

THE NORTON ANTHOLOGY WORLD LITERATURE

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Full p. C-2 Full p. C-3 Full p. C-4

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I Encounters with Islam

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An illustration of the Ottoman fleet blockading the port of Marseille, from a 16th-century Ottoman manuscript that recounts the military campaigns of Süleyman the Magnificent.

The Prophet Muhammed and the emergence of Islam united disparate Arab tribes over the course of the seventh century, turning them into a potent cultural and political force. Islam initially spread as the religion of a dynamic Arab state that took advantage of the weakness of the Byzantine and Persian Empires in the Middle East, and soon extended its political boundaries even farther, to Spain, Central Asia, and Afghanistan. Once conquests slowed down and political boundaries were consolidated, traders carried the religion even farther still, to West Africa and China, as well as South and Southeast Asia. Arab traders established an

increasingly far-flung network of cities and trading posts, facilitating an extraordinary exchange of goods. In Cordoba, the center of Muslim Spain, one had access to goods coming from Delhi, the Sultanate in northern India, and from what is now Bulgaria in eastern Europe to Sudan. Along with commodities, what traveled along these trade routes were armies. Islam became the religion of the ruling classes in the different empires. However, unlike Christianity, Islam did not seek Full p. C-5 converts, which meant that it often allowed local religious practices to exist alongside Islam, thus creating multicultural societies in which different religions existed side by side. The Ottoman Empire and the Mughal rule in India, for all the tensions that existed between different groups, set a standard for religious tolerance.

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WESTERN AFRICA
1200–1400
0 200 400 600 800 kilometers
0 100 200 300 400 500 miles
Cordoba
GRANADA
Granada
Algiers
Tunis
Sardinia
Tyrrhenian Sea
Mediterranean Sea
Sicily
Malta
MARINIDS
Fez
Tlemcen
ZAYYANIDS
ATLAS MOUNTAINS
Marrakesh
HIGH ATLAS MOUNTAINS
BEDUINS
Tripoli
Sijilmassa
HAFSIDS
Canary Islands
Ghadamès
BERBERS
Socna
Taourirt
Sahara Desert
Tarraghan
Murzuk
Zawila
Ghat
Taghaza
Approximate line of division between the Sahel and the Sahara Desert
Wadan
BERBERS
TUAREGS
Lamjuna
Es Souk/Tadmekka
Bilma
TAKRUR
Awdaghust
WAGADU/ GHANA
Walata
Timbuktu
SONGHAY
Agadès
Senegal
Diara
Méma
Niger Inland Delta
Gao
KANEM-BORNO
Mali
DOGON
Niger
Azelik
Buré gold fields
Jenne
Ségou
Lake Chad
Narena
Dakajalan
Niani
White Volta
Sokoto
Katsina
Ngazargamu
Kano
Approximate southern limit of the spread of Islam by 1500
Black Volta
Zaria
Volta
Niger
Benue
Ife
Benin
Bight of Benin
Niger Delta
Atlantic Ocean
Gulf of Guinea
Equator
Major trade route
Important trading center
Major cultural/political center or city/state
Approximate extent of the Mali Empire at its height
Approximate area of the core Mande homeland
Designation of empire that reached its height after the Mali Empire
SONGHAY
Designation of empire that reached its height before the Mali Empire
GHANA
Designation of a smaller core political area
Méma
Designation of a major ethnic group of a region
TUAREGS

The same pattern held true of culture. Far from seeking to export a homogeneous notion of culture, the various Islamic empires were places of vibrant cultural exchange, in which art and ideas traveled as freely as goods and armies. Writing was especially enriched by the interchange; new literary forms that blended imported styles with existing local ones emerged throughout the Islamic world. Oral literature, such as the ones that fed into the Turkish epic ***Dede Korkut*** or the Mali epic ***Sunjata*** , continued to flourish, while incorporating Islamic elements, much as the pre-Christian epic ***Beowulf*** had received a late Christian layer or veneer to make the traditional story compatible with the new dominant religion. The result was a fascinating encounter of cultures and religions, whose products are presented here.

ISLAM AND PRE-ISLAMIC CULTURE IN NORTH AFRICA

Between 640 and 700 C.E., North Africa was occupied by Arab invaders seeking to expand the growing sphere of influence of an Arab world increasingly united by Islam. One far-reaching result of the Arab conquest was that it led to an economic revolution by combining the faltering economy of late Roman North Africa with the desert and savannah lands of West Africa into a vast commercial network that extended from the Atlantic to East Asia and from the equator throughout northern Europe. By the latter half of the eighth century, most of the native Berber peoples of the Maghreb (Northwest Africa) had been converted to Islam. Owing to increasingly dynamic market forces to the north of the desert and the spread of camel-herding in the desert itself, Muslim Berber merchants became engaged in the systematic development of trans-Saharan trade.

The ninth-century Arab occupation of southern Morocco gave rise to a string of oasis cities south of the High Atlas Mountains. These included the bustling market town of Sijilmasa, which became the northern counterpart of the commercial centers of Tadmekka and Awdaghust on the southern edge of the Sahara. By the end of the tenth century, the southern trading centers had been colonized by Muslim (mostly Berber) immigrants from the north. They were merchants eager to trade with the markets of desert-edge kingdoms like Ghana, Takrur, and Gao, and especially to extract wealth from parts of the western Sudan described by Arab travelers as “the land of gold.”

Thus, Islam arrived in West Africa via Muslim traders, and by 1068 the respected Arab geographer Al-Bakri was writing that there were significant Muslim populations occupying towns of the Mande peoples, which included the Maninka of the Upper Niger region who became founders of the Mali Empire in the thirteenth century.

But Islam was not only an economic force; it also reshaped the cultural landscape. By the thirteenth century Islam had become a common, though not universal, aspect of Mande culture. Far from imposing onto North Africa, including the Mali Empire, its own conception of art, Islam was gradually integrated into Mande culture, with Mande bards (*jeliw*) assimilating elements of Islamic tradition. Some of the stories told by Muslim clerics and by pilgrims returning from Mecca were adapted to local narrative repertoires. The Prophet Muhammad and various characters from his life and times were borrowed by Mande bards and incorporated into their most important oral traditions, including the epic *Sunjata*, which tells the story of the thirteenth-century hero who is credited with the founding of the Mali Empire.

Full p. C-6 Full p. C-7

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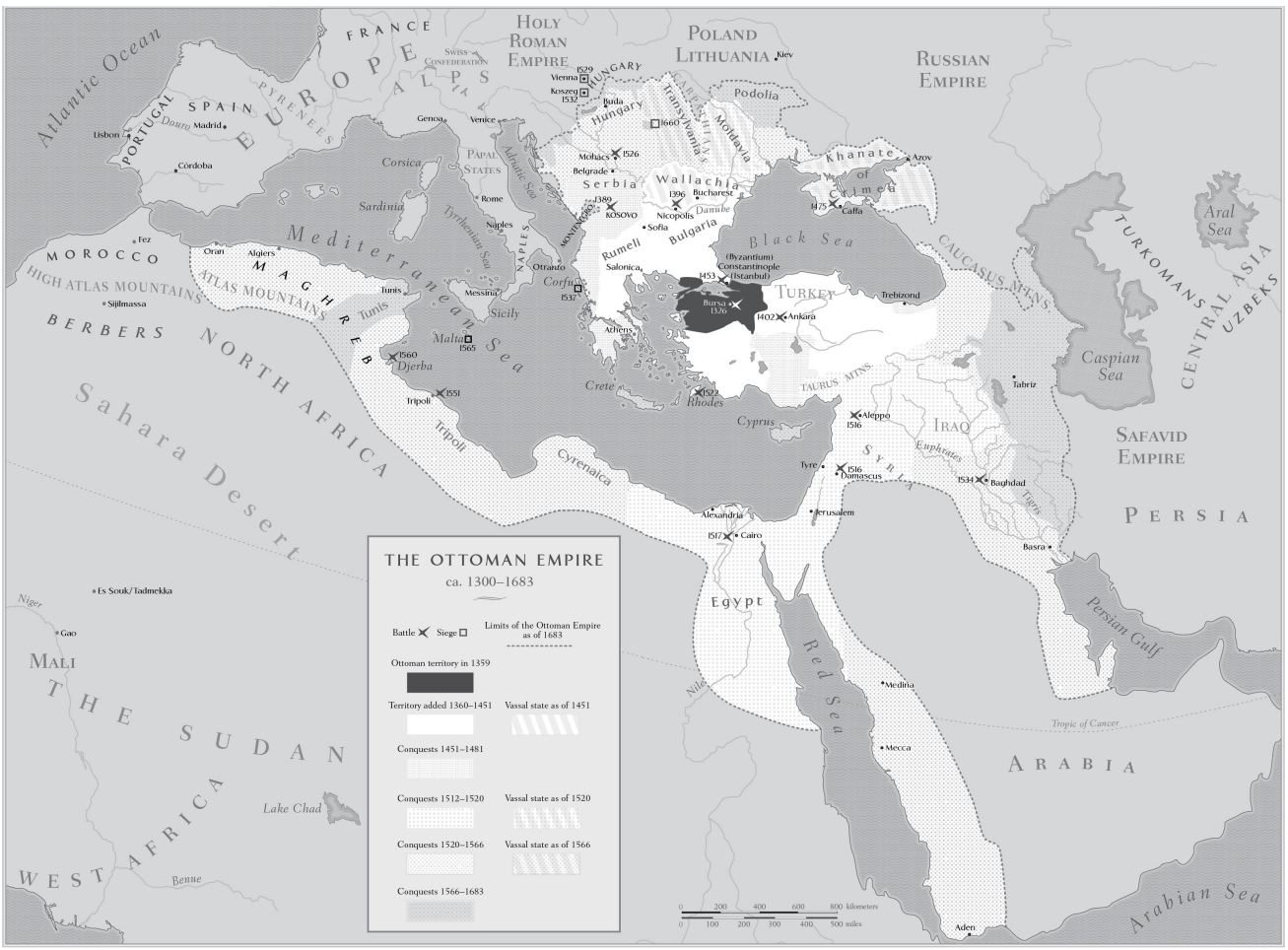


A contemporary photograph of the Great Mosque at Djenne, Mali, which was first built in the 13th century.

Full p. C-8

THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

The beginnings of the Ottoman Empire can be traced to a small principality established around 1300 C.E. by Turkoman nomads in the little-controlled borderlands of northwestern Asia Minor between the Byzantine Empire and the fragments of the Seljuk Empire. The "Ottoman enterprise," named after Osman Beg (d. probably 1324) was initially one of many similar petty principalities, but it managed, within a century and a half, to eliminate its Islamic competitors in Asia Minor and conquer much of southeastern Europe. The conquest of the city of Constantinople in 1453 finally established it as the inheritor of the eastern Roman Empire. Over time, Ottoman conquests extended farther into Europe, including Hungary and today's Romania. By 1517, the Ottomans also controlled Syria, Egypt, and the Holy Cities of Arabia. Despite this eastern expansion, the Ottoman Empire remained a Mediterranean rather than an Asiatic power.



In this process of empire building, the nomadic origins soon faded away to fond memories preserved in chronicles and heroic epics, such as the *Book of Dede Korkut*, while the remaining nomads were marginalized as a social group and used as a military reserve. The new political and military elite largely consisted of carefully selected and highly educated people enslaved in the sultan's custody, thus concentrating the administration of the empire in the imperial household. A second pillar of Ottoman power was a feudal army, which never developed into a landed aristocracy (as feudal armies did throughout Europe) that could hold its own against the central power of the sultan. While the Ottoman Dynasty was Full p. C-9 ethnically Turkish, and the administrative language was Turkish as well, this elite was mostly recruited from Christian subjects, who were converted to Islam and culturally socialized into Ottoman-Turkish elite culture.

This elite culture found its classical expression in art, architecture, and literature between the late fifteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth century. Ottoman literature used a language that is Turkish in principle, but had come to incorporate so many Arabic and Persian words, phrases, and even syntactic constructions that it is sometimes difficult to tell whether a poem is Turkish or Persian. This literary Ottoman Turkish was worlds apart from the Turkish spoken on the street, the reserve of its erudite connoisseurs, who were all expected to be fluent in the "Three Languages"—Arabic, Persian, and Turkish—and their rich literary traditions. EvliyaÇelebi's *Book of Travels* is a powerful late homage to these ideals of classical Ottoman culture.

Strictly speaking, the term Ottoman should be used only for the members of the imperial household and everybody else who shared this culturally defined identity, but more generally

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it has come to include the numerous subcultures that were allowed to thrive alongside it. Within this multilingual and multireligious empire, place and social status, as well as affiliation with religious and social institutions were more important than ethnic background or language. Lacking a concept of “Ottoman citizenship,” the Ottoman state with its small elite had neither an interest nor the means to impose any kind of cultural or religious identity on its subjects, and did not interfere in the internal communal affairs of its populations. This policy has often been praised as Ottoman tolerance, but it is important to realize that tolerance did not mean equality: different religious groups were taxed differently and did not have the same access to power. Yet the sheer diversity of the Ottoman Empire continues to command respect and elicit fascination.

ISLAM AND HINDUISM IN SOUTH ASIA

Muslim armies from Iraq entered South Asia early in the eighth century, initially conquering what are now the southern and western regions of Pakistan. Over the next three hundred years or so, immigrants from various parts of the Muslim world, together with local converts to Islam, gradually established distinctive settlements for themselves in the western and northwestern parts of the Indian subcontinent, from Sind and Gujarat to Punjab and Kashmir. During the eleventh and twelfth centuries, Muslim armies from Afghanistan and Central Asia (which included Mumluks, enslaved Turkish mercenaries) carried out a succession of raids, or short-lived invasions, on towns and cities in northern India. In 1206, a Mumluk proclaimed himself the sultan of Delhi, laying the foundation for a Muslim empire in northern India that lasted more than three centuries and was ruled by five different dynasties of Turkish-Afghan descent.

In the early sixteenth century, the Delhi Sultanate, which controlled the greater portion of western, northern, eastern, and central India by then, lost power to the Mughals, a dynasty with origins in today’s Uzbekistan. The Mughals ruled most of South Asia from 1526 to 1857, creating a vast empire that, especially in the second half of the sixteenth century and in the seventeenth century, was the richest and most powerful political formation in Asia. Over a period of more than six centuries, the Delhi Sultanate and the Mughal Empire, between them, provided a complex framework for the emergence of a unique Indo-Islamic civilization, which continues to shape the cultural life of South Asia to this day.

Full p. C-10



Full p. C-11

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Before the arrival of Islam, the Indian subcontinent was predominantly Hindu in religion and culture, with Buddhism and Jainism practiced only by small minorities of the population. For much of the first millennium of the Common Era, Hinduism in its classical form involved polytheism (belief in the existence of many gods), worship in temples officiated by priests (belonging to the Brahmin caste), the worship of idols and the performance of numerous and intricate rituals (in accordance with elaborate scriptures, law books, and codes), and pilgrimages to designated holy places.

When Islam settled into South Asia, it challenged many of these ideas and practices in Hinduism. Islam's uncompromising monotheism (belief in a single, all-powerful God), as well as its attacks on idol-worship, compelled many Hindus to reconsider their polytheism and their worship in temples (which is centered around idols, often representing gods in anthropomorphic forms). Likewise, Islam's emphasis on social equality and a universal fraternity persuaded Hindus to question the caste hierarchy and its practice of discrimination on the basis of birth. Moreover, Sufism—a mystical form of Islam centered on the cultivation of music, dance, poetry, the visual arts, and techniques of ecstasy—offered forms of spiritualism that resonated with some Hindu conceptions of "union with God." The poets collected here, from different regions and religions of South Asia, all work through this productive tension between Islam and Hinduism, testifying to the fact that cross-cultural encounters are sometimes violent, but can also lead to artworks of stunning beauty.

Full p. C-12 Shorter p. 1500

SUNJATA: A WEST AFRICAN EPIC OF THE MANDE PEOPLES late thirteenth– early fourteenth century

The West African epic named after its central hero, Sunjata, is an essential part of Mande culture. The heartland of Mande territory is located in what is now northeastern Guinea and southern Mali, but the Mande peoples are found throughout a much larger portion of sub-Saharan West Africa, speaking various related languages and dialects. The Mande, also known as "the people of Manden," who include the Bamana of Mali and the Maninka of Guinea, are heirs to a vibrant historical legacy, the high point of which was the Mali Empire that flourished from the mid-thirteenth to the early fifteenth century. The epic narrative of Sunjata and his contemporaries illustrates the Mande peoples' own view of this glorious past both before and after Islam began to influence their culture, and it rightfully credits their ancestors with establishing one of the great empires of the medieval world.

In Mande culture, oral tradition is the domain of bards popularly known as griots, but as *jeliw* or *jelilu* (sing. *jeli*) to their own people. They are the hereditary oral artists responsible for relating the alleged deeds of the early ancestors, keeping them and their exploits alive in the community's memory. For many centuries the *jeliw* have served as genealogists, musicians, praise-singers, spokespersons, and diplomats. As the principal narrators of oral tradition, the bards have been responsible for preserving narratives that express what peoples of the Mande cultural heartland believe to have happened in the distant past. For centuries, stories of the ancestors have passed from one generation of *jeliw* to the next, and the principal Mande clans frame their identities in terms of descent from the ancestors described in epic tradition.

As specialists in maintaining the oral traditions of their culture, *jeliw* are known to their people as guardians of "The Word." In early times they served as the spokespersons of chiefs

(*dugutigiw*) and kings (*mansaw*), and were thus responsible for their patrons' reputations in the community. Generations of *jeli* families were permanently attached to leading households and ruling dynasties, who supported the bards in exchange for their services in the verbal arts. The *jeliw* encouraged their patrons to strive for ambitious goals by reminding them of the examples set by their heroic ancestors, as described in the epic narratives. They pointed out mistakes through the use of proverbs, and admonished their patrons when they seemed likely to fail in their duties. At the same time, the bards' own security depended on their rulers' political power and social prestige, so the stories they told tended to be biased in favor of their patrons' own ancestors.

In Mande societies, all matters involving family, clan, and ethnic kinship are of supreme importance. People are identified by their *jamu*—the family name or patronymic associated with famous ancestors remembered for important deeds alleged to have occurred around the beginning of the thirteenth century. Thanks to regular Shorter p. 1501 exposure to live or locally taped performances by *jeliw* that are played privately Full p. C-13 or heard regularly on local radio broadcasts, general awareness of the heroes and heroines of ancient times, like those in *Sunjata*, enters the people's consciousness in childhood and grows there throughout their lives. Memories of the ancestors are constantly evoked in praise songs and narrative episodes that are sung or recited by the bards on virtually any occasion that calls for entertainment. When elders meet in village council, the ancestral spirits are felt to be present because, according to tradition, it was they who established the relative status of everyone present, as well as the administrative protocols to be followed and the values underpinning every decision. The ancestors who are described in *kuma koro* or "ancient speech" define the identity of virtually everyone of Mande origin.

The performance of *Sunjata* would often be accompanied by musical instruments: a small lute (*nkoni*), a twenty-one-string calabash harp (*kora*), or a Malian xylophone (*bala*). Even without music, Mande oral poetry incorporates a kind of call-and-response rhythm through the repeated assent of the "*naamu-sayer*" (responding person) to each line sung by the *jeli* . The *naamus* of this secondary performer might be translated as "yes" or "We hear you"; they are preserved here in the original to give a flavor of the repetitive, almost incantatory quality of the response. The variant spellings of *naamu* reflect different pronunciations used for emphasis. Common interjections include *tinye* ("it's true") in the indigenous language, as well as terms borrowed from Arabic and reflecting the influence of Islam, such as *walahi* ("I swear") and *amina* ("amen"). In all cases, the community hears not only the poem but an enthusiastic, repeated approbation of it. The *jeli*'s own language when narrating the stories of the ancestors is also distinct from everyday speech, as *kuma koro* ("ancient speech") is turned to for the performance. Even the most central names in the story may vary according to the pronunciation of the individual *jeliw* and to regional differences, so that Sunjata, for example, may appear as Son-Jara, So'olon Jara, or Sunjara.

Oral literature that has been passed down from generation to generation is difficult to date. The epic material feeding this version of the *Sunjata* epic was narrated and recorded only in the late twentieth century, although it retells stories that go back centuries. Djanka Tassey Condé, the *jeli* who narrated this version, lived his entire life in the small village of Fadama near the Niandan River in northeastern Guinea. Nominally a Muslim like most people in today's Mande society, Tassey was descended from a lineage of Condébards who trace their ancestry to forebears who lived before the arrival of Islam in the land of Dòni Kiri as it is

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described in the Mande epic. Even among other bardic Manden families, the Condéof Fadama are respected for their vast knowledge of Mande epic tradition. In the 1970s and 1980s, Tassey's brother Mamadi Condéwas *belentigi* (chief bard) of Fadama, and one of the best-known Manden orators, distinguished for his depth of knowledge. When Mamadi died in 1994, his brother Tassey became the *belentigi* . Several months later, David C. Conrad, who edited this version of *Sunjata*, began a collaborative relationship with Tassey Condéthat lasted until that great bard's death in 1997.

The passages collected here are from the rendering by Tassey Condéof this communal, epic story. The narrative is episodic and often disjunct, full of magic (*dalilu*) and humor, as the *jeli* gives his own version of a story familiar to his listeners. The epic tells of the great expectation surrounding the birth of Sunjata, whose heroism has long been foretold. Foreigners come to Full p. C-14 Shorter p. 1502 defeat a wild buffalo that has been decimating Mande lands, and their first achievement is to recognize the buffalo woman DòKamissa as the culprit. They tame her with kindness, claiming that she resembles their mother, until she relents and offers them her wisdom. Urging them to look beyond appearances, she commends to them the deformed Sogolon, who will be the mother of Sunjata. When Sunjata is finally born, into a world full of sorcery and treachery, he barely escapes the many plots against him, and is eventually driven into exile by the jealousy of his stepbrother. His greatest achievement comes with the defeat of the tyrannous Sumaworo to liberate Manden, which the text recognizes as a foundational imperial gesture. *Sunjata* also emphasizes, however, that the hero's exalted stature comes at a high cost to the community: while Sumaworo furiously seeks the man who is fated to succeed him, we are told, the Mande people suffer his violent attacks.

Like most epics, *Sunjata* is a relation of the hero's many trials, which he surmounts through his courage, tenacity, and piety. Yet the singular hero is also deeply ensconced in his community: in order to lead he must find allies, cultivate friends, and honor his family. Part of the charm of *Sunjata* lies in its attention to detail, and its fresh humor as it relates the interactions of legendary heroes with the very concrete world around them. This is a poem about the power struggles that can lead to war, certainly, but it is also about people's relationship to a place and a landscape. Land takes on a concrete quality beyond its political significance as Sunjata pleads for a plot in which to bury his mother when she dies in exile. In its vivid re-creation of the hero's experience, *Sunjata* knits together the mythic and the everyday, the ancestral and the contemporary, providing for its Mande listeners a recognizable, living history, and for everyone else rich insight into the culture of a once-glorious empire.

From Sunjata[1]

The Search for a Special Wife

When Maghan Konfara[2] was a *mansa* in Manden, he had power, he had wealth, he was popular, and he had *dalilu*—but he had no child. Maghan Konfara, Sunjata's father, craved a child. Though his friends had begun to have children, he still had no child. But then his *dalilu*[3] showed that he would finally have a child. His *moriw,*[4] his sand diviners, and his pebble diviners[5] all said, "Simbon, you will sire a child who will be famous." Everybody he consulted

said the same thing. “But try to marry a light-skinned woman,” they told him. “If you marry a light-skinned woman, she will give birth to the child that has been foreseen.” Because Maghan Konfara was powerful, he married nine light-skinned women. But aside Full p. C-15 Shorter p. 1503 from Flaba Naabi, none of them gave him a child. He was perplexed. From the last Wednesday of the month of Jomènè[6] to the same time the following year, Maghan Konfara did not sire a child. (If you want to know about Sunjata, then you have to learn what Sunjata’s father and the people of Manden had to endure!)

He sent the *moriw* back into retreat, telling them, “I need a child, so do your best. It’s said that if I sire the child that has been foreseen, that child will rule Manden. I must sire this child.” The *moriw*, all of whom were present, went back into retreat. When they returned, they told him, “Simbon, marry somebody who is a mulatto.” So he married nine mulatto women. But aside from Marabajan Tarawelé, none of those mulatto women gave birth. From that time of the year to the same time the following year, none of those women who were with him in the house bore any male children. Simbon was frustrated. Maghan Konfara sent the *moriw* back into retreat. He said, “Tell me the truth. Ah! If you see that I will not have any children, tell me. A child is something that only God can provide; it cannot be bought in the market.” This time the *moriw* told him, “Very well, marry a black woman. Find a black woman who has a white heart.” This time he married nine black women. But aside from Nyuma Damba Magasuba, none of them bore any children.

Maghan Konfara was frustrated. His *moriw* told him again, “Very well, man, free one of your slave girls and marry her.” (In those days they still practiced slavery.) He liberated and married nine slave girls. But aside from Jonmusoni Manyan, none of the slave girls bore him any children. Frustrated, Simbon gathered the people of Konfara together on the last Wednesday of Jomènè.

When the people of Konfara had gathered, he separated the *moriw*, the sand diviners, and the pebble diviners into groups and sent them all into retreat. He said, “I told you not to hesitate. If you see that I won’t have a child, tell me. Go into the house. If you do not tell me the truth, I’ll kill all of you and replace you.” When the *moriw* came out of retreat, they told him, “Simbon, you will sire a child. Make one of your *jelimusow*[7] happy. Marry her so she will give birth.” He made nine *jelimusow* happy, but aside from Tunku Manyan Diawara, none of them ever gave birth.

Now all of Manden was frustrated. (It’s hard to give birth to a child who will be famous!) And when all of Manden became frustrated, the diviners were ashamed of themselves. They met and swore an oath: “Any one of us who has broken a taboo should confess it. Maybe this is our fault. If we don’t get together and tell this man the truth, the feet of our descendants will not be able to even break an egg in Manden.” They went into retreat and came back out, telling Simbon, “Someone will come from the East. He will be coming from the land of the white-skinned people. This much has been revealed to us. Let this man pray to God for a solution to your problem. If you let this man pray to God on the matter of your son, anything he tells you will be God’s word. We won’t be able to accomplish this ourselves. God has shown us a good man.”

While they waited there in Farakoro,[8] Manjan Beretéarrived. Manjan Beretéwas the first Muslim leader of Manden; he opened the door[9] to the Full p. C-16 Shorter p. 1504 Mande people. (He is

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also the ancestor of the Beretéin Manden. The home of the Beretépeople is Farisini Hejaji,[1] a region in the land of Mecca; the Beretéare Suraka.[2]) Beretépacked up some books and came from Farisi to the land of Manden because it was a powerful place. If he found someone in the land of Manden who would join him, who would work with the Koran, then his blessings would be great. Because he could not get used to the food here, Manjan Beretébrought Sansun Bereté, his little sister, with him when he came to meet Simbon. He brought his sister so she could prepare his food until he became better acquainted with the Mande people.

Manjan Beretécame and lived with Simbon. He said, “You need the religion practiced in my homeland. The Prophet has said nobody should take up swords in the religion again, that we should now be gentle with one another. Let us win people over with kindness, so we can awaken their minds and they can join the religion. The blessings will be great for anyone who accomplishes this.”

> [*In an omitted passage, Konfara suggests that Bereté’s sister is his destined wife. Beretéforbids this union, but his fathers and brothers convince him that Konfara can have his sister if he converts to Islam. Bereté’s sister gives birth to a son, but it is not the foretold son.*]

Simbon said, “How do I get that son? Pray to God for me to have that son. Will I get that son?”

“Yes, you will get that son.”

“Very well, pray to God for that.”

Manjan Beretéprayed to God. He said, “Simbon, you will get this child. When I was praying, God revealed to me that there are others like me who will come. They too will come from the land of the white-skins. Those people will not bring any woman with them when they come. But they will tell you the name of the place that is their destination, and if you ask them to, they will bring you a woman from that place. She will bear that child.”

> [*In an omitted passage, the narrator describes the Moroccan background of two brothers, Abdu Karimi and Abdu Kassimu, who will travel to the land of Dòni Kiri to hunt a buffalo that is devastating the countryside, and will eventually become known as Danmansa Wulanni and Danmansa Wulanba.*]

Footnotes

- Note 1:Translated by David C. Conrad. All notes are by the translator unless otherwise indicated. In an excerpted section, the narrator, Tassey Condé, introduces the birth of the seventh king (*mansa*) Sunjata by recalling the lineage of kings born before Sunjata. He declares that he will not start from the very beginning since the listeners and the Mande people are all Adam’s descendants. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Maghan Knofara is the father of Sunjata, also referred to as Simbon (Master Hunter) and *Mansa* (ruler) [editor’s note]. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Magic, occult, or secret power; in everyday use, any means used to achieve a goal. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:Nominal Muslims who, in oral tradition, often perform divination. Return to reference 4

- Note 5:Seers and healers who identify the source of all kinds of problems by spreading a pile of sand and reading symbols in it, or casting multiple objects such as pebbles or cowrie shells and reading the configurations in which they land. Diviners then prescribe appropriate sacrifices to remedy the problem. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:The first month of the year. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:Female bards (sing. *jelimuso*). Return to reference 7
- Note 8:Sometimes shortened to "Farako." Evidently the hometown of Sunjata's father, located in the territory (*jamana*) of Konfura [editor's note]. Farakoro appears in the longer version of Maghan Konfura's name, as he was known to Tassey Condéand his ancestral bards of Fadama: Farako Manko Farakonken. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:That is, he was instrumental in the introduction of Islam. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:"Farisi" is from Fars, a region in Persia. "Hejaji" is from Hejaz, a region that was the ancient cradle of Islam, including the Red Sea coast of Arabia and the cities of Mecca, Medina, and others. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:A Maninka and Bamana term for the local perception of "Arab," which includes "Moors" and North Africans in general. Return to reference 2

Two Hunters Arrive in Manden

Abdu Karimi and Abdu Kassimu came to Manden from Morocco. When they got here they walked all night and all the following day, and were already under the three *nkiliki* trees of Manden by the evening of that second day. When Abdu Karimi and Abdu Kassimu arrived under the trees, they measured out their food, cooked their meal, ate, and slept there.

(People used to rest under those three *nkiliki* trees when traveling to and from Dòni Kiri, the home of the Condé. Travelers of Manden, from the home of the Mansaré, used to rest there, as did travelers from Negeboriya, the home of Full p. C-17 Shorter p. 1505 the Koroma. Travelers from Soso, from the home of the Kanté, also used to rest under those trees. People could get the news of the world there.)

Abdu Karimi and Abdu Kassimu, who were Arab *kamalenw*,[3] were worried, for they did not know where they were headed. They found a place where some traders had left their cooking pots. After eating, the Arab *kamalenw* said, "Let's lie down here and wait for these traders to return. We'll soon learn our next destination."

While Abdu Karimi and Abdu Kassimu were sleeping, some traders who were on their way from Manden arrived. Some traders also arrived from Negeboriya, home of the Koroma. They all greeted one another.

The Arab *kamalenw* asked, "Is everything all right with the people of Manden?"

The traders replied, "There is nothing wrong with them."

"Is everything all right with the Koroma of Negeboriya?"

The traders said, "Nothing is troubling them." They too measured out their food; then they went to sleep.

While the brothers were lying there, some traders who were on their way from Soso arrived. These traders had visited Dòni Kiri and found it in turmoil. Upon meeting Abdu Karimi and Abdu Kassimu, they asked, "Where are you from?"

The *kamalenw* said, "We are from Morocco."

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“Where are you going?”

The *kamalenw* replied, “We were on our way to the land of the Condé, but we don’t know the way.”

The traders said, “The *mansa* of Dòni Kiri is Donsamogo Diarra; he is quarreling with his sister.”

I just told you about this sister, called DòKamissa, the first daughter of Ma’an Solonkan. She and her brother, Donsamogo Diarra, were quarreling over the issue of the legacy left by Ma’an Solonkan, their mother.

DòKamissa said, “Donsamogo Diarra, if you refuse to share our mother’s legacy with me, I’ll take it myself.”

The Condéelders said to her, “Go ahead and *try* to take a share for yourself; you are too headstrong.”

“You think I can’t take it for myself?”

“Yes, that’s right.” They did not know she had the power to transform herself into different things.

DòKamissa left the town and stayed in a farm hamlet near Dòni Kiri. At that time, the place known as Dòni Kiri included the twelve towns of Dò, the four towns of Kiri, and the six towns on the other side of the river. At the break of day, DòKamissa transformed herself into a buffalo and began to kill the people living in those places.

It became a bad time for Dòni Kiri.

Donsamogo Diarra said, “This buffalo has killed all of the hunters that I requested from Manden.” He sent a message to the Koroma of Negeboriya, but the buffalo killed all of the hunters who came from there. He sent for the hunters of Soso, but when they came the buffalo killed them all, too.

Full p. C-18 Shorter p. 1506

Donsamogo Diarra was at a loss. He sent out the word from Dòni Kiri. He said, “People have died because of me. Anyone who kills this buffalo will get to choose a wife from three age sets[4] of Dòni Kiri’s girls.” Everybody who visited Dòni Kiri was told about this. And when the traders returned to the camp under the *nkiliki* tree, they told Abdu Karimi and Abdu Kassimu about the turmoil in Dòni Kiri.

The traders said, “Things in Dòni Kiri have become very bad. Donsamogo Diarra’s quarrel with his sister has resulted in many deaths. Hunger has come to Kiri because no one can go in or out. The paths to the village and farms have been closed. There is no way for crops to be brought home, for the buffalo is blocking the way. The Condésay that anyone who kills this buffalo will get to choose a wife from three sets of Dòni Kiri girls.”

The Arab *kamalenw* were still camped there. The younger brother, Abdu Karimi, said, “Big brother, do you hear what they are saying?”

Abdu Kassimu replied, “I hear it.”

Together they said, “Let us go to Dòni Kiri.”

The elder brother said, “Hey, little brother, what about these things they are talking about? Suppose the buffalo kills us?”

Abdu Karimi replied, “If the buffalo kills us, at least we’ll die for the sake of the Condé. They are having a bad time in Dòni Kiri. I feel bad for them. Remember how our fathers told us the

story of the Condéancestor Samasuna?[5] Before the Prophet could make any progress, God told him to fight at Kaïbara.[6] The Condéancestor Samasuna took a thousand of his sons to go and help our ancestors fight at the battle of Kaïbara, and there he lost all thousand of his sons. No matter how difficult the fight at Dòni Kiri will be, it can't be more difficult than the battle at Kaïbara.

"The thousand sons that the Condéancestor Samasuna gave all died on the battleground of our ancestors' war at Kaïbara. If the two of us should die for the sake of the Condé, will our deaths be equal to the deaths of those thousand men? If it's our time to die, we should die for a good cause. We do not equal a thousand men. But if we should die for the sake of the Condé, we will only be doing what the thousand men did for those ancestors. So let us go to Dòni Kiri. Knowing what the Condéancestors suffered for our sake at Kaïbara, we would be bastards if we retreated now, after hearing that the Condéare suffering." Thus Abdu Karimi encouraged his elder brother.

Abdu Kassimu now had the courage to go to Dòni Kiri. But first the brothers packed their belongings and went straight to Konfara. They bypassed Dòni Kiri and went straight to Manden.

When the brothers arrived in Manden, Manjan Beretéwas sitting in a circle near Maghan Konfara. The two men were playing *wari* .[7] Manjan Beretéwas sitting in the circle near Simbon, with prayer beads in his hands, praying to God: Full p. C-19 Shorter p. 1507 "May God not let me be embarrassed by my prediction." They remained sitting when they saw Abdu Karimi and Abdu Kassimu approaching. When the two brothers arrived, all of the men met in that same circle, and Manjan Beretéand Maghan Konfara stopped playing *wari* .

Abdu Karimi said, "My respected *karamogo*, we have come to God, we have come to the Mande people, and we have come to Simbon. What makes us walk fast will also make us talk fast."

After greeting the brothers, the Mande people asked them, "Where did you come from?"

The Arab *kamalenw* said, "We come from Morocco."

"What is your family?"

"We are Sharifu."[8]

The Mande people saluted them, "You Haidara,"[9] to which the *kama lenw* replied, "Marahaba."[1]

The Mande people said, "The honor is yours, the honor is Simbon's."

The Arab *kamalenw* said, "We come from Morocco. We are children of Abdu Sharifu. We are descendants of Saïdina Ali."[2]

The *kamalenw* explained, "We have heard that the Condéare suffering, that they are quarreling with their sister who has transformed herself into a buffalo. Every morning the buffalo has killed people in all of the twelve towns of Dò, the four towns of Kiri, and the six towns across the river. That is why we have come. We want to go to Dòni Kiri, to help the Condéwith their trouble. We want you to perform the sand divination for us. If our sand is sweet, we will go to Dòni Kiri. And if our sand is not sweet, we will still go to Dòni Kiri."

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[*In an omitted passage, the narrator recounts that the sand is indeed sweet and a sacrifice must accompany the divination. Before the hunters leave, Maghan Konfara asks for a wife but the younger brother refuses. The narrator introduces the buffalo's female genie companion, who advises the brothers on how to respond to abusive women they will meet, and how to approach DòKamissa, the Buffalo Woman, and avoid being killed by her.*]

Footnotes

- Note 3: *Kamalenw*: plural form of *kamalen*, a circumcised youth 15–25 years old. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:Children born within the same span of about three years are identified as a single group or age set that grows up together, going through the various initiation rituals into adulthood. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:Samson (Shamsūn in Arabic) is not mentioned in the Koran, but according to other sources of Muslim tradition (e.g., al-Tha'labi and al-Tabari), he dedicated his life to God and continually fought against idolators. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:Maninka usage of Khaybar, an oasis 95 miles from Medina, Arabia, the site of a famous battle fought by the Prophet Muhammad and his army. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:A popular game played with two rows of shallow holes, usually in a carved wooden board, with small stones or cowrie shells used as counters. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:Contraction of the longer plural form Sharifulu from the Arabic Shurafa' (sing. Sharīf), a lineage claiming descent from the family of the Prophet Muhammad. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:A prestigious Muslim family name in Manden, here used in a greeting as the equivalent of Sharifu. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:Response to a greeting that honors people by saluting their ancestors with the family name or *jamu* (patronymic, identity). From Arabic *mrehba* ("welcome"). Return to reference 1
- Note 2:'Alīibn AbīTālib, cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet Muhammad, and one of the first converts to Islam; renowned as a warrior during Islam's struggle for survival, he took part in most of the Prophet's expeditions and displayed legendary courage at the battles of Badr and Khaybar. Return to reference 2

DòKamissa the Buffalo Woman

After walking for one kilometer, the brothers passed into the land of Konfara, and from there crossed into the land of the Condé. There they met a woman who had borne one child, just as the female genie had told them. The genie had said, "You will not see me again. But if you don't heed the advice I give you, the buffalo will kill you."

When they greeted this woman who had borne one child, she spoke abusively to them. She said, "Eh! Is it the woman who should greet first, or is it the man? Full p. C-20 Shorter p. 1508 You do not pass by a beautiful woman without greeting her!" She said every possible bad word to them.

They said, "M'ba.[3] We are children of the road. We do not know anything about women or men. We have never been to this country. We speak to everyone we meet, so they can help us."

She replied, “Am I the one who is supposed to help you?”

Huh! They passed on by her without quarreling further.

After they passed that woman, they walked another kilometer and met the full-breasted girl. When they met this girl they said, “Lady, we greet you, God is great.”

Ah! She abused them. She said every bad word to them.

The younger brother said, “Aaah, you do not understand. A beautiful woman like you will pass by a man like that? You do not know what is happening.” (No matter how proud a girl is, once you call her “beautiful,” she will soften.)

After the hunters passed by the full-breasted girl, she went on her way. (Humility really comes only with death, but men act humbly until they get what they want.)

After walking on for another kilometer, they heard the pounding of the mortars and pestles[4] of Dòni Kiri, and there they met DòKamissa herself. She carried a hoe on her shoulder and a walking staff served as her third leg.

When they said, “Greetings mother.” Heeeh! She cursed their father. After that, she cursed their grandfather. Then she cursed their mother.

“You are calling me mother? Was I the one who gave birth to your father or your mother?” She said every bad word to them.

Abdu Karimi said, “Big brother, don’t you think this lady resembles our mother?”

> [*In an omitted passage, the brothers help the buffalo woman feed her chickens before they arrive in Dòni Kiri and are given lodging. They set out on their plan, treating the buffalo woman as they would treat their mother. After three failed attempts at forming a bond, she finally invites them into her home for a conversation.*]

Footnotes

- Note 3:Contraction of *marahaba*, a response to a greeting that honors people by saluting their ancestors with the family name or jamu (patronymic, identity). From Ar. mrehba (“welcome”). Return to reference 3
- Note 4:The mortar is a large wooden receptacle in which women pound grain with a heavy, wooden, dub-shaped [slightly curved] pestle that can be as long as five feet. Return to reference 4

DòKamissa’s Revelations

DòKamissa the Buffalo Woman said, “You have outdone me. No one can get the better of people like you. You are polite. You were brought up well. Eh! Despite everything you were told, you were not discouraged. You favor me? Now I will cooperate with you. Were it not for you, I would have wiped out Dòni Kiri.

“You know that Donsamogo Diarra, with whom I am quarreling, is my brother. I was the firstborn of my father’s children. When I reached puberty, I said, ‘My Lord God, I will give the largest of the two gold earrings that are on my ears to whoever brings me the news that my father has had a son. My Lord God, I will also give the beautiful outer one of the two wrappers I am wearing to the person that brings me such good news.’ I was the first to offer a sacrifice

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for my brother. So who does he think he is, telling me that women shouldn't have property? Huh!

Full p. C-21 Shorter p. 1509

"I would have wiped out Donsamogo's entire lineage. But you Sharifu, you have outdone me. I will cooperate with you and give you my life, for I know that if you kill me, you will bury me; you will not let my body go to God as a bad body.

"Before I give myself up to you, though, I will ask you to do three things for me. If you agree to do those three things, then I will cooperate with you. But if you do not agree to those three things, I will keep after you until you do."

The *kamalenw* said, "Ma, tell us the three things you want us to do for you."

She said, "Here's the first: Don't go to town immediately after killing the buffalo; come to this hamlet instead. You'll find me dead. Because I am the only one who knows what I have done,[5] my brother must not see my corpse. When you arrive here, you'll see that I have poured water on the fire. There will be a hoe; there will also be an axe. Take the axe and cut down a *toro* tree. Take the hoe and dig my grave. After you have laid me in it, fire the musket. At no point can my brother, my father's son, see my body; nor can my body be carried to Dòni Kiri. I have not done any good for them. I have wiped out their children, I have wiped out their wives, I have widowed their husbands; this is all my doing.

"That's the first thing you must do. Now, you know that whoever kills me will be rewarded with the choice of a wife from three sets of Dòni Kiri's girls. The second thing you must do for me is refuse all of the fine young girls they bring out for you. Do not choose any of those girls as your wife, because they would be forcing my father's last-born to remain in the house. Five sets of girls have gone to their husbands, but she has not married, and if you do not marry her, she will never be married. She holds something special in her breast for whoever marries her. You, Sharifu, must marry her.

"She is very ugly. She's the 'Short Sogolon' you've heard about, the one who is so very ugly. I damaged one of her tear ducts and now her eyes water all the time. Her head is bald, she has a humped back, her feet are twisted, and when she walks, she limps this way and that. I, DòKamissa, did all of that to her.

"How could I make her so ugly when I loved her so much? I put my far-seeing mask[6] on her face before she was old enough to wear it, and, in doing so, cut her tear duct, caused her hair to fall out, and put a hump on her back. By putting her on my sorcery horse when she was too young, I twisted her feet, stretched her tendons, and made her knock-kneed. All of this is my fault. I take the blame, and if she does not get married, it will be my curse.

"So, when the men of Dòni Kiri bring those beautiful Condéwomen to you, do not accept any of them. Choose my father's last-born. Some call her 'Humpbacked Sogolon.' Some call her 'Ugly Sogolon.' Everybody used to call her whatever they felt like. But the real name of that last-born child is Sogolon Wulen Condé. There will be something special in her breast for you because she'll have all the *dalilu.*[7]

"If you choose her over all the beautiful daughters they offer you and are not satisfied with the way she looks, then cut off the buffalo's tail when you kill it. The tail is heavy with gold and silver, because I took the gold and silver earrings Full p. C-22 Shorter p. 1510 of every Dòni Kiri woman I killed and hung them from the hair of my tail. I have a lot of hair on my tail, and it is heavy

with the gold and silver ear jewelry of the Dòni Kiri women. If you exchange some of that gold, you can go and marry a beautiful woman somewhere else, a wife to have along with Sogolon Condé. But do not refuse to take Sogolon! Then there will be no problems. Will you do this, or not?"

The Sharifu said, "We agree to that."

She said, "That is the second thing you must do. Here's the third thing: the dead buffalo's carcass must not be taken to the town."

"Eh, Condéwoman! We have agreed to your other demands, but we might not be able to do this. What if we can't convince the people of Dòni Kiri not to take the carcass back to town? What if they force us? We'll be powerless to fight them off or to take the carcass from them."

"Oh, you will do your best to heed what I have said. If you can do the other things, then forget about that last request. But you must respect my other two wishes."

"Very well."

As the brothers were about to leave, she said to them, "Sit down." Once they were sitting, she said, "The weapons you brought won't do anything to me. The arrows and quivers you brought won't do anything either. I am in control of my own life."

She put her hand in her basket of cleaned cotton, pulled out the spindle, and handed it to them. Then, putting her hand in her storage basket, she took out the distaff that usually holds the thread, and gave it to them, saying, "Put this in your bow and shoot the buffalo with it. It will stop the buffalo. If you do not shoot the buffalo with it—if you shoot a big arrow at the buffalo instead—then the buffalo will kill you."

> [*In an omitted passage, DòKamissa provides the brothers with various enchanted objects that will help them kill her buffalo wraith.*]

Footnotes

- Note 5:Contrary to what the narrator has previously indicated. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:A magic object allowing the wearer to see unimaginable distances. The concept might have entered oral tradition when Europeans were observed using telescopes and binoculars, but there also could have been an indigenous mask imbued with such power. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:The mother's physical deformities signal her possession of special occult powers that she will pass on to her child. Return to reference 7

Death of the Buffalo

The brothers left the town and went into the bush, past the lake of Dòni Kiri and into the forest. They crossed another open space and entered more forest. There, before going any further, they saw the buffalo.

(Before they came to the bush that day, the brothers' name was Sharifu. But afterwards they were called Diabatéor Tarawèlè. They left their Sharifu identity behind in Manden[8] and came to be known as Tarawèlèand Diabaté. We will soon come to the reason for this.)

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There was the buffalo. Abdu Karimi, the younger brother, said to Abdu Kassimu, “Big brother! You should be the one to take the magic dart and shoot the buffalo, because the killing of this buffalo will make history. The person who kills this buffalo will be mentioned in all of the future generations’ histories, right up until the trumpet is blown on Judgment Day. You are my big brother, so you kill the buffalo.”

Full p. C-23 Shorter p. 1511

Abdu Kassimu said, “Little brother, a job must be left to the experts. Yes, I was the first to be born. But I know what *dalilu* you have—and I know you must be the one to kill the buffalo.” He handed the magic dart to his younger brother.

Abdu Karimi told his elder brother to go on ahead. Crawling through the grass, Abdu Karimi came ever closer to the buffalo. He remembered what the old woman had told him: that he should not try to kill the buffalo until he was in its shadow. She’d said, “Do not miss me! If you miss the buffalo, I’ll kill you.” The younger brother crawled until he reached the buffalo’s shadow. He took the distaff and put it on the spindle. He pulled the string of his bow back, back, back, he pulled it still harder, and he could feel that he had something very powerful in his hand. When he’d pulled the bowstring back to his shoulder, he let the spindle go, *pow*! It shot right into the buffalo’s chest.

The buffalo was startled when the spindle pierced its chest. It raised its head, saw Abdu Karimi, and bellowed, *hrrr*! And there, while he was still right beside the wounded buffalo, Abdu Karimi told his elder brother, “Run!” for the buffalo had been shot and the struggle between them had begun.

(It’s said that greatness will not be acquired without hardship. We’ve been telling you about the hardship Manden had to endure before the country could know peace. Sunjata would not have been born without this hardship, and without Sunjata, Manden would never have been sweet. And if Manden was never sweet, we Mande people would never have known ourselves!)

Bellowing, the buffalo began to chase the *kamalenw*, it came up behind Abdu Karimi, who was trying to catch up with his elder brother. Abdu Karimi dropped the bamboo stick, which instantly sprouted into a grove of bamboo, and before the buffalo could get through it, the *kamalenw* were far ahead.

Once it was clear of the bamboo, the buffalo started chasing them again. When it came up behind them and bellowed, the brothers dropped the hot charcoal. In those days, the Mande bush had been there a long time and had never been burned. So when the *kamalenw* dropped the hot charcoal, the bush caught on fire, stopping the buffalo and forcing it back while they dashed ahead through the grass.

When the fire died out, the buffalo jumped into the ashes and started chasing them again. But by the time it reached them and bellowed, they were already at the lake of Dòni Kiri. There Abdu Karimi dropped the egg, which turned the ground into deep mud. The buffalo got stuck in the mud. (This is the mud referred to in the Condésong “Dala Kombo Kamba”:

“Condédrinker of big lake water,

Those who drank the big lake water,

They did not stop to clean it.

Those who clean the big lake,

They did not drink its big water."

It was Danmansa Wulanba and Danmansa Wulanni[9] who cleaned the water of the big lake.)

By the time the mud started to dry, it was too late for the buffalo: the spindle wounds were letting water into its intestines, and it fell down. When the buffalo fell, Danmansa Wulanni said, "Big brother, look behind you! The buffalo has fallen."

Full p. C-24 Shorter p. 1512

A new family lineage was created at the moment the elder brother looked back and saw that the buffalo was dying. Going back, he put his foot on the buffalo's body. He said, "Ah, little brother! You have given me a name. Ah, little brother! You were sired by Abdu Mutulu Budulaye, Abdu Mutulu Babatali. Aba Alibi's own son is Sedina Alia, to whom God gave a sword, and you were sired by Alia. Sedina Alia's son is Hassana Lonsani, and you were sired by him. Hassana Lonsani's son is Sissi; Sissi's son is Kèmo; Kèmo's son is Kèmomo Tènè; Kèmo Tènè's son is Sharifu—and you were sired by Sharifu. Aah, Karimi! You have given us names."

After hearing this praise, the younger brother said, "Eh, big brother! If you were a praise-singer or *jeli*, no one could surpass you (*i jèmba t*è)!"

That was the beginning of the *jeli* family known as Diabaté;[1] that was the origin of the lineage. "Diabaté" was first said in Manden, in the Mande language, when the buffalo was killed in the bush.

Once the buffalo was dead, the brothers saw that its tail was heavy with gold and silver.

In cutting off the buffalo's tail, the brothers were able to take for themselves all of the gold and silver in its hair. The *kamalenw* were also able to use the tail as proof that they really had killed the buffalo. As soon as they showed the tail, people knew that the business was finished, because the tail of DòKamissa's buffalo wraith could only be cut off if the buffalo was dead. Ahuh! (And this was the beginning of the custom of removing the tails of dead game.)

[*In an omitted passage, Danmansa Wulanba and Danmansa Wulanni try to respect DòKamissa's wish that her wraith be buried in the bush, but the townspeople insist on retrieving the buffalo carcass and dragging it into town to be desecrated.*]

Footnotes

- Note 8:Only after the buffalo is mortally wounded does Tassey begin to use the names by which the brothers are usually known, Danmansa Wulanni and Danmansa Wulanba. These probably originated as praise names based on the brothers' exploits, e.g., Danmansa Wulanba can be roughly translated as "Big Lord of the Solitary Forest Buffalo." Return to reference 8
- Note 9:The elder brother is Wulanba, the younger Wulanni. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:The singing or chanting of praises is an occupational specialty of *jeliw* . This is a popular etymology explaining how the Diabaté*jeliw* acquired their family name. When the younger brother killed the buffalo and the elder brother praised his courage by reciting their family genealogy, this was the way a *jeli* would do it. When the younger brother said, "no one could surpass you," the phrase *jèmba t*èevolved through repetition

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into “Diabaté,” which, along with “Kouyaté,” is one of the two names exclusive to traditional bards. Return to reference 1

Sogolon Wulen Condéof DòNi Kiri

After the buffalo was dead, the people of Dòni Kiri started beating the ceremonial drum. All of the people living in the twelve towns of Dò, the four towns of Kiri, and the six towns across the river were expected to attend, and they all came. When the twenty-two towns were all present, the people said, “What did we say? We said that we’ll bring out three age sets of girls for the hunter that kills this buffalo, and that he can choose any girl from among them to be his wife. Bring your daughters forward.” (Huh! If you bring out three age sets of daughters from twenty-two towns, you should bring out the oldest set first, then the next oldest, then the youngest set.)

The villagers brought out the beautiful Condégirls, formed them into three circles, and told the boys to choose. The people said, “Even if you choose ten or twenty girls, they will be your wives. Or if you choose only one girl, she will be your wife. You have delivered us from disaster! And everyone here wants to have their daughters married to you two boys.

Full p. C-25 Shorter p. 1513

“You Sharifu, we don’t go back on our promises. Take a look at these girls, and take any one that pleases you.” The two men followed one another, walking around, around, around the circle. When they had returned to where they started they said, “Where are the rest of the girls?”

The Condéancestor said, “You young men search every house, so that no one can hide his daughter.”

The villagers searched the entire town but found no other girls. Everybody wanted to marry their daughter to the brothers!

When the searchers returned they said, “There is nobody left.”

A bystander said, “What about the bad old woman who was just killed? She has her father’s last-born still in her house.”

Somebody said, “Eeh, man! Heeeye, can we show that one to the strangers?”

Danmansa Wulanni said, “Go and get that woman you’re talking about. Has she been married to another man?”

They said, “No.”

“Has she been married before?”

“No.”

The brothers said, “Well, if she is unmarried, go get her.”

The people said, “Out of five age sets of girls that have found husbands, only she has remained unmarried.”

The brothers said, “If she is an unmarried girl, go get her.”

Ma DòKamissa had told them that the door of Sogolon Wulen Condé’s father’s house was the one facing the town’s meeting ground. She’d also told them, “When Sogolon is coming from my father’s house to go into the town meeting ground, a little black cat will come from behind her

and pass in front of her; the little black cat will go from in front of her and pass behind her. If you see that happening to anyone, then you'll know that she is the girl I am talking about."

They sent for Sogolon, and as she was being brought out of the house—just as she reached the edge of the town meeting ground—a black cat came from behind her and passed in front of her; it went from in front of her and passed behind her.

As soon as the brothers saw Sogolon, they said, "This is the one we've been talking about."

They heard people go, "Wooo!"

They were asked, "Is this really the one you were talking about?"

To which the brothers replied, "Yes, this is the one we have been talking about."

Ancestor Donsamogo Diarra said to them, "You Sharifu, is this the one you want?"

To which they replied, "Yes, this is the one we want."

"Are you *sure* this is the one you want?"

"This is the one we want."

He said, "This one is even more powerful than my sister, whom you killed, and you know how much *dalilu* she had. This one has *really* powerful *dalilu* . But if you say that you want her, I'll give her to you. Go ahead and take her with you. If you're not compatible, just bring her back. I'll return her to where you found her, and I'll give you another wife.

"Now, I don't want to contradict myself, but just take another look at these other girls. We'll give you up to three months. If, after three months, you're not Full p. C-26 Shorter p. 1514 compatible with my sister, come back and I will give you one of these girls. I will put my sister back where she came from."

The brothers said, "Very well."

She was Sogolon, the woman who was given to them, the mother of Simbon. Simbon, whose birth was foretold and who united Manden—this is the child about to be born. We can talk about Turama'an, we can talk about Kankejan, or of Tombonon Sitafa Diawara, of Fakoli, Sumaworo, or of Tabon Wana Faran Kamara; but the one who organized them all, united them into one place and called it Manden, well, the person who did all those things was Sunjata, and this is how his mother was married.

> [*In an omitted passage, both brothers try to consummate the marriage but are unsuccessful. They reach Konfara and offer Sogolon to Maghan Konfara. While Simbon prepares for their meeting, the community shows the new bride a mixed welcome. At the threshold of the new couple's home, Sogolon and Konfara test each other with three magical back-and-forth attacks before Sogolon acquiesces to her role as a traditional bride. On their wedding night, she uses sorcery to watch the other women dancing, making them wary of her.*]

Sogolon was still a virgin when she came to Maghan Konfara. After three days, her bloody virgin cloth was taken out. The following month, she became pregnant with Sunjata. That is how Sunjata was conceived.

The co-wives said, "We won't be able to do anything against this woman." She had gone to her husband almost at the end of the lunar month, and for the rest of that month, she did not see the other moon. She had conceived.

When the women of Manden heard this, they went outside the town and held a meeting under a baobab tree. They said, "Getting pregnant is one thing, delivering is another. Make

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miscarriage medicine, anything that will spoil the belly with a touch. Everyone must prepare her own."

Sogolon Condéalso had very powerful *dalilu* . When her belly started to expand, the other wives would visit her, saying, "Younger sister, this is the medicine we use here in Manden for pregnant women. Aah, all of the women here wanted a child, but we have not been able to conceive. You may be the lucky one bearing our husband's child—but the child belongs to all of us. Here, M'ma,[2] dilute this medicine in water and drink it."

Heh, Sogolon, the Condéwoman, diluted that medicine in water and drank it. She drank it and drank it, for seven years. And each time she drank it, her belly would shrink away, *j*è!

After seven years of this, Sogolon Condéwent outside the town.

She prayed to God. She said, "M'mari! That is enough! Enough of what those Mande people have done to me. I come to you, God. I am only a stranger here, and the men who brought me here cannot help."

[*In an omitted passage, the narrator describes his own family's relationship with characters in the narrative, and with ancestors from Arab tradition.*]

Full p. C-27

Footnotes

- Note 2:Affectionate greeting to a woman, equivalent to the masculine "M'ba" [editor's note]. Return to reference 2

Shorter p. 1515

The Childhood of Ma'an Sunjata

God made Ma'an Sunjata into a person, made him into a human fetus and brought him into the world.

When the Mande women heard the news of Ma'an Sunjata's birth, they again gathered together under the Mande baobab tree. They said, "It is one thing to give birth to a son, but another thing for him to survive."

Then what did they do to him? Through sorcery they stretched the tendons of his two feet. They lamed him and forced him to crawl on the ground for one year!

Two years!

Three years!

Four years!

Five years!

Six years!

Then, in Sunjata's seventh year, the co-wives provoked Sogolon to anger. (Because we are walking on a straight path, we cannot wander from one side to the other. We have to take the main road, so we will know how Manden was built.)

One day, in Sunjata's seventh year, Maramajan Tarawèlèwas picking some leaves from the same baobab tree that we've already mentioned. As Maramajan Tarawèlèwas on her way back

to the villiage, Ma Sogolon Wulen Condé, who was sitting under the eaves of the house she shared with Ma'an Sunjata, asked, "Big sister Maramajan Tarawèlè, won't you give me a few of your baobab leaves?"

Maramajan Tarawèlèsaid, "Ah! Younger sister, you are the only one of us to have a son. Why would you ask us for baobab leaves? Your lame son is sitting right there inside the house. If you want baobab leaves, why don't you tell your son to stand up and go get some?"

Ma Sogolon Wulen Condésaid, "Ah, that is not what I meant. I thought I could depend on the help of my sisters. I didn't know you were upset because I had this child."

The two women didn't know Sunjata was listening to them.

Afterwards, when Ma Sogolon Condéwalked by, Sunjata said, "Mother! Mother!" She did not answer because she knew he had overheard them.

He said, "Mother, what are they saying?"

"Forget about that talk."

"Ah, how can I ignore that? Mother, I'll walk today. They insult you by saying you have a lame person in your house, and yet you beg them for a baobab leaf? I'll walk today. Go and get my father's *sunsun*[3] staff, and bring it to me. I'll walk today."

Ma Sogolon Condéwent and got the *sunsun* staff and brought it to Simbon. When he attempted to stand by thrusting the *sunsun* staff firmly into the ground and holding on to it, the *sunsun* staff broke.

Sunjata said to Sogolon, "Ah, mother. They say you have a lame son in the house, but you gave birth to a real son. Nothing happens before its time. Go and bring my father's iron staff." But when she gave him the iron staff, he broke it, too.

Full p. C-28 Shorter p. 1516

He said, "Go and tell my father's blacksmith to forge an iron staff so I can walk." The blacksmith carried one load of iron to the bellows, forged it, and made it into an iron staff. But when Sunjata thrust that iron staff into the ground and tried to stand, the staff bent. (That iron staff, the one they say was bent by Sunjata into a bow, is now in Narena.)

Sunjata broke both of his father's staffs and an iron one that was forged for him. Therefore, when he stood, he did it on his own, first lifting one foot, then the other foot, then the other one, and so on.

His mother said, "Simbon has walked!"

The *jeliw* sang this song:

"Has walked,

Jata has walked.

Has walked,

Jata has walked."

Thus it was his mother's rivalry with her co-wives, and their humiliation of her, that caused Jata to walk. (That is why I can't believe it when I hear people saying they do not love their mother! Heh! Jelimoril[4] Your father belongs to everyone, but your mother belongs only to you.

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When you meet people for the first time, they don't ask you about your father; they ask about your mother.)

After that, God gave Sunjata feet. Sunjata went into the house, took his father's bow and quiver, and left town. (Some people say he made the bent iron staff into his bow, but don't repeat that.)

When he reached the baobab tree, he shook it, uprooted it, and put it on his shoulder. He carried it into his mother's yard and said, "Now everyone will come here for baobab leaves."

So it was that when the Mande women next saw Sogolon they said, as they picked the baobab leaves, "Aah, Sogolon Condé! We knew this would happen for you. The prayers and sacrifices we made on your behalf have been answered." (Now, when you are having a hard time, everyone abuses you. But when things are going well for you, people say, "We knew this would happen for you." May God help us persevere!)

Sogolon eventually had three more children. After So'olon Ma'an was born—but before he could walk—his younger brother So'olon Jamori was born. Then, while So'olon Ma'an was still crawling on the ground, Manden Bori was born. Finally after So'olon Ma'an walked, So'olon Kolonkan was born.

> [*In an omitted passage, Sunjata's enemies conspire with nine sorceresses to kill him, but one sorceress warns him and reveals that the sorceresses agreed to kill him only because the reward is a dead bull and the sorceresses crave meat. Sunjata suggests that he provide the meat instead and that they spare his life. He upholds his end of the compromise and the sorceresses vow that no female, human or animal or otherwise, will ever hurt him. Dankaran Tuman and his mother conspire to have Sunjata murdered in his sleep. Meanwhile, Sunjata spends a rainy day playing the hunter's harp while he waits for the weather to change so he can go hunting.*]

Full p. C-29

Footnotes

- Note 3:An extremely hard wood called "false ebony" or "West African ebony" [editor's note]. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:During performances, *jeliw* occasionally speak to people in the audience, commenting on something in the narrative. Return to reference 4

Shorter p. 1517

Mistaken Murder and the Question of Exile

As So'olon Ma'an waited for the rain to stop so he could go hunting, he sat in his hammock with his six-stringed hunter's harp and sang to himself. (His younger brothers Manden Bori and So'olon Jamori were also harp players.) After playing "Kulanjan"[5] for a while, Sunjata changed tunes and played "Sori."[6]

Some youths passing by So'olon Ma'an's door heard him singing in a low, sweet voice and stopped in his door to listen. One of these youths was an apprentice hunter. He said, "I will listen to Sunjata until the rain stops."

While the youth stood at the door, Sunjata put some snuff into his mouth. When the snuff was wet, he stopped playing the harp and went to spit out the door, where he noticed the young man. Sunjata said, "Who's there?"

The youth said, "Brother So'olon Ma'an, it is me."

"Ah, what are you doing here?"

"Your brother sent a message that we should bring him some food and supplies. So that's what I'm doing. But it is raining, and a slave with wet clothes does not enter the house of his betters. I am an apprentice hunter at the farm. I stopped under your eaves when I heard your music. Let me keep listening to you until the rain stops."

(Meanwhile, the musket[7] of conspiracy was being loaded in town.)

So'olon Ma'an said to the youth, "Come into the house."

The young man entered the house and sat on the edge of the bed. Simbon was playing the harp. When he played certain parts, the young man would tap his feet, because the harp music was so sweet. But the youth was also tired, and the warm room felt good to him. He became sleepy and started to nod. Ma'an Sunjata told him, "Lie on the bed." When the young man was asleep on the bed, Simbon stood up and covered the young man with a blanket. When the rain stopped, Sunjata—who forgot about the young man sleeping there—stood up, put on his crocodile-mouth hat, took his hunter's hammock, his quiver, bow, and fly whisk,[8] shut the front door, and went out the back. Taking a deep breath, he went into the bush.

While Simbon was in the bush, Dankaran Tuman came and stood under the eaves of the house, where he heard the young man snoring. He did not know that Ma'an Sunjata had left the house.

Dankaran Tuman went and told the seven young men, "Didn't I tell you that Sunjata sleeps anytime it rains into the evening? He's sleeping now; go get your clubs."

After getting their clubs, the seven young men came to Simbon's door. But they were afraid of him. To each other they said, "Man, don't you know who So'olon Ma'an is? One man can't outdo him, two men can't outdo him, even the Full p. C-30 Shorter p. 1518 seven of us together can't outdo him. When we go in, listen carefully for the sound of his breathing, and be sure to hit him on the head. If we only hit him on the back, he'll be sure to capture us." They went in and surrounded the young man. When they located the source of his breathing, they raised their clubs and hit him on the head. They beat him until his body went cold.

When the body was cold, they left to tell Dankaran Tuman that they'd finished the work he had given them. Dankaran Tuman told his mother, "Ahah, Mother. The bad thing is now off our backs. He is dead." (No matter how good you think you are, you'll always do something bad to your enemy!)

"Eh! Dankaran Tuman," she said, "has he died?"

"Yes! The son of the Condéwoman has died today!"

"Ah, my son! Now I will not be the failure in my husband's home. Now my heart is cool. If you have killed Ma'an Sunjata, *aagba*! Manden Bori and So'olon Jamori can't stand up to you. The only brother I was worried about has been killed."

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They did not sleep that night.

Sansun Beretésaid, “Heee, just wait until Sogolon Condéknows about this.”

When day broke, Dankaran Tuman and his mother went to spy on Sogolon.

“Huh!” they whispered. “Don’t say or do anything! When he’s slept for a long time, his mother will go and open the door on him.”

Sansun Beretésaid, “If you don’t say anything, no one will guess that you are the one who killed him.”

As the soft morning sun rose on them, they saw Sunjata, Danama Yirindi[9] —yes, the son of the Condéwoman—walking along, carrying three dead animals; one was hanging over his left shoulder, one was hanging over his right shoulder, and one was on his head.

When they saw him, Sansun Beretésaid, “Dankaran Tuman! Didn’t you say that Sunjata was dead?”

Dankaran Tuman replied, “Mother, we really killed him.”

“Then who is this coming? Who is coming?”

“It is Sunjata who is coming.”

When they saw that it really was Sunjata, Dankaran Tuman peed in his pants.

Walking up to them, Sunjata said to Sansun Bereté, “Big mother, here is some wild game for you.” Then, laying another animal before his step-brother, he said, “Big brother, here is one for you.”

There was nothing they could say.

Sunjata carried the last animal to his mother’s place and said, “Mother, here is your animal.”

His mother said, “Ah, my son, thank you.”

When he returned to his house and pushed the door open, there were flies all over the stinking body—wooooo!

Sunjata shouted, “Mother, Mother! Come here! I’ll kill someone today. Ever since I was born, I’ve never done anything bad like this. My brother did this, and I’ll take revenge.”

Ma Sogolon Condécame to the door.

Sunjata said, “You see this? I went to the bush and forgot about the young man you see lying here. My brother’s men beat him to death with their clubs. I’ll kill Full p. C-31 Shorter p. 1519 for this young man. I know this is Dankaran Tuman’s boy, but he died my death. I’ll prove to them that I am not the one who died.”

Ma Sogolon Condéknew that Konfara would be destroyed by So’olon Ma’an’s revenge, because he would kill anyone known to be one of Dankaran Tuman’s supporters.

Sunjata dashed out of the house. When he reached for his iron staff, his mother ran and called Jelimusoni Tunku Manyan Diawara.

Sogolon said, “Sunjata is going to kill someone right now if you don’t stop him.”

Jelimusoni Tunku Manyan Diawara went and took hold of Simbon.

She said, “Simbon, won’t you think about your mother? Simbon! Won’t you think of me? Won’t you leave this to God? Don’t you realize that Dankaran Tuman has poked himself in the eye?” Sunjata tried and tried to break away, but she would not let go. Ha! She was able to hold him.

Then Ma Sogolon Condésaid, “My son Sunjata, your popularity is your biggest problem. If they have started murdering people because of you, shouldn’t we go away?”

This is why they went into exile. (One never sells his father’s homeland, but it can be pawned!)

Footnotes

- Note 5:One of the oldest melodies in the bards’ repertory; often dedicated to hunters, Sumaworo is praised as “Kulanjan.” Return to reference 5
- Note 6:A lesser-known melody dedicated to hunters. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:Maninka *morifa* . The first firearms did not arrive in West Africa until the 16th century, but the *jeliw* frequently speak of muskets in the time of Sunjata. Linear chronology is not a pressing issue in their views of the distant past, but what is of interest is the imagery of a formidable weapon and a hero’s power to repel any iron projectile. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:Ideally made from the tail of a dangerous wild animal and possibly symbolizing the one cut from the slain Buffalo of Dò, although elephant tails were highly prized for this essential hunters’ device carrying occult protective qualities. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:A praise-name for Sunjata that can be translated as “superhero.” Return to reference 9

Departure for Exile

> [*In an omitted passage, Sunjata repeatedly refuses to flee from his step-brother, but Sogolon argues that neither he nor Dankaran Tuman can understand the special circumstances of her background in Dò ni Kiri and how she was brought to their father because of Sunjata’s destiny. She convinces Sunjata that even if they go away, he will eventually take over the leadership of Manden.*]

Ma Sogolon Condéthen set out to visit Sansamba Sagado, the Somono[1] ancestor. (This is the Sansamba Sagado you always hear about in the histories of Manden. He was involved with the organization of Manden, and those towns along the bank of the river—Jelibakoro, Sansando, and Baladugu—are populated with his Mande descendants. If you talk about Manden without talking about Sansamba Sagado, you have not covered the subject of Manden.)

Saying, “Sansamba Sagado,” Sogolon removed her silver wrist and ankle bracelets and gave them to the Somono ancestor as the price for a future river crossing. This way, he would take her children across the river whenever they needed to cross, at any time of day or night, without anybody in Manden knowing that he’d done so.

The days passed. Then, one day, at three o’clock in the morning, Sogolon woke up her children and said, “The time has come for what we talked about.”

They left together. When they came to the riverbank, she took the path to Sansamba Sagado’s house. Waking him, she said, “This is the day we talked about.”

He was not a man to break his promise. Taking his bamboo pole and his paddle, he left to meet Sogolon and her children in the bushes by the bank of the river. The water was rising; it

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nearly touched the leaves on the bushes. Sansamba Full p. C-32 Shorter p. 1520 Sagado's canoe was attached to a *npeku* tree; he untied it and brought it to them, saying, "Get in!"

Ma Sogolon Condé, her daughter Ma Kolonkan, Manden Bori, and So'olon Jamori got into the canoe. But when they told Sunjata to get in, he refused.

Ma Sogolon Condésaid, "Ah, Sunjata! Do you want to make me suffer?"

He said, "Mother, if I told you that I will go with you, then I will go. You take the canoe now; I will join you later."

They crossed the river in the canoe, and before they could reach the other side, they saw Sunjata sitting on the bank. He had brought his *dalilu* with him.

Footnotes

- Note 1:Maninka- or Bamana-speaking specialists in fishing, canoeing, boating, and the waterborne transport of people and goods. Return to reference 1

A Visit to Soso

> [*In an omitted passage, Sogolon decides to stop in Soso to ask for the help of Sumaworo, a powerful sorcerer who, in his youth, had been her husband's hunting apprentice. Meanwhile, Sumaworo's personal oracle informs him that the man who will eventually take Soso and Manden away from him has not only been born, but has grown up into a hunter and will be identifiable as the one who violates Sumaworo's taboo.*]

They were now in Soso.

Sogolon Condéarrived and said, "Eh, Soso *mansa* . These are the children of your former master. Their relationship with their brother is strained, and murder has been committed as a result. The death of one of two friends[2] does not spoil the friendship; the one who survives continues the friendship. I've come to put Ma'an Sunjata and his younger siblings under your protection. You should train them to be hunters, people who can kill their own game." (Oh! She did not know that Dankaran Tuman had sent a message ahead of them to Soso!)[3]

Sumaworo said, "Condéwoman, that pleases me. I agree to care for them and take them under my protection, so long as they do not interfere with my sacred totem."

"God willing, they will never spoil your totem."

"Well, if they do not interfere with my totem, then I agree to protect them."

They spent the day there. That evening Ma Sogolon Condésaid that she had brought a small amount of cotton she wanted to spin at night, and asked the children of Soso to collect a pile of dried cow dung she could use to light her lantern of conversation.[4] The children brought her the cow dung she needed. Sumaworo owned all the musical instruments, and he brought all of them—except for the *bala*[5] —out for the first time that night. He brought out the *kèrèlèngkèngbèng*,[6] the *kòwòro*,[7] the *donso nkoni*,[8] the three-stringed *bolon*,[9] Full p. C-33 Shorter p. 1521 the *soron*,[1] and the *kora* .[2] (The *kora* was the last of the instruments to be brought out; that is why they call it *ko la*, which means "the last one."[3] Eventually it came to be called *kora* . It is played in Kita and Senegal.)

Taking out his *nkoni*,[4] Sumaworo sat down by the people who were talking. Sunjata and his siblings came and sat down too. Contented, Ma Sogolon Condésaid, “Wait. I will sing three songs.” They said, “Very well.” When anybody sang, Sumaworo would accompany them on the *nkoni* .

For Ma Sogolon Condé’s first song, she sang:

“Big ram,

The pen where the rams are kept,

The leopard must not enter,

Big ram.

The pen where the rams are kept,

The leopard must not enter.”

Sumaworo’s *nkoni* was in harmony with her song.
After that, what else did she sing? She sang:

“Pit water,

Don’t compare yourself with clear water flowing over rocks,

The pure white rocks.

Pit water,

Don’t compare yourself with clear water flowing over rocks,

The pure white rocks.”

Again, Sumaworo’s *nkoni* was in harmony with her song.
The third song she sang was:

“Big vicious dog,

If you kill your vicious dog,

Somebody else’s will bite you,

Vicious dog.

If you kill your vicious dog,

Somebody else’s will bite you.”

Sumaworo’s *nkoni* was still in harmony with her song.
Then the gathering broke up.

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[*In omitted passages, Sumaworo performs a ritual to identify his rival for power, learns that it is Sunjata, and resolves to kill him. Sunjata intentionally violates a taboo by sitting in Sumaworo's sacred hammock, confirming that he is the rival described by the oracle. In an episode about Sumaworo's youthful rebelliousness and leadership, he invents different stringed musical instruments at various stages of his youth. The narrator describes Fakoli's birth by his father's second wife, Kosiya Kante, who was also the sister of Sumaworo. During his hunting apprenticeship, Sumaworo encounters a group of genies and their instruments.* *Full p. C-34* *Sumaworo covets the* bala *, but when he hears that the price would be people,* *Shorter p. 1522* *four members of his family, he refuses. Kosiya, upon hearing this, decides to sacrifice herself, and Fakoli is raised by his father's first wife, who carries him to the sacred sites of Manden to receive protective devices and become a hunter.*

The scene then shifts back to Soso at the time of Sogolon's visit with her children, when Sumaworo is in power. Sumaworo interprets the meaning of the songs sung earlier by Sogolon. Sunjata violates Sumaworo's sacred taboo, the two men engage in the deadly snuff-taking ritual, and Sunjata is banished from Soso. Continuing the journey into exile, Sunjata violates sacred taboos in each of the places they stop, including Nema, where they remain.]

Footnotes

- Note 2:Sumaworo and Sunjata's father. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Offering a reward to kill Sunjata. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:When villagers gather after dark to socialize and play music, they do it around a lantern to avoid burning valuable fuel needed for cooking fires. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:An indigenous xylophone. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:Named from the sound it makes (i.e., onomatopoeic), this child's instrument consists of a tin can resonator (or a tiny gourd) and a stick for a neck that supports a single string. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:More commonly known as *dan*, an inverted open calabash instrument with a neck for each of its six strings; technically known as a pentatonic pluriarc. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:The hunters' harp, a large animal-skin-covered calabash with a single neck and six strings, played to praise hunters. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:The harp used to praise warriors; larger and deeper toned than the hunters' harp, an animal-skin-covered calabash with a single neck supporting three or four strings. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:A large, rarely seen harp of northeastern Guinea, similar to the *kora* but with 12 strings. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:With 21 strings, the largest of the calabash harps. Return to reference 2
- Note 3: *Ko la* = literally "later on," another popular etymology. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:Bamana *ngoni*; a traditional lute consisting of four to five strings attached to a single neck on a wooden, trough-shaped body covered with animal skin. Return to reference 4

Sumaworo's Tyranny over Manden

When Sogolon and her children were staying with ancestor Faran Tunkara at Kuntunya in Nema, he sometimes sent Sunjata on journeys out between the edges of the village and the place where the sun sets. Whenever war broke out, the village sent for Sunjata, who would come and join the Kuntunya army, marching along with them. Whenever he captured three prisoners, he kept one for himself. Whenever he captured five prisoners, he kept two. Whenever he captured ten prisoners, he kept four as his share. (The other six captives were given to the Kuntunya *mansa.*) This is how Sunjata collected his own band of men.

Sunjata stayed in Kuntunya for twenty-seven years, and before the end of the twenty-seventh year, well, things turned very bad in Manden. Things were terrible in Manden! Sumaworo, who was looking for Sunjata, had sent his warriors to Manden. Whenever Sumaworo consulted Nènèba, his oracle, it would say, "Your successor has grown."

Before consulting Nènèba, Sumaworo first had to have three age sets of young men pile wood beneath Nènèba's cauldron; this had to be done morning and evening, for the oracle always said, "Fire, fire, fire, fire, fire, fire." Then Sumaworo would bathe in the cauldron's medicines whenever he went to visit Nènèba. And Nènèba would tell Sumaworo what to sacrifice before setting out to war.

Every morning Nènèba told Sumaworo, "Sumaworo, only God knows the day. Your successor has grown up."

Sumaworo asked the Mande people, "Has Ma'an Sunjata returned to Manden?" Meanwhile, he laid waste to Manden nine times. The Mande people struggled and rebuilt their villages nine times during Sumaworo's failed search for Sunjata.

Whenever Sumaworo killed some Mande villagers, he would tell his men to search among the bodies for the Condéwoman's son. But his men never found Sunjata; instead, they would return saying, "The Mande people do not know the whereabouts of the Condéwoman's son."

Sumaworo then summoned all of the Mande villagers to Kukuba. He killed all of the men who attended this meeting except for the leaders Turama'an and Kankejan, who could disappear in broad daylight, and Fakoli, who could stand and vanish instantly. The people who had that kind of *dalilu* were the only ones he did not kill; he killed all of the other men. The people of Manden mourned and wept. But Ma'an Sunjata and his brothers were not there.

After another month had passed, Sumaworo summoned his men to Bantamba, saying, "I have to finish off the Mande. If I do that, I'll find my successor. If I kill all the human beings, my successor will be among them."

Full p. C-35

So he called the Mande to a meeting in Bantamba. After looking them over he said to his men, "Kill them all." Only those who had the power to disappear in broad daylight escaped. Again Manden wept.

He summoned the Mande to Nyèmi-Nyèmi, and they wept there, too.

Every time Mande people were summoned by Sumaworo, it ended in mourning. Sumaworo was killing the people of Manden, searching among the bodies for his successor. After every massacre, he would go to his Nènèba. (The Kantés now have that Nènèba in Balandugu, the only town they established. Sumaworo's descendants did not establish any other towns,

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because he was so ruthless.) The Nènèba would say, “Sumaworo, uh heh. You still haven’t found him yet? You’ve killed so many, yet the one you want is not among them.”

Sumaworo asked, “What should I do?” To which the oracle replied, “Keep searching for him. He has reached maturity.”

When the Mande people were summoned again, this time to Kambasiga, Fakoli went to see Kani Simbon, the Kulubali ancestor.

He said, “Simbon. Manden is about to be wiped out. We must sit down together and find a solution to this problem in Manden. Manden will be reduced to being Soso’s peanut farm, because Sumaworo has said two things. He has said, ‘Manden’s reputation is better than Manden itself,’ and ‘The Mande women are better than the Mande men.’ By this he meant that Manden has only women because he’s killed all the men. He said these things to provoke Sunjata, who he now knows to be his successor, into responding.” Having said that, Fakoli then returned to Manden and said, “Let us build a council hall at the edge of town, and let the surviving men of Manden hold meetings there. If we don’t get together, Manden is doomed.” So the men worked hard and built a council hall. Afterwards, they sat in front of the council hall while Fakoli addressed them.

He said, “We have finished building this council hall, which belongs to all of us—except for the one who wants to destroy Manden. If you are a man of courage, this is your council hall. If you are a man of truth, this is your council hall. If you are a master of sorcery, this is your council hall. If you have love for Manden in your heart, this is your council hall.”

The Expedition to Find Sunjata and Return Him to Manden

[*In an omitted passage, the assembled elders decide to summon diviners to learn who will be the liberator of Manden, and where he can be found. After an extended period of divination it is determined that Ma’an Sunjata is the one who was foreseen, and that a special delegation must be sent to find Sogolon and her children. Volunteering for this delegation are the Muslim diviners Manjan Beretéand Siriman Kanda Touré, as well as the female bard Tunku Manyan Diawara and the enslaved woman Jonmusoni Manyan. They plan to visit distant markets with special sauce ingredients that can only be found in Manden, as a way of finding the people they seek.*]

Manjan Beretélaid down his prayer skin[5] as soon as he’d left town, and made two invocations to God: he asked that no one would see the travelers leave, and that they would meet no one on the road. He said, “Siriman Kanda Touré, we Full p. C-36 Shorter p. 1524 mustn’t be seen on the road. It doesn’t matter whether you are a man or a woman: every one of us must use their *dalilu* .” When he’d finished making his two invocations. Manjan Beretéshook hands with his companions, who asked where they would sleep that night.

“Ahhh,” said Manjan Bereté, “let us try to reach Soso today. Because tomorrow is Soso’s market day.”

As a result of his two invocations, each of his companions became invisible when Manjan Beretéshook their hands. When he gave his hand to one of his companions and withdrew it, the person became invisible. Then Manjan Beretécircled his prayer skin and became invisible himself.

They traveled on to the outskirts of Soso, where they spent the night. At daybreak Manjan Beretésaid, “Take the things to the market.” They set their goods out in the Soso market, but nobody wanted them. They went on to the market of Tabon; but no one wanted what they had. They went to the market of Kirina; no one was interested.

On Thursday they took the road to Kuntunya and slept outside that town to be ready for the market on Friday.

Meanwhile, at a house in that same town, Ma Sogolon Condéwas saying to her daughter, “Ma Kolonkan, *aaaoy*! My stomach is hurting me because it’s been twenty-seven years since I last had *dado*[6] in Manden. Tomorrow morning, do not wash the dishes, do not scrub the pots; instead, be the first one into the market, my child, and get me some *dado* to eat.” (When a *dado* eater goes for a long time without having any, their stomach hurts; this is why Ma Sogolon Condéwas complaining all night to Ma Kolonkan. It was a good thing that the Mande people spending the night outside of town had brought *dado*!)

As soon as the sun started to show its face the next morning, Manjan Beretésaid, “Take the things into the market.” The two women went and sat outside the covered part of the market. They had the *dado* there, along with some *namugu* and some *nè*rèseeds[7] they had on display.

Ma So’olon Wulen Condésaid to Ma Kolonkan, “Go early to the market so you can get the *dado* I want.” As soon as she’d arrived at the market, Kolonkan saw two women standing there with *dado.* She clapped her hands, saying, “From the time we came from Manden, my mother has not said anything about *dado*, nothing at all. It was only yesterday that she suddenly spoke of *dado*—and here it is! Heh! My mother has *dalilu.*” She did not even stop to greet the *dado* seller; she immediately reached for the *dado* and put some in her mouth.

Jelimusoni Tunku Manyan Diawara said, “Eh! You, girl, are impolite! Don’t touch our merchandise without greeting us or asking us first.”

“Eeeh, I was so surprised! My mother told me to come to the market today to see if I could find *dado* . She said she’s gone for so long without eating the old things of Manden that her stomach hurts. We haven’t seen *dado* since we arrived here; we haven’t even seen anyone who sells it. I just wanted to taste it because it is something we always used to have.”

Full p. C-37 Shorter p. 1525

Tunku Manyan Diawara asked, “Who are you? Where do you come from?”

“Ah, mother, we come from Manden.”

“Who is with you here?”

“I am here with my mother Sogolon Wulen Condé, my elder brother Ma’an Sunjata, and my elder brother So’olon Jamori.”

“Aaah! You are the people we have come for! Our road has been good. Let us go to your house.”

[*In omitted passages Kolonkan conducts the Mande delegation to her house for a joyful reunion with Sogolon. Manjan Beretéannounces that they have been sent to ask Sogolon to return to Manden because her children are needed there. Sogolon explains that her sons are hunting in the bush and concerns herself with providing the customary hospitality to the guests .*

Kolonkan goes out of town to find meat for the guests from Manden and discovers animals killed by her brothers. Her brother Manden Bori is enraged that she has removed the animals’

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internal organs, and they fight. Kolonkan's curse on his descendants—they will not be able to decide on a ruler until the final trumpet is blown—still affects them in today's Hamana region of Guinea. Tassey Condémentions a childhood experience with his famous father, Babu Condé, toward the end of the colonial era and describes how he, Tassey, became the spokesman for the bards of Fadama. Reverting to his story, Tassey describes Sogolon's great happiness at the prospect of her sons' returning to Manden. The next episode describes a momentous family meeting of Sogolon and her children, in which the rarely mentioned brother Jamori plays a conspicuous part.]

Footnotes

- Note 5:His Muslim prayer rug, the hide of a goat or sheep. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:Dried hibiscus blossoms and/or leaves, used as a condiment in sauces. Return to reference 6
- Note 7: *Namugu* is powdered leaves of the baobab tree, used as an ingredient in sauces. *Nè*rè: *Parkia biglobosa*; the seeds are pounded into a paste that is fermented and rolled into balls to make a pungent condiment called *sumbala* . Return to reference 7

Sogolon Bestows the Legacy of Maghan Konfara

Sogolon said to her children, "Let us go outside the town. I want to give you my final words." They left the Mande delegation behind and went out of town. When they arrived there, Ma So'olon Condésaid to Manden Bori, "Break off that termite mound."[8]

When Manden Bori broke off the termite mound, Sogolon said, "Pick some leaves." He picked some leaves.

She said, "Lay them on the termite mound."

When they were laid on it, she said, "Ma'an Sunjata, you sit on that."[9]

Then she said, "Go and break off another termite mound." So Manden Bori went and broke another one and put leaves[1] on it.

She said, "So'olon Jamori, you sit on that. Now go and break off another one for you to sit on." Manden Bori broke off another termite mound and brought it over.

The three men sat, but Ma So'olon Condéstood up. Ma Kolonkan stood behind her. Women would usually be seated during a hunter's ceremony,[2] but here they did not sit down.

Full p. C-38 Shorter p. 1526

While they were standing, Ma So'olon Wulen Condésaid, "Manden Bori! What I say to you is also for So'olon Jamori and for Ma'an Sunjata[3] to hear. The people of Manden have come for you; they are calling you to war.

"When your father died, Dankaran Tuman wanted your father's gold and silver; he also wanted your father's *dalilu* but did not know where to find it. That's why he has plotted against you all this time: he thought that when he killed you, he could take your father's legacy, his *dalilu.*

“But my sons, you do not have your father’s *dalilu*; Dankaran Tuman does not have it either. I have your father’s *dalilu* here. If you are seeing that a man’s *dalilu* went to his last wife,[4] it is because my husband trusted me. When my husband was dying, he gave his *dalilu* to me so that I could keep it safe and give it to you when you reached maturity. I have brought you here now to give you your father’s *dalilu*, because the Mande people have come to take you to war. But what worries me is that there are three things in your father’s *dalilu*, and they cannot be separated. They can only go to one person. Ah! There are three things, but your father had three sons. These three things would not be of any benefit to you if we were to divide them up amongst you.

“The Mande messengers have come for your brother Ma’an Sunjata. You must allow him to be given the three things, because the three things—the sorcery horse, the sorcery bow, and the sorcery mask—all work together: when you sit on the sorcery horse, you must also wear the sorcery mask and take up the sorcery bow. Then you are ready for combat against all comers.

“If you mount the sorcery horse without carrying the sorcery bow, or without wearing the sorcery mask, then somebody will strike you down while the horse is galloping. If you put on the sorcery mask without carrying the sorcery bow and you are not on the horse, you will not be able to kill the enemies you see. If you take up the sorcery bow without wearing the mask and without being on the horse, what good is that? The three things must go to one person: please, allow me to give them to Ma’an Sunjata.”

So’olon Jamori said, “Manden Bori, tell our mother that I do not agree to what she is saying. Ah! She herself says there are three things. There are three of us. They are easily divided.

“Have you not heard the Mande saying that if you cannot take your father’s legacy on your head, you must at least drag part of it behind you? If I cannot carry it, I will drag it behind me. Let her bring the three things out and divide them between the three of us.”

Ma So’olon Condésaid, “Eh, So’olon Jamori my son! Eh, So’olon Jamori! I was afraid you’d cause trouble; that is why I wanted to bring you out of the town. Did you not hear me say that there are three things, but they can only solve one problem? Will you not be agreeable?”

Full p. C-39 Shorter p. 1527

Manden Bori said, “Big brother So’olon Jamori,[5] will you not have pity on our mother, who is so worried about this? Let us agree to give the *dalilu* to brother So’olon Maghan.”

Ah! Jamori said if Manden Bori did not shut his mouth, he would slap his ears.

Manden Bori said, “You can’t slap my ears. Why should you slap my ears for this? Don’t you know our brother can battle Soso with or without our father’s legacy?

“And who used up our mother’s legacy? You and I did; our brother did not take part in that. Our mother took her gold earring and silver bracelet and gave them to Sansamba Sagado, the Somono ancestor, as a future day’s river-crossing fee. And how many of us got into the canoe that day, when we left Manden by crossing the river? The canoe our mother paid for with her legacy? Our mother went in the canoe, our little sister got into the canoe, you got into the canoe, and I got into the canoe. Did our brother get in? Hah! Didn’t our brother say he was not getting in? Didn’t my mother weep? Didn’t he say that we should go ahead and he would follow? And by the time we got to the other side of the river, didn’t we see our brother already sitting there?

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“The *dalilu* with which our brother crossed the river was our father’s legacy, and Sunjata can battle Sumaworo with that. But you say you will slap my ears? Why didn’t you slap my ears on the riverbank?”

Ma’an Sunjata said, “Manden Bori, be quiet. Tell my mother that we will not quarrel. If you see somebody taking your friend’s share of the sauce, your own sauce cannot satisfy you. Does she think I will quarrel with this foolish person? I will never quarrel with So’olon Jamori over our father’s legacy. Even if he were to ask me to give it all to him, I would do it. Tell my mother to bring out the legacy.

“But mother, we will never forget the two things you have done for us. First, we were legitimately born, and it is because of our legitimacy that the Mande people came to find us. Second, my father married fifty women—fifty wives!—and two other women, none of whom gave birth to a child. Sansun Beretéwas one of the other two women: she gave birth to Dankaran Tuman and Nana Triban.

“But you! You were the fifty-second wife. Eh! Out of all his wives, why did my father give his legacy to you? Because of your devotion, and it was for us you were so devoted. I trust in God. Even if you do not give me the legacy, I will vanquish Sumaworo because of your devotion. Bring out the legacy.”

Ma So’olon Wulen Condésaid, “I am pleased with that, now excuse me.” She pushed her hand into her abdomen. When she did that, *ho*! The *dalilu* fell out. When the three *dalilu* were piled together, Ma’an Sunjata laughed.

He started to say, “So’olon Jamori,” but suddenly his mother began to shake. So’olon Ma’an held his mother until her dizziness passed. When the dizziness left her eyes, Sunjata said, “Manden Bori, tell our mother that she should tell So’olon Jamori he should choose one of the things. Aheh! My little brother and I will not quarrel over my father’s legacy.”

Full p. C-40 Shorter p. 1528

So’olon Jamori said that he chose the sorcerer’s mask. They asked, “Is that your choice?” And he replied, “Uhuh, that is mine.” They said, “Very well, take it.”

Sunjata said, “Manden Bori, choose one.”

Manden Bori said, “I will not take a share in this legacy. I am holding your shirt-tail, and so long as I hold your shirt-tail, nothing will happen to me in the war with Soso. When you die, Sunjata, your legacy will come to me anyway. It was my father’s legacy, but you are my father now, and so it belongs to you. Take both my share and your share.”

Ma’an Sunjata said, “Is that your word?”

“Uhuh. It is your name, not mine or So’olon Jamori’s, that will become attached to the bow and *mansaya*[6] we are quarreling over.” (That is why, when people go outside town for a private meeting, they say, “Let us speak with the truth of Manden Bori.”)

Manden Bori, the youngest of the brothers, had his oldest brother’s blessing. Ma So’olon Wulen Condéspoke. She said, “Manden Bori, is that your word? Come here.”

Taking Manden Bori behind a bush, Sogolon said, “Manden Bori, you’ve honored me, and so now God will honor you. Nobody will ever dishonor you. If you’d acted the way So’olon Jamori acted, then all of the Mande people would know that your father’s *dalilu* had been divided—and if your rival knows your secret, he will vanquish you. You preferred to keep all of this secret so I would not be shamed.

“Come and let me give you my legacy. My legacy is something that did not come from here, in Nema, or Manden. It came from Dōni Kiri, the home of my brothers. I will give this ring to you. So long as you live, it will protect you from genies or enemies that might threaten you; it will also keep you safe in the bush. If you find yourself in trouble, look at this ring and say, ‘Ah, mother!’ If you do that, God will protect you. If you look at it and say, ‘Ah, genie!’ God will save you from genies. If you look at it and say, ‘Genie and man!’ God will spare you from both.” (That was the first of the brass rings hunters now wear on their fingers. Some people call such a ring “genie and man.”) Sogolon said, “This is your keepsake.” Then they all returned to town.

[*In the next scene, Sogolon suddenly dies and Sunjata tells Manden Bori to request a plot of land for her burial.*]

Footnotes

- Note 8:As the youngest of three sons, Manden Bori is ordered to perform the menial tasks. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:Of the many kinds of termite mounds (some well over six feet tall), the type referred to here is approximately one to two feet high, shaped like a hard clay mushroom, and the larger ones could be used as stools. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:For a soft and clean seat. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:If present at a hunters’ meeting, women would be seated in the background. In this and the following line, the bard explains that mother and daughter remain standing because Sogolon is in charge of this solemn occasion. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:On occasions where oral communication must be precise, it is customary for an important speaker’s words to be repeated several times by various people in the presence of the person addressed. When a *jeli* is available the speaker addresses the bard, who repeats and validates what was just heard. At Sogolon’s secret meeting, the youngest son serves to repeat and reaffirm her words. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:The legacy would normally go to the first (senior) wife. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:In many variants of the epic, Sogolon’s son Jamori is not mentioned at all, and the claim here that Manden Bori was the youngest of the three brothers is an especially rare detail. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:The bow and quiver were symbolic of Mande kingship (*mansaya*). Return to reference 6

The Burial of Sogolon and Departure from Nema

On the path to town, Manden Bori met with Faran Tunkara, the *mansa* of Nema. He said, “Mansa, my brother says that I should come and tell you that my mother is dead. He’d like you to agree to give him some land he can use for her burial.”

Now, Faran Tunkara had been unhappy to see the messengers from Manden arrive in Nema. From the time Sunjata arrived in Nema, he’d helped the Kuntunya people win every single battle they’d faced, and he returned with slaves from every campaign. But Faran Tunkara could not keep Sunjata in Nema, because Sogolon and her family had arrived there by choice. He decided to start a quarrel so he could detain Sunjata.

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So Nema Faran Tunkara said, “Manden Bori, go and tell your brother that I, Nema Faran Tunkara, say that I own all the land here. Unless you brought a piece of land with you from Manden to bury your corpse in, you should load her body on your head and carry it back to Manden the same way you brought her. Tell him that if you bury her in my land, I will blast her out of the ground with gunpowder. Go and tell your brother that.”

Manden Bori returned on the path and relayed Nema Faran Tunkara’s message to Sunjata. When he heard what Manden Bori reported, Manjan Beretésaid, “What kind of man is Nema Faran Tunkara? Simbon, let me go and give him a real ‘message.’”

“Eee,” said Sunjata, “just leave it alone. Don’t worry, he’ll provide the land. I’ve spent twenty-seven years here; I’m in his army. And he says I should carry my mother’s body back to Manden? He’ll soon provide the land.”

To Manden Bori, Sunjata said, “Go back and tell Nema Faran Tunkara that I, the son of the Condéwoman, say he should give me some land in which I can bury my mother. Tell him it is I who say so.”

When Tunkara was told this, he said to Manden Bori, “I do not want ever to see you here again. From the minute you first arrived here, I knew that you’re a hotheaded man. Go and tell your brother that I don’t go back on what I’ve said twice. Tell him I have no land for him here.”

Manden Bori went and told this to Ma’an Sunjata. Manjan Beretéand Siriman Kanda Tourébecame angry. They were all brave men; they all had *dalilu*, and they all knew how to fight. But when they started to leave the house to find Nema Faran Tunkara, Ma’an Sunjata said, “Be patient and take your seats. He will soon provide the land.”

Sunjata took the path that passed behind the house. Along the way, he picked up a fragment of old clay pot, a piece of old calabash, the feather of a guinea fowl, and a partridge feather. To these things he added a stick of bamboo. He gave all of these things to Manden Bori, and said, “Tell Tunkara that I say he should give me land to bury my mother in. If he’s asking a price for his land, well, tell him I’ll pay his fees with these things. Tell him he must agree to let me lay my mother in the ground.”

As he gave Faran Tunkara these things from Sunjata, Manden Bori said, “My brother says this is payment for your land, and that you should agree to let him bury his mother.”

Faran Tunkara said, “Is this what you pay for land in your country? Huh, Manden Bori? I do not ever want to see you here again. Take these things and go away.”

But Tunkara’s *jeli* man, who was sitting there beside him, said, “He should not take those things away from here. Heh! Sunjata has sent you an important message.

“M’ba, when these people came to Nema, didn’t I say you should kill Sunjata? And didn’t you reply that Sunjata had come to place himself in your care, and that therefore you must not do anything to him? Ahuh! Well, now he has said something to you; there’s a message in these things he sent. Since you do not understand the message, I will tell you what these things mean.”

To which Faran Tunkara replied, “All right, tell me what they mean.”

The *jeli* said, “This piece of bamboo means that you should give him land so he can bury his mother in it. If you do not give him land, the Mande people will Full p. C-42 Shorter p. 1530 come and take it for themselves. If he should be named king after he finishes fighting that war for Manden, he will bring the Mande army here to Nema, and he will break Nema like this old

clay pot or this old calabash. Then the guinea fowls and the partridges will take their dust baths in the ruins of Nema. See? These are the feathers of those guinea fowls and partridges. Nothing will grow in the ruins of Nema but weeds; that's what this piece of bamboo stick means."

Now, Mansa Tunkara was a good debater, and he always won arguments. So he said, "I am right."

The *jeli* said, "How can you be right about this?"

"I am right," said Faran Tunkara, "because these people have been here for twenty-seven years. During the time those three brothers served in my army, I lost no battles. They never cheated me, were never disobedient to me; I never had to discipline them for chasing women. Now their mother has died. Are they going to do the right thing and say the corpse is mine, or are they just going to demand that I give them land?"

Everyone agreed that the three brothers should have observed the custom of saying, "This is your corpse."

Faran Tunkara said, "Ah! This is why I refused. Eh! If they were raised correctly as children, they should have said that God has made this my opportunity, and that this is my corpse. But did they show me the proper respect? Should they be looking for land to lay their mother in?"

Everybody said, "You are right!" Even Manjan Beretéhimself came and said, "You are right."

"Very well," said Faran Tunkara. "If I am right, give her to me and I will conduct the funeral."

Even though she was a woman, the people of Nema gave Sogolon a man's funeral. They killed cows, fired their guns, and beat the special drum. (This tradition started with Ma So'olon Wulen Condé's funeral.) Then they took her body to the town of Kuntunya, and on Thursday they buried her.

When they were finished with the burial, Simbon asked for Faran Tunkara's permission to leave Nema. Because all debts had now been settled between the two men, Sunjata was able to say, "I will leave tomorrow."

Faran Tunkara said, "Go with my blessing. I give you the road." But once Sunjata and his brothers had returned to their house, Faran Tunkara summoned his warriors, telling them, "I cannot allow Sunjata to leave with his men, because those men are rightfully mine; Sunjata had no men of his own until he arrived here. Prepare yourselves and go on ahead to cut them off. Go ahead as far as the second village and wait for them there; attack them when they arrive, and try to capture them. If you bring them back, they will never leave Nema again."

Faran Tunkara's warriors left, passing the first village and preparing their attack at the second. And when Sunjata and his companions arrived at the second village, they were attacked. So'olon Jamori did not survive the attack! He died there; he did not live to reach Manden. So the three parts of his father's legacy were combined and given to Simbon. (That is why we say that if a *kamalen* of the Mansarélineage becomes selfish, do not bother to curse him. He won't live long.)

Sunjata and his men escaped that ambush, and Sunjata added the captives they took from among Faran Tunkara's warriors to his own troops.

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[*The narrator explains that despite the ambush that killed So'olon Jamori, Faran Tunkara sent troops to support Manden's campaign against Soso, and Sunjata never attacked Nema. Claiming that he wants to notify Sumaworo of his return so he will not be accused of sneaking back into Manden, Sunjata stops in Soso. Sumaworo issues a series of warnings to Sunjata that he must not attack Soso. They engage in a traditional boasting contest, concluding with Sunjata's vow to return and Sumaworo's reply that he will be waiting.*]

The Return of Sunjata

Sunjata took the road toward home. When they arrived at the edge of town, the townspeople could hear *nege* music[7] played by Jelimusoni Tunku Manyan Diawara.

She sang to Manden:

"The *danama yirindi*[8] that we have been looking for,

He is at the edge of town.

Come, let us go.

For the sake of the Condéwoman's son,

Come, let us go.

The person that Manden was busy searching for,

Known as So'olon Ma'an,

Come, let us go."

Sansamba Sagado crossed the river with his canoe that day. He put the canoe into the river without a pole or paddle, and as soon as he untied the canoe, it headed straight for Sunjata and his men—*prrrr*, just as if it had a motor.

Sunjata loaded his men into the canoe and said, "You will now see the power of my *dalilu* ." He struck the water, the canoe went *prrrr*, and they landed on the riverbank in Manden, where Simbon stepped out. His fathers, brothers, and all the men of Manden were there to greet and embrace him. (The shade tree under which the people of Manden welcomed Sunjata home is still living today.) When he arrived, Manden was jubilant, Manden celebrated. They named that place Nyani, the town of happiness, the town of rejoicing, *ko anyènyani so.*[9]

As the people of Manden welcomed Sunjata and his men, they said, "Manjan Bereté, you are welcome; Siriman Kanda Touré, you are welcome; Tunku Manyan Diawara, you are welcome; Jonmusoni Manyan, you are welcome. You have brought a gift for Manden: you have found Simbon! We knew that someday the son of Farako Manko Farakonken and the Condéwoman would return. But Manden suffered while he was away; we have suffered so much at Sumaworo's hands. Let Sunjata see for himself how many of those he knew here have been killed by Sumaworo. The only people left here are those with *dalilu*, and Sumaworo has even caused those who have *dalilu* to suffer.

"When we knew Sunjata was returning, we carried out divinations and swore oaths and saw that only he could receive ancestor Mamadi Kani's legacy. And now that he has come, heh! We all—the Kulubali, the Konaté, and the Douno—say Full p. C-44 Shorter p. 1532 that he should accept the legacy and help Manden. Simbon, you have been called to take the legacy." (This saying —"Take your legacy," or *ko ila kèta*—came to be spoken as "Keita.")

[*In the following brief departure from his narrative, the bard (who is traditionally expected to instruct as well as entertain) reiterates his view of human origins and explains who really built Paris. In the omitted passage, the bard explains the power of the Condépeople, their descent from Isiaaka, and the equality of all humans as children of God.*]

Footnotes

- Note 7: *Nege* = iron; also a synonym for the *nkarinyan*, a rhythm instrument consisting of a notched iron tube seven to eight inches long, held in one hand and scraped with a thin metal rod. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:Roughly translated as "superhero." Return to reference 8
- Note 9:This and the following line comprise a popular etymology. Return to reference 9

Fakoli Reveals His Power

While the Mande men were in a meeting, a message from Sumaworo arrived. He said that he'd been waiting a long time for a message from the Mande. He said it had been a long time since their *mansa* arrived, and that he'd not seen any Mande messengers. Finally, Sumaworo said that since So'olon Ma'an had now returned home, he wanted to see all of the Mande people at Dakajalan on the fourteenth of the new month. The battle had now been set.

As soon as he heard Sumaworo's message, So'olon Ma'an replied by having his people beat the signal drum, calling everyone to the council hall. On his way to the council hall, Fakoli was thinking, "We are going to march against Soso!" But his mother and Sumaworo had suckled at the same breast, and he wondered if it was right for him to join the Mande people in attacking Sumaworo. He decided, "As soon as I get to the council hall, I will ask the Mande people to let me go to Soso. Let Manden come and fight both me and my uncle."

But before Fakoli had the chance to say this to the men gathered in the council hall, Manden Bori laughed at him. Manden Bori always ridiculed Fakoli whenever he entered the council hall. When he heard Manden Bori laughing at him, Fakoli became angry and said, "Turama'an, let me give you a message for Simbon. Tell Simbon to ask his younger brother why he always laughs at me. Of all the people that enter the council hall, it's me that Manden Bori laughs at. Why does he laugh at me? What have I done to him?"

When Ma'an Sunjata was given this message, he said, "Manden Bori, stop laughing at Fakoli. Didn't you hear him saying that you are shaming him? Why do you laugh at him?"

Manden Bori replied, "Big brother, the tall men always duck their heads as they enter the council hall. Though Fakoli is only one and a half arm-spans tall, he also ducks his head when he comes in. That is what makes me laugh. Aaah, that Fakoli, heh, heh."

Fakoli said, "Turama'an, tell Simbon that he should tell his younger brother that short Mande people can do things that tall Mande people cannot do. And he'd better believe it."

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Manden Bori said, “I won’t believe that until I see it. Really, do you believe that? I don’t.”

