

THE DECAMERON

(Volume II)

[Illustrated]

By

Giovanni Boccaccio

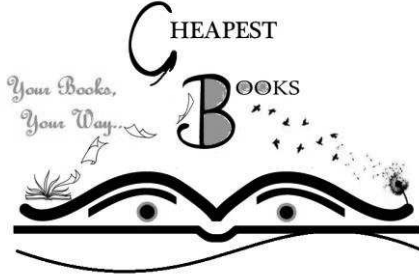
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Contents

Giovanni Boccaccio 6

THE AUTHOR'S EPILOGUE. 21

FIFTH DAY 28

NOVEL I. 29

NOVEL II. 43

NOVEL III. 51

NOVEL IV. 61

NOVEL V. 68

NOVEL VI. 76

NOVEL VII. 83

NOVEL VIII. 93

NOVEL IX. 99

NOVEL X. 107

SIXTH DAY 124

NOVEL I. 124

NOVEL II. 127

NOVEL III. 132

NOVEL IV. 136

NOVEL V. 140

NOVEL VI. 143

NOVEL VII. 147

NOVEL VIII. 151

NOVEL IX. 153

NOVEL X. 156

SEVENTH DAY 177

NOVEL I. 177

NOVEL II. 184

NOVEL III. 190

NOVEL IV. 197

NOVEL V. 203

NOVEL VI. 213

NOVEL VII. 218

NOVEL VIII. 226

NOVEL IX. 236

NOVEL X. 249

EIGHTH DAY 258

NOVEL I. 258

NOVEL II. 263

NOVEL IV. 280

NOVEL V. 287

NOVEL VI. 291

NOVEL VII. 299

NOVEL VIII. 327

NOVEL IX. 333

NOVEL X. 353

NINETH DAY 372

NOVEL I. 372

NOVEL II. 379

NOVEL III. 383

NOVEL IV. 389

NOVEL V. 395

NOVEL VI. 405

NOVEL VII. 411

NOVEL VIII. 414

NOVEL IX. 419

NOVEL X. 426

TENTH DAY 434

NOVEL I. 434

NOVEL II. 438

NOVEL III. 444

NOVEL IV. 452

NOVEL V. 461

NOVEL VI. 467

NOVEL VII. 475

NOVEL VIII. 485

NOVEL IX. 508

NOVEL X. 530

Giovanni Boccaccio



Giovanni Boccaccio (1313–1375) was an Italian writer, poet, correspondent of Petrarch, and an important Renaissance humanist. Boccaccio wrote a number of notable works, including *The Decameron* and *On Famous Women*. As a poet who wrote in the Italian vernacular, Boccaccio is particularly noted for his realistic dialogue, which differed from that of his contemporaries, medieval writers who usually followed formulaic models for character and plot.

Short Biography:

The details of Boccaccio's birth are uncertain. He was born in Florence or in a village near Certaldo where his family was from. He was the son of a Florentine merchant, Boccaccino di Chelino, and an unknown woman; he was likely born out of wedlock. Boccaccio's stepmother was called Margherita de' Mardoli.

Early life

Boccaccio grew up in Florence. His father worked for the Compagnia dei Bardi and in the 1320s married Margherita dei Mardoli, who was of a well-to-do family. Boccaccio may have been tutored by Giovanni Mazzuoli and received from him an early introduction to the works of Dante. In 1326, when his father was appointed head of a bank, Boccaccio moved with his family to Naples. Boccaccio was an apprentice at the bank but disliked the banking profession. He persuaded his father to let him study law at the *Studium*, where for the next six years he studied canon law. He also pursued his interest in scientific and literary studies.

His father introduced him to the Neapolitan nobility and the French-influenced court of Robert the Wise (the king of Naples) in the 1330s. At this time he fell in love with a married daughter of the

king, who is portrayed as "*Fiammetta*" in many of Boccaccio's prose romances, including *Il Filocolo* (1338). Boccaccio became a friend of fellow Florentine Niccolò Acciaiuoli, and benefited from his influence as the administrator, and perhaps the lover, of Catherine of Valois-Courtenay, widow of Philip I of Taranto. Acciaiuoli later became counselor to Queen Joan I of Naples and, eventually, her *Grand Seneschal*.

It seems Boccaccio enjoyed law no more than banking, but his studies allowed him the opportunity to study widely and make good contacts with fellow scholars. His early influences included Paolo da Perugia (a curator and author of a collection of myths, the *Collectiones*), the humanists Barbato da Sulmona and Giovanni Barrili, and the theologian Dionigi di Borgo San Sepolcro.

On his request, his mentor, Petrarch translated the two great epics of **Homer**, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, in Latin.

—DETAILED CONTENTS—

- FIFTH DAY -

NOVEL I. - Cimon, by loving, waxes wise, wins his wife Iphigenia by capture on the high seas, and is imprisoned at Rhodes. He is delivered by Lysimachus; and the twain capture Cassandra and recapture Iphigenia in the hour of their marriage. They flee with their ladies to Crete, and having there married them, are brought back to their homes.

NOVEL II. - Gostanza loves Martuccio Gomito, and hearing that he is dead, gives way to despair, and hies her alone aboard a boat, which is wafted by the wind to Susa. She finds him alive in Tunis, and makes herself known to him, who, having by his counsel gained high place in the king's favour, marries her, and returns with her wealthy to Lipari.

NOVEL III. - Pietro Boccamazza runs away with Agnolella, and encounters a gang of robbers: the girl takes refuge in a wood, and is guided to a castle. Pietro is taken, but escapes out of the hands of the robbers, and after some adventures arrives at the castle where Agnolella is, marries her, and returns with her to Rome.

NOVEL IV. - Ricciardo Manardi is found by Messer Lizio da Valbona with his daughter, whom he marries, and remains at peace with her father.

NOVEL V. - Guidotto da Cremona dies leaving a girl to Giacomino da Pavia. She has two lovers in Faenza, to wit, Giannole di Severino and Minghino di Mingole, who fight about her. She is discovered to be Giannole's sister, and is given to Minghino to wife.

NOVEL VI. - Gianni di Procida, being found with a damsel that he loves, and who had been given to King Frederic, is bound with her to a stake, so to be burned. He is recognized by Ruggieri dell' Oria, is delivered, and marries her.

NOVEL VII. - Teodoro, being enamoured of Violante, daughter of Messer Amerigo, his lord, gets her with child, and is sentenced to the gallows; but while he is being scourged thither, he is recognized by his father, and being set at large, takes Violante to wife.

NOVEL VIII. - Nastagio degli Onesti, loving a damsel of the Traversari family, by lavish expenditure gains not her love. At the instance of his kinsfolk he hies him to Chiassi, where he sees a knight hunt a damsel and slay her and cause her to be devoured by two dogs. He bids his kinsfolk and the lady that he loves to breakfast. During the meal the said damsel is torn in pieces before the eyes of the lady, who, fearing a like fate, takes Nastagio to husband.

NOVEL IX. - Federigo degli Alberighi loves and is not loved in return: he wastes his substance by lavishness until nought is left but a single falcon, which, his lady being come to see him at his house, he gives her to eat: she, knowing his case, changes her mind, takes him to husband and makes him rich.

NOVEL X. - Pietro di Vinciolo goes from home to sup: his wife brings a boy into the house to bear her company: Pietro returns, and she hides her gallant under a hen-coop: Pietro explains that in the house of Ercolano, with whom he was to have supped, there was discovered a young man bestowed there by Ercolano's wife: the lady thereupon censures Ercolano's wife: but unluckily an ass treads on the fingers of

the boy that is hidden under the hen-coop, so that he cries for pain: Pietro runs to the place, sees him, and apprehends the trick played on him by his wife, which nevertheless he finally condones, for that he is not himself free from blame.

- SIXTH DAY -

NOVEL I. - A knight offers to carry Madonna Oretta a horseback with a story, but tells it so ill that she prays him to dismount her.

NOVEL II. - Cisti, a baker, by an apt speech gives Messer Geri Spina to know that he has by inadvertence asked that of him which he should not.

NOVEL III. - Monna Nonna de' Pulci by a ready retort silences the scarce seemly jesting of the Bishop of Florence.

NOVEL IV. - Chichibio, cook to Currado Gianfigliuzzi, owes his safety to a ready answer, whereby he converts Currado's wrath into laughter, and evades the evil fate with which Currado had threatened him.

