack full of flour, and began to scatter its contents about the floor. Nevertheless, keeping account with his fingers of the mishaps which had happened that day, and thinking that he had committed stupidities that would lose for him all play with the love of his mother, he resolved in his heart not to let her find him again alive. Therefore he went to the cupboard, and taking out the jar full of preserved walnuts, which his mother had told him contained poison, he began to eat its contents, and never ceased until he came to the last; and when he had filled his stomach, he went to sleep inside the oven. Meanwhile his mother came, and knocked for some time, and seeing that no one heard her, gave a kick to the door and entered: and calling her son in a loud voice, and finding that no one answered, bethought her that a bad day had come, and shouted louder, 'O Vardiello, Vardiello, art thou deaf, that thou hearest not? Hast thou weights on thy feet, that thou comest not? Hast thou a pip on thy tongue, that thou answerest not? Where art thou, O rogue? Where art thou, son of a bad race? Would that I had strangled thee in thy birth!' Vardiello, listening to all this noise, at last with a pitiful voice said, 'Here am I! I am inside the oven, and you will never see me more, mother mine.' 'Why?' answered the distressed mother. 'Because I am poisoned,' answered the son. 'Alas and well-a-day! How didst thou do it? What cause hadst thou to commit this slaughter, and who gave to thee the poison?' And Vardiello related one after another all the fine deeds that he had done, and for which cause he desired to die, and not remain in this world as an example of folly.

The poor woman, hearing thus all that had happened,

was wroth, and embittered, and aggrieved also, and had something to do to take out of Vardiello's head all his melancholy humour : and because she loved him dearly, she gave him other sweetmeats, so as to cheer him and undeceive him from his belief that the walnuts were poison, saying that they were good to restore the stomach but not to poison him. Having appeased him with many kind words, she drew him out of the oven, and giving him a piece of cloth, told him to go and sell it, advising him not to treat of this business with anybody that spake too much. 'Bravo,' said Vardiello; 'doubt not but that I shall serve thee well'; and taking the piece of cloth, Vardiello fared to Naples city, where he brought his ware, and began crying, 'Cloth! cloth!' But to all those who said to him, 'What cloth is this?' he answered, 'Thou art no good for my house, because thou speakest too much.' And to another who said to him, 'How dost thou sell it?' he answered that he had deafened him with his shouting.

At last, beholding in the courtyard of an untenanted house a statue of stucco, and being very tired and sore-footed, he seated himself upon a heap of stones; and seeing no one entering that house, that seemed as if it had been plundered, he marvelled with exceeding marvel, and turning to the statue, said, 'Tell me, comrade, doth anybody live in this house?' And as the other answered not, he thought that this must be a man of few words, and said, 'Wilt thou buy this piece of cloth? I will let thee have it cheaply': and seeing that the statue answered not, said, 'By Jupiter, this is the very man I have been seeking: take it, let some one price it, and give me for it whatsoever thou wilt, and shortly I will return for the moneys.' Thus saying, he put the piece of

cloth where he had been sitting; and the first one who entered therein for some want of nature, finding it there, took it away. Meanwhile Vardiello returned to his mother without the cloth; and relating the facts to her, she felt heart-sore, and said, 'Whenever wilt thou put thy brains in order? See how much mischief thou hast done to me: remember it well. But I am to blame for being too tender-hearted: I have not at first put thy legs to rights, and now I feel assured that a pitiful doctor maketh a wound sorer: and so much mischief dost thou do that at last I will pay thee back, and we will square all accounts.' Vardiello kept saying, whilst she thus spake, 'Hush, mother mine, it is not what thou sayest. Thou wantest nought but the coins. Thinkest thou that I am such a dunce, and do not know how to keep counts? It will come by-and-by: thou wilt see in a short time if I do not have an handle put to the shovel.'

As morning dawned, when the shadows of night flee, persecuted by the sun's troops of light, Vardiello made his way to the courtyard where was the statue, and said, 'Good-morrow, master. Will it be convenient to give me that small amount of money? Now dost thou hear? Pay me for the cloth.' But the statue answering not, he took hold of a stone, and throwing it with all his strength, caught the statue in the middle of its breast, and broke a vein which was the health and benefit of his house, for, having knocked down a few pieces of stone, he discovered a vessel full of gold pieces, and hending them with both hands, he ran to his house, crying, 'Mother! mother! look what a number of red lupins: oh, how many! how many!' The mother, seeing the gold, and knowing that her son would soon publish the fact, told him to stand at the door and wait for the curdled milk seller, because she

would buy him some. Vardiello, who was a glutton, at once seated himself before the door : and the mother, going upstairs, sent down for more than half an hour a rain of raisins and figs from the window, which Vardiello beholding, he began to cry, 'Mother! mother! put out basins and tubs, and if this rain lasteth, we shall be rich': and as soon as he was well filled, he went upstairs to sleep.

Now it happened that one day of the days two working men were quarrelling because of a golden coin they had found on the ground ; and whilst thus engaged, Vardiello passed that way, and seeing the cause of their dispute, said, 'What asses ye are to quarrel about a red lupin, which I hold of no account, since I found of them a potful!' The men, hearing this, took him before a court of justice, where the judge asked him, 'How, when, and with whom didst thou find these lupins?' to which answered Vardiello, 'I found them in a palace, inside a dumb man: and it rained raisins and dried figs.' The judge, hearing this jumping of emptiness, decreed that he should be taken to the madhouse as a competent judge of it. Thus the son's ignorance made the mother rich, and the judgment of the mother balanced the stupidity of the son: and by this is clearly seen that

'Tis great misfortune if ship, governed by good pilot, wrecks on rock.'

## THE FLEA.

### FIFTH DIVERSION

#### Of the First Day.

A thoughtless king groweth a flea to the size of a sheep, and ordering it to be slain and skinned, offereth his daughter in marriage to whoso shall, on seeing, the hide, recognise to what manner of animal it belonged. A ghul recogniseth it by the scent, and taketh the princess to wife: but she is freed from her thralldom by seven sons of an old woman, each one giving proof of his wit to deliver her.

THE prince and the slave laughed aloud at Vardiello's tricks, and praised the sound sense of the mother, who had the wit to foresee and remedy her son's folly; and it being now Popa's turn to relate her story, all the company became silent, and she began thus:

A resolve taken without wise judgment bringeth always ruin without remedy. Whoso guideth himself as a madman suffereth cark and care as a wise one: as happened to the King of Automonte, who, through a measureless folly, did a mad deed, imperilling greatly both his daughter and his honour.

The King of Automonte, being once bitten by a flea, caught it with dexterity, and seeing it nicely rounded, deemed it a cruelty to sentence it to be crushed on the nail. Therefore, putting it into a bottle, he nourished it with the blood from his own arm, and it was so well

fed that in seven months' time it had to change lodging, for it had become of the size of a sheep, whereat the king at once ordered it to be slain and skinned, and the hide tanned, and bade the public crier proclaim, 'Whoso will recognise to what animal belongeth this hide, the king will give him his daughter to wife.' When the folk heard this, they crowded from all parts of the world to tempt their fortune: and some said it belonged to a wild cat, and some to a wolf, and some to a crocodile, and some gave it to one animal, and some to another; but all were a thousand miles from the truth, and not one hit the nail on the head. At last came a ghul to this experiment, who was the most hideous being ever seen, since to look upon him was enough to make one tremble, and the most courageous youth in the world would have felt faint at the sight. Now no sooner had this ghul arrived than, putting his nose to the hide, he said, 'This skin belongeth to the largest of fleas.'

The king, hearing that he had known it straightway, and desiring not to fail in his promise, sent for his daughter Porziella, a beauteous lady, with a face like milk and roses that would charm all beholders; and the king said to her, 'O my daughter, thou knowest the edict that I had cried about the city, and thou knowest who I am. I cannot gainsay my promise: I must be a king or the bark of a poplar-tree: my word once given must be maintained, even though in so doing I break my heart. Who could suppose that this lottery would be won by a ghul? But as not a leaf falleth without the will of Heaven, we must believe that this marriage is made first above and afterwards here below. Be patient, therefore, and if thou art a blessed daughter,

do not rebel against thy sire's will, for my heart whispers to me that thou wilt be happy, because often hidden behind a rude stone is treasure found.' Porziella hearing this behest, all things became dark before her sight, and her colour changed and paled, and her mouth drooped, and her limbs trembled, and she came nigh unto death for her stress of sorrow.

At last she wept with sore weeping, and spake in a tremulous voice, and said to her sire, 'What evil deed have I done to our house, that I am doomed to so cruel a fate? what evil words have I uttered to thee, that I should be given in hand to this monster? O wretched Porziella, as a weasel I must be eaten by a toad, and a sa trembling sheep I must be dragged to the den of a wolf! Is this the love thou bearest to thy race? Is this the affection thou showest to me, whom heretofore thou calledst the doll of thy soul? Is it thus thou hast expelled from thy heart her who is a part and parcel of thy flesh and blood? Is it thus thou sendest from thy sight her who was the apple of thine eye? O father, O cruel sire, thou art not born of human flesh: the sea-ghuls gave thee birth, the wild cats suckled thee. But what am I saying? Every brute, be it of the sea or of the land, loveth its own breed. Only thou goest against thy own seed: thou hatest thy child. Oh, far better had it been if my mother had strangled me at my birth, if my cradle had been my death-bed, the breast which suckled me a bladder of poison, and the necklace they put round my neck a rope to strangle me: better all these things than to see the evil day in which an harpy's hand should caress me, and to be embraced by two bear's paws and kissed by a bear's mouth.'

She would have added more, but the king interrupted

her, saying, 'Be not angry, as the sugar costeth dear; softly, as the forks are made of wood; hold, for out of it come the dregs: be silent; say no more; thou speakest too much; thy tongue goeth too fast; what I do is well done; a father knoweth what to make with his children; put thy tongue behind thee, and raise not mine anger, for if I put my hands upon thee I will not leave thee a whole bone, and I will see thee bite the dust, thou breath of my arse, wanting to play the man and lay down the law to thy sire. Whence comes it that one whose mouth yet stinketh of milk can contradict my will? At once take his hand and wend thy footsteps to his home, for I will behold thy brazen face no longer.'

The unhappy princess, having reached this pass, with a face like a corpse, and eyes glaring, and mouth foaming, and a heart crushed with cark and care took the ghul by the hand, and he dragged her to the forest, where the trees were her palace, and the sun's rays never shone; the rivers met, and being in a darksome place, touched each other; and the wild beasts joyed to their hearts' content in the security of the bush, where man never entered, unless he had strayed and lost his road. And in a dark place, fearful to behold, like a very hell, was built the ghul's palace, adorned and bedecked with the bones of all those wretches whom he had slain and devoured. Bethink, ye that are Christians, the affright, the straitened breast, the trembling of limbs, the anguished heart, of the wretched princess: she had no blood left in her! But this was as nought to what followed, since the ghul had gone a-hunting, and shortly returned laden with slaughtered men, saying, 'Now thou canst not say, O my wife, that I do not feed thee well: see what a fine meal I have brought thee; take and eat, and love me:

for the heavens may fall, but I will never leave thee meatless.' The unhappy Porziella, spitting like a woman with child, turned her head the other side.

The ghul, seeing her disgust, said, 'It is like giving sweetmeats to pigs: but never mind, be patient till to-morrow morning, for I have been bidden to the chase, and will hunt wild boars, and I will bring thee a pair, and we will have a feast, and all our kith and kin shall partake thereof in honour of our wedding.' Thus saying, he fared onwards into the forest; and Porziella was left to think and repine at the window.

Now it chanced that an old woman passed that way, and feeling faint with hunger, begged of Porziella some refreshment, to which the unhappy princess answered, 'O my good old woman, God knoweth the heart, but I am in the power of a Satan, who bringeth me home nought but quarters of slaughtered men, and I know not how I have any appetite left in sighting such horrors, and I am spending the most miserable and wretched day that was ever left in store for a baptized being, and I am a king's daughter to boot, and was brought up with delicacy, and all my wishes were gratified': and thus saying, she wept with bitter weeping.

The old woman felt her heart softening for her, and turning to her, said, 'Weep not, O beauteous lady: do not wear out thy loveliness, for thou hast met with thy chance: here am I to help thee and watch over thee. Now hearken to me: I am the mother of seven sons, like seven giants, Mase, Nardo, Cola, Micco, Petrullo, Ascadeo, and Ceccone, and they have more power in them than the rosemary, and especially Mase, since every time he leans his ear to the ground he can hear what is done for thirty miles' distance; Nardo, every time he spits, makes a great sea of soapy

water; Cola, every time he throws on the ground a hair-pin, it becomes a field of sharpened razors; Micco, every time he sets a bough, it becomes an intricate forest; Petrullo, every time he drops a drop of water, it becomes a large river; Ascadeo, every time he throws a stone, it becomes a strong fortress; and Ceccone pulls the bow-string with such dexterity that he can hit a fowl in the eye at a mile's distance. Now, with the help of these my sons, who are all good and loving, and will take compassion of this thy estate, I will try to wrench thee out of the ghul's claws, because this sweet morsel is not for his mouth.'

'There never will be a better opportunity than now,' answered Porziella, 'for that hideous shadow hath gone to the chase, not to return till this evening, and we would have time to take our departure and escape.'

'It cannot be this evening,' answered the old woman, 'because I live at a distance from here; but to-morrow morning early I and my sons will ease thee of thy travail.' Thus saying, she went her way: and Porziella's heart was heartened, and she rested cheerfully that night. And when the maids of dawn cried, 'Hail to the sun!' behold, the old woman came with her seven sons, and bidding the princess to walk in the midst of them, they all fared cityward: but they had not journeyed half the way, when Mase, putting his ear to the earth, cried, 'Be on guard: let us be careful! The ghul hath returned home, and finding not this child, is coming after us with all speed.' Hearing these words, Nardo turned, and spat on the ground, when a roaring sea of soapy water rose up. The ghul, sighting this hindrance in his way, returned to his home, and took up a sack of bran, which he tied about his limbs; and thus accoutred, he passed this first difficulty. But Mase, again putting his ear to the ground, said, 'Look out, brother

mine; 'tis thy turn, for he is coming,' whereupon Cola threw the hair-pin on the ground, and it became at once a field of sharpened razors. The ghul, sighting this new obstacle, ran home, and donned steel raiment from head to foot, and returning, passed on. But Mase, putting ear on ground again, cried, 'Up, up, to arms! The ghul is coming in all haste'; and Micco, ready with the bough, set it on the ground: and a forest of great intricacy sprang up.

But as soon as the ghul reached this impediment, he drew a knife from his waistband, and began to cut down trees, one here and one there, so that in a short time he had nearly cut down all the forest, and had come out of this difficulty easily. Mase, who held his ear close to the ground, lifted his voice and cried, 'Let us not be idle, for the ghul is coming, and will be at our backs in a trice.' Petrullo, hearing these words, took from a small fountain, which ran near the roadside, a shell full of water: and throwing it on the ground, behold, a great river sprang up.

The ghul, perceiving this new obstacle, took off his raiment and remained quite naked, and putting his robes on his head, plunged into the stream, and swimming powerfully, soon reached the other side. Mase, who kept his ear in every hole, cried, 'This matter is becoming stale, and already the ghul beateth his heels on the ground behind us, and may Heaven guard us: therefore let us be wise, and let us repair this evil: let not the storm overtake us.' Then said Ascadeo, 'Doubt not; I will clear thee of this hideous ragamuffin'; and thus speaking, he took up a stone and threw it at a distance, when a strong fortress appeared, and all entered therein, shutting the door.

Now the ghul, perceiving that they were in a safe place, returned home, and took up a ladder, and came back with it. Mase, who was always on guard, heard from afar that

the ghul had returned, and said, 'Now we have reached the last candle of our hopes; Ceccone is the final refuge for our lives; the ghul is returning in a great fury. Alas! my heart is beating against my breast, and I dream already of a bad day.'

'Art thou so faint-hearted?' said Ceccone. 'Dost thou shít thyself in thy small-clothes with fear? Let me deal with this villain, and thou wilt see if I hit the nail on the head.' Thus saying, they beheld the ghul coming with the ladder, which he leant against the wall, and began mounting: but Ceccone took aim, and drew the string, and caught him on the eye, and he fell headlong on the ground, when Ceccone, issuing from the tower, took the ghul's knife from his belt, and cut off his head, just as if it had been a new cheese, which they brought to the king, who rejoiced with exceeding joy in having recovered his daughter, having repented sorely of the rash deed which had obliged him to wed her to the ghul. After a short time he gave her in marriage to a handsome prince, and enriched the seven sons and their mother, who had saved his daughter from unhappiness and death, never ceasing to reproach himself for having exposed his daughter to so much peril for a worthless caprice, and thinking of what a grave error is committed by those who seek

'A wolf's eggs and comb of fifteen.'\*

\* *Ova di lupo*, a thing impossible or without price, for a worthless thing, viz., *pettine de quinnaci*, a comb of fifteen soldi. *Ova di lupo* is also used for several kinds of pastry fried together.

## THE CAT CINDERELLA.

### SIXTH DIVERSION

#### Of the First Day.

Zezolla is taught by her governess to slay her stepmother, and believing that in persuading her father to marry her teacher she would be well treated and held dear, instead is sent into the kitchen: but, by virtue of the fairies, after passing various adventures, gaineth a king for a spouse.

THE hearers were silent as statues, listening to the story of the flea, and as soon as it was ended, all declared that the king had behaved like an ass in placing in jeopardy his own flesh and blood and the succession of his realm: and all having said their say, Antonella began to relate as follows:

Envy is ever a sea of malignity, and giveth in exchange for bladders a rupture, and when it desireth to see folk drowned in the sea, findeth itself under water or impelled against a rock, as I am now going to relate.

Once upon a time there lived a prince who was a widower, and he possessed an only daughter, so dear to him that he saw nought but by her eyes: and the princess had a governess, who taught her all kinds of fancy work, and educated her in many other feminine endowments.

Now this woman made a great show of affection for



her pupil, more in sooth than can be expressed. The prince took to himself a wife after a little while, and she chanced to be an evilly-disposed woman, who looked with disfavour on her charming stepdaughter, treating her with contempt, and coldness, and spite, so much so that the unhappy child used to complain of the ill-treatment she received to her teacher, saying to her, 'O God, would that thou hadst been my darling mother, thou who lovest me and art always caressing me!' And so long did she continue this song that the governess at last lent a pleased ear to it, and blinded by Satan, spake to the child thus: 'If thou wilt do as I bid thee, I will become thy mother, and thou shalt be dear unto me as my very eyes.' She was going to end her say, when Zezolla (thus was the princess hight) interrupted her, and said, 'Pardon me if I thus stop the words upon thy lips: I ken quite well that thou lovest me: therefore say no more, but teach me only by what art we can come to the end of our desires. Write thou, and I will sign the deed.' The teacher rejoined, 'Open thine ears, and hearken well, and thou shalt have bread as white as snow. When thy sire fareth to the chase, say to thy stepmother that thou wouldest like to wear one of the old raiments which are to be found in the large chest stored away, as it is thy desire to save for high occasions the one thou wearest now. Thy stepmother, who loveth above all things to see thee in rags, will at once consent, and will go and open the chest, and will say to thee, "Hold up the lid," and thou wilt hold it: and when she searcheth therein, thou wilt let it fall, and thus her neck will be broken. And after this thou knowest thy sire will do anything, even to false coinage, to please thee: therefore, when he caresseth thee, beseech thou him to

take me to wife: and then wilt thou be blessed and happy, since thou wilt be the mistress of my life.'

Having listened to the bidding of her governess, every hour seemed a thousand years to her until she could execute her teacher's rede. And after a time she did so: and when the mourning for her stepmother's untimely end had passed, she began to speak to her sire, telling him that she would be very happy if he would wed her teacher.

The prince at first heard not; but the daughter kept ever speaking and persuading him, till at last he lent a willing ear to her desires, and took Carmosina (thus was the teacher hight) to wife, and ordered great joyance and feasting in all his realm. Now it so happened that whilst the bride and bridegroom were toying and playing, and spending their time in joyance, Zezolla was looking out of one of the windows in the palace, and beheld a pigeon flying about, which at last settled upon a low wall in front of her, and addressing her in human voice, spake thus: 'When thou desirest to have something, send to the pigeon of the fairies in the island of Sardinia, and thou shalt have thy wish.'

The new stepmother for five or six days caressed and petted the young princess, seating her in the best place at table, giving her the choicest morsels, arraying her in the finest raiment: but having passed a short time, forgetting the deed Zezolla had done to serve her (and sad the soul who hath a bad master), she brought forward six daughters of her own, whom she had kept hidden secretly: and so much art did she use that, having ingratiated her daughters in the stepfather's favour, he lost all love and affection for his own child, so that (argue to-day and speak to-morrow) Zezolla was sent

from the chamber to the kitchen, from the dais to the fireplace, from the silken and golden raiment to the coarse cloth, and from the sceptre to the spit. And not only did she change her estate, but her name was changed also, and she was hight the Cat Cinderella. So it chanced one day of the days that the prince her sire had to journey to the island of Sardinia on matters concerning his realm; and before departing he asked each one of his stepdaughters—Mperia, Calamita, Sciorrella, Diamante, Colommina, and Pascarella—what they would that he should bring to them on his return. One asked for fine raiment, another jewels for her hair, another cosmetics and pomade for the skin, another divers playthings to pass the time, another fruits, another flowers: and at the last, in contempt for his own daughter, he turned and said to her, ‘And thou, what wilt thou?’ and she answered, ‘I want nought, but I desire that thou recommend me to the pigeon of the fairies, bidding her tell them that they would send me somewhat: and an thou shouldest forget to do my bidding, mayest thou not be able to stir forward or backward from thy place. Remember well my saying: thine is the weapon, and thine is the sleeve.’ The prince fared to Sardinia, ended all his affairs, bought all the things desired by his stepdaughters, and forgot quite Zezolla’s bidding. He took ship for his return: but do as they would, the ship would not move from its place, neither backward nor forward, and it seemed glued to its mooring. The vessel’s master was in despair, and in the evening, being very tired, he lay down and slept: and he beheld a fairy in his sleep, who said to him, ‘Knowest thou wherefore thy ship cannot sail? ’Tis because the prince thou hast on board hath failed to keep his promise to his daughter, remembering all his

stepdaughters, and forgetting his own flesh and blood.’ The master awoke from sleep, and related his dream to the prince, who, confessing the fault he had committed, fared at once to the fairies’ grotto, and recommending his daughter to them, begged that they would send her somewhat: and at his words out of the cave came a beauteous young lady, who said to him that she thanked his daughter for her kind remembrance, and that she bade her take for love of her these her gifts: and thus saying, she gave him a date-tree, a mattock, a golden bucket, and a silken napkin, the one to transplant, and the others to cultivate the tree. The prince marvelled at the present, took leave of the fairy, and journeyed with the ship towards his country. On his arrival he gave his stepdaughters that which they had bidden him bring, and lastly to his daughter the gifts of the fairy. Zezolla accepted the gift with great joy, and transplanted the date-tree in a larger and finer vase, and watered it, and dug round it morning and evening, and dried it with the silken napkin, and in four days it grew to a woman’s stature: and the fairy came out of it one morning, saying, ‘What wilt thou?’ and the princess answered, ‘I would like to fare from this house, but should desire that my stepsisters should not know of it’: and the fairy rejoined, ‘Each time that thou wouldest fare out and enjoy thyself, come to the date-tree, and say,

“My date-tree tall and golden,  
With a golden mattock I dug thee around,  
With a golden bucket I watered thee,  
With a silken napkin I wiped thee dry:  
Undress thyself, and robe thou me.”

And when thou wouldest undress, change the last verse, and say, “Undress thou me, and robe thyself.”

Now it so chanced that a great festival was held by the king: and the daughters of the teacher went to it in fine raiment, and jewellery, and ribbons, and fine shoes, and flowers, and perfumed, with roses and posies. As soon as they departed, Zezolla ran to the date-tree, and repeated the verse taught her by the fairy: and at once she was arrayed as a queen, and put on a steed, and twelve pages followed her, all dressed with luxury and taste: and she went where her stepsisters had gone before her, who knew her not, and were ready to die with envy. But as fate decreed, came to that same place the king, who on beholding Zezolla fell enamoured of her, and desired one of his most trusty followers to learn who was this beauty and where she dwelt. The king's servant at once followed the princess: but Zezolla, perceiving the snare, threw an handful of golden coins to the ground, at the sight of which the man forgot to follow the courser as he stooped to gather the gold, which Zezolla had begged the date-tree to give her for this same purpose. Thus she had time to run into the house, and undress herself as the fairy had taught her. And when those witches, her stepsisters, arrived home, they said many things in praise of the festival, of what they had done and what they had seen, to cause her vexation, as they supposed. In the meanwhile the follower returned to the king, and related to him about the handful of coins and how he had lost sight of her, at which the king waxed wroth, and said to him that for a few dirty pieces of gold he had deprived him of his delight, but that he would forgive him this time, but he must be sure to follow her on the next feast-day, and to discover for him who this beautiful bird was.

The next feast-day the stepsisters went their way all bedecked in finery, and left the despised Zezolla at the

fireplace. As soon as they were gone, she ran to the date-tree and said the usual charm: and some young girls came forward, some with the mirror, some with the perfumes, some with the curling tongs, some with the comb, some with the hair-pins, and others with the raiment, some with the necklace, and others with flowers: and decking her like a bride, she looked like the sun, and setting her in a carriage, with six horses, with footmen, and servants, and pages in livery, she arrived at the same place where had been held the festival heretofore: and she lit more marvel and envy in her stepsisters' breasts, and greater love and fiercer fire in the king's heart. But having departed, the same servant followed her: but she threw at him a handful of jewels, and pearls, and precious stones, and he could not withstand the temptation to gather them, as they were too precious to lose. And the princess had time to reach her home, and to undress as usual. The man returned to the king, who said, 'By the bones of my ancestors, if thou findest not this lovely being for me, I will give thee as many kicks on thy backside as thou hast hairs in thy beard.'

The third festival came: and the stepsisters having departed, Zezolla went to the date-tree, and saying the charmed verse, she was at once apparelled most splendidly, and seated in a golden carriage, followed by many servants, pages, and retainers. And thus she caused more envy in the sisters' breasts: and the king's follower stuck to the carriage. And the princess, sighting him always beside her, said to the coachman, 'Hasten on,' and the horses raced with such speed that nothing could be discerned clearly, and in the fury of the race a slipper of the princess flew out of the carriage. The servant, unable to follow the carriage, which seemed to fly, picked

up the slipper and brought it to the king, and related all that had happened; and the king, taking it, said, 'If the foundation is so beautiful, what must be the house? O beauteous candlestick, which holdest the candle that consumeth me! O trivet of the beauteous kettle where boileth my life! O fine cloth, to which is tied the net of love wherewith thou hast caught this soul! I embrace thee and hold thee to my bosom; and if I cannot have the tree, I worship the root; and if I cannot hend the chapter, I kiss the foundation. Thou wert the covering for a white foot, and now art thou the pulley of this blackened heart; by thee stood thy fellow, an inch tall and more, who is the tyrant of this life of mine; and by thee groweth so much sweetness in my soul, whilst I gaze upon thee and possess thee!' And thus saying, he called his secretary, and commanded him to send the public crier to publish a ban that all the women in the land should be invited to a banquet by the king.

And the day came. O goodness me, what a banquet was that, and what joyance and amusements were there, and what food: pastry, and pies, and roast, and balls of mincemeat, and macaroni, and ravioli, enough to feed an army! All the women came: noble and commoner, rich and poor, old and young, wives and maidens, beautiful and ugly; and the king, arrayed in costly raiment, tried the slipper on each one's foot to see if it would fit one of them, hoping thus to find the one he was seeking: but he found not what he sought, and he came nigh unto despair. At last, commanding perfect silence, he said to them, 'Return to-morrow to do penance with me: but an ye love me, leave not a single female in the house, be she who she may.' Said the prince, 'I have a daughter who sitteth always in the kitchen

by the fireplace, because she is not worthy any one's notice, and she deserveth not to sit at thy table.' Said the king, 'Let this be the very one at the head of all: such is my desire.' Therefore all departed, and on the morrow all came again, and with the daughters of Carmosina came also Zezolla, and when the king beheld her he knew her for the one he sought: but he dissembled.

The banquet was more sumptuous than the last, and when all had eaten their fill the king began to try on the slipper: but no sooner came he to Zezolla than the foot was caught by love like steel to the magnet; and the king surprised her by putting his arms around her, and seating her under the dais, and putting the crown on her head, commanded that all should do her obeisance as to their queen. The stepsisters, beholding this sight, full of wrath and envy, and being unable to support this blow without showing their chagrin, departed quite quietly towards their mother's home: confessing, in spite of themselves, that

'Tis a madman's deed to dispute the stars' decree.'

## THE MERCHANT.

## SEVENTH DIVERSION

## Of the First Day.

Cienzo breaketh the king's son's head, and is obliged to flee from his country. He delivereth from a dragon the daughter of King Pierdisinno, and after various adventures she becometh his wife. Ensorcelled by a woman, he is freed from the charm by his brother, Meo hight, whom for jealousy he slayeth: but being apprised of Meo's innocence, with an herb he restoreth him to life.

**W**ORDS fail to express how the good fortune of Zezolla touched all hearers, even to the marrow of their bones, and how they praised Heaven for its liberality towards her; but they deemed the punishment small for the stepmother and her daughters, since there is no chastisement great enough for pride, nor ruin strong enough to crush envy. But listening awhile to the whispering about that which had been related, Prince Thaddeus at last put the forefinger of his right hand upon his lips, and signed to them to be silent: and they ceased instantaneously, just as if they had seen a wolf, or like a pupil who, in the midst of his game beholding the teacher approach, loseth all power of speech. The prince signed to Ciulla to proceed with her story, and she began thus:

Oft-times man hath sorrows and travail which, like flames and shovels, straighten the road to that good fortune

which he never dreamt he could achieve. And such a man curseth the rain because it wetteth his head, and knoweth not that it bringeth him plentifulness, so that he may expel dark hunger from his side: as will be seen in the story of a youth which I will relate.

There lived in Naples city a rich merchant, Antoniello hight, who had two sons named Cienzo and Meo; and they so much resembled one another that one could hardly tell which was one and which the other. Now Cienzo, who was the eldest, was playing with the son of the king at throwing stones, when it chanced that he struck and broke the prince's head; and Cienzo's sire, hearing of the mishap, said, 'Bravo! thou hast done a good deed. Write now to thy country, boast of thy doings, bag of emptiness, and I will unpick thee. Mount on thy high horse, for thou hast gained that which is worth six soldi: thou hast broken the head of the prince. Hadst thou not the measure, son of a goatherd? Now what will become of thee? I would not give three farthings for thy skin, for thou hast cooked thy soup badly; even shouldst thou enter the womb whence thou camest forth, I would not answer that thou wouldst escape the king's wrath: thou knowest that kings' arms are long and reach far, and he is certain to do something that will stink.'

Cienzo listened patiently to his father's saying, and when he had ended, thus rejoined: 'O my father, I have always heard it said that it is better to go to a court of justice than to have the doctor in the house. Would it not have been worse if he had broken my head? I was provoked: we are but children, and we quarrelled; it is a first crime, and the king is a just man; at worst what will it matter in an hundred years?

Who will not give me the mother may give me the daughter, and who will not send me cooked food may send it uncooked; all the world is a country, and he that is afraid may become a constable.' Antoniello answered, 'What can he do to thee? He can send thee out of the world; he can send thee for a change of air; he can make thee a schoolmaster in a twenty-four feet galley,\* to be a horse for the fishes, so that thou mayest teach them to speak; he can send thee a three-feet collar well starched,† so that thou mayest enjoy thyself with the widow: and instead of touching the hand of the bride, thou shalt touch the feet of the groomsman. Therefore stand not with thy skin between the cloth and the cloth-shearer; but march at this same step, that we may never hear tidings, neither old nor new, of thee and thy doings, so that thou mayest not be caught by the foot. For it is better to be a bird in the wilderness than a bird in a cage. Here, take this gold, and go to the stable, and mount one of the two charmed steeds I have therein; and take a bitch which is also ensorcelled, and wait for nothing more. It is better to lift thine heel than to be caught by the heel; it is better to carry thy legs than to put thy neck under thy legs; it is better to walk a thousand feet than to remain with a rope three feet long. If thou takest not thy saddlebags, neither Baldo nor Bartolo will help thee.'

Cienzo begged his father to give him his blessing, and mounting horse and taking the bitch on his arm, journeyed away from the city; but as soon as he fared forth from the Capuan gate, turning his head backwards, he began saying, 'I am going to leave thee, O my beautiful Naples; who knoweth if I evermore will see thee, O thou whose

\* Galley-slave.

† To be hanged.

bricks are sugar, and whose walls are made of sweet soft pastry, where the stones are manna, and the beams are of sugarcane, and the doors and the windows are of sweet cakes? Alas! separating myself from thee, O beautiful Apennine, it seems to me as if I fared away with the standard; withdrawing myself from thee, O thou Great Place, my soul is straitened; removing myself from thee, Ermo's Place, my spirit is ready to depart from this body; dividing myself from you, Lancers, I feel the stroke of a Catalan lance in my side. Where shall I ever find another harbour like thine, the sweetest harbour in all the world? Where shall I find another hole, receptacle of all virtuous men, where another lodge where dwelleth all that pleaseth and enticeth the taste? Alas! and woe is me, I cannot leave thee, O dear bay mine, if I do not let mine eyes run a sea of tears; I cannot leave thee, O market, without deep grief burning in my breast; in leaving thee, O beautiful Chiaja, I must bear in my heart a thousand wounds. Farewell, sweet carrots, and cabbages, and cauliflowers! adieu, dear tripe and lovely trots! adieu, tarantella and elegant ladies! adieu, flower of the city and Talia's luxury, Cupid of Europe and Ass of the World! farewell, Naples, where ends all virtue, and all grace abideth! I go, and shall be for ever a widower of married pottage; I fare away from this beauteous country, where I leave all my strength and peace.'

And thus saying, he made a winter of tears and a summer of sighs, and journeyed onwards, and never ceased faring till the evening, when he came to a forest, where he sighted an old house at the foot of a strong tower. He knocked at the door, but the master, fearing brigands, it being a dark night, would not open to him; and Cienzo was obliged to take refuge in a dilapidated

part of the old house: and tethering the horse in the adjacent field, he lay with the bitch by his side on some straw he found there. But hardly had he closed his eyes, when he started up at the barking of the bitch; and listening, he heard footsteps creeping around. Now Cienzo was brave and courageous, and he drew his sword and began to lunge and plunge in the dark; but finding that he caught no one, and that he fought with the wind, he lay down once more. But after a little while he felt some one pulling him gently by the foot; and again rising and drawing his sword, he cried, 'Ho, there, whoever thou art, thou annoyest me now; it is no good playing hide-and-seek: if thou art valiant, let me see thee, and if thou wilt fight, let us fight, for thou hast found the shape for thy shoe.' In answer to this he heard a light laugh, and a muffled voice said, 'Come down here, and I will tell thee who I am.' Cienzo fearlessly replied, 'Wait a minute, and I will be with thee'; and he crept in the dark, feeling about till he found a staircase descending to the cellar; and he went down, and perceived, by the light of a small lantern, three gnomes who were weeping bitterly and crying, 'O beautiful treasure, how can we lose thee?' Cienzo at the sight began also to weep and lament, to keep them company; and after bemoaning for some time, and the moon being high amidst the heavens, the three gnomes said to him, 'Go and take this treasure: it was decreed by the Decree that it should be thine; take it, and know how to use it.' And having spoken thus, they disappeared.

Now as soon as Cienzo beheld a ray of the sun from a little fissure, he tried to find the stairs to mount; but he could see no mode of exit, at which case he began to cry out so very loud that the master of the tower, who had

entered those ruins to make water, heard him, and asking him what he was doing there, and hearing how it fared, went to fetch a ladder, and in descending thereon found the hoard, which he wished to share with Cienzo. But Cienzo would accept none of it; and taking the bitch on his arm, he mounted his steed, and fared on. After a while he came to another forest, very dark and gloomy; and there at the sea-shore he found a fairy, who, being enamoured of the shade and its coolness, liked to spend her time in the wood in the shape of a serpent: and she was persecuted by several others who desired to slay her, which Cienzo seeing, he laid hand on sword and sliced right and left, thus saving the fairy's life and honour. Then she appeared to him as a beauteous lady, and thanked him, and complimented him on his valour, and invited him to her palace, which was not very distant, for that she desired to show him proof of her gratitude. But Cienzo said to her, 'There is no need; a thousand thanks! Another time I will accept thy favour; now I cannot, for I am pressed for time'; and taking leave of her, he fared on for some time, and he came to a king's palace, all tapestried in mourning, so that it made the very heart be darkened to look upon it.

Cienzo went forward and inquired the cause of this mourning; and they answered him that into that country had come a dragon with seven heads, the most terrible that could be seen in the world. On each head he had a cock's comb and a cat's face, eyes of fire, a dog's mouth, a bat's jaws, and he had a bear's paws and a serpent's tail. And this dragon ate a human being each day, and so it had been for some time; and now, by decree of the Decree, it had come to the turn of Menechiella, the king's daughter, to serve as food for the monster. 'And this is the reason why the king's palace is in

mourning,' continued they, 'because the loveliest and most graceful creature in this country must serve as food for this horrible monster.' As Cienzo heard this he stood aside, and beheld Menechiella coming dressed all in mourning, and followed by the young ladies of the court and by all the women of the land, who buffeted their faces, and struck at their breasts, and tore their hair, and wept and wailed, bemoaning the lot of the unhappy princess, saying, 'Who could have dreamt that this poor child should give up all the joys and pleasures of life in the body of this hideous beast? If any one had told us that this pretty bird should serve as food for this dragon, we could not have believed it; we could not dream that this bright young angel would lose her life in this monster's belly'; and as they spake thus, behold, out of a hidden place came the dragon. O mother mine, how hideous! The sun would hide its face behind the clouds for fear, and the sky would darken. And the hearts of all beholders shrivelled up, and the fear was such that a pig's head could not have entered amid the crowd.

Cienzo, beholding this sight, hent sword in hand and came forward and sliced at the dragon; and tiff and taff, down went one of the dragon's heads. But the dragon, rubbing the fallen head on some grass which grew hard by, stuck it on again, like a lizard gluing on its tail. But Cienzo seeing this, said, 'Who followeth not up his work will fail,' and tightening his lips, lifted his sword and gave such a powerful blow that all the seven heads fell at a single stroke; and they jumped to a distance like beans from a wooden spoon. Taking hold of them, and wrenching their tongues, and putting them aside, he carried them about a mile's distance, for fear that they should cleave together again; and taking a handful of the grass with

which the dragon had glued on his head, he put it carefully by; then he sent Menechiella back to her father's house, and he went to take some rest at a tavern.