Fakoli picked up his goatskin rug and, placing it in the center of the council hall, sat down on it. He waved his hand and grunted. He raised the roof from the house! The sun shone in on everybody. He said, “Well, Manden Bori, what about that?”

Manden Bori said, “You spoke the truth.”

(They were fair about crediting one another with the truth, for there was respect among those with *dalilu* .)

Full p. C-45 Shorter p. 1533

The people asked Fakoli to put the roof back where it belonged. They said, “No tall Mande man has ever done such a thing.”

Then Fakoli placed his hand in the middle of the council hall floor. He crouched there and wrinkled his face. Wrinkled his face and wrinkled his face! He squeezed everyone against the wall. That was the origin of the song “Nyari Gbasa,” which goes:

“Fakoli, our arms will break,

Fakoli, our heads will burst,

Fakoli, our stomachs will rupture.”

(That song belongs to the Koroma family.)

The people said, “Fakoli, stop! No tall Mande man has done such a thing.”

Fakoli Explains His Dilemma and Takes His Leave from Manden

After performing these feats, Fakoli spoke to the assembled elders. He said, “Turama’an, Simbon, and everyone in the council hall: Sumaworo has sent a message that we should meet at Dakajalan. But my mother and Sumaworo were the children of the three Touréwomen, and it would be shameful for me to participate in Manden’s attack on my uncle. I ask that you give me leave to go to Soso. I should be at my uncle’s side when you come to attack him.”

Ma’an Sunjata heard what Fakoli said, even though Manden Bori refused to repeat it to him. To Manden Bori, Sunjata said, “Haven’t I told you? Fakoli is right. You and I have uncles whose home is Dòni Kiri. What if we knew that Dòni Kiri would be attacked? Would we stay here and do nothing?”

Manden Bori said, “Would anyone dare to attack Dòni Kiri?”

“That’s not the point. If Fakoli says he is going to help his mother’s kinsman, leave him alone and let him go.” Then, turning to Fakoli, Sunjata said, “Fakoli, you have done well by Manden. You helped us during Sumaworo’s nine invasions of Manden, and our nine efforts to rebuild our homeland. So if you should say that you are going to help your uncle, very well; we won’t stop you. But remember that if we meet on the battlefield there will be no brotherhood, no friendship between us. Don’t think us ungrateful. But there’s no gratitude when the guns start firing. That is all I have to say.”

Fakoli said, “Bisimillahi,”[1] and returned to his house for the night.

The next morning Fakoli bathed in the water of his seven medicine pots. Taking his battle-axe on his shoulder, he brought out his horse and mounted it. His groom, Nyana Jukuduma,[2] was with him. He lifted up his wife, Keleya Konkon, and sat her behind him on his horse; then he took the ends of his scarf and tied them together, saying, "Because I know the kind of man my uncle is, he might wait for me on the road."[3]

While he was preparing to leave, another message from Sumaworo arrived. Sumaworo said that he'd been informed of Fakoli's plan to help him fight against Manden, and that Fakoli must not go to Soso. Sumaworo said he'd learned that if the Mande were successful in defeating him, they planned to replace Sumaworo Full p. C-46 Shorter p. 1534 with Fakoli as ruler of Soso. When the people of Soso heard this, they promised to cut off Fakoli's head, just as the Mande people already wanted to. Thus, one way or another, said Sumaworo, Fakoli's "feet would be bringing his head" if he dared to come to Soso. Fakoli laughed, "I'm not going to die for anyone—not Sunjata, and not Sumaworo." (Even today, that expression is often quoted.)

Fakoli said, "Go and tell my uncle that I'll soon be there. If I were really planning to get myself killed, then I'd let him carry out his threats against me. But since I don't intend to die, I'll go to Soso today. Tell him to get ready."

[*In an omitted passage, Sumaworo deploys soldiers to intercept Fakoli and kill him, but Fakoli makes himself and his companions invisible and arrives unscathed at the gates of Soso.*]

Footnotes

- Note 1:Literally, "in the name of Allah" (Arabic), a traditional Muslim invocation spoken at the outset of an undertaking [editor's note]. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:An enslaved person who cared for his horse. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:To ambush him. Return to reference 3

Fakoli Finds Trouble in Soso

When Sumaworo learned that Fakoli was accompanied only by his wife and his slave, he told Bala Fasali,[4] "Take the *bala* and welcome my nephew."

Bala Fasali took up the *bala* and sang the song we now call "Janjon":[5]

"Eh, Fakoli!

You became a son.

If death is inevitable,

A formidable child should be born.

The Mande people said

That if you came, they would wait for you on the road.

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The people of Soso said

That if you came, your feet would bring your head.

Knowing that, you still had no fear.

If death is inevitable,

A formidable child should be born."

Sumaworo welcomed Fakoli by standing and raising his elephant tail in salute. Fakoli sat down and explained why he had come to Soso. He said, "Bala Fasali, you take part in this.[6] Let Sumaworo hear what I have to say. I have come because Sumaworo has done many things, and though I was invisible as I traveled, I come in good faith.

"The three Touréwomen gave birth to my mother and to Sumaworo. I have been thinking about my mother ever since war was declared between Soso and Manden. Had my mother been a man, she would have fought in this war alongside Sumaworo, her brother. That is why I decided to come: to fight in place of my mother. I have come to Sumaworo through the will of God; let us unite and fight the coming war together."

Sumaworo replied, "Bala Fasali, I'll tell you what to say to Fakoli. Tell him that I appreciate his words, and that I am pleased he has come."

Full p. C-47 Shorter p. 1535

After this meeting, Fakoli was taken to meet Sumaworo's wives. Sumaworo had three hundred and thirty-three wives. Fakoli had only one wife, Keleya Konkon.

To his three hundred and thirty-three wives, Sumaworo said: "Fakoli has arrived just as I am going to war. The oracle Nènèba says that in order to win this war I must offer three hundred and thirty-three different dishes as sacrifice. I want these dishes to be prepared the day after tomorrow, on Friday. I mention this because Fakoli should know about this sacrifice if we are to be allies."

Fakoli said, "Fine. Since I have come to take the place of my mother, my wife will cook the one bowl of food my mother would have provided."

When the Soso women heard Fakoli say that, they said, "Paki! We'll show that Mande woman how much better a Soso woman's cooking is." This was insulting to Keleya Konkon, who said, "I'm going to build my fire near theirs. Fakoli, go and find a cooking pot for me. Those Soso women want to brag? They'll soon learn that Mande women can also cook. They will realize that Manden has kitchens, too." Fakoli left to find a cooking pot for Keleya Konkon.

Among the three hundred and thirty-three dishes prepared by Sumaworo's wives were beans, rice, fonio, cereal paste, millet wafers, wheat meal, cassava, and porridge: all of these different foods were included in the sacrifice.

Fakoli's wife said to him, "Bring me rice, pounded cassava, and fonio for my pot. God willing, I'm going to cook a meal that the *jelilu* will sing about for years to come."

Keleya Konkon put her one pot on the fire. Whenever she saw the Soso women who were cooking rice put some into their pots, she would put rice in her one pot, then sit down. Whenever she saw the Soso women who were cooking fonio put some into their pots, she would add some fonio in her one pot then sit down.

When the women who were cooking *monie*[7] were rolling their *monie* balls, Keleya Konkon also rolled *monie* balls. When the women put the *monie* balls into their pots, Keleya Konkon would put *monie* balls into her pot too, then take her seat. When the women who were baking *takura*[8] were putting their *takura* balls into their pots, Keleya Konkon also put *takura* balls into her pot, then sat down.

So Keleya Konkon put into her one pot all of the same things the Soso women put into their three hundred and thirty-three pots. Then, when the women started dishing out rice, she took her rice bowl and dished out the rice from her pot. When the women started dishing out the fonio, she took her fonio bowl and dished out her fonio from the same pot.

Sumaworo's wives produced three hundred and thirty-three dishes—but Fakoli's wife also produced three hundred and thirty-three dishes, and all from her one pot! The wives couldn't get the best of her.

Some scandalmongers went to Sumaworo and told him what had happened, adding, "Didn't we tell you that Fakoli came to take your place? You have three hundred and thirty-three wives, who have cooked you three hundred and thirty-three dishes. Your nephew has only one wife, but she has also prepared three Full p. C-48 Shorter p. 1536 hundred and thirty-three dishes! In fact, Keleya Konkon's servings are bigger than yours! Everything that you have, Fakoli now also has. He came to take your place. If you don't take this Fakoli business seriously, he will take Soso away from you even before you go to war."

Sumaworo said, "Huh? Oho!" And he called his people together. Sumaworo sent the scandalmonger to go and bring Fakoli to the meeting.

Instead of going to find Fakoli, the scandalmonger simply went and stood on the road, then returned to Sumaworo, saying, "I have called him." A lot of time passed; Fakoli did not come to see Sumaworo. When Sumaworo sent for someone, he expected that person to arrive one minute after the messenger returned.

"Ah!" said Sumaworo. "Did you not see my nephew?"

To which the scandalmonger replied, "I saw him."

"Ah, did you not call him?"

"I called him."

"All right, go and tell him I am waiting for him."

The scandalmonger went and stood in the road again. Returning to Sumaworo, he said, "I have called him."

More time passed and still Fakoli did not appear. Now very angry, Sumaworo sent another messenger to get Fakoli. He said, "You go and tell Fakoli that I am waiting for him."

That messenger did find Fakoli. He said, "Fakoli, this is the third time you have been called. Why didn't you come when we called? Who do you think you are?"

Fakoli said, "Me? Was I called three times?"

"Yes, the message came and came again."

"Me? M'ba, I refuse."

That messenger ran back and told Sumaworo, "Your nephew refuses to come."

Sumaworo said, "*Paki!* That's it! Fakoli dares tell me, Sumaworo, 'I refuse'?"

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Once Sumaworo's last messenger had gone, Fakoli put on his hat with the three hundred birds' heads. He put his axe on his shoulder and tied his headband around his head, because he knew there was going to be trouble.

When Sumaworo saw Fakoli approaching, he stood up in his royal seat and said, "Fakoli, am I the one to whom you said, 'I refuse'?"

Fakoli replied, "I refuse," for he believed it would be cowardly to explain himself to Sumaworo.

Again, Sumaworo asked, "Am I the one to whom you said, 'I refuse'?"

"I refuse."

"Why?"

"I refuse."

"Ah, very well." Sumaworo said. "What they told me is the truth. You claim that you came to help me. But you have not come to help me. You know what you came for. I have three hundred and thirty-three wives who have prepared three hundred and thirty-three dishes for me. You have only one wife, yet she also produced three hundred and thirty-three dishes for you.

"Did you come to help me? Were you told that your head and my head are equal? I gave you this wife you're so proud of—the one with your mother's name[9] — Full p. C-49 Shorter p. 1537 and now I am taking her back. You can't brag about what you don't have anymore! This Kosiya Kantéthat you have, she is my daughter,[1] so now I am taking her back."

Fakoli said, "Ah! Uncle, have matters between us sunk so low? Has our dispute come to the point of taking back a wife? You can have her! I don't even want her now, at least not until the smoke from our battle with the Mande people at Dakajalan has settled. Until then, I don't want her!"

He brought out his blanket and tore off a strip, *prrrr*! He threw it to Keleya Konkon and told her to use it for a mourning veil, saying, "I will not marry you again until I've defeated your brother[2] in gunsmoke. I am returning to Manden."

Turning his back on Keleya Kondon, he gave the tail of his horse to Nyana Jukuduma,[3] and the two men took the road to Manden, where the diviners were still praying to God.

When Fakoli got back to Manden, he went and stood at the door of the council hall. He said, "Simbon, my uncle and I have quarreled. He has taken my wife from me. I will not take back Keleya Konkon until I do it in gunsmoke."

"Huh," Ma'an Sunjata laughed.

Manjan Beretéand Siriman Kanda Touréalso laughed. They said, "Manden is now complete." They said they had put their trust in Turama'an. (This is why you sometimes hear a person say that they put their trust in Turama'an instead of Fakoli.[4] The people gave their trust to Turama'an while Fakoli was off visiting his uncle.)

Still standing on the threshold of the council hall, Fakoli said, "Simbon, I do not want a wife from Manden or Negeboriya. Send a message to your uncles in Dòni Kiri, and ask them to give you your 'nephew wife.'[5] Then give that wife to me. I want to have that woman before we go to the battle at Dakajalan. Then, regardless of what happens, no one will be able to blame my actions in battle on the fact that I have no wife. If I don't have a wife before going into battle,

the people will say I fought well because I was trying to get myself a wife—that I was afraid of staying a bachelor. So let me have your 'nephew wife' before we leave for the war." Ma'an Sunjata sent a message to his uncle (our ancestor!) in Dòni Kiri, who sent Ma Sira Condéto Sunjata as his nephew wife. Ma'an Sunjata then gave this wife to Fakoli.

At that time, Fakoli was feeling bitter. Having refused to live in Negeboriya, Manden, and Soso, he'd built his own hamlet and remained there until it was time for the battle at Dakajalan. The people all said, "Eeeh, Fakoli is bitter! He Full p. C-50 Shorter p. 1538 has refused to live with us; he's built his own hamlet." (That hamlet, built in Manden, became Bambugu, and it was there that Sira Condéwas brought to Fakoli.)

Footnotes

- Note 4:An unusual pronunciation of this famous bard's name, which is usually given as Bala Fasaké, or a variant thereof. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:One of the oldest and most famous songs of Manden, said to have been originally composed for Fakoli, but in later times played to honor any distinguished personage. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:Custom dictated that the dignitary, in this case Fakoli, would speak to the *jeli*, who would then add weight to the message by repeating it to the person addressed. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:A millet porridge made with small balls of millet flour flavored with tamarind or lemon. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:A millet cake made with five balls of soaked millet flour and baked or steamed in a clay pot buried in the ground; one of the preferred foods for sacrifice or almsgiving. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:Fakoli's mother was Kosiya, so his wife Keleya was not exactly her namesake. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:Family relationships among Manding peoples arc perceived on several levels, or "paths." Keeping in mind that this is the storyteller's viewpoint, this is probably meant in the sense that the wife Sumaworo provided for Fakoli was a classificatory "daughter" of Sumaworo. In Manding societies, the children of one's cousins are considered to be one's own children. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:In the same way that Keleya Konkon could be a classificatory "daughter" of Sumaworo, she could also be a classificatory "sister." Indeed, on one path a person can be classified as one's sibling, while on another path the same person can be referred to as one's father, uncle, mother, or aunt. This reflects the polygymous practice of men marrying wives of the same age as their children. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:The groom would run behind the horse, hanging on to its tail. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:Turama'an had acquired a leadership position or military command that was formerly held by Fakoli. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:In Maninka and Bamana society, it is claimed, both jokingly and seriously, that it is the uncle's duty to give his nephew a wife, the so-called nephew wife. The obligation of this uncle–nephew bond is implied in the Bamana proverb: "When your uncle fails to give you a wife, he is no longer your uncle but your mother's brother." Return to reference 5

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A Visit to Kamanjan in Sibi

Dressed in his ritual attire, Sunjata said to Fakoli, “Before she died, my mother asked God to help me earn the support of a Mande elder whose *dalilu* is greater than mine, and I believe I must not go to war without having first accomplished this. Now that you’re settled, Fakoli, I ask you—just as I’m asking Turama’an, Kankejan, Tombonon Sitafa Diawara, and all the Simbons—please give me sixty men so I can greet Kamanjan, because I esteem him above all other elders.”

Kamanjan was much older than Sunjata; Kamanjan and Sunjata’s father, Maghan Konfara, were born at the same time. Kamanjan never committed a shameful deed in his entire life, and anyone who commanded an army would seek his advice. This is why Sunjata said, “Let’s go to greet Kamanjan.”

With sixty men, Sunjata went to salute Kamanjan at the battle site called Kalassa, near Sibi Mountain, where Kamanjan liked to hold torchlit meetings at night. It was a special honor to be asked by Kamanjan to extinguish the torches at the end of such meetings; only those *kamalenw* he knew to be special in their towns would be allowed to put out the flames.

Sunjata arrived as Kamanjan was having one of his nighttime meetings, and all of the torches were lit. With his hand, Sunjata extinguished them all. Then he used a little thing to reignite them, *kan!* Suddenly everything was illuminated again. The people at the meeting said, “As soon as Sunjata put out the torches, he lit his own torch.”

(Sunjata’s own light was as powerful as the light from a pressure lamp, and the little town where Sunjata extinguished the torches is called Kalassa, which is near Tabon on the Bamako road. The Konatélive there.)

After relighting the torches, Sunjata saluted Kamanjan and explained the purpose of his visit, saying, “I left here with my mother; now I have returned.”

Kamanjan said, “Simbon! Have you come?”

“Yes, I have come.”

“Ah, are you the one that Manden will send against Sumaworo?”

“Uhuh. That is why I have come to greet you, father Kamanjan. The last person to be told you’re leaving on a trip must be the first person you greet upon your return.”

“Sunjata, what *dalilu* did you bring with you? Hm? Sumaworo is a bad one. Haven’t you heard people sing his praises? They sing:

‘Transforms in the air,

Sumaworo,

Transforms on the ground,

Sumaworo.

Manden pi-pa-pi,

Whirlwind of Manden,

Kukuba and Bantamba,

Nyemi-Nyemi and Kambasiga,

Sege and Babi'?"

Sunjata said, "Yes, Father Kamanjan, I've heard that."

"Then what kind of *dalilu* did you bring to use against him?"

Full p. C-51 Shorter p. 1539

"Ah, father Kamanjan, that is why I have come to greet you and tell you my thoughts."

"Well, I've become old since we last met here. I can't go to war again, nor can I ask anyone else to do that. All those who attacked Sumaworo have been defeated, and this is Manden's fault; it was Manden that made it possible for Sumaworo to become what he is. It was a mistake for us to give him the four *jamanaw* .[6] Not satisfied with that, he now wants to add Manden to Soso. That is what we must fight to avoid."

Kamanjan and Sunjata were talking beneath the tree that is called *balansan*[7] in Manden, and when Kamanjan said, "Ah!" the *balansan* flipped upside down onto its top branches.

When Sunjata also said, "Ah!" the *balansan* flipped back over onto its roots. (It's true, *binani tinima*!)

Kamanjan said, "Ah!" a second time, and the *balansan* flipped back over onto its top branches.

Before Sunjata could say, "Ah," again, his sister whispered in his ear, "Big brother, this is not what my mother told you to do. Let Kamanjan do this. Our mother prayed that you would be blessed by an elder with *dalilu* stronger than yours. Kamanjan is trying to demonstrate to you how strong his *dalilu* is. If you beat him with your own *dalilu*, he will not give you anything. Let him do this, and he will flip the tree back once he's satisfied. If you add his *dalilu* to what you already have, maybe you will win the war against Sumaworo. You should act like you do not know anything, so Kamanjan will give you his *dalilu* ."

Footnotes

- Note 6:The four main provinces of Soso that commonly appear in praise-lines to Sumaworo (though rarely identified in the same way): Kukuba, Bantamba, Nyemi-Nyemi, and Kambasiga. This comment, which the bard attributes to a contemporary of Sunjata's father, appears to imply a failed policy of appeasement toward Sumaworo. Return to reference 6
- Note 7: *Acacia albida*; in Mande lore, one of the many trees, including the baobab and the dubalen, that carry strong associations with the spirit world. Return to reference 7

A Strategic Alliance: Kolonkan's Marriage

The battle that followed Sunjata's meeting with Kamanjan did not go well for Manden, and the town was filled with sorrow. But Kamanjan didn't let Sunjata leave him empty-handed. Kamanjan said, "Simbon, I see that your sister has matured since we last met. Yes, she has matured, and you should give her to me so I can marry her. Though your sister spent twenty-seven years at Nema, your mother—who was of the best stock—said she would never be given

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to a man there. You yourself agreed that your sister would only be married here in Manden. So give her to me."

Ma'an Sunjata said, "Eh! Father Kamanjan, that won't be possible. If I give you my younger sister, I would be embarrassed to discuss certain subjects with you. There are things I could discuss with you so long as there's no marriage between us. Now that my mother and father are both dead, I'm depending on your counsel on such matters. But a marriage between us would make it embarrassing for me to do so.[8] Besides that, you are a battle commander. If we do something to displease you, if you become offended, we might quarrel."

Full p. C-52 Shorter p. 1540

Kamanjan said, "Ah, give her to me."

"Well, I'll give her to you if you will command the Kamara people to show respect for the Mansarépeople. Tell the Kamara people to show respect for my people and for me. The Kamara should respect us, *Kamaralu yédan a na* ." (The Dannalu, who take their name from that saying, live between Balia and Wulada. Now, because of Ma Kolonkan's marriage to Kamanjan, the Dannalu must be mentioned whenever the Kamara are discussed.) Ma Kolonkan was given to Kamanjan Kamara as soon as he made this promise to Sunjata. Kamanjan entered her, and she eventually gave birth to his son Fadibali.

Footnotes

- Note 8:In this case of *buranya* ("having an older in-law"), Sunjata would have to practice great restraint and lack of familiarity toward his sister's husband, and would no longer be able to appeal to him for help or advice. Return to reference 8

The Battle of Negeboriya

Kamanjan said, "Simbon, I respect you, and believe you'll be successful in the war against Sumaworo. But listen: don't go to Dakajalan yet. Go to Negeboriya first and pay your respects to Fakoli's relatives. Though Fakoli is from Negeboriya, not Manden, he has done much for us. Besides, haven't you ever heard the saying, 'Negeboriya Maghan, Kayafaya Maghan'?[9] The Negeboriyans are our in-laws.

"Fakoli has said, 'The Mande people are wrong if they think I am helping them only because I want to win the *mansaya* for myself,' and we believe him. After all, none of the Koroma living in our Mansarétowns have ever tried to take the *man saya* for themselves.

"Fakoli has also said, 'I am only helping Manden because of Ma Tenenba Condé; it was she who raised and blessed me. Tenenba Condé's sister is So'olon Wulen Condé, and So'olon Wulen Condé's son is Ma'an Sunjata. So I am not helping you because of personal ambition. If you listen to the Mande people's gossip about me now, you'll be ashamed to face me later.'

"Turama'an and Kankejan have said the same sorts of things. So go and pay your respects to the people of Negeboriya."

Taking their leave from Tabon, Ma'an Sunjata and his companions mounted their horses and rode straight to Negeboriya. But Sumaworo had built a wall around that town by the time

they arrived. In fact, Sumaworo had built walls around many towns of Manden and was occupying them with his troops.

When Sumaworo's men heard that So'olon Ma'an and his troops were coming to pay their respects to the people of Negeboriya, they lined their musket barrels along the top of the wall and waited. When Sunjata and his men arrived, the muskets fired and fired and fired at them!

Forced to retreat, Sunjata returned to find Manden in mourning over his defeat at the Battle of Negeboriya. But Sunjata's powerful army was not destroyed, and Sumaworo had lost his sacred drum Dunun Mutukuru during the battle. (That drum, the Dunun Mutukuru, was never found; only the *bala* was saved.)

> [*In omitted passages, back in Manden two rams that are named for Sunjata and Sumaworo, respectively, fight one another in a symbolic preview of the battle to come. Preparing for the Battle of Dakajalan, Sunjata calls for volunteers. The army of Manden is divided into companies of men who possess occult powers, companies of those who have no magic, and one unit made up of famous ancestral* *Shorter p. 1541* *figures with the power to become invisible. In a secret meeting with Manjan Bereté, Sunjata learns the elaborate strategy he must adopt to defeat Sumaworo.* *Full p. C-53* *He exchanges his sorcery horse for the sorcery mare of the jelimuso Tunku Manyan Diawara. He also sends a messenger to his sister, Nana Triban, who is in Soso, to retrieve from her the dibilan medicine*[1] *that she steals from the tail of Sumaworo's horse.*]

Footnotes

- Note 9:Kayafaya is said to have been a *jamana*, or province, attached to Negeboriya under the Koroma ruling lineage. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:A secret medicine said to render the person who takes it invisible. Return to reference 1

Trading Insults and Swearing Oaths

Manden mourned after each of their battles against Sumaworo. He made many women widows. He made shirts and pants from the skins of Mande and Soso people. He sewed a hat of human skin. He even made shoes of human skin and then ordered the surviving Mande people to come and name them. If one of the people tried to name the shoes "Finfirinya Shoes," Sumaworo would say, "That is not the name." If someone tried "Dulubiri shoes," he would say, "That is not the name." Finally, the people asked him, "All right, Sumaworo, what are your shoes called?" He said, "My human-skin shoes are called 'Take the Air, take the Ground from the Chief.' I wear your skins because the Mande people will always be around me, Sumaworo. You will always be in my power."

After both sides had made their preparations, the war began. Briefly, here's what happened:

The three Mande divisions—including those men who could become invisible in the daytime and the five *mori* diviners—arrived at the first battle. Simbon was placed in the middle of his men, with Manjan Beretédirectly in front of him. The men were packed so tightly that the head of one man's horse touched the tail of the horse in front of him. Sanbari Mara Cisséand Siriman Kanda Touréwere there, as were Kòn Mara and Djané, Manden Bori,

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Tombonon Sitafa Diawara, Turama'an, Kankejan, and Fakoli. Sunjata ordered them to maintain their positions on the battlefield, so they marched back and forth in a line, like an army of ants. Simbon was in the middle!

When they arrived at the battlefield, Ma'an Sunjata said, "Men of Manden, wait here," and crossed the field with his masked flag bearers, headed for Sumaworo's camp. Sumaworo's troops were also there, waiting in position. Sumaworo sat astride his horse, surrounded by his corps of personal guards.

As he approached Sumaworo, Sunjata said, "Father Sumaworo, good morning." (True bravery is revealed by the mouth!)

Sumaworo said, "Marahaba, good morning. Where are the Mande troops?"

"Ah, Father Sumaworo, they are over on the Mande side."

"Ah, is that how you usually arrange your troops?"

Sunjata said, "Well, I am new at this. This is our first encounter in battle. If I brought my men over here, they'd mingle with your troops, and we'd be unable to tell whose men are whose.[2] You can see them standing over there on the Mande side."

"Ah, So'olon Ma'an, this is not the usual procedure."

Shorter p. 1542

Feeling bold, Sunjata said, "Well, you killed all of the other leaders; there was nobody left to lead the Mande troops."

Sumaworo said, "I say to you, Bala Fasali, tell Simbon that I am doing him a favor by inviting him to meet here on the battlefield. I understand that the Mande Full p. C-54 people sent for Sunjata so he could be their commander in battle. But apparently they did not tell him about anything that happened while he was away.

"This is why I have invited him to come and meet in the field: so that I can tell him what I have to say, and he can tell me what is on his mind. Then I will do to him what I planned to do —or he can try to do to me what he wants to."

Simbon said, "I appreciate the invitation. Ah! You are my respected elder. The person who has helped one's father is also one's father. But let me tell you something, father Sumaworo: people may refuse peanuts, but not the ones that have been placed right in front of them."

Sumaworo said, "M'ba, give me some snuff from Manden."[3]

"Ah! Father Sumaworo, it is more appropriate for the master to give snuff to his apprentice, rather than for the apprentice to give snuff to his master. Give me some snuff from Soso, so that I will know I have met my master."

Sumaworo took out his snuffbox and handed it to Sunjata. Simbon put some snuff in his palm, took a pinch and snorted it, took another pinch and snorted it, and put some in his mouth. He closed the snuffbox and gave it back to Sumaworo. The snuff did not even make Sunjata's tongue quiver.

Sumaworo was surprised. Anybody who took that snuff would immediately fall over. It was poison! But So'olon Ma'an sucked on the snuff and didn't even cough. He spit the snuff on the ground.

Then Sumaworo said, "Give me some Mande snuff." Simbon reached in his pocket, took out his snuffbox, and handed it to Sumaworo, who put some in his palm. He took a pinch of snuff

and snorted it, took some more and snorted it, and put the rest in his mouth. That was specially prepared snuff, too, but it did not do anything to him.

Sumaworo said to him, “I asked you to meet with me because the Mande people seem to think you are their *mansa*, and it’s true that you would not be here if you didn’t have some *dalilu* . But your *dalilu* will do no good against me. I told you before, when you passed through Soso, that if the Mande people tried to send you to fight me, you should refuse. As you now know, I have become hot ashes surrounding Manden and Soso; any toddler who tries to cross me will be burned up to his thighs. And yet here you are.”

“Ah, father Sumaworo, as I told you, this is my father’s home, not yours. You are not from here: your grandfather came from Folonengbe; your father was a latecomer to Manden. You are only the second generation of your people in Manden. But we have been here for eight generations: our ancestor Mamadi Kani first came here from Hejaji. After him came Mamadi Kani’s son, Kani Simbon, Kani Nyogo Simbon, Kabala Simbon, Big Simbon Mamadi Tanyagati, Balinene, Bele, and Belebakòn, and Farako Manko Farakonken. Now I am Farako Manko Farakonken’s son, the eighth generation. My people Shorter p. 1543 have been here all along; you only arrived yesterday, your dawn is just breaking today.

“Huh!” continued Sunjata. “And you say that I have just arrived? M’ba, huh! You are my respected elder, so I will not be the first to make a move. You invited me here to tell me that I’m a disrespectful child? You just go ahead and show what you’ve got.”

Sumaworo said, “Bisimillahi.”

Full p. C-55

Footnotes

- Note 2:The problem of distinguishing between ally and enemy in the heat of battle was a serious concern. In an episode not included in this book, the narrator describes how Kamanjan Kamara introduced facial scarification for that purpose. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:This request commences a standard ritual called *sigifili*, conducted between opposing commanders before a battle; it involved boasting about one’s powers and swearing oaths while taking a poisonous snuff that would kill a liar. Return to reference 3

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The Battle of Dakajalan and Fakoli's Revenge

When something is filled to the brim, it will overflow.

When Sumaworo took his sword and struck at Sunjata, his blade flexed like a whip. Sunjata also struck with his sword; the blade of his sword also bent. Sumaworo raised his musket and fired, but nothing touched So'olon Ma'an. So'olon Ma'an then fired his musket at Sumaworo but failed to wound him.

With that, the *dalilu* was finished, and the two men just stood there. Sumaworo reached into his saddlebag and took his whip. As he raised his hand like this, So'olon Ma'an seized his reins like this—*Clap!*—and dashed away.

The two armies were waiting, Soso on one side, Manden on the other. Everybody was watching the commanders on the battlefield. Fakoli stood off to one side of Sunjata; Turama'an was on his other side. Sumaworo was also flanked by his men.

Blu, blu! Sunjata, Sumaworo, and their men dashed across the field and up the hill. Near the top of the hill, they faded from sight; even their dust disappeared. Soon they reached the edge of a very deep ravine. Gathering all her strength, Sunjata's sorcery mare (Tunku Manyan Diawara's horse) jumped the ravine and landed on the other side. When Sumaworo's horse tried to jump the ravine, it tumbled to the bottom.[4] Fakoli and Turama'an—whose horses safely jumped the ravine—turned and, with Sunjata, went to look down at Sumaworo who was trapped at the bottom of the ravine.

Sunjata called down, "Sumaworo, what is the matter?"

"So'olon Ma'an, kill me here; do not carry me to the town. Do not bring such shame to me. God controls all time. Please do not take me back."

Sumaworo removed his *dalilu* and dropped his horse-whip. He stripped completely, taking off his human-skin shirt and trousers.

Sunjata said, "I am not going to finish you off. No one can climb out of that ravine; you're stuck. I do not want your shirt of human skin, because it is the skin of my father's relatives. I will not take it." Turning to his companions he said, "Come, let's go home."

They had gone some distance when Fakoli made a decision, turned, and went back to the ravine. When he arrived there, he said to Sumaworo, "What did I tell you? When you took back your sister,[5] what did I say?" Taking his axe from his shoulder, Fakoli struck Sumaworo on the head, *poh*! He said, "This will be Shorter p. 1544 mentioned in Ma'an Sunjata's praise song." (And he was right! Though we sing, "Head-breaking Mari Jata," it was Fakoli who broke Sumaworo's head.)[6]

Fakoli started to leave. But he was still angry, so he went back to the ravine again and struck Sumaworo on the leg, *gbao*! Fakoli broke Sumaworo's leg, Full p. C-56 saying, "This will also be mentioned in Ma'an Sunjata's praise song." (That is why we sing, "Leg-Breaking Mari Jata.")

With his axe, Fakoli returned to the ravine a third time and broke Sumaworo's arm, saying, "This, too, will be mentioned in Ma'an Sunjata's praise song." (And so we sing, "Arm-Breaking Mari Jata." Aheh! It was not Jata who broke it! It was Fakoli who broke it.)

Finally Sunjata and his men went home. Laughter returned to Manden, and eventually Soso joined in.

[*In omitted passages, the narrator describes how, following the defeat of Sumaworo, the people of Soso dispersed and eventually settled in various communities along the Atlantic coast. Meanwhile, Sunjata begins to initiate reforms and organize the newly unified Mali Empire.*]

Footnotes

- Note 4:Though not usually seen in versions of the Sunjata epic, the incident of the horse tumbling into a ravine is a popular motif in *jeli* storytelling, a favorite way of disposing of the hero's enemy. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:Fakoli's wife, Keleya Konkon. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:It is unusual for a *jeli* to describe the death of Sumaworo, as Tassey Condédoes here. In many versions, Sumaworo flees to the mountain at Koulikoro where he disappears. The Kouyatéand Diabaté*jeliw*, among others, are usually careful not to say that Sumaworo was slain by Sunjata, Fakoli, or anybody else. Such things arc taken seriously in modern times, because Maninka and Bamana identify with the ancestors whose names they carry. The version translated here was recorded in a private performance in the narrator's own house, but in a public performance, giving details of a humiliating defeat (even one alleged to have occurred more than seven centuries ago) risks embarrassing any people in the audience who regard themselves as descendants of the defeated ancestor. Return to reference 6

The Campaign against Jolofin Mansa

After the war was over, Ma'an Sunjata said, "My fathers and my brothers: now that the war has ended and the *mansaya* has come to us, the Mansaré, let's send our horse-buyers to Senu to replace the many Mande horses killed by Sumaworo. We should buy enough horses for each of our elders and warriors to have one."

So the horse-buyers went to Senu and bought hundreds of horses. On the way back to Manden, the horse-buyers stopped at the *jamana* of Jolofin Mansa, and there Jolofin Mansa robbed the buyers of their horses; he then took the horse-buyers captive and beheaded all but two. Jolofin Mansa sent the two survivors to tell Ma'an Sunjata that even though Ma'an Sunjata had taken over the power—that Sunjata had recently received the Mande *mansaya*—he knew the Mande walked on all fours like dogs, and that they should leave horse-riding to others.

The two horse-buyers arrived in Manden and gave the message to Ma'an Sunjata, who said, "Jolofin Mansa has extended an invitation to me. I myself will lead the campaign against Jolofin Mansa."

His younger brother Manden Bori said, "Elder brother, are you going to lead us in that campaign? Give me the command, and I will do the fighting."

"I am not giving you command of the army."

Fakoli said, "Simbon, give me the army! We will not stay here while you lead the army. Give the army to me, Fakoli, so I can go after Jolofin Mansa."

Simbon said, "I will not give you the army. I will go myself."

Shorter p. 1545

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Meanwhile, Turama'an was digging his own grave. He cut some *tòr*òbranches, laid them on his grave, and had his shroud sewn. Then he said to Ma'an Sunjata, "Simbon, I'll kill myself if you do not give me the army. Would you really leave us behind while you lead the army to go after Jolofin Mansa? Give me the army. If you don't, if you go after Jolofin Mansa yourself, you will lose me, for I'll kill myself."

"Ah," said Simbon. "I did not know you felt so strongly, Turama'an. Your *dalilu* and my *dalilu* are tied together: my mother was given to your fathers, who killed the buffalo of Dòni Kiri. If your father and my mother had gotten along, my mother would have stayed with your father. Because my mother did not get along with your fathers, your fathers brought my mother to my father, and I was born out of that marriage, as were my younger brothers Manden Bori and So'olon Jamori.

Full p. C-57

"My father took my younger siblings Nana Triban and Tenenbajan, and gave them to Danmansa Wulanni and Danmansa Wulanba, your fathers. You, Turama'an, are the son of Danmansa Wulanni. Considering what you have said, you and I are equal in this war, and I will let you take the army."

So Sunjata gave Turama'an command of the army, and Turama'an prepared the army for war. With the campaign underway, they marched to Jolofin Mansa's land.

(You know Jolofin Mansa, he was one of the Mansaré. The son of Latali Kalabi, the Mansaréancestor, was Danmatali Kalabi; Danmatali Kalabi then also named his son Latali Kalabi. This second Latali sired Kalabi Doman and Kalabi Bomba, and Kalabi Doman sired Mamadi Kani. Mamadi Kani sired Kani Simbon, Kani Nyogo Simbon, Kabala Simbon, Big Simbon Madi Tanyagati, and M'balinene; M'balinene sired Bele, Bele sired Belebakon, Belebakon sired Maghan Konfara, and this Farako Manko Farakonken was Ma'an Sunjata's father.

So Jolofin *Mansa* and Ma'an Sunjata both descended from the same person. And Jolofin's people—the *Jolofin na mò'òlu*—became known as the Wolofo.[7] Have you heard people calling the Wolofo "little Mande people"? That's because they all came from Manden.)

Turama'an marched the army of Manden to Jolofin Mansa's land and there destroyed Jolofin Mansa's place like it was an old clay pot; Turama'an broke it like an old calabash. He also captured those who were supposed to be captured, killed those who were supposed to be killed.

Though his soldiers had been defeated, Jolofin Mansa had not been captured, so he fled with Turama'an in pursuit. Jolofin Mansa headed for the big river.[8]

At that time, no one knew that Jolofin Mansa could transform himself into a crocodile, living on land or under water. When he came to the big river, Jolofin Mansa plunged in and swam into a cave; there he transformed himself into a crocodile and lay down to wait.

Standing above the cave, Turama'an and his men said, "Jolofin Mansa went in here." The Mande men were good warriors, but they were not used to water fighting. All of the battle commanders standing there were dressed for fighting on land; they were all wearing hunting clothes and carried quivers and bows. Shorter p. 1546 Until they stood at the entrance to that cave, the Mande people did not know that they had a warrior who could fight under water.

Turama'an said, "Jolofin Mansa has changed himself into a crocodile and gone into that cave. We can't leave him there, for if we destroy the war *mansa*'s home without killing the war *mansa* himself, we have not won the battle. But who will go after him?"

Everybody kept quiet, *lele!*

Again Turama'an asked, "Who will go after him?" Nobody spoke up, so Turama'an asked a third time, "Who will follow this man?"

The Diawara chief, whose name was Tombonon Sitafa Diawara, stepped out from among the soldiers. He said, "Turama'an, tell the Mande people that if they agree, I, Sitafa Diawara, will go after Jolofin Mansa. But also tell them that I am Full p. C-58 not doing this to prove my manhood. I'm doing it because we can't return home to Simbon having only destroyed Jolofin Mansa's home. If we return home without also having killed Jolofin Mansa himself, Simbon will wonder why we told him to stay home."

(That is why, if you are a real man, you should stay low to the ground when you are among the *kamalenw* . You should only reveal the kind of man you are when somebody challenges your group.)

Meanwhile, Jolofin Mansa's crocodile wraith was lying in the cave, its mouth open wide. The upper jaw reached to the top of the entrance, the lower jaw reached to the bottom. Anybody who went after the crocodile would end up in its stomach, and the crocodle would just close his mouth. Eh! There would be no need to chew.

Sitafa Diawara said, "I'll give you two signs when I get down to where the crocodile is. If, while the water is bubbling and churning and turning the color of blood, you see a pelican flying from where the sun sets to where it rises, Manden should weep, for you'll know that Jolofin Mansa has defeated me. But if, while the water is bubbling and churning and turning the color of blood, the pelican flies from where the sun rises to where it sets, you Mande people should be happy, for it will mean I have honored you and God. Those are the signs I've given you."

Diawara put on his medicine clothes and gathered all his *dalilu* . He had a small knife fastened to his chest, and a short Bozo[9] fish-spear hung from his waist.

To the other warriors Diawara said, "Excuse me. We may meet in this world or we may meet in God's kingdom. If I'm successful, we'll meet in this world; I'll come back and find you here. But if I'm overcome by the crocodile, we'll meet in God's kingdom." Then he dove into the water and swam into the cave, unaware that he was actually swimming straight into the crocodile's stomach. The crocodile closed its mouth on him.

As the crocodile closed its mouth on him, Diawara the hunter demonstrated his *dalilu* . Though he was trapped inside the crocodile, he was still alive, as comfortable as if he were in his own house. Taking his spear from his side, he stabbed the crocodile here, *pu!*; he stabbed it there, *pu!* The crocodile went *kututu* . Diawara speared the crocodile over and over again.

Shorter p. 1547

The water bubbled, and blood came to the surface. As the water around him turned bloody, Diawara reached for the knife on his chest. He sliced a hole in the crocodile's belly and swam out of it. Then, still under the water, he twisted the crocodile's front legs and tied them together.

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As Diawara swam to the surface with the crocodile, a pelican flew by, squawking, from east to west. Manden laughed. As they hauled the crocodile wraith up onto the riverbank, Jolofin Mansa himself appeared. He was captured, tied up, and taken to Sunjata, the *mansa* .

Turama'an, who was the commander at that battle, brought Jolofin Mansa's treasure to Ma'an Sunjata. Manden was at last free, and the war was over.

Footnotes

- Note 7:Maninka pronunciation attaches an extra vowel. The Wolof, who call their country Jolof (see previous sentence), are mainly in Senegal (the narrator's "Senu"), and they speak a language that is not interintelligible with Manding languages. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:The Senegal River. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:An ethnic group of the Middle Niger, specializing in fishing and boating occupations, mainly located between Sansanding and Lake Debo in Mali. Return to reference 9

Full p. C-59

THE BOOK OF DEDE KORKUT fifteenth century

The anonymous *Book of Dede Korkut* is the oldest example from the rich oral epic tradition of the Turkic peoples, which include, besides the Turks of Türkiye, the Kazakhs, Kyrghyz, Uzbeks, Karakalpaks, Tatars, and many other nations in Central and northern Asia. Preserved almost by chance in manuscript, it gives us insight into the life and literary imagination of Asia Minor even as it invites comparison with other national epics. Combining the many cultures that shaped Asia Minor, *The Book of Dede Korkut* is a multilayered text that confronts individual heroism with a devout belief in an omnipotent god, and high literary style with moments of satire. Like other examples of oral literature, it preserves the unique atmosphere of a story being told to a live audience.

In the ninth and tenth centuries, the Oghuz federation of Turkic nomadic tribes, migrating westward from the area of today's Mongolia, converted to Islam in the region between the Syr Darya and Amu Darya rivers—where modern-day Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan meet. Their migration over subsequent centuries into the larger Middle East marked the beginning of Turkish domination of the region, which would last until World War I, when the Ottoman Empire collapsed. The Seljuq and later the Ottoman dynasties, who ruled over far-flung empires, both traced their genealogy back to the Oghuz nomads.

As the Ottomans refashioned themselves as heirs to a Byzantine imperial tradition, the Turkic nomadic tribes were increasingly marginalized politically, and as the Ottoman elite developed distinctly urban tastes, they were alienated from nomadic culture. Yet nomads continued to be an important part of the social fabric of Asia Minor. There, Oghuz bards continued to compose heroic tales populated with the leaders (khans) and heroes of a mythical, idealized past. These tales preserved and transmitted the fundamental values of the tribe and a code of conduct for their aristocracy, including the ideals of courage, generosity, chivalry, and compassion. Just as the ***Iliad*** did for the ancient Greeks, or the ***Song of Roland***

did for medieval France, so the heroic tales collected in *The Book of Dede Korkut* told its Oghuz audiences who they were and to what they should aspire.

The Book of Dede Korkut was written down around the second half of thefifteenth century, making it the oldest Turkic epic known today. While elements may go back to pre-Islamic Central Asia, its current form reflects the politics and geography of eastern Asia Minor at that time, centered on the Turkmen Empire of the “White Sheep” (Aqqoyunlu), whichflourished in the fourteenth andfifteenth centuries, before it succumbed to the Ottomans.

Although preserved as a written text, *The Book of Dede Korkut* displays many hallmarks of oral literature. Among the Turks, oral epics were performed on special occasions, like festivities, banquets, weddings, at contests, or during meetings among several tribes. The khan, the supreme leader of a tribe or tribal confederation, himself invited the singer to present his tales, and the singer would frequently address the khan directly during the performance. In *The Book of Dede Korkut*, occasional Full p. C-60 interjections of the phrase “Oh my Khan” replicate this aspect of oral performance.

Unlike western epics such as the *Iliad* or ***Odyssey*** , Turkic epics are not entirely rendered in verse. The language of *The Book of Dede Korkut* is mostly a simple, colorful prose in which parallel sentence structures and the unique properties of Turkic languages aid scansion and create a strong effect of rhythm. Cyclical narrative patterns and symmetries, as well as other devices that are typical of oral narratives, such as the association of certain topical phrases with certain characters, aided the memory of the singer. The prose narrative is interspersed with lyrical passages in verse that not only heighten the sense of drama, but also provided the singer with a space for adaptation and improvisation.

In its present form, *Dede Korkut* consists of a lengthy prologue and twelve tales, which, however, are not unified into a coherent cycle. Ten of these tales focus on conflicts either among the tribes or between the Oghuz and their enemies. Its cast of characters consists of the khan of the tribe of Oghuz, his family, and his courtiers, all of them noble and brave, and a varied cast of villains, demons, monsters, and infidels as their adversaries. The most importantfigure is Dede (Grandfather) Korkut, the wise man and adviser to the khan. Dede Korkut is the spiritual authority who gives names to children, a rite of passage among the ancient Turks. He is also the source of wisdom, often consulted for his sage advice; a set of his aphorisms constitutes a separate chapter of the book. Most significantly, he is the narrator of the tales, and thus plays the dual role of singer and shaman, a magician of word and spirit.

Bayindir Khan is the paramount chief in *The Book of Dede Korkut*, but he is not the hero of these tales. That role is played by his son-in-law and commander-in-chief, Salur Kazan, an exemplary hero who leads and inspires the other warriors. Four of the tales are devoted to his adventures and those of other members of his family, and his presence is felt in the other stories as well.

The episode we’ve chosen, “The Story of How Basat Killed Goggle-Eye,” has another hero at its center: Basat, son of Uruz Koja, one of the inner circle of Oghuz noblemen. The story is a marvelous and surprising parallel to the story in Homer’s *Odyssey* of the man-eating, one-eyed giant Polyphemus. The monstrous Goggle-Eye is born from a *peri*, a female spirit or fairy who had been raped by a man of the Oghuz. The character of Basat, who spends his childhood raised by lions after having been lost as a baby during a hasty Oghuz escape from an approaching enemy, also calls to mind the character Enkidu from the ***Epic of Gilgamesh*** , another “wild man” who must be taught the ways of humans after spending his early life

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“consort[ing] with wild beasts.” How, exactly, these elements of the tale traveled from Greece and Mesopotamia to the Oghuz is impossible to say; no one has ever proposed a plausible scenario of transmission. And yet, the parallels are undeniable.

A central cultural ingredient of the tale, and of *The Book of Dede Korkut* generally, is Islam. In one episode, not reprinted here, a father, convinced by a blood-stained shirt that his son has been killed, loses his sight grieving over the loss, and is healed as his son returns. This echo of the biblical story of Joseph, an important touchstone for Muslims (as well as Jews and Christians), is just one of many moments in *Dede Korkut* where the traditional, pre-Islamic oral tales of the Oghuz were adapted to incorporate elements of Islamic theology and culture. Sometimes, the melding of the two has unusual effects. In our selected episode, for example, the hero escapes Goggle-Eye Full p. C-61 not by using his own wit and strength, but by means of a miracle reminiscent of popular Islamic hagiographies, a motif that seems at odds with the heroic ideal. Another narrative complication, and another bit of evidence of the hybrid status of *Dede Korkut*, is the presence of satirical passages, scattered here and there, that seem to undermine the serious intent of the epic. The existence of numerous layers in *The Book of Dede Korkut*, despite its early date, speaks to the degree of adaptation possible within oral narratives.

Turkish oral epic narratives were a living part of the aristocratic society of the nomadic tribes, and for this reason they were likely to lose their meaning and be forgotten once that society changed. Such a process seems to have been under way in Asia Minor in the second half of thefifteenth century. And yet, at that point somebody decided to write down *The Book of Dede Korkut*, preserving it for a reading (and probably urban) audience. No one knows who made that decision, or why. Atfirst, the work did notfind a place in the genres of written Ottoman literature. Interest in *The Book of Dede Korkut* was only rekindled in the twentieth century, when Kemal Atatürk, the founder and long-time president of modern-day Türkiye, sought to emphasize a non-Muslim Turkish national heritage in contradistinction to the Ottoman Islamic tradition. Centuries after having been written down and forgotten, *The Book of Dede Korkut* acquired an important role in fashioning cultural identity once more.

The Story of How Basat Killed Goggle-Eye[1]

It is related, my Khan, that once while the Oghuz were sitting in their encampment the enemy fell upon them. In the darkness of night they broke and scattered. As theyfled, the baby son of Uruz Koja fell. A lioness found him, carried him offand nursed him. Time passed, and the Oghuz came back and settled in their old home. One day the horse-drover of Oghuz Khan brought him news. ‘My Khan, there is a lion comes out of the thicket roaring, but he walks with a swagger, like a man. He attacks the horses and sucks their blood.’ Said Uruz, ‘My Khan, maybe it is my little son who fell that time when we scattered.’ The nobles mounted their horses and came to the lair of the lioness. They drove her offand seized the boy. Uruz took him to his tent. They held a celebration, there was eating and drinking. But for all that they had brought the boy home he would not stay; back he went to the lion’s lair. Again they seized him and brought him back. Dede Korkut came and said, ‘My boy, you are a human being; do not consort with wild beasts. Come, ridefine horses, amble and trot in company withfine young men. Your elder brother’s name is Kiyan Seljuk, your name shall be Basat. I have given you your name; may God give you long life.’[2]

One day the Oghuz migrated to their summer pasture. Now Uruz had a shepherd whom they called Konur Koja Saru Choban. Whenever the Oghuz migrated this man always wentfirst. There was a spring called Uzun Pinar, which had become a haunt of the peris.[3] Suddenly something startled the sheep. The shepherd was angry with the goat which led theflock, and he went forward, to see that the peri maidens had spread their wings and wereflying. Full p. C-62 He threw his cloak over them and caught one. He desired her and straightway violated her. Theflock began to scatter; he ran to head them off, and the peri beat her wings andflew away, saying, 'Shepherd, you have left something in trust with me. When a year has passed, come and take it. But you have brought ruination on the Oghuz.' Fear fell on the shepherd's heart and his face turned pale with anxiety at the peri's words.

Time passed, and again the Oghuz migrated to that summer pasture. Again the shepherd came to that spring. Again something startled the sheep and again the shepherd went forward. He saw a brightly glittering shape lying on the ground. The peri appeared and said, 'Come, shepherd, take back your property. But you have brought ruination on the Oghuz.' Seeing this shape, the shepherd was seized with dread. He turned round and began to rain stones on it from his sling. As each stone struck it, it grew bigger. The shepherd abandoned the shape andfled, and the sheep followed him. Now it happened that at that time Bayindir Khan and the nobles had gone out riding, and they chanced on this spring. They saw a monstrous thing lying there, its head indistinguishable from its arse. They surrounded it, and one warrior dismounted and kicked it. At every kick it grew in size. Several other warriors dismounted and kicked it, and still it grew at every kick. Uruz Koja also dismounted and kicked it. His spur drove into it and the shape split down the middle, and out came a child. Its body was that of a man, but it had one eye at the top of its head. Uruz took this child, wrapped it in the skirt of his garment and said, 'My Khan, give this to me and I shall rear it together with my son Basat.' 'Take it,' said Bayindir Khan, 'it's yours.'

Uruz took Goggle-Eye and brought him to his house. He ordered a wet-nurse to come, and she put her nipple into the child's mouth. He gave one suck and took all her milk; a second suck, and he took her blood; a third, and took her life. Several other wet-nurses were brought and he destroyed them. Seeing that this was impossible, they decided to feed him on milk, but a cauldronful a day was not enough. They fed him and he grew; he began to walk, he began to play with the little boys. He started to eat the nose of one, the ear of another. The upshot was that the whole camp was greatly upset at him, but there was nothing they could do. They complained and wept in chorus before Uruz. Uruz beat Goggle-Eye, he abused him, he ordered him to stop it, but he paid no attention. Finally he drove him from his house.

Goggle-Eye's peri mother came and put a ring on her son'sfinger, saying, 'My son, this is so that no arrow will pierce you or sword cut you.' Goggle-Eye left the Oghuz land and came to a high mountain. He infested the roads, he seized men, he became a notorious outlaw. Many men were sent against him; they shot arrows, which did not pierce him; they struck at him with swords, which did not cut him; they thrust at him with lances, which did not penetrate him. No shepherd, no herd-boy was left; he ate them all. Then he began to eat people from the Oghuz. The Oghuz assembled and marched against him. Seeing them, Goggle-Eye was angered; he uprooted a tree, threw it, and destroyedfifty or sixty men. He dealt a blow at the prince of heroes, Kazan, and the world became too narrow for his head. Kara Göne, Kazan's brother, became helpless in Goggle-Eye's hand. Alp Rüstem son of Düzen was killed. So valiant a man as the son of Ushun Koja died by his hand. His two pure-souled brothers perished at his hand. So

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too did Bügdüz Emen of the bloody moustaches. White-headed Uruz Koja he made vomit blood, and his son Kiyan Seljuk's Full p. C-63 gall-bladder split with terror. The Oghuz could do nothing against Goggle-Eye, they broke[4] andfled. Goggle-Eye hemmed them in and barred their way, he would not let them go, he brought them back to where they were. In all, the Oghuz broke seven times, and seven times he barred their way and brought them back. The Oghuz were totally helpless in Goggle-Eye's hand.

They went and called Dede Korkut, they consulted with him and said, 'Come, let us make terms.' They sent Dede Korkut to Goggle-Eye. He came and greeted him, then he said, 'Goggle-Eye, my son, the Oghuz are helpless in your hand, they are overwhelmed. They have sent me to the dust of your feet; they wish to come to terms with you.' Goggle-Eye said, 'Give me sixty men a day to eat.' Dede Korkut replied, 'This way you won't have any men left; you'll exhaust the supply. Let us give you two men andfive hundred sheep a day.' 'Very well,' replied Goggle-Eye, 'so be it, I agree. And give me two men to prepare my food for me to eat.' Dede Korkut returned to the Oghuz and told them, 'Give Goggle-Eye Yünlü Koja and Yapaghilu Koja to cook his food. He also asks for two men andfive hundred sheep a day.' They agreed. Whoever had four sons gave one of them, leaving three. Whoever had three gave one of them, leaving two. Whoever had two gave one, leaving one. There was a man called Kapak Kan, who had two sons. One he gave and one was left. His turn came round again. The mother screamed and cried and lamented.

Now it seems, my Khan, that Basat son of Uruz, who had gone on an expedition into the lands of the infidel, returned at this point. The poor woman said to herself, 'Basat has just come back from raiding. I'll go and perhaps he might give me a prisoner so that I can ransom my son.' Basat had pitched his gold-adorned pavilion and was sitting in it, when he saw a lady approaching. She came in, greeted Basat and wept, saying,

'Son of Uruz, my lord Basat,

Renowned among the Inner Oghuz and the Outer Oghuz.

With yourflighted arrows that do not stay in your hand,

With your strong bow of the horn of the he-goat,

Help me!'

Said Basat, 'What is it you desire?' The poor woman replied, 'On the face of this treacherous world there has erupted a man who has not let the Oghuz rest in their domain. Those who wield the pure black steel swords have not cut a hair of his that might be cut; those who brandish the bamboo lances have not been able to make them penetrate; those who shoot the hornbeam arrows have achieved nothing. He dealt a blow at Kazan, prince of heroes; Kazan's brother Kara Göne and Bügdüz Emen of the bloody moustaches became powerless in his hand. Your white-bearded father Uruz he made vomit blood; your brother Kiyan Seljuk's gall-bladder burst on thefield of battle and he gave up his soul. Of the other nobles of the teeming Oghuz, some he overpowered and some he killed. Seven times he drove the Oghuz from their place. Then he agreed to make terms; he demanded two men andfive hundred sheep a day. They gave him Yünlü Koja and Yapaghilu Koja to serve him. Whoever had four sons gave one of them, whoever had three sons gave one of them, whoever had two sons gave one of them. I

had two dear sons and gave one, and one remained. Now the turn has come round to me again and they are asking for him too. Help me, my lord!' Basat's dark eyesfilled with tears. He declaimed for his brother; let us see, my Khan, what he declaimed.

Full p. C-64

'Your tents, pitched in a place apart,

Can that pitiless one have overthrown, brother?

Your swift-running horses from their stalls

Can that pitiless one have stolen, brother?

Your sturdy young camels from theirfile

Can that pitiless one have taken, brother?

The sheep you would slaughter at your feasting

Can that pitiless one have slaughtered, brother?

Your dear bride I proudly saw you bring home

Can that pitiless one have parted from you, brother?

You have made my white-bearded father mourn his son;

Can this be, O my brother?

You have made my white-skinned mother weep;

Can this be, O my brother?

Brother, pinnacle of my black mountain yonder!

Brother,flood of my lovely eddying river!

Brother, strength of my strong back!

Brother, light of my dark eyes!

I have lost my brother.'

So saying, he wept and lamented greatly. Then he gave that lady a captive and said, 'Go, ransom your son.' The lady took the captive and came and gave him in place of her son. Moreover she brought Uruz the good news that his son had come home.

Uruz rejoiced, and came with the nobles of the teeming Oghuz to meet Basat. Basat kissed his father's hand and they cried and wept together. He came to his mother's house. His mother came to meet him and pressed her dear son to her heart. Basat kissed his mother's hand, they embraced and wept together. The Oghuz nobles assembled and there was eating and drinking. Basat said, 'Princes, I shall meet Goggle-Eye for my brother's sake; what do you say?' Thereupon Kazan Bey declaimed; let us see, my Khan, what he declaimed.

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‘Goggle-Eye burst forth, a black dragon!

I chased him round the face of the sky but could not catch him, Basat.

Goggle-Eye burst forth, a black tiger!

I chased him round the darkling mountains but could not catch him, Basat.

Goggle-Eye burst forth, a raging lion!

I chased him round the dense forests but could not catch him, Basat.

Though you be a man, though you be a prince,

You will not be like me, Kazan.

Do not make your white-bearded father cry!

Do not make your white-haired mother weep!’

‘I shall surely go,’ said Basat, and Kazan replied, ‘You know best.’ Then Uruz wept and said, ‘Son, do not leave my hearth desolate. I beg you, don’t go.’ Basat answered, ‘No, my white-bearded honoured father, I shall go,’ and he would not listen. He took from his quiver afistful of arrows and stuck them in his belt, he girded on his sword, he grasped his bow, he rolled up his skirts, he kissed his parents’ hands, he made his peace with all, he said ‘Good-bye!’

He came to the crag of Salakhana, where Goggle-Eye was. He saw Goggle-Eye lying with his back to the sun. He took an arrow from his belt and shot it at Goggle-Eye’s back. The arrow did not penetrate, it broke. He shot another, Full p. C-65 which also broke. Goggle-Eye said to the cooks, ‘Theflies here are a bit of a nuisance.’ Basat shot another arrow, and that broke too. One piece fell in front of Goggle-Eye, who leaped up and looked around. When he saw Basat, he clapped his hands and bellowed with laughter. He said to the cooks, ‘Another spring lamb from the Oghuz!’ He clutched Basat and held him, he dangled him by the throat, he brought him into his den, he pushed him into the leg of his boot and said, ‘Cooks! This afternoon you will put this one on the spit for me and I’ll eat him.’ Then he fell asleep again. Now Basat had a dagger, and he cut the boot and slipped out. ‘Tell me, men,’ said he, ‘how can this creature be killed?’ ‘We do not know,’ they answered, ‘but there is noflesh anywhere except his eye.’ Basat advanced right up to Goggle-Eye’s head, raised his eyelid and saw that his eye was indeedflesh. ‘Come on, men,’ he said, ‘put the spit in thefire and get it red-hot.’ They did so. Then Basat took it in his hand, invoked blessings on Muhammad of beautiful name, and drove the spit into Goggle-Eye’s eye, which was destroyed. So loud did he scream and bellow that the mountains and rocks echoed.

Basat bounded into the midst of the sheep, down into the cave. Goggle-Eye knew Basat was in the cave. He set himself at the entrance, put a foot on each side of it and said, ‘Ho billy-goats, leaders of theflock, come one by one and pass through.’ They did so, and he patted each one’s head. ‘My dear yearlings, and you my good fortune, my white-blazed ram, come and pass through.’ A ram rose up and stretched itself. At once Basat leaped at it, cut its throat andflayed it. He left the head and tail attached to the skin, and got inside it. Basat came in front of Goggle-Eye. Now Goggle-Eye guessed that Basat was inside the skin, and said, ‘White-blazed ram, you

knew through what part I might be destroyed. I shall dash you against the cave-wall so that your tail greases the cave.' Basat gave the ram's head into Goggle-Eye's hand, and Goggle-Eye grasped it tightly by the muzzle. He lifted it and held the muzzle with the skin hanging. Basat slipped between Goggle-Eye's legs and away. Goggle-Eye raised the muzzle, dashed it against the ground and said, 'Boy, have you escaped?' Basat replied, 'My God has saved me.' Said Goggle-Eye, 'Boy, take this ring which is on myfinger and put it on your ownfinger, and arrow and sword will have no effect on you.' Basat took the ring and put it on hisfinger. 'Boy,' said Goggle-Eye, 'have you taken the ring and put it on?' 'I have,' said Basat. Goggle-Eye rushed at Basat,flailing and cutting with a dagger. He leaped away and stood on open ground. He saw that the ring was now lying under Goggle-Eye's foot. 'Have you escaped?' asked Goggle-Eye. Basat replied, 'My God has saved me.' Said Goggle-Eye, 'Boy, do you see that vault?' 'I see it,' he replied. Goggle-Eye said, 'I have a treasure; go and seal it so that the cooks don't take it.' Basat entered the vault and saw mounds of gold and silver. Looking at it, he forgot himself. Goggle-Eye shut the door of the vault and said, 'Are you inside there?' 'I am,' replied Basat. Goggle-Eye said, 'I shall shake it so that you and the vault are dashed to pieces.' There came to Basat's tongue the words 'There is no god but God; Muhammad is the Messenger of God.' Straightway the vault split and doors were opened in seven places, through one of which he came out. Goggle-Eye put his hand against the vault and pushed so hard that the vault crumbled to bits. Said Goggle-Eye, 'Boy, have you escaped?' Basat replied, 'My God has saved me.' Said Goggle-Eye, 'It seems you can't be killed. Do you see that cave?' 'I see it,' said Basat. 'There are two swords in it,' said Goggle-Eye, 'one with a scabbard and one without. The one without a scabbard will cut offmy head. Go fetch it and cut Full p. C-66 offmy head.' Basat went up to the opening of the cave. He saw a sword without a scabbard, ceaselessly moving up and down. 'I shan't get hold of this,' said he, 'without a bit of trouble.' He drew his own sword and held it out, and the moving sword split it in two. He went and fetched a tree and held it against the sword, which split it in two also. Then he took his bow in his hand, and with an arrow he struck the chain by which the sword was suspended. The sword fell and buried itself in the ground. He put it into his own scabbard and held itfirmly by the hilt. He came out and said, 'Hey Goggle-Eye! How are you?' Goggle-Eye answered, 'Hey boy! Aren't you dead yet?' 'My God has saved me,' replied Basat. 'It seems you can't be killed,' said Goggle-Eye. Then crying loudly he declaimed; let us see, my Khan, what he declaimed.

'My eye, my eye, my only eye!

With you, my only eye,

I once routed the Oghuz.

Man, you have robbed me of my chestnut eye;

May the Almighty rob you of your sweet life!

Such pain I suffer in my eye,

May God Almighty give no man pain in the eye.'

Then again he spoke:

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‘What is the place where you dwell, man, and whence you migrate in the summer?

If you lose your way in the dark night, what is your watchword?

Who is your Khan who carries the great standard?

Who is your hero who leads on the day of battle?

What is the name of your white-bearded father?

For a valiant warrior to conceal his name from another is shameful;

What is your name, man? Tell me.’

Basat declaimed to Goggle-Eye; let us see, my Khan, what he declaimed.

‘My place where I dwell, whence I migrate in the summer, is the southland.

If I lose my way in the dark night, my watchword is God.

Our Khan who carries the great standard is Bayindir Khan.

Our hero who leads on the day of battle is Salur Kazan.

If you ask my father’s name, it is Mighty Tree.

If you ask my mother’s name, it is Raging Lioness.

If you ask my name, it is Basat son of Uruz.’

‘Then we are brothers!’ said Goggle-Eye, ‘Spare me!’ Basat replied,

‘Youfilthy scoundrel, you have made my white-bearded father weep,

You have made my old white-haired mother cry,

You have killed my brother Kiyan,

You have widowed my white-skinned sister-in-law,

You have orphaned her chestnut-eyed babes;

Shall I let you be?

Till I have wielded my pure black steel sword,

Till I have cut offyour pointed-capped head,

Till I have spilled your red blood on the ground,

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Till I have avenged my brother Kiyan,

I shall not let you be.’

Thereupon Goggle-Eye declaimed once more:

‘I meant to rise up from my place,

To break my pact with the nobles of the teeming Oghuz,

To kill their newborn young,

To have once more myfill of man-meat.

I meant, when the nobles of the teeming Oghuz massed against me,

Toflee and shelter at the crag of Salakhana,

To cast rocks from a mighty catapult,

To go down, let the rocks fall on my head, and die.

Man, you have robbed me of my chestnut eye;

May the Almighty rob you of your sweet life!’

Yet again Goggle-Eye declaimed:

‘I have made the white-bearded old men weep much;

Their white beards’ curse must have smitten you, O my eye!

I have made the white-haired old women weep much;

Their tears must have smitten you, O my eye!

Many the dark-moustached youths I have eaten;

Their manhood must have smitten you, O my eye!

Many the maidens I have eaten, their little hands dyed with henna;

Their small curses must have smitten you, O my eye!

Such pain I suffer in my eye,

May God Almighty give no man pain in the eye.

My eye, my eye, O my eye, my only eye!’

Basat, enraged, rose up and forced him down on his knees like a camel, and with Goggle-Eye’s own sword he cut offGoggle-Eye’s head. He made a hole in it, tied his bowstring to it and dragged it and dragged it until he reached the door of the cave. He sent Yünlü Koja and Yapaghilu Koja to take the good news to the Oghuz. They mounted grey-white horses and galloped away.

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The news came to the lands of the teeming Oghuz. Horse-mouthed Uruz Koja galloped to his tent and gave Basat's mother glad tidings. 'Good news!' he said, 'Your son has killed Goggle-Eye!' The nobles of the teeming Oghuz arrived, they came to the crag of Salakhana and brought out the head of Goggle-Eye for all to see. Dede Korkut came and played joyful music. He related the adventures of the valiantfighters for the Faith, and he invoked blessings on Basat:

'When you reach the black mountain may He make a way,

May He give you passage across the blood-red water.'

And he said,

'Manfully have you avenged your brother's blood,

You have saved the nobles of the teeming Oghuz from a heavy burden;

May Almighty God give you honour and glory, Basat!'

When the hour of death comes may it not part you from the pure Faith, and may He forgive your sins for the sake of Muhammad the Chosen of beautiful name, O my Khan!

Footnotes

- Note 1:Translated by Geoffrey Lewis. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Among the Oghuz, naming was a rite of passage into manhood. The young man's name, Basat, means "who attacks horses." Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Fairies or female demons. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:That is, broke their line of defense. Return to reference 4

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EVLIYA ÇELEBI 1611–ca. 1683

Evliya Çelebi's detailed descriptions of the far-flung corners of the Ottoman Empire, collected in his ten-volume *Book of Travels*, represent a high-water mark of travel literature. *The Book of Travels's* sheer scale and sweep, spanning more than forty years and the entire expanse of the empire, from Sudan to Vienna, the literary quality of its abundant anecdotes and other narratives, and the intertwining of observation and imagination make it an indispensable and immensely compelling window onto lost times, places, and people.

LIFE

Evliya's father was a goldsmith who worked for the Ottoman sultans. His mother was related to Grand Vizier Melek Ahmed Pasha, later Evliya's most important patron. His title "çelebi" marks him as educated and sets him apart from the career lines in Ottoman officialdom and in the military. Evliya distinguished himself early on by his beautiful voice, acting as müezzin (the caller to prayer) and reciter of the Qur'an. His seemingly effortless eloquence and wit, coupled with his impressive erudition (the product of a vast traditional

education), made him an ideal boon companionfirst for Sultan Murad IV, then for Melek Ahmed Pasha and other members of the elite. Evliya accompanied these dignitaries to posts in every corner of the empire, serving them in a number of occasional tasks, like envoy, inspector, and müezzin. Remunerations and profits from such tasks, together with a modest fortune from his family, allowed him to live an independent life, and no marriage hindered his mobility. In 1671 he went on the pilgrimage to Mecca, and then settled in Cairo. Throughout his travels, Evliya gathered impressions and material; the anecdotal style and rich language of his narrative suggests that he may have told much of it orallyfirst, during evening conversations in the social gatherings of his patrons and other members of the Ottoman elite. What sets him apart from many other entertaining travelers in a highly mobile elite was that, late in life, he wrote his impressions down in ten large volumes. Although complete, the book is missing thefinal touches, which suggests that he worked on it until his death. The date of his death, however, is a matter of speculation, because outside of his *Book of Travels*, there is barely any record of Evliya.

THE BOOK OF TRAVELS

Widely acclaimed today as the single most important work of Ottoman literature, *The Book of Travels* languished in obscurity for a long time after Evliya's death. Very few manuscript copies were made, and the scarce references by later authors dismiss Evliya as a storyteller and a liar. In the nineteenth century Western orientalists began to draw attention to *The Book of Travels*, which was printed for thefirst time in the twentieth century, but only in the last few decades has appreciation of Full p. C-69 this text as a literary monument truly begun.

Bracketed by descriptions of the two most important Ottoman cities, Istanbul, where Evliya was born, and Cairo, where he spent his later years writing, *The Book of Travels* is many things. It is a factual account, perceived with the eye of an administrator, of provinces, cities, villages,fiefs and other sources of revenue, roads, and waystations. It is also a repository for innumerable factoids and narratives—legends, histories, local lore, personal adventures, and tall tales—that the passionate storyteller inserted in order to make his work as entertaining as it was informative. Taken altogether, *The Book of Travels* is a carefully crafted, monumental mirror that Evliya presents to his Ottoman audience to show them who they are or ought to be.

Evliya wrote in a sophisticated and often playful style, afforded by Ottoman Turkish with its rich vocabulary of Persian and Arabic, that moved through every register between crude colloquialism and artistic rhymed prose. As the American Turcologist Robert Dankoffhas observed, two discourses alternate, often unpredictably, in *The Book of Travels*: "one of persuasion, in which it was important that [Evliya's] listeners give credence to what he was saying; and one of diversion, in which it was more important to arouse their wonder and delight." Evliya measured cities and listed tax revenues, he recorded ancient legends of kings and saints, and he provided samples of all the languages he encountered, often in amazing accuracy. But he also noted the sensational and fantastical, such as the case of the girl who gave birth to a baby elephant, and the seemingly mundane, such as the typical names of the enslaved men and women of Diyarbakir, a town in southeastern Türkiye (what the Turkish people have called their country since 1923 when the Turkish Republic was formed). His own adventures feature prominently, sometimes casting him in a heroic light, as when he faced

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down a notorious bandit in the Balkans, but they can also be farcical, as when an infidelfighter surprised him relieving himself not far from the battlefield. Anything goes, as long as it yields a good story, and it does not have to be true: Evliya's readers would certainly have known that the prophet Kaffah, whom he narrates in much detail, never existed, and might have recognized that some stories are patterned on ancient lore.

Serious or joking, however, Evliya remained a true Ottoman, committed to its elite ideals of cosmopolitan, multilingual erudition. His attention to the sacred spaces of mosques, dervish lodges, and tombs of saints betray a profound Islamic piety, lightened by the awareness of human fallibility and the wisdom which characterize the mystical form of Islam, Sufism. His rhetoric abounds with references to holy warfare (*ghaza*) and the ideal of Ottoman world domination, yet his work is tinged with a kind of romantic nostalgia for an ideal of the past. Instead of religious fanaticism, his account is imbued with a deep spirit of humanism, which allowed him to acknowledge and overcome difference.

These various ingredients are especially visible in one of the rare instances of Evliya's travel leading beyond Ottoman boundaries—his visit to Vienna in 1665 (which is represented in the excerpt below). Evliya came to Vienna with the delegation of Kara Mehmed Pasha to negotiate a peace agreement after an Ottoman campaign had been halted at St. Gotthard in western Hungary. His description makes the Habsburg capital another part of the mirror, in which the Ottoman audience recognized itself, in positive or negative terms. Although not an official representative, Evliya writes with Full p. C-70 a keen awareness of Ottoman state interests, as he observes the symbolic jousting of the two diplomatic delegations in their encounter at the border. He explores every corner of Vienna with a natural curiosity, and is not shy to socialize with the locals, without losing his cultural superiority. As he mocks the Catholic ritual, he implicitly extols the somber practices of Islam; as he praises Austrian achievements in the arts, sciences, and technology, he criticizes his fellow countrymen for neglecting them. His truly Ottoman appreciation of beauty and the good life extends to the pretty youth and the lush gardens of infidel Austria.

Most importantly, however, Vienna for Evliya was a place charged with history and meaning. Vienna was identified with the "Golden Apple" of the old Turkish myth that promised eternal conquest to the Ottomans and that also held a prominent place in Ottoman political ritual. The memory of thefirst Ottoman siege of Vienna in 1529 under Süleyman I (1520–66), the idealized sultan of a "Golden Age," remained with Evliya throughout his visit. In Ottoman legendary lore on which Evliya draws, Süleyman's *ghazis* (warriors of faith) left numerous tokens throughout the city, such as the golden sphere on the bell tower of St. Stephen, that promised, even as they were retreating, future conquest of the city. Yet at the time of his writing, Evliya had probably heard the news of the disastrous defeat that the Ottomans had suffered at the gates of Vienna in 1683, a defeat that forever tipped the balance of power in southeastern Europe toward the West.

The mixing of the factual and the legendary in Evliya's account of Vienna has puzzled readers to the point that historians long doubted that he was even there. Only the discovery in the 1970s of Evliya's name on a roster of the Ottoman delegation in the Austrian archives has ended these doubts. As a traveler records his impressions of foreign places and peoples, he gives them meaning in dialogue with his domestic audience and according to their cultural horizon. EvliyaÇelebi's *Book of Travels* is a particularly rich and complex product of this process.

From The Book of Travels[1]

[*In 1665, EvliyaÇelebi accompanied a diplomatic delegation under Kara Mehmed Pasha to Vienna to exchange the ratification of the peace treaty. In our first excerpt, delegations from the Habsburgs and the Ottomans have arrived at the border between the two empires to conclude the peace arrangement previously negotiated. Evliya describes the complicated ritual of the encounter at the border posts as a symbolic tournament of the two states, of course taking sides with his patron, the Ottoman ambassador.*]

The description of the border posts

These things they call border posts: when the deceased Sultan Süleyman took Esztergom and Székesfehérvár from the hands of the German Emperor he had Full p. C-71 a hillock thrown up about twelve hours from both of these cities, on the Danube river near Komárom.[2] On top there is plenty of space, enough to form a circle. The hillock is round and extends from east to west; on our side as well as on the side of the infidels a wooden pole is erected, more thanfive times the height of a man. Exactly in the middle between the two poles there is a third, which demarcates the border. This is what they call border post.

* * *

The two ambassadors climbed the border mound erected by Sultan Süleyman, and from both sides the dragomans started to go back and forth, but the ambassadors themselves stood near their respective poles, each surrounded byfifty elders and experienced advisors. Our pasha, too, halted with his neat sword-bearers and footmen with their tassels and embroidered quivers and belts and sashes, and his lackeys in full armor, and hisflask-bearers and his neatly dressed attendants, and was only talking to Hacı Mustafa Pasha of Székesfehérvár andİskender Pasha of Esztergom, and some elders and dragomans.[3] Occasionally, stewards and dragomans went to and fro, working to bring the two ambassadors to the middle pole so that they should shake hands and conclude the peace. The distance from one ambassador to the other was one hundred steps, and they were bothfifty steps away from the middle pole.

* * *

Now the ambassador of the infidels got up from the foot of the pole on their side, and in the most circumspect way came towards our Pasha, dragging his feet all the while. When our ambassador saw this, he also got up from his stool, and very slowly walked towards their ambassador and drew nearer until the soldiers were only separated by the poles; the ambassadors were moving at a snail's pace.[4] In those situations ambassadors need to have the most considerate, circumspect, reasonable men around them, because according to the truthful hadith, "he who makes peace between two parties deserves the same reward as the martyr," one needs men who can improve the relations between the two emperors, so that the peace is not violated, because previously here there had been two months offighting instead of peace.[5]

* * *

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Finally, the infidel ambassador walked with hundred thousand pauses, so slowly as if he did not want to step on a single ant, and ours also came, until they joined hands at the middle pole, and greeted each other with greatest respect. They sat down at the middle pole on stools, and after a thousand Full p. C-72 excuses he accepted all the peace agreements, consisting of twenty-two articles from either party, for twenty-two years, according to the felicitous decree of our felicitous sultan.

Description of Schwechat (Peşpihil)

[*Shortly before arriving in Vienna, the Ottoman delegation passes through the town of Schwechat, where they observe local customs, and also mingle with the locals.*]

These were the ignoble Ayanta holidays of the infidels.[6] Ten thousand monks and seventy or eighty thousand faithless infidels came to this large monastery with their crucifixes andflags and banners and organs and trumpets to conduct their worthless rituals. Afterward, they indulged in such wickedness and debauchery, jollity and drinking in the gardens of Schwechat that it is beyond description. Several thousand infidels and priests, burning incense and aloe and amber in gold and silver censers, paraded through the streets playing the trumpets, and returned to their monasteries.

The domes of every monastery are idolatrous temples covered with tin, tinfoil, yellow brass, and lead. In each of them are idols and chandeliers each worth the annual tribute of Egypt,[7] and on every dome and tower are golden crosses as tall as a man, which are sparkling all across the city. Their clock towers, too, are covered with tinned sheet metal, and the sound of the bells carries as far as one day's travel.

The river * * * passes through the middle of the town. It is just a little creek but [as sweet as] the water of life. It comes from the Little German [Mountains],flows through hamlets, villages, and small towns, waters the vineyards and gardens of this city, and then empties into the Danube below it. On both sides of the city there are innumerable vineyards and gardens with fruit trees and roses, and in paradisiac gardens like the garden of Aspuzu,[8] with tall castles, and enclosures decorated with water basins and fountains, remarkable pleasure grounds according to the taste of the Franks. In each garden a perfect master has erected an artful castle like the castle of Khavarnaq,[9] and in each there are colorful paintings by Frank painters like Mani with his Erjeng,[1] done in such remarkable, indeed magic art that anybody who understands painting puts thefinger of astonishment to his lips full of admiration.[2]

All the notable and noble infidels from Vienna enjoy themselves for weeks and months in this city and its gardens, and their young boys and pretty girls swim in the river which runs through it, and, embracing each other in the heat Full p. C-73 of the joy of wine and liquor, amuse themselves in a quiet corner. Due to the mild climate [the beauty of] their boys and girls is famous far and wide.

Their men and women do not avoid each other; even when their wives sat together with us Ottomans in jollity and drinking, the husbands did not say anything. They go out freely, which is not sinful, because in this entire land of the infidels it is the women who rule, which is their evil custom since the days of Virgin Mary.

Evliya's strange adventure in Vienna

About a most marvelous and bewildering spectacle: One day when I, your humble servant full of faults, strolled through the inner city, I came to the market of doctors which has about one hundred shops. In front of some of the shops I saw captives from the nation of Muhammad[3] sitting on stools, with white turbans, and Bosnian fur hats, and felt caps from Tekke and Hamid,[4] or with Tatar features and in Tatar garb, hands and feet of all of them in iron chains, some of them black negroes, and others young heroes, and others white-bearded feeble old men. Their necks bowed in grief, they sat on their stools grinding nutmeg, cinnamon, pepper, cardamom, ginger, and other spices in huge bronze mortars, working hard as if someone was holding a sword to their necks, in order to make them work faster. But the old ones worked agonizingly slow, their eyes rolling right and left with exhaustion.

I your humble servant felt my vein of compassion swelling, and reached for my wallet to give these old men a few silver coins. But my companion,fief-holder Boshnaq 'Ali from Esztergom prevented my good deed, saying: Hold on for now, give it to them when we come along again towards the evening. Now the owners of these captives are around, and would just take away what you give them. I your humble servant found this reasonable and put my wallet back into my pocket. We continued to stroll through markets, business streets, residential neighborhoods and other monuments we had not seen before, and around nightfall returned to the place of the captives. As we stood and watched they started to close the shops, and some infidels came and loosened the Muslim captives' belts, and took offtheir turbans and fur hats and felt caps, and took all their clothes. Then they stuck a key like one for a clock mechanism in the armpit of each of them and turned it around, and immediately these Muslim captives' hands and heads and eyes and eyebrows stopped moving. Now as their turbans had been taken offtheir heads and their clothes from their bodies I realized that these were all clock mechanisms made of bronze in the shape of humans, and moved like clock mechanisms if wound up. I wasflabbergasted, and my companion 'Ali Agha mocked to me: For God's sake, EvliyaÇelebi, give those poor captives a few silver coins. This was a marvelous and wonderful adventure indeed!

[*Evliya visits St. Stephen's Cathedral in Vienna, marveling at the various paintings and frescoes, and admiring the sound of the organ and the boys' choir. He also discovers a magnificent library.*]

Full p. C-74

In the walls there are niches for the Gospels, the Thora, the Psalms, and the Quran, and their walls are all plastered with raw ambergris.[5] As many nations of different languages as there are, of all their authors and writers in their languages there are many times a hundred thousand books here, and specially employed priests look after them. It is a magnificent library well worth seeing.

Such a collection of precious books does not exist in any other country. There are God knows how many books in the mosques of Sultan Barqūq and Sultan Faraj[6] in Cairo, and in the mosques of [Sultan Meḥmed] The Conqueror and Sultan Süleymān and Sultan Bāyezīd and

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the New Mosque,[7] but in this St. Stephen's Monastery in Vienna there are even more, since there are, in the scripts of every language of the infidels, so many illustrated books, theological commentaries, the Atlas and the Atlas Minor, geography books, astronomy books called Mappa mundi; we do not have any of those because images are forbidden. This is why this monastery in Vienna has so many books. I, your humble servant, entered this library with the permission of the chief priest, and was stunned when I walked through it while the scents of musk and ambergris wafted through my brains.

Thus, my friend, the result and outcome of what I am saying is this: Despite all their infidelity these infidels, considering that they are God's own word, have all these books dusted offonce a week, and have seventy or eighty servants for that purpose. Whereas we do in fact have the [mosque called] Jami'al-'Attarin in Alexandria which has so many shops and hostels and baths and stores and works of beneficence [to generate income for its maintenance], and yet is wrecked and in ruins, and in its library because of the rain of mercy several thousand volumes containing the precious word of glory written by the noble hands of Yāqūt al-Musta'simīand 'Abdallah al-Qirīmīand Shamsaddīn Ghumrawīand Sheykh Jūshīare rotting in the rain.[8] All the Muslims who come to the Friday prayer to this mosque once a week can hear the noises of the moths and worms and mice eating away at these books, but none of this nation of Muhammad ever thinks of saying: There are so many books of God perishing here, let us do something about it. [That is] because they do not love God's scripture as much as the infidels do. If only they could reconstruct that mosque like this church, and if only its servants and scholars would look at that poor mosque with the eye of mercy.

Description of the golden sphere on the steeple of St. Stephen

A strange adventure: In the city of Vienna there are 360 cathedrals and churches, each has one or two clock towers, with a total of 470. At noonfirst that big clock at St. Stephen's strikes once, and then, before its harmony has fully developed, all the other clock towers in the fortress of Vienna strike at one Full p. C-75 time. They have found a marvelous way of synchronizing those clocks. If a fellow in Rum has two clocks, one will definitively be one degree and two minutes ahead or behind the other, but the clocks of Vienna all strike at the same moment—so skillfully are their clocks made. That steeple of St. Stephen's cathedral is higher than all the others, and its stair has 770 stone steps, and it has 360 large and small cells for the monks. On its highest tip there is a golden sphere, made from 150 oqqa of pure gold, big enough to hold ten shinik[9] of wheat. When Sultan Süleyman besieged Vienna in the year 936 [1529 C.E.] he could not bring himself tofire his cannons at this steeple, thinking that ultimately this would be a minaret for the call to Muslim prayer at a Muslim temple. [He thought to himself:] So this steeple should carry my sign. Thus he had that golden sphere made out there and sent it into the fortress to the king, and that erring king put the sphere up on the highest tip of that steeple in the very same night. That is why the fortress of Vienna is called the Golden Apple of Germany and Hungary because of this golden sphere. When Sultan Süleyman lifted the siege without victory and left, King Ferdinand[1] put a golden crescent and a silver sun on top of Süleyman Khan's sphere. When Sultan Süleyman heard that the infidels had dared to put some stuffon top of his own sphere, he warned them: Watch out, I am going to wage war against you. He went on his German campaign, conquered 176 fortresses within one year, and laid his country and provinces to waste. Finally King Ferdinand took the crescent and sun

down from Sultan Süleyman's sphere and made peace with him. In the course of time Sultan Murad [IV] conquered Baghdad, the paradisical city, in 1048 [1638 C.E.], but after his return to Constantinople he took to drinking, and died soon thereafter. When Sultan Ibrahim succeeded him on the throne, the German emperor and evildoing king * * * violated the peace of Sultan Süleyman with the foolish act of putting a sort of fork shaped like a golden cross on top of the sphere. When he was asked: Why did you put this cross-shaped thing on Sultan Süleyman's Golden Apple?, he responded: We put this weather vane in the form of a cross up there so that no bird should perch up there. And indeed, it is a kind of weather vane in the shape of a cross on which no bird can perch when it whirls around in the wind like a top. Surely there will be a powerful sultan like Süleyman one day who takes this down from the sphere!

* * *

May God Almighty make it a minaret and grant that the call for the Muhammadan prayer is sounded from it—peace upon you.

Footnotes

- Note 1:Translated by Gottfried Hagen with guidance of the German translation by Richard Kreutel and Erich Prokosch: *Im Reiche des Goldenen Apfels. Des türkischen Weltenbummlers Evliyâ Çelebi denkwürdige Reise in das Giaurenland und in die Stadt und Festung Wien anno 1665*, Osmanische Geschichtsschreiber (Graz, Wien, Köln: Verlag Styria, 1985). Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Sultan Süleyman (r. 1520–66) conquered Hungary for the Ottoman Empire and led a campaign against Vienna in 1529, the farthest point of Ottoman expansion into Europe. His reign is idealized by Evliya as the Golden Age of the Ottoman Empire. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Translators in the Ottoman service. "Pasha": title for the governors and military leaders, here of the border provinces next to the Habsburg dominions. Other denominations of ranks here refer to the personal service of Kara Mehmed Pasha, the ambassador. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:To arrive at the border post *before* the other ambassador would have been interpreted as a sign of weakness. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:The reward for the martyr, who dies for the sake of Islam, is paradise. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:The delegation stayed in Schwechat during the holiday of Corpus Christi. How Evliya came up with the word Ayanta is not clear. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:Egypt being the wealthiest Ottoman province, this is Evliya's hyperbolic way of saying "a lot of money." Return to reference 7
- Note 8:The urbanites of Malatya in southeastern Anatolia used to have their summer residences in Aspuzu, which was famous for its orchards and vineyards. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:The pre-Islamic palace of Khavarnaq in Iraq was frequently cited by the ancient Arabian poets as one of the wonders of the world. Return to reference 9

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- Note 1:In the Islamic world Mani (c. 216–276 C.E.), the founder of Manicheism, is remembered as the most accomplished painter of all times; Erjeng is the book in which his paintings were collected. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Putting one indexfinger to the lip was a common gesture of admiration, frequently seen in Islamic miniature paintings. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:I.e., Islam. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:Two Ottoman provinces in Asia Minor. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:All these texts are considered valid revelations in Islam. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:“Barqūq”: Mamluk sultan of Egypt (r. 1382–99); “Faraj”: Barqūq’s son and successor, (r. 1399–1412). Return to reference 6
- Note 7:The mosque of Aḥmed I (r. 1603–17), today known as the Blue Mosque. Meḥmed II (r. 1451–81), Bāyezīd II (r. 1481–1512), and Süleyman I (r. 1520–66), were Ottoman sultans, all of whom erected mosques in Istanbul. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:Four famous calligraphers, the most important being Yāqūt al-Musta’simī(1221–1298). Return to reference 8
- Note 9:A unit of volume, used for grain, about a quarter of a bushel. “Oqqa”: a unit of weight, standardized at 1,283 gr (45.26 oz.) Return to reference 9
- Note 1:Ferdinand I of Habsburg, King of Bohemia and Hungary since 1526, Holy Roman Emperor (r. 1558–64). In fact, the steeple had carried a crescent and star (a universal symbol that had nothing to do with Islam) in the 16th century. Return to reference 1

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INDIAN POETRY AFTER ISLAM twelfth–seventeenth centuries



A gathering of holy figures from different faiths, including the poet Kabir, on the left, depicted by the South Asian painter Mir Kalan Khan (active c. 1730–1775).

The mutual engagement of Islam and Hinduism in South Asia began as a “clash of civilizations” in the eighth century, and has continued to generate fresh political, economic,

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social, and ideological conflicts ever since. As faiths and as ways of life, they are each other's contraries, mainly because Islam is a religion of the Book whereas Hinduism (like Buddhism and Jainism) is not. Nevertheless, especially in literature, art, and modern popular culture, they have converged in unexpected ways in India to create a cultural synthesis that is rare in world history.

One prominent example of the encounter of Islam and Hinduism was the *bhakti* movement, which began on a smaller scale in southern India before the end of thefirst millennium C.E. *Bhakti* ("devotion"), which emphasized intense commitment and service to one chosen god out of many in the Hindu pantheon, was as much a theological, social, and political phenomenon as it was a literary and artistic one. It started as a movement to reform classical Hinduism and the caste system, rejecting temples, pollution, endogamy, hierarchy, and ritual. After the arrival of Islam, *bhakti* increasingly engaged with monotheism, iconoclasm, and abstract divinity (as contrasted to idols), as well as egalitarianism and community. In this apparent synthesis, however, *bhakti* did not completely overturn the central concepts of Hinduism. It retained the logic of karma and *mokṣa*, so that union with God and liberation from reincarnation remained principal goals; it preserved the classical mythologies ofŚiva and Viṣṇu; and it continued with earlier Hindu pantheism, in which godhead ("the God beyond God") pervades the universe, and hence can be found everywhere.

This cluster offers selections of poetry byfive majorfigures in the *bhakti* movement from across the subcontinent. Among them, **Basava ṇṇā** and **Mah ā dev ī yakk ā** (a woman poet) belong to the Kannada-speaking region of southern India in the twelfth century, and represent the movement's social, political, and religious upheaval shortly before Islam's impact. **Kabir** comes from the Hindi heartland in northern India in thefifteenth century, and articulates an early synthesis of Hindu and Muslim ideas, focusing on "the God beyond God" and seeking to mediate the conflicts between the two religions. **Mīrabāī** (also a woman), from the western edge of the Hindi-speaking region in the sixteenth century, embodies a subsequent blend of Hindu and Sufitraditions of erotic mysticism, but also a reaction to Islam. **Tukaram**, who belongs to the Marathi-speaking region along the western edge of the Indian peninsula in the seventeenth century, represents a late phase in which *bhakti* responds to Islam's dominance in the public realm by revitalizing its own roots in Hinduism within local communities. Between them, thesefive poets help us Full p. C-78 map out about half a millennium in the literary history of India, a period in which, despite violent conflicts, Islam and Hinduism interacted with each other in remarkably creative ways, creating a unique amalgam of cultures.

BASAVA ṆṆĀ

Basavaṇṇā(1106–1167), or Basava for short, was born a *brāhmaṇa* (in Karnataka state, southern India) but orphaned at an early age. Raised by a Sanskrit scholar, he received an orthodox Hindu education but, by his late teens, he developed a strong aversion to caste and ritual. He gave up his *brāhmaṇa* status and left home, settling at Kūḍalasangama, literally a place "where two rivers meet"; there he learned the worship ofŚiva from an unorthodox guru (master), and had a series of mystical experiences. In his *vacana* s ("sayings" or poems) composed in Kannada, he referred toŚiva as "the lord of the meeting rivers"—a phrase that became his characteristic signature line.

Thinking of himself asŚiva's servant, Basava resolved to create a community of devotees. He went to the northern Karnataka city of Kalyāṇa, where an uncle was the king's minister; establishing himself as a courtier, Basava married the king's foster-sister, and subsequently became the kingdom's treasurer. As a powerful and famous official, he began to attract other devotees to Kalyāṇa, which thus became the nucleus of a new community of Vīraśaivas ("Śiva's warriors").

The group, however, was egalitarian to an extreme: it welcomed any devotee ofŚiva, regardless of caste, class, and gender; it openly challenged social conventions; and it rejected classical Hindu rituals. Its unconventionality quickly triggered a backlash. When the Vīraśaivas blessed the wedding of an untouchable man and a woman of *brāhmaṇa* birth among their members, the king ordered the execution of the couple's fathers. Some Vīraśaivas protested violently, and the king was assassinated during a riot; persecuted thereafter, the community scattered across the Kannada-speaking region, never to be reunited. Despondent at his failure to curb the extremism and violence, Basava retired to Kūḍalasangama and died shortly afterward.

Nearly one thousand short poems have been preserved in Basava's name. About half of them deal with various phases of the poet's spiritual progress, while the rest focus on the difficulties and conflicts of worldly life, especially its corruptions and temptations. In our selection, poems such as "The master of the house, is he at home, or isn't he" and "Don't you take on" represent the former half of the canon, whereas "Look, the world, in a swell" and "Cripple me, father" represent the latter. "The rich" unites the themes of worldliness and transcendence: if a human being is truly committed to God, then even the lowliest devotee can achieve the ultimate goal, because "things standing"—such as worldly palaces and temples —"shall fall," but "the moving"—intangible human and divine Love—"ever shall stay."

Full p. C-79

8[1]

Look, the world, in a swell
of waves, is beating upon my face.[2]
Why should it rise to my heart,
tell me.
O tell me, why is it
rising now to my throat?
Lord,
how can I tell you anything
when it is risen high
over my head
lord lord
listen to my cries
O lord of the meeting rivers[3]
listen.

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Footnotes

- Note 1:This and the following poems translated by A. K. Ramanujan. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Basava uses a traditional Indian metaphor for the world as a “raging sea.” Return to reference 2
- Note 3:This is Basava’s signature phrase, commemorating his mystical experience ofŚiva, which occurred at Kūḍalasangama, “the place where two rivers meet,” shortly after his initiation by a spiritual master (guru) there. Return to reference 3

21

Father, in my ignorance you brought me
through mothers’ wombs,[4]
through unlikely worlds.
Was it wrong just to be born, O lord?
Have mercy on me for being born once before.
I give you my word,
lord of the meeting rivers,
never to be born again.

Footnotes

- Note 4:Basava takes it for granted that action in the world inevitably leads to the self or soul’s net accumulation of “bad karma” in a lifetime, and hence to its repeated rebirth or reincarnation. The self can change this trajectory only if it determines to perform an excess of good deeds in this life, and hence to attain liberation from the cycle and be reunited with God or godhead. Hence this poem’s line of reasoning, addressed directly toŚiva simultaneously as a confession, a prayer, and a vow. Return to reference 4

59

Cripple me, father,
that I may not go here and there.
Blind me, father,
that I may not look at this and that.

Full p. C-80

Deafen me, father,
that I may not hear anything else.
Keep me
at your men’s feet[5]
looking for nothing else,
O lord of the meeting rivers.

Footnotes

- Note 5:“Your men” refers to the community ofŚiva’s devotees (*bhaktas*); being at their “feet” represents spiritual humility and openness to education in the complex ways of *bhakti* (devotion, in this case uncompromisingly toŚiva alone). In Basava’s religious practice, the individual is subsumed by the community, and hence cannot be spiritually autonomous; this was a founding principle of the Vīraśaiva community that he established and led. Return to reference 5

97

The master of the house,[6] is he at home, or isn’t he?
Grass on the threshold,
dirt in the house:
the master of the house, is he at home, or isn’t he?
Lies in the body,
lust in the heart:
no, the master of the house is not at home,
our lord of the meeting rivers.

Footnotes

- Note 6:This phrase is a metaphor for the true self or soul, whose “home” in the current lifetime is this person and personality. The poem’s repeated question, and the negative answer to it in the second verse, are designed to remind us that, unless the true self is “in charge” of our daily lives, no spiritual progress is possible. Return to reference 6

111

I went to fornicate,[7]
but all I got was counterfeit.
I went behind a ruined wall,
but scorpions stung me.
The watchman who heard my screams
just peeled offmy clothes.
I went home in shame,
my husband raised weals on my back.

Full p. C-81

All the rest, O lord of the meeting rivers,
the king took for hisfines.

Footnotes

- Note 7:This poem is a dramatic monologue; its speaker is a married woman, who metaphorically represents the individual self or soul trapped in worldliness. The poem’s sequence of vignettes therefore adds up to the moral that the world “dupes” the

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individual self at every level of experience, from that of private desire to that of politics. One implication is that the only way to overcome “bad karma” is to extricate oneself from—to renounce—worldly engagement altogether. Return to reference 7

212

Don’t you take on
this thing called bhakti:
like a saw
it cuts when it goes
and it cuts again
when it comes.
If you risk your hand
with a cobra in a pitcher[8]
will it let you
pass?

Footnotes

- Note 8:An ancient Indian ordeal, used to test a person’s loyalty, purity, or honesty. Return to reference 8

494

I don’t know anything like time-beats and metre
nor the arithmetic of strings and drums;
I don’t know the count of iamb and dactyl.[9]
My lord of the meeting rivers,
as nothing will hurt you
I’ll sing as I love.

Footnotes

- Note 9:Types of meter in poetry. An iamb is a two-syllable unit (stressed, unstressed); a dactyl is a three-syllable unit (stressed, unstressed, unstressed). Return to reference 9

563

The pot is a god. The winnowing
fan is a god. The stone in the
street is a god. The comb is a
god. The bowstring is also a
god. The bushel is a god and the
spouted cup is a god.[1]

Full p. C-82

Gods, gods, there are so many

there's no place left
for a foot.
There is only
one god. He is our lord
of the meeting rivers.

Footnotes

- Note 1:Here Basava satirizes and attacks Hinduism's older polytheism; his claim at the end of the poem thatŚiva is the only one true god articulates the "monotheistic" tendency in the *bhakti* movement, which may be a trace of Islam's influence on Indian religious thought from about the 12th century onward. Return to reference 1

703

Look here, dear fellow:
I wear these men's clothes
only for you.[2]
Sometimes I am man,
sometimes I am woman.
O lord of the meeting rivers
I'll make wars for you
but I'll be your devotees' bride.

Footnotes

- Note 2:The *bhakta* often portrays himself or herself as transgendered, as being above the arbitrariness of human gender roles. Basava ends this poem provocatively by suggesting that he is willing to "feminize" himself for God's cause. Return to reference 2

820

The rich[3]
will make temples forŚiva.
What shall I,
a poor man,
do?
My legs are pillars,
the body the shrine,
the head a cupola[4]
of gold.
Listen, O lord of the meeting rivers,
things standing shall fall,
but the moving ever shall stay.[5]

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Footnotes

- Note 3: *Bhakti* poetry often subversively points to the unequal distribution of wealth in human society as evidence of injustice and immorality. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:Architecturally, the topmost “pinnacle” of a Hindu temple, often metaphorically called its “head.” Return to reference 4
- Note 5:The poem’s last two lines highlight a paradox central to human history: things that are assumed to last forever often prove perishable, whereas what seems to be merely transitory endures. Here Basava appropriates this paradox to the advantage of *bhakti* . Return to reference 5

Full p. C-83

MAH Ā DEV Ī YAKK Ā

Mahādevī(twelfth century) probably died in her early twenties, but left behind some 350 short poems remarkable for their consistent voice, imagery, and content. Known as Mahādevīyakkā(elder sister), she is one of the earliest women poets in Indian and world literature for whom we have a sizable and aesthetically complete body of work. Her bold and unique expression of her feelings and desires gives us an exceptional opportunity to understand women’s lives, experiences, and imaginations before modernity.

A younger contemporary of Basavaṇṇā, Mahādevīcame from a village near Shimoga, now in Karnataka state in southern India. At ten, she was initiated as a devotee ofŚiva, and fell in love with the form in which the god was represented in her village temple—as Mallikārjuna, “the lord white as jasmine.” This phrase became Mahādevī’s signature line: she was apparently so enamored that she symbolically betrothed herself toŚiva at that age. Her experience of marriage in the real world was short-lived and unpleasant; compelled as a teenager to wed a local chieftain, she left him when he forced himself upon her. Homeless, she became a wandering mystic who discarded all clothing and covered her body with only her long tresses. She walked from central Karnataka to Kalyāṇa in the north, where Basavaṇṇāhad established his unorthodox and egalitarian Vīraśaiva community; she was admitted after passing a difficult spiritual test, and died soon afterward, but came to be prized as the community’s most gifted poet.

Mahādevīuses three main categories for her erotic longing forŚiva and her desire for mystical ecstasy: love forbidden by society and morality, as in “He bartered my heart”; love tested by intolerable separation from the beloved, as in “Four parts of the day”; and love thatfinally overcomes obstacles and celebrates union, as in “Look at.” She also projects her longing onto the cyclical processes in the natural world created by God; in “Like a silkworm weaving,” for example, she compares her desire for the “lord white as jasmine” to the desire embodied in the silkworm who spins silk out of its own body’s substance. At the same time, as in “You are the forest,” she draws on an older Hindu pantheism tofind God potentially everywhere in nature. But the relationship withŚiva can never be merely erotic or mundane; as thefinal poem, “Look at,” suggests, for the human self God is (and can only be) the ultimate soulmate.

Full p. C-84

17[1]

Like a silkworm weaving[2]
her house with love
from her marrow,
and dying
in her body's threads
winding tight, round
and round,
I burn
desiring what the heart desires.
Cut through, O lord,
my heart's greed,
and show me
your way out,
O lord white as jasmine.[3]

Footnotes

- Note 1:This and the following poems translated by A. K. Ramanujan. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Silk culture has been a vital part of the handloom weaving industry in southern India since early in the Common Era. Here Mahādevīuses a local image with memorable originality, contrasting it with the ancient Hindufigure of the spider weaving its web out of its own bodily substance. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:This is Mahādevī's signature phrase, which captures her childhood experience of an idol ofŚiva (in a temple in her hometown of Shimoga) as Mallikārjuna, "white as jasmine." Return to reference 3

60

Not seeing you
in the hill, in the forest,
from tree to tree[4]
I roamed,
searching, gasping:
lord, my lord, come
show me your kindness!
till I met your men
and found you.
You hide
lest I seek andfind.
Give me a clue,
O lord
white as jasmine,

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to your hiding places.

Footnotes

- Note 4:Among *bhakti* poets, Mahādevīis the closest to being a “nature poet,” as these images indicate. Return to reference 4

Full p. C-85

75

You are the forest[5]
you are all the great trees
in the forest
you are bird and beast
playing in and out
of all the trees
O lord white as jasmine
filling andfilled by all
why don’t you
show me your face?

Footnotes

- Note 5:This and the next few lines are a poetic expression of pantheism, the belief that God or godhead is manifest throughout the created universe. The poem centers on the paradox that seems to undermine pantheism: that, even though God is supposed to be present everywhere, he is nowhere to be found “face to face.” Return to reference 5

79

Four parts of the day[6]
I grieve for you.
Four parts of the night
I’m mad for you.
I lie lost
sick for you, night and day,
O lord white as jasmine.
Since your love
was planted,
I’ve forgotten hunger,
thirst, and sleep.

Footnotes

- Note 6:The conventional Indian unit of time that Mahādevīuses here is about three hours, so “the day” is about twelve hours long, and is divided into quarters accordingly. Return to reference 6

88

He bartered my heart,
looted myflesh,
claimed as tribute
my pleasure,

Full p. C-86

took over
all of me.

I’m the woman of love[7]
for my lord, white as jasmine.

Footnotes

- Note 7:Here Mahādevīprojects herself asŚiva’s mistress or sexual plaything, a metaphor that profoundly disturbs the strict normal separation of the divine from the profane. Her intention is to shock us into understanding the erotic underpinnings of divine love, which can be grasped only mystically. Return to reference 7

199

For hunger,
there is the town’s rice in the begging bowl.
For thirst,
there are tanks, streams, wells.
For sleep,
there are the ruins of temples.[8]
For soul’s company
I have you, O lord
white as jasmine.

Footnotes

- Note 8:All the images in this poem echo the key position in *bhakti* that the devotee must renounce privilege and pleasure, voluntarily adopt poverty, and throw himself or herself at “God’s mercy.” Mahādevīreinforces this last idea with her reference to sleeping in ruined temples. Return to reference 8

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336

Look at
love's marvellous
ways:
if you shoot an arrow
plant it
till no feather shows;
if you hug
a body, bones
must crunch and crumble;
weld,
the welding must vanish.
Love is then
our lord's love.

Full p. C-87

KABIR

Kabir (ca. 1398–1448), whose name is of Arabic origin, was probably born a Muslim; he is said to have lived most of his life in Banaras (Varanasi) in northern India, the oldest and holiest city of Hinduism, and was a handloom weaver by occupation. Though poor and illiterate, he became a poet in the oral tradition, composing songs (*pada* s) as well as proverb-like couplets (*doh*ās), besides witty and stringent satires (classified as *sākh*īs, "poems of witness"). He is likely to have been persecuted equally by orthodox Hindus, conservative Muslims, and political authorities for his outspoken criticism of society and organized religion.

Kabir probably acquired an extensive reputation in his own lifetime; in the centuries following his death, a large and varied body of poetry was recorded in his name. More thanfive hundred poems bearing his signature line were included in theĀ*di Grantha* (1604), the original scripture of Sikhism composed in Punjab, in which he is classified as the principal *bhagat* (a variant of *bhakta*, devotee of God) who preceded the Gurus, the canonized teachers of the new faith. Between the sixteenth and early nineteenth centuries, two other major repositories of Kabir's verse emerged in Rajasthan and Banaras, defining a legacy of nearly six thousand short poems preserved in a mixture of scripts, languages, and dialects. A large number of songs, satires, and aphorisms ascribed to Kabir also circulated in oral and musical forms during this period, making him the best-known and most frequently quoted poet across northern India in the past half a millennium.

In the *bhakti* tradition, in Sikhism, among Hindus and Muslims, and among modern secular audiences, Kabir is celebrated mainly for his belief in "the God beyond God," or godhead in its absolute, undifferentiated form. In our selection, this theological position is expressed in "The Final State," where both godhead and the union of the self or soul with it prove to be indescribable in human terms. In a parable such as "Ant," the God beyond God hides like grains of sugar amid grains of sand, so that only someone as industrious and adept as an ant (in contrast to a clumsy elephant) canfind Him or It.