NOVEL V. - Messer Forese da Rabatta and Master Giotto, the painter, journeying together from Mugello, deride one another's scurvy appearance.

NOVEL VI. - Michele Scalza proves to certain young men that the Baronci are the best gentlemen in the world and the Maremma, and wins a supper.

NOVEL VII. - Madonna Filippa, being found by her husband with her lover, is cited before the court, and by a ready and jocund answer acquits herself, and brings about an alteration of the statute.

NOVEL VIII. - Fresco admonishes his niece not to look at herself in the glass, if 'tis, as she says, grievous to her to see nasty folk.

NOVEL IX. - Guido Cavalcanti by a quip meetly rebukes certain Florentine gentlemen who had taken him at a disadvantage.

NOVEL X. - Fra Cipolla promises to shew certain country-folk a feather of the Angel Gabriel, in lieu of which he finds coals, which he avers to be of those with which St. Lawrence was roasted.

- SEVENTH DAY -

NOVEL I. - Gianni Lotteringhi hears a knocking at his door at night: he awakens his wife, who persuades him that 'tis the bogey, which they fall to exorcising with a prayer; whereupon the knocking ceases.

NOVEL II. - Her husband returning home, Peronella bestows her lover in a tun; which, being sold by her husband, she avers to have been already sold by herself to one that is inside examining it to set if it be sound. Whereupon the lover jumps out, and causes the husband to scour the tun for him, and afterwards to carry it to his house.

NOVEL III. - Fra Rinaldo lies with his gossip: her husband finds him in the room with her; and they make him believe that he was curing his godson of worms by a charm.

NOVEL IV. - Tofano one night locks his wife out of the house: she, finding that by no entreaties may she prevail upon him to let her in, feigns to throw herself into a well, throwing therein a great stone. Tofano hies him forth of the

house, and runs to the spot: she goes into the house, and locks him out, and hurls abuse at him from within.

NOVEL V. - A jealous husband disguises himself as a priest, and hears his own wife's confession: she tells him that she loves a priest, who comes to her every night. The husband posts himself at the door to watch for the priest, and meanwhile the lady brings her lover in by the roof, and tarries with him.

NOVEL VI. - Madonna Isabella has with her Leonetto, her accepted lover, when she is surprised by one Messer Lambertuccio, by whom she is beloved: her husband coming home about the same time, she sends Messer Lambertuccio forth of the house drawn sword in hand, and the husband afterwards escorts Leonetto home.

NOVEL VII. - Lodovico discovers to Madonna Beatrice the love that he bears her: she sends Egano, her husband, into a garden disguised as herself, and lies with Lodovico; who thereafter, being risen, hies him to the garden and cudgels Egano.

NOVEL VIII. - A husband grows jealous of his wife, and discovers that she has warning of her lover's approach by a piece of pack-thread, which she ties to her great toe a nights. While he is pursuing her lover, she puts another woman in bed in her place. The husband, finding her there, beats her, and cuts off her hair. He then goes and calls his wife's brothers, who, holding his accusation to be false, give him a rating.

NOVEL IX. - Lydia, wife of Nicostratus, loves Pyrrhus, who to assure himself thereof, asks three things of her, all of which she does, and therewithal enjoys him in presence of

Nicostratus, and makes Nicostratus believe that what he saw was not real.

NOVEL X. - Two Sienese love a lady, one of them being her gossip: the gossip dies, having promised his comrade to return to him from the other world; which he does, and tells him what sort of life is led there.

- EIGHTH DAY -

NOVEL I. - Gulfardo borrows moneys of Guasparruolo, which he has agreed to give Guasparruolo's wife, that he may lie with her. He gives them to her, and in her presence tells Guasparruolo that he has done so, and she acknowledges that 'tis true.

NOVEL II. - The priest of Varlungo lies with Monna Belcolore: he leaves with her his cloak by way of pledge, and receives from her a mortar. He returns the mortar, and demands of her the cloak that he had left in pledge, which the good lady returns him with a gibe.

NOVEL III. - Calandrino, Bruno and Buffalmacco go in quest of the heliotrope beside the Mugnone. Thinking to have found it, Calandrino gets him home laden with stones. His wife chides him: whereat he waxes wroth, beats her, and tells his comrades what they know better than he.

NOVEL IV. - The rector of Fiesole loves a widow lady, by whom he is not loved, and thinking to lie with her, lies with her maid, with whom the lady's brothers cause him to be found by his Bishop.

NOVEL V. - Three young men pull down the breeches of a judge from the Marches, while he is administering justice on the bench.

NOVEL VI. - Bruno and Buffalmacco steal a pig from Calandrino, and induce him to essay its recovery by means of pills of ginger and vernaccia. Of the said pills they give him two, one after the other, made of dog-ginger compounded with aloes; and it then appearing as if he had had the pig himself, they constrain him to buy them off, if he would not have them tell his wife.

NOVEL VII. - A scholar loves a widow lady, who, being enamoured of another, causes him to spend a winter's night awaiting her in the snow. He afterwards by a stratagem causes her to stand for a whole day in July, naked upon a tower, exposed to the flies, the gadflies, and the sun.

NOVEL VIII. - Two men keep with one another: the one lies with the other's wife: the other, being ware thereof, manages with the aid of his wife to have the one locked in a chest, upon which he then lies with the wife of him that is locked therein.

NOVEL IX. - Bruno and Buffalmacco prevail upon Master Simone, a physician, to betake him by night to a certain place, there to be enrolled in a company that go the course. Buffalmacco throws him into a foul ditch, and there they leave him.

NOVEL X. - A Sicilian woman cunningly conveys from a merchant that which he has brought to Palermo; he, making a shew of being come back thither with far greater store of goods than before, borrows money of her, and leaves her in lieu thereof water and tow.

- NINTH DAY -

NOVEL I. - Madonna Francesca, having two lovers, the one Rinuccio, the other Alessandro, by name, and loving neither of them, induces the one to simulate a corpse in a tomb, and the other to enter the tomb to fetch him out: whereby, neither satisfying her demands, she artfully rids herself of both.

NOVEL II. - An abbess rises in haste and in the dark, with intent to surprise an accused nun abed with her lover: thinking to put on her veil, she puts on instead the breeches of a priest that she has with her: the nun, espying her headgear, and doing her to wit thereof, is acquitted, and thenceforth finds it easier to forgo with her lover.

NOVEL III. - Master Simone, at the instance of Bruno and Buffalmacco and Nello, makes Calandrino believe that he is with child. Calandrino, accordingly, gives them capons and money for medicines, and is cured without being delivered.

NOVEL IV. - Cecco, son of Messer Fortarrigo, loses his all at play at Buonconvento, besides the money of Cecco, son of Messer Angiulieri, whom, running after him in his shirt and crying out that he has robbed him, he causes to be taken by peasants: he then puts on his clothes, mounts his palfrey, and leaves him to follow in his shirt.

NOVEL V. - Calandrino being enamoured of a damsel, Bruno gives him a scroll, averring that, if he but touch her therewith, she will go with him: he is found with her by his wife, who subjects him to a most severe and vexatious examination.

NOVEL VI. - Two young men lodge at an inn, of whom the one lies with the host's daughter, his wife by inadvertence lying with the other. He that lay with the daughter afterwards gets into her father's bed and tells him all, taking him to be his comrade. They bandy words: whereupon the good woman, apprehending the circumstances, gets her to bed with her daughter, and by divers apt words re-establishes perfect accord.

NOVEL VII. - Talano di Molese dreams that a wolf tears and rends all the neck and face of his wife: he gives her warning thereof, which she heeds not, and the dream comes true.

NOVEL VIII. - Biondello gulls Ciacco in the matter of a breakfast: for which prank Ciacco is cunningly avenged on Biondello, causing him to be shamefully beaten.

NOVEL IX. - Two young men ask counsel of Solomon; the one, how he is to make himself beloved, the other, how he is to reduce an unruly wife to order. The King bids the one to love, and the other to go to the Bridge of Geese.

NOVEL X. - Dom Gianni at the instance of his gossip Pietro uses an enchantment to transform Pietro's wife into a mare; but, when he comes to attach the tail, Gossip Pietro, by saying that he will have none of the tail, makes the enchantment of no effect.