When the king beheld his daughter his joy and gladness knew no bounds, and hearing how she had been delivered, he sent the public crier round the city to publish an edict 'That whosoever had killed the dragon, by the king's command should come and wed the princess.' A cunning rustic, hearing the crier, went and picked up the dragon's seven heads and fared to the presence, and after paying due homage to the king presented him the heads and said, 'My prowess saved Menechiella, and these hands saved our land from direst ruin. Here are the heads as witnesses of the deed; and every promise is a debt.' The king hearing this, took off the crown from his head, and put it on the clown's; and it looked like an exile's head on the top of a pillar. The news went round like wildfire in all the land, till it reached the ears of Cienzo, who said to himself, 'I am in very sooth an ass; I held Fortune by the hair, and I let her slip from my grasp: the master of the tower offered me a moiety of the treasure, and I refused, holding it of such account as a German does water; the fairy invited me to her palace, desiring to do me some deed of kindness, and I took so much heed of it as the ass doth of the fly; and now I am sent for to wear a crown, and I behave as a drunkard doth with the spindle, allowing that a clodhopper should set his hairy foot before me and bear away from me this beautiful being by a dishonest gambling to his advantage.' And thus saying, he searched for pen, ink, and paper, and began to write:—

'To the most beauteous jewel, above all women, Menechiella, Infanta of King Pierdisinno.

'Having, by the sun's grace, saved thy life, I find that



another is enjoying the fruit of my labour ; another beareth the honours for the service which I rendered thee ; therefore I ask of thee, that wert present and a witness of my doings, to undeceive the king thy sire, and let him know the truth, and do not thou consent that another should win thee, when I imperilled my life to gain thy safety. And this is written so that thou shouldst bestow upon me with thy queenly grace the guerdon due to my valour ; and I end this kissing thy lily-white hands.

‘From the Pot Tavern to-day, Sunday.’

Having written and sealed this letter, he put it in the bitch’s mouth, saying to her, ‘Haste thee, and tarry not till thou hast taken this missive to the king’s daughter ; and let no one have it but herself, and let her hand take it, my princess, with her face like a silvern moon.’ The bitch went to the palace nearly flying, and ascending the stairs, entered the saloon, where she beheld the king, paying great homage to the bridegroom. And when they sighted the bitch with a letter in her mouth, they ordered that it should be taken from her ; but the bitch would not let any one touch her till she reached the princess, and laid it in her hands. And Menechiella arose and read it, and bowing low to the king, laid it in his hands, so that he might see it. And the king having read it, ordered some of his officers to follow the bitch wherever she went and bring back with them her master.

The officers and courtiers followed the bitch to the tavern, where they found Cienzo ; and delivering their message from the king, they returned, and Cienzo with them, to the royal presence. The king asked him, ‘How canst thou boast of having killed the dragon, if this man, who is crowned here by my side, brought the seven heads?’ and Cienzo rejoined, ‘This clodhopper deserveth rather

a paper hat than a crown, and he hath been so impudent as to make thee believe that bladders are lanterns ; and to prove to thee that it was I that delivered thy daughter, and not this tow-bearded villain, let the dragon’s heads be brought here, and thou wilt see that not one of them can bear witness against me, as they are tongueless, and I have brought the tongues to the judgment.’ Saying thus, he drew forth the seven tongues and showed them to the king ; and the rustic stood still as if carved in stone, hardly knowing what had happened to him. And Menechiella came forward and said, ‘O my sire, this is the one that saved me,’ and turning to the boor, said, ‘Ah, accursed dog and villain, I had nearly believed thee.’

The king, hearing and seeing all this, took off the crown from the head of that hardened hind, and put it on Cienzo’s head ; and would have sent the clown to the galleys, but Cienzo besought the king to be gracious and forgive him, desiring to heap coals of fire upon his head, punishing his indiscretion with generosity and kindness. And the king married his daughter to Cienzo, and tables were spread, and abundance of victuals was brought, and all ate and were satisfied ; and when all was ended, the bride and bridegroom retired to a perfumed bed, where Cienzo, lifting the trophy of his victory over the dragon, entered in triumph into love’s capitol. But as morning dawned, when the sun, having drawn his sword of light chaseth away the stars, crying, ‘Stand back, canaille,’ Cienzo donned his raiment, and looked out of the window ; and in a house opposite he beheld a beautiful lady at the window, and turning to Menechiella, said to her, ‘What a pretty thing that is opposite our palace!’ ‘And what dost thou want with it?’ answered his wife ; and pursued she, ‘Hast thou opened thine eyes already? Art thou in a

bad humour? Hath thy good surfeited thee? Doth it not suffice thee what thou hast at home?' Cienzo bowed his head like a cat which hath done some damage, and said nothing; but pretending to go out on some business, fared forth from the palace, and entered the house of that young lady, who was in sooth a choice morsel, a curdled milk, a sugarcane, a sweet paste. She never turned her eyes without ensnaring a thousand hearts, and she never opened her lips without setting fire to all breasts, and never moved a foot without crushing down the hopes of her adorers. But, besides such grace and comeliness, she had the power through sorcery to charm, chain, and tie all men with her hair, as she did with Cienzo, that no sooner did he put foot where she abode than he was tethered like unto a pony. Such was his case.

Now his younger brother Meo, receiving no news from Cienzo, begged leave of his father to go and search for him, and he let him go willingly, giving him another steed and a bitch, as he had done to his elder son. And Meo, bidding farewell to his sire, departed, and fared on the same road whither his brother had forewent him, till he reached the tower. The master, believing him to be Cienzo, received him and welcomed him with joy and affection; and offered him some money, which Meo refused; but seeing himself so well entreated, he bethought him that his brother must have been there before him, and he waxed more hopeful of finding him. But as soon as Luna, with her enmity to poets, turned her shoulders to the sun, he fared on once more, and never ceased faring till he arrived at the fairy's palace; and when she saw him, believing him to be Cienzo, she welcomed him with joy and gladness, saying to him, 'Be thou welcome and well come, O youth mine, thou who hast saved my life.' Meo thanked her for her kindness, and

said, 'Forgive me, if I do not stay longer, as I have some pressing matters to attend to; I will come and visit thee on my return'; and joying in himself at having thus perceived traces of his brother, he pursued the same road, and never ceased wayfaring till he came to the king's palace.

On the evening of the day on which Cienzo had been ensorcelled, Meo entered the palace, and was received with great honour by the officers, and guards, and pages, and servants, and was embraced by the bride with great affection; and she said to him, 'Welcome, my darling, to thy wife! This morning thou wentest, and this evening thou returnest; when every bird seeketh for food the owl sleepeth. Where hast thou been so long, O Cienzo mine? How canst thou stay so long away from Menechiella? Thou hast saved me from the dragon's mouth, and cast me deep into suspicion's chasm; and thou holdest me not as the light of thine eyes.' Meo, who was sharp-witted, understood at once that the one who thus addressed him was no other than his brother's wife, turning towards her, said, 'Pray, excuse me for being away so long'; and he embraced her, and went with her to take food. But when the moon, like a breeding fowl, calleth the stars to enjoy the dews, they rose to go to their rest, and Meo, who respected his brother's honour, divided the bed-linen, so that there should be no chance of his touching his sister-in-law; and she, beholding this new system, with a darkened face and wrathful mien said to him, 'O my love, since when? What game are we playing at? Are we two disputants, that thou hast put a division? Are we two belligerent armies, that thou hast dug a trench? Are we two strange horses, that thou dividest the manger?' Meo, who knew well how to count till thirteen, rejoined, 'Do not be angry with me, O my dear love, but I do so by the doctor's

orders ; it is he that hath advised me this diet, fearing that chasing too much would make me powerless.'

Menechiella knew nought of troubled waters, and swallowed this pear, and peacefully went to sleep. But when Night, exiled by the sun, took her flight, Meo arose, and began dressing near the same window where heretofore his brother had looked out, and beheld the same sorceress in whose bonds was Cienzo ; and she pleased him, and turning to Menechiella, he said, 'Who may that girl be ?' and the princess answered in wrath, 'Ah ! this is it. And if it be so, the thing is ours. Yesterday thou didst sing the same song to me about that dog-fish, and I fear me that the tongue goeth where the tooth acheth ; thou oughtest to show respect unto me, for, after all, I am a king's daughter, and every shit hath its stink. Was it not enough that last night thou playedst at eagle imperial shoulder to shoulder, deeming not sufficient thy withdrawal of expense ? I hear thee ; the diet of our bed is convincing proof to me of a banquet in the house of others ; but if I find this to be true, I will do some mad deed, and will not heed what evil may come.'

Meo, who was a youth who had eaten bread from several bakers, soothed her with kind words, and swore an oath, and said that for the handsomest leman in the world he would not exchange what was his at home, and that she alone was engrafted in his heart and entrails. Menechiella, comforted by these words, retired to her chamber, and sent for her tirewomen to dress her hair, and to paint her eyebrows, and to anoint her face, and have recourse to all arts so as to look bewitching to her lord ; whilst Meo, suspecting by her words that Cienzo might be at the house of that sorceress, fared forth, taking the bitch with him, and entering the house of the sorceress,

came to the saloon, where no sooner did she behold him than she said, 'O my hair, bind him fast' ; and Meo rejoined readily, 'O my bitch, eat this witch' ; and the bitch, obedient to her master's words, swallowed the sorceress just as if she had been the yolk of an egg. Then he fared from room to room till he came to the chamber where lay his brother, ensorcelled by the witch. And Meo took a few hairs from the bitch's tail and burnt them over him, when Cienzo awakened as from a deep sleep ; and when he beheld his brother, he joyed with exceeding joy, and asked how he came there : and Meo related to him how he had decided to come in search of him, and how he had fared on his journey, and, lastly, how he came to the palace, and how Menechiella had mistaken him for her husband, and how he had slept with her ; and he was about to continue his narrative, and explain to his brother how he had divided the bed-linen, when Cienzo harshly interrupted him, and tempted by the demon of jealousy, he took up an old sword which lay near at hand, and cut off his brother's head. At the noise and cries the king came with his daughter, and looked out of the window ; and they beheld Cienzo, who had cut off the head of some one very like him, at which sight they inquired of him the cause ; and Cienzo made answer, 'Inquire it of thyself, thou who hast slept with my brother, believing that thou didst sleep with me, and for this reason have I slain him.'

'Alas ! how many are slain and punished wrongfully,' exclaimed Menechiella. 'A fine deed hast thou done ! Thou wast not worthy to have such a brother ; he did find himself in the same bed with me, and so great was his respect for thee that he divided the bed-linen, so as not to come in contact with me.' Cienzo hearing these words, repented with deep repentance of having committed such

a direful error, born of a rash judgment, and fathered by crass stupidity, and buffeted his face, and tore his hair and plucked his beard. But after a little while remembering the herb used by the dragon, he rubbed his brother's neck with it, and stuck his head on again. And he at once became whole, hale, and hearty, as he was before, and embracing him with exceeding joy and pleasure, and begging him to forgive him his hastiness in thus sending him out of the world without listening to the end of his say, they entered the palace, and the king sent a messenger to bring hither Antoniello, and all his family and belongings. And when he arrived he became very dear unto the king, who made him his companion, and he beheld verified in the person of his son the old saw,—

'A ship sailing crossways reacheth harbour straightway.'

## GOAT-FACE.

### EIGHTH DIVERSION

#### Of the First Day.

A peasant's daughter by the goodness of a fairy becometh a king's wife ; but being ungrateful to her who had done her so much good, in punishment the fairy changeth her face into a goat's face. And thus she is despised by her husband, and suffereth a thousand ills : but at last humbling herself to a good old man, is changed to her former favour, and reinstated in her husband's love.

CIULLA having ended her say, which was duly praised by all, and deemed sweet as sugar, Paola, whose turn it was to enter the ball, began thus :

All the evil deeds committed by man have some cause which urgeth him on, as wrath that provoketh him ; or necessity, that compelleth him ; or love, that blindeth him ; or fury, that enrageth him. Ingratitude is the only vice that hath no reason, either true or false, whereunto to attach itself ; and therefore it is the worst, to which the fountain of mercy is dry. It extinguisheth the fire of love, it closeth the roads to all benefits, and bringeth punishment to the ingrate, and tardy repentance : as ye will hear of in this story that I am going to relate.

There once lived a peasant who had twelve daughters, each but little older than the other, as every year his goodwife Ceccuzza gave birth to one ; and the poor man

desiring to maintain honourably his home, arose in the morning and went early to work, and with the sweat of his brow could scarce contend with the hunger of so many mouths. Now it so chanced that one day of the days he was digging at the foot of a mountain whose summit reached the clouds, and at the further side thereof was a grotto so darksome and fearsome that no sunrays ever entered there. And from this cave came a large green lizard as big as a crocodile, and the poor peasant was sore frightened, and stood open-mouthed, expecting the end of his days from that hideous animal. But the lizard came near him and said, 'Be not afraid, my good man, I came not here to do thee hurt, I come only to do thee service.' Masaniello, so was the peasant hight, hearing the lizard speak thus, knelt before her, and said, 'My lady, what is thy name? I am thy slave; be thou kind-hearted, and take compassion of this poor body, as I have twelve children to feed.' Answered the lizard, 'I came to help thee; therefore bring me tomorrow morning the youngest of thy daughters, and I will bring her up as my own child, and will hold her dear as my own life.'

The father, hearing this, remained confused as a thief found with whatso he had been stealing in hand; his breast straitened to think that his youngest and tenderest child should be desired of a lizard, perchance to assuage its hunger, and he said to himself, 'If I give it my child, I give my soul; if I refuse it will take my body; if I bring my daughter, I lose my entrails; if I deny the beast, it will suck my blood; an I please it, I give it part of myself; an I refuse, it will take all. What must I do? What will be best? What is most expedient? Alas, and woe is me, what a bad day is this for me! What a misfortune hath rained from Heaven upon me!'

The lizard perceiving his indecision, said, 'Let me know thy say, at once, and do thou as I bid thee, otherwise thou wilt lose thy cloth: this is my will, and thus must it be done.' Masaniello, hearing what the lizard decreed, and knowing not how to refuse, fared homewards, sad at heart and yellow-faced, and Ceccuzza seeing him in such a case, said to him, 'What hath happened to thee, O my husband? didst thou quarrel with some one? Has some one served thee with a writ? or is the ass dead?'

'Nought of all this hath occurred,' answered Masaniello, 'but a lizard hath threatened me with all kinds of evils, if I take not to her cave my youngest daughter; and my head is swimming like a top; I know not what fish to catch; in one way am I constrained by love, and in the other am I constrained by fear. I love very dearly Renzolla mine, but I love also my own life; if I give not to the lizard this part of myself, the beast will take me: therefore advise me, Ceccuzza mine; if not, I shall die.' Hearing this, the wife said, 'Who knoweth, O dear my husband, but that this lizard will be double-tailed for our house? Perhaps this lizard will put an end to all our miseries and woes. Remember that oft-times we ourselves toss the axe upon our feet, and when we should have an eagle's sight to understand the weal which cometh to us, we are blind as a bat: therefore obey thou the lizard's behest, and take the child to its cave, as my heart whispers to me that it will be the fortune of our daughter.' Masaniello followed his wife's rede, and in the morning, as soon as the sun brightened the heavens with his rays, he took his child by the hand, and fared towards the grotto.

The lizard was waiting for his coming, and as soon as she saw him, came out of her hiding place, and taking the child, gave to the father a bag full of gold pieces,

saying, 'Go home, take this coin, and give thy daughters in marriage, and hearten thine heart, for Renzolla hath found a mother and father; thrice happy is she, to be blessed with such good fortune.' Masaniello, with heart full of gladness, thanked the lizard, and taking leave of her and his daughter, fared back home to his wife, relating to her what had taken place and showing her the ducats. She joyed with exceeding gladness, and after a time, with the help of the money, they gave all their daughters in marriage; and they were left alone to engage with pleasure in the daily labour of life. Such was their case. But no sooner was Renzolla left alone with the lizard than a splendid palace arose in sight, and they both entered therein; and there Renzolla dwelt in great ease and luxury, like unto a queen never wanting for anything. Ye may suppose that even if she had desire to drink ant's milk she would have had her wish. She ate, and dressed as a princess, had an hundred handmaids to do her bidding, and being so well entreated, she became tall and strong, beauteous and healthy.

One day of the days the king fared out a-hunting, and night surprised him in that forest; and not knowing where he might seek a resting-place, he looked round about till at last he beheld a light shining afar, and going nearer he found it came out of the window of a splendid palace. He called one of his suite and sent him to this mansion, to beg permission from the house-master to rest therein for the night. The officer did the king's behest and knocked at the palace-gate, when the lizard came forth in the shape of a beauteous lady, to whom the man delivered his message, and she answered, 'The king is welcome, and a thousand times well come; neither bread nor knives will be wanting here.'

The messenger returned to the king and reported the answer, and he at once fared forward with his suite, and was met and received as a true knight, an hundred pages coming to meet him, with torches alight, like as if they were going to the funeral of some rich man. An hundred pages more brought food and drink, and spread the tables, looking like so many hospital valets bringing food to the sick; and an hundred more played on instruments of music deafening all hearers. And Renzolla stood as cupbearer to the king, and filled his cup so often and well that he drank as much love from her eyes as wine from her cup. But having eaten their sufficiency, they all retired to rest, and the king with them, and Renzolla attended him and pulled his socks from his feet, and his heart from his breast with such good will, that feeling the pressure of that lovely hand the poison of love burned in his soul; and to remedy this evil, for his love-longing and desire were such that he felt he would die if he had not his desire, he sent for the fairy, and there and then begged her to give him Renzolla to wife. And the fairy, desiring naught but the girl's good, gave her consent freely, and also bestowed upon her a dowry of seven millions in gold.

The king joyed with exceeding gladness, and prepared to take his departure with Renzolla, and she with base ingratitude, forgetting all the goodness of the fairy towards her, was ready to follow her husband without uttering a single word of thanks, or bestowing a kindly glance upon one who had done so much for her welfare. The fairy, perceiving her ingratitude, laid a curse upon her, saying, 'O thou ingrate, may thy face become like unto a goat's': and hardly had she spoken the words, when her mouth lengthened, and a beard a foot long hung down her chin, and her cheeks tightened, and hair grew on her face, and

the curls and tresses on her head became pointed horns. The king, seeing this transformation, nearly lost his wits, and knew not what had happened, beholding an incomparable beauty thus changed, and sighing, and weeping, and bemoaning his lot, he wailed, 'Where is the golden hair which bound mine heart? Where the sweet eyes which darted fiery darts? Where the mouth which burnt my soul, mastered my spirit, and enchained my heart? But, what? Must I be the husband of a goat, and thus acquire the title of Caprone\*? Have I come to this pass? No, no, I will not let my heart be crushed by a goat-faced creature, a goat that will cause me war and dissension wherever I go, with her shiting of olives.'

And thus saying, as soon as he reached his own palace he sent Renzolla with a maid to the kitchen, and gave to each some flax to spin; bidding them end their work in a week's time. The maid obeyed the king's command, and began by combing the flax, and filling the distaff, and twisting the spindle, and forming the skein; and she worked on so well that on the Saturday evening she had ended her share of the work. But Renzolla believing herself the same as when she was in the fairy's palace, as she had not seen her own figure in the mirror, threw the flax out of window, saying, 'The king wants something to do, to give me such hindrances; if he needeth shirts, let him buy some, he must not think that he found me in the street. He must remember that I brought him seven millions of gold pieces, and that I am his wife, and not his leman, and I think him an ass to treat me thus.' But although she spake thus, when Saturday morning came, seeing that the maid had ended her work, and fearing some mishap because of her disobedience, she fared to the fairy's palace, and related

\* A nasty large he-goat.

to her her disgrace and fear. The fairy embraced her with great love and affection, and brought her a bag full of thread; and bade her give it to the king, showing to him thus that she had been an industrious woman and a good mistress. But Renzolla, taking the bag, without saying thank you for the service, returned to the king's palace; leaving the fairy wroth with exceeding wrath at the ingratitude of the girl.

Meanwhile the king, having taken away the thread, brought two dogs, and gave one to his wife and one to the maid, telling them to bring them up well. The maid fed her dog with crumbs and treated it like a son. But Renzolla, saying, 'Yes, this thought was left me by my sire; there are the Turks; must I comb a dog's tail, and take him to shit?' and thus grumbling threw the dog out of the window, which was not so pleasant for the brute as jumping over a stick. But after some months had passed the king came seeking the dogs, and Renzolla being sorely afraid, ran once more to the fairy's palace and found at the door an old man who was the door-keeper who inquired of her, 'Who art thou, and whom seekest thou?' and Renzolla hearing his question answered, 'Dost thou not know me, thou goats-beard?' Replied the old man, 'Goats-beard to me? The thief runneth after the constable! Stand aside, for thou soilest me, said the boiler-maker; throw thyself forward for fear to tumble backward. I am a goats-beard: and thou? thou art a goats-beard and a half; because of thy great presumption thou deservedst this and worse; and await a little while, impudent hussy, and I will clear thee, and thou wilt perceive where thy fine airs, and thy smoke, and thy forwardness have brought thee.'

Thus saying, he went to a little chamber and brought

out of it a mirror, and putting it before Renzolla, told her to look at herself, and she, beholding her own ugly hairy face, came nigh unto death with sorrow ; neither such grief did Rinaldo suffer when looking at his own image in the charmed shield, than felt she in viewing her metamorphosis, and she knew not herself, and the old man continued, ' Thou must remember, O Renzolla, that thou art the daughter of a peasant, and the fairy had thus entreated thee and cared for thee and loved thee, that thou becamest as a very queen ; but thou, disobedient and discourteous, hadst no gratitude nor thankfulness for so many favours thou hadst received. Thou hast ever been unkind showing not the least sign of love or affection. Therefore thou hast thy desert ; take this and return for the rest ; see to what brought thee thy bad conduct ; look, what face hast thou ; see to what plight thy ingratitude hath brought thee : the fairy having cursed thee, thou hast changed not only face but also position. But an thou wilt do as I bid thee, go to the fairy, and throw thyself at her feet, buffet thy face and beat thy breast, and weep and lament, and beseech her forgiveness : she hath a tender heart, and will be moved to compassion at thy stress of pain.' Renzolla, thinking the old man's rede right, did as he bade her ; and the fairy, seeing her plight, kissed and embraced her, and returned her to her pristine shape, and arraying her in costly raiment, sent for a carriage and put her therein, and accompanied by a train of followers, pages, and servants, took her to the king. And when he beheld her looking so beautiful and queenly, he loved her with a deep love, and held her dear as his life, and beating his breast, begged her forgiveness for that which he had made her suffer ; excusing himself by saying that that accursed goat's-face had caused all this disunion. And thus Renzolla became humble and patient

and grateful, and joy and gladness returned to her, and she loved her lord dearly, and honoured the fairy, and was ever thankful to the old man, having found out at her own expense that

' It is ever best to be courteous.'



## THE CHARMED HIND.

## NINTH DIVERSION

## Of the First Day.

Fonzo and Canneloro are brought into the world by enchantment ; the queen, mother of Fonzo, envieth Canneloro, and breaketh his head. Canneloro fareth forth from his country, and becoming king, is in great danger. Fonzo, by means of a fountain and myrtle-tree, cometh to the knowledge of his brother's peril, and departeth to deliver him.

ALL the company remained open-mouthed, listening to the story related by Paola, and they one and all came to the conclusion that humility is like a ball, the more one throws it to the ground the more it rebounds ; it is like the he-goat, the more ye pull him backwards the harder he will hit you. But Prince Thaddeus having signed to Ciometella to continue the rubric, she put her tongue in motion, and thus began :

There is no doubt that the strength of a true and loyal friendship is such that all fatigue is thought as naught, and to serve a friend the dangers we incur are but as child's play, our wealth but a straw, our honour but smoke, our life as nothing : and to do service to him, we lose freely : as is often related in romances and histories, of which to-day I will give you an example, such as my grandam (may her soul be at rest) used to relate, if ye will hearken to me, shutting your mouths and lengthening your ears.

Once upon a time there lived a certain king, Jannone hight, and he being childless had great desire to have offspring, and he commanded that public prayers to the gods should be said, so that his wife might soon be with child. And he largessed the people, and gave alms, and well entreated pilgrims, and was charitable and kind to all. But after a time, seeing that there was no sign of his wife being with child, he shut his doors, and sent away all that came to seek hospitality.

Now one day of the days a great sage passed that way, and knowing not the change in the king's habits, or perhaps knowing it but desiring to remedy this evil, he made his way to Jannone's presence, and begged him to let him rest in his house. And the king with severe mien replied brusquely, 'If thou hast no other candle than this one, thou mayest go and sleep in darkness ; the time is past when Bertha spinned ; and the cats have opened their eyes ; and the mother is here no longer.' And the old sage enquired the cause of this change, and rejoined the king, 'I longed to have a son ; and I have spent and thrown away in every side to all those that came, and have thus wasted my substance ; and finding at last that it was all time lost I ceased so doing.'

'If this be all,' replied the sage, 'I will cause her to be pregnant, and if I do not, thou mayst cut off mine ears.'

'If thou wilt do this,' said the king, 'I will give thee half of my kingdom.' And the sage replied, 'Now pay attention to my say, let a heart of a sea-dragon be brought, and a virgin maid cook it, and she will be with child with the smell issuing from the pot, and when it is ready, give it to the queen to eat and thou wilt see at once, that she will be with child, just as if the nine months were passed.'

Rejoined the king, 'How can this be? It seems to me, thou biddest me swallow a hard morsel.'

Said the old man, 'Do not marvel: if thou hast ever read fables thou wilt have found that Juno passing one day through a field, leant down to inhale the scent of a flower, and that was enough to fill her belly.'

'If it be so, let us at once get this dragon's heart. At the worst I lose nothing,' said the king; and he sent an hundred fishermen out a-fishing with spears, and nets, and bow-nets, and they tried, and turned so long, that at last they caught a dragon, and taking out its heart, they brought it to the king. And he sent for a beauteous damsel, who shut herself in a chamber, and as soon as the heart began cooking, and the smoke and smell filled the room, not only the beautiful cook became pregnant, but the furniture of the house became full and at the end of a few days gave birth, the bedstead to a small bed, the chest to a small chest, the coffer to a small coffer, the chairs to smaller chairs, the table to a smaller table, and the night-chamber to a smaller vase, graceful, and comely, and captivating to the eye.

Now when it was ready they brought the heart to the queen, and no sooner did she eat of it than she felt her stomach fill, and within four days the queen and the damsel each gave birth to a man-child, like the full moon, and so like one another, that one could not be known from the other when apart; and they grew up together and loved each other with such deep affection, that they could not live apart one from the other. And the queen beholding the great tenderness each bestowed to the other, waxed envious, and she could not endure the thought that her son should bear more affection to the son of one of her handmaidens than to herself, and

she knew not by what device she might rid herself of this eye-sore.

Now it so chanced that one day the prince was desirous to go to the chase with his brother, and he bade his followers light a fire in his chamber, and began melting the lead to make some small shot, and wanting somewhat, left his brother in care of the lead, and went to fetch that which he desired himself. Meanwhile the queen came to her son's retreat and finding Canneloro alone (thus was the damsel's son hight) thought it was a good opportunity to send him out of the world, and taking an heated iron from the fire struck with it a blow on Canneloro's head, so that he perceiving the blow coming lowered his head, and it struck him on the eyebrow, and wounded him seriously. And she was on the point of repeating her blow when Fonzo, her son, returned, and feigning that she had come to enquire after his health, after a few insipid caresses, she went her ways.

Now Canneloro, putting on his hat, hid thus from Fonzo the wound on his head, and firmly and stoutly bore in silence the suffering and pain and burning of the cut; and when the prince had ended the casting of the shot, he begged his leave to depart. Fonzo marvelled with exceeding marvel at the request and enquired of him the cause of this sudden resolve: and he answered 'Seek not to know, O Fonzo mine, enough is it for thee to know that I must depart hence; Heaven knoweth, that when I part from thee, who art mine heart, I part with my soul, my spirit goeth, and life leaveth the body, and the blood leaveth my veins; but I cannot do otherwise, it must be so, do not forget me.' And weeping and lamenting he embraced the prince and went to his chamber where he donned an armour, and buckled his sword (a sword that had come to

the world when the heart was cooking), and arming himself cap-a-pie, went to the stables and saddled his horse, and he was putting his foot on the stirrup when Fonzo came to him weeping and wailing, and saying, that if in very sooth he desired to forsake him, at least he should leave him some thing by which to remember him while he was gone, and with this token of his love he might crush down the anguish caused by his absence. Canneloro hearing these words drew a poniard from his side, and struck it on the ground and a beautiful fountain sprung up, and turning to the prince said, 'This is the best remembrance that I can leave thee, as in this fountain thou canst apprize thyself what happeneth in my life : if thou seest its waters clear and tranquil, then thou wilt know that my life passeth in ease and peace ; if thou perceivest the water to be troubled, then thou mayest suppose that some travail and sorrow is upon me ; and if thou beholdest it dry (but Heaven forbid), thou mayest believe that there is no more oil in my lamp, and that I shall have reached that bourn from whence no wayfarer returneth, and paid my debt to nature.' And as he ended speaking, he drew his sword and struck the earth with it, when a myrtle-tree sprung up, and turning to the prince, he added, 'Until thou seest this myrtle-tree green, know that I am hale and well, and green as garlic ; if thou beholdest it withered, think that some trouble vexeth me ; and if thou findest it perfectly dry, thou mayest say a requiem for Canneloro, leathern shoes and wooden shoes.' And saying thus, he embraced his brother and fared on, and in wayfaring he met with many adventures, as quarrelling with the postillions, disgusts with the tavern-keepers, fights with robbers, and many others, but at last he reached Longa-pergola when a grand tourney was taking place, and the king's daughter was the prize awarded to the winner.

Canneloro presented himself to the lists, and fought boldly, unhorsing the bravest knights who had come there to win a renown. And thus he obtained the hand of the Lady Fenizia, the king's daughter, and was married, and great festivals and banquets were held in honour of the bridal, and for a month all was peace and joy and gladness.

After this time had passed, Canneloro became sad at heart, and desiring a distraction, asked leave of his father-in-law to go a-hunting, and the king rejoined, 'Mind thy limbs, O my son-in-law, do not be blinded by Satan, keep thy brain clear, open thine eyes, my master, for about these wilds and wolds whereto thou wilt go a-hunting dwelleth a ghul, who changeth shape every day ; now he appeareth as a wolf, to-morrow as a lion, now as a deer, and to-morrow as an ass, and every day changeth form and colour. And he enticeth all wayfarers, with a thousand devices, into the cave wherein he dwelleth, and he maketh his meal of them. Therefore, O my son, do not endanger thy safety, and beware that thou lose not thy cloth and skin together.'

Canneloro, who had left all fear in the body of his mother when he came into the world, heeding not his father-in-law's rede, as soon as the sun came forth, and with his bristle-broom of light swept off all the cobwebs from the darksome night, fared forth to the chase, and coming to a forest, where under the thick boughs the shadows met to monopolize and conspire against the sun's rays, he beheld a hind (the ghul seeing him coming had taken that shape), and as soon as he sighted her, he began to chase her, and she leapt from place to place, till she enticed him to the darkest part of the forest. Then the ghul by magic made a great fall of snow to come down, so that it seemed as if the heavens were falling,

and Canneloro finding himself before the ghul's cavern, he entered therein to save himself from the downpour. And being very cold, he took a handful of wood that he found therein, and putting aside his gun, he lit a fire and stood before it to warm himself and to dry his clothes; and as he stood thus, the hind came to the cavern's mouth, and thus addressed him, 'O sir knight, give me leave, I beseech thee, to come in and warm myself for a little while, as I am frozen with the cold.'

Canneloro, who was gentle and kind-hearted, answered, 'Come in, and be thou welcome.'

Replied the hind, 'I would enter, but I fear me, that thou wilt slay me after.'

Said Canneloro, 'Fear naught, and doubt not my promise.'

Continued the hind, 'If thou wilt let me come in, do chain these dogs, that they may not worry me, and tether this horse, that he may not kick me.'

And Canneloro did so; and said the hind, 'I feel more sure now, but if thou do not put aside thy sword and fire-arms, by my father's soul I will not enter therein;' and the youth, willing to be friendly with the hind, put aside his sword, but the ghul, beholding him unarmed and defenceless, came forth in his own shape, and lifting him up, threw him into a pit at the further end of the cave, and rolling a large stone over the top, left him there until he should require him for his meal. Such was his case.

Meanwhile Prince Fonzo every morning and evening visited the fountain and the myrtle-tree, so as to be aware of how it passed with his brother, but on that very morning when the ghul had imprisoned Canneloro, Fonzo, going to the fountain and myrtle-tree as was his wont, found the waters of the one troubled, and the leaves of the other withered, and he knew at once by these signs

that Canneloro was in stress of danger; and desiring to go to his aid, without speaking to any one, or taking leave of his sire or his mother, he saddled his own steed and donned his armour, and taking with him two charmed dogs, he mounted, and fared forth, and never ceased way-faring first in one place and then the other, seeking tidings of his brother, till he came to Longa-pergola, and in entering the city he beheld all the houses and palaces decked in mourning, and the folk in mourning raiment, for the supposed death of Canneloro. But no sooner had the prince entered the city, than the folk, supposing him to be Canneloro, because of his great likeness to him, all hastened to bring the good news to Princess Fenizia, and when she heard it, she ran down the palace-stair, and threw her arms round Fonzo's neck, saying, 'O my husband, O my love, O my heart! where hast thou been all these days?' Fonzo understood easily by this, that Canneloro had been there, and had gone, and he thought that he must dexterously examine the princess, and draw out from her where he had gone; and she spake to him of that accursed chase, and of the danger he had incurred, especially if he had been met by the ghul who was cruel with mankind. By this the prince inferred that Canneloro must have fallen into the ghul's power; and when night darkened they went to their rest. But Fonzo, telling the princess that he had made a vow to the goddess Diana not to touch his wife that night, placed his naked sword between Fenizia and himself, and laid himself down, anxiously waiting the first ray of dawn when the sun giveth the golden pills to the heavens to ease them of the darksome shadows of the night.

Then he hastily left his bed and equipped himself for the chase, and neither Fenizia's prayers, nor the king's command could change him from his purpose. And mounting horse,

and taking the two charmed dogs with him, he fared to the wilds and wolds, and entered the same darksome forest, and it chanced to him, as it had fortune with Canneloro ; and entering the cave he beheld his brother's dogs, and the steed, and his sword and fire-arms ; at the sight of which he was now assured that Canneloro was in the ghul's power either dead or alive. And he determined to avenge his death, if he came too late to save him ; therefore when the hind bade him lay aside his arms, and chain the dogs, and tether the horse, Fonzo in answer to her bidding threw himself upon her and slew her, and after heaping upon the slain ghul stones and whatsoever he could find, he looked about in search of tidings. And he heard a sound of moaning at the further end of the cavern, and going there he saw the pit, and rolling off the stone out came Canneloro and several others, whom the ghul kept there to fatten them ; and they all embraced him and thanked him for their deliverance, and then they fared to the king's palace, where the princess beholding two princes so much alike knew not which was her husband. But Canneloro lifting his hat shewed her the cicatrix on his brow, which when she beheld she embraced him, and there was feasting and joyance and gladness ; and Prince Fonzo tarried with them one month, enjoying all the sights and pleasaunces of the country ; but at last he longed to return to his own nest, and Canneloro writing a letter to his mother bidding her to come and share his grandeur and happiness, gave it to him, and taking leave from each other, promising to visit one another often, he departed. And Canneloro's mother came to him, and from that hour he would not hear any more, neither of dogs, nor of chase, keeping in mind that true sentence,

' Unhappy is he who learneth and is corrected at his own expense.'

## THE OLD WOMAN DISCOVERED.

### TENTH DIVERSION

#### Of the First Day.

The King of Roccaforte is enamoured by the voice of an old woman ; is deceived by a finger, and goeth to bed with her ; but discovering the deceit, commandeth his servants to throw her out of window, and in falling she remaineth hanging on a tree. Seven fairies sighting her they give her a charm, and she becometh a beautiful girl, and the king taketh her to wife ; the other sister being envious of her good fortune, and wishing to be made handsome also, desireth to be flayed alive, and in so doing dies.

ALL hearers were pleased with Ciometella's story, and were delighted to hear of Canneloro's safety, and the ghul's punishment for such deeds of cruelty. Then Prince Thaddeus signed for all to be silent, and commanded Ghiacova to seal with her recital this letter of entertainment, when thus she began :

The accursed vanity born with us women is our besetting vice, and through the great longing to seem beautiful and adorn the brow we spoil our faces ; to whiten our skin we mar the whiteness of our teeth ; and to give light to the limbs we darken our sight ; and thus we pay the tribute to Time before the hour, enfeebling the eyesight, lining the face, and withering the skin. If a young girl deserveth blame for such emptiness, how much more so an old woman, who, eager to seem young, becometh the

laughing stock of all beholders and the ruin of herself: as I will relate to you if ye lend me an ear.

In a garden, opposite the king's palace in Roccaforte city, were sitting two old women, who were the most hideous creatures that could be seen. They had dishevelled hair, and wrinkled brow, and crooked stiff eyebrows, eyes red and watery, yellow skins full of wrinkles, large and crooked mouths, and hairy breasts. They were hunchbacked, with shrivelled arms, and were lame, and cloven footed; and so that the sun should not light upon that ugly looking sight, they were hidden under the trees near one of the windows of the king. And it had come to this, that he could not even fart but that these two would talk and observe his doings; sometimes saying, that a jasmine had fallen upon their heads, and had given them an head-ache; another time, that a letter had fallen upon their shoulders and disturbed them; and at another, that the dust had suffocated them.

Now the king, listening to this talk, supposed that under him must be the quintessence of beauty, and the first cut of flowers, and the sweetest of all sweetness: and thus thinking, he longed with excessive longing to behold these hidden beauties, and to be enlightened upon their charms: therefore he began to sigh with deep sighs, and cough without a cold, and lastly to speak softly, saying, 'Where, where art thou hidden, thou most precious jewel? Come forth, O thou, the most beauteous in the world! Arise, thou sun! Come forth, thou gem worthy an emperor! Make manifest thy graces, let me behold the beaming lights which kindle fire in love's domain! Chase from thee, O thou accursed bench, this flower of beauty: be not so ware of thy excellencies: open the gate to a poor falcon, and cage me if thou wilt! Let me behold

the mouth from whose lips these sounds come forth: let me behold the bell whose sound I hear: let me behold this bird whose sweet song I listen to; do not leave me as a sheep from Ponto to be fed with cresses, do not deny me the joy to behold and contemplate thy beauteous form.' These and other words did the king say, but he could ring gloria, the old women's ears were deaf to his prayers, and it was like adding fuel to the fire.

And the king burned with the heat of desire, and his thoughts were held ensnared by a form created in his own mind, and his heart was enslaved by amorous longing, and he fain would have found the key that could open the casket where this priceless gem was hidden, that caused him to die in despair; but nothing daunted at the silence which followed his sighs and petitions, he continued to beseech and pray, never ceasing until one day of the days the old women, having become proud, gave themselves airs, through the flattering speeches of the king, and took counsel each with the other, so as not to let this opportunity escape them to catch this fine bird, who of his own accord came to throw himself into the snare. Therefore one day when the king, according to his wont, made sweet speeches from the window, they spake to him through the trees with a sweet whispering voice, that the greatest favour that they could confer upon him was to show him in eight days time one finger of one hand.