In keeping with this view, Kabir's poems also criticize organized religion for promoting anthropomorphic representations of God, which falsify the nature of divinity; and for instituting pointless rituals that distract human worshippers from the true goal of life, which is union with godhead. "Mosque with Ten Doors" and "Purity" therefore satirize some of the ritual practices of Islam and Hinduism, respectively; whereas "The Simple State" attacks superstition and hypocrisy among various kinds of self-aggrandizing men of religion who exploit only the business potential of piety. Offering alternatives to such practices, "Don't Stay" points toward stoical forbearance in the face of the world's transitoriness and of the pain and suffering that afflict human life.

Full p. C-88

The Final State[1]

The ineffable tale
of thatfinal simple state:
it's utterly different.
It can't be weighed on a scale,
can't be whittled down.
It doesn't feel heavy
and doesn't feel light.
It has no rain, no sea,
no sun or shade.
It doesn't contain
creation or destruction.
No life, no death exist in it,
no grief, no joy.
Both solitude and blissful union
are absent from it.
It has no up or down,
no high or low.
It doesn't contain
either night or day.
There's no water, no air,
nofire thatflares again and again.
The True Master permeates
everything there.
The Eternal One remains
unmoving, imperceptible, unknowable.
You can attain Him
with the Guru's grace.[2]
Kabir says, sacrifice yourself
to the Guru,
and remain ensconced
in the true community.

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Footnotes

- Note 1:This and the following poems translated by Vinay Dharwadker. This poem seeks to describe “thefinal state” into which the enduring human self or soul must enter when it “reunites” with godhead. It is a “simple” state because it is elemental or primordial; and, as the poem’s successive verses argue, it lacks any physical or “normal” attributes. In fact, it is indescribable in human terms; and it is identical to the “state” of godhead itself. In older Hindu terms, “thefinal state” is the state of the soul’s *mokṣa*, liberation from karma and rebirth. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:The words and phrases “It,” “the True Master,” “the Eternal One,” “Him,” and “Guru” all refer to godhead, “the God beyond God.” So the human soul canfind or attain godhead or *mokṣa* only by “God’s grace.” Return to reference 2

Full p. C-89

Ant

Beware of the world,
brothers,
be alert—
you’re being robbed
while wide awake.
Beware of the Vedas,[3]
brothers,
be vigilant—
Death will carry you away
while the guard
looks on.
The neem tree[4]
becomes the mango tree,
the mango tree becomes
the neem.
The banana plant
spreads into a bush—
the fruit on the coconut palm
ripens into a berry
right under your noses,
you dumb and foolish
rustics!
Hari[5] becomes sugar
and scatters Himself
in the sand.
No elephant can sift
the crystals from the grains.
Kabir says, renounce

all family, caste, and clan.
Turn into an ant
instead—
pick the sugar from the sand
and eat.

Footnotes

- Note 3:Here the Vedas represent institutional Hinduism, which is organized by human beings; hence, in Kabir's radically subversive perspective, Hindu scripture is not divine revelation but a manmade text. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:The margosa tree, very common across South Asia. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:An ancient Hindu epithet for God, most often used for Viṣṇu; here a name for God in his most transcendent form. Return to reference 5

Full p. C-90

Mosque with Ten Doors

Broadcast, O mullāh,[6]
your merciful call to prayer—
you yourself are a mosque
with ten doors.[7]
Make your mind your Mecca,
your body, the Ka'aba[8] —
your Self itself
is the Supreme Master.
In the name of Allāh,[9] sacrifice
your anger, error, impurity—
chew up your senses,
become a patient man.
The lord of the Hindus and Turks[1]
is one and the same—
why become a mullāh,
why become a sheikh?[2]
Kabir says, brother,
I've gone crazy—
quietly, quietly, like a thief,
my mind has slipped into the simple state.

Footnotes

- Note 6:A priest and theologian in Sunni Islam. Return to reference 6

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- Note 7:Kabir here imagines the Muslim priest's body as the "true mosque" of his religion, as contrasted with the physical mosque built with stone. "Ten doors" refersfiguratively to the natural orifices of the human body. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:Mecca is Islam's holiest city. The Ka'aba is the large black cubical structure in the Masjid al-Haram in Mecca; it marks Islam's most sacred site. At prayer-time anywhere in the world, a Muslim must face in the direction of the Ka'aba from his or her location. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:God's principal name in the Qur'an, the scripture of Islam. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:Since the early 13th century, Indians have commonly referred to Muslims as "Turks," mainly because armies made up of enslaved Turkish people were the successful conquerors of northern India, and thefirst to establish Muslim rule on the subcontinent. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Alludes to the title usually given to Sufimasters. Return to reference 2

Purity

Tell me, O pandit,[3]
what place is pure—
where I can sit
and eat my meal?

Full p. C-91

Mother was impure,
father was impure—
the fruits they bore
were also impure.
They arrived impure,
they left impure—
unlucky folks,
they died impure.
My tongue's impure,
my words are impure,
my ears, my eyes,
they're all impure—
you brahmins,
you've stolen thefire,
but you can't burn off
the impurity of the senses!
Thefire, too, is impure,
the water's impure—
so even the kitchen's
nothing but impure.
The ladle's impure
that serves a meal,
and they're impure
who sit and eat theirfill.
Cowdung's impure,
the bathing-square's impure—
its very curbs
are nothing but impure.
Kabir says,
only they are pure
who've completely cleansed
their thinking.

Footnotes

- Note 3:Common title of a learned priest of the *brāhmaṇa* caste group, which dominates the Hindu caste system. This poem attacks the system's insistence on ritual purity (which is very different from hygiene or cleanliness), and its discrimination against pollution;

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the higher castes maintain their superiority by claiming that they are “purer” than the “polluted” low castes. Kabir’s strategy is to show that many supposedly pure things are manifestly impure; and that the supposed purity or impurity of many things leads to logical contradictions. Return to reference 3

Debate

If you love your followers, Rāma,
settle this quarrel, once and for all.[4]
Is Brahmāgreater, or where He came from?
Is the Veda greater, or its origin?

Full p. C-92

Is this mind greater, or what it believes in?
Is Rāma greater, or the one who knows Him?
Kabir says, I’m in despair. Which is greater?
The pilgrim-station, or Hari’s devoted slave?

Footnotes

- Note 4:The quarrel Kabir asks God to settle is over a series of intellectual puzzles, which take two basic forms with enormous consequences for religious belief. When we have a cause and an effect (or a source and an outcome), which of the two is greater? And when we have a knower and an object of knowledge, which is greater? The poem’s tantalizing suggestion is that an effect can be greater than its cause, and that a person who knows may logically be greater than what he knows. Return to reference 4

Moth

Joy is brief.
Sorrow and grief are endless.
The mind’s an elephant,
mad, amnesiac.
Air andflame burn as one,
just as when the moth, its eye enchanted by light,
flies straight into the lamp,
and wing andfireflare together.[5]
Who hasn’t found
restful peace in a moment of pleasure?
So you brush aside the truth,
and chase the lies you hold so dear.
At the end of your days
you feel the temptation, you covet joy,
even though old age and death
are close at hand.
The world’s embroiled in illusion, error:

this is the process always in motion.
Man attains a human birth:
why does he waste and destroy it?

Footnotes

- Note 5:This poem centers on a popular image in Sufism (a mystical branch of Islam): the moth is so attracted to theflame of an oil lamp that itflies straight to its death in theflame. Return to reference 5

The Simple State

Listen,
you saints—
I see that the world
is crazy.
When I tell the truth,
people run
to beat me up—
when I tell lies,
they believe me.

Full p. C-93

I've seen
the pious ones,
the ritual-mongers—
they bathe at dawn.[6]
They kill the true Self
and worship rocks[7] —
they know nothing.
I've seen
many masters and teachers—
they read their Book,
their Qur'ān.
They teach many students
their business tricks—
that's all they know.
They sit at home
in pretentious poses—
their minds are full
of vanity.
They begin to worship
brass and stone—
they're so proud
of their pilgrimages,
they forget the real thing.

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They wear caps and beads,
they paint their brows
with the cosmetics
of holiness.[8]
They forget the true words
and the songs of witness
the moment they've sung them—
they haven't heard
the news of the Self.
The Hindu says
Rāma's dear to him,
the Muslim says it's Rahīm.
They go to war
and kill each other—

Full p. C-94

no one knows
the secret of things.
They do their rounds
from door to door,
selling their magical formulas—
they're vain
about their reputations.
All the students
will drown with their teachers—
at the last moment
they'll repent.
Kabir says,
listen,
you saintly men,
forget all this vanity.
I've said it so many times
but nobody listens—
you must merge into
the simple state[9]
simply.

Footnotes

- Note 6:This verse refers to Hindu *brāhmaṇas*, who bathe to ritually cleanse themselves of all "pollution." Return to reference 6
- Note 7:Idols made of stone. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:Practitioners of many faiths in India wear "signs" of their religious identity or status; these include various types of caps or headgear, beads (like rosaries), and distinctive cosmetic marks painted on the body. Return to reference 8

- Note 9:The self or soul's union with the godhead; the same as "thefinal state" described in thefirst poem in this selection. Return to reference 9

Don't Stay

Don't stay—
the land's a wilderness.
This world's a paltry paper packet—
a spot of rain
will wash it away.
This world's a garden of thorns—
snarled and snared,
we'll perish in pain.
This world's all tree and tinder—
kindled, it will roast us
like sacrificial victims.
Kabir says, listen, my good men,
the True Master's name[1]
is our lasting abode—
our station, our destination.

Footnotes

- Note 1:God's "name," which mystics in Kabir's tradition are supposed to repeat constantly as a magical formula (*mantra*) for liberation from karma and rebirth. Return to reference 1

Full p. C-95

Aphorisms

3

Don't be vain, Kabir:
you're just a wrapping of skin on bone.
Even those who ride on horses, under parasols,
are buried quickly in the mud.

9

Kabir, sow such a seed
that its tree willflourish perennially:
cool shade, abundant fruit,
foliage full of birds at play.

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12

Even if you were to transform
the seven oceans into ink,
the world's trees into pens, the whole earth into paper,
you couldn't write down the list of God's excellences.

20

The man with a truthful heart is best:
there's no happiness without the truth,
no matter how many millions of times
one tries tofind it by other means.

31

Knowledge ahead, knowledge behind,
knowledge to the left and right.
The knowledge that knows what knowledge is:
that's the knowledge that's mine.

32

The one who stays within the limits assigned to him is a man.
The one who roams beyond those limits is a saint.
To reject both limits and their absence:
that's a thought with immeasurable depths.

Full p. C-96

37

Accomplish one thing and you accomplish all.
Seek to do all and you lose the one vital thing.
When you water the root of a plant,
itflowers and bears fruit to satisfaction.

46

The poem of witness is the eye of knowledge:
to understand it, gaze into your heart and mind.
Without the song of testimony,
the quarrels of this world don't end.

M Ī RAB ĀĪ

We know nothing for certain about Mīrabāī(sixteenth century), except that she was from Rajasthan, northern India's westernmost state. Legends claim that she was a princess from a Rajput clan (an ethnic group of the warrior caste); as a young married woman, she developed an interest in *bhakti*, and probably broke many social codes to keep company with itinerant

ascetics, yogis, Sufis, and other "dubious" spiritual practitioners. Her husband, father, or father-in-law perhaps tried to poison her for nonconformity, and she gave up her life of privilege to become a homeless wanderer searching for union with God.

For Mīra (as she is commonly known), the god of choice was Kṛṣṇa, an avatar of Viṣṇu, part of the story of whose incarnation on earth is narrated in the ancient Sanskrit epic the ***Mahabharata*** . But she devoted herself to the aspect of Kṛṣṇa in which he is a young erotic god, in whom women of all ages and from every social class are said tofind the fulfillment of their desires and destinies. The poetry attributed to Mīra—preserved in several varieties of Hindi—is a candid, ongoing, lyrical conversation with and about God as a divine lover.

Though few, if any, of Mīra's compositions have survived verifiably in their original forms, the several hundred *padas* (short songs in metrical, rhymed couplets) preserved in her name represent Kṛṣṇa as "the dark one" and as "the cowherd" who moves, carries, or lifts "mountains"—phrases that evoke the erotic god's classical mythology, physical attractions, superhuman strength, and miracles. As our selection indicates, most of Mīra's poems represent the devotee in a state of painful separation from her divine beloved; she is lonely and wretched, anxious and desperate, full of emotional longing Full p. C-97 and physical desire. In "My sleep's rotten, my friend," she is like a "strandedfish thrashing for water," whereas in "Darling, come visit me," she is lovesick, with "No hunger by day, no sleep by night." She is also alienated from normal human society, being constantly persecuted: in "The cowherd who carries mountains," the chieftain sends her a cup of poison, and she leaves her relatives and companions and loses her "honor in the world."

The only woman poet in the *bhakti* movement in northern India between the fourteenth and eighteenth centuries, Mīra has been promoted in modern times by Mahatma Gandhi and others as a historical ideal of Indian womanhood: sensitive, bold, determined, rebellious, and spiritually self-reliant. This image has found wide appeal in India's popular culture today, from music, dance, and visual art tofilm, television, and other mass media.

[My sleep's rotten, my friend][1]

My sleep's rotten, my friend,
my sleep's rotten.
I've spent my nights staring at the path
my lover will take
when he comes to me.[2]
My friends, concerned,
decided to intervene—
but my heart accepted nothing they said.
If I don't see him, there's no tomorrow—
but I'm determined
not to be sore with him.
My body's lean with anxious waiting—
My love, my love,
the only words locked upon my lips.
This separation, an agony inside me—
no one else

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can understand this pain.
Just like the thirsty bird
obsessed with rain-clouds—
just like the strandedfish thrashing for water.

Full p. C-98

Being a woman
wracked by separation,
Mīra has lost her wits.

Footnotes

- Note 1:This and the following poems translated by Vinay Dharwadker. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Mīra's poetry of devotion to God is explicitly erotic. She consistently projects God —in his anthropomorphic forms as Viṣṇu, and as Viṣṇu's avatar, Kṛṣṇa—as her lover or husband. As a woman in the human world, she lives in a state of separation from her divine paramour, who exists "beyond" this world; as his metaphorical wife, she perpetually waits for him to come to her. Return to reference 2

[The cowherd who carries mountains]

The cowherd who carries mountains[3]
is the one for me—
I want no one else.
I've looked and looked
all over the world—
I have no other savior.
I've left my brothers,
left my bondsmen,
left my blood relations.
I've been hanging out
with the likes of roaming holy men—
I've lost my honor in the world.[4]
I'm delighted to see
my fellow devotees,
but I weep and weep when I see the world.
I've sown love's vine—
I water it
with myflowing tears.
I've garnered the butter
from the curds,
and thrown away the whey.[5]

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The chieftain sent me a poison cup[6] —
lost in love,

I gulped it down, straight.
Mīra, you've found
your true attachments[7] —
whatever happens now,
O let it happen as it will.

25

Footnotes

- Note 3:This phrase, considered as one of Mīra's poetic signatures, refers to one part of the composite mythology of Kṛṣṇa, in which he is born as a cowherd in the Braj region of northern India (around Mathura, between modern Delhi and Agra). In this part of his human life, Kṛṣṇa is a young erotic god, with whom all the women of the region—young and old, married and unmarried—seek union; the women's longing for him is a "personification" of the soul's desire for union with God, for permanent liberation from earthly existence. In one episode, Kṛṣṇa saves the people of Braj from a deluge by uprooting and lifting an entire mountain, and holding it up with his superhuman strength like an enormous parasol or cover against the rain. He is thus their "ultimate savior." Return to reference 3
- Note 4:In the settled society of Indian householders, wandering holy men are often regarded with distrust and suspicion; and it is especially dishonorable for women, whether unmarried or married (as Mīra is said to have been), to keep their company. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:For at least 3,500 years, yogurt has been an essential part of Indian cuisine. When yogurt is churned to make buttermilk, the creamy portion of the suspension rises to the surface, and can be skimmed offto make butter. The solids that remain in the buttermilk can then be separated as "curds" from the liquid, which is called "whey." The butter is considered the most—and the whey, the least—nutritious and valuable portion of the suspension. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:The most popular legend associated with Mīra says that she was a princess in a Rajput clan in Rajasthan (now a western Indian state), and that she married a chieftain or into a chieftain's family in the region. When she became a devoted worshipper (*bhakta*) of Kṛṣṇa, either her husband or father or father-in-law tried to poison her; the legend claims that she swallowed the poison, but her love of God was so great that she remained unharmed. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:In contrast to her "false" attachments to her fellow human beings and to worldly things, her attachments to Kṛṣṇa and his divine love are "true." Return to reference 7

[I'm steeped]

I'm steeped,
steeped
in the dark one's color.[8]
I dressed up in myfinery,
put on my dancing anklets,
abandoned all shame, and danced in public.[9]

5

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Gave up reason, went crazy,
kept the company of holy men,
found the true form of a devotee.
Sang and sang the praises
of Hari's virtues,[1] night and day—
so saved myself from the serpent of mortality.[2]
Without my lord, the whole world's brackish—
merely a mouthful of salt.
Apart from him, everything's disposable.

Full p. C-100

Mīra asks her lord who lifts mountains[3]
to give her the kind of devotion
that seeps with sweetness—that's luscious,flavorful.[4]

Footnotes

- Note 8:In Hindu mythology, Viṣṇu in his anthropomorphic form is dark-complexioned, and so is his avatar Kṛṣṇa. Here Mīra suggests that she is "steeped" in Kṛṣṇa's dark skin color. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:In conservative 16th-century Hindu society—probable historical context of Mīra's life—women did not dance in public. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:Hari is one of Viṣṇu's, and hence also Kṛṣṇa's, most common alternative names; "virtues" here refers to Kṛṣṇa's divine qualities. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:In *bhakti* poetry, the serpent usually represents the poisonous nature either of the world or of mortal human life. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:An allusion to the episode in Kṛṣṇa's mythology, in which he lifted up a mountain to save people from a deluge. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:The sweetness andflavor of devotion invoke the idea that *bhakti* has its own special *rasa* or poetic emotion; here *rasa* explicitly refers to classical Indian aesthetics. Return to reference 4

[Darling, come visit me]

Darling, come visit me,
give me a vision of yourself—
I can't live without you.
A lotus without water, a night without the moon.
That's what you look like
without your beloved—me.
Distressed, distraught,
I wander night and day,
our separation gnawing at my heart.
No hunger by day, no sleep by night—
and, when I speak,
no words from my mouth.

What shall I say? What's said is no use.
Come visit me—
quench my body heat.[5]
You pervade my self, control my moods—
why torment me with yearning?
Have mercy, my master—come visit me.
Your lifelong slave, in life after life,[6]
Mīra
falls at your feet.

Footnotes

- Note 5:Here Mīra boldly invites her divine lover to a physical encounter with her in human sexual terms. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:In this verse, Mīra claims that she has voluntarily enslaved herself to God in all her reincarnations. Return to reference 6

[My lord who lifts mountains]

My lord who lifts mountains—
I'm offto his home.

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He's my one true love.
The moment I see his form,
I'm entranced.
When night falls, I get up and go to him—
when day breaks,
I get up and return.[7]
Night and day, I play with him.
I keep him happy
any which way I can.
I wear whatever he asks me to wear—
I eat whatever
he gives me to eat.
Our love's an ancient love.
I can't survive
a single moment without him.
I sit wherever he tells me to sit—
if he were ever to sell me,
I'd be willing to be sold.[8]
Mīra's master is the lord
who lifts mountains—
again and again, she sacrifices herself to him.

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Footnotes

- Note 7:The extended metaphor in this verse suggests that Mīra spends her days in the human world but her nights in Kṛṣṇa's divine realm. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:Her voluntary obedience of and enslavement to God is so complete that even if he were to choose to "sell" her in the marketplace (like a callous slaveowner), she would accept his decision. Return to reference 8

TUKARAM

Tukaram (1608–1649) is associated with Dehu, a village near the city of Pune in Maharashtra state, India. He was a peasant by birth and hence aśū*dra* by caste; he probably earned a meager living as a grocer. He was married twice early,first to an invalid and then to a shrewish woman; his parents died when he was seventeen, which made him the head of an impoverished household that included several siblings. During a severe drought and famine across western India in 1629–31, he turned to poetry as a means of spiritual survival; for the rest of his life, he was a devoted worshipper of the god Vi ṭṭ hala, popularly believed to be a local manifestation of Viṣṇu.

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Over two decades or more, Tukaram composed a large number of short poems in Marathi in the *abhanga* form (a lyric in metrical quatrains); the canon of his poetry contains about 4,600 *abhanga* s. The poems are designed to be sung, and hence are set to music and performed with a one-string drone, castanets, and a drum. Since the mid-seventeenth century, they have been sung in temples in Dehu and around Maharashtra, and during large pilgrimages; they are prominent in the folk as well as classical musical traditions of western India. Tukaram's poetry has been disseminated widely in oral, musical, written, and printed forms, and is a vital presence in both literary and popular culture in Marathi. The majority of Maharashtrians regard him as their community's most important poetic and spiritual "voice."

As our selection shows, Tukaram plays this role because, beyond his particular religious affiliation, he is a poet of the general human condition. He often speaks directly and without intrusive artifice as an ordinary man engaged in everyday domestic and community life; he refers to his personal feelings and circumstances humbly and honestly, without embarrassment. He is therefore able to explore moods, states of mind, and psychological and existential crises—from inadequacy and failure to guilt and despair—in remarkably modern and even secular ways. "The Prisoner" and "Begging for God's Compassion," for example, are both frankly confessional poems: the poet is inextricably trapped by his own deeds and feels "completely powerless." Nevertheless, Tukaram is also a fearless social poet and critic; "The Rich Farmer" attacks the wealthy for their selfishness, greed, and moral double standards, whereas "The Harvest" celebrates the unstinting labor and essential goodness of the common farmer. His prayers, such as "Viṭṭhala," are addressed to a Hindu god, but they contain universal expressions of frailty and desire in a hostile world, which resonate with people of many faiths in different times and places.

The Rich Farmer[1]

He has vowed undying devotion
to a god of stone,
but he won't let his wife go
listen to a holy recitation.
He has built a crematorium
with his hoarded wealth,
but he thinks it wrong to grow
holy basil at his door.
Thieves plunder his home
and bring him much grief,
Full p. C-103
but he won't give a coin
to a poor brahman.
He treats his son-in-law
like a guest of honor,
but he turns his back upon
his real guests.
Tukāsays, curse him,
may he burn.
He's only a burden
and drains the earth.

Footnotes

- Note 1:This and the following poems translated by Vinay Dharwadker. Like other *bhakti* poems, this *abhanga* by Tukaram adopts the persona of a poor man—in a country village, in this case—to forthrightly criticize the wealthy for their hypocritical piety, greed, stinginess, incivility, and lack of compassion. Return to reference 1

The Harvest[2]

Thefield has ripened:
watch its four corners.
The grain is ready for harvest,
but you mustn't stop working.
Guard it, guard it!
Don't fall asleep,
don't take it easy:
the crop's still standing on the ground.
Put a stone in your sling:
the force of your shot,
your shouting and shooing
will scatter all theflocks of birds.

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Light afire, keep awake,
keep changing places:
when your head rolls,
you won't have your strength, your wits.
Give generously from the threshingfloor,
make the world happy.
When the grain's piled up,
pay your taxes, give everyone his share.
Full p. C-104
Tukāsays that's the moment
when there's nothing left to be done.
What's ours is in our hands,
and the chaffand husks have been thrown away.

Footnotes

- Note 2:A parable about the spiritual worth of labor on the land, this poem treats the various activities involved in farming as "good karma" that results in salvation. Incessant, selfless, and vigilant labor is thus its own reward, because it yields a harvest that embodies justice and happiness for all. Return to reference 2

The Waterwheel

How long must you endure
the whirlwind of death, of time?
It's at your back
all the while.
Free yourself
from your eighty-four hundred thousand births:[3]
enter the shelter
of Pāṇḍuranga.[4]
The seed that sprouts to life
brings death with it,
and when it dies
it's quickly born again.
Tukāsays one's lives
are strung like pots on a waterwheel:
a pot frees itself
only when the cord is broken.[5]

Footnotes

- Note 3:The traditional number of successive lifetimes for which a human self or soul is reborn in the world due to the consequences of karma. Return to reference 3

- Note 4:Pāṇḍuranga (“the one who is white in color”) is one of the forms or aspects of Viṭṭhala, an autochthonous god of the Maharashtra region, now a state in western peninsular India. Viṭṭhala is identified with—but is not an avatar of—Viṣṇu, the god of preservation in classical Hinduism. Viṭṭhala-Pāṇḍuranga is the god that Tukaram, as a *bhakta*, chooses to worship. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:The waterwheel is a multifaceted metaphor for the cycle of rebirth under the effects of karma; the breaking of the cord on which the pots on the wheel are strung signifies the breaking of the bondage of karma, and hence the attainment of *mokṣa* orfinal liberation from earthly existence. Return to reference 5

The Prisoner[6]

Ifind ways and means
to set myself free:
but, look, they only
entangle my feet.

Full p. C-105

I’m caught like a prisoner
under this sorrow’s warrant:
I’ve lost my strength,
my wits.
All my past deeds
and present actions,
gathered in one place,
come dragging after me.
I’m trapped in the snare
of do’s and don’ts:
I cut them one by one
but they can’t be sorted out,
I collect them, but they grow back
like each other’s limbs.
In desire’s company
I’ve found unhappiness.
Tukāsays, Lord,
now you must set me free:
I’ve become
completely powerless.

Footnotes

- Note 6:This *abhanga* succinctly expresses the whole logic of karma and reincarnation, and the role of God’s grace in ending the karmic cycle for an individual soul. Return to reference 6

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Begging for God’s Compassion

The world has bothered me no end.
I’ve lain in the womb in my mother’s belly.
I’ve become the beggar who begs at the doors
of eighty-four hundred thousand yonis.[7]
I live like a slave in someone else’s hands.
I’m caught and whirled in the powerful snare
of all my deeds, done now and in earlier births,
whose fruits stick to me, to ripen now and later.
My belly’s empty and there’s no rest.
No destination, no resting place, no home town.
Lord, don’t spin me like this, I’ve lost my strength.
My soul sputters in torment, like a rice grain on a hot griddle.

Full p. C-106

So many times have gone by like this,
and I don’t know how many more lie ahead of me.
They come around again and again without a break.
Maybe the string will snap only when the world ends.
Who will take away such anguish from me?
On whom can I press my burden?
Your name ferries us across the world’s ocean,
but you hide in a hole, waiting in ambush.
Strike me now, run me over, O Nārāyaṇa.[8]
Do this for me, impoverished wretch that I am.
Don’t ask a man without goodness for good things.
Tukābegs for your compassion.

Footnotes

- Note 7:The number of rebirths that an individual self undergoes, if it cannot break the chain of action and its consequences; and hence also the number of mothers’ “wombs” or *yoni* s through which it must “pass” before being liberated. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:Like Hari, one of the ancient Indian names of God in his most general form; often used for Viṣṇu in his universal aspect. Return to reference 8

Vi ṭṭ hala[9]

His name is good, his form lovely.
They cool my eye and drive away my fever.
Viṭṭhala, Viṭṭhala is my rosary.
So short and sweet, so easy, and always there.
This name is a weapon, the arrow of nirvāṇa,[1]
a means for the moment when death is near.
What’s the use of preparing for a funeral?

Nārāyaṇa[2] breaks up your pain if youfix your sights on him.
This is the very best of all that's known.
Because it frees you from the world, and frees you forever,
you must go and seek out the Lord's protection.
It's all you need to do, and it's enough.
That's why I'm angry with the world,
this gleaming, poisonous serpent.[3]
It keeps us apart, me and you, my giver,
with its sharp and hostile stratagems.

Full p. C-107

It has made me taste the fruit of this world,
it hasfixed the wrong verses in my mind.
I've grown fat and heavy with my many sojourns.
I've grown bald with the mockery heaped on me.
I've had the punishment for what I've done.
I've eaten what's eaten in many castes and births.
I must break it up now, put an end to it.
Lord, Tūka lays himself down at your feet.

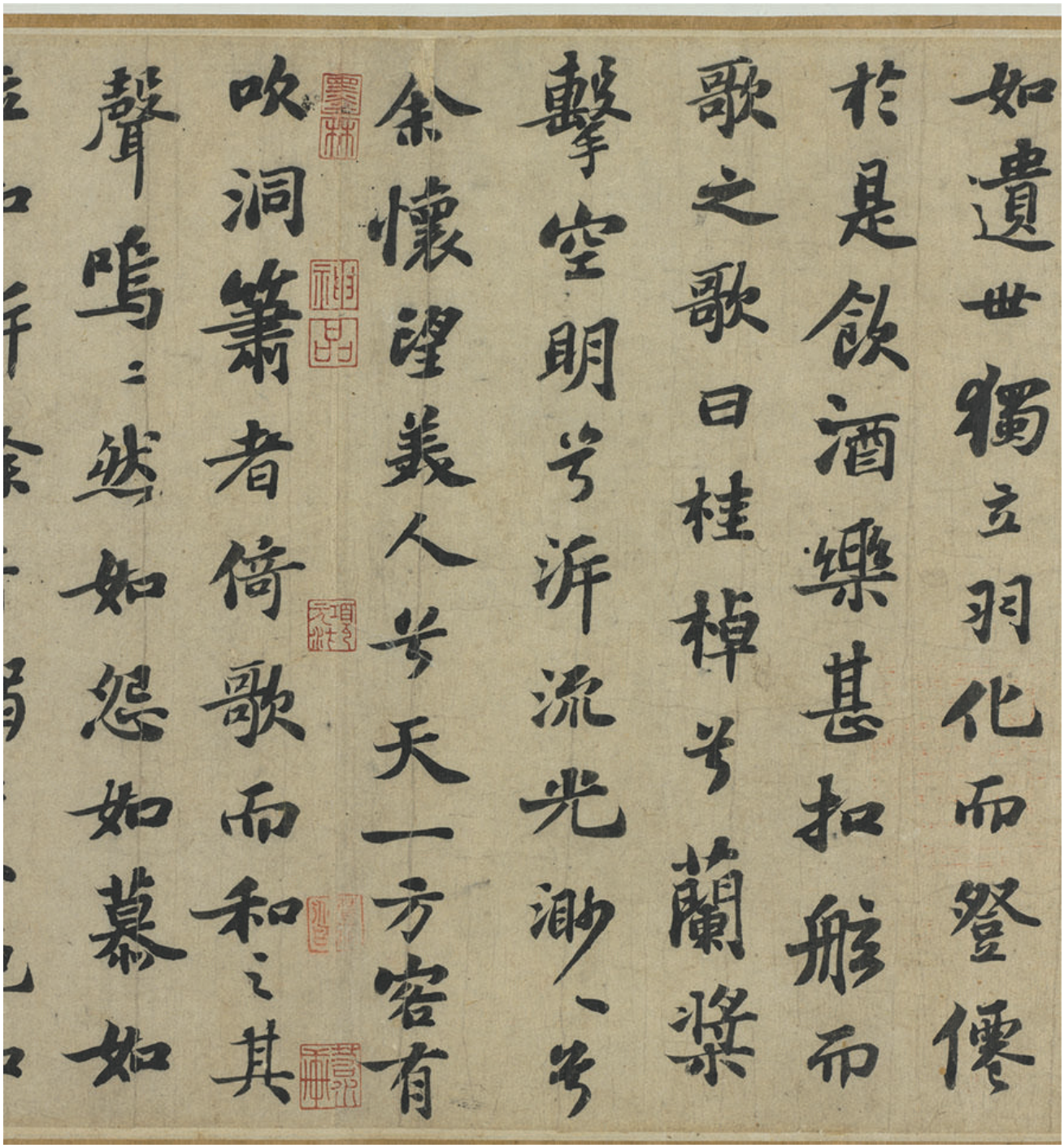
Footnotes

- Note 9:A local god associated with the region of Maharashtra in western India, who is identified with Viṣṇu. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:Buddhist term for liberation from karma and rebirth by means of "extinguishing" the self, but used in many Hindu and *bhakti* texts as a broad synonym for *mokṣa*, liberation from karma when the self reunites with God or godhead. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:A name for Viṣṇu in his universal aspect, here used as an epithet for Viṭṭhala, Tukaram's chosen local god. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:A personification of the world's deceptiveness and viciousness. Return to reference 3

Full p. C-108 Full p. C-109

HUMANISM AND THE REDISCOVERY OF THE PAST

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Original calligraphic text of “First Rhapsody on the Red Cliff” (c. 1082), composed by Su Shi.

Humanism is a belief system or attitude that appreciates the agency of human beings in this world. Proponents of humanism believe that humans have the capacity to reach their full potential through a process of self-examination and self-awareness, without the intervention of gods or divine powers. They believe in the dignity of humans and in the value of their accomplishments. Forms of humanism thus typically emerged in historical moments when people could look back to a history of cultural achievement in order to seek political and moral guidance and cope with the challenges of an ever more complex present.

In Renaissance Europe, *umanisti* were scholars who studied classical—that is, Greek and Roman—literatures as a cornerstone for a well-rounded education: they engaged their students in *studia humanitatis*, a pedagogical ideal that originated with the ancient Roman

statesman Marcus Tullius Cicero (106–43 B.C.E.). As precursor to the "Humanities" disciplines of today's colleges and universities, the ideal education included the study of grammar, rhetoric, poetry, history, and moral philosophy, mainly through the languages and literary cultures of ancient Greece and Rome.

Although the Latin-derived word *humanism* is typically associated with Renaissance Europe, intellectual movements that believe in the creative power and inherent ability of humans for self-realization have existed in various cultures and periods across world history. Here we focus our attention on two such formative moments: humanisms in China during the Tang (618–907) and Song Dynasties (960–1279) and in Renaissance Europe during thefifteenth through seventeenth centuries, stimulated by earlier Arabic and Persian scholars and philosophers, and ultimately brought to the New World by European colonialism. The Chinese tradition and the rediscovery of ancient Greece and Rome in the West were historically unrelated, and their propagators were unaware of each other. But when we compare them, we can see intriguing patterns of similarity and divergence in the intersections among humanistic attitudes, the rediscovery of a classical past through texts and antiquarian objects, political and religious reform programs, and the literary texts that gave them voice.

Understanding the divergences between the Chinese case and the various examples below helps us realize both how various societies in world history have sought renewal and the positive affirmation of human creativity in their past, but also how humanism has taken different forms depending on the political circumstances, educational institutions, and prevailing social and literary values.

Full p. C-110

HUMANISMS OF TANG AND SONG CHINA

With its three millennia of continuous cultural and literary traditions, China has had a number of "renaissance" moments when thinkers and writers looked back to earlier times and clothed their calls for reform in the words of human sages of earlier ages. Confucius (ca. 551–479 B.C.E.) turned the sage-kings King Wen and King Wu, who had founded the Zhou Dynasty (ca. 1046–256 B.C.E.) six hundred years earlier, into moral exemplars in order to criticize the greedy and unscrupulous rulers of his own time. But the period that saw the most significant calls for return to a classical past were revival movements during the Tang and Song Dynasties, which impacted not just China, but all of East Asia—Korea, Japan, and Vietnam—until the threshold of the twentieth century.

The contexts in which humanism and the rediscovery of the past emerged in China and the West were strikingly different. After the fall of its only recently Christianized Western part in 410, the Roman Empire was never again fully reunited, but disintegrated into various regions and sank into a period of barbarian invasions that resulted in a tremendous loss of knowledge. Various polities have laid claim to restoring the Roman Empire over the past one-and-a-half millennia, from the Holy Roman Empire founded by the Frankish king Charlemagne, to the Ottoman Empire, to Fascist Italy. In stark contrast, long after the fall of the great Han Empire (206 B.C.E.–220 C.E.) China was not just reunited after a rather brief "Period of Disunion" in 581, but the Sui (581–618) and Tang Dynasties (618–907) became a golden age of cosmopolitan culture, and Chinese culture an ideal on which young states throughout East Asia modeled their political, religious, and cultural institutions. These conditions made for a

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very different rediscovery of the classical past. Unlike Renaissance scholars in Europe, Chinese thinkers and writers did not face the challenge of reconciling the admiration of a pagan past with their Christian beliefs. For them, classical antiquity was remote, but could serve as a comprehensive ideal model, whereas their European counterparts had to work carefully to integrate Europe's pagan past into its Christian present. Further, whereas its splintered political map meant that Europe developed national "Renaissances" that spread gradually from Italy to various states in Northern Europe between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries, in China the rediscovery of the past happened simultaneously within a single empire, even as this process took diverse forms. Moreover, European humanism, by drawing on Islamic predecessors, recovered the classical Greek and Roman past after a period of cultural loss during the Christian Middle Ages; but China's "Period of Disunion," though politically fractured, saw the highpoint of a sophisticated court culture that developed alongside the gradual spread of Buddhism from India into China.

Already during the Period of Disunion, when some writers rebelled against excessive ornament and a form of beautifully balanced "parallel prose" writing that had emerged after the Han Empire. But the call for reform through revival of the classical past became pressing only with the Tang Dynasty. During the early Tang, scholars established definitive editions and explanatory commentaries of the Confucian classics, reinforcing their canonical status by adding their own commentaries (and new commentaries to existing ones). With the call to "Revive Antiquity!" (*fu gu*), poets and scholar-officials proposed various programs of reform for a dynasty that was struggling to regain central control and was beset by economic woes, Full p. C-111 natural disasters, popular uprisings, and disloyal military governors.

European humanists were eager to recover the sophisticated literary cultures of ancient Greece and Rome. In contrast, Chinese proponents of a return to antiquity strove to return to the simplicity of past writing from the Zhou and Han Dynasties that preceded the refined court culture of the Period of Disunion and early Tang. The growing dissatisfaction with court culture inspired scholar-officials to move from the role of court poets, called on to praise the emperor, to the role of critical scholar-poets, the "literati" (plural of the Latin *literatus*), who often found their most sincere voice when exiled and ousted from court.

"Revive Antiquity" movements took a programmatic shape in the ninth century—a period that Song Dynasty literati would later pinpoint as the origins of their own reform programs. **Han Yu** (768–824) called for restoring the virtues of ancient Confucianism, in particular a restoration of order through social hierarchies—especially between the ruler and his ministers, as well as the family patriarch and his wife and male offspring—as realized through the values of loyalty,filial piety, and proper ritual behavior in everyday life. Han Yu's program was strongly "nativist," as he emphasized the recovery of native Chinese customs and harshly polemicized against the evil influence of the foreign-born religion of Buddhism, which spread across China after antiquity and had allegedly led to moral decline. Notice the intriguing contrast: whereas European humanists had to cleverly adapt their rediscovery of pagan antiquity to the orthodox demands of the Christian church to avoid conflict, Han Yu could call for a straight return to the high antiquity that existed *prior* to the arrival of Buddhism from India. In afit of polemical overreach, he urged the emperor to eradicate the religion, which almost cost him his life. Han Yu's friend **Liu Zongyuan** (773–819) was less invested in the moral program—which would earn Han Yu his status as a foremostfigurehead for subsequent

Confucian revival movements. Instead, Liu Zongyuan rediscovered classical texts as objects of scholarly examination—anotherflavor of humanism and revival of the past.

The various reform-through-revival movements in the Tang era articulated their programs through experimentation with ancient literary styles and genres. During the Song Dynasty, such movements took a more directly political and philosophical shape. This is most obvious in the rise of a novel form of Confucianism, "Neo-Confucianism." Philosophically minded literati like **Zhang Zai** (1020–1077) enlisted the Confucian classics to build a unified vision of the cosmos that emphasized human agency. Based on the *Classic of Changes*, a Confucian classic that was originally a divination, Zhang Zai posited the "vital force" (*qi*) as the primordial substance and ever-changing force of all things. He claimed that by "forming one body with the universe," humans could achieve sagehood, based on the wisdom of ancient sages. Neo-Confucian thinkers believed that authority should be given to those who had progressed furthest on this path of constant self-cultivation in their individual development, the stewardship of their families, and leadership in their communities.

The brands of humanism and references to antiquity became more diverse during the Song. Take **Su Shi** (1037–1101). His reflections on human ephemerality and ingenuity, as well as his interests in ancient books, calligraphy, and paintings, allow us to identify a new streak of humanistic outlook and antiquarian influence. During his lifetime, ancient bronze vessels from Full p. C-112 the earliest historical dynasties were rediscovered and spurred scholars to attempt to interpret these ritual implements in relation to ancient Confucian ritual classics. Collecting ancient books and artefacts became an expensive, time-consuming pastime of scholars who enjoyed showing offtheir deep expertise, "connoisseurship," to their friends and colleagues. Because they looked back to the origins of Confucian patriarchal values in ancient texts, all revival movements were a thoroughly male business, just as in Europe. However, the female poet and collector **Li Qingzhao** has given us a unique image of how deep learning and a passion for antique collecting and connoisseurship could intersect with romantic marital passion. Her classical erudition and participation in antiquarian pursuits makes her a very rare female presence in Song Dynasty humanism.

The Song Dynasty marks the beginning of China's early modernity. Europe's early modernity of thefifteenth and sixteenth centuries was marked by revival movements, such as the Renaissance, humanism, and the Reformation, and also by the commercial printing revolution, the emergence of an increasingly wealthy class of citizens and merchants, and the beginnings of European exploration and colonization. In contrast, China's early modernity, which preceded Europe's by aboutfive centuries, had its own distinctive features: revival movements such as Tang "Revive Antiquity" movements and Song Neo-Confucianism and antiquarianism, a strongly state-sponsored print revolution, and the ever-stronger assertion of the literati class. By the period of the Southern Song (1127–1279), the increasing competitiveness of exams led to frustration and factional struggles at court, inspiring literati to seek status in their local communities through philanthropy in education and public life. Literati sustained a network of state-sponsored local schools where they taught their new vision of education, self-cultivation, and Neo-Confucian philosophy. Neo-Confucians rejected success in the civil service exam as sole path to political influence and instead considered themselves the successors of the teachings of the sage-kings of antiquity and the much-needed reformers of a broken political system. Until the late nineteenth-century, under the pressure of invading imperialist European powers, the Chinese literati class would continue to formulate

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political criticism and philosophical programs in this spirit—the outcome of a complex process of revivalist reform movements initiated by the Tang and Song poets and thinkers featured here.

EUROPE AND THE NEW WORLD

"*Ad fontes*!" ("To the sources!") With this rousing cry, thinkers and writers urged early modern Europeans to connect to the Greco-Roman tradition andfind in it the inspiration for their own societies. Starting in about the middle of the fourteenth century in Europe, the turn to the classics as a source of insight gave birth to the movement we know as humanism. Although humanists did not reject the Christian tradition, they turned their focus to this world and to the living potential of humankind as opposed to its ultimate destiny in a heavenly realm. Intellectually, humanists often positioned themselves against the medieval tradition of scholasticism, which privileged generations of commentators and latter-day authorities over the original texts. Humanists, by contrast, sought a close intellectual communion with the ancients, even as they also strove to make their texts available again.

The routes to those sources were multiple and complex. Islamic societies had long engaged with Greek thought, Full p. C-113 and particularly Aristotle, as the brief excerpt from **Ibn Sina** below makes clear. Yet this body of knowledge only gradually made its way into Europe after Arabic works were translated into Latin in the twelfth century. Meanwhile, many Greek and Latin works were considered lost, and it was not until scholars such as **Poggio** and others actively started hunting for manuscripts that anything like our modern sense of "the classics" was recovered. **Francis Petrarch** (1304–1374), arguably thefirst humanist, followed his discovery of Cicero's personal correspondence with his own letters to the ancients, in an imaginative conversation that collapsed all distance. Similarly, the political theorist **Niccol ò Machiavelli** (1469–1527), who was intimately involved in the power struggles of his native Florence and whose revolutionary work ***The Prince*** is included in this volume, found comfort and inspiration in the classics: "Entering the ancient courts of ancient men," he wrote to his friend Francesco Vettori, "I feel no boredom and forget every worry; I do not fear poverty, and death does not terrify me."

Humanism was an intellectual and aesthetic movement, to be sure, yet it was particularly important in the civic realm: its proponents hoped to form citizens who would be able to participate in political life, to speak and write with eloquence, and to inspire others to virtuous action. This was to be accomplished through the study of grammar, rhetoric, history, poetry, and moral philosophy—subjects that today we call the humanities. The growth of literacy and the advent of the printing press, combined with the new humanist pedagogy, offered opportunities for educating future citizens of the commonwealth.

Humanists across Europe participated in a "republic of letters" that transcended individual nations and that found a shared language in Latin. While they traveled widely as emissaries or ambassadors for their rulers, in the new age of print their texts traveled even farther, reaching across vast distances to readers who shared their interests and education. Humanists formed a new lettered class of (almost exclusively) men whose talents propelled them within their polities, as they helped to staffthe bureaucracies of the new nation-states and also to create important intellectual networks beyond them. Figures such as the Flemish Desiderius Erasmus (1466?–1536) and the English **Thomas More** (1478–1535) transcended their places of origin to

become famous across Europe. Yet their tight intellectual circles meant that texts such as Erasmus's *Praise of Folly* or More's ***Utopia*** were often read as inside jokes, both deadly serious in their satirical thrust and yet dependent on a savvy, learned audience. Beyond their specific targets, these texts question the very possibility of received wisdom, arguing instead for tireless inquiry, all while merrily recalling the folly of human behavior.

On occasion, humanism could also take on a much more melancholy tinge, given the enormous temporal and cultural distance that writers had to traverse in order to engage with the classical world. By the mid-sixteenth century, the optimism of the earliest Italian humanists had been replaced by a more cautious and skeptical stance. In the sonnets of the French poet **Joachim du Bellay** (1522–1560) included here, looking to Rome is a complicated gesture, far from the cozy confabulations with the ancients of Petrarch or Machiavelli. Hardly celebratory, Du Bellay's poems on Rome confront in the sixteenth-century city the decadence of what was once a great empire. Yet while the physical ruins provide no more than a lifeless portrait, just a sepulchral shade of Rome's ancient glory (as Full p. C-114 Sonnet 5 puts it), its writings "keep her specter wandering around the world." The spectral Rome haunts the Renaissance writer, whose works must, paradoxically, measure up to the glories of a past that is no more. Humanism also informed the European encounter with the New World, where the rise and fall of empires was hardly an ancient phenomenon, but was occurring in real time. In the former Aztec Empire—New Spain to the conquerors, present-day Mexico—the Spaniards taught Latin to Indigenous elites and grappled with current ideas of what antiquity meant. Born in the former Inca Empire of South America, the *mestizo* writer **Inca Garcilaso de la Vega** turned to humanist models to validate his own history of the Spanish conquest of Peru and the Inca Empire itself, whose capital, Cuzco, he compared to Rome.

One version of the tension between antiquity and modernity, so neatly expressed in Du Bellay's sonnets, is the development of literary humanism in the vernacular, or modern, languages. Petrarch, Rabelais, and Du Bellay are all known for their writings in their everyday spoken languages, as opposed to Latin. For while humanists revered the classical tradition and pursued the study of ancient languages, they also embarked on an ambitious program to dignify their own languages and to give them an equal standing alongside Latin. Du Bellay argued in his "Defense and Illustration of the French Language" (1549) that though French might seem rough in comparison to Latin, proper cultivation would help elevate it to the level of the classical languages. Similar movements to defend and promote the vernaculars were spearheaded by humanists across Europe, leading to an unprecedented period of literary innovation that drew equally from the rediscovered classics and the newly confident vernaculars. Even as they looked to the Greco-Roman tradition for inspiration, humanists and their students innovated and transformed the languages of the Renaissance.

HAN YU

Han Yu (768–824) lost his father, a minor government official, during thefirst years of his life, but was lovingly raised in the family of his older brother. He passed the prestigious civil service examination in his early twenties and went on to serve in various high-ranking government positions as an official in the Bureau of War and as rector of the Imperial Academy. But he was also exiled twice, for factional struggles, and was almost executed.

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Among the various voices calling for a revival of antiquity in Tang China, Han Yu had the most comprehensive vision and polemical spirit. There are lyrical underpinnings to his nostalgic yearning for antiquity, as we can see in the domestic scene in “Autumn Thoughts” where hefinds himself musing on “the ancients” while eavesdropping on a boy reciting ancient poems. But his vision for reform took on clearer programmatic contours in the manifesto-like “Essentials of the Way,” Full p. C-115 where he praises the sages of antiquity and sharply criticizes Daoist (Taoist) and Buddhist institutions, blaming them for civilizational decline and, specifically, for the economic harm caused by the tax-exempt monasteries with their idle monks and nuns. His restoration of Confucian values, articulated in the opening list of definitions, is built on the restoration of family hierarchies, based on the values of the former kings, on the orthodox lineage of Confucian rulers and thinkers that he saw culminating in himself, and the protection of the weak in society by a virtuous Confucian monarch. It was his infamous “Memorial on the Buddha Bone,” where he castigates the court for supporting Buddhism and the veneration of “stinking” Buddha relics, that sent him into exile in the southern city of Chaozhou, in today’s Guangdong province.

Opposing the engrained parallel prose style that was rooted in the Buddhist culture of the Period of Disunion, he spearheaded a new “ancient-style prose” style that creatively evoked the literature of antiquity for his own political, moral, and aesthetic purposes. With Liu Zongyuan and Su Shi he was canonized as one of the “Eight Prose Masters of the Tang and Song Dynasties,” although his eccentric predilection for archaic and rare diction was characteristically his own.

Autumn Thoughts (poem no. 8)[1]

Blown tumbling, leaves that fall to the ground,
before my porch they run with the wind.
There seems some intent in the sounds they make,
toppling over, chasing swiftly each other.
Then twilight came to my empty hall,
I sat there silent, not speaking.
The boy came in from the outside
and lit the lamp in front of me.
He asked how I was, I did not reply;
he brought me food, I would not eat.
He drew back and sat by the western wall,
read out poems, completing a few.
Their writers were not men of today,
already a thousand years have gone by.
But something touched me in their words,
that made me again feel discouraged.
I looked around, saying, “You, boy,
put the books down and go to bed.
There’s something on my mind just now,
a task to be done that never ends.”

Footnotes

- Note 1:Translated by Stephen Owen. Return to reference 1

Full p. C-116

Essentials of the Way[1]

1. To love largely is called humaneness (*ren*); to act according to what should be done is called rightness (*yi*). To proceed from these principles is called the moral Way (*dao*); to be sufficient unto oneself without relying on externals is called inner power (*de*). Thefirst two, *ren* and *yi*, arefixed concepts; but the latter two, *dao* and *de*, are relative terms. Thus there is the Way (*dao*) of the superior man and the way of the petty man; and inner power (*de*) can work either for good or for evil.

Laozi[2] belittled humaneness and rightness; he disparaged and spoke ill of them. Yet his view was limited. Just because one sits in a well and says the sky is small does not mean the sky is really small. For Laozi humaneness meant a small kindness and rightness meant a petty favor, so it was natural that he belittled them. Therefore, the moral way and the inner power that he spoke of and put into practice are not the same as what I mean by the Way and its Power.

Whenever I use these terms, they encompass both humaneness and rightness which is the common interpretation of the whole world. Laozi's use divorces humaneness and rightness from the Way and from inner power; and this is the private interpretation of only one man.[3]

2. After the traditions of the Zhou dynasty declined and Confucius passed away, there was the burning of the books in Qin and the rise of Daoism in the Han and of Buddhism in the Jin, Wei, Liang, and Sui dynasties. During these times those who spoke of humaneness and rightness, of the Way and its power, were either followers of Yang Zhu or Mozi, Laozi or Buddha. To adopt one of these, one had to reject the others; so when believers took these men as their masters and followed them, they despised and defamed Confucius.[4] And those of later ages who might wish to hear of the teachings on humaneness and rightness, the Way and its power, had no one to listen to.

The followers of Laozi and Buddha both maintained that Confucius had been a disciple of their masters. And the followers of Confucius grew so accustomed to hearing these theories that they began to enjoy such calumnies and belittled themselves, acknowledging that the Master himself had indeed taken Laozi or the Buddha as his master. They not only said such things but also recorded them in their books. Those of later ages who might have wished to hear of the teachings on humaneness and rightness, the Way and its power, had no one from whom to seek them. How great has become men's fondness for the fantastic! They do not inquire into fundamentals or essentials but wish only to hear of the fantastic.

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3. In antiquity there were four classes of subjects; now there are six. In antiquity only one class were teachers; now there are three. For each farmer there are six people that consume his produce. For each craftsman six use his products. For each merchant, there are six people

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who must live offhis profits. Under such conditions, is it any wonder the people are impoverished and driven to brigandage?

In ancient times men confronted many dangers. But sages arose who taught them the way to live and to grow together. They served as rulers and as teachers. They drove out reptiles and wild beasts and had the people settle the central lands. The people were cold, and they clothed them; hungry, and they fed them. Because the people dwelt in trees and fell to the ground, dwelt in caves and became ill, the sages built houses for them.

They fashioned crafts so the people could provide themselves with implements. They made trade to link together those who had and those who had not and medicine to save them from premature death. They taught the people to bury and make sacrifices [to the dead] to enlarge their sense of gratitude and love. They gave rites to set order and precedence, music to vent melancholy, government to direct idleness, and punishments to weed out intransigence. When the people cheated each other, the sages invented tallies and seals, weights and measures to make them honest. When they attacked each other, they fashioned walls and towns, armor and weapons for them to defend themselves. So when dangers came, they prepared the people; and when calamity arose, they defended people.

But now the Daoists maintain:

> Till the sages are dead,
> theft will not end . . .
> so break the measures, smash the scales,
> and the people will not contend.[5]

These are thoughtless remarks indeed, for humankind would have died out long ago if there had been no sages in antiquity. Men have neither feathers nor fur, neither scales nor shells to ward offheat and cold, neither talons nor fangs tofight for food.

4. And so for this reason, the ruler is the one who issues commands. His ministers effect their ruler's commands and transmit them to the people. The people produce grains and rice, hemp and silk, make implements and exchange commodities in order to serve their superiors. If the ruler issues no commands, then he loses his reason for being ruler. If the ministers do not effect their ruler's commands and transmit them to the people, if the people do not produce grains and rice, hemp and silk, make implements and exchange commodities in order to serve their superiors, they are punished.

But now the Buddhist doctrine maintains that one must reject the relationship between ruler and minister, do away with father and son and forbid the Way that enables us to live and to grow together—all this in order to seek what they call purity and *nirvāṇa.*[6] It is fortunate for them that these doctrines Full p. C-118 emerged after the Xia, Shang, and Zhou dynasties[7] and so were not discredited by the ancient sages and by Confucius. It is equally unfortunate for us that they did not emerge before that time and so could have been corrected by the same sage.

The titles of emperor and of king are different, yet they are sages for the same reason. To wear linen in summer and fur in winter, to drink when thirsty and to eat when hungry—in both cases the concern is different, yet the logic is the same. But now the Daoists advocate "doing nothing"[8] as in high antiquity. Such is akin to criticizing a man who wears furs in

winter by asserting that it is easier to make linen, or akin to criticizing a man who eats when he is hungry by asserting that it is easier to take a drink.

5. According to a traditional text, “Those in antiquity who wished to illuminate luminous virtue throughout the world wouldfirst govern their states; wishing to govern their states, they wouldfirst bring order to their families; wishing to bring order to their families, they wouldfirst cultivate their own persons; wishing to cultivate their own persons, they wouldfirst rectify their minds; wishing to rectify their minds, they wouldfirst make their thoughts sincere.”[9] And so what the ancients called rectifying the mind and making thoughts sincere were things they actually put into practice.

Yet today those who would rectify their minds do so by rejecting the empire and the state and by abrogating the natural principles of human relations: although they are sons, they do not regard their fathers as fathers. Although ministers, they do not regard their ruler as ruler. Although subjects, they do not attend to their duties.

When Confucius wrote the *Spring and Autumn Annals,*[1] if the enfeoffed lords followed the usage of the barbarians, he treated them as barbarians. If they progressed to the level of the central states, then he treated them as central states. The classic says: “The barbarians with their rulers are not the equal of all Xia without them.” The Ode says: “The Rong and Di barbarians, them he withstood; Jing and Shu, those he repressed.”[2]

Yet today we elevate barbarian practices and place them above the teachings of our former kings. How long will it be before we ourselves have all become barbarians?

6. What is the teaching of the former kings? To love largely is called a sense of humaneness; to act according to what should be done is called rightness. To proceed from these principles is called the moral Way; to be sufficient unto oneself without relying on externals is called inner power. Its texts are the Full p. C-119 *Odes,* the *Documents,* the *Changes,* and the *Spring and Autumn Annals* .[3] Its methods are the rites, music, chastisement, and government. Its classes of people are scholars, peasants, craftsmen, and merchants. Its social relationships are ruler and minister, father and son, teacher and pupil, guest and host, older and younger brother, husband and wife. Its dress is hemp and silk; its dwellings are houses; its foods are rice and grains, fruits and vegetables,fish and meat. Its ways are easy to explain; its teachings are easy to execute.

> And so
> Take it unto yourself;find ease and happiness
> use it with others; be loving and fair
> take it to your own mind;find peace, quietness
> use it for empire and state;find it works everywhere
> And so
> in life they held to human feeling
> and in death fulfilled their obligations,
> so the spirits of Heaven came to their altars
> and the manes of mortals received their libations.

7. What Way is this? It is what I call the Way, not what the Daoists and Buddhists have called the Way. Yao passed it on to Shun, Shun to Yu, Yu to Tang, Tang to King Wen, King Wu, and the

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Duke of Zhou; then these passed it on to Confucius, who passed it on to Mencius.[4] But after the death of Mencius it was not passed on. Xunzi and Yang Xiong

> Excerpted it but not its essence,
> Discussed it but not in detail.
> Before the Duke of Zhou
> Our sages were kings,
> And things got done.
> After the Duke of Zhou
> Our sages were subjects
> And long theory won.

This being so, what can be done? Block them or nothing willflow; stop them or nothing will move. Make humans of these people, burn their books, make homes of their dwellings, make clear the way of the former kings to guide them, and "the widowers, the widows, the orphans, the childless, and the diseased all shall have care." This can be done.

Footnotes

- Note 1:Translated by Charles Hartman. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:After the opening on a compact statement of central Confucian values, Han Yu launches into a critique of Laozi (Lao Tzu), foundingfigure of Daoism and associated with the philosophical Masters Text *Laozi* (also known as *Daodejing*, or *Tao Te Ching*). Return to reference 2
- Note 3:This attack is directed against Laozi 18: "When the great Way declined, there were humaneness and rightness," and Laozi 38: "Therefore after the Way was lost there was virtue, after virtue was lost there was humaneness, after humaneness was lost there was rightness . . ." Return to reference 3
- Note 4:A sweeping macrohistorical view of the supposed decline of Confucianism due to Daoism and Buddhism (and other intellectual enemies of Confucianism, such as Yang Zhu and Mozi) from the Zhou Dynasty (c. 1046–256 B.C.E.) to the Sui Dynasty (581–618), the dynasty that preceded Han Yu's own Tang Dynasty. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:Excerpt from the other central early Daoist text, *Zhuangzi* . Return to reference 5
- Note 6:The ultimate goal of practitioners of Buddhism, where one reaches a place of perfect bliss, and "extinguishment" and "liberation" from all suffering and rebirth. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:Dynasties of Chinese antiquity, prior to 221 B.C.E. Buddhism reached China from India around the Common Era. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:In Chinese *wuwei*, a core Daoist concept that advocates for the power of "nonassertive action" or "productive passivity." Return to reference 8
- Note 9:Quotation from the "Great Learning," a chapter from the Confucian classic *Record of Ritual* that the Song-Dynasty Neo-Confucian thinker Zhu Xi elevated to the Neo-Confucian canon of the *Four Books* (together with the *Analects*, *Mencius*, and *Doctrine of the Mean*). Return to reference 9
- Note 1:Historical chronicle of Confucius's home state of Lu that became one of the Five Confucian Classics. Return to reference 1

- Note 2:Quotations from the *Analects* (3.5) and *Classic of Poetry* (no. 300; also known as *Book of Odes* or simply *Odes*), respectively, to show the cultural superiority of the Chinese states over various "barbarian" or semicivilized states. Han Yu uses these quotations from ancient texts to mount his critique of "barbarian" foreign Buddhism. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Four of the Five Confucian Classics (missing only the ritual classics). Return to reference 3
- Note 4:This is the earliest and most influential statement of the orthodox Neo-Confucian "Lineage of the Way": it originated with model emperors of high antiquity (Yao and Shun), was carried on by the dynastic foundingfigures of the ancient Xia, Shang, and Zhou Dynasties (Yu, Tang, and King Wen and King Wu and his brother, the Duke of Zhou), and then passed to Confucian masters, namely Confucius and Mencius. Han Yu saw himself as the restorer of the lineage that supposedly lapsed after Mencius with unorthodox Confucians like Xunzi and Yang Xiong. Return to reference 4

Written on the Wall of the Temple of King Zhao of Chu[1]

Burial moundsfill the eye: their clothes and
ceremonial caps have vanished.
The city walls and chambers stretch to
the clouds; the grasses and trees grow wild
Still there are people of this
country who cherish virtue of old:
In a thatched house of one room,
they sacrifice to King Zhao.[2]

5

Footnotes

- Note 1:Translated by Michael Fuller. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Han Yu wrote this poem in 819 on his way to exile in Chaozhou, in today's Guangdong province, after having offended the emperor with a memorial that stridently criticized the emperor's worshiping of Buddhist relics. He is stopping here in Yicheng (in modern Hubei province), the site of the former capital of King Zhao of Chu, who moved his capital in 504 B.C.E. to escape the threat of attacks by the neighboring state of Wu. Han Yu admires the uninterrupted devotion of countryfolk to offering sacrifices to the ancient king from 1,300 years earlier. Return to reference 2

LIU ZONGYUAN

Liu Zongyuan (773–819) was less lucky than Han Yu. Although he passed the civil service exam at a young age and embarked on a successful career as a civil servant, he was exiled in 805 when he became embroiled with a failed reformist movement. He spent the rest of his life in various provincial posts, never making it back to the capital and eventually dying in the deep south of today's Guangxi province.

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Liu Zongyuan's exile had profound consequences for his literary and scholarly work. He had little impact during his life, since his works did not circulate in the capital. But Neo-Confucian thinkers in the Song Dynasty rediscovered him as a kindred spirit. His distance from the capital, it turned out, also had advantages. Rather than being busy with administrative tasks, he was able to dedicate himself to his remarkable literary experiments. In addition to a poetry collection, he wrote philosophical fables, meditative travelogues, syncretic essays on Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism, biographies of humble adolescents who persevere withfierce moral rectitude in the face of difficulties, and even a fable-like biography of a man in love with the goddess of the privy and ends up drowning himself in the latrine, illustrating, in a tragicomical manner, the dire effects of human obsessions and folly. While Han Yu used classical texts as a quarry for erudite diction and classicist literary experimentation, Liu Zongyuan wrote essays on various Confucian Classics and the Confucian *Analects*, hoping to mobilize Full p. C-121 these texts to address contemporary political problems.

"A Theory of Heaven" is a tongue-in-cheek argument about the harm humans are inflicting upon their environment. Half-parodying the passion forfierce polemical argument popular among the literati at the time, Liu Zongyuan has his friend Han Yu enthusiastically make a caustic case for praising those who harm people: they do Heaven and the world a favor when they remove the culprits who assault, destroy, ruin, and wreck nature! In response, Liu Zongyuan, as afictional protagonist in this treatise, pokes fun at Han Yu and makes the serious argument that Heaven doesn't care. In keeping with a humanist attitude, Liu Zongyuan emphasizes that humans should not look to Heaven as a moral force but realize that they have to take responsibility for their own actions in this world.

A Theory of Heaven[1]

Han Yu addressed Master Liu, "Do you know my theory about Heaven? Well, I will tell you my theory. These days whenever someone suffers from the torment of disease or is worn down by humiliation or endures hunger and cold, he looks up and cries out to Heaven: 'Those who harm folkflourish; those who help folk perish!' Or they look up and cry out to Heaven: 'Why have you caused things to go so utterly wrong?' No one who behaves like this truly understands Heaven.

"When a piece of fruit or a melon has become too rotten to eat, insects grow in it. When the vitality of a man's blood fails and becomes sluggish, abscesses, swelling pustules, and hemorrhoids form; insects grow in these too. When wood rots, there are grubs within; when plants putrefy,fireflies come forth from them. These are obviously things that appear only after decay sets in. When something decays, insects are born out of it; and when the Primordial Force or Yin and Yang decayed, out of that human beings were born.

"When insects grow in that thing, it decays even further. Chewing at it, boring holes in it, the harm that the insects inflict on the thing increases greatly. If someone were able to get rid of them, such a person would have done a good deed on behalf of the thing; but whoever lets them multiply and gives comfort to them is the enemy of the thing. The incremental decay that human beings cause to the Primordial Force and to Yin and Yang has also increased greatly. Men plow meadows andfields; they cut down the mountain forests; they dig down to underground springs tofind wells that provide them with drink; they excavate graves in which

to put their dead. Moreover, they dig latrines; they pound hard earthen walls to surround their homes and their cities; they raise platforms of pounded earth on which to build pavilions and lodges for their excursions; they dig channels for rivers and canals, irrigation ditches, and ponds; they kindle wood forfires; they alter metals by smelting them; they mold pottery and grind and polish stone. Everything in the world looks the worse for wear and nothing can follow its own nature—human beings are responsible for this. Seething in their fury, constantly battering, they assault, destroy, ruin, and wreck; nor have they ever desisted. Is not the harm they inflict on the Primordial Force and upon Yin and Yang even worse than what insects do?

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"In my opinion if one were able to cut away at humanity and make them dwindle over the days and years, then the harm inflicted on the Primordial Force and Yin and Yang would steadily diminish. Whoever could accomplish this would have done a good deed for Heaven and Earth. But whoever lets them multiply and gives comfort to them is the enemy of Heaven and Earth. These days no one understands Heaven, so they cry out to it in reproach. In my opinion, when Heaven hears their cries of reproach, then those who have done it a good deed will inevitably receive a rich reward; but those who have inflicted harm on it will inevitable receive grave punishment. What do you think of what I have said?"

Master Liu then said, "Was there something that got you truly worked up that you propose this? It is well argued indeed and beautifully put. But let me carry this theory to its conclusion. Human beings refer to what is dark, mysterious, and above us as Heaven; they refer to what is brown and beneath us as Earth. They refer to that vast, undifferentiated murkiness in between as the Primordial Force; and they refer to the cold and heat as Yin and Yang. However large these are, they are no different from fruits and melons, abscesses and pustules, or plants and trees.

"Let us suppose there were someone or something able to get rid of what bores holes in them—would there be any reward for such a creature? Or one that let them multiply and gave them comfort—would there be any anger against such? Heaven and Earth are a large fruit. The Primordial Force is a large pustule. Yin and Yang are a large tree. How could such things reward a good deed or punish harms inflicted? Those who do such good deeds, do so on their own; those who inflict harm, inflict it on their own. To expect either reward or punishment is great folly. Those who cry out in reproach, expecting Heaven will feel sorry for them and be kind to them, show even greater folly. As for you, you trust in your own sense of kindness and right and move freely within that, during your life and on until your death. Why attribute your preservation or destruction, your gains and your losses, to a piece of fruit, a pustule, or a tree?"

Footnotes

- Note 1:Translated by Stephen Owen. Return to reference 1

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SU SHI

Su Shi (1037–1101) was a phenomenon. Like Han Yu and Liu Zongyuan, Su Shi (also called “Su Dongpo”—“Su of the Eastern Slope,” his residence during exile in Huangzhou) was to be canonized as one of the “Eight Prose Masters of the Tang and Song Dynasties.” Even during his lifetime he was celebrated as a poet, successful calligrapher, culinary connoisseur, and a deep and whimsical thinker about the vicissitudes of public and private life, the pleasures of art and collecting, and the small wonders of everyday life. When he was around age thirty his works started to circulate in print, helping him become a publicfigure—unlike any Chinese writer in the age before the invention of printing in China in the ninth century.

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Su Shi ranked at the top of his cohort in the civil service examination at the young age of twenty and became even more renowned a few years later, when he passed a special examination given only for individuals of extraordinary promise. His career included high-level appointments at court, but also imprisonment for slandering the emperor and ever harsher stints in exile. This treatment added to his fame but made for a life punctuated by material hardship and political persecution. Persecution extended beyond his death, as his writings were prohibited until the 1120s—which did not reduce his fame or prevent the enthusiastic reception of his work across East Asia in Korea and Japan.

Much of his political trouble was rooted in his opposition to the “New Policies,” which sought to reduce government spending and strengthen the military in its struggles on the northern frontier. Su Shi was a “Renaissance man” and advocated for broad learning, reaching from literature, history, and moral philosophy tofields like astronomy, music, and calendric science. He was convinced that every human being needed tofind their own access to and expression of the Way.

Su Shi’s humanist advocacy for curiosity, individual insight, and personal self-realization resounds subtly throughout his work. His “Account of the Hall of Precious Artworks” includes his ardent confession of his antiquarian passions for collecting old books, paintings, and art, but is mainly a Buddhist-inspired warning to a friend, the Commander Escort Wang Shen, not to get attached to material things and increase his suffering in this world. A similar move to scale philosophical heights in response to everyday events happens in the two “Rhapsodies on the Red Cliff,” the site where the southern warlords Sun Quan, Liu Bei, and Liu Qi had miraculously defeated the overpowering forces of the northern warlord Cao Cao in a decisive naval battle that ushered in the Three Kingdoms Period (220–280 C.E.). An improvised boat excursion under the autumn moon sends Su Shi offto muse on the presence of the great past, the paradox of constant change and the endless changelessness of things, human insignificance—and lone cranes, harbingers of immortality.

Hall of Precious Artworks[1]

The superior person may let his interestsfind temporary lodging in external things, yet he may not let those interests remain caught up in things. When our interestsfind temporary lodging in external things, even the humblest things can bring delight and even the most beguiling things can bring no harm upon us. But if our interests do remain caught up in things, even the humblest things can do us damage and even the most beguiling things bring no delight. It was

Lao-zi who said, “All the colors together blind the eyes. All the musical notes deafen the ears. Allflavors ruin the palate. And galloping onfield hunts brings out a madness in the mind of man.” But the Sage never gives these four things up—he simply lets his interests lodge in them only temporarily. Liu Bei, the founder of the Shu-Han Kingdom, had the gift of bold action, yet he loved to plait animal hair. Xi Kang, the Daoist eccentric, achieved the spirit’s perfection, Full p. C-124 yet he loved the labors of a smith. Ruan Fu was a free spirit, yet he loved waxed clogs. These are hardly the sensual pleasures of sound, physical beauty, smell, or taste; yet throughout their lives these men found an unflagging delight in such things.

Among all the things that bring us joy and have the capacity to please a person without swaying him, nothing can compare to books and paintings. But when our interests remain caught up in them and cannot get loose, the evil they can wreak is beyond the telling. By these Zhong Yao was brought to vomit blood and dig up a tomb.[2] Emperor Xiao-wu of the Liu-Song, who wanted to be the dominant calligrapher of the time, came to feel spite for Wang Seng-qian. Huan Xuan’s speeding boat, in which he carried his collection of books and paintings in order to have them with him always, and Wang Ya’s multiple walls, by which he protected his collection, were both childish amusements that harmed the nation and brought ruin on the men themselves. Such is the evil of having one’s interest caught up in things.

Whenfirst I was young, I loved both books and paintings. I feared only losing what I already had and that others would not give me what they themselves had. But then I laughed at myself and said: “I care so little for wealth and honor, yet I treat books with the highest regard. I care little about my life or death, but my paintings are important to me. Doesn’t it seem that I’ve gotten things upside down and lost what is basic in the heart?” From that point on, I didn’t dote on them any more. Even though, when I came upon something that gave me pleasure, I would sometimes keep it, I no longer cared when such things were taken by someone else. Compare them to clouds and mist shapes passing before the eyes or to all the different birds that stir the listening ear—of course we rejoice when we encounter them; but when they are gone, our thoughts do not hang on them. Thus books and paintings always give me delight, yet they can do me no damage.

Although Commander Escort Wang Shen hails from the quarter of the imperial in-laws, in his clothing, in his sense of ceremony and right, in his learning, and in his literary accomplishments, he is of equal stature to poor scholars. His style of living eschews rich foods and fancy fare; he keeps apart from the sensual pleasures of ear and eye and devotes himself to books and paintings. To the east of his mansion he has built a Hall of Precious Artworks where he keeps what he has acquired; and he has asked me to write an account for it. Worried lest he have the misfortune to be as I was in my youth, too much loving these things, I have made a point of telling him this, in hopes that he can enjoy the fullness of their delights and keep far from the potential damage.

—An account written this twenty-second day of September, 1077

Footnotes

- Note 1:Translated by Stephen Owen. Return to reference 1

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- Note 2:Zhong Yao, a famous 3rd-century calligrapher, had the tomb of his rival Wei Dan robbed in order to obtain a precious piece of calligraphy by the grand calligraphy master Cai Yong. Return to reference 2

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Two Rhapsodies on the Red Cliff[1]

First Rhapsody

In the autumn of the year *renxu* (1082), the seventh month, when the moon had just passed its prime, a friend and I went out in a small boat to amuse ourselves at the foot of the Red Cliff. A fresh breeze blew softly across the water, leaving the waves unruffled. As I picked up the wine jar and poured a drink for my friend, I hummed a poem to the moon and sang a phrase on its strange beauty.

In a little while, the moon rose from the eastern hills and wandered across the sky between the Archer and the Goat. White dew settled over the river, and its shining surface reached to the sky. Letting the boat go where it pleased, we drifted over the immeasurablefields of water. I felt a boundless exhilaration, as though I were sailing on the void or riding the wind and didn't know where to stop. I wasfilled with a lightness, as though I had left the world and were standing alone, or had sprouted wings and wereflying up to join the immortals. As I drank the wine, my delight increased and, thumping the edge of the boat, I composed a song that went:

> With cassia sweep and
> Oars of orchid wood,
> Strike the empty moon,
> Row through its drifting light.
> Thoughtsfly far away—
> I long for my loved one
> In a corner of the sky.

My friend began to play on an openflute, following my song and harmonizing with it. Theflute made a wailing sound, as though the player werefilled with resentment or longing, or were lamenting or protesting. Long notes trailed through the night like endless threads of silk, a sound to make dragons dance in hidden caves, or to set the widow weeping in her lonely boat.

Saddened by his playing, I straightened my robe, bowed and asked, "What makes you play this way?"

He replied,

> "'The moon is bright, stars grow few,
> Crows and magpiesfly to the south.'

That's how Cao Cao's poem goes, doesn't it? There you can see Xiakou to the west, Wuchang to the east. A dense tangle of dark green, bounded by mountains and river—this is the very spot where the young Zhou Yu swooped down on Cao Cao, isn't it?[2] After Cao Cao had conquered

Ying and taken Yiangling, he sailed down the Yangtze to the east. The stems and sterns of his ships Full p. C-126 touched for a thousand miles, and hisflags and pennants blocked out the sky. He drank wine overlooking the river, laid his lance across the saddle, and wrote his poems. Surely he was the greatest hero of his time—yet where is he now?

"What then of you and me? Fishermen and wood gatherers by the banks of streams, companions tofish and crayfish, friends of deer and elk, riding this leaf of a boat, dipping gourds into the wine jar and pouring for each other—we are no more than summerflies between heaven and earth, a grain of millet on the waste of the sea! It grieves me that life is so short, and I envy the long river that never stops. If we could only link arms with theflying immortals and wander where we please, embrace the moon and grow old with it. . . . But I know that such hopes cannot quickly be fulfilled, and so I confide these lingering notes to the sad air."

I asked, "Do you know how it is with the water and the moon? 'The waterflows on and on like this,'[3] but somehow it neverflows away. The moon waxes and wanes, and yet in the end it's the same moon. If we look at things through the eyes of change, then there's not an instant of stillness in all creation. But if we observe the changelessness of things, then we and all beings alike have no end. What is there to be envious about?

"Moreover, everything in the world has its owner, and if a thing doesn't belong to us, we don't dare take a hair of it. Only the clear breeze over the river, or the bright moon between the hills, which our ears hear as music, our eyes see beauty in—these we may take without prohibition, these we may make free with and they will never be used up. These are the endless treasures of the Creator, here for you and me to enjoy together!"

My friend was pleased and, laughing, washed the wine cups andfilled them up again. But the fruit and other things we had brought to eat were all gone and so, among the litter of cups and bowls, we lay down in a heap in the bottom of the boat, unaware that the east was already growing light.

Second Rhapsody

This same year, on thefifteenth day of the tenth month, I was walking back from Snow Hall to my home at Lingao.[4] Two friends were with me, and we went by way of Yellow Mud Slope. Frost had already fallen and the trees were bare of leaves. Our shadows appeared on the ground, and looking up, we saw that the moon had risen. Glancing around to enjoy the sight, we walked along singing songs back and forth.

After a while, I sighed and said, "Here I have guests and there's no wine! And even if I had some wine, there's nothing to eat with it. A clear moon, a fresh breeze—what will we do with such afine night?"

"Today at sundown," said one of my friends, "I put out a net and caught somefish with big mouths and delicate scales, like the perch of Pine River. And there must be somewhere we can get some wine. . . ."

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As soon as I got home, I consulted my wife. "I have a gallon of wine that's been put away for a long time," she said. "I was saving it for some occasion when you might suddenly need it."

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So we took the wine andfish and went for another trip to the foot of the Red Cliff. The river raced along noisily, its sheer banks rising a thousand feet. The mountains were very high, the moon small. The level of the water had fallen, leaving boulders sticking out. How much time had passed since my last visit? I couldn't recognize them as the same river and hills!

Tucking up my robe, I began to climb, picking my way along the steep embankment, pushing through tangled grass, straddling rocks the shape of tigers, clambering over roots twisted like dragons. I pulled my way up to the eagle's precarious nest, and looked down into the hidden halls of the river god. My two friends couldn't keep up.

I gave a long, shrill whoop. Trees and grass shook and swayed, the mountains rang, the valley echoed. A wind came up, roiling the water, and I felt a chill of sadness, a shrinking fear. I knew with a shudder that I couldn't stay there any longer.

I went back to my friends and got into the boat, and we turned it loose to drift with the current, content to let it stop wherever it chose. The night was half over and all around was deserted and still, when a lone crane appeared, cutting across the river from the east.[5] Its wings looked like cart wheels, and it wore a black robe and a coat of white silk. With a long, grating cry, it swooped over our boat and went offto the west.

Soon afterwards, I left my friends and went to bed. I dreamed I saw a Taoist immortal in a feather robe come bouncing down the road past the foot of Lingao. He bowed to me and said, "Did you enjoy your outing to the Red Cliff?" I asked him his name, but he looked down and didn't answer.

"Ah, wait—of course—now I know! Last evening,flying over our boat and crying—that was you, wasn't it?"

He turned his head and laughed, and I woke up with a start. I opened the door and peered out, but I could see no sign of him.

Footnotes

- Note 1:Translated by Burton Watson. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:The northern warlord at the end of the Han Dynasty, whose overpowering forces were defeated by the southern warlords Sun Quan and Liu Bei, preventing the reconquest of the south. Zhou Yu, a remarkable general serving under Sun Quan, was instrumental in the tour-de-force victory. The actual site of the battle is disputed; there are various spots on the Yangzi called "Red Cliff" with the claim to fame. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Quotation from the *Analects* (*Analects* 9.16). Return to reference 3
- Note 4:Snow Hall, completed at a time of heavy snow, was a small house on Eastern Slope that the poet built early in 1082. He sometimes stayed there alone or with friends, while his wife and family continued to live in their home at Lingao. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:Cranes are said to embody longevity and immortality. Return to reference 5

ZHANG ZAI

Zhang Zai (1020–1077) was a leadingfigure of the Neo-Confucian movement during the Song Dynasty. A native of the old capital area of Chang'an (modern-day Xi'an in Shaanxi province),

he politically endorsed the revival of old forms of land use. Zhang Zai deeply believed in the inherent goodness of human nature. His philosophical vision that humans should bring out the best of this nature by an ongoing pursuit of self-cultivation found concrete expression in his “Western Inscription,” a text inscribed on the western wall of his study, not unlike mottos we scribble on Post-it notes or as daily affirmations on our computer screens. Zhang Zai claims that the “vital energy” of *qi* (or *ch’i*)—though Full p. C-128 emerging from the ultimate polarity of yin and yang, heaven and earth, or father and mother—is the foundation of all creaturely beings. It consolidates at birth and dissipates back into primal energy at death. The text sparkles with allusions to earlier Confucian traditions, which are put in the service of creating a vision of life and cosmic order that combines lofty metaphysics—the study of deeper structures in the cosmos beyond what our eyes can see—with a loving emphasis on compassion and humanism found in the ancient formulation of Confucianism.

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Western Inscription[1]

Heaven is my father and Earth is my mother, and even such a small creature as Ifinds an intimate place in their midst.

Therefore that which extends throughout the universe I regard as my body and that which directs the universe I consider as my nature.

All people are my brothers and sisters, and all things are my companions.

The great ruler [the emperor] is the eldest son of my parents [Heaven and Earth], and the great ministers are his stewards. Respect the aged—this is the way to treat them as elders should be treated. Show affection toward the orphaned and the weak—this is the way to treat them as the young should be treated. The sage identifies his virtue with that of Heaven and Earth, and the worthy is the best [among the children of Heaven and Earth]. Even those who are tired and infirm, crippled or sick, those who have no brothers or children, wives or husbands, are all my brothers who are in distress and have no one to turn to.

When the time comes, to keep himself from harm—this is the care of a son. To rejoice in Heaven and have no anxiety—this isfiliality at its purest.

One who disobeys [the principle of Heaven] violates virtue. One who destroys humanity (*ren*) is a robber. One who promotes evil lacks [moral] capacity. But one who puts his moral nature into practice and brings his physical existence to complete fulfillment can match [Heaven and Earth].

One who knows the principles of transformation will skillfully carry forward the undertakings [of Heaven and Earth], and one who penetrates spirit to the highest degree will skillfully carry out their will.

Do nothing shameful even in the recesses of your own home and thus bring dishonor to it. Preserve the mind and nourish the nature and thus [serve them] with untiring effort.

The great Yu shunned pleasant wine but attended to the protection and support of his parents. Border Warden Ying cared for the young and thus extended his love to his own kind.[2]

Emperor Shun's merit lay in delighting his parents with unceasing effort, and Shensheng's reverence was demonstrated when he awaited punishment without making an attempt to escape.[3]

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Zeng Can received his body from his parents and reverently kept it intact throughout life, while [Yin] Boqi vigorously obeyed his father's command.[4]

Wealth, honor, blessing, and benefit are meant for the enrichment of my life, while poverty, humble station, care, and sorrow will be my helpmates to fulfillment.

In life I follow and serve [Heaven and Earth]. In death I will be at peace.

Footnotes

- Note 1:Translated by Wing-tsit Chan. Return to reference 1

- Note 2:The historicalfigures evoked in the closing paragraphs are all models of virtue. The great Yu was the legendary founder of the Xia Dynasty of high antiquity. Border Warden Ying inspired Duke Zhuang, a 7th-century B.C.E. ruler of the statelet of Lu under the Zhou Dynasty, with his virtuous behavior. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Emperor Shun was an emperor of high antiquity. Shensheng was heir apparent of the state of Jin, but committed suicide because he was falsely accused of having murdered his father. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:Zeng Can was a disciple of Confucius known for hisfiliality. Yin Boqi was a 9th-century B.C.E. prince who accepted his father's decision to let the son of a scheming stepmother inherit the throne. Return to reference 4

LI QINGZHAO

Born in northeastern China in today's Shandong province, Li Qingzhao (1084–1151?) came from a distinguished literary family. Her father belonged to the literary circle of Su Shi, and after his appointment to the national academy in the capital, the family moved to Kaifeng. Her mother was also a poet, and Li Qingzhao was recognized as a promising poetic talent when still in her teens. At age seventeen, she was married to Zhao Mingcheng, a student at the prestigious Hanlin Academy and son of a powerful official. Sharing an obsessive passion for books and learning, they began to amass a large collection of books, paintings, rubbings, and antiquities. But the life they knew abruptly ended as the Song Dynasty lost its capital, the northern territories, and its emperor (himself an avid collector) to the invading Jin Tartars in 1126 and 1127. Li Qingzhao and her husband hastilyfled south with part of their collection, but the pieces were gradually scattered and lost. Her husband left her due to an imperial summons and he soon fell ill and died. Li Qingzhao was now without a place of refuge and in constantflight from local rebellions. Finally, she and the court settled in Hangzhou in the south in 1132. There has been much speculation as to whether Li Qingzhao married a second time in her late forties thenfiled for divorce within a hundred days; a letter survives that accuses her second husband of greed and corruption, but many scholars deny its authenticity. Not much is known about her subsequent life, and even her year of death is uncertain.

The "afterword" of *Records on Metal and Stone* is a remarkable testimony to Song Dynasty antiquarianism—the love for ancient texts, painting, and art objects and the connoisseurship that people needed in order to build up collections of antiquities. Li Qingzhao was a true connoisseur of painting and antiquities in an age when the literary elite, like their European counterparts during the Renaissance, started to collect ancient artwork with great enthusiasm. While typical models of the afterword genre were stylized, scholarly, and relatively impersonal, Li Qingzhao used the form to show the relationship between a work of scholarship and two lives: begun passionately in the idyllic early years of their marriage, their collection increasingly grew into an obsession that dominated her husband's life and ultimately led Full p. C-130 her to pursue her own path. Throughout this short work Li Qingzhao returns again and again to the connection between people and their possessions, to the role of possessions in human relationships, and to the way in which such objects gain value and meaning.

Li Qingzhao is also one of thefinest writers of Chinese "song lyric" (*ci*) and one of the most celebrated women poets of traditional China. Song lyric, a new poetic form that came to the

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fore during the Song Dynasty (960–1279), had begun as songs performed in the pleasure quarters of the bustling urban centers, but the genre eventually developed into a refined literary vehicle for delicately sketching mood and emotion. Li Qingzhao used the form with great virtuosity to capture her states of mind, displaying an effortless freshness that belies the precision of her poetic craftsmanship and her poems' emotional depth.

The ties between poetry and song in traditional China were old and complex. The works of poets were often set to music and were sometimes modified to answer musical needs. During the Tang period, however, an entirely new kind of music became popular: stanza-like melodies with musical lines of unequal length. Tang poets began the practice of composing lyrics for these popular irregular melodies, and this new poetic form came to be known as *ci* . These "song lyrics," which often concerned love, were frequently performed in the entertainment quarters of the great cities and at parties. By the early Song Dynasty the song lyric had evolved into a verse form whose character differed markedly from that of classical poetry. Primarily associated with delicate sensibility, it sought to evoke passing moods andfleeting emotions of the moment. The relatively few surviving song lyrics by Li Qingzhao, some of which are included here, are among thefinest examples of the form.

In the lyrics to the melody "Note after Note," Li Qingzhao takes up the essential concerns of the form and one of the oldest questions in the Chinese tradition: the adequacy of language to express what occurs in the mind and heart. The lyric, which attempts to capture the essence of a particular moment, closes by wondering how the complex emotion she has evoked can be named by the simple word *sorrow* . Li Qingzhao had a genius for presenting scenes that could evoke feeling, as in the lyrics to "Southern Song," in which she describes changing from light summer clothes to a warmer autumn dress, decorated with scenes of a lotus pond. But the dress is old and its gilt lotus leaves areflaking off, giving the appearance of dying vegetation—a change she takes as both symbol and physical evidence of her own aging. It is at such moments that she answers in her own way the ancient question of how words can express the feeling of the moment, showing a true mastery not just of a particular poetic form but of verbal art generally.

Afterword *from* Records on Metal and Stone[1]

What are the preceding chapters of *Records on Metal and Stone*?—the work of the governor, Zhao Defu.[2] In it he took inscriptions on bells, tripods, steamers, kettles, washbasins, ladles, goblets, and bowls from the Three Dynasties of high Full p. C-131 antiquity all the way down to the Five Dynasties (immediately preceding our Song); here also he took the surviving traces of acts by eminent men and obscure scholars inscribed on large steles and stone disks. In all there were two thousand sections of what appeared on metal and stone. Through all these inscriptions, one might be able to correct historical errors, make historical judgements, and mete out praise and blame. It contains things which, on the highest level, correspond to the Way of the Sages, and on a lower level, supplement the omissions of historians. It is a great amount indeed. Yet catastrophe fell on Wang Ya and Yuan Zai alike: what did it matter that the one hoarded books and paintings while the other merely hoarded pepper? Changyou and Yuankai both had a disease—it made no difference that the disease of one was a passion for money, and of the other, a passion for transmission of knowledge and commentary. Although their reputations differed, they were the same in being deluded.

In 1101, in thefirst year of the Jianzhong Reign, I came as a bride to the Zhao household. At that time my father was a division head in the Ministry of Rites, and my father-in-law, later Grand Councilor, was an executive in the Ministry of Personnel. My husband was then twenty-one and a student in the Imperial Academy. In those days both families, the Zhaos and the Lis, were not well-to-do and were always frugal. On thefirst andfifteenth day of every month, my husband would get a short vacation from the Academy: he would "pawn some clothes"[3] forfive hundred cash and go to the market at Xiangguo Temple, where he would buy fruit and rubbings of inscriptions. When he brought these home, we would sit facing one another, rolling them out before us, examining and munching. And we thought ourselves persons of the age of Getian.[4]

When, two years later, he went to take up a post, we lived on rice and vegetables, dressed in common cloth; but he would search out the most remote spots and out-of-the-way places to fulfill his interest in the world's most ancient writings and unusual characters. When his father, the Grand Councilor, was in office, various friends and relations held positions in the Imperial Libraries; there one mightfind many ancient poems omitted from the *Book of Songs*, unofficial histories, and writings never before seen, works hidden in walls and recovered from tombs. He would work hard at copying such things, drawing ever more pleasure from the activity, until he was unable to stop himself. Later, if he happened to see a work of painting or calligraphy by some person of ancient or modern times, or unusual vessels of the Three Dynasties of high antiquity, he would still pawn our clothes to buy them. I recall that in the Chongning Reign[5] a man came with a painting of peonies by Xu Xi and asked twenty thousand cash for it. In those days twenty thousand cash was a hard sum to raise, even for children of nobility. We kept it with us a few days, and having thought of no plan by which we could purchase it, we returned it. For several days afterward husband and wife faced one another in deep depression.

Later we lived privately at home for ten years, gathering what we could here and there to have enough for food and clothing. Afterward, my husband governed two provinces in succession, and he used up all his salary on "lead and wooden tablets" [for scholarly work].[6] Whenever he got a book, we would collate Full p. C-132 it with other editions and make corrections together, repair it, and label it with the correct title. When he got hold of a piece of calligraphy, a painting, a goblet, or a tripod, we would go over it at our leisure, pointing out faults andflaws, setting for our nightly limit the time it took one candle to burn down. Thus our collection came to surpass all others infineness of paper and the perfection of the characters.

I happen to have an excellent memory, and every evening after wefinished eating, we would sit in the hall called "Return Home" and make tea. Pointing to the heaps of books and histories, we would guess on which line of which page in which chapter of which book a certain passage could be found. Success in guessing determined who got to drink his or her teafirst. Whenever I got it right, I would raise the teacup, laughing so hard that the tea would spill in my lap, and I would get up, not having been able to drink anything at all. I would have been glad to grow old in such a world. Thus, even though we were living in anxiety, hardship, and poverty, our wills were not broken.

When the book collection was complete, we set up a library in "Return Home" hall, with huge bookcases where the books were catalogued in sequence. There we put the books.

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Whenever I wanted to read, I would ask for the key, make a note in the ledger, then take out the books. If one of them was a bit damaged or soiled, it would be our responsibility to repair the spot and copy it out in a neat hand. There was no longer the same ease and casualness as before. This was an attempt to gain convenience which led instead to nervousness and anxiety. I couldn't bear it. And I began to plan how to do away with more than one meat in our meals, how to do away with allfinery in my dress; for my hair there were no ornaments of bright pearls or kingfisher feathers; the household had no implements for gilding or embroidery. Whenever we would come upon a history or the work of a major writer, if there was nothing wrong with the printing and no errors in the edition, we would buy it on the spot to have as a second copy. His family had always specialized in *The Book of Changes* and the *Zuozhuan*,[7] so the collection of works in those two traditions was most perfect and complete. Books lay ranged on tables and desks, scattered on top of one another on pillows and bedding. This was what took our fancy and what occupied our minds, what drew our eyes and what our spirits inclined to; and our joy was greater than the pleasure others had in dancing girls, dogs, and horses.

In 1126, thefirst year of the Jingkang Reign, my husband was governing Zechuan when we heard that the Jin Tartars were moving against the capital. He was in a daze, realizing that all those full trunks and overflowing chests, which he regarded so lovingly and mournfully, would surely soon be his possessions no longer. In the third month of spring in 1127, thefirst year of the Jianyan Reign, we hurried south for the funeral of his mother. Since we could not take the overabundance of our possessions with us, wefirst gave up the bulky printed volumes, the albums of paintings, and the most cumbersome of the vessels. Thus we reduced the size of the collection several times, and still we hadfifteen cartloads of books. When we reached Donghai, it took a string of boats to ferry them all across the Huai, and again across the Yangzi to Jiankang. Full p. C-133 In our old mansion in Qingzhou we still had more than ten rooms of books and various items locked away, and we planned to have them all brought by boat the next year. But in the twelfth month Jin forces sacked Qingzhou, and those ten or so rooms I spoke of were all reduced to ashes.

The next autumn, the ninth month of 1128, my husband took charge of Jiankang Prefecture but relinquished the position in the spring of the following year. Again we put everything in boats and went up to Wuhu and Gushu intending to take up lodging on the River Gan. That summer in thefifth month we had reached Chiyang. At that point an imperial decree arrived, ordering my husband to take charge of Huzhou, and before he assumed that office, to proceed to an audience with the Emperor. Therefore he had the household stop at Chiyang from which he would go offalone to answer the summons. On the thirteenth day of the sixth month he set offto carry out his duty. He had the boats pulled up onto the shore, and he sat there on the bank, in summer clothes with his headband set high on his forehead, his spirit like a tiger's, his eyes gleaming as though they would shoot into a person, while he gazed toward the boats and took his leave. I was in a terrible state of mind. I shouted to him, "If I hear the city is in danger, what should I do?" He answered from afar, his hands on his hips: "Follow the crowd. If you can't do otherwise, abandon the household goodsfirst, then the clothes, then the books and scrolls, then the old bronzes—but carry the sacrificial vessels for the ancestral temple yourself; live or die with them; don't give *them* up." With this he galloped offon his horse.

As he was hurrying on his journey, he suffered sunstroke from the intense heat, and by the time he reached imperial headquarters, he had contracted a malarial fever. At the end of the

seventh month I received a letter that he was lying sick. I was much alarmed, considering my husband's excitable nature and how nothing had been able to prevent the illness deteriorating into fever; his temperature might rise even higher, and in that case he would have to take chilled medicines; then the sickness would really be something to be worried about. Thereupon I set out by boat and in one day and night traveled three hundred leagues. At the point when I arrived he was taking large doses of *chaihu* and yellow *qin;*[8] he had a recurring fever with dysentery, and the illness appeared terminal. I was weeping, and in such a desperate situation I could not bring myself to ask him what was to be done after his death. On the eighteenth day of the eighth month he could no longer get up; he took his brush and wrote a poem; when hefinished, he passed away, with no thought at all for the future provision of his family.

When the funeral was over I had nowhere to go. His Majesty had already sent the palace ladies elsewhere, and I heard that crossings of the Yangzi were to be prohibited. At the time I still had twenty thousand *juan* of books, two thousand copies of inscriptions on metal and stone with colophons,[9] table service and mats enough to entertain a hundred guests, along with other possessions equaling those already mentioned. I also grew very sick, to the point that my only vital Full p. C-134 sign was a rasping breath. The situation was getting more serious every day. I thought of my husband's brother-in-law, an executive in the Ministry of War on garrison duty in Hongzhou, and I dispatched two former employees of my husband to go ahead to my brother-in-law, taking the baggage. That winter in the twelfth month Jin invaders sacked Hongzhou and all was lost. Those books which, as I said, took a string of boats to ferry across the Yangzi were scattered into clouds of smoke. What remained were a few light scrolls and calligraphy pieces; manuscript copies of the collections of Li Bo, Du Fu, Han Yu, and Liu Zongyuan;[1] a copy of *A New Account of Tales of the World;*[2] a copy of *Discourses on Salt and Iron*; a few dozen rubbings of stone inscriptions from the Han and Tang; ten or so ancient tripods and cauldrons; a few boxes of Southern Tang manuscript editions—all of which I happened to have had removed to my chambers to pass the time during my illness—now a solitary pile of leftovers.

Since I could no longer go upriver, and since the movements of the invaders were unfathomable, I went to stay with my younger brother Li Hang, a reviser of edicts. By the time I reached Taizhou, the governor of the place had alreadyfled. Proceeding on to Shan through Muzhou, we left the clothing and linen behind. Hurrying to Yellow Cliff, we hired a boat to take us toward the sea, following thefleeing court. The court halted a while in Chang'an, then we followed the imperial barge on the sea route to Wenzhou and Yuezhou.[3] In the twelfth month of the fourth year of the Jianyan Reign, early in 1131, all the officials of the government were released from their posts. We went to Quzhou, and then in the third month of spring, now thefirst year of the Shaoxing Reign (1131), we returned to Yuezhou, and in 1132, back again to Hangzhou.

When my husband had been gravely ill, a certain academician, Zhang Feiqing, had visited him with a jade pot—actually it wasn't really jade but *min,* a stone like jade. I have no idea who started the story, but there was a false rumor that they had been discussing presenting it to the Jin as a tribute gift. I also learned that someone had made formal charges in the matter. I was terrified and dared say nothing, but I took all the bronze vessels and such things in the household and was about to turn them over to the imperial court. But by the time I reached

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Yuezhou, the court had already gone on to Siming. I didn't dare keep these things in the household any longer, so I sent them along with the manuscript books to Shan. Later, when the imperial army was rounding up defeated enemy troops, I heard that these had all been taken into the household of General Li. That "solitary pile of leftovers" of which I spoke had now been reduced by aboutfifty or sixty percent. All that remained were six or so baskets of books, painting, ink, and inkstones that I hadn't been able to part with. I always kept these under my bed and opened them only with my own hands.

At Kuaiji I chose lodging in a cottage belonging to a local named Zhong. Suddenly one night someone made offwithfive of the baskets through a hole Full p. C-135 in the wall. I was terribly upset and offered a substantial reward to get them back. Two days later Zhong Fuhao next door produced eighteen of the scrolls and asked for a reward. By that I knew the thief was not far away.[4] I tried every means I could, but I still couldn't get hold of the rest. I have now found out that they were all purchased at a low price by the Circuit Fiscal Supervisor, Wu Yue. Now seventy or eighty percent of that "solitary pile of leftovers" is gone. I still have a few volumes from three or so sets, none complete, and some very ordinary pieces of calligraphy, but I still treasure them as if I were protecting my own head—how foolish I am!

Nowadays, when I chance to look over these books, it's like meeting old friends. And I recall when my husband was in the hall called "Calm Governance" in Laizhou: he hadfirstfinished binding the volumes, making title slips of rue leaves to keep out insects and tie-ribbons of pale blue silk, binding ten *juan* into one volume. Every day in the evening when the office clerks would go home, he would do editorial collations on two *juan* and write a colophon for one inscription. Of those two thousand items, colophons were written onfive hundred and two. It is so sad—today the ink of his writing seems still fresh, yet the trees by his grave have grown to an armspan in girth.

Long ago when the city of Jiangling fell, Xiao Yi, Emperor Yuan of the Liang, did not regret the fall of his kingdom, yet destroyed his books and printings [unwilling to see them fall into the hands of his conquerors]. When his capital Jiangdu was sacked, Yang Guang, Emperor Yang of the Sui, wasn't concerned with his own death, only with recovering his books [his spirit overturning the boat in which they were being transported so that he could have his library in the land of the dead]. It must be that the passions of human nature cannot be forgotten, even standing between life and death. Or maybe it is Heaven's will that beings as insignificant as ourselves are notfit to enjoy these superb things. Or it might be that the dead too have consciousness, and they still treasure such things, give them their devoted attention, unwilling to leave them in the world of the living. How hard they are to obtain and how easy to lose!

From the time I was eighteen until now at the age offifty-two—a span of thirty years—how much calamity, how much gain and loss I have witnessed! When there is possession, there must be lack of possession; when there is a gathering together, there must be a dissolution—that is the constant principle of things. Someone loses a bow; someone else happens tofind a bow—what's worth noticing in that? The reason why I have so minutely recorded this story from beginning to end is to serve as a warning for scholars and collectors in later generations.

Written this second year of the Shaoxing Reign (1132), the eighth month,first day.

Li Qingzhao

Footnotes

- Note 1: Translated by Stephen Owen. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Sobriquet of Li Qingzhao's husband, Zhao Mingcheng. Return to reference 2
- Note 3: All students at the Imperial Academy received an allowance of clothing. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:A legendary emperor of the earliest times, when the world was still at peace. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:From 1102 to 1106. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:Throughout this selection, the material in brackets is the translator's. Return to reference 6
- Note 7: Two works of the Confucian canon: the *I Ching* ("Book of Changes"), a divination manual, and the commentary to the *Spring and Autumn Annals* . Return to reference 7
- Note 8: Chinese herbal medicine. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:Short essays containing the essential scholarly information on the inscriptions. These were Zhao Mingcheng's copies and rubbings of early inscriptions. "*Juan*": analogous to a book chapter, and used to measure the size of books or libraries. Return to reference 9
- Note 1: Four famous Tang Dynasty (617–907) writers of poetry and prose. Selections from Han Yu and Liu Zongyuan appear in this volume; selections from Li Bo and Du Fu can be found in vol. B. Return to reference 1
- Note 2: A 5th-century book of anecdotes about and character sketches of artists, musicians, and literati in Han, Wei, and Jin China. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:This itinerary follows the general route of the northerners to the southeast toward the sea, as theyfled the threat of an invasion of South China by the Jin Tartars. Return to reference 3
- Note 4: That is, she knew that her landlord, Zhong Fuhao, was involved in the theft. Return to reference 4

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S ONG L YRICS[1]

Footnotes

- Note 1: Translated by Stephen Owen. Return to reference 1

To "Southern Song"

Up in heaven the star-river turns,
in man's world below
curtains are drawn.
A chill comes to pallet and pillow,
damp with tracks of tears.
I rise to take offmy gossamer dress

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and just happen to ask, “How late is it now?”
The tiny lotus pods,
kingfisher feathers sewn on;
as the giltflecks away
the lotus leaves grow few.
Same weather as in times before,
the same old dress—
only the feelings in the heart
are not as they were before.

To “Free-Spirited Fisherman”

Billowing clouds touch sky and reach
the early morning fog,
the river of stars is ready to set,
a thousand sails dance.
My dreaming soul moves in a daze
to where the high god dwells—
I hear Heaven speak,
asking me with urgent concern
where I am going now.
And I reply that my road is long,
and, alas, twilight draws on;
I worked at my poems and for nothing have
bold lines that cause surprise.
Into strong winds ninety thousand miles
upward the Peng[2] nowflies.
Let that wind never stop,
let it blow this tiny boat away
to the Three Immortal Isles.[3]

Footnotes

- Note 2: A huge mythical bird described in the ancient Masters Text *Zhuangzi* (see vol. A). Here it appears as afigure of greatness that smaller creatures cannot comprehend. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:In the eastern sea, believed to be inhabited by immortals. Return to reference 3

Full p. C-137

To “Like a Dream”

I will always recall that day at dusk,
the pavilion by the creek,
and I was so drunk I couldn’t tell
the way home. My mood left me,

it was late when I turned back in my boat
and I strayed deep among lotuses—
how to get through?
how to get through?
and I startled toflight a whole shoal
of egrets and gulls.

To “Drunk in the Shadow of Flowering Trees”

Pale fog, then dense clouds—
gloomy all day long;
in the animal-shaped censer
incense burns away.
Once again it is that autumn holiday:
to my jade pillow behind the gauze screen
at midnight the coldfirst comes.
By the eastern hedge I took wine in hand
after twilight fell.
A fragrancefilled my sleeves unseen.
Don’t tell me this does not break your heart—
the west wind blowing up the curtains
and the person,
as gaunt as the chrysanthemums.

To “Spring in Wuling”

The wind dies down, the fragrance in dirt,
theflowers now are gone;
late afternoon, too weary to comb my hair.
Everything in the world is right; I am wrong;
all that will happen is done;
before I can say it, tears come.
Yet I’ve heard it said that at Double Creek
the spring is lovely still,
and I think I’ll go boating there.
But then I fear
those little boats of Double Creek
won’t budge if they are made to bear
this much melancholy.

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To “Note after Note”

Searching and searching, seeking and seeking,
so chill, so clear,

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dreary,
and dismal,
and forlorn.
That time of year
when it's suddenly warm,
then cold again,
now it's hardest of all to take care.
Two or three cups of weak wine—
how can they resist the biting wind
that comes with evening?
The wild geese pass by—
that's what hurts the most—
and yet they're old acquaintances.
In piles chrysanthemumsfill the ground,
looking all wasted, damaged—
who could pick them, as they are now?
I stay by the window,
how can I wait alone until blackness comes?
The beech tree,
on top of that
thefine rain,
on until dusk,
the dripping drop after drop.
In a situation like this
how can that one word "sorrow" grasp it?

IBN SINA (AVICENNA)

Ibn Sina (or Avicenna, as he is known in the West, ca. 970–1037) was the most noted philosopher and physician of the early Islamic world. Born near Bukhara, a powerful cultural capital of the Persian caliphate on the Silk Road, in what is today Uzbekistan, he revived ancient Greek thought, particularly that of Aristotle, and combined it with that of his own culture in an ambitious attempt to synthesize all knowledge and reconcile philosophy with religion. The rebirth of the Greek tradition in Arabic in the ninth century long predates the European Renaissance; when Ibn Sina's works were translated into Latin in the twelfth century, they transformed European philosophy and shaped the medical curriculum taught at universities for centuries to come. The *Autobiography* is a stylized text: though it offers details about Ibn Sina's own life, it also presents a theory of knowledge. Ibn Sina highlights the Full p. C-139 individual's capacity to gain knowledge on their own, by relying on reading and rationality, and presents his encounter with Aristotle's works as independent verification of their worth, not beholden to any particular school of thought. As the young Ibn Sina voraciously makes his way through the theoretical and the practical sciences—mathematics, philosophy, theology, medicine—at increasing levels of complexity yet organized according to Aristotelian principles, he showcases his understanding that all knowledge is intrinsically connected. Not all knowledge comes from books, however: experience is key for the physician. And despite Ibn Sina's palpable excitement at accessing the library of the Sultan, with its rare,

ancient books, he is very much involved in his world, whether as physician, lawyer, or civil servant.

From The Autobiography[1]

My father was a man of Balḫ. He moved from there to Buḫārāin the days of the Prince Nūḥibn-Manṣūr, during whose reign he was employed in the administration as the governor of a village in one of the royal estates of BuḫārācalledḪarmayṭan, which is one of the regional capitals there. Nearby is a village named Afšana, and there my father married my mother and took up his permanent residence.