- TENTH DAY -

NOVEL I. - A knight in the service of the King of Spain deems himself ill requited. Wherefore the King, by most cogent proof, shews him that the blame rests not with him, but

with the knight's own evil fortune; after which, he bestows upon him a noble gift.

NOVEL II. - Ghino di Tacco, captures the Abbot of Cluny, cures him of a disorder of the stomach, and releases him. The abbot, on his return to the court of Rome, reconciles Ghino with Pope Boniface, and makes him prior of the Hospital.

NOVEL III. - Mitridanes, holding Nathan in despite by reason of his courtesy, journey with intent to kill him, and falling in with him unawares, is advised by him how to compass his end. Following his advice, he finds him in a copse, and recognizing him, is shame-stricken, and becomes his friend.

NOVEL IV. - Messer Gentile de' Carisendi, being come from Modena, disinters a lady that he loves, who has been buried for dead. She, being reanimated, gives birth to a male child; and Messer Gentile restores her, with her son, to Niccoluccio Caccianimico, her husband.

NOVEL V. - Madonna Dianora craves of Messer Ansaldo a garden that shall be as fair in January as in May. Messer Ansaldo binds himself to a necromancer, and thereby gives her the garden. Her husband gives her leave to do Messer Ansaldo's pleasure: he, being apprised of her husband's liberality, releases her from her promise; and the necromancer releases Messer Ansaldo from his bond, and will tale nought of his.

NOVEL VI. - King Charles the Old, being conqueror, falls in love with a young maiden, and afterward growing ashamed of his folly bestows her and her sister honourably in marriage.

NOVEL VII. - King Pedro, being apprised of the fervent love borne him by Lisa, who thereof is sick, comforts her, and forthwith gives her in marriage to a young gentleman, and having kissed her on the brow, ever after professes himself her knight.

NOVEL VIII. - Sophronia, albeit she deems herself wife to Gisippus, is wife to Titus Quintius Fulvus, and goes with him to Rome, where Gisippus arrives in indigence, and deeming himself scorned by Titus, to compass his own death, avers that he has slain a man. Titus recognizes him, and to save his life, alleges that 'twas he that slew the man: whereof he that did the deed being witness, he discovers himself as the murderer. Whereby it comes to pass that they are all three liberated by Octavianus; and Titus gives Gisippus his sister to wife, and shares with him all his substance.

NOVEL IX. - Saladin, in guise of a merchant, is honourably entreated by Messer Torello. The Crusade ensuing, Messer Torello appoints a date, after which his wife may marry again: he is taken prisoner, and by training hawks comes under the Soldan's notice. The Soldan recognizes him, makes himself known to him, and entreats him with all honour. Messer Torello falls sick, and by magic arts is transported in a single night to Pavia, where his wife's second marriage is then to be solemnized, and being present thereat, is recognized by her, and returns with her to his house.

NOVEL X. - The Marquis of Saluzzo, overborne by the entreaties of his vassals, consents to take a wife, but, being minded to please himself in the choice of her, takes a husbandman's daughter. He has two children by her, both of whom he makes her believe that he has put to death. After-

ward, feigning to be tired of her, and to have taken another wife, he turns her out of doors in her shift, and brings his daughter into the house in guise of his bride; but, finding her patient under it all, he brings her home again, and shews her her children, now grown up, and honours her, and causes her to be honoured, as Marchioness.

THE AUTHOR'S EPILOGUE.

Most noble damsels, for whose solace I addressed me to this long and toilsome task, meseems that, aided by the Divine grace, the bestowal whereof I impute to the efficacy of your pious prayers, and in no wise to merits of mine, I have now brought this work to the full and perfect consummation which in the outset thereof I promised you. Wherefore, it but remains for me to render, first to God, and then to you, my thanks, and so to give a rest to my pen and weary hand. But this I purpose not to allow them, until, briefly, as to questions tacitly mooted—for well assured I am that these stories have no especial privilege above any others, nay, I forget not that at the beginning of the Fourth Day I have made the same plain—I shall have answered certain trifling objections that one of you, maybe, or some other, might advance. Peradventure, then, some of you will be found to say that I have used excessive license in the writing of these stories, in that I have caused ladies at times to tell, and oftentimes to list, matters that, whether to tell or to list, do not well beseem virtuous women. The which I deny, for that there is none of these stories so unseemly, but that it may without offence be told by any one, if but seemly words be used; which rule, methinks, has here been very well observed. But assume we that 'tis even so (for with you I am not minded to engage in argument, witting that you would vanquish me), then, I say that for answer why I have so done, reasons many come very readily to hand. In the first place, if aught of the kind in any of these stories there be, 'twas but such as was de-

manded by the character of the stories, which let but any person of sound judgment scan with the eye of reason, and 'twill be abundantly manifest that, unless I had been minded to deform them, they could not have been otherwise recounted. And if, perchance, they do, after all, contain here and there a trifling indiscretion of speech, such as might ill sort with one of your precious prudes, who weigh words rather than deeds, and are more concerned to appear, than to be, good, I say that so to write was as permissible to me, as 'tis to men and women at large in their converse to make use of such terms as hole, and pin, and mortar, and pestle, and sausage, and polony, and plenty more besides of a like sort. And therewithal privilege no less should be allowed to my pen than to the pencil of the painter, who without incurring any, or at least any just, censure, not only will depict St. Michael smiting the serpent, or St. George the dragon, with sword or lance at his discretion; but male he paints us Christ, and female Eve, and His feet that for the salvation of our race willed to die upon the cross he fastens thereto, now with one, now with two nails.

Moreover, 'tis patent to all that 'twas not in the Church, of matters whereto pertaining 'tis meet we speak with all purity of heart and seemliness of phrase, albeit among her histories there are to be found not a few that will ill compare with my writings; nor yet in the schools of the philosophers, where, as much as anywhere, seemliness is demanded, nor in any place where clergy or philosophers congregate, but in gardens, in pleasaunces, and among folk, young indeed, but not so young as to be seducible by stories, and at a time when, if so one might save one's life, the most sedate might without disgrace walk abroad with his breeches for head-

gear, that these stories were told. Which stories, such as they are, may, like all things else, be baneful or profitable according to the quality of the hearer. Who knows not that wine is, as Cinciglione and Scolaio(1) and many another aver, an excellent thing for the living creature, and yet noxious to the fevered patient? Are we, for the mischief it does to the fever-stricken, to say that 'tis a bad thing? Who knows not that fire is most serviceable, nay, necessary, to mortals? Are we to say that, because it burns houses and villages and cities, it is a bad thing? Arms, in like manner, are the safeguard of those that desire to live in peace, and also by them are men not seldom maliciously slain, albeit the malice is not in them, but in those that use them for a malicious purpose. Corrupt mind did never yet understand any word in a wholesome sense; and as such a mind has no profit of seemingly words, so such as are scarce seemingly may as little avail to contaminate a healthy mind as mud the radiance of the sun, or the deformities of earth the splendours of the heavens. What books, what words, what letters, are more sacred, more excellent, more venerable, than those of Holy Writ? And yet there have been not a few that, perversely construing them, have brought themselves and others to perdition. Everything is in itself good for somewhat, and being put to a bad purpose, may work manifold mischief. And so, I say, it is with my stories. If any man shall be minded to draw from them matters of evil tendency or consequence, they will not gainsay him, if, perchance, such matters there be in them, nor will such matters fail to be found in them, if they be wrested and distorted. Nor, if any shall seek profit and reward in them, will they deny him the same; and censured or accounted as less than profitable and seemingly they can never be, if the times or the persons when and by whom they are

read be such as when they were recounted. If any lady must needs say paternosters or make cakes or tarts for her holy father, let her leave them alone; there is none after whom they will run a begging to be read: howbeit, there are little matters that even the beguines tell, ay, and do, now and again.

In like manner there will be some who will say that there are stories here which 'twere better far had been omitted. Granted; but 'twas neither in my power, nor did it behove me, to write any but such stories as were narrated; wherefore, 'twas for those by whom they were told to have a care that they were proper; in which case they would have been no less so as I wrote them. But, assuming that I not only wrote but invented the stories, as I did not, I say that I should take no shame to myself that they were not all proper; seeing that artist there is none to be found, save God, that does all things well and perfectly. And Charlemagne, albeit he created the Paladins, wist not how to make them in such numbers as to form an army of them alone. It must needs be that in the multitude of things there be found diversities of quality. No field was ever so well tilled but that here and there nettle, or thistle, or brier would be found in it amid the goodlier growths. Whereto I may add that, having to address me to young and unlearned ladies, as you for the most part are, I should have done foolishly, had I gone about searching and swinking to find matters very exquisite, and been sedulous to speak with great precision. However, whoso goes a reading among these stories, let him pass over those that vex him, and read those that please him. That none may be misled, each bears on its brow the epitome of that which it hides within its bosom.

Again, I doubt not there will be such as will say that some of the stories are too long. To whom, once more, I answer, that whoso has aught else to do would be foolish to read them, albeit they were short. And though, now that I approach the end of my labours, 'tis long since I began to write, I am not, therefore, oblivious that 'twas to none but leisured ladies that I made proffer of my pains; nor can aught be long to him that reads but to pass the time, so only he thereby accomplish his purpose. Succinctness were rather to be desired by students, who are at pains not merely to pass, but usefully to employ, their time, than by you, who have as much time at your disposal as you spend not in amorous delights. Besides which, as none of you goes either to Athens, or to Bologna, or to Paris to study, 'tis meet that what is meant for you should be more diffuse than what is to be read by those whose minds have been refined by scholarly pursuits.

Nor make I any doubt but there are yet others who will say that the said stories are too full of jests and merry conceits, and that it ill beseems a man of weight and gravity to have written on such wise. To these I am bound to render, and do render, my thanks, for that, prompted by well-meant zeal, they have so tender a regard to my reputation. But to that, which they urge against me, I reply after this sort:— That I am of weight I acknowledge, having been often weighed in my time; wherefore, in answer to the fair that have not weighed me, I affirm that I am not of gravity; on the contrary I am so light that I float on the surface of the water; and considering that the sermons which the friars make, when they would chide folk for their sins, are to-day, for the most part, full of jests and merry conceits, and drolleries, I

deemed that the like stuff would not ill beseem my stories, written, as they were, to banish women's dumps. However, if thereby they should laugh too much, they may be readily cured thereof by the Lament of Jeremiah, the Passion of the Saviour, or the Complaint of the Magdalen.

And who shall question but that yet others there are who will say that I have an evil tongue and venomous, because here and there I tell the truth about the friars? Now for them that so say there is forgiveness, for that 'tis not to be believed but that they have just cause; seeing that the friars are good folk, and eschew hardship for the love of God, and grind intermittently, and never blab; and, were they not all a trifle malodorous, intercourse with them would be much more agreeable. Nevertheless, I acknowledge that the things of this world have no stability, but are ever undergoing change; and this may have befallen my tongue, albeit, no great while ago, one of my fair neighbours—for in what pertains to myself I trust not my own judgment, but forgo it to the best of my power—told me 'twas the goodliest and sweetest tongue in the world; and in sooth, when this occurred, few of the said stories were yet to write; nor, for that those who so tax me do it despitefully, am I minded to vouchsafe them any further answer.

So, then, be every lady at liberty to say and believe whatever she may think fit: but 'tis now time for me to bring these remarks to a close, with humble thanks to Him, by whose help and guidance I, after so long travail, have been brought to the desired goal. And may you, sweet my ladies, rest ever in His grace and peace; and be not unmindful of me, if, peradventure, any of you may, in any measure, have been profited by reading these stories.

(1) Noted toppers of the day.

FIFTH DAY

— Endeth here the fourth day of the Decameron, beginneth the fifth, in which under the rule of Fiammetta discourse is had of good fortune befalling lovers after divers direful or disastrous adventures. —

All the east was white, nor any part of our hemisphere unilluminated by the rising beams, when the carolling of the birds that in gay chorus saluted the dawn among the boughs induced Fiammetta to rise and rouse the other ladies and the three gallants; with whom adown the hill and about the dewy meads of the broad champaign she sauntered, talking gaily of divers matters, until the sun had attained some height. Then, feeling his rays grow somewhat scorching, they retraced their steps, and returned to the villa; where, having repaired their slight fatigue with excellent wines and comfits, they took their pastime in the pleasant garden until the breakfast hour; when, all things being made ready by the discreet seneschal, they, after singing a stampita,⁽¹⁾ and a balladette or two, gaily, at the queen's behest, sat them down to eat. Meetly ordered and gladsome was the meal, which done, heedful of their rule of dancing, they trod a few short measures with accompaniment of music and song. Thereupon, being all dismissed by the queen until after the siesta, some hied them to rest, while others tarried taking their pleasure in the fair garden. But shortly after none, all, at the queen's behest, reassembled, according to their wont, by the fountain; and the queen, having seated herself on her throne, glanced towards Pamfilo, and bade him with a smile lead off with the stories of good fortune. Whereto Pamfilo gladly addressed himself, and thus began.

(1) A song accompanied by music, but without dancing.

NOVEL I.



— **C**imon, by loving, waxes wise, wins his wife Iphigenia by capture on the high seas, and is imprisoned at Rhodes. He is delivered by Lysimachus; and the twain capture Cassandra and recapture Iphigenia in the hour of their marriage. They flee with their ladies to Crete, and having there married them, are brought back to their homes. —

Many stories, sweet my ladies, occur to me as meet for me to tell by way of ushering in a day so joyous as this will be: of which one does most commend itself to my mind, because not only has it, one of those happy endings of which to-day we are in quest, but 'twill enable you to understand how holy, how mighty and how salutary are the forces of Love, which not a few, witting not what they say, do most unjustly reprobate and revile: which, if I err not, should to

you, for that I take you to be enamoured, be indeed welcome.

Once upon a time, then, as we have read in the ancient histories of the Cypriotes, there was in the island of Cyprus a very great noble named Aristippus, a man rich in all worldly goods beyond all other of his countrymen, and who might have deemed himself incomparably blessed, but for a single sore affliction that Fortune had allotted him. Which was that among his sons he had one, the best grown and handsomest of them all, that was well-nigh a hopeless imbecile. His true name was Galesus; but, as neither his tutor's pains, nor his father's coaxing or chastisement, nor any other method had availed to imbue him with any tincture of letters or manners, but he still remained gruff and savage of voice, and in his bearing liker to a beast than to a man, all, as in derision, were wont to call him Cimon, which in their language signifies the same as "bestione" (brute)(1) in ours. The father, grieved beyond measure to see his son's life thus blighted, and having abandoned all hope of his recovery, nor caring to have the cause of his mortification ever before his eyes, bade him betake him to the farm, and there keep with his husbandmen. To Cimon the change was very welcome, because the manners and habits of the uncouth hinds were more to his taste than those of the citizens. So to the farm Cimon hied him, and addressed himself to the work thereof; and being thus employed, he chanced one afternoon as he passed, staff on shoulder, from one domain to another, to enter a plantation, the like of which for beauty there was not in those parts, and which was then—for 'twas the month of May—a mass of greenery; and, as he traversed it, he came, as Fortune was pleased to guide him, to a meadow girt in

with trees exceeding tall, and having in one of its corners a fountain most fair and cool, beside which he espied a most beautiful girl lying asleep on the green grass, clad only in a vest of such fine stuff that it scarce in any measure veiled the whiteness of her flesh, and below the waist nought but an apron most white and fine of texture; and likewise at her feet there slept two women and a man, her slaves. No sooner did Cimon catch sight of her, than, as if he had never before seen form of woman, he stopped short, and leaning on his cudgel, regarded her intently, saying never a word, and lost in admiration. And in his rude soul, which, despite a thousand lessons, had hitherto remained impervious to every delight that belongs to urbane life, he felt the awakening of an idea, that bade his gross and coarse mind acknowledge, that this girl was the fairest creature that had ever been seen by mortal eye. And thereupon he began to distinguish her several parts, praising her hair, which shewed to him as gold, her brow, her nose and mouth, her throat and arms, and above all her bosom, which was as yet but in bud, and as he gazed, he changed of a sudden from a husbandman into a judge of beauty, and desired of all things to see her eyes, which the weight of her deep slumber kept close shut, and many a time he would fain have awakened her, that he might see them. But so much fairer seemed she to him than any other woman that he had seen, that he doubted she must be a goddess; and as he was not so devoid of sense but that he deemed things divine more worthy of reverence than things mundane, he forbore, and waited until she should awake of her own accord; and though he found the delay overlong, yet, enthralled by so unwonted a delight, he knew not how to be going. However, after he had tarried a long while, it so befell that Iphigenia—such was the girl's

name—her slaves still sleeping, awoke, and raised her head, and opened her eyes, and seeing Cimon standing before her, leaning on his staff, was not a little surprised, and said:—"Cimon, what seekest thou in this wood at this hour?" For Cimon she knew well, as indeed did almost all the country-side, by reason alike of his uncouth appearance as of the rank and wealth of his father. To Iphigenia's question he answered never a word; but as soon as her eyes were open, nought could he do but intently regard them, for it seemed to him that a soft influence emanated from them, which filled his soul with a delight that he had never before known. Which the girl marking began to misdoubt that by so fixed a scrutiny his boorish temper might be prompted to some act that should cause her dishonour: wherefore she roused her women, and got up, saying:—"Keep thy distance, Cimon, in God's name." Whereto Cimon made answer:—"I will come with thee." And, albeit the girl refused his escort, being still in fear of him, she could not get quit of him; but he attended her home; after which he hied him straight to his father's house, and announced that he was minded on no account to go back to the farm: which intelligence was far from welcome to his father and kinsmen; but nevertheless they suffered him to stay, and waited to see what might be the reason of his change of mind. So Cimon, whose heart, closed to all teaching, love's shaft, sped by the beauty of Iphigenia, had penetrated, did now graduate in wisdom with such celerity as to astonish his father and kinsmen, and all that knew him. He began by requesting his father to let him go clad in the like apparel, and with, in all respects, the like personal equipment as his brothers: which his father very gladly did. Mixing thus with the gallants, and becoming familiar with the manners proper to gentlemen, and especially to lovers, he very

soon, to the exceeding great wonder of all, not only acquired the rudiments of letters, but waxed most eminent among the philosophic wits. After which (for no other cause than the love he bore to Iphigenia) he not only modulated his gruff and boorish voice to a degree of smoothness suitable to urbane life, but made himself accomplished in singing and music; in riding also and in all matters belonging to war, as well by sea as by land, he waxed most expert and hardy. And in sum (that I go not about to enumerate each of his virtues in detail) he had not completed the fourth year from the day of his first becoming enamoured before he was grown the most gallant, and courteous, ay, and the most perfect in particular accomplishments, of the young cavaliers that were in the island of Cyprus. What then, gracious ladies, are we to say of Cimon? Verily nought else but that the high faculties, with which Heaven had endowed his noble soul, invidious Fortune had bound with the strongest of cords, and circumscribed within a very narrow region of his heart; all which cords Love, more potent than Fortune, burst and brake in pieces; and then with the might, wherewith he awakens dormant powers, he brought them forth of the cruel obfuscation, in which they lay, into clear light, plainly shewing thereby, whence he may draw, and whither he may guide, by his beams the souls that are subject to his sway.

Now, albeit by his love for Iphigenia Cimon was betrayed, as young lovers very frequently are, into some peccadillos, yet Aristippus, reflecting that it had turned him from a booby into a man, not only bore patiently with him, but exhorted him with all his heart to continue steadfast in his love. And Cimon, who still refused to be called Galesus, because 'twas as Cimon that Iphigenia had first addressed him, being de-

sirous to accomplish his desire by honourable means, did many a time urge his suit upon her father, Cipseus, that he would give her him to wife: whereto Cipseus always made the same answer, to wit, that he had promised her to Pasi-mondas, a young Rhodian noble, and was not minded to break faith with him. However, the time appointed for Iphigenia's wedding being come, and the bridegroom having sent for her, Cimon said to himself:—'Tis now for me to shew thee, O Iphigenia, how great is my love for thee: 'tis by thee that I am grown a man, nor doubt I, if I shall have thee, that I shall wax more glorious than a god, and verily thee will I have, or die. Having so said, he privily enlisted in his cause certain young nobles that were his friends, and secretly fitted out a ship with all equipment meet for combat, and put to sea on the look-out for the ship that was to bear Iphigenia to Rhodes and her husband. And at length, when her father had done lavishing honours upon her husband's friends, Iphigenia embarked, and, the mariners shaping their course for Rhodes, put to sea. Cimon was on the alert, and overhauled them the very next day, and standing on his ship's prow shouted amain to those that were aboard Iphigenia's ship:—"Bring to; strike sails, or look to be conquered and sunk in the sea." Then, seeing that the enemy had gotten their arms above deck, and were making ready to make a fight of it, he followed up his words by casting a grapnel upon the poop of the Rhodians, who were making great way; and having thus made their poop fast to his prow, he sprang, fierce as a lion, reckless whether he were followed or no, on to the Rhodians' ship, making, as it were, no account of them, and animated by love, hurled himself, sword in hand, with prodigious force among the enemy, and cutting and thrusting right and left, slaughtered them like sheep; inso-

much that the Rhodians, marking the fury of his onset, threw down their arms, and as with one voice did all acknowledge themselves his prisoners. To whom Cimon:—"Gallants," quoth he, "'twas neither lust of booty nor enmity to you that caused me to put out from Cyprus to attack you here with force of arms on the high seas. Moved was I thereto by that which to gain is to me a matter great indeed, which peaceably to yield me is to you but a slight matter; for 'tis even Iphigenia, whom more than aught else I love; whom, as I might not have her of her father in peaceable and friendly sort, Love has constrained me to take from you in this high-handed fashion and by force of arms; to whom I mean to be even such as would have been your Pasimondas: wherefore give her to me, and go your way, and God's grace go with you."

Yielding rather to force than prompted by generosity, the Rhodians surrendered Iphigenia, all tears, to Cimon; who, marking her tears, said to her:—"Grieve not, noble lady; thy Cimon am I, who, by my long love, have established a far better right to thee than Pasimondas by the faith that was plighted to him." So saying, he sent her aboard his ship, whither he followed her, touching nought that belonged to the Rhodians, and suffering them to go their way. To have gotten so dear a prize made him the happiest man in the world, but for a time 'twas all he could do to assuage her grief: then, after taking counsel with his comrades, he deemed it best not to return to Cyprus for the present: and so, by common consent they shaped their course for Crete, where most of them, and especially Cimon, had alliances of old or recent date, and friends not a few, whereby they deemed that there they might tarry with Iphigenia in security.

But Fortune, that had accorded Cimon so gladsome a capture of the lady, suddenly proved fickle, and converted the boundless joy of the enamoured gallant into woeful and bitter lamentation. 'Twas not yet full four hours since Cimon had parted from the Rhodians, when with the approach of night, that night from which Cimon hoped such joyance as he had never known, came weather most turbulent and tempestuous, which wrapped the heavens in cloud, and swept the sea with scathing blasts; whereby 'twas not possible for any to see how the ship was to be worked or steered, or to steady himself so as to do any duty upon her deck. Whereat what grief was Cimon's, it boots not to ask. Indeed it seemed to him that the gods had granted his heart's desire only that it might be harder for him to die, which had else been to him but a light matter. Not less downcast were his comrades; but most of all Iphigenia, who, weeping bitterly and shuddering at every wave that struck the ship, did cruelly curse Cimon's love and censure his rashness, averring that this tempest was come upon them for no other cause than that the gods had decreed, that, as 'twas in despite of their will that he purposed to espouse her, he should be frustrate of his presumptuous intent, and having lived to see her expire, should then himself meet a woeful death.

While thus and yet more bitterly they bewailed them, and the mariners were at their wits' end, as the gale grew hourly more violent, nor knew they, nor might conjecture, whither they went, they drew nigh the island of Rhodes, albeit that Rhodes it was they wist not, and set themselves, as best and most skilfully they might, to run the ship aground. In which enterprise Fortune favoured them, bringing them into a little bay, where, shortly before them, was arrived the Rho-

dian ship that Cimon had let go. Nor were they sooner ware that 'twas Rhodes they had made, than day broke, and, the sky thus brightening a little, they saw that they were about a bow-shot from the ship that they had released on the preceding day. Whereupon Cimon, vexed beyond measure, being apprehensive of that which in fact befell them, bade make every effort to win out of the bay, and let Fortune carry them whither she would, for nowhere might they be in worse plight than there. So might and main they strove to bring the ship out, but all in vain: the violence of the gale thwarted them to such purpose as not only to preclude their passage out of the bay but to drive them, willing nilling, ashore. Whither no sooner were they come, than they were recognized by the Rhodian mariners, who were already landed. Of whom one ran with all speed to a farm hard by, whither the Rhodian gallants were gone, and told them that Fortune had brought Cimon and Iphigenia aboard their ship into the same bay to which she had guided them. Whereat the gallants were overjoyed, and taking with them not a few of the farm-servants, hied them in hot haste to the shore, where, Cimon and his men being already landed with intent to take refuge in a neighbouring wood, they took them all (with Iphigenia) and brought them to the farm. Whence, pursuant to an order of the Senate of Rhodes, to which, so soon as he received the news, Pasimondas made his complaint, Cimon and his men were all marched off to prison by Lysimachus, chief magistrate of the Rhodians for that year, who came down from the city for the purpose with an exceeding great company of men at arms. On such wise did our hapless and enamoured Cimon lose his so lately won Iphigenia before he had had of her more than a kiss or two. Iphigenia was entertained and comforted of the annoy, occasioned as well by

her recent capture as by the fury of the sea, by not a few noble ladies of Rhodes, with whom she tarried until the day appointed for her marriage. In recompense of the release of the Rhodian gallants on the preceding day the lives of Cimon and his men were spared, notwithstanding that Pasimondas pressed might and main for their execution; and instead they were condemned to perpetual imprisonment: wherein, as may be supposed, they abode in dolorous plight, and despaired of ever again knowing happiness.

However, it so befell that, Pasimondas accelerating his nuptials to the best of his power, Fortune, as if repenting her that in her haste she had done Cimon so evil a turn, did now by a fresh disposition of events compass his deliverance. Pasimondas had a brother, by name Hormisdas, his equal in all respects save in years, who had long been contract to marry Cassandra, a fair and noble damsel of Rhodes, of whom Lysimachus was in the last degree enamoured; but owing to divers accidents the marriage had been from time to time put off. Now Pasimondas, being about to celebrate his nuptials with exceeding great pomp, bethought him that he could not do better than, to avoid a repetition of the pomp and expense, arrange, if so he might, that his brother should be wedded on the same day with himself. So, having consulted anew with Cassandra's kinsfolk, and come to an understanding with them, he and his brother and they conferred together, and agreed that on the same day that Pasimondas married Iphigenia, Hormisdas should marry Cassandra. Lysimachus, getting wind of this arrangement, was mortified beyond measure, seeing himself thereby deprived of the hope which he cherished of marrying Cassandra himself, if Hormisdas should not forestall him. But like a wise

man he concealed his chagrin, and cast about how he might frustrate the arrangement: to which end he saw no other possible means but to carry Cassandra off. It did not escape him that the office which he held would render this easily feasible, but he deemed it all the more dishonourable than if he had not held the office; but, in short, after much pondering, honour yielded place to love, and he made up his mind that, come what might, he would carry Cassandra off. Then, as he took thought what company he should take with him, and how he should go about the affair, he remembered Cimon, whom he had in prison with his men, and it occurred to him that he could not possibly have a better or more trusty associate in such an enterprise than Cimon. Wherefore the same night he caused Cimon to be brought privily to him in his own room, and thus addressed him:—"Cimon, as the gods are most generous and liberal to bestow their gifts on men, so are they also most sagacious to try their virtue; and those whom they find to be firm and steadfast in all circumstances they honour, as the most worthy, with the highest rewards. They have been minded to be certified of thy worth by better proofs than thou couldst afford them, as long as thy life was bounded by thy father's house amid the superabundant wealth which I know him to possess: wherefore in the first place they so wrought upon thee with the shrewd incitements of Love that from an insensate brute, as I have heard, thou grewest to be a man; since when, it has been and is their intent to try whether evil fortune and harsh imprisonment may avail to change thee from the temper that was thine when for a short while thou hadst joyance of the prize thou hadst won. And so thou prove the same that thou wast then, they have in store for thee a boon incomparably greater than aught that they vouchsafed thee before: what

that boon is, to the end thou mayst recover heart and thy wonted energies, I will now explain to thee. Pasimondas, exultant in thy misfortune and eager to compass thy death, hastens to the best of his power his nuptials with thy Iphigenia; that so he may enjoy the prize that Fortune, erstwhile smiling, gave thee, and forthwith, frowning, reft from thee. Whereat how sore must be thy grief, if rightly I gauge thy love, I know by my own case, seeing that his brother Hormisdas addresses himself to do me on the same day a like wrong in regard of Cassandra, whom I love more than aught else in the world. Nor see I that Fortune has left us any way of escape from this her unjust and cruel spite, save what we may make for ourselves by a resolved spirit and the might of our right hands: take we then the sword, and therewith make we, each, prize of his lady, thou for the second, I for the first time: for so thou value the recovery, I say not of thy liberty, for without thy lady I doubt thou wouldst hold it cheap, but of thy lady, the gods have placed it in thine own hands, if thou art but minded to join me in my enterprise."

These words restored to Cimon all that he had lost of heart and hope, nor pondered he long, before he replied:—"Lysimachus, comrade stouter or more staunch than I thou mightst not have in such an enterprise, if such indeed it be as thou sayst: wherefore lay upon me such behest as thou shalt deem meet, and thou shalt marvel to witness the vigour of my performance." Whereupon Lysimachus:—"On the third day from now," quoth he, "their husbands' houses will be newly entered by the brides, and on the same day at even we too will enter them in arms, thou with thy men, and I with some of mine, in whom I place great trust, and forcing our way among the guests and slaughtering all that dare to op-

pose us, will bear the ladies off to a ship which I have had privily got ready." Cimon approved the plan, and kept quiet in prison until the appointed time; which being come, the nuptials were celebrated with great pomp and magnificence, that filled the houses of the two brothers with festal cheer. Then Lysimachus having made ready all things meet, and fired Cimon and his men and his own friends for the enterprise by a long harangue, disposed them in due time, all bearing arms under their cloaks, in three companies; and having privily despatched one company to the port, that, when the time should come to embark, he might meet with no let, he marched with the other two companies to the house of Pasimondas, posted the one company at the gate, that, being entered, they might not be shut in or debarred their egress, and, with the other company and Cimon, ascended the stairs, and gained the saloon, where the brides and not a few other ladies were set at several tables to sup in meet order: whereupon in they rushed, and overthrew the tables and seized each his own lady, and placed them in charge of their men, whom they bade bear them off forthwith to the ship that lay ready to receive them. Whereupon the brides and the other ladies and the servants with one accord fell a sobbing and shrieking, insomuch that a confused din and lamentation filled the whole place. Cimon, Lysimachus and their band, none withstanding, but all giving way before them, gained the stairs, which they were already descending when they encountered Pasimondas, who, carrying a great staff in his hand, was making in the direction of the noise; but one doughty stroke of Cimon's sword sufficed to cleave his skull in twain, and lay him dead at Cimon's feet, and another stroke disposed of hapless Hormisdas, as he came running to his brother's aid. Some others who ventured to

approach them were wounded and beaten off by the retinue. So forth of the house, that reeked with blood and resounded with tumult and lamentation and woe, sped Simon and Lysimachus with all their company, and without any let, in close order, with their fair booty in their midst, made good their retreat to the ship; whereon with the ladies they one and all embarked, for the shore was now full of armed men come to rescue the ladies, and, the oarsmen giving way, put to sea elate. Arrived at Crete, they met with a hearty welcome on the part of their many friends and kinsfolk; and, having married their ladies, they made greatly merry, and had gladsome joyance of their fair booty. Their doings occasioned, both in Cyprus and in Rhodes, no small stir and commotion, which lasted for a long while: but in the end, by the good offices of their friends and kinsfolk in both islands, 'twas so ordered as that after a certain term of exile Cimon returned with Iphigenia to Cyprus, and in like manner Lysimachus returned with Cassandra to Rhodes; and long and blithely thereafter lived they, each well contented with his own wife in his own land.

(1) One of the augmentative forms of bestia.

NOVEL II.



— **G**ostanza loves Martuccio Gomito, and hearing that he is dead, gives way to despair, and hies her alone aboard a boat, which is wafted by the wind to Susa. She finds him alive in Tunis, and makes herself known to him, who, having by his counsel gained high place in the king's favour, marries her, and returns with her wealthy to Lipari. —

Pamfilo's story being ended, the queen, after commending it not a little, called for one to follow from Emilia; who thus began:—

Meet and right it is that one should rejoice when events so fall out that passion meets with its due reward: and as love merits in the long run rather joy than suffering, far gladlier obey I the queen's than I did the king's behest, and address myself to our present theme. You are to know then,

dainty ladies, that not far from Sicily there is an islet called Lipari, in which, no great while ago, there dwelt a damsel, Gostanza by name, fair as fair could be, and of one of the most honourable families in the island. And one Martuccio Gomito, who was also of the island, a young man most gallant and courteous, and worthy for his condition, became enamoured of Gostanza; who in like manner grew so afire for him that she was ever ill at ease, except she saw him. Martuccio, craving her to wife, asked her of her father, who made answer that, Martuccio being poor, he was not minded to give her to him. Mortified to be thus rejected by reason of poverty, Martuccio took an oath in presence of some of his friends and kinsfolk that Lipari should know him no more, until he was wealthy. So away he sailed, and took to scouring the seas as a rover on the coast of Barbary, preying upon all whose force matched not his own. In which way of life he found Fortune favourable enough, had he but known how to rest and be thankful: but 'twas not enough that he and his comrades in no long time waxed very wealthy; their covetousness was inordinate, and, while they sought to gratify it, they chanced in an encounter with certain Saracen ships to be taken after a long defence, and despoiled, and, most part of them, thrown into the sea by their captors, who, after sinking his ship, took Martuccio with them to Tunis, and clapped him in prison, and there kept him a long time in a very sad plight.

Meanwhile, not by one or two, but by divers and not a few persons, tidings reached Lipari that all that were with Martuccio aboard his bark had perished in the sea. The damsel, whose grief on Martuccio's departure had known no bounds, now hearing that he was dead with the rest, wept a

great while, and made up her mind to have done with life; but, lacking the resolution to lay violent hands upon herself, she bethought her how she might devote herself to death by some novel expedient. So one night she stole out of her father's house, and hied her to the port, and there by chance she found, lying a little apart from the other craft, a fishing boat, which, as the owners had but just quitted her, was still equipped with mast and sails and oars. Aboard which boat she forthwith got, and being, like most of the women of the island, not altogether without nautical skill, she rowed some distance out to sea, and then hoisted sail, and cast away oars and tiller, and let the boat drift, deeming that a boat without lading or steersman would certainly be either cap-sized by the wind or dashed against some rock and broken in pieces, so that escape she could not, even if she would, but must perforce drown. And so, her head wrapped in a mantle, she stretched herself weeping on the floor of the boat. But it fell out quite otherwise than she had conjectured: for, the wind being from the north, and very equable, with next to no sea, the boat kept an even keel, and next day about vespers bore her to land hard by a city called Susa, full a hundred miles beyond Tunis. To the damsel 'twas all one whether she were at sea or ashore, for, since she had been aboard, she had never once raised, nor, come what might, meant she ever to raise, her head.

Now it so chanced, that, when the boat grounded, there was on the shore a poor woman that was in the employ of some fishermen, whose nets she was just taking out of the sunlight. Seeing the boat under full sail, she marvelled how it should be suffered to drive ashore, and conjectured that the fishermen on board were asleep. So to the boat she hied

her, and finding therein only the damsel fast asleep, she called her many times, and at length awakened her; and perceiving by her dress that she was a Christian, she asked her in Latin how it was that she was come thither all alone in the boat. Hearing the Latin speech, the damsel wondered whether the wind had not shifted, and carried her back to Lipari: so up she started, gazed about her, and finding herself ashore and the aspect of the country strange, asked the good woman where she was. To which the good woman made answer:—"My daughter, thou art hard by Susa in Barbary." Whereupon the damsel, sorrowful that God had not seen fit to accord her the boon of death, apprehensive of dishonour, and at her wits' end, sat herself down at the foot of her boat, and burst into tears. Which the good woman saw not without pity, and persuaded her to come with her into her hut, and there by coaxing drew from her how she was come thither; and knowing that she could not but be fasting, she set before her her own coarse bread and some fish and water, and prevailed upon her to eat a little. Gostanza thereupon asked her, who she was that thus spoke Latin; whereto she answered that her name was Carapresa, and that she was from Trapani, where she had served some Christian fishermen. To the damsel, sad indeed though she was, this name Carapresa, wherefore she knew not, seemed to be of happy augury, so that she began to take hope, she knew not why, and to grow somewhat less fain of death: wherefore without disclosing who or whence she was, she earnestly besought the good woman for the love of God to have pity on her youth, and advise her how best to avoid insult. Whereupon Carapresa, good woman that she was, left her in her hut, while with all speed she picked up her nets; and on her return she wrapped her in her own mantle, and led her to

Susa. Arrived there, she said to her:—"Gostanza, I shall bring thee to the house of an excellent Saracen lady, for whom I frequently do bits of work, as she has occasion: she is an old lady and compassionate: I will commend thee to her care as best I may, and I doubt not she will right gladly receive thee, and entreat thee as her daughter: and thou wilt serve her, and, while thou art with her, do all thou canst to gain her favour, until such time as God may send thee better fortune;" and as she said, so she did.

The old lady listened, and then, gazing steadfastly in the damsel's face, shed tears, and taking her hand, kissed her forehead, and led her into the house, where she and some other women dwelt quite by themselves, doing divers kinds of handiwork in silk and palm leaves and leather. Wherein the damsel in a few days acquired some skill, and thenceforth wrought together with them; and rose wondrous high in the favour and good graces of all the ladies, who soon taught her their language.

Now while the damsel, mourned at home as lost and dead, dwelt thus at Susa, it so befell that, Mariabdelá being then King of Tunis, a young chieftain in Granada, of great power, and backed by mighty allies, gave out that the realm of Tunis belonged to him, and having gathered a vast army, made a descent upon Tunis with intent to expel the King from the realm. Martuccio Gomito, who knew the language of Barbary well, heard the tidings in prison, and learning that the King of Tunis was mustering a mighty host for the defence of his kingdom, said to one of the warders that were in charge of him and his comrades:—"If I might have speech of the King, I am confident that the advice that I should give him would secure him the victory." The warder repeated

these words to his chief, who forthwith carried them to the King. Wherefore by the King's command Martuccio was brought before him, and being asked by him what the advice, of which he had spoken, might be, answered on this wise:—"Sire, if in old days, when I was wont to visit this country of yours, I duly observed the manner in which you order your battle, methinks you place your main reliance upon archers; and therefore, if you could contrive that your enemy's supply of arrows should give out and your own continue plentiful, I apprehend that you would win the battle." "Ay indeed," replied the King, "I make no doubt that, could I but accomplish that, I should conquer." "Nay but, Sire," returned Martuccio, "you may do it, if you will. Listen, and I will tell you how. You must fit the bows of your archers with strings much finer than those that are in common use, and match them with arrows, the notches of which will not admit any but these fine strings; and this you must do so secretly that your enemy may not know it, else he will find means to be even with you. Which counsel I give you for the following reason:—When your and your enemy's archers have expended all their arrows, you wot that the enemy will fall to picking up the arrows that your men have shot during the battle, and your men will do the like by the enemy's arrows; but the enemy will not be able to make use of your men's arrows, by reason that their fine notches will not suffice to admit the stout strings, whereas your men will be in the contrary case in regard of the enemy's arrows, for the fine string will very well receive the large-notched arrow, and so your men will have an abundant supply of arrows, while the enemy will be at a loss for them."

The King, who lacked not sagacity, appreciated Martuccio's advice, and gave full effect to it; whereby he came out of the war a conqueror, and Martuccio, being raised to the chief place in his favour, waxed rich and powerful. Which matters being bruited throughout the country, it came to the ears of Gostanza that Martuccio Gomito, whom she had long supposed to be dead, was alive; whereby her love for him, some embers of which still lurked in her heart, burst forth again in sudden flame, and gathered strength, and revived her dead hope. Wherefore she frankly told all her case to the good lady with whom she dwelt, saying that she would fain go to Tunis, that her eyes might have assurance of that which the report received by her ears had made them yearn to see. The lady fell heartily in with the girl's desire, and, as if she had been her mother, embarked with her for Tunis, where on their arrival they were honourably received in the house of one of her kinswomen. Carapresa, who had attended her, being sent to discover what she might touching Martuccio, brought back word that he was alive, and high in honour and place. The gentlewoman was minded that none but herself should apprise Martuccio of the arrival of his Gostanza: wherefore she hied her one day to Martuccio, and said:—"Martuccio, there is come to my house a servant of thine from Lipari, who would fain speak with thee here privily, and for that he would not have me trust another, I am come hither myself to deliver his message." Martuccio thanked her, and forthwith hied him with her to her house: where no sooner did the girl see him than she all but died for joy, and carried away by her feelings, fell upon his neck with open arms and embraced him, and, what with sorrow of his past woes and her present happiness, said never a word, but softly wept. Martuccio regarded her for a while in silent won-

der; then, heaving a sigh, he said:—"Thou livest then, my Gostanza? Long since I heard that thou wast lost; nor was aught known of thee at home." Which said, he tenderly and with tears embraced her. Gostanza told him all her adventures, and how honourably she had been entreated by the gentlewoman with whom she had dwelt. And so long time they conversed, and then Martuccio parted from her, and hied him back to his lord the King, and told him all, to wit, his own adventures and those of the girl, adding that with his leave he was minded to marry her according to our law. Which matters the King found passing strange; and having called the girl to him, and learned from her that 'twas even as Martuccio had said:—"Well indeed," quoth he, "hast thou won thy husband." Then caused he gifts most ample and excellent to be brought forth, part of which he gave to Gostanza, and part to Martuccio, leaving them entirely to their own devices in regard of one another. Then Martuccio, in terms most honourable, bade farewell to the old lady with whom Gostanza had dwelt, thanking her for the service she had rendered to Gostanza, and giving her presents suited to her condition, and commending her to God, while Gostanza shed many a tear: after which, by leave of the King, they went aboard a light bark, taking with them Carapresa, and, sped by a prosperous breeze, arrived at Lipari, where they were received with such cheer as 'twere vain to attempt to describe. There were Martuccio and Gostanza wedded with all pomp and splendour; and there long time in easeful peace they had joyance of their love.

NOVEL III.



— **P**ietro Boccamazza runs away with Agnolella, and encounters a gang of robbers: the girl takes refuge in a wood, and is guided to a castle. Pietro is taken, but escapes out of the hands of the robbers, and after some adventures arrives at the castle where Agnolella is, marries her, and returns with her to Rome. —

Ended Emilia's story, which none of the company spared to commend, the queen, turning to Elisa, bade her follow suit; and she, with glad obedience, thus began:—

'Tis a story, sweet ladies, of a woeful night passed by two indiscreet young lovers that I have in mind; but, as thereon

ensued not a few days of joy, 'tis not inapposite to our argument, and shall be narrated.

'Tis no long time since at Rome, which, albeit now the tail,(1) was of yore the head, of the world, there dwelt a young man, Pietro Boccamazza by name, a scion of one of the most illustrious of the Roman houses, who became enamoured of a damsel exceeding fair, and amorous withal—her name Agnolella—the daughter of one Gigliuozzo Saullo, a plebeian, but in high repute among the Romans. Nor, loving thus, did Pietro lack the address to inspire in Agnolella a love as ardent as his own. Wherefore, overmastered by his passion, and minded no longer to endure the sore suffering that it caused him, he asked her in marriage. Whereof his kinsfolk were no sooner apprised, than with one accord they came to him and strongly urged him to desist from his purpose: they also gave Gigliuozzo Saullo to understand that he were best to pay no sort of heed to Pietro's words, for that, if he so did, they would never acknowledge him as friend or relative. Thus to see himself debarred of the one way by which he deemed he might attain to his desire, Pietro was ready to die for grief, and, all his kinsfolk notwithstanding, he would have married Gigliuozzo's daughter, had but the father consented. Wherefore at length he made up his mind that, if the girl were willing, nought should stand in the way; and having through a common friend sounded the damsel and found her apt, he brought her to consent to elope with him from Rome. The affair being arranged, Pietro and she took horse betimes one morning, and sallied forth for Anagni, where Pietro had certain friends, in whom he placed much trust; and as they rode, time not serving for full joyance of their love, for they feared pursuit, they held converse thereof,

and from time to time exchanged a kiss. Now it so befell, that, the way being none too well known to Pietro, when, perhaps eight miles from Rome, they should have turned to the right, they took instead a leftward road. Whereon when they had ridden but little more than two miles, they found themselves close to a petty castle, whence, so soon as they were observed, there issued some dozen men at arms; and, as they drew near, the damsel, espying them, gave a cry, and said:—"We are attacked, Pietro, let us flee;" and guiding her nag as best she knew towards a great forest, she planted the spurs in his sides, and so, holding on by the saddle-bow, was borne by the goaded creature into the forest at a gallop. Pietro, who had been too engrossed with her face to give due heed to the way, and thus had not been ware, as soon as she, of the approach of the men at arms, was still looking about to see whence they were coming, when they came up with him, and took him prisoner, and forced him to dismount. Then they asked who he was, and, when he told them, they conferred among themselves, saying:—"This is one of the friends of our enemies: what else can we do but relieve him of his nag and of his clothes, and hang him on one of these oaks in scorn of the Orsini?" To which proposal all agreeing, they bade Pietro strip himself: but while, already divining his fate, he was so doing, an ambuscade of full five-and-twenty men at arms fell suddenly upon them, crying:—"Death, death!" Thus surprised, they let Pietro go, and stood on the defensive; but, seeing that the enemy greatly outnumbered them, they took to their heels, the others giving chase. Whereupon Pietro hastily resumed his clothes, mounted his nag, and fled with all speed in the direction which he had seen the damsel take. But finding no road or path through the forest, nor discerning any trace of a horse's

hooves, he was—for that he found not the damsel—albeit he deemed himself safe out of the clutches of his captors and their assailants, the most wretched man alive, and fell a weeping and wandering hither and thither about the forest, uttering Agnolella's name. None answered; but turn back he dared not: so on he went, not knowing whither he went; besides which, he was in mortal dread of the wild beasts that infest the forest, as well on account of himself as of the damsel, whom momentarily he seemed to see throttled by some bear or wolf. Thus did our unfortunate Pietro spend the whole day, wandering about the forest, making it to resound with his cries of Agnolella's name, and harking at times back, when he thought to go forward; until at last, what with his cries and his tears and his fears and his long fasting, he was so spent that he could go no further. 'Twas then nightfall, and, as he knew not what else to do, he dismounted at the foot of an immense oak, and having tethered his nag to the trunk, climbed up into the branches, lest he should be devoured by the wild beasts during the night. Shortly afterwards the moon rose with a very clear sky, and Pietro, who dared not sleep, lest he should fall, and indeed, had he been secure from that risk, his misery and his anxiety on account of the damsel would not have suffered him to sleep, kept watch, sighing and weeping and cursing his evil luck.

Now the damsel, who, as we said before, had fled she knew not whither, allowing her nag to carry her whithersoever he would, strayed so far into the forest that she lost sight of the place where she had entered it, and spent the whole day just as Pietro had done, wandering about the wilderness, pausing from time to time, and weeping, and uttering his name, and bewailing her evil fortune. At last, seeing that

'twas now the vesper hour and Pietro came not, she struck into a path, which the nag followed, until, after riding some two miles, she espied at some distance a cottage, for which she made with all speed, and found there a good man, well stricken in years, with his wife, who was likewise aged. Seeing her ride up alone, they said:—"Daughter, wherefore ridest thou thus alone at this hour in these parts?" Weeping, the damsel made answer that she had lost her companion in the forest, and asked how far might Anagni be from there? "My daughter," returned the good man, "this is not the road to Anagni; 'tis more than twelve miles away." "And how far off," inquired the damsel, "are the nearest houses in which one might find lodging for the night?" "There are none so near," replied the good man, "that thou canst reach them to-day." "Then, so please you," said the damsel, "since go elsewhither I cannot, for God's sake let me pass the night here with you." Whereto the good man made answer:—"Damsel, welcome art thou to tarry the night with us; but still thou art to know that these parts are infested both by day and by night by bands, which, be they friends or be they foes, are alike ill to meet with, and not seldom do much despite and mischief, and if by misadventure one of these bands should visit us while thou wert here, and marking thy youth and beauty should do thee despite and dishonour, we should be unable to afford thee any succour. This we would have thee know, that if it should so come to pass, thou mayst not have cause to reproach us." The damsel heard not the old man's words without dismay; but, seeing that the hour was now late, she answered:—"God, if He be so pleased, will save both you and me from such molestation, and if not, 'tis a much lesser evil to be maltreated by men than to be torn in pieces by the wild beasts in the forest." So