The king being an expert soldier, knew that fortresses are taken inch by inch, and therefore refused not the offer, hoping thus to win step by step his will of this strong place which he besieged unceasingly; knowing the old adage, 'Take first and ask afterwards.' He accepted the peremptory terms and awaited the eight days, desiring to behold this eighth marvel of the world.

Meanwhile the old women all this time did naught else but trim and anoint their fingers, so that when the appointed time should arrive she whose finger was smoothest and finest, should hold it for inspection to the king; and he, impatiently waiting, counted the days, dragged on the nights, weighed the hours, measured the moments, noted the points, and examined carefully the atoms that should elapse till the longed for good should be vouchsafed to him, beseeching the sun to shorten his ways through the heavenly fields, so that he should sooner reach the end of his daily route and water his fiery steeds, tired of their long journey. And he adjured the night to chase away all darkness, and let him gaze on the light that, yet not seen, made him burn in a furnace of love; and he apostrophized Time, saying that he walked on crutches, and had put on leaden boots to spite him, so that the hour should not arrive so quickly in which their obligation should be fulfilled. But the time came at last, and the king descended to the garden, and knocked at the gate, and said, 'Come, come!' And one of the old women, the oldest and ugliest, seeing that her finger was the finest and smoothest, put it through the key-hole, and showed it to the king. For him, this was not a finger but a pointed dart, which struck his heart with deadly aim: 'twas not a dart, but a mace that struck his head with fiercest blow: but what do I say? Dart and mace? It was a lighted match to his desires, which took fire and burned with fiercest flames: but what am I saying? Dart and mace, and match? It was a thorn unto his thoughts, which cost him a thousand sighs; and holding the hand, and kissing that finger, that from a woodcutter's scraper had become a gilder's burnisher, he began saying, 'O sweet bow of love, O receptacle of

all joys, O register of all love's privileges, for which I have become a warehouse of sorrow, and a magazine of anguish, and a custom-house of torments: is it possible, that thou wilt remain so hardened, and cruel, and feel no compassion of my complaints? O my sweetheart, if thou hast shown me the tail by the key-hole, put there thy lips, and we will have a jelly of happiness; if thou hast shown part of thy sweetmeats, O thou river of beauty, let me behold all thy body, let me behold those eyes of hawk peregrine, and let them wither and scorch mine heart with their leven glances. Who holdeth prisoner the treasure of thy beauteous face; who keepeth this beauteous ship in quarantine; by whose power is held prisoner this charming and graceful gazelle in a pig-stye? Come out of that pit; issue forth from those stables, come out of that hole; leap, sweet May, and give thine hand to Cola, and pay me what I am worth; thou knowest that I am the king, I am not a cucumber, I can bid and forbid: but that false and blind son of the lame Vulcan and the strumpet Venus, who hath full authority over all sceptres, hath made me thy subject, so that I beg of thee that of which I could command the gift; and I do as the old saw saith, for "with caresses and not with talk is Venus won."

The old woman, who well knew where the devil kept his tail, an old fox, a decrepit cat, an old crow, a superannuated owl, thinking that, when your superior begs of you something, it is a command, and that the disobedience of a liege rouseth the wrath of the master, which may bring ruin, in a voice like a flayed cat's said, 'O my lord, as thou art willing to submit thyself to one that is beneath thee, an thou hast deigned descend from the sceptre to the spinning-wheel, from the royal hall to the stable, from pomp and luxury to the petticoats, from

grandeur to misery, from the belvedere to the cellar, from the steed to the ass, I cannot, and I must not, and I will not contradict the will of so great a king; therefore as it is your desire to tie this knot between prince and liege, this binding of ivory with wood of a poplar-tree, this setting of diamonds with glass, I am ready to do thy will, but I must beseech thee to grant me, as a sign of thine affection, what I will beg of thee, and that is, that I may be received in thy bed at night without a candle, because I could not bear to be seen naked.'

The king, joying with exceeding gladness, sware an oath, laying hand upon hand, that he would grant her request willingly. And giving a kiss sweet as sugar to a mouth stinking like assafoetida, he went his ways, and the time seemed longsome to him till the sun, tired of ploughing heaven's fields, before sowing the stars went to repose, and he thought of naught but the field he would plough and the seed he would sow, the joyance by hundredweights and the happiness by tons. But when the night darkened, and all marauders issued forth to empty the pockets of the wayfarers, and ease them of their cloaks, the old woman, conducted by one of the king's valets, came in the gloom, covered from head to foot with a thick veil looped up behind. And reaching the king's bedchamber, she unrobed at once, and went into bed.

The king, who had waited like match near a powder-cask, when he heard them coming, and heard her get into bed, perfuming his person with sweet scented musk and civet, and anointing his beard with perfumed ointment, jumped into bed. And it was well for the old woman that he was thus anointed and perfumed, so that he could not smell the stink of her mouth, and the vinegar of her arm-pits, and the mustiness of that ugly thing.

But as soon as he felt her limbs, he perceived the deception; he felt her bottom and found it fleshless, the limbs thin and withered, and the breasts as empty bladders; and he marvelled with exceeding marvel, but kept silence, so as to be better assured of the case; and forced himself to do that for which he had no more desire, and entered this pig-stye whilst he believed he would enter the coast of Posillaco; and sailed with a fishing-smack, when he believed himself on board a galley.

But when sleep overtook the old woman, the king drew out from an ebony casket inlaid with silver a leathern bag, and out of it a small lanthorn which he lit, and made a perquisition under the bed-linen, and beheld an harpy instead of a nymph, a fury instead of a grace, Medusa instead of Venus. And at the sight he was wroth with exceeding wrath, and he had a mind to cut the rope which held this ship. And foaming at the mouth with rage, he cried aloud and called all his household, and when the servants heard the king's outcries they hardly stopped to don their shirts, but ran to his help, and said he to them, 'Behold, what trick hath this witch of Satan played me! Thinking I had a suckling-lamb, I find an old buffalo; believing I held in hand a dove, I find an owl; supposing I was enjoying a mouthful worth a king, I find between mine hands this filthy morsel, sickening to taste; but this, and worse, deserveth he who buyeth the cat inside the bag. But she hath vexed me beyond measure, and she will do just penance, therefore take her up as she is, and throw her out of the window;' which command hearing, the old woman began to defend herself, kicking, and plunging, and biting, and saying, 'I appeal against this sentence: thou wouldest that I came to thy bed, and I will bring an hundred



doctors to my defence,' and she spake the proverbs, 'An old fowl maketh good soup;' and 'Whoso leaveth the old way for the new findeth worse will ensue;' but with all this talk she was lifted up by the servants and thrown out of window, and that was her fortune. She fell, and being hung by the hair of her head on the bough of a fig-tree, remained hanging there without breaking her neck.

Now at early dawn some fairies passed through that garden, and being sad-hearted, having had some great sorrow to bear, for some time had neither spoken nor smiled; but perceiving that hideous shadow hanging on the tree, they all laughed till they fell backward, and putting their tongue in motion, they never ended talking about this spectacle they beheld. And to repay the old woman for the enjoyment she had caused them, they each and all gave her a charm. The first said, 'Mayest thou become young;' another, 'Mayest thou become beautiful;' another, 'Mayest thou be rich;' the next, 'Mayest thou be noble;' and another, 'Mayest thou be virtuous;' and the next, 'May all folk love thee;' and the last, 'Be thine all good fortune.' And when they ended their saying they departed, and the old woman found herself seated on a velvet chair with fringe of golden threads under that same tree, which had become a green velvet canopy purflewed with gold. Her face was as the face of a young girl, just fifteen, so beauteous that all other beauties would seem like old slippers near satin shoes: compared to this grace sitting on that velvet chair, the three Graces would seem as old iron; and if she would but smile and talk and glance, all others would play a losing game beside her. And she was decked and arrayed in costly raiments all purflewed with gems and gold, and the flowers that adorned her, scented the air with

their perfume, and pages and servants and handmaidens surrounded her, and she looked every inch a queen.

In the meanwhile the king, wrapping himself up in a blanket, and putting on a pair of light shoes, looked out of window to see what had happened to the old woman, and beholding a sight so marvellous and unexpected, he remained with mouth wide open, and gazed upon this beauty as one charmed, admiring first the golden hair falling lightly upon the white shoulders, and the curls tied with a golden cord, whose sheen would put to shame the sun's rays; then the pencilled brows, like bows whose darts pierced the heart; and those eyes whose leven glance caused him a thousand sighs; and the sweet mouth, full of love's witchery, where all graces sat enthroned; and he gazed at the jewels and the robes, and he was beside himself, and murmured to himself, 'Am I sleeping, or awaking? am I in my right senses, or am I mad? do I know or do I not know whence came this ball to strike me in such manner which maddens me? I must be a senseless spindle if I do not find out all about this marvel. How hath this sun appeared? how did this flower open? whence did this bird come hither, to draw by magnet all my desires? what ship hath brought her to this country? which cloud rained her down? This fountain of beauty hath brought me a sea of trouble!'

And speaking thus he ran down the steps into the garden, and went where the made-young old woman sat, and throwing himself at her feet, said to her, 'O dove-faced mine, O thou graceful doll, O thou pigeon from Venus' car, triumph of love, thou hast put this heart in soak in the river Sarno. If thine eyes are not blinded by the cane-seed, and thine ears deafened by

the excrement of Rennena, thou wilt hear and perceive the love-longing and pain, the anguish and sore distress that I endure for thy beauty's sake; an if thou dost not believe, at the yellowing of my face, the heat which boileth in this breast; if thou believest not the flames of sighs, and the scorching fire which burneth in my veins; thou who art of good understanding, and judgment, thou canst comprehend how thy golden hair bindeth me like a chain, from thy dark eyes what coal burneth me, and from thy red lips like Cupid's bow, what darts strike me: therefore shut not the gate of pity, and draw not up the bridge of mercy, and dry not up the rill of compassion: and if thou do not believe me worthy to possess thy beauteous form, at least give me a safeguard of good words, a guide in a promise, and a deed of expecting hope, an if thou dost not, I will die and thou wilt lose the form.' These and other words did the king utter from the depth of his heart, which touched the made-young old woman, and at last she accepted him for her husband. And then she arose and he took her by the hand, and they went together in the royal palace, and he commanded them to get ready a banquet, and invited all the nobles of the country.

Now the old bride would have her sister there, but the messengers had great difficulty in finding her, and she was sadly afraid and would not go. She had been hiding carefully, but at last they prevailed upon her to go, and she went, and now was seated by her sister's side, and it was long ere she knew her, and when at last she did know her, they joyed together with exceeding gladness. But the old woman could not eat, because other hunger consumed her entrails. Her heart was bursting with envy in sighting the youth and beauty

of her sister, and every now and then she pulled her by the sleeve, saying, 'How hast thou done it, how hast thou done it, O my sister? Blessed art thou within those bonds.' And her sister answered, 'Eat now thy sufficiency, we will converse afterwards.' And the king enquired what she wanted, and the bride answered that her sister desired some green sauce, and the king sent at once for garlic sauce, peppered mustard, and a thousand other appetizing sauces to tickle the appetite. But to the old woman all kinds of sauces, seemed bitter as gall, and again she pulled her sister's sleeve, saying, 'How didst thou do it, O sister mine, how didst thou do it? as I wish to do the like under the mantle;' and the sister answered, 'Be silent, we will have more time than money, eat now, and I will help thee, and we will speak afterwards.' And the king, being curious, asked what she wanted, and the bride was perplexed, and felt like a chick among the straw, and would have liked to be let alone from that nuisance, and answered that her sister wanted some sweetmeats, and the king sent for some pastry, and blanc-mange, and other sweetmeats raining from the heavens in great quantities. But the old woman could not rest, and again sang to the same tune, and the bride unable to bear her persistency any longer answered, 'I made them flay me, O my sister.' And the envious sister hearing these words said to herself, 'Go thy ways, thou hast not spoken to deaf ears; I will also tempt Fortune, and a courageous spirit perchance winneth, and if I succeed, thou wilt not be alone in thy enjoyment, as I also will require my share.' And thus saying, feigning to leave the table on some necessary requirement, she went to a barber's shop, where finding the master, she took him apart, and said to him, 'Here thou hast fifty ducats, if thou wilt flay me from head to foot.'

The barber, believing her to be mad, answered, 'Go thy ways, O my sister, thou speakest oddly, and surely thou wilt find some company very shortly.'

And the old woman, with a brazen face, replied, 'Mad thou art, as thou knowest not thy luck when it cometh to thee; because besides the fifty ducats, if my attempt be successful, I will make thee barber to Fortune herself; therefore do as I bid thee, tarry not, as this will be thy fortune.' The barber contradicted, quarrelled, snapped, and protested for a long while, and at last feeling himself pulled by the nose, did as the proverb saith, 'Tether the master where the ass willeth,' and making her take a seat upon a bench, began to flay her, and the blood rained down, but she firm as adamant, now and again said, 'Ugh, who beauteous wisheth to be, with anguish and pain must troubled be!' and the barber continued his work and she continued her say, till at last the barber reached the navel, when her strength failed her, and giving vent to a strong fart in sign of departure, she proved at her own risk Sannazaro's verse:

'Envy, O my son, her flesh doth rend.'

This story ended, and it wanting an hour yet to sunset, Prince Thaddeus sent for Fabiello and Jacovuccio, the one Master of the Robes, and the other House Steward, and desired them to give a dessert to this furnished table of entertainments; and they were ready as serjeants, the one dressed in tights, and surtout bell-fashion with large brass buttons, and a flat cap drawn over the ears; the other with a long cap, surtout with breastplate, and trousers as a spider's legs. And they came forth from behind a myrtle-bush, just as if they were on the stage acting a scene, and spake thus:

## ECLOGUE.

## THE CRUCIBLE.

*Fabiello, and Jacovuccio.*

*Fab.* Where away in such haste?

Where art thou going, O Jacovuccio?

*Jac.* I am taking this parcel home.

*Fab.* Is it something very good?

*Jac.* Most excellent, it is Mescescia.\*

*Fab.* And what else?

*Jac.* And a tub.

*Fab.* And what is that for?

*Jac.* Ho! there, come not nigh me,  
And keep thy brains clear.

*Fab.* What for?

*Jac.* Who knoweth, but that  
Satan would blind thee;  
Thou understandest my meaning.

*Fab.* I understand thee;

But thou comest not near it by an hundred miles.

*Jac.* How do I know?

*Fab.* Who knoweth not, keepeth silence, and a dry mouth.  
I know thou art not a jeweller,  
Nor art thou a distiller:  
Now draw thou out the consequences.

*Jac.* Let us retire apart, O Fabiello,  
And thou shalt hear marvellous matters and wondrous.

*Fab.* Let us go whither it pleaseth thee.

\* 'Mescescia' (Gr. *μεσοτομος*) beef cut in pieces, and dried in the wind and smoke: 'dried beef.'

- Jac.* We will stand near this gutter,  
And thou shalt listen to most surprising things.
- Fab.* O my brother, tell me quickly,  
Do not keep me in suspense.
- Jac.* Softly, O my brother.  
Do not be so hasty.  
Did thy mother give birth to thee in a hurry?  
Seest thou this utensil?
- Fab.* I see it, 'tis a crucible  
Wherein silver is refined.
- Jac.* Thou hast hit the mark;  
Thou hast divined it at first sight.
- Fab.* Hide it from sight, lest some peasant see it,  
And we be taken to the filthy den.
- Jac.* Do not shit thy breeches:  
Tremble not, 'tis not of those  
Where pastry is worked ingeniously  
And out of fifteen thou gettest three.
- Fab.* Tell me, what dost thou with it?
- Jac.* I keep it to refine this world's goods,  
Clearly to know a garlic from a fig.
- Fab.* Thou hast taken too much flax to spin:  
Thou wilt grow old before thy time,  
Too soon thou'lt have a hoary head.
- Jac.* There dwelleth not a man upon earth's face  
Who would not give his teeth and eyes  
To be quick-witted as I am,  
Who at first glance can clear away the blot  
Of all the bad that man in mind contains,  
And value truly each art, and fortune's ways.  
Because herein is seen  
If 't be an empty marrow, or meat with salt,  
If this be profitless, or a thing of worth.

- Fab.* What dost thou mean?
- Jac.* Listen with care,  
Till I explain to thee;  
When at first sight a countenance  
Seemeth a thing of worth,  
Know thou, that 'tis deceit,  
The folk are blind to all,  
See naught, but what may seem:  
But thou, look not from smoke to smoke,  
Nor fare from bark to bark,  
But pierce that bark, and enter thou within,  
For those that angle not in waters deep  
Are nothing but clodhoppers in this world;  
Then use this crucible and thus thou'lt prove  
If all be substance or appearance only,  
If it be shooting onion, or sweet pasty.
- Fab.* 'Tis truly wondrous  
By the life of Lanfusa!
- Jac.* Hearken to me, and marvel,  
Let us go on, and fear not,  
Thou shalt hear things most wondrous,  
Listen to me, *verbi gratia*:  
Thou art bursting with envy  
And jealousy and wrath  
If thou beholdest earl or knight,  
In rolling chariot, with jewels dight:  
Thou seest them followed by their servants' train.  
All bend to them with humble flattery.  
One cringeth like a cur,  
One boweth to the ground,  
One lifteth cap from head,  
One saith, 'I am thy slave,'  
(All these be done to silken raiment and gems and gold).

When they feel warm, they have ready fans,  
 Even their night-commode is silver and gold.  
 Be not deceived by this parade and pomp,  
 Sigh not, and envy not this ostentation :  
 Put them into this crucible,  
 And thou shalt see the canker-worm  
 Under the velvet vest ;  
 Thou shalt see how many serpents  
 Lurk hidden amid the flowers and in the grass ;  
 And if thou but unlid the night-commode,  
 And lift its silken cover purfled with gold,  
 Thou'lt smell what cometh forth, if stink or scent.  
 Thou shalt perceive, they basons have of gold :  
 Look in and thou wilt see they spit their blood.  
 Dainty in their food,  
 It chokes them in their throat ;  
 An if thou ponder well and measure right,  
 That which thou thinkest Fortune's proudest gift,  
 It is but Heaven's punishment.  
 They feed with delicacies many crows,  
 Which at the last pluck out their eyes from head ;  
 They keep a pack of hounds,  
 Which bark continuously around ;  
 Wages they give to their greatest foes,  
 Who stand about them ;  
 And they are flayed alive ;  
 And on all sides are robbed,  
 And flattered by their panders  
 With false humility and affectation.  
 One urgeth them to things due and undue ;  
 Another to give help and alms pretendeth,  
 The wolf concealing under the sheep's hide,  
 With kindly manner, and a brutal heart,

Compelleth them to unright and injustice ;  
 One plotteth against their peace ;  
 Another spieth their doings,  
 And bringeth sorrow and anguish  
 To their hearts.  
 One betrayeth them,  
 And thus they lose their rest,  
 And eat not with desire,  
 And joy to them is not known ;  
 The music played at dinner deafeneth them,  
 Sleep, when they rest, hath frightful visions,  
 And dire suspicion driveth away all peace.  
 Like Tizio's bird, water and fruit surround them,  
 They stand amongst them, and they die with  
 hunger.  
 Reason fights against reason,  
 And Ixion's wheel,  
 Never lets it rest,  
 And the chimerical designs  
 Upon the stones rolled  
 By Sisypheus up the mountain,  
 Only to fall to lower depth.  
 And they sit on their golden throne  
 Encrusted with ivory and gems ;  
 Under their feet  
 Brocaded cushions, and carpets soft  
 Of Turkish texture : but the plumage  
 On the top of their heads  
 Is always ruffled ;  
 And whilst they sit, fear standeth by their side ;  
 Suspended by an hair's breadth is their life ;  
 Their days are spent in doubts and fears ;  
 Their lips are wreathed in false smiles,

Whilst dreads of unknown dangers sap their vitals.  
 And at the last, bethink thyself,  
 This sumptuous grandeur and this luxury  
 Are all vain shadows, worldly emptiness :  
 A handful of earth and a narrow grave  
 Holdeth the king and the vilest slave.

*Fab.* Thou art right, by my godsire's soul,  
 By Jove, 'tis very true, this, and more thou sayest,  
 That the noblest and the highest in degree  
 Feel keenly misadventures more than we ;  
 And in very deed spake sooth  
 The man of Terrapiena,  
 Who went about with walnuts, saying,  
 'Tis not all gold, oh no, all that which glitters.'

*Jac.* And now hearken to this, and gape with wonder ;  
 Some folk praise war,  
 And lift it to a high pinnacle,  
 And when the time cometh  
 That from afar they sight the standard flying,  
 And listen to the tramping and neighing of steeds,  
 They sign their names to the roll,  
 Feeling themselves drawn to the fight  
 By sighting a few medals laid on a bench :  
 They take a few new coppers,  
 And dress in Jewish garb,\*  
 And don a rusty sword,  
 And look as mules of burden,  
 With drooping plume, and foot in stirrup.  
 If a friend asketh, 'Where do we go ?'  
 They answer cheerfully,  
 With foot aloft,

\* An expression used in Naples, which means buying second-hand clothes in the Ghetto at the old Jew vendors'.

'To war, to war,'  
 And go from tavern to tavern,  
 Bespeaking triumphs in advance,  
 Run to their lodgings  
 Bid farewell to all,  
 Kick up a shindy, overthrow all things,  
 And would not stand aside even for a Gradasso.  
 But if thou put them in this crucible,  
 Thou wilt perceive that all this merriment,  
 And all their boast, and all their proud disdain,  
 Are but a mask to cover for their sore anguish.  
 They freeze with cold,  
 They burn with heat,  
 Their entrails are gnawed by hunger,  
 Their tongue is swollen with thirst,  
 They are fainting with fatigue,  
 And danger standeth ever by their sides ;  
 The guerdon is afar,  
 And wounds and death are near ;  
 The wage on credit ;  
 Long the disasters, and all joyance short ;  
 Life is uncertain, most are sure of death.  
 At last, worn out  
 By a thousand mishaps, they fly from the plain,  
 Or instantly are struck by cannon-ball,  
 Or bound like asses with a rope,  
 Or killed in fight,  
 Or lose their limbs ;  
 And naught to them remaineth  
 Else to do, but walk with crutches,  
 Or troubled be with a perennial itch,  
 And when the evil is least  
 Fill empty places in the hospital.

*Fab.* Thou speakest sooth, and cuttest out the rotten—  
 Naught can be said :  
 'Tis truth, and more than truth,  
 As a poor soldier's fate  
 Is to return a beggar, and crushed down.

*Jac.* But what wilt thou say of a genial man  
 Who treadeth on the air,  
 Whose self-conceit is great,  
 Who boasteth of himself  
 And of his ancient race,  
 Referring to Achilles or Alexander,  
 And all the day draweth trees of genealogy,  
 And from a chesnut-bough  
 Bringeth forth an holm :  
 Writing all the day,  
 Stories and biographies  
 Of fathers who never had children :  
 Insisting that a vendor of oil by quart  
 Is noble in his quarters :  
 With privileges, upon parchment writ,  
 Hung in a smoky place, so as to seem old,  
 To feed his self-esteem, and overbearing pride.  
 He buyeth a mausoleum,  
 And hath engraved thereon a lengthened epitaph,  
 With praise of virtues which have birth in the  
     clouds ;  
 And payeth well for stock  
 To mend his worn old coat ;  
 Willingly giveth to put new bells  
 Into a church-steeple ;  
 And to lay a new foundation  
 In a tumbling old house  
 Wasteth on stones his gold.

But put him in the crucible,  
 And thou wilt see, that he who delayeth longer,  
 And he who pretendeth more,  
 And weareth sumptuous robes,  
 And exacteth more encomium,  
 His hands have yet the corns of when he worked  
     the fields.

*Fab.* Thou touchest the wound to the quick,  
 Naught can be said more ; thou hast hit the nail  
     on the head ;  
 I remember on this subject  
 (And the words I keep in mind)  
 That once a sage did say,  
 'There is naught worse than a boor set in high  
     place.'

*Jac.* And now for the proud vain man,  
 The coxcomb full of vainglory and pretensions,  
 Expecting cheeses to drop from the air,  
 Who maketh a point of great prosopopœa,  
 Who swelleth out balloons,  
 Who filleth thine ears with falsehoods,  
 Spitting a round of words, all boasts of self,  
 Twisting his mouth in shapes of affectation,  
 And when he speaketh sucking his lips :  
 He measureth every step :  
 Canst thou divine in what rank the man may be ?  
 And he crieth and swelleth forth :  
 'Olá, send for some pastry ;  
 Call twenty of my followers ;  
 Go some of you to the palace  
 Of the earl, my nephew ;  
 Bid him come to me,  
 That we may go to enjoy an airing

When our coachman bringeth the chariot round ;  
 Go to the tailor, and bid him bring before night  
 My coat and vest purfled with gold ;  
 Write and say to that lady,  
 Who is dying for my sake,  
 That perhaps, and may be, some day I will love her.'  
 But put him in this crucible,  
 And thou wilt find not one mite of truth :  
 'All is a fire of straw ;'  
 The higher he mounteth, the lower he falleth ;  
 He speaketh of ducats, and hath not a soldo ;  
 Dainties are on his lips, and emptiness within ;  
 A full kerchief hath he to hide his withered neck ;  
 Lightly he trippeth along, with empty purse and  
     pockets ;  
 And in conclusion  
 Every beard he passeth for a fin,  
 Every pump becometh a hammer,  
 Every hunchback is perfectly straight,  
 And every gun resolveth into a cannon.

*Fab.* Blessed be thy tongue :

How prettily hast thou explained it ;  
 And in very sooth it is an ancient say  
 That, 'A coxcomb is a bladder, full of wind, for  
     children's play.'

*Jac.* Who followeth the court,  
 Charmed by that hideous witch,  
 And filleth himself with wind,  
 And feedeth on smoke, leaving the roast for others ;  
 With bladders full of hope,  
 Who expecteth bells  
 When blowing soapy waters  
 Which reach but half the way,

And there dissolve ;  
 Who sumptuously arrayed  
 Standeth with open mouth  
 Gazing on pomp and grandeur :  
 And for this old vain rag,  
 And to sip broth from a tub,  
 And eat a dry old loaf,  
 He selleth his liberty, man's greatest prize.  
 If thou purify this gold from all its dross,  
 Thou'lt spy a labyrinth  
 Of fraud and treachery ;  
 Thou'lt find, O brother, an abyss  
 Of deceit and falsity ;  
 Thou a country shalt discover  
 Of wicked tongues, with poison as an asp's ;  
 Now he is held aloft, but shortly downcast ;  
 Now to his master dear, but soon an outcast ;  
 Now rich, and briefly a beggar ;  
 Now stout and well fed, and shortly thin and hungry :  
 He worketh hard to get forward in the chase,  
 Perspireth like a dog,  
 Runneth rather than walketh,  
 And carrieth even water with his ears.  
 But it is loss of time,  
 He loseth the work and the seed,  
 All is thrown to the winds,  
 All falleth into the sea.  
 Do what he will, they are gone ;  
 Let him make drawings and models  
 Of hopes, of merits, and travails :  
 A little contrary wind  
 Casteth them down to the ground :  
 And he beholdeth before him



A jester, a spy, a Ganymede,  
 A hardened hide,  
 One who buildeth  
 A house with two entrances, a two-faced man.

*Fab.* O my brother, thou givest me new life.  
 Believe me, I have learned  
 More in this short time,  
 And from this thy say,  
 Than in all the years I spent at school :  
 And 'twas a sage who said,  
 'Who serveth courts, upon a straw-rick dieth.'

*Jac.* Thou hast heard what is a courtier :  
 Hearken now what is a servant of lower degree.  
 Take a man-servant,  
 Handsome, polite, and clean :  
 He must be of good parentage,  
 He boweth an hundred times,  
 He keepeth the house in order, draweth water,  
 Cooketh thy food,  
 Brusheth thy vestments,  
 Currieth thy mule, washeth thy dishes ;  
 If thou send him to market,  
 He is back before thy spittle drieth on ground.  
 He is never idle,  
 His hands are never still,  
 He cleanseth the glass, emptieth the night vase.  
 But put thou him to the test,  
 In this true crucible :  
 Thou shalt find that all new things are fine,  
 And the race of an ass endureth not,  
 And before three days are past  
 Thou shalt discover him to be a flatterer,  
 Deceiver, and idle for dear life ;

A first class pander,  
 A meddling fellow, a glutton, and a gamester.  
 If he goeth to market, he defraudeth ;  
 If he giveth corn to the mule,  
 'Tis given from grapes to rice ;  
 He corrupteth the maid-servant,  
 He emptieth thy pockets,  
 And when he is so inclined,  
 To put the last stroke to his deeds,  
 He taketh thy best things, and lifts his heels ;  
 And thou may'st tether thy pigs to the cucumber.

*Fab.* These are substantial words  
 With wit and juice :  
 O unfortunate, O thrice unhappy is he  
 Whose trust hath met with servants' treachery.

*Jac.* And now for the man of valour,  
 The first of Spartan braves,  
 The chief of all swashbucklers,  
 The prompter of all disputes,  
 Fourth in the art of neck-breaking,  
 Bravest of the brave,  
 Commander-in-chief of the valiant :  
 He pointedly presumeth  
 To frighten all the folk,  
 To make thee tremble  
 With a side-glance of his eyes ;  
 He walketh with a swagger,  
 He weareth a slashed coat,  
 His hat drawn over his eyes,  
 His hair disorderly,  
 His mustachios twisted on end,  
 His eyes fiercely rolling,  
 One hand on side,

Swearing, and stamping with his feet ;  
 Even a straw causeth him to be wroth,  
 And he squabbleth with the flies ;  
 He companieth with soldiers and brigands ;  
 If thou hearken to his speech,  
 He speaketh of naught, but of cutting,  
 Of slashing, and piercing, and hanging,  
 Of killing, and running through the body ;  
 Of one he draweth out the heart,  
 Of another the liver,  
 Of one he draweth out the entrails,  
 Of another the kidneys,  
 He trampleth on one,  
 Another he heweth in quarters.  
 If thou listen to his boasting,  
 The earth is too small to hold them :  
 This one, he writeth his name in the book,  
 That other, he sendeth out of the world,  
 This one, he sendeth unto his friends,  
 That other, he emptieth his pockets of gold,  
 This one, he salteth,  
 That other, he striketh to earth,  
 Of this one, he maketh mince-meat :  
 An hundred he turneth, and an hundred he gathereth,  
 And always passing truth, and with havoc,  
 Splitting heads, and breaking limbs.  
 But the sword hung by his side,  
 No matter how strong and sharp its edge,  
 Is virgin of blood, and widowed of honour :  
 And this crucible will to thee make clear,  
 That the big words carried so high  
 Hide the heart's trembling ;  
 The rolling of the eyes,

Retreat of feet ;  
 The eastern thunderclaps,  
 Looseness of ice ;  
 The visionary boastings  
 Indicate the wakeful hours of night ;  
 And the swearing and stamping  
 Is but an excuse to keep sword in sheath,  
 Which, like an honoured woman,  
 Feeleth ashamed to show itself naked.  
 Seemeth he bitter as gall,  
 He hath but a chicken's heart ;  
 Seemeth he an eater of lions,  
 He is but a catcher of rabbits ;  
 Challengeth he, he gaineth a thrashing ;  
 Threateneth he, he receiveth annoyance double  
 weight ;  
 Gambleth he with his boasting dice,  
 He always meeteth his equal ;  
 In words he is brave,  
 But in actions brief ;  
 Layeth hand on hilt,  
 But draweth not sword ;  
 Seeketh quarrel, and withdraweth from it ;  
 And he lifteth heel easier than show valour,  
 If he lighteth upon one who bendeth him down,  
 Or one who sets his coat to rights,  
 And dealeth him a rain of blows with change,  
 Who settleth his accounts,  
 Who cardeth out his wool,  
 Who beateth well his sides,  
 Who whistleth in his ears,  
 Who knocketh down his teeth,  
 Who pusheth him down a pit,

Who bravely throttlet him,  
 Who passeth his blood through a sieve,  
 Who breaketh his lantern to pieces,  
 Who giveth him a good dressing,  
 Who prepareth him for a feast,  
 Or casteth him with the box,  
 Or boxeth well his ears,  
 Or giveth him back-handed cuffs,  
 Kicks, pushes, knocks, and cuts,  
 Or thrusteth a knife in his side.  
 Enough for him to cut and thrust,  
 And speak in manly voice :  
 He steppeth deal faster than a deer ;  
 He soweth spittle, and gathereth marrows ;  
 And when thou thinkest  
 That he is about to lay waste an army,  
 Then it is that the scene changeth ;  
 Goodby, farewell, and good-day,  
 He disappeareth, weigheth anchor, is gone,  
 And shooting the parting shaft,  
 Lifteth his heels, and runneth away ;  
 Taketh with him his saddle-bags well-filled,  
 'And help me, O my feet, because I cover ye,'  
 His heel toucheth shoulder,  
 And rivalleth hare in speed ;  
 And well he playeth with his two-legged sword,  
 And like a great poltroon  
 In haste he flieth : is caught, and taken in gaol !

*Fab.* It is the true portrait

Of these fire-eaters :

It is in sooth quite natural.

And hereabout thou findest more than one

That answer well to this description,

That with their tongues do giants slay,  
 And are not worth a cur nor yet a quail.

*Jac.* And now for the flatterer, who ever praiseth thy  
 doings,

He lifteth thee aloft above the moon's circle,  
 He agreeth always to all thou choose to do,  
 He feedeth thy pride, and filleth himself,  
 He giveth fair wind to thy sails,  
 And never contradicteth what thou sayest.

If thou art a ghul or an Æsop,  
 He will tell thee thou art a Narcissus ;  
 If thou hast a mark upon thy face,  
 He'll swear 'tis but a patch, a mole ;

If thou art a poltroon,  
 He will assert thou art Hercules or Samson ;  
 If thou art of vile descent,  
 He will attest thou springest from a count ;  
 He is always flattering thee and caressing thee :  
 But be not caught by the sweet words  
 Of these sycophants ;

And do not trust them,  
 Nor hold them in esteem ;  
 Do not let the false glitter dazzle thee,  
 But try them in this crucible,

And thou shalt feel with both hands  
 That these folk are double-faced,  
 One visage frontward, and another backward,  
 And what is on their tongues is not in heart ;  
 They are all face-washers, and false dealers,  
 And tricksters, and deceivers ;  
 They knit thee, and perplex thee,  
 And blind thee, and deceive thee.

When he agreeth with thee in every matter,

Be watchful, for 'tis then thou'lt have a storm.  
 With a sweet smile he biteth thee,  
 He soileth thee with his flattery;  
 He swelleth thy balloon,  
 And emptieth thy money-bags.  
 The end he hath in view  
 Is thee to cheat and upon thee sponge.  
 And with his praises and eulogium,  
 And his long stories and enormous boasting,  
 He draweth from thy heart thy secrets' core,  
 And all this doth this sharper  
 To get from thee gold or silver;  
 That he may spend to his leman, and in taverns,  
 He selleth to thee bladders for a lanthorn.

*Fab.* May the seed be lost of such vile race,  
 Men wearing masks!  
 They ought to be thrown within a sack;  
 Out, fair Narcissus, and with Satan back!

*Jac.* And listen now about a woman, who kisseth  
 Those which come, and those that go:  
 Thou shalt behold a pretty doll,  
 All grace and gallantry, a dove,  
 A fair white ass, a jewel,  
 A parrot, a Fairy Morgana,  
 A moon on her fourteenth night,  
 A form worthy a painter's brush:  
 Thou couldst drink her in a glass of water:  
 A delicate morsel fit for kings,  
 A charmer and heart stealer.  
 With her golden locks she bindeth thee,  
 With her glances she consumeth thee,  
 With her voice of honey seduceth thee.  
 But no sooner is she put within this crucible,

Thou shalt behold great flames,  
 And traps, and snares,  
 And skains, and clews;  
 A thousand sly snakish deeds she'll do,  
 A thousand malices invent,  
 A thousand snares, and ambushes,  
 And stratagems will lay,  
 And lead thee first one way and then another,  
 And from the one perplexity to the other.  
 She will draw thee, like an hook,  
 Bleed thee, like a barber,  
 Cheat thee, like a gipsy;  
 And a thousand times thou wilt believe  
 She'll bring thee a cup of good strong wine,  
 And instead thou'lt find  
 She mixeth mince-meat.  
 If she speak, she enticeth,  
 And if she walk, stiffeneth:  
 Her smile is a guile,  
 And her touch will soil thee,  
 And if thou wilt escape from all harm  
 And not be thrown in an hospital,  
 Thou shalt be treated as a bird, or beast,  
 With her accursed manner,  
 And she will pluck thee of thy feathers  
 And will leave thee hideless.  
*Fab.* If thou shouldst write on paper all these words,  
 It would be sold six times over,  
 As in publishing this history,  
 Some one will take example,  
 And thus every man will be on his guard,  
 And not easily give himself in hand  
 To these blood-suckers:

Because they are false coin,  
Which ruineth the meat and all the sauce.  
*Jac.* If thou by chance beholdest at a window  
A girl who seems to thee a beauteous fairy,  
With golden hair,  
In glancing at whose sheen  
Thou wouldst suppose it  
Threads of gold or chains of golden cheese;  
The brow like mirror, or a colt of ass;  
A speaking eye; and, juiceful fruit,  
Two lips, red as two cherries, like  
Two slices of ham:  
For a time thou standest afar  
Sighing at this rising star,  
She standeth on high as a standard flying,  
And thou hast hardly gazed on her,  
And with desire and longing art dying,  
Thy vitals gnawed with despair.  
O thou clodhopper, O thou lack-wits,  
Put her in the crucible,  
And thou wilt see that what seemeth to thee  
A beauty without compeer  
Is but an enamelled doll,  
A wall newly plastered,  
A Ferrarese mask,  
And the bride is all made up.  
The lovely golden hair is not her own,  
The pencilled brows are painted,  
The rosy cheeks are covered by a cup-full  
Of chalk and varnish, and of cochineal.  
She smootheth her wrinkles, and raileth at thee,  
All cosmetics and pomade.  
Arrayed in silks, and laces, and flowers,

Powder, scent-bottles, and perfumes,  
She seemeth ready, with kerchief in hand,  
To bandage all the wounds of some sick man.  
How many faults are hid by all this train  
Of petticoats, and jewels, and costly garments,  
Her feet misshapen, covered full with corns,  
Are hid by slippers red purflewed with gold.  
*Fab.* Thou fillest me with wonder:  
'Tis truly marvellous, I am become a mummy,  
And with surprise I am beside myself.  
Every sentence, O my brother, uttered by thee,  
Is worth full seventy golden pieces to me;  
Thou canst engrave thy sayings with the engraver  
Upon a stone, for thou agreest in thy thoughts  
With that old saw:  
'That a woman is like a chesnut:  
Handsome outside, and with a worm inside.'  
*Jac.* Now we come to the merchant,  
Who changeth, and exchangeth,  
Ensureth vessels, and findeth accounts;  
He trafficketh, intrigueth, and deceiveth,  
Shareth with the custom-house,  
Loadeth, and unloadeth,  
Taketh share in all, and gaineth ducats;  
Buildeth ships and buildeth houses,  
And thus filleth well his sink;  
Furnisheth his house with sumptuousness,  
With pomp and luxury equal to an earl's,  
And wasteth silks and trimmings,  
And keepeth serving-men, and servant-maids,  
And free born women,  
And is envied by all folk.  
Unhappy is he, if put into this crucible,

For his riches are but of air,  
 And his fortune hath birth in smoke.  
 Fortune inconstant,  
 Subject to changeful winds,  
 In power of the waves,  
 Is beautiful to gaze at.

But it cheateth the eyesight,  
 And when thou seest it  
 More prosperous to view,  
 The game is lost by a very slight mistake.

*Fab.* Thou speakest sooth : of these I count by thousands,  
 Whose houses have failed down,  
 And all their riches  
 Disappeared quickly : as, thou seest me  
 And seest me not ; and joyed in this world  
 To the beard of the third, and fourth, who had  
 lack of wits,  
 And filled their pots, and made bad testament.

*Jac.* Now for the lover :  
 Happy thinketh he the hours,  
 Spent in the service of love :  
 Sweet holdeth the flame, and dear the chain,  
 Loveth the dart,  
 Which wounded him for a beauty.  
 He confesseth that he dieth  
 When afar from his love ;  
 'Tis not life far from her side ;  
 He calleth joy, the pains,  
 The turns of the head, and reproaches ;  
 Delight, the doubts and the jealousy.  
 He cannot enjoy his food,  
 His sleep is broken and restless,  
 He suffereth without sickness,

He maketh without wage the round  
 Of the doors of his beloved ;  
 No architect, he draweth designs  
 Of castles in the air ;  
 And although he is not the executioner,  
 He is always tyrannizing over his life.  
 But nathless all this woe,  
 He groweth red and stout ;  
 And the harder he is hit by the dart  
 The better he cometh in form.  
 And always feasteth, and playeth,  
 Until the fire lasteth ;  
 And thinketh himself lucky, and happy is he,  
 To feel himself in bondage and not free.  
 But if thou put him in this crucible,  
 Thou shalt perceive that 'tis a lunacy,  
 A species of consumption,  
 Living in uncertainty,  
 Always between hope, and fear,  
 'Tis like being half way hung  
 Between doubts and suspicions :  
 'Tis living ever badly,  
 Like the cat of Messer Basil  
 Which weepeth this moment and laugheth the next :  
 'Tis a stepping badly on uneven road,  
 A speaking brokenly and interrupted,  
 At all hours sending  
 The brains out feeding ;  
 'Tis like ever having  
 The heart for a napkin,  
 The face discoloured,  
 Warm the breast, and the soul sickening.  
 And if at last

The ice is broken, and the stone is moved  
 Of the being he loves,  
 That the further he is from her, the nearer he feeleth  
 He proveth the sweet at last, and soon repenteth.

*Fab.* O unhappy he unto whom happen

These unjust weights :  
 And sad his heart whose foot is caught,  
 For the blind god sendeth  
 Joys short-lived, and troubles by the ton.

*Jac.* And now we'll speak of the sad poet,  
 Pouring down stanzas, and bowling out sonnets,  
 Spoiling much paper, and torturing the brain,  
 And tearing his coat's elbows,  
 And his time,  
 Only that the folk  
 Should hold him as an oracle in the world.  
 He goes about as if possessed,  
 By legions of evil spirits,  
 With empty stomach and foolish aspect,  
 Thinking of the conceptions  
 He kneadeth in his mind ;  
 And whilst he is walking in the roads,  
 He talketh to himself,  
 Finding new voices by the thousand ;  
 And rolling his eyes about,  
 Saith, 'Liquid surmounting of leaves and flowers,  
 Funereal croaking of the waves !  
 O life-giving pear-tree !  
 O lubric hope !'  
 O unmeasurable presumption !  
 But put him in this crucible,  
 And all evaporates in smoke :  
 'O what fine composition,' and there

Endeth the madrigal, and spendeth.  
 And having scanned the verse,  
 The more he writeth the less they agree :  
 He praiseth whoso despiseth him,  
 Exalteth whoso troubleth him,  
 Keepeth ever in remembrance  
 Whoso hath clean forgotten him,  
 Expendeth all his strength  
 For those who never give him aught :  
 Thus is his life broken ;  
 For glory singeth he, and weepeth for want.

*Fab.* And in fact they are past,  
 Those days of Saint Martin, when  
 On high hand every poet stood ;  
 But in this darksome age  
 The patronisers are ground upon the wheel ;  
 And besides, in Naples, I must say,  
 Even though I died of grief and great distress,  
 The laurel leaf is not thought of like other leaves.

*Jac.* The astrologer standeth well :  
 From every side he hath put to him  
 An hundred questions and more :  
 One wants to know if she'll bring forth a son-child ;  
 Another, if this is a suitable time,  
 And most propitious, to win a law-suit ;  
 And one, if his unluckiness will change ;  
 One, if his lady-love is true to him ;  
 And one, if he will have a thunderstorm  
 With her he loves, or great enjoyment reap.  
 And the seer answereth well to all,  
 And he deserveth a good thrashing ;  
 For half the questions put he wisely guesseth,  
 And the other half are cunningly invented.

But in this crucible  
 Thou mayst discern, if dust or flour it is ;  
 That if he formeth aught in a square form,  
 Thou wilt behold it oblong, and deal larger ;  
 And if he buildeth houses,  
 Thou wilt perceive he hath no fireside ;  
 He showeth figures, and discovereth stories ;  
 Ascendeth to the stars,  
 And droppeth arse on ground ;  
 And at the last, having lost all vogue,  
 He is seen in tatters, reduced to beggary,  
 And rags and lice his only company.  
 His trowsers fall from his hips,  
 And there mayest thou behold a truer astrology  
 Than shown in the astrolabe with all the spheres.

*Fab.* Thou hast cheered me, O my brother,  
 And I must laugh at this description,  
 Although I had no desire, and I must smile  
 At the most foolish credulity of those  
 Who put their trust in such mendacity ;  
 And they pretend to foretell unto others,  
 Who cannot divine what evil will befall them,  
 And whilst star-gazing, fall into a pit.

*Jac.* And another pretendeth to be a sage,  
 And stretcheth his legs,  
 And measureth his words, spitting them round,  
 And holdeth himself the best in all the world.  
 Dost thou discuss upon poetry ?  
 He knoweth more than Petrarca.  
 Speakest thou of philosophers ?  
 He will mention fifteen more than Aristoteles.  
 In arithmetic he surpasseth Cantone ;  
 In the art of war toppeth Cornazgaro ;

In architecture goeth back to Euclid ;  
 In music he rivalleth Venosa ;  
 In law he knoweth more than Farinaccio ;  
 For language taketh precedence of Boccaccio ;  
 He speaketh in sentences, offereth advice ;  
 And the play is not worth a leaf of Indian corn.  
 But if he is tried,

And put into this crucible,  
 In a library full of books he playeth the ass

*Fab.* How foolish it is to be overmuch presumptuous ;  
 And a clever sage used once to say :  
 'He who believeth himself most clever  
 Is the most ignorant.'

*Jac.* And now for alchemy, and the alchemist :  
 He holdeth himself to be a happy man,  
 And is always cheerful,  
 And in twenty or thirty years hence  
 Promiseth thee great doings,  
 And relateth marvellous things :  
 Of a new drug he hath distilled ;  
 Of his great hope of having riches.  
 But put him into this crucible,  
 And thou wilt see, that after squandering all  
 He perceiveth how sophistical is that art ;  
 He findeth how blind, and filthy,  
 And full of smoke he hath been,  
 To lay all his best hopes  
 On a scaffold of brittle glass,  
 And to put all thoughts and designs  
 Amongst the smoke.  
 And whilst he fanneth lustily  
 The flames with words, meanwhile  
 Replenisheth the longing and desire



Of him who waiteth for what never comes.  
 He seeketh after secrets,  
 And all the folk believe him mad;  
 And trying to find the first matter  
 Loseth his own form.  
 He believeth he is going to multiply his gold,  
 And he diminisheth whatsoever he possesseth;  
 He thinketh the sick metals he will heal,  
 And he instead is sent to the hospital;  
 And instead of hardening  
 Quick-silver, so that he may coin and spend it,  
 His own life thus fatigued he melteth down;  
 And whilst believing he'll transmute  
 Into fine gold all baser metal,  
 He but transmuteth himself from a man to an ass.

*Fab.* Doubtless 'tis madness

To enter on such enterprise: I have seen  
 An hundred houses in this way thrown down,  
 And none ever built.  
 But having great hopes, he evermore despaireth,  
 Is sad at heart, and hungry stomach beareth.

*Jac.* And now tell me, dost thou want more for a  
 penny?

*Fab.* I stand here open-mouthed to hear thy say.

*Jac.* And I could still continue even to roses.

*Fab.* Then do so, whilst the mood is on thee still.

*Jac.* Yes, so I would, if my soul was not departing  
 For want of food, as my meal-time is past:  
 Therefore let us be going,  
 And come thou to my shop  
 If so it please thee,  
 And thus we'll something find for our teeth to grind,  
 For food's ne'er wanting in a beggar's home.

The words of this eclogue were companied by such graceful gestures, and with such ludicrous grimaces, that all hearers perforce must needs show their teeth: and because the crickets called the folk to take their rest, therefore Prince Thaddeus took leave of all the women, and bade them depart and return on the following morning to continue the enterprise: and then he and the slave retired to their own chambers.

END OF THE FIRST DAY.

SECOND DAY OF THE  
DIVERSION FOR THE LITTLE ONES.

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THE dawn arose and came forth to anoint the wheels of the sun's chariot ; and the fatigue endured by her in turning the grease with her mace in the stock of the wheel had reddened her cheeks like unto a sweet apple. And Prince Thaddeus, leaving his bed, after stretching himself and gaping called the slave, and dressing in the twinkling of an eye, both descended to the garden, where they found the ten women assembled. And bidding them each gather a few fresh figs, which looked so inviting, and with their ragged coats and their long necks, and their glistening tears (like unto a prostitute's) made the spittle gather into the mouth, they played a thousand games to pass the time till the dinner hour, and they left none of the games untouched : they played 'Here is Nicholas ;' 'The Wheel of Kicks ;' 'Look to thy Wife ;' 'The Knight ;' 'O my Companion, I am Wounded ;' 'By Edict and Commandment ;' and 'Welcome, O my Master ;' and 'Rentinola, my Rentinola ;' 'Jump over this Cask ;' 'Jump a Foot ;' 'Stone on Lap ;' 'O thou Fish of the Sea ;' 'O thou Angel, and Anola ;' 'The King Thrasher ;' 'The Blind Cat ;' and 'Lamp to Lamp ;' and 'Stretch the

Curtain ;' and 'Drum and Fife ;' 'I find no Room ;' 'A Long Beam ;' 'The Little Chicks ;' 'The Old Man is Come ;' 'Unload the Barrel ;' and 'Mammara and Hazel-nut ;' and 'The Exile ;' and 'Take out this Dart ;' and 'Come come ;' 'Hold the Needle and Thread ;' 'Sweet Bird, Sweet Bird ;' and 'Iron Handle ;' 'The Greek and Vinegar ;' and 'Open the Door to a Poor Hawk.'

But when the meal time came, they took their seats round the table, and after they had eaten their sufficiency, the prince told Zeza, that she should bear herself as a clever woman should and begin her story ; and Zeza, who had so many tales in her head that they overflowed, asking them to listen to her story, chose the one which I am going to relate.

## PETROSINELLA.

### FIRST DIVERSION

#### Of the Second Day.

A woman with child eateth some parsley out of the garden of a ghula, and being caught whilst so doing, promiseth the ghula the child to whom she should give birth. She giveth birth to Petrosinella ; the ghula taketh the child, and shutteth her up in a tower. A prince stealeth her away, and by the virtue of three acorns both escape the perils set them by the ghula, and being taken home by her lover, she becometh a princess.

**M**Y desire to please the princess and to maintain her in good humour hath kept me awake all the night. When all other folk were fast asleep and no foot-step was heard, I did naught else but turn in the old pockets of my brain, and search in all the corners of my memory, choosing those things, that that good soul of Madame Chiarella Usciollo, grandmother of my uncle (may God have her in His glory), used to relate : an ye be all in health, I will tell to you, of these tales, one each day, whichever seems to me more à propos ; and of these ye will remain well satisfied. If I have not turned mine eyes the wrong way, I imagine that ye will be all pleased with them ; or if they will not be pleasing enough to chase the annoyance and gloom out of your minds, at least they will be as trumpets to excite these my companions to come into the field with more power than my poor strength doth allow,

and to supplement with the abundance of their wit the deficiency of these my words :

Once upon a time there lived a woman who was with child, Pascaddozia hight. Looking out of a window into a garden belonging to a ghula, she sighted a pretty bed of parsley, and she longed for some, and her longing increased so much that she felt faint, and could not withstand the temptation to go and gather some, and watching till the ghula went out, she descended to the garden and gathered a handful.

The ghula, returning home, and wanting some parsley for some sauce, discovered that some had been stolen and cried, 'Whosoever hath taken it, I hope to break his neck. If I once catch him and put these hooks upon him, I will make him repent of the deed, for an example to others, so that they shall know how to eat at their own fireside, and not put their spoons in other folk's pots.'

Pascaddozia, continuing her despoiling, was at last caught in the act by the ghula, who in sighting her became wroth with exceeding wrath, and cried 'I have caught thee, thou thief, thou robber. Thou must pay me for the theft thou hast committed in my garden, as thou hast come to steal my sweet herbs and hast used so little discretion in taking them. Doubt not, but that I will take thee to Rome to do penance.'

Pascaddozia, frightened and ashamed, began to excuse herself, saying that it had not been taken to satisfy her greed. Satan had blinded her, and she had stolen it because she was with child, and feared that the child's face would come covered all over with parsley if she did not satisfy her longing; and she begged the ghula to forgive her, and trusted that she would not punish her by sending her something evil. Answered the ghula, 'Words are fit

for brides, thou shalt not fish me up with all this prattling : thou hast put an end to thy life's thread, if thou promise not to give me the child that thou wilt bring forth, either male or female.' The unhappy Pascaddozia, to escape the peril in which she was, sware, laying hand upon hand, to do the ghula's bidding, and the latter let her go unhurt.

When the time came of child-bed, she brought forth a beauteous woman-child, like unto a gem, with a face like the moon in her fourteenth night. But on her breast was wrought a bunch of parsley, whereupon her mother had her named Petrosinella. Day by day she grew, and when she was seven years old, Pascaddozia sent her to school, and every time she went her ways, she was met by the ghula, who kept saying to her, 'Tell thy mother to remember her promise'; and so often did she recite these words to the child, that the wretched mother, being tired of hearing this music repeated, and having lost her wits with fear, said to the child, 'If thou shouldst meet the old woman, and she again ask of thee that accursed promise, answer thou, "Take it."'

Petrosinella, who was not possessed of too much wit, soon met the ghula, who asked her the same question, and she answered innocently in the words her mother had bade her say. Then the ghula, seizing her by the hair of her head, carried her into the forest, where Phœbus' horses never entered, desiring not to graze in that dreary darkness. And the ghula put her in a tower, which arose by means of magic. And the tower was without doors or stairs, and possessed only a small window, by which the ghula came and went, using Petrosinella's hair, which was very long, as a ladder; and she mounted and descended as a sailor-boy mounts and descends from the masts to the sails.

Now it so chanced one day of the days that the ghula having gone out of the tower, Petrosinella put her head out of that small window, and let her tresses hang out in the sun. Whilst she was in this plight, passed that way a prince's son, and beholding those two golden standards, calling to arms to enrol himself under the banner of love, and sighting between those precious waves the face of a mermaid, which charmed all hearts and took his own by storm with her grace and beauty, he sent her a petition of a thousand sighs, and it was thus decreed that the fortress should be taken and be at his mercy. And the merchandise had good success, and the prince had in return bowing of head, hand-kissing, languishing glances, thanks and offers, hopes and promises, good words and salutes: which continued for some days and they became so used to each other, that they made appointments together, but only when the moon plays with the stars. And Petrosinella would give the ghula somewhat to make her sleep, and then would hang her tresses out of window for her lover to climb up; and thus they combined together, and then came the hour when the prince stood beneath the tower window, and Petrosinella lowered her tresses, and he caught hold of them with both hands, saying, 'Lift up.' Jumping in from the window into the room, he sated his desire, and ate of that sweet parsley sauce of love, and before the sun brought forth his horses to jump over the zodiac, he descended by the same golden ladder to his affairs.

So this continued for some time, until at last a gossip of the ghula sighted them, and taking the matter in Russian fashion, would put her nose in the excrement, and persuaded the ghula that she must be watchful, as Petrosinella was making love with a certain youth, and

she suspected that they might go a step forward; because she could see the traffic, and the mosquito flying about; and misdoubted but that they might take flight before May from that house. The ghula thanked the gossip for her good advice, and said that it would be her care to stop the way; and Petrosinella, who kept her ears open, having suspected something wrong, heard her say, 'It is impossible for Petrosinella to escape, as I have charmed her, unless she taketh in her hands the acorns which are hid in the rafter in the kitchen.' When night darkened and starkered, the prince came as usual to his meeting place, and Petrosinella put down her tresses, and he came up, and she told him what had happened, and he searched the beams till he found the acorns, and knowing how to use them, and how she had been charmed by the ghula, he made a ladder with some rope, and both descended, and lifted their heels towards the city. But they were seen by the ghula's gossip, who began howling and screeching until the ghula woke up; and when she heard that Petrosinella had run away, she went down by the same ladder by which the lovers had gone, and set to running after them. When they saw her coming like a wild horse, they thought they were lost; but Petrosinella remembered the acorns, and threw one to the ground, and at once a large dog rose up, terrible of aspect, with mouth open, and barking furiously. And O dear mother, how frightful it was! And the dog flew at the ghula, meaning to make a mouthful of her: but the witch, who was more knowing than the devil, putting her hand in her pocket, drew out a loaf, and threw it to the dog, who put down his tail, and abated his fury; and she began to chase the lovers once more. Petrosinella, who beheld her coming, threw down the second acorn, and behold! a lion,

lashing his tail furiously, and shaking his mane, opened his mouth, and got himself ready to make a good meal of the ghula. But the ghula went back and flayed an ass, that was grazing in a field, and putting on his hide, she returned to the lion, who believing her to be a donkey, was frightened so much that he flieth yet.

Therefore having surmounted this second pit, the ghula once more pursued the two lovers, and when they heard her footsteps, and sighted the dust-cloud, which rose to the sky, they supposed that the ghula was once more on their scent, whilst she thinking that the lion still followed her, had not taken off her ass's hide. And Petrosinella having thrown down the third acorn, a wolf sprang up, who not allowing the ghula to take a new measure of defence, ate her up for an ass, and the lovers thus being saved from further trouble, fared onward very slowly to the prince's realm, where with his father's leave he took Petrosinella to wife. And peace and joy followed, and thus they were happy after so many storms and travails: as saith truly the old saw,

'An hour of happiness in safe harbour  
Maketh us forget an hundred years of ill-fortune.'

## VERDE PRATO.

### SECOND DIVERSION

#### Of the Second Day.

Nella is beloved of a prince, who goeth to take joyance with her, passing through a viaduct of crystal. This passage being broken by envious sisters, he is wounded sorely, and cometh nigh unto death. Nella by a strange adventure obtaineth a remedy and applying it to the sick prince, he recovereth, and she thus becometh his wife.

WITH great zest all listened to Zeza's story, and had it lasted another hour they would have been the better pleased. And it being Cecca's turn to say her say, she began to relate what follows:

It is a great thing to make up accounts in all ways, because with the same wood whereof statues and idols are hewn the beams of the gallows are fashioned, and chairs fit for an emperor, and lids for night-commodes. And yet stranger it seems that from a picce of rag paper is made, that may be used for lovers' letters, which are kissed by beautiful women, or as behind-wipers by country boors; these are things which would cause you and the best astrologer in the world to lose your wits. And the same can be said of a mother who giveth birth to two daughters, the one good, and the other the ruin of her house; one lazy, and the other diligent; one beautiful,

and the other hideous; one envious, and the other loving; one chaste, the other unchaste; one with luck, and the other with ill-luck: whereas by reason of their being of the same flesh and blood, both ought to be of the same nature. But let us leave this talk for others that know more of it, and I will bring you an example of that of which I have spoken, in three daughters of the same mother, in whom you will perceive the difference in customs, and manners, and thoughts, which brought the wicked into the pit, and the good upon the wheel of fortune.

Once upon a time there lived a mother who had three daughters, two of whom were so unfortunate that nothing ever came right to them: all that they tried was unsuccessful, and their hopes were blasted and came to naught. But the youngest, Nella hight, brought from her mother's womb good fortune; and I believe that when she was born, things concerted to give her the best of all that they could: the heavens dowered her with their light; Venus with her beauty; love with all his strength; nature with the flower of good manners. She never did a service, but that it came to good ending; never undertook an enterprise, but it was well done; never danced, but every one praised the grace of her movements; and came forth with honour in her every undertaking.

For this reason she was bitterly envied by her own sisters, and beloved of all those that knew her; and the sisters would have liked to see her underground, whilst other folk carried her on the palm of their hands. Now in that country there was a prince who was charmed, and this prince, beholding this sea of beauty, threw forth the bait of the slavery of love, till he caught her and made her his own. And so that they might joy together without the knowledge of the mother, who was of a stern

and severe nature, the prince gave her some powder, which built a crystal viaduct from the royal palace to underneath Nella's bed, though it was eight miles distant, saying, 'Every time that thou desirest to feed me as a bird with thy sweet grace, put a pinch of this powder in the fire, and I will at once come through the passage of crystal to enjoy thy dear silvern face.' And having thus agreed, the prince never missed one night to come and go, to enter and go forth through that passage: and the sisters, who were ever on watch to see their sister's doings, observed what took place, and they held counsel together to make her lose such good morsel; and desiring to wreak their wrath upon their love, they brake the passage through and through. And that wretched child throwing the powder into the fire as a signal to the prince that he might come, he, whose fashion it was to come running stark naked, was wounded sorely by the broken glass, so that it caused great distress to see him; and as it was impossible for him to go forward, he retired to his palace all cuts and wounds like a German reiter, and went to bed, and sent for all the doctors and physicians in the city. But as the crystal was charmed, the wounds were mortal, and there was no human remedy that could avail. The king his father, perceiving that his case was desperate, sent the crier to proclaim an edict that whoso could in any way ease the sufferings of the prince and heal him, if a woman, he would marry her to him, if a man, he would give him the half of his realm.

Now Nella, who heard this edict, and was dying with love and sorrow for the prince, bethought herself to try what she could do, and dyeing her face and hands, and disguising herself unbeknown to her sisters, she left the house, thinking that at least she might see him before his

death. But as it was the time when the sun's golden balls, with which he plays in the fields of heaven, took their way towards the west, and night darkened and starkered, Nella found herself in a forest near the house of a ghul, where being afraid, and desiring to eschew any danger, she clomb upon a tree.

Now the ghul and his wife were sitting at table, and the windows were open, so that they could enjoy the fresh air whilst they were eating. When they had ended and were satisfied, they began chatting of little and much, and being so very near that place, like as from nose to mouth, Nella could hear what they said; and amongst other things she heard the ghula say to her husband, 'O my hairy beauty, what hast thou heard? What do the folk say in the world?'

And answered he, 'Thou mayest suppose that there is not a foot of ground clean, and everything is going topsyturvy and crookedly.'

Rejoined the ghula, 'But what is there?'

And the ghul replied, 'There would be great deal to say about all the perplexities, and sayings, and doings which take place. There are matters which when heard would make one jump out of his clothes, jesters prized and regaled, rogues held in high esteem, assassins supported, poltroons honoured, false coiners defended, and good honourable men valued very little, and esteemed less. But as these are matters which annoy one greatly, I will tell thee only what hath happened to the king's son. He had built a crystal passage from his palace to the house of a beauteous girl whom he loved, and he used to go and enjoy her through it, and to depart from the palace stark naked; and I know not how it occurred, but in making his way through this passage, he hath been sorely

wounded, and before he will be able to heal so many holes, he will lose his life. And the king, who loveth him dearly, hath sent an edict, promising great things to whoso will heal his son; but 'tis all time lost, he may cleanse his teeth of it; and the best thing he can do is to get ready the mourning, and prepare the obsequies.' Nella hearing these words, and thus understanding what was the cause of the prince's illness, wept with bitter weeping, and said in her mind, 'What accursed being hath done this deed? Who hath broken the passage wherein flew my sweet bird, so that mine own spirit may take flight?' But the ghula spake again, and Nella kept silence and listened, and she heard her say, 'And is it possible, that the world is lost for this poor young lord? And can no remedy be found for his sickness? Then thou mayest tell the mediciners that they may go and bake themselves; and the physicians to hang themselves; tell Galen and Mesué to return the money to the master, as they cannot find a recipe to heal the prince.'

Answered the ghul, 'Listen to me, O my dearling, the doctors are not obliged to find remedies passing the confines of nature. 'Tis not a cholick, that an oil-bath would cure; 'tis not a fart, that thou canst chase it with figs, and fingers, and mice's excrement; 'tis not a fever, that will go by taking medicine and diet; nor are they ordinary wounds, that with rags and hypericon-oil may be healed: because the charm which was on the broken glass has that effect that an onion-juice hath upon iron, by which the wound is becoming incurable: only one thing would do him good and would save his life; but ask me not to tell thee, as 'tis something I care for.'

Replied the ghula, 'Tell me, O my love, tell me, or I shall die.'



And the ghul rejoined, 'I will tell thee, but thou must promise never to reveal it to any one living: because it would be the extinction of our house, and the ruin of our life.'

Answered the ghula, 'Doubt not, O sweet my husband, O beauty, thou shalt sooner see pigs with horns, and apes with tails, and a mole with eyes, than hear one single word out of my lips.'

And swearing an oath, laying one hand upon the other, the ghul said to her, 'Now thou must know that there is naught upon the face of the earth nor in the heavens that can save the prince from death, but by anointing the wounds with our own fat: that would detain the soul, and hinder it from taking flight, and prevent it from forsaking its home, the body.'

Nella, hearing all this talk, gave time to time, so that they should end their chatting; and coming down the tree, heartened her heart, and knocked at the ghul's door, crying, 'O my lord and lady, be charitable, give me an alms, show a token of mercy, have a little compassion upon a wretched creature, an exile, a miserable being banished and badly used by fortune, far from her country, deprived of all human help: night hath surprised her in this dark forest, and she is dying with hunger.' And she continued knocking. The ghula, hearing the words and the continual tapping, was going to throw her half a loaf out of the window, but the ghul, who was a glutton of human flesh, more than the parrot is of nuts, and the bear of doing evil, and the cat of fishes, and the sheep of salt, and the ass of bran, said to his wife, 'Let her come in, poor thing: if she should sleep outside in the forest some wolf might hurt her'; and he said and argued so much, that his wife opened the door

at last; and he, with his hairy charity, meant to make four mouthfuls of her.

But one thing thinketh the glutton, and another account maketh the innkeeper; because after having eaten his sufficiency of the supper they had before them, he drank so much that he fell down drunk; and Nella seeing them both fast asleep, took a knife from a cupboard and slaughtered the ghul, and putting the fat in a pot, fared forth on her way to the court and the king's palace. Straightway she demanded to be led to the presence, and when before the king she offered to heal the prince, the king answered her, 'With joy and good pleasure will I take thee to him,' and at once led her in to his son's chamber. And when she came to the prince's bedside she pulled forth the pot, and anointed the wounds with the grease; and it was no sooner done, than just as if she had thrown water upon the fire, the wounds closed themselves, and he was healed. Which wondrous healing was sighted by the king who, turning to his son, spake thus to him, 'This good lady deserveth well the guerdon promised by the edict, and thou shouldst take her to wife.' The prince hearing these words said, 'Tell her to take somewhat else, as I have not in my body a warehouse of hearts, that I may give out to divers folk; mine is already bespoken by another woman and she is mistress of it.' Nella, hearing these words, replied, 'Thou shouldst not remember this woman, who was the cause of all thy misfortune.' Said the prince, 'The evil was done me by her sisters, and they shall pay the forfeit.' Nella rejoined, 'Dost thou love her so well?' and the prince answered, 'More than my life.' 'If this be true,' added Nella, 'embrace me, clasp me to thy breast, as I know the fire of this heart'; but the prince

beholding her with such blackened face, answered, 'More likely thou shalt be coals, than fire; therefore stand back, or else thou'lt soil me.' But Nella, perceiving he knew her not, asked for a basin of cold water, and she washed her face, and out of the clouds came forth the sun, and the prince knew her, and clasped her to his breast, and with great pomp, and festivities, and joy, and enjoyance took her to wife. Then he ordered a fireplace to be built, and the envious sisters to be burnt therein: so that like unto leeches they should purge their blood in the cinders of their wickedness and envy, thus making come true the proverb, that sayeth,

'No evil deed was ever left unpunished.'

## VIOLA.

### THIRD DIVERSION

#### Of the Second Day.

Viola is envied by her sisters, and after a great many tricks played to and received from a prince in spite of them, becometh his wife.

THE preceding story was heard with great satisfaction, and the hearers blessed the prince who had thus punished the sisters of Nella, and praised a thousand times the great love of the young girl, who passed such peril in endeavouring to get the salve to anoint the prince's wounds; till Prince Thaddeus, having made a sign that they should all be silent, commanded Meneca to proceed with her say, and she paid her debt, beginning thus:

Envy is a rushing wind which, bloweth with such force that it knocketh down the props which sustain the glory of a good man, and scattereth to the winds the seed of his good fortunes. But often Heaven's just punishment reacheth those whose words are this scathing wind that trieth to throw the good with face upon the ground, but instead is the cause of their reaching to unexpected felicity: as ye will perceive in this story that I am going to relate.

Once upon a time there lived a man upright and just, Col' Aniello hight, and he was blessed with three daughters, Rosa, Garofana, and Viola: and the youngest of these was

very beautiful. She was like syrup which purged the heart from all its cark and care. And Ciullone, the king's son, burned with a burning fire for the love of her, and every time that he passed that way and glanced where the three sisters sat at work together, he would lift his cap, and say courteously, 'Good morrow, good morrow, sweet Viola,' and she would answer, 'Good morrow, O our king's son, I am working more than thou.' And the other sisters were sore envious, and murmured with each other, and said to her, 'Thou art rude, and thou wilt anger the prince'; but Viola noticed not her sisters' words, rather putting them behind her.

Now her sisters, to spite Viola, went to their father, and told him that she was a bold and brazen-faced hussy, who answered pertly to the prince, just as if he were her equal, and one of these days she would be punished, and the just would suffer for the guilty. Col' Aniello, being a wise and good man, sent Viola to stay at the house of her aunt, Cuccemannella hight, bidding her to set his daughter some work to do. Meanwhile the prince tarried every day before the house of his dove, and seeing naught of his heart's desire, passed the days as a nightingale who hath lost her little ones' nest, flying from bough to bough, wofully lamenting. And he pried, and listened, and watched, and looked through keyholes, till at last he knew where they had sent her, and he journeyed to the aunt, and when he reached her house he said to her, 'Dear madam, thou knowest who I am, and if I can do somewhat, and if I am worth somewhat; and all must be between me and thee, and thou must be silent and dumb; thou must do me a favour, and then thou mayest ask of me as much money as thou wilt.' Answered the old woman, 'In all that I can, I am at thy service, command

thou me and I will obey'; and the prince, 'I want naught of thee, but only that thou allow me once to kiss sweet Viola, and thou mayest take this money.' And replied the old woman, 'So that I may be of service to thee, I can do naught else than hold the clothes for the bathers: but I may not allow that her innocence be defiled, or the pitcher's handle be broken, or that I hold hand to this infamy, so that my old age be disgraced; nor will I hold the title of the apprentice of a smith who worketh the bellows; but whatever I can do to please thee I will do. Go and hide thyself in the chimney of the little summer-house in the garden, where with some excuse I will send Viola, and as thou wilt hend in hand the cloth and the scissors, if thou do not know how to use of it the fault will be thine.'

The prince, hearing her rede, without any loss of time hid himself in the summer-house, and the old woman pretending that she wanted to cut out some cloth, said to her niece, 'O Viola, go, an thou lovest me, to the garden summer-house, and bring the measure;' and Viola entering the room to obey her aunt's desire, perceived the ambush, and quick as a cat jumped out of the room, leaving the prince heart-sore, and with a lengthened nose for very shame. And the old woman, when she saw Viola coming in such haste, suspected that the prince's ruse had not succeeded, and a little while after said to the girl, 'Go, O my niece, to the summer-house, and bring that ball of thread that thou wilt find upon the table;' and Viola ran to do her aunt's bidding, and slipped like an eel from the prince's grasp. But in a little while the old woman again said to her, 'My sweet Viola, if thou do not go and fetch me the scissors, I shall be ruined;' and Viola went down for the third time, but being quick

as a dog, escaped again, and going upstairs, cut her aunt's ears with the same scissors she had brought, saying, 'Here is a good gift to thee for thy romancing : every kind of work hath its reward : a sliding of honour bringeth a loss of ears. I have a mind to cut off thy nose also, but that thou wouldst smell not the stink of thine own bad fame. Thou bawd, pimp, chickens-carrier, thou canst eat : eat an thou canst, corruption of children.' And leaving her in bad plight, in three minutes was at her own house, leaving her aunt without ears, and the prince full of cark and care.

In a day or two he once more began walking in front of her father's house, and beholding her seated in the same place where she used to work, he began to address her as before, 'Good morrow, good morrow, sweet Viola,' and she at once like a good deacon answered, 'Good morrow, O our king's son, I know more than thou ;' but the sisters could not bear to hear this music, and desiring to get rid of her, they confabulated together how they should best accomplish their purpose ; and they bethought themselves of a window in their house which overlooked upon a ghul's garden, and they agreed one with the other that this would be the best means to rid themselves of this hated sister. Therefore, dropping a skein of silk out of this window, with which they were working a piece of tapestry for the queen, they cried out, 'O woe unto us, we are ruined, we will not be able to finish the work in time, if Viola will not help us ; she is the youngest and lightest of us, and if she will let us tie a rope round her waist and lower her down, she will be able to pick up the silk.' And Viola, not desiring to see them so sorrowful, offered to descend, and they tied a rope round her, and lowered her down, and then let go the rope.

At the same time entered the ghul for a view of the

garden, and the ground being damp he had taken a bad cold and sneezed, and in sneezing he let go a fart, so powerful and strong that it sounded like thunder, and Viola, hearing it, screamed with fright, 'O mother mine, help me!' And the ghul, hearing the scream, turned round, and beheld the beauteous child behind him, and remembering that once he had heard a clever student say that the Spanish mares became with foal by the wind, bethought himself that maybe the wind of his fart had filled a tree and out of it had come this beautiful child : therefore embracing her with great love he said to her, 'O my daughter, part of this my body, breath of my breath, soul of my soul, who could have told me that a fart could have given life to such a beauteous creature ? who could have told me that an effect of a cold would have brought forth such fire of love ?' And saying these words, and others of more tender import, he led her to his palace, where he consigned her to three fairies, and bade them take care of her, and entreat her kindly, and give her the best of all things. Such was her case. But the prince who could see nothing of his love, and could hear naught concerning her, neither new nor old, was sorely stricken, and his eyes were swollen for so much weeping, and his face was discoloured, and his lips were whitened, and he could take no food, and his sleep was lost, and he could find no peace. And he searched everywhere, and promised rewards, and sent many of his followers in quest of her, until at last it came to his ears where she dwelt, and sending for the ghul, he said to him, 'I am very ill, as thou canst perceive, and I would ask of thy favour to allow me to dwell for one single day and night in thy garden, as in this chamber I feel suffocating, and I should like to come there to cheer my spirit.' The ghul, being a good

liege unto the king, could not deny the prince so small a favour, and offered him the use of all his palace if one room did not suffice, and said he would lay down his life in his service. The prince thanked him, and was at once conducted to the ghul's palace, and a chamber was assigned to him next to the ghul's, where Viola slept in the same bed with him. And when night came forth to play with the stars the game of drawing the curtain, the prince finding the door of the ghul's chamber open, it being summer and the heat very excessive, and the ghul liking to have the fresh air, feeling he was in a safe place he entered very quietly therein, and going to the side where Viola slept, he gave her two pinches, and she woke up in affright and cried out, 'O papa, we are full of fleas : ' and the ghul at once changed place with his daughter, and sent her into another bed, and when once more she slept, the prince did the same as before. And Viola cried in the same way, and the ghul bade the servants change her bed-linen and her mattress, and all the night was spent in this traffic, till with the dawn, the sun finding himself alive came forth, and the sky shook off its mourning garment. But as soon as it was day, the prince walked about in the palace and gardens, and saw Viola standing at the gate, and said to her as usual, 'Good morrow, good morrow, sweet Viola ; ' and she replied, 'Good morrow, O our king's son, I am working more than thou ; ' and answered the prince, 'O papa, we are full of fleas.'

As soon as Viola heard these words, she understood that all the upset of the night had been a trick played her by the prince, yet she said naught to him, but went to pay a visit to the fairies, and told them what had come to pass. Said the fairies, 'If he hath done this, we will treat him as a corsair treateth a corsair, and a sailor a galley-

slave ; and if this dog hath bitten thee, we will try to get his fur ; he hath played thee a trick, and we will play him a trick and a half : tell the ghul to make thee a pair of slippers covered with tiny bells, and after leave all to us, as we will pay him in good coin.' Viola, desirous of avenging herself, told the ghul at once to get her these slippers, and awaiting until the heavens, like unto a Genoese woman, apparelled themselves with a black veil upon their face, all four made their way to the prince's palace, where Viola with the fairies entered unseen into his chamber. And as soon as the prince tried to sleep, the fairies made a great noise, and Viola stamped with her feet, and the noise of her heels upon the floor, and the tiny bells ringing, awakened the prince, and he started up in affright, and cried out, 'O mother mine, help me ! ' and the same was done three times, whereafter Viola and the fairies retired to their home.

Now in the morning the prince was obliged to take lemonade and other drinks to allay his fright, but as usual he made his morning walk, and beholding Viola standing at the gate, since he could not live without a sight of that Viola who so greatly excited his flesh, he said, 'Good morrow, good morrow, sweet Viola ; ' and Viola replied, 'Good morrow, O king's son, I am doing more than thou ; ' and the prince said, 'O papa, how full of fleas we are ; ' and she rejoined, 'O mother mine, help me ! ' and the prince hearing these words, said, 'Thou hast played me a good trick, thou hast won, I give in, and seeing that in reality thou knowest more than I I will have thee for my wife ; ' therefore, sending for the ghul, he asked him to give her to him in marriage. The ghul, not desiring to put his hand on other people's property, as in the morning it had come to his knowledge,

that Viola was the daughter of Col' Aniello, and that his back eye had been deceived to think that this sweetly scented being could be the offspring of a stinking wind, sent for her father, and telling him of her good fortune, with great feasting and enjoyment the prince took Viola to wife, and thus came the proverb true that

'A beauteous girl is married even in the market-place.'

## GAGLIUSO.

## FOURTH DIVERSION

## Of the Second Day.

Gagliuso, having been abandoned by his father, by a cat's industry becometh rich; but showing himself insensible thereof, is reproached with his ingratitude.

ALL hearers were delighted to know of the good fortune of Viola, who by her own hands had thus built a high position in spite of the envy of her sisters, who were foes to their own flesh and blood, and had tried in so many ways to bring her to grief; but it was time that Paola should begin her story, paying from her lips the golden coins of good words, and thus she discharged her debt:

Ingratitude is a rusty nail, which, nailed to the bark of a tree, causeth the tree to wither and die; 'tis a broken sink, which soaketh up all troubles and afflictions; 'tis a spider's web, which falling in the pot of friendship, maketh it lose its scent and flavour, as is seen daily, and as ye will hear in this story which I will relate. There once lived in the city of Naples a miserly old man, thin, and tall, and ragged, and tattered, and withered, and wrinkled, so that he went about as nearly naked as a flea. And as he had reached the time when the sacks of life are shaken,

he called to his side Oraziello and Pippo his two sons, and said to them, 'I have been sent for to pay the debt that we all owe to Nature, and believe me, O my sons, that I would feel most happy to exit from this world of trouble, this hovel of travail, but for the thought that I leave you, grown tall and strong as Santa Clara and the five roads of Melito, without a single coat to your backs, like a barber's basin; sharp as a drilling sergeant, and dry as a plum-stone; ye are worth not even as much as a fly would carry tied at its foot; an if ye were to run a hundred miles, ye would not drop a mite: and all this because my ill-luck brought me all my life where the curs shit; but as thou beholdest, thus thou mayst paint me, and as ye know, I have done many things; and many times I have crossed me, and have gone to bed without cinnamon to my wine; but notwithstanding all this, I desire to leave ye somewhat at my death in sign of my love, therefore, thou Oraziello, who art my first born, take that sieve which thou seest hanging upon the wall, with which thou mayest gain the wherewithal to keep life in thee; and thou Pippo, who art the youngest, take thou the cat, and may both of ye remember your father.' And thus having ended his say, he wept with bitter weeping, and his sons wept with him, and straightway he spake again, and said, 'Adieu, 'tis night,' and died.

Now after Oraziello had had him laid out and buried for charity, he took the sieve, and went about sifting to gain a livelihood: and the more he sifted the more he gained. Pippo, taking the cat with him, said, 'Now behold, what heritage hath my father left me? I have naught to eat for myself, and I will have to think for two. What an heritage is mine! who ever heard of such a gift? Far better had he left me nothing.' But the cat,

hearing this repining, said to him, 'Thy lamenting is needless, for thou art the most fortunate: but thou knowest not thine own good fortune, and I shall enrich thee, an I begin my doings.' Pippo, hearing this, thanked the cat, and smoothing her upon the back three or four times, recommended himself to her charge; and the cat, feeling great compassion for the sad hearted Gagliuso,\* every morning when the sun with his bait of light and gold fisheth the shadows of the night, made her way to the sea-shore at Chiaja, and watching for an opportunity of catching a large gold-fish, she would take it and carry it to the king, saying, 'My lord Gagliuso, a slave of your highness and a loyal liege, sendeth this fish with his humble greetings, saying, "To a great lord small is the gift."' The king, with a smiling countenance, which he generally wears to those who bring him presents, answered the cat, 'Say to this lord, whom I know not, that I thank him.' Another time the cat would run to some marshy ground where the hunters had let fall some pheasants, or wild ducks, or partridges, when she would lift them up, and take them to the king with the same embassy, and for many a day she continued so doing, till one morning the king said to her, 'I feel myself under deep obligation to this thy lord Gagliuso, and I should like to make his acquaintance, so that I may thank him for his offerings, and give him proof of my gratitude, and do somewhat for him in exchange.' Answered the cat 'Tis the desire of my lord Gagliuso to lay down his life for the weal of thy realm and thy crown, and to-morrow morning unfailingly, when the sun shall have set fire to the ricks of straw in the fields, he will stand before thee to do obeisance.'

Now when the morning came, puss came to the king,

\* Youngster.

and said, 'O my lord, the lord Gagliuso sendeth thee greetings, and wouldst thou excuse him for not coming this morning, as last night some of his varlets took to their heels, carrying with them all my master's wardrobe, and have left him without even a shirt to his back.' The king hearing this, sent to his master of the robes, and ordered that he should forward at once some of his own raiments for the lord Gagliuso.

In two hours' time Gagliuso came to the palace, guided by the cat, and when he stood in the royal presence, the king thanked and complimented him, and made him sit by his side, and then led him to the banquet-hall, where the tables were spread with dainties, and whilst they ate, Gagliuso turned round, and said to the cat, 'O pussy mine, I pray thee watch over those few rags, that they should not go a bad way;' and the cat replied, 'Be silent, hold thy tongue, and speak not of these beggarly objects;' and the king desiring to know what he wanted, the cat answered that he longed for a small lemon; and the king sent at once to the garden to fetch a basketful. Shortly after Gagliuso returned to the same music about his tatters, and the cat bade him again to shut his mouth; and the king inquiring what he wanted, puss had ready another excuse to remedy the vileness and meanness of Gagliuso.

After they had ended eating, and had chatted upon divers subjects, Gagliuso begged leave to retire, and the cat remained with the king, describing to him the prowess, ability, and just judgment of Gagliuso, and above all his great riches, being master of estates near Rome, in the Campagna, and in Lombardy. Saying that he deserved to mate with a king's daughter: and the king inquired if such could be found: and the cat answered, that no account could be kept of the goods, and properties,

and houses, and estates of this very rich lord, as it was unknown how much he possessed. But if the king would send forth some of his officers to inquire beyond his kingdom they might have an idea of what he was worth, for no one was so rich as Gagliuso. The king at once sent for some of his most trusty followers, and bade them inquire concerning him, and they departed taking the cat with them as a guide, and she, excusing herself, saying that she would order some food, forewent them, and no sooner were they outside the kingdom than she ran forward. And as she met many flocks of sheep, and cows, and horses, and pigs, she would say to the shepherds and keepers, 'Ho there, keep your brains clear, as a company of robbers is scouring the country, and if ye desire to escape unscathed, and that respect should be shown to your homes and belongings, when they come nigh, say ye to them that all ye hold belongeth to the lord Gagliuso, and no harm shall befall ye.' And she continued so doing in all the farms whereto she came, so that wherever the king's messengers arrived they found a general accord of music, and all things fell into the same reply, that they belonged to the lord Gagliuso. Till being tired of asking more questions, they returned to the king, telling him wonders upon wonders of the great riches of this lord: and the king, hearing this, promised a good present to the cat, if she would manage to bring about this marriage; and the cat, pretending to go and come backwards and forwards, at last concluded the marriage; and Gagliuso came to court, and the king gave him a rich dowry with his daughter in marriage. After a month of high festivities and joy and enjoyment, Gagliuso told the king that he desired to take his bride to his estates, and the king



gave him leave, and accompanied him part of the way, and then bade them adieu. Gagliuso continued his journey to Lombardy, where by puss's advice he bought some lands and a palace, and at once became a baron.

Now Gagliuso, finding himself in so much opulence, thanked the cat with deepest gratitude, saying that he owed her his life, and his happiness, and his greatness, since more good had been wrought by the craft of a cat, than by the genius and wit of his father; therefore she could bid and forbid and do whatsoever she chose with his life and his goods; promising faithfully that even if she died in an hundred years, he would have her embalmed, and enclosed in a golden urn, and kept in his room, so as to have ever before his eyes the memory of all her benefits. The cat, hearing this boast, thought she would put it to the test, and three days after she pretended death, and lay stretched out at full length in the garden; and the wife of Gagliuso beholding this sight, cried, 'O mine husband, what a great misfortune hath happened, the cat is dead.' Answered Gagliuso, 'May every evil go with her, better she than ourselves;' and the wife, 'What shall we do with her?' and he, 'Take hold of one leg, and throw her out of the window.' The cat, hearing in what way his gratitude was to be shown when least she expected it, cried out, 'These are the thanks I get for the lice I have cleaned from thy neck? This is thy gratitude for ridding thee of thy rags? This is the reward for my spider-like industry in lifting thee up from the dust, beggar, breeches-tearer: thou wert in rags, and tattered, and torn, and full of lice, thou villain, thou scoundrel. Such is the reward of those that wash the ass's head, accursed be all the good I have done for thee, for thou dost not deserve even that I should spit

in thy throat: fine golden urn hadst thou prepared for me! beautiful grave, where thou hadst consigned me! Go and serve thou, work and sweat, to receive such fine reward. O wretched is he, that putteth the pot to the fire in hopes that another may fill it. Spake well that sage who said, "Whoso goes to bed an ass, an ass riseth again," and "Whoso doeth most expecteth least." But good words and bad deeds deceive the wise and the foolish.'

And saying thus, she jumped off and took to her heels; and although Gagliuso with sweet talk, and omelette in mouth, tried to smooth down her ruffled fur, all was to no purpose, puss would not come back, but running on without turning her head kept saying,

'God guard thee from the rich man who hath become poor,  
And from a beggarly clown enriched by fate.'

## THE SERPENT.

## FIFTH DIVERSION

## Of the Second Day.

The King of Starza-longa weddeth his daughter to a serpent, and discovering the same to be a handsome youth, he burneth his cast-off skin. The serpent, attempting to escape, breaketh a window-frame, and also his own head. The king's daughter, wishing to find means to heal the youth, leaveth her father's house, and being told by a fox with what remedy she might effect the cure, maliciously killeth the fox, and with the blood and the blood of divers birds anointeth the wounds of the youth, who becometh her husband, he being in reality a prince's son.

THE cat was compassionated beyond measure, seeing that she had received such unworthy recompense for her well-doing. But there were those who considered she might have found consolation in the thought that she was not alone; for in these days ingratitude hath become a domestic evil, and hath become quite a common disease, like the French sickness, and the horned evil. And there are many who have made and unmade and lost their fortune, and ruined their lives to serve an ungrateful race, and whilst they think of holding a golden cup in their hand, they find themselves decreed to die in the hospital. Meanwhile Popa had prepared herself to speak, and all present were silent, whilst she began as follows:

Whoso seeketh to know through curiosity other folk's

affairs usually droppeth the axe on his own feet: as can be instanced by the King of Starza-longa, who for putting his nose in whatso concerned him not, spoiled his daughter's happiness, and ruined his son-in-law; and attempting to break a head, remained with a broken head himself.

There lived a peasant-woman, who longed sorely to have a son, more than a litigant desireth to win his suit, and the sick a glass of water, and the innkeeper his gain. But no matter how much the husband delved all the night long, he could see no sign of her fertility. One day of the days he fared forth to the foot of a mountain to get a fagot of wood, and in bringing it home he discovered a pretty little serpent among the boughs. At this sight Sapatella (thus was the peasant's wife hight) drew a long sigh, and said, 'Even the serpents have their little ones, but I brought ill-luck with me to this world, I have an useless husband, that although he is a gardener, is not capable to engraft a single trec.' And the serpent answered to these words, 'As thou canst have no children, take me, and thou wilt do a good deed, and wilt find thyself contented, and I will love thee better than mine own mother.' Sapatella, hearing a serpent speak, was frightened with sore affright, but after a little while heartened her heart, and said, 'As thou dost desire it, for the loving words thou hast spoken to me, I am content to accept thee just as if thou wert born out of mine own knee;' and thus, taking the serpent home, she found a hole for him to go into, and fed him of whatsoever she possessed with the greatest affection, so that the serpent grew from day to day. And when he had grown large, he said to Cola-Matteo (thus was the gardener hight), whom he treated as his father, 'O my sire, I desire to be married.' Said Cola-Matteo, 'By thy leave, shall we find another serpent like thee, or shall we mate thee with some

other race?' Answered the serpent, 'What art thou saying? wouldest thou mate me with serpents, vipers, and others of this kind? go, thou art verily a foolish fellow, and thou makest of all herbs one bunch. 'Tis my desire to wed the king's daughter, and therefore go thou at once to the king's presence, and ask of him his daughter in marriage and tell him that a serpent desireth to make her his wife.' Cola-Matteo, who was a simpleton, and understood naught of these things, went straightway to the king and delivered his message, saying, 'An ambassador is not punished, else there would be many whose backs would be broken. Thou must know that a serpent desireth to wed thy daughter, therefore I was bidden to come, and try if we can engraft a serpent with a dove.' The king seeing that he had to deal with a simpleton, to get rid of him, replied, 'Go and say to this serpent that, if he will make all the fruit in my garden to become gold, I will give him my daughter in marriage.' And so saying, and laughing in his face, he bade him take his leave.

When Cola-Matteo went home and conveyed this answer to the serpent, he said, 'Go early to-morrow morning, and gather all the stones of fruit that thou wilt find in the city, and throw them about the park, and thou wilt behold pearls threaded in gold.' As soon as the sun with his golden besom swept the dust of the shadows of night from the fields watered by the dawn, Cola-Matteo did as he was bid, without asking questions or contradicting anything, and basket on arm, fared on from market-place to market-place, and gathered the stones of peaches, nectarines, cherries, plums, and whatever he found in the streets; and going to the king's park, sowed them as the serpent had directed him. In no time the trees sprang up, and boughs, leaves, buds, and fruit

were all sheening gold, at the sight of which the king marvelled with extreme marvel, and was glad with exceeding gladness. But when Cola-Matteo was sent by the serpent to the king to ask him the fulfilment of his promise, the king said, 'Do not go so fast, I must have another gift from thy master, if he desireth to take my daughter in marriage, and 'tis, that he buildeth all the walls, and the ground of the park, with gems and precious jewels.' And the gardener returned and told this to the serpent, and he said, 'Go to-morrow morning, and gather up all the broken bottles and platters and other earthen wares thou canst find, and throw them about in the paths and on the walls of the park, and thus we will reach the end of this lame intent.' And Cola-Matteo, as soon as the night, after protecting with her gloom all thieves and malefactors, went about gathering the fagots of the twilight of heaven, taking a large basket on his head, began to collect pieces of broken pots, and of ewers' handles, and lids of jugs, and bits of lanterns and of night chamber-pots, and slabs, and handles, and all kinds of broken earthenware. And he did with them as the serpent had told him, and all at once the park walls and paths mantled with emeralds, and carbuncles, and sapphires, and diamonds, and rubies, and amethysts, which shone in the sun with glitter enough to blind the sight; and exceeding marvel struck every heart. Whereat the king remained in an ecstasy of amazement, and could not realise what had befallen him. But when the serpent sent for the third time to ask him to fulfil his promise, the king answered, 'That which he hath already done is naught, if he let not this my palace become all of gold.'

When Cola-Matteo referred this other caprice of the king to the serpent, he thus replied 'Go and gather

several herbs, and anoint with their juice the foundation of the palace, and thus we will try to satisfy this beggar.' Cola-Matteo, obedient to the serpent's orders, went and gathered tender leaves, small radishes, burnet, porchiacca,\* rocket, and charvel, and anointing the foundations of the palace with the juice, behold, it at once glistened with gold enough to enrich a thousand houses beggared by fortune. And the gardener returned to the king with the serpent's message, and seeing there was no escape, and that he must maintain his promise, the king sent for his daughter, Princess Grannonia hight, and said to her, 'O my daughter, I have asked gifts and deeds which seemed impossible to me to attain of one who desireth to become thine husband, and whom I liked not, but he hath fulfilled all that I asked, and now I feel obliged to fulfil my promise, and I beseech thee, O my blessed child, not to refuse, so that I may keep my trust, and to try and be content of whatso Heaven hath sent thee, as I am constrained to do.' Answered the princess, 'Do as it please thee, O my sire, I will not gainsay thy will.' The king, hearing these words, sent to Cola-Matteo to bid the serpent come to the presence; and the serpent, hearing the royal command, mounted a golden car, drawn by four elephants caparisoned in jewels and gold, and came to court. But wherever he passed, all folk fled in wild fear, beholding such a large serpent parading the city in a golden car. And when he arrived at the palace, all the courtiers fled, and not even the scullions remained. And the king and queen fled also, and hid themselves in one of the chambers. Princess Grannonia alone stood firmly awaiting his coming. And

\* 'Porchiacca': *portulaca oleracea*. Herb with thick leaves but small, which no sooner springs forth than it dies. It is used for mixed salad, or fried in oil.

the father and mother cried out to her, 'Fly, run Grannonia, "save thyself Rienzo,"' but she moved not one step, saying, 'Must I run away from the husband that ye gave me?' But no sooner had the serpent entered the room, than he caught the princess by the waist with his tail, and kissed her many times, whilst the king felt the worms dance in him with fright, and if a leech could have bled him in that moment, no blood would have come forth from his veins. And the serpent led the princess into an inner chamber, and bade her shut the door, and shaking off his skin, became a most handsome youth, with an head covered with golden curls, and eyes which caused a thousand sighs; and embracing his bride, he gathered the first fruits of his love. When the king saw the serpent withdraw into an inner chamber with his daughter, and shut the door after him, he said to the queen, 'Heaven give peace to that good soul of our daughter, surely she is dead by this: and that accursed serpent will have swallowed her up like the yolk of an egg.' And going forward, he put his eye to the key-hole, desiring to know what had become of her: but beholding the grace and beauty and comeliness of the youth, and the serpent's skin thrown off on the floor, the king gave a kick to the door, and both he and his wife entered, and taking the skin, threw it into the fire and burned it.

When the youth saw this, he cried, 'O ye renegade dogs, ye have done for me;' and taking the shape of a pigeon, flew to the window. But the windows being closed, he struck his head against the pane of glass and broke it, and he was sore wounded, so that he had no unhurt place on his head. Grannonia, who had been very happy, and beheld herself deprived of all joy, happy and unhappy, rich and poor at the same moment, beat

her breast, and buffeted her face, and wept and lamented with her father and mother, upon the trouble that had come upon her, the poison that had embittered her sweetness, and the change of fortune wrought by those who believed to do her service, but instead had brought her evil. And both excused themselves, saying that they had not meant to do harm.

The princess stayed quietly awaiting till the night came forth to light the torches of the scaffold of heaven for the sun's funeral, when, knowing that the folk slept, she took all jewels and gold which were in her desk, and donning a disguise, fared forth from a secret postern, and thought only of wandering about in search of her lover till she found him. And she issued forth from the city, guided by the moon's rays, and she fared on till she was met by a fox, who asked her if she wished for company; and Grannonia answered, 'It will please me very much, O my gossip, as I know not well this country.' And thus they fared on together till they came to a forest, where the trees, playful as children, had built small houses for the shadows to dwell in. And feeling fatigued of their long walk, and desiring to rest, they retired under the shadows of the trees where a fountain played upon the cool grass; and lying down upon this bed of grass, paid the tribute of rest to nature for the wares of life; and they stirred not nor awakened till the sun gave the sign with his burning rays to sailors and couriers that they could proceed on their journey. And when they arose, they still remained in the spot to listen to the warbling of various birds, and Grannonia listened with great enjoyance to their singing, and the fox, seeing her pleasure, said, 'Still more pleased wouldst thou be if thou couldst understand what they are saying, as I understand it.' Grannonia, hearing

these words, (for all women are as full of curiosity as they are of chatter) begged the fox to relate to her what she heard in the birds' language. The fox, allowing her to beg and pray for some time, so as to provoke the more her curiosity, to give more importance to what she had to tell, at last said that those birds were talking to each other about a great misfortune that had happened to the king's son, who was a very beautiful and graceful youth, because he would not satisfy the licentious desires of an accursed ghula, who had charmed him and given him the curse that he should be a serpent for seven years. And the time had nearly come to an end, when he had fallen in love with a charming damsel, the daughter of a king, and had asked her in marriage of the king her father; and being one day for the first time in a room with his bride, he had left his skin on the floor, and her father and mother out of curiosity rushed in, and seeing the skin on the ground had burned it, whereupon the prince, taking the shape of a pigeon, tried to escape, and in flying out of a window had broken the pane of glass with his head, and wounded himself sorely, so much so that the doctors despaired for his life. Grannonia, hearing thus her sorrows discussed, inquired whose son this prince was, and if there was any hope or remedy for his sickness. The fox answered that those birds were just saying that his father was the King of Vallone-grosso; and there was no other secret to heal those wounds in his head, so that his soul should not come forth, than to anoint them with the blood of those very birds who had related the story. Grannonia, hearing these words, knelt down before the fox, and besought her to do her this kind deed, and to catch those birds for her, to get their blood, and they would afterwards divide the gain. Said the fox, 'Softly, let us await till

night darkeneth and the birds are asleep, let thy mother do her will, I will climb up the tree, and I will slay them one by one.' And they passed the day, talking of the youth's beauty, of the mistake of the king, the bride's father, of the misfortune to the youth. And discussing these matters, the time passed, and earth strewed the black pasteboard to gather in all the wax of the torches of night.

The fox, as soon as she beheld the birds fast asleep upon the boughs, clomb up the tree quite quietly, and slew one by one as many bullfinches, swallows, sparrows, blackbirds, larks, chaffinches, woodcocks, wild fowls, owls, crows, magpies, and flycatchers as were upon the tree, and put their blood in a small juglet, which the fox always carried with her to refresh herself by the way. Grannonia was so overjoyed that her feet scarcely touched ground, but the fox said to her, 'Thy great joy is but a dream, O my daughter, thou hast done naught, if thou hast not also my blood to mix with the birds'; and having said these words, she took to her heels. Grannonia, seeing all her hopes fall to the ground, had recourse to woman's art, which is cunning and flattery, and said, 'O my gossip, O fox mine, thou wouldst do well to save thy skin if I were not so much indebted to thee, and if there were no other foxes in the world. But as thou knowest what I owe thee, and thou knowest also that in these woods there is no lack of thy companions, thou mayest rest assured of my faith, and needest not, like the cow, kick the tub when 'tis full of milk. Thou hast done and undone, and thou wilt lose thyself at thy best: stay; believe me; and accompany me to the city to this king's presence, so that he may buy me for his slave.' The fox, never dreaming that the other was a quintessence of foxery, found a woman more a fox than herself; therefore turning

back, she walked with Grannonia. But they had not gone an hundred steps when the princess struck her a blow, with the stick which she carried, upon the head, which forthwith stretched her at her feet, and slaughtering her, at once took her blood, mixing it with that of the birds in the juglet. She fared on till she came to Vallone-grosso, and entering the city, went to the royal palace, and sent word to the king, that she had come to heal the prince. The king sent for her to the presence, and marvelled with exceeding marvel to perceive a young damsel undertake to do that in which the wisest doctors in all his kingdom had failed; but as to try doeth no harm, he said that he wished to see the experiment. But replied Grannonia, 'If I succeed in my endeavour, and thou perceive a beneficial effect of my cure, and I fulfil thy heart's desire, thou must promise to give the prince to me in marriage.' The king, believing that his son would certainly die, answered, 'If thou wilt give him to me free and healthy, I will give him to thee healthy and free, as 'tis not such a great gift to give a husband to whoso giveth me a son.' And going to the prince's chamber, the princess stood by the bedside, and anointed his head with the salve, and no sooner had she done so than he rose up in good health, just as if he had never been ill.

When Grannonia beheld the prince hale and strong once more, she bade the king keep his promise, and the king, turning to his son, said, 'O my son, I gazed upon thee as one dead, and I see thee alive and can hardly believe it. But I gave a promise to this damsel that, if she healed thee, and I beheld thee in health and strength, thou wouldst become her husband, and now that Heaven hath granted this grace, let me fulfil this promise, an thou lovest me: as it is a debt of gratitude which must be paid.' And the

prince replied, 'O my lord, would that I could freely do as thou biddest me, and give thee satisfaction, and proof of the great love which I bear to thee; but I have given my faith to another damsel, and thou wilt not ask me to break my troth; and neither will this damsel advise me to act wrongfully and treacherously to one I love, nor can I change my thoughts.' The princess, hearing the prince's words, felt unspeakable joy not to be described, seeing the remembrance of her so deeply impressed in her lover's heart: and the delicate tint of carmine tinging her cheeks, she said, 'But if I could satisfy this young damsel, beloved by thee, and she would willingly give thee up, wouldst thou still be adverse to my desire?' rejoined the prince, 'It shall never be. I can never chase from my mind the sweet image of my love, and in my breast will I keep her enthroned. Let her love me as she will, or chase me from her presence, I will ever remain with the same longing and desire, the same deep affection, and the same thought, and even if I were in danger to lose my life once more, I would never do such a deed, I will never withdraw my plighted troth.'

Grannonia, being unable to resist any more, threw off her disguise, and discovered herself; and when the secret was out, and the prince recognised her, he took her in his arms in deep joy, telling his sire who the damsel was, and what he had done for her sake; and she related to them also what befell her after he had left her, and how through the fox's rede she had been able to heal the prince. And the king sent for the King and Queen of Starza-longa, and all agreed that the marriage-feast should take place at once, and they rejoiced to think how Grannonia had outwitted the fox, concluding at the last that

'To the joy of love  
Grief is ever the sauce.'

## THE SHE-BEAR.

### SIXTH DIVERSION

#### Of the Second Day.

The King of Rocc' Aspra desireth to take his own daughter to wife. The princess, by the cunning of an old woman, changeth her shape, and becometh a she-bear, and escapeth from her father's palace. She is taken home by a prince, who once beholdeth her in her own shape in the garden, where she is dressing her hair, and falleth deeply in love with her. After many adventures she discovereth herself, and taketh her own shape once more, and becometh the prince's wife.

ALL enjoyed heartily Popa's story, but when she spake of women's craft and flattery, which were sufficient to outwit a fox, they laughed till they fell backwards; and truly women are cunning, and their craftiness is threaded like beads in every hair of their head. Fraud is their mother; falsehood their nurse; allurements their teacher; dissimulation their adviser; deceit their companion: and thus they can turn man round and round according to their liking. But let us return to Antonella who was eager to begin her story. She stood a little while as one in deep thought, and at last thus began her say:

Spake well the sage who said that to a command mixed with gall cannot be rendered obedience sweet as sugar. Man must require matters justly ordered and rightly measured, if it be his desire to meet with justly weighed obedience. From undue commands are born resistance,

and rebellion, and evils which cannot easily be remedied : as happened to the King of Rocc' Aspra, who sought from his daughter an undue thing, thus causing her flight at the risk of her life and honour.

Now it is said that once upon a time there lived a king of Rocc' Aspra, who had a wife who for beauty, and grace, and comeliness exceeded all other women. Truly she was the mother of beauty, but this beauteous being, at the full time of her life, fell from the steed of health, and brake the threads of life. But before the candle of life was finally put out, she called her husband, and said, 'I know well, that thou hast loved me with excessive love, therefore show unto me a proof of thy love and give me a promise that thou wilt never marry, unless thou meetest one beauteous as I have been ; and if thou wilt not do so, I will leave thee a curse, and I will hate thee even in the other world.' The king, who loved her above all things, hearing this her last will, began to weep and lament, and for a while could not find a word to say : but after his grief subdued, he replied, 'If I ever think of taking a wife, may the gout seize me, and may I become as gaunt as an asparagus ; O my love, forget it, believe not in dreams, or that I can ever put my affection upon another woman. Thou wilt take with thee all my joyance and desire.' And whilst he spake thus, the poor lady, who was at her last, turned up her eyes and stretched her feet.

When the king saw that her soul had taken flight, his eyes became fountains of tears, and he cried with loud cries, and buffeted his face, and wept, and wailed, so that all the courtiers ran to his side, and he continually called upon the name of that good soul, and cursed his fate, which had deprived him of her, and tore his hair, and pulled out his beard, and accused the stars of having sent to him this

great misfortune. But he did as others do ; pain of elbow and of wife acheth much but doth not last. Two, one in the grave, and other on the knee. Night had not yet come forth in the place of heaven to look about her for the bats, when he began to make counts with his fingers, saying 'My wife is dead, and I am a widower, and sad-hearted without hope of any kind but my only daughter, since she left me. Therefore it will be necessary to find another wife that will bear me a son. But where can I find one ? Where can I meet a woman dowered with my wife's beauty, when all other damsels seem witches in my sight ? There is the rub ! Where shall I find another like unto her ? where am I to seek her with the bell, if nature moulded Nardella (whose soul rest in glory), and then brake the mould ? Alas ! in what labyrinth am I ! What a mistake was the promise I made her ! But what ? I have not seen the wolf yet, and am going to fly : let us seek, let us see, and let us understand. Is it possible, that no other she-ass will be found to stable in Nardella's place ? Is it possible that the world will be lost for me ? Will there be such a misfortune, that no damsel will shoot, or will the seed be lost ?' And thus saying, he commanded the public crier to publish a ban that all the beautiful women in the world should come and undergo the comparison of beauty, that he would take to wife the handsomest of all, and make her a queen of his realm. And these news spread in all parts of the world, and not one of the women in the whole universe failed to come and try this venture, and not even flayed hags stayed behind, they came by the dozen, because, when the point of beauty is touched, there is none who will yield, there is no sea-monster who will give herself up as hideous ; each and every boasteth of uncommon beauty ; and if an ass speaketh the truth, the mirror is



blamed, which reflecteth not the form as it is naturally; 'tis the fault of the quicksilver at the back. And now the land was full of women, and the king ordered that they should all stand in file, and he began to walk up and down, like a sultan when he entereth his harem to choose the best Genoa stone to sharpen his blade damascene. He came and went, up and down, like a monkey who is never still, looking and staring at this one and that one. And one had a crooked brow, another had a long nose, one had a large mouth, and another had thick lips, this one was too tall and gaunt, that other was short and badly formed, this one was too much dressed, another was too slightly robed; the Spaniard pleased him not because of the hue of her skin; the Neapolitan was not to his taste because of the way in which she walked; the German seemed to him too cold and frozen; the French woman too light of brains; the Venetian a spinning-wheel full of flax; and at the last, for one reason and for another, he sent them all about their business with one hand in front and another behind. And seeing so many beautiful heads of celery turned to hard roots, having resolved to have his will, he turned to his own daughter, saying, 'What am I seeking about these Marys of Ravenna, if my daughter Preziosa is made of the same mould like unto her mother? I have this beauteous face at home, and shall I go to the end of the world seeking it?' And he explained to his daughter his desire, and was severely reprov'd and censured by her, as Heaven knoweth. The king waxed wroth at her censure, and said to her, 'Speak not so loud, and put thy tongue behind thee, and make up thy mind this evening to be tied in this matrimonial knot, otherwise the least thing that I will do to thee is that I will have thine ears cut off.' Preziosa, hearing this resolve, retired within her chamber, and wept

and lamented her evil fate. And whilst she lay in this plight with such a sorrowful face, an old woman, who used to bring her unguents, and pomade, and cosmetics, and salve to anoint herself, came to her, and finding her in such a plight, looking like one more ready for the other world than for this, enquired the cause of her distress, and when the old woman mastered it, she said, 'Be of good cheer, O my daughter, and despair not, as every evil hath a remedy: death alone hath no cure. Now hearken to me: when thy sire this evening cometh in to thee, and being an ass, would like to act the stallion, put thou this piece of wood in thy mouth, when at once thou wilt become a she-bear and then thou canst fly; as he being afraid of thee will let thee go. And fare thou straight to the forest, where 'twas written in the book of fate, the day that thou wert born, that thou shouldst meet thy fortune: and when 'tis thy desire to appear a woman as thou art and wilt ever be, take out of thy mouth the bit of wood, and thou wilt return to thy pristine form.' Preziosa embraced and thanked the old woman, and bidding the servants give her an apron-full of flour and some slices of ham, sent her away. And the sun beginning to change his quarters like a bankrupt strumpet, the king sent for his minister, and bade him issue invitations to all the lords and grantees to come to the marriage-feast. And they all crowded thither. And after spending five or six hours in high revel, and eating out of measure, the king made his way to the bed-chamber, and called to the bride to come and fulfil his desire. But instantly putting the bit of wood in her mouth, she took the shape of a she-bear, terrible of aspect, and stood before him. And he, frightened at the sudden change, rolled himself up amongst the mattresses, and did not put forth a finger or an eye until the morning.

Meanwhile Preziosa came forth and fared towards the forest, where the shadows met concocting together how they could annoy the sun, and there she lay in unison and in good fellowship with the other animals. When the day dawned, it was decreed by the Decreeer that there should come to that forest the son of the King of *Acqua-corrente*, and he, sighting the she-bear, was frightened with excessive fear; but the beast came forward, and wagging her tail, walked round him, and put her head under his hand for him to caress her. At this sight, which seemed passing strange to him, he heartened his heart, smoothed its head as he would have done to a dog, and said to it, 'Lie down, down, quiet, quiet, ti ti, good beast;' and seeing the beast was very tame, he took her home with him, commanding his servants to put her in the garden by the side of the royal palace, and there to attend to and feed her well, and treat her as they would his own person, and to take her to such a spot that he might see her from the windows of his palace whenever he had a mind to.

Now it so chanced, one day of the days, that all his people had gone forth on some errand, and the prince being left alone, bethought himself of the bear, and looked out of the window to see her, and at that very moment Preziosa, believing she was utterly alone, had taken out the bit of wood from her mouth, and stood combing her golden hair. The prince, beholding this damsel of passing beauty, marvelled with excessive marvel, and descending the stairs, ran to the garden. But Preziosa, perceiving the ambush, at once put the bit of wood in her mouth, and became a she-bear once more. The prince looked about him, and could not discern what he had seen from above, and not finding what he came to seek, remained sorely disappointed, and was melancholy and sad-hearted, and in a few days was

taken with grievous sickness. And he kept repeating, 'O my bear, O my bear.' His mother, hearing this continual cry, imagined that perhaps the bear had bit him or done him some evil, and therefore ordered the servants to slay her. But all the servants loved the beast because it was so very tame, even the stones in the roadway could not help liking her, and they had compassion of and could not endure to slay her: therefore they led her to the forest, and returning to the queen, told her that she was dead. When this deed came to the prince's ear, he acted as a madman, and leaving his bed, ill as he was, was about to make mincemeat of the servants; but when they told him the truth of the affair, he mounted his steed, and searched, and turned backward and forwards till at length he came to a cave and found the bear. Then he took her, and carried her home with him, and putting her in a chamber, said, 'O thou beauteous morsel fit for kings, why dost thou hide thy passing beauty in a bear's hide? O light of love, why art thou closed in such an hairy lantern? Why hast thou acted thus toward me, is it so that thou mayest see me die a slow death? I am dying of despair, charmed by thy beauteous form, and thou canst see the witness of my words in my failing health and sickening form. I am become skin and bone, and the fever burneth my very marrows, and consumeth me with heart-sore pain: therefore lift thou the veil of that stinking hide, and let me behold once more thy grace and beauty; lift up the leaves from this basket's mouth, and let me take a view of the splendid fruit within; lift thou the tapestry, and allow mine eyes to feast upon the luxury of thy charms. Who hath enclosed in a dreary prison such a glorious work? Who hath enclosed in a leathern casket such a priceless treasure? Let me behold thy passing grace, and

take thou in payment all my desires; O my love, only this bear's grease can cure the nervous disease of which I suffer.' But perceiving that his words had no effect, and that all was time lost, he took to his bed, and his illness daily increased, till the doctors despaired of his life. The queen his mother, who had no other love in the world, seated herself at the bedside, and said to him, 'O my son, wherefrom cometh all thy heart-sickness? What is the cause of all this sadness? Thou art young, thou art rich, thou art beloved, thou art great; what dost thou want, O my son? speak, for only a shameful beggar carrieth an empty pocket. Dost thou desire to take a wife, choose thou, and I will bid; take thou, and I will pay; canst thou not see that thy sickness is my sickness? that thy pulse beats in unison with my heart? if thou burnest with fever in thy blood, I burn with fever on the brain. I have no other support for my old age but thou. Therefore, O my son, be cheerful, and cheer my heart, and do not darken this realm, and raze to the ground this house, and bereave thy mother.' The prince hearing these words, said, 'Nothing can cheer me, if I may not see the bear; therefore, an thou desirest to see me in good health again, let her stay in this room, and I do not wish that any other serve me, and make my bed, and cook my meals, if it be not herself, and if what I desire be done, I am sure that I shall be well in a few days.' To the queen it seemed folly for her son to ask that a bear should act as cook and housemaid, and she believed that the prince must be delirious; nevertheless, to please his fancy, she sent for the bear, and when the beast came to the prince's bedside she lifted her paw and felt the invalid's pulse, and the queen smiled at the sight, thinking that by and by the bear would scratch the prince's nose. But the prince spake to

the bear, and said, 'O mischievous mine, wilt thou not cook for me, and feed me, and serve me?' And the bear signed yes with her head, showing that she would accept the charge. Then the queen sent for some chickens, and had a fire lit in the fireplace in the same chamber, and had a kettle with boiling water put on the fire. The bear, taking hold of a chicken and scalding it, dexterously plucked off its feathers, and cleaning it, put half of it on the spit, and stewed the other half, and when it was ready, the prince, who could not before eat even sugar, ate it all and licked his fingers. When he had ended his meal, the bear brought him some drink, and handed it so gracefully that the queen kissed her on the head. After this the prince arose, and went to the saloon to receive the doctors, and stood under the touch-stone of their judgment. And the bear at once made the bed, and ran to the garden and gathered a handful of roses and orange-blossoms, and came and strewed them upon it, and she delivered herself so well of her divers duties that the queen said in her mind, 'This bear is worth a treasure, and my son is quite right in being fond of the beast.' And when the prince returned to his chamber, seeing how well the bear had acquitted herself of her duties, it seemed like adding fuel to the fire, and if he consumed himself in a slow fire before, he burned with intense heat now; and he said to the queen, 'O my lady mother, if I give not a kiss to this bear, I shall give up the ghost.' The queen, seeing her son nearly fainting, said to the bear, 'Kiss him, kiss him, O my beauteous bear, leave not this poor my son to die in despair.' Then the bear obediently neared the prince, who taking her cheeks between his fingers, could not leave off kissing her on the lips. Whilst thus engaged, I know not how, the bit of wood fell from Preziosa's

mouth, and she remained in the prince's embrace, the most beauteous and ravishing being in the world; and he strained her to his bosom with tightly clasped arms, and said, 'Thou art caught at last, and thou shalt not escape so easily without a reason.' Preziosa, reddening with the lovely tint of modesty and of shame, the most beautiful of natural beauties, answered, 'I am in thine hands, I recommend to thy loyalty mine honour, and do otherwise as thou wilt.' And the queen enquired who was this charming damsel, and what had caused her to live such a wild life; and she related to them all her misfortunes, and the queen praised her as a good and honoured child, and said to her son that she was well satisfied that he should marry the princess. And the prince, who desired for naught else, plighted his troth at once to her, and both kneeling before the queen received her blessing, and with great feasting the marriage took place: and Preziosa thus measured the truth of human judgment that

'He who doeth good may good expect.'

## THE DOVE.

### SEVENTH DIVERSION

#### Of the Second Day.

A prince, by a curse laid upon him by an old woman, passeth great travail, and his distress is increased by another curse laid upon him by a ghula. At the last, by the industry of the ghula's daughter, he escapeth all dangers, and they are married.

WHEN Antonella had ended her story, it was loudly praised as a pretty and graceful tale, and of great good example for an honoured child; and Ciulla, whose turn it was to say her say, began as follows:

Whoso is born a prince should not act as an insolent varlet. A great man must not set a bad example to those below him, for from the largest ass doth the smallest learn to eat its fodder. It is not marvellous that Heaven sendeth travail and trouble in abundance to those that act not in accordance with their birth and position: as happened to a prince, who had to bear the horse-worms for having disgusted an old woman, so that he came nigh unto death with sore travail.

In days of yore, eight miles' distance from Naples toward Astrune, there grew a forest of fig-trees and poplar-trees, where the sun's rays hardly penetrated. In this wood there was an old, half-ruined house, in which dwelt

an old woman, who was as light of teeth as she was burdened with years, and as highly hunch-backed as she was low of fortune. She had an hundred wrinkles on her face, but had naught to fill her wrinkles within, and although her head was covered with silver, yet not a crown piece or a mite could be found in her pocket to cheer her spirits, so that she went about the neighbourhood begging for alms to keep life in her. But as purses full of gold are more willingly and easily given to spies and parasites than half-pence to worthy and really needy persons, so by walking about all day she could hardly get enough to cook herself a dish of beans, whilst there was such abundance in the country that few houses had a closed tomb. But of a truth to an old pot cometh holes, and God sendeth to a lean horse flies, and to a fallen tree the axe.

Thus it was with the old woman, who one day, after cleansing her beans and putting them into a saucepan, laid the pot upon the window-sill, and went forth to gather a few sticks wherewith to cook them. And as she was going and returning, Nard' Aniello, the king's son, who had gone forth a-hunting, passed before that house, and sighting the pot upon the window-sill, he bethought himself of playing a trick, and calling his followers bade them throw stones at it to see who could fling the straightest and strike it in the centre. Then they began to cast stones at the innocent pot, and at the third or fourth throw the prince caught it in the middle, and broke it to bits.

The old woman, arriving just when this bitter disaster had taken place, began to howl and scream, and cried, 'May the accursed stretch his arm, and may this clod-hopper of Foggia boast of his chivalrous deed in thus breaking my pot: may this son of a strumpet break the pot of his own flesh, this rustic who hath sown the seed out

of season of these my beans; and if he felt no compassion of my misery and want, he might have had respect for his own interests, and not cast down the shield of his house. Nor let things be cast at the feet which should be carried on the head. But let him go, and I pray Heaven on my knees, and with the deepest feelings of my heart, that he may fall in love with the daughter of some ghula, and that she may twist and drag him about in all ways. May the witches torment him beyond measure, so that he may see himself alive, and yet weep as if he were dead, and finding himself shackled by the daughter's beauty and by the mother's charms, may he never be able to take up his saddle-bags and gang his gait, but be obliged to stay, though he should die a subject and a slave of that hideous harpy, who will bid and forbid, order and command him to serve her in all ways, and make him sweat for the bread he eats, so that he may long for the very beans that he hath thrown away for me.'

The curse of the old woman reached the gates of heaven, although there is an old saw which saith that 'Women's curses are sown to the winds;' and, 'An horse accursed fatteneth and getteth a lustrous coat;' but so many times did she continue her song that before two hours were past, being lost in the intricacies of the forest from the view of his people, the prince met a beauteous damsel, who was gathering herbs and slugs, and in playful tone she kept repeating to the slugs, 'Put out thine horns, so that thy mother may not affront thee, and thou wilt be affronted on the Belvidere, for she will tell thee thou art not her son.' The prince, beholding this casket full of the most precious things of nature, this bank rich with the richest trusts from heaven, this arsenal of all the forces of love, knew not what had happened to him, and from that round

crystal face shone glances of bright eyes which cost him a thousand sighs, and his heart took fire in an instant and burned as a conflagration, where were baked the bricks of his designs, with which would be built the house of his hopes. Filadoro (thus was the damsel hight) did not pare medlars, as the prince was an handsome youth, who at once pierced her heart through : so that each to the other sought mercy with their eyes, and where the lips were dumb, the eyes spake volumes, like a gaol trumpet, publishing the secret of the soul. Thus they remained for a time unable to utter a single word. At last the prince, heartening his heart, found voice, and spake thus, ' From which garden hath bloomed forth this flower of beauty ? from which heaven hath fallen this dew full of grace ? from which mine hath come this priceless treasure ? O happy woods, O fortunate wilds, that contain this gem, that with its splendour illumineth love's joyances ; O forests and woods, where are cut neither broomsticks, nor guillotine boards, nor gibbet beams, nor night-vase lids, but gates for the temple of beauty, and beams for the house of the Graces, and sticks to form the darts of love.' Replied Filadoro, ' Down with thine hands, O Sir Knight mine, praise not so loud, 'tis thy merits, and not my virtues, to which this epitaph of commendation should be spoken : I am a woman who can measure my own worth, nor need I that another should serve me as foot-measure, but such as I am, either beauteous or hideous, black or white, stout or thin, warm or cold, hairy or smooth, fairy, doll, or witch, I am thy slave, ready to obey thy command, as thy fine and manly figure hath taken my heart, and thy noble mien hath wounded my body through and through, and thy slave I shall be now and for ever.' These were not words, but the sound of the trumpet which called the prince to take his seat at the table of love's

enjoyance, and incited him to mount steed and fare forth to the battle of love ; and perceiving a finger held out to him in love's cause, he took the hand, and kissed the ivory palm which held his heart in thrall. At this ceremony of the prince, Filadoro pulled a face à la marquis, or rather as a painter's palette, where may be seen mixed the vermilion of shame, and the cerise of fear, and the green of hope, and the cinoper of desire. And Nard' Aniello was going to repeat the homage, when the act was stopped midway, and the words cut short on the lips. In this darksome life there is no wine without its dregs of disgust, nor is there soup without the fat of discontent, or the froth of disgrace. Whilst they were at their best enjoyance, behold, Filadoro's mother appeared on the scene, and she was a ghula of most hideous appearance. Nature had taken her as a mould of deformity. Her hair stood on end as a knee-holm broom, and it was not made to cleanse the houses of spider-webs and dust, but to darken the hearts ; the brow was cut out of Genoa stone fit to sharpen the knife of fear, which sickened all breasts ; the eyes were comets, which caused by a glance a trembling of the limbs, and tightening of the heart, and ice upon the spirits, sharpening of arms, and looseness of body ; and she brought terror in her face, fear in her eyes, trembling in her steps, and threats in her words. Her mouth had tusks like a wild boar's, and was large as a dog-fish's ; she stood as one caught by a sudden stroke, frothing at the mouth like a mule, and from head to foot thou couldst behold a distillation of ugliness and an hospital of crooked limbs. The prince must have worn some amulet of the story of Mark and Fiorella sewn in his coat's lining to prevent himself from crying aloud in terror : and she, stretching her hand, caught the prince by the collar, and said, ' Lift up thine

head, thou court bird, thou iron handle.' Answered Nard' Aniello, 'I am your witness; back, canaille!' and laid his hand on the hilt of his sword like an old wolf, but remained as a sheep when it beholds the wolf, and he could not move one step, nor could he speak one word, and thus was he dragged like an ass by the halter to the ghula's house, and as soon as she arrived, she said to him, 'Mind thou workest well, like unto a dog, if thou wilt not die like unto a hog; and for the first work, mind that thou diggest well, and sow the seed in the extent of this orchard; and be careful, that if I come back this evening, and do not find the work done, I will eat thee;' and bidding her daughter mind the house, she went to gossip with her friends, ghulas who dwelt in the woods.

Nard' Aniello, finding himself in such a bad case, began to water his breast with tears, cursing his fate, which had brought him to this pass. And Filadoro consoled him, saying, to hearten his heart, that she would shed her own blood to help him, and that he should not curse the fortune which had brought him to her house, for she loved him with excessive love; and that he shewed but little appreciation of her affection, by standing so in despair of success. And the prince answered, 'I do not grieve at having dismounted from a steed to mount an ass, nor having changed my royal palace for this hut, the banquets of choicest meats for a piece of black bread, the courtiers and servants for orders to dig myself, the sceptre for the mattock, the pride of being the dread of armies for the shame of beholding myself terrified at an hideous ghula. All mishaps I would esteem as ventures, if thou wouldst cheer me with thy presence and lighten me with thy glance; but what woundeth my heart sorely is that I must dig, and spit in my hands an hundred times, I who scorned to

spit even on the ground. And what is worse, I have to do what even a pair of oxen could not do in a day, and if I do not finish the task I shall be eaten for supper by thy mother; yet I would not feel so much the torment of this body, as being torn away from thy beauteous person.'

So saying he sighed a pipe-full and wept a cask-full of tears; but Filadoro wiped his tears away and said to him, 'O my life, do not think that thou wilt be obliged to work in other ground than the orchard of love, and fear not that my mother will hurt one hair of thy head'; thou hast Filadoro by thee, and doubt not, an if thou know it not, I will make thee acquainted with the knowledge that I am charmed, and I can freeze the water and darken the sun; enough therefore, let us be merry for this evening: all will be found as my mother bade, and no one will be able to say one word.' Nard' Aniello hearing these words, said, 'If thou art a fairy as thou hast said, O beauty of the world, why should we not fly from this country, and I will keep thee, and make thee my queen in my sire's house.' And Filadoro replied, 'This is not the time to act this play, as the stars are not propitious: but shortly these trials will end, and we shall be happy.'

In this and other talk the day was spent, and the ghula returning home, called her daughter from the street, saying, 'Filadoro, put down thine hair'; for as the house had no staircase, she always ascended by her daughter's tresses. As soon as Filadoro heard her mother's voice she lowered her hair out of window, thus laying a golden stair for an iron heart; whereupon the old ghula mounted up quickly, and ran to the orchard, and finding the work done, marvelled with excessive marvel, as it seemed impossible to her that such a delicate youth should have done such a dog's work. But no sooner did the sun appear the next morning

to dry his garments of the damp he had taken in the Indian river, than the old ghula again descended, leaving word to Nard' Aniello that he should split till the evening six yards of wood, at four to the piece, which were kept in a large room, and if she found not the work done she would make mince-meat of him, and eat him for breakfast. The unhappy prince hearing this command, nearly died of despair; and Filadoro seeing him in this case, said to him, 'What a shit-breeches thou art, I do believe thou wouldst be afraid of thy own shadow.' Nard' Aniello answered, 'And does it seem to thee a matter of little import, to split six yards of wood, four to each piece, till the evening? Alas! before long I shall be split in two to fill the guts of that hideous old ghula.' Replied Filadoro, 'Doubt not, without any fatigue on thy part thou shalt find the wood split and well done; and meanwhile be cheerful, and cut not my soul with so many doubts, and fears, and lamentations.'

Now when the sun closed the shop of his radiance, refusing to sell the light to the shadows, behold the old ghula returned, and calling for the usual staircase, mounted quickly, and finding the wood split, she suspected her daughter of playing her some trick. The third day she tried him with a third proof, and bade him cleanse the cistern of a thousand casks of water, as she desired to have it filled afresh: and this work must be done by the evening, otherwise she would make smoked meat of him.

As soon as the ghula went forth, Nard' Aniello began again to weep and lament, and Filadoro, perceiving that each trouble became heavier, and that the old ghula acted as an ass to load the unhappy youth with such a heavy load of misery, said to him, 'Be silent and weep not: now is the time past which sequestered mine art,

and before the sun saith his evening prayer, we will leave this house, and bid it good eve; and thus my mother will find the country deserted; and I will come with thee, dead or alive.' The prince, hearing these news, was ready to fly for joy, and embracing Filadoro, said to her, 'Thou art the north wind which speedeth my weary bark, O my soul! Thou art the prop of all my hopes.' Now when evening came, Filadoro delved a passage beneath the orchard, and both came forth and fared on towards Naples. But when they came to the grotto of Pozzuolo, said Nard' Aniello to Filadoro, 'O my love, 'tis not convenient that thou shouldst come to the palace decked in this raiment and on foot, therefore wait thou at this tavern, till I return with carriage and horses, and followers and servants, and bring thee fit raiment wherewith to array thyself.' And leaving Filadoro, he made his way to the city. Such was their case.

In the meantime the ghula, when 'twas night, returned home, and Filadoro not answering at her usual call, she waxed suspicious, and ran to the forest, and making a kind of ladder leaned it against the window, and thus climbing like a cat, went in through the window, and searching inside and out, up and down, high and low, and finding no one, she went to the orchard and espied the passage, and passing through it found that it led to the road going city-wards, and she tore her hair, and buffeted her face, and cursed her daughter and the prince, and prayed Heaven that at the first kiss that her lover should receive, he would forget her. Such was her case.

But let us leave the ghula to say her wild pater nosters, and return to the prince, who as soon as he reached the palace, where they believed him dead, was met by a



thousand welcomes, and all the household ran to meet him, crying 'Here he is safe,' 'Welcome our lord,' 'Thou art well come,' 'How handsome he looks, come back to our country,' and an hundred more endearing terms: and mounting the stairs, he was met at the top by his mother, who embraced and kissed him, saying, 'O my son, O my jewel, O pupil of mine eyes, and where hast thou been, why didst thou delay, causing all such cark and care?' The prince knew not what to answer, as he would have to relate his misadventures, but no sooner had he kissed his mother, than, by the curse of the ghula, all that he had passed went from his memory. Then the queen said to him that to make him forsake this taste for hunting and consuming his life about the wilds and wolds she would give unto him a wife. And the prince replied, 'So be it, here am I ready, and prepared to do whatever my lady mother should desire.' Rejoined the queen, 'Tis thus that blessed obedient children act.' And she appointed to bring to the palace the bride in about four days, she having made choice of a lady high in rank and degree, who had come from Sciannena to that city. And great feasting and banquets were ordered by royal mandate.

Meanwhile Filadoro, perceiving that her husband tarried too long, and somewhat of this feasting coming to her ears, watched for the innkeeper's boy, and when she saw him asleep, she took his clothes, which he had laid by the bedside, and disguised herself, and fared city-wards to the royal palace. There the cooks, being in want of help, engaged her as scullion. And the morning appointed for the meeting arose, when the sun showeth upon heaven's bank the privileges of nature sealed by the light, and selleth secrets to clear the sight, and the bride came accompanied by a band of fifes and horns. The tables were spread, and all the

grandees and nobles took their places, and the wines went round, and choice dainties were brought. At last the carver carved a large English pasty which had been concocted by Filadoro's own hands, and out of the pasty flew a beautiful dove, and all the guests forgot to eat, and marvelled with exceeding marvel, and gazed at this beauteous bird; and the dove began to say in a sweet pitiful voice, 'Hast thou eaten some cat's brains, O prince, that thou hast forgotten all the love and affection of Filadoro? Dost not remember the services thou didst receive, O thou ingrate? Is it thus thou payest all benefits by thee received? What hath she done to thee, O thou ingrate? She saved thee from the ghula's wrath, she gave thee life, and she gave herself to thee; and is this the recompense thou hast mated to the unhappy child for the great love she bore thee? Say me, is it to be given once, and then to be easily withdrawn? Tell her to feed on this bone until cometh the roast meat: oh, wretched the woman that believeth men's words, they carry in their words direst ingratitude, and to benefits are most unthankful, and of their debts are most forgetful. Behold this unhappy child who thought to cook the pasty with thee, and now she findeth herself divided from thy home; she believed that she would be tied with thee in a knot, and thou instead hast taken to thy heels. She thought of breaking a glass with thee, and now the night-vase is broken. Go thy ways and never mind, thou face of a debt-denier, and may all the curses of that wretched damsel light upon thine head. Thou shalt in time perceive of what account it is to deceive a child, to rail at a damsel, to hoodwink an innocent being doing so fine a deed, putting her behind thee whilst she carried thee on the head; and whilst she served thee so well, thou hast put her where clysters are made. But if Heaven hath not

blindfolded its eyes, and if the gods have not stopped their ears, they will see the wrong thou hast done, and when least thou expectest it, the eve and the feast will overtake thee, the lightning and the thunder, the fever and the dysentery. Enough! eat well, enjoy thyself, dance and triumph with thy new bride; whilst the unhappy Filadoro, dying by slow degrees, will leave thee an open field to enjoy thy new wife.' And ending these words, the dove flew out of the window, and was lost to sight.

The prince hearing this long homily preached by the dove, stood wonderstruck: at last he found voice to enquire whence had that pasty come, and who had concocted it, and the carver told him that it had been made by a scullion boy, who had been engaged for the occasion. The prince bade them send him to his presence, and when he came he threw himself at Nard' Aniello's feet, and weeping a torrent of tears, he kept repeating, 'What have I done to thee?' whereupon the prince, struck by Filadoro's great beauty, broke the charm of the ghula's curse, and remembered all that had passed, and his promise and obligation to the court of love: therefore he bade her arise, and seated her by his side. And when he related to the queen the great debt he owed to this beauteous damsel, and all she had done for him, and the promise he had given her, and how it was right it should be fulfilled, his mother, who had no other idol than this son, whom she loved with passing love, said, 'Do as thou wilt, enough that the honour and good taste of this lady whom thou wert going to espouse should not be disgraced.' Said the whilom bride, 'Be not troubled about me, for to speak the truth, I would not willingly stay in this country; and as Heaven hath protected me, I, by your leave, desire to return to Sciannena

mine, where I will find the fathers of the glasses which are used in Naples, where, thinking to light a lamp in rightful way, I had nearly extinguished the lantern of my life.' The prince with great joy thanked her, and offered a well-manned vessel for her service, and followers to accompany her to her country, and sending Filadoro to his mother's chamber, bade them array her as a princess, and the banquet continued, and when all had eaten their fill the tables were cleared, and the dancing began, and lasted till evening. And the earth being covered in mourning for the funeral rites of the sun, torches were brought and all the palace illumined, but behold, a great noise of bells was heard on the stairs; whereat the prince said to his mother, 'This must be an improvised masquerade to honour my bridal feast, truly the Neapolitan cavaliers are very accomplished, and where it is needed they know how to use well cooked meats and raw ones also.' But whilst they thus discoursed, amidst the saloon appeared an hideous mask, which hardly stood three feet high, but it was larger than a cask in diameter, and it came forward and stood before the prince, and said, 'Know Nard' Aniello, that the stones, and thy unworthy behaviour, have brought thy misfortunes upon thine head. I am the ghost of the old woman whose pot thou didst break, and through thy deed I died from hunger; I cursed thee, so that thou shouldst fall into the ghula's hands, and my prayers were heard. But by the strength of this beauteous fairy thou didst escape from thy travails, but the ghula gave thee another curse, and it was, that at the first kiss which thou shouldst receive thou shouldst forget Filadoro: thy mother kissed thee, and Filadoro was forgotten. And now I curse thee again, that in remembrance of the damage thou didst to me, mayest thou ever

have before thee the beans which thou threwest away for me, and may the proverb come true in thy case, that "Whoso soweth beans, gathereth horns." And having spoken thus, she disappeared like quicksilver, not leaving even smoke behind.

The fairy, beholding the prince, whose colour had yellowed at those words, cheered him, saying, 'Doubt not, O my husband, if 'tis sorcery 'twill not have strength; for I will withdraw thee from the fire.' And the festival being ended, they retired to their chamber, and went to bed in confirmation of the faith they had sworn, they being both witnesses of past travails which made all the sweeter the present joys, thus seeing in the crucible of this world's success that

'Whoso slippeth and falleth not  
Forward fareth in his way.'

## THE YOUNG SLAVE.

### EIGHTH DIVERSION

#### Of the Second Day.

Lisa is born from a rose-leaf, and dieth through a fairy's curse; her mother layeth her in a chamber and biddeth her brother not to open the door. But his wife being very jealous, wishing to see what is shut therein, openeth the door, and findeth Lisa well and alive, and attiring her in slave raiments, treateth her with cruelty. Lisa being at last recognised by her uncle, he sendeth his wife home to her relations, and giveth his niece in marriage.

'IN very sooth,' said the prince, 'every man ought to work at his own craft, the lord as lord, the groom as groom, and the constable as constable; and as a beggar-boy becometh ridiculous when he taketh upon himself the mien and airs of a prince, so it is with the prince who will play the beggar-boy:' and turning to Paola, he added, 'Begin thy say;' and she, sucking her lips and scratching her head, began to relate:

Jealousy is a fearful malady, and (sooth to say) 'tis a vertigo which turneth the brain, a fever burning in the veins, an accident, a sudden blow which paralyseth the limbs, a dysentery which looseneth the body, a sickness which robbeth ye of sleep, embittereth all food, cloudeth all peace, shorteneth our days: 'tis a viper which biteth, a moth which gnaweth, gall which embittereth, snow which freezeth, a nail which boreth you, a separator

of all love's enjoyments, a divider of matrimony, a dog causing disunion to all love's felicity: 'tis a continual torpedo in the sea of Venus' pleasures, which never doeth a right or good deed: as ye will all confess with your own tongues on hearing the story which follows.

In days of yore, and in times long gone before, there lived a baron of Serva-scura, and he had a young sister, a damsel of uncommon beauty, who often fared to the gardens in company of other young damsels of her age. One day of the days they went as usual, and beheld a rose-tree which had a beautiful fully-opened rose upon it, and they agreed to wager that whosoever should jump clear above the tree without damaging the rose would win so much. Then the damsels began to jump one after the other, but none could clear the tree; till it coming to Cilla's turn (thus was the baron's sister hight), she took a little longer distance, and ran quickly, and jumped, and cleared the tree without touching the rose, and only a single leaf fell to the ground. She quickly picked it up, and swallowed it before any of the others perceived aught, and thus won the wager.

Three days had hardly passed, when she felt that she was with child, and finding that such was the case she nearly died with grief, well wotting that she had done naught to bring such a catastrophe upon her, and she could not suppose in any way how this had occurred. Therefore she ran to the house of some fairies, her friends, and relating to them her case, they told her that there was no doubt but that she was with child of the leaf she had swallowed. Cilla hearing this hid her state as long as it was possible, but the time came at length for her delivery, and she gave birth secretly to a beauteous woman-child, her face like a moon in her fourteenth night, and she named her Lisa, and sent her to the fairies to be brought up. Now each

of the fairies gave to the child a charm; but the last of them, wanting to run and see her, in so doing twisted the foot, and for the anguish of pain she felt cursed her, saying that when she should reach her seventh year, her mother in combing her hair would forget the comb sticking in the hair on her head, and this would cause her to die. And years went by till the time came, and the mishap took place, and the wretched mother was in despair at this great misfortune, and after weeping and wailing, ordered seven crystal chests one within the other, and had her child put within them, and then the chest was laid in a distant chamber in the palace; and she kept the key in her pocket. But daily after this her health failed, her cark and care bringing her to the last step of her life; and when she felt her end drawing near, she sent for her brother, and said to him, 'O my brother, I feel death slowly and surely come upon me, therefore I leave to thee all my belongings. Be thou the only lord and master; only must thou take a solemn oath that thou wilt never open the furthest chamber in this palace, of which I consign to thee the key, which thou wilt keep within thy desk.' Her brother, who loved her dearly, gave her the required promise, and she bade him farewell and died.

After a year had passed the baron took to himself a wife, and being one day invited to a hunt by some of his friends, he gave the palace in charge to his wife, begging her not to open the forbidden chamber, whose key was in his desk. But no sooner had he left the palace than dire suspicion entered in her mind, and turned by jealousy, and fired by curiosity (the first dower of womankind), she took the key, and opened the door, and beheld the seven crystal chests, through which she could perceive a beauteous child, lying as it were in a deep sleep. And she had grown

as any other child of her age would, and the chests had lengthened with her. The jealous woman, sighting this charming creature, cried, 'Bravo my priest; key in waist-band, and ram within; this is the reason why I was so earnestly begged not to open this door, so that I should not behold Mohammed, whom he worshippeth within these chests.' Thus saying, she pulled her out by the hair of her head; and whilst so doing the comb which her mother had left on her head fell off, and she came again to life, and cried out, 'O mother mine, O mother mine.' Answered the baroness, 'I'll give thee mamma and papa;' and embittered as a slave, and an-angered as a bitch keeping watch on her young, and with poison full as an asp, she at once cut off the damsel's hair, and gave her a good drubbing, and arrayed her in rags. Every day she beat her on her head, and gave her black eyes, and scratched her face and made her mouth to bleed just as if she had eaten raw pigeons. But when her husband came back and saw this child so badly treated, he asked the reason of such cruelty; and she answered that she was a slave-girl sent her by her aunt, so wicked and perverse that it was necessary to beat her so as to keep her in order. After a time the baron had occasion to go to a country-fair, and he, being a very noble and kind-hearted lord, asked of all his household people from the highest to the lowest not leaving out even the cats, what thing they would like him to bring for them, and one bade him buy one thing, and another another, till at the last he came to the young slave-girl. But his wife did not act as a Christian should, and said, 'Put this slave in the dozen, and let us do all things within the rule, as we all should like to make water in the same pot; leave her alone and let us not fill her with presumption.' But the lord, being by nature kind,

would ask the young slave what she should like him to bring her, and she replied, 'I should like to have a doll, a knife, and some pumice-stone: and if thou shouldst forget it, mayst thou be unable to pass the river which will be in thy way.' And the baron fared forth, and bought all the gifts he had promised to bring, but he forgot that which his niece had bade him bring; and when the lord on his way home came to the river, the river threw up stones, and carried away the trees from the mountain to the shore, and thus cast the basis of fear, and uplifted the wall of wonderment, so that it was impossible for the lord to pass that way; and he at last remembered the curse of the young slave, and turning back, bought her the three things, and then returned home, and gave to each the gifts he had brought. And he gave to Lisa also what pertained to her. As soon as she had her gifts in her possession, she retired in the kitchen, and putting the doll before her, she began to weep, and wail, and lament, telling that inanimate piece of wood the story of her travails, speaking as she would have done to a living being; and perceiving that the doll answered not, she took up the knife and sharpening it on the pumice-stone, said, 'If thou wilt not answer me, I shall kill myself, and thus will end the feast;' and the doll swelled up as a bag-pipe, and at last answered, 'Yes, I did hear thee, I am not deaf.'

Now this went on for several days, till one day the baron, who had one of his portraits hung up near the kitchen, heard all this weeping and talking of the young slave-girl, and wanting to see to whom she spake, he put his eye to the key-hole, and beheld Lisa with the doll before her, to whom she related how her mother had jumped over the rose-tree, how she had swallowed the leaf, how herself had been born, how the fairies had each given her a charm,

how the youngest fairy had cursed her, how the comb had been left on her head by her mother, how she had been put within seven crystal chests and shut up in a distant chamber, how her mother had died, and how she had left the key to her brother. Then she spoke of his going a-hunting, and the wife's jealousy, how she disobeyed her husband's behest and entered within the chamber, and how she had cut her hair, and how she treated her like a slave and beat her cruelly, and she wept and lamented saying, 'Answer me, O my doll: if not, I shall kill myself with this knife;' and sharpening it on the pumice-stone, she was going to slay herself, when the baron kicked down the door, and snatched the knife out of her hands, and bade her relate to him the story. When she had ended, he embraced her as his own niece, and led her out of his palace to the house of a relative, where he commanded that she should be well entreated so that she should become cheerful in mind and healthy of body, as owing to the ill-treatment she had endured she had lost all strength and healthful hue. And Lisa, receiving kindly treatment, in a few months became as beautiful as a goddess, and her uncle sent for her to come to his palace, and gave a great banquet in her honour, and presented her to his guests as his niece, and bade Lisa relate to them the story of her past troubles. Hearing the cruelty with which she had been entreated by his wife, all the guests wept. And he bade his wife return to her family, as for her jealousy and unseemly behaviour she was not worthy to be his mate; and after a time gave to his niece a handsome and worthy husband whom she loved: which touched the level that

'When a man least goods of any kind expecteth,  
The heavens will pour upon him every grace.'

## THE PADLOCK.

### NINTH DIVERSION

#### Of the Second Day.

Luciella goeth to the fountain to draw some water, and meeteth there a slave, who taketh her to a splendid palace, where she is entreated like a queen. By her envious sisters she is advised to look with whom she sleepeth at night. She doeth as she is bid, and findeth that her companion is a handsome youth, but she loseth his grace and is expelled from the palace. She wandereth about the world, but at last being big with child, she reacheth, unknown to her, the house of her lover, where she is brought to bed of a man-child, and after various adventures becometh his wife.

THE hearts of all were moved to compassion by the sufferings of Lisa, and four of them had their eyes red with weeping, for there is naught that touches the heart so much as to behold the innocent suffer; but it being Ciommetella's turn to mind the wheel and spin the flax, she thus began:

The advice imparted by envy is always the father of misfortune, because under the smiling, well-wishing mask is hidden the face which bringeth ruin. And he that holdeth in hand the hair of fortune must expect in all hours a hundred foes to lay snares and traps to make him fall: as happened to a damsel, who for the wicked advice of her sisters fell from the top of the stair of happiness; and it was a mercy of Heaven that in falling she did not break her neck.

Once upon a time there lived a mother who had three daughters, and misery and want had taken hold of that house (which was the very sink of all misfortunes), and they went a-begging and gathering cast-away cabbage leaves so as to keep body and soul together. One morning the old woman had gone forth a-begging at a certain palace, and the cook had given her some greens and a few things more, therefore she returned home and bade her daughters to go to the fountain to fetch some water; but one with the other kept saying, 'Thou go,' and none went, and the cat wagged her tail: till at last the old woman, seeing their unwillingness, said, 'If thou desirest to have anything done, do it thyself:' and taking the juglet, was going to fetch the water, although through her age and infirmities she could hardly put one foot before the other, when Luciella, her youngest daughter, said, 'Give me the juglet, O my mother: although I am not very strong, yet have I strength enough to do this for thee, as I like thee not to do this work,' and taking the juglet, fared forth from the city, whereto stood a fountain, that liking not to see the flowers fade with fear, kept throwing up water in their faces; and Luciella met there a handsome slave, and he said to her, 'Wilt thou come with me, O thou beauteous damsel, and I will take thee to a grotto not very far distant, and I will give thee many pretty things.'

Luciella, who had never met with kindly words and good treatment, answered, 'Let me carry this water to my mother, who is waiting for it, and then will I return to thee;' and carrying the water home, she told her mother she was going a-begging. Returning to the fountain, where she found the slave awaiting for her,

they fared on to a grotto all covered by Venus-hair creeper and ivy, and when she entered it he led her to an underground palace, most splendid and shining with gold, where at once a table was laid, covered with all dainties. After she had eaten, two beautiful slave-girls came forth, and taking off the rags she wore, arrayed her in costly raiments: and in the evening they led her to a chamber where stood a bed with coverlets all purflewed with pearls and gold; where as soon as the candles were put out, some one came and slept with her, and this continued for some days.

After this time the damsel felt a longing to see her mother, and she told the slave, and the slave entered an inner chamber and spake with some one, and came forth with a bag full of gold, saying, 'Give thou these to thy mother: and be careful not to forget thy way and come back soon, but do not say where thou comest from, or whither thou goest.' The damsel went home, and the sisters beholding her so well arrayed nearly died with envy. She stayed with them a few hours, and when she desired to go back, her mother and sisters offered to attend her; but she refused their company, and returned to the same palace by the same grotto; and abiding quietly within it for two months, at the last came upon her the same longing as hitherto, and again she told the slave, and as before was sent home with gifts to her mother. This happened three or four times, and the sisters grew ever more envious. At the last these hideous harpies took counsel together, and decided that they would confer with a ghula whom they knew, and she told them how it was with Luciella. So when the damsel came to visit them, they said to her, 'Although thou wouldst not tell us anything of thy

enjoyance, thou must know that we are aware of these, and we know that every night thou sleepest with a handsome youth, whom thou hast never seen because they drug thy drinks, and thou art always fast asleep. But thou wilt always remain as thou art, if thou do not resolve to do the rede that those that love thee will advise. In the end, thou art our flesh and blood, and we only desire thy weal and thy pleasure: therefore, when the evening shall come, and thou shalt go to thy bed, and the slave shall come bringing thee thy night-drink and water to wash thy mouth bid thou him go and fetch thee a towel to wipe thy mouth, and when he is gone on his errand throw the drink away, so that thou mayst remain awake in the night; and when thou perceivest thy husband fast asleep, open this padlock, and thus he will be obliged to break the spell in spite of himself, and thou wilt remain the happiest woman in all the world.' Poor Luciella knew not that under the velvet saddle the thorns were hid, and amongst the flowers the adder slept, and in the golden bowl the poison was prepared. She believed the words of her sisters, and returning to the grotto, went within the palace, and when night came, did as those wretches had told her, and when all things lay still, she struck a light, and lit the candle, and beheld by her side a flower of beauty, a youth like lilies and roses, and sighting so much beauty, said, 'By my faith, thou shalt not escape from my hands, ever;' and taking the padlock, she unlocked it, and beheld some women carrying some skeins of thread on their head. One of these let fall a skein, and Luciella, who was very kind hearted, remembering not where she was, cried out in a loud voice, 'Pick up thy thread, madam.' At the cry the youth woke up; and was so disgusted and an-

angered in being seen by Luciella that, at once calling the slaves, he bade them dress her in the same rags that she wore before, and send her home to her mother and sisters.

This they did, and when she stood before them with pale face and sorrow-stricken heart, they bade her go her ways with insolent words; and she, knowing not whither to turn her steps, wandered about the world, and after much travail the unhappy damsel, being big with child, arrived at the city of Torre-Longa, and going to the royal palace, went round to the stables, and sought a place upon the straw wherein to rest. Here one of the court maids of honour found her, and kindly entreated her. So the time for child-bed came, and she was delivered of a son so beautiful that he seemed a golden bough; and the first night he was born, a handsome youth entered the chamber where the mother and babe lay, and going near the child, he took him in his arms, and said, 'O my beauteous son, if my mother knew of thee, in a golden bath she would wash thee, and with a golden band she would swathe thee, and if never a cock should crow, never would I leave thy side;' and whilst he was chanting these words, at the first cock crowing he disappeared as quicksilver. The young maid of honour sat near the bedside, and every night she beheld the youth, who came and took the child in his arms, and chanted the same words, and at the first cock-crow disappeared, so she made her way to the queen's presence, and related to her what she had witnessed; and the queen, as soon as the sun, like a clever doctor, had discharged all the stars from the hospital of heaven, bade the crier publish an edict (which was thought by all folk very cruel) that all the cocks in that city should be slain, thus condemning all fowls to widowhood and wretchedness. And in the evening the queen took the maid's place by



Luciella's bedside, and waited in great suspense for the youth's coming, and when he came at the same hour, she recognised in him her own son, and she arose and embraced him; and as the curse which had been cast upon the prince by a ghula was that he should wander about in exile far from his home, till his mother should see him and embrace him, and the cock should not crow, as soon as he was in his mother's arms the spell was broken, and the sad term of exile was ended. Thus the mother found that she had gained a grandson beautiful as a jewel. And Luciella regained her husband, and the sisters after a time having knowledge of her happiness and greatness, came with a brazen face to visit her, but they met with the same reception that they had given her when through their wicked rede she had been cast out from the prince's palace: and thus it was rendered to them evil for evil, and they were paid in the same coin, and in great distress of mind they came to know that

'Son of envy is the heart's disease.'

## THE GOSSIP.

### TENTH DIVERSION

#### Of the Second Day.

Cola Jacopo hath a gossip who sucketh him and liveth on him, and of whom he cannot rid himself, neither by arts nor stratagems. At last, being unable to bear it longer, he putteth his head out of the bag, and with a storm of injurious words expelleth him from his house.

THE preceding story was adjudged truly pretty, and being related gracefully and with taste, was listened to with attention, so that all things conspired to give it zest to please. But because every time that they rested a little in their talk, the slave felt as one on thorns, Prince Thaddeus solicited Jacoma to take her place at the lathe; and she put her hand in the cask of prolixity to refresh the desire of the hearers, and thus began:

The lack of discretion, ladies, maketh the merchant drop the measure of judgment from his hand, the engineer mistake the compass of good behaviour, and the sailor lose the compass of his reason. Taking root in the ground of ignorance, it produceth no other fruit than shame and scorn, as can be seen happening in every-day life: and it chanced to a certain gossip brazen-faced, as I will relate in the following story.

Once upon a time there lived a certain Cola Jacopo of

Pomegliano, husband of Masella Cernecchia of Resina: a man was he as full of riches as the sea, nor knew what he possessed. So that he kept his pigs in stable all day feeding on straw. But, though he had neither chick nor child, and measured coins by tons, yet he would fare an hundred miles to save a crown, and lived in a niggardly way the better to put away more of his gold. Nevertheless, every time that he took seat at his table with his wife to eat his scanty meals, would come a bad penny of a gossip, who would not let him stir a step without being by his side. Just as if he had a clock in his body, and a timepiece in his teeth, he unfailingly stood before the door at each meal hour, so that he could eat with them, and with a weigher's face there would he stay, and do as they would, they could not get rid of him. There he remained, counting their mouthfuls, and saying witty things, till they were obliged to ask, 'Wouldst thou take a bite?' Which invitation he would not let them repeat, but seating himself between husband and wife, like one famished he would dart upon the dishes, and cut like a sharp razor, and like a hunting dog, as if he had a wolfish hunger, with a sharpness and rapidity quite marvellous, as if he had just come from the mill; he would make use of his hands like a fife-player, and roll about his eyes like a foreign cat, and use his teeth like a stone machine, and swallow his food whole, one mouthful awaiting not for another. When he had stuffed well his guts, and loaded well his belly, making a stomach like a drum, viewing the dishes empty, having swept the country without asking by your leave, taking hold of the wine-flagon, he would blow in it, and sip in it, and empty it, drinking its contents to the very dregs at one breath, and would not stop till he could see the bottom, leaving Cola Jacopo and

Masella with a lengthened nose. Perceiving the want of discretion on the part of the gossip, who, like a sack without a bottom, ate, swallowed, emptied, cut, wrapped, devoured, planed, combed, shook, disfigured, and put in order all that lay on the table, they knew not what plan to adopt so as to be delivered from this leech, this epithema cordial, this shit-in-breeches, this August cure, this troublesome fly, this sticking tick, this spring, this bone-gnawer, this trouble, this continual tax, this many-feet, this heavy weight, this headache; nor could they sight a time in which they could peacefully eat their food, without this unsought and unwished for guest to help them.

One morning, at last, they heard that the gossip had gone on some business out of the city, and Cola Jacopo hearing the happy tidings exclaimed, 'O may the Sun in Lion be praised, that we will once be able to move our cheeks, and make good use of our grinders, and put our meal under our nose without this nuisance; therefore he will not be able to do me homage, and I will do it myself. In this stinking world, all that one enjoyeth is what he pulleth with his teeth; quick, light the fire, and now that we are free we will have a feast, and will eat some tasty morsel.' So saying, he ran to buy a large swamp eel, and a kilogram of fine flour, and a flagon of good wine, and returned home. His wife at once set to make a fine pizza,\* and put it to bake, then fried the eel, and everything being ready, they took their seat at the table. But they had hardly eaten a mouthful, when behold, that parasite of a gossip was heard knocking at the door, and Masella looking out in dismay, and beholding the cause and ruin of their happiness, said to her husband, 'Cola Jacopo mine, 'tis a badly bought pound of meat in the butcher's shop of our

\* 'Pizza.' A dough-cake stuffed with cheese, or fish, or ham.

relish, if we have the joint of the bone of displeasure. One has never slept yet in the white sheets of satisfaction, without finding some bugs to disquieten one; there never was yet a good lye-washing made, without the rain of dissatisfaction. Behold, thou must drain this bitter drink even to the dregs, and choke thyself with the food in thy throat.' And Cola Jacopo answered, 'Put away these things, clear the table, melt them, disappear with them, stuff them somewhere, hide them, let not a speck of them be seen, and then open the door, and as the village will be plundered and naught will be found, perhaps he will have discretion enough to depart, and thus give us time and place to swallow this poisoned mouthful.' Masella, whilst the gossip rang to arms and chimed to glory, hid the eel in the cupboard, and put the flagon under the bed, and the pizza between the mattresses, and Cola Jacopo scrambled under the table, holding the table cover down, and peeping through a hole.

But the gossip had watched all this traffick from the key-hole. And as soon as the door was opened, he, rather surprised at their proceedings, entered smiling blandly, and inquired of Masella what had happened; saying, 'Thou hast left me so long without, that whilst I was awaiting for the door to be opened by the crow, a serpent came round my feet, and O mother mine, what an hideous monster! Thou mayst suppose that he was as large as the eel, which thou hast put into the cupboard. I saw myself in bad case, and trembling like a bough shaken by the wind, my limbs quivering with fright, and my body full of worms with fear, I stooped and took up a stone the size of the flagon thou hast just hid beneath the bed, and I threw it on its head and made of it a pizza like the one thou hast hid beneath the

mattresses; and when it lay a-dying, I could perceive that it watched me like unto gossip Jacopo who is under the table, and no blood remaineth in my body with excessive fear.' And Cola Jacopo, hearing these words, could no longer stand proof and swallow the sugar, so putting forth his head from under the table, like a jester playing a part, he roared out, 'If it be so, now we will have a pasty, now we will fill the spindle, now we will bake the bread. Now we have won the law-case, see if we owe thee anything, accuse us to the seat of justice; if we have displeased thee, indict us at the mint; if thou feel offended, tie me short; if thou be capricious, cure thyself with the mute; if thou pretend something, pursue us with a fox's tail or put thy nose in Naples. What kind of proceeding is this? When wilt thou put an end to it? It seemeth thou art no soldier of discretion, and thou desirest our goods unceasingly; a finger ought to have been enough, without taking all the hand. Now thou wouldst kick us out of house and home and busiest thyself about it; to him who hath little discretion all the world is his; but who doth not measure himself will be measured, and if thou hast not a yard measure, we have both trepane and plane, and at last thou knowest that it is said, to a fair brow a fair weight; every hedge-hog hath its straw-bed: therefore leave us in peace with our troubles. If thou supposest from this day forward to continue this music, thou wilt lose thy footsteps, and thou wilt get nothing for it: thou wilt lose the furniture, as it will not run smooth; and if thou imaginest to lie down on this spring always, thou hast time, and more than time, as March hath shaved thee, and thou canst use the tooth-pick. If thou thinkest that my house is a tavern always open for that rotten throat, and when

thou comest thou eatest, forget it, take it out of thy head, 'tis lost work, 'tis a thing of wind, there is no more tinder. I care not for thee; thou hadst discovered who would be spited, light had come into thine eyes; for the pigeons thou hadst examined the ass, thou hadst found the happy land; now thou mayest go back, as thou wilt not do it any more; and thou mayest write the name of this house with the pen, as thou wilt never more draw water at this well. Thou art a dinner-spy, a bread-expulser, laying the tables and setting them right, a kitchen-sweeper, a pot-scraper, a bowl-cleaner, a glutton, a sink-throat, a devourer, a wolfish eater, thy body is like the deluge, thy guts are endless, and thou wouldst be a match for an ass, and thou wouldst hold a ship, thou wouldst even eat the prince's bear, and that would not hurt thy digestion. Thou wouldst drink the Tiber dry, and not feel full, and thou wouldst eat even Mariaccio's breeches. Fare to other churches; go and cast thy nets elsewhere; go and gather rags and bones in other dust-holes; go and pick up nails in the torrent; go and gather wax at the obsequies; go and empty the water-closets to fill that belly; and may this house seem fire to thee; for every one has his own troubles, and every one knows what is hid under the surface, and where his stomach aches; and we need not a shoulder shove, nor accounts failed, nor broken lances. Let them be saved who can be saved; 'tis time thou left sucking the breast. Bird who locest thy day, useless being, lazy-bones. Work! Work! Learn some craft, and find thyself a new master.' The wretched gossip hearing this long oration uttered through the teeth, this dislodging of imposthume, this carding without combing, stood turned to stone, all cold and frozen, like a thief caught in the act, like a pilgrim who hath lost his way,

like a sailor whose bark is wrecked, like a strumpet who hath missed accounts, like a child who hath soiled the bed; and with tongue between his teeth, and head bended downwards, beard laid on the chest, and with running eyes, and musty nose, and frozen teeth, and empty hands, sick at heart, and with tail between his legs, cooked and scalded, silent and mute, took to his heels, without ever turning his head to look behind; so that just suited him that time-honoured sentence, which saith,

‘Dog not invited to the marriage-feast  
Should never go, or else he will be whipped.’

All the company laughed loudly at the scorn received by the gossip, and they perceived not that the sun, having lavished generously his light, had caused his bank to fail, and having thrust the golden key under the door, had taken flight. When Cola Ambruoso and Marchionno came forth, robed in leathern tights and serge cassocks, to play the second part, all readily lent a willing ear to the pleasant eclogue which followed.

## ECLOGUE.

## THE DYE.

*Cola Ambruoso and Marchionno.*

- Col.* Amid all crafts, O Marchionno,  
To the dye is due, as said  
I know not if a cook or a scullion,  
The first vaunt, and the first place.
- Mar.* I deny it consequently, O Cola Ambruoso,  
Because 'tis a dirty craft:  
Thine hands are ever  
Amongst vitriol and alum,  
And just varnished like a blackamoor's.
- Col.* Rather 'tis the cleanest  
Among all exercises;  
'Tis craft fit for a man,  
Who prides himself in cleanliness, and is foul.
- Mar.* Thou wouldst make me believe  
That 'tis a perfumer's craft,  
Or a purfling business,  
Go thou and turn back: thou art sadly in error.
- Col.* I will prove to thee  
And maintain it in an oven,  
That a dyer's craft  
Is work fit for a lord;  
In these days 'tis used by all,  
With it man lives,  
And is kept in great account;  
Is he full of perplexities and troubles,  
Is he dissolute and full of vices,  
With the dye he can hide every fault.

- Mar.* What have to do the vice and faults of life  
With the dye that's used for woollen and silk array?
- Col.* How easy 'tis to see thou knowest naught:  
Thou thinkest that I speak  
Of dyeing stockings and old clothes:  
The dye of which I speak,  
Is not of indigo, nor basil-wood:  
'Tis the dye which changeth the folk's face  
From dark to white or red carnation.
- Mar.* I feel as if I were within a sack,  
I understand thee not a straw, and this  
Thy talk bewildereth me and darkeneth me.
- Col.* If thou couldst understand me,  
Thou wouldst at once be taught to be a dyer,  
Or wouldst thou long to know those of the craft,  
And wouldst feel rest and pleasure,  
In learning this new art that's chosen alway  
By the most wary folk:  
A craft so perfectly disguising all things  
That a crab-louse will seem to thee a cat.  
Now hearken well, 'tis a gibbet of third rate,  
Which sweepeth all that cometh, and all that lighteth,  
And lifteth all it sighteth.  
Now who knoweth this dye,  
Will not give it an infamous name  
Of cheat and thief,  
But will say, this is a man with sense,  
And with his keen judgment, he draweth gold  
Even from under ground, he gaineth well,  
And could live well even in a wild wold,  
And is a clever man and of good worth,  
Who can make profit in all things.  
A cheat, a tartar, a thief,

And a corsair of first water,  
 Who loseth not his cap among the crowd,  
 And useth this dye  
 So beautiful and gallant :  
 He is named by folk a prudent man  
 When he is a rogue and scoundrel.

*Mar.* Thou fillest my hands with garlic :  
 This is a most wondrous craft,  
 But 'tis a craft will not succeed with poor folk :  
 'Tis only fit for certain rogues,  
 To whom 'tis granted to name,  
 Coming from distant parts, in dry cool tones,  
 Gains their cheats, and fruits their robberies.

*Col.* Then there is the poltroon, a double-faced man,  
 A jew, shit-in-breeches, a chicken,  
 Poor of spirit,  
 Pullet-hearted,  
 With a half frightened smile,  
 Frozen and timorous,  
 Who trembleth like an aspen leaf,  
 Always feeleth small,  
 Is ever full of terror,  
 Afraid at his own shadow :  
 If some one glanceth at him askance  
 He shifts a night-vase full of worms ;  
 If some one threaten him, thou shalt see him  
 Stand like a plucked quail :  
 He loseth his speech,  
 Becometh deathly and sallow,  
 And if the other lifteth a hand,  
 He taketh to his heels.  
 But making use of this noble dye,  
 The folk will take him

For a prudent person,  
 Staid, and a man of worth,  
 Who walketh with the lead and with the compass,  
 Nor taketh excrement on flight,  
 Nor buyeth with ready money  
 Any dissension,  
 Is not a court fire-brand,  
 But doeth his own business,  
 Is quiet, and keeps his counsel :  
 And in such a manner, O my son,  
 They mistake a rabbit for a fox.

*Mar.* It seems to me, they understand it well  
 Who save their own skin,  
 As I read once  
 In a fine story, I know not  
 If written by hand or printed,  
 That a good flight all bitterness escapeth.

*Col.* And at the other side  
 Thou seest a man quite worthy,  
 Daring, courageous, and tender-hearted,  
 Who would not flinch before a Rodomonte,  
 Who can stand hand to hand with a very Roland,  
 Who can meet in fair fight an Hector,  
 Who will not let a fly  
 Pass unhurt before his nose ;  
 And deeds speak for him before his words.  
 And he maketh his foes stand in order,  
 And put two feet in one shoe,  
 Every corner cutter, and part chief  
 Mixeth well the mixture ;  
 He is a lion-hearted one,  
 He fighteth even with death,  
 And never steppeth backward, and hitteth

Always forward like a he-goat ;  
 But let him use this dye  
 He is held by all  
 For a break-neck most impertinent,  
 Rash, and insolent,  
 Touchy, mad, and brittle,  
 A tempter, a fire in the house,  
 Who putteth his foot on every stone,  
 Who seeketh quarrels with the lantern,  
 An unreasonable man,  
 A broken person without bit or bridle ;  
 And no day passeth without some great dissension,  
 And his neighbours have no peace,  
 And he is a provocation even to stones in the road :  
 In fact, a man, whose real worth  
 Deserveth praise, is not esteemed,  
 But thought instead to be worthy of an oar.\*

*Mar.* Be silent, they are right,  
 Because a prudent and praiseworthy man  
 Commands respect without the need of sword.

*Col.* And here behold a miser,  
 One dying with hunger,  
 One tight in the waist,  
 An empty purse ; a pair of pinchers  
 Fit for a boiler-maker ; a dry-shitter,  
 A nail-gnawer,  
 A Siennese horse,  
 A dry orange,  
 A rotten cork, a plum-stone,  
 An ant out of a miserly crab-apple,  
 Mother of misery, a beggarly being,  
 Who, like a kicking horse,

\* To be made a galley-slave.

Not only would not give one two small loaves,  
 But would not part with even an hair of his tail,  
 A sorrowful figure, a wrinkled face,  
 Who runneth an hundred miles  
 To save a mite ;  
 Who will give an hundred bites to a bean,  
 And will tie in an hundred knots  
 A half decinco\* ;  
 One who never shits, to save eating.  
 But this dye covers all his faults,  
 And he is called a saving man,  
 Who squanders not what he possesseth,  
 Who alloweth not his goods  
 To go down the water side,  
 And letteth not a crumb fall to the ground ;  
 At last he is called  
 (But by certain scoundrels)  
 A man, a very compass : and he is pinchers.

*Mar.* Oh, what a foul race  
 This is, their heart is in their coins,  
 They fast without a doctor's orders,  
 They dress in an hundred rags,  
 You see them always sad-faced,  
 And they bear themselves as servants very humbly,  
 And die most thin among all this their fat.

*Col.* But the reverse of this medal  
 Is he who spendeth and squandereth,  
 Who would empty a ship of its freight,  
 And would ruin the mint,  
 A sack without a bottom,  
 Throwing away what he holdeth,  
 And never counting what goods he hath.

\* 'Decinco.' Old coin worth about eleven centesimi.

Thou seest around him  
 An hundred sharpeners and parasites,  
 Without any kind of virtue,  
 And he bundleth them together  
 And remitteth to them :  
 Breaketh without judgment,  
 Turneth without reason,  
 Giveth to pigs and dogs,  
 And squandereth his goods in smoke :  
 But when he useth this dye  
 He gaineth good opinion,  
 He is called a liberal soul,  
 Kind, magnanimous, gentle,  
 Who would give thee his entrails,  
 The friend of friends,  
 The king of kings,  
 Never refusing to those that ask him,  
 And with this nice eulogium  
 Emptieth his chests, and sendeth his home to ruin.

*Mar.* He lieth in his throat  
 Who calleth liberal a man like this ;  
 Generous is he who giveth in time and place,  
 And throweth not his coin about  
 To folk dishonoured and foolish jesters,  
 But instead giveth his crowns  
 To a poor but worthy man.

*Col.* Thou seest a glutton,  
 A pot-full, a woolly sheep,  
 A brainless ram, jumping and butting,  
 A house with two gates, a shoe-horn,  
 That cometh from Cornito,\*  
 And hath a house of rest ;

\* 'Cornito' ancient Roman city.

A put-things-straight gentleman,  
 A most original picture  
 Of infamy, a portrait from the copy :  
 And when he useth this dye,  
 The folk will call him quiet, a worthy man,  
 An honest man, a gentleman,  
 Who mindeth his own affairs,  
 And is pleasant to all,  
 And polite, and courtly :  
 His house is open unto all his friends,  
 He is not punctilious, ceremonious ;  
 Well-baked as bread,  
 Sweet as honey,  
 Thou canst do what thou wilt with him ;  
 And meanwhile, without so much as a blush,  
 He maketh a good market of the meat  
 And saveth the bones.

*Mar.* 'Tis these that live on the fat ;  
 One of these clearly seeth,  
 If he goeth by night in a tavern,  
 And, for the bones, giveth light the lantern.

*Col.* A man liveth quite retired,  
 And companieth not with false deceitful men,  
 Escheweth conversations,  
 Wanteth not an head-ache,  
 Will not give an account  
 To the third and to the fourth,  
 Leadeth a tranquil life,  
 Is master of himself,  
 Hath none to awaken him when he sleepeth,  
 Or to count his mouthfuls when he eateth :  
 But for all that some one will dye him,  
 And call him a sophist wild and savage,



The excrement of birds of prey,  
 Who scenteth not, stinketh not,  
 A rough and most insipid one,  
 A stingy, caustic man,  
 Without any love or taste,  
 A wretched beastly clodhopper,  
 A maccarone without salt.

*Mar.* O most happy he who dwelleth in a desert,  
 Who seeth not, and butteth not;  
 Let them say as they will, I find  
 The old saw in sooth well proven,  
 'Tis better to be alone than in bad company.

*Col.* And on the other side  
 They find a sociable pleasant man,  
 Who giveth his flesh and shareth it with his friend,  
 An affable good companion,  
 Who treateth thee most generously:  
 And with this dye—who ever would believe it?—  
 There is found one who cutteth and who sliceth him  
 Of things, and excuses, and works,  
 Badly and against the grain,  
 And judgeth and disputeth his cause  
 Behind his back;  
 Calleth him, brazen-faced, froward,  
 Fart-in-breeches, pointed brow,  
 Leather-string broken by the dozen,  
 Impudent, parsley for every sauce,  
 Who liketh to put salt in all he seeth,  
 And put his nose in whatsoe'er he heareth,  
 Busybody, arrogant, and troublesome,  
 Lifter of this, and spendthrift: O poor man!

*Mar.* This is wanted, and worse:  
 And the Spaniard understood it,

Who said, 'Tis a long while,  
 And great, since this was all the cause for contempt.

*Col.* If by chance there is a man,  
 Who speaketh quickly, chatteth and reasoneth well,  
 And showeth off his genius, and is eloquent,  
 And wherever thou touchest him and twistest him  
 Thou findest him clever; and he replieth with sense:  
 This dye will reduce him in such a manner  
 That he cannot lift his hat,  
 Without being called by some sink-mouthed wretch  
 A prattler and a glutton,  
 Who hath more talk, than a magpie  
 And would defy in noise even a grasshopper,  
 Who stunneth thy head, and turneth thy brain,  
 With many stories, and prolix trifles,  
 And tales of ghuls,  
 And troublesome vexation, and bis and vis,  
 Whenever he putteth that tongue in motion,  
 With a mouth that goeth like a chicken's arse:  
 It infecteth thee, it deafeneth and confuseth thee.

*Mar.* In this, the donkeys' age,  
 Do as thou wilt, thou always art mistaken.

*Col.* And if another is ever silent, and mute,  
 And stoppeth, and speaketh not, nor maketh a sign  
 And saveth his mouth for the figs,  
 And thou canst not once hear him whisper:  
 This dye will change his colour,  
 And he is called Antony the simpleton,  
 An ass, a piece of silliness, a mamcluke,  
 Like a block of wood from hell,  
 Always cold, and ever frozen  
 Like a bride, may evil happen to him;  
 So much so, that in this gulf

The north wind I cannot see ;  
 If thou speakest 'tis wrong, and if thou art silent  
 'tis worse.

*Mar.* Sooth thou sayest, for in these days,  
 Thou knowest not what to do,  
 Thou knowest not how to fish,  
 And there's no beaten track to those that walk,  
 And blest is he in this world who can divine it.

*Col.* But who could ever explain the buzzing  
 Effects of this dye ?  
 It would require a thousand years unfailingly,  
 And even a metal tongue it would destroy :  
 Do as thou wilt,  
 Treat as thou like, in any way,  
 If the colour is changed, the jester  
 Is called facetious,  
 And entertaineth well ;  
 The spy, a clever man,  
 Who knoweth the ways of the world ;  
 The rogue, ingenious and crafty ;  
 The lazy man, phlegmatick ;  
 The glutton, a bon vivant ;  
 The flatterer, a clever courtier  
 Who knoweth his master's humour,  
 And sootheth him in his moods ;  
 The strumpet, a kindly person with good manners ;  
 The ignorant, a simple good-hearted fellow ;  
 And so on from hand to hand,  
 And discoursing on, and enough :  
 Therefore 'tis not surprising if at court  
 The rogue is pampered,  
 And the upright ill-treated,  
 Because the lords and nobles

Are misled by this dye in all the colours,  
 And take one thing for another,  
 As 'tis always seen,  
 Leaving the good for the wicked.

*Mar.* Wretched is he that serveth :  
 Far better if his mother  
 Had given him birth still-born,  
 He leadeth a life of storms, and never hopeth  
 To sight the port.

*Col.* The court is held alone  
 For profligate folk and vicious,  
 And the good are always kept at distance,  
 And shoved away, and kicked,  
 And butted, and pushed aside ;  
 But let us leave this talk,  
 For whilst one scratcheth where it itcheth,  
 Naught would disappear, but be kept in casket.  
 Therefore let us dot a point, and say farewell,  
 Now that the sun is playing at hide-and-seek,  
 And we will do the rest another evening.

They all shut their mouths at the fall of the shadows,  
 and having appointed to return the next morning with a  
 new ammunition of stories, they all made their way to  
 their own houses, filled with words, and loaded with  
 appetite.

END OF THE SECOND DAY.

THE THIRD DAY OF THE  
DIVERSION OF THE LITTLE ONES.

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N O sooner were the shadows delivered by the sun's visit from their durance vile at the judgment-seat of night, than the company, the prince and his wife also, with the women, returned to the same place, to spend cheerfully those hours between breakfast and dinner-time. They sent for the band of music, and began to dance with great zest and pleasure, and to play games, such as, 'Roger,' 'The Young Peasant Girl,' 'The Story of the Ghul,' 'Stefania,' 'The Crafty Peasant,' 'All the Day with the Dove,' 'Tordiglione,' 'The Nymph's Ball,' 'The Gipsy,' 'The Whimsical One,' 'My Bright Star,' 'My Sweet Amorous Flame,' 'The One I am Seeking,' 'The Weeping One and the Little Weeper,' 'The Peace-maker,' 'High and Low,' 'The Clearing with the Foot-Point Cutter,' 'Behold with Whom I fell in Love,' 'Extort, for 'tis Useful,' 'The Clouds Flying in Air,' 'The Devil in his Shirt,' 'Living in Hope,' 'Change Hands,' 'Cascarda,' \* 'The Little Spaniard.' And they ended the ball with 'Lucy the Bitch': all this to please the slave. And the time sped

\* 'Cascarda.' A popular dance common in Naples, accompanied by singing.

on, and they took no note of its flight till the meal hour came, when all kinds of dainties were brought, as if from Heaven, and so tasty were they that the company is still eating; and the tables were cleared, and Zeza, who sat on thorns ready to relate her story, began in this way:

## CANNETELLA.

## FIRST DIVERSION

## Of the Third Day.

Cannetella is unable to find a husband to her taste, but for her sin she falleth into the hands of a ghul, who maketh her lead a bad life. She is saved at last by a locksmith, her father's vassal.

**L**ADIES, 'tis a bad thing to seek for better bread than that of wheat-flour, because in the end one cometh to long for that which he hath thrown away. Each should content himself with what is honest and right: for whoso loseth all, and whoso walketh on the tree-tops, hath as much madness in his brains as danger under his heels: as befel to a king's daughter, which hath given matter for this story that I now relate.

In days of yore, there lived a king of Bel-Pujo, and he longed to have an heir more than the porters long for funeral rites that they may gather the wax. And he at last made a vow to the goddess Serenga that, if she would vouchsafe to him the blessing of a daughter, he would name her Cannetella, in remembrance of the goddess who had transformed herself in a cane. So long did he pray and beseech that the grace was granted him, for his wife Renzolla presented him with a beauteous woman-child, whom he named as he had promised. Now the

child grew foot by foot till she was as tall as a crane, when the king said to her, 'O my daughter, thou art now, Heaven bless thee, grown as tall as an oak, and it is time thou shouldst company with a husband worthy of thy beauteous face, to maintain and multiply the seed of our house. Therefore, as I love thee better than mine own entrails, and desire to please thee, I would that thou wouldst say what kind of an husband thou wouldst like. What manner of man would be to thy taste? wouldst thou have him a wise man of letters, or a swordsman? young, or somewhat old? dark, white, or fair? a tall mosquito, or a sprig from the vine fit for a rush basket? small of waist, or round as an ox? Choose thou, and I will consent.' The princess, hearing these offers from her sire, replied that she had vowed her virginity to the goddess Diana, and would not take to herself an husband. But the king urged and implored till at last she said, 'As I do not desire to show myself ungrateful to thy great love, I will obey and fulfil thy wants, but thou must find such a husband for me that there shall not be another in the world like unto him.' The father, hearing this answer, with great joy agreed to please her, and from morn till eve he stood at the window, looking, measuring, weighing, and observing the menfolk as they passed that way. And when a handsome and pleasant man came in sight, the king said to his daughter 'Run, Cannetella, and look out of the window, and see if this youth meet thy requirements.'

On one occasion Cannetella called the youth upstairs, and the king ordered the table to be spread for a great banquet, and all kinds of food to be brought, leaving naught to be desired: and whilst eating, an almond fell from the mouth of the youth, and he, stooping down, dexterously picked it up, and laid it under the table-cloth. The eating

having ended, he went his ways: and after he was gone, said the king to Cannetella, 'How dost thou like the youth, O my life?' And she replied, 'Make him disappear from my sight, the clownish boor: a man so tall and big as he is, to allow an almond to drop from his mouth!' The king hearing this answer again went to the window, and watched till he beheld another youth cast in a graceful mould, when he called his daughter, and enquired if this other met her approval. Cannetella replied, that he should be invited upstairs. Then the king ordered another feast to be spread, and when all had eaten their fill the youth went his ways, and the king demanded of his daughter, whether this one pleased her, and she answered, 'And what am I to do with such a miserable fellow? He ought to have brought at least two valets to help him to take off his cloak.' 'If this be all, 'tis a patty,' said the king: 'these are the excuses of a bad pay-master. Thou art picking up down from the cloth, so as not to give me this satisfaction: thou hadst better resolve, as it is my will to marry thee, and thus find root enough to rear upon the sprouting the succession of mine house.' At these angry words of her sire, Cannetella replied, 'To speak sooth, dear my lord and sire, out of my teeth, and as I feel it, thou art digging in the sea, and art counting badly on thy fingers: as I will never submit to the will of any man living, if he hath not a golden head and teeth.' The unhappy king, perceiving that his daughter was headstrong as a mule, sent the crier to publish a ban throughout the city that whosoever in his kingdom suited the desires of his daughter should come forward, and he would give him Cannetella to wife, and he should be made king.

Now the king had a bitter foe, Scioravante hight, most hideous to behold, so that if he had been painted on the

wall none could look at him. Scioravante, hearing this edict, and being a clever necromancer, well versed in the art of sorcery, called to his aid a company of those who are best away, and commanded that they should at once make him a golden head and teeth of gold; and they answered that they could hardly do him this extravagant service, and much sooner would they give him horns of gold, for the latter were more fashionable and in use. But forced by the power of charms and spells, at last they did what he required. And when he beheld himself with head and teeth of twenty-carat gold, he paced up and down under the king's windows, and the king, sighting the very man he was seeking, called his daughter, and she as soon as she perceived him, said, 'Now this is the one, and he could not be better, even if I had kneaded him with mine own hands.' And the king sent for him, and well entreated him, and Scioravante arose to go his ways, when the king said to him, 'Await a little while, O my brother, do not be in such haste; thou must be hot at thy back; or it seems, as if thou hast a pledge at the jew's, or that thou hast quicksilver in thy behind, or a bit of wood under thy tail. Easy, for now I will give thee luggage, and followers to company thee, and my daughter, whom 'tis my desire thou shouldst take to wife.' Said Scioravante, 'I thank thee for nothing: it is enough if thou wilt give me a steed, so that I may seat her before me, and carry her home with me, where there is no lack of servants and followers, and furniture as much as there is sand in the sea.' And having contested the point for some time, at last Scioravante won his way, and mounting steed, and putting his wife before him, he departed.

In the evening, when the red horses retire to give place to the white oxen, they arrived at a stable-yard, and leading

Cannetella to the stable, where some mares were feeding, Scioravante said to her, 'Keep thy brains about thee. I must go to mine house, and it will take me seven years to get there, therefore be thou careful and await for me in this stable, and go not out, nor let any one see thee: an if thou disobey me, I will make thee remember whilst thou art green and alive.' To which Cannetella made answer, 'I am thy liege, and will do thy commandment even unto the fennel: but I should like to know what thou wilt leave me to live upon.' And Scioravante replied, 'Twill be enough for thee, to eat of what remaineth of the fodder eaten by these mares.'

Now ye must consider what heart did poor Cannetella make in hearing this, and if she cursed the hour and the moment when ever a word was spoken. And she remained cold and frozen, and had no other food to sustain her but her tears, cursing her fortune, and the stars which had reduced her from the palace to the stable, from the perfumes to the stink of dung, from the mattresses of barbarian wool to the bed of straw, and from the daintiest of food to the leavings of the mares. Thus she passed two months in this hard life, eating the corn that was left by the mares, whose mangers were filled every morning by invisible hands, and thus she sustained her life. But at the end of that time she perceived a little hole, and gazing through it she observed a beautiful garden, with avenues of orange-trees, grottoes surrounded by citrons, squares of flower-beds, fruit-trees, and vines which it was a pleasure to behold: and she, sighting these things, longed for a bunch of grapes, and said in her mind, 'I will issue forth quite quietly, and let come what will, even if the heavens fall, I will eat thereof. What can it matter in another hundred years? Who can or will tell my husband? And

even if, by an unfortunate chance, he should come to know of it, what can he do to me? It is but a bunch of grapes, and not horns.' And thus saying, she went forth, and gladdened her soul, which had failed her for want.

After a little while, and before the established time, her husband returned, and one of the mares accused Cannetella of having stolen the grapes. And Scioravante became exceeding wroth, and drawing from his belt a knife, he would have slain her. But she knelt down before him, and wept, and prayed him to hold his hand, for it had been hunger which had chased the wolf from the forest, and she said, and prayed, and besought so much, that Scioravante said to her, 'I forgive thee for this time, and I give thee thy life as an alms: but if another time the evil one tempt thee, and I come to know that thou hast been seen in the sun, I will make mince-meat of thy life: therefore keep thy brains steady, as again I am going away, and will stay away in very truth seven years this time. Walk straight, for thou shalt not succeed again, and I should make thee pay for the old and the new.' Thus saying he departed, and Cannetella wept a river of tears, and beating hand against hand, and striking her breast, and buffeting her face, and pulling her hair, she said, 'O would that I had never been born to pass such bitter venture! O my father, O how thou hast smothered me! But why do I reproach my sire, if I myself have done the damage? I am the builder of mine own evil fortune. I desired a golden head, to fall into the molten lead, and die in irons. O how I flew to gain the golden teeth, so that I might grow teeth of gold; this is the just punishment of Heaven. I ought to have done as my sire desired me, and not to have had so many whims and impossible fancies: and whoso hearkeneth not to the

father and mother walketh a road which he knoweth not.' And not a day passed but that she wept, and wailed, and thus addressed herself: so that her eyes had become two fountains, and her colour had yellowed, and her face was pinched, and she inspired compassion to the beholder. Where were those eyes darting love glances? where all her gentleness and sweetness? where the smile of those lips? Her own sire would not have known her.

Now after a year had gone by, by chance passed that stable the king's locksmith, and he being recognised by Cannetella, she called him, and issued forth. Hearing some one uttering his name, and not recognising the poor child, for she was so much changed, he marvelled with excessive marvel; but when she told him who she was, and how she was changed, partly in pity of her troubles, and partly to gain the king's grace, he bethought himself to save her, and putting her within an empty cask which he was carrying on the top of his load, on the back of a mule, he trotted toward Bel-Pujojo, and he arrived there at four o'clock in the morning, and straightway entered the king's palace. He knocked at the gate, and the servants looking out of window, and hearing that it was the locksmith, began to abuse him grossly, calling him an animal without discretion, coming at such an hour to disturb and awaken the whole household; adding that he would escape cheaply, if they did not throw something at him, or let go a large stone at his head. But the king, hearing all this noise, and one of his valets telling him who it was, bade them lead the locksmith to the presence, considering that if he had come at such unusual hour, and had taken the liberty to awaken all the king's household, it must be that some great matter had occurred. And when the locksmith came to the presence, he unshipped his load, and uncovering the cask,

out stepped Cannetella. But more than words had to be brought to bear witness before the father could recognize his daughter; and had it not been for a wart which she had on her right arm, she could have gone back whence she came. But being certified of her identity, he embraced her, and kissed her a thousand times; and sending her at once to the bath, to be cleansed, and arrayed in befitting garments, the king led her to breakfast, which she sorely needed as she was dying of hunger. And the father said, 'Who could have told me, O my daughter, that I should meet thee in such a plight? What face is this? Who hath brought thee to such a pass?' And she answered, 'And so it is, O my lord! That barbarian Turk hath made me suffer great ill-usage, and at all hours I have been ready to give up the ghost; but I will not tell thee what I have passed, because it far surpasseth what 'tis possible for human beings to endure, and 'tis impossible for man to believe it. Enough, O my father, I am here, and I will never more move one step away from thy footsteps, and I would rather be a servant in thine house than a queen in any one else's home, and I would rather have a napkin where thou art, than a golden mantle far from thee, I would sooner turn the spit in thy kitchen, than hend a sceptre under the dais of any one else.' Such was her case.

In the meanwhile Scioravante had returned from his journey, and the mares had told him what had taken place, that the locksmith had carried away Cannetella inside the cask; and he hearing this, feeling overwhelmed with shame, and heated with wrath, hastened towards Bel-Pujo, and finding an old woman who dwelt opposite to the king's palace, said to her, 'How much wilt thou have, O madam mine, if thou wilt let me behold the king's daughter?'

And the old woman asked of him an hundred ducats. Scioravante put his hand in his hunting bag, and counted out the golden pieces one after the other, and she having taken them, bade him mount to the terrace, and from thence he beheld Cannetella out in her own terrace, drying her hair; and her heart spake to her, and turning that way, she perceived the ambush, and running down the stairs, she flew in the presence of her father, crying 'O my lord, if thou wilt not build me a chamber this very moment with seven iron doors I am lost.' 'Will I lose thee for so little?' said the king. 'Let even an eye of the head be spent to give satisfaction to my beauteous daughter.' And at once the doors were made; and Scioravante, hearing of this, returned to the old woman, and said she to him, 'What dost thou want with me?' Said he, 'Go to the king's palace with the excuse of selling a bowl of red colour, and entering where the daughter is, put carefully amongst the mattresses this paper, saying whilst thou put it there, between thy teeth; "may all the folk be fast asleep, and Cannetella alone be left awake."' The old woman agreed for another hundred ducats, and served him right well. O unfortunate is he who alloweth these hideous women to enter his home with the excuse of mending things and carrying manure, for they mend and manure only his honour and his life!

Now no sooner had the old woman done this good deed, than a heavy sleep seemed to overtake all the folk in the house, and they were like dead. Cannetella alone stood with eyes wide open: and being awake, she heard the doors shaken, and she began to scream, but there was no one that could come to her aid. Meanwhile Scioravante had thrown down the seven doors, and entering the chamber, caught hold of Cannetella and was carrying her



away with the bed: when as her good luck would have it, the paper that the old woman had put amongst the mattresses slipped to the ground, and the powder within it fell out, and all the folk sprang up awake, and hearing Cannetella's screams, they ran to her assistance, even the dogs and cats, and seizing the ghul they made mince-meat of him. Thus was he caught in the snare which he had prepared for the luckless Cannetella: proving to his own cost that

'There existeth not worse grief and pain  
Than his, who of himself his love hath slain.'

## PENTA THE HANDLESS.

### SECOND DIVERSION

#### Of the Third Day.

Penta scorneth to wed her brother, and cutting off her hands, sendeth them to him as a present. He commandeth that she should be put within a chest and thrown into the sea. The tide casteth her upon a sea-shore. A sailor findeth her, and leadeth her to his home, but his wife thrusts her again into the same chest and into the sea. She is found by a king, and he taketh her to wife; but by the wickedness of the same woman, Penta is expelled from that kingdom. After sore troubles and travail she is recovered by her husband and her brother.

HAVING heard Zeza's story, the company were of the mind that Cannetella deserved what befell her and more, because she sought for an hair within an egg: yet they felt pleased when they beheld her saved from so much sorrow, and there was matter for reflection in that, knowing how all men were dirt for her, she was reduced to the pass of humbling herself and bowing down before a locksmith, so that he might save her from so much travail. But the prince signed to Cecca to begin her story, and she did not delay in speaking, proceeding thus:

Virtue is tried in the crucible of troubles, and the candle of goodness shineth the more where it is darkest, and fatigue begetteth merit. Who sitteth idle triumpheth

not, but whoso turneth the ladle, as did the daughter of the King of Preta-secca, with sweat of blood and danger of death, buildeth for himself the house of contentment, like unto the fortunes I am going to relate.

The King of Preta-secca having been bereft of his wife, the evil one entered his head, and suggested that he should take his sister Penta to wife. For this reason, sending for her one day, he met her alone, and said, 'Tis not a matter, O my sister, to be done by a man with sound judgment, to let the good which he hath in his own house depart; and besides one knoweth not how it will be, when one alloweth strange people to put their feet in one's house; therefore having well digested this business, I came to the resolution, and I purpose to take thee to wife, because thou art made of mine own breath, and I know thy nature. Be thou content therefore to be tied in this knot, to be set in this setting, to join this partnership, to enter into this *uniantur acta*, this mixture, *et fiat potio*, and let it be done, as both of us will do a good day's work.'

Penta, hearing this thrust in fifth, stood nearly out of her mind, and her colour came and went, and she could scarce believe her own ears, thinking it impossible that her brother could jump to this height, and try to sell her a pair of rotten eggs when he needed an hundred fresh ones. Remaining silent for a while, thinking how she should answer to such an impertinent question, and out of purpose, at last, unloading the fardel of patience, she said, 'If thou hast lost thy wits, I will not lose my shame. I am in a transport of surprise at thee, that thou allowest such words to escape thy mouth, which if said in joke befit an ass, and if in earnest stink of lecherousness. I regret that, if thou hast tongue to speak

such outrageous language, I have not ears to hearken thereto. I thy wife? Yes 'tis done for thee: oh, smell thy fill: since when dost thou these foul tricks? this olla podrida? these mixtures? and where are we? in the ice? His sister, O baked-cheese! Ask thy priest to correct thee, and never allow such words to escape thy lips, or else I will do incredible things, and whilst thou esteem me not as a sister, I will not hold thee for what thou art to me.' And thus saying, she departed, and entering a chamber, locked and bolted the door, and saw not the face of her brother for more than a month, leaving the wretched king, who had listened with an hardened brow, to tire out the shot, scorned as a child who hath broken the juglet, and confounded as a cook-maid when the cat hath stolen the meat.

After some days were past, the king again gave vent to his licentious desires, and she desiring to know what had caused her brother such great longing, and what was in her person that should put such a thought in his head, came forth out of her chamber, and went to him, and said, 'O my brother, I have admired myself and looked at myself in the mirror, and I cannot find anything in my face which could deserve and inspire such love as thine, as I am not such a sweet morsel to cause folk to pant and long for me.' And answered the king, 'Penta mine, thou art beauteous and accomplished from head to foot, but thine hand is the thing which above all others causeth me to faint with excessive desire: that hand is the fork which extracteth from the pot of this breast my heart and entrails: that hand is the hook, which lifteth from the cistern of my life the pail of my soul: that hand is the pincers, wherein is held my spirit whilst love is filing it. O hand, O beauteous hand, spoon, which administereth

the soup of sweetness: nippers, which nip my longing and desire: shovel, which casteth dust within my heart!' And he would have said more, but Penta replied, 'Thou mayest go, I have heard thee; we will meet again;' and entering her chamber, she sent for a witless slave, and giving him a large knife and an handful of coins, said to him, 'Ali mine, cut off mine hands, I wish to make them beautiful in secret, and whiter.' The slave, believing he was doing her pleasure, with two blows cut them off. Then she had them laid in a faenza basin and sent them covered with a silken napkin to her brother, with a message that she hoped he would enjoy what he coveted most, and desiring him good health and twins, she saluted him.

The king, beholding such a deed, was wroth with exceeding wrath, and he waxed furious, and ordered that a chest should be made straightway, well tarred outside, and commanded that his sister should be put therein, and cast into the sea. And this was done, and the chest sailed on battered by the waves until the tide projected it upon a sea-shore, where, found by some sailors who had been casting their nets, it was opened, and therein they beheld Penta, far more beautiful than the moon when it riseth after having spent its lenten time at Taranto. Masiello, who was the chief and the most courageous of those folk, carried her home, bidding Nuccia his wife to entreat her with kindness. But no sooner had her husband gone forth, than she, who was the mother of suspicion and jealousy, put Penta again within the chest, and cast her once more into the sea, where beaten by the waves, and buffeted here and there, it was at last met by a large vessel, on board of which was the King of Terra-Verde. Perceiving this chest floating about, the king

instructed the sailors to strike sail and lay to, and ordering the small boat to be lowered, sent some of the sailors to pick up the chest. When they brought it on board, they opened it, and discovered therein the unhappy damsel, and the king, beholding this beauty alive within a coffin for the dead, believed that he had found a great treasure, although his heart wept because the casket of so many gems of love was found without handles. Taking her to his realm, the king gave her as maid of honour to the queen; and she did all possible services to the queen, as sew, thread the needle, starch the collars, and comb the queen's hair, with her feet, for which reason, no less than for her goodness, youth and beauty, she was held dear as the queen's own daughter.

Now after a month or so was past, the queen was called to appear before the judgment seat of destiny to pay the debt to nature, and she asked the king to her bed-side, and said to him, 'But a short while can my soul remain till she looseth the matrimonial knot between herself and the body; therefore hearten thy heart, O my husband, and strengthen thy soul. But if thou lovest me, and desirest that I should go content and consoled and comforted into the next world, thou must grant me a boon.' 'Command, O mine heart,' said the king, 'that if I cannot give thee proof whilst in life of my great love, I may give thee a sign of the affection I bear thee even after death.' Replied the queen, 'Now listen, as thou hast promised. As soon as mine eyes will be closed in the dust, thou must marry Penta, although we know not who she is, nor whence she came: yet by good breeding and fine bearing is known a steed of good race.' Answered the king, 'Live thou an hundred years; but even if thou shouldst say good-night to give me the evil day, I swear

to thee that I shall take her to wife, and I care not that she is without hands and short of weight, for of the bad ones one must always take the least.' But these last words were uttered in an undertone so that his wife should not hear them. And as soon as the candle of the queen's days was put out, he took Penta to wife; and the first night that he lay with her she conceived. But after a time the king was obliged to sail for the kingdom of Antoscuoglio, and farewelling Penta, he weighed anchor.

The nine months being over, Penta brought to the light a beauteous man-child, and all the city was illumined and tables spread in honour of the new-born babe, and the ministers and counsellors quickly dispatched a felucca to advise the king of what had taken place. Now the ship met stormy weather on the way, so that one moment it seemed as if she would meet the stars, and another moment that she would plunge into the very bottom of the ocean. At last, by the grace of Heaven, she went ashore in the same place where Penta had been found, and had met with kindness and compassion from the chief of the sailors, and had been cast again into the sea by a woman's cruelty. As ill-fortune would have it, the same Nuccia was washing the linen of her child at the seashore, and curious to know the business of other people, as 'tis the nature of women, enquired of the felucca's master whence he came, and whither he was bound, and who had sent him. And the master answered, 'I come from Terra-Verde, and am going to Antoscuoglio to find the king of that country, to give him a letter, and for this I have been sent on purpose. I believe 'tis his wife that hath written to him. But I could not tell thee clearly what is the message.' Replied Nuccia, 'And

who is the wife of this king?' and the master rejoined, 'From what I have heard said, she is a beauteous young dame, and she is hight Penta the Handless, as she hath lost both her hands. And I have heard them saying that she was found within a chest in the midst of the sea, and by her good fortune and destiny she hath become the king's wife, and I know not why she is writing to him in such haste that I needs must run against time and tide to reach him quickly.' Hearing these words, that jewess of a Nuccia invited the master to come and drink a glass in her house, and she plied him with liquor till he was dead drunk, and then taking the letter out of his pocket, she called a scribe and bade him read it. All the time the man read, she was dying with envy, and every syllable made her sigh deeply, and at the last she bade the same scribe to falsify the writing, and write to the king that the queen had given birth to a dog, and they awaited his orders to know what they should do with it. After it was written they sealed it, and she put it in the sailor's pocket, and when he awakened and beheld the weather changed, he weighed anchor, and tacked the ship, and fared with a light wind for Antoscuoglio. Arriving thereto, he presented the letter to the king, who, after reading it, answered, that they should keep the queen in cheerful spirits, so that she should not be troubled at all, for these things came through Heaven's commandments, and a good man should not rebel against the stars' decree.

And the master departed, and in a few days arrived at the same place, where Nuccia met him, and entreating him with exceeding great kindness, and giving him wine of extra good vintage, he fell to the ground intoxicated once more. And he slept heavily, and Nuccia putting

her hand in his pocket found the answer; and calling the scribe bade him read it, and again bade him falsify a reply for the ministers and counsellors of Terra-Verde, which was, that they should burn at once mother and son. When the master got over his drinking bout, he departed; and arriving at Terra-Verde, presented the letter to the counsellors, and they opened it. When they had mastered its contents, there was a murmuring and whispering among those old sages; and they conversed at length about this matter, and concluded at last that either the king must be going mad, or that some one had cast a spell upon him, for when he had such a pearl of a wife and a gem of an heir, he ordered to make powder of them for death's teeth. So they took the middle course, and decided to send the queen and her son away from the city, where no news could ever be heard of them: and so, giving her some money so as to keep body and soul together, they sent out of the house a treasure, and from the city a great light, and from the husband the two props uplifting his hopes.

The unhappy Penta, perceiving that they had expelled her, although she was not a dishonest woman, nor related to bandits, nor a fastidious student, taking the child in arms, whom she watered with her tears, and fed with her milk, departed, and fared toward Lago-truvolo where dwelt a magician, and he beholding this beautiful maimed damsel who moved the hearts to compassion, this beauty who made more war with her maimed arms than Briareus with his hundred hands, asked her to relate to him the whole history of her misadventures. And she related to him how her brother, because she would not satisfy his lust of her flesh, sent her to be food for the fishes, and she continued her story up to the day in which she had

set her foot in his kingdom. The magician, hearing this sad tale, wept with ceaseless weeping; and the compassion which entered through the ear-holes issued in sighs from the mouth; at last comforting her with kind words, he said, 'Keep a good heart, O my daughter, for no matter how rotten is the soul's home, it can be supported with the props of hope; and therefore let not thy spirit go forth, as Heaven sometimes sendeth great trouble and travail, so as to make appear all the greater the marvellous coming of success. Doubt not, therefore, thou hast found father and mother here, and I will help thee with my own blood.' The sad-hearted Penta thanked him gratefully, and said, 'I care not now for aught. Let Heaven rain misfortunes upon my head, and let a storm of ruin come, now that I am under thy shelter I fear naught as thou wilt protect me with thy grace as thou canst and wilt; and I feel like under the spell of childhood.' And after a thousand words of kindness on one side and thanks on the other, the magician allotted her a splendid apartment in his palace, and bade that she should be entreated as his own daughter.

The next morning he sent for the crier and commanded that a ban should be published, that whosoever would come and relate at his court the greatest misfortune, he would present them with a crown and sceptre of gold, of the worth of a kingdom. And the news of this edict flew to all parts of Europe, and to that court came folk more than broccoli to gain such great riches, and one related that he had served at court all the days of his life, and had found that he had lost the water and the soap, his youth and health, and had been paid with a form of cheese. And another, that he had met with injustice from a superior, which he could not resent; and that he had been obliged

to swallow the pill, and could not give vent to his anger. One lamented that he had put all his substance within a vessel, and owing to contrary winds had lost the cooked and the raw. Another complained that he had spent all his years in the exercise of his pen and had had so little fortune, that never had it brought him any gain, and he despaired of himself, seeing that matters of pen and ink were so fortunate in the world, whilst his only failed. Such was their case.

In the meanwhile the King of Terra-Verde had returned to his kingdom; and finding this fine sirup at home, he became frantic, and acted as a mad unchained lion, and would have slain all the ministers and counsellors, if they had not shown him his own letter, and perceiving that it had been counterfeited, he sent for the ship's master, and bade him relate to him what had occurred in the voyage. And the king keenly divined that Masiello's wife must have worked him this evil; and arming and equipping a galley, he departed and sailed for that coast, and arriving there he sought and found the woman, and with kindly words he drew out from her the whole intrigue, and thus ascertaining that envy and jealousy had been the cause of this great misfortune, he commanded that the woman should be punished: and they well anointed her with wax and tallow, and put her among a heap of wood, setting fire thereto. And the king stood and watched till he beheld that the fire with its red tongues had licked up that wretched woman. He then ordered the sailors to weigh anchor and depart. And whilst sailing amid the sea, his craft was met by a large vessel, and on enquiry being made he found that on board of it was the King of Preta-secca. They exchanged a thousand ceremonious compliments, and the King of Preta-secca informed the

King of Terra-Verde that he was sailing towards Lago-truvolo, as the king of that kingdom had published a certain ban, and he was going to tempt his fortune, as he did not yield to any in misfortune, being the most sorrow-stricken man in all the world. Answered the King of Terra-Verde, 'If 'tis for such case thou goest, I can surpass thee, or at least equal thee, and I can give fifteen for a dozen, and excel the most unfortunate, whoever he be, and where the others measure their cark and care with a small lantern, I can measure it even to the grave. Therefore I will also come with thee, and let us act as gentlemen, each one of us, and whoso shall win of us two shall divide the winnings with the other, even to a fennel.' 'I agree to it,' answered the King of Preta-secca, and plighting their word between them, they sailed together for Lago-truvolo, where they disembarked, and fared to the royal palace, and presented themselves before the magician. And when he knew who they were, he entreated them with honour as due to kings, and bade them be seated under the dais, and said, 'Well come, and a thousand times welcome!' And hearing that they also had come to the trial of wretchedness and unhappiness of men, the magician enquired what great sorrow had subjected them to the south wind of sighs. And the King of Preta-secca first began to tell of his love, and the wrong done to his own flesh and blood, and the honourable deed of a virtuous woman done by his sister, and his own dog-heartedness in shutting her up into the chest, and casting her into the sea. And he grieved with exceeding grief as his conscience reproached him of his own error, and his sorrow was great, passing all distress, for the loss of his sister. In one way he was tormented by shame, in the other by the great loss: so that all the cark and care of

the most great affliction in others was in him like hell compared to a lantern, and the quintessence of sorrow was as naught, compared with the anguish which gnawed at his heart. Having ended his say, the King of Terra-Verde began to relate, saying, 'Alas! thy sorrow and trouble are like small lumps of sugar, and cakes, and sweetmeats compared with mine, because that very Penta the Handleless of whom thou hast spoken, and whom I found in that chest, like a Venice wax torch to burn at my funeral, I took to wife. And she conceived, and bare me a son of passing beauty, and by the envy and malignity of an hideous witch, both had nearly been slain. But, O sore nail to my heart, O anguish and sore affliction, I can never find peace and rest in this world! They were both expelled from my kingdom: and I have taste for naught, and I know not how under the heavy load of such cark and care, doth not fall the ass of this weary life.'

The magician, having heard both their say, understood at once from the points of their noses that one of them was the brother, and the other the husband, of Penta, and sending for Nufriello the son, said to him, 'Go and kiss thy sire and lord's feet;' and the child obeyed the magician, and the father seeing the good breeding and beauty and grace of the little child threw a gold chain round his neck. And this done, the magician said again to the child; 'Go and kiss thy uncle's hand, O beauteous boy mine,' and the child obeyed at once. The uncle marvelling with exceeding marvel at the wit and spirit of the little one, presented him with a valuable gem, and enquired of the magician if he were his son, and he answered that they must enquire of his mother. Penta, who had been hid behind a curtain, and had heard the whole business, now came forth, and like a little dog who, having been lost,

and after some days finding his master again, barks, and wags its tail, and bounds, and licks his hand, and gives a thousand signs of its delight: thus it was with her, now going to the brother, and then to her husband, now clasped by the love of the one, and then drawn by the blood's instinct of the other, she embraced first one and then the other, and their delight, and joy, and happiness knew no bounds. Ye must suppose that it was a concert in three of broken words and interrupted sighs; but having ended this music, they then returned to caress the child, first the father, and then the uncle, clasped him, and kissed him, and embraced him. After that from both sides all was said and done, the magician concluded with these words, 'Heaven knoweth how this heart fluttereth with joy in beholding the happiness of all, and the lady Penta comforted, who for her own good deeds deserveth to be held in the palm of the hand, and by this scheme I tried to draw to this kingdom her husband and her brother, and to one and the other I submit myself their slave; but as man bindeth himself with words, and the ox is bound by the horns, and the promise of a worthy man is his bond, judging that the King of Terra-Verde was in sooth the one most likely to burst with grief, I will maintain my promise to him, and therefore I give him not only the crown and sceptre as hath been published by the ban, but my kingdom also. And as I have neither chick nor child, by your good grace I desire to take as my adopted children this handsome couple, husband and wife, and ye will be dear unto me as the eye-ball of mine eyes; and because there should be naught left for Penta to desire, let her put her maimed limbs between her legs, and she will withdraw them with a pair of hands more beauteous than she had before.' And this being done, and all happening as the

magician had said, the joy was great: they were out of mind with delight. The husband esteemed this the greater good fortune, more than the other kingdom given to him by the magician; and for a few days there were great joyances and feasting, and then the King of Preta-secca returned to his kingdom, and the King of Terra-Verde sent his brother-in-law to his realm, bidding his younger brother take his place, and he and his wife remained with the magician, forgetting in joy and delight the past travail, and taking the world to witness, that

‘There is naught sweet and dear  
Unless one hath been first tried by the bitter.’

## THE FACE.

### THIRD DIVERSION

#### Of the Third Day.

Renza is shut in a tower by her father, it having been foretold that she would die through a big bone. She falleth in love with a prince, and with a bone brought to her by a dog, she boreth a hole through the wall, and escapeth. But beholding her lover, who is wedded to another, kissing his bride, she dieth of a broken heart, and the prince, unable to endure his anguish, slayeth himself.

WHILST Cecca with great effect related her story, one could observe an olla podrida of pleasure and disgust, of comfort and affliction, of smiles and weeping. The company wept for Penta's misfortunes, but laughed to hear the end; they were afflicted to behold her passing so much trouble, but they felt comforted that she was saved at last in such great honour; they were disgusted at the treachery done to her, but they were pleased at the vengeance which followed. Meanwhile Meneca stood ready with the match at the powder-train of chatter, and laid her hands on the irons, beginning thus:

It chanceth oftentimes, that when a man believeth himself to eschew an ill adventure, 'tis then that he meeteth it in full. Therefore a wise man must know how to lay in the hands of Heaven all his interests, and not to put his



trust in the circle of the magician or in the lies of the astrologer: because otherwise in seeking to prevent all danger as a prudent man, he falleth within the ruins like a beast: and that this is truth ye will now hear.

Once upon a time there lived the King of Fuosso-stritto, who had a beautiful daughter, and desiring to know what was written in the book of fate for her, he sent for all the magicians, and astrologers, and gipsies of the country, and they came to the royal court, and looking at the lines in the hand, and the marks in the face, and the movements of the person of Renza (thus was the damsel hight), each said their say. But most of them concluded, that she stood in great danger of losing her life through a master bone. The king hearing this, and wishing to wend forward so as not to fall, ordered that a tower should be built, wherein he placed his daughter with twelve damsels and a housekeeper to serve her, and commanded, under pain of death, that all the meat should be served to her without bone, so as to escape the decree of this false planet.

Renza grew up like a full moon. One day as she stood at the lattice-window, there passed that way Cecio, the son of the Queen of Vigna-larga, and beholding such a beauteous face, he at once took heat, and saluted her, and perceiving that she returned his salute, and smiled sweetly the while, he took courage, and going under the window, said, 'Adieu, O thou protocol of all the privileges of nature, archives of all the concessions from heaven: adieu, universal table of all the titles of beauty.' Renza, hearing this praise, reddened with shame, thus becoming even more beautiful, and adding fuel to Cecio's burning fire. She threw, as it is said, boiling water upon the burning flesh; and desiring not to be surfeited by Cecio's

courtesy, answered, 'Mayest thou be welcome, O thou dispenser of the food of the graces; O thou magazine of all the stores of virtue; O custom-house of love's traffick.' But Cecio replied, 'How comes it that the castle of the strength of Cupid is enclosed within a tower? How is it that thus is imprisoned the enslaver of all hearts? How is it that imprisoned behind these iron rails is this golden apple?' And Renza related to him how matters stood. Cecio said to her that he was the son of a queen but a vassal of her beauty, and if she would be pleased to escape and wend with him to his kingdom, he would set a crown upon her head.

Renza, who felt as if stinking of mould, having been shut within four walls, and who desired and longed with great longing to inhale the sweet scent of liberty, accepted the offer, and begged Cecio to return in the morning when the dawn calleth the birds to witness of the bad deed done to it by Aurora, and then they would fly together; and putting a flower-vase upon the window, she retired, and the prince returned to his lodging.

Meanwhile Renza stood thinking which would be the best way to file off and trick the damsels, when a certain dog, which the king kept on guard before the tower, entered within her chamber with a large bone in his mouth, and hid under the bed, and there lay eating. Renza, lowering her head, beheld the dog feasting; and it seemed to her that, as chance and luck would have it, it had been sent for her need. Driving the dog out, she took up the bone, and telling the handmaidens that her head ached, and that she desired to be left alone to rest, she locked her door, and began to work in good earnest with this bone, knocking down a stone, and pulling down the mortar. She worked and worked, she dug

and levelled, till at last she had made a hole in the wall large enough for her to pass without trouble. Tearing a pair of sheets and twisting them like a rope, when the curtain was lifted from the shadows of the scene of heaven for Aurora to come forth and act the prologue of the tragedy of night, and hearing Cecio whistling, she attached the end of the rope to a post, and slid down into Cecio's arms. He seated her upon an ass, with a saddle covered by a carpet, and they fared on toward Vigna-larga. But towards evening they arrived at a place called Viso, and there finding a beautiful palace, Cecio remained to take possession of his amorous charge: but as it is the trick of Fortune ever to spoil the thread, and upset all games, and to put her nose in the good dreams of all lovers when they are at the best of their enjoyment, a courier arrived with a letter from Cecio's mother, in which she wrote that if he did not hurry back to her, he would not find her alive, because she felt like reaching the end of her vital alphabet. Cecio, hearing these bad news, said to Renza, 'O my heart, the business is important, and I must depart in all haste to arrive in time; therefore stay five or six days in this palace, for I will return, or will send at once to fetch thee.' Renza, hearing this, began to weep and said, 'O wretched fortune mine, O how soon must I drain the dregs from the cask of my enjoyment! O how soon have I reached the bottom of the pot of my pleasure! How hath it reached me this nail in the heart of my contentment! O wretched Renza, my hopes have fallen into the cistern, my designs are upset, my satisfaction has ended in smoke: hardly have I put my lips to this royal sauce, than the mouthful choketh me: I have no sooner put my mouth to this fountain of

sweetness, than it hath embittered my taste: I have just seen the sun appearing, when I may say good night, uncle's nest.' These and many other words issued from the Cupid's bows of those lips, darting barbed arrows into Cecio's heart, when he rejoined, 'Be silent, O beautiful pole of my life; O clear lantern of mine eyes; O hyacinth and comfort of mine heart, I shall soon return, and no one from miles of distance will make me ever go the distance of one foot from thee; and time will have no power to erase thee from my memory; be still, rest thy brain, dry thine eyes, and keep me in thine heart.' Thus saying, he mounted steed and galloped towards his kingdom.

Renza, remaining awhile planted like a cucumber, ran quickly after Cecio's footsteps, and untethering a horse which she found in a pasture ground, galloped after him; and in her way she met with a lay-brother, and she reined in her steed, and bade him give her his garments, whilst she, giving the man her own raiments which were all purflewed with gold, put on his woollen robe and girded the cord round her waist, which held the arms and snares of love, and mounting steed pursued her route, spurring on her horse, so that in a short time she came up to Cecio, and said to him, 'Well met, O my gentleman,' and Cecio answered, 'Well come, O my father, whence comest thou, and where art thou going?' and Renza replied:

'I come from a place, where ever there is weeping:  
There dwelleth a woman, who saith, "O my white face,  
Alas! who hath caused thee to leave my side?"'

Hearing these words, Cecio said to her, whom he believed to be a boy, 'O my handsome youth, thy company is

dear to me ; therefore I pray thee (and take my entrails if thou wilt) leave not my side, and now and then repeat to me these verses, for thou touchest my heart with them.' And thus with the fan of chat fanning the heat of the way, they reached Vigna-larga. Here they found that the queen had wedded Cecio to a lady of high degree, and the letter he had received had been only a trick to hasten his return ; and the bride stood awaiting his orders ; and when Cecio arrived, he begged his mother to well entreat and detain in the house this youth who had kept him company in the way, and to use him as his brother. The queen being pleased and consenting, the prince seated him by his side, and also at table with the bride.

Now ye may suppose what heart could Renza make, and if she could swallow a mouthful : but for all that now and then she kept repeating the verses, which so much pleased Cecio ; but the tables being cleared, and the bride and bridegroom retiring in an alcove to speak one with other, Renza, being left to herself, had time to alleviate the anguish and passion of her heart, and entering an orchard which was past the garden, near the saloon where the revels had been held, and retiring under a plum-tree, thus began to lament, 'Alas ! cruel Cecio, these are the thanks thou givest me for my great love ! this is the gratitude for my deep affection ! this is the sweet beverage thou holdest to my lips in exchange for my strong devotion ! Here have I left my sire and my home, tainted mine honour and given myself into the hands of a heartless dog, that hath cut my way, and shut the door in my face, and hath lifted up the bridge, when I believed I was going to possess such a beautiful fortress. Alas, that I should sight myself written in the excise book of thy black ingratitude, whilst I thought of staying quietly in

the height of thy grace ; that I should see myself treated like a child, and playing at the game of "Ban and Commandment, by Master Clement," when I believed I would have played at "Nicholas" with thee ! Have I sown my hopes to gather cheeses ? Have I been casting nets of desires, and caught within them the sand of ingratitude ? Have I been building castles in the air, to drop with a crash all the building ? This is the change and exchange that I receive : this is the double point that is given to me : here is the payment that I receive. I have lowered in the well the pail of my amorous desires, and the handle is left in mine hands ; I have put my washing to dry in the sun, and it has been raining heavily ; I have put upon the fire of my desires the pot which containeth my thoughts, and whilst cooking the spider's web of my misfortunes, I have fallen within it. But who could believe, thou turn-coat, that thy faith should be like unto fame ? and that the cask of thy promises should empty itself to the dregs ? and the bread of thy bounty should be musty ? Fine deed of a worthy man, fine proofs of honoured folk, fine ending for the son of a king, to laugh at me, and trick me, and deceive me, and make me wear a large mantle so that my skirt should appear shorter ; promising a sea of pleasure and a world of enjoyment, only to cast me within a darksome grave ; washing my face so that I should find my heart blackened. O promises thrown to the winds, O words of bran, O vows of fried spleen ! here am I an hundred miles afar when I believed I had reached the baron's home : verily 'tis perfectly true, that the wind carrieth away words said in the evening. Alas ! when I believed I should have been one flesh with this cruel man, I shall be with him as dog and cat. When I imagined to eat with the

same spoon with this ungrateful dog, I shall be with him like serpent and toad, because I shall not be able to endure that another with a fifty-five of good fortune should snatch from my hands the first number of all my hopes. I shall be unable to bear to be check-mated : O ill-guided Renza, trust thou, and fill thyself with words from lawless men, without any loyalty ; unhappy is she who doth trust them, sad-hearted is she who loveth them, wretched whoso lieth in the large bed they make for her. But do it not, for thou knowest that whoso tricketh children dieth the death of the cricket : thou knowest, that even in heaven's bank there are tricking clerks, who will upset the carts : and when least thou expectest it, will come thy day, having done this hand-play to whoso hath given herself to thee on trust, to receive this evil satisfaction in ready coin. But can I not see that I am telling my reasons to the winds ? that I am weeping and lamenting to myself empty sighs and lost sobs ? He will this evening square up accounts with the bride, and break the measure ; and I shall square up my accounts with death, and will pay my debt to nature. He will lie in a perfumed bed of white linen, and I shall be laid on a darksome and stinking bier. He will play at "Emptying the cask" with the bride, and I, "O comrade mine, I am wounded : " I shall strike myself with a poignard through the ribs, and thus end this wretched life.' And after speaking these and other words full of anguish and sorrow, the meal time being near, she was sent for, and the dainties and delicacies were arsenic and bitters, and her head was full of something else than the desire of eating, and she felt no appetite to fill that stomach. Cecio, beholding her so full of thought and sad of face, said to her, 'What is the meaning of this, and why dost thou not honour these drinks ? What

is the matter with thee, of whom dost thou think, how dost thou feel ?' Answered Renza, 'I am not well, and I know not if it is a vertigo or an indigestion.' Replied Cecio, 'Thou doest well in losing one meal, for diet is the best cure for every sickness ; but if thou needest the advice of a doctor we will send for a water doctor, who will look only at thy face, without feeling the pulse, and will know at once the infirmity of the person.' Rejoined Renza, 'Mine is not a sickness that requireth a prescription, as no one knoweth the vexations of the pot but only the spoon that wadeth in it.' Said Cecio, 'Go out a little while to breathe the fresh air.' And Renza replied, 'The more I see, the more my heart is breaking.'

Meanwhile all had ended their eating, and the time for retiring had come ; and Cecio, desiring to hear continually Renza's verses, bade her sleep on a couch within the same chamber where he was going to sleep with the bride, and now and again he called her to repeat her verses, which were as many knife thrusts in the heart of Renza, as of annoyance in the ears of the bride, so that the latter at last puffed out, 'Ye have broken mine arse with that white face : what kind of music is this ? is it dysentery that it lasteth so long ? A little of it is quite enough, what in the world can ye find in always repeating the same thing ? I believed I would lie with thee to listen to a music of instruments, and not to a bewailing of voices ; and ye have taken it in a fine way to touch always on the same matter. Please let it cease, O mine husband, and do thou allay thy thirst for garlic, and let us rest a while.' Answered Cecio, 'Be quiet, O my wife, for now we will break the thread of speech : ' and thus saying, he gave her a loud kiss that could be heard from the distance of a mile ; and the noise of their lips was

like a clap of thunder for Renza's breast, and she felt such anguish that all the spirits ran to render help to the heart, and it chanced as 'tis said, that a surfeit in the pot breaketh the pot and the lid; for the rush of blood to the heart was so great, that she stretched her feet.

Cecio, after playing a few tricks with the bride, called Renza in a whisper, and bade her repeat those verses which pleased him so much, but not receiving any reply, he besought and prayed again that she would oblige him by fulfilling his desire. Hearing not a word, he arose lightly and pulled her by the arm; and the other answering naught, he laid his hand upon her face, and on touching the cold nose, perceived that the heat of the fire of that body was put out for ever. And he stood stunned and affrighted, and rang for candles, and uncovering Renza, he recognised her by a patch that she had between her breasts, and crying with a bitter cry, he began to say: 'What dost thou behold O wretched Cecio? What hath happened to thee? What a spectacle is before thine eyes? What ruin hath fallen upon thy head? O my sweet flower, who hath gathered thee? O my light, who hath put thee out? O pot of my love desires, how hast thou overflown? Who hath overthrown thee, thou beauteous home of all my happiness? Who hath torn thee, O thou free paper of my pleasures? Who hath foundered thee, O thou beauteous vessel of the enjoyments of this heart? O my love, when thou hast closed thine eyes, the magazine of all beauties hath failed; all business hath ceased for the graces; and love is gone to cast bones into the sea. At the departure of thy beauteous soul hath departed the seed of all beauty, the mould is broken of thy graceful form, nor can the compass be

found of all the sweetness of love. O evil irreparable, O anguish without compare, O immeasurable ruin. Go and stretch thine arm, my mother, thou hast done a fine deed to smother me, thou hast made me lose this fine treasure! What will become of me, stripped of all pleasure, light of taste, without consolation, without satisfaction, without enjoyment; believe it not, O my life, that I will remain in this world. I will follow thee, and take thee by siege wherever thou goest, in spite of death's jaws. We shall be united, and if I had taken thee as companion of my bed by affection, I shall be thy companion in the grave, and the same epitaph shall speak of both and our unhappy fate.' And as he ended speaking he snatched a nail and plunged it under his left breast, and thus bereaved himself of life, leaving the bride cold and frozen with fright. As soon as she could find tongue to speak she called the queen, and the queen came in haste with all her court, and beholding the dreadful catastrophe of Renza and her own son, and hearing the cause of this deed, she tore her hair, and buffeted her face, and beat her breast, and knocked herself about like a fish out of water, calling the stars cruel for pouring such direful misadventure upon her house, and cursing her dark old age in which it had been decreed that such a tragedy should chance. After weeping, and wailing, and crying, and moaning, she commanded that both should be laid in the same grave. And the history of their fortunes was written and stored in the archives.

In the meanwhile there arrived the king, sire of Renza, who had gone round the world in search of his daughter who had run away. He was met in his way by the monk who was selling her clothes, and he related to him his adventure: and the king arrived when the wheat was

gathered and the sheaves of their young ears were ready to be laid in the grave ; and sighting her, and knowing her, and sighing for her, he cursed the bone which had fattened this soup of roses, for it had been found in his daughter's chamber, and recognised as the instrument which caused this bitter blow, and thus had verified this crime in its gender, or rather the sad presage of those sorcerers, who had said that by a bone she should die, and in this can be clearly seen that

'When an evil chooseth to come,  
It will enter by the key-hole.'

## SAPIA THE GLUTTON.

### FOURTH DIVERSION

#### Of the Third Day.

Sapia with her ability maintaineth herself in all honour, in spite of the bad example of her sisters, their father being away. She laugheth at her lover, and foreseeing the danger which overshadoweth her, she surpasseth it ; and at last the king's son taketh her to wife.

THE enjoyment of listening to the other stories was darkened by the sad end of the two unfortunate lovers, and the company stood silent for a while, just as if a daughter had been born. Thereupon the king said to Tolla that she should relate some pleasant tale, to moderate the affliction caused by the death of Renza and Cecio, and she, obedient to the command, ran on in the manner which followeth :

Man's good judgment is like unto a good lantern, which lighteth the night of the world's travail, and by its light deep chasms are passed without danger, and darksome passes without fear. Therefore it is better to have sound sense than money, for the last comes and goes, whilst the first is ready when most needed : of which thing ye will perceive a great experience in the person of Sapia the Glutton, who with the sure North wind of her judgment came forth in safety from the great gulf, and reached in security good port.

In times long gone before, there lived a very rich merchant, Marcone hight, who was blessed with three beautiful daughters, named Bella, Canzolla, and Sapia the Glutton. One day of the days he had to fare forth for certain merchandise, and well knowing that the eldest daughters were unruly and great flirts, he nailed down the windows, and gave rings to each, which possessed gems set in them that whosoever wore them on their fingers and behaved unseemingly the gems would change colour, and become like so many patches. No sooner had the father left behind him Villa-aperta (the land thus being hight), than they began an attempt to open the windows, and to look out of the small wickets, although Sapia the Glutton, who was the youngest, scolded, and cried that their house was not the abode of bad women, nor an orange store, nor a chamber-pot, to play these tricks and coquet with the neighbours.

Now vis-a-vis stood the palace of the king, and the king was blessed with three sons, Ceccariello, Grazullo, and Torre hight, who beholding these young damsels, began to sign with their eyes. From signs they came to handkissing, and from handkissing to words, and from words to promises, and from promises to facts, so that one evening when the sun, unwilling to contest with night, retires with his income, the three sons scaled the walls, and entered the house where the sisters dwelt, and the two elder brothers taking the two elder sisters retired, and Torre was seizing Sapia the Glutton, when she slid from his hold like an eel, and shut herself up within a chamber, bolting the door in such fashion that it was impossible to open it. The unhappy boy was constrained to count his brothers' mouthfuls: and whilst the two loaded the sacks at the mill, he held the mule. But when morning came,

and the birds, trumpeters of the dawn, blew the up-in-saddle, so that the hours should mount the steed of day, the two elder brothers departed highly pleased and cheerful, having satisfied their desire, but the younger fared forth disconsolate at having spent so bad a night.

Now the two sisters became with child and had an ill time, and Sapia the Glutton reproached them severely, as they grew rounder from day to day. She puffed out to them from hour to hour, always coming to the conclusion that their drum-like bellies would bring unto them ruin and war, and that when their sire should return there would be a fine sheep-dance. In the meanwhile Torre's desire grew, partly for Sapia's beauty, and partly because he felt spited and ashamed, and he took counsel with the elder sisters, and they agreed to concert a device together so as to cause her to fall in the trap set for her, when least she expected it. They would have brought her to the pass of seeking for him even in his own house. Therefore one day calling Sapia, they said to her, 'O my sister, what is done cannot be undone, and if advice were paid for, it would cost more, and would be more esteemed. If we had but listened sagely to thy words, we would not have ruined the honour of our house, nor filled our bellies, as thou hast seen; but to what is done there is no remedy, and the knife hath entered up to the handle. Things have gone too far, the goose's beak is made; but nathless we cannot suppose that thine anger will be so great as to desire us out of the world; and if not on our account, at least for the sake of these unborn creatures that we bear in our womb, thou wilt be moved to compassion of our sad state.' 'Heaven knoweth,' answered Sapia the Glutton, 'how my heart doth weep for this error ye have done, thinking of the present shame, and of the trouble

which awaiteth you when our father shall return and find this wrong done in his house ; and I would give a finger of mine hand, that such a thing should not have happened. But as the devil hath blinded you, I will try and do what I can. Enough that my honour is safe, as blood cannot be changed into milk or water, and, after all, the flesh draweth me to pity your case, and I would lay down my life to remedy this deed.' When Sapia ended speaking, the sisters replied, 'We desire naught else as a token of thine affection, but that thou gain for us some of the bread eaten by the king ; because we long for it with such a longing, that if we do not satisfy this our want, we fear that a loaf may be found on the nip of our children's noses when they be born ; therefore if thou art a Christian, to-morrow morning, when 'tis yet dark, we will lower thee through the window whence came up the king's sons, and we will disguise thee as a beggar, and thou shalt not be known.' Sapia the Glutton, feeling compassion for the little ones, donned a ragged raiment, and slinging a linen bag across her chest, with a comb hanging behind her, when the sun lifteth the trophies of light in sign of the victory gained against the night, was lowered through the window, and she wended toward the king's palace and begged some bread, and when she had received the alms and was ready to retire, Torre, who was in the secret of this trap, knew her at once and tried to seize her, and she turning her back, his hand struck against the comb, and he tore and scratched his hand, so that he was maimed for a few days.

The sisters, having received the bread, had assuaged their desire for it. But hunger gnawed the vitals of the wretched Torre, and they conferred together once more, and in two or three days again the sisters turned to

Sapia, telling her that they longed for two pears from the king's garden, and the good sister, arraying herself in another disguise, went to the royal gardens, where she met the king's son. Sighting her and hearing what she sought, he himself climbed the tree, and cast down some pears to Sapia. But when he was going to descend to get hold of her, she withdrew the ladder from under the tree, leaving him to keep company with the owls, and if a gardener had not chanced to pass that way to gather a couple of cabbage-lettuces, and perceiving what had happened, helped him to descend, he might have stayed there all night, for which reason he bit his nails and threatened to avenge himself, in great wrath.

Now as Heaven would have it, the two sisters of Sapia were brought to bed, and they gave birth to two beauteous boys, and they sent for Sapia and said to her, 'We are ruined, O our beautiful sister, if thou resolvest not to help us ; because our sire cannot tarry long now in his return, and finding this bad service in the house, the least that he will do, is to cut our ears ; therefore do thou fare below, and we will lower the two children in a basket, and thou shalt carry them to their sires, so that they may take every care of them.' Sapia the Glutton had a tender heart full of love, and although she thought it hard to do this work for the stupidity of her sisters, still she allowed them to persuade her to go down, and then they lowered the children, and she carried them to the princes' chambers. The fathers not being there, she laid a child upon each bed, and having discovered which was Torre's chamber, she laid a large stone upon his bed, and then returned home. When the princes came to their chambers, and found these charming children with the names of their sires written on a slip of paper and



sewn upon the breast, they were pleased and joyful, and Torre was annoyed and vexed, because he had not been thought worthy to have an offspring. And when he retired to rest he threw himself upon the bed, and knocked against the stone in such a way that he gained a good contusion. Such was their case.

Meanwhile the merchant, returning from his travels, and looking at the rings he had given to his daughters, perceived that the two of the elder sisters were soiled and darkened, and he was wroth with exceeding wrath, and did most wild deeds, and was about to lay hand upon sword to torture and beat them well, so as to discover the truth, when the king's sons demanded the daughters in marriage. Not knowing what had taken place between them, he believed himself scorned. At last he heard what had passed, and of both of the children, and held himself happy and fortunate that it had come to a good ending. And the night was appointed for the bridal. Sapia, knowing the cark and care that she had caused to Torre, although he had asked her hand in marriage with great eagerness, and that all herbs are not mint, and that the mantle is not hairless, at once made a beautiful statue of pastry and sugar, and laying it within a basket, covered it with some raiment. In the evening there being festivals, and balls, and joyances, she sought an excuse, and retired to rest before the others, saying that she was over tired, and she went to the bedside, and bidding them bring her the basket, saying that it held a change of raiment, bade them retire, and when she was alone, she took out the statue, and laying it between the sheets, she hid herself behind the screen awaiting the issue of events. The hour came at last when the brides and bridegrooms retired to their

chambers, and Torre, coming to his bed, and believing that Sapia was lying in it, said, 'Now shalt thou pay me, O ungrateful bitch, for all the anguish and heart-sore thou hast caused me; now shalt thou perceive what it is for a cricket to compete with an elephant; now shalt thou pay for all, and I will make thee remember the comb in the linen bag, the ladder taken from under the tree, and the other tricks thou hast played me.' And saying thus he drew a poignard from his side, and struck the statue through and through, and not satisfied with this, said, 'And I will even drink thy blood.' And withdrawing the poignard from the statue, he laid it on his mouth and licked it, and tasting its sweetness, and the scent of musk which came from it, he repented that he had been so cruel as to slay such a sweet damsel, and he began to weep and lament for his fury, speaking words which would have melted a stone; saying that his heart must have been made of gall, and the knife a poisoned one, which could have wounded such a beautiful being. After lamenting, and crying, and weeping, driven by despair he raised the same weapon to slay himself; but Sapia quickly came forward and held his hand, saying, 'Hold thine hand, O Torre, here is a slice of the one thou art weeping for, here am I alive, and in perfect health, and desiring to see thee alive and green. Take me not for a ram's hide. If I have annoyed thee and caused thee displeasure, it was only to try thy constancy, and prove thy truth; this last deceit was done to remedy the furies of thine angered heart, and therefore I beg thee to pardon me for my past deeds.' Torre embraced her with great affection and love, and made her lie by his side, and they made their peace, and their enjoyment was all the sweeter after the

past travail, and he esteemed the more the retirement  
of his wife than the overmuch readiness of his sisters-in-  
law, because, as saith the poet,

‘Nor naked Venus, nor Diana dressed,  
The middle course is ever prizèd most.’