I was born there, as was my younger brother, and later we moved to Buḫārā. I was provided with a teacher of the Qurʾān and a teacher of literature, and when I reached the age of ten I had mastered the Qurʾān and a great deal of literature to such an extent that I evoked great amazement.

My father was among those who responded to the proselytizer of the Egyptians and was considered one of the Ismāʿīlīs.[2] He had heard from them the account about the soul and the intellect in the way in which *they* tell it and present it, and so had my brother. They would sometimes discuss this matter [i.e., the account about the soul and the intellect] among themselves, while I would listen to them and comprehend what they were saying, but my soul would not accept it; and they began to summon me to it with constant talk on their tongues about philosophy, geometry, and Indian arithmetic.

Then he [my father] sent me for a while to a greengrocer who used Indian arithmetic and I would thus learn from him.

Then Abū-ʿAbdallāh an-Nātilī, who claimed to be a philosopher, came to Buḫārā. My father had him stay in our house, and he occupied himself with my education. Before his arrival, I used to occupy myself with jurisprudence, attending frequently Ismāʿīl az-Zāhid about it. I was one of the most skillful questioners, having become familiar with the methods of posing questions and ways of raising objections to a respondent in the manner Customary with these people.[3] Then I began to study the *Eisagoge* with an-Nātilī, and when he mentioned to me the definition of “genus,” viz., “what is predicated of many things differing in species, in answer to [the question] ‘What is it?’,” I surprised him Full p. C-140 in Verifying this definition with something whose like had never been heard. He was extremely amazed at me and cautioned my father that I should occupy myself with nothing else but Philosophy. Whatever problem he posed I conceptualized it better then he, until Ifinished [in this fashion] a literal reading of Logic with him; as for its minute implications, though, he had no notion of them. Then I began to study the books [of the *Organon*] by myself and consult the commentaries until I had mastered Logic.

As for the book [the *Elements*] of Euclid, I studied thefirstfive or sixfigures with him, and thereafter undertook on my own to solve the entire remainder of the book. Next I moved on to the *Almagest* [of Ptolemy] and when I hadfinished its introductory sections and reached the geometricalfigures, an-Nātilīsaid to me, “Take over reading and solving them [i.e. the geometricalfigures] by yourself, and then submit them to me so that I can show you what is right and what is wrong.” But the man could not deal with the book, so I made the analysis

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myself; and many were thefigures with which he was unfamiliar until I presented them to him and made him understand them! Then an-Nātilītook leave of me, heading for Gurgānj, and I occupied myself on my own with Determining the Validity of books on Physics and Theology [*ilāhiyyāt*], both their essential parts and commentaries, and the gates of the Philosophical Sciences began opening for me.

Next I desired [to learn] medicine and I read the books that have been written on this subject. Medicine is not one of the difficult sciences, and therefore I excelled in it in a very short time, to the point that distinguished physicians began to study medicine with me. I cared for the sick, and there opened up to me indescribable possibilities of therapy which can only be acquired through experience. At the same time I was also occupied with jurisprudence and would engage in legal disputations, being now sixteen years of age.

The next year and a half I devoted myself entirely to reading Philosophy: I read Logic and all the parts of philosophy once again. During this time I did not sleep completely through a single night, or occupy myself with anything else by day. I put together in front of me [sheaves of] scratch paper, and for each argument that I examined, I recorded the syllogistic premisses it contained, the way in which they were composed, and the conclusions which they might yield, and I would also take into account the conditions of its premisses [i.e., their modalities] until I had Ascertained that particular problem. Every time I was at a loss about a problem, concerning which I was unable tofind the middle term in a syllogism, I would repair on its account to the mosque and worship, praying humbly to the All-Creator to disclose to me its obscurity and make its difficulty easy. At night I would return home, set the lamp before me, and occupy myself with reading and writing. Whenever I felt drowsy or weakening, I would turn aside to drink a cup of wine to regain my strength, Full p. C-141 and then I would go back to my reading. Whenever I fell asleep, I would see those very problems in my dream; and many problems became clear to me while asleep. So I continued until all the Philosophical Sciences became deeply rooted in me and I understood them as much as is humanly possible. Everything that I knew at that time is just as I know it now; I have added nothing more to it to this day, such that I mastered Logic, Physics and Mathematics.

Ultimately I reached Theology [*al-ʿilm al-ilāh*ī]. I read the *Metaphysics* [of Aristotle] but did not understand what it contained and was confused about the author's purpose to the point that I reread it forty times and consequently memorized it. In spite of this I still did not understand it or what was intended by it, and I said, despairing of myself, "There is no way to understand this book!" One afternoon I was at the booksellers' quarter when a crier came up holding a volume which he was hawking for sale. He offered it to me but I refused it in vexation, believing that there was no use in this particular science. But he said to me, "Buy it; its owner needs the money and it's cheap; I'll sell it to you for three dirhams." So I bought it and it turned out to be Abū-Naṣr al-Fārābī's book *On the Purposes of the Metaphysics* . I returned home and hastened to read it, and at once the purposes of that book were disclosed to me because I had learned it by heart. I rejoiced at this and the next day I gave much in alms to the poor in gratitude to God Exalted.

It happened that the Sultan at that time in Buḫārā, Nūḥibn-Manṣūr, had an illness which perplexed the physicians. Since my name had become well known among them for my complete devotion to the Philosophical Sciences and to reading, they mentioned me in his presence and asked him to summon me. So I presented myself and collaborated with them in treating him, and was enrolled in his service. One day I asked his permission to enter their

library, look through it, and read its contents. He gave me permission and I was admitted to a building with many rooms; in each room there were chests of books piled one on top of the other. In one of the rooms were books on the Arabic language and poetry, in another jurisprudence, and so on in each room a separate science. I looked through the catalogue of books by the ancients and requested those which I needed. I saw books whose very names are unknown to many and which I had never seen before nor have I seen since. I read those books, mastered their teachings, and realized how far each man had advanced in his science.

So by the time I reached my eighteenth year I had completed my study in all these Philosophical Full p. C-142 Sciences. At that time my retention of Knowledge was better, but today my grasp of it is more mature; otherwise the Knowledge is the same, nothing new having come to me since.

In my neighborhood there lived a man called Abū-l-Ḥasan al-ʿArūḍī[the Prosodist], who asked me to compose for him a comprehensive work on this Knowledge [i.e., Philosophy]. I composed for him *The Compilation*, which I named after him [i.e., *Philosophy forʿAr*ūḍī], and I treated in it all the sciences except mathematics. At that time I was twenty-one years old.

Also in my neighborhood there lived a man called Abū-Bakr al-Baraqī, aḪwārizmian by birth. A prudent man, he favored jurisprudence, Qur ʾānic exegesis, and asceticism, but also had an inclination for these Philosophical Sciences. He asked me to comment on the books [on Philosophy] and so I composed *The Available and the Valid* for him in about twenty volumes, and I also composed a book for him on Ethics which I called *Piety and Sin* . These two books exist only in his possession because he never lent them to anybody to copy from them.

Then my father died. My situation changed drastically, and I assumed some post in thefinancial administration of the Sultan. However, necessity led me to abandon Buḫārāand move to Gurgānj, where Abū-l-Ḥusayn as-Sahlī, a lover of the Philosophical Sciences, was minister. I was introduced to the Prince there,ʿAlīibn-Ma ʾ mūn; at that time I was in lawyer's garb, wearing the*ṭaylasān* scarf turned under the chin. Theyfixed for me a monthly salary which provided enough for someone like me.

Then necessity led me to move to Nasā, and from there to Bāward, and then toṬūs, then to Samanqān, then to Jājarm (the frontier ofḪurāsān), and then to Jurjān. I was planning to go to Prince Qābūs, but it happened meanwhile that he was taken and imprisoned in some fortress, where he died. Then I departed for Dihistān, where I fell very ill. I returned to Jurjān, and there I became associated with Abū-ʿUbayd al-Jūzjānī. He recited to me an ode on my state of affairs which contained the following verse by a poet:

When I became great, no city was big enough for me;

When my price went up, no one would buy me.

Footnotes

- Note 1:Translated by Dimitri Gutas. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Ishmaʿilism is a branch of Shia Islam that places particular importance on Imam Ismaʿil ibn Jafar in contrast to other branches of Shia Islam, which regard his younger brother as the true Imam. Ishmaʿilists came to favor a more metaphorical and esoteric approach to Islam. Return to reference 2

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- Note 3:“Posing questions . . . raising objections:” *muṭālaba . . . ʿtir*āḍ. These are specific terms in Aristotelian dialectics, not general concepts, as implied by the existing translations: “Argumentation . . . widerleg[en],” [Paul] Kraus; “postulation . . . rebuttal,” [Arthur John] Arberry; “prosecution . . . rebuttal,” [William E.] Gohlman. Only [Mohammad] Achena and [Henri] Masséare more precise: “interrogation . . . objection.” The context here is dialectical discussion as analyzed by Aristotle in the *Topics* [translator’s note]. Return to reference 3

NICCOLÒ MACHIAVELLI

Born in Florence to a family that was well connected but hardly wealthy, Machiavelli (1469–1527) was introduced to the scholarly circles around the ruler Lorenzo de Medici. Machiavelli’s adult life was closely bound up with Florence’s political fortunes, in an Italy constantly overrun by the armies of France, Spain, and the Holy Roman Empire. He built a distinguished career of public service in the Florentine Republic, a city-state whose government was the most widely representative of its time. As a student of politics and an acute observer of historical events, Machiavelli offered in his most famous work, ***The Prince*** (1513), prescriptions for effective rule that paid little heed to conventional morality. With the end of the Republic and the return of the Medici, Machiavelli was unjustly accused of conspiracy, and eventually retreated from the city to his family’s farm. There, he imagined himself in conversation with the classical writers he most admired, as he writes in his letter to Francesco Vettori excerpted here. During his prolonged exile he also wrote works of history and even a popular comedy, *The Mandrake* . Although he again served Florence under the Medici in the 1520s, developing its military fortifications, he never regained his early prominence. He died in 1527, after being passed over for public office by a new republican government.

Full p. C-143

From Letter to Francesco Vettori[1]

* * *

I am living on my farm, and since my last troubles[2] I have not been in Florence twenty days, putting them all together. Up to now I have been setting snares for thrushes with my own hands; I get up before daylight, prepare my birdlime, and go out with a bundle of cages on my back, so that I look like Geta when he came back from the harbor with the books of Amphitryo,[3] and catch at the least two thrushes and at the most six. So I did all of September; then this trifling diversion, despicable and strange as it is, to my regret failed. What my life is now I shall tell you.

In the morning I get up with the sun and go out into a grove that I am having cut; there I remain a couple of hours to look over the work of the past day and kill some time with the woodmen, who always have on hand some dispute either among themselves or among their neighbors. * * *

When I leave the grove, I go to a spring, and from there into my aviary. I have a book in my pocket, either Dante or Petrarch or one of the minor poets, as Tibullus,[4] Ovid, and the like. I read about their tender passions and their loves, remember mine, and take pleasure for a while in thinking about them. Then I go along the road to the inn, talk with those who pass by, ask the news of their villages, learn various things, and note the varied tastes and different fancies of men. It gets to be dinner time, and with my troop I eat what food my poor farm and my little property permit. After dinner, I return to the inn; there I usuallyfind the host, a butcher, a miller, and two furnace-tenders. With these fellows I sink into vulgarity for the rest of the day, playing at *cricca* and *tricche-trach*;[5] from these games come a thousand quarrels and numberless offensive and insulting words; we often dispute over a penny, and all the same are heard shouting as far as San Casciano.[6] So, involved in these trifles, I keep my brain from getting mouldy, and express the perversity of Fate, for I am willing to have her drive me along this path, to see if she will be ashamed of it.

In the evening, I return to my house, and go into my study. At the door I take offthe clothes I have worn all day, mud spotted and dirty, and put on regal and courtly garments. Thus appropriately clothed, I enter into the ancient courts of ancient men,[7] where, being lovingly received, I feed on that food which alone is mine, and which I was born for; I am not ashamed to speak with them and to ask the reasons for their actions, and they Full p. C-144 courteously answer me. For four hours I feel no boredom and forget every worry; I do not fear poverty, and death does not terrify me. I give myself completely over to the ancients. And because Dante says that there is no knowledge unless one retains what one has read,[8] I have written down the profit I have gained from their conversation, and composed a little book *De principatibus*,[9] in which I go as deep as I can into reflections on this subject, debating what a principate is, what the species are, how they are gained, how they are kept, and why they are lost. If ever any of my trifles can please you, this one should not displease you; and to a prince, and especially a new prince, it ought to be welcome. * * *

Footnotes

- Note 1:Translated by Allan H. Gilbert from a letter dated December 10, 1513, to Vettori, an ambassador in Rome. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Machiavelli had been suspected of participation in a conspiracy led by two young friends of his and had been imprisoned and subjected to torture before his innocence was recognized. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Allusion to a popular tale in which Amphitryo, returning to Thebes after having studied at Athens, sends forward from the harbor his servant Geta to announce his arrival to his wife, Alemene, and loads him with his books. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:Albius Tibullus (1st century B.C.E.), Roman elegiac poet. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:Two popular games, thefirst played with cards, the second with dice thrown to regulate the movements of pawns on a chessboard. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:Nearby village, in the region around Florence. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:Machiavelli here refersfiguratively to his study of ancient history. Return to reference 7

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- Note 8: *Paradiso* 5.41–42: “For knowledge none can vaunt / Who retains not, although he have understood.” Return to reference 8
- Note 9:Of princedoms. Return to reference 9

POGGIO BRACCIOLINI

Culture maven extraordinaire, Poggio (1380–1459) took it upon himself to recover key Greek and Roman works that were known by name but had not been seen for many centuries. His teacher, Salutatus, whom Poggio would eventually succeed as chancellor of Florence, had been a student of Petrarch. In the third generation of Italian humanism, and with his expertise on everything from ancient manuscripts to equally ancient sculpture, Poggio consolidated the new traditions of scholarship, connoisseurship, and collecting. By searching the libraries of monasteries across Europe, Poggio recovered works that would become foundational for modern disciplines, such as Vitruvius’s *Ten Books on Architecture* and Lucretius’s *On the Nature of Things* . He also became known as the person to go to with any discoveries, and he established networks of agents to help him search, as he describes in the letter below to his friend and fellow collector NiccolòNiccoli. Poggio collected his own letters and circulated them in manuscript “books,” suggesting that he wrote them with one eye on posterity.

Full p. C-145

From Letter to Niccolò Niccoli[1]

I gave some specific errands to Master Franciscus of Pistoia when he left us. Among them the most important was to look for any marble statue, even if it were broken, or any unusual head which he could bring back to me with him. I said that there was a great supply of them in the places through which he was going. He has indeed been quite careful in carrying out my commissions; for yesterday I received letters from him written from Chios in which he informed me that he was holding in my name three marble heads by Polycleitus and Praxiteles.[2] They are heads of Juno, Minerva, and Bacchus, which he praises highly and says that he will carry with him as far as Cajeta. I do not know what to say about the names of the sculptors; as you know, the Greeks are very wordy and perhaps they have made up the names in order to sell the heads more dearly. I hope that I am wrong to suspect this. He also writes that he had got these heads from a man named Caloiros, who had recently found nearly a hundred undamaged marble statues of marvelously beautiful workmanship in some cave. * * *

I know that when you read this you will be onfire with a desire to go there and you will want wings tofly; for the wind would not keep up with your haste, not even inflight. Now I shall stay here to dream. I immediately wrote back to Master Franciscus and I wrote to Andreolus, too (for he is, as I hear from our friend Rinucius, a pretty knowledgeable man), asking them tofind out whether any of these statues could be had either for a price or a prayer, and to use great care and diligence in this matter, and to let me know the result as soon as possible. I wanted you to have a share in this discovery. I think that these statues are of gods because of their heads and that they were hidden in some shrine. He writes that the head of Minerva has a laurel crown and that of Bacchus two horns. When they arrive, I shall place

them in my little gymnasium. The Minerva will not feel out of place with us; I shall put her among my books. The Bacchus ought to feel grand, for if he deserves a lodging anywhere it is certainly in my country where he is particularly worshiped. We shall also have a place for Juno, for since at one time she was the wife of an adulterer, she will now be a concubine. I also have something here which I shall bring home with me. Donatellus[3] saw it and praised it highly. I do not want this letter to have anything else in it except the gossip about the statues; so goodbye and love me. Rome, the twenty-third day of September [1430]. * * *

Footnotes

- Note 1:Translated by Phyllis Walter Goodhart Gordan. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Two of the most highly regarded ancient Greek sculptors, working in the 5th and 4th centuries B.C.E., respectively. “Chios”: Greek island in the northern Aegean Sea, site of a famous school of sculpture in the 6th and 5th centuries B.C.E., under Genoese rule in Poggio’s time. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Donatello (1386–1466), renowned Florentine sculptor of the early Renaissance who worked in both marble and bronze. Return to reference 3

Full p. C-146

JOACHIM DU BELLAY

Du Bellay (1522–1560) was born to a noble family in the west of France and was orphaned very young. He studied law at Poitiers, where he joined a circle of humanist poets and thinkers. A fateful meeting with his contemporary, the poet Pierre de Ronsard, led to the formation of the hugely influential literary circle known as the Pléiade, whose manifesto was written by Du Bellay. In the “Defense and Illustration of the French Language,” Du Bellay argued for cultivating French as a poetic language, although he continued to write in both French and Latin. In 1550 Du Bellay traveled to Rome as secretary to his cousin, Cardinal Du Bellay, and there produced *The Antiquities of Rome*, a collection of sonnets from which the poems below are taken.

From The Antiquities of Rome[1]

Footnotes

- Note 1:Translated by Richard Helgerson. Return to reference 1

3

Newcomer, you who seek Rome in Rome andfind nothing of Rome in Rome, these old palaces, these old arches that you see, and these old walls, this is what they call Rome.

See what pride, what ruin, and how she who brought the world under her laws, in vanquishing all, at last vanquished herself and became the prey of time, which devours all.

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Rome is the only monument to Rome, and only Rome conquered Rome. Only the Tiber,[2] whichflees toward the sea,

Remains of Rome. O worldly inconstancy! Whatever standsfirm is destroyed by time. And whateverflees resists time.

Footnotes

- Note 2:Rome's main watercourse; the city was founded on the eastern banks of the river. Return to reference 2

5

Whoever wishes to see all that nature, art, and heaven have been able to do, let him come see you, Rome—if, that is, he can imagine your greatness from what is only your lifeless portrait.

Rome is no more, and if her ruins still show us some shade of Rome, it is like a body raised by magic powers from its sepulchre at night.

The body of Rome has returned to ashes, and her soul has gone to rejoin the great soul of the material universe.

Full p. C-147

But her writings, which in spite of time wrest her fairest praise from the grave, keep her specter wandering throughout the world.

13

Neither the fury of ragingflame, nor the sharp edge of victorious steel, nor the destruction of the furious soldier, which have so often pillaged you, Rome,

Nor vicissitudes of your changing fortune, nor the destruction of envious time, nor the spite of men and gods, nor your own power turned against yourself,

Nor the shock of impetuous winds, nor the overflowing of that twisting god who has so oftenflooded you with his waters[3]

Have so lowered your pride that the greatness of the nothing they have left you does not still amaze the world.

Footnotes

- Note 3:I.e., the river Tiber. Return to reference 3

15

Pale Spirits and you ashen shades, who, while you enjoyed the light of day, brought forth this proud city, whose dusty remains we see,

Tell me, Spirits (and may the dark banks of the Styx,[4] which forbid all return, binding you with a three times triple turn, not confine your shadowy forms),

Tell me then (for one of you may still be hidden here below), do you not feel your pain increase

When you see on these Roman hills the work of your hands reduced to nothing but a dusty plain?

Footnotes

- Note 4:The river that separates Earth from the underworld in Greek mythology; it also circles the underworld nine times. Return to reference 4

Full p. C-148

INCA GARCILASO DE LA VEGA

Born in the city of Cuzco, in present-day Peru, to a prominent Spanish conquistador and an Inca princess, the young *mestizo* Gómez Suárez de Figueroa (1539–1616) traveled to Spain as a young man. Fashioning himself as a man of letters, he took on a new name that combined his indigenous knowledge of the New World with the authority of Spanish literary forebears (his distant relative **Garcilaso de la Vega** was the famous poet of Petrarchan sonnets that appear in this anthology), hence the name *Inca Garcilaso* . His most famous work, the *Royal Commentaries of the Incas* (1609), describes their world before the arrival of the Spaniards, including the expansion of the Inca Empire, while its second part, the *General History of Peru* (published posthumously in 1617), narrates the Spanish conquest of Peru and its aftermath.

By the time Garcilaso wrote these massive works, the Spaniards had written countless histories of the conquest. Acutely aware of the prejudice and even surprise with which European readers might respond to a *mestizo* writer going over the same ground, Garcilaso astutely establishes his own authority, explaining with a mixture of tact and pride how his intimate knowledge of Inca culture, and his access to living sources in his own family members, allows him to correct the misunderstandings that plague Spanish accounts. Garcilaso compares the Inca Empire to Rome, arguing that the city of Cuzco bore the same relationship to the Inca Empire as Rome did to its own. Poignantly, Garcilaso sets out to recuperate a past that, though very recent, is in danger of being lost, through both the general upheaval of the Spanish conquest and the Spaniards' concerted attempts to erase all trace of the Tawantinsuyu, or Realm of the Four Parts, as the Incas referred to their empire.

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From Royal Commentaries of the Incas[1]

BOOK ONE, CHAPTER XIX

The Author's Declaration about His History

Now that we have laid thefirst stone of our edifice, though it be fabulous, it will be proper to proceed from the origin of the Inca kings of Peru to the conquest and subjugation of the Indians, enlarging somewhat the brief account that my uncle the Inca[2] gave me with the accounts of many other Incas and Indians born in the towns that thefirst Inca Manco Cápac founded, peopled, and added to his empire. I was brought up among these Indians, and as I frequented their society until I was twenty I was able to learn during that time something of all the subjects I am writing about, for in my childhood they used Full p. C-149 to recount their histories, just as stories are told for children. Later, as I grew up, they talked to me at length about their laws and government, and compared the new rule of the Spaniards with that of the Incas, contrasting especially the crimes and punishments and the severity the latter were dealt with under the two regimes. They told me how their kings acted in peace and war, in what manner they treated their vassals, and how their vassals served them. Moreover, they told me, as if I were their own son, all about their idolatry, their rites, ceremonies, and sacrifices, the greater and lesser festivals, and how they were celebrated. They told me their superstitions and abuses, good and evil auspices, including those they discerned in sacrifices and others. In short, I would say that they told me about everything they had in their state, and if I had written it down at the time, this history would have been more copious. Apart from what the Indians told me, I experienced and saw with my own eyes a great deal of their idolatry, festivals, and superstitions, which had still not altogether disappeared in my own time, when I was twelve or thirteen. I was born eight years after the Spaniards conquered my country, and as I have said, was brought up there till I was twenty: thus I saw many of the things the Indians did in the time of their paganism and shall relate them and say that I saw them.

I have also listened to many accounts of the deeds and conquests of those kings in addition to what my relatives told me and what I myself say, for as soon as I resolved to write this history, I wrote to my old schoolmates at my primary school and grammar school, and urged each of them to help me with accounts they might have of the particular conquests the Incas made in the provinces their mothers came from, for each province has its accounts and knots[3] to record its annals and traditions, and thus preserves its own history much better than that of its neighbors. My schoolfellows earnestly complied with my request, and each reported my intention to his mother and relatives, and they, on hearing that an Indian, a son of their own country, intended to write its history, brought from their archives the records they had of their histories and sent me them. Thus I learned of the deeds and conquests of each Inca, which are the same as the Spanish historians obtained, except that this is longer, as we shall point out in various contexts.

And as all the deeds of thisfirst Inca are the beginning and foundation of the history we are to write, it will be very helpful to give them here, or at least the most important of them, so that we do not have to repeat them later in discussing the lives and deeds of each of the Incas

descended from him. For all the Incas in general, whether kings or not, took pride in imitating in every way the character, deeds, and habits of thefirst prince Manco Cápac. Having told about him, we shall proceed to tell about all the rest. Our intention will be to include the most historical deeds and omit others as irrelevant and repetitive. Although some of what has been said and is to be said may seem fabulous, I have thoughtfit to include it so as not to miss out the foundations on which the Indians rely for the greatest and best things they tell of their empire. For it was from these fabulous beginnings that the magnificent reality that Spain now possesses emerged. For this reason, I shall allow myself to include everything Full p. C-150 necessary for a full account of the beginning, middle, and end of the Inca monarchy. I declare that I shall simply tell the tales I imbibed with my mother's milk and those I have since obtained by request from my own relatives, and I promise that my affection for them shall not cause me to stray from the true facts either by underestimating the ill or exaggerating the good they did. I am well aware that paganism is a sea of errors, and I shall not write new and unheard-of things, but will recount the same things the Spanish historians have written of those parts and their kings, bringing forward where necessary their very words, so as to prove that I have not inventedfictitious circumstances to the credit of my relatives, but say no more than what Spaniards have said. I shall merely act as a commentator to reveal and amplify much of what they have begun to say, but have left unfinished for lack of full account. Much will be added that is missing in their histories but really happened, and some things will be omitted as superfluous because the Spaniards were misinformed, either because they did not know how to ask for information with a clear idea of the different periods and ages and divisions of provinces and tribes, or because they misunderstood the Indians who gave them it, or because they misunderstood one another on account of the difficulty of the language. The Spaniard who thinks he knows the language best is ignorant of nine-tenths of it, because of the many meanings of each word and the different pronunciation that a word has for various meanings, as will be seen from some words that I shall have to refer to.

Moreover, in all that I shall have to say about a state that was destroyed before it had been known, I shall plainly tell everything concerning its idolatry, rites, sacrifices, and ceremonies in ancient times, and its government, laws, and customs in peace and war, and make no comparison with other histories divine or human, nor with the government of our times, for all comparisons are odious. The reader can make his own comparisons, for he willfind many points of similarity in ancient history, both in Holy Writ and in the profane histories and fables of pagan antiquity. He will observe many laws and customs that compare with those of our own age, and hear many others quite contrary to them. I for my part have done what I could, though not all I desired. I beg the discreet reader to accept my will to give him pleasure and satisfaction, though the strength and skill of an Indian, born among Indians and brought up amidst horses and arms, may be insufficient for the attempt.

From BOOK SEVEN, CHAPTER VIII

The Imperial City of Cuzco

Inca Cápac was the founder of the city of Cuzco, which the Spaniards honored with a longer title, though without removing its proper name. They called it the Great City of Cuzco, head of the kingdoms and provinces of Peru. They also called it New Toledo, but this other name was soon forgotten, since it was quite inappropriate: Cuzco is not girt by a river like Toledo, and

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does not resemble it in situation, for its population is centered on the slopes and folds of a high hill and stretches in all directions over a broad and spacious plain. It has long, wide streets and large squares, which is why the Spaniards in general, and royal scribes and notaries in public documents in particular, use thefirst title. For Cuzco in relation to its empire was like Rome to the Roman empire, Full p. C-151 and the two can be compared with one another, for they resembled one another in their nobler aspects. First, and in chief, both were founded by theirfirst kings. Secondly, they resembled one another in the many different tribes they conquered and added to their empires. Thirdly, they had many excellent laws applied to the good government of the two states. Fourthly, they both bred many famous men and taught them good civil and military doctrine. In this Rome had the advantage over Cuzco, not because she reared her sons better, but because she was more fortunate in having attained the art of letters, whereby she perpetuated the fame of her offspring. They became indeed as illustrious in the sciences as they were excellent in the use of arms; and soldiers and writers honored one another, thefirst performing notable deeds in peace and war, and the latter writing them down to the honor of their country and the perpetual memory of all concerned. I do not know which did most, those who wielded their swords or those who wielded their pens, for the two activities are both heroic and occupy an equal place, as we see in the case of the great Julius Caesar, who exercised both professions with such talent that it is hard to say in which he was the greater. Indeed it may be doubted which of these two groups of illustrious men owed most to the other, whether the warriors to the writers who set down their deeds and immortalized them, or the men of letters to the men of war, who daily provided them with such great deeds as to offer material for their whole lives. Each group could allege many arguments in its own favor, but we shall not repeat them, for we must return to the misfortune of my own country whose sons, though they were distinguished in warfare and for their great wisdom and understanding, and had great aptitude for learning, yet, having no knowledge of letters, left no memory of their great deeds and wise sayings. Thus they all perished with their country. All that has remained of their words and deeds is a feeble tradition passed down by word of mouth from father to son. Even this has been lost with the arrival of a new race, the imposition of a foreign rule and a change of government: this indeed always occurs when empires fall.

I myself, moved by the desire to preserve the few shreds of the ancient traditions of my country that have survived, lest they should completely disappear, have undertaken the excessive labor that this work has occasioned me, as far as I have gone, and that still faces me in continuing the history of the ancient institutions till their end. And so that the city of Cuzco, the mother and mistress of the ancient empire, shall not be forgotten, I have resolved to include a short description of it in this chapter, following the traditions that I picked up as a native son of the city and setting down what I saw with my own eyes. I shall give the traditional names of its various wards which were retained until the year 1560, when I left. Later some of these names were changed to correspond with those of the parish churches built in some of the wards.

King Manco Cápac, having taken into account the advantages possessed by the valley of Cuzco—theflatness of the site, surrounded on all sides by high sierras; the four streams (though none of them very large) to irrigate the whole valley, and in the midst a splendid fountain of briny water for making salt; fertile soil; and healthy air—decided to found his imperial city on that site, in obedience to the will of his father the Sun, who, according to the

Indian belief, had bidden him set up his court, which was to become the capital of his empire, at the place indicated by the golden wand. The temperature of the city is cold Full p. C-152 rather than warm, but not so cold as to oblige the inhabitants to lightfires for warmth. They have only to go into a room in which there is no current of air to shake offthe cold from the street. If they have a brazier, they keep very warm; if not, they manage well without. Similarly with clothes; summer outdoors dress is sufficient: winter outdoors dress is comfortable. In the same way for bedcovers a single blanket is enough, but three are not oppressive throughout the year, with no distinction between winter and summer. This is true of all the regions of Peru, which are constant throughout the year, whether hot, temperate, or cold. In Cuzco, which, as we have said, is cold and dry rather than hot and damp, meat does not go bad. A piece of meat hung in a room with the windows open will keep a week, a fortnight, or thirty or a hundred days until it is as dry as a bone. I have seen this done with theflesh of the Peruvian sheep. I do not know if it can be done with theflesh of the sheep introduced from Spain, or whether, as the Spanish sheep is more hot-blooded than the Peruvian sheep, its meat will keep in the same way or not stand such treatment. I did not see this, as in my time Castilian sheep were never killed because few of them were bred. Because of the coldness of the temperature there are noflies in the city, or very few, and such as there are live in the open air and do not enter the houses. Stinging mosquitos are not found, nor are other noxious creatures: the city is quite free of all of them. Thefirst houses and dwellings in Cuzco were built on the slopes and folds of the hill called Sacsahuana, which is now between the east and north of the city. On the top of this hill the successors of thefirst Inca later built that spendid fortress, which was so little esteemed, but rather abhorred by its conquerors, that they pulled it down in a very short time. The city was divided into the two parts we mentioned earlier, Hanan Cuzco, which is upper Cuzco, and Hurin Cuzco, or lower Cuzco. They were divided by the Antisuyu road which leads eastwards, the part to the north of the road being Hanan Cuzco, and that to the south Hurin Cuzco. Thefirst and most important district was called Collcampata. *Cóllcam* must have been a word from the special language of the Incas, whose meaning I do not know. *Pata* is “terrace,” and also means a stair: as the cultivation terraces were made in the form of a staircase, this name was applied to them. It also means any kind of bench or seat.

It was on this terrace that Inca Manco Cápac founded his royal palace, and it was later occupied by Paullu, the son of Huaina Cápac. I saw a large and spacious hall which served as a public place for celebrating the great festivals in rainy weather: when I left Cuzco it alone was standing and a number of others like it, to which we shall refer, had all fallen in. Beyond Collcampata, moving toward the east, there lay another ward called Cantutpata, meaning the “terrace of pinks.” *Cantut* is the name for a very prettyflower somewhat resembling Spanish pinks, though before the arrival of the Spaniards there were no pinks in Peru. The *cantut* has a stalk, leaf, and thorns like those of the Andalusian *cambronera* or box-thorn, and the plant grows in large thickets. The ward received its name from the very large quantity of these plants, which I saw when I was there. Still further round toward the east lies the ward of Pumacurcu, “the lions’ beam,” from *puma,* “lion,” and *curcu,* “beam,” referring to some large beams there were in this ward to which lions presented to the Inca were fastened until they were tamed and could be moved to their permanent quarters. Then followed another very large ward called Tococachi. The Full p. C-153 meaning of this compound I do not understand. *Toco* is “window” and *cachi,* “salt for eating,” so that according to the rules of the language it ought to mean “window salt”: I cannot understand what is intended unless it is a proper noun

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and has a different meaning which I do not know. In this ward stood the primitive building of the convent of St. Francis. Turning a little to the south, continuing the circle, follows the ward called Munaicenca, or “love-nose,” from *muna*, “to love,” and *cenca*, “nose.” Why this name was given I do not know, but it must have been because of some anecdote or superstition, for names were never applied at random. Further toward the south follows another large ward called Rimacpampa, “the talking square,” for it was there that some of the decrees issued for the government of the republic were announced. They were proclaimed from time to time so that the inhabitants might hear them and present themselves to carry out whatever obligations they entailed. As the square was in this ward, its name was given to the ward: from the square the royal highway leads out to Collasuyu. Beyond the ward of Rimacpampa lies another to the south of the city, called Pumapchupan, “lion’s tail,” for the ward tapers to a point between two streams that unite at a right angle. The name was also given to imply that this ward was the last in the city, and they therefore distinguished it with the name of “the lion’s tail.” Moreover, lions and otherfierce animals were kept in it. At a distance to the west of this ward there was a village of over three hundred inhabitants called Cayaucachi. It stood more than a thousand paces from the last houses in the city. This was in 1560. As I write this, in 1602, I am told that it is already within the limits of Cuzco, the population of which has so multiplied that the city has surrounded the village on all sides.

To the west of the city, again a thousand paces away, there was another ward called Chaquillchaca, which again as a compound is a meaningless name, unless it is a proper noun. The royal highway to Cuntisuyu begins here. Near the road there are two streams of excellent water which are channeled underground. The Indians do not know where the water comes from, for the work is a very ancient one and traditions about these things are being forgotten.
* * *

Footnotes

- Note 1:Translated by Harold V. Livermore. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:The term “Inca” could refer either to one of the Inca people or, more specifically, to their ruler. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:The Incas used elaborately knotted cords—quipus—as a means of recordkeeping and communication. Return to reference 3

Full p. C-154 Full p. C-155

II Europe and the New World

Shorter pp. 1548–49

II Europe and the New World



A detail from Hans Holbein's 1533 painting commonly called *The Ambassadors* .

"All the world's a stage, / And all the men and women merely players." **William Shakespeare**'s famous comparison of human beings to actors playing their various roles in the great theater of the world conjures up the exhilarating liberty and mobility we associate with the memorable characters of Renaissance literature. Because "merely" meant, in Shakespeare's day, "wholly" and "entirely," the line evokes a lively sense of the men and women of that world performing their roles with the gusto of actors. Their social roles as princes, clowns, thieves, or housewives appear, from one angle, as exciting opportunities for the characters to explore. Yet such roles are also clearly confining: Renaissance men and women were born into societies that strictly regulated their actions and even their clothing—only actors had the right to vary their garb and dress above their station. Whether Renaissance subjects relished the pleasures

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of playing or resented the constraints of their social roles is a subject often taken up in the literature of the day.

The most memorable characters of Renaissance literature enjoy greater autonomy and more fully realized personalities, and are much more prone to introspection than their medieval predecessors. Characters like **Miguel de Cervantes**' idealistic but Full p. C-156 Shorter p. 1550 mad Don Quixote; Shakespeare's hesitant Hamlet; and **John Milton**'s "domestic" Adam and "adventurous" Eve are frequently presented in acts of thought, fantasy, planning, doubt, and internal debate. Deliberating with others and themselves about what to do seems at least as important to these characters as putting their plans into action.

One reason for this shift toward internal, mental, and psychological portraiture is that Renaissance authors, like the characters they invent, inhabited a world of such widespread revolutionary change that they could not passively receive the traditional wisdom of previous ages. The stage on which they played was transformed and expanded by both the scientific and the geographical advances of the age. When Nicolaus Copernicus (1473–1543) discovered that the earth moves around the sun and when Galileo Galilei (1564–1642) turned his telescope up to the heavens, the nature of the universe and creation had to be reconceived. When **Christopher Columbus** (1451–1506) sailed to what he thought were the Indies, he introduced a New World to Europe, which began for thefirst time to think of itself as the Old World. Around the time that Columbus was sailing to America, humanist thinkers in Italy began to use new scholarly methods that gave them fuller access to the cultural legacy of ancient Greece and Rome as well as a different sense of their own place in history. On scientific, geographical, and scholarly fronts, the world of Renaissance Europe was undergoing revolutionary change.

After Johannes Gutenberg refined the movable-type printing press in Europe around 1450, the ideas and controversies of the age reached a broader audience than ever before. Texts of all sorts were printed widely, and the spread of the printing press across Europe meant that writers could often avoid local censorship by having texts printed elsewhere, as occurred with Protestant bibles in local languages that circulated widely despite Catholic prohibitions, or works like the biting satire *Lazarillo de Tormes*, which the Inquisition banned in Spain but which were printed and reprinted in the Netherlands or Italy. Despite censorship, the average person's access to information increased dramatically.

The new discoveries, rapidly circulating, were avidly resisted in some quarters, as when the Inquisition forced Galileo to repudiate the Copernican theory that the earth rotates around the sun. At the same time, they led to an unprecedented sense of possibility. In his dialogue *The City of the Sun* (1602) Galileo's friend and supporter Tommasso Campanella (1568–1639) optimistically asserted that the three great inventions of his day—the compass, the printing press, and the gun—were "signs of the union of the entire world."

As the two towering powers of the age, Habsburg Spain and the Ottoman Empire, grew ever more dominant, this "union of the world" could also seem threatening. With the defeat of the Muslim stronghold of Granada in 1492, and the expulsion of the Jews in the same year, Spain emerged as a centralized, militantly Christian state. Spain's modernized army effectively replaced older chivalric forms of combat with new troops armed with guns and cannons, making inroads into Italy and France. Charles, King of Spain, was crowned Holy Roman Emperor in 1519, consolidating many of the great dynastic houses of Europe. Soon the

Habsburg domains extended across the globe, from Europe to the New World in the west to Asia, in an empire without precedent.

ENCOUNTERING THE NEW WORLD

As emperor, Charles V took for his emblem the pillars of Hercules (both mythical and a real-world geographical reference to the two large landmasses Full p. C-157 Shorter p. 1551 flanking the Straits of Gibraltar). For the ancients, the pillars had signaled the end of the known world. But Charles reversed the motto that accompanied the emblem, from the forbidding "Ne Plus Ultra" (*no further*, [Latin]) to the endlessly ambitious "Plus Ultra," which encouraged going *ever further* . So the Spanish did across the globe, all while battling the Ottomans' own expansion into the Mediterranean and North Africa.

The discoveries challenged European centrality in the world and in creation. Contact with New World peoples forced Europeans to consider as never before what counted as culture, civilization, and even humanity, casting into doubt the authority of the classics that scholars had recently embraced with a new fervor. In an ironic exchange on Prospero's island in Shakespeare's ***The Tempest*** , Miranda exclaims, "Oh, brave new world / that has such people in't!," only to suffer her father's devastating correction: "'Tis new to thee." Although Columbus considered the New World a *tabula rasa*—a clean slate ready to be imprinted with Christianity and European ways—by the time the conquerors **Hern á n Cort é s** (1485–1547) and Francisco Pizarro (1478–1541) encountered the great civilizations of the Aztecs and the Incas in the 1520s and 1530s, Europe was forced to grapple with other versions of what culture could mean.

As the explorers contemplated complex societies that had been completely unknown to the Old World, the arbitrariness of European social arrangements became visible to many thoughtful observers. **Thomas More** (1478–1535) was inspired by reports of new social arrangements to imagine his own island of ***Utopia*** , a wry fantasy nonetheless full of hope for reform. In one of his skeptical, probing *essais* (called "**Of Cannibals**") **Michel de Montaigne** (1533–1592) elaborated on **Jean de L é ry's** detailed and even-handed ethnography of the Tupinambápeople indigenous to Brazil, to ask larger questions about European society, whose peculiarities proved as unintelligible to the "cannibals" as Tupinamba society was to Europeans.

Europeans assumed that the New World existed for their profit and delectation—an idea expressed everywhere from the famous engraving by Jan van der Straet that depicted America as a seductive woman welcoming the explorer Amerigo Vespucci with open arms, to **John Donne**'s poem "To his mistress going to bed," in which he exclaims as hefinally manages to peel offher clothes, "Oh, my America, my new found land." Yet these assumptions were quickly challenged in the New World, both by an impregnable landscape and by the continued resistance of the Native population. New World authors both Indigenous and *mestizo* (born of the union of a European and an Indian), such as **Inca Garcilaso de la Vega** or **Guaman Poma**, demonstrated that America had its own history, far predating the encounter, and decried the abuses of the conquest as they argued for their own role in governing their societies. Spanish reformers such as **Bartolom é de las Casas** (1484–1566) also took up the cause of the Indigenous peoples, promoting legal protections that ultimately failed to stop abuses that

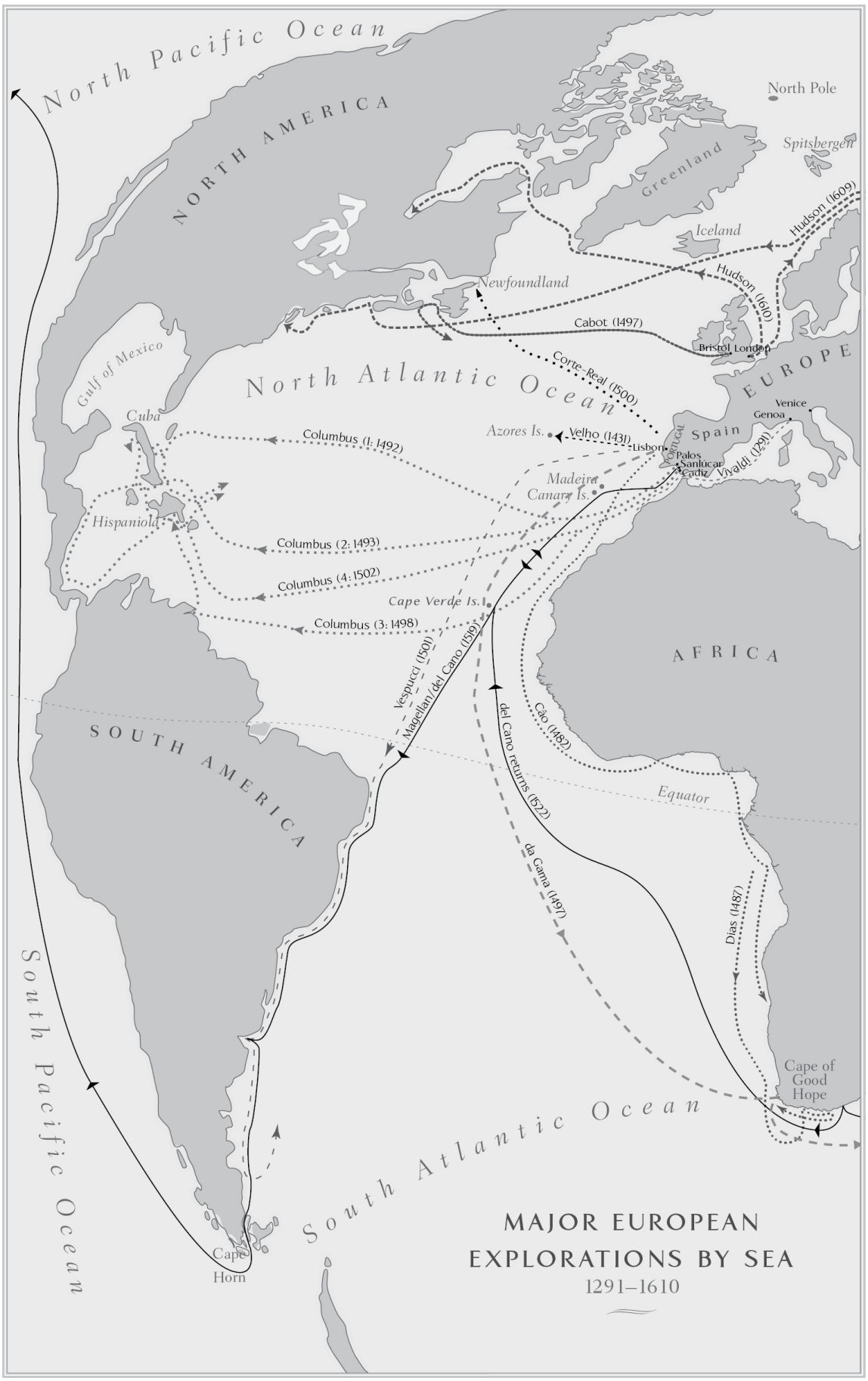
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occurred far from the metropole. As the New World yielded untold mineral wealth, Spain set up an elaborate political structure to control it, while other European nations mounted their own expeditions or turned to piracy in efforts to rival Spanish successes. Meanwhile, the tremendous influx of wealth from the New World had a destabilizing effect across Europe, leading to persistent inflation and increased opportunities for social mobility.

CONFLICTS IN EUROPE

If the New World proved difficult to control from across the ocean, Europe was no less riven by conflict. Not even the threat of "the Turk," as the Europeans referred to the Ottoman expansion, could paper over the serious rifts that divided the continent. The Protestant Reformation, which initially targeted the abuses and corruption of the Catholic Church, quickly became a political as well as a religious crisis. Movements originally intended to reform the Church—such as those led by **Martin Luther** (1483–1546) and John Calvin (1509–1564)—were rapidly adopted by Renaissance princes bridling under papal authority. The reformers' attacks on the Pope, who wielded enormous political and military as well as spiritual power, provided an opportunity for rulers across Europe to increase their own sway. Henry VIII of England famously broke with the Catholic Church and declared himself head of the Church of England, and the pattern of contesting or breaking with papal authority was repeated throughout Europe. By nationalizing religious authority, monarchs claimed for themselves more and more rights that traditionally had belonged to the Pope or that had been shared by parliaments. Securing these rights from these other institutions brought monarchs closer to the absolutist rule that they craved. And yet, the Protestant Reformation had so emboldened subjects to challenge religious and political authority that the advantage enjoyed by European monarchs in the later sixteenth century would occasionally give way to a violent overthrow, as it did during the English Civil War (1642–51), when Charles I, a king reviled for his dismissal of Parliament and for failure to grant religious liberties to the more extreme Protestants among his subjects, was beheaded and the monarchy temporarily abolished.

Full p. C-158 Shorter p. 1552



Full p. C-159 Shorter p. 1553

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From Jan van der Straet, *Vespucci Discovering America*, 1589. The fertility of the New World is represented as a sexualized female body.

Full p. C-160 Shorter p. 1554-55

Given the political force of the Catholic Church and the Protestant Reformation, it is no wonder that the Renaissance often appears to be more preoccupied with earthly princes and empires than Shorter p. 1556 with the heavenly King. In this new world of politics, the role of the Renaissance prince and his courtiers was instrumental. **Niccol ò Machiavelli**'s revolutionary treatise ***The Prince*** underscored the importance of the strong ruler—or at least a ruler who always appeared strong—as the head of his state. Dispelling with all pieties in favor of practical advice and placing ruthless effectiveness over morality, Machiavelli broke with a long tradition of advisers who preached moral behavior to their rulers, recognizing instead the exigencies of his time and the importance of projecting strength and authority. In his *Book of the Courtier*, Baldassare Castiglione (1478–1529) explained how to comport oneself with courtly grace, suggesting in the process that nobility could be learned. In an uncertain and rapidly changing world, performance and self-improvement were intertwined.

Full p. C-161



Full p. C-162

HUMANISM

The new Renaissance consciousness of how individuals could fashion themselves through their actions was in part due to the influence of the classics. Humanism, the intellectual movement that championed the return to the culture of Greece and Rome as a way to renew Europe, sought civic and moral guidance as well as aesthetic inspiration in the ancient texts. As the modern European rulers took on cadres of secretaries, ambassadors, and advisers, humanist pedagogy made education a road to power and privilege as never before.

The literal meaning of the word *renaissance*—"rebirth"—casts the great intellectual and artistic achievements of the period as a reprise of ancient culture. The artists and intellectuals of the Renaissance imagined the world of antiquity "reborn" through their work, in a vigorous renewal comparable to the thrilling discoveries of their own age. The degree to which European intellectuals of the period engaged with the writings of the ancient world is difficult for the average modern reader to realize. For these writers, references to classical mythology, philosophy, and literature are not ornaments or affectations. Along with references to the Scriptures, they are a major part of their mental equipment and way of thinking. Every cultivated person wrote and spoke Latin, with the result that a Western community of intellectuals could exist, a spiritual "republic of letters" above individual nations.

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The archetypal humanist is often said to be the poet and scholar **Francis Petrarch** (1304–1374), who anticipated certain ideals of the high Renaissance: a lofty conception of the literary art, a taste for the good life, and a strong sense of the memories and glories of antiquity. In this last respect, what should be emphasized is the imaginative quality, the visionary impulse with which the writers of the period looked at those memories—the same vision and imagination with which they regarded such contemporary heroes as the great navigators and astronomers.

The vision of an ancient age of glorious intellectual achievement that is "now" brought to life again implies, of course, however roughly, the idea of an intervening "middle" age, by comparison ignorant and dark. The hackneyed, vastly inaccurate notion that the "light" of the Renaissance broke through a long "night" of the Middle Ages was not devised by subsequent centuries; it was held by the humanist scholars of the Renaissance themselves. Petrarch imagined himself living in "sad times": "It were better to be born either earlier or much later, for there was once and perhaps will be again a happier age. In the middle, you see, in our time, squalor and baseness haveflowed together." Addressing his book, Petrarch expresses his longing for a new age: "But if you, as is my wish and ardent Full p. C-163 Shorter p. 1557 hope, shall live on after me, a more propitious age will come again: this Lethean stupor surely can't endure forever. Our posterity, perchance, when the shadows have lifted, may enjoy once more the radiance the ancients knew." The combination of self-deprecation, aspiration, and arrogance aptly characterizes the period's sense of its own superiority over not only the New World but also the recent past.

Despite the fractured political and religious landscape of Europe, especially in the sixteenth century, the great intellectual innovations of the Renaissance expanded across all boundaries. The movement had its inception in Italy with Petrarch, and developed most remarkably in the visual arts, made its way across Europe to Spain, France, and England, where its main achievements were in literature, particularly the drama. The intellectual fervor of humanism, like the poetic conventions of Petrarchism, gradually expanded into multiple languages and national traditions. Their dissemination led to new genres and to playful recombinations of older ones, inaugurating a period of great innovation in all forms of literature.

Definitions of the Renaissance must take account of the period's preoccupation with this life rather than with the life beyond. Though an oversimplification, one might say that an ideal medieval man or woman, whose mode of action is basically oriented toward the thought of the afterlife (and who therefore conceives of life on earth as transient and preparatory) contrasts with an ideal Renaissance man or woman, whose enthusiasm for earthly interests is actually enhanced by the knowledge that one's time on earth isfleeting. Once again, Petrarch provides the best example: the *Rime Sparse* (*Scattered Rhymes*), the extensive sequence of love poems for which he is best known, are full of renunciation, as the poet searches in vain for religious consolation for the travails of earthly desire. Yet in the process of charting the futility of earthly love, the poems paint an incredibly detailed portrait of the poet-lover in all his earthly variations, rendering his interior life both immediate and engrossing.

THE WELL-LIVED LIFE

The emphasis on the immediate and tangible is reflected in the earthly, amoral, and aesthetic character of what we may call the Renaissance code of behavior. Human action is judged not in terms of right and wrong, of good and evil (as it is judged when life is viewed as a moral "test," with reward or punishment in the afterlife), but in terms of its present concrete validity and effectiveness, of the delight it affords, of its memorability and its beauty. Much of what is typical of the Renaissance, then, from architecture to poetry, from sculpture to rhetoric, may be related to a taste for the harmonious and the memorable, for the spectacular effect, for the successful striking of a pose. Individual human action, seeking in itself its own reward,finds justification in its formal appropriateness; in its being a well-rounded achievement, perfect of its kind; in the zest and gusto with which it is, here and now, performed; and,finally, in its proving worthy of remaining as a testimony to the performer's power on earth. In this sense, the purpose of life is the unrestrained and self-sufficient practice of one's "virtue," the competent and delighted exercise of one's skill.

The leaders of the period saw in a work of art the clearest instance of beautiful, harmonious, and self-justified performance. To create such a work became the valuable occupation par excellence, the most satisfactory display of virtue. The Renaissance view of antiquity exemplifies this attitude. The artists and intellectuals of the period not Full p. C-164 Shorter p. 1558 only drew on antiquity for certain practices and forms but also found there a recognition of the place of the arts among outstanding modes of human action. In this way, the concepts of "fame" and "glory" became particularly associated with the art of poetry because the Renaissance drew from antiquity the idea of the poet as celebrator of high deeds, the "dispenser of glory."

At the same time, there is no reason to forget that such virtues and skills are God's gift. Renaissance intellectuals, artists, aristocrats, and princes did not lack in abiding religious faith or fervor. Machiavelli, **Rabelais**, and Cervantes take for granted the presence of God in their own and in their heroes' lives. For many, the Protestant Reformation and the growth of mysticism within the Catholic Church led to a more intimate and individualized relationship with the divine. Much about the religious temper of the age is expressed in its art, particularly in Italian painting, where Renaissance Madonnas celebrate earthly beauty even as they inspire thoughts of the divine.

SKEPTICISM AND MELANCHOLY

Especially where there is a close association between the practical and the intellectual—as in the exercise of political power, the act of scientific discovery, the creation of works of art—the Renaissance assumption is that there are things here on earth that are highly worth doing, and that by doing them, humanity proves its privileged position in creation and therefore incidentally follows God's intent. The often-cited phrase "the dignity of man" describes this positive, strongly affirmed awareness of the intellectual and physical "virtues" of the human being, and of the individual's place in creation. And yet, alongside the delight of earthly achievement, there lurked in many Renaissance minds nagging doubts: What is the purpose or

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ultimate worth of all this activity? What meaningful relation does it bear to any all-inclusive, cosmic pattern? The Renaissance coincided with, and perhaps to some extent occasioned, a loss offirm belief in thefinal unity and thefinal intelligibility of the universe. In the wake of the geographic and scientific discoveries, thinkers such as Montaigne and Descartes became skeptics, doubting and questioning received knowledge.



Madonna and Child, c. 1465, by Fra Filippo Lippi. The object of the painting's devotions is somewhat unclear: is our eye focused on the baby Jesus, or on the beauty of Mary's face?

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For some Renaissance writers and artists, the sense of uncertainty became so strong as to paralyze their aspiration to power or thirst for knowledge or delight in beauty. The resulting attitude we may call Renaissance melancholy. It was sometimes openly expressed (as by some characters in Elizabethan drama) and other times Full p. C-165 Shorter p. 1559 merely provided an undercurrent of sadness or wise resignation to a work (as in More's *Utopia* or Montaigne's *Essays*). Thus while on one, and perhaps the better-known, side of the picture, human intellect in Renaissance literature enthusiastically illuminates the realms of knowledge and unveils the mysteries of the universe, on the other it is beset by puzzling doubts and a profound mistrust of its own powers.



Young Man Holding a Skull, 1519, by Lucas van Leyden. This young nobleman, a paragon of Renaissance fashion, points to a skull that he cradles in his left arm, reminding the viewer of the inevitable fate that even the best-dressed courtier will face.

Doubts about the value of human action within the scheme of eternity did not, however, diminish the outpouring of ideas about the ideal ordering of this world. Renaissance poets and intellectuals tested ideas about the ideal prince, courtier, councilor, and humble subject as well

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as the ideal court and society. More's *Utopia* imagines a perfectly ordered society, as improbable as it is optimistic, while Machiavelli proposes his amoral ideas about the effective (rather than ideal) prince. Other writers shift the focus from the court to the entire commonwealth, as when **Lope de Vega** transforms the historical case of a peasant uprising against an abusive overlord into a play, ***Fuenteovejuna*** , that makes an ethical and political case for resistance. In all these works, Renaissance writers can be seen tirelessly examining the nature of their own world, the problem of power, and the vexed relations between the absolute authority of the prince and the rights and liberties of the people. Its zeal for defining the social contract partly explains why the Renaissance is often viewed as the "early modern" period; the "rebirth" andflourishing of antiquity also heralded ideas that we associate with the modern political world.

The joining of philosophical and imaginative thinking in literary expression is characteristic of the Renaissance, which cultivated the idea of "serious play." Throughout the literature of the period, we see the creative and restless mind of the Renaissance intellectual "freely ranging," as Sir Philip Sidney put it, "only in the zodiac of his own wit," creatingfictional characters and worlds that might, if the poet is sufficiently persuasive, be put into practice and change the nature of the real world.

Full p. C-166 Full p. C-167 Shorter p. 1560

PETRARCH AND THE LOVE LYRIC



An early 16th-century Venetian portrait of Petrach and Laura de Noves, the real-life Laura. She holds a laurel branch like that which crowns the poet. The double portrait, now in the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford, is based on a 15th-century manuscript that depicts the two subjects separately.

Although **Petrarch** (1304–1374), a contemporary of **Dante** and **Boccaccio**, lived and died in the Middle Ages, he did everything in his power to distinguish himself and his scholarship from the period he dismissed as the "Dark Ages." Petrarch dedicated himself to the recovery of classical learning in a spirit commonly associated with a later period, in which humanist scholars zealously pursued the rebirth of antiquity. Yet Petrarch's status as a precursor of the Renaissance is primarily due to an aspect of his work that neither he nor his contemporaries regarded as a lasting contribution: his 366 lyric poems in the vernacular, mostly dedicated to his frustrated desire for an elusive woman named Laura. Petrarch's experience of love and sense of his own fragmented and fluid self set the standard for the lyric expression of subjective and erotic experience in the Renaissance. His efforts to scrutinize himself intently and at times unflatteringly and to capture his own elusive inner workings in verse inspired a poetic tradition that has influenced lyric sequences from **Shakespeare**'s sonnets to Walt Whitman *'s Leaves of Grass* to contemporary pop lyrics.

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Francis Petrarch was born in Arezzo on July 20, 1304, three years after his father and Dante Alighieri were exiled from Florence. In 1314, Petrarch's father moved his family to Avignon, the new seat of the papacy in southern France (1309–77), where he became prosperous in the legal profession. Petrarch himself initially trained as a law student, but chose instead to pursue the study of classical culture and literature. He soon came to the attention of the powerful Colonna family, whose patronage launched his career as a diplomat-scholar and allowed him to travel widely and move in the intimate circles of European princes and scholars. He refused the offices of bishop and papal secretary, preferring instead to ground his growing prestige in his humanistic scholarship. Imaginative conversation with the ancients, like imitation of their poetry, brought him into contact with the past: his research into classical history and arts profoundly influenced his sense of himself and his own cultural moment. He died in 1374 near Padua, his head resting on a volume of his beloved **Virgil** .

Petrarch's most famous work, the *Rime Sparse* (*Scattered Rhymes*) or *Rerum Fragmenta Vulgarium* (*Fragments in the Vernacular*), is a collection of 366 songs and sonnets (based on the calendar year associated with the liturgy) of extraordinary technical virtuosity and variety. Written in Italian and woven into a highly introspective narrative, the lyric collection takes the poet himself as its object of study. The poems painstakingly record how his thoughts and identity are scattered and transformed by the experience of love for a beautiful, unattainable woman named Laura. Even some of his Full p. C-168 friends suspected that Laura was merely the theme and emblem of his lyric poetry and not a historical woman; she appears to have been both. On theflyleaf of his magnificent copy of Virgil, Petrarch inscribed a note on her life:

> Laura, illustrious through her own virtues, and long famed through my verses,first appeared to my eyes in my Shorter p. 1561 youth, in the year of our Lord 1327, on the sixth day of April, in the church of St. Clare in Avignon, at matins; and in the same city, also on the sixth day of April, at the samefirst hour, but in the year 1348, the light of her life was withdrawn from the light of day, while I, as it chanced, was in Verona, unaware of my fate. * * * Her chaste and lovely form was laid to rest at vesper time, on the same day on which she died in the burial place of the Brothers Minor. I am persuaded that her soul returned to the heaven from which it came, as Seneca says of Africanus. I have thought to write this, in bitter memory, yet with a certain bitter sweetness, here in this place that is often before my eyes, so that I may be admonished, by the sight of these words and by the consideration of the swiftflight of time, that there is nothing in this life in which I shouldfind pleasure; and that it is time, now that the strongest tie is broken, toflee from Babylon; and this, by the prevenient grace of God, should be easy for me, if I meditate deeply and manfully on the futile cares, the empty hopes, and the unforeseen events of my past years.
>
> (Translated by E. H. Wilkins)

Petrarch's note illuminates the powerful role that Laura plays in his personal struggles between spiritual aspirations and earthly attachments. Thoughts of Laura return him to the problem of his own will, torn between spiritual and sensual desires, always delaying worldly renunciation. Even when he expresses disgust with earthly rewards and pleasures, it is conditional: he will choose the right course of action, Petrarch writes, *if* he meditates "deeply and manfully" on the disappointments and failures of his past and denies memory's seductively bittersweet pleasures.

In the *Rime Sparse*, Laura's ambiguous position between divine guide and earthly temptress contrasts sharply with the role that Beatrice played in Dante's spiritual pilgrimage, the *Divine Comedy* . Whereas Dante's lovefinally leads him to paradise, it is never clear to Petrarch whether he is pursuing heavenly or earthly delights and whether he will safely reach any destination or "port" (in the nautical image of sonnet 189). When Dante looks into Beatrice's eyes on Mount Purgatory, he sees a reflection of the heavens; when Petrarch gazes into Laura's eyes, he sees himself. Not even his use of the liturgical year (especially the anniversaries of Christ's death and resurrection) to structure his account of their relationship guarantees that a spiritual conversion will follow Petrarch's self-analysis or "confession" of his life.

The lyric collection'sfirst sonnet, in which Petrarch solicits compassion as well as pardon from his readers, establishes the *Rime Sparse*'s close relationship to confessional narrative. Its themes of conversion, memory, and forgetfulness (of God and oneself) evoke the model of **St. Augustine** and raise the question of whether Petrarch will follow suit: Will he ultimately transcend his attachment to a woman's physical beauty, his love of language and poeticfigures, and his narcissistic preoccupation with himself? In dramatic opposition to the transcendent model of Augustine is **Ovid** of the ***Metamorphoses*** , the classical counter-epic that artfully uses fragmentation,fluid change, and scattering to describe the effects of power—divine, political, or erotic—on bodies and on minds. Petrarch refers to a variety of Ovidianfigures in the *Rime Sparse*, including Full p. C-169 Narcissus and Echo, Actaeon and Diana, Medusa, and Pygmalion. His chief Ovidian model, however, is the story of Apollo, the god who "invents" the genre of lyric during his amorous chase of the nymph Daphne. While running, Apollo describes her various beauties—eyes,figure, and hair—and imaginatively embellishes what he sees. When Daphne eludes him through her Shorter p. 1562 transformation into the laurel, Apollo claims her as his tree, if not his lover, and declares that the laurel will be the sign of triumph in letters and warfare. The prominence of this tale in the *Rime Sparse* suggests that if Laura had not lived, Petrarch would have had to invent her. Her name interweaves key attributes of Petrarch's poetic imagination: *lauro* and *alloro* ("laurel"), *oro* ("gold," for her tresses and value), *l'aura* ("breeze" and "inspiration," which etymologically relates to "breath"), *laus* or *lauda* ("praise"). Such wordplay suggests the selective, even obsessive character of Petrarch's poetic style. Like Apollo, Petrarch also "translates" his beloved's elusive body into the more tangiblefigures of rhetoric.

Petrarch's great legacy to Renaissance European literature is the *Rime Sparse*'s language of self-description, which starts from the conventional hy-perbole, antithesis, and oxymoron (rhetorical exaggeration and opposition) that characterized troubadour songs, Provençal lyric, and classical love elegy: *I freeze and burn, love is bitter and sweet, my sighs are tempests and my tears are floods, I am in ecstasy and agony, I am possessed by memories of her and I am in exile from myself* . Petrarch transformed such rhetoricalfigures or tropes of love into a powerful language of introspection and self-fashioning that swept through European literature. Although it soon became so popular that writers endlessly repeated and even trivialized it, Petrarchism had serious dimensions that helped articulate growing questions about the self: Is it determined by God orflexible and in the shaping hands of humankind? Do culture, history, and force of will compose and transform it?

Petrarchism offered rich formal possibilities as well: although Petrarch often wrote in other meters, the sonnet became in his hands an extraordinarily supple metrical form. A Petrarchan sonnet, as the form is now known, is a fourteen-line poem with a break after line eight. The

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octet is usually broken into two stanzas of four lines each, with a rhyme scheme of *abba*, and the sestet is made up of two three-line stanzas, rhyming *cdc* . The sonnet proved remarkablyflexible, allowing poets to express themselves in a compact and striking manner. The sestet and the octet may contrast formally or semantically, as may the stanzas within a section of the sonnet, while its rhyme can reinforce or contradict meaning. The possibilities are virtually endless, as Petrarch's many imitators were to demonstrate.

Across sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Europe, writers such as **Garcilaso** in Spain, **Du Bellay** in France, and Sidney, Spenser, and Shakespeare in England all turned to Petrarch as a beacon of Italian humanism who offered a powerful intellectual and formal toolkit for introspection. Through their own poems, they made Petrarchism into an international language, adapting it to various national traditions and rehearsing it in countless iterations. Garcilaso's "When I stand and contemplate my state" (sonnet 1) evokes Dante as well as Petrarch to give us an anguished self who both longs for and rues the end of erotic longing that will come with death. Garcilaso elaborates on nostalgia as a central theme of Petrarchism: memory brings joy and pain ("O sweet mementoes to my sorrow found," sonnet 10), while the poet urges the beloved to seize the day (*carpe diem*, in the Latin phrase) before it, too, is past ("For as long as the lily and the rose," sonnet 23).

The poetic sequence was itself a much-imitated model, allowing the poet Full p. C-170 Shorter p. 1563 to chart the minute transformations of the desiring self over time. The beloved does not fare as well: the eloquent expression of the male poet-lover's complex *interior* life in these sequences depends, as Petrarchan successors noticed, on a correspondingly detailed description of the beloved's *exterior* . In the Petrarchan inventory of the beloved's adorable parts, from eyes to hair, cheeks, and hand, the poet converts her living body to ornaments, metal, and minerals, such as gold, topaz, and pearls. Although any one of her beauties is capable of scattering the poet's thoughts, the beloved herself has little independent coherence: as one critic puts it, "some of Laura's parts are greater than her whole person." While male Renaissance writers turned to Petrarch to investigate their own interiority, groundbreaking female poets such as **Louise Lab é** and **Veronica Franco** chose instead to give voice to the object of male longing, whether by challenging the Petrarchan "scattering" of the female presence, or by voicing an urgent female desire. Labé's poems, especially "Kiss me again" (sonnet 18), are striking for their immediacy, as though in response to the infinite deferment of Petrarchan introspection. The poet insists on the here and now with a force that dispels Petrarch's doubts and hesitations, yet her lyric "I" speaks a Petrarchan language in a Petrarchan form. Beyond the expression of desire, the defiant lyric personae that these female poets assume affords them a poetic voice, arguing for their very right to be heard as artists. In Labé's sonnet 10, love and poetic admiration are intertwined, as the poet expresses her desire for a beloved who is himself crowned with laurel. Franco's "A Challenge to a Lover Who Has Offended Her" (capitolo 13) dares the lover to afight here and now, in a "love match" that makes the Petrarchan oxymoron of love as war urgent and concrete. Yet the poem is Franco'sfirst blow, reminding the reader that the contest is not only physical but poetic.

By Shakespeare's time, the Petrarchan idiom had become a trite convention ripe for parody ("My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun," sonnet 130), yet it remained the most powerful language available for describing desire, the ephemeral nature of love, and the fragility of the self when confronted with an impossible object. Shakespeare explicitly harnesses the conventionality of the form to create a highly skeptical poetic voice, which recognizes the

tradition and yet questions it. He reflects on the limits of poetic invention, noting the paradox in alwaysfinding a novel way to describefidelity: “O know, sweet love, I always write of you” (“Why is my verse so barren of new pride,” sonnet 76). Thematically, Shakespeare occupies an oblique position in relation to Petrarchism, for his sequence includes *two* distinct love objects, one homoerotic: the beautiful, often inattentive aristocratic youth of sonnets 1–126, and the “dark lady” of 127–52. Sonnet 135, “Whoever hath her wish, thou hast thy Will” reveals a love triangle in which the poet must share his beloved’s affection. Yet the brilliant saturation of the poem with puns on “will”—the poet’s name, but also wishes, desire, the future, a testament—signals the power of the poetic voice to transcend the immediacy of the betrayal. We can recognize the symptoms in everything from a Renaissance sonnet to a twentieth-century Motown lyric (“Tracks of My Tears,” Smokey Robinson and the Miracles): the lover who dies and is reborn a thousand times a day, who is mentally scattered and physically immobile, and who is never more alone than in a crowd, suffers from Petrarchan love. Petrarch did not invent the idea of a divided, tormented lover, but his authoritative self-portrait defined an infinitely rich poetic tradition of erotic longing.

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FRANCIS PETRARCH

P OEMS FROM *S CATTERED R HYMES*[1]

Footnotes

- Note 1:Translated by David Young. Return to reference 1

1

All you who hear in scattered rhymes the sound
of heavy sighs with which I fed my heart
during the time of myfirst youthful straying[2]
when I was not the man I’ve since become:
for the mixed style in which I speak and weep,
caught between empty hopes and empty sorrow,
from anyone who knows of lovefirsthand
I hope tofind some sympathy—and pardon.
I can see now that I was made the subject
of lots of gossip among lots of people;
inside myself I’m oftenfilled with shame;[3]
shame is the fruit of all my clever ravings;
so are repentance and my knowing clearly
that every worldly pleasure is a dream.

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Footnotes

- Note 2:Mental and physical “straying” as well as a moral “mistake.” “Scattered rhymes”: reference to the sonnet collection’s title, *Rime Sparse* . Return to reference 2
- Note 3:The Italian, *di me medesmo meco mi vergogno*, suggests intense self-consciousness. Return to reference 3

3

It was the day the sun himself grew pale
with grieving for his Maker[4] —I was seized
and made no effort to defend myself;
your lovely eyes had held and bound me, Lady.
It didn’t seem a time to be on guard
against Love’s blows, so I went confident
and fearless on my way. My troubles started
amid the universal sense of woe.[5]
Love found me wholly undefended, with
the way from eyes to heart completely open,
eyes that are now the conduit for tears.

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He got no glory by it; I was helpless.[6]
And he let you escape with no attack
when you were well defended, fully armed.

Footnotes

- Note 4:The anniversary of Christ’s crucifixion. Elsewhere (in sonnet 211 and a note in Petrarch’s copy of Virgil) given as April 6, 1327. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:The communal Christian grief that contrasts with Petrarch’s private woes. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:That is, with grief over the crucifixion. Return to reference 6

Shorter p. 1564

34

If fair desire’s still alive, Apollo,
that burned within you once by Thessaly’s waves,[7]
and if through all the years you still have not
forgot those golden tresses that you loved,
among these frosts, these cruel and bitter times,
that last as long as you conceal your face,
redeem the honor of these sacred leaves
where you were trapped, and then I was trapped too;

and by the power of that amorous hope
that once sustained you in your bitter life,
come clear this atmosphere of mist and vapor;
then both of us can see a marvelous thing[8] —
our lady sitting out here on the grass
her arms raised up to give herself some shade.

Footnotes

- Note 7:Petrarch links his love of Laura to the love of Apollo for Daphne in Ovid's *Metamorphosis* . Daphne, daughter of the god of the Peneus River in Thessaly, was pursued by Apollo, the god of poetry. She begged her father to change her form, which had "given too much pleasure," and was transformed into the laurel tree. Apollo, whom Petrarch associates with the sun god, claimed the laurel as his personal emblem. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:Supernatural and highly meaningful spectacle. Return to reference 8

62

Father of Heaven, after days now lost,
after the nights spent raving with desire
that burned incessantly within my heart
when I saw graceful gestures that destroyed me,
be pleased that finally, by your great light,[9]
I may embrace a different way of life,
my bitter adversary[1] now disarmed,
his nets at last all spread for me in vain.
It's now eleven years,[2] my gracious Lord,
that I've been subject to this ruthless yoke
that is mostfierce, always, to the submissive:
on my unworthy misery, please have mercy,
and lead my thoughts back to a better place,
remind them: this day you were on the cross.

Footnotes

- Note 9:Of grace. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:Satan. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:I.e., 1338. Return to reference 2

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126

Clear waters, fresh and sweet,[3]

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where she who is my lady,
my only one, would rest her lovely body;
gentle branch that pleased her
(with sighing, I remember)
to make a column she could lean against;
grass andflowers which her gown,
graceful and rich, concealed,
and her angelic breast,
sacred, brilliant air
where Love had those fair eyes unlock my heart:
listen all together
to these my mournful words and dying speech.
If it's my destiny
and Heaven deems it so
that Love will shut these weeping eyes of mine,
let kindness act to see
my body buried here
and let my soul go naked to its home;
my death will be less harsh
if I can keep my hope
until that fearful pass,
because my weary spirit
could never sail to a more restful port,
or in more tranquil grave
flee from my poor, exhaustedflesh and bones.
The time will come, perhaps,
when she'll come back again
to her old haunts, that wild gentle thing,
and she will seek me out
as on that blessèd day
and turn her loving and expectant gaze
to search me out—oh, pity!—
and see that I am dust
among the stones. Then Love
will make her sigh so sweetly
that she will win me grace at last in Heaven
and force my fate to change,
wiping her eyes upon her lovely veil.
From lovely branches fell
(how sweet to recollect this)
a rain offlowers on her precious bosom,
and she sat humbly there
in such a cloud of glory,[4]

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a loving nimbus that surrounded her;

someflowers on her skirt
and some in her blond hair—
like pearls set on gold
they seemed to me that day;
while one was landing gently on the earth,
another twirled around,
as if to say, “Now here is where Love[5] reigns.”
How often I would murmur
at that time, full of awe:
“This person clearly had her birth in Paradise!”
Her bearing, clearly godlike,
her face and words and smile,
sofilled me with forgetfulness,
and so divided me
from images of truth,
that I would utter, sighing,
“How did I get here? When?”
believing that I must have gone to Heaven.
That’s why this grass delights me;
there is no other place where Ifind peace.
If you had beauties equal to desires,
you could go boldly
out of this wood and move among mankind.[6]

Footnotes

- Note 3:Of the river Sorgue. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:An image associated with the Virgin Mary. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:Amor (Cupid) or Christ. Thefloral and bejeweled images associate Laura’s body with the bride of the biblical Song of Songs, whose erotic chastity is celebrated as an “enclosed garden” and “fountain sealed.” Return to reference 5
- Note 6:These last three lines are addressed to the poem. Return to reference 6

333

Go, doleful rhymes, and visit the hard stone
that hides my dearest treasure in the earth;
call on her there, who will respond from Heaven
although her mortal part lies dark and buried.
Tell her that I’m already sick of living,
of sailing through these rough and heaving seas;
tell her I gather up her scattered leaves
and follow where she went, step after step,
and speak of her alone, alive and dead,
(or rather, still alive, and now immortal),

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so that this world may understand and love her.
Ask her to pay attention to my death day,
which can't be far away, so she can meet me,
and summon me to where she is, in Heaven.

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GARCILASO DE LA VEGA

Born to a noble family in Toledo, Spain, the courtier and soldier Garcilaso (ca. 1501–1536) traveled to Italy with the armies of Emperor Charles V. He was deeply influenced by the poetry he encountered there and, with his friend Joan Boscán, adopted Petrarchism for Iberia. Using the sonnet form and the Italianate hendecasyllable (the eleven-syllable line), Garcilaso developed an extraordinarily nuanced voice to describe a subject set both geographically and emotionally adrift. Though he died an early death of battle wounds, his slim but elegant body of work, collected by Boscán, proved foundational for Spanish Renaissance lyric.

S onnets[1]

Footnotes

- Note 1:Translated by Edith Grossman. Return to reference 1

1

When I stand and contemplate my state,
and look back at the path that brought me here,
Ifind, in light of how I lost my way,
I might have met a much more bitter fate;
if I ignore my steps along that road,
then I know not just how I came to grief;
I know my life is over, and I rue
the passing of my sorrow when I die.
I shall meet my end, for I gave my heart
to one who could destroy and ruin me
if she should wish, and she could learn to wish;
for if my will can bring about my death,
hers, less partial to my cause, will kill me
if it can, and why should it refrain?

10

O sweet mementoes, to my sorrow found,
so dear and joyous when it was God's will!
Joined forever in memory and mind,
together you conspire to see my death.

No one could have told me in times long past,
when you and you alone brought so much joy,

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that on a bitter day you'd come back to me
in the bleak company of so much grief.
Since in one hour you have taken from me
the joys doled out a little at a time,
take from me too the sorrow left behind;
if you do not, I cannot but believe
you brought me joy only because you wished
to see me die of memoriesfilled with grief.

23

For as long as the lily and the rose
give their color and hue to your fair face,
and the look in your eyes, ardent and chaste,
inflames my heart and yet restrains it too;
and for as long as your hair, taken from veins
of purest gold, shimmers around your throat
—so beautiful, so slender, and so white—
blown in disarray by the gentle breeze:
oh gather, in the joy of this your spring
the sweetest fruit before a sullen time
covers that gleaming mountaintop with snow.
The icy wind will wither the fair rose,
fleet-footed age will change and transform all
but never alter its own ancient ways.

LOUISE LABÉ

Writing in a tradition marked by male desire, the French poet Louise Labé(ca. 1520–1566) adds a new dimension to Petrarchism by giving voice to a female lover who longs for her male beloved. Born to a rich ropemaker in the city of Lyons, Labé, known as La Belle Cordière (the beautiful ropemaker), was educated in Italian and in music, possibly at a convent school. One of the most important women writers of the Renaissance, Labémoved in humanist circles and was part of a lively community of poets, many of whom dedicated their own poems to her. Her own *Works* were published in 1555. In the early 1540s Labé had married Ennemond Perrin, who was a ropemaker like her parents. Although there has been much speculation about the identity of the beloved in her poems, unlike Petrarch's Laura, he is never named.

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SONNETS[1]

Footnotes

• Note 1:Translated by Annie Finch. Return to reference 1

1

Not even Ulysses,[2] or someone as wise as he,

Footnotes

• Note 2:The Roman name for Odysseus, the Greek hero, who was famous for his intelligence and his trickery in the Trojan War. His long voyage home to Ithaca and his wife, Penelope, is related in the *Odyssey* . Return to reference 2

10

When I see your blond head in its laurel crown
and hear your melancholy lute strings sing
with a sound that would seduce almost anything,
even rocks or trees;[3] when I hear of your renown,
all the ten thousand ornaments that surround
your virtue, endowing you more than a king
so the highest praise grows dim with your sparkling—
then my heart cries, in a secret passion of her own:
since all your graces are well-loved and known—
since everyone's esteem for you has grown
so strong—shouldn't these graces help you start
to love? To all the virtues that make you great
adding knowledge of my own pitiable state,
so that my love can softly inflame your heart?

Footnotes

• Note 3:The beloved is compared to Orpheus, the famed musician in Greek mythology whose playing could move inanimate objects. Return to reference 3

18

Kiss me again, rekiss me, and then kiss
me again, with your richest, most succulent
kiss; then adore me with another kiss, meant
to steam out fourfold the very hottest hiss

from my love-hot coals. Do I hear you moaning? This
is my plan to soothe you: ten more kisses, sent
just for your pleasure. Then, both sweetly bent
on love, we'll enter joy through doubleness,
and we'll each have two loving lives to tend:
one in our single self, one in our friend.
I'll tell you something honest now, my love:
it's very bad for me to live apart.
There's no way I can have a happy heart
without some place outside myself to move.

VERONICA FRANCO

The writer and courtesan Veronica Franco (1546–1591) was a brilliant literary voice who wrote and published works in many different genres. Her collection of elegant and erudite verse in *terza rima*—the poetic form used by **Dante**—is characterized by a frank eroticism that is wholly unique. Similarly, Franco's familiar letters take Cicero as a model, but position the courtesan-writer as the moral center of the work to consider with keen insight the plight of women who must depend upon men for their survival. Deeply engaged with Venice's literary life and its salons, Franco also encountered great hostility. She was the target of vicious poetic attacks and was also accused of practicing witchcraft, which led to her trial by the Inquisition. Though Franco was acquitted, she never regained the stature and success she had once enjoyed.

Capitolo 13[1]

A Challenge to a Lover Who Has Offended Her

No more words! To deeds, to the battlefield, to arms![2]
For, resolved to die, I want to free myself
from such merciless mistreatment.
Should I call this a challenge? I do not know,
since I am responding to a provocation;
but why should we duel over words?
If you like, I will say that you've challenged me;
if not, I challenge you; I'll take any route,
and any opportunity suits me equally well.
Yours be the choice of place or of arms,
and I will make whatever choice remains;
rather, let both be your decision.
At once, I am sure, you will realize

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how ungrateful and faithless you have been
and how wrongfully you have betrayed me.
And unless my rage yields to overwhelming love,
with these very hands I will, in all boldness,

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tear your living heart from your very breast.
The deceiving tongue that lies to do me harm
I will tear out by its root, after it's been bitten
against the palate with repentant teeth;
and if this brings no relief to my life,
abandoning all hope, I will rejoice
at having turned to bloodshed for my revenge.
Then, with the same knife, my own breast,
satisfied and appeased by slaying you,
I may cut open, regretting my deed.
Now, while I'm intent on pursuing revenge,
enter the arena, cruel, rebellious lover,
and present at once whatever arms you wish.
Do you wish, for thefield, the secret inn
that, hardhearted and deceptive, once watched
over so many of my now bitter delights?
Here before me now stands the bed
where I took you in my arms, and which still
preserves the imprint of our bodies, breast to breast.
In it Ifind now neither joy nor sleep,
but only weeping, by night and by day,
which transforms me into a river of tears.
But this very place, which once was
the cherished shelter of my joys,
where I now live alone, in torment and grief,
choose this as a battleground, so that the news
of your betrayal will reach no other place
but die here with you, cruel, faithless man.
Come here, and, full of most wicked desire,
braced stifffor your sinister task,
bring with daring hand a piercing blade.
Whatever weapon you hand over to me,
I will gladly take, especially if it is sharp
and sturdy and also quick to wound.
Let all armor be stripped from your naked breast,
so that, unshielded and exposed to blows,
it may reveal the valor it harbors within.
Let no one else intervene in this match,
let it be limited to the two of us alone,
behind closed doors, with all seconds sent away.
This is the custom of noble knights,
who, without clamor, strive to clear their names
when they consider their honor to be stained:
either they reach an agreement on their own,
or, if they canfind no road to peace,
they may sate their thirst for each other's blood.

This is the style in which I like tofight,
and this manner fulfills and satisfies
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my desire for bitter revenge.
Although I hope, without any doubt, to spill
a river of your blood—indeed, I am certain
I can, without shedding a drop of my own—
what if you were to offer me peace?
What if, all weapons laid aside, you took
the path opened to a love match in bed?
Must I continue to battle against you,
since whoever refuses pardon when asked
wends his erring way reputed a coward?
When youfinally came to this point
with me, I'd not, perhaps, depart
from what is decent and proper to do.
Perhaps I would even follow you to bed,
and, stretched out there in skirmishes with you,
I would yield to you in no way at all.
To take revenge for your unfair attack,
I'd fall upon you, and in daring combat,
as you too caughtfire defending yourself,
I would die[3] with you, felled by the same blow.
Oh, empty hopes, over which cruel fate
forces me to weep forever!
But holdfirm, my strong, undaunted heart,
and with that felon'sfinal destruction,
avenge your thousand deaths with his one.
Then end your agony with the same blade.

Footnotes

- Note 1:Translated by Ann Rosalind Jones and Margaret F. Rosenthal. A capitolo indicates that the *terza rima* form employs a satirical tone. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:The metaphor of the duel, with the attendant choice of place, weapons, and seconds, is developed throughout the poem. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Reach sexual climax. Return to reference 3

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Shakespeare's sonnets are as celebrated as his plays. The poems have been read and debated as records of his own loves, even though poets often used the Petrarchan idiom to create poeticfictions far removed from actual erotic entanglements. Born to a middle-class family in Stratford-upon-Avon, Shakespeare (1564–1616) married young and quickly moved to London, leaving his wife, Anne Hathaway, behind as he made his career as an actor and dramatist. Editors have long speculated on the "beloveds" in the sonnet sequence: most of the poems

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refer to a noble young man, often addressed directly, who toys with his devoted “Will” (Shakespeare makes abundant use of the puns on his own name, which become as rich here as the puns on Laura for **Petrarch**), while a smaller subset concern a “dark lady.” The poems circulated privately for many years; Shakespearefinally published them in 1609. Although Shakespeare himself makes fun of the Petrarchan tradition, in the mocking “My mistress’ eyes are nothing like the sun” (sonnet 130 below), his sonnet sequence demonstrates Petrarchism’s enduring appeal and endlessflexibility.

Full p. C-181

S ONNETS

76

Why is my verse so barren of new pride,
So far from variation or quick change?
Why with the time do I not glance aside
To new-found methods and to compounds strange?
Why write I still[1] all one, ever the same,
And keep invention in a noted weed,[2]
That[3] every word doth almost tell my name,
Showing their birth and where they did proceed?
O, know, sweet love, I always write of you,
And you and love are still my argument;[4]
So all my best is dressing old words new,
Spending again what is already spent:
For as the sun is daily new and old,
So is my love still telling[5] what is told.

Footnotes

- Note 1:Always. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Keep my subject matter in a familiar garb. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:So that. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:Theme. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:Telling—i.e., counting—continues the play on money and poetry of line 12. Return to reference 5

116

Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments.[6] Love is not love
Which alters when it alterationfinds,
Or bends with the remover to remove:

O no! it is an ever-fixèd mark
That looks on tempests and is never shaken;
It is the star to every wandering bark,[7]
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.[8]
Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
Within his bending sickle's compass come:
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.
If this be error and upon me proved,
I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

Footnotes

- Note 6:The marriage service in the Elizabethan Book of Common Prayer requires those being wed to speak up if they know of any impediment to the union. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:Boat. "Star": guiding star. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:Altitude be measured. Sailors calculated latitude by measuring the height of the pole star over the horizon. Return to reference 8

129

Th' expense of spirit in a waste of shame
Is lust in action,[9] and, till action, lust
Is perjured, murderous, bloody,[1] full of blame,
Savage, extreme, rude, cruel, not to trust,

Full p. C-182 Shorter p. 1567

Enjoyed no sooner but despisèd straight,
Past reason hunted, and no sooner had
Past reason hated, as a swallowed bait
On purpose laid to make the taker mad;
Mad in pursuit and in possession so;
Had, having, and in quest to have, extreme;
A bliss in proof, and proved, a very woe;[2]
Before, a joy proposed, behind, a dream.
All this the world well knows, yet none knows well
To shun the heaven that leads men to this hell.[3]

Footnotes

- Note 9:The end of lust is the shameful squandering of energy. "Spirit": may mean semen. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:Violent. "Perjured": false. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:A delight while experienced, a source of misery after. Return to reference 2

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• Note 3:The hell of guilt, also a colloquial term for the vagina. Return to reference 3

130

My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun;
Coral is far more red than her lips' red;
If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun;
If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.
I have seen roses damasked, red and white,[4]
But no such roses see I in her cheeks;
And in some perfumes is there more delight
Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks.
I love to hear her speak, yet well I know
That music hath a far more pleasing sound.
I grant I never saw a goddess go;
My mistress, when she walks, treads on the ground:
And yet, by heaven, I think my love as rare
As any she belied with false compare.

Footnotes

• Note 4:Damask roses mingle the colors red and white. Return to reference 4

135

Whoever hath her wish, thou hast thy Will,[5]
And Will to boot,[6] and Will in overplus;
More than enough am I that vex thee still,
To thy sweet will making addition thus.
Wilt thou, whose will is large and spacious,
Not once vouchsafe to hide my will in thine?
Shall will in others seem right gracious,
And in my will no fair acceptance shine?
The sea, all water, yet receives rain still
And in abundance addeth to his store;
So thou, being rich in Will, add to thy Will
One will of mine, to make thy large Will more.
Let no unkind no fair beseechers kill;[7]
Think all but one, and me in that one Will.

Footnotes

• Note 5:The poem plays on the multiple meanings of *will*: (a) what you want; (b) sexual desire; (c) the poet'sfirst name; (d) sexual organs, male or female; (e) shall. Return to reference 5

- Note 6:In addition. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:Let no ungenerous refusal kill any attractive suitor. Return to reference 7

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Full p. C-183

TRANSLATION LAB Petrarch

Petrarch's sonnet 189, beginning "*Passa la nave mia colma d'oblio*" ("My galley, loaded with forgetfulness," in David Young's translation) renders the lover as a lost ship, adrift amid the storms of love and uncertain of everfinding safe harbor. The sixteenth-century version by Thomas Wyatt brought the poem to the English-speaking world, where it has been translated and reworked ever since. John Berryman's free adaptation ("after Petrarch and Wyatt") shows how English-language poets must grapple with Wyatt's version, which has become a source-text in its own right. Thus the opening line of Young, who sets out to translate Petrarch, ends up echoing Wyatt. A learned early reader and poet such as Mary Wroth, thefirst Englishwoman to produce a Petrarchan love sequence, would have known both Petrarch's original and Wyatt's refashioning.

The versions below showcase how the tightly patterned form of the sonnet varied as it was adapted across Europe. Petrarch wrote two *abba* quatrains, followed by two *cde* tercets. Wyatt instead writes three quatrains followed by a rhyming couplet, approximating what would eventually be known as the "Shakespearean" sonnet. Yet Wroth hews closer to the Petrarchan original, with two quatrains and two tercets in a lively variation of the original rhyme scheme, amid many run-on lines. In the 1950s, Berryman gives us an octet followed by a sextet, and reproduces Petrarch's rhyme scheme, with the half rhymes playfully acknowledging the almost-but-not-quite relation to the original. Young, as a contemporary translator of Petrarch, returns to the two quatrains and two tercets, but abandons the rhyme scheme altogether in favor of a closer approximation to the original.

The Petrarchan model, with its indirection and metaphorical allusiveness, proved supremely adaptable. Wyatt's version may reflect his vexed relationship with England's Henry VIII—a lord who certainly proved inimical to the poet, eventually ordering his imprisonment. Yet there is plausible deniability in the Petrarchan model, in which the "lord" and foe at the helm of the ship is Love itself. Beyond adapting Petrarch to his own situation, Wyattfinds new possibilities in theflexible spelling of sixteenth-century England, as when "every *owre* a thought in readiness" adds a pun on *hour* to Petrarch's *oar* .

From the tempestuous emotional turmoil described in the original, each reworking emphasizes certain emotions over others. Wroth is unique in scripting an internal dialogue, as "thoughts" and "faith" vie within the poetic consciousness. In a meta-literaryflourish, Berryman questions the original's sustained metaphor, from his rhetorical question at the start ("What was Ashore, then?") to the succinct opposition ("Rain of tears, real, mist of imagined scorn"). Instead of installing Love at the helm, Berryman places his actual lover on board, embarking them on a shared voyage, albeit one we only hear about from his point of view.

Full p. C-184 Shorter p. 1568

Sonnet 189

[My galley, chargèd with forgetfulness]

Translated by Thomas Wyatt (1557)

My galley, chargèd[1] with forgetfulness,
Thorough sharp seas in winter nights doth pass,
'Tween rock and rock;[2] and eke[3] mine en'my, alas,
That is my lord, steereth with cruelness;
And every owre[4] a thought in readiness,
As though that death were light in such a case.
An endless wind doth tear the sail apace
Of forcèd sighs and trusty fearfulness.
A rain of tears, a cloud of dark disdain,
Hath done the wearied cords great hinderance;
Wreathed with error and eke with ignorance.
The stars be hid that led me to this pain;
Drownèd is Reason that should me comfort,
And I remain despairing of the port.

[My pain, still smothered in my grievèd breast]

Translated by Mary Wroth (1610)

My pain, still smothered in my grievèd breast,
Seeks for some ease, yet cannot passagefind
To be discharged of this unwelcome guest;
When most I strive, more fast his burdens bind,
Like to a ship, on Goodwins[5] cast by wind,
The more she strives, more deep in sand is pressed
Till she be lost; so am I, in this kind
Sunk, and devoured, and swallowed by unrest,
Lost, shipwrecked, spoiled, debarred of smallest hope,
Nothing of pleasure left, save thoughts have scope,
Which wander may: Go then, my thoughts, and cry,
'Hope's perished; Love tempest-beaten; joy lost.
Killing despair hath all these blessings crossed,'
Yet faith still cries, 'Love will not falsify.'

Full p. C-185 Shorter p. 1569

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[My galley, loaded with forgetfulness]

Translated by David Young (2005)

My galley, loaded with forgetfulness,
rolls through rough seas, at midnight, during winter,
aiming between Charybdis and sharp Scylla;
my lord, ah no, my foe, sits at the tiller;
each oar is wielded by a quick, mad thought
that seems to scorn the storm and what it means;
an endless wind of moisture, of deep sighs,
of hopes and passions, rips the sail in half;
tears in a steady downpour, mists of hate,
are loosening and soaking all the ropes,
ropes made of ignorance, tangled up with error.
The two sweet stars I steer by are obscured;
reason and skill are dead amid the waves;
and I don't think I'll ever see the port.

[What was Ashore, then? . . . Cargoed with Forget]

Translated by John Berryman (1967)

What was Ashore, then? . . . Cargoed with Forget,
My ship runs down a midnight winter storm
Between whirlpool and rock, and my white love's form
Gleams at the wheel, her hair streams. When we met
Seaward, Thought frank & guilty to each oar set
Hands careless of port as of the waters' harm.
Endless a wet wind wears my sail, dark swarm
Endless of sighs and veering hopes, love's fret.
Rain of tears, real, mist of imagined scorn,
No rest accords the fraying shrouds, all thwart
Already with mistakes, foresight so short.
Muffled in capes of waves my clear sighs, torn,
Hitherto most clear,—Loyalty and Art.
And I begin now to despair of port.

Full p. C-186 Shorter p. 1570

CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS

1. Over time, translations tell their own history of how a poem was understood by different translators and their audiences. Research the political context of one translator—for

example, Wyatt's relation to Henry VIII—to understand the historical forces at work in translation.
2. What is the difference between translation and adaptation where poetry is concerned? How would we make the distinction, and to what end?
3. Petrarch's original is full of opposing dualities. How are these rendered in the various versions, and to what effect?

Footnotes

- Note 1:Loaded. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:I.e., Petrarch's Scylla and Charybdis, sea monsters of Greek mythology. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Also. Return to reference 3
- Note 4: *Oar* in Petrarch, here with an additional pun on *hour* . Return to reference 4
- Note 5: The Goodwin Sands, a 10-mile sandbank offthe coast of Kent in England, has long been known as a particularly dangerous place for ships. Return to reference 5

NICCOLÒ MACHIAVELLI 1469–1527

Widely vilified and secretly admired, NiccolòMachiavelli attempted to teach the rulers of his time how to get power and hold on to it. With his mix of clear-eyed, pragmatic observation and humanist idealism, Machiavelli transformed our conception of political power. Sharply contrasting traditional morality to the pragmatic necessities of ruling, Machiavelli tried to address the painful fragmentation and constant warfare of the many states that then made up what is today Italy. His solution—a strong, effective prince unconstrained by moral pieties—struck his contemporaries as a terrifying prescription for the use of force and deception, even though Machiavelli always stressed the ruler's need for popular support. Seeking to discuss the conduct of political affairs from a new rational basis, Machiavelli has been credited with having turned politics into a science.

LIFE AND TIMES

The son of a lawyer, Machiavelli was born to a well-connected but not wealthy family in the city-state of Florence, ruled by the beloved Lorenzo di Medici. He received a modest education, and was introduced to the scholarly circles around the ruler. Machiavelli's adult life was closely bound up with the political fortunes of his city-state. Renaissance Italy was a fractured collection of polities, constantly overrun by the armies of France, Spain, and the Holy Roman Empire, all of which took advantage of Italian fragmentation to expand their territorial claims. When Machiavelli Full p. C-187 Shorter p. 1571 was a young man, Florence experienced its own profound political upheavals: after Lorenzo's death in 1492, the Medici were expelled from power and Florence was ruled by the Dominican preacher Savonarola. When Savonarola's regime collapsed, the city returned to republican government, and Machiavelli embarked on a distinguished career of public service, serving a city-state whose government was the most widely representative of its time. From 1498 to 1512, Machiavelli was secretary to the Second Chancery, charged with internal and war affairs. He also served as a diplomatic envoy (his low rank meant he could not be an ambassador), and, during the conflict between Florence and

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Pisa, he dealt with military problemsfirsthand. His many missions to some of the most powerful rulers of his time—King Louis XII of France, Cesare Borgia, Pope Julius II, the Emperor Maximilian—allowed him to observe up close their methods for gaining and maintaining political power; this led to two books—*Portraits*—of the affairs of their territories, written in 1508 and 1510. Machiavelli noted what made for effective conquest and rule, and contrasted the ruthlessness of afigure like Borgia to the slow deliberations of the consensus-based government in his own city. The constant threats and emergencies faced by Florence and other Italian states made Machiavelli's ideal leader—the hardheaded, strong prince—seem an appealingfigure as a possible savior against foreign invasions.

As a student of politics and an acute observer of historical events, Machiavelli tried to apply his experience of other states to strengthening his own. He noted that one weakness of the Italian city-states was their reliance on mercenary soldiers, who were ever ready to change sides for higher pay. Instead, following Cesare Borgia's example, he set out in 1505 to establish an army of Florentine citizens, animated by their love for their country, which achieved some surprising victories. Yet the republican forces were not enough to fend offall attackers, and, in 1512, in a moment of military weakness, the Medici faction regained power. With the end of the republic, Machiavelli lost his post. The Medici accused him unjustly of conspiracy and had him imprisoned and tortured. Once released, he retreated from the city to his family's farm, with his wife, Marietta Corsini, and theirfive children. There, in a study where he imagined himself in conversation with the classical writers he most admired (as detailed in the "**Letter to Francesco Vettori**," also included in this anthology), Machiavelli produced his major works: a study of republican government, the *Discourses on the First Ten Books of Livy* (1513–21), and one on statecraft, *The Prince*, written in 1513 with the hope that the Medici would ultimately grant him a public office. As his exile grew longer, he also wrote a number of literary works, including the much-applauded comedy *La mandragola* (*The Mandrake*),first performed in 1520. That same year Machiavelli was commissioned to write a history of Florence, which he presented in 1525 to Pope Clement VII (Giulio de' Medici).

After a reconciliation of sorts with the ruling Medicis, Machiavelli was entrusted with the upkeep of military fortifications in Florence. Here, too, he served the city well, presenting a strong enough defense that when the Holy Roman Empire invaded Italy in 1527, Florence avoided being attacked. Instead, the imperial forces sacked Rome with incredible violence. For Florence, which had long benefited from the strength of a series of Medici popes in Rome, the result was the collapse of Medici domination and, once more, the return of republican government. Despite Machiavelli's Full p. C-188 long history of service to the republic, however, he was now regarded as a Medici sympathizer Shorter p. 1572 and passed over for public office. This last disappointment may have accelerated his demise. He died on June 22, 1527, and was buried in the church of Santa Croce.

THE PRINCE

Although he wrote widely across many genres, Machiavelli's reputation—and his notoriety—is based on *The Prince* . This "handbook" on how to obtain and keep political power consists of twenty-six chapters. Thefirst eleven deal with different types of dominions and how they are acquired and preserved—the early title of the whole book, in Latin, was *De principatibus* (Of Princedoms)—while the twelfth through fourteenth chapters focus on problems of military

power. The book's astounding fame, however, is based on thefinal part (from chapterfifteen to the end), which deals primarily with the attributes and "virtues" of the prince himself.

Traditional manuals for rulers—a genre often referred to as the "mirror of princes"—couched their advice in the language of Christian morality. Their point was to remind the ruler to remain virtuous as they educated him and gave him advice. Erasmus's roughly contemporary *The Education of a Christian Prince* (1516), for example, which he presented to the future Charles V of Spain and also to Henry VII of England, held that what the prince most needed was "the best possible understanding of Christ." Machiavelli's point, by stark contrast, is to make the ruler effective by giving him advice on how to stay in power. For Machiavelli, the end of political stability justifies the means, even if those means include deception and violent force.

The view of humanity in Machiavelli is not cheerful. Indeed, the pessimistic notion that humanity is evil is not so much Machiavelli's conclusion about human nature as his premise, the point of departure for the course a ruler should follow: "A prudent ruler . . . cannot and should not observe faith when such observance is to his disadvantage and the causes that made him give his promise have vanished. If men were all good, this advice would not be good, but since men are wicked and do not keep their promises to you, you likewise do not have to keep yours to them." The idealism of Christian morality is checked by realism, by the facts on the ground. Machiavelli sees humanity as it is, not as it should be, and indicates the rules of the game as his experience shows it must, under the circumstances, be played. This kind of bald assessment did not sit well with European Christians invested in moral absolutes and in the idea that it was God who bestowed power to rulers.

Yet despite his emphasis on ruthlessly preserving power, Machiavelli stresses over and over again the importance for a ruler of preserving the goodwill of his subjects. In Machiavelli's view, a ruthless leader such as Cesare Borgia would at least avoid the weakness of lords who "plundered their subjects rather than governed them" and allowed "thefts, brawls, and every sort of excess." It is better for a prince to be thought stingy, he explains, than for him to grow poor through lavishness and then be forced to rob his subjects.

Machiavelli's pragmatism, his emphasis on fact, on how the real world works rather than on lofty ideals, contrasts with his own idealization of the strong ruler. His picture of the perfectly efficient ruler shows the Renaissance tendency toward "perfected" form. In this, he is closer than one might suspect to that more obvious treatise of political idealism, **Thomas More's *Utopia*** (1516), in which the desires and venality of Full p. C-189 humankind are Shorter p. 1573 curbed by a strong ruler and the rules he bequeaths to society. Most clearly at the end of the book, Machiavelli abandons complex reality in favor of an ideal vision, and he offers the conclusion to his many lessons: the ideal ruler, now technically equipped by Machiavelli's lessons, is to undertake a mission—the liberation of Italy. The realistic method described throughout now appears directed toward an ideal task. Instead of technical political considerations (choice of the opportune moment, evaluation of military power), Machiavelli invokes religious and ancient precedents, calling for a new Moses to lead Italy out of bondage: "Everything is now fully disposed for the work . . . if only your House adopts the methods of those I have set forth as examples. Moreover, we have before our eyes extraordinary and unexampled means prepared by God. The sea has been divided. A cloud has guided you on your way. The rock has given forth water. Manna has fallen."

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Although *The Prince* did not succeed in winning Machiavelli the favor of the Medici, or, for that matter, in achieving the unification of Italy, it was hugely influential throughout Europe. The work circulated widely in manuscript before being published in 1532, and the response to it was unmitigated outrage. Whatever truths readers recognized in Machiavelli's little book, it was tempting to accuse him of provoking the amorality (or immorality) that in some cases he simply described. "Machiavellian" became an insult denoting amorality in the service of *Realpolitik*, and the intricacies of Machiavelli's study of political power were overlooked. A careful reading of *The Prince* offers a very different impression, however, as the acute realism of the political observer gives way to the humanist dreaming of ancient glories.

F ROM T HE P RINCE[1]

Footnotes

- Note 1:Translated by Allan H. Gilbert. Return to reference 1

[New Princedoms Gained with Other Men's Forces and through Fortune]

FROM CHAPTER 7

* * *

[*Cesare Borgia*][2]

Cesare Borgia, called by the people Duke Valentino, gained his position through his father's Fortune and through her lost it, notwithstanding that he made use of every means and action possible to a prudent and vigorous man for putting down his roots in those states that another man's arms and Fortune bestowed on him. As I say above, he who does not lay his foundations beforehand can perhaps through great wisdom and energy lay them afterward, though he does so with trouble for the architect and danger to the building. So on Full p. C-190 Shorter p. 1574 examining all the steps taken by the Duke, we see that he himself laid mighty foundations for future power. To discuss these steps is not superfluous; indeed I for my part do not see what better precepts I can give a new prince than the example of Duke Valentino's actions. If his arrangements did not bring him success, the fault was not his, because his failure resulted from an unusual and utterly malicious stroke of Fortune.[3]

[*Pope Alexander VI Attempts to Make Cesare a Prince*]

Alexander VI,[4] in his attempt to give high position to the Duke his son, had before him many difficulties, present and future. First, he saw no way in which he could make him lord of any state that was not a state of the Church, yet if the Pope tried to take such a state from the Church, he knew that the Duke of Milan and the Venetians[5] would not allow it because both Faenza and Rimini were already under Venetian protection. He saw, besides, that the weapons

of Italy, especially those of which he could make use, were in the hands of men who had reason to fear the Pope's greatness; therefore he could not rely on them, since they were all among the Orsini and the Colonnesi[6] and their allies. He therefore was under the necessity of disturbing the situation and embroiling the states of Italy so that he could safely master part of them. This he found easy since, luckily for him, the Venetians, influenced by other reasons, had set out to get the French to come again into Italy. He did not merely oppose their coming; he made it easier by dissolving the early marriage of King Louis.[7] The King then marched into Italy with the Venetians' aid and Alexander's consent; and he was no sooner in Milan than the Pope got soldiers from him for an attempt on Romagna; these the King granted for the sake of his own reputation.[8]

[*Borgia Determines to Depend on Himself*]

Having taken Romagna, then, and suppressed the Colonnesi, the Duke, in attempting to keep the province and to go further, was hindered by two things: one, his own forces, which he thought disloyal; the other, France's intention. That is, he feared that the Orsini forces which he had been using would fail him and not merely would hinder his gaining but would take from him what he had gained, and that the King would treat him in the same way. With the Orsini, he had experience of this when after the capture of Faenza he attacked Bologna, for he saw that they turned cold over that attack. And as to the King's purpose, the Duke learned it when, after taking the dukedom of Urbino, he invaded Tuscany—an expedition that the King made him abandon. As a result, he determined not to depend further on another man's armies and Fortune.

Full p. C-191 Shorter p. 1575

[*The Duke Destroys His Disloyal Generals*]

The Duke'sfirst act to that end was to weaken the Orsini and Colonnesi parties in Rome by winning over to himself all their adherents who were men of rank, making them his own men of rank and giving them large subsidies; and he honored them, according to their stations, with military and civil offices, so that within a few months their hearts were emptied of all affection for the Roman parties, and it was wholly transferred to the Duke. After this, he waited for a good chance to wipe out the Orsini leaders, having scattered those of the Colonna family; such a chance came to him well and he used it better. When the Orsini found out, though late, that the Duke's and the Church's greatness was their ruin, they held a meeting at Magione, in Perugian territory. From that resulted the rebellion of Urbino, the insurrections in Romagna, and countless dangers for the Duke, all of which he overcame with the aid of the French. Thus having got back his reputation, but not trusting France or other outside forces, in order not to have to put them to a test, he turned to trickery. And he knew so well how to falsify his purpose that the Orsini themselves, by means of Lord Paulo,[9] were reconciled with him (as to Paulo the Duke did not omit any sort of gracious act to assure him, giving him money, clothing and horses) so completely that their folly took them to Sinigaglia into his hands. Having wiped out these leaders, then, and changed their partisans into his friends, the Duke had laid very good foundations for his power, holding all the Romagna along with the

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dukedom of Urbino, especially since he believed he had made the Romagna his friend and gained the support of all those people, through their getting a taste of well-being.

[*Peace in Romagna; Remirro de Orco*]

Because this matter is worthy of notice and of being copied by others, I shall not omit it. After the Duke had seized the Romagna and found it controlled by weak lords who had plundered their subjects rather than governed them, and had given them reason for disunion, not for union, so that the whole province was full of thefts, brawls, and every sort of excess, he judged that if he intended to make it peaceful and obedient to the ruler's arm, he must of necessity give it good government. Hence he put in charge there Messer[1] Remirro de Orco, a man cruel and ready, to whom he gave the most complete authority. This man in a short time rendered the province peaceful and united, gaining enormous prestige. Then the Duke decided there was no further need for such boundless power, because he feared it would become a cause for hatred; so he set up a civil court in the midst of the province, with a distinguished presiding judge, where every city had its lawyer. And because he knew that past severities had made some men hate him, he determined to purge such men's minds and win them over entirely by showing that any cruelty which had gone on did not originate with himself but with the harsh nature of his agent. So getting an opportunity for it, one morning at Cesena he had Messer Remirro laid in two pieces in the public square with a block of wood and a bloody sword near him. The ferocity of this spectacle left those people at the same time gratified and awe-struck.

Footnotes

- Note 2:Son of Pope Alexander VI and duke of Valentinois and Romagna. His skillful and merciless subjugation of the local lords of Romagna occurred between 1499 and 1502. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Ill health. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:Rodrigo Borgia (c. 1431–1503), pope (1492–1503), father of Cesare and Lucrezia Borgia. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:The Venetian Republic opposed the expansion of the papal states. "Duke of Milan": Ludovico Il Moro, theflamboyant duke of the Sforza family. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:Powerful Roman families. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:Louis XII, king of France (d. 1515). Return to reference 7
- Note 8:According to his agreement with Pope Alexander VI. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:Member of the Orsini. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:My lord (from the French *monsieur*). Return to reference 1

[Princely Virtues]

FROM CHAPTER 15

On the Things for Which Men, and Especially Princes, Are Praised or Censured

* * * Because I know that many have written on this topic, I fear that when I too write I shall be thought presumptuous, because, in discussing it, I break away completely from the principles laid down by my predecessors. But since it is my purpose to write something useful to an attentive reader, I think it more effective to go back to the practical truth of the subject than to depend on my fancies about it. And many have imagined republics and principalities that never have been seen or known to exist in reality. For there is such a difference between the way men live and the way they ought to live, that anybody who abandons what is for what ought to be will learn something that will ruin rather than preserve him, because anyone who determines to act in all circumstances the part of a good man must come to ruin among so many who are not good. Hence, if a prince wishes to maintain himself, he must learn how to be not good, and to use that ability or not as is required.

Leaving out of account, then, things about an imaginary prince, and considering things that are true, I say that all men, when they are spoken of, and especially princes, because they are set higher, are marked with some of the qualities that bring them either blame or praise. To wit, one man is thought liberal, another stingy (using a Tuscan word, because *avaricious* in our language is still applied to one who desires to get things through violence, but *stingy* we apply to him who refrains too much from using his own property); one is thought open-handed, another grasping; one cruel, the other compassionate; one is a breaker of faith, the other reliable; one is effeminate and cowardly, the other vigorous and spirited; one is philanthropic, the other egotistic; one is lascivious, the other chaste; one is straightforward, the other crafty; one hard, the other easy to deal with; one isfirm, the other unsettled; one is religious, the other unbelieving; and so on.

And I know that everybody will admit that it would be very praiseworthy for a prince to possess all of the above-mentioned qualities that are considered good. But since he is not able to have them or to observe them completely, because human conditions do not allow him to, it is necessary that he be prudent enough to understand how to avoid getting a bad name because he is given to those vices that will deprive him of his position. He should also, if he can, guard himself from those vices that will not take his place away from him, but if he cannot do it, he can with less anxiety let them go. Moreover, he should not be troubled if he gets a bad name because of vices without which it will be difficult for him to preserve his position. I say this because, if everything is considered, it will be seen that some things seem to be virtuous, but if they are put into practice will be ruinous to him; other things seem to be vices, yet if put into practice will bring the prince security and well-being.

Full p. C-193 Shorter p. 1577

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CHAPTER 16

On Liberality and Parsimony

Beginning, then, with thefirst of the above-mentioned qualities, I assert that it is good to be thought liberal. Yet liberality, practiced in such a way that you get a reputation for it, is damaging to you, for the following reasons: If you use it wisely and as it ought to be used, it will not become known, and you will not escape being censured for the opposite vice. Hence, if you wish to have men call you liberal, it is necessary not to omit any sort of lavishness. A prince who does this will always be obliged to use up all his property in lavish actions; he will then, if he wishes to keep the name of liberal, be forced to lay heavy taxes on his people and exact money from them, and do everything he can to raise money. This will begin to make his subjects hate him, and as he grows poor he will be little esteemed by anybody. So it comes about that because of this liberality of his, with which he has damaged a large number and been of advantage to but a few, he is affected by every petty annoyance and is in peril from every slight danger. If he recognizes this and wishes to draw back, he quickly gets a bad name for stinginess.

Since, then, a prince cannot without harming himself practice this virtue of liberality to such an extent that it will be recognized, he will, if he is prudent, not care about being called stingy. As time goes on he will be thought more and more liberal, for the people will see that because of his economy his income is enough for him, that he can defend himself from those who make war against him, and that he can enter upon undertakings without burdening his people. Such a prince is in the end liberal to all those from whom he takes nothing, and they are numerous; he is stingy to those to whom he does not give, and they are few. In our times we have seen big things done only by those who have been looked on as stingy; the others have utterly failed. Pope Julius II,[2] though he made use of a reputation for liberality to attain the papacy, did not then try to maintain it, because he wished to be able to make war. The present King of France[3] has carried on great wars without laying unusually heavy taxes on his people, merely because his long economy has made provision for heavy expenditures. The present King of Spain,[4] if he had continued liberal, would not have carried on or completed so many undertakings.

Therefore a prince ought to care little about getting called stingy, if as a result he does not have to rob his subjects, is able to defend himself, does not become poor and contemptible, and is not obliged to become grasping. For this vice of stinginess is one of those that enables him to rule. Somebody may say: Caesar, by means of his liberality, became emperor, and many others have come to high positions because they have been liberal and have been thought so. I answer: Either you are already prince, or you are on the way to become one. In thefirst case liberality is dangerous; in the second it is very necessary to be thought liberal. Caesar was one of those who wished to attain dominion over Rome. But if, when he had attained it, he had lived for a long time and had not moderated his expenses, he would have Full p. C-194 Shorter p. 1578 destroyed his authority. Somebody may answer: Many who have been thought very liberal have been princes and done great things with their armies. I answer: The prince spends either his own property and that of his subjects or that of others. In thefirst case he ought to be frugal; in the second he ought to abstain from no sort of liberality. When he marches with his

army and lives on plunder, loot, and ransom, a prince controls the property of others. To him liberality is essential, for without it his soldiers would not follow him. You can be a free giver of what does not belong to you or your subjects, as were Cyrus, Caesar, and Alexander,[5] because to spend the money of others does not decrease your reputation but adds to it. It is only the spending of your own money that hurts you.

There is nothing that eats itself up as fast as does liberality, for when you practice it you lose the power to practice it, and become poor and contemptible, or else to escape poverty you become rapacious and therefore are hated. And of all the things against which a prince must guard himself, thefirst is being an object of contempt and hatred. Liberality leads you to both of these. Hence there is more wisdom in keeping a name for stinginess, which produces a bad reputation without hatred, than in striving for the name of liberal, only to be forced to get the name of rapacious, which brings forth both bad reputation and hatred.

FROM CHAPTER 17

On Cruelty and Pity, and Whether It Is Better to Be Loved or to Be Feared, and Vice Versa

Coming then to the other qualities already mentioned, I say that every prince should wish to be thought compassionate and not cruel; still, he should be careful not to make a bad use of the pity he feels. Cesare Borgia was considered cruel, yet this cruelty of his pacified the Romagna, united it, and changed its condition to that of peace and loyalty. If the matter is well considered, it will be seen that Cesare was much more compassionate than the people of Florence, for in order to escape the name of cruel they allowed Pistoia to be destroyed.[6] Hence a prince ought not to be troubled by the stigma of cruelty, acquired in keeping his subjects united and faithful. By giving a very few examples of cruelty he can be more truly compassionate than those who through too much compassion allow disturbances to continue, from which arise murders or acts of plunder. Lawless acts are injurious to a large group, but the executions ordered by the prince injure a single person. The new prince, above all other princes, cannot possibly avoid the name of cruel, because new states are full of perils. Dido in Virgil puts it thus: “Hard circumstances and the newness of my realm force me to do such things, and to keep watch and ward over all my lands.”[7]

Full p. C-195 Shorter p. 1579

All the same, he should be slow in believing and acting, and should make no one afraid of him, his procedure should be so tempered with prudence and humanity that too much confidence does not make him incautious, and too much suspicion does not make him unbearable.

All this gives rise to a question for debate: Is it better to be loved than to be feared, or the reverse? I answer that a prince should wish for both. But because it is difficult to reconcile them, I hold that it is much more secure to be feared than to be loved, if one of them must be given up. The reason for my answer is that one must say of men generally that they are ungrateful, mutable, pretenders and dissemblers, prone to avoid danger, thirsty for gain. So long as you benefit them they are all yours; as I said above, they offer you their blood, their property, their lives, their children, when the need for such things is remote. But when need

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comes upon you, they turn around. So if a prince has relied wholly on their words, and is lacking in other preparations, he falls. For friendships that are gained with money, and not with greatness and nobility of spirit, are deserved but not possessed and in the nick of time one cannot avail himself of them. Men hesitate less to injure a man who makes himself loved than to injure one who makes himself feared, for their love is held by a chain of obligation, which, because of men's wickedness, is broken on every occasion for the sake of selfish profit; but their fear is secured by a dread of punishment which never fails you.

Nevertheless the prince should make himself feared in such a way that, if he does not win love, he escapes hatred. This is possible, for to be feared and not to be hated can easily coexist. In fact it is always possible, if the ruler abstains from the property of his citizens and subjects, and from their women. And if, as sometimes happens, hefinds that he must inflict the penalty of death, he should do it when he has proper justification and evident reason. But above all he must refrain from taking property, for men forget the death of a father more quickly than the loss of their patrimony. Further, causes for taking property are never lacking, and he who begins to live on plunder is alwaysfinding cause to seize what belongs to others. But on the contrary, reasons for taking life are rarer and fail sooner.

But when a prince is with his army and has a great number of soldiers under his command, then above all he must pay no heed to being called cruel, because if he does not have that name he cannot keep his army united or ready for duty. It should be numbered among the wonderful feats of Hannibal[8] that he led to war in foreign lands a large army, made up of countless types of men, yet never suffered from dissension, either among the soldiers or against the general, in either bad or good fortune. His success resulted from nothing else than his inhuman cruelty, which, when added to his numerous other strong qualities, made him respected and terrible in the sight of his soldiers. Yet without his cruelty his other qualities would not have been adequate. So it seems that those writers have not thought very deeply who on one side admire his accomplishment and on the other condemn the chief cause for it.

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Full p. C-196 Shorter p. 1580

Returning, then, to the debate on being loved and feared, I conclude that since men love as they please and fear as the prince pleases, a wise prince will evidently rely on what is in his own power and not on what is in the power of another. As I have said, he need only take pains to avoid hatred.

CHAPTER 18

In What Way Faith Should Be Kept by Princes

Everybody knows how laudable it is in a prince to keep his faith and to be an honest man and not a trickster. Nevertheless, the experience of our times shows that the princes who have done great things are the ones who have taken little account of their promises and who have known how to addle the brains of men with craft. In the end they have conquered those who have put their reliance on good faith.

You must realize, then, that there are two ways tofight. In one kind the laws are used, in the other, force. Thefirst is suitable to man, the second to animals. But because thefirst often falls short, one has to turn to the second. Hence a prince must know perfectly how to act like a beast and like a man. This truth was covertly taught to princes by ancient authors, who write that Achilles and many other ancient princes were turned over for their upbringing to Chiron[9] the centaur, that he might keep them under his tuition. To have as teacher one who is half beast and half man means nothing else than that a prince needs to know how to use the qualities of both creatures. The one without the other will not last long.

Since, then, it is necessary for a prince to understand how to make good use of the conduct of the animals, he should select among them the fox and the lion, because the lion cannot protect himself from traps, and the fox cannot protect himself from the wolves. So the prince needs to be a fox that he may know how to deal with traps, and a lion that he may frighten the wolves. Those who act like the lion alone do not understand their business. A prudent ruler, therefore, cannot and should not observe faith when such observance is to his disadvantage and the causes that made him give his promise have vanished. If men were all good, this advice would not be good, but since men are wicked and do not keep their promises to you, you likewise do not have to keep yours to them. Lawful reasons to excuse his failure to keep them will never be lacking to a prince. It would be possible to give innumerable modern examples of this and to show many treaties and promises that have been made null and void by the faithlessness of princes. And the prince who has best known how to act as a fox has come out best. But one who has this capacity must understand how to keep it covered, and be a skilful pretender and dissembler. Men are so simple and so subject to present needs that he who deceives in this way will alwaysfind those who will let themselves be deceived.

I do not wish to keep still about one of the recent instances. Alexander VI[1] did nothing else than deceive men, and had no other intention; yet he always Full p. C-197 Shorter p. 1581 found a subject to work on. There never was a man more effective in swearing that things were true, and the greater the oaths with which he made a promise, the less he observed it. Nonetheless his deceptions always succeeded to his wish, because he thoroughly understood this aspect of the world.

It is not necessary, then, for a prince really to have all the virtues mentioned above, but it is very necessary to seem to have them. I will even venture to say that they damage a prince who possesses them and always observes them, but if he seems to have them they are useful. I mean that he should seem compassionate, trustworthy, humane, honest, and religious, and actually be so; but yet he should have his mind so trained that, when it is necessary not to practice these virtues, he can change to the opposite, and do it skillfully. It is to be understood that a prince, especially a new prince, cannot observe all the things because of which men are considered good, because he is often obliged, if he wishes to maintain his government, to act contrary to faith, contrary to charity, contrary to humanity, contrary to religion. It is therefore necessary that he have a mind capable of turning in whatever direction the winds of Fortune and the variations of affairs require, and, as I said above, that he should not depart from what is morally right, if he can observe it, but should know how to adopt what is bad, when he is obliged to.

A prince, then, should be very careful that there does not issue from his mouth anything that is not full of the above-mentionedfive qualities. To those who see and hear him he should

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seem all compassion, all faith, all honesty, all humanity, all religion. There is nothing more necessary to make a show of possessing than this last quality. For men in general judge more by their eyes than by their hands; everybody isfitted to see, few to understand. Everybody sees what you appear to be; few make out what you really are. And these few do not dare to oppose the opinion of the many, who have the majesty of the state to confirm their view. In the actions of all men, and especially those of princes, where there is no court to which to appeal, people think of the outcome. A prince needs only to conquer and to maintain his position. The means he has used will always be judged honorable and will be praised by everybody, because the crowd is always caught by appearance and by the outcome of events, and the crowd is all there is in the world; there is no place for the few when the many have room enough. A certain prince of the present day,[2] whom it is not good to name, preaches nothing else than peace and faith, and is wholly opposed to both of them, and both of them, if he had observed them, would many times have taken from him either his reputation or his throne.

FROM CHAPTER 19

On Avoiding Contempt and Hatred

But because I have spoken of the more important of the qualities above, I wish to cover the others briefly with this generality. To wit, the prince should give his attention, as is in part explained above, to avoiding the things that make him hateful and contemptible. As long as he escapes them, he will have done his duty, and willfind no danger in other injuries to his reputation. Hatred, as I have said, comes upon him chiefly from being rapacious and seizing the property Full p. C-198 and Shorter p. 1582 women of his subjects. He ought to abstain from both of these, for the majority of men live in contentment when they are not deprived of property or honor. Hence the prince has to struggle only with the ambition of the few which can be restrained in many ways and with ease. Contempt is his portion if he is held to be variable, volatile, effeminate, cowardly, or irresolute. From these a prince should guard himself as from a rock in the sea. He should strive in all his actions to give evident signs of greatness, spirit, gravity, and fortitude. Also in the private affairs of his subjects he should make it understood that his opinion is irrevocable. In short he should keep up such a reputation that nobody thinks of trying to deceive him or outwit him.

The prince who makes people hold that opinion has prestige enough. And if a prince has a high reputation, men hesitate to conspire against him and hesitate to attack him, simply because he is supposed to be of high ability and respected by his subjects. For a prince must needs have two kinds of fear: one within his state, because of his subjects; the other without, because of foreign rulers. From these dangers he defends himself with good weapons and good friends. And if his weapons are good, he will always have good friends. Conditions within the state, too, will always remain settled when those without are settled, if they have not already been unsettled by some conspiracy. And when things without are in movement, if he has ruled and lived as I have said, and does not fail himself, he will surely repel every attack, as I said Nabis the Spartan did.[3]

But with respect to his subjects, when there is no movement without, he has to fear that they will make a secret conspiracy. From this the prince protects himself adequately if he avoids being hated and despised and keeps the people satisfied with him. The latter

necessarily follows the former, as was explained above at length. Indeed one of the most potent remedies the prince can have against conspiracies is not to be hated by the majority of his subjects. The reason for this is that a man who conspires always thinks he will please the people by killing the prince; but when he thinks he will offend them by it, he does not pluck up courage to adopt such a plan, because the difficulties that fall to the portion of conspirators are numerous. Experience shows that there have been many conspiracies and that few have come out well. They fail because the conspirator cannot be alone, and he can get companions only from those who, he thinks, are discontented. But as soon as you have revealed your purpose to a malcontent, you have given him an opportunity to become contented, because he evidently can hope to gain every advantage from his knowledge. Such is his position that, seeing on the one hand certain gain, and on the other gain that is uncertain and full of danger, he must needs be a rare friend, or, at any rate, an obstinate enemy of the prince, if he keeps faith with you. To put the thing briefly, I say that on the part of those who conspire there is nothing but fear, jealousy, and the expectation of punishment, which terrifies them. But on the part of the prince are the majesty of his high office, the laws, the power of his friends and his party that protects him. Evidently when the popular goodwill is joined to all these things, it is impossible that anybody can be so foolhardy as to conspire against him. Ordinarily the conspirator must be afraid before the execution of Full p. C-199 Shorter p. 1583 his evil deed, but in this case he also has reason to fear after his transgression, because he will have the people against him and therefore cannot hope for any escape.

* * *

I conclude, therefore, that a prince need not pay much attention to conspiracies when the people are well disposed to him. But when they are unfriendly and hate him, he must fear everything and everybody. Further, well-organized governments and wise princes have striven with all diligence not to make the upper classes feel desperate, and to satisfy the populace and keep them contented. In fact this is one of the most important matters a prince has to deal with.

Among the kingdoms well organized and well governed in our times is France. In this country there are numerous good institutions on which depend the liberty and security of the king. Thefirst of these is the parliament and its authority. He who organized this kingdom set up the parliament because he knew the ambition of the nobles and their arrogance, and judged it necessary that the nobility should have a bit in its mouth to restrain it. On the other hand, he knew the hatred, founded on fear, of the generality of men for the nobles, and intended to secure the position of the latter. Yet he did not wish this to be the special concern of the king, because he wished to relieve the king from the hatred he would arouse among the great if he favored the people, and among the people if he favored the nobles. Therefore he set up a third party as judge, to be the one who, without bringing hatred on the king, should restrain the nobles and favor the people. This institution could not be better or more prudent, nor could there be a stronger cause for the security of the king and the realm. From this can be deduced another important idea: to wit, princes should have things that will bring them hatred done by their agents, but should do in person those that will give pleasure. Once more I conclude that a prince should esteem the nobles but should not make himself hated by the populace.

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It should here be observed that hate is gained through good deeds as well as bad ones. Therefore, as I said above, if a prince wishes to keep his position, he is often obliged not to be good. For if that large body, whether made up of people or soldiers or grandees, whose support you believe you need to maintain yourself, is corrupt, you must feed its humor in order to satisfy it. In such conditions, good deeds are enemies to you. But let us come to Alexander. He was of such goodness that among the other matters for which he is praised is this, that, in the fourteen years during which he held the empire, no one was ever put to death by him without trial. All the same, since he was thought to be under the influence of women, and a man who allowed his mother to govern him, he came to be despised. Then the army plotted against him and killed him.

* * *

I say that the princes of our times are less troubled than the emperors were by the necessity of making their conduct satisfy the soldiers above all others. It is true that they do have to give their troops some consideration, yet it is quickly settled, because none of these princes have armies already formed that have grown old along with the governments and administrations of the provinces, as Full p. C-200 Shorter p. 1584 did the armies of the Roman Empire. If, therefore, it was then necessary to satisfy the soldiers rather than the people, it was because the soldiers were more powerful than the people. Now it is more necessary to princes, except the Turk and the Soldan,[4] to satisfy the people rather than the soldiers, for the people are the more powerful. I make an exception of the Turk, who always keeps about him twelve thousand infantry andfifteen thousand cavalry, on whom depend his security and the strength of his kingdom. So it is necessary that, giving second place to any other consideration, that lord should keep the friendship of his soldiers. Since the kingly authority of the Soldan is likewise entirely in the hands of the soldiers, it is needful for him to have them as his friends, without regard for the people. You should observe that this government of the Soldan is unlike all other principates; it is like the Christian papacy, which can be called neither a hereditary principality nor a new one. The sons of the old prince are not heirs and do not carry on a line of princes, but the successor is he who is chosen to that rank by those who have the right to do so. And yet, since this method of government has long been used, it cannot be called a new principality, because it encounters none of the difficulties of new ones. Even if the ruler is new, the institutions of the state are old and arranged to receive him as though he were their hereditary lord.

Footnotes

- Note 2:Pope Julius II (r. 1503–13) was known as the “Warrior Pope” and led efforts to drive French forces from Italy. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Louis XII (r. 1498–1515), mocked for his economy. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:Ferdinand the Catholic (1452–1516), king of Aragon, whose marriage to Isabel of Castile unified Spain. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:Great conquerors and imperial leaders of the classical world: Cyrus the Great, founder of the Achaemenid (Persian) Empire; Julius Caesar, Roman general and statesman; and Alexander the Great, king of Macedonia. Return to reference 5

- Note 6:Pistoia was a city under Florentine rule, riven by quarrels among its aristocratic families, which Cesare Borgia attempted to conquer. Machiavelli was Florence's envoy to Pistoia on several occasions in 1501–2, and wrote a memorandum on its problems. Here, he condemns what he considers Florence's insufficiently decisive actions against the leaders of the rival factions in Pistoia. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:Virgil, *Aeneid* 1.563–4. Dido, queen of Carthage, is building her city as Aeneas arrives on her shores. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:Carthaginian leader who fought against Rome in the Second Punic War (218–201 B.C.E.). He famously marched his army, including war elephants, across the Alps into Italy. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:In Greek myth, Chiron was the wisest of the centaurs (half men, half horses). He was renowned as the teacher of gods and heroes, including the great warrior Achilles, the Greek champion in the Trojan War. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:Pope Rodrigo Borgia (r. 1492–1503), father of Cesare Borgia, was widely considered worldly and corrupt. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Ferdinand the Catholic, king of Spain. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Last ruler (d. 192 B.C.E.) of independent Sparta, a Greek city-state. A controversialfigure, he was known for ably maintaining his power in a time of war, but was also reviled in classical sources for his use of mercenaries and abuse of power. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:Turk: ruler of the Ottoman Empire, supported by a corps of Janissaries (elite infantry troops); Soldan: sultan of Egypt, supported by a corps of Mamluks (enslaved soldiers). Return to reference 4

[The Best Defense]

FROM CHAPTER 20

Whether Fortresses and Other Things That Princes Employ Every Day Are Useful or Useless

Some princes, in order to hold their positions securely, have disarmed their subjects. Others have kept their subject territories divided. Some have nourished enmities against themselves. Yet others, by a change in policy, have tried to gain to their side those they suspected at the beginnings of their reigns. Some have built fortresses. Some have dismantled and destroyed them. From all these things it is not possible to educe afinal decision, without coming to the particulars of those states where matters like these must be decided. Hence I shall speak in the general manner that the material in itself justifies.

It has never been true, then, that a new prince has disarmed his subjects. On the contrary, when he has found them disarmed, he has always armed them, because, when you arm them, their arms become your own; those whom you have suspected become faithful; those who were faithful are kept so, and instead of your subjects they become your partisans. It is impossible to arm all your subjects, yet if you benefit those you arm, you can deal much more securely with those who are left unarmed. The very diversity of procedure which the favored ones see applied to them, binds them to you. The others excuse you, holding it necessary that

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those should have more favor who undergo the most danger and have the greatest obligation. But when you disarm new subjects you get their ill Full p. C-201 Shorter p. 1585 will; for you show that you distrust them either for their worthlessness or their lack offidelity. Either one of these beliefs rouses hatred against you. And because you are not able to remain unarmed, you are obliged to turn to mercenary soldiers * * * . Even if mercenaries were good, they could not be sufficient to defend you from hostile rulers and untrustworthy subjects. Hence, as I have said, a new prince, in a new principate, has always organized armies there. Histories are full of examples of this.

But when a prince acquires a new state that he joins as a member to his old one, then it is necessary to disarm the new state, except for those who have been your partisans in gaining it. And even these it is necessary to render soft and effeminate as time and opportunity permit; and you must arrange things in such a way that the arms of your whole state are in the hands of your own soldiers, who live in your old state close to you.

* * *

There is no doubt that princes become great when they overcome difficulties and opposition. Therefore Fortune avails herself of this, especially when she wishes to bestow greatness on a new prince, who has more need to acquire reputation than a hereditary one. For she causes enemies to rise up against him, and makes him undertake campaigns against them, that he may have an opportunity to conquer them, and rise high by ascending the ladder provided by his enemies. Hence many think that a wise prince, whenever he has opportunity for it, should craftily nourish some hatreds against himself, in order that by overthrowing them he may increase his greatness.

Princes, and especially new ones, sometimesfind morefidelity and helpfulness in those whom they have distrusted at the beginning of their rule, than in those who atfirst were attached to them. Pandolfo Petrucci,[5] prince of Siena, ruled his state more with those he distrusted than with the others. But of this thing it is not possible to speak in general because it varies according to the individual case. I shall say only this. Those men who are unfriendly in the early days of a reign, and are of such a kind that they have need of support if they are to maintain themselves, are always to be gained by the prince with the greatest ease, and they are obliged to serve him faithfully, in proportion as they know it is needful for them to cancel with their deeds the unfavorable opinion he had of them. Hence the prince always derives more profit from them than from those who feel too secure in his service, and as a result neglect his affairs.

And because the subject demands it, I do not wish to omit a reminder to princes who have secured a brand-new state by means of the favor of persons within it. They should consider well what cause moved those who favored the change to do so. If it is not natural affection for the new ruler, but merely discontent with the government as it was, a prince will succeed in keeping them as his friends only with effort and great difficulty, because it is impossible for him to satisfy them. And if he will examine the cause of this, with the aid of examples derived from ancient and modern affairs, he will see that it is much easier to gain the friendship of the men who had been contented with the earlier Full p. C-202 Shorter p. 1586 government, and therefore were his enemies, than to gain that of those who became his friends and favored his occupation merely because they were not contented.

In order to hold their positions more securely, princes have been in the habit of building fortresses, which serve as bridle and bit for those who plan to act against them; princes also wish to have secure places of refuge from sudden assaults. I praise this method, because it has been used from ancient times. Nonetheless, Messer NiccolòVitelli,[6] in our times, has been seen dismantling two fortresses in Cittàdi Castello, in order to keep that state. Guido Ubaldo,[7] duke of Urbino, when he returned into his dominions after Cesare Borgia had been driven out of them, completely ruined all the fortresses of that province, and believed that without them it would be more difficult for him to lose that territory again. The Bentivogli,[8] when they returned to Bologna, employed similar methods.

Fortresses, then, are useful or not according to the times. If they benefit you in some circumstances, they will damage you in others. This matter can be considered as follows: a prince who has more fear of the people than of foreigners ought to build fortresses; but he who has more fear of foreigners than of his people should leave them out of his plans. The castle of Milan, which Francesco Sforza[9] built there, has done and will do more damage to the house of Sforza than any other cause of trouble in that state. Therefore not to be hated by the people is the best fortress there is. Even if you have fortresses, and the people hate you, you will not be safe, because, when the people have taken arms, foreigners who will assist them are never lacking. * * * Considering all these things, then, I praise him who builds fortresses and him who does not build them. I blame any prince who, trusting in his castles, thinks it of little importance that his people hate him.

Footnotes

- Note 5:Ruler of the Italian Republic of Siena (1452–1512). Return to reference 5
- Note 6:Military ruler of the Italian city-state of Cittàdi Castello (1414–1486). Return to reference 6
- Note 7:Ruler of the Italian city-state of Urbino (1472–1508). Return to reference 7
- Note 8:Ruling family of the Italian city-state of Bologna during the Renaissance. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:Duke of Milan (1401–1466), founder of the Sforza dynasty that ruled the city-state of Milan from 1450–1535. Return to reference 9

[Ferdinand of Spain, Exemplary Prince]

CHAPTER 21

What Is Necessary to a Prince That He May Be Considered Excellent

Nothing gives a prince so much respect as great undertakings and unusual examples of his own ability. In our day we have Ferdinand of Spain. He can be called, as it were, a new king, because, though at the beginning he was weak, he has become thefirst king of the Christians in fame and glory. If you will consider his actions, you willfind them all great and some of them extraordinary. In the beginning of his reign he attacked Granada,[1] and that undertaking was the foundation Full p. C-203 Shorter p. 1587 of his power. In thefirst place, he carried it on when he was

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without other occupation and had no fear of being impeded; he used it to occupy the minds of the barons of Castile, who, when they were thinking about that war, did not think of rebelling. By this means he gained reputation and control over them without their realizing it. He was able to support armies with the money of the Church and the people, and, by means of that long war, to lay a foundation for his army, which later did him honor. Besides this, in order to undertake greater enterprises, he availed himself of religion and turned to a pious cruelty, hunting down the Moors and driving them out of his kingdom. Nothing can be more wretched or more unusual than this example of his ability. Cloaked with this same mantle, he attacked Africa; he undertook his enterprise in Italy; andfinally he assailed France. And so he has always kept the minds of his subjects in suspense and wonder, and concerned with the outcome of his deeds. And his actions have begun in such a way, one coming from another, that between any two of them, he has never given men time enough to enable them to work quietly against him.

It is also to the profit of a prince to give unusual examples of his ability in internal affairs, like those that are related of Messer Bernabòof Milan.[2] I mean when he has an opportunity because someone does something extraordinary, either good or bad, in ordinary life, and the prince takes a method of rewarding or punishing him that will be widely talked of. And above all, a prince should endeavor in all his actions to show that he deserves fame as a great man and one of high mental capacity.

A prince is also esteemed when he is a true friend or a true enemy; that is, when without any reservation he shows himself favorable to one ruler and against another. This procedure is always more profitable than to remain neutral, because if two potentates, your neighbors, come to grips, they are such that when one of them conquers, you either will have to be afraid of the conqueror, or you will not. In either of these two cases, it will be better for you to make your policy plain and put up a goodfight. In thefirst of them, if you do not adopt an open policy, you will always be the prey of the conqueror, to the pleasure and satisfaction of him who is conquered. You can give no reason why anybody should protect you and receive you, and willfind nobody to do it. The one who conquers does not wish friends whom he suspects and who will not aid him in adversity, and the loser will not receive you because you have not been willing to share his fortunes with arms in your hands.

When Antiochus[3] led his army into Greece, summoned there by the Aetolians to drive out the Romans, he sent ambassadors to the Achaeans, who were friends of the Romans, to advise them to remain neutral. On the other side, the Romans tried to persuade them to take arms with them. This matter came up for decision in the council of the Achaeans, where the agent of Antiochus advised them to remain neutral. The Roman legate answered: “As to what the Full p. C-204 Shorter p. 1588 others say about not getting yourselves into the war, nothing is less advantageous to you; without thanks, without dignity, you will be the reward of the victor.”

It will always come about that he who is not your friend will ask you to be neutral, and he who is friendly to you will ask you to come out clearly with arms. Princes of irresolute character, in order to escape the perils of the moment, generally take the way of neutrality, and generally go to smash. But when a prince comes out vigorously in favor of one side, if the one you have joined wins, even though he is powerful and you are at his discretion, he is under obligation to you, and has formed a friendship for you. Moreover, men are never so dishonorable that they will give so great an example of ingratitude as to oppress you. And then

victories are never so decided that the victor is not subject to qualifications, and especially with regard to justice. But if the one to whom you adhere loses, you are received by him, he aids you as long as he can, and you are the companion of a fortune that may rise again.

In the second case, when those whofight are of such a sort that you do not need to fear whichever one conquers, it is so much the more prudent for you to join your friend, because you go to the ruin of one neighbor with the aid of another who, if he were wise, would protect him. If your ally is victorious he is at your discretion, and it is impossible that with your aid he will not win.

Here it may be observed that a prince should be careful not to join company with one more powerful than himself, in order to attack someone, except when necessity constrains him, in the way mentioned above. If your powerful ally conquers, you remain his prisoner. And princes should avoid, as much as they can, being at the discretion of others. The Venetians joined the King of France against the Duke of Milan, when they were able to avoid making that alliance, and it resulted in their ruin. But when such an alliance cannot be avoided (as happened to the Florentines when the Pope and the King of Spain went with their armies to attack Lombardy), then a prince should join in for the reasons I have given. No state should believe it can always make plans certain of success; it should rather expect to make only doubtful ones. For the course of human events teaches that man never attempts to avoid one disadvantage without running into another. Prudence, therefore, consists in the power to recognize the nature of disadvantages and to take the less disagreeable as good.

A prince should also show himself a lover of excellence by giving preferment to gifted men and honoring those who excel in some art. Besides, he should encourage his citizens by giving them a chance to exercise their functions quietly, in trade and agriculture and every other occupation of man. A citizen should not hesitate to increase his property for fear it will be taken away from him, or to open a new business for fear of taxes. On the contrary the prince should offer rewards to those who undertake to do these things, and to anybody who thinks of improving in any way his city or his dominion. Besides this, at suitable times of the year he should engage the attention of the people with festivals and shows. And because every city is divided into gilds or wards, he should take account of these bodies, meet with them sometimes, and give in person an example of humanity and generosity. At the same time he should always preserve the dignity befitting his rank, for this ought never to be lacking in any circumstances.

Footnotes

- Note 1:City in southern Spain that was the seat of Nasrid rule in Spain for centuries before it was conquered by Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain in 1492. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:BernabòVisconti, ruler of Milan from 1354 to 1385. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Antiochus III “the Great” (c. 241–187 B.C.E.), ruler of the Seleucid Empire in Asia Minor. Return to reference 3

Full p. C-205 Shorter p. 1589

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[Good Counsel vs. Flattery]

FROM CHAPTER 23

In What Way Flatterers Are to Be Avoided

I do not wish to omit an important subject and an error from which princes with difficulty protect themselves, if they are not unusually prudent, or if they are not able to choose well. I refer toflatterers, of whom courts are full. Men are generally so well pleased with their own abilities and so greatly deceived about them that they protect themselves with difficulty from this plague, and when they do endeavor to protect themselves, they run the risk of becoming contemptible, for the reason that there is no way of protecting yourself fromflattery except to have men understand that they do not offend you by speaking the truth to you; but when anyone can speak the truth to you, you do not receive proper respect. Hence a prudent prince must adopt a third method. He should choose wise men in his state, and to them alone he should give full power to speak the truth freely, but only on the matters he asks about, and on nothing else. Yet he should ask them about everything, and heed their opinions. Then he should make up his mind in private, at his leisure. With these pieces of advice, and with every one of them, he should conduct himself in such a way that each adviser may know that he will be so much the more in favor in proportion as he speaks more freely. But the prince should not consent to listen to anyone except these advisers, should carry out what he decides on, and should befirm in his decisions. He who does otherwise is either ruined byflatterers, or changes often, because of the varied opinions he listens to. As a result, he receives little respect.

* * *

A prince, therefore, should always take advice, but he should do it when he pleases and not when someone else pleases. On the contrary he should not let anyone dare to advise him when he does not ask for advice. But he should be a big asker, and a patient listener to the truth about the things asked. Still further, he should be angry if for any reason anybody should not tell him the truth. Many think that if a prince gives the impression of being prudent, he should be thought so not because of his own natural gifts but because of the good advice he has at hand; but without question they are wrong. For this is a general rule that never fails: a prince who is not wise himself cannot be well advised, unless by chance he gives himself over to one man who entirely directs him, and that man is exceedingly prudent. In this instance the prince surely would be, but such a condition would not last long, because in a short time that tutor of his would take away his throne. As a matter of fact, an unwise prince who asks counsel from more than one man will never receive unified advice, nor will he be able to unify it unaided. Each of the advisers will think about what concerns himself, and the prince will not be able to control them or to understand them. It cannot be otherwise; men are always wicked at bottom, unless they are made good by some compulsion. Hence I conclude that good counsels, whatever their source, necessarily result from the prudence of the ruler, and not the prudence of the ruler from good counsels.

Full p. C-206 Shorter p. 1590

[Why Princes Fail]

CHAPTER 24

Why the Princes of Italy Have Lost Their Authority

The things written above, if they are prudently carried into effect, will make a new prince seem to be an old one, and will immediately make him safer andfirmer in his realm than if he had grown old in it. For the actions of a new prince are more closely watched than those of a hereditary one; and when they are seen to show great ability they influence men more and attach them to the prince more closely than ancient blood can, for men are much more impressed with present things than with past ones, and when in the present theyfind something good, they enjoy it and seek for nothing further. In fact, they will take every means of defending such a prince, if only he does not fail himself in other things. And thus he will secure a double glory: that of having begun a new princedom, and of having enriched and strengthened it with good laws, good arms, and good examples. On the contrary, he is doubly disgraced who, though born a prince, loses his dominion because he is not prudent.

And if those lords are examined who have lost their positions in Italy in our times, such as the King of Naples, the Duke of Milan, and others, they will exhibitfirst a common defect in their armies, for the reasons that have been discussed at length above. Further, it will be seen that some of them either had the people as enemies, or they had the friendship of the people, but had not been able to secure themselves against the upper classes. For realms without these defects are not lost if the prince has strength enough to keep an army in thefield. Philip of Macedon,[4] not the father of Alexander but the one who was conquered by Titus Quintus, did not have a large realm, in comparison with the greatness of the Romans and the Greeks who attacked him. Nevertheless, because he was a warrior, and knew how to deal with his people and to secure himself against the upper classes, he kept up the war for several years. Even though at the end he lost control of some cities, he nevertheless retained his royal authority.

Therefore these princes of ours who have been many years in their positions should blame for the loss of them not Fortune, but their own worthlessness. In good weather they never thought of change (it is a common defect of men not to reckon on a storm when the sea is calm). Hence when times of adversity came, they thought about running away and not about defending themselves; and they hoped that the people, disgusted by the insolence of the conquerors, would call them back. This plan, when there are no others, is good, but it is a bad thing to abandon other resources for this one. A prince should not be willing to fall, just because he believes he willfind somebody to set him up again; that may not come about, or if it does, it cannot bring you security, because such an expedient for defence is base and does not depend on yourself. Only those means of security are good, are certain, are lasting, that depend on yourself and your own vigor.

Footnotes

- Note 4:Philip V (238–179 B.C.E.), king of Macedonia, defeated in 197 B.C.E. by a Roman army led by Titus Quintus Flaminius. Return to reference 4

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[“Fortune is a woman”]

FROM CHAPTER 25

The Power of Fortune in Human Affairs, and to What Extent She Should Be Relied On

It is not unknown to me that many have been and still are of the opinion that the affairs of this world are so under the direction of Fortune and of God that man’s prudence cannot control them; in fact, that man has no resource against them. For this reason many think there is no use in sweating much over such matters, but that one might as well let Chance take control. This opinion has been the more accepted in our times, because of the great changes in the state of the world that have been and now are seen every day, beyond all human surmise. And I myself, when thinking on these things, have now and then in some measure inclined to their view. Nevertheless, because the freedom of the will should not be wholly annulled, I think it may be true that Fortune is arbiter of half of our actions, but that she still leaves the control of the other half, or about that, to us.

I liken her to one of those raging streams that, when they go mad,flood the plains, ruin the trees and the buildings, and take away thefields from one bank and put them down on the other. Everybodyflees before them; everybody yields to their onrush without being able to resist anywhere. And though this is their nature, it does not cease to be true that, in calm weather, men can make some provisions against them with walls and dykes, so that, when the streams swell, their waters will go offthrough a canal, or their currents will not be so wild and do so much damage. The same is true of Fortune. She shows her power where there is no wise preparation for resisting her, and turns her fury where she knows that no walls and dykes have been made to hold her in. And if you consider Italy—the place where these variations occur and the cause that has set them in motion—you will see that she is a country without dykes and without any wall of defence. If, like Germany, Spain, and France, she had had a sufficient bulwark of military vigor, thisflood would not have made the great changes it has, or would not have come at all.

And this, I think, is all I need to say on opposing oneself to Fortune, in general. But limiting myself more to particulars, I say that a prince may be seen prospering today and falling in ruin tomorrow, though it does not appear that he has changed in his nature or any of his qualities. I believe this comes, in thefirst place, from the causes that have been discussed at length in preceding chapters. That is, if a prince bases himself entirely on Fortune, he will fall when she varies. I also believe that a ruler will be successful who adapts his mode of procedure to the quality of the times, and likewise that he will be unsuccessful if the times are out of accord with his procedure. Because it may be seen that in things leading to the end each has before him, namely glory and riches, men proceed differently. One acts with caution, another rashly; one with violence, another with skill; one with patience, another with its opposite; yet with these different methods each one attains his end. Still further, two cautious men will be seen, of whom one comes to his goal, the other does not. Likewise you will see two who succeed with two different methods, one of them being cautious and the other rash. These

results are caused by nothing Full p. C-208 Shorter p. 1592 else than the nature of the times, which is or is not in harmony with the procedure of men. It also accounts for what I have mentioned, namely, that two persons, working differently, chance to arrive at the same result; and that of two who work in the same way, one attains his end, but the other does not.

On the nature of the times also depends the variability of the best method. If a man conducts himself with caution and patience, times and affairs may come around in such a way that his procedure is good, and he goes on successfully. But if times and circumstances change, he is ruined, because he does not change his method of action. There is no man so prudent as to understand how tofit himself to this condition, either because he is unable to deviate from the course to which nature inclines him, or because, having always prospered by walking in one path, he cannot persuade himself to leave it. So the cautious man, when the time comes to go at a reckless pace, does not know how to do it. Hence he comes to ruin. Yet if he could change his nature with the times and with circumstances, his fortune would not be altered.

Pope Julius II proceeded rashly in all his actions, and found the times and circumstances so harmonious with his mode of procedure that he was always so lucky as to succeed. Consider thefirst enterprise he engaged in, that of Bologna, while Messer Giovanni Bentivogli[5] was still alive. The Venetians were not pleased with it; the King of Spain felt the same way; the Pope was debating such an enterprise with the King of France. Nevertheless, in his courage and rashness Julius personally undertook that expedition. This movement made the King of Spain and the Venetians stand irresolute and motionless, the latter for fear, and the King because of his wish to recover the entire kingdom of Naples. On the other side, the King of France was dragged behind Julius, because the King, seeing that the Pope had moved and wishing to make him a friend in order to put down the Venetians, judged he could not refuse him soldiers without doing him open injury. Julius, then, with his rash movement, attained what no other pontiff, with the utmost human prudence, would have attained. If he had waited to leave Rome until the agreements werefixed and everything arranged, as any other pontiffwould have done, he would never have succeeded, for the King of France would have had a thousand excuses, and the others would have raised a thousand fears. I wish to omit his other acts, which are all of the same sort, and all succeeded perfectly. The brevity of his life did not allow him to know anything different. Yet if times had come in which it was necessary to act with caution, they would have ruined him, for he would never have deviated from the methods to which nature inclined him.

I conclude, then, that since Fortune is variable and men are set in their ways, they are successful when they are in harmony with Fortune and unsuccessful when they disagree with her. Yet I am of the opinion that it is better to be rash than over-cautious, because Fortune is a woman and, if you wish to keep her down, you must beat her and pound her. It is evident that she allows herself to be overcome by men who treat her in that way rather than by those who proceed coldly. For that reason, like a woman, she is always the friend of young men, because they are less cautious, and more courageous, and command her with more boldness.

Footnotes

- Note 5:Of the ruling family Bentivogli. The pope undertook to dislodge him from Bologna in 1506. Return to reference 5

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[The Roman Dream]

FROM CHAPTER 26

An Exhortation to Take Hold of Italy and Restore Her to Liberty from the Barbarians

Having considered all the things discussed above, I have been turning over in my own mind whether at present in Italy the time is ripe for a new prince to win prestige, and whether conditions there give a wise and vigorous ruler occasion to introduce methods that will do him honor, and bring good to the mass of the people of the land. It appears to me that so many things unite for the advantage of a new prince, that I do not know of any time that has ever been more suited for this. And, as I said, if it was necessary to make clear the ability of Moses that the people of Israel should be enslaved in Egypt, and to reveal Cyrus's greatness of mind that the Persians should be oppressed by the Medes, and to demonstrate the excellence of Theseus that the Athenians should be scattered, so at the present time, in order to make known the greatness of an Italian soul, Italy had to be brought down to her present position, to be more a slave than the Hebrews, more a servant than the Persians, more scattered than the Athenians; without head, without government; defeated, plundered, torn asunder, overrun; subject to every sort of disaster.

And though before this, certain persons[6] have showed signs from which it could be inferred that they were chosen by God for the redemption of Italy, nevertheless it has afterwards been seen that in the full current of action they have been cast offby Fortune. So Italy remains without life and awaits the man, whoever he may be, who is to heal her wounds, put an end to the plundering of Lombardy and the tribute laid on Tuscany and the kingdom of Naples, and cure her of those sores that have long been suppurating. She may be seen praying God to send some one to redeem her from these cruel and barbarous insults. She is evidently ready and willing to follow a banner, if only some one will raise it. Nor is there at present anyone to be seen in whom she can put more hope than in your illustrious House, because its fortune and vigor, and the favor of God and of the Church, which it now governs,[7] enable it to be the leader in such a redemption. This will not be very difficult, as you will see if you will bring to mind the actions and lives of those I have named above. And though these men were striking exceptions, yet they were men, and each of them had less opportunity than the present gives; their enterprises were not more just than this, nor easier, nor was God their friend more than he is yours. Here justice is complete. "A way is just to those to whom it is necessary, and arms are holy to him who has no hope save in arms."[8] Everything is now fully disposed for the work, and when that is true an undertaking cannot be difficult, if only your House adopts the methods of those I have set forth as examples. Moreover, we have before our eyes extraordinary and unexampled means prepared by God. The sea has been divided. A cloud has guided you on Shorter p. 1594 your Full p. C-210 way. The rock has given forth water. Manna has fallen.[9] Everything has united to make you great. The rest is for you to do. God does not intend to do everything, lest he deprive us of our free will and the share of glory that belongs to us.

It is no wonder if no one of the above-named Italians[1] has been able to do what we hope your illustrious House can. Nor is it strange if in the many revolutions and military enterprises of Italy, the martial vigor of the land always appears to be exhausted. This is because the old military customs were not good, and there has been nobody able tofind new ones. Yet nothing brings so much honor to a man who rises to new power, as the new laws and new methods he discovers. These things, when they are well founded and have greatness in them, make him revered and worthy of admiration. And in Italy matter is not lacking on which to impress forms of every sort. There is great vigor in the limbs if only it is not lacking in the heads. You may see that in duels and combats between small numbers, the Italians have been much superior in force, skill, and intelligence. But when it is a matter of armies, Italians cannot be compared with foreigners. All this comes from the weakness of the heads, because those who know are not obeyed, and each man thinks he knows. Nor up to this time has there been a man able to raise himself so high, through both ability and fortune, that the others would yield to him. The result is that for the past twenty years, in all the wars that have been fought when there has been an army entirely Italian, it has always made a bad showing. Proof of this was givenfirst at the Taro, and then at Alessandria, Capua, Genoa, Vailà, Bologna, and Mestri.[2]

If your illustrious House, then, wishes to imitate those excellent men who redeemed their countries, it is necessary, before everything else, to furnish yourself with your own army, as the true foundation of every enterprise. You cannot have more faithful, nor truer, nor better soldiers. And though every individual of these may be good, they become better as a body when they see that they are commanded by their prince, and honored and trusted by him. It is necessary, therefore, that your House should be prepared with such forces, in order that it may be able to defend itself against the foreigners with Italian courage.

And though the Swiss and the Spanish infantry are properly estimated as terribly effective, yet both have defects. Hence a third type would be able not merely to oppose them but to feel sure of overcoming them. The fact is that the Spaniards are not able to resist cavalry, and the Swiss have reason to fear infantry, when they meet any as determined in battle as themselves. For this reason it has been seen and will be seen in experience that the Spaniards are unable to resist the French cavalry, and the Swiss are overthrown by Spanish infantry. And though of this last a clear instance has not been observed, yet an approach to it appeared in the battle of Ravenna,[3] when the Spanish infantry met the German battalions, who use the same methods as the Swiss. There the Spanish, through their ability and the assistance given by their shields, got Full p. C-211 within the points of the spears from below, and slew their enemies in security, Shorter p. 1595 while the Germans couldfind no means of resistance. If the cavalry had not charged the Spanish, they would have annihilated the Germans. It is possible, then, for one who realizes the defects of these two types, to equip infantry in a new manner, so that it can resist cavalry and not be afraid of foot-soldiers; but to gain this end they must have weapons of the right sorts, and adopt varied methods of combat. These are some of the things which, when they are put into service as novelties, give reputation and greatness to a new ruler.[4]

This opportunity, then, should not be allowed to pass, in order that after so long a time Italy may see her redeemer. I am unable to express with what love he would be received in all the provinces that have suffered from these foreign deluges; with what thirst for vengeance, whatfirm faith, what piety, what tears! What gates would be shut against him? what peoples

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would deny him obedience? what envy would oppose itself to him? what Italian would refuse to follow him? This barbarian rule stinks in every nostril. May your illustrious House, then, undertake this charge with the spirit and the hope with which all just enterprises are taken up, in order that, beneath its ensign, our native land may be ennobled, and, under its auspices, that saying of Petrarch may come true: “Manhood[5] will take arms against fury, and the combat will be short, because in Italian hearts the ancient valor is not yet dead.”

Footnotes

- Note 6:Possibly Cesare Borgia and Francesco Sforza, who were discussed earlier in the book. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:Pope Leo X (1475–1521) was a Medici (Giovanni de’ Medici). “House”: of Medici. *The Prince* wasfirst meant for Giuliano de’ Medici. After Giuliano’s death it was dedicated to his nephew Lorenzo, later duke of Urbino. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:Livy’s *History* 9.1, para. 10. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:Another allusion to Moses. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:Perhaps another reference to Borgia and Sforza. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Sites of battles occurring between the end of the 15th century and 1513. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Between Spain and France in April 1512. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:Machiavelli was subsequently the author of the treatise *Art of War* (1521). Return to reference 4
- Note 5:An etymological translation of the original *virt*ù(from the Latin *vir*, “man”). The quotation is from the canzone “My Italy.” Return to reference 5

LUDOVICO ARIOSTO 1474–1533

Orlando Furioso (*Orlando Gone Crazy*) is as witty and playful in tone as it is philosophically and politically serious. The poem follows the hero Orlando as he chases the elusive princess Angelica, against the backdrop of Charlemagne’s battles against the Saracens. The most important achievement of Renaissance Italy’s greatest poet, it is also a study in contrasts, at once brilliantly original and a comical imitation of the epic and romance traditions.

LIFE

Born into a large family of the lower nobility in the city-state of Ferrara, Ariosto could not afford the life of cultured leisure enjoyed by the upper nobility there. In 1503 he entered the service of Ippolito d’Este, the warlike and profligate cardinal. Ippolito could be demanding and stingy, but he understood Ariosto’s importance as a poet well enough tofinance the publication of thefirst edition of *Orlando Furioso* Full p. C-212 in 1516. When Ariosto refused to join him on a mission to Hungary in 1517, however, hefired the poet on the spot, and Ariosto transferred his services to the more cultured Duke Alfonso, whose sister Isabella was the poet’s most avid reader. Alfonso was himself strapped for cash in his constant negotiations with the Venetian Republic, King Francis I of France, and Emperor Charles V to keep the pope from seizing Ferrara. His solution to Ariosto’sfinancial woes was to make him governor of the bandit-infested region of Ganfagnana in 1522. In 1525, after begging for release from this unwelcome

charge, Ariostofinally returned to Ferrara, to his family, and to his poetic labors. He died in 1533 after seeing thefinal edition of the *Furioso* through publication in 1532.

ORLANDO FURIOSO

Orlando Furioso reprises the works of **Homer, Virgil, Ovid, St. Augustine, Dante, Boccaccio**, and **Petrarch** as well as the ***Song of Roland,*** from which Ariosto's title hero ultimately derives. The *Furioso* is, in turn, itself a source of inspiration to such writers of the later Renaissance as Rabelais, Cervantes, Shakespeare, and Milton. In his title, which recalls the popular romance epic *Orlando in Love*, Ariosto announces his plan to outdo other poets in the romance epic tradition: he will show how Orlando, under the influence of desire, crosses the line from love to lunatic frenzy. Much of Ariosto's humor in fact comes from placing heroes of the past in new and unexpected situations. The mood of the poem moves up and down the scale of genres, from epic fury to romance dalliance to pastoral repose, from tragedy to comedy, from praise to satire, and from the sublime to the grotesque. Range also characterizes the *Furioso*'s geography, which stretches from France, Italy, Spain, Holland, England, Scotland, India, Tunisia, Libya, Syria, and Nubia to Byzantium and beyond (including a voyage to the Moon). From these diverse countries come Christian and pagan knights who mingle and clash as they try to make names for themselves.

The breadth of *Orlando Furioso*'s geographic survey is matched by the depth of its scrutiny of human psychology. Wrath and desire are the passions Ariosto explores in greatest depth, and no character experiences them more violently than Orlando. For twenty-three cantos of the poem, neglecting his obligations to his king, Charlemagne, he pursues his obsessive love for the beautiful Chinese princess, Angelica, who constantlyflees the attentions of her many suitors. At the poem's exact center, Orlando enters into a frenzy of epic proportions when he discovers that Angelica loves the young Saracen soldier Medor and that the pair have consummated their mutual passion. Although Angelica had not promised her love to him, Orlando experiences her loss as an immeasurable betrayal, and in his fury becomes more bestial than human. In a typical ironic gesture, Ariosto's narrator inserts himself into the story, expressing his sympathy for Orlando at his most outrageous and his own anger at the "nasty tribe" of women, then immediately apologizing for introducing a "discordant note."

Orlando's story is not the sole, or even the most important, of Ariosto's tales; the poet weaves into a single tapestry an extraordinary range of story lines. The other story represented here is also of forbidden love. Narrated by Richardet, the twin brother of Ariosto's famous woman warrior, Bradamante, the tale recounts the passionate love that the Spanish princess Fiordispina conceived for Bradamante, whom Fiordispina had mistaken for a man. Full of confused identities and impersonation, the episode explores the artificiality of Full p. C-213 gender roles and the capricious nature of desire. The tale has all the characteristics for which Ariosto is celebrated as a poet and raconteur: charm, wit, and humor blend with searching and serious questions about human nature (especially in love) and its relationship to civic norms.

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From Orlando Furioso[1]

Footnotes

• Note 1:Translated by Guido Waldman. Return to reference 1

FROM CANTOS 23 AND 24

[*Orlando's Great Madness*]

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He came to a stream which looked like crystal; a pleasant meadow bloomed on its banks, picked out with lovely pure colors and adorned with many beautiful trees.[2] / A welcome breeze tempered the noontide for the ruggedflock and naked shepherd, and Orlando felt no discomfort, for all that he was wearing breastplate, helmet, and shield. Here he stopped, then, to rest—but his welcome proved to be harsh and painful, indeed quite unspeakably cruel, on this unhappy, ill-starred day. / Looking about him, he saw inscriptions on many of the trees by the shady bank; he had only to look closely at the letters to be sure that they were formed by the hand of his goddess. This was one of the spots described earlier, to which the beautiful damsel, Queen of Cathay, often resorted with Medor, from the shepherd's house close by. / He saw "Angelica" and "Medor" in a hundred places, united by a hundred love-knots. The letters were so many nails with which Love pierced and wounded his heart. He searched in his mind for any number of excuses to reject what he could not help believing; he tried to persuade himself that it was some other Angelica who had written her name on the bark. / "But I recognize these characters," he told himself; "I've seen and read so many just like them. Can she perhaps be inventing this Medor? Perhaps by this name she means me." Thus deceiving himself with far-fetched notions, disconsolate Orlando clung to hopes which he knew he was stretching out to grasp. / But the more he tried to smother his dark suspicions the more theyflared up with new vigor: he was like an unwary bird caught in a web or in bird-lime—the more he beats his wings and tries to free himself, the worse ensnared he becomes.

Orlando came to where a bow-shaped curve in the hillside made a cave overlooking the clear spring. / Twisting on their stems, ivy and rambling vines adorned the entrance. Here during the heat of the day the two happy lovers used to lie in each other's arms. Their namesfigured here more than elsewhere; they were inscribed within and without, sometimes in charcoal, sometimes in chalk, or scratched with the point of a knife. / The dejected count approached on foot. At the entrance he saw many words which Medor had written in his own hand; they seem to have been freshly inscribed. The inscription was written in verse and spoke of the great pleasure he had enjoyed in this cave. I believe it was written in his native tongue; in ours this is how it reads: Full p. C-214 / "Happy plants, verdant grass, limpid waters, dark, shadowy cave, pleasant and cool, where fair Angelica, born of Galafron, and loved in vain by many, often lay naked in my arms. I, poor Medor, cannot repay you for your indulgence otherwise than by ever praising you, / and by entreating every lover, knight, or maiden, every person, native or alien, who happens upon this spot by accident or by design, to say to the grass, the shadows, the cave, stream, and plants: 'May sun and moon be kind to you,

and the chorus of the nymphs, and may they see that shepherds never lead theirflocks to you.'" / It was written in Arabic, which the count knew as well as he knew Latin. He knew many and many a tongue, but Arabic is one with which he was most familiar: his grasp of it had saved him on more than one occasion from injury and insult when he was among the Saracens. But he was not to boast if formerly his knowledge had helped him—the pain it now brought him quite discounted every former advantage. /

Five and six times the unfortunate man re-read the inscription, trying in vain to wish it away, but it was more plain and clear each time he read it. And each time, he felt a cold hand clutch his heart in his afflicted breast. Finally he fell to gazingfixedly at the stone—stonelike himself. / He was ready to go out of his mind, so complete was his surrender to grief. Believe one who has experienced it—this is a sorrow to surpass all others. His chin had dropped onto his chest, his head was bowed, his brow had lost its boldness. So possessed was he by sorrow that he had no voice for laments, no moisture for tears. / His impetuous grief, set upon erupting all too quickly, remained within. A broad-bellied, narrow-necked vase full of water has the same effect, as can be observed: when the vase is inverted, the liquid so surges to the neck that it blocks its own egress, and can scarcely do more than come out drop by drop. / Returning to himself a little, he considered how he might yet be mistaken about it: he hoped against hope that it might simply be someone trying to besmirch his lady's name this way, or to charge him with a burden of jealousy so unendurable that he would die of it; and that whoever it was who had done this had copied her hand most skilfully. / With such meager, such puny hopes he roused his spirits and found a little courage.

He mounted Brigliador, now that the sun was giving place to his sister in the sky. Before he had gone far he saw smoke issuing from the housetops, and heard dogs barking and cows lowing; he came to a farmhouse and found lodging. / Listlessly he dismounted, and left Brigliador to the care of a discreet stable-boy. Others there were to help him offwith his armor and his golden spurs, and to refurbish them. This was the house where Medor lay wounded, and met with his great good fortune. Orlando did not ask for supper but for a bed: he was replete with sadness, not with other fare. / The harder he sought for rest, the worse the misery and affliction he procured himself—every wall, every door, every window was covered with the hateful inscriptions. He wanted to make enquiries there, but chose to keep his lips sealed: he was afraid to establish too clearly the very question he wanted to cloud with mist so as to dull the pain. / Little good did it do him to deceive himself; somebody there was to speak of the matter unasked. The herdsman, who saw him so downcast and sad and wanted to cheer him up, embarked, without asking leave, upon the story of those two lovers: he knew it well, and often repeated it to those who would listen. There were many who enjoyed hearing it. / He told how at the Full p. C-215 prayer of beautiful Angelica he had brought Medor back to his house. Medor was gravely wounded, and she tended his wound, and in a few days had healed it—but Love inflicted upon her heart a wound far worse than his, and from a small spark kindled so blazing afire that she was all aflame and quite beside herself, / and, forgetting that she was daughter of the greatest monarch of the East, driven by excessive passion, she chose to become wife to a poor simple soldier. The herdsman ended his story by having the bracelet brought in—the one Angelica had given him on her departure as a token of thanks for his hospitality. /

This evidence shown in conclusion proved to be the axe which took his head offhis shoulders at one stroke, now that Love, that tormentor, was tired of raining blows upon him.

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Orlando tried to conceal his grief, but it so pressed him, he could not succeed: willy nilly the sighs and tears had tofind a vent through his eyes and lips. / When he was free to give rein to his sorrow, once he was alone without others to consider, tears began to stream from his eyes and furrow his cheeks, running down onto his breast. He sighed and moaned, and made great circular sweeps of the bed with his arms: it felt harder than rock; it stung worse than a bed of nettles. / Amid such bitter anguish the thought occurred to him that on this very bed in which he was lying the thankless damsel must have lain down many a time with her lover. The downy bed sent a shudder through him and he leapt offit with all the alacrity of a yokel who has lain down in the grass for a nap and spies a snake close by. /

The bed, the house, the herdsmanfilled him on a sudden with such revulsion that, without waiting for moonrise, or for thefirst light preceding the new day, he fetched his arms and his steed and went out into the darkest, most tangled depths of the wood; when he felt he was quite alone, he gave vent to his grief with cries and howls. / There was no checking his cries and tears; night and day he allowed himself no respite. Towns and villages he avoided, and lay out in the open on the hard forest-floor. He wondered that his head could hold such an unquenchable source of water, and that he could sigh so much. Frequently as he wept he said to himself: / “These are no longer tears that drop from my eyes so copiously. The tears were not enough for my grief: they came to an end before my grief was half expressed. Urged byfire, my vital spirit is now escaping by the ducts which lead to the eyes: this is what is now spilling out, and with it my sorrow and my life willflow out at its last hour. / These sighs, which are a token of my anguish, are not truly sighs: sighs are not like this—now and then they will cease, but never do I feel a relaxing of my pain as my breast exhales it. Love, which burns my heart, makes this wind, beating his wings about theflames. By what miracle, Love, do you keep my heart ever burning but never consumed byfire? / I am not who my face proclaims me; the man who was Orlando is dead and buried, slain by his most thankless lady who assailed him by her betrayal. I am his spirit sundered from him, and wandering tormented in its own hell, so that his shade, all that remains of him, should serve as an example to any who place hope in Love.” /

All night the count wandered in the wood; at sunrise, Fate brought him back to the spring where Medor had carved his inscription. To see his calamity written there in the hillside so inflamed him that he was drained of every drop that was not pure hate, fury, wrath, and violence. On impulse he drew his sword, / and Full p. C-216 slashed at the words and the rock-face, sending tiny splinters shooting skywards. Alas for the cave, and for every trunk on which the names of Medor and Angelica were written! They were left, that day, in such a state that never more would they afford cool shade to shepherd orflock. The spring, too, which had been so clear and pure, was scarcely safer from wrath such as his; / branches, stumps and boughs, stones and clods he kept hurling into the lovely waters until he so clouded them from surface to bottom that they were clear and pure never again. In the end, exhausted and sweat-soaked, his stamina given out and no longer answering to his deep, bitter hate, his burning wrath, he dropped onto the grass and sighed up at the heavens. / Weary and heart-stricken, he dropped onto the grass and gazed mutely up at the sky. Thus he remained, without food or sleep while the sun three times rose and set. His bitter agony grew and grew until it drove him out of his mind.

On the fourth day, worked into a great frenzy, he stripped offhis armor and chain-mail. / The helmet landed here, the shield there, more pieces of armor further off, the breastplate further

still: arms and armor all found their resting-place here and there about the wood. Then he tore offhis clothes and exposed his hairy belly and all his chest and back.

Now began the great madness, so horrifying that none will ever know a worse instance. / He fell into a frenzy so violent that his every sense was darkened. He did not think to draw his sword, with which I expect he would have performed marvels. But in view of his colossal strength he had no need of it, nor of any hatchet or battle-axe. He now performed some truly astonishing feats: at one jerk he rooted up a tall pine, / after which he tore up several more as though they were so many celery-stalks. He did the same to oaks and ancient elms, to beech and ash-trees, to ilexes andfirs. What a birdcatcher does when clearing the ground before he lays nets—rooting up rushes, brushwood, and nettles—Orlando did to oaks and other age-old timber. / The shepherds who heard the din left theirflocks scattered through the woodland and hastened from all parts to this spot to see what was happening. But I have reached a point which I must not overstep for fear of boring you with my story; I should rather postpone it than annoy you by making it too long.

* * *

If you have put your foot in the birdlime spread by Cupid, try to pull it out, and take care not to catch your wing in it too: love, in the universal opinion of wise men, is nothing but madness. Though not everyone goes raving mad like Orlando, Love's folly shows itself in other ways; what clearer sign of lunacy than to lose your own self through pining for another? / The effects vary, but the madness which promotes them is always the same. It is like a great forest into which those who venture must perforce lose their way: one here, another there, one and all go offthe track. Let me tell you this, to conclude: whoever grows old in love ought, in addition to Cupid's torments, to be chained and fettered. / "You, my friend, are preaching to others," someone will tell me, "but you overlook your own failing." The answer is that now, in an interval of lucidity, I understand a great deal. And I am taking pains (with imminent success, I hope) tofind peace and withdraw from the dance—though I cannot do so as quickly as I should wish, for the disease has eaten me to the bone. /

Full p. C-217

In the last canto I was telling you, my Lord, how Orlando, crazed and demented, had torn offarms and armor and scattered them everywhere, ripped his clothes, tossed away his sword, rooted up trees, and made the hollow caves and deep woods re-echo. And some shepherds were attracted to the noise, whether by their stars, or for some wicked misdeed of theirs. / When they had a closer sight of the madman's incredible feats and his prodigious strength, they turned toflee, but without direction, as people do when suddenly scared. The madman was after them at once; he grabbed one and took offhis head with all the ease of a person plucking an apple from a tree or a dainty bloom from a briar. / He picked up the heavy carcass by one leg and used it to club the rest; he laid out two, leaving them in a sleep from which perhaps they would awake on Judgment Day. The others cleared offat once: they were quickfooted and had their wits about them. The madman would not have been slow to pursue them, but he had now turned upon theirflocks. /

In thefields the laborers, wise from the shepherds' example, left their ploughs, hoes, and sickles and scrambled onto the housetops or onto the church roofs—there being no safety up elm or willow tree. From here they contemplated the fearsome frenzy unleashed upon horse

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and oxen: they were shattered, battered, and destroyed by dint of punches, thumps, and bites, kicks and scratches. It was a fast mover who could escape him. / Now you could have heard the neighboring farms resound with shouts, the shrill of horns, and rustic trumpets and, most persistently, the peal of clarions; you could have seen a thousand men streaming down from the hills, armed with pikes and bows, spears, and slings; as many more came up from the plain, ready to wage a peasant war against the madman. / Imagine waves, driven by the South Wind which earlier had been playful, breaking on the shore; the second wave is higher than thefirst, the third follows with greater force; and, each time, the water builds up more and seethes more widely across the beach. Thus did the pitiless mob increase, coming down from the hills and out of the valleys against Orlando. / Out of that disorderly throng ten he killed who came within his reach, and then another ten. This experiment made it clear that it was far safer to stand well away. No one was able to draw blood from his body; steel was powerless to strike and wound it—the King of Heaven had given him this endowment so as to make him guardian of His holy faith. / Had he been capable of dying, his life would have been in danger; he might have learned what it was to throw aside his sword and, unarmed, to overreach himself.[3]

Now having seen their every blow prove ineffective, the throng began to ebb. With no one left to confront him, Orlando made offand came to a hamlet. / Here he found not a soul, man or child, for everyone had abandoned the place in terror. There was plenty of food set out, humble fare of which shepherds partake. Spurred by hunger and frenzy, he made no distinction between bread and acorns but set to with his hands and teeth and devoured whatever camefirst within reach, whether raw or cooked. / After this he roamed about the countryside, preying upon men and wild beasts. He would range through the woods catchingfleet-footed goats and nimble fawns. Often he wouldfight with bears and boars, wrestling them to the ground bare-handed; often hefilled his Full p. C-218 ravenous belly with their meat, carcass and all. / He roamed across the length and breadth of France, until one day he came to a bridge. Beneath it a broad, full riverflowed between steep, craggy banks. Beside it there stood a tower commanding a sweeping view in all directions. What he did here you shall learn later on.

Footnotes

- Note 2:The scene resembles Orlando’s dream. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Orlando’s frenzy resembles that of Hercules, the strongest man in classical mythology. Return to reference 3

FROM CANTO 25

[*Fiordispina’s Love for Bradamant*]

Oh what conflict there can be in a young man’s mind between a thirst for glory and the impulses of Love! There is no telling which of the two motives is the stronger when now one, now the other predominates. * * * / He had not traveled a mile beyond the well before he saw a messenger approaching at a gallop; he was one of those sent by Agramant to the warriors from whom he was expecting help. He learnt that the Saracens were in such danger from

Charlemagne's blockade that, short of immediate assistance, degradation or even death would be their lot. / Ruggiero was perplexed by many thoughts which all assailed him at once; but this was not the time or the place to decide on his best course. He let the messenger go, then turned his steed to follow the damsel who was guiding him; he kept urging her to hasten, as there was no time to lose. / They continued along their way until, as the sun was setting, they came to a stronghold of Marsilius in the middle of France, one which he had seized from Charlemagne in the course of the war. They did not stop at the drawbridge nor at the gate—nobody blocked or obstructed their entry, even though the palisade and fosse were thronged with armed men. / As the damsel accompanying him was recognized by the bystanders, they were allowed through unhindered without even being asked from where they had come. They reached the square which they found aglow withflames and teeming with a malicious throng.

In the middle he saw the young man condemned to death. His face was white; / it was tearful and downcast, and when Ruggiero looked up at it he imagined he was looking at Bradamant, so closely did the youth resemble her. The more he gazed at his face andfigure the more the likeness struck him. "Either this is Bradamant," he told himself, "or else I'm no longer Ruggiero. / Perhaps she was over-hasty in taking up the condemned boy's defence: her intervention must have miscarried and she has been captured, as I see. Oh why such haste, why could I not have been with her on this venture? But I have arrived, thank God, and there's still time for me to save her." / And without further delay he grasped his sword—he had broken his lance at Pinabello's castle—and drove his steed into the unarmed throng, assailing them in the chest, sides, and belly. He whirled his sword, catching one man on the brow, the next at the throat, another on the cheek. The rabblefled screaming: the entire throng was left maimed, if not with cracked skulls. / Imagine aflock of birds by a lake,flitting about confidently as they grub for food, when suddenly a hawk plummets down upon them from the sky and strikes or snatches one of their number; the rest scatter, each deserting his companion to attend to his own escape. Thus you would have seen the crowd behave the moment Ruggiero drove into them. / Some half dozen who were slow in leaving had their Full p. C-219 heads lopped offclean; as many more he split down to the chest, while a countless number were cleft down to the eyes or the jaw.

I'll grant you that they were not wearing helmets, but merely head-pieces of shining metal; had they been properly helmeted, though, he would have slashed them with almost as much ease. / No knight of the present day could match him for sheer strength—nor could any bear or lion or more ferocious beast, whether native or foreign to our shores. An earthquake might have equaled him, or the mighty Devil: not the one in hell—it's my Lord's Devil[4] I mean, the one which spitsfire and forces its way everywhere, by land, sea, and air. / At every stroke at least one man fell, and more often two; he killed four and evenfive at a stroke, which soon brought the total to a hundred. The sword he had unsheathed could cut through steel as though it were soft whey. Falerina the sorceress[5] had made this cruel sword in the garden of Orgagna, for the purpose of slaying Orlando; / much did she regret having made it when she saw it used to destroy her garden. Imagine, then, the havoc and devastation wrought by it in the hands of a champion such as Ruggiero! If ever he manifested his rage, his strength, his supreme valor it was here and now as he strove to rescue his lady. /

The mob stood up to him as well as hare to unleashed hounds. A good number were killed; those whofled were legion. Meanwhile the damsel guiding Ruggiero had released the youth

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from the bonds tying his wrists, and procured him arms as best she could, a sword for his hand, a shield to sling from his neck. / He now did his utmost to avenge himself on these folk who had done him grievous wrong; he laid about him to such effect that he left a reputation for prowess and valor. The sun had dipped his golden rays into the Western sea when victorious Ruggiero and the young man set out from the castle. /

When the youth was outside the gates with Ruggiero, he thanked him profusely and most gracefully: his benefactor had, after all, risked his life to save him without knowing who he was. He asked Ruggiero to divulge his name, as he wanted to know who it was to whom he owed such a debt of gratitude. / "I am looking at the comely face and beautifulfigure of my Bradamant," Ruggiero mused, "but I do not hear the dulcet tones of her voice. And her words are not appropriate to thanking a faithful lover. If she really is Bradamant, how is it that she has so soon forgotten my name?" / To establish who it was, Ruggiero employed subtlety. "I have seen you somewhere before," he remarked, "but though I have pondered and racked my brains I cannot remember where it was. Will you remind me, then, if you can recollect? And do me the pleasure of telling me your name, so that I may know who it was whom I saved today from the pyre." /

"It could be that you have seen me before," replied the other, "but I cannot say where or when. I too wander about the world seeking high adventure. Perhaps it was a sister of mine you saw, one who wears armor and carries a sword at her side; we are twins from birth and look so alike that even our family cannot tell us apart. / You are not thefirst, nor the second, nor even the fourth to have mistaken us; neither our father, nor our brothers, nor even our mother who bore us at one birth is able to tell us apart. True, our hair used to mark a sharp difference between us when I wore my hair short and loose in the male fashion, while she wore hers long and coiled in a plait. / But one day she was wounded in the head Full p. C-220 (it would take too long to tell the story) and to heal her a servant of God cut her hair till it only half covered her ears. After that there was nothing to distinguish us beyond our sex and name: mine is Richardet, hers is Bradamant; we are brother and sister to Rinaldo. / And if it would not bore you to listen, I would tell you a story to amuse you—something that happened to me on account of my resemblance to her: atfirst it was rapture, but it ended in agony." Ruggiero, in whose ears no song was sweeter, no story dearer than one in which his lady featured, begged him to tell his story. /

"My sister had been wounded by a party of Saracens who had come upon her without a helmet, so she had been obliged to cut her long tresses if her dangerous head-wound was to heal. Now recently she happened to be traveling through these woods, her head shorn as I have said. / On her way she came to a shady spring and, being weary and dejected, she dismounted, took offher helmet and fell asleep in the tender grass. (I don't believe there can be a story more beautiful than this one.) Who should come upon her but the Spanish Princess Fiordispina, who had come into the woods to hunt. / When she saw my sister clad in armor all except for her face, and with a sword in place of a distaff, she imagined she was looking at a knight. After gazing awhile at her face and her manly build she felt her heart stolen. So she invited my sister to join the hunt, and ended by eluding her retinue and disappearing with her among the shady boughs. /

"Once she had brought her into a solitary place where she felt unlikely to be disturbed, little by little, by words and gestures she revealed that she was love-struck. With burning looks andfiery sighs she showed how consumed she was with desire. She paled and blushed and,

summoning her courage, gave her a kiss. / It was clear to my sister that the damsel had illusions about her; my sister could never have satisfied her need and was quite perplexed as to what to do. ‘My best course is to undeceive her,’ she decided, ‘and to reveal myself as a member of the gentle sex rather than to have myself reckoned an ignoble man.’ / And she was right. It would have been a sheer disgrace, the conduct of a man made of plaster, if he had kept up a conversation with a damsel as fair as Fiordispina, sweet as nectar, who had set her cap at him, while like a cuckoo, he just trailed his wings. So Bradamant tactfully had her know that she was a maiden. / She was in quest of glory at arms, like Hippolyta and Camilla[6] of old. Born in Africa, in the seaside city of Arzilla, she was accustomed from childhood to the use of lance and shield. These revelations did not abate love-struck Fiordispina’s passion one jot; Cupid had thrust in his dart to make so deep a gash that this remedy was now too late. / To Fiordispina my sister’s face seemed no less beautiful for this, her eyes, her movements no less graceful; she did not on this account retrieve mastery over her heart, which had gone out to Bradamant to bask in her adorable eyes. Seeing her accoutred as a man, she had imagined that there would be no need for her passion to remain unassuaged; but now the thought that her beloved was also a woman made her sigh and weep and betray boundless sorrow. /

“Anyone who heard her tears and grieving that day would have wept with her. ‘Never was any torment so cruel,’ she lamented, ‘but mine is crueler. Were it a question of any other love, evil or virtuous, I could hope to see it consummated, and I should know how to cull the rose from the briar. My desire alone can have no fulfilment. / If you wanted to torment me, Love, because my happy Full p. C-221 state offended you, why could you not rest content with those torments which other lovers experience? Neither among humans nor among beasts have I ever come across a woman loving a woman; to a woman another woman does not seem beautiful, nor does a hind to a hind, a ewe to a ewe. / By land, sea, and air I alone suffer thus cruelly at your hands—you have done this to make an example of my aberration, the ultimate one in your power. King Ninus’s wife was evil and profane in her love for her son; so was Myrrha, in love with her father, and Pasiphae with the bull. But my love is greater folly than any of theirs. / These females made designs upon the males and achieved the desired consummation, so I am told. Pasiphae went inside the wooden cow, the others achieved their end by other means. But even if Daedalus cameflying to me with every artifice at his command, he would be unable to untie the knot made by that all-too-diligent Maker, Nature, who is all-powerful.[7] /

“Thus the fair damsel grieved and fretted and would not be assuaged. She struck her face and tore her hair and sought to vent her feelings against her own person. My sister wept for pity and felt embarrassed[8] as she listened to her grieving. She tried to deflect her from this insane and profitless craving, but her words were in vain and to no effect. / It was help, not consolation, that she required and her grief only continued to increase. The day was now drawing to a close and the sun was reddening in the West; rather than spending the night in the woods it was time now to withdraw to some lodging. So the damsel invited Bradamant to this castle of hers not far away. / My sister was unable to refuse, so they came to the very spot where the wicked mob would have burned me to death had you not appeared. Here Fiordispina made much of my sister; she dressed her once more in feminine attire and made it plain to one and all that her guest was a woman. / Realizing how little benefit she derived from Bradamant’s apparent masculinity, Fiordispina did not want any blame to attach to herself on

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her guest's account. In addition, she nurtured the hope that the sickness already implanted in her as a result of Bradamant's male aspect might be dispelled by a dose of femininity to show how matters really stood. /

"That night they shared a bed but they did not rest equally well. The one slept, the other wept and moaned, her desire ever mounting. And if sleep did occasionally press upon her eyelids, it was but a brief sleep charged with dreams in which it seemed to her that Heaven had allotted to her a Bradamant transformed into a preferable sex. / If a thirst-tormented invalid goes to sleep craving for water, in his turbid,fitful rest he calls to mind every drop of water he ever saw. Likewise her dreaming mind threw up images to requite her desires. Then she would wake and reach out, only tofind that what she had seen was but an empty dream. / How many prayers and vows did she not offer that night to Mahomet and all the gods, asking them to change Bradamant's sex for the better by a clear and self-evident miracle! But she saw that all her prayers were vain; perhaps Heaven even mocked her. The night ended and Phoebus Full p. C-222 lifted his fair head out of the sea and gave light to the world. / With the new day they left their bed, and Fiordispina's pain was aggravated when Bradamant, anxious to be clear of her predicament, mentioned that she was leaving. As a parting gift, Fiordispina presented her with an excellent jennet, caparisoned in gold; also with a costly surcoat woven by her own hand. / Fiordispina accompanied her a step of the way then returned, weeping, to her castle, while my sister pressed on so hastily that she reached Montauban the same day. Our poor mother and we, her brothers, crowded round her, rejoicing—for lack of news of her, we had been gravely anxious for fear she were dead. /

"When she removed her helmet we all stared at her cropped hair which previously had fallen about her neck; and the new surcoat she was wearing also caught our attention. And she told us all that had befallen her, from start tofinish just as I've told you: how after she was wounded in the wood she cut offher fair tresses in order to be healed; / and how the beautiful huntress came upon her as she was by the spring; and how she took to her deceptive appearance and segregated her from her party. She did not pass in silence over Fiordispina's grief, and we were allfilled with pity at it. She described how she lodged with her, and all she did until her return to our castle. /

"Now I had heard a great deal about Fiordispina, whom I had seen in Saragossa and in France. I had been much allured by her lovely eyes and smooth cheeks, but had not let my thoughts dwell upon her; to love without hope is idle dreaming. But, brought again so fully to the fore, she reawakened my passion at once. / Out of this hope, Love prepared bonds for me, having no other cord with which to capture me. He showed me how to set about obtaining what I wanted of this damsel. A little deception would procure an easy success: the similarity between my sister and myself had often deceived others, so perhaps it would deceive her too. / Shall I, shan't I? My conclusion was that it is always good to go in pursuit of one's pleasure. I did not divulge my thought to a soul, nor seek anyone's advice on the matter. When it was night, I went to where my sister had left her armor; I put it on and away I went on her horse without waiting for dawn to break. / I set offby night, with Cupid for guide, to be with lovely Fiordispina, and I arrived before the Sun had hidden his radiance in the sea. Happy the man who outstripped his fellows in bringing the news to the princess: as bearer of good tidings he could expect thanks and a reward from her. /

"They all of them took me for Bradamant—just as you did—the more so in that I had both the attire and the horse with which she had left the previous day. Fiordispina lost no time in

coming out to meet me; she was so jubilant and affectionate, she could not possibly have shown greater pleasure and joy. / Throwing her graceful arms around my neck, she softly hugged me and kissed me on the lips. You can imagine after this how Love guided his dart to pierce me at the heart of my heart! She took me by the hand and quickly led me into her bedroom; here she would suffer none but herself to undo my armor, from helmet to spurs; no one else was to take a hand. / Next she sent for a dress of hers, richly ornate, which she herself spread out and put on me as though I were a woman; and she caught my hair in a golden net. I studied modesty in my glances, and none of my gestures betrayed my not being a woman. My voice might have betrayed me, but I controlled it so well that it aroused no suspicions. / Then we went into a hall crowded with knights and ladies who received us with the sort of Full p. C-223 honor paid to queens and great ladies. Here several times I was amused when certain men, unaware that my skirts concealed something sturdy and robust, kept making eyes at me. / When the evening was further advanced and the meal had been over for some while—the fare had been an excellent choice of what was then in season—Fiordispina did not wait for me to ask the favor which was the object of my visit, but invited me hospitably to share her bed for the night. /

"When the waiting-women and maidens, the pages, and attendants had withdrawn, and we were both changed and in bed, while theflaming sconces left the room bright as day, I said to her: 'Do not be surprised, my lady, at my returning to you so soon—perhaps you thought that you would not see me again for God knows how long. / First I shall tell you why I left, then why I have returned. Had I been able to abate your ardor by staying, I should have wanted to live and die in your service, and never for an hour be without you. But seeing how much pain my presence occasioned you, as I could do you no better service, I chose to leave. / Fate drew me offmy path into the thick of a tangled wood, where I heard a cry sound close by, as of a damsel calling for help. I came running and found myself at the edge of a crystal lake where a faun had hooked a naked maiden in the water and was cruelly preparing to eat her raw. / I went over, sword in hand—only this way could I help her—and slew the boorishfisherman. Straight away she dived into the water and said: "It is not for nothing that you have saved me. You shall be richly rewarded and given as much as you ask for: I am a nymph and I live in this limpid lake. / I have the power to perform miracles, to coerce nature and the elements. Ask to the limits of my capabilities, then just leave it to me: at my singing the moon comes down from the sky,fire turns to ice, the air turns brittle, and with mere words I have moved the earth and stopped the sun." /

"'I did not ask her for a hoard of treasure, or for power over nations, or for greater valor or might, or for honorable victory in every war. My only request was that she would show me some way I could fulfil your desire; I did not ask to achieve this in one way or in another, but left the method up to her own discretion. / Scarcely had I disclosed my wish than I saw her dive a second time, and for all reply to my request she splashed the enchanted water at me. The moment it touched my face I was quite transformed, I know not how. I could see, I could feel—though I could scarcely believe my senses—that I was changing from woman to man.[9] / You would never believe me, except that now, right away, you shall be able to see for yourself. In my new sex as in my old, my desire is to give you ready service. Command my faculties, then, and you shallfind them now and ever more alert and bestirred for you.' Thus I spoke to her, and I guided her hand to test the truth for herself. /

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“Imagine the case of a person who has given up hope of having something for which he craves; the more he bemoans his deprivation, the more he works himself into a state of despair; and if later he acquires it, he is so vexed over the time wasted sowing seed in the sand, and despair has so eroded him that he is dumbfounded and cannot believe his luck. / So it was with Fiordispina: she Full p. C-224 saw and touched the object she had so craved for, but she could not believe her eyes or herfingers or herself, and kept wondering whether she were awake or asleep. She needed solid proof to convince her that she was actually feeling what she thought she felt. ‘O God, if this is a dream,’ she cried, ‘keep me asleep for good, and never wake me again!’ /

“There was no roll of drums, no peal of trumpets to herald the amorous assault: but caresses like those of billing doves gave the signal to advance or to standfirm. We used arms other than arrows and slingstones; and I, without a ladder, leapt onto the battlements and planted my standard there at one jab, and thrust my enemy beneath me. / If on the previous night that bed had been laden with heavy sighs and laments, this night made up for it with as much laughter and merriment, pleasure and gentle playfulness. Never did twisting acanthus entwine pillars and beams with more knots than those which bound us together, our necks and sides, our arms, legs, and breasts in a close embrace. / It remained a secret between us, so our pleasure continued for a few months. But eventually someone found us out, so the matter became known to the king—to my undoing. You, who rescued me from his people who had lit the pyre in the square, you can understand the rest: but God knows what an ache I am left with.” /

Footnotes

- Note 4:Duke Alfonso’s great cannon. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:Boiardo’s sorceress, who created the sword Balisardo to kill Orlando. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:Virgil’s Amazon warrior. “Hippolyta”: queen of the Amazons. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:The entire speech is based on the soliloquy of Ovid’s Myrrha, who loved her father (*Metamorphoses* 10). “King Ninus’s wife”: Semiramis, Syrian queen who married her son. “Pasiphae”: wife of King Minos, who loved a bull. “Daedalus”: inventor who created the labyrinth in which Minos kept the Minotaur, the monstrous offspring of Pasiphae. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:The Italian verb for Bradamant’s emotional response,è*costretta*, indicates that she feels obliged or compelled to help Fiordispina rather than “embarrassed,” as the translator puts it. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:Richardet invents afictional metamorphosis, which he bases generally on Ovid’s tales, with specific allusions to the famous tales of Actaeon (who sees the goddess Diana naked and is metamorphosed into a stag when she sprinkles him with water) and Salmacis and Hermaphroditus (who together become the hermaphrodite). Return to reference 9

THOMAS MORE 1478–1535

Somewhere between a learned joke and a visionary dream of social reform, Thomas More's *Utopia* is thefirst modern example of the genre now known as "utopian literature." With its vision of an elusive and remote ideal society, *Utopia* offers readers the tantalizing possibility of an alternative to their own world. From the Renaissance and into our own time, More's humanist inquiry into the proper organization of society has inspired other writers to imagine their own alternatives to the way we live.

LIFE AND TIMES

As a scholar and statesman, Thomas More was one of the most influential English thinkers of the early sixteenth century. Humanism had created a new professional class of secretaries, ambassadors, and counselors to kings, and More's career in law and government was a shining example of what education could achieve in Tudor England. Born not of noble, but of honest stock, as he wrote in his own epitaph, More came from families with a tradition of civic service to London and to the crown. As a young boy, he served as a page in the household of the famed prelate and statesman Cardinal Morton, who appears in Book One of *Utopia* . At London'sfinest grammar school, at Oxford University, and at the Inns of Court, he received afirst-rate Full p. C-225 education in the classics and law. He befriended the famous humanist Erasmus of Rotterdam and his circle, and had close connections to a London religious order. More was married twice and oversaw a pious, industrious household, in which, unusually, his daughters as well as his son were educated. He led a life of intense spirituality, his interest in living piously but without renouncing worldly power matching his study of classical virtue. Early in his career, More wrote a history of Richard III (ca. 1513) in which he grappled with the complexities of power and virtue, themes also explored in *Utopia* (1516).

More was to experience the vicissitudes of royal powerfirsthand, as he held increasingly important offices, from Member of Parliament to ambassador to,finally, Lord Chancellor of England (one of the highest positions in the government, adviser to the king, Henry VIII, and head of the judiciary). Yet the tumultuous events of the early 1530s cut short his brilliant ascent. Henry VIII became increasingly frustrated as the Pope refused to grant him a divorce from Catherine of Aragon, which Henry needed in order to marry Anne Boleyn. In a bold move to bolster his own authority, Henry formally broke with the Church of Rome, and, in the 1534 "Act of Supremacy," proclaimed himself the "only and supreme head" of his realm. England was convulsed by the unprecedented break, and by the political and religiousfirestorms that ensued. Although Henry did not seek Protestant reforms, his actions encouraged those who did.

As a loyal Catholic and high official, More had vigorously persecuted Protestant heretics, written tracts against Protestantism, and strived to keep the new reform movements out of England, a land far less tolerant than the *Utopia* he had imagined, where "no man's religion, as such, shall be held against him." Given his position, More could not condone Henry's claim to lead the English church. In 1532, just three years after being named Chancellor, More resigned and defended his stance in print. Staunchly refusing to take an oath to acknowledge Henry's supremacy, More was imprisoned in the Tower of London, where he wrote his last works, on

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the spiritual benefits of tribulation. He wasfinally executed as a traitor in 1535. Considered a Catholic martyr, he was canonized in 1935.

UTOPIA

More's *Utopia* is a serious text full of inside jokes, paradoxes, and contradictions, a slippery satire of More's world that simultaneously proposed a provocative alternative. *Utopia* is actually two very different books: thefirst, sometimes referred to as "The Dialogue of Counsel," introduces More and his humanist friends as characters. On an embassy for Henry VIII to Flanders, More meets a worldly, wise, and entirelyfictional traveler, Raphael Hythloday, who had sailed with Amerigo Vespucci. When More suggests that Hythloday should put his knowledge to use in public service, the traveler replies with a strong indictment of European monarchies for their greed and ambition. The dialogue turns to social inequality in England, exacerbated in More's time by the enclosure of agricultural common land for private sheep-pastures. Hythloday insists that private property makes social justice impossible, and offers the distant commonwealth of Utopia as a counterexample.

The second book, modeled closely on travel narratives of the New World, describes the island Utopia, from its geography to its society to its moral philosophy. By framing *Utopia* as a travel narrative, More contrasts the supposed certainties of the classics and of established knowledge with the earth-shattering novelty of the New World. Full p. C-226 Utopia is itself both new and old: new to Europeans, certainly, but the beneficiary of a wealth of transferred knowledge from the Old World, including Christianity, which Hythloday's expedition has recently brought to them.

Based on the ideal commonwealth of **Plato**'s *Republic*, on **St. Augustine**'s *City of God*, and on monastic communal living, *Utopia* looks back as much as it looks forward. The island that Hythloday describes is ruled by a set of hyperrational, simplified laws that treat (almost) everyone equally and attempt to quiet the desires, such as greed or lust, that can wreak havoc with such arrangements. More's own career had made him acutely aware of the distance between ideals and political realities, and his island commonwealth satirizes human folly as well as offering possible solutions.

Uniquely slippery and as difficult tofix as the island is tofind, *Utopia* beckons for its political engagement and its literary richness. Written in Latin for an audience of European humanists, *Utopia* assumes a learned reader who can understand puns in Greek and Latin, the cutting-edge disciplines of More's time. The most important of these puns is the name of the island: Utopia means "no place" (from the Greek *u-topos*), but also sounds like "good place" (*eu-topos*). The puns undercut the seeming solidity of Raphael Hythloday's account—named after an archangel, his last name means "peddler of nonsense," while a river is named Anyder, or "waterless." More presents us with a mirage, an island both elusive and exemplary, desirable and impossible.

Despite the geographical remove of the island it describes, *Utopia* hews very close to More's world, from its discussion of the privatization of public lands to its preoccupation with social justice to the many echoes of England in that other,fictional island. Yet the force of *Utopia* lies in its relevance beyond the English case. Extraordinarily influential for writers such as **Rabelais**, **Montaigne**, and **Shake speare**, the text also spawned a whole archipelago of ideal commonwealths and their dystopian counterparts, such as Francis Bacon's *The New Atlantis*

(1627) and George Orwell's *1984* (1949). *Utopia* also inspired actual communities in the New World, where European colonists tried to rule Indigenous peoples by the principles of More's playfully imagined society, as well as later European and American experiments in socialism.

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CONCERNING THE BEST STATE OF A COMMONWEALTH AND THE NEW ISLAND OF UTOPIA[1]

A Truly Golden Handbook No Less Beneficial Than Entertaining by the Most Distinguished and Eloquent Author THOMAS MORE Citizen and Undersheriff[2] of the Famous City of London

Footnotes

- Note 1:Translated by Robert M. Adams and George M. Logan. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:More was appointed Undersheriffof London in 1510. Sheriffs were legal officials charged with keeping the peace and enforcing royal justice. Return to reference 2

BOOK I

The most invincible king of England, Henry, the eighth of that name, a prince adorned with the royal virtues beyond any other, had recently some differences of no slight import with Charles, the most serene prince of Castille,[3] and sent me into Flanders as his spokesman to discuss and settle them. I was companion and associate to that incomparable man Cuthbert Tunstall, whom the king has recently created master of the rolls,[4] to everyone's great satisfaction. I will say nothing in praise of this man, not because I fear the judgment of a friend might be questioned, but because his integrity and learning are greater than I can describe and too well known everywhere to need my commendation—unless I would, according to the proverb, "light up the sun with a lantern."

Those appointed by the prince to deal with us, all excellent men, met us at Bruges by prearrangement. Their head and leader was the mayor of Bruges,[5] a most distinguished person. But their main speaker and guiding spirit was Georgius de Theimseke,[6] the provost of Cassel, a man eloquent by nature as well as by training, very learned in the law, and most skillful in diplomatic affairs through his ability and long practice. After we had met several times, certain points remained on which we could not come to agreement; so they adjourned the meetings and went to Brussels for some days to learn their prince's pleasure.

Meanwhile, since my business required it, I went to Antwerp. Of those who visited me while I was there, no one was more welcome than Peter Giles.[7] He was a native of Antwerp, a man of high reputation, already appointed to a good position and worthy of the very best: I hardly know whether the young man is Full p. C-228 more distinguished in learning or in character. Apart from being cultured, virtuous, and courteous to all, with his intimates he is so open-hearted,

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affectionate, loyal, and sincere that you would be hard-pressed tofind anywhere a man comparable to him in all the points of friendship. No one is more modest or more frank; none better combines simplicity with wisdom. His conversation is so pleasant, and so witty without malice, that the ardent desire I felt to see again my native country, my wife, and my children (from whom I had been separated more than four months) was much eased by his agreeable company and delightful talk.

One day after I had heard mass at Nôtre Dame, the most beautiful and most popular church in Antwerp, I was about to return to my quarters when I happened to see him talking with a stranger, a man of quite advanced years. The stranger had a sunburned face, a long beard, and a cloak hanging loosely from his shoulders; from his appearance and dress, I took him to be a ship's captain. When Peter saw me, he approached and greeted me. As I was about to return his greeting, he drew me aside, and, indicating the stranger, said, "Do you see that fellow? I was just on the point of bringing him to you."

"He would have been very welcome on your behalf," I answered.

"And on his own too, if you knew him," said Peter, "for there is no mortal alive today can tell you so much about unknown peoples and lands; and I know that you're always greedy for such information."

"In that case," said I, "my guess wasn't a bad one, for atfirst glance I supposed he was a skipper."

"Then you're far offthe mark," he replied, "for his sailing has not been like that of Palinurus,[8] but more that of Ulysses, or rather of Plato. This man, who is named Raphael—his family name is Hythloday[9] —knows a good deal of Latin, and is particularly learned in Greek. He studied Greek more than Latin because his main interest is philosophy, and in thatfield he found that the Romans have left us nothing very valuable except certain works of Seneca and Cicero.[1] Being eager to see the world, he left to his brothers the patrimony to which he was entitled at home (he is a native of Portugal) and took service with Amerigo Vespucci.[2] He was Vespucci's constant companion on the last three of his four voyages, accounts of which are now common reading everywhere; but on the last voyage, he did not return home with the commander. After much persuasion and expostulation he got Amerigo's permission to be one of the twenty-four men who were left in a fort at the farthest point of the last voyage.[3] Being marooned in this way was altogether agreeable to him, as he was more anxious to pursue his travels than afraid of death. He would often say, 'The man who has no grave is covered by the sky,' and 'The road to heaven is the Full p. C-229 same length from all places.' Yet this frame of mind would have cost him dear, if God had not been gracious to him. After Vespucci's departure, he traveled through many countries withfive companions from the garrison. At last, by strange good fortune, he got, via Ceylon, to Calicut,[4] where he opportunely found some Portuguese ships; and so, beyond anyone's expectation, he returned to his own country."

When Peter had told me this, I thanked him for his great kindness in wishing to introduce me to a man whose conversation he hoped I would enjoy, and then I turned to Raphael. After we had greeted each other and exchanged the usual civilities of strangers upon theirfirst meeting, we all went offto my house. There in the garden we sat down on a bench covered with turf, to talk together.

He told us that when Vespucci sailed away, he and his companions who had stayed behind in the fort often met with the people of the countryside, and by ingratiating speeches gradually won their friendship. Before long they came to dwell with them safely and even affectionately. The prince (I have forgotten his name and that of his country) also gave them his favor, furnishing Raphael and hisfive companions not only with ample provisions but with means for traveling—rafts when they went by water, wagons when they went by land. In addition, he sent with them a most trusty guide, who was to conduct them to other princes to whom he heartily recommended them. After many days' journey, he said, they came to towns and cities, and to commonwealths that were both very populous and not badly governed.

To be sure, under the equator and as far on both sides of the line as the sun moves, there lie vast empty deserts, scorched with perpetual heat. The whole region is desolate and squalid, grim and uncultivated, inhabited by wild beasts, serpents, and also by men no less wild and dangerous than the beasts themselves. But as you go on, conditions gradually grow milder. The sun is lessfierce, the earth greener, the creatures less savage. At last you reach people, cities, and towns which not only trade among themselves and with their neighbors but even carry on commerce by sea and land with remote countries. After that, he said, they were able to visit different lands in every direction, for he and his companions were welcome as passengers aboard any ship about to make a journey.

Thefirst vessels they saw wereflat-bottomed, he said, with sails made of stitched papyrus-reeds or wicker, or elsewhere of leather. Farther on, they found ships with pointed keels and canvas sails, in every respect like our own.The seamen were not unskilled in managing wind and water; but they were most grateful to him, Raphael said, for showing them the use of the compass, of which they had been ignorant. For that reason, they had formerly sailed with great timidity, and only in summer. Now they have such trust in the compass that they no longer fear winter at all, and tend to be overconfident rather than cautious. There is some danger that through their imprudence this device, which they thought would be so advantageous to them, may become the cause of much mischief.

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It would take too long to repeat all that Raphael told us he had observed in each place, nor would it make altogether for our present purpose. Perhaps on another occasion we shall tell more about the things that are most profitable, especially the wise and sensible institutions that he observed among the civilized nations. We asked him many eager questions about such things, and he answered us willingly enough. We made no inquiries, however, about monsters, for nothing is less new or strange than they are. Scyllas, ravenous Celaenos, man-eating Lestrygonians,[5] and that sort of monstrosity you can hardly avoid, but well and wisely trained citizens you will hardlyfind anywhere. While he told us of many ill-considered usages in these new-found nations, he also described quite a few other customs from which our own cities, nations, races, and kingdoms might take example in order to correct their errors. These I shall discuss in another place, as I said. Now I intend to relate only what he told us about the customs and institutions of the Utopians,first recounting the conversation that led him to speak of that commonwealth. Raphael had been talking very sagely about the faulty arrangements and also the wise institutions found in that hemisphere and this (many of both sorts in each), speaking as shrewdly about the manners and governments of each place he had visited as though he had lived there all his life. Peter was amazed.

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“My dear Raphael,” he said, “I’m surprised that you don’t enter some king’s service; for I don’t know of a single prince who wouldn’t be eager to employ you. Your learning and your knowledge of various countries and peoples would entertain him, while your advice and your supply of examples would be very helpful in the council chamber. Thus you might advance your own interests and be useful at the same time to all your relatives and friends.”

“I am not much concerned about my relatives and friends,” he replied, “because I consider that I have already done my duty by them. While still young and healthy, I distributed among my relatives and friends the possessions that most men do not part with till they are old and sick (and then only reluctantly, because they can no longer keep them). I think they should be content with this gift of mine, and not expect that for their sake I should enslave myself to any king whatever.”

“Well said,” Peter replied; “but I do not mean that you should be in servitude to any king, only in his service.”

“The difference is only a matter of one syllable,” said Raphael.

“All right,” said Peter, “but whatever you call it, I do not see any other way in which you can be so useful to your friends or to the general public, in addition to making yourself happier.”

“Happier indeed!” exclaimed Raphael. “Would a way of life so absolutely repellent to my spirit make my life happier? As it is now, I live as I please, and I fancy very few courtiers, however splendid, can say that. As a matter of fact, there are so many men soliciting favors from the powerful that it will be no great loss if they have to do without me and a couple of others like me.”

Then I said, “It is clear, my dear Raphael, that you seek neither wealth nor power, and indeed I value and revere a man of such a disposition as much as I do the mightiest persons in the world. Yet I think if you would devote your time Full p. C-231 and energy to public affairs, you would do a thing worthy of a generous and philosophical nature, even if you did not much like it. You could best perform such a service by joining the council of some great prince and inciting him to just and noble actions (as I’m sure you would): for a people’s welfare or miseryflows in a stream from their prince, as from a never-failing spring. Your learning is so full, even if it weren’t combined with experience, and your experience is so great, even apart from your learning, that you would be an extraordinary counselor to any king in the world.”

“You are twice mistaken, my dear More,” he replied, “first in me and then in the situation itself. I don’t have the capacity you ascribe to me, and if I had it in the highest degree, the public would still not be any better offif I exchanged my contemplative leisure for this kind of action. In thefirst place, most princes apply themselves to the arts of war, in which I have neither ability nor interest, instead of to the good arts of peace. They are generally more set on acquiring new kingdoms by hook or by crook than on governing well those they already have. Moreover, the counselors of kings are all so wise already that they need no advice from anyone else (or at least that’s the way they see it). At the same time, they approve and evenflatter the most absurd statements of favorites through whose influence they seek to stand well with the prince. It is only natural, of course, that each man should think his own opinions best: the crow loves hisfledgling, and the ape his cub.

“Now in a court composed of people who envy everyone else and admire only themselves, if a man should suggest something he had read of in other ages or seen in practice elsewhere, the other counselors would think their reputation for wisdom was endangered and they would look like simpletons, unless they couldfind fault with his proposal. If all else failed, they

would take refuge in some remark like this: ‘The way we’re doing it was good enough for our ancestors, and I only hope we’re as wise as they were.’ And with this deep thought they would take their seats, as though they had said the last word on the subject—implying, of course, that it would be a very dangerous matter if anyone were found to be wiser in any point than his ancestors were. As a matter of fact, we have no misgivings about neglecting the best examples they have left us; but if something better is proposed, we eagerly seize upon the excuse of reverence for times past and cling to it desperately. Such proud, obstinate, ridiculous judgments I have encountered many times, and once even in England.”

“What!” I said. “Were you ever in my country?”

“Yes,” he answered, “I spent several months there. It was not long after the revolt of the Cornishmen against the king had been put down, with the miserable slaughter of the rebels.[6] During my stay I was deeply beholden to the reverend father John Cardinal Morton,[7] archbishop of Canterbury, and in addition at that time lord chancellor of England. He was a man, my dear Peter (for More knows about him, and can tell what I’m going to say), as much respected for his wisdom and virtue as for his authority. He was of medium height, not bent over despite his years; his looks inspired respect rather than fear. In conversation, he Full p. C-232 was not forbidding, though serious and grave. When suitors came to him on business, he liked to test their spirit and presence of mind by speaking to them sharply, though not rudely. He liked to uncover these qualities, which were those of his own nature, as long as they were not carried to the point of effrontery; and he thought such men were best qualified to carry on business. His speech was polished and pointed; his knowledge of the law was great; he had an incomparable understanding and a prodigious memory, for he had improved extraordinary natural abilities by study and practice. At the time when I was in England, the king relied heavily on his advice, and he seemed the chief support of the nation as a whole. He had been taken from school to court when scarcely more than a boy, had devoted all his life to important business, and had acquired from weathering violent changes of fortune and many great perils a supply of practical wisdom, which is not soon lost when so purchased.

“One day when I was dining with him, there was present a layman, learned in the laws of your country, who for some reason took occasion to praise the rigid execution of justice then being practiced upon thieves. They were being executed everywhere, he said, with as many as twenty at a time being hanged on a single gallows. And then he declared that he could not understand how so many thieves sprang up everywhere, when so few of them escaped hanging. I ventured to speak freely before the cardinal, and said, ‘There is no need to wonder: this way of punishing thieves goes beyond the call of justice, and is not, in any case, for the public good. The penalty is too harsh in itself, yet it isn’t an effective deterrent. Simple theft is not so great a crime that it ought to cost a man his life, yet no punishment however severe can withhold those from robbery who have no other way to eat. In this matter not only you in England but a good part of the world seem to imitate bad schoolmasters, who would rather whip their pupils than teach them. Severe and terrible punishments are enacted against theft, when it would be much better to enable every man to earn his own living, instead of being driven to the awful necessity of stealing and then dying for it.’

“‘Oh, we’ve taken care of that,’ said the fellow. ‘There are the trades and there is farming, by which men may make a living unless they choose deliberately to be rogues.’

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"'Oh no you don't,' I said, 'you won't get out of it that way. We may disregard for the moment the cripples who come home from foreign and civil wars, as lately from the Cornish battle and before that from your wars with France. These men, who have lost limbs in the service of king and country, are too badly crippled to follow their old trades, and too old to learn new ones. But since wars occur only from time to time, let us, I say, disregard these men, and consider what happens every day. There are a great many noblemen who live idly like drones offthe labor of others, their tenants whom they bleed white by constantly raising their rents. (This is the only instance of their tightfistedness, because they are prodigal in everything else, ready to spend their way to the poorhouse.) These noblemen drag around with them a great train of idle servants, who have never learned any trade by which they could earn a living. As soon as their master dies, or they themselves fall ill, they are promptly turned out of doors, for lords would rather support idlers than invalids, and the son is often unable to maintain as big a household as his father had, at least atfirst. Those who are turned offsoon set about starving, unless they set about stealing. What else can they do? Then when a wandering life has left their health Full p. C-233 impaired and their clothes threadbare, when their faces look pinched and their garments tattered, men of rank will not care to engage them. And country people dare not do so, for they don't have to be told that one who has been raised softly to idle pleasures, who has been used to swaggering about with sword and buckler, is likely to look down on the whole neighborhood and despise everybody else as beneath him. Such a man can't be put to work with spade and mattock; he will not serve a poor man faithfully for scant wages and sparse diet.'

"'But we ought to encourage these men in particular,' said the lawyer. 'In case of war the strength and power of our army depend on them, because they have a bolder and nobler spirit than workmen and farmers have.'

"'You may as well say that thieves should be encouraged for the sake of wars,' I answered, 'since you will never lack for thieves as long as you have men like these. In fact thieves don't make bad soldiers, and soldiers turn out to be pretty good robbers—so nearly are these two ways of life related. But the custom of keeping too many retainers is not peculiar to this nation; it is common to almost all of them. France suffers from an even more grievous plague. Even in peacetime—if you can call it peace—the whole country is crowded with foreign mercenaries, imported on the same principle that you've given for your noblemen keeping idle servants. Wise fools think that the public safety depends on having ready a strong army, preferably of veteran soldiers. They think inexperienced men are not reliable, and they sometimes hunt out pretexts for war, just so they may have trained soldiers and experienced cutthroats—or, as Sallust neatly puts it, that "hand and spirit may not grow dull through lack of practice." But France has learned to her cost how pernicious it is to feed such beasts. The examples of the Romans, the Carthaginians, the Syrians, and many other peoples show the same thing; for not only their governments but theirfields and even their cities were ruined more than once by their own standing armies. Besides, this preparedness is unnecessary: not even the French soldiers, practiced in arms from their cradles, can boast of having often got the best of your raw recruits. I shall say no more on this point, lest I seem toflatter present company. At any rate, neither your town workmen nor your rough farm laborers—except for those whose physiques aren't suited for strength or boldness, or whose spirits have been cowed by inability to feed their families—seem to be much afraid offighting the idle attendants of noblemen. So you need not fear that retainers, once strong and vigorous (for that's the only

sort noblemen deign to corrupt), but now soft andflabby because of their idle, effeminate life, would be weakened if they were taught practical crafts to earn their living, and trained to manly labor. Anyway, I cannot think it's in the public interest to maintain for the emergency of war such a vast multitude of people who trouble and disturb the peace. You never have war unless you choose it, and peace is always more to be considered than war. Yet this is not the only circumstance that makes thieving necessary. There is another one, which, I believe, applies more especially to you Englishmen.'

"'What is that?' asked the cardinal.

"'Your sheep,' I replied, 'that used to be so meek and eat so little. Now they have become so greedy andfierce that they devour human beings themselves, as I hear. They devastate and depopulatefields, houses, and towns.[8] For in Full p. C-234 whatever parts of the land the sheep yield the softest and most expensive wool, there the nobility and gentry, yes, and even some abbots—holy men—are not content with the old rents that the land yielded to their predecessors. Living in idleness and luxury, without doing any good to society, no longer satisfies them; they have to do positive harm. For they leave no land free for the plow: they enclose every acre for pasture; they destroy houses and abolish towns, keeping only the churches, and those for sheepbarns. And as if enough of your land were not already wasted on woods and game-preserves, these worthy men turn all human habitations and cultivatedfields back to wilderness. Thus one greedy, insatiable glutton, a frightful plague to his native country, may enclose many thousand acres of land within a single hedge. The tenants are dismissed; some are stripped of their belongings by trickery or brute force, or, wearied by constant harassment, are driven to sell them. By hook or by crook these miserable people—men, women, husbands, wives, orphans, widows, parents with little children, whole families (poor but numerous, since farming requires many hands)—are forced to move out. They leave the only homes familiar to them, and they canfind no place to go. Since they cannot afford to wait for a buyer, they sell for a pittance all their household goods, which would not bring much in any case. When that little money is gone (and it's soon spent in wandering from place to place), what remains for them but to steal, and so be hanged—justly, you'd say!—or to wander and beg? And yet if they go tramping, they are jailed as idle vagrants. They would be glad to work, but they canfind no one who will hire them. There is no need for farm labor, in which they have been trained, when there is no land left to be planted. One herdsman or shepherd can look after aflock of beasts large enough to stock an area that would require many hands if it were plowed and harvested.

"'This enclosing has had the effect of raising the price of food in many places. In addition, the price of raw wool has risen so much that poor people who used to make cloth are no longer able to buy it, and so great numbers are forced from work to idleness. One reason is that after the enlarging of the pasture-land, a murrain killed a great number of sheep—as though God were punishing greed by sending a plague upon the animals, which in justice should have fallen on the owners! But even if the number of sheep should increase greatly, their price will not fall a penny. The reason is that the wool trade, though it can't be called a monopoly, because it isn't in the hands of one single person, is concentrated in few hands (an oligopoly, you might say), and these so rich that the owners are never pressed to sell until they have a mind to, and that is only when they can get their price.

"'For the same reason other kinds of livestock also are priced exorbitantly, the more so because with so many farmhouses being pulled down, and farming in a state of decay, there

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are not enough people to look after the breeding of animals. These rich men will not breed other animals as they do lambs, but buy them lean and cheap, fatten them in their own pastures, and then sell them at a high price. I don't think the full impact of this bad system has yet been felt. We know these dealers raise prices where the fattened animals are sold. But when, over a period of time, they keep buying beasts from other localities faster than they can be bred, then as the supply gradually diminishes where they are purchased, a severe shortage is bound to ensue. So your island, which seemed especially fortunate in this matter, will be ruined by the crass avarice of a few. Full p. C-235 For the high food prices cause everyone to dismiss as many retainers as he can from his household; and what, I ask, can these men do, but rob or beg? And a man of courage is more likely to steal than to cringe.

"'To make this hideous poverty and scarcity worse, they exist side by side with wanton luxury. Not only the servants of noblemen, but tradespeople, even some farmers, and people of every social rank are given to ostentatious dress and gluttonous greed. Look at the eating houses, the bawdy houses, and those other places just as bad, the wine bars and alehouses. Look at all the crooked games of chance, dice, cards, backgammon, tennis, bowling, and quoits, in which money slips away so fast. Don't all these lead their habitués straight to robbery? Banish these blights, make those who have ruined farmhouses and villages restore them, or hand them over to someone who will rebuild. Restrict the right of the rich to buy up anything and everything, and then to exercise a kind of monopoly. Let fewer people be brought up in idleness. Let agriculture be restored and the wool manufacture revived as an honest trade, so there will be useful work for the whole crowd of those now idle—whether those whom poverty has already made into thieves, or those whom vagabondage and habits of lazy service are converting, just as surely, into the robbers of the future.

"'If you do notfind a cure for these evils, it is futile to boast of your justice in punishing theft. Your policy may look superficially like justice, but in reality it is neither just nor practical. If you allow young folk to be abominably brought up and their characters corrupted, little by little, from childhood; and if then you punish them as grownups for committing crimes to which their early training has inclined them, what else is this, I ask, butfirst making them thieves and then punishing them for it?'

"As I was speaking thus, the lawyer had made ready his answer, choosing the usual style of disputants who are better at summing up than at replying, and who like to show offtheir memory. So he said to me, 'You have talked very well for a stranger, but you have heard about more things than you have been able to understand correctly. I will make the matter clear to you in a few words. First, I will summarize what you have said; then I will show how you have been misled by ignorance of our customs;finally, I will demolish all your arguments and reduce them to rubble. And so to begin where I promised, on four points you seemed to me—'

"'Hold your tongue,' said the cardinal, 'for you won't befinished in a few words, if this is the way you start. We will spare you the trouble of answering now, and reserve the pleasure of your reply till our next meeting, which will be tomorrow, if your affairs and Raphael's permit it. Meanwhile, my dear Raphael, I am eager to hear why you think theft should not be punished with death, or what other punishment you think would be more in the public interest. For I'm sure even you don't think it should go unpunished entirely. Even as it is, the fear of death does not restrain evildoers; once they were sure of their lives, as you propose, what force or fear could restrain them? They would look on a lighter penalty as an open invitation to commit more crimes—it would be like offering them a reward.'

"'It seems to me, most kind and reverend father,' I said, 'that it's altogether unjust to take someone's life for taking money. Nothing in the world that fortune can bestow is equal in value to a human life. If they say the thief suffers not for the money, but for violation of justice and transgression of laws, then Full p. C-236 this extreme justice should really be called extreme injury. We ought not to approve of thesefierce Manlian edicts[9] that invoke the sword for the smallest violations. Neither should we accept the Stoic view that considers all crimes equal, as if there were no difference between killing a man and taking a coin from him. If equity means anything, there is no proportion or relation at all between these two crimes. God has said, "Thou shalt not kill"; shall we kill so readily for the theft of a bit of small change? Perhaps it will be argued that God's commandment against killing does not apply where human law allows it. But then what prevents men from making other laws in the same way—perhaps even laws legalizing rape, adultery, and perjury? God has taken from each person the right not only to kill another, but even to kill himself. If mutual consent to human laws on manslaughter entitles men freely to exempt their agents from divine law and allows them to kill those condemned by human decrees where God has given no precedent, what is this but preferring the law of man to the law of God? The result will be that in every situation men will decide for themselves how far it suits them to observe the laws of God. The law of Moses was harsh and severe, as for an enslaved and stubborn people, but it punished theft with afine, not death.[1] Let us not think that in his new law of mercy, where he rules us with the tenderness of a father, God has given us greater license to be cruel to one another.

"'These are the reasons why I think it is wrong to put thieves to death. But surely everybody knows how absurd and even harmful to the public welfare it is to punish theft and murder alike. If theft carries the same penalty as murder, the thief will be encouraged to kill the victim whom otherwise he would only have robbed. When the punishment is the same, murder is safer, since one conceals both crimes by killing the witness. Thus while we try to terrify thieves with extreme cruelty, we really invite them to kill the innocent.

"'As for the usual question of what more suitable punishment can be found, in my judgment it would be much easier tofind a better one than a worse. Why should we question the value of the punishments long used by the Romans, who were most expert in the arts of government? They condemned those convicted of heinous crimes to work, shackled, for life, in stone quarries and mines. But of all the alternatives, I prefer the method which I observed in my Persian travels, among the people commonly called the Polylerites.[2] They are a sizable nation, not badly governed, free and subject only to their own laws, except that they pay annual tribute to the Persian king. Living far from the sea, they are nearly surrounded by mountains. Being contented with the products of their own land, which is by no means unfruitful, they do not visit other nations, nor are they much visited. According to their ancient customs, they do not try to enlarge their boundaries, and easily protect themselves behind their mountains by paying tribute to their overlord. Thus they have no wars and live in a comfortable rather than a showy manner, more contented than renowned or glorious. Indeed, I think they are hardly known by name to anyone but their next-door neighbors.

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"'In their land, whoever is found guilty of theft must make restitution to the owner, not (as elsewhere) to the prince; they think the prince has no more right to the stolen goods than the thief. If the stolen property has disappeared, its value is repaid from the thief's possessions.

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Whatever remains of those is handed over to his wife and children, while the thief himself is sentenced to hard labor.

"'Unless their crimes were compounded with atrocities, thieves are neither imprisoned nor shackled, but go freely and unconstrained about their work on public projects. If they shirk and do their jobs slackly, they are not chained, but they are whipped. If they work hard, they are treated without any indignities, except that at night after roll call they are locked up in their dormitories. Apart from constant work, they undergo no discomfort in living. As they work for the public good, they are decently fed out of the public stores, though arrangements vary from place to place. In some districts they are supported by alms. Unreliable as this support may seem, the Polylerites are so compassionate that no way is found more rewarding. In other places, public revenues are set aside for their support, or a special tax is levied on every individual for their use; and sometimes they do not do public work, but anyone in need of workmen can go to the market and hire some of them by the day at a set rate, a little less than that for free men. If they are lazy, it is lawful to whip them. Thus they never lack for work, and each one of them brings a little profit into the public treasury beyond the cost of his keep.

"'They are all dressed in clothes of the same distinctive color. Their hair is not shaved but trimmed close about the ears, and the tip of one ear is cut off. Their friends are allowed to give them food, drink, or clothing, as long as it is of the proper color; but to give them money is death, both to the giver and to the taker. It is just as serious a crime for any free man to take money from them for any reason whatever; and it is also a capital crime for any of these slaves (as the condemned are called) to carry weapons. In each district of the country they are required to wear a special badge. It is a capital crime to throw away the badge, to go beyond one's own district, or to talk with a slave of another district. Plotting escape is no more secure than escape itself: it is death for any other slave to know of a plot to escape, and slavery for a free man. On the other hand, there are rewards for informers—money for a free man, freedom for a slave, and for both of them pardon and amnesty. Thus it can never be safer for them to persist in an illicit scheme than to renounce it.

"'Such are their laws and policies in this matter. It is clear how mild and practical they are, for the aim of the punishment is to destroy vices and save men. The criminals are treated so that they become good of necessity, and for the rest of their lives they atone for the wrong they have done before. There is so little danger of relapse that travelers going from one part of the country to another think slaves the most reliable guides, changing them at the boundary of each district. The slaves have no means of committing robbery, since they are unarmed, and any money in their possession is evidence of a crime. If caught, they would be punished, and there is no hope of escape anywhere. Since every bit of a slave's clothing is unlike the usual clothing of the country, how could a slave escape, unless hefled naked? Even then his cropped ear would give him away. Might not the slaves form a conspiracy against the government? Perhaps. But the slaves of one district could hardly expect to succeed unless theyfirst involved in their plot the slave-gangs of many other districts. Full p. C-238 And that is impossible, since they are not allowed to meet or talk together or even to greet one another. No one would risk a plot when they all know joining is so dangerous to the participant and betrayal so profitable to the informer. Besides, no one is quite without hope of gaining his freedom eventually if he accepts his punishment in the spirit of obedience and patience, and gives promise of future good conduct. Indeed, every year some are pardoned as a reward for their submissive behavior.'

“When I hadfinished this account, I added that I saw no reason why this system could not be adopted even in England, and with much greater advantage than the ‘justice’ which my legal antagonist had praised so highly. But the lawyer replied that such a system could never be established in England without putting the commonwealth in serious peril. And so saying, he shook his head, made a wry face, and fell silent. And all the company sided with him.

“Then the cardinal remarked, ‘It is not easy to guess whether this scheme would work well or not, since nobody has yet tried it out. But perhaps when the death sentence has been passed on a thief, the king might reprieve him for a time without right of sanctuary,[3] and thus see how the plan worked. If it turned out well, then he might establish it by law; if not, he could execute immediate punishment on the man formerly condemned. This would be neither less nor more unjust than if the condemned man had been put to death at once, and the experiment would involve no risk. I think vagabonds too might be treated this way, for though we have passed many laws against them, they have had no real effect as yet.’

“When the cardinal had concluded, they all began praising enthusiastically ideas which they had received with contempt when I suggested them; and they particularly liked the idea about vagabonds, because it was the cardinal’s addition.

“I don’t know whether it is worthwhile telling what followed, because it was silly, but I’ll tell it anyhow, for there’s no harm in it, and it bears on our subject. There was a hanger-on standing around, who was so good at playing the fool that you could hardly tell him from the real thing. He was constantly making jokes, but so awkwardly that we laughed more at him than at them; yet sometimes a rather clever thing came out, confirming the old proverb that a man who throws the dice often will sooner or later make a lucky cast. One of the company happened to say that in my speech I had taken care of the thieves, and the cardinal had taken care of the vagabonds, so now all that was left to do was to take care of the poor whom sickness or old age had reduced to poverty and kept from earning a living.

“‘Leave that to me,’ said the fool, ‘and I’ll set it right at once. These are people I’m eager to get out of my sight, having been so often vexed with them and their woeful complaints. No matter how pitifully they beg for money, they’ve never whined a single penny out of my pocket. They can’t win with me: either I don’t want to give them anything, or I haven’t anything to give them. Now they’re getting wise; they know me so well, they don’t waste their breath, but let me pass without a word or a hope—no more, by heaven, than if I were a priest. But I would make a law sending all these beggars to Benedictine monasteries,[4] where the men could become lay brothers, as they’re called, and the women could be nuns.’

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“The cardinal smiled and passed it offas a joke; the rest took it seriously. But a certain friar, a theologian, took such pleasure in this jest at the expense of priests and monks that he too began to make merry, though generally he was grave to the point of sourness. ‘Even so, you will not get rid of the beggars,’ he began, ‘unless you take care of us friars too.’

“‘You have been taken care of already,’ retorted the fool. ‘The cardinal provided for you splendidly when he said vagabonds should be arrested and put to work, for you friars are the greatest vagabonds of all.’[5]

“When the company, watching the cardinal closely, saw that he admitted this jest like the other, they all took it up with vigor—except for the friar. He, as you can easily imagine, was stung by the vinegar, andflew into such a rage that he could not keep from abusing the fool. He

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called him a knave, a slanderer, a sneak, and a ‘son of perdition,’ quoting the meanwhile terrible denunciations from Holy Scripture. Now the joker began to jest in earnest, for he was clearly on his own ground.

“‘Don’t get angry, good friar,’ he said, ‘for it is written, “In your patience possess ye your souls.” ’[6]

“In reply, the friar said, and I quote his very words, ‘I am not angry, you gallows-bird, or at least I do not sin, for the psalmist says, “Be ye angry, and sin not.” ’[7]

“At this point the cardinal gently cautioned the friar to calm down, but he answered: ‘No, my lord, I speak only from righteous zeal, as I ought to. For holy men have had great zeal. That is why Scripture says, “the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up,” and we sing in church, “those who mocked Elisha as he went up to the house of God, felt the zeal of the baldhead,”[8] just as this mocker, this rascal, this guttersnipe may very well feel it.’

“‘Perhaps you mean well,’ said the cardinal, ‘but you would act in a holier, and certainly in a wiser way, if you didn’t set your wit against a fool’s wit and try to spar with a buffoon.’

“‘No, my lord,’ he replied, ‘I would not act more wisely. For Solomon himself, the wisest of men, said, “Answer a fool according to his folly,”[9] and that’s what I’m doing now. I am showing him the pit into which he will fall if he does not take care. For if the many mockers of Elisha, who was only one bald man, felt the effects of his zeal, how much more effect shall be felt by a single mocker of many friars, who include a great many baldheads! And besides, we have a papal bull, by which all who mock us are excommunicated.’

“When the cardinal saw there was no end to the matter, he nodded to the fool to leave, and turned the conversation to another subject. Soon after, he rose from table, and, going to hear petitioners, dismissed us.

“Look, my dear More, what a long story I have inflicted on you. I would be quite ashamed, if you had not yourself asked for it, and seemed to listen as if you did not want any part to be left out. Though I ought to have related this conversation more concisely, I did feel bound to recount it, so you might see how those who rejected what I said atfirst approved of it immediately afterward, when they saw the cardinal did not disapprove. In fact they went so far Full p. C-240 in theirflattery that they indulged and almost took seriously ideas that he tolerated only as the jesting of a fool. From this episode you can see how little courtiers would value me or my advice.”

To this I answered, “You have given me great pleasure, my dear Raphael, for everything you’ve said has been both wise and witty. As you spoke, I seemed to be a child and in my own native land once more, through the pleasant recollection of that cardinal in whose court I was brought up as a lad. Dear as you are to me on other accounts, you cannot imagine how much dearer you are because you honor his memory so highly. Still, my friend Raphael, I don’t give up my former opinion: I think if you could overcome your aversion to court life, your advice to a prince would be of the greatest advantage to the public welfare. This, after all, is the chief duty of every good man, including you. Your friend Plato thinks that commonwealths will become happy only when philosophers become kings or kings become philosophers.[1] No wonder we are so far from happiness, when philosophers do not condescend even to assist kings with their counsels.”

“They are not so ungracious,” Raphael replied, “but that they would gladly do it; in fact, they have already done it in a great many published books, if the rulers would only read their good advice. But doubtless Plato was right in foreseeing that unless kings became philosophical themselves, they would never take the advice of real philosophers, drenched as they are and infected with false values from boyhood on. Plato certainly had this experience with Dionysius of Syracuse.[2] If I proposed wise laws to some king, and tried to root out of his soul the seeds of evil and corruption, don’t you suppose I would be either banished forthwith, or treated with scorn?

“Imagine, if you will, that I am at the court of the king of France. Suppose I were sitting in his royal council, meeting in secret session with the king himself presiding, and all the cleverest councillors were hard at work devising a set of crafty machinations by which the king might keep hold of Milan, recover Naples, which has proved so slippery; then overthrow the Venetians and subdue all Italy;[3] next add Flanders, Brabant, and the whole of Burgundy to his realm, besides some other nations he has in mind to invade. One man urges him to make an alliance with the Venetians for just as long as the kingfinds it convenient—perhaps to develop a common strategy with them, and even allow them some of the loot, which can be recovered later when things work out according to plan. While one recommends hiring German mercenaries, his neighbor proposes paying the Swiss to stay neutral. A fourth voice suggests soothing the offended divinity of the emperor with an offering of gold. Still another, who is of a different mind, thinks a settlement should be made with the king of Aragon, and that, to cement the peace, he should be allowed to take Navarre from its proper ruler.[4] Meanwhile, someone suggests snaring the prince of Castille into a marriage alliance—afirst step would be to buy up some nobles of his court with secret pensions.

“The hardest problem of all is what to do about England. They all agree that peace should be made, and that the alliance, which is weak at best, should be Full p. C-241 strengthened as much as possible; but while the English are being treated as friends, they should also be suspected as enemies. And so the Scots must be kept in constant readiness, poised to attack the English in case they stir ever so little. Also a banished nobleman with some pretensions to the English throne must be secretly encouraged (there are treaties against doing it openly), and in this way pressure can be brought to bear on the English king, and a ruler kept in check who can’t really be trusted.

“Now in a meeting like this one, where so much is at stake, where so many brilliant men are competing to think up intricate strategies of war, what if an insignificant fellow like me were to get up and advise going on another tack entirely? Suppose I said the king should leave Italy alone and stay at home, because the single kingdom of France all by itself is almost too much for one man to govern well, and the king should not dream of adding others to it? Then imagine I told about the decrees of the Achorians,[5] who live offthe island of Utopia toward the southeast. Long ago, these people went to war to gain another realm for their king, who had inherited an ancient claim to it through marriage. When they had conquered it, they soon saw that keeping it was going to be as hard as getting it had been. The seeds of war were constantly sprouting, their new subjects were continually rebelling or being attacked by foreign invaders, the Achorians had to be constantly at war for them or against them, and they saw no hope of ever being able to disband their army. In the meantime, they were being heavily taxed, moneyflowed out of their kingdom, their blood was being shed for the advantage of others,

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and peace was no closer than it had ever been. The war corrupted their own citizens by encouraging lust for robbery and murder; and the laws fell into contempt because their king, distracted with the cares of two kingdoms, could give neither one his proper attention.

"When they saw that the list of these evils was endless, the Achorians took counsel together and very courteously offered their king his choice of keeping whichever of the two kingdoms he preferred, because he couldn't rule them both. They were too numerous a people, they said, to be ruled by half a king; and they added that a man would not even hire a muledriver, if he had to divide his services with somebody else. The worthy king was thus obliged to be content with his own realm and give his new one to a friend, who before long was driven out.

"Finally, suppose I told the French king's council that all this warmongering, by which so many different nations were kept in turmoil as a result of one man's connivings, would exhaust his treasury and demoralize his people, and yet in the end come to nothing, through some mishap or other. And therefore he should look after his ancestral kingdom, improve it as much as he could, cultivate it in every conceivable way. He should love his people and be loved by them; he should live among them, govern them kindly, and let other kingdoms alone, since his own is big enough, if not too big, for him. How do you think, my dear More, the other councillors would take this speech of mine?"

"Not very well, I'm sure," said I.

"Well, let's go on," he said. "Suppose the councillors of some other king are discussing various schemes for raising money tofill his treasury. One man Full p. C-242 recommends increasing the value of money when the king pays his debts and devaluing it when he collects his revenues. Thus he can discharge a huge debt with a small payment, and collect a large sum when only a small one is due him. Another suggests a make-believe war, so that money can be raised under pretext of carrying it on; then, when the money is in, he can conclude a ceremonious peace treaty—which the deluded common people will attribute to the piety of their prince and his careful compassion for the lives of his subjects. Another councillor calls to mind some old motheaten laws, antiquated by long disuse, which no one remembers being made and consequently everyone has transgressed. By imposingfines for breaking these laws, the king will get great sums of money, as well as credit for upholding law and order, since the whole procedure can be made to look like justice. Another recommendation is that he forbid under particularly heavyfines a lot of practices that are contrary to the public interest; afterward, he can dispense with his own rules for large sums of money. Thus he pleases the people and makes a double profit, one from the heavyfines imposed on lawbreakers, and the other from selling dispensations. Meanwhile he seems careful of his people's welfare, since it is plain he will not allow private citizens to do anything contrary to the public interest, except for a huge price.

"Another councillor proposes that he work on the judges so that they will decide every case in favor of the king. They should be summoned to court often, and invited to debate his affairs in the royal presence. However unjust his claims, one or another of the judges, whether from love of contradiction, or desire to seem original, or simply to serve his own interest, will be bound tofind some way of twisting the law in the king's favor. If the judges can be brought to differ, then the clearest matter in the world will be obscured, and the truth itself brought into question. The king is given leverage to interpret the law as he will, and everyone else will acquiesce from shame or fear. The judges will have no hesitation about supporting the royal interest, for there are always plenty of pretexts for giving judgment in favor of the king. Either

equity is on his side, or the letter of the law happens to make for him, or the words of the law can be twisted into obscurity—or, if all else fails, he can appeal above the law to the royal prerogative, which is a never-failing argument with judges who know their 'duty.'

"Then all the councillors agree with the famous maxim of Crassus:[6] a king can never have too much gold, because he must maintain an army. Further, that a king, even if he wants to, can do no wrong, for all property belongs to the king, and so do his subjects themselves; a man owns nothing but what the king, in his goodness, seesfit to leave him. The king should in fact leave his subjects as little as possible, because his own safety depends on keeping them from growing insolent with wealth and freedom. For riches and liberty make people less patient to endure harsh and unjust commands, whereas meager poverty blunts their spirits, makes them docile, and grinds out of the oppressed the lofty spirit of rebellion.

"Now at this point, suppose I were to get up again and declare that all these counsels are both dishonorable and ruinous to the king? Suppose I said his Full p. C-243 honor and his safety alike rest on the people's resources rather than his own? Suppose I said that the people choose a king for their own sake, not for his, so that by his efforts and troubles they may live in comfort and safety? This is why, I would say, it is the king's duty to take more care of his people's welfare than of his own, just as it is the duty of a shepherd who cares about his job to feed his sheep rather than himself.

"They are absolutely wrong when they say that the people's poverty safeguards public peace—experience shows the contrary. Where will youfind more squabbling than among beggars? Who is more eager for revolution than the man who is most discontented with his present position? Who is more reckless about creating disorder than the man who knows he has nothing to lose and thinks he may have something to gain? If a king is so hated or despised by his subjects that he can rule them only by mistreatment, plundering, confiscation, and pauperization of his people, then he'd do much better to abdicate his throne—for under these circumstances, though he keeps the name of authority, he loses all the majesty of a king. A king has no dignity when he exercises authority over beggars, only when he rules over prosperous and happy subjects. This was certainly what that noble and lofty spirit Fabricius meant when he said he would rather be a ruler of rich men than be rich himself.

"A solitary ruler who enjoys a life of pleasure and self-indulgence while all about him are grieving and groaning is acting like a jailer, not a king. Just as an incompetent doctor can cure his patient of one disease only by throwing him into another, so it's an incompetent king who can rule his people only by depriving them of all life's pleasures. Such a king openly confesses that he does not know how to rule free men.

"A king of this stamp should correct his own sloth or arrogance, because these are the vices that cause people to hate or despise him. Let him live on his own income without wronging others, and limit his spending to his income. Let him curb crime, and by wise training of his subjects keep them from misbehavior, instead of letting it breed and then punishing it. Let him not suddenly revive antiquated laws, especially if they have been long forgotten and never missed. And let him never take money as afine when a judge would regard an ordinary subject as a low fraud for claiming it.

"Suppose I should then describe for them the law of the Macarians,[7] a people who also live not far from Utopia? On the day that their kingfirst assumes office, he must take an oath confirmed by solemn ceremonies that he will never have in his treasury at any one time more

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than a thousand pounds in gold, or its equivalent in silver. They say this law was made by an excellent king, who cared more for his country's prosperity than for his own wealth; he established it as a barrier against any king heaping up so much money as to impoverish his people. He thought this sum would enable the king to put down rebellions or repel hostile invasions, but would not tempt him into aggressive adventures. His law was aimed chiefly at keeping the king in check, but he also wanted to ensure an ample supply of money for the daily business transactions of the citizens. Besides, a king who has to distribute all his excess money to the people will not be much disposed to seek out opportunities for extortion. Such a king will be both a terror to evildoers and beloved by the good.—Now, don't Full p. C-244 you suppose if I set such ideas before men strongly inclined to the contrary, they would turn deaf ears to me?"

"Stone deaf, indeed, there's no doubt about it," I said, "and no wonder! To tell you the truth, I don't think you should offer advice or thrust on people ideas of this sort, that you know will not be listened to. What good can it do? When your listeners are already prepossessed against you andfirmly convinced of opposite opinions, how can you win over their minds with such out-of-the-way speeches? This academic philosophy is quite agreeable in the private conversation of close friends, but in the councils of kings, where grave matters are being authoritatively decided, there is no place for it."

"That is just what I was saying," Raphael replied. "There is no place for philosophy in the councils of kings."

"Yes, there is," I said, "but not for this school philosophy which supposes that every topic is suitable for every occasion. There is another philosophy that is better suited for political action, that takes its cue, adapts itself to the drama in hand, and acts its part neatly and appropriately. This is the philosophy for you to use. Otherwise, when a comedy of Plautus is being played, and the household slaves are cracking trivial jokes together, you propose to come on stage in the garb of a philosopher and repeat Seneca's speech to Nero from the *Octavia* .[8] Wouldn't it be better to take a silent role than to say something wholly inappropriate, and thus turn the play into a tragicomedy? You pervert and ruin a play when you add irrelevant speeches, even if they are better than the original. So go through with the drama in hand as best you can, and don't spoil it all simply because you happen to think of a play by someone else that would be better.

"That's how things go in the commonwealth, and in the councils of princes. If you cannot pluck up bad ideas by the root, if you cannot cure long-standing evils as completely as you would like, you must not therefore abandon the commonwealth. Don't give up the ship in a storm because you cannot hold back the winds. And don't force strange ideas on people who you know have set their minds on a different course from yours. You must strive to influence policy indirectly, handle the situation tactfully, and thus what you cannot turn to good, you may at least make as little bad as possible. For it is impossible to make everything good unless you make all men good, and that I don't expect to see for a long time to come."

"The only result of this," he answered, "will be that while I try to cure others of madness, I'll be raving along with them myself. If I am to speak the truth, I will simply have to talk in the way I have described. For all I know, it may be the business of a philosopher to tell lies, but it certainly isn't mine. Though my advice may be repugnant and irksome to the king's councillors, I don't see why they should consider it eccentric to the point of folly. What if I told them the kind of thing that Plato advocates in his republic, or that the Utopians actually

practice in theirs? However superior those institutions might be (and as a matter of fact they are), yet here they would seem inappropriate, because private property is the rule here, and there all things are held in common.

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"People who have made up their minds to rush headlong down the opposite road are never pleased with someone who calls them back and tells them they are on the wrong course. But, apart from that, what did I say that could not and should not be said anywhere and everywhere? If we dismiss as out of the question and absurd everything which the perverse customs of men have made to seem alien to us, we shall have to set aside most of the commandments of Christ, even in a community of Christians. Yet he forbade us to dissemble them, and even ordered that what he had whispered to his disciples should be preached openly from the housetops. Most of his teachings differ more radically from the common customs of mankind than my discourse did. But preachers, like the crafty fellows they are, have found that people would rather not change their lives to conform to Christ's rule, and so, just as you suggest, they have accommodated his teaching to the way people live, as if it were a leaden yardstick.[9] At least in that manner they can get the two things to correspond in some way or other. The only real thing they accomplish that I can see is to make people feel more secure about doing evil.

"And this is all that I could accomplish in the councils of princes. For either I would have different ideas from the others, and that would come to the same thing as having no ideas at all, or else I would agree with them, and that, as Mitio says in Terence, would merely confirm them in their madness.[1] When you say I should 'influence policy indirectly,' I simply don't know what you mean; remember, you said I should try hard to handle the situation tactfully, and what can't be made good I should try to make as little bad as possible. In a council, there is no way to dissemble, no way to shut your eyes to things. You must openly approve the worst proposals, and consent to the most vicious policies. A man who went along only halfheartedly even with the worst decisions would immediately get himself a name as a spy and perhaps a traitor. How can one individual do any good when he is surrounded by colleagues who would more readily corrupt the best of men than do any reforming of themselves? Either they will seduce you by their evil ways or, if you keep yourself honest and innocent, you will be made a screen for the knavery and folly of others. Influencing policy indirectly! You wouldn't have a chance.

"This is why Plato in a veryfine comparison declares that wise men are right in keeping clear of public business. They see the people swarming through the streets and getting soaked with rain, and they cannot persuade them to go indoors and get out of the wet. They know if they go out themselves, they can do no good but only get drenched with the rest. So they stay indoors and are content to keep at least themselves dry, since they cannot remedy the folly of others.

"But as a matter of fact, my dear More, to tell you what I really think, as long as you have private property, and as long as money is the measure of all things, it is scarcely ever possible for a commonwealth to be just or happy. For justice cannot exist where all the best things in life are held by the worst people; nor can anyone be happy where property is limited to a few, since even those few are always uneasy, and the many are utterly wretched.

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“So I reflect on the wonderfully wise and sacred institutions of the Utopians, who are so well governed with so few laws. Among them virtue has its reward, yet everything is shared equally, and everyone lives in plenty. I contrast them with the many other nations, which are constantly passing new ordinances and yet can never order their affairs satisfactorily. In these other nations, whatever a man can get he calls his own private property; but all the mass of laws old and new don’t enable him to secure his own, or defend it, or even distinguish it from someone else’s property—as is shown by innumerable and interminable lawsuits, fresh ones every day. When I consider all these things, I become more sympathetic to Plato and do not wonder that he declined to make laws for any people who refused to share their goods equally.[2] Wisest of men, he saw easily that the one and only road to the welfare of all lies through the absolute equality of goods. I doubt whether such equality can ever be achieved where property belongs to individuals. However abundant goods may be, when everyone tries to get as much as he can for his own exclusive use, a handful of men end up sharing the whole pile, and the rest are left in poverty. The result generally is two sorts of people whose fortunes ought to be interchanged: the rich are rapacious, wicked, and useless, while the poor are unassuming, modest men who work hard, more for the benefit of the public than of themselves.

“Thus I am wholly convinced that unless private property is entirely done away with, there can be no fair or just distribution of goods, nor can the business of mortals be happily conducted. As long as private property remains, by far the largest and the best part of the human race will be oppressed by a heavy and inescapable burden of cares and anxieties. This load, I admit, may be lightened to some extent, but I maintain it cannot be entirely removed. Laws might be made that no one should own more than a certain amount of land or receive more than a certain income. Or laws might be passed to prevent the prince from becoming too powerful and the populace too unruly. It might be made unlawful for public offices to be solicited, or put up for sale, or made burdensome for the officeholder by great expense. Otherwise, officials are tempted to get their money back by fraud or extortion, and only rich men can afford to accept positions which ought to be held by the wise. Laws of this sort, I agree, may have as much effect as poultices continually applied to sick bodies that are past cure. The social evils I mentioned may be alleviated and their effects mitigated for a while, but so long as private property remains, there is no hope at all of effecting a cure and restoring society to good health. While you try to cure one part, you aggravate the disease in other parts. Suppressing one symptom causes another to break out, since you cannot give something to one person without taking it away from someone else.”

“But I don’t see it that way,” I replied. “It seems to me that people cannot possibly live well where all things are in common. How can there be plenty of commodities where every man stops working? The hope of gain will not spur him on; he will rely on others, and become lazy. If men are driven by need, and yet cannot legally protect what they have gained, what can follow but continual bloodshed and turmoil, especially when respect for magistrates and their Full p. C-247 authority has been lost? I for one cannot conceive of authority existing among men who are equal to one another in every respect.”[3]

“I’m not surprised,” said Raphael, “that you think of it this way, since you have no idea, or only a false idea, of such a commonwealth. But you should have been with me in Utopia, and seen with your own eyes their manners and customs as I did—for I lived there more thanfive years, and would never have left, if it had not been to make that new world known to others. If

you had seen them, you would frankly confess that you had never seen a people well governed anywhere but there."

"You will have a hard time persuading me," said Peter Giles, "that people in that new land are better governed than in the world we know. Our minds are not inferior to theirs, and our governments, I believe, are older. Long experience has helped us develop many conveniences of life, and by good luck we have discovered many other things which human ingenuity could never have hit upon."

"As for the relative ages of the governments," Raphael replied, "you might judge more accurately if you had read their histories. If we believe these records, they had cities before there were even people here. What ingenuity has discovered or chance hit upon could have turned up just as well in one place as the other. For the rest, I believe that even if we surpass them in natural intelligence, they leave us far behind in their diligence and zeal to learn.

"According to their chronicles, they had heard nothing of ultraequatorials (that's their name for us) until we arrived, except that once, some twelve hundred years ago, a ship which a storm had blown toward Utopia was wrecked on their island. Some Romans and Egyptians were cast ashore, and never departed. Now note how the Utopians profited, through their diligence, from this one chance event. They learned every single useful art of the Roman empire either directly from their guests or indirectly from hints and surmises on which they based their own investigations. What benefits from the mere fact that on a single occasion some Europeans landed there! If a similar accident has hitherto brought anyone here from their land, the incident has been completely forgotten, as it will perhaps be forgotten in time to come that I was ever in their country. From one such accident they made themselves masters of all our useful inventions, but I suspect it will be a long time before we accept any of their institutions which are better than ours. This willingness to learn is, I think, the really important reason for their being better governed and living more happily than we do, though we are not inferior to them in brains or resources."

"Then let me implore you, my dear Raphael," said I, "to describe that island to us. Do not try to be brief, but explain in order everything relating to their land, their rivers, towns, people, manners, institutions, laws—everything, in short, that you think we would like to know. And you can take it for granted that we want to know everything that we don't know yet."

"There's nothing I'd rather do," he replied, "for these things are fresh in my mind. But it will take quite some time."

"In that case," I said, "let'sfirst go to lunch. Afterward, we shall have all the time we want."

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"Agreed," he said. So we went in and had lunch. Then we came back to the same spot, and sat down on the bench. I ordered my servants to take care that no one should interrupt us. Peter Giles and I urged Raphael to keep his promise. When he saw that we were attentive and eager to hear him, he sat silent and thoughtful a moment, and then began as follows.

Footnotes

- Note 3:Future Holy Roman Emperor Charles V (Charles I of Spain). The dispute was over Dutch import duties. Return to reference 3

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- Note 4:Scholar and cleric appointed ambassador to Brussels in 1515. The Master of the Rolls was responsible for keeping legal records but also held judicial functions. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:Bruges was an important manufacturing center for English wool in the Low Countries. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:Chief magistrate of a small town in what is today northeastern France. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:A pupil of Erasmus, the humanist Peter Giles (c. 1486–1533) was town clerk of Antwerp (an important international trading center in the Low Countries), as well as a poet and Latin editor. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:In the *Aeneid*, the pilot who fell asleep at the ship's wheel and drowned. In contrast, the hero Ulysses (Odysseus) represents the man who learns from traveling, while the philosopher Plato travels to learn. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:From the Greek *huthlos*, "nonsense" and *daien*, "to distribute," Hythloday means roughly "peddler of nonsense." "Raphael": the most sociable of the biblical archangels. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:Cicero (106–43 B.C.E.): statesman and philosopher. Seneca (3 B.C.E.–65 C.E.): Stoic philosopher, statesman, and dramatist. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Amerigo Vespucci (1454–1512): Italian explorer and cartographer after whom the Americas are named. His last two voyages were made for the King of Portugal. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:In Cape Frio, north of Rio de Janeiro in Brazil. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:Ceylon (Sri Lanka) and Calicut, in southern India, were both major trading posts for spices, reached by Portuguese explorers at the turn of the 16th century. Roughly 15,000 miles separate them from Brazil. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:Monsters from classical mythology. Scylla and the Lestrygonians appear in the *Odyssey* (books 12 and 10, respectively), while Celaeno tortures Aeneas and his men in *Aeneid* 3. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:1497 Cornish revolt against taxation, violently suppressed. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:A distinguished cleric and statesman. As a child More had served as a page in his household, as part of his education. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:As the English wool trade prospered, public lands on which peasants had farmed and lived were gradually enclosed (i.e., privatized) and dedicated to sheep-rearing. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:The Roman consul Manlius (4th century B.C.E.) was proverbial for his strictness. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:Exodus 22 in the Old Testament gives various penalties for theft, but never death. England was supposedly operating under the gentler "new law" of Christ. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:From the Greek *polus* and *leiros*, "much nonsense." Return to reference 2
- Note 3:In certain cases, criminals could seek refuge from the law in a church. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:Benedictines were a very strict monastic order. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:Friars, unlike monks, did not live in a cloister. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:Luke 21.19. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:Psalms 4.4. Return to reference 7

- Note 8:Psalms 69.9. In Kings 2.23, the children who mock the prophet Elijah are eaten by bears. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:Proverbs 26.5. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:Plato's *Republic*, like *Utopia,* imagines an ideal commonwealth. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Plato tried in vain to tutor the young ruler. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:In this period, France, like Spain, attempted to gain control of Italy. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:The mountain kingdom of Navarre had long been fought over by Spain and France. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:From the Greek, *a* ("without") and *chora* ("place"): "people from nowhere." Return to reference 5
- Note 6:A rich Roman general and statesman. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:From the Greek *makarios*, "fortunate." Return to reference 7
- Note 8:The Roman playwright Plautus wrote comedies, while the tragedian and philosopher Seneca is associated with high seriousness. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:Aflexible yardstick in ancient building, often used as a metaphor forflexible moral standards. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:In a play by the Roman writer Terence, the enslaved man Mitio claims that listening to his mad master will make him equally crazy. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Asked to legislate for a new city, Plato refused to do so unless property would be held in common. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:These objections are adapted from Aristotle's *Politics*, in which Aristotle challenges Plato's claims that common property solves social problems. Return to reference 3

BOOK II

[*The Geography of Utopia*]

Footnotes

- Note 1:A mysterious name from Gnostic cosmology. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Dark city (Greek). Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Head of a tribe (Greek). Return to reference 3
- Note 4:Waterless (Greek). Return to reference 4
- Note 5:Neither *syphogrant* nor *tranibor* have any clear meaning or etymology. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:The fear of conspiracy may explain the severity of the prohibition. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:Renaissance universities held lectures at dawn, or even earlier. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:Without people (Greek). "Barzanes": the name of a Persian governor in the age of Alexander the Great (4th century B.C.E.). Return to reference 8

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- Note 9:The doctrine of *res nullius* (“that which belongs to nobody,” Latin) was frequently invoked by English colonizers in Ireland and in North America to claim lands used by nomadic peoples. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:Windy people (Greek). Return to reference 1
- Note 2:As a humanist, More mocks scholasticism’s formalism and abstraction. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:A scholastic textbook. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:The Utopians owe much to Epicureanism, which advocated seeking simple pleasures and limiting one’s desires to live in a state of tranquility. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:Hythloday’s traveling library is a compendium of Renaissance knowledge. Humanists revered Plato and Aristotle as the basis of Greek thought. Theophrastus was a student of Aristotle’s whose botanical works influenced medieval science. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:Dioscorides (1st century C.E.) wrote on drugs and herbs; Lascaris and Theodorus wrote Renaissance dictionaries of Greek. Hesychius (5th century C.E.) wrote on Greek dialects. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:Lucian (c. 125–180 C.E.): Assyrian satirist who wrote in Greek. Plutarch (46–120 C.E.): Greek historian and moralist. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:Aldus Manutius’s press, founded in Venice in the late 15th century,first printed Greek texts in Greek and was admired for its book design. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:A canon of the classics rediscovered by the Renaissance, many newly edited and published in More’s time. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:Trica and Apina were tiny Roman towns, symbolizing insignificance; thus “Tricius Apinatus”: Mr. Nobody. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Hippocrates (5th century B.C.E.) and Galen (2nd century C.E.): medical authorities of the classical world. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:The maiden name of More’sfirst wife was Jane Colt. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:A marked contrast with the English system of common law, in which More was trained, and which is determined by precedents. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:The irony here is compounded by the fact that Renaissance popes, much like other rulers of the time, routinely violated treaties. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:“People born of the clouds” vs. “People of a country without people.” Return to reference 6
- Note 7:“Busy sellers.” The best-known mercenaries of the time were the Swiss. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:Venetian ducats became an international currency in the 16th century. Although difficult to measure precisely, this is an enormous sum of money. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:The spirit of light and truth in ancient Zoroastrian cosmology, in what is today Iran. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:This practice is described in Acts 2.44–45 and 4.32–35, and echoed in many monastic orders. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:These views, which even the tolerant Utopians seem unable to contemplate, appear in the Epicurean philosopher Lucretius’s (99–55 B.C.E.) *On the Nature of Things.* Return to reference 2
- Note 3:In ancient Greece, followers of Pythagoras believed in the transmigration of souls into other animals. Return to reference 3

- Note 4:Turning day (Greek). “Cynemern”: dog-day (Greek). Return to reference 4
- Note 5:A smallfish that attaches itself to the underbelly of largerfish or the hulls of ships. Return to reference 5

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FRAN Ç OIS RABELAIS ca. 1495–1553

Rabelais created a distinctive blend of broad, lusty humor, so influential that it took his name: to this day, we call that blend of high and low, elegant and grotesque, erudite and physical *Rabelaisian* . A learned humanist, he was also a most serious critic of the intellectual foibles of his time.

LIFE AND TIMES

Rabelais, the son of a successful lawyer, was born around 1495 in the province of Touraine. He trained as a Franciscan monk and priest, gained proficiency in Greek, and came to the attention of Guillaume Budé, secretary to the king of France, as a promising young scholar. Rabelais quickly came up against the conservative, anti-humanist forces of the Sorbonne—the theologians of the University of Paris—who banned the study of Greek and confiscated his books. He immortalized his hatred of the Sorbonne, which in future years would condemn with depressing regularity each of his books as they appeared, in his grotesque inventory of “sophistes, Sorbillans, Sorbonagres, Sorbonigènes, Sorbonicoles, Sorboniformes, Sorbonisecques, Niborcisans, Borsonisans, Saniborsans. . . .” Exposed to accusations of heresy and Protestant leanings, Rabelais relied on powerful patrons in the court to defend him. Around 1527 Rabelais decided to give up his monk’s habit and pursue a career in medicine, and by 1532 he was a successful physician practicing in Lyon.

Under the pseudonym Alcofribas Nasier (an anagram of his name), Rabelais published a series offlamboyant books on the giant Gargantua, a traditional French folk hero, and his son Pantagruel. Rabelais’s giant humanist was a timely and sensitive invention: he satirized the Roman Catholic Church by contrasting its fossilized learning with the excellence of a humanist education, which Gargantua himself experiences and then insists on for his son. Rabelais’s books were condemned by the Sorbonne, which outlawed their sale or possession, so that he was forced to appeal personally to the king for permission to publish. His work coincided with heightened protests by Protestants in Paris and their subsequent persecution, leading Rabelaisfirst into temporary hiding andfinally, in fear of execution, to his renunciation of Protestantism.

GARGANTUA AND PANTAGRUEL

Rabelais masterfully mixed high and low, mind and body. In the passages below, wefirst encounter the young Gargantua, who has (unsurprisingly) failed to thrive under his old-fashioned teacher Blowhard Birdbrain. His father has decided to secure for him a more modern education, according to humanist principles, under master Powerbrain. To get his giant to Paris, where the education is to take place, Rabelais takes a detour into fable, interjecting the story of the great mare that carried Gargantua while shaping the landscape of

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Beauce and giving it its name. In Paris, Powerbrain looks on in dismay as Gargantua goes through the motions of everything humanists loved to hate: too much sleeping and eating, rote mumbling through religious observation, and much more praying that studying. Full p. C-291 Gradually, his teacher sets Gargantua on the right track, offering the reader a model of humanist principles, as strict in their way as the rule of a monastic order, but characterized by careful reasoning. Proper care for the body accompanies the study of Greek and Latin; being in the world—whether gathering plants, studying the stars, or visiting artisans—is just as important as learning from books.

After the well-educated Gargantua and his friends manage to resist a would-be conqueror, they found a city that will cultivate the values for which they fought. They establish a community that affirms pacifist, liberal, humanistic values and name it the Abbey of Thélème, derived from *thélema*, the Greek word for "will" or "desire." Rabelais's abbey is not a completely imagined world, but a fantasy *negating* undesirable aspects of social reality in Europe. The abbey's rules forbid men to live without women, and vice versa; ban clocks; and decree that all can come and go as they wish. Moreover, since monks and nuns usually took vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience, in Thélème all inhabitants can marry with honor, be rich, and live wherever they want. On the great gate of Thélème, the architects inscribed a poem about Christian life, restored to its pristine state: hypocrites, bigots, liars, frauds, lawyers, and judges are cordially asked to stay away, while "Sportsmen, lovers, friends," who know and love the holy Word of God, are joyfully welcomed within the abbey's walls. The abbey is populated with beautiful, intelligent, and learned youths who dress, converse, play games, value communal harmony, and relish the goal of married, sexual love. Blissful unions lay the foundation of an equally harmonious society—one based on consent and the exercise of liberties.

Few works in the Renaissance are as artistically and intellectually expansive as Rabelais's *Gargantua and Pantagruel* . The books are outrageous and serious, entertaining and thought-provoking. These qualities have continued to intrigue, and sometimes repel, subsequent writers. Laurence Sterne paid tribute to Rabelais's unruly spirit in his satirical novel *Tristram Shandy* (1759–67), while James Joyce admired his combination of learning and raucous humor. When the Japanese writer Kenzaburo Oe was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1994, he paid tribute to Rabelais, who had recently been translated into Japanese, summarizing what made this distant predecessor so special as "the correspondence between the cosmic, social, and physical elements; the overlapping of death and passions for rebirth; and the laughter that subverts hierarchical relationships." Rabelais's laughter,first heard in the age of Renaissance humanism, has continued to echo ever more widely through the ages, offering rollicking humor and biting satire to readers across the globe.

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F ROM G ARGANTUA AND P ANTAGRUEL[1]

Footnotes

- Note 1:Translated by Burton Raffel. Return to reference 1

[Education of a Giant Humanist]

BOOK I, CHAPTER 15

How Gargantua Got to Study with Other Teachers

By that point his father could see that although he was studying as hard as he could, and spending all his time at it, he didn't seem to be learning much and, what's worse, he was becoming distinctly stupid, a real simpleton, all wishy-washy and driveling.

When he complained of this to Don Philippe des Marais, viceroy of Papeligosse,[2] he was told that it would be better for Gargantua to learn nothing at all than to study such books with such teachers, whose learning was nothing but stupidity and whose wisdom was nothing but gloves with no hands in them—empty. They were specialists in ruining good and noble spirits and nipping theflowering of youth in the bud.

"To show you what I mean," he said, "take some modern youngster, who has only been studying for two years. If he doesn't show better judgment, better use of words, better ability to analyze and discuss than your son, as well as greater ease and courtesy in dealing with the world, then call me a fat-head from Brenne."

Grandgousier[3] was delighted and told him to do exactly that.

That night, at supper, des Marais introduced one of his young pages, a young fellow named Rightway (in Greek, Eudemon), who was from Villegongis, near Saint-Genou. And he was so well-groomed, so beautifully dressed, so clean and neat in every respect, so courteous in his bearing, that he more nearly resembled a little angel than a human being. And des Marais said to Grandgousier:

"See this child? He's only twelve years old. Shall we see, if you care to, what a difference there is between the learning of your bird-chirping old philosophers and modern youngsters like this?"

Grandgousier liked the idea, and told the page to give them a demonstration of what he knew. Then Rightway, after asking his master's permission to proceed, stood on his feet, his hat in his hands, his face open, his lips red, his eyes confident, his glancefixed on Gargantua with a modesty appropriate to his age, and began both to praise and to glorify Grandgousier's son,first for his virtue and his good manners, second for his knowledge, third for his nobility, fourth for his physical beauty, and then,fifth, sweetly urged him always to honor his father, who had taken such pains to have him well brought up,finally begging Gargantua to consider Master Rightway the most insignificant of his servants, for the boy asked no other gift from the heavens but the grace of pleasing Gargantua by some cheerfully rendered service. And all of this was spoken with such extraordinarily tactful gestures, with a pronunciation so clear, a voice so Full p. C-293 eloquent, and in language so elegant and such good Latin, that he more nearly resembled a kind of ancient Gracchus, or Cicero, or Ennius[4] than a young person of his own time.

But all Gargantua could do was weep like a cow. He hid his face behind his hat, and it was no more possible to draw a word from him than to get a fart from a dead donkey.

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All of which made his father so furious that he wanted to kill Maître Blowhard Birdbrain. But des Marais checked him with a well-turned word of warning, so neatly administered that it cooled his anger. But he ordered that Blowhard Birdbrain be paid what he was owed and allowed to guzzle like a philosopher. And when he'd drunk to his heart's content, he was to be told to go to the devil.

"It won't cost me a thing," he said, "not today at least, if he gets so drunk that he dies of it, like an Englishman."

Maître Blowhard Birdbrain left the house. Grandgousier sought des Marais' advice about who might be available to be Gargantua's new teacher, and the two of them decided that Powerbrain (in Greek, Ponocrates), Rightway's teacher, would be the best man for the job. The three of them would then travel to Paris, the better to understand how the young men of France were pursuing their studies.

BOOK I, CHAPTER 16

How Gargantua Was Sent to Paris, Riding an Enormous Brood Mare, Which Waged War against the Cow Flies of Beauce

Now, at this same time Fayoles, fourth king of Numidia, happened to send Grandgousier, all the way from Africa, the biggest, tallest brood mare anyone had ever seen. And the most monstrous, too (it being well known that Africa always brings forth new things), for it was the size of six elephants and it had toes, like Julius Caesar's horse; its ears hung down like a Languedoc goat, and it had a horn sticking out of its ass. For the rest, it had a kind of burned chestnut hide, mottled with gray. Most impressive of all was its ghastly tail, because—give a pound, take a pound—it was as big as the old ruin of Saint-Mars, near Langeais (which is forty feet high), and every bit as wide, with hair as closely woven as the tassels on an ear of corn.

And if that strikes you as astonishing, what do you think of those amazing Scythian rams, weighing in at more than thirty pounds apiece, and those Syrian sheep, which (if Jean Thenaud is telling the truth) have an ass so heavy, so long and massive, that they have to tie a supporting cart to its rear end so it can get about at all. You haven't got anything like it, you lowland ass bangers!

It came by sea, in three Genoan schooners and a man-of-war, to the port of Les Sables-d'Olonne, in Talmont.

When Grandgousier saw it:

"This is exactly the right thing," he said, "to carry my son to Paris. Now, God be thanked, everything will turn out all right. Someday he'll surely be a great scholar. If it weren't for our friends the animals, we'd all have to live like philosophers."

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The next day, but of course only after having drunk theirfill, Gargantua, his new teacher Powerbrain, and all his attendants, together with the young page Rightway, took to the road. And because the weather was calm and moderate, his father had them make soft laced boots for Gargantua. (That great bootmaker Babin tells me they go by the name of buskins.)

So they went merrily down the highway, laughing and singing, until they had almost reached Orléans. There they entered a large forest, ninety miles long and forty miles wide. The

place swarmed with horrible cowflies, millions of them, and wasps and hornets, too, the sort that were true highway robbers for all poor mares and mules and horses. But Gargantua's mare took an appropriate revenge for all the outrages her species had suffered, playing a trick that those insects had never expected. Suddenly, as they entered the wood and theflies and wasps began their assault, she whipped out her tail and swatted them so vigorously that in fact she knocked down the entire forest. Left, right, here, there, length and width, over and under, she smashed those trees like a mower cutting grass, untilfinally there were neither any trees nor any insects, but just a niceflat stretch of land, which is all you can see to this day.

Gargantua watched this performance with immense delight. But he didn't want to sound vainglorious, so all he said to his companions was, "This isfine, but I don't want to boast." And ever since that part of the country has been known as Beauce. But all they got to put in their open mouths was their own yawns—in memory of which the gentlemen of Beauce (and everyone knows how poor they've always been) still dine by yawning and opening and closing their empty mouths, which they've grown to like, especially since it helps them spit.

When at last they reached Paris, Gargantua spent two or three days resting and recovering from their journey, drinking and chatting with the townsfolk and asking what scholars happened to be in the city at that time and what wine Parisians liked to drink.

BOOK I, CHAPTER 21

Gargantua's Studies, and His Way of Life, according to His Philosophical Teachers

* * *

Gargantua was absolutely determined to study under Powerbrain. To begin with, however, Powerbrain directed his new pupil to proceed exactly as he always had, the better to understand how, over such a long period of time, his former teachers had turned him into such a fop, such a fool and ignoramus.

Accordingly, Gargantua lived just as he usually did, waking up between eight and nine (whether it was daylight or not), exactly as his old teachers had prescribed. And they cited the words of King David: *Vanum est vobis ante lucem surgere,* It does you no good to wake before day begins.[5]

So he fooled about, swaggering, wallowing away the time in his bed (the better to enliven his animal spirits), and then dressed himself as the season dictated. But what he really liked to put on was a great long gown of heavy wool, Full p. C-295 lined with fox fur. And then he combed his hair as that great Ockhamist[6] philosopher Jacob Almain always did—that is, with fourfingers and a thumb, because his teachers used to say that, in this world of ours, to pay any more attention than that to your hair—or to washing and keeping yourself clean—was simply a waste of time.

Then he shat, pissed, vomited, belched, farted, yawned, spat, coughed, sighed, sneezed, and blew his nose abundantly. Then he put away a good breakfast, the better to protect himself against the dew and the bad morning air: good fried tripe, some nice broiled steak, several cheerful hams, some good grilled beef, and several platters of bread soaked in bouillon.

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Powerbrain objected, observing that, fresh out of bed and before he'd been exercising, he hardly needed to take in so much refreshment. Gargantua replied:

"What! Haven't I already done enough exercise? I turned over in bed six or seven times before I got up. Isn't that enough? That's exactly what Pope Alexander used to do, and he was following the advice of his great Jewish doctor and astrologer, Bonnet de Lates. And he lived until he died, too, in spite of those who did not wish him well. This is what my prior teachers got me used to doing, saying that breakfast helped you develop your memory: that was why they started drinking at breakfast, too. I think it's marvelous—and it starts me offso well that I eat an even better supper. And Maître Tubalcain Holofernes (who was right at the head of his class, here in Paris) used to say there was no point at all just to running well: the idea was to leave early enough. So true good health for all of us doesn't require, does it, that we gulp it down, cup after cup after cup, like ducks, but certainly that we start to drink in the morning—*unde versus,*[7] as the little poem says:

> To wake up early in the morning isn't the point:
> You've got to wet your whistle and bend that joint."

And so, after a hearty breakfast, he went to church, where they brought him, in a huge basket, a great fat prayer book, all wrapped in velvet, so heavily oiled, with such heavy clasps, and on such luxurious parchment that it must have weighed at least twenty-five hundred pounds. And then they heard twenty-six or maybe thirty masses. And then his private chaplain would come, dressed like a society swell, and with his breath nicely fortified by wine. He and Gargantua would mumble through the litany, thumbing the rosary so carefully that not a single bead ever fell to the ground.

As he walked out of church, they brought in a heavy-wheeled log carrier and delivered for his personal use an entire cask of carved-wood rosaries, each of them as round around as the rim of a man's hat. And as he and his chaplain strolled through the cloister of the church, and its galleries and gardens, they worked at their beads, saying more prayers than sixteen hermits.

Then he put in a scant half-hour of studying, keeping his eyes on his book. But, like the character in Terence's play, his soul was in the kitchen.[8]

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Then he pissed his urinal full, sat down to table, and—being naturally of a calm and imperturbable disposition—began his meal with several dozen hams, smoked beef tongues, caviar, fried tripe, and assorted other appetizers.

Meanwhile, four of his servants began to toss into his mouth, one after the other—but never stopping—shovelfuls of mustard, after which he drank an incredibly long draft of white wine, to make things easier for his kidneys. And then, eating whatever happened to be in season and he happened to like, he stopped only when his belly began to hang down.

His drinking was totally unregulated, without any limits or decorum. As he said, the time to restrict your drinking was only when the cork soles of your slippers absorb enough so they swell half a foot thick.

BOOK I, CHAPTER 23

How Gargantua Was So Well Taught by Powerbrain That He Never Wasted a Single Hour of the Day

Once Powerbrain understood Gargantua's vicious way of life, he began to reflect on other—and better—ways of instructing him in humanistic matters. But for thefirst few days he did not make any changes, realizing that nature would not allow abrupt shifts without cataclysmic violence.

Accordingly, to begin his work in the best way possible, he sought the advice of a wise physician, Holygift, with whom he discussed how to set Gargantua on a better path. The learned doctor, proceeding according to his profession's canonical rules,first purged the young man with a sovereign remedy for madness, Anticyrian hellebore, which powerful herb quickly cleaned away all the deterioration and perverse habits to which his brain had succumbed. This procedure had the advantage, also, of making Gargantua forget everything he had learned from his early teachers, just as in ancient times Timotheus[9] did with disciples who'd studied under other musicians.

To help in the good work, Powerbrain introduced Gargantua to some of Paris's truly learned scholars. In trying to be like them, he came to understand their spirit, wanting to acquire knowledge and to make something of himself.

And then he got him into such a way of studying that no hour in the day was wasted: all his time was spent in pursuit of humanistic learning and honest knowledge.

Accordingly, Gargantua now woke up at four in the morning. He would be given a massage, while a portion of the holy Scriptures was read aloud to him, in a high, clear voice, with precise and accurate pronunciation. A young page named Reader, a native of Basché, was given this task. The subject, and also the argument, of this lesson often led Gargantua into reverence and adoration of God, the majesty and marvelous wisdom of whom had thus been exhibited to him, and into prayer and supplication.

Then he would go offand, in some private place, permit the natural result of his digestive process to be excreted. While he was thus occupied, his teacher would repeat what had been read to him, clarifying and explaining the more obscure and difficult points.

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Coming back, they would examine and reflect on the state of the heavens: was everything as it had been when they'd seen the sky the night before? into what constellations had the sun newly entered, and likewise the moon?

And then he was dressed and combed, his hair was properly done, and he was equipped and perfumed, while all the time the lessons he'd been given the day before were repeated for him. He recited them by heart, showing by some practical and compassionate illustrations that he understood their meaning. This often lasted two or three hours, though ordinarily they stopped when he was fully dressed.

Then he was read to for three solid hours.

After which they went outdoors, always discussing the meaning of what had been read, and went to the park or somewhere near it, where they played various games, especially three-

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handed palm ball, giving their bodies the same elegant exercise they had earlier given their souls.

Their games were entirely free: they stopped whenever they felt like stopping—usually when they'd worked up a sweat or when they grew tired. Then they had a vigorous massage, and were wiped clean; they'd change their shirts and, walking quietly, would go to see if dinner was ready. And as they waited they'd recite, clearly and eloquently, remembered portions of the lesson.

However, Sir Appetite arrived, and when they could they seated themselves at the table.

Some entertaining story of ancient heroism was read to them, at the start of the meal, until wine was poured in Gargantua's cup.

Then, if they liked the idea, the reading was resumed, or else they'd begin to chat happily. At the beginning of this new regime, they talked about virtue, proper behavior, the nature and effect of everything placed on their table that day: bread, wine, water, salt, meat,fish, fruit, herbs, roots, and about the preparation of these things. In so doing, Gargantua soon learned all the appropriate passages from Pliny, Athenaeus, Dioscorides, Julius Pollux, Galen, Porphyry, Oppian, Polybius, Heliodorus, Aristotle, Claudius Aelian,[1] and others. In order to be sure they had their authorities right, they'd often have the books brought right to the table. And what was said became so clearly and entirelyfixed in Gargantua's memory that no doctor alive understood anything like as much as he did.

Then, talking about the lessons read that morning, andfinishing their meal with some quinced sweet, Gargantua would clean his teeth with a bit of fresh green mastic twig. He'd wash his hands and his eyes with good fresh water, and give thanks to God with sweet hymns of praise for His munificence and divine kindness. And cards were brought, not for playing games of chance, but to learn a thousand gracious things and new inventions, all founded in arithmetic.

And in this way Gargantua developed a genuine liking for the numerical science. Every day, after both dinner and supper, he passed his time in arithmetical games just as pleasantly as when he'd been in the habit of playing at dice or cards. Indeed, he came to understand both the theory and the practice of arithmetic so well that Cuthbert Tunstall,[2] the Englishman who had written so Full p. C-298 much on the subject, was obliged to admit that, truly, in comparison to Gargantua, all he understood was a pack of nonsense.

But arithmetic wasn't the end of it, for they went on to other mathematical sciences, like geometry, astronomy, and music. While waiting for their meal to be digested and properly absorbed, they worked out a thousand pleasant geometricalfigures, and shaped appropriate instruments, and practiced astronomical laws in the same way.

Later, they had a wonderful good time, singing four- andfive-part rounds, and sometimes singing variations on some melody that was a delight to their throats.

As for musical instruments, Gargantua learned to play the lute, the clavier, the harp, the transverseflute as well as the recorder, the viol, and also the trombone.

As this hour passed, digestion was indeed accomplished, and so he proceeded to purge himself of his natural excrement. Then he at once returned to his main studies for three hours or even more, in order to repeat the morning's lesson and also to continue with whatever book had been set for him. And he practiced writing in the Italian and the Gothic alphabets, and also drawing.

And then they'd go back to their rooms, and along with them went a young gentleman from Touraine, Squire Gymnast by name, who was teaching Gargantua the arts of knighthood.

After changing his clothes, Gargantua would mount a battle horse, a traveling steed, a Spanish stallion, an Arabian racehorse, and a light, quick horse, and ride a hundred laps, making his mount fairlyfly through the air, jump ditches, leap over fences, make quick circular turns, both to the right and to the left.

Nor did he break his lance, for it is sheer nonsense to say, "I broke ten lances in battle." Any carpenter could do as much. Real glory comes from breaking ten of your enemies' with one of your own. So, with his steel-tipped, solid,firm lance he learned to break down a door, crack open a suit of armor, uproot a tree, strike right through the center of a hoop, knock a knight's saddle right offhis horse, and carry away a coat of mail or a pair of armored gloves. And all the time he was himself in armor, from his head right down to his toes.

When it came to marching his horse in rhythm, or making the animal obey his commands, there was simply no one better. Even Cesare Fieschi, the famous equestrian acrobat, seemed no better than a monkey on horseback, in comparison. He was especially good at leaping from one horse to another, without ever setting foot on the ground—the horses were known as leapers—and he could do this from either side, lance erect, without stirrups. Without any reins or bridle he could make a horse do anything he wanted it to do. In short, he was accomplished at everything useful in military matters.

Some days he exercised with the battle-ax, which he could wield like a razor, swinging it so powerfully, slicing it around in a circle so deftly, that he was ranked a knight at arms, passing every sort of trial and declaredfit for any battle.

And then he'd practice with the pickax, or at wielding the two-handed sword, or with the short sword (so perfect for thrusting and parrying), and the dagger—sometimes wearing armor, sometimes not, or using a shield, or wearing a cape, or carrying a small wrist shield, known as a *rondelle.*

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He hunted deer—stag and doe and fallow buck—bears, wild boar, hares, partridge, pheasant, buzzards. He played with the big kickball, making it bound high in the air, sometimes with his foot, sometimes with hisfist. He fought and ran and leaped and jumped—but not a mere three-foot hop and leap, or a high jump in the German style—because, as Gymnast said, jumps of that sort were useless and of no good whatever, when it came to real war—but he'd jump great wide ditches, goflying over a hedgerow, climb six paces up a wall, and thus get in through a window as high offthe ground as a lance.

He swam in deep water, breaststroke, backstroke, sidestroke, using his entire body or only his legs, or with one hand high in the air and holding a book, crossing the Seine River without getting a page wet. He swam with his cloak in his teeth, as Julius Caesar did (says Plutarch[3]). Then, pulling himself right into a boat with just one hand, he'd throw himself back into the water, headfirst, going all the way down to the bottom, sinking among the rocks and swimming to great depths, plunging down to all sorts of chasms and deep abysses. Then he'd turn the boat, and steer it, sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly, now downstream, now upstream, sometimes bringing it to a halt by pressing it against a milldam, guiding it with one hand, his other wielding a great oar or raising the sail. He'd climb up the guide ropes, right to

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the top of the mast, and run out along the spars. He'd adjust the compass, brace the bowlines, tighten the helm.

Leaving the water, he'd go directly up a mountain and then come right down again. He'd climb trees like a cat, jumping from one to the other like a squirrel, tearing down thick branches as if he were another Milo of Croton.[4] With a pair of sharp-pointed daggers and a couple of good marlinespikes, he'd climb to the top of a house exactly like a rat, then leap down so expertly that the drop wouldn't cause him so much as a twinge.

He threw the javelin, and the iron bar, the millstone, the boar spear, the hunting spear, the spiked halberd. He drew the longbow like an archer, pulled crossbows taut (though this was usually done with a winch), sighted a rifle right against his eye (though usually it had to be rested against the shoulder), set up and mounted cannon, centering them right in on target, aimed them so they could knock a stuffed parrot offa pole, pointing them straight up a mountain or right down into a valley, directing theirfire up ahead or to the side or, like the ancient Parthians, back behind him.

They would attach a rope cable to some high tower, hanging down to the ground, and he would climb this, hand over hand, then come down so strongly and with such confidence that he might just as well have been strolling along some nice,flat meadow.

They would rig up a long pole, supported on each side by a tree, and he'd hang from it by his hands, going this way and that without his feet ever touching the ground—and at such a speed that, even running onflat ground, it would have been impossible to catch him.

And in order to exercise his chest and lungs, he would shout like all the devils in hell. Once, I heard him call to Rightway, from the Saint Victor Gate all Full p. C-300 the way across Paris to Montmartre. Even bull-throated Stentor,[5] at the battle of Troy, could not shout so loud.

To toughen his nerves, they made him two huge molded lead weights, cast in the shape of salmon, each just over eighty thousand pounds: he called them his dumbbells. He'd lift one in each hand, starting from the ground, and hold them both high up over his head—and then he'd keep them there, not moving a muscle, for three-quarters of an hour or even more. This was literally unmatchable strength!

No one was stronger, not in barriers or tug-of-war or any of the games. When it was his turn, he stood his ground sofirmly that he could afford to let the most adventurous try to move him a single inch from his place, exactly as Milo of Croton used to do—and in imitation of whom he would clasp a pomegranate in his hand and offer it to anyone who could take it from him. Nor would he permit the fruit to be damaged in the attempt.

Having thus spent his time, he'd have another massage, then clean himself and change his clothes, returning with a smile and, strolling through meadows and other grassy spots, he'd turn his attention to trees and plants, examining them in the light of what the ancients wrote —Theophrastus, Dioscorides, Marinus, Pliny, Nicander, Aemilius Macer, and Galen.[6] He and his companions wouldfill their hands with herbs and roots andflowers, then bring it all back to their lodgings, where a young page, Root-gatherer, was in charge of all such matters, including care of the hoes, picks, rakes, spades, shovels, and everything else needed for the proper care of growing things.

And once they were back at their lodgings, and while waiting for their supper, they would repeat selected passages from what they had read, earlier, and also what they had discussed at table.

Note, please, that although dinner was a sober and even frugal meal, at which Gargantua would eat only just enough to control the growling in his stomach, supper was a great abundant affair. He would consume everything he needed to sustain and properly nourish himself, which is exactly the sort of diet prescribed by any good, knowing doctor, though there are plenty of medical hacks (in constant dispute, of course, with learned academic philosophers) who advise exactly the opposite.

Gargantua continued his lessons all during supper, or for as long as he felt in the mood. And then he would turn to good solid discussion, literate, informed, useful.

After afinal grace had been said, they would turn to music, singing, the harmonious playing of various instruments, or to pleasant card and dice games. And there they would stay, having afine time, often amusing themselves until it was time to go to bed. And sometimes they would go visiting the houses of learned people, or perhaps those newly returned from foreign countries.

When night had truly arrived, but before they climbed into bed, they would stand in their lodgings, in the spot from which the sky could be most closely observed, and compare notes about any comets they might see, and the configuration of the stars, their location and aspect, their oppositions and conjunctions.

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And then Gargantua and Powerbrain would briefly recapitulate, according to the Pythagorean fashion,[7] everything Gargantua had read and seen and understood, everything he had done and heard, all day long.

They would both pray to God their Creator, worshiping, reaffirming their faith, glorifying Him for His immense goodness and thanking Him for all they had been given, and forever placing themselves in His hands.

And then they would go to sleep.

BOOK I, CHAPTER 24

What Gargantua Did When It Was Rainy

When the weather turned rainy and bad, the time before dinner went exactly as usual, except that Gargantua had a good bright fire lit, to help moderate the intemperate air. But after dinner, in place of exercise, they would stay indoors and, according to the best therapeutic approach, amuse themselves by baling hay, sawing and splitting wood, and threshing the grain stored in the barn. Then they would study the art of painting and sculpture, or else (following ancient custom) play knucklebones, an entertainment about which Leonicus Thomaeus has written so well—and a game which Andreas Lascaris, teacher and friend of Erasmus,[8] and my good friend too, has played with such pleasure. And while they played they turned over in their mind all the passages from classical authors in which the game is either mentioned or used as a metaphor.

In the same way, they would either go to watch the work at metal foundries, or the casting of cannon, or go to observe jewelers, gold-smiths, and those who cut precious stones, or else alchemists and coin makers, or tapestry weavers, silk weavers, velvet makers, watchmakers, mirror makers, printers, organ manufacturers, dyers, and other craftsmen of that sort. And

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treating all of them to wine, they learned from the mouths of these masters what their various trades and inventions were all about.

They would go to hear public lectures, solemn convocations, and the careful orations, declamations, and pleadings of wellborn lawyers, or the sermons of evangelical preachers.

He went to all the places where swordsmanship was practiced and taught, and tested himself against those who taught it, in every aspect of fencing and with all the sorts of swords and foils known. And he demonstrated to them that he knew as much as they did, and more.

Instead of going offto collect herbs and examine plants andflowers, they would go to drugstores, herb sellers, and other apothecaries, and contemplate with great care the fruits, roots, leaves, gums, seeds, and all the exotic unguents, and then how they were prepared and diluted for more effective use.

He went to see the jugglers and clowns, the magicians and those who peddled wonderful, half-magical remedies, and contemplated their games and Full p. C-302 tricks, their somersaults and smooth patter, especially those famous mountebanks from Chauny, in Picardy—born with a silver tongue, every one of them, able to sell water to people swimming in a lake orfirewood to those who live inside a volcano.

They would return for supper, and eat more sparingly than on other days—in particular, meats that tend to dry and tame the body. This was made necessary by the excessive humidity in the air, which under the circumstances there was no way to avoid. These simple dietary measures corrected that natural imbalance and saved them from being bothered by the loss of their usual exercise.

And this was how Gargantua's life was regulated. He kept to these rules every day, and he benefited—to be sure!—as a young man of his years can, a youth with good sense. All regular exercise, no matter how hard it may atfirst seem, becomes pleasant and easy andfinally great good fun, more like a royal pastime than a scholar's plodding.

In spite of which, and in order to allow him some relief from such a whirlwind way of life, Powerbrain made sure that Gargantua took offat least one day a month, some day of great clarity and calm brightness. They would leave Paris early in the morning and go to one of the pleasant villages beloved of all Parisian students—Gentilly, perhaps, or Boulogne on the Seine, or Montrouge, or Pont-Charenton, or Vanves, or Saint-Cloud. And they would spent the entire day there, just as happily as they could manage, laughing, telling jokes, drinking gaily, playing, singing, dancing, lying on their backs in beautiful meadows, hunting for sparrows' nests, catching quail, andfishing for frogs and crayfish.

But even on this day spent without books and reading, they didn't completely neglect higher matters, because even lying there in the lovely meadows they would recite from memory cheerful verses from Virgil's *Georgics*, from Hesiod, from Politian's *Rusticus* (Farming),[9] or some pleasant Latin epigrams, which they'd then turn into equally pleasant poems in their own language.

And when they feasted they would not simply mix their wine and water. Instead, as Cato advises in his *Country Matters*, and Pliny too, they would use a cup of ivy wood and wash the wine in a full basin of water, then pour it back out with a funnel.[1] And they would pour the water from one glass to another and construct tiny automatic engines that seemed to work of their own accord, like automatons.

Footnotes

- Note 2:Probably an allusion to a real person. Rabelais's method is to take real people and introduce them into his fantastic world; he also mentions real places and draws on local lore. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Gargantua's father; the name means "Big Throat." Return to reference 3
- Note 4:Roman politician, orator, and poet, respectively. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:Psalm 127.2: "It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: for so he giveth his beloved sleep." Return to reference 5
- Note 6:That is, a follower of the English philosopher William of Ockham (c. 1287–1347). Return to reference 6
- Note 7:Whence the verse (Latin). Return to reference 7
- Note 8: *The Eunuch*, line 816. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:Of Miletus, famous musician of the time of Alexander the Great (356–323 B.C.E.). Return to reference 9
- Note 1:Some of the most famous scientific authors of antiquity. The new curriculum, exacting as it is, reflects a less "medieval" type of learning than was embodied in his earlier course of study. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Author of the treatise *The Art of Computation* (*De arte supputandi*, 1522). Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Greek philosopher and historian (c. 46–c. 119 B.C.E.), best known for his biographies of illustrious Greeks and Romans. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:Greek wrestler (6th century B.C.E.) renowned for feats of strength. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:The loud-voiced herald in the *Iliad* 5. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:Greek and Roman scientists. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:Followers of the Greek philosopher Pythagoras (c. 470–c. 595 B.C.E.) established academies of learning throughout the Greek world. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:Erasmus of Rotterdam (1466–1536), Dutch scholar and philosopher. André-Jean de Lascaris (c. 1445–c. 1535), librarian to King Francis I and a friend of Rabelais. Leonicus Thomaeus (d. 1531), a Venetian and professor at Padua. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:Roman poet Virgil (70–19 B.C.E.), Greek poet Hesiod (c. 7th century B.C.E.), and Italian scholar Politian (Agnolo Ambrogini, 1454–1494) all wrote about rural life. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:Both Cato's *On Farming* (*De re rustica*) 109 and Pliny's *Natural History* 16.63 suggest an ivy-wood cup as a means to detect water in wine. Return to reference 1

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[The Abbey of Thélème]

BOOK I, CHAPTER 52

How Gargantua Built the Abbey of Desire (Thélème) for Brother John

The only one still left to be provided for was the monk.[2] Gargantua wanted to make him abbot of Seuilly, but the monk refused. Gargantua also offered him the abbey of Bourgueil or that of Saint-Florent, whichever best pleased him—and said he could have both those rich, old Benedictine cloisters, if he preferred that.[3] But the monk answered him in no uncertain terms: he wanted neither to govern nor to be in charge of other monks:

"And how," he asked, "should I govern others, when I don't know how to govern myself? If you really think I've done something for you, and I might in the future do something to please you, grant me this: establish an abbey according to my plan."

The request pleased Gargantua, so he offered him the whole land of Thélème, alongside the river Loire, two leagues from the great forest of Port-Huault. And the monk then asked Gargantua to establish this abbey's rules and regulations completely differently from all the others.

"Obviously," said Gargantua, "it won't be necessary to build walls all around it, because all the other abbeys are brutally closed in."

"Indeed," said the monk, "and for good reason. Whenever you've got a whole load of stones in front and a whole load of stones in back, you've got a whole lot of grumbling and complaining, and jealousy, and all kinds of conspiracies."

Moreover, since some of the cloisters already built in this world are in the habit, whenever any woman enters them (I speak only of modest, virtuous women), of washing the ground where she walked, it was decreed that if either a monk or a nun happened to enter the abbey of Thélème, they would scrub the blazes out of the places where they'd been. And since everything is completely regulated, in all the other cloistered houses, tied in and bound down, hour by hour, according to afierce schedule, it was decreed that in Thélème there would not be a single clock, or even a sundial, and that work would be distributed strictly according to what was needed and who was available to do it—because (said Gargantua) the worst waste of time he knew of was counting the hours—what good could possibly come of it?—and the biggest, fattest nonsense in the whole world was to be ruled by the tolling of a bell rather than by the dictates of common sense and understanding.

Item: because in these times of ours women don't go into convents unless they're blind in one eye, lame, humpbacked, ugly, misshapen, crazy, stupid, deformed, or pox-ridden, and men only if they're tubercular, low born, blessed with an ugly nose, simpletons, or a burden on their parents . . .

("Oh yes," said the monk, "speaking of which: if a woman isn't pretty and she isn't good, what sort of path can she cut for herself?"

“Straight into a convent,” said Gargantua.

“To be sure,” said the monk, “especially with a scissors and a needle.”)

. . . it was decreed that, in Thélème, women would be allowed only if they were beautiful, well formed, and cheerful, and men only if they were handsome, well formed, and cheerful.

Item: since men were not allowed in convents, unless they sneaked in under cover of darkness, it was decreed that in Thélème there would never be any women unless there were men, nor any men unless there were women.

Item: because both men and women, after they’d entered a cloister and served their probationary year, were obliged to spend the entire rest of their lives there, it was decided that men and women who came to Thélème could leave whenever they wanted to, freely and without restriction.

Item: because monks and nuns usually took three vows—chastity, poverty, and obedience—it was decided that in Thélème one could perfectly honorably be married, that anyone could be rich, and that they could all live wherever they wanted to.

As an age limitation, women should be allowed in at any time from ten tofifteen, and men from twelve to eighteen.

BOOK I, CHAPTER 53

How the Abbey of Desire (Thélème) Was Built and Endowed

In order to build and equip the abbey, Gargantua gave two million seven hundred thousand eight hundred and thirty-one gold pieces. Further, until everything had been completed, he assigned the yearly sum of one million six hundred and sixty thousand gold pieces, from the tolls on the river Dive, payable in funds of an unimaginable astrological purity. To endow and perpetually maintain the abbey he gave two million three hundred thousand and sixty-nine English pounds in property rentals, tax-free, fully secured, and payable yearly at the abbey gate, to which effect he had written out all the appropriate deeds and grants.

The building was hexagonal, constructed so that at each angle there was a great round tower sixty feet in diameter, and each of the towers was exactly like all the others. The river Loire was on the north side. One of the towers, called Artice (meaning “Arctic,” or “Northern”), ran down almost to the riverbank; another, called Calaer (meaning “Lovely Air”), was just to the east. Then came Anatole (meaning “Oriental,” or “Eastern”), and Mesembriné (meaning “Southern”), and then Hesperia (meaning “Occidental,” or “Western”), andfinally Cryere (meaning “Glacial”). The distance between each of the towers was three hundred and twelve feet. The building had sixfloors, counting the subterranean cellars as thefirst. The second or groundfloor had a high vault, shaped like a basket handle. The otherfloors were stuccoed in a circular pattern, the way they do such things in Flanders; the roof was offine slate, the coping being lead-decorated with smallfigurines and animals, handsomely colored and gilded; and there were rainspouts jutting out from the walls, between the casement windows, painted all the way to the ground with blue and gold stripes and ending in great pipes which led down to the river, below the building.

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This was all a hundred times more magnificent than the grand chateau at Bonnivet, or that at Chambord, or that at Chantilly,[4] because it had nine thousand three hundred and thirty-two suites, each furnished with an antechamber, a private reading room, a dressing room, and a small personal chapel, and also because each and every room adjoined its own huge hall. Between each tower, in the middle of the main building, was a spiral staircase, its stairs made of crystal porphyry and red Numidian marble and green marble struck through with red and white, all exactly twenty-two feet wide and threefingers thick, there being twelve stairs between each landing. Further: each landing had a beautiful double arch, in Greek style, thus allowing light toflood through and also framing an entryway into overhanging private rooms, each of them just as broad as the stairway itself. The stair wound all the way to the roof, ending there in a pavilion. Offthe stair, on each side, one could come to a great hall; the stair also led the way to the private suites and rooms.

Between the tower called Artice and that called Cryere were great beautiful reading rooms, well stocked with books in Greek, Latin, Hebrew, French, Italian, and Spanish, carefully divided according to the languages in which they had been written.

In the center of the main building, entered through an arch thirty-six yards across, stood a marvelous circular ramp. It was fashioned so harmoniously, and built so large, that six men-at-arms, their lances at the ready, could ride clear up to the top of the building, side by side.

Between the tower called Anatole and that called Mesembriné were beautiful galleries, large and open, painted with scenes of ancient heroism, episodes drawn from history, and strange and fascinating plants and animals. Here, too, just as on the side facing the river, were a ramp and a gate. And on this gate was written, in large antique letters, the poem which follows:

BOOK I, CHAPTER 54

[*The Inscription on the Great Gate of Thélème*]

Hypocrites, bigots, stay away!
Old humbugs, puffed-up liars, playful
Religious frauds, worse than Goths
Or Ostrogoths (or other sloths):

Your wicked talk
Would clutter our walks
Like clusteringflies:
Butflies or lies,
We've no room for your cries,
Your wicked talk.

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Hungry lawyers, stay away!
People eaters, who grab while praying,
Scribes and assessors, and gouty judges
Who beat good men with the law's thick cudgels
And tie old pots to their tails, like dogs,

We'll hop you up and down like frogs,
We'll hang you high from the nearest tree:
We're decent men, not legalfleas.

Summons and complaints
Don't strike us as quaint,
And we haven't got time
For your legal whine
As you hang from the line
Of your summons and complaints.

Money suckers, stay away!
Greedy gougers, spending your days
Gobbling up men, stuffing your guts
With gold, you black-faced crows, busting
Your butts for another load of change,
Though your cellar's bursting with rotten exchange.
O lazy scum, you'll pile up more,
Till smiling death knocks at your door.

Inhuman faces
With ghastly spaces
That no heart can see,
Find other places:
Here you can't be,
You inhuman faces.

Slobbering old dogs, stay away!
Old bitter faces, old sour ways,
We want you elsewhere—the jealous, the traitors,
The slime who live as danger creators,
Wherever you come from, you're worse than wolves:
Shove it, you mangy, scabby oafs!
None of your stinking, ugly sores:
We've seen enough, we want no more.

Honor and praise
Fill all our days:
We sing delight
All day, all night:
These are our ways:
Honor and praise.

But you, you, you can always come,
Noble knights and gentlemen,
For this is where you belong: there's money
Enough, and pleasure enough: honey
And milk for all, and all as one:

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Come be my friends, come join our fun,
O gallants, sportsmen, lovers, friends,
Or better still: come, gentlemen.

Gentle, noble,
Serene and subtle,
Eternally calm;
Civility's balm
To live without trouble,
Gentle, noble.

And welcome, you who know the Word
And preach it wherever the Word should be heard:
Make this place your holy castle
Against the false religious rascals
Who poison the world withfilthy lies:
Welcome, you with your eyes on the skies
And faith in your hearts: we canfight to the death
For truth,fight with our every breath.

For the holy Word
Can still be heard,
That Word is not dead:
It rings in our heads,
And we rise from our beds
For that holy Word.

And welcome, ladies of noble birth,
Live freely here, like nowhere on earth!
Flowers of loveliness, with heaven in your faces,
Who walk like angels, the wisdom of ages
In your hearts: welcome, live here in honor,
As the lord who made this refuge wanted:
He built it for you, he gave it gold
To keep it free: Enter, be bold!

Money's a gift
To give, to lift
The souls of others:
It makes men brothers
In eternal bliss:
For money's a gift.

BOOK I, CHAPTER 55

How They Lived at Thélème

In the middle of the inner court was a magnificent fountain of beautiful alabaster. Above it stood the three Graces, holding the symbolic horns of abundance: water gushed from their breasts, mouths, ears, eyes, and every other body opening.

The building which rose above this fountain stood on giant pillars of translucent quartz and porphyry, joined by archways of sweeping classical proportions. And Full p. C-308 inside there were handsome galleries, long and large, decorated with paintings and hung with antlers and the horns of the unicorn, rhinoceros, hippopotamus, as well as elephant teeth and tusks and other spectacular objects.

The women's quarters ran from the tower called Artice all the way to the gates of the tower called Mesembriné. The rest was for men. Right in front of the women's quarters was a kind of playingfield, an arena-like space set just between the twofirst towers, on the outer side. Here too were the horse-riding circle, a theater, and the swimming pools, with attached baths at three different levels, all provided with everything one could need, as well as with an endless supply of myrtle water.

Next to the river was a beautiful pleasure garden, and in the middle of it stood a handsome labyrinth. Between the other two towers werefields for playing palm ball and tennis. Alongside the tower called Cryere were the orchards, full of fruit trees of every description, carefully arranged in groups offive, staggered by rows of three. At the end was a great stretch of pastures and forest, well stocked with all kinds of wild animals.

Between the third pair of towers were the target ranges for muskets, bows, and crossbows. The offices were in a separate building, only one story high, which stood just beside the tower called Hesperia, and the stables were just beyond there. The falcon house was situated in front of the offices, staffed with thoroughly expert falconers and hawk trainers: every year supplies of every sort of bird imaginable, all perfect specimens of their breed, were sent by the Cretans, the Venetians, and the Sarmatian-Poles: eagles, great falcons, goshawks, herons and cranes and wild geese, partridge, gyrfalcons, sparrow hawks, tiny butfierce merlins, and others, so well trained and domesticated that, when they left the chateau tofly about in thefields, they would catch everything they found and bring everything to their handlers. The kennels were a bit farther away, in the direction of the woods and pastures.

All the rooms in all the suites, as well as all the smaller private rooms, were hung with a wide variety of tapestries, which were regularly changed to suit the changing seasons. Thefloors were covered with green cloth, the beds with embroidery. Every dressing room had a mirror of Venetian crystal, framed infine gold, decorated around with pearls, and so exceedingly large that one could in truth see oneself in it, complete and entire. Just outside the doorways, in the ladies' quarters, were perfumers and hairdressers, who also attended to the men who visited. Every morning, too, they brought rose-water to each of the ladies' rooms, and also orange and myrtle water—and brought each lady a stick of precious incense, saturated with all manner of aromatic balms.

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BOOK I, CHAPTER 56

How the Men and Women Who Dwelled at Thélème Were Dressed

In the beginning, the ladies dressed themselves as they pleased. Later, of their own free will, they changed and styled themselves all as one, in the following way:

They wore scarlet or yellow stockings, bordered with pretty embroidery and fretwork, which reached exactly threefingers above the knee. Their garters were colored like their bracelets (gold, enameled with black, green, red, Full p. C-309 and white), fastened both above and below the knee. Their shoes, dancing pumps, and slippers were red or purple velvet, with edges jagged like lobsters' claws.

Over the chemise they wore a handsome corset, woven of rich silk shot through with goat hair. Over this they wore taffeta petticoats, in white, red, tan, gray, and so on, and on top of this petticoat a tunic of silver taffeta embroidered with gold thread, sewn in tight spirals—or if they were in the mood and the weather was right, their tunics might be of satin, or damask, or orange-colored velvet, or perhaps tan, green, mustard gray, blue, clear yellow, red, scarlet, white, gold, or silvered linen, with bordered spirals, or embroidery, according to what holiday was being celebrated.

Their dresses, again according to the season, were of golden linen waved with silver, or red satin decorated with gold thread, or taffeta in white, blue, black, or tan, or silk serge, or that same rich silk shot through with goat hair, or velvet slashed with silver, or silvered linen, or golden, or else velvet or satin laced with gold in a variety of patterns.

Sometimes, in the summer, they wore shorter gowns, more like cloaks, ornamented in the ways I have described, or else full-length capes in the Moorish style, of purple velvet waved with gold and embroidered with thin spirals of silver, or else with heavier gold thread, decorated at the seams with small pearls from India. They were never without beautiful feathers in their hair, colored to match the sleeves of their gowns and always spangled in gold. In the winter they wore taffeta dresses, colored as I have described, lined with lynx fur, or black skunk, or Calabrian marten, or sable, or some other precious pelt.

Their prayer beads, rings, neck chains, and collar pieces were made offine gems—red garnets, rubies, orange-red spinels, diamonds, sapphires, emeralds, turquoises, garnets, agates, green beryls, pearls, and fat onion pearls of a rare excellence.

They covered their heads, once again, as the season demanded: in winter, in the French style, with a velvet hood hanging down in the back like a pigtail; in spring, in the Spanish style, with a lace veil; in summer, in the Italian mode, with bare ringed hair studded with jewels, except on Sundays and holidays, when they used the French fashion, which seemed to them both more appropriate and more modest.

And the men wore their fashions, too: their stockings were of light linen or serge, colored scarlet, yellow, white, or black; their breeches were velvet, in the same colors (or very nearly), embroidered and patterned however they pleased. Their jackets were of gold or silver cloth, in velvet, satin, damask, taffeta, once again in the same colors, impeccably patterned and decorated and worn. Their shoes were laced to the breeches with silken thread, colored as before, each lace closed with an enameled gold tip. Their undervests and cloaks were of golden cloth or linen, or silver cloth, or velvet embroidered however they liked. Their gowns

were as costly and beautiful as the women's, with silk belts, colored to match their breeches. Each of them wore a handsome sword, with a decorated hilt, the scabbard of velvet (the color matching their stockings), its endpiece of gold and heavily worked jewelry—and their daggers were exactly the same. Their hats were of black velvet, thickly garnished with golden berries and buttons, and the feathered Full p. C-310 plumes were white, delicately spangled in gold rows and fringed with rubies, emeralds, and the like.

But there was such a close fellowship between the men and the women that they were dressed almost exactly alike, day after day. And to make sure that this happened, certain gentlemen were delegated to inform the others, each and every morning, what sort of clothing the women had chosen to wear that day—because of course the real decisions, in this matter, were made by the women.

Although they wore such well-chosen and rich clothing, don't think these women wasted a great deal of time on their gowns and cloaks and jewelry. There were wardrobe men who, each day, had everything prepared in advance, and their ladies' maids were so perfectly trained that everyone could be dressed from head to toe, and beautifully, in the twinkling of an eye. And to make sure that all of this was perpetually in good order, the wood of Thélème was surrounded by a vast block of houses, perhaps half a league long, good bright buildings well stocked and supplied, and here lived goldsmiths, jewelers, embroiderers, tailors, specialists in hammering andfilamenting gold and silver, velvet makers, tapestry weavers, and upholsterers, and they all worked at their trades right there alongside Thélème, and only for the men and women who dwelled in that abbey. All their supplies, metals and minerals and cloths, came to them courtesy My Lord Shipmaster (Nausiclète, in Greek), who each year brought in seven boats from the Little Antilles, the Pearl and Cannibal islands, loaded down with gold ingots, raw silk, pearls, and all sorts of gemstones. And any of the fat pearls which began to lose their sparkle and their natural whiteness were restored by feeding them to handsome roosters (as Avicenna recommends), just as we give laxatives to hawks and falcons.

BOOK I, CHAPTER 57

How the Men and Women of Thélème Governed Their Lives

Their lives were not ordered and governed by laws and statutes and rules, but according to their own free will. They rose from their beds when it seemed to them the right time, drank, ate, worked, and slept when they felt like it. No one woke them or obliged them to drink, or to eat, or to do anything whatever. This was exactly how Gargantua had ordained it. The constitution of this abbey had only a single clause:

DO WHAT YOU WILL

—because free men and women, wellborn, well taught,finding themselves joined with other respectable people, are instinctively impelled to do virtuous things and avoid vice. They draw this instinct from nature itself, and they name it "honor." Such people, if they are subjected to vile constraints, brought down to a lower moral level, oppressed and enslaved and turned away from that noble passion toward which virtue pulls them,find themselves led by that same passion to throw offand break any such bondage, just as we always seek out forbidden things and long for whatever is denied us.

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And their complete freedom set them nobly in competition, all of them seeking to do whatever they saw pleased any one among them. If he or she said, Full p. C-311 “Let’s drink,” everyone drank. If he or she said, “Let’s play,” they all played. If he or she said, “Let’s go and have fun in the meadows,” there they all went. If they were engaged in falconry or hunting, the women joined in, mounted on their good tame horses, light but proud, delicately sporting heavy leather gloves, a sparrow hawk perched on their wrists, or a small falcon, or a tiny butfierce merlin. (The other birds were carried by men.)

All of them had been so well educated that there wasn’t one among them who could not read, write, sing, play on harmonious instruments, speakfive or six languages, and write easy poetry and clear prose in any and all of them. There were never knights so courageous, so gallant, so light on their feet, and so easy on their horses, knights more vigorous, agile, or better able to handle any kind of weapon. There were never ladies so well bred, so delicate, less irritable, or better trained with their hands, sewing and doing anything that any free and worthy woman might be asked to do.

And for this reason, when the time came for anyone to leave the abbey, whether because his parents had summoned him or on any other account, he took one of the ladies with him, she having accepted him, and then they were married. And whatever devotion and friendship they had shown one another, when they lived at Thélème, they continued and even exceeded in their marriage, loving each other to the end of their days just as much as they did on thefirst day after their wedding. . . .

Footnotes

- Note 2:Brother John of the Funnels, the muscular and highly unconventional monk who has had a major part in helping the party of Gargantua’s father win the mock-heroic war against the arrogant Picrochole. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:A satiric allusion to the custom of accumulating church livings. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:Châteaux built in the early and middle years of the 16th century. Rabelais is again mixing realism with fantasy. Return to reference 4

[Father’s Letter from Home]

BOOK II, CHAPTER 8

How Pantagruel, at Paris, Received a Letter from His Father, Gargantua, with a Copy of That Letter

Pantagruel studied hard, of course, and learned a great deal, because his brain was twice normal size and his memory was as capacious as a dozen kegs of olive oil. While he was thus occupied in Paris,[5] one day he received a letter from his father, which read as follows:

“My very dear son,

“Among the gifts, the graces and the prerogatives with which from the very beginning our sovereign Creator and God has blessed and endowed human nature, that which seems

to me uniquely wonderful is the power to acquire a kind of immortality while still in this our mortal state—that is, while passing through this transitory life a man may perpetuate both his name and his race, and this we accomplish through the legitimate issue of holy wedlock. And by that means we partially reestablish that which we lost through the sin of ourfirst parents, Adam and Eve, to whom it was declared that, because they had not obeyed the commands of God their Creator, they would know death and in dying would utterly destroy the magnificent form in which mankind had been shaped.

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"But this seminal propagation permits what the parents lose to live on in their children, and what dies in the children to live on in the grandchildren, and so it will continue until the hour of the Last Judgment, when Jesus Christ will return to the hands of God the Father His purified and peaceful kingdom, now utterly beyond any possibility or danger of being soiled by sin. And then all the generations and all the corruptions will come to an end, and all the elements will be taken from their endless cycle of transformations, for the peace so devoutly desired will be achieved, and will be perfect, and all things will be brought to theirfit and proper ending.

"So I have very fair and just cause to be thankful to God, my preserver, for having permitted me to see my hoary old age blossoming once again in your youth. Whenever, at His pleasure, He who rules and governs all things, my soul leaves this human dwelling place, I will not consider myself entirely dead, but simply transported from one place to another, for in you, and by you, my visible image lives in this world, wholly alive, able to see and speak to all honorable men, and all my friends, just as I myself was able to do. I confess that my life on this earth, though I have had divine help and divine grace to show me the way, has not been sinless (for indeed we are all sinners and continually beg God to wash away our sins), and yet it has been beyond reproach.

"Just as the image of myflesh lives on in you, so too shine on the ways of my soul, or else no one would think you the true keeper and treasure of our immortal name, and I would take little pleasure in seeing that, because in that case the least part of me, my body, would live on, and the best part, my soul, in which our name lives and is blessed among men, would be decayed and debased. Nor do I say this because I have any doubt about your virtue, which I have long since tested and approved, but simply to encourage you to proceed from good to still better. And the reason I write to you now is not so much to ensure that you follow the pathways of virtue, but rather that you rejoice in thus living and having lived, andfind new joys and fresh courage for the future.

"To consummate and perfect that task, it should be enough for you to remember that I have held back nothing, but have given help and assistance as if I had no other treasure in the world but to someday see you, while I still lived, accomplished and established in virtue, integrity, and wisdom, perfected in all noble and honorable learning, and to be able to thus leave you, after my death, as a mirror representing me, your father—perhaps in actual practice not so perfect an image as I might have wished, but certainly exactly that in both intention and desire.

"But though my late father of worthy memory, Grandgousier, devoted all his energy to those things of which I might take the fullest advantage, and from which I might acquire the most sensible knowledge, and though my own effort matched his—or even surpassed it—still, as you know very well, it was neither sofit nor so right a time for learning as exists

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today, nor was there an abundance of such teachers as you have had. It was still a murky, dark time, oppressed by the misery, unhappiness, and disasters of the Goths, who destroyed all worthwhile literature of every sort. But divine goodness has let me live to see light and dignity returned to humanistic studies, and to see such an improvement, indeed, that it would be hard for me to qualify for the veryfirst class of little schoolboys—I who, in Full p. C-313 my prime, had the reputation (and not in error) of the most learned man of my day. Nor do I say this as an empty boast, though indeed I could honorably do so in writing to you —for which you have the authority of Cicero in his book *On Old Age*, and also the judgment of Plutarch, in his book *How a Man May Praise Himself without Fear of Reproach* . No, I say these things to make you wish to surpass me.

"For now all courses of study have been restored, and the acquisition of languages has become supremely honorable: Greek, without which it is shameful for any man to be called a scholar; Hebrew; Chaldean; Latin.[6] And in my time we have learned how to produce wonderfully elegant and accurate printed books,[7] just as, on the other hand, we have also learned (by diabolic suggestion) how to make cannon and other such fearful weapons. The world is full of scholars, of learned teachers, of well-stocked libraries, so that in my opinion study has never been easier, not in Plato's time, or Cicero's, or Papinian's.[8] From this day forward no one will dare to appear anywhere, or in any company, who has not been well and properly taught in the wisdom of Minerva. Thieves and highwaymen, hangmen and executioners, common foot soldiers, grooms and stableboys, are now more learned than the scholars and preachers of my day. What should I say? Even women and girls have come to aspire to this marvelous, this heavenly manna of solid learning. Old as I am, I have felt obliged to learn Greek, though I had not despised it, as Cato[9] did: I simply had no leisure for it, when I was young. And how exceedingly glad I am, as I await the hour when it may please God, my Creator, to call me to leave this earth, to read Plutarch's *Morals*, Plato's beautiful *Dialogues*, Pausanias's *Monuments*, and Athenaeus's *Antiquities* .[1]

"Which is why, my son, I strongly advise you not to waste your youth, but to make full use of it for the acquisition of knowledge and virtue. You are in Paris, you have your tutor, Epistemon: you can learn from them, by listening and speaking, by all the noble examples held up in front of your eyes.

"It is my clear desire that you learn languages perfectly,first Greek, as Quintilian decreed, and then Latin.[2] And after that Hebrew, for the Holy Bible, and similarly Chaldean and Arabic. I wish you to form your literary style both on the Greek, following Plato, and on the Latin, following Cicero. Let there be nothing in all of history that is not clear and vivid in your mind, a task in which geographical texts will be of much assistance.

"I gave you some awareness of the liberal arts—geometry, arithmetic, and music—when you were still a child offive and six. Follow them further, and learn all the rules of astronomy. Ignore astrology and its prophecies, and all the hunt for the philosopher's stone which occupied Raymond Lully[3] —leave all those errors and vanities alone.

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"As for the civil law, I wish you to know by heart all the worthy texts: deal with them and philosophy side by side.

“I wish you to carefully devote yourself to the natural world. Let there be no sea, river, or brook whosefish you do not know. Nothing should be unknown to you—all the birds of the air, each and every tree and bush and shrub in the forests, every plant that grows from the earth, all the metals hidden deep in the abyss, all the gems of the Orient and the Middle East—nothing.

“Then carefully reread all the books of the Greek physicians, and the Arabs and Romans, without turning your back on the talmudic scholars or those who have written on the Cabala. Make free use of anatomical dissection and acquire a perfect knowledge of that other world which is man himself. Spend several hours each day considering the holy Gospels,first the New Testament and the Apostles’ letters, in Greek, and then the Old Testament, in Hebrew.

“In short, plumb all knowledge to the very depths, because when you are a grown man you will be obliged to leave the peace and tranquillity of learning, and acquire the arts of chivalry and warfare, in order to defend my house and lands and come to the aid of our friends if in any way they are attacked by evildoers.

“And soon I shall ask you to demonstrate just how much you have learned, which you can do in no better way than by publicly defending, in front of the entire world and against all who may come to question you, a thesis of your own devising. And continue, as you have been doing, to frequent the company of those learned men who are so numerous in Paris.

“But since, as the wise Solomon says, wisdom canfind no way into a malicious heart, and knowledge without self-awareness is nothing but the soul’s ruin, you should serve, and love, and fear God. Put all your thought in Him, and all your hopes, and by faith which has been shaped by love unite yourself with Him sofirmly that sin will never separate you away. Be ever watchful of the world’s wicked ways. Never put your heart in vanity, for ours is a transitory existence and the Word of God lives forever. Help your neighbors and love them as you love yourself. Honor your teachers. Avoid the company of those you do not desire to imitate; do not take in vain the blessings God has given you. And when,finally, you know that you have learned all that Paris can teach you, return to me, so that I may look on you and, before I die, give you my blessing.

“My son, may the peace and grace of our Lord be with you. *Amen* .

“Written from Utopia, this seventeenth day of the month of March.

Your father,

G ARGANTUA”

After receiving and reading this letter, Pantagruel wasfilled with new zeal, positively onfire to learn more than ever before—so much so that, had you seen him at his studies, and observed how much he learned, you would have declared that he was to his books like afire in dry grass, burning with such an intense and consumingflame.

Footnotes

- Note 5:Like his father before him, Pantagruel has been sent to Paris to study. The letter, patterned after Ciceronian models of eloquence, summarizes Rabelais’s view of an ideal

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education, and generally illustrates the attitude of the Renaissance intellectual elite toward culture. Return to reference 5

- Note 6:The languages that are the instruments of classical learning are listed along with those useful for the study of the Old Testament of the Bible. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:Printing from movable type wasfirst used in Europe about the middle of the 15th century. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:Jurisconsult of the time of Emperor Septimius Severus (r. 193–211 C.E.). Return to reference 8
- Note 9:Plutarch's life of Cato is the source of the notion that he despised Greek. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:The works of Pausanias and Athenaeus were standard sources of information on ancient geography, art, and everyday life. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:In his *Institutio oratoria* 1.1.12, Quintilian recommends studying Greek before Latin. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Raymond Lully (13th century), Spanish philosopher who dabbled in magic. Return to reference 3

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[Disputation with Thaumaste]

BOOK II, CHAPTER 18

How a Great English Scholar Wanted to Dispute with Pantagruel, But Was Beaten by Panurge

At about the same time, a scholar named Thaumaste (in Greek, "Wonderful"), hearing all the fuss over Pantagruel's incomparable learning, and seeing how famous he'd become, came from England with the sole intention of meeting Pantagruel andfinding out if his knowledge matched his reputation. Arriving in Paris, he immediately went to Pantagruel's lodgings, which were at the abbey of Saint Denis.[4] At that moment, Pantagruel was in the garden with Panurge, walking up and down and philosophizing after the fashion of the ancient Peripatetics.[5] Thaumaste quivered with fear, seeing how huge Pantagruel was, but then he greeted him in customary style and said, with great courtesy:

"How true it is, as Plato, prince of philosophers, says, that if the image of wisdom and learning is a physical matter, visible to human eyes, it excites the whole world with admiration. The very word of such accomplishments, spread through the air and received by the ears of those who study and love philosophy, prevents them from taking any further rest, stirring them, urging them to hurry to where they mayfind and see the person in whom knowledge has erected its temple and given forth its oracles. Which was clearly demonstrated for us by the queen of Sheba, who traveled from the farthest reaches of the Orient and the Persian Sea to visit the house of the wise Solomon and hear his sage words;[6]

"and by Anacharsis,[7] who came from Scythia only to see Solon;

“and by Pythagoras, who journeyed to the prophets of Memphis;[8]

“and by Plato, who visited the Egyptian magi, and also Archytas of Tarentum;[9]

“and by Apollonius of Tyana,[1] who went to the Caucasian mountains, who journeyed among the Scythians, the Massagetae, and the Indians, who sailed down the great river Physon, all the way to the land of the Brahmans, to see Hiarchos, and who traveled in Babylonia, Chaldea, the land of the Medes, Assyria, Parthia, Syria, Phoenicia, Arabia, Palestine, and Alexandria, and in Ethiopia, too, to see the Gymnosophists.[2]

“We have another example in Livy,[3] to see and hear whom certain studious folk came to Rome from the farthest boundaries of France and Spain.

“I am not so presumptuous as to include myself among the ranks of such illustrious men. But I deeply desire to be thought of as a student and lover not only of humanistic learning but also of men of such learning.

“And, in fact, hearing of your priceless learning, I have left my country, my parents, and my home and come here, indifferent to the weariness of the journey, the Full p. C-316 anxiety of a voyage by sea, the strangeness of different lands, solely for the purpose of seeing and conferring with you about certain passages of philosophy, and geometrical divination, and also of cabalistic knowledge,[4] passages of which I am myself unsure and, about which I cannot rest content. If you can resolve these difficulties for me, I will be your servant from this day forth, and not only me but all my posterity, for I command no other gifts sufficient to repay you.

“I will put all of this in writing, and tomorrow I shall notify all the learned men of this city, so that we can discuss these matters publicly and in their presence.

“But I intend that our discussions, and any disputes in which we may engage, shall be conducted as follows. I do not wish to argue any bare-bones *for* and *against*, as do the besotted sophistical minds[5] of this and other cities. Nor do I wish to dispute after the fashion of academics, by declamation, or by the use of numbers, as Pythagoras did and as Picodella Mirandola,[6] at Rome, wished to do. I wish to dispute simply by signs, without a word being spoken, for these are matters so intricate and difficult that, as far as I am concerned, mere human speech will not be adequate to deal with them.

“May it please Your Magnificence to accept my invitation and join me, at seven in the morning, in the great hall of the College of Navarre.”

When he hadfinished, Pantagruel said to him, courteously:

“My dear sir, how could I deny anyone the right to share in whatever blessings God has given me? All good things come from Him, and surely He wishes us to spread the celestial manna we have from Him among men both worthy and capable of receiving true learning—among whose number in our time, as I know very well, you belong in the veryfirst rank. Let me say to you, therefore, that you willfind me ready at any time to accede to any of your requests, to the extent that my poor powers may enable me, and well aware as I am that it is I who should be learning from you. And so, as you have declared, we will discuss these doubts of yours together, and hunt as hard as we can for their resolution, diving even as far as the bottom of that bottomless well in which, according to Heraclitus,[7] the truth is said to be hidden.

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“And I highly commend the style of argument you have proposed, that is to say, by using signs, without any words, for thus you and I will truly understand one another, free from the sort of hand clapping and applause produced during their discussions by these puerile sophists, whenever one party has the better of the argument.

“So, then, tomorrow I shall appear without fail at the time and place you have requested. I ask of you only that, as between us, there may be no contentiousness and fuss, and that we seek neither honor nor men’s applause, but only the truth.”

To which Thaumaste replied:

“Sir, may God keep you in His grace. I thank Your High Magnificence for being so willing to condescend to my humble talents. Until tomorrow, I leave you in His hands.”

“Farewell,” said Pantagruel.

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Gentlemen, you who may read this book, please don’t imagine that anyone was ever more exalted, more transported, that whole night long, than Thaumaste and Pantagruel. Thaumaste told the concierge at his lodgings, in the abbey of Cluny, that in his entire life he had never been so incredibly thirsty:

“It feels to me,” he said, “as if Pantagruel has me by the throat. Order me wine, if you please, and make sure that there’s enough fresh water so I can lubricate the roof of my mouth.”

And for his part, Pantagruel felt himself carried away, so that all that night he did nothing but tear through:

The Venerable Bede’s *De numeris et signis*, Numbers and Signs;
Plotinus’s *De inenarrabilibus*, Inexpressible Things;
Proclus’s *De sacrificio et magia*, Sacrifices and Magic;
Artemidorus’s *Per onirocriticon*, On the Interpretation of Dreams;
Anaxagoras’s *Peri semion*, On Signs;
Dinarius’s *Peri aphaton*, Unknowable Things;
Philistion’s books;
Hipponax’s *Peri anecphoneton*, Things Better Left Undiscussed;

And many, many others, so thatfinally Panurge said to him:

“My lord, stop all this intellectual groping and go to bed, for I can see you’re far too agitated —indeed, such an extravagance of thinking and straining may well make you feverish. Butfirst, have twenty-five or thirty good drinks, then go to bed and sleep comfortably—for tomorrow I will answer our English friend, I will argue with him, and if I don’t get him *ad metam non loqui*,[8] to the point where he can’t say a word, well, then you can say anything you like about me.”

“All right,” said Pantagruel, “but Panurge, my good friend, he’s a deeply learned man. How will you deal with him?”

“Very easily,” said Panurge. “Please: don’t even speak about it. Just leave the whole thing to me. Do you know any man as learned as the devils in hell?”

“Not really,” said Pantagruel, “unless blessed by some special divine grace.”

“You see?” said Panurge. “I’ve had many arguments with devils, and I’ve made them look like idiots, I’ve knocked them on their asses. So tomorrow you can be sure I’ll make this glorious Englishman shit vinegar, right out in public.”

Then Panurge spent the night boozing with the servants and playing games, at which he lost all the roses and ribbons from his breeches. And then, when the agreed-upon hour came, he conducted his master Pantagruel to the assigned meeting place, where as you can easily understand everyone in Paris, from the most important to the least, had assembled, all of them thinking:

“This devil of a Pantagruel, he’s beaten all our clever fellows, and all those naive theologians and philosophers. But now he’ll get what’s coming to him, because this Englishman is a regular devil. We’ll see who beats whom today.”

Everyone was assembled; Thaumaste was waiting for them. And when Pantagruel and Panurge arrived in the hall, all the students—elementary, high school, and college—began to applaud, in their usual ridiculous way. But Pantagruel shouted at them, his voice as loud as the sound of a double cannon:

“Quiet! In the name of the devil, quiet! By God, you rascals, bother me and I’ll cut the heads offevery last one of you!”

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Which announcement struck them as dumb as ducks: they were afraid even to cough, no matter if they’d swallowedfifteen pounds of feathers. And the very sound of his voice left them so parched and dry that their tongues hung half a foot out of their mouths, as if Pantagruel had roasted their throats.

Then Panurge began to speak, saying to the Englishman:

“Sir, have you come here seeking a debate, a contest, about these propositions which you have posted, or are you here to learn, to honestly understand the truth?”

To which Thaumaste answered:

“Sir, the only thing which has brought me here is my deep desire to understand that which I have struggled all my life to understand, and which neither books nor men have ever been able to resolve for me. As far as disputing and arguing is concerned, I have no interest whatever in that. That is a vulgar affair, and I leave it to villainous sophists, who never truly seek for truth when they argue, but only contradict each other and emptily debate.”

“And so,” said Panurge, “if I, who am no more than a minor disciple of my master Pantagruel, am able to satisfy you in all these matters, it would be an indignity and an imposition to trouble my master. Accordingly, it would be better if for now he simply presided over this discussion, judging what we say—and I need hardly say that he will himself satisfy you, should I be unable to fully quench your scholarly thirst.”

“Indeed,” said Thaumaste, “that’s perfectly true.”

“Then let us begin.”

But note, please, that Panurge had hung a handsome tassel of red, white, green, and blue silk at the end of his long codpiece,[9] and inside it he had stuffed a fat, juicy orange.

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BOOK II, CHAPTER 19

How Panurge Made the Englishman Who Argued by Signs Look Like an Idiot

Then, with everyone watching and listening in absolute silence, the Englishman raised his hands high in the air,first one and then the other, holding hisfingertips in the shape called, in Chinon, the hen's asshole. He struck the nails of one hand against the nails of the other four times in a row, then opened his hands and slapped his palms together with a sharp crack. Joining his hands once again, as he had done at the start, he clapped them twice, then opened them out and clapped them four times more. Then he clasped them and extended one right over the other, as if praying devoutly to God.

Suddenly Panurge raised his right hand and stuck his thumb into his nose, keeping the other fourfingers extended in a row straight out from the tip of his nose. He closed his left eye and winked the right one, making a deep hollow between eyebrow and eyelid. Then he lifted his left hand, the fourfingers held rigidly extended, the thumb raised, and lined it up precisely with his right hand, keeping it perhaps half again the width of his nose distant. Then he lowered both hands, keeping them just as they were, and ended by raising them halfway and holding them there, as if aiming at the Englishman's nose.

"And yet if Mercury[1] —" the Englishman began.

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But Panurge interrupted him:

"You have spoken. Be silent."

Then the Englishman made the following sign: With palm open, he raised his left hand high in the air, then closed its fourfingers in a tightfist, with the thumb lying across the bridge of his nose. And then, suddenly, he raised his right hand, palm out, and lowered it again, placing the thumb against the littlefinger of his left hand, the fourfingers of which he moved slowly up and down. Then, in reverse, he repeated with his right hand what he had just done with his left and with his left hand what he had done with his right.

Not a bit surprised, Panurge lifted his immense codpiece with his left hand, and with his right pulled from it a piece of white ox rib and two bits of wood in the same shape, one of black ebony, the other of rose-colored brazilwood. Arranging these objects symmetrically, in thefingers of his right hand, he clapped them together, making a sound exactly like that produced by the lepers in Brittany, to warn people off—but a sound infinitely more resonant and harmonious. And then, pulling his tongue slowly back into his mouth, he stood there, humming happily, staring at the Englishman.

The theologians, physicians, and surgeons thought this sign meant that the Englishman was a leper.

The counselors, jurists, and canon lawyers, however, thought his meaning was that being a leper brought with it a certain sort of happiness, as once our Lord had declared.

Not at all frightened, the Englishman raised both hands, holding them with the three largestfingers balled into afist, then placed both thumbs between the index and middlefingers, with the littlefingers sticking straight out. He presented his hands to Panurge, then rearranged them so that the right thumb touched the left one, and his littlefingers, too, were pressed against each other.

At this, without a word, Panurge raised his hands and made the following sign: he put the nail of his right indexfinger against the thumbnail, shaping a loop. He bent all thefingers of his right hand into afist, except for the indexfinger, which he jabbed in and out of the space framed by his other hand. Then he extended both the index and the middlefingers of his right hand, separating them as widely as he possibly could and pointing them at Thaumaste. Then placing his left thumb in the corner of his left eye, he extended his entire hand like a bird's wing or afish's backbone, and waved it very delicately up and down. Then he did the same thing with his right hand and his right eye.

Thaumaste began to turn pale and tremble, then made the following sign: he struck the middlefinger of his right hand against the muscle of his palm, just below the thumb, then inserted the indexfinger of his right hand into a loop shaped exactly like that Panurge had made, except that Thaumaste inserted it from below, not from above.

Accordingly, Panurge clapped his hands together and breathed into his palms. Then, once again, he shaped a loop with his left hand and, over and over, inserted into it the indexfinger of his right hand. Then he thrust his chin forward and stood staring at Thaumaste.

And though no one there understood what these signs meant, they understood perfectly well that he was asking Thaumaste, without a word being spoken:

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"Hey, what do you make of that, eh?"

And indeed Thaumaste began to sweat heavily, looking like a man swept away by high contemplation. Then he stared back at Panurge and put the nails of his left hand against those of his right, opening all thefingers into semicircles, then raised his hands as high as he could, exhibiting this sign.

At which Panurge suddenly put his right thumb under his jaw, and stuck the littlefinger into the loop fashioned by his left hand, and proceeded to vigorously snap his jaw, making his teeth crash harmoniously together.

In great anguish, Thaumaste stood up, but as he rose letfly a fat baker's fart, with the dung right after it. He pissed a good dose of vinegar, and stank like the devils in hell. All those in the hall began to hold their noses, because, clearly, it was anxiety that was obliging him to beshit himself. Then he raised his right hand, the ends of all thefingers clutched together, and spread out his left hand,flat against his chest.

At which Panurge pulled out his long codpiece with its waving tassel, stretching it a good foot and a half or more, holding it in the air with his left hand and with his right, taking the ripe orange, he threw it in the air seven times, the eighth time catching it in his rightfist and then holding it quietly, calmly high in the air. Then he began to shake his handsome codpiece, as if displaying it to Thaumaste.

After this, Thaumaste began to puffout his cheeks like a bagpipe musician, blowing as hard as if he were inflating a pig's bladder.

At which Panurge stuck onefinger of his left hand right up his ass, sucking in air with his mouth, as if eating oysters in the shell or inhaling soup. Then he opened his mouth a bit and slapped himself with the palm of his right hand, making an immensely loud sound which seemed to work its way up from the very depths of his diaphragm all along the trachial artery. And he did this sixteen times.

But all Thaumaste could do was snuffle like a goose.

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So Panurge next stuck his right indexfinger into his mouth, clamping down hard on it. Then he pulled it out and, as he did so, made a loud noise, like little boysfiring turnips from an elderwood cannon. And he did this nine times.

And Thaumaste cried:

"Ah ha, gentlemen! The great secret! He's got his hand in there up to the elbow."

And he pulled out a dagger, holding it with the point facing down.

At which Panurge grabbed his great codpiece and shook it against his breeches as hard as he could. Then he joined his hands like a comb and put them on top of his head, sticking out his tongue as far as he could and rolling his eyes like a dying goat.

"Ah ha, I understand," said Thaumaste. "But what?" And he set the handle of his dagger against his chest, and put his palm over the point, letting hisfingertips turn lightly against it.

At which Panurge bent his head to the left and put his middlefinger in his left ear, raising his thumb. Then he crossed his arms on his chest, coughedfive times, and thefifth time banged his right foot on the ground. Then he raised his left arm and, tightening hisfingers into afist, held the thumb against his forehead, and with his right hand clapped himself six times on the chest.

But Thaumaste, as though still unsatisfied, put his left thumb to the end of his nose and closed the rest of that hand.

So Panurge put his forefingers on each side of his mouth, pulling back as hard as he could and showing all his teeth. His thumbs drew his lower eyelids Full p. C-321 as far down as they would go, making an exceedingly ugly face, or so it seemed to everyone watching.

BOOK II, CHAPTER 20

What Thaumaste Said about Panurge's Virtues and His Learning

Then Thaumaste stood up and, removing his hat, thanked Panurge graciously, then turned to the audience and said in a loud voice:

"Gentlemen, now I can truly speak the biblical words: *Et ecce plus quam Solomon hic*, And here is one who is greater than Solomon.[2] You see in front of you an incomparable treasure: and that is Monsieur Pantagruel, whose fame drew me from the farthest reaches of England in order to discuss with him certain insoluble problems, involving not only magic, academy, cabalistic learning, geometrical divination, and astrology but philosophy as well, which had long been troubling me. But now his fame bothers me, because it seems to be afflicted with jealousy—certainly, it hasn't granted him a thousandth part of what he deserves.

"You have seen for yourselves how his only disciple has satisfied my questions—has even told me more than I'd asked. Moreover, he hasfirst shown and then solved for me other problems of inexpressible difficulty and importance, and in so doing he has opened for me, I can assure you, the deepest, purest well of encyclopedic learning, and in a fashion, indeed, that I had never thought any man could accomplish—not even begin to accomplish. I refer to our disputation by signs alone, without a word being spoken. But in due time I will record everything he has said and shown me, so no one will think that this has been more tomfoolery in which we have been engaged, and I will have that record put into print so others can learn from it as I have. Then you will be able to judge how little the master is truly esteemed, when

the mere disciple can demonstrate such ability, for as it is written, *Non est discipulus super magistrum*, The disciple is not superior to his master.[3]

"And now let praise be given to God, and let me humbly thank you all for the honor you have shown us. May the good Lord repay you through all the eternity."

Pantagruel said similarly courteous things to all who were gathered there, and as he left took Thaumaste with him, to dine—and you will believe they drank until they had to open their breeches to let their bellies breathe. (In those days men buttoned up their bellies, the way they buttoned up their collars today.) They drank, indeed, until all they could say was, "Where do *you* come from?"

Holy Mother of God, how they guzzled, and how many bottles of wine they put away:

"Over here!"

"More, more!"

"Waiter, wine!"

"Pour it, in the name of the devil, pour it!"

No one drank fewer than twenty-five or thirty jugs, and do you know how? *Sicut terra sine aqua*, Like a dry land with no water—for it was warm weather and, besides, they were good and thirsty.

But as for Thaumaste's explanation of the signs they used, in their disputation, well, I'd be glad to explain them all myself, but I'm told that Thaumaste in fact wrote a huge book, printed in London, in which he sets out everything, omitting not a single item. In consideration of which, for now at least I'll just leave the subject.

Footnotes

- Note 4:A college for Benedictines. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:Followers of the Greek philosopher Aristotle, who wandered about in the Lyceum of ancient Athens while lecturing. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:2 Chronicles 9.1–12; the Queen of Sheba came from southern Arabia to test Solomon's legendary wisdom. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:Scythian prince, renowned for his travels and wisdom (6th century B.C.E.). Return to reference 7
- Note 8:Capital of ancient Egypt. "Pythagoras": Greek philosopher of the 6th century B.C.E. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:Said to be the founder of mathematics (4th century B.C.E.). Return to reference 9
- Note 1:An ascetic wandering teacher of the early Christian period. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Ancient sect of Hindu ascetics. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Titus Livius (59 B.C.E.–17 C.E. or 64 B.C.E.–12 C.E.), Roman historian. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:Lore from an occult system of mystical speculation of rabbinical origin. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:Sophists, for Thaumaste, are specious, overly subtle rhetoricians. Return to reference 5

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- Note 6:Pico della Mirandola (1463–1494), Italian humanist scholar. Pythagoras (6th century B.C.E.) discovered the mathematical basis of the musical intervals. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:Greek philosopher of the 6th century B.C.E. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:Translated in the next phrase, “to the point where he can’t say a word” (Latin). Return to reference 8
- Note 9:Ornamental pouch at the crotch of tightlyfitting breeches, worn by men in the 15th and 16th centuries. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:Thaumaste may be referring to the messenger god or to quicksilver, used in alchemy. Panurge reminds him of the rule of silent, gestural communication. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Matthew 12.42 and Luke 11.31. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Matthew 10.24. Return to reference 3

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MARGUERITE DE NAVARRE 1492–1549

The French “discovered” Italy in the latter part of the fifteenth century, both through travel and, starting in 1494, through military invasions. Eager to imitate more sophisticated Italian city-states, French rulers and aristocrats adapted Italian artistic, literary, and social values to their own culture. Marguerite de Navarre, one of the most influential members of French courtly society, played a significant part in bringing about this transformation. As a writer and a patron of artists, she also responded seriously to the spiritual and intellectual challenge to Christian faith brought about by the Reformation. Her lively collection of stories modeled on **Boccaccio,** the *Heptameron*, gives voice to characters whose different positions afford them starkly different views of the world.

LIFE AND TIMES

Marguerite was born in 1492 into the French royal family. Her brother, the future King Francis I, was born two years later. From her earliest years, Shorter p. 1596 Marguerite received an exceptionally good education, including instruction in Latin, Italian, Spanish, and German; later in life she also studied Greek and Hebrew. At seventeen she was married to Charles, duke of Alençon, a feudal lord who was intellectually not her match. When her brother succeeded Louis XII to the French throne in 1515, Marguerite became one of the most influential women at the royal court, where she advised the king and received dignitaries and ambassadors as well as eminent men of letters. Under Francis I, the French courtflourished culturally, hiring Italian artists as famous as Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519) and Benvenuto Cellini (1500–1571).

Francis I continued the Italian wars, the complicated conflicts fought on Italian soil between his forces and those of the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V. His defeat in the crucial battle of Pavia in 1525 was a double blow for Marguerite: her brother was taken to Madrid as a prisoner and her husband died of battle wounds. Marguerite went to Madrid to assist her sick brother and helped negotiate with Charles V for his release.

The year following her husband's death, Marguerite became "queen of Navarre" when she married Henri d'Albret, the king of Navarre in title only, since most of that domain had been annexed by Spain in 1516. Eleven years younger than Marguerite, Henri d'Albret was a dashing,flighty, and intellectually disappointing husband—and is thought to be the prototype for the philandering and misogynistic character of Hircan in the *Heptameron* . Their only daughter, Jeanne, born in 1527, was the mother of the future King Henry IV of France.

Marguerite continued to be involved in her royal brother's activities, participating in diplomacy and peace talks. Her interest, however, was increasingly focused on intellectual and literary pursuits and on religious meditation and debate. Erasmus, John Calvin, and Pope Paul III were among her numerous correspondents. Throughout her life she was a protector of writers and thinkers accused or suspected of Protestant leanings, including **Rabelais**, who dedicated the third book of ***Gargantua and Pantagruel*** to Full p. C-323 her. Herfirst published work, *The Mirror of the Sinful Soul* (1531), was found by the theologians of the Sorbonne to contain elements of Protestant "heresy"; the edition of 1533, containing an additional "Dialogue in the Form of a Night Vision" on the theological problem of salvation, was condemned. The king had to intervene on behalf of his sister and her chaplain. Later it became more difficult for Francis I to manage the rivalry between Catholics and Protestants, which was a political and military matter as much as it was a religious dispute. Protestants and their sympathizers were persecuted, and several prominent intellectuals went into prudent exile or were burned at the stake. Marguerite, who had an intellectual and mystical faith, appears never to have abandoned Catholicism but to have hoped for internal reform.

After the death of her brother in 1547, she published her *Marguerite de la Marguerite des Princesses* (with a play on the word *marguerite*, which in French means both "pearl" and "daisy"), a collection including long devotional poems and theatrical pieces ranging from allegory to farce. In 1549 she retired to Navarre and died in the castle of Odos on December 21.

THE *HEPTAMERON*

Marguerite's greatest literary achievement is the *Heptameron*, which was not published until 1559, a decade after her death. A collection of seventy stories told over seven days, it is framed by a larger narrative that reveals the storytellers' characters and relationships with each other. We do not know the exact circumstances of its production, Shorter p. 1597 and there are doubts that Marguerite herself authored all of its parts. Some scholars have concluded that Marguerite collected or commissioned tales for the narrative, and perhaps composed only the frame narrative—in many ways the work's most compelling feature. In the prologue,five men andfive women, all nobles, are brought together in the Pyrenees when natural and criminal forces—including aflood, bandits, a bear, and murderers—prevent them from returning home. They arrive independently at an abbey, where, at the suggestion of Parlamente, thought to represent Marguerite herself, they agree to tell stories each day until they are able to return home. The stories deal above all with the antagonism between the sexes, particularly concerning issues of maritalfidelity and the status of women. The *Heptameron* pays considerable attention to ideas of masculinity and to ideals and stereotypes about women. Class tensions are somewhat more muted, although the stories often pit powerful lords and husbands against those whose only weapon is their cleverness. The courtly men and women who narrate and hear the stories are, to say the least, unafraid to disagree with each other about the tales' significances, both in the frame and through their stories, which implicitly

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debate such issues as the just desserts for the philandering husband or the clever wife. For example, Ennasuite, the female narrator of story 10, celebrates a high-spirited, intelligent princess who physically resists and humiliates a gentleman who assaults her in her bedchamber. Yet the aggressive Hircan retorts that Ennasuite's gentleman should have raped the princess rather than suffer humiliation, and uses his own tale to present manly dominance —which other characters have been disparaging—in an attractive and romantic light.

The *Heptameron* belongs to a tradition of framed storytelling that includes ***The Thousand and One Nights*** , **Chau cer**'s ***Canterbury Tales*** , and **Boccac cio**'s ***Decameron*** . In the prologue, Parlamente overtly ties the storytelling game to the *Decameron* and a recent translation into French (commissioned by Marguerite) that drew, she says, the admiration Full p. C-324 of the French court. In writing a French *Decameron*, however, the group proposed, "they should not write any story that was not truthful." The relationship between language and truth therefore becomes a dominant theme. Unable to devote themselves entirely to religious pursuits, the characters choose "truthful" stories as a worthwhile pastime.

By truthfulness, Marguerite means stories that are honest about social tensions. When the characters comment—in the frame and in their own stories—on each others' tales, they reveal how social factors influence their view of the world. Divine "truth" gives way to individual and social perspective: age, gender, social standing, education, marital status, and religious disposition form the grounds for rivalry and dispute among the group members.

The two stories reproduced here show strong female characters managing male desire. The social differences among the characters are key to understanding their positions. In story 8, a wise wife protects her chambermaid and foils her philandering husband at the same time, exposing the blindness of his sexual infatuation. In the more complex story 10, the heroic Amador can only worship his beloved Florida from a distance, as she is "of far higher birth than he." As an old-fashioned knight of romance, Amador ("he who loves") seems content to stick to this kind of service, but when he is called to aid his king, he seeks to force an immediate union with his beloved, who bravely resists him. In this tale of dutiful devotion gone awry, a modernizing monarchy and the increasing irrelevance of older aristocratic forms lead to the demise of courtly love.

The "amusing and virtuous" pastime of a privileged group of storytellers forced into reclusion becomes in these pages a lively debate on gender roles, true virtue, and the force of society's disapproval. Balanced between the court and broader social concerns, between older certainties and new challenges, the *Heptameron* presents a lively and complex portrait of Marguerite de Navarre's changing world. At the same time, it offers an enduring account of the gendered division of experience, exploring how men and women manage and mismanage their desires.

Shorter p. 1598

From The Heptameron[1]

Footnotes

- Note 1:Translated by P. A. Chilton. Return to reference 1

From *Prologue*

* * *

Parlamente, the wife of Hircan,[2] was not one to let herself become idle or melancholy, and having asked her husband for permission, she spoke to the old Lady Oisille.[3]

Full p. C-325

"Madame," she said. "you have had much experience of life, and you now occupy the position of mother in regard to the rest of us women, and it surprises me that you do not consider some pastime to alleviate the boredom and distress that we shall have to bear during our long stay here. Unless we have some amusing and virtuous way of occupying ourselves, we run the risk of [falling][4] sick."

Longarine,[5] the young widow, added, "What is worse, we'll all become miserable and disagreeable—and that's an incurable disease. There isn't a man or woman amongst us who hasn't every cause to sink into despair, if we consider all that we have lost."

Ennasuite[6] laughed and rejoined, "Not everyone's lost a husband, like you, you know. And as for losing servants, no need to despair about that—there are plenty of men ready to do service! All the same, I do agree that we ought to have something to amuse us, so that we can pass the time as pleasantly as we can."

Her companion Nomerfide[7] said that this was a very good idea, and that if she had to spend a single day without some entertainment, she would be sure to die the next.

All the men supported this, and asked the Lady Oisille if she would kindly organize what they should do.

"My children," replied Oisille, "when you ask me to show you a pastime that is capable of delivering you from your boredom and your sorrow, you are asking me to do something that Ifind very difficult. All my life I have searched for a remedy, and I have found only one—the reading of holy Scripture, in which one mayfind true and perfect spiritual joy, from which proceed health and bodily repose. And if you ask what the prescription is that keeps me happy and healthy in my old age, I will tell you. As soon as I rise in the morning I take the Shorter p. 1599 Scriptures and read them. I see and contemplate the goodness of God, who for our sakes has sent His son to earth to declare the holy word and the good news by which He grants remission of all our sins, and payment of all our debts, through His gift to us of His love, His passion and His merits. And my contemplations give me such joy, that I take my psalter, and with the utmost humility, sing the beautiful psalms and hymns that the Holy Spirit has composed in the heart of David and the other authors. The contentment this affords mefills me with such well-being that whatever the evils of the day, they are to me so many blessings, for in my heart I have by faith Him who has borne these evils for me. Likewise, before supper, I withdraw to nourish my soul with readings and meditations. In the evening I ponder in my mind everything I have done during the day, so that I may ask God forgiveness of my sins, and give thanks to Him for His mercies. And so I lay myself to rest in His love, fear and peace, assured against all evils. And this, Full p. C-326 my children, is the pastime that long ago I adopted. All other ways have I tried, but none has given me spiritual contentment. I believe that if, each

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morning, you give one hour to reading, and then, during mass, say your prayers devoutly, you willfind even in this wilderness all the beauty a city could afford. For, a person who knows God willfind all things beautiful in Him, and without Him all things will seem ugly. So I say to you, if you would live in happiness, heed my advice."

Then Hircan spoke: "Madame, anyone who has read the holy Scriptures—as indeed I think we all have here—will readily agree that what you have said is true. However, you must bear in mind that we have not yet become so mortified in theflesh that we are not in need of some sort of amusement and physical exercise in order to pass the time. After all, when we're at home, we've got our hunting and hawking to distract us from the thousand and one foolish thoughts that pass through one's mind. The ladies have their housework and their needlework. They have their dances, too, which provide a respectable way for them to get some exercise. All this leads me to suggest, on behalf of the men here, that you, Madame, since you are the oldest among us, should read to us every morning about the life of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the great and wonderful things He has done for us. Between dinner and vespers I think we should choose some pastime, which, while not being prejudicial to the soul, will be agreeable to the body. In that way we shall spend a very pleasant day."

Lady Oisille replied that she herself found it so difficult to put behind her the vanities of life, that she was afraid the pastime suggested by Hircan might not be a good choice. However, the question should, she thought, be judged after an open discussion, and she asked Hircan to put his point of viewfirst.

"Well, my point of view wouldn't take long to give," he began, "if I thought that the pastime I would really like were as agreeable to a certain lady among us as it would be to me. So I'll keep quiet for now, and abide by what the others say."

Thinking he was intending this for her, his wife, Parlamente, began to blush. "It may be, Hircan," she said, half angrily and half laughing, "that the lady you think ought to be the most annoyed at what you say would have ways and means of getting her own back, if she so desired. But let's leave on one side all pastimes that require only two participants, and concentrate on those which everybody can join in."

Shorter p. 1600

Hircan turned to the ladies. "Since my wife has managed to put the right interpretation on my words," he said, "and since private pastimes don't appeal to her, I think she's in a better position than anyone to know which pastime all of us will be able to enjoy. Let me say right now that I accept her opinion as if it were my own."

They all concurred in this, and Parlamente, seeing that it had fallen to her to make the choice, addressed them all as follows.

"If I felt myself to be as capable as the ancients, by whom the arts were discovered, then I would invent some pastime myself that would meet the requirements you have laid down for me. However, I know what lies within the scope of my own knowledge and ability—I can hardly even remember the clever things other people have invented, let alone invent new things myself. Full p. C-327 So I shall be quite content to follow closely in the footsteps of other people who have already provided for your needs. For example, I don't think there's one of us who hasn't read the hundred tales by Boccaccio,[8] which have recently been translated from Italian into French, and which are so highly thought of by the [most Christian] King Francis I, by Monseigneur the Dauphin, Madame the Dauphine[9] and Madame Marguerite. If Boccaccio

could have heard how highly these illustrious people praised him, it would have been enough to raise him from the grave. As a matter of fact, the two ladies I've mentioned, along with other people at the court, made up their minds to do the same as Boccaccio. There was to be one difference—that they should not write any story that was not truthful. Together with Monseigneur the Dauphin the ladies promised to produce ten stories each, and to get together a party of ten people who were qualified to contribute something, excluding those who studied and were men of letters. Monseigneur the Dauphin didn't want their art brought in, and he was afraid that rhetorical ornament would in part falsify the truth of the account. A number of things led to the project being completely forgotten—the major affairs of state that subsequently overtook the King, the peace treaty between him and the King of England, the confinement of Madame the Dauphine and several other events of sufficient importance to keep the court otherwise occupied. However, it can now be completed in the ten days of leisure we have before us, while we wait for our bridge to befinished. If you so wished, we could go each afternoon between midday and four o'clock to the lovely meadow that borders the Gave de Pau, where the leaves on the trees are so thick that the hot sun cannot penetrate the shade and the cool beneath. There we can sit and rest, and each of us will tell a story which he has either witnessed himself, or which he has heard from somebody worthy of belief. At the end of our ten days we will have completed the whole hundred. And if, God willing, the lords and ladies I've mentionedfind our endeavors worthy of their attention, we shall make them a present of them when we get back, instead of the usual statuettes and beads. I'm sure they wouldfind that preferable. In spite of all this, if any of you is able to think of something more agreeable, I shall gladly bow to his or her opinion."

Shorter p. 1601

But every one of them replied that it would be impossible to think of anything better, and that they could hardly wait for the morrow. So the day came happily to a close with reminiscences of things they had all experienced in their time.

As soon as morning came they all went into Madame Oisille's room, where she was already at her prayers. When they had listened for a good hour to the lesson she had to read them, and then devoutly heard mass, they went, at ten o'clock, to dine, after which they retired to their separate rooms to attend to what they had to do. At midday they all went back as arranged to the meadow, which was looking so beautiful and fair that it would take a Boccaccio to describe it as it really was. Enough for us to say that a more beautiful meadow there never was seen. When they were all seated on the grass, so green and soft Full p. C-328 that there was no need for carpets or cushions, Simontaut[1] said: "Which of us shall be [the one in charge]?"

* * *

Footnotes

- Note 2:Hircan is variously described, in the book itself and by its commentators, as brilliant,flighty, sensual, capable of sarcasm and grossness. The name is related to Hircania, an imaginary and proverbially wild region in classical literature; the root is that of *hircus*, Latin for "goat" (cf. English *hircine*: libidinous). Parlamente probably represents Marguerite, whose name can be construed as *perle amante*, "loving pearl," or as *parlementer*, which refers to eloquent speaking. Return to reference 2

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- Note 3:The oldest, most authoritative, and most evangelical of the storytellers; she seems to be named for Louise—either Louise of Savoy, Marguerite's mother, or her lady-in-waiting, Louise de Daillon. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:Brackets indicate translator's interpolations. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:A young and wisely talkative widow, often identified with one of Marguerite's ladies-in-waiting, who among her titles had that of lady of Langrai (hence her name, which is also interpreted as a play on *langue orine*, meaning "tongue of gold"). Return to reference 5
- Note 6: *Enna* may stand for "Anne," and *suite* means "retinue"; so the character is identifiable with Anne de Vivonne, one of the ladies in Marguerite's entourage who collaborated on the *Heptameron* project at court. Her attitude toward men can be bitter and sharply ironic. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:The youngest member of the group, who generally views life with joyful optimism. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:The *Decameron* . Return to reference 8
- Note 9:The future queen Catherine de Médici. "Monseigneur the Dauphin": the future Henry II, nephew of Marguerite. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:Identified with François de Bourdeille, the husband of Anne of Vivonne. He is the long-standing *serviteur* to Parlamente: "According to the *serviteur's* practice, as the *Heptameron* presents it, a married aristocratic woman has the right to maintain several devoted knights in her service. . . . Since it is supposed to be chaste, the *serviteur*'s relationship, this remnant of courtly and chivalrous love, can coexist with faithful marriage. . . . Nevertheless, there is evidently considerable anxiety about the institution as such" [from the translator's introduction]. His name punningly alludes to masculinity (*monte haut*: rises high). Return to reference 1

Story 8

In the county of Alès there was once a man by the name of Bornet, who had married a very decent and respectable woman. He held her honor and reputation very dear, as I am sure all husbands here hold the honor and reputation of *their* wives dear. He wanted her to be faithful to him, but was not so keen on having the rule applied to them both equally. He had become enamored of his chambermaid, though the only benefit he got from transferring his affections in this way was the sort of pleasure one gets from varying one's diet. He had a neighbor called Sendras, who was of similar station and temperament to himself—he was a tailor and a drummer. These two were such close friends that, with the exception of the wife, there was nothing that they did not share between them. Naturally he told him that he had designs on the chambermaid.

Not only did his friend wholeheartedly approve of this, but did his best to help him, in the hope that he too might get a share in the spoils.

The chambermaid herself refused to have anything to do with him, although he was constantly pestering her and in the end she went to tell her mistress about it. She told her that she could not stand being badgered by him any longer, and asked permission to go home to her parents. Now the good lady of the house, who was really very much in love with her husband, had often had occasion to suspect him, and was therefore rather pleased to be one

up on him, and to be able to show him that she had found out what he was up to. So she said to her maid: “Be nice to him dear, encourage him a little bit, and then make a date to go to bed with him in my dressing-room. Don’t forget to tell me which night he’s supposed to be coming, and make sure you don’t tell anyone else.”

Shorter p. 1602

The maid did exactly as her mistress had instructed. As for her master, he was so pleased with himself that he went offto tell his friend about his stroke of luck, whereupon the friend insisted on taking his share afterwards, since he had been in on the business from the beginning. When the appointed time came, offwent the master, as had been agreed, to get into bed, as he thought, with his little chambermaid. But his wife, having abandoned her position of authority in order to serve in a more pleasurable one, had taken her maid’s place in the bed. When he got in with her, she did not act like a wife, but like a bashful young girl, and he was not in the slightest suspicious. It would be impossible to say which of them enjoyed themselves more—the wife deceiving Full p. C-329 her husband, or the husband who thought he was deceiving his wife. He stayed in bed with her for some time, not as long as he might have wished (many years of marriage were beginning to tell on him), but as long as he could manage. Then he went out to rejoin his accomplice, and tell him what a good time he had had. The lustiest piece of goods he had ever come across, he declared. His friend, who was younger and more active than he was, said: “Remember what you promised?”

“Hurry up, then,” replied the master, “in case she gets up, or my wife wants her for something.”

Offhe went and climbed into bed with the supposed chambermaid his friend had just failed to recognize as his wife. *She* thought it was her husband again, and did not refuse anything he asked for (I say “asked,” but “took” would be nearer the mark, because he did not dare open his mouth). He made a much longer business of it than the husband, to the surprise of the wife, who was not used to these long nights of pleasure. However, she did not complain, and looked forward to what she was planning to say to him in the morning, and the fun she would have teasing him. When dawn came, the man got up, and fondling her as he got out of bed, pulled offa ring she wore on herfinger, a ring that her husband had given her at their marriage. Now the women in this part of the world are very superstitious about such things. They have great respect for women who hang on to their wedding rings till the day they die, and if a woman loses her ring, she is dishonored, and is looked upon as having given her faith to another man. But she did not mind him taking it, because she thought it would be sure evidence against her husband of the way she had hoodwinked him.

The husband was waiting outside for his friend, and asked him how he had got on. The man said he shared the husband’s opinion, and added that he would have stayed longer, had he not been afraid of getting caught by the daylight. The pair of them then went offto get as much sleep as they could. When morning came, and they were getting dressed together, the husband noticed that his friend had on hisfinger a ring that was identical to the one he had given his wife on their wedding day. He asked him where he had got it, and when he was told it had come from the chambermaid the night before, he was aghast. He began banging his head against the wall, and shouted: “Oh my God! Have I gone and made myself a cuckold without my wife even knowing about it?”

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His friend tried to calm him down. “Perhaps your wife had given the ring to the girl to look after before going to bed?” he suggested. The husband made no reply, but marched straight out and went back to his house.

Shorter p. 1603

There he found his wife looking unusually gay and attractive. Had she not saved her chambermaid from staining her conscience, and had she not put her husband to the ultimate test, without any more cost to herself than a night’s sleep? Seeing her in such good spirits, the husband thought to himself: “She wouldn’t be greeting me so cheerfully if she knew what I’d been up to.”

As they chatted, he took hold of her hand and saw that the ring, which normally never left herfinger, had disappeared. Horrified, he stammered: “What have you done with your ring?”

She was pleased that he was giving her the opportunity to say what she had to say.

Full p. C-330

“Oh! You’re the most dreadful man I ever met! Who do you think you got it from? You think you got it from the chambermaid, don’t you? You think you got it from that girl you’re so much in love with, the girl who gets more out of you than I’ve ever had! Thefirst time you got into bed you were so passionate that I thought you must be about as madly in love with her as it was possible for any man to be! But when you came back the *second* time, after getting up, you were an absolute devil! Completely uncontrolled you were, didn’t know when to stop! You miserable man! You must have been blinded by desire to pay such tribute to my body—after all you’ve had me long enough without showing much appreciation for myfigure. So it wasn’t because that young girl is so pretty and so shapely that you were enjoying yourself so much. Oh no! You enjoyed it so much because you were seething with some depraved pent-up lust—in short the sin of concupiscence was raging within you, and your senses were dulled as a result. In fact you’d worked yourself up into such a state that I think any old nanny-goat would have done for you, pretty or otherwise! Well, my dear, it’s time you mended your ways. It’s high time you were content with me for what I am—your own wife and an honest woman, and it’s high time that you found *that* just as satisfying as when you thought I was a poor little erring chambermaid. I did what I did in order to save you from your wicked ways, so that when you get old, we can live happily and peacefully together without anything on our consciences. Because if you go on in the way you have been, I’d rather leave you altogether than see you destroying your soul day by day, and at the same time destroying your physical health and squandering everything you have before my very eyes! But if you will acknowledge that you’ve been in the wrong, and make up your mind to live according to the ways of God and His commandments, then I’ll overlook all your past misbehavior, even as I hope God will forgive me *my* ingratitude to Him, and failure to love Him as I ought.”

If there was ever a man who was dumbfounded and despairing, it was this poor husband. There was his wife, looking so pretty, and yet so sensible and so chaste, and he had gone and left her for a girl who did not love him. What was worse, he had had the misfortune to have gone and made her do something wicked without her even realizing what was happening. He had gone and let another man share pleasures which, rightly, were his alone to enjoy. He had gone and given himself cuckold’s horns and made himself look ridiculous for evermore. But he could see she was already angry enough about the chambermaid, and he did not dare tell her about the other dirty trick he had played. So he promised that he would leave his wicked ways behind him, asked her to forgive him and gave her the ring back. He told his friend not to

breathe a word Shorter p. 1604 to anybody, but secrets of this sort nearly always end up being proclaimed from the [roof-tops], and it was not long before the facts became public knowledge. The husband was branded as a cuckold without his wife having done a single thing to disgrace herself.

“Ladies, it strikes me that if all the men who offend their wives like that got a punishment like that, then Hircan and Saffredent ought to be feeling a bit nervous.”

“Come now, Longarine,” said Saffredent, “Hircan and I aren’t the only married men here, you know.”

Full p. C-331

“True,” she replied, “but you’re the only two who’d play a trick like that.”

“And just when have you heard of us chasing our wives’ maids?” he retorted.

“If the ladies in question were to tell us the facts,” Longarine said, “then you’d soonfind plenty of maids who’d been dismissed before their pay-day!”

“Really,” intervened Geburon, “afine one you are! You promise to make us all laugh, and you end up making these two gentlemen annoyed.”

“It comes to the same thing,” said Longarine. “As long as they don’t get their swords out, their getting angry makes it all the more amusing.”

“But the fact remains,” said Hircan, “that if our wives were to listen to what this lady here has to say, she’d make trouble for every married couple here!”

“I know what I’m saying, and who I’m saying it to,” Longarine replied. “Your wives are so good, and they love you so much, that even if you gave them horns like a stag’s, they’d still convince themselves, and everybody else, that they were garlands of roses!”

Everyone found this remark highly amusing, even the people it was aimed at, and the subject was brought to a close. Dagoucin,[2] however, who had not yet said a word, could not resist saying: “When a man already has everything he needs in order to be contented, it is very unreasonable of him to go offand seek satisfaction elsewhere. It has often struck me that when people are not satisfied with what they already have, and think they canfind something better, then they only make themselves worse off. And they do not get any sympathy, because inconstancy is one thing that is universally condemned.”

“But what about people who have not yet found their other half?” asked Simontaut. “Would you still say it was inconstancy if they seek her wherever she may be found?”

“No man can know,” replied Dagoucin, “where his other half is to be found, this other half with whom he mayfind a union so equal that between [the parts] there is no difference; which being so, a man must hold fast where Love constrains him and, whatever may befall him, he must remain steadfast in heart and will. For if she whom you love is your true likeness, if she is of the same will, then it will be your own self that you love, and not her alone.”

“Dagoucin, I think you’re adopting a position that is completely wrong,” said Hircan. “You make it sound as if we ought to love women without being loved in return!”

Shorter p. 1605

“What I mean, Hircan, is this. If love is based on a woman’s beauty, charm and favors, and if our aim is merely pleasure, ambition, or profit, then such love can never last. For if the whole foundation on which our love is based should collapse, then love willfly from us and there will be no love left in us. But I am utterly convinced that if a man loves with no other aim, no other

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desire, than to love truly, he will abandon his soul in death rather than allow his love to abandon his heart."

"Quite honestly, Dagoucin, I don't think you've ever really been in love," said Simontaut, "because if you had felt thefire of passion, as the rest of us have, you wouldn't have been doing what you've just been doing—describing Plato's republic, which sounds all veryfine in writing, but is hardly true to experience."

Full p. C-332

"If I have loved," he replied, "I love still, and shall love till the day I die. But my love is a perfect love, and I fear lest showing it openly should betray it. So greatly do I fear this, that I shrink to make it known to the lady whose love and friendship I cannot but desire to be equal to my own. I scarcely dare think my own thoughts, lest something should be revealed in my eyes, for the longer I conceal thefire of my love, the stronger grows the pleasure in knowing that it is indeed a perfect love."

"Ah, but all the same," said Geburon, "I don't think you'd be sorry if she did return your love!"

"I do not deny it. But even if I were loved as deeply as I myself love, my love could not possibly increase, just as it could not possibly decrease if I were loved less deeply than I love."

At this point, Parlamente, who was suspicious of theseflights of fancy, said: "Watch your step, Dagoucin. I've seen plenty of men who've died rather than speak what's in their minds."

"Such men as those," he replied, "I would count happy indeed."

"Indeed," said Saffredent, "and worthy to be placed among the ranks of the Innocents—of whom the Church chants '*Non loquendo, sed moriendo confessi sunt'!*[3] I've heard a lot of talk about these languishing lovers, but I've never seen a single one actually die. I've suffered enough from such torture, but I got over it in the end, and that's why I've always assumed that nobody else ever really dies from it either."

"Ah! Saffredent, the trouble is that you desire your love to be returned," Dagoucin replied, "and men of your opinions never die for love. But I know of many who *have* died, and died for no other cause than that they have loved, and loved perfectly."

Footnotes

- Note 2:The most philosophical member of the group, described elsewhere (story 11) as "so wise that he would rather die than say something foolish." He is also the saintliest; our translator indicates that his name is "a fairly obvious pun: *de goûts saints* (of saintly tastes)." Return to reference 2
- Note 3:"Not by speaking but by dying they confessed," a line recited during the Feast of the Holy Innocents. Return to reference 3

Story 10

In Aragon, in the province of Aranda, there once lived a lady. She was the widow of the Count of Aranda, who had died while she was still very young, and left her with a son and a daughter, who was called Florida.[4] As was right and proper for the children of a noble lord, they were brought up by her according to the strictest codes of virtue and honor. So carefully

did she school them that her house was known far and wide as the most honorable in the whole of Spain. She would often go to Toledo, which was then the seat of the King of Spain,[5] and when she visited Saragossa, which was not far from the family home, she would spend her time at the Queen's court, where she was as highly esteemed as any lady could be.

One day, when the King was in residence at his castle in Saragossa, the Castillo de la Aljaferia, the Countess, on her way to pay her respects as was her wont, was passing through a little village that belonged to the Viceroy of Catalonia.[6] Normally the Viceroy never moved from the border at Perpignan, where he Full p. C-333 was in command during the war between France and Spain, but peace[7] had just been declared, and he returned with his officers in order to do homage to his King. He knew that the Countess would be passing through his lands, and went to meet her, not only to do her the honor that was her due as the King's kinswoman, but also because of the goodwill that he had long borne her. Now in the Viceroy's entourage there were not a few noblemen of outstanding valor, courageous men, who, after long service in the wars had earned such heroic reputations that there was no one in the land who was not anxious to meet them and be seen in their company. Amongst these men there was one by the name of Amador.[8] Although he was only eighteen or nineteen years of age, he had such confidence, and such sound judgment, that you could not have failed to regard him as one of those rare menfit to govern any state. Not only was he a man of sound judgment, he was also endowed with an appearance so handsome, so open and natural, that he was a delight for all to behold. This was not all, for his handsome looks were equally matched by the fairness of his speech. Poise, good looks, eloquence—it was impossible to say with which gift he was more richly blessed. But what gained him even higher esteem was his fearlessness, which, despite his youth, was famed throughout all lands. For he had already in many different places given evidence of his great abilities. Not only throughout the kingdoms of Spain, but also in France and Italy people looked upon him with admiration. Not once during the recent wars had he shrunk from battle, and when his country had been at peace, he had gone to seek action in foreign parts, and there too had been loved and admired by friend and foe alike.

This young nobleman had devotedly followed his commander back home, to meet the Countess of Aranda. He could not fail to notice her daughter, Florida, who was then but twelve years of age. Never, he thought to himself, as he contemplated her grace and beauty, had he beheld so fair and noble a creature. If only she might look with favor upon him, that alone would give him more happiness than anything any other woman in the world could ever give him. For a long while he gazed at her. His mind was made up. He would love her. The promptings of reason were in vain. He would love her even though she was of far higher birth than he. He would love her, even though she was not yet of an age to hear and understand the words of love. But his misgivings were as nothing against thefirm hope that grew within him, as he promised himself that time and patient waiting would in the end bring his toils to a happy conclusion. Noble Love, through the power that is its own, and for no other cause, had entered Amador's breast and now held out to him the promise of a happy end, and the means of attaining it.

The greatest obstacle was the distance that separated his own homeland from that of Florida, and the lack of opportunity to see her. To [overcome] this problem he decided,

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contrary to his previous intentions, to marry some lady from Barcelona or Perpignan. His reputation stood so high there that there was little or nothing anyone would refuse him. Moreover, he had spent so long on the frontier during the wars, that although he came from the region of Toledo, he was more like a Catalan than a Castilian.[9] His family was rich and Full p. C-334 distinguished, but he was the youngest son, and possessed little in the way of inheritance. But Love and Fortune, seeing him ill-provided for by his parents, and resolving to make him their paragon, bestowed upon him through the gift of virtue and valor that which the laws of the land denied him. He was experienced in matters of war, and much sought after by noble lords and princes. He did not have to go out of his way to ask for rewards. More often than not he had to refuse them.

The Countess meanwhile continued on her way, and arrived at Saragossa, where she was well received by the King and the whole court. The Viceroy of Catalonia visited her frequently, and Amador took the opportunity of accompanying him. In this way he might at least have the chance of looking at Florida, for there was no way in which he might be able to speak to her. In order to introduce himself into the society of the Countess, he approached the daughter of an old knight, who came from his home town. Her name was Avanturada,[1] and she [had been brought up alongside] Florida, so that she knew the innermost secrets of her heart. Since she was a good, respectable girl, and expected to receive three thousand ducats a year by way of dowry, Amador made up his mind to address himself to her as a suitor, and seek her hand in marriage. She was only too willing to listen. But her father was a rich man, and she felt that he would never consent to her marriage with a man as poor as Amador unless she enlisted the aid of the Countess. So shefirst approached Florida.

“My lady, you have seen the Castilian gentleman, who often talks to me,” she said. “I believe that it is his intention to ask my hand in marriage. But you know what my father is like. You know that he will never consent, unless the Countess and yourself persuade him.”

Florida, who loved the young lady dearly, assured her that she would do everything she could for her, just as if her own interests were at stake. Then Avanturada presented Amador to Florida. As he kissed her hand, he almost fainted in rapture. He, the most eloquent man in Spain, was speechless as he stood before her. This somewhat surprised Florida, for, although she was only twelve years of age, she knew well enough that there was not a man in Spain who could express his mind more eloquently than Amador. He stood there in silence, so she said to him:

“Señor Amador, your reputation has spread through all the kingdoms of Spain, and it would be surprising indeed if you were not known to us also. All of us who have heard about you are anxious tofind some way in which we can be of service. So if there is anything I can do, I hope you will not be afraid to ask.”

Amador stood gazing at his lady’s beauty. He was transported with joy, and was only just able to utter a few words of grateful thanks. Florida was astonished to see that he was still incapable of making any kind of reply, but she attributed it to some momentary whim, completely failing to see that the true cause of his behavior lay in the violence of his love. She ignored his silence, and said no more.

Amador, for his part, had perceived what great virtue was beginning to appear in Florida, young as she was, and later he said to the lady he was planning to marry:

“Avanturada, do not be surprised that I couldn’t speak a word in front of Lady Florida. She is so young, yet she speaks so well and so wisely, and behind Full p. C-335 her tender years there clearly lie hidden such virtues, that I was overcome with admiration and didn’t know what to say to her. Tell me, Avanturada, since you are her friend and must know her closest secrets, how is it possible that she hasn’t stolen the heart of every single man at court? Any man who has met her, and hasn’t fallen in love with her, must be a dumb beast or made of stone!”

Avanturada, who by now was much in love with Amador, could keep nothing from him. She told him that the Lady Florida was indeed greatly loved by everyone, but that very few people actually spoke with her, that being the custom in that part of the land. There were only two men who seemed to show any inclination—Don Alfonso, son of Henry of Aragon, otherwise known as the Infante of Fortune,[2] and the young Duke of Cardona.

“Tell me,” said Amador, “which of the two do you think she likes the best?”

“She is so good and wise,” replied Avanturada, “that she would never confess to anything that was not in accordance with the wishes of her mother. But, as far as we can judge, she prefers the son of the Infante of Fortune to the Duke of Cardona, although it is the Duke of Cardona her mother prefers, because with him she would stay closer to home. But you are a man of perception and sound judgment, so perhaps you would help us decide what the truth of the matter is. It’s like this. The son of the Infante of Fortune was brought up at this court, and he is one of the most handsome and most accomplished young princes in Christendom. What I and the other girls think is that he is the one she should marry—they’d make the loveliest couple in the whole of Spain. And I ought to tell you as well that although they’re both very young—she’s only twelve and he’sfifteen—they’ve been in love for three years already. If you want to get in her good books you ought to make a friend of him and enter into his service.”

Amador was relieved to hear that his lady was capable of love at all. One day, he hoped, he might win the right to become her true and devoted servant, even though he might never become her husband. Of her virtue he was not afraid. His sole anxiety had been that she might reject love completely. From this conversation onward, Amador made friends with the son of the Infante of Fortune. He had little difficulty in gaining his goodwill, for he was versed in all the sports and diversions that the young prince enjoyed, being an excellent horseman, skilled in the use of arms and indeed good at everything that a young man ought to be able to do.

War broke out again in Languedoc, and Amador was obliged to return with the governor. His sorrow was great, the more so as he had no means of ensuring that he would return to a post where he would still be able to see his Florida. So before his departure, he spoke to a brother of his, who was major-domo[3] in the household of the Queen. He told him what an excellent match he had found in the Lady Avanturada while in the Countess’s household, and asked him to do everything in his power during his absence to bring the marriage about, by drawing on the influence of the Queen, the King and all his other friends. The brother, who was very fond of Amador, not only because of their common blood, but because he admired his prowess, promised to do as he was bidden. He was as good as his word. The Countess of Aranda, the young Full p. C-336 Count, who was growing to appreciate virtue and valor, and above all the beautiful Florida, joined in singing the praises of Amador. The result was that Avanturada’s miserly old father put aside his grasping habits for once and was brought to recognize Amador’s excellent qualities. The marriage was duly agreed upon by the parents of

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the couple, and, during the truce that had been declared by the two warring kings, Amador was summoned home by his brother.

It was at that time that the King of Spain withdrew to Madrid, where he was safe from the unhealthy air that was affecting a number of places throughout the country. Acting on the advice of his Council, but also at the request of the Countess, he had arranged a marriage between her son, the little Count, and a rich heiress, the Duchess of Medinaceli, in order to bring the two families together in an advantageous union and to please the Countess herself, whose interests were very dear to his heart. In accordance with his wishes the marriage was celebrated in the King's palace at Madrid. Amador was present, and was able to pursue his own matrimonial plans so successfully that he too was married—to Avanturada, in whom he inspired a good deal more love than he returned. His marriage was no more than a cover, no more than a convenient excuse to enable him to visit her on whom his mind constantly dwelled.

After his marriage he made himself so familiar in the Countess's household that no one took any more notice of him than if he had been a woman. He was only twenty-two at this time, but had such good sense that the Countess used to keep him informed of all her business affairs. She even instructed her son and her daughter to listen carefully to his conversation, and heed any advice he might give. Having reached these heights in the Countess's esteem, he behaved in such a sensible, such a restrained manner, that even the lady whom he loved so dearly failed to perceive his feelings. In fact, being so fond of Amador's wife, she hid nothing from Amador himself, not even her most intimate thoughts, [and went so far as] to tell him about her love for the son of the Infante of Fortune. Amador's sole concern was to win her completely, and he talked to her constantly about the Infante's son. Provided he was able to converse with her, he did not care what was the topic of their conversation. However, he had been there hardly a month after his marriage when he was obliged to go back to the wars. Not once, during the two years that followed, did he return to see his wife, who waited for him, living as she always had done in the household of the Countess. Throughout this time Amador would write to his wife, but his letters consisted principally of messages for Florida. She for her part would reply, and even insert something amusing in her own hand in Avanturada's letters—which alone was enough to make Amador very conscientious in writing to his wife. But throughout all this Florida was aware of nothing, except perhaps that she was as fond of Amador as if he had been her own brother.

Several times Amador came and went, but forfive whole years he never saw Florida for two months together. Yet in spite of these long absences, and the long distances that separated them, his love grew. At last he was able to travel to see his wife. He found the Countess far from the court, for the King had gone into Andalusia, taking with him the young Count of Aranda, who had already started to bear arms. The Countess had moved to a country house she owned on the borders of Aragon and Navarre. She was delighted to see Amador, who had been away now for three years, and commanded that he was to be Full p. C-337 treated like a son. There was nobody who did not make him welcome. During his stay, the Countess told him all her domestic business, and asked his advice on almost every aspect of it. The family's regard for him was unbounded. Wherever he went, there was always an open door. He was looked upon as a man of such integrity that he was trusted in everything. Had he been a saint or an angel, he could hardly have been trusted more. Florida, fond as she was of Avanturada, went straight to Amador whenever she saw him. Having not the slightest suspicion as to his true

intentions, she was quite unreserved in her behavior toward him. There was not a trace of passion in her heart, unless it was a feeling of contentment at being by his side. Nothing else occurred to her. But there are people who can guess from the expression in a man's eyes whether that man is in love or not, and Amador was constantly anxious lest he be thus found out. When Florida came to speak to him alone, in complete innocence, thefire that burned in his breast wouldflare up so violently that, do what he might, the color would mount to his cheeks and theflames of passion would gleam in his eyes.

In order that no one should guess from his intimacy with Florida that he was in love with her, he began to make approaches to an extremely attractive lady called Paulina, whose charms were highly celebrated in her day, and from whose snares few men managed to escape. She had heard how Amador had been successful with the ladies in Barcelona and Perpignan, and how he had won the hearts of the most beautiful and most noble ladies in the land; in particular she had heard how a certain Countess of Palamos, who was regarded as the most beautiful woman in Spain, had lost her heart to him. So she told him how deeply she pitied him for having married such an ugly wife, after all his past good fortunes in love. Amador realized from what she said that she was ready to provide him with any consolation he might require, and replied with as encouraging words as he was able, thinking that it would be possible to cover up the truth of his real feelings by making her believe a lie. But she was shrewd, experienced in the ways of love, and not a woman to make do with mere words. She sensed that his heart was not entirely taken up with love for her, and suspected that he wanted to use her as a cover. She watched him so closely that not a single glance escaped her. Amador's eyes were well-practiced in the art of dissembling, however, and Paulina could get no further than her vague suspicions. But it was only with extreme difficulty that he was able to hide his feelings, especially when Florida, who had not the slightest idea of the game he was playing, talked to him with her customary intimacy in front of Paulina herself. It was only by making the most painful effort that on such occasions he was able to control the expression in his eyes, and prevent them reflecting the feelings in his heart. So to forestall any unfortunate consequences in the future, he said to her one day as he leaned against the window where they had been chatting: "Tell me, [my Lady], is it better to speak or to die?"

"I would always advise my friends to speak," she replied quickly, "because there are very few words that can't be remedied, but once you've lost your life, there's no way of getting it back."

"So will you promise that you will not only not be angry at what I am going to say, but also, if you are shocked, that you will not say anything until I havefinished?"

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"Say whatever you please," she said, "because if *you* shock me, then there's no one in the world who could reassure me."

So he began.

"My Lady, there are two reasons why I have not yet told you of the feelings I have for you. One reason is that I hoped to give you proof of my love through long and devoted service. The other is that I feared that you would consider it [overweening presumption] that I, an ordinary nobleman, should dare to aspire to the love of a lady of birth so high. Even if I were, like you, my Lady, of princely estate, a heart so true and loyal as your own would not suffer such talk of love from anyone but the son of the Infante of Fortune, who has taken possession of your heart. Yet, my Lady, just as in the hardships of war one may be compelled to destroy one's own

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land, to lay waste one's rising crops, in order to prevent the enemy taking advantage of them, even so do I now seek to anticipate the fruit that I had hoped to reap only in the fullness of time, in order to prevent our enemies from taking advantage of it to your loss. I must tell you, my Lady, that from the time Ifirst saw you, when you were still so young, I have wholly consecrated myself to your service. I have never ceased to seek the means to obtain your good grace, and it was for this reason alone that I married the very lady who is your own dearest friend. Knowing, too, that you loved the son of the Infante, I did my utmost to serve him, to become his friend. In short, I have striven to do everything that I thought would give you pleasure. You have seen how the Countess, your mother, has looked favorably upon me, as has the Count your brother, and all those of whom you are fond, with the result that I am treated in this house, not as a man serving his superiors, but as a son. All the efforts that I madefive years ago were for no other end than to live my whole life by you. But you must believe me, my Lady, when I tell you that I am not one of those men who would exploit this advantage. I desire no favor, nor pleasure, from you, except what is in accordance with the dictates of virtue. I know that I cannot marry you. And even if I could, I should not seek to do so, for your love is given to another, and it is he whom I long to see your husband. Nor is my love a base love. I am not one of those men who hope that if they serve their lady long enough they will be rewarded with her dishonor. Such intentions could not be further from my heart, for I would rather see you dead, than have to admit that my own gratification had sullied your virtue, had, in a word, made you less worthy to be loved. I ask but one thing in recompense of my devotion and my service. I ask only that you might be my true and faithful Lady, so true, so faithful, that you will never cast me from your good grace, that you will allow me to continue in my present estate, and that you will place your trust in me above all others. And if your honor, or any cause close to your heart, should demand that a noble gentleman lay down his life, then mine will I gladly lay down for your sake. On this you may depend. Know, too, that whatsoever deeds of mine may be counted noble, good or brave, these deeds will be performed for love of you alone. Yes, and if for ladies less exalted my deeds have met acclaim, then be you assured that for a lady such as you I shall perform such deeds of greatness, that acts which once I deemed impossible I shall now perform with ease. But if you will not accept me as wholly yours, my Lady, then I shall make up my mind to abandon my career at arms. I shall renounce the valor and the virtue that were mine, for they will have availed me nought. Wherefore, my Lady, I do humbly beseech that my just demand might be granted, since your honor and your conscience cannot refuse it."

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The young Lady Florida changed color at this speech, the like of which she had never heard before. Then she lowered her gaze, like a mature woman, her modesty shocked. Then, with all the virtue and good sense that was hers, she said:

"If, as seems to be the case, Amador, you're only asking me for something that you already have, then why do you insist on making such a long, high-flown speech about it? I am rather afraid that there is some evil intent hidden away underneath all thesefine words, and that you're trying to beguile me because I'm young and innocent. It makes me very uncertain as to how I should reply to you. If I were to reject the noble love that you offer me, I would only be contradicting the way I've behaved toward you up till now, because in you I've placed more trust than in any other man in the world. Neither my honor nor my conscience stand in the way of your request. Nor does the love I bear the son of the Infante of Fortune, for my love for

him is founded on marriage, to which you lay no claim. In fact I can think of no reason why I should not grant your wishes, except perhaps for one anxiety that troubles my mind. You have no reason to address me in the way you do. If you already have what you desire, what can it be that now makes you tell me about it in such an emotional manner?"

Amador was ready with his reply.

"My Lady, you speak most prudently," he said, "and do me great honor to place in me such trust as you declare. If I were not happy to receive this blessing from you, I should be unworthy indeed to receive any other. But let me explain, my Lady, that the man who desires to build an edifice that will endure throughout eternity should take the utmost care to lay a safe and sure foundation. So it is that I, who desire most earnestly to serve you through all eternity, should take the greatest care that I have the means to ensure not only that I shall remain always by you, but that I shall be able to prevent all others from knowing of the great love I bear you. For, though my love is pure and noble enough to be announced to the whole world, yet there are people who will never understand a lover's soul, and whose pronouncements will always belie the truth. The rumors that result are none the less unpleasant for being untrue. The reason why I have made so bold as to say all this to you, is that Paulina has become very suspicious. She senses in her heart that I am unable to give her my love, and she is constantly on the watch for me to give myself away. And when you come to talk to me alone in your affectionate way, I am so nervous lest she discern something in my expression to confirm her suspicions that Ifind myself in just the awkward situation that I am most anxious to avoid. So I made up my mind to beg you not to take me unawares when Paulina is present, or anyone else whom you know to have an equally malicious disposition. For I would die rather than let any living creature know of my feelings. Were it not that your honor is so dear to me, I should never have entertained the idea of speaking to you in the way I have spoken. For I feel myself so content in the love that you have for me, that there is nothing further that I desire, unless it be that you should continue in the same for ever."

At these words Florida wasfilled with delight beyond bounds. Deep within her heart she began to feel stirrings that she had never felt before. And as she could see that the arguments he brought forth were honorable and good, she was able to grant his request, saying that virtue and honor answered for her. Full p. C-340 Amador was transported with joy, as anyone who has ever truly loved will understand.

However, Florida took his advice too seriously. She became nervous, not only in the presence of Paulina, but in other circumstances too, until she began not to seek Amador's company at all in the way she had in the past. Moreover, she took it badly that he spent so much time with Paulina, who seemed so attractive that she felt it impossible for Amador not to be in love with her. To relieve her distress she would talk at great length with Avanturada, who was herself beginning to be jealous of her husband and Paulina, and often bemoaned her lot to her friend. Florida, suffering from the same affliction, would offer what consolation she was able. It was not long before Amador noticed Florida's strange behavior, and concluded that she was keeping away from him, not just as a result of his advice, but because she was displeased with him. One day, as they were returning from vespers at a monastery, he said to her: "My Lady, why do you treat me the way you do?"

"Because that is the way I thought you wanted it," she replied.

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Then, suspecting the truth of the matter, and wishing to know whether he was right, Amador said: “My Lady, because of the time I have spent with her, Paulina no longer suspects you.”

“Then you couldn’t have done better, either for yourself or for me,” she answered, “for in giving yourself a little pleasure, you are acting in the interests of my honor.”

Amador understood from these words that she thought he derived pleasure from talking with Paulina. So hurt was he that he could not restrain his anger:

“Ah! My Lady, so you’re starting already to torment your servant, by hurling abuse at him for [acting in your interests]! There’s nothing more irksome and distressing than being obliged to spend one’s time with a woman one isn’t even in love with! Since you take exception to tasks I undertake solely in your service, I’ll never speak to her again. And let the consequences take care of themselves! To cover up my anger, just as in the past I’ve hidden my joy, I shall go away to a place not far from here, and wait until your mood has passed. But I hope that when I get there I shall receive orders from my commanding officer to return to the wars, where I shall stay long enough to prove to you that nothing keeps me here but you, my Lady.”

So saying, he went, without even waiting for her reply. Florida was left utterly dejected and downcast. Love, having been thwarted, was aroused now, and began to demonstrate its power. She acknowledged that she had wronged Amador, and wrote to him over and over again, beseeching him to come back to her—as indeed he did several days later, once his anger had subsided. I could not begin to tell you in detail what they said to one another to resolve their jealousies. To cut a long story short, he won the day. She promised that she would never again suspect him of being in love with Paulina. More than that, she swore she was and would remain convinced that it was for Amador almost unbearable to have to speak with Paulina or any other woman, nay that it was a martyrdom suffered for no other reason than to render service to his lady.

No sooner had Love overcome thesefirst suspicions and jealousies, no sooner had the two lovers begun to take more pleasure than ever from talking together, than word came that the King of Spain was sending the entire army Full p. C-341 to Salces. Amador, who was accustomed to be thefirst to join the royal standards, was as eager as ever to follow the path of honor and glory. Yet this time it was with particular regret, a regret deeper than that which he had experienced before, for not only was he relinquishing the one pleasure of his life, but he now feared that Florida might change during his absence. She had already reached the age offifteen or sixteen, and was wooed by lords and princes from far and wide. He feared that she might be married while he was away, and that he might never see her again. He had one safeguard, however—that the Countess should make his wife the special companion to Florida. Accordingly, he employed his influence to obtain promises both from the Countess and from Florida herself that wherever she should go after her marriage Avanturada should go with her. And so, in spite of the fact that the talk at that time was of a marriage in Portugal, Amador was certain in his mind that she would never abandon him. With this assurance, yet none the lessfilled with sorrow beyond words, he departed for the wars, leaving his wife with the Countess.

After her faithful servant had left, Florida found herself quite alone. She set herself to perform all manner of good and virtuous deeds, hoping thereby to acquire the reputation of being the most perfect lady in the land, and worthy to have a man such as Amador devoted to her service. As for Amador himself, when he arrived at Barcelona, he was, as he had been in

the past, greeted with delight by all the ladies. But they found him a changed man. They would never have thought that marriage had such a hold over a man, for he now seemed to have nothing but distaste for all the things that before he had pursued. Even the Countess of Palamos, of whom he had once been so enamored, could no longerfind a way of luring him even as far as the door of her residence. Anxious to be away to the scene of battle [where glory was to be won], Amador spent as little time as possible in Barcelona. No sooner had he arrived at Salces, than war did indeed break out between the two kings.[4] It was a great and merciless war. I have no intention of relating the course of events in detail, or even of recounting the many heroic deeds accomplished by Amador, for to tell you all this I should need a whole day. Suffice it to say that Amador won renown above all his comrades in arms. The Duke of Nájera arrived at Perpignan in charge of two thousand men, and invited Amador to be his second-in-command. He answered the call of duty, and led his men with such success that in every skirmish the air rang with shouts of “Nájera! Nájera!”

Now it came to the ears of the King of Tunis that the kings of Spain and France were waging war on the border between Perpignan and Narbonne. He had long been at war himself with the King of Spain, and he now saw that he could not wish for a better opportunity to harass him more. So he sent a largefleet of galleys and other vessels to pillage and lay waste every inch of unguarded territory that he couldfind along the Spanish coasts. When the inhabitants of Barcelona saw the vast number of sailing ships looming on the horizon, they immediately sent word to their Viceroy at Salces, who reacted by sending the Duke of Nájera to Palamos without delay. The Moors[5] arrived tofind the coasts Full p. C-342 well garrisoned and acted as if they were sailing on. But toward midnight they returned, and put large numbers of men ashore. The Duke was taken completely by surprise, and was in fact taken prisoner. Amador, vigilant as ever, had heard the noise, marshaled as many of his men as he could and defended himself so effectively that it was a long time before the stronger forces of the enemy were able to make any inroads. In the end, however, realizing that the Duke of Nájera had been captured, and that the Turks were determined to setfire to the whole of Palamos, and destroy the building which he had defended against them, he thought it better to surrender than to be the cause of the annihilation of his valiant comrades. It was also in his mind that if he were held to ransom, there would be some hope of seeing Florida again. Without more ado, he gave himself up to the Turkish chief-in-command, a man called Dorlin, who took Amador before the King of Tunis himself. He was received respectfully and treated well. He was guarded well, too, for the Turkish King was aware that the man he had in his hands was the veritable Achilles of Spain.

For two years Amador remained the prisoner of the King of Tunis. When the news reached Spain, the family of the Duke of Nájera was stricken with grief, but people who held the honor of their country dear judged the capture of Amador an even greater loss. It was broken to the Countess of Aranda and her household at a time when the poor Avanturada lay seriously ill. The Countess (who had guessed how Amador felt about her daughter, and had kept quiet, raising no objections, because she appreciated the young man’s qualities) called Florida to one side to tell her the distressing news. But Florida knew how to hide her true feelings, and merely said that it was a great loss for all the family, and that she felt especially sorry for Amador’s poor wife lying sick in bed. But seeing her mother weeping bitterly, she shed a few tears with her, lest her secret be discovered by being too well disguised. From this time on the Countess often spoke to Florida about Amador, but never once was she able to draw from her any reaction that would confirm her thoughts. I shall leave aside for now the pilgrimages, the

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prayers, the devotions, the fasts, which Florida began regularly to offer for Amador's salvation. As for Amador himself, as soon as he reached Tunis, he lost no time in sending messengers to his friends. To Florida he naturally sent the most trustworthy man he couldfind, to let her know that he was well and living in the hope of seeing her again. This was all she had to sustain her in her distress, but you may be sure that since she was allowed to write to him, she assiduously performed this task, and Amador did not go without the consolation of her letters.

The Countess of Aranda was summoned to Saragossa, where the King had taken up residence. There she found the young Duke of Cardona, who had been actively seeking the support of the King and Queen in his suit for the hand of Florida. Pressed by the King to agree to the marriage, the Countess, as a loyal subject, could not refuse his request. She was sure that her daughter, still so young in years, could have no other will than that of her mother, and, once the agreement was concluded, she took her on one side to explain how she had chosen for her the match which was mostfitting. Florida knew that the matter was already settled and that further deliberation was useless. "May the Lord be praised in everything," was all she could bring herself to say, for her mother looked so stern, and she judged it preferable to obey rather than indulge Full p. C-343 in self-pity. To crown all her sorrows, she then heard that the son of the Infante of Fortune had fallen sick and was close to death. But never once in the presence of her mother, or of anyone else, did she show any sign of how she felt. So hard indeed did she repress her feelings that her tears, having been held back in her heart by force, caused violent bleeding from the nose which threatened her life. And all the cure she got was marriage to a man she would gladly have exchanged for death. After the marriage was over she went to the Duchy of Cardona. With her went Avanturada, to whom she was able to unburden herself, bemoaning the harsh treatment she had received from her mother and the sorrow she nursed in her heart at the loss of the son of the Infante. But never once did she mention the fact that she missed Amador, except by way of consoling Avanturada herself. In short, the young Lady Florida resolved to have God and honor constantly before her eyes, and she so carefully hid her troubles, that no one had the slightest suspicion that her husband gave her no pleasure.

For a long time Florida lived this life, a life that seemed to her little better than death. She wrote of her woe to her servant Amador, who, knowing how great and noble was his lady's heart, and how deep was her love for the son of the Infante, could only think her end was nigh. This new anguish heightened his affliction, and he grieved bitterly, for Florida's plight seemed already worse than death. Yet he knew what torment his beloved must be suffering, and his own paled into insignificance. Gladly would he have stayed a slave to the end of his days, if only that might have ensured Florida the husband of her desires. One day he learned from a friend he had made at the court of Tunis that the King, who would have liked to keep Amador in his service, provided he could make a good Turk of him, was planning to threaten him with impalement if he did not renounce his faith. To forestall this move, therefore, he prevailed upon the man who had captured him and had become his master to let him go on parole, without informing the King. The ransom was set so high that the Turk reckoned no one as poor as Amador could ever possiblyfind the money to pay it.

So, having been allowed to depart, he went to the court of the King of Spain, from where, as soon as he was able, he set offagain to seek his ransom among his friends. He went straight to Barcelona, where the young Duke of Cardona, his mother and Florida were staying on account of some family business. As soon as Amador's wife, Avanturada, heard the news, she told Florida, who, as if for Avanturada's sake, expressed her joy. But she was afraid lest the joy she

felt at seeing him again should show in her face, and lest people who did not know her well should put a bad interpretation on it. So instead of going to meet him, she stood at a window to watch his arrival from afar. Immediately he came into sight she went down by way of a staircase, which was dark enough to prevent anybody seeing whether her cheeks changed color. She embraced Amador, took him to her room, and then to meet her husband's mother, who had not yet made his acquaintance. Needless to say, he had not been there two days before he had endeared himself to the whole household, exactly as he had in the house of the Countess of Aranda. I shall leave you to imagine the words that passed between him and Florida, and how Florida sorrowfully told of all that she had been through during his absence. She wept bitterly at having had to marry against her inclinations, and at having lost the man whom she loved Full p. C-344 so dearly, without hope of ever seeing him again. Then she made up her mind to take consolation in her love for Amador and the sense of security it afforded her, though she never once dared declare to him her intent. Amador guessed, however, and never lost an opportunity to make known to her how great was his love for her.

Florida was almost won. She was almost at the point where she was ready not merely to accept Amador as a devoted servant, but to admit him as a sure and perfect lover. But it was then that a most unhappy accident occurred. Amador had received word from the King to go to him immediately on urgent business. Avanturada was very upset at the news, and fainted. Unfortunately she happened to be standing at the top of aflight of stairs. She fell, and injured herself so badly that she never recovered. Florida was deeply affected by Avanturada's death. There could be no consolation for her now. It was as if she felt herself bereft of all relatives and friends. She went into deep mourning for her loss. To Amador the blow was even more overwhelming, for not only had he lost one of the most virtuous wives who ever lived, but he had also lost all hope now of continuing to be near Florida. He sank into a state of such dejection, that he thought he himself had not long to live. The old Duchess of Cardona visited him at frequent intervals, and quoted the sayings of the philosophers, in the hope of inducing him to bear the death of his wife with fortitude. But to no avail. The specter of death tormented him from one side. From the other, his martyrdom was made more painful by the force of his love. His wife was dead and buried. His sovereign lord had called him. What further reason could he have for staying where he was? In his heart was such despair that he thought he would lose his reason. Florida sought to give consolation, but desolation was all she brought him. One whole afternoon she spent in an attempt to console him with gentle words, doing all she would to lessen the pain of his grief, and assuring him that she wouldfind a way of seeing him far more often than he supposed. Since he was due to depart the following morning, and since he was so weak that he was unable to move from his bed, he begged her to come and visit him again that same evening, when everyone else had gone. This she promised to do, not realizing that such extremity of love as Amador's knew no rational bounds. He had served her long and well, without any reward other than what I have described in my story. Now he despaired of ever being able to return to see her again, and, racked by a love that had been hidden away within him, he made up his mind to make one last desperate gamble—to risk losing all, or to gain everything and treat himself to one short hour of the bliss that he considered he had earned. He had his bed hung with heavy curtains, so that it was impossible for anyone in the room to see in, and when his visitors came he moaned even more than before, so that people thought that he must surely die before another day passed.

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In the evening, when all the visitors had gone, Florida came, with the full approval of her husband, who had encouraged her to tend the sick man. She hoped to give him consolation by declaring her feelings and her desire to love him within the limits permitted by honor. She sat down on a chair at the head of his bed, and began, as she thought, to comfort him, by joining her tears to his. Seeing her so overcome with sorrow and regret, Amador judged that it was now, while she was in this state of torment, that his intentions would most easily be accomplished. He rose from his bed. Florida, thinking he was too weak Full p. C-345 for such exertions, tried to stop him. But he fell on his knees in front of her, saying, “Must I lose you for ever from my sight?” Whereupon he collapsed into her arms, as if all his strength had suddenly drained from him. The poor Florida put her arms around him and supported him for a while, doing her utmost to console him. He said not a word, and pretending still that he was at the brink of death, began to pursue the path that leads to the forbidden goal of a lady’s honor. When Florida realized that his intentions were not pure, she found it beyond belief. Had not his conversation in the past always been pure and good? She asked him what he was trying to do. Amador still said nothing. He did not want to receive a reply that could not but be virtuous and chaste. He struggled with all the strength in his body to have his way. Florida, terrified, thought he must be out of his mind. Rather that, than have to admit he had desired to stain her honor. She called out to a gentleman who she knew would be in the room. Amador, now utterly despairing, threw himself back on the bed with such violence that the other man thought he had breathed his last. Florida, who had now got up from her chair, said: “Quick, go and fetch some fresh vinegar!”

While the gentleman was doing as he had been bidden, she turned to Amador.

“What kind of madness is this, Amador? Are you beginning to lose your mind? What did you think you were trying to do?”

“What cruelty!” exclaimed Amador, now bereft of all reason through the violence of love. “Is this the only reward I deserve after serving you so long?”

“And what,” she replied, “has become of the honor you preached about so often?”

“Ah! my Lady,” he said, “no one in the world could possibly hold your honor as dear as I do! Before you were married I was able to overcome the desires of my heart so successfully that you knew nothing at all of my feelings. But now you are a married woman. You have a cover and your honor is safe. So what wrong can I possibly be doing you in asking for what is truly mine? It is I who have really won you, through the power of my love. The man whofirst won your heart so irresolutely pursued your body that he well deserved to lose both. As for the man who now possesses your body—he’s not worthy of the smallest corner in your heart. So you do not really belong to him, even in body. But consider, my Lady, what trials and tribulations I have gone through in the lastfive or six years for your sake. Surely you cannot fail to realize that it is to me alone that you belong, body and heart, for is it not for you that I have refused to give thought to my own body and my own heart? And if you are thinking that you can justify yourself on grounds of conscience, bear in mind that no sin may be imputed when the heart and the body are constrained by the power of love. When men kill themselves in a violentfit of madness, in no way do they commit a sin. For passion leaves no room for reason. And if it is the case that the passion of love is the most difficult to bear of all, if it is—as indeed it is—the passion that most completely blinds the senses, then what sin can you impute to a man who merely lets himself be swept along by an insuperable force? Now I must depart. All hope of seeing you again is gone. Had I but the guarantee that my great love deserves, I

would have all the strength I need to endure in patience what will surely be a long and painful absence. If, however, you do not deign to grant me my request, then ere long you shall hear that your severity has brought me to a cruel and unhappy end!”

Full p. C-346

Florida was as distressed as she was taken aback to hear a speech like this from a man of whom she would never have expected anything of the kind, and her tearsflowed.

“Alas! Amador,” she began, “what has happened to all the virtuous things you used to say to me when I was young? Is this the honor, is this the conscience, for which you so often told me to die, rather than lose my soul? Have you forgotten all the lessons you taught me from examples of virtuous ladies who resisted senseless and wicked passion? Have you forgotten how you have always spoken with scorn of women who succumb to it? It is hard, Amador, to believe that you have left your former self so far behind that all regard for God, for your conscience, and for my honor is completely dead. But if it really is as you seem to say, then I thank God that in His goodness He has forewarned me of the disaster that was about to befall me. By the words you have uttered God has revealed to me what your heart is really like. How could I have remained ignorant for so long? I lost the son of the Infante of Fortune, not just because I was obliged to marry somebody else, but because I knew that he really loved another woman. Now I am married to a man whom I cannot love and cherish however hard I try. That is why I had made up my mind to give you all the love that is in me, to love you with my whole heart. And the foundation of this love was to have been virtue, that virtue which holds honor and conscience dearer than life itself, that virtue which Ifirst found in you, and which, through you, I think I have now attained. Thus it was that I came to you, Amador,firmly resolved to build upon this rock of honor. But in this short space of time you have clearly demonstrated to me that I would have been building not upon the solid rock of purity, but upon the shifting sands, nay, upon a treacherous bog of vice. I had begun to build a dwelling in which I could live for evermore, but with a single blow you have razed it to the ground. So now you must abandon hope. You must be resolved never again, wherever it may be, to seek to speak to me or look into my eyes. Nor may you hope that one day I could change my mind, even should I so desire. My heart brims with sorrow for what might have been. But had it come to pass that I had sworn myself to you in the bond of perfect love, my poor heart would have been wounded unto death by what has transpired. To think that I have been so deceived! If it does not bring me to an early grave, I shall surely suffer for the rest of my days. This is myfinal word to you. Adieu. For ever more adieu!”

I shall not try to describe Amador’s feelings as he listened to these words. It would be impossible to set such anguish down in writing. It is difficult even for anyone to imagine such anguish, unless they have experienced the same kind of suffering themselves. What a cruel end! Realizing that she was going to leave him on this note, and that he would lose her for ever if he did not clear his name, he seized her by the arm.

“My Lady,” he said, putting on the most convincing expression he could manage, “for as long as I can remember I have longed to love a good and honorable woman. But I have found few who are truly virtuous, and that is why I wanted to test you out—to see if you were as worthy to be admired for your virtue, as you are to be loved for your other attributes. And now I know for certain that you are. For this I praise God, and give Him thanks that He has brought my heart to love such consummate perfection! So I beseech you, forgive this whim, pardon my

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rash behavior. For as you can see, all has turned out Full p. C-347 for the best. Your honor is vindicated, and I am happy indeed that this should be so!"

But Florida was beginning to understand the evil ways of men. If she had before found it hard to believe that Amador's intentions were bad, she now found it even harder to believe him when he said that in reality they were good.

"Would to God that you were speaking the truth!" she said. "But I am a married woman, and I am not so ignorant that I do not clearly realize that it was violent passion that drove you to do what you did. If God had not stood by me, and my hold on the reins had slackened, I am not at all convinced that you would have been the one to tighten the bridle. Those who truly seek virtue do not take the route that you took. But enough has been said. I was too ready to believe you were a good man. It is time that I recognized the truth, for it is by truth that now I am delivered from your clutches."

With these words, Florida left the room. The whole night long she wept. This sudden change caused her such pain that her heart was hard pressed to withstand the assaults of bitter regret which love hurled against it. For, while in accordance with reason she was determined to love him no more, the heart, over which none of us has control, would never yield. Thus, unable to love him less than before, she resolved to propitiate love, since love it was that was the cause. She resolved, in short, to go on loving Amador with all her heart, but, in order to obey the dictates of honor, never to let it be known, either to him or to anyone.

The next morning Amador departed in a state of mind which I leave to your imagination. But no one in the world had a more valiant heart than he, and, instead of sinking into despair, he began to seek new ways of seeing Florida again, and winning her. So, being due to present himself to the King of Spain, who at that time was in residence at Toledo, he went by way of the County of Aranda. He arrived late one night at the castle of the Countess, and found her ailing, and pining for her daughter. When she saw Amador she put her arms around him and kissed him, as if he were her own son, for she loved him dearly, and had guessed that he was in love with Florida. She pressed him for news, and he told her as much as he could without telling the whole truth. Then he told her what her daughter had always concealed, and confessed their love, begging the Countess to help him have news of Florida, and to bring her soon to live with her.

The next morning he left, and continued on his journey. When his business with the King had been dispatched, he went offto join the army on active service. He was downcast and so changed in every respect that the ladies and officers whose company he had always kept no longer recognized him. He continually dressed himself in clothes of coarse black cloth, much more austere than was called for by the death of his wife. But the death of his wife served merely as a cover for a much deeper grief. Three or four years went by, and Amador never once returned to court. The Countess meanwhile had word that such a change had come over her daughter that she was piteous to behold. She summoned Florida to her, in the hope that she might want to come back and live with her permanently. But Florida would not hear of it. When she heard that Amador had told her mother about their love, and that her mother, good and wise as she was, had confided in Amador and told him she approved, her consternation Full p. C-348 was great indeed. On the one hand, she could see that her mother had considerable admiration for Amador, and that if she had the truth told to her, it might bring him harm. That was the last thing she wanted, and in any case, she felt quite well able to punish him for his outrageous behavior without help from her family. On the other hand, she could see that if she

concealed the bad things she knew about him, she would be obliged by her mother and all her friends to talk with him and receive him favorably. That, she feared, could only strengthen him in his base intentions. However, he was in distant parts, so she made little fuss, and wrote him letters whenever the Countess asked her to do so. But when she did write, she made sure that he would realize that they were written out of obedience, and not from any inclination of her own. There had once been a time when her letters had brought him transports of joy. Now he felt nothing but sorrow as he read them.

Three years went by, during which time Amador performed so many glorious deeds that no writer could ever hope to set them all down, even if he had all the paper in Spain. It was now that he devised his grand scheme—not a scheme to win back Florida's heart, for he deemed her lost for ever, but a scheme to score a victory over her as his mortal enemy, for that was how she now appeared. Throwing all reason to the winds, and setting aside all fear of death, he took the greatest risk of his life. His mind was made up. He was not to be deterred from his aim. Since his credit stood high with the governor, he was able to get himself appointed to a mission to the King for the purpose of discussing some secret campaign directed against the town of Leucate. He also managed to get himself issued with orders to inform the Countess of Aranda of the plan, and to take her advice before meeting the King. Knowing that Florida was there, he went post-haste into Aranda, and on his arrival sent a friend in secrecy to tell the Countess that he wished to see her, and that they must meet only at dead of night, without anyone else knowing about it. Overjoyed to hear that Amador was in the neighborhood, the Countess told Florida, and sent her to undress in her husband's room, so that she should be ready to be called once everyone had retired. Florida made no objection. But she had not yet recovered from her earlier terrifying experience, and, instead of doing as she was bidden, went straight to an oratory to commend herself to our Lord, and to pray to Him that He might preserve her heart from all base affections. Remembering that Amador had often praised her beauty, which in spite of long sickness had in no way diminished, she could not bear the thought that this beauty of hers should kindle so base afire in the heart of a man who was so worthy and so good. Rather than that she would disfigure herself, impair her beauty. She seized a stone that lay on the chapelfloor, and struck herself in the face with great force, severely injuring her mouth, nose and eyes. Then, so that no one would suspect her when she was summoned, she deliberately threw herself against a [large piece of stone] as she left the chapel. She lay with her face to the ground, screaming, and was found in this appalling state by the Countess, who immediately had her wounds dressed and her face swathed in bandages.

Once she had been made comfortable, the Countess took her into her chamber and told her that she wanted her to go and talk to Amador in her private room till she had dismissed her attendants. Thinking that Amador would not be unaccompanied, Florida obeyed, but, once the door closed behind her, she was horrified tofind herself completely alone with him. Full p. C-349 Amador, for his part, was not at all displeased, for now, he thought, he would by fair means or foul surely get what he had so long desired. A few words were sufficient to tell him that her attitude was the same as when he had last seen her, and that she would die rather than change her mind. In a state of utter desperation he said:

"Almighty God, Florida, I'm not going to have the just desserts of all my efforts frustrated by your scruples! Seeing that all my love, all my patient waiting, all my begging and praying are useless, I shall use every ounce of strength in my body to get the one thing that will make life worth living! Without it I shall die!"

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His whole expression, his face, his eyes, had changed as he spoke. The fair complexion wasflushed withfiery red. The kind, gentle face was contorted with a terrifying violence, as if there was some raging inferno belchingfire in his heart and behind his eyes. One powerfulfist roughly seized hold of her two weak and delicate hands. Her feet were held in a vice-like grip. There was nothing she could do to save herself. She could neitherfight back, nor could shefight free. She had no other recourse than to see if there might not yet be some trace of his former love, for the sake of which he might relent and have mercy.

“Amador,” she gasped, “even if you think I’m your enemy now, I beg you, in the name of that pure love which I used to think you felt for me in your heart, please listen to me, before you torture me!”

Seeing that he was prepared to hear her out, she continued: “Alas, Amador! What is it that drives you to seek that which can give you no satisfaction, and to cause me the greatest sorrow anyone could ever cause me? You came to know my feelings so well in the days when I was young, when my beauty was at its most fresh, and when your passion might have had some excuse, that I marvel now that at the age I am, ugly as I am, ravaged by deepest sorrow as I am, you should seek that which you know you cannotfind. I am certain that you can have no doubt but that my feelings remain as they have always been, and that [only by use of force therefore can you obtain that which you ask]. If you will look at the way my face is now adorned, you will lose all memory of the delights that once you found there, you will lose all your desire to approach it nearer! If there is the slightest trace in you of the love you used to bear me, you must surely have pity on me and overcome this violent madness. In the name of all the [pity and noble virtue] that I have known in you in the past, I plead with you, and beg you for mercy. Just let me live in peace! Let me live the life of honor and virtue to which, as you yourself once urged me, I have committed myself. And if your former love for me really has turned to hatred, and if, more out of a desire for revenge than some form of love, your intention is to make me the most wretched woman on earth, then I tell you plainly that you will not have your way. I shall be forced, against all my previous intentions, to make known your vicious designs to the very lady, who hitherto has held you in the highest esteem. You will realize that if I take this action, you will be in danger of your life . . .”

“If I am to die anyway,” Amador broke in, “then the agony will be over all the sooner! Nor am I going to be deterred because you’ve disfigured your face! I’m quite sure you did it yourself, of your own volition. No! If all I could get were your bare bones, still I should want to hold them close!”

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Florida could see that neither tears, nor entreaties, nor reasoning were to any avail. She could see that he was going to act out his evil desires, unmoved and merciless. Exhausted and unable to struggle any more, there was only one thing left she could do to save herself, the one thing that she had shrunk from as from death itself. With a heart-rending cry, she shouted out to her mother with all the strength that was in her. There was something in Florida’s voice that made the Countess go cold with horror. Suspecting what had happened, sheflew to the room with all possible haste. Amador, not quite so ready to die as he had just declared, had had enough time to gather himself together. When the Countess entered, there he was standing by the door, with Florida at a distance.

“Amador, what’s the matter?” she demanded. “Tell me the truth!”

Amador was never at loss when it came tofinding his way out of a difficult situation. Looking shocked and pale, he gave his answer.

“Alas! Madame, what has come over Florida? I’ve never been so astonished as I am at this moment. I used to think, as you know, that I had some share in her goodwill. But now I see that I have none at all. I do not think that she was any less modest, any less virtuous in the days when she was living in your household than she is now, but she used not to have such scruples about seeing men and talking to them. I only have to look at her now, and she can’t bear it! I thought it was a dream or a trance, when I saw her acting like that, and I asked her if I could kiss her hand, which after all is quite normal in this part of the world, but she completely refused! I am prepared to admit that I was in the wrong over one thing, Madame, and for this I do ask your forgiveness: I’m afraid I did hold her hand as you might say by force, and kissed it. But that was the only thing I asked of her. But she seems to be so determined that I should die, that she called out to you, as you must have heard. I can’t understand why she did it, unless she was afraid that I had other intentions. Anyway, whatever the reason, Madame, I take the blame for it. She really ought to show affection for all your loyal servants. But such is fate! I happen to be the one who’s in love, and yet I’m the only one who loses favor! Of course, I’ll always feel the same way about you, Madame, and about your daughter, as I have in the past, and I hope and pray that I shan’t lose your good opinion, even if, through no fault of my own, I have lost hers.”

The Countess, who half believed, half doubted these words, turned to Florida. “Why did you call out for me like that?” she asked.

Florida replied that she had been afraid, and, in spite of her mother’s insistent and repeated questions, she refused ever to give more details. It was enough for her that she had been delivered from the hands of her enemy, and as far as she was concerned Amador had been quite sufficiently punished by being thwarted in his attempt. The Countess had a long talk with Amador, and then let him speak again to Florida, though she stayed in the room while he did so, in order to observe from a distance how he would comport himself. He had little to say, though he did thank Florida for not telling her mother the whole truth, and he did ask her that since he was banished from her heart for ever, she would at least not admit a successor.

“If I had had any other way of protecting myself,” came her reply, “I would not have shouted out, and no one would have heard anything about what happened. Provided that you don’t drive me to it, that is the worst you will have Full p. C-351 from me. And you need have no fear that I shall give my love to some other man. For since I have not found that which I desired in the heart which I regarded as the most virtuous in the world, I shall never believe it is to be found in any man. Thanks to what has happened I shall be free for ever more from the passions that can arise from love.”

So saying, she bade Amador farewell. The Countess had been watching closely, but she could come to no conclusion, except that her daughter plainly no longer felt any affection for Amador. She was convinced that Florida was just being perverse, and had taken it into her head to dislike anyone that her mother was fond of. From that time on, the Countess became so hostile toward her daughter, that for seven whole years she did not speak to her except in anger—and all this for the sake of Amador.

Up till this time Florida had had a horror of being with her husband, but during this period her attitude changed, and, in order to [escape] the harshness of her mother, she refused to move from his side. But this did not help her in her plight, so she conceived a plan which

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involved deceiving Amador. Dropping for a day or two her hostile air, she advised Amador to make amorous overtures to a certain woman, who, she said, had spoken of their love. The woman in question was a lady by the name of Loretta, who was attached to the household of the Queen. Amador believed Florida, and in the hope of eventually regaining her favor, he made advances to Loretta, who was only too pleased to have such an eminently desirable servant. Indeed she made it so obvious by her simperings, that the whole court soon got to hear of it. The Countess herself was at court at this time, and when she heard the rumors, she began to be less severe than she had been with her daughter. One day, however, it came to Florida's ears that Loretta's husband, who was a high-ranking officer in the army, and one of the King of Spain's highest governors, had become so jealous, that he had sworn to stop at nothing to kill Amador. Now Florida was incapable of wishing harm on Amador, however harsh a mask she might wear, and she informed him immediately of the danger he was in. Amador, anxious to return to her, replied that he would never again speak a word to Loretta, provided that Florida would agree to see him for three hours each day. To that she could not give her consent.

"Then why," said Amador to her, "if you do not wish to give me life, do you wish to save me from death? There can only be one reason—that you want to keep me alive in order to torture me, and hope thereby to cause me greater pain than a thousand deaths could ever do. Death may shun me, yet I shall seek it out, and I shallfind it, for only in death shall I have repose!"

Even as they spoke, news arrived that the King of Granada had declared war on the King of Spain, and had attacked sofiercely that the King had had to send his son, the Prince, to the front, together with two old and experienced lords, the Constable of Castile and the Duke of Alba. The Duke of Cardona, too, and the Count of Aranda, were anxious to join the campaign, and petitioned the King for a commission. His majesty granted their requests, appointing each to the command appropriate to his birth. Amador was appointed to lead them. His exploits during that campaign were so extraordinary that they had more the appearance of acts of desperation than acts of bravery. Indeed, to bring my story to its conclusion, this bravery, going beyond all bounds, was demonstrated at the last in death.

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The Moors had indicated that they were about to join battle. Then, seeing the size of the Christian forces, they had staged a sham retreat. The Spaniards had been about to follow in hot pursuit. But the old Constable and the Duke of Alba, realizing that it was a trap, had managed to restrain the Prince from crossing the river. The Count of Aranda and the Duke of Cardona, however, had defied orders. The Moors, seeing their pursuers were reduced in number, had wheeled round. Cardona had been killed, cut down by thrusts from Moorish scimitars. Aranda had been left gravely wounded, and as good as dead. In the midst of the carnage Amador arrived, riding furiously, and forcing his way like a madman through the thick of the battle. He had the two bodies transported back to the Prince's encampment. The Prince was as overcome as if they had been his own brothers. When the wounds were examined, however, it was found that the Count of Aranda was still alive, so he was carried back in a litter[6] to the family home, where he lay ill for a very long time. The Duke's corpse was sent back to Cardona. Amador, having rescued the two bodies, was so heedless of his own safety that he found himself surrounded by vast numbers of Moors. He made up his mind what he should do. His enemies would not enjoy the glory either of capturing him alive or of slaying him. Even as he had failed to take his lady, so now his enemies would be frustrated in

taking him. His faith to her he had broken. His faith to God he would not break. He knew, too, that if he was taken before the King of Granada, he would have to abjure Christianity, or die a horrible death. Commending body and soul to God, he kissed the cross of his sword, and plunged it with such force into his body that he killed himself in one fell blow.

Thus died poor Amador, his loss bemoaned as his virtue and prowess deserved. The news of his death spread throughout Spain, and eventually reached Florida, who was at Barcelona, where her husband had expressed his wish to be buried. She conducted the obsequies with due honor. Then, saying not a word either to her own mother or to the mother of her dead husband, she entered the Convent of Jesus. Thus she took Him as lover and as spouse who had delivered her from the violent love of Amador and from the misery of her life with her earthly husband. All her affections henceforth were bent on the perfect love of God. As a nun she lived for many long years, until at last she commended her soul to God with the joy of the bride who goes to meet her bridegroom.

“I’m afraid, Ladies, that this story has been rather long, and that some of you might have found it somewhat tedious—but it would have been even longer if I’d done justice to the person who originally told it to me. I hope you will take Florida’s example to heart, but at the same time I would beg you to be less harsh, and not to have so much faith in men that you end up being disappointed when you learn the truth, drive them to a horrible death and give yourselves a miserable life.”

Parlamente had had a patient and attentive audience. She now turned to Hircan, and said: “Don’t you think that this woman was tried to the limits of her endurance, and that she put up a virtuous resistance in the face of it all?”

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“No,” replied Hircan, “for screaming is the least resistance a woman can offer. If she’d been somewhere where nobody could have heard her, I don’t know what she’d have done. And as for Amador, if he’d been more of a lover and less of a coward, he wouldn’t have been quite so easily put off. The example of Florida is not going to make me change my opinion on this matter. I still maintain that no man who loved perfectly, or who was loved by a lady, could fail in his designs, provided he went about things in a proper manner. All the same, I must applaud Amador for at least partly fulfilling his duty.”

“What duty?” demanded Oisille. “Do you call it duty when a man who devotes himself to a lady’s service tries to take her by force, when what he owes to her is obedience and reverence?”

“Madame,” replied Saffredent, “when our ladies are holding court and sit in state like judges, then we men bend our knees before them, we timidly invite them to dance, we serve them so devotedly that we anticipate their every wish. Indeed, we have the appearance of being so terrified of offending them, so anxious to serve their every whim, that anybody else observing us would think we must be either out of our minds, or struck dumb, so idiotic is our animal-like devotion. Then all the credit goes to the ladies, because they put on such haughty expressions and adopt such refined ways of speaking, that people who see nothing but their external appearance go in awe of them, and feel obliged to admire and love them. However, in private it is quite another matter. Then Love is the only judge of the way we behave, and we soonfind out that they are just women, and we are just men. The title ‘lady’ is soon exchanged for ‘mistress,’ and her ‘devoted servant’ soon becomes her ‘lover.’ Hence the well-known proverb: ‘loyal service makes the servant master.’”

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“They have honor, just as men, who can give it to them or take it away, have honor; and they see the things we patiently endure; but it is therefore only right that our long-suffering should be rewarded when honor cannot be injured.”

“But you are not talking about true honor,” intervened Longarine, “true honor which alone gives true contentment in this world. Suppose that everybody said I was a decent woman, while I knew that the opposite was true—then their praise would only increase my dishonor and make me feel inwardly ashamed. Equally, if everybody criticized me, while I knew that I was completely innocent, I would only derive contentment from their criticism. For no one is truly contented, unless he is contented within himself.”

“Well, whatever you all might say,” said Geburon, “in my opinion Amador was the most noble and valiant knight that ever lived. I think I recognize him beneath hisfictitious name, but since Parlamente has preferred not to disclose the identities of her characters, I shall not disclose them either. Suffice it to say that if it’s the man I think it is, then he’s a man who never experienced fear in his life, a man whose heart was never devoid of love or the desire for courageous action.”

Then Oisille turned to them all and said: “I think it has been a delightful day, and if the remaining days are equally enjoyable, then we shall have seen how swiftly the time can be made to pass in refined conversation. See how low the sun is already. And listen to the Abbey bell calling us to vespers! It started ringing a while ago, but I didn’t draw your attention to it because your desire to hear the end of the story was more devout than your desire to hear vespers!”

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Upon these words they all got up and made their way to the Abbey, where they found the monks had been waiting for them for a good hour. After hearing vespers, they had their supper, and spent the evening discussing the stories they had heard that day and racking their brains for new stories to make the next day as enjoyable as thefirst. Then, after playing not a few games in the meadow, they retired to bed, thus bringing thefirst day to a happy and contented close.

Footnotes

- Note 4:“In bloom.” Return to reference 4
- Note 5:Ferdinand V of Spain (1452–1516). Return to reference 5
- Note 6:Don Enrique of Aragon. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:Treaty of Blois (1505). Return to reference 7
- Note 8:“He who loves.” Return to reference 8
- Note 9:Although a native of Castile, Amador has lived with, and fought alongside of, the Catalans and Aragonese—i.e., although a foreigner, he looks like a native. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:“Aventurada” (Spanish), daring or uncertain. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:A son of the Spanish king other than the heir apparent. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Head steward in the royal household. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:When the Treaty of Blois failed, the wars between Spain and France resumed at the border of the two countries (Perpignan). Return to reference 4
- Note 5:Muslims from North Africa. Return to reference 5

• Note 6:A stretcher. Return to reference 6

THE ABENCERRAJE sixteenth century

Although it announces itself as a love story (its full title is *The History of the Abencerraje and the Lovely Jarifa*), the primary focus of *The Abencerraje* is the unlikely friendship between two knights: a gallant lovelorn Moor and his Christian captor. Offering an idealized version of life on the Andalusian Christian/Muslim frontier in what is today southern Spain, the book also takes long-familiar traditions of the sixteenth century—ideas about chivalry and courtly love that were already well known and well worn—and puts them to new and surprising uses.

The Abencerraje was published anonymously, as were several of the most influential and popular early-modern Spanish works that tackled sensitive topics. Several versions of the novella, with minor differences, appeared in quick succession in the 1560s: in an anonymous history of the conquest of the city of Antequera; as an interpolated story in the wildly popular pastoral romance *Diana*; and as one item in a humanist anthology of miscellaneous texts.

Although *The Abencerraje* was read far beyond its time and place, it was written in a very specific political context, when not only Islam but most cultural forms recognized as deriving from Al-Andalus, the formerly Muslim part of the Iberian peninsula, were forbidden in Spain. In contrast, *The Abencerraje* celebrates that cultural inheritance, advocates sympathy toward Muslims and their Christian-converted descendants, and expresses a humanist belief in the power of chivalry to overcome religious differences.

By the latefifteenth century, when the story is set, Christians had gained control of all of modern-day Spain except the Nasrid kingdom of Granada. Much of the warfare on the frontier was carried out through raids, skirmishes, and the taking of captives for ransom. In 1492—the same year in which they decreed the expulsion of Spain's Jews and in which Columbusfirst reached the New World on their behalf—King Ferdinand II of Aragon and Queen Isabella I of Castile, known as Spain's "Catholic Monarchs," conquered Granada.

Soon after their victory, Ferdinand and Isabella reneged on the guarantees of religious freedom that they had offered, and instead set out to align Spain exclusively with the Roman Catholic Church. The Muslims of Castile and Aragon, like the Jews before them, were offered the choice of Full p. C-355 conversion or forced exile. A few noble families managed to assimilate by converting and marrying into the Christian nobility and were thereafter known dismissively as New Christians, or Moriscos. The "Moors" of mid-sixteenth-century Spain, when *The Abencerraje*first appeared, were thus a persecuted and ostracized minority. In this context, the idealized representation of a sympathetic, noble Moor and his beloved participates in an urgent debate about the nature of the newly unified Spanish nation and how it would manage the large numbers of converted "Moors" that remained in Spain. How to reconcile the idealizedfigures of the text with the realities of its context? How should we remember our history, and what role does it serve? From the wry question at the start, concerning whether Spain could ever pay due homage to its many heroes, to Rodrigo de Narváez's claim at the end that, of all his feats, he would most like to commemorate his friendship with Abindarráez, *The Abencerraje* foregrounds the stakes of the stories we choose to tell ourselves about the past.

The Abencerraje works within genres that were extremely popular at the time, such as the chivalric and the sentimental romance, to present the relationship between a Moor and his

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Christian foe. It makes literal the metaphors of Petrarchan love—the idea of love as a form of captivity, the state of seeming enmity between lover and beloved—to explore what kinds of ties bind knights of different faiths. The novella tells of a Moorish knight, Abindarráez, of the unfortunate Abencerraje clan, who is brought up in exile, away from Granada. He is raised with a supposed sister, Jarifa, with whom he falls in love. Once they discover they are not related, they decide to marry in secret. As Abindarráez is on his way to meet Jarifa to consummate their union, his journey is interrupted. Rodrigo de Narváez—a historicalfigure of the Andalusian wars, and governor of the frontier town ofÁlora—and his Christian knights attack him in a skirmish, and Abindarráez, despite his valor, is taken captive. Abindarráez tells Rodrigo the tragic story of his lineage, falsely accused of treason and driven from Granada—a lament that some critics have read as an oblique reference to the persecution of Jews and Muslims by the Spanish Crown.

Moved by Abindarráez's story, and relying on his chivalry, Narváez frees him temporarily so that he can pursue his interrupted nuptials, while Abindarráez gives his solemn word as a knight that he will return. The novella is much more invested in chivalry and nobility than in religious differences; in fact, religion is only ever mentioned to make the point that it does not impede the friendship between the two knights. Yet for all its idealization of the friendship between Moor and Christian, *The Abencerraje* also questions the costs and contradictions of that ideal, just as Jarifa also appears as a skeptical observer of the relations between men, repeatedly voicing her surprise at the choices they make and drawing our attention to how little agency they grant even the women they profess to adore.

The Abencerraje was a tremendously influential work for its sympathetic depiction of an idealized Moor in love. It inaugurated a genre of idealizing Moorish tales in Spain and beyond. In the huge late-sixteenth-century vogue for ballads on Moorish themes, the story of Abindarráez and Jarifa was repeated across Spain. So popular was thefigure of the Moorish knight that when **Cervantes'** Don Quixote (1605) lies wounded after hisfirst sortie, he imagines himself as Abindarráez. Translated widely across Europe in the early modern period, and read as part of the best-selling *Diana* (1562), *The Abencerraje* anchored a tradition of idealized, orientalist storytelling that would continue well into the nineteenth century.

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The Abencerraje[1]

Prologue

This is a living portrait of virtue, generosity, valor, nobility, and loyalty, composed of Rodrigo de Narváez[2] and the Abencerraje and Jarifa,[3] as well as her father and the king of Granada. Although the two make up the body of this work, the others adorn the canvas and have left their own marks on it. And just as a precious diamond, whether set in gold or silver or lead, retains its fair value according to its carats and its luster, so too virtue shines and shows its qualities in anyflawed subject, just like the seed that grows when it falls on fertile soil and in the barren soil is lost.[4]

Footnotes

- Note 1:Translated by Barbara Fuchs, Larissa Brewer-García, and Aaron J. Ilika. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Rodrigo de Narváez was the name of a historical person who participated in the Christian conquest of Antequera in 1410 and was named its governor by Prince Ferdinand of Aragon. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:In Arabic, Abindarráez (thefirst name of the Abencerraje) means “captain’s son,” and Jarifa means “noble, precious, or beautiful one.” The Abencerraje family was a noble clan in Al-Andalus. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:In the biblical parable (Matthew 13.3–23; Mark 4.3–20; Luke 8.5–8), Christ compares spreading his word to the sowing of seeds: just as soils may be fertile or barren, some people will be more receptive to the spreading of the Word than others. Return to reference 4

The Abencerraje

The story goes that in the time of Prince Ferdinand, who conquered Antequera, there was a knight named Rodrigo de Narváez, famous for his virtue and feats of arms. He fought the Moors with great valor, and especially in the campaign and the battle for Antequera he performed deeds worthy of eternal memory, were it not that our Spain takes such skill for granted. For it is so natural to Spain and so common here that anything one does seems too little; unlike for the Greeks and Romans, who in their writings turned men who once risked death into immortals and set them among the stars. This knight, then, did so much in the service of his king and his faith that after the town was conquered he was named governor, so that having played such a great role in taking it, he would now do the same in defending it. He was also made governor ofÁlora, and so commanded both garrisons, dividing his time between the two and always attending to the greater need. He was usually to be found inÁlora, where he hadfifty noble squires in the king’s service for the defense and safety of the town. And none was ever found lacking, for, like the immortal knights of King Darius,[5] whenever one died, they set another in his place. They all had such great faith in their captain’s virtue and took such strength from it that nothing was ever difficult for them: they never ceased to attack their enemies and defend themselves against them. They triumphed every time they skirmished, winning honor and profit, which enriched them always.

One night when the weather was very mild, the governor spoke these words to his squires after supper:

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“It seems to me, noblemen, my brothers and lords, that nothing so rouses the hearts of men as the continual exercise of arms, through which we gain experience with our own weapons and lose fear of the enemy’s. There is no need for me to invoke distant examples of this, as you yourselves are the best proof. I mention this because it has been many a day since we have done anything to increase our renown, and I would not be doing my duty to my office and my person if I let the time go to waste with such virtuous men and valiant troops at my command. It seems to me, if you are all in agreement, that with this clear and safe night beckoning to us,

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we should let our enemies know that the guardians ofÁlora do not sleep. That is my wish; do what you will."

They answered that he should lead and all would follow him. He chose nine of them and had them armed. Once ready, they left through a hidden door so that they would not be noticed and the fortress would remain safe. Setting out on their way, they came to a fork in the road, where the governor addressed them:

"If we all take one path, our prey might escape on the other. Youfive take this one, and I will take the other with these four. If by chance any of youfind enemies that you cannot defeat, blow your horn, and the sound of it will call the others to your aid."

Thefive squires set out on their path, speaking of various things, when one of them said, "Hold on, friends, for unless I am mistaken, there is someone coming."

They hid in a thicket by the road and heard noises. Taking a closer look, they saw a gallant Moor coming toward them on a roan horse. He was of powerful build and had a beautiful face, and he looked veryfine in the saddle. He wore a crimson cloak and a damask burnoose of the same color, all embroidered in gold and silver. His right sleeve was turned back, with a beautiful lady embroidered on it, and he held afine and sturdy lance with two points. He carried a shield and a scimitar, and wore a Tunisian head wrap with many folds that served to both adorn and protect him.[6] So dressed, the Moor advanced with a noble air, singing a song he had composed in fond memory of his love, and which went like this: "Born in Granada, raised in Cártama, I fell in love in Coín, borderingÁlora."

Although the music lacked artistry, the Moor did not lack for happiness, and his heart, which was full of love, gave charm to his every word. The squires, transported by the sight of him, almost let him through before they set upon him. Finding himself ambushed, he bravely came to his senses and waited to see what they would do.

Four of thefive squires rode offto the side while one attacked him. But since the Moor was more skilled in those matters, with a stroke of his lance he forced the squire and his horse to the ground. Seeing this, three of the four remaining attacked him at the same time, for he seemed to them very strong. Now there were three Christians, any one of whom could take on ten Moors, against this one Moor, and yet all of them together could not defeat him. Soon the Moor found himself in great danger, as his lance broke and the squires pressed him hard. Feigningflight, he spurred his horse on with his legs and rushed toward the squire he had unhorsed. Like a bird he swooped from his saddle and grabbed the man's lance, and with it he turned upon the enemies who chased him as he pretended toflee. He fought so skillfully that in a short time he had two of the three on the Full p. C-358 ground. The last one, seeing his companions' dire need, sounded his horn as he rode to help them. Now the skirmish became veryfierce, for they were affronted to have one knight last so long against them, while he fought for his life and more. Then one of the squires struck him on the thigh with his lance, in a blow so hard that, had it not landed askew, it would have gone right through him. Furious atfinding himself wounded, the Moor turned and struck him with the lance, throwing both horse and rider to the ground, badly wounded.

Rodrigo de Narváez drew near, sensing that his companions needed help. As he rode the best horse, he took the lead. When he witnessed the Moor's bravery, he was astonished: the Moor had four of thefive squires on the ground and thefifth one on the way.

“Moor, ride against me,” he said, “and if you defeat me, I will vouch for the others.” They joined in a bitterfight, but since the governor was fresh and the Moor and his horse were injured, Narváez pressed him so that he could not keep up. Yet seeing that his life and happiness hung on this one battle, the Moor threw such a blow at Narváez that it would no doubt have killed him, had he not stopped it with his shield. Parrying the blow, Narváez charged against him and wounded him on his right arm. Closing in, he grappled with him and threw him from his saddle to the ground. Then, leaning over him, he said, “Sir, concede defeat, or I shall kill you.”

“You may well kill me,” said the Moor, “for I am in your hands, but I cannot be vanquished except by the one who once vanquished me.”

The governor did not remark on the mystery of these words; with his usual decency, he helped the Moor to his feet, for the wound that the squire had given him on his thigh and the other one on his arm (though not severe), coupled with his great exhaustion and the fall from his horse, had quite drained him. With supplies he took from the squires, Rodrigo bound up the Moor’s wounds. Then he helped him onto one of the squires’ horses, for his own was wounded, and they took the road back toÁlora. While they all rode along, discussing the Moor’s good bearing and bravery, he let out a great deep sigh and spoke a few words in Arabic that none of them could make out.[7] Observing the Moor’sfine build and bearing, and recalling what he had seen him do, Rodrigo de Narváez suspected that such great sadness in such a brave heart could hardly come from what had just occurred.

To learn more, he said to him, “Sir, consider that the prisoner who loses all hope forfeits his right to liberty. Consider, too, that in war knights must both win and lose, for the better part of their battles are subject to fortune. For one who has just shown such valor, it seems like weakness to show so little now. If you sigh from the pain of your wounds, know that you are on your way to a place where you will soon be cured. If you lament your imprisonment, know that these are the ways of war, to which all who wage it are subject. And if you suffer some other secret torment, confide in me, for I promise you on my honor as a knight to do all in my power to remedy it.”

The Moor, lifting his gaze from the ground, said, “What is your name, knight, you who show such understanding of my plight?”

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He responded, “They call me Rodrigo de Narváez; I am the governor of Antequera andÁlora.”

The Moor, whose face brightened a bit at this, said, “Truly now some of my sorrow lifts, since though fortune was against me, it has left me in your hands. For although I have never seen you before, I have heard of your virtue and experienced your strength. So that you will not think that the pain from my wounds is what makes me sigh, and since it seems to me that you could keep any secret, send offyour squires so that I may have two words with you.”

The governor had them fall back. When they were alone, the Moor said to him with a great sigh:

“Rodrigo de Narváez, renowned governor ofÁlora, listen to what I shall tell you now, and you shall see whether my misfortunes are enough to break the heart of a captive man. They call me Abindarráez the Younger, to distinguish me from an uncle of mine, my father’s brother, of the same name. I come from the line of the Abencerrajes of Granada, of whom you must

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have often heard—although my present grief is quite enough, without recalling sorrows past, I want to tell you that story.

“In Granada there lived a line of noblemen called the Abencerrajes who were thefinest in the kingdom: in their elegance, good grace, disposition, and bravery they excelled all others. They were favored by the king and all the nobles and well loved by the common people. They emerged as victors from any combat they entered and distinguished themselves in all tournaments; they devised all thefinery and costumes. So one could truly say that in times of peace as in war they were a model and example for the entire kingdom. It is said that there was never an Abencerraje who was miserly or cowardly or ill disposed. A man was not considered an Abencerraje if he did not serve a lady, nor was a woman considered a lady if she had no Abencerraje as a suitor.

“Yet fortune, their great enemy, decreed that they should fall from this excellence, as you will now hear. The King of Granada, led on by false information he had received against them, did a great wrong to two of these noblemen, the bravest of them all. And it was said, though I don’t believe it, that these two and ten others at their request conspired to kill the King and divide the kingdom among themselves, avenging their insult. This conspiracy, whether true or false, was discovered, and so as not to scandalize the kingdom that loved them so, the King had them all beheaded in one night, for had he delayed his injustice, he would not have been able to carry it out. The King was offered huge ransoms for their lives, but he would not even hear of it. When the people saw that there was no hope for their lives, they began to lament anew. The fathers who had sired them wept, as did the mothers who had given birth to them; the ladies whom they served wept, as did the knights who were their companions. The common people raised such a great and lasting outcry it was as though enemies had invaded the city. If their lives could have been bought with tears, the Abencerrajes would not have died so miserably.

“Behold what became of such a distinguished lineage and its famous knights! Consider how long it takes for Fortune to raise a man and how quickly she cuts him down; how long it takes for a tree to grow and how quickly it goes to thefire; how difficult it is to build a house and how rapidly it burns! How many could learn from those wretched men, who blamelessly suffered their public disgrace! Even though they were so numerous and so important and had enjoyed the favor Full p. C-360 of the King himself, their houses were destroyed, their estates given to others, and their name proclaimed treasonous throughout the kingdom. Because of this unfortunate episode, no Abencerraje was allowed to live in Granada, except for my father and uncle, who were found innocent of this crime, on the condition that any sons born to them be raised outside the city, never to return, and any daughters married outside the kingdom.”

Rodrigo de Narváez, who observed the suffering with which the Abencerraje related his misfortunes, said to him:

“Yours is certainly a strange story, sir, and a great injustice was done to the Abencerrajes, for it is hard to believe that men such as they could have committed treason.”

“It is just as I have told you,” answered the Abencerraje, “Wait and you shall hear how, from that time on, all the Abencerrajes were unfortunate. When I came into the world from my mother’s womb, my father sent me to the governor of Cártama, his close friend, in order to fulfill the king’s decree. The governor had a daughter about my age, whom he loved more than himself, for not only was she his only child and most beautiful, but she had cost him his wife, who had died giving birth to her. She and I were as brother and sister in our childhood

because that is what we heard people call us. I cannot recall a moment when we were not together. We were raised together, walked together, ate and drank together. From this closeness came a natural affection that increased with age. I remember that one afternoon when I walked into the place they call the Garden of Jasmine, I found her seated by the fountain, arranging her lovely hair. I gazed at her, vanquished by her beauty, and she seemed to me like Salmacis.[8] I said to myself, 'O to be Hermaphroditus and appear before this beautiful goddess!' How I regretted that she was my sister! Yet I rushed to her, and when she saw me, she hurried to meet me with arms outstretched. Seating me by her side, she said to me,

"'Brother, why did you leave me alone for so long?'

"'My lady,' I replied, 'I have been searching for you for a long time, and no one could say where you were, until my heart told me. But tell me now, how certain are you that we are brother and sister?'

"'I only know it from the great love I have for you, and from the fact that everyone calls us that,' she said.

"'And if we were not,' said I, 'would you love me as much?'

"'Can you not see,' she said, 'that if we were not, my father would never let us spend so much time alone together?'

"'Well, if it would mean the loss of that good fortune,' I said, 'I would rather have my present sorrow.'

"Then she began to blush, and said, 'What do you lose from our being brother and sister?'

"'I lose myself and you,' I said.

"'I don't understand you,' she said. 'In fact, it seems to me that simply being brother and sister naturally compels us to love one another.'

"'Only your beauty compels me. The kinship actually seems to discourage me sometimes.'

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"Lowering my eyes in embarrassment at what I had said, I saw her exact likeness in the waters of the fountain. Wherever I turned my head, I saw her image, and most of all in my heart. I said to myself (for I would not have wanted anyone to hear me), 'If I were to drown myself in the fountain where I see my lady, I would have a better excuse than Narcissus![9] If she loved me as I love her, how happy I would be! And if fortune allowed us to live together always, what a life I could lead!'

"Saying this, I stood up and gathered some of the jasmine that surrounded the fountain, threading it with myrtle to make a beautiful garland. Placing it on my head, I turned to her, both crowned and vanquished. She looked at me, more sweetly it seemed than usual, took the garland from me and placed it on her head. At that moment she seemed to me more beautiful than Venus when she was judged for the apple.[1] Turning to me, she asked, 'How do I look now, Abindarráez?'

"'As though you have just vanquished the world and they are crowning you its queen and lady,' I answered. She stood up and took me by the hand, saying, 'If that were the case, brother, you would lose nothing by it.' I did not answer and instead followed her out of the garden. We led this life of dissimulation for a long time, until Love took revenge on us and exposed the ruse, for as we grew older, we both learned that we were not siblings. I know not what she felt when shefirst found out, but nothing has ever made me happier, although I have paid dearly

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for it since. No sooner were we certain of this, but the pure and healthy love we had for each other began to spoil, turning into a raging malady that will last until our deaths. Here there were nofirst causes to excuse because our love came from a pleasure and delight that was nothing but good. Yet the harm did not come atfirst, but suddenly and all at once: I now found all my joy in her, and my soul followed the measure of her soul. What I did not see in her seemed to me ugly, unnecessary, and of no use in the world; all my thoughts were with her. By this point, our pastimes had changed: I now looked at her in fear of being found out and was jealous of the very sun that touched her. Her presence wounded me, and her absence broke my heart. And yet for all this, she did not owe me anything because she paid me in the same coin. Then Fortune, jealous of our sweet life, decided to snatch away our happiness, as you shall hear.

"The king of Granada, wishing to promote the governor of Cártama, ordered him to leave his garrison for Coín, which is that town near yours, and to leave me in Cártama under the new governor. Imagine, if you have ever been in love, how my lady and I felt when we learned this disastrous news. We met in a secret place to weep at our parting. I called out to her, 'My lady, my soul, my only happiness,' and other names love had taught me. 'When your beauty is far away from me, will you ever remember this captive of yours?' Here my tears and sighs cut short my words. Forcing myself to continue, I half muttered some confused notions that I cannot even remember because my lady took my memory with her. Who could relate how she lamented, although it still seemed too little to me! She said a thousand sweet words to me that I can hear even now. Finally, so that no Full p. C-362 one would hear us, we said good-bye with many tears and sobs, and with a sigh wrenched from our souls, we gave each other an embrace as a pledge of our love.

"Then, because she saw me in such straits, looking as though I would die, she said, 'Abindarráez, leaving you is breaking my heart, and since I know you feel the same, I want to be yours until death. My heart is yours, my life is yours, my honor and wealth. As proof of this, as soon as Ifind a way to meet you while my father is indisposed or away, which I eagerly await, I will send word to you from Coín, where I now go with him. Come to me wherever I am, and there I shall give you, as my husband, that which I carry with me, for neither your loyalty nor my nature would allow it otherwise, and everything else has been yours for many years.'

"With this promise my heart calmed down somewhat, and I kissed her hands for the favor she promised me. They left the next day, and I was left as one who, walking through steep and rugged mountains, loses sight of the sun. I began to feel her absence sharply and sought false cures for it. I gazed at the windows where she used to sit, the waters where she bathed, the room where she slept, the garden where she rested. I visited all her stations,[2] and in all of them I found an image of my suffering. The hope she had given me that she would summon me sustained me, and so I fooled my cares somewhat. Sometimes the delay caused me even greater pain, so that I would have preferred for her to leave me in despair, which causes pain only until it is believed certain, while hope troubles us until desire is fulfilled.

"My good fortune had it so that this morning my lady fulfilled her promise to me and sent one of her trusted servants to summon me. Her father had left for Granada, called for by the King to return immediately. Revived by this good news, I readied myself. I waited for nightfall so as to leave in secret, and put on the garments in which you found me to show my lady the joy in my heart. I would not have thought that a hundred knights at once would have been

enough to stop me since I carried my lady on my sleeve. If you defeated me, it was not by force, which is not possible, but rather because my bad luck or heaven's will snatched away my good fortune. So consider now, at the end of my story, the good I have lost and the misfortune that weighs on me. I was traveling from Cártama to Coín—a short trip, although desire made it longer—the proudest Abencerraje ever: I went at the behest of my lady, to see my lady, to love my lady, and to marry my lady. Now Ifind myself wounded, captive and defeated, and the worst part is that the short space of my good fortune ends this evening. Allow me tofind consolation in my sighs, Christian, and consider them not weakness, for it would take even greater fortune to be able to suffer such desperate straits."

Rodrigo de Narváez was amazed and touched by the Moor's strange affair, and since it seemed to him that nothing could harm his purpose more than delay, said to him:

"Abindarráez, I want to show you that my virtue is stronger than your ill fortune. If you give me your word as a knight to return as my captive in three days' time, I will set you free to go on your way, since I would be sorry to prevent such an affair."

The Moor was so happy when he heard this that he tried to throw himself at Narváez's feet, saying, "Rodrigo de Narváez, if you do this, you will have done Full p. C-363 the greatest kindness that man ever did, and you would give me new life. As for what you ask of me, take whatever assurance you will, for I shall fulfill it."

The governor called his squires and said, "My lords, entrust this prisoner to me, for I will guarantee his ransom." They told him to command as he pleased. Taking the Moor's right hand between his own, he said, "Do you swear to me as a knight to return to my castle inÁlora to be my prisoner within three days?

He said, "I swear."

"Then good luck, and if you should need me or anything else for your enterprise, it shall be done as well."

Abindarráez thanked him and set offin haste for Coín. Rodrigo de Narváez and his squires returned toÁlora, discussing the bravery andfine bearing of the Moor.

In his hurry, Abindarráez pressed on and did not take long to reach Coín, heading straight for the castle. He did not stop until he found a door, as he had been instructed. Pausing there, he began his reconnaissance to see if there was any need to defend himself. Seeing that all was well, he knocked on the door with the back of his lance, for this was the signal that the lady-in-waiting had given him. She quickly opened the door herself and said to him, "What has taken you so long, my lord? Your delay had us greatly worried. My lady has long awaited you; dismount, and you shall go to her."

He dismounted and placed his horse in a well-hidden spot nearby. He left his lance with his shield and scimitar, and then the lady-in-waiting led him by the hand as quietly as possible so that the people of the castle would not hear him. They climbed a staircase and reached the bedchamber of the lovely Jarifa, for this was the lady's name. She had already heard him and came out to welcome him with outstretched arms. In their great joy, they embraced without a word.

Then the lady said, "What has taken you so long, my lord? Your delay has caused me great sadness and alarm."

"My lady," he said, "you know full well it could not have been my negligence, but things do not always turn out the way we wish."

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She took him by the hand and led him to a secret chamber. Sitting on a bed that was there, she said, “Abindarráez, I long to show you how the captives of love keep their promises, for from the day I gave you my heart as a token, I have been trying to win it back. I ordered you to come to this castle to be my prisoner, as I am yours, and, as my husband, to make you the owner of my person and of my father’s estate, even though I suspect that shall go against his wishes. He does not know your bravery, nor has he experienced your virtue as I have, and he would like to give me a richer husband. But I take your person and my happiness to be the greatest treasure in the world.”

And saying this, she hung her head, ashamed to have revealed so much. The Moor took her in his arms, kissing her hands many times for the favor she granted him, and said, “My lady, in exchange for all the good you have offered me, I have nothing to offer you that is not yours already, save this token as a sign that I take you as my lady and wife.”

After summoning the lady-in-waiting, they spoke their marriage vows. Now, being married, they lay in their bed, where the new experience stoked thefire in their hearts. In this conquest, many loving words and actions were exchanged, which are better imagined than written.

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Afterward, the Moor became lost in thought and, distracted, let out a great sigh. The lady, unable to suffer such a slight to her beauty and devotion, lovingly brought him back to his senses and asked, “What is this, Abindarráez? It seems that my happiness brings you sorrow. I hear you sigh and twist and turn all around. If I am your all and your happiness as you told me, for whom do you sigh? And if I am not, why did you deceive me? If you have found some fault with my body, look upon my devotion, which should be enough to outweigh many faults. If you serve another lady, tell me who she is so that I may serve her too. If you have another secret sorrow that will not offend me, tell me, for I will either free you from it or die in the attempt.”

The Abencerraje, embarrassed by what he had done and believing that if he did not confess he would provoke great suspicion, told her with an impassioned sigh, “My lady, if I did not love you more than myself, I would not have complained. I suffered my grief bravely when it was just my own, but now that it forces me to leave you, I have no strength to bear it. Know that my sighs come from too muchfidelity rather than the lack of it. I want to tell you what has happened, so you will not wonder.”

Then he told her everything that had occurred and at the end said, “So, my lady, your captive is also the governor ofÁlora’s. I do not fear the sorrow of imprisonment for you taught my heart to endure, but living without you would be death itself.”

The lady smiled and told him, “Do not worry, Abindarráez. I shall take care of your ransom for it is my duty. I hold that any knight who gives his word to return to prison keeps it as long as he sends whatever ransom is asked of him. And so name the sum you seefit, for I have the keys to my father’s treasure and will give them to you so that you can send of it what you will. Rodrigo de Narváez is a praiseworthy knight. He gave you your liberty once when you entrusted this matter to him, and this now obliges him to be even more virtuous. I think he will be satisfied, since if he had you in his power, he would only ask for the same.”

The Abencerraje replied, “My lady, your great love for me prevents you from counseling me wisely; I shall certainly not commit such a great fault. If I was obliged to keep my word when I came on my own behalf to see you, now that I am yours, my obligation has redoubled. I shall

return toÁlora and place myself in the governor's hands; after I do what I must, let him do as he pleases."

"May God never allow you to go into captivity while I go free, for I would not be so," Jarifa said. "I wish to accompany you on this journey, for neither my love for you nor my fear of my father, having offended him, will allow me any choice in the matter."

The Moor, weeping tears of happiness, embraced her and said, "My lady, you are always granting favors upon favors; do as you please for that is what I want."

Having come to this agreement, they gathered provisions and set out the next morning. The lady covered her face so as not to be recognized.

As they were on their way, discussing various things, they came across an old man. The lady asked him where he was going, and he answered, "I'm going toÁlora for I have some business with the governor, who is the most virtuous and honorable knight I have ever known."

Jarifa was pleased to hear this, for it seemed to her that if everyone found so much virtue in this knight, they, who were in so much need of it, wouldfind it Full p. C-365 also. Turning to the traveler, she said, "Tell me, brother, do you know of any memorable deed this knight has done?"

"I know many," he said, "but I can tell you one that will stand in for all the rest. This knight wasfirst the governor of Antequera, where for a long time he was in love with a beautiful lady. He performed a thousand courtesies in her service, too many to relate. Yet even though she knew the worth of this knight, she paid him little attention because she loved her husband so much.

"It happened that one summer day, havingfinished dinner, she and her husband went down to an orchard in their estate. He carried a sparrowhawk on his hand and slipped it at some birds, whichfled and hid in the brambles. The wise hawk, holding its body back, reached in with its talons and killed many of them. The knight fed it and, turning to the lady, said, 'What do you think, my lady, of how cleverly the hawk trapped the birds and then killed them? I'll have you know that when the governor of Antequera skirmishes with Moors, he pursues them and kills them like that.' She asked who the governor was, pretending not to know him. 'He's the bravest and most virtuous knight I've ever seen.' He began to speak of him very highly, so that the lady felt a certain regret and said to herself, 'Well! Men are in love with this knight, and I am not, though he is in love with me? Surely I shall be forgiven for whatever I do for him, since my own husband has told me how deserving he is.'

"The next day it happened that the husband was away from the city and the lady could resist no longer, so she had a servant send for the knight. Narváez was nearly beside himself with joy, although he could hardly believe it, recalling the harshness she had always shown him. Yet he still went discreetly to see her at the appointed time. She waited for him in a hidden place, and there she realized the great wrong she had committed and the shame in seeking one who had sought her for so long. Her thoughts turned to Fame, who reveals all things; she feared thefickleness of men and the offense to her husband. All these obstacles served only to vanquish her even further, as is usually the case. Ignoring them all, she received him sweetly and ushered him into her bedchamber, where they exchanged many kind words. At last she said, 'Lord Rodrigo de Narváez, I am yours from this day forward, as is everything in my power. Do not thank me, for all your passions and entreaties, whether true or false, had no effect on me. Rather, thank my husband, who told me such things about you that they have

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put me in this state.' Then she told him about the conversation with her husband and concluded, 'In fact, my lord, you owe more to my husband than he owes you.'

"These words struck Narváez, causing him worry and remorse for the wrong he was committing against one who had so praised him. He stepped away, and said, 'In truth, my lady, I love you full well and shall love you always, but God forbid that I should commit such a cruel offense against one who has spoken of me so highly. Instead, from this day forward, I shall safeguard your husband's honor as though it were my own, for that is the best way to repay him for the good things he has said of me.' And without further ado, he left the way he came. The lady must have felt duped, yet the knight no doubt acted with great virtue and bravery, my lords, for he overcame his own desire."

The Abencerraje and his lady were amazed at the story. He praised Narváez greatly, saying that he had never seen greater virtue in a man. She replied, "By God, my lord, I would not wish for such a virtuous servant. He must not have been Full p. C-366 too much in love since he left so quickly and the husband's honor moved him more than the lady's beauty." And she said a few other clever things about the matter.

Just then they arrived at the fortress. They knocked at the gate, and it was opened by guards who already knew what had happened. One man ran to summon the governor, saying, "My lord, the Moor you defeated is here in the castle, and he has brought a noble lady with him."

The governor suspected who it was and came downstairs. The Abencerraje, taking his bride by the hand, approached him and said:

"Rodrigo de Narváez, see whether I have kept my word, for I promised one prisoner and I bring you two, one of whom would suffice to vanquish many others. Behold my lady; consider if I have suffered rightly. Take us as your own, for I trust you with my lady and my honor."

Narváez was delighted to see them and said to the lady, "I know not which of you owes more to the other, but I am in great debt to you both. Come in, and take your ease in this your house; consider it as such from now on, for its owner is your servant."

With that they went to the rooms that had been prepared for them, and soon after they ate something, for they were weary from their journey. "How are your wounds, sir?" the governor asked Abindarráez.

"It seems that with the journey they are inflamed and somewhat sore, sir."

The lovely Jarifa became upset: "What is this, my lord? You have wounds of which I know nothing?"

"My lady, whoever survives the wounds that you give thinks little of any others. It is true that the skirmish the other night left me with a few scrapes, and the journey and not tending to them must have done me some harm."

"It would be best," the governor said, "for you to lie down, and a surgeon from the castle will attend you."

Immediately the lovely Jarifa began to undress him in great dismay. When the doctor came and examined him, he said it was nothing and applied an ointment to relieve the pain. In three days' time, he was cured.

One day after dinner, the Abencerraje spoke these words: "Rodrigo de Narváez, since you are so wise, you may well surmise our situation from the manner in which we arrived. My hope is that you will be able to solve this unfortunate business. This lady is the beautiful Jarifa, of whom I spoke to you, my lady and my wife. She did not wish to remain in Coín for fear of

having offended her father—she fears this even now. I know full well that the king loves you for your virtue, even though you are a Christian—I beg you to ask her father to pardon us for having done this without his knowledge, since Fortune brought it about in this way."

The governor said to them, "Take heart, for I promise you I shall do everything in my power." And taking ink and paper he wrote a letter to the King, which read thus:

Letter from Rodrigo de Narváez, Governor ofÁlora, to the King of Granada

Most noble and powerful King of Granada:

Rodrigo de Narváez, Governor ofÁlora, your servant, kisses your royal hands and says: the Abencerraje Abindarráez the Younger, who was born in Granada and raised in Cártama under the authority of its Governor, fell in love with the Full p. C-367 beautiful Jarifa, his daughter. Later, you favored the Governor by transferring him to Coín. The lovers were secretly betrothed to confi rm their love. When Abindarráez was summoned to the fortress due to the absence of Jarifa's father, whom you have with you, I happened across him on his way. After a skirmish I fought with him, in which he proved himself to be very valiant, I took him prisoner. When he told me his situation, I took pity on him and freed him for two days; he went to see his wife, so that on his journey he lost his freedom but won the lady. When she learned that the Abencerraje was returning to my captivity, she came with him and thus both of them are now in my power. I beg you not to let the name Abencerraje offend you, for I know that both this one and his father were not to blame in the conspiracy perpetrated against your royal person; they live as evidence of that. I entreat your Royal Highness to join me in assisting these unfortunate ones. I will pardon their ransom and will graciously release them, but only you can make her father pardon them and receive them in his good graces. And with this you will prove true to your greatness, proceeding as I would always expect of you.

When he had written the letter, he dispatched it with a squire, who gave it to the King as soon as he reached him. The King, knowing whose letter it was, was very pleased, for he loved this one Christian for his merits and good deeds. When he read it, he turned to the Governor of Coín, who was with him, and calling him aside, said:

"Read this letter from the Governor ofÁlora." When Jarifa's father read it he became very upset. The King said, "Do not be angry, even though you have good cause; know that there is nothing the Governor ofÁlora can ask me that I will not grant. And so I command that you go straight toÁlora now to see him and to pardon your children and take them home. In return for this service, I will always favor them and you."

The Moor resented it in his heart, but seeing that he could not avoid the King's commandment, he put a good face on things and said he would do as his highness commanded.

He immediately left forÁlora, where already they had heard from the squire what had happened and where everyone received him with great happiness and rejoicing. The Abencerraje and Jarifa came before him with great contrition and kissed his hands. He received them graciously and said:

"Let us not dwell on the past. I forgive you for having married without my consent, and as for the rest, my daughter, you chose a better husband than I could ever have given you."

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Narváez held feasts in their honor for many days, and one night, after dining in a garden, he said, “I am so proud to have played a part in bringing this matter to a good end that nothing could make me happier. The only ransom I require, therefore, is the honor of having had you as my prisoners. From this day forth, lord Abindarráez, I free you to do as you wish.”

They kissed his hands for the favor and kindness he had shown them, and the next morning they left the fortress with the Governor accompanying them partway.

Once they had arrived in Coín and were enjoying the good fortune they had so longed for, their father said to them, “My children, now that by my wish you control my estate, it would be right to show Rodrigo de Narváez the gratitude you owe him for the good deed he did you. He should not lose your ransom just Full p. C-368 because he was so generous; instead, he deserves a much larger one. I shall give you six thousand Zahene gold coins;[3] send them to him and keep him henceforth as a friend, even though we are of different faiths.”

Abindarráez kissed his hands and received the doubloons. He sent them to the Governor ofÁlora, along with four beautiful horses and four lances with golden hilts and points, as well as four shields, and wrote him this letter:

Letter from the Abencerraje Abindarráez to the Governor ofÁlora

> If you think, Rodrigo de Narváez, that by freeing me in your castle so that I could return to mine you set me free, you deceive yourself, for when you freed my body, you captured my soul . Good works make prisoners of noble hearts. Where you are in the habit of doing good to those you could destroy so as to gain honor and fame, I am obliged to thank you and serve you so as to follow my forebears and not sully the noble bloodline of the Abencerrajes but instead gather and distill in my veins all their blood that was shed. This small gift comes with the great love of the one who sends it, and that of Jarifa, which is so pure and loyal that it pleases me.

The Governor admired the worth and uniqueness of the gift, and accepting the horses, lances, and shields, he wrote this to Jarifa:

Letter from the Governor ofÁlora to the Fair Jarifa

> Fair Jarifa: Abindarráez has not allowed me to enjoy the real triumph of his captivity, which consists in forgiving and doing good. Since never was a mission off ered me in this land so noble or worthy of a Spanish captain, I would like to enjoy it fully and to craft a statue of it for my posterity and descendants. I accept the horses and weapons to defend him from his enemies. And if by sending the coins, he proved himself a generous knight, by accepting them I would seem a greedy merchant. I grant them to you in payment for the favor you showed me by making use of me in my castle. Besides, my lady, I am not accustomed to robbing ladies, but rather to serving them and honoring them.

And with that he sent the doubloons back to them. Jarifa received them and said, “Whoever thinks to surpass Rodrigo de Narváez in combat or courtesy should think again.” And so they remained very satisfied and pleased with each other, and linked by bonds of friendship so tight that they lasted a lifetime.

Footnotes

- Note 5:Darius the Great (550–486 B.C.E.) ruled the Persian Empire at its peak. The "Immortals," so called by the ancient Greek historian Herodotus, were an elite corps in the Persian army, whose number was maintained constant by replacing dead, wounded, or sick soldiers. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:Fine "Moorish" garments such as those worn here by Abindarráez would have been admired and worn not only by Muslims but also by Christians of the aristocratic classes. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:The original uses *entendi*ó(understood) instead of *entendía* (could understand) here: the squires may well have known Arabic but could not make out what Abindarráez mumbled. Christians on the frontier in Al-Andalus would have been likely to know Arabic. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:In the Greek myth retold by Ovid in book four of the *Metamorphoses*, Salmacis falls in love with Hermaphroditus (son of Hermes and Aphrodite) when he is bathing by a fountain. When he rejects her, she asks the gods to combine their bodies into one. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:In the myth retold in book three of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, the beautiful Narcissus falls in love with his image reflected in a stream, falls in while gazing at himself, and drowns. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:When Venus, Juno, and Minerva competed for a golden apple promised to the fairest goddess, Paris of Troy awarded Venus the prize. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Abindarráez visits the places where Jarifa used to be with the reverence of a worshipper viewing representations of Christ at the stations of the cross. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:The *zahén* was a valuable gold coin still used by Moors in the time of the Catholic Monarchs. In the late 16th century, 6,000 Zahene gold pieces (approximately 2,550,000 *maravedís*) amounted to what an average laborer (who made approximately 85 *maravedís* a day) could only have made after 30,000 days of work. Return to reference 3

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MICHEL DE MONTAIGNE 1533–1592

The probing, skeptical essays of Michel Eyquem de Montaigne show a Renaissance mind exploring its own workings. The first writer to ask "Who am I?" and pursue the question with extraordinary honesty and rigor, Montaigne at times appears surprisingly modern in his outlook. He pays unflinching attention to the embarrassing realities of his own body and mind, even as he considers the most abstract questions. His radical break with traditional forms of writing and thinking is particularly striking in that Montaigne was an avid student of the classical even as he also paved the way for the modern form of the essay.

LIFE AND TIMES

Montaigne was born on February 28, 1533, in the castle of Montaigne, to a Catholic father and a Protestant mother of Spanish-Jewish descent. His father, Pierre Eyquem, was for two terms

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mayor of Bordeaux and had fought in Italy under Francis I. Though no man of learning, Pierre had unconventional ideas of upbringing: Michel was awakened in the morning by the sound of music and was taught Latin as his mother tongue. At six Michel went to the famous Collège de Guienne at Bordeaux; later he studied law; and in 1557 he became a member of the Bordeaux parliament. In 1565 he married Françoise de la Chassaigne, daughter of a man who, as one of Montaigne's colleagues in the Bordeaux parliament, was a member of the new legal nobility.

Perhaps because of disappointed political ambitions, Montaigne retired from politics in 1570 at the age of thirty-eight: he sold his post as magistrate and retreated to his castle of Montaigne, which he had inherited two years earlier. There he devoted himself to meditation and writing. Although Montaigne spent, as he put it, "most of his days, and most hours of the day" in his library on the thirdfloor of a round tower, the demands of his health and France's tumultuous politics often drew him out of retirement. For the sake of his health (he suffered from gallstones), in 1580 he took a journey through Switzerland, Germany, and Italy. While in Italy he received news that he had been appointed mayor of Bordeaux, an office that he held for two terms (1581–85).

His greatest political distractions, however, concerned the Catholic and Protestant factions that violently divided the court and France itself. French politics profoundly influenced the attitudes toward warfare, political resistance, and mercy expressed in Montaigne's *Essays* . When Henry II died in a jousting accident in 1559 and left thefifteen-year-old Francis II to succeed him, the Huguenots (French Reformers in the tradition of John Calvin), recognized the opportunity to influence the weakened royal government. Catherine de Médicis, the queen mother, seized power when Francis II died in 1560 (his successor, Charles IX, was only ten years old). Her policy of limited religious toleration satisfied neither the Catholic nor the Huguenot factions, and from 1562 to 1598 France repeatedly fell into civil war. In the infamous St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre of August 24, 1572, noblemen, municipal authorities, and the Parisian mobs indiscriminately slaughtered the Protestants in Paris. Full p. C-370 Shorter p. 1607 The slaughter was imitated in other French cities, and the civil wars once again broke out.

Throughout his country's political struggles, Montaigne sympathized with the unfanatical Henry of Navarre, leader of the Protestants, but his attitude was neutral and conservative. He expressed his joy when Henry of Navarre became King Henry IV and turned Catholic to do so: "Paris," Henry memorably observed, "is well worth a Mass." Montaigne, who died on September 13, 1592, did not live to see Henry's triumphal entrance into Paris.

ESSAYS

Montaigne's *Essays*, which began as a collection of interesting quotations, observations, and recordings of remarkable events, slowly developed into itsfinal form of three large books. The essays are at once highly personal and outward looking; they present a curious mind investigating history, the complex and changing sociopolitical world, and the mind's own slightly mysterious workings. To *essay*—from the French *essayer*, meaning to attempt or try out—is Montaigne's characteristic intellectual operation, as he carefully examines his topics from a variety of possible angles. The literary result of that operation is the *essay*, the common noun that, in the wake of Montaigne, describes a short piece of highly personal and exploratory writing.

Though fascinated by the complexities of self-understanding, Montaigne explores far more than his own circumstances or thoughts. “I am a man,” he says, quoting the Roman playwright Terence, and “I consider nothing human to be alien to me.” As an ethnographer and historian, Montaigne studies geographically and historically distant cultures, insisting that cultural norms are relative and should be free from judgment by sixteenth-century European standards. As a psychologist, he is drawn to the stranger thoughts and experiences of himself and his countrymen. His method is not didactic or moralizing, and his criticism, which he reserves for fellow Europeans, emerges largely through subtle ironies that he leaves readers to detect.

When Montaigne looks inward, he does not aggrandize or justify himself but tries to understand how the mind works. Far from prizing his capacity for reason and judgment, for example, he neutrally observes, “My judgmentfloats, it wanders.” Montaigne is, in fact, disarmingly modest: “Reader, I am myself the subject of my book; it is not reasonable to expect you to waste your leisure on a matter so frivolous and empty.” Although massively learned, he emphasizes not what he knows but rather, like his revered model, Plato’s Socrates, the ways that knowledge reveals how little he truly knows.

Although he refuses certainty and mocks vanity, Montaigne’s stance is skeptical, not cynical. Thus when he “essays” or probes the human capacity to act purposefully and coherently—as he does in “Of the Inconsistency of Our Actions”—he does not aim to prove that action is futile. Instead, he resists granting the mind a coherence it does not possess; to Montaigne, the Stoic ideal of the “constant man,” unmoved by emotion or circumstance, is an impoverished version of humankind. Instead, he emphasizes the strangeness and instability of the self: “There is as much difference between us and ourselves as between us and others.” This idea became highly influential in Renaissance thinking and shaped such haunting insights as **John Donne**’s observation that “ourselves are what we know not.” For Renaissance thinkers who embraced Montaigne’s doubt, the difficult philosophical imperative of Socrates, “know thyself,” seemed unattainable.

Full p. C-371 Shorter p. 1608

Montaigne charts the elusive “self” through a wide range of anecdotes, both contemporary and classical. A slippery or indefinable historical character intrigues him far more than a monolithic or single-minded one. The legendary warrior Alexander the Great is rendered frighteningly transparent by his obsession with power and conquest: he wants nothing less than to be a god. Emperor Augustus, on the other hand, rewards study precisely because his character has “escaped” the willful reductions of historians bent on “fashioning a consistent and solid fabric” of his character.

Why was Montaigne so unusually able to suspend the self-interest and bias he considered ingrained in human nature in order to analyze himself, and his culture? As his life in politics indicates, the violent instability of French history taught him tolerance, skepticism about human self-interest, and hatred of dogmatic positions: “It demands a great deal of self-love and presumption, to take one’s own opinions so seriously as to disrupt the peace in order to establish them, introducing so many inevitable evils, and so terrible a corruption of manners as civil wars and political revolutions with them.” His hatred of political radicalism influenced much of what he saw in ancient history and in contemporary accounts of New World discovery and conquest. Alienated from his own political context, Montaigne developed a rich double perspective, both ethnographic (outward-looking and impartial) and self-critical

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(introspective and moral). As he reflects on the ancient and new worlds, he pays special attention to how human beings respond to adversity, oppression, and physical torture.

In the best known of the selections included here, “Of Cannibals” (which influenced **Shakespeare**’s reflections in ***The Tempest*** on the ideal commonwealth, colonialism, and the nature of savages), Montaigne compares the behavioral codes of Brazilian cannibals and those of “ourselves” (Europeans) and concludes that “each man calls barbarism whatever is not his own practice.” Once he has asserted the relativity of customs, Montaigne is able to praise elements of the savages’ culture that he regards as superior to Europe’s. He admires the savages’ courage, for instance, in which “the honor of valor consists in combating, not in beating.” Moreover, hefinds in the positive example of the Brazilian cannibals an implicit criticism of violence by Europeans both at home and in the New World.

As an ethnographer, Montaigne is able to grapple with a distinct and alien culture without passing judgment; but when he reflects on France, he becomes a moralist. Central to “Of Cannibals” is the invocation of the Catholics’ torture and burning of fellow citizens. Montaigne juxtaposes two kinds of savagery: that which appears foreign (cannibalism) and that which has grown too familiar (religious persecution). His own country’s civil strife enables him to transcend smug cultural bias, making him a powerful critic of European culture and allowing him to imagine communities other than his own. Like the world of antiquity, which also riveted his imagination, the idea of America allowed Montaigne to explore alternate worlds for their own sake and for their illumination of his own.

The genre that Montaigne inaugurated quickly made its way into the English tradition, with the *Essays* of Francis Bacon (1597). Yet its larger influence reached much further: with the advent of the Enlightenment and the rise of periodicals, the essay enabled the intellectual exchange of carefully considered, highly personal opinions in the public realm and thus shapes our own thinking and writing to this day.

Full p. C-372 Shorter p. 1609

F ROM E SSAYS[1]

Footnotes

- Note 1:Translated by Donald Frame. Return to reference 1

To the Reader

This book was written in good faith, reader. It warns you from the outset that in it I have set myself no goal but a domestic and private one. I have had no thought of serving either you or my own glory. My powers are inadequate for such a purpose. I have dedicated it to the private convenience of my relatives and friends, so that when they have lost me (as soon they must), they may recover here some features of my habits and temperament, and by this means keep the knowledge they have had of me more complete and alive.

If I had written to seek the world’s favor, I should have bedecked myself better, and should present myself in a studied posture. I want to be seen here in my simple, natural, ordinary fashion, without straining or artifice; for it is myself that I portray. My defects will here be

read to the life, and also my natural form, as far as respect for the public has allowed. Had I been placed among those nations which are said to live still in the sweet freedom of nature'sfirst laws, I assure you I should very gladly have portrayed myself here entire and wholly naked.

Thus, reader, I am myself the matter of my book; you would be unreasonable to spend your leisure on so frivolous and vain a subject.

So farewell. Montaigne, thisfirst day of March,fifteen hundred and eighty.

Of the Power of the Imagination

A strong imagination creates the event, say the scholars. I am one of those who are very much influenced by the imagination. Everyone feels its impact, but some are overthrown by it. Its impression on me is piercing. And my art is to escape it, not to resist it. I would live solely in the presence of gay, healthy people. The sight of other people's anguish causes very real anguish to me, and my feelings have often usurped the feelings of others. A continual cougher irritates my lungs and throat. I visit less willingly the sick toward whom duty directs me than those toward whom I am less attentive and concerned. I catch the disease that I study, and lodge it in me. I do notfind it strange that imagination brings fevers and death to those who give it a free hand and encourage it.

Simon Thomas was a great doctor in his time. I remember that one day, when he met me at the house of a rich old consumptive with whom he was discussing ways to cure his illness, he told him that one of these would be to give me occasion to enjoy his company; and that byfixing his eyes on the freshness of my face and his thoughts on the blitheness and overflowing vigor of my youth, andfilling all his senses with myflourishing condition, he might improve his constitution. But he forgot to say that mine might get worse at the same time.

Gallus Vibius[2] strained his mind so hard to understand the essence and impulses of insanity that he dragged his judgment offits seat and never could get it back again; and he could boast of having become mad through wisdom. Full p. C-373 There are some who through fear anticipate the hand of the executioner. And one man who was being unbound to have his pardon read him dropped stone dead on the scaffold, struck down by his mere imagination. We drip with sweat, we tremble, we turn pale and turn red at the blows of our imagination; reclining in our feather beds we feel our bodies agitated by their impact, sometimes to the point of expiring. And boiling youth, fast asleep, grows so hot in the harness that in dreams it satisfies its amorous desires:

> So that as though it were an actual affair,
> They pour out mighty streams, and stain the clothes they wear.
>
> LUCRETIUS[3]

And although it is nothing new to see horns grow overnight on someone who did not have them when he went to bed, nevertheless what happened to Cippus,[4] king of Italy, is memorable; having been in the daytime a very excited spectator at a bullfight and having all night in his dreams had horns on his head, he grew actual horns on his forehead by the power

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of his imagination. Passion gave the son of Croesus the voice that nature had refused him. And Antiochus took fever from the beauty of Stratonice too vividly imprinted in his soul. Pliny says he saw Lucius Cossitius changed from a woman into a man on his wedding day. Pontanus[5] and others report similar metamorphoses as having happened in Italy in these later ages. And through his and his mother's vehement desire,

> Iphis the man fulfilled vows made when he was a girl.
>
> OVID[6]

Passing through Vitry-le-François, I might have seen a man whom the bishop of Soissons had named Germain at confirmation, but whom all the inhabitants of that place had seen and known as a girl named Marie until the age of twenty-two. He was now heavily bearded, and old, and not married. Straining himself in some way in jumping, he says, his masculine organs came forth; and among the girls there a song is still current by which they warn each other not to take big strides for fear of becoming boys, like Marie Germain. It is not so great a marvel that this sort of accident is frequently met with. For if the imagination has power in such things, it is so continually and vigorouslyfixed on this subject that in order not to have to relapse so often into the same thought and sharpness of desire, it is better offif once and for all it incorporates this masculine member in girls.

Some attribute to the power of imagination the scars of King Dagobert and of Saint Francis. It is said that thereby bodies are sometimes removed from their places. And Celsus tells of a priest who used tofly with his soul into such ecstasy that his body would remain a long time without breath and without sensation. Saint Augustine[7] names another who whenever he heard lamentable and plaintive cries would suddenly go into a trance and get so carried away that Full p. C-374 Shorter p. 374 it was no use to shake him and shout at him, to pinch him and burn him, until he had come to; then he would say that he had heard voices, but as if coming from afar, and he would notice his burns and bruises. And that this was no feigned resistance to his senses was shown by the fact that while in this state he had neither pulse nor breath.

It is probable that the principal credit of miracles, visions, enchantments, and such extraordinary occurrences comes from the power of imagination, acting principally upon the minds of the common people, which are softer. Their belief has been so strongly seized that they think they see what they do not see.

I am still of this opinion, that those comical inhibitions by which our society is so fettered that people talk of nothing else are for the most part the effects of apprehension and fear. For I know by experience that one man,[8] whom I can answer for as for myself, on whom there could fall no suspicion whatever of impotence and just as little of being enchanted, having heard a friend of his tell the story of an extraordinary impotence into which he had fallen at the moment when he needed it least, andfinding himself in a similar situation, was all at once so struck in his imagination by the horror of this story that he incurred the same fate. And from then on he was subject to relapse, for the ugly memory of his mishap checked him and tyrannized him. He found some remedy for this fancy by another fancy: which was that by admitting this weakness and speaking about it in advance, he relieved the tension of his soul, for when the trouble had been presented as one to be expected, his sense of responsibility diminished and weighed upon him less. When he had a chance of his own choosing, with his

mind unembroiled and relaxed and his body in good shape, to have his bodily powersfirst tested, then seized and taken by surprise, with the other party's full knowledge of his problem, he was completely cured in this respect. A man is never after incapable, unless from genuine impotence, with a woman with whom he has once been capable.

This mishap is to be feared only in enterprises where our soul is immoderately tense with desire and respect, and especially if the opportunity is unexpected and pressing; there is no way of recovering from this trouble. I know one man who found it helpful to bring to it a body that had already begun to be sated elsewhere, so as to lull his frenzied ardor, and who with agefinds himself less impotent through being less potent. And I know another who was helped when a friend assured him that he was supplied with a counterbattery of enchantments that were certain to save him. I had better tell how this happened.

A count, a member of a very distinguished family, with whom I was quite intimate, upon getting married to a beautiful lady who had been courted by a man who was present at the wedding feast, had his friends very worried and especially an old lady, a relative of his, who was presiding at the wedding and holding it at her house. She was fearful of these sorceries, and gave me to understand this. I asked her to rely on me. I had by chance in my coffers a certain littleflat piece of gold on which were engraved some celestialfigures, to protect against sunstroke and take away a headache by placing it precisely on the suture of the skull; and, to keep it there, it was sewed to a ribbon intended to be tied under the chin: a kindred fancy to the one we are speaking of. Jacques Full p. C-375 Peletier[9] had given me this singular present. I thought of making some use of it, and said to the count that he might incur the same fate as others, there being men present who would like to bring this about; but that he should boldly go to bed and I would do him a friendly turn and would not, if he needed it, spare a miracle which was in my power, provided that he promised me on his honor to keep it most faithfully secret; he was only to make a given signal to me, when they came to bring him the midnight meal, if things had gone badly with him. He had had his soul and his ears so battered that he didfind himself fettered by the trouble of his imagination, and gave me his signal. I told him then that he should get up on the pretext of chasing us out, and playfully take the bathrobe that I had on (we were very close in height) and put it on him until he had carried out my prescription, which was this: when we had left, he should withdraw to pass water, say certain prayers three times and go through certain motions; each of these three times he should tie the ribbon I was putting in his hand around him and very carefully lay the medal that was attached to it on his kidneys, with thefigure in such and such a position; this done, having tied this ribbonfirmly so that it could neither come untied nor slip from its place, he should return to his business with complete assurance and not forget to spread my robe over his bed so that it should cover them both. These monkey tricks are the main part of the business, our mind being unable to get free of the idea that such strange means must come from some abstruse science. Their inanity gives them weight and reverence. All in all, it is certain that the characters on my medal proved themselves more venereal than solar, more useful for action than for prevention. It was a sudden and curious whim that led me to do such a thing, which was alien to my nature. I am an enemy of subtle and dissimulated acts and hate trickery in myself, not only for sport but also for someone's profit. If the action is not vicious, the road to it is.

Amasis,[1] king of Egypt, married Laodice, a very beautiful Greek girl; and he, who showed himself a gay companion everywhere else, fell short when it came to enjoying her, and

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threatened to kill her, thinking it was some sort of sorcery. As is usual in matters of fancy, she referred him to religion; and having made his vows and promises to Venus, he found himself divinely restored from thefirst night after his oblations and sacrifices.

Now women are wrong to greet us with those threatening, quarrelsome, and coy countenances, which put out ourfires even as they light them. The daughter-in-law of Pythagoras used to say that the woman who goes to bed with a man should put offher modesty with her skirt and put it on again with her petticoat. The soul of the assailant, when troubled with many various alarms, is easily discouraged; and when imagination has once made a man suffer this shame—and it does so only at thefirst encounters, inasmuch as these are more boiling and violent, and also because in thisfirst intimacy a man is much more afraid of failing—having begun badly, he gets from this accident a feverishness and vexation which lasts into subsequent occasions.

Married people, whose time is all their own, should neither press their undertaking nor even attempt it if they are not ready; it is better to fail unbecomingly to handsel the nuptial couch,[2] which is full of agitation and feverishness, and Full p. C-376 wait for some other more private and less tense opportunity, than to fall into perpetual misery for having been stunned and made desperate by afirst refusal. Before taking possession, the patient should try himself out and offer himself, lightly, by sallies at different times, without priding himself and obstinately insisting on convincing himself definitively. Those who know that their members are naturally obedient, let them take care only to counteract the tricks of their fancies.

People are right to notice the unruly liberty of this member, obtruding so importunately when we have no use for it, and failing so importunately when we have the most use for it, and struggling for mastery so imperiously with our will, refusing with so much pride and obstinacy our solicitations, both mental and manual.

If, however, in the matter of his rebellion being blamed and used as proof to condemn him, he had paid me to plead his cause, I should perhaps place our other members, his fellows, under suspicion of having framed this trumped-up charge out of sheer envy of the importance and pleasure of the use of him, and of having armed everyone against him by a conspiracy, malignantly charging him alone with their common fault. For I ask you to think whether there is a single one of the parts of our body that does not often refuse its function to our will and exercise it against our will. They each have passions of their own which rouse them and put them to sleep without our leave. How many times do the forced movements of our face bear witness to the thoughts that we were holding secret, and betray us to those present. The same cause that animates this member also animates, without our knowledge, the heart, the lungs, and the pulse; the sight of a pleasing object spreading in us imperceptibly theflame of a feverish emotion. Are there only these muscles and these veins that stand up and lie down without the consent, not only of our will, but even of our thoughts? We do not command our hair to stand on end or our skin to shiver with desire or fear. The hand often moves itself to where we do not send it. The tongue is paralyzed, and the voice congealed, at their own time. Even when, having nothing to put in to fry, we should like to forbid it, the appetite for eating and drinking does not fail to stir the parts that are subject to it, no more nor less than that other appetite; and it likewise abandons us inopportunely when it seesfit. The organs that serve to discharge the stomach have their own dilatations and compressions, beyond and against our plans, just like those that are destined to discharge the kidneys. To vindicate the omnipotence of our will, Saint Augustine alleges that he knew a man who commanded his

behind to produce as many farts as he wanted, and his commentator Vives[3] goes him one better with another example of his own time, of farts arranged to suit the tone of verses pronounced to their accompaniment; but all this does not really argue any pure obedience in this organ; for is there any that is ordinarily more indiscreet or tumultuous? Besides, I know one so turbulent and unruly, that for forty years it has kept its master farting with a constant and unremitting wind and compulsion, and is thus taking him to his death.

But as for our will, on behalf of whose rights we set forth this complaint, how much more plausibly may we charge it with rebellion and sedition for its disorderliness and disobedience! Does it always will what we would will it to Full p. C-377 will? Doesn't it often will what we forbid it to will, and that to our evident disadvantage? Is it any more amenable than our other parts to the decisions of our reason?

To conclude, I would say this in defense of the honorable member whom I represent: May it please the court to take into consideration that in this matter, although my client's case is inseparably and indistinguishably linked with that of an accessory, nevertheless he alone has been brought to trial; and that the arguments and charges against him are such as cannot—in view of the status of the parties—be in any manner pertinent or relevant to the aforesaid accessory. Whereby is revealed his accusers' manifest animosity and disrespect for law. However that may be, Nature will meanwhile go her way, protesting that the lawyers and judges quarrel and pass sentence in vain. Indeed, she would have done no more than is right if she had endowed with some particular privilege this member, author of the sole immortal work of mortals. Wherefore to Socrates generation is a divine act; and love, a desire for immortality and itself an immortal daemon.[4]

Perhaps it is by this effect of the imagination that one man here gets rid of the scrofula which his companion carries back to Spain.[5] This effect is the reason why, in such matters, it is customary to demand that the mind be prepared. Why do the doctors work on the credulity of their patient beforehand with so many false promises of a cure, if not so that the effect of the imagination may make up for the imposture of their decoction? They know that one of the masters of the trade left them this in writing, that there have been men for whom the mere sight of medicine did the job.

And this whole caprice[6] has just come to hand apropos of the story that an apothecary, a servant of my late father, used to tell me, a simple man and Swiss, of a nation little addicted to vanity and lying. He had long known a merchant at Toulouse,[7] sickly and subject to the stone, who often needed enemas, and ordered various kinds from his doctors according to the circumstances of his illness. Once they were brought to him, nothing was omitted of the accustomed formalities; often he tested them by hand to make sure they were not too hot. There he was, lying on his stomach, and all the motions were gone through—except that no injection was made. After this ceremony, the apothecary having retired and the patient being accommodated as if he had really taken the enema, he felt the same effect from it as those who do take them. And if the doctor did notfind its operation sufficient, he would give him two or three more, of the same sort. My witness swears that when to save the expense (for he paid for them as if he had taken them) this sick man's wife sometimes tried to have just warm water used, the effect revealed the fraud; and having found that kind useless, they were obliged to return to thefirst method.

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A woman, thinking she had swallowed a pin with her bread, was screaming in agony as though she had an unbearable pain in her throat, where she thought she felt it stuck; but because externally there was neither swelling nor alteration, a smart man, judging that it was only a fancy and notion derived Full p. C-378 from some bit of bread that had scratched her as it went down, made her vomit, and, on the sly, tossed a crooked pin into what she threw up. The woman, thinking she had thrown it up, felt herself suddenly relieved of her pain. I know that one gentleman, having entertained a goodly company at his house, three or four days later boasted, as a sort of joke (for there was nothing in it), that he had made them eat cat in a pie; at which one lady in the party was so horrified that she fell into a violent stomach disorder and fever, and it was impossible to save her. Even animals are subject like ourselves to the power of imagination. Witness dogs, who let themselves die out of grief for the loss of their masters. We also see them yap and twitch in their dreams, and horses whinny and writhe.

But all this may be attributed to the narrow seam between the soul and body, through which the experience of the one is communicated to the other. Sometimes, however, one's imagination acts not only against one's own body, but against someone else's. And just as a body passes on its sickness to its neighbor, as is seen in the plague, the pox, and soreness of the eyes, which are transmitted from one body to the other—

> By looking at sore eyes, eyes become sore:
> From body into body ills pass o'er
>
> OVID[8]

—likewise the imagination, when vehemently stirred, launches darts that can injure an external object. The ancients maintained that certain women of Scythia,[9] when animated and enraged against anyone, would kill him with their mere glance. Tortoises and ostriches hatch their eggs just by looking at them, a sign that their sight has some ejaculative virtue. And as for sorcerers, they are said to have baleful and harmful eyes:

> some evil eye bewitched my tender lambs.
>
> VIRGIL[1]

To me, magicians are poor authorities. Nevertheless, we know by experience that women transmit marks of their fancies to the bodies of the children they carry in their womb; witness the one who gave birth to the Moor.[2] And there was presented to Charles, king of Bohemia and Emperor, a girl from near Pisa, all hairy and bristly, who her mother said had been thus conceived because of a picture of Saint John the Baptist hanging by her bed.

With animals it is the same: witness Jacob's sheep,[3] and the partridges and hares that the snow turns white in the mountains. Recently at my house a cat was seen watching a bird on a treetop, and, after they had locked gazes for some time, the bird let itself fall as if dead between the cat's paws, either intoxicated by its own imagination or drawn by some attracting power of the Full p. C-379 cat. Those who like falconry have heard the story of the falconer who, setting his gaze obstinately upon a kite in the air, wagered that by the sole power of his gaze he would bring it down, and did. At least, so they say—for I refer the stories that I borrow to the conscience of those from whom I take them. The reflections are my own, and depend on the

proofs of reason, not of experience; everyone can add his own examples to them; and he who has none, let him not fail to believe that there are plenty, in view of the number and variety of occurrences. If I do not apply them well, let another apply them for me.

So in the study that I am making of our behavior and motives, fabulous testimonies, provided they are possible, serve like true ones. Whether they have happened or no, in Paris or Rome, to John or Peter, they exemplify, at all events, some human potentiality, and thus their telling imparts useful information to me. I see it and profit from it just as well in shadow as in substance. And of the different readings that histories often give, I take for my use the one that is most rare and memorable. There are authors whose end is to tell what has happened. Mine, if I could attain it, would be to talk about what can happen. The schools are justly permitted to suppose similitudes when they have none at hand. I do not do so, however, and in that respect I surpass all historicalfidelity, being scrupulous to the point of superstition. In the examples that I bring in here of what I have heard, done, or said, I have forbidden myself to dare to alter even the slightest and most inconsequential circumstances. My conscience does not falsify one iota; my knowledge, I don't know.

In this connection, I sometimes fall to thinking whether it befits a theologian, a philosopher, and such people of exquisite and exact conscience and prudence, to write history. How can they stake theirfidelity on thefidelity of an ordinary person? How can they be responsible for the thoughts of persons unknown and give their conjectures as coin of the realm? Of complicated actions that happen in their presence they would refuse to give testimony if placed under oath by a judge; and they know no man so intimately that they would undertake to answer fully for his intentions. I consider it less hazardous to write of things past than present, inasmuch as the writer has only to give an account of a borrowed truth.

Some urge me to write the events of my time, believing that I see them with a view less distorted by passion than another man's, and from closer, because of the access that fortune has given me to the heads of different parties.[4] What they forget is that even for all the glory of Sallust,[5] I would not take the trouble, being a sworn enemy of obligation, assiduity, perseverance; and that there is nothing so contrary to my style as an extended narration. I cut myself offso often for lack of breath; I have neither composition nor development that is worth anything; I am more ignorant than a child of the phrases and terms that serve for the commonest things. And so I have chosen to say what I know how to say, accommodating the matter to my power. If I took a subject that would lead me along, I might not be able to measure up to it; and with my freedom being so very free, I might publish judgments which, even according to my own opinion and to reason, would be illegitimate and punishable. Plutarch[6] might Full p. C-380 well say to us, concerning his accomplishments in this line, that the credit belongs to others if his examples are wholly and everywhere true; but that their being useful to posterity, and presented with a luster which lights our way to virtue, that is his work. There is no danger—as there is in a medicinal drug—in an old story being this way or that.

Footnotes

- Note 2:Roman orator. Montaigne illustrates his points with many examples from both antiquity and contemporary Europe: it is less important to know who these historical persons were than to follow Montaigne's presentation of telling moments of their lives. Return to reference 2

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- Note 3:Titus Lucretius Caro (94–55 B.C.E.), Roman poet and Epicurean philosopher: *On the Nature of Things* 4.1035–36. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:The story of Cippus is told by Pliny (23/24–79 C.E.). Return to reference 4
- Note 5:Johannes Pontanus (1426–1503), Renaissance scholar and philosopher. Croesus, last king of Lydia (c. 560–546 B.C.E .). Antiochus 1 (324–261 B.C.E .), who ruled the eastern Seleucid territories from 293/2 B.C.E ., took Seleucus's wife, Stratonice. Return to reference 5
- Note 6: *Metamorphoses* 9.793. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:Early Christian Church father (354–430 C.E .) Return to reference 7
- Note 8:Possibly Montaigne himself. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:Renaissance mathematician (1517–1582). Return to reference 9
- Note 1:Pharaoh who reigned 570–526 B.C.E., known for his great public works and unconventional life. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:To consummate the marriage on one's wedding night. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Juan Luis Vives (1492–1540), Renaissance philosopher and scholar. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:Socrates (c. 470–399 B.C.E.) describes love as a *daemon* in Plato's *Symposium* . Return to reference 4
- Note 5:Scrofula, or king's evil, was supposed to be curable by the touch of the kings of France. In Montaigne's time great numbers of Spaniards came to France for this purpose [translator's note]. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:Montaigne's "cure" for his impotent friend. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:City of southwestern France. Return to reference 7
- Note 8: *The Cure for Love*, lines 615–16. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:Scythians, the Greek name for Asian tribes who lived in what are now parts of Iran and Türkiye, were legendary in the Renaissance for their "barbarity." Return to reference 9
- Note 1: *Eclogue* 3.103. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Saint Jerome tells of a woman who, accused of adultery for giving birth to a Black child, was absolved when Hippocrates explained that she had a picture of a dark man hanging in her room by her bed [translator's note]. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Genesis 30.37–42. After Laban agreed to give Jacob the striped sheep from hisflocks, Jacob bred the sheep in front of rods (the visual stimulation was thought to cause the females to produce striped offspring). Return to reference 3
- Note 4:A centrist, Montaigne knew leaders of the rivaling factions in France. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:Roman historian (probably 86–35 B.C.E .) Return to reference 5
- Note 6:Philosopher and biographer (c. 50–120 C.E.). Return to reference 6

Of Cannibals

When King Pyrrhus[7] passed over into Italy, after he had reconnoitered the formation of the army that the Romans were sending to meet him, he said: “I do not know what barbarians these are” (for so the Greeks called all foreign nations), “but the formation of this army that I see is not at all barbarous.” The Greeks said as much of the army that Flaminius brought into their country, and so did Philip, seeing from a knoll the order and distribution of the Roman camp, in his kingdom, under Publius Sulpicius Galba.[8] Thus we should beware of clinging to vulgar opinions, and judge things by reason’s way, not by popular say.

I had with me for a long time a man who had lived for ten or twelve years in that other world which has been discovered in our century, in the place where Villegaignon landed, and which he called Antarctic France.[9] This discovery of a boundless country seems worthy of consideration. I don’t know if I can guarantee that some other such discovery will not be made in the future, so many personages greater than ourselves having been mistaken about this one. I am afraid we have eyes bigger than our stomachs, and more curiosity than capacity. We embrace everything, but we clasp only wind.

Plato brings in Solon,[1] telling how he had learned from the priests of the city of Saïs in Egypt that in days of old, before the Flood, there was a great island Shorter p. 1610 named Atlantis, right at the mouth of the Strait of Gibraltar, which contained more land than Africa and Asia put together, and that the kings of that country, who not only possessed that island but had stretched out so far on the mainland that they held the breadth of Africa as far as Egypt, and the length of Europe as far as Tuscany, undertook to step over into Asia and subjugate all the nations that border on the Mediterranean, as far as the Black Sea; and for this purpose crossed the Spains, Gaul, Italy, as far as Greece, where the Athenians checked them; but that some time after, both the Athenians and themselves and their island were swallowed up by the Flood.

It is quite likely that that extreme devastation of waters made amazing changes in the habitations of the earth, as people maintain that the sea cut offSicily from Italy—

> ’Tis said an earthquake once asunder tore
> These lands with dreadful havoc, which before
> Formed but one land, one coast
>
> VIRGIL[2]

Full p. C-381

—Cyprus from Syria, the island of Euboea from the mainland of Boeotia; and elsewhere joined lands that were divided,filling the channels between them with sand and mud:

> A sterile marsh, longfit for rowing, now
> Feeds neighbor towns, and feels the heavy plow.
>
> HORACE[3]

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But there is no great likelihood that that island was the new world which we have just discovered; for it almost touched Spain, and it would be an incredible result of aflood to have forced it away as far as it is, more than twelve hundred leagues; besides, the travels of the moderns have already almost revealed that it is not an island, but a mainland connected with the East Indies on one side, and elsewhere with the lands under the two poles; or, if it is separated from them, it is by so narrow a strait and interval that it does not deserve to be called an island on that account.

It seems that there are movements, some natural, others feverish, in these great bodies, just as in our own. When I consider the inroads that my river, the Dordogne, is making in my lifetime into the right bank in its descent, and that in twenty years it has gained so much ground and stolen away the foundations of several buildings, I clearly see that this is an extraordinary disturbance; for if it had always gone at this rate, or was to do so in the future, the face of the world would be turned topsy-turvy. But rivers are subject to changes: now they overflow in one direction, now in another, now they keep to their course. I am not speaking of the sudden inundations whose causes are manifest. In Médoc, along the seashore, my brother, the sieur d'Arsac, can see an estate of his buried under the sands that the sea spews forth; the tops of some buildings are still visible; his farms and domains have changed into very thin pasturage. The inhabitants say that for some time the sea has been pushing toward them so hard that they have lost four leagues of land. These sands are its harbingers; Shorter p. 1611 and we see great dunes of moving sand that march half a league ahead of it and keep conquering land.

The other testimony of antiquity with which some would connect this discovery is in Aristotle, at least if that little book *Of Unheard-of Wonders* is by him. He there relates that certain Carthaginians, after setting out upon the Atlantic Ocean from the Strait of Gibraltar and sailing a long time, at last discovered a great fertile island, all clothed in woods and watered by great deep rivers, far remote from any mainland; and that they, and others since, attracted by the goodness and fertility of the soil, went there with their wives and children, and began to settle there. The lords of Carthage, seeing that their country was gradually becoming depopulated, expressly forbade anyone to go there any more, on pain of death, and drove out these new inhabitants, fearing, it is said, that in course of time they might come to multiply so greatly as to supplant their former masters and ruin their state. This story of Aristotle does notfit our new lands any better than the other.

This man I had was a simple, crude fellow—a characterfit to bear true witness; for clever people observe more things and more curiously, but they interpret them; and to lend weight and conviction to their interpretation, they Full p. C-382 cannot help altering history a little. They never show you things as they are, but bend and disguise them according to the way they have seen them; and to give credence to their judgment and attract you to it, they are prone to add something to their matter, to stretch it out and amplify it. We need a man either very honest, or so simple that he has not the stuffto build up false inventions and give them plausibility; and wedded to no theory. Such was my man; and besides this, he at various times brought sailors and merchants, whom he had known on that trip, to see me. So I content myself with his information, without inquiring what the cosmographers say about it.

We ought to have topographers who would give us an exact account of the places where they have been. But because they have over us the advantage of having seen Palestine, they want to enjoy the privilege of telling us news about all the rest of the world. I would like

everyone to write what he knows, and as much as he knows, not only in this, but in all other subjects; for a man may have some special knowledge and experience of the nature of a river or a fountain, who in other matters knows only what everybody knows. However, to circulate this little scrap of knowledge, he will undertake to write the whole of physics. From this vice spring many great abuses.

Now, to return to my subject, I think there is nothing barbarous and savage in that nation, from what I have been told, except that each man calls barbarism whatever is not his own practice; for indeed it seems we have no other test of truth and reason than the example and pattern of the opinions and customs of the country we live in. *There* is always the perfect religion, the perfect government, the perfect and accomplished manners in all things. Those people are wild, just as we call wild the fruits that Nature has produced by herself and in her normal course; whereas really it is those that we have changed artificially and led astray from the common order, that we should rather call wild. The former retain alive and vigorous their genuine, their most useful and natural, virtues and properties, which we have debased in the latter in adapting them to gratify our corrupted taste. And yet for all that, the savor and delicacy of some uncultivated fruits of those countries is quite as excellent, even to our Shorter p. 1612 taste, as that of our own. It is not reasonable that art should win the place of honor over our great and powerful mother Nature. We have so overloaded the beauty and richness of her works by our inventions that we have quite smothered her. Yet wherever her purity shines forth, she wonderfully puts to shame our vain and frivolous attempts:

> Ivy comes readier without our care;
> In lonely caves the arbutus grows more fair;
> No art with artless bird song can compare.
>
> PROPERTIUS[4]

All our efforts cannot even succeed in reproducing the nest of the tiniest little bird, its contexture, its beauty and convenience; or even the web of the puny spider. All things, says Plato,[5] are produced by nature, by fortune, or by art; the greatest and most beautiful by one or the other of thefirst two, the least and most imperfect by the last.

Full p. C-383

These nations, then, seem to me barbarous in this sense, that they have been fashioned very little by the human mind, and are still very close to their original naturalness. The laws of nature still rule them, very little corrupted by ours; and they are in such a state of purity that I am sometimes vexed that they were unknown earlier, in the days when there were men able to judge them better than we. I am sorry that Lycurgus[6] and Plato did not know of them; for it seems to me that what we actually see in these nations surpasses not only all the pictures in which poets have idealized the golden age and all their inventions in imagining a happy state of man, but also the conceptions and the very desire of philosophy. They could not imagine a naturalness so pure and simple as we see by experience; nor could they believe that our society could be maintained with so little artifice and human solder. This is a nation, I should say to Plato, in which there is no sort of traffic, no knowledge of letters, no science of numbers, no name for a magistrate or for political superiority, no custom of servitude, no riches or poverty, no contracts, no successions, no partitions, no occupations but leisure ones, no care

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for any but common kinship, no clothes, no agriculture, no metal, no use of wine or wheat.[7] The very words that signify lying, treachery, dissimulation, avarice, envy, belittling, pardon—unheard of. How far from this perfection would hefind the republic that he imagined: *Men fresh sprung from the gods* [Seneca].[8]

These manners naturefirst ordained.

VIRGIL[9]

For the rest, they live in a country with a very pleasant and temperate climate, so that according to my witnesses it is rare to see a sick man there; and they have assured me that they never saw one palsied, bleary-eyed, toothless, or bent with age. They are settled along the sea and shut in on the land side by great high mountains, with a stretch about a hundred leagues wide in between. They have a great abundance offish andflesh which bear no resemblance to Shorter p. 1613 aours, and they eat them with no other artifice than cooking. Thefirst man who rode a horse there, though he had had dealings with them on several other trips, so horrified them in this posture that they shot him dead with arrows before they could recognize him.

Their buildings are very long, with a capacity of two or three hundred souls; they are covered with the bark of great trees, the strips reaching to the ground at one end and supporting and leaning on one another at the top, in the manner of some of our barns, whose covering hangs down to the ground and acts as a side. They have wood so hard that they cut with it and make of it their swords and grills to cook their food. Their beds are of a cotton weave, hung from the roof like those in our ships, each man having his own; for the wives sleep apart from their husbands.

They get up with the sun, and eat immediately upon rising, to last them through the day; for they take no other meal than that one. Like some other Full p. C-384 Eastern peoples, of whom Suidas[1] tells us, who drank apart from meals, they do not drink then; but they drink several times a day, and to capacity. Their drink is made of some root, and is of the color of our claret wines. They drink it only lukewarm. This beverage keeps only two or three days; it has a slightly sharp taste, is not at all heady, is good for the stomach, and has a laxative effect upon those who are not used to it; it is a very pleasant drink for anyone who is accustomed to it. In place of bread they use a certain white substance like preserved coriander. I have tried it; it tastes sweet and a littleflat.

The whole day is spent in dancing. The younger men go to hunt animals with bows. Some of the women busy themselves meanwhile with warming their drink, which is their chief duty. Some one of the old men, in the morning before they begin to eat, preaches to the whole barnful in common, walking from one end to the other, and repeating one single sentence several times until he has completed the circuit (for the buildings are fully a hundred paces long). He recommends to them only two things: valor against the enemy and love for their wives. And they never fail to point out this obligation, as their refrain, that it is their wives who keep their drink warm and seasoned.

There may be seen in several places, including my own house, specimens of their beds, of their ropes, of their wooden swords and the bracelets with which they cover their wrists in combats, and of the big canes, open at one end, by whose sound they keep time in their

dances. They are close shaven all over, and shave themselves much more cleanly than we, with nothing but a wooden or stone razor. They believe that souls are immortal, and that those who have deserved well of the gods are lodged in that part of heaven where the sun rises, and the damned in the west.

They have some sort of priests and prophets, but they rarely appear before the people, having their home in the mountains. On their arrival there is a great feast and solemn assembly of several villages—each barn, as I have described it, makes up a village, and they are about one French league[2] from each other. The prophet speaks to them in public, exhorting them to virtue and their duty; but their whole ethical science contains only these two articles: resoluteness in war and affection for their wives. He prophesies to them things to come and the results they are to expect from their undertakings, and urges Shorter p. 1614 them to war or holds them back from it; but this is on the condition that when he fails to prophesy correctly, and if things turn out otherwise than he has predicted, he is cut into a thousand pieces if they catch him, and condemned as a false prophet. For this reason, the prophet who has once been mistaken is never seen again.

Divination is a gift of God; that is why its abuse should be punished as imposture. Among the Scythians, when the soothsayers failed to hit the mark, they were laid, chained hand and foot, on carts full of heather and drawn by oxen, on which they were burned. Those who handle matters subject to the control of human capacity are excusable if they do the best they can. But these others who come and trick us with assurances of an extraordinary faculty that is beyond our ken, should they not be punished for not making good their promise, and for the temerity of their imposture?

Full p. C-385

They have their wars with the nations beyond the mountains, further inland, to which they go quite naked, with no other arms than bows or wooden swords ending in a sharp point, in the manner of the tongues of our boar spears. It is astonishing whatfirmness they show in their combats, which never end but in slaughter and bloodshed; for as to routs and terror, they know nothing of either.

Each man brings back his trophy the head of the enemy he has killed, and sets it up at the entrance to his dwelling. After they have treated their prisoners well for a long time with all the hospitality they can think of, each man who has a prisoner calls a great assembly of his acquaintances. He ties a rope to one of the prisoner's arms, by the end of which he holds him, a few steps away, for fear of being hurt, and gives his dearest friend the other arm to hold in the same way; and these two, in the presence of the whole assembly, kill him with their swords. This done, they roast him and eat him in common and send some pieces to their absent friends. This is not, as people think, for nourishment, as of old the Scythians used to do; it is to betoken an extreme revenge. And the proof of this came when they saw the Portuguese, who had joined forces with their adversaries, inflict a different kind of death on them when they took them prisoner, which was to bury them up to the waist, shoot the rest of their body full of arrows, and afterward hang them. They thought that these people from the other world, being men who had sown the knowledge of many vices among their neighbors and were much greater masters than themselves in every sort of wickedness, did not adopt this sort of vengeance without some reason, and that it must be more painful than their own; so they began to give up their old method and to follow this one.

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I am not sorry that we notice the barbarous horror of such acts, but I am heartily sorry that, judging their faults rightly, we should be so blind to our own. I think there is more barbarity in eating a man alive than in eating him dead; and in tearing by tortures and the rack a body still full of feeling, in roasting a man bit by bit, in having him bitten and mangled by dogs and swine (as we have not only read but seen within fresh memory, not among ancient enemies, but among neighbors and fellow citizens, and what is worse, on the pretext of piety and religion),[3] than in roasting and eating him after he is dead.

Shorter p. 1615

Indeed, Chrysippus and Zeno, heads of the Stoic sect, thought there was nothing wrong in using our carcasses for any purpose in case of need, and getting nourishment from them; just as our ancestors,[4] when besieged by Caesar in the city of Alesia, resolved to relieve their famine by eating old men, women, and other people useless forfighting.

> The Gascons once, 'tis said, their life renewed
> By eating of such food.
>
> JUVENAL[5]

And physicians do not fear to use humanflesh in all sorts of ways for our health, applying it either inwardly or outwardly. But there never was any opinion so Full p. C-386 disordered as to excuse treachery, disloyalty, tyranny, and cruelty, which are our ordinary vices.

So we may well call these people barbarians, in respect to the rules of reason, but not in respect to ourselves, who surpass them in every kind of barbarity.

Their warfare is wholly noble and generous, and as excusable and beautiful as this human disease can be; its only basis among them is their rivalry in valor. They are notfighting for the conquest of new lands, for they still enjoy that natural abundance that provides them without toil and trouble with all necessary things in such profusion that they have no wish to enlarge their boundaries. They are still in that happy state of desiring only as much as their natural needs demand; anything beyond that is superfluous to them.

They generally call those of the same age, brothers; those who are younger, children; and the old men are fathers to all the others. These leave to their heirs in common the full possession of their property, without division or any other title at all than just the one that Nature gives to her creatures in bringing them into the world.

If their neighbors cross the mountains to attack them and win a victory, the gain of the victor is glory, and the advantage of having proved the master in valor and virtue; for apart from this they have no use for the goods of the vanquished, and they return to their own country, where they lack neither anything necessary nor that great thing, the knowledge of how to enjoy their condition happily and be content with it. These men of ours do the same in their turn. They demand of their prisoners no other ransom than that they confess and acknowledge their defeat. But there is not one in a whole century who does not choose to die rather than to relax a single bit, by word or look, from the grandeur of an invincible courage; not one who would not rather be killed and eaten than so much as ask not to be. They treat them very freely, so that life may be all the dearer to them, and usually entertain them with threats of their coming death, of the torments they will have to suffer, the preparations that

are being made for the purpose, the cutting up of their limbs, and the feast that will be made at their expense. All this is done for the sole purpose of extorting from their lips some weak or base word, or making them want toflee, so as to gain the advantage of having terrified them and broken down theirfirmness. For indeed, if you take it the right way, it is in this point alone that true victory lies:

Shorter p. 1616

> It is no victory
> Unless the vanquished foe admits your mastery.
>
> CLAUDIAN[6]

The Hungarians, very bellicosefighters, did not in olden times pursue their advantage beyond putting the enemy at their mercy. For having wrung a confession from him to this effect, they let him go unharmed and unransomed, except, at most, for exacting his promise never again to take up arms against them.

We win enough advantages over our enemies that are borrowed advantages, not really our own. It is the quality of a porter, not of valor, to have sturdier arms and legs; agility is a dead and corporeal quality; it is a stroke of luck to Full p. C-387 make our enemy stumble, or dazzle his eyes by the sunlight; it is a trick of art and technique, which may be found in a worthless coward, to be an able fencer. The worth and value of a man is in his heart and his will; there lies his real honor. Valor is the strength, not of legs and arms, but of heart and soul; it consists not in the worth of our horse or our weapons, but in our own. He who falls obstinate in his courage, *if he has fallen, he fights on his knees* [Seneca].[7] He who relaxes none of his assurance, no matter how great the danger of imminent death; who, giving up his soul, still looksfirmly and scornfully at his enemy—he is beaten not by us, but by fortune; he is killed, not conquered.

The most valiant are sometimes the most unfortunate. Thus there are triumphant defeats that rival victories. Nor did those four sister victories, the fairest that the sun ever set eyes on —Salamis, Plataea, Mycale, and Sicily[8] —ever dare match all their combined glory against the glory of the annihilation of King Leonidas and his men at the pass of Thermopylae.[9]

Who ever hastened with more glorious and ambitious desire to win a battle than Captain Ischolas to lose one? Who ever secured his safety more ingeniously and painstakingly than he did his destruction? He was charged to defend a certain pass in the Peloponnesus against the Arcadians. Finding himself wholly incapable of doing this, in view of the nature of the place and the inequality of the forces, he made up his mind that all who confronted the enemy would necessarily have to remain on thefield. On the other hand, deeming it unworthy both of his own virtue and magnanimity and of the Lacedaemonian name to fail in his charge, he took a middle course between these two extremes, in this way. The youngest andfittest of his band he preserved for the defense and service of their country, and sent them home; and with those whose loss was less important, he determined to hold this pass, and by their death to make the enemy buy their entry as dearly as he could. And so it turned out. For he was presently surrounded on all sides by the Arcadians, and after slaughtering a large number of them, he and his men were all put to the sword. Is there a trophy dedicated to victors that would not be

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more due to these vanquished? The role of true victory is infighting, not in coming offsafely; and the honor of valor consists in combating, not in beating.

Shorter p. 1617

To return to our story. These prisoners are so far from giving in, in spite of all that is done to them, that on the contrary, during the two or three months that they are kept, they wear a gay expression; they urge their captors to hurry and put them to the test; they defy them, insult them, reproach them with their cowardice and the number of battles they have lost to the prisoners' own people.

I have a song composed by a prisoner which contains this challenge, that they should all come boldly and gather to dine offhim, for they will be eating at the same time their own fathers and grandfathers, who have served to feed and nourish his body. "These muscles," he says, "thisflesh and these veins are your own, poor fools that you are. You do not recognize that the substance of your ancestors' limbs is still contained in them. Savor them well; you willfind in them the taste of your ownflesh." An idea that certainly does not smack of Full p. C-388 barbarity. Those that paint these people dying, and who show the execution, portray the prisoner spitting in the face of his slayers and scowling at them. Indeed, to the last gasp they never stop braving and defying their enemies by word and look. Truly here are real savages by our standards; for either they must be thoroughly so, or we must be; there is an amazing distance between their character and ours.

The men there have several wives, and the higher their reputation for valor the more wives they have. It is a remarkably beautiful thing about their marriages that the same jealousy our wives have to keep us from the affection and kindness of other women, theirs have to win this for them. Being more concerned for their husbands' honor than for anything else, they strive and scheme to have as many companions as they can, since that is a sign of their husbands' valor.

Our wives will cry "Miracle!" but it is no miracle. It is a properly matrimonial virtue, but one of the highest order. In the Bible, Leah, Rachel, Sarah, and Jacob's wives gave their beautiful handmaids to their husbands; and Livia seconded the appetites of Augustus to her own disadvantage; and Stratonice, the wife of King Deiotarus,[1] not only lent her husband for his use a very beautiful young chambermaid in her service, but carefully brought up her children, and backed them up to succeed to their father's estates.

And lest it be thought that all this is done through a simple and servile bondage to usage and through the pressure of the authority of their ancient customs, without reasoning or judgment, and because their minds are so stupid that they cannot take any other course, I must cite some examples of their capacity. Besides the warlike song I have just quoted, I have another, a love song, which begins in this vein: "Adder, stay; stay, adder, that from the pattern of your coloring my sister may draw the fashion and the workmanship of a rich girdle that I may give to my love; so may your beauty and your pattern be forever preferred to all other serpents." Thisfirst couplet is the refrain of the song. Now I am familiar enough with poetry to be a judge of this: not only is there nothing barbarous in this fancy, but it is altogether Anacreontic.[2] Their language, moreover, is a soft language, with an agreeable sound, somewhat like Greek in its endings.

Shorter p. 1618

Three of these men, ignorant of the price they will pay some day, in loss of repose and happiness, for gaining knowledge of the corruptions of this side of the ocean; ignorant also of the fact that of this intercourse will come their ruin (which I suppose is already well advanced: poor wretches, to let themselves be tricked by the desire for new things, and to have left the serenity of their own sky to come and see ours!)—three of these men were at Rouen, at the time the late King Charles IX was there. The king talked to them for a long time; they were shown our ways, our splendor, the aspect of afine city. After that, someone asked their opinion, and wanted to know what they had found most amazing. They mentioned three things, of which I have forgotten the third, and I am very sorry for it; but I still remember two of them. They said that in thefirst place they thought it very strange that so many grown men, bearded, strong, and armed, who were around the king (it is likely that they were talking about the Swiss of his guard) should submit to obey a child, and that one of them was Full p. C-389 not chosen to command instead. Second (they have a way in their language of speaking of men as halves of one another), they had noticed that there were among us men full and gorged with all sorts of good things, and that their other halves were beggars at their doors, emaciated with hunger and poverty; and they thought it strange that these needy halves could endure such an injustice, and did not take the others by the throat, or setfire to their houses.

I had a very long talk with one of them; but I had an interpreter who followed my meaning so badly, and who was so hindered by his stupidity in taking in my ideas, that I could get hardly any satisfaction from the man. When I asked him what profit he gained from his superior position among his people (for he was a captain, and our sailors called him king), he told me that it was to march foremost in war. How many men followed him? He pointed to a piece of ground, to signify as many as such a space could hold; it might have been four orfive thousand men. Did all this authority expire with the war? He said that this much remained, that when he visited the villages dependent on him, they made paths for him through the underbrush by which he might pass quite comfortably.

All this is not too bad—but what's the use? They don't wear breeches.

Footnotes

- Note 7:King of Epirus (in Greece) who fought the Romans in Italy in 280 B.C.E. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:Both Titus Quinctius Flaminius and Publius Sulpicius Galba were Roman statesmen and generals who fought Philip V of Macedon in the early years of the 2nd century B.C.E. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:In Brazil. Villegaignon landed there in 1557. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:In his *Timaeus* . Return to reference 1
- Note 2: *Aeneid* 3.414–15. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Horatius Flaccus (65–8 B.C.E .), great poet of Augustan Rome; *Art of Poetry*, lines 65–66. Return to reference 3
- Note 4: *Elegies* 1.2.10–12. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:See his *Laws* . Return to reference 5
- Note 6:The half-legendary Spartan lawgiver (9th century B.C.E.). Return to reference 6
- Note 7:This passage is always compared with Shakespeare's *The Tempest* 2.1.143ff. Return to reference 7

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- Note 8:Roman tragedian (c. 4 B.C.E.–65 C.E.), philosopher, and political leader, *Epistles* 90. Return to reference 8
- Note 9: *Georgics* 2.20. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:A Byzantine lexicographer. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:About 2.49 miles. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:The allusion is to the spectacles of religious warfare that Montaigne himself had witnessed in his time and country. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:The Gauls. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:Decimus Junius Juvenal (fl. early 2nd century C.E .), last great Roman satirist; *Satires* 15.93–94. Return to reference 5
- Note 6: *Of the Sixth Consulate of Honorius*, lines 248–49. Return to reference 6
- Note 7: *Of Providence* 2. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:References to the famous Greek victories against the Persians and (at Himera, Sicily) against the Carthaginians in or about 480 B.C.E . Return to reference 8
- Note 9:The Spartan king Leonidas's defense here also took place in 480 B.C.E ., during the war against the Persians. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:Tetrarch of Galatia, in Asia Minor. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Worthy of Anacreon (572?–488? B.C.E .), major Greek writer of amatory lyrics. Return to reference 2

Of the Inconsistency of Our Actions

Those who make a practice of comparing human actions are never so perplexed as when they try to see them as a whole and in the same light; for they commonly contradict each other so strangely that it seems impossible that they have come from the same shop. One moment young Marius is a son of Mars, another moment a son of Venus.[3] Pope Boniface VIII, they say, entered office like a fox, behaved in it like a lion, and died like a dog. And who would believe that it was Nero, that living image of cruelty, who said, when they brought him in customary fashion the sentence of a condemned criminal to sign: "Would to God I had never learned to write!" So much his heart was wrung at condemning a man to death!

Everything is so full of such examples—each man, in fact, can supply himself with so many —that Ifind it strange to see intelligent men sometimes going to great pains to match these pieces; seeing that irresolution seems to me the most common and apparent defect of our nature, as witness that famous line of Publilius, the farce writer:

> Bad is the plan that never can be changed.
>
> PUBLILIUS SYRUS[4]

There is some justification for basing a judgment of a man on the most ordinary acts of his life; but in view of the natural instability of our conduct and Full p. C-390 opinions, it has often seemed to me that even good authors are wrong to insist on fashioning a consistent and solid fabric out of us. They choose one general characteristic, and go and arrange and interpret all a man's actions tofit their picture; and if they cannot twist them enough, they go and set them down to dissimulation. Augustus has escaped them; for there is in this man throughout the

course of his life such an obvious, abrupt, and continual variety of actions that even the boldest judges have had to let him go, intact and unsolved. Nothing is harder for me than to believe in men's consistency, nothing easier than to believe in their inconsistency. He who would judge them in detail and distinctly, bit by bit, would more often hit upon the truth.

In all antiquity it is hard to pick out a dozen men who set their lives to a certain and constant course, which is the principal goal of wisdom. For, to comprise all wisdom in a word, says an ancient [Seneca], and to embrace all the rules of our life in one, it is "always to will the same things, and always to oppose the same things."[5] I would not deign, he says, to add "provided the will is just"; for if it is not just, it cannot always be whole.

In truth, I once learned that vice is only unruliness and lack of moderation, and that consequently consistency cannot be attributed to it. It is a maxim of Demosthenes, they say, that the beginning of all virtue is consultation and deliberation; and the end and perfection, consistency. If it were by reasoning that we settled on a particular course of action, we would choose the fairest course—but no one has thought of that:

> He spurns the thing he sought, and seeks anew
> What he just spurned; he seethes, his life's askew.
>
> HORACE[6]

Our ordinary practice is to follow the inclinations of our appetite, to the left, to the right, uphill and down, as the wind of circumstance carries us. We think of what we want only at the moment we want it, and we change like that animal which takes the color of the place you set it on. What we have just now planned, we presently change, and presently again we retrace our steps: nothing but oscillation and inconsistency:

> Like puppets we are moved by outside strings.
>
> HORACE[7]

We do not go; we are carried away, likefloating objects, now gently, now violently, according as the water is angry or calm:

> Do we not see all humans unaware
> Of what they want, and always searching everywhere,
> And changing place, as if to drop the load they bear?
>
> LUCRETIUS[8]

Full p. C-391

Every day a new fancy, and our humors shift with the shifts in the weather:

> Such are the minds of men, as is the fertile light
> That Father Jove himself sends down to make earth bright.
>
> HOMER[9]

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Wefloat between different states of mind; we wish nothing freely, nothing absolutely, nothing constantly. If any man could prescribe and establish definite laws and a definite organization in his head, we should see shining throughout his life an evenness of habits, an order, and an infallible relation between his principles and his practice.

Empedocles noticed this inconsistency in the Agrigentines, that they abandoned themselves to pleasures as if they were to die on the morrow, and built as if they were never to die.[1]

This man would be easy to understand, as is shown by the example of the younger Cato:[2] he who has touched one chord of him has touched all; he is a harmony of perfectly concordant sounds, which cannot conflict. With us, it is the opposite: for so many actions, we need so many individual judgments. The surest thing, in my opinion, would be to trace our actions to the neighboring circumstances, without getting into any further research and without drawing from them any other conclusions.

During the disorders of our poor country,[3] I was told that a girl, living near where I then was, had thrown herself out of a high window to avoid the violence of a knavish soldier quartered in her house. Not killed by the fall, she reasserted her purpose by trying to cut her throat with a knife. From this she was prevented, but only after wounding herself gravely. She herself confessed that the soldier had as yet pressed her only with requests, solicitations, and gifts; but she had been afraid, she said, that he wouldfinally resort to force. And all this with such words, such expressions, not to mention the blood that testified to her virtue, as would have become another Lucrece.[4] Now, I learned that as a matter of fact, both before and since, she was a wench not so hard to come to terms with. As the story[5] says: Handsome and gentlemanly as you may be, when you have had no luck, do not promptly conclude that your mistress is inviolably chaste; for all you know, the mule driver may get his will with her.

Antigonus,[6] having taken a liking to one of his soldiers for his virtue and valor, ordered his physicians to treat the man for a persistent internal malady that had long tormented him. After his cure, his master noticed that he was going about his business much less warmly, and asked him what had changed him so and made him such a coward. “You yourself, Sire,” he answered, “by delivering me from the ills that made my life indifferent to me.” A soldier of Lucullus[7] who had been robbed of everything by the enemy made a bold attack on them to get revenge. When he had retrieved his loss, Lucullus, having Full p. C-392 formed a good opinion of him, urged him to some dangerous exploit with all thefine expostulations he could think of,

> With words that might have stirred a coward’s heart.
>
> HORACE[8]

“Urge some poor soldier who has been robbed to do it,” he replied;

> Though but a rustic lout,
> “That man will go who’s lost his money,” he called out;
>
> HORACE[9]

and resolutely refused to go.

We read that Sultan Mohammed outrageously berated Hassan, leader of his Janissaries, because he saw his troops giving way to the Hungarians and Hassan himself behaving like a coward in thefight. Hassan's only reply was to go and hurl himself furiously—alone, just as he was, arms in hand—into thefirst body of enemies that he met, by whom he was promptly swallowed up; this was perhaps not so much self-justification as a change of mood, nor so much his natural valor as fresh spite.

That man whom you saw so adventurous yesterday, do not think it strange tofind him just as cowardly today: either anger, or necessity, or company, or wine, or the sound of a trumpet, had put his heart in his belly. His was a courage formed not by reason, but by one of these circumstances; it is no wonder if he has now been made different by other, contrary circumstances.

These supple variations and contradictions that are seen in us have made some imagine that we have two souls, and others that two powers accompany us and drive us, each in its own way, one toward good, the other toward evil; for such sudden diversity cannot well be reconciled with a simple subject.

Not only does the wind of accident move me at will, but, besides, I am moved and disturbed as a result merely of my own unstable posture; and anyone who observes carefully can hardlyfind himself twice in the same state. I give my soul now one face, now another, according to which direction I turn it. If I speak of myself in different ways, that is because I look at myself in different ways. All contradictions may be found in me by some twist and in some fashion. Bashful, insolent; chaste, lascivious; talkative, taciturn; tough, delicate; clever, stupid; surly, affable; lying, truthful; learned, ignorant; liberal, miserly, and prodigal: all this I see in myself to some extent according to how I turn; and whoever studies himself really attentivelyfinds in himself, yes, even in his judgment, this gyration and discord. I have nothing to say about myself absolutely, simply, and solidly, without confusion and without mixture, or in one word. *Distinguo*[1] is the most universal member of my logic.

Although I am always minded to say good of what is good, and inclined to interpret favorably anything that can be so interpreted, still it is true that the strangeness of our condition makes it happen that we are often driven to do good by vice itself—were it not that doing good is judged by intention alone.

Full p. C-393

Therefore one courageous deed must not be taken to prove a man valiant; a man who was really valiant would be so always and on all occasions. If valor were a habit of virtue, and not a sally, it would make a man equally resolute in any contingency, the same alone as in company, the same in single combat as in battle; for, whatever they say, there is not one valor for the pavement and another for the camp. As bravely would he bear an illness in his bed as a wound in camp, and he would fear death no more in his home than in an assault. We would not see the same man charging into the breach with brave assurance, and later tormenting himself, like a woman, over the loss of a lawsuit or a son. When, though a coward against infamy, he isfirm against poverty; when, though weak against the surgeons' knives, he is steadfast against the enemy's swords, the action is praiseworthy, not the man.

Many Greeks, says Cicero, cannot look at the enemy, and are brave in sickness; the Cimbrians and Celtiberians, just the opposite; *for nothing can be uniform that does not spring from a firm principle* [Cicero].[2]

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There is no more extreme valor of its kind than Alexander's; but it is only of one kind, and not complete and universal enough. Incomparable though it is, it still has its blemishes; which is why we see him worry so frantically when he conceives the slightest suspicion that his men are plotting against his life, and why he behaves in such matters with such violent and indiscriminate injustice and with a fear that subverts his natural reason. Also superstition, with which he was so strongly tainted, bears some stamp of pusillanimity. And the excessiveness of the penance he did for the murder of Clytus[3] is also evidence of the unevenness of his temper.

Our actions are nothing but a patchwork—*they despise pleasure, but are too cowardly in pain; they are indifferent to glory, but infamy breaks their spirit* [Cicero][4] —and we want to gain honor under false colors. Virtue will not be followed except for her own sake; and if we sometimes borrow her mask for some other purpose, she promptly snatches it from our face. It is a strong and vivid dye, once the soul is steeped in it, and will not go without taking the fabric with it. That is why, to judge a man, we must follow his traces long and carefully. If he does not maintain consistency for its own sake, *with a way of life that has been well considered and preconcerted* [Cicero];[5] if changing circumstances makes him change his pace (I mean his path, for his pace may be hastened or slowed), let him go: that man goes before the wind, as the motto of our Talbot[6] says.

It is no wonder, says an ancient [Seneca], that chance has so much power over us, since we live by chance.[7] A man who has not directed his life as a whole toward a definite goal cannot possibly set his particular actions in order. A man who does not have a picture of the whole in his head cannot possibly arrange the pieces. What good does it do a man to lay in a supply of paints if he does not know what he is to paint? No one makes a definite plan of his life; we think about it only piecemeal. The archer mustfirst know what he is aiming at, Full p. C-394 and then set his hand, his bow, his string, his arrow, and his movements for that goal. Our plans go astray because they have no direction and no aim. No wind works for the man who has no port of destination.

I do not agree with the judgment given in favor of Sophocles, on the strength of seeing one of his tragedies, that it proved him competent to manage his domestic affairs, against the accusation of his son. Nor do I think that the conjecture of the Parians sent to reform the Milesians was sufficient ground for the conclusion they drew. Visiting the island, they noticed the best-cultivated lands and the best-run country houses, and noted down the names of their owners. Then they assembled the citizens in the town and appointed these owners the new governors and magistrates, judging that they, who were careful of their private affairs, would be careful of those of the public.

We are all patchwork, and so shapeless and diverse in composition that each bit, each moment, plays its own game. And there is as much difference between us and ourselves as between us and others. *Consider it a great thing to play the part of one single man* [Seneca].[8] Ambition can teach men valor, and temperance, and liberality, and even justice. Greed can implant in the heart of a shop apprentice, brought up in obscurity and idleness, the confidence to cast himself far from hearth and home, in a frail boat at the mercy of the waves and angry Neptune; it also teaches discretion and wisdom. Venus herself supplies resolution and

boldness to boys still subject to discipline and the rod, and arms the tender hearts of virgins who are still in their mothers' laps:

> Furtively passing sleeping guards, with Love as guide,
> Alone by night the girl comes to the young man's side.

TIBULLUS[9]

In view of this, a sound intellect will refuse to judge men simply by their outward actions; we must probe the inside and discover what springs set men in motion. But since this is an arduous and hazardous undertaking, I wish fewer people would meddle with it.

Footnotes

- Note 3:Goddess of love. "Marius": the nephew of the older and better-known Marius. Montaigne's source is Plutarch's *Life of Marius* . "Mars": the god of war. Return to reference 3
- Note 4: *Apothegms (Sententiae*), line 362. Return to reference 4
- Note 5: *Epistles* 20. Return to reference 5
- Note 6: *Epistles* 1.1.98–99. Return to reference 6
- Note 7: *Satires* 2.7.82. Return to reference 7
- Note 8: *On the Nature of Things* 3.1057–59. Return to reference 8
- Note 9: *Odyssey* 18.135–36. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:From Diogenes Laertius's life of the Greek philosopher Empedocles (5th century). Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Cato Uticensis (1st century B.C.E.), a philosopher. He is traditionally considered the epitome of moral and intellectual integrity. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:See p. 385, n. 3. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:The legendary virtuous Roman who stabbed herself after being raped by King Tarquinius Superbus's son. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:A common folktale. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:Macedonian king (382–301 B.C.E.). Return to reference 6
- Note 7:Roman general (1st century B.C.E.). Return to reference 7
- Note 8: *Epistles* 2.2.36. Return to reference 8
- Note 9: *Epistles* 2.2.39–40. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:I distinguish (Latin)—that is, I separate into its components. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Marcus Tullius Cