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of them alone. In the multitude of things, needs must divers qualities thereof be found. No field was ever so well tilled but therein either nettles or thistles or somewhat of briers might be found mingled with the better herbs. Besides, having to speak to simple lasses, such as you are for the most part, it would have been folly to go seeking and wearying myself to find very choice and exquisite matters, and to use great pains to speak very measuredly. However, whoever goes reading among these, let him leave those which offend and read those which divert. They all, not to lead anyone into error, bear branded upon their forefront that which they hold hidden within their bosoms.

Again, I doubt not but that there are those who will say that some of them are overlong; to whom I say again that whoever has anything else to do does folly to read these stories, even though they were brief. And even though a great while is passed from the time when I began to write to this present hour when I come to the end of my toils, it has not therefore escaped my memory that I proffered this my labor to idle women and not to others; and to anyone who reads to pass away the time, nothing can be overlong, if only it serves that which he intends it to serve. Things brief are far better suited to students, who seek, not to pass away, but usefully to employ time, than to you ladies, who have on your hands all the time that you do not spend in the pleasures of love; moreover, since none of you goes to Athens or Bologna or Paris to study, it behooves to speak to you more at large than to those who have had their wits whetted by study. Again, I doubt not a jot but there be yet some of you who will say that the things aforesaid are full of quips and idle talk and that it ill beseems a man of weight and gravity to have written thus. To these I am bound to render and do render thanks, for, moved by a virtuous jealousy, they are so tender of my fame; but to their objection I reply on this wise: I confess to being a man of weight and to have been often weighed in my time, wherefore, speaking to those ladies who have not weighed me, I declare that I am not

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heavy; nay, I am so light that I float like a nutgall in water, and considering that the preachments made by friars, to rebuke men of their sins, are nowadays for the most part seen to be full of quips and cranks and gibes, I conceived that these latter would not sit amiss in my stories written to ease women of melancholy. Still, if they should laugh overmuch on that account, the Lamentations of Jeremiah, the Passion of our Savior and the Complaint of Mary Magdalen will readily avail to cure them thereof.

Again, who can doubt but there will also be found some to say that I have an ill and venomous tongue, because I have in sundry places written the truth about the friars? To those who shall say thus it must be forgiven, since it is not credible that they are moved by other than just cause, because the friars are a good sort of folk, who eschew hardship for the love of God and who grind with a full head of water and tell no tales; and but that they savor somewhat of the buck-goat, association with them would be most agreeable. Nevertheless, I confess that the things of this world have no stability and are always on the change, and so may it have befallen of my tongue, which, not to trust to my own judgment (which I eschew as most I may in my affairs), a she-neighbor of mine told me, not long since, was the best and sweetest in the world; and truly when this came about, there were few of the foregoing stories left to write. But, since those who say thus speak spitefully, I will have that which has been said suffice them for a reply; wherefore, leaving each of you henceforth to say and believe as seems good to her, it is time for me to make an end of words, humbly thanking Him who has, after so long a labor, brought us with His help to the desired end. And you, charming ladies, abide you in peace with His favor, remembering you of me, if perchance it profit any of you aught to have read these stories.

*Here ends the tenth and last day of the book called Decameron
surnamed Prince Galahalt.*

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fest that I could not have otherwise recounted, if I would not altogether disfeature them. And if perchance there be therein some tittle, some wordlet or two, freer, perhaps, than pleases your squeamish hypocritical prudes, who weigh words rather than deeds and study more to appear good than to be good, I say that it should no more be forbidden me to write them than it is commonly forbidden to men and women to say all day long *hole* and *peg* and *mortar* and *pestle* and *sausage* and *boloney* and all manner of suchlike things; without reckoning that no less liberty should be accorded to my pen than is conceded to the brush of the painter, who, without any (or, at the least, any just) reprehension, makes – let be St. Michael smite the serpent with sword or spear and St. George the dragon, where he chooses – but Christ male and Eve female; and affixes to the Cross, sometimes with one nail and sometimes with two, the feet of Him Himself who willed for the salvation of the human race to die thereupon. Moreover, it is easy enough to see that these things are spoken, not in the church, of the affairs whereof it behooves to speak with a mind and in terms alike of the chastest (albeit among its histories there are tales enough to be found of quite other fashion than those written by me), nor yet in the schools of philosophy, where decency is no less required than elsewhere, nor among churchmen or philosophers anywhere, but amidst gardens, in a place of delight and diversion and among men and women, though young, yet of mature wit and not to be led astray by stories, at a time when it was not forbidden to the most virtuous to go, for their own preservation, with their breeches on their heads. Again, such as they are, these stories, like everything else, can work both harm and profit, according to the disposition of the listener. Who does not know that wine, though according to Cinciglione and Scolaio and many others an excellent thing for people in health, is hurtful to anyone who has the fever? Shall we say, then, because it harms the fevered, that it is bad? Who does not know that fire is most useful, nay, necessary to mortals? Shall we say, because it burns houses and villages and

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cities, that it is bad? Arms on like wise assure the welfare of those who desire to live in peace and yet oftentimes slay men, not by any malice of their own, but through the perversity of those who use them wrongfully. Corrupt mind never understood word healthily; and just as seemly words do not profit depraved minds, so those which are not altogether seemly do not avail to contaminate the well disposed, any more than mire can sully the rays of the sun or earthy foulness the beauties of the sky. What books, what words, what letters are holier, worthier, more venerable than those of the Divine Scriptures? Yet many there be, who, interpreting them perversely, have brought themselves and others to perdition. Everything in itself is good unto somewhat, and ill used, may be in many things harmful; and so say I of my stories. If any be minded to draw therefrom ill counsel or ill practice, they will in no way forbid it him, if perchance they have it in them or be strained and twisted into having it; and whoso would gain profit and utility thereof, they will not deny it him, nor will they be ever styled or accounted other than useful and seemly, if they be read at those times and to those persons for which and for whom they have been recounted. Whoever has to say paternosters or to make tarts and puddings for her spiritual director, let her leave them be; they will not run after any to make her read them; albeit your she-saints themselves now and again say and even do certain little things.

There be some ladies also who will say that there are some stories here that were better not here. Granted. But I could not, nor should, write aught save those actually related, wherefore those who told them should have told them goodly and I would have written them goodly. But, if folk pretend that I am both the inventor and writer thereof (which I am not), I say that I should feel no shame that they were not all alike goodly, for there is no craftsman living (barring God) who does everything both well and completely; witness Charlemagne, who was the first maker of the Paladins, but knew not to make so many thereof that he might avail to form an army

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I hold all false; whereby
I'm all disconsolate and fain would die,
Of each with doubting torn
Who eyes him, lest she bear him off from me.

Be, then, each lady prayed
By God that she in this be not intent
'Gainst me to do amiss;
For, sure, if any maid
Should or with words or becks or blandishment
My detriment in this
Seek or procure and if I know't, ywis,
Be all my charms forsworn
But I will make her rue it bitterly.

NO sooner had Fiammetta made an end of her song than Dyoneo, who was beside her, said, laughing, "Madam, you would do a great courtesy to let all the ladies know who he is, lest you be ousted of his possession through ignorance, since you would be so sore incensed thereat." After this divers other songs were sung and the night being now well-nigh half spent, they all, by the king's commandment, betook themselves to repose. As the new day appeared, they arose and the seneschal having already dispatched all their gear in advance, they returned, under the guidance of their discreet king, to Florence, where the three young men took leave of the seven ladies and leaving them in Santa Maria Novella, whence they had set out with them, went about their other pleasures, while the ladies, when it seemed to them time, returned to their houses.

Here ends the tenth and last day of the Decameron.

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MOST noble ladies, for whose solace I have addressed myself to so long a labor, I have now, I think, with the aid of the Divine favor (vouchsafed me, as I deem, for your pious prayers and not for my own merits) thoroughly accomplished that which I promised at the beginning of this present work to do; wherefore, returning thanks first to God and then to you, needs must I give rest to my pen and to my tired hand; but before I grant them this, I propose briefly to reply, as to objections tacitly broached, to certain small matters that may perhaps be alleged by someone of you or by others, since it seems to me very certain that these stories have no especial privilege more than other things; indeed, I remember to have shown, at the beginning of the fourth day, that they have none such. There are, peradventure, some of you who will say that I have used overmuch license in writing these stories, such as in making ladies sometimes say and very often listen to things not very seemly either to be said or heard by modest women. This I deny, for there is nothing so unseemly as to be forbidden to anyone if only he express it in seemly terms, as it seems to me indeed I have here very aptly done. But let us suppose that it is so (for I do not intend to dispute with you, who would overcome me), I say that many reasons very readily offer themselves in answer why I have done this. Firstly, if there be aught thereof in any of them, the nature of the stories has required it, the which, if they be considered with the rational eye of a person of understanding, it will be abundantly mani-

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zance of things present; but in knowing, by means of the one and the other of these, to forecast things future is reputed by men of mark to consist the greatest wisdom. Tomorrow, as you know, it will be fifteen days since we departed Florence, to take some diversion for the preservation of our health and of our lives, eschewing the woes and pains and miseries which, since this pestilential season began, are continually to be seen about our city. This, to my judgment, we have well and honorably done; for, if I have known to see aright, albeit merry stories and perhaps incentive to concupiscence have been told here and we have continually eaten and drunken well and danced and sung and made music, all things apt to incite weak minds to things less seemly, I have noted no act, no word, in fine nothing blameworthy, either on your part or on that of us men; nay, it strikes me I have seen and felt here a continual decency, an unbroken concord and a constant fraternal familiarity; the which, both for your honor and service and for my own, is certainly most pleasing to me. Lest, however, for overlong usage aught should grow thereof that might issue in tediousness, and that none may avail to cavil at our overlong sojourn – each of us, moreover, having had his or her share of the honor that yet resides in myself – I hold it meet, if it be your pleasure, that we now return whence we came; and mark you well that, if you consider aright, our company, already known to several others of the neighborhood, may multiply after a fashion that will deprive us of our every happiness. Wherefore, if you approve my counsel, I will retain the crown conferred on me until our departure, which I propose shall be tomorrow morning; but, should you determine otherwise, I have already in mind whom I shall invest withal for the ensuing day.”

Much was the debate between the ladies and the young men; but ultimately they all took the king's counsel for useful and seemly and determined to do as he proposed; whereupon, calling the seneschal, he told him of the manner which he should hold on the ensuing morning and then, having dis-

missed the company until suppertime, he rose to his feet. THE LADIES and the young men, following his example, gave themselves, this to one kind of diversion and that to another, not otherwise than was their wont; and suppertime come, they betook themselves to table with the utmost pleasure and after fell to singing and caroling and making music. Presently, Lauretta leading up a dance, the king bade Fiammetta sing a song, whereupon she very blithely proceeded to sing thus:

If love came but withouten jealousy,
I know no lady born
So blithe as I were, whosoe'er she be.

If gladsome youthfulness
In a fair lover might content a maid,
Virtue and worth discreet,
Valiance or gentillesse,
Wit and sweet speech and fashions all arrayed
In pleasantness complete,
Certes, I'm she for whose behoof these meet
In one; for, love-o'erborne,
All these in him who is my hope I see.

But for that I perceive
That other women are as wise as I,
I tremble for affright
And tending to believe
The worst, in others the desire espy
Of him who steals my spright;
Thus this that is my good and chief delight
Enforceth me, forlorn,
Sigh sore and live in dole and misery.

If I knew fealty such
In him my lord as I know merit there,
I were not jealous, I;
But here is seen so much
Lovers to tempt, how true they be soe'er,

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answered, 'I think very well of her, and if, as I believe, she is as discreet as she is fair, I doubt not a whit but you will live the happiest gentleman in the world with her; but I beseech you, as most I may, that you inflict not on her those pangs which you once inflicted on her who was sometime yours; for I think she might scarce avail to endure them, both because she is younger and because she has been delicately reared, whereas the other had been in continual hardship from a little child.' Thereupon, Gualtieri, seeing she firmly believed that the young lady was to be his wife nor therefore spoke anywise less than well, seated her by his side and said to her, 'Griselda, it is now time that you reap the fruits of your long patience and that those who have reputed me cruel and unjust and brutish should know that this which I have done I wrought to an unforeseen end, willing to teach you to be a wife and to show them how to take and use one, and at the same time to beget myself perpetual quiet, what while I had to live with you; the which, when I came to take a wife, I was much afraid might not betide me, and therefore, to make proof thereof, I probed and afflicted you in such a manner as you know. And it seeming to me, for I have never perceived that either in word or in deed have you departed from my pleasure, that I have of you that solace which I desired, I mean presently to restore you, at one stroke, that which I took from you at many, and to requite you with a supreme delight the pangs I have inflicted on you. Wherefore with a joyful heart take this whom you deem my bride and her brother for your children and mine; for these are they whom you and many others have long accounted me to have barbarously had put to death; and I am your husband, who loves you over all else, believing I may boast that there is no one else who can be so content of his wife as can I.'

So saying, he embraced her and kissed her; then, rising up, he betook himself with Griselda, who wept for joy, whereas the daughter, hearing these things, sat all stupefied, and, tenderly embracing her and her brother, undeceived her and many

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others who were there. Thereupon the ladies arose from table, overjoyed, and withdrew with Griselda into a chamber, where, with happier augury, pulling off her mean attire, they clad her anew in a magnificent dress of her own and brought her again to the salon, as a gentlewoman, which indeed she appeared, even in rags. There she rejoiced in her children with wonderful joy, and all being overjoyed at this happy issue, they redoubled in feasting and merrymaking and prolonged the festivities several days, accounting Gualtieri a very wise man, although they held the trials which he had made of his lady overharsh, nay, intolerable; but over all they held Griselda most sage. The count of Panago returned, after some days, to Bologna, and Gualtieri, taking Giannucolo from his labor, placed him in such estate as befitted his father-in-law, so that he lived in honor and great solace and so ended his days; while he himself, having nobly married his daughter, lived long and happily with Griselda, honoring her as most might be. What more can here be said save that even in poor cottages there rain down divine spirits from heaven, even as in princely palaces there be those who were worthier to tend swine than to have lordship over men? Who but Griselda could, with a countenance, not only dry, but cheerful, have endured the barbarous and unheard-of proofs made by Gualtieri? Which latter would not perchance have been ill requited, had he happened upon one who, when he turned her out of doors in her shift, had let someone else jumble her furbelows to such purpose that a fine gown had come of it.?"

DYONEO'S story being finished and the ladies having discoursed at length thereof, some inclining to one side and some to another, this blaming one thing and that commending it, the king lifted his eyes to heaven and seeing that the sun was now low and the hour of vespers at hand, proceeded, without arising from session, to speak thus, "CHARMING LADIES, AS I doubt not you know, the understanding of mortals consists not only in having in memory things past and taking cogni-

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and returned to her father, followed by the tears and lamentations of all who saw her. Giannucolo, who had never been able to believe it true that Gualtieri should have his daughter to wife and went in daily expectation of this event, had kept her the clothes which she had put off the morning that Gualtieri had married her and now brought them to her; whereupon she donned them and addressed herself, as she had been wont to do, to the little offices of her father's house, enduring the cruel onslaught of hostile fortune with a stout heart.

Gualtieri, having done this, gave out to his people that he had chosen a daughter of one of the counts of Panago and having great preparations to be made for the nuptials, sent for Griselda to come to him and said to her, 'I am about to bring home this lady, whom I have newly taken to wife, and mean, at this her first coming, to do her honor. You know I have no women about me who know how to array me the rooms nor to do a multitude of things that are needful for such a festival; wherefore do you, who are better versed than any other in these household matters, order that which is to do here and have such ladies invited as seems good to you and receive them as if you were mistress here; then, when the nuptials are ended, you may begone back to your house.' Albeit these words were all daggers to Griselda's heart, who had been unable to lay down the love she bore him as she had laid down her fair fortune, she replied, 'My lord, I am ready and willing.' Then, in her coarse homespun clothes, entering the house, whence she had a little before departed in her shift, she fell to sweeping and ordering the chambers and causing hangings and covercloths to be placed about the salons and the viands to be made ready, putting her hand to everything, as if she were some paltry serving-wench of the house, nor ever gave over till she had arrayed and ordered everything as it behooved. Thereafter, having had all the ladies of the country invited on Gualtieri's part, she awaited the day of the festival, which being come, with a cheerful countenance and the spirit and bearing of a lady of high

degree, for all she had mean clothes on her back, she received all the ladies who came thither.

Meanwhile, Gualtieri, who had caused the two children to be diligently reared in Bologna by his kinswoman (who was married to a gentleman of the Panago family), the girl being now twelve years old and the fairest creature that ever was seen and the boy six, had sent to his kinsman at Bologna, asking him to be pleased to come to Saluzzo with his son and daughter and to take order to bring with him a goodly and honorable company and bidding him tell everyone that he was carrying him the young lady to his wife, without otherwise discovering in the least to any aught of who she was. The gentleman did as the marquis begged him and setting out, with the girl and boy and a goodly company of gentlefolk, after some days' journey, arrived, about dinnertime, at Saluzzo, where he found all the countryfolk and many others of the neighborhood awaiting Gualtieri's new bride. The latter, being received by the ladies and come into the salon where the tables were laid, Griselda came to meet her, clad as she was, and accosted her blithely, saying, 'Fair welcome to my lady!' Thereupon the ladies (who had urgently, but in vain, besought Gualtieri to suffer Griselda to remain in a chamber or lend her one of the gowns that had been hers, so that she might not go thus before his guests) were seated at table and they were served. The girl was eyed by everyone, and all declared that Gualtieri had made a good exchange; and among the rest, Griselda commended her much, both her and her young brother.

Gualtieri perceiving that the strangeness of the case in no wise changed her and being assured that this proceeded not from lack of understanding, for he knew her to be very quick of wit, it seemed to him that he had now seen fully as much as he desired of his lady's patience and he judged it time to deliver her from the bitterness which he doubted not she kept hidden under her constant countenance; wherefore, calling her to himself, he said to her, smiling, in the presence of everyone, 'What do you think of our bride?' 'My lord,' she

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nothing is dear to me save in so much as I see it please you.' Not many days after, Gualtieri sent for the son, even as he had sent for the daughter, and making a like show of having him put to death, dispatched him to Bologna, there to be brought up, even as he had done with the girl; but the lady made no other countenance nor other words thereof than she had done of the girl; whereat Gualtieri marveled greatly and affirmed in himself that no other woman could have availed to do this that she did; and had he not seen her tender her children with the utmost fondness, the while it pleased him, he would have believed that she did this because she cared no more about them; whereas in effect he knew that she did it of her discretion. His vassals, believing that he had had the children put to death, blamed him greatly, accounting him a barbarous man, and had the utmost compassion for his wife, who never answered otherwise to the ladies who condoled with her for her children thus slain, than that that which pleased him thereof who had begotten them pleased her also.

At last, several years being passed since the birth of the girl, Gualtieri, deeming it time to make the supreme trial of her endurance, declared, in the presence of his people, that he could no longer endure to have Griselda to wife and that he perceived that he had done ill and boyishly in taking her, wherefore he intended, so far as in him lay, to appeal to the pope to grant him a dispensation, so he might put her away and take another wife. For this he was roundly taken to task by many men of worth, but answered them nothing save that needs must it be so. The lady, hearing these things and it seeming to her that she must prepare to return to her father's house and maybe tend sheep again as she had done before, the while she saw another woman in possession of him to whom she willed all her weal, sorrowed sorely in herself; but yet, even as she had borne the other affronts of fortune, so with a firm countenance she addressed herself to bear this also. Gualtieri no great while after caused to come to him from Rome counterfeit letters [of dispensation] and gave his vassals to

believe that the pope had thereby licensed him to take another wife and leave Griselda; then, sending for the latter, he said to her, in the presence of many, 'Wife, by concession made me by the pope, I am free to take another wife and put you away, and accordingly, because my ancestors have been great gentlemen and lords of this country, while yours have always been peasants, I mean that you should no longer be my wife, but that you return to Giannucolo's house with the dowry which you brought me, and I will then bring hither another wife, for I have found one more suitable to myself.'

The lady, hearing this, contained her tears, contrary to the nature of woman, though not without great effort, and answered, 'My lord, I ever knew my mean estate to be nowise sortable with your nobility, and for that which I have been with you I have ever confessed myself indebted to you and to God, nor have I ever made nor held it mine, as given to me, but have always accounted it but as a loan. It pleases you to require it again and it must and does please me to restore it to you. Here is your ring wherewith you espoused me; take it. You bid me carry away with me that dowry which I brought hither, which to do you will need no paymaster and I neither purse nor packhorse, for I have not forgotten that you had me naked, and if you account it seemly that this my body, wherein I have carried children begotten of you, be seen by all, I will begone naked; but I pray you, in requital of my maidenhead, which I brought hither and bear not hence with me, that it please you I may carry away at the least one sole shift over and above my dowry.' Gualtieri, who had more mind to weep than not, nevertheless kept a stern countenance and said, 'So be it; carry away a shift.' As many as stood around besought him to give her a gown, so that she who had been thirteen years and more his wife should not be seen to go forth from his house on such mean and shameful wise as it was to depart in her shift; but their prayers all went for nothing; wherefore the lady, having commended them to God, went forth from his house in her shift, barefoot and nothing on her head,

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and so well mannered that she seemed rather to have been the child of some noble gentleman than the daughter of Giannucolo and a tender of sheep; whereof she made everyone marvel who had known her aforesaid. Moreover, she was so obedient to her husband and so diligent in his service that he accounted himself the happiest and best contented man in the world; and on like wise she bore herself with such graciousness and such loving-kindness towards her husband's subjects that there was none of them but loved and honored her with his whole heart, praying all for her welfare and prosperity and advancement; and whereas they were used to say that Gualtieri had done as one of little wit to take her to wife, they now with one accord declared that he was the wisest and best-advised man alive, for none other than he might ever have availed to know her high worth, hidden as it was under poor clothes and a rustic habit. Brief, it was no great while before she knew so to do that, not only in her husband's marquisate, but everywhere else, she made folk talk of her virtues and her well-doing and turned to the contrary whatsoever had been said against her husband on her account, when he married her.

She had not long abidden with Gualtieri before she conceived with child and in due time bore a daughter, whereat he rejoiced greatly. But, a little after, a new thought having entered his mind, to wit, to seek, by dint of long tribulation and things unendurable, to make trial of her patience, he first goaded her with words, feigning himself troubled and saying that his vassals were exceedingly ill content with her, because of her mean extraction, especially since they saw that she bore children, and that they did nothing but murmur, being sorely chagrined for the birth of her daughter. The lady, hearing this, replied, without anywise changing countenance or showing the least resentment, 'My lord, do with me that which you deem will be most for your honor and solace, for I shall be content with all, knowing, as I do, that I am of less account than they and that I was unworthy of this dignity to which you have advanced me of your courtesy.' This reply was most agreeable to Gual-

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tieri, for he saw that she was not uplifted into pridefulness for any honor that he or others had done her; but, a little after, having in general terms told her that his vassals could not brook this girl that had been born of her, he sent to her a servingman of his, whom he had instructed and who said to her with a very woeful countenance, 'Madam, if I would not die, needs must I do that which my lord commands me. He has bidden me take this your daughter and that I . . .' And he said no more. The lady, hearing this and seeing the servant's aspect and remembering her husband's words, concluded that he had ordered him to put the child to death; whereupon, without changing countenance, she promptly took her from the cradle and having kissed and blessed her, laid her in the servant's arms, saying, 'Here, take her and punctually do that which your lord has enjoined you; but do not leave her to be devoured by the beasts and the birds, except he command it.' The servant took the child and reported what the lady had said to Gualtieri, who marveled at her constancy and dispatched him with the child to a kinswoman of his at Bologna, asking her to bring her up and rear her diligently, without ever saying whose daughter she was.

In course of time the lady again conceived and in due season bore a male child, to her husband's great joy; but, that which he had already done sufficing him not, he addressed himself to probe her to the quick with a yet sorer stroke and accordingly said to her one day with a troubled air, 'Wife, since you have borne this male child, I have in no way been able to live in peace with these my people, so greatly do they murmur that a grandson of Giannucolo should become their lord after me; wherefore I am afraid, if I would not be driven forth from my domains, it will behoove me to do in this case that which I did another time and ultimately put you away and take another wife.' The lady gave ear to him with a patient mind nor answered other than, 'My lord, seek to content yourself and to satisfy your pleasure and have no thought of me, for

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poor girl, who was of a village near to his house, had long pleased Gualtieri, and it seeming to him that she was fair enough, he judged that he might lead a very comfortable life with her; wherefore, without seeking farther, he determined to marry her and sending for her father, who was a very poor man, agreed with him to take her to wife. This done, he assembled all his friends of the country round and said to them, 'My friends, it has pleased and pleases you that I should dispose me to take a wife and I have resigned myself thereto, more to please you than of any desire I have for marriage. You know what you promised me, to wit, that you would be content with and honor as your lady and mistress her whom I should take, whosoever she might be; wherefore the time is come when I am to keep my promise to you and when I would have you keep yours to me. Quite near here I have found a girl after my own heart and mean within some few days hence to marry her and bring her home to my house; wherefore do you bethink yourselves how the bride feast may be a goodly one and how you may receive her with honor, in such a way that I may avouch myself contented of your promise, even as you will have cause to be of mine.' The good folk all answered joyfully that they were pleased with this and that, be she who he would, they would hold her for lady and mistress and honor her as such in all things; after which they all addressed themselves to hold fair and high and glad festival and on like wise did Gualtieri, who had very great and goodly nuptials made ready and invited thereto many friends and kinsfolk and great gentlemen and others of the neighborhood. Moreover, he had cut and fashioned much rich and goodly apparel, after the measure of a girl who seemed to him like of her person to the young woman he meant to marry, and provided also rings and girdles and a rich and goodly crown and all that behooves unto a bride.

The day come that he had appointed for the nuptials, Gualtieri towards half-tierce mounted to horse, he and all those who were come to do him honor, and having ordered every-

thing needful, 'Gentlemen,' said he, 'it is time to go fetch the bride.' Then, setting out with all his company, he rode to the village and betaking himself to the house of the girl's father, found her returning in great haste with water from the spring, so she might afterwards go with other women to see Gualtieri's bride come. When the marquis saw her, he called her by name, to wit, Griselda, and asked her where her father was; to which she answered bashfully, 'My lord, he is within the house.' Thereupon Gualtieri dismounted and bidding all await him, entered the poor house alone, where he found her father, whose name was Giannucolo, and said to him, 'I am come to marry Griselda, but first I wish to know somewhat of her in your presence.' Accordingly, he asked her if, should he take her to wife, she would always seek to please him, nor take umbrage at aught that he should do or say, and if she would be obedient, and many other like things, to all of which she answered yes; whereupon Gualtieri, taking her by the hand, led her forth and in the presence of all his company and of everyone else, had her stripped naked. Then, sending for the garments which he had made, he straightway had her don the clothes and shoes and had a crown set on her hair, all tumbled as it was; after which, everyone marveling at this, he said, 'Gentlemen, this is she who I intend shall be my wife, if she will have me to husband.' Then, turning to her, where she stood, all shamefast and confounded, he said to her, 'Griselda, will you have me for your husband?' To which she answered, 'Yes, my lord.' Said he, 'And I will have you for my wife'; and espoused her in the presence of all. Then, mounting her on a palfrey, he carried her, honorably accompanied, to his mansion, where the nuptials were celebrated with the utmost splendor and rejoicing, not otherwise than as if he had taken to wife the daughter of the king of France.

The young wife seemed to have, together with her clothes, changed her mind and her manners. She was, as we have already said, goodly of person and countenance, and even as she was fair, on like wise she became so engaging, so pleasant

GIOVANNI BOCCACCIO DECAMERON

THE JOHN PAYNE TRANSLATION

REVISED AND ANNOTATED

BY CHARLES S. SINGLETON

U. Cal. @ Berkeley (1986)

THE TENTH STORY

*The marquis of Saluzzo, constrained by the prayers
of his vassals to marry, but determined to do it after his
own fashion, takes to wife the daughter of a peasant and has
of her two children, whom he makes believe to her
to put to death; after which, feigning to be grown weary
of her and to have taken another wife, he has his own daughter
brought home to his house, as if she were his new bride,
and turns his wife away in her shift;
but, finding her patient under everything, he fetches her
home again, dearer than ever, and showing her
her children grown great, honors her and has
her honored as marchioness.*

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THE king's long story being ended and having, to all appearance, much pleased all, Dyoneo said, laughing, "The good man who looked that night to abase the phantom's upright tail would not have given two farthings for all the praises you bestow on Messer Torello." Then, knowing that it rested with him alone to tell, he proceeded: "GENTLE LADIES mine, it appears to me that this day has been given up to kings and soldans and the like; wherefore, that I may not overmuch depart from you, I propose to relate to you of a marquis, not

THE TENTH STORY

an act of magnificence, but a monstrous folly, which, although good ensued to him thereof in the end, I do not advise any to imitate, for it was a thousand pities that weal did betide him thereof.

IT is now a great while ago since the chief of the house among the marquises of Saluzzo was a youth called Gualtieri, who, having neither wife nor children, spent his time in nought but hunting and hawking nor had any thought of taking a wife nor of having children; wherein he deserved to be reputed very wise. The thing, however, not pleasing his vassals, they besought him many times to take a wife, so he might not abide without an heir nor they without a lord, and offered themselves to find him one of such a fashion and born of such parents that good hopes might be had of her and he be well content with her; whereto he answered, 'My friends, you constrain me to that which I was altogether resolved never to do, considering how hard a thing it is to find a wife whose fashions sort well with one's own humor and how great an abundance there is of the contrary sort and how dour a life is his who happens upon a woman not well suited to him. To say that you think, by the manners and fashions of the parents, to know the daughters, wherefrom you argue to give me a wife such as will please me, is a folly, since I know not how you may avail to know their fathers nor yet the secrets of their mothers; and even did you know them, daughters are often unlike their parents. However, since it pleases you to bind me in these chains, I am content to do your desire; but, that I may not have occasion to complain of other than myself, should it prove ill done, I mean to find a wife for myself, certifying you that, whomsoever I may take me, if she be not honored by you as your lady and mistress, you shall experience, to your cost, how much it irks me to have at your entreaty taken a wife against my own will.'

The good men replied that they were content, if only he would bring himself to take a wife. Now the fashions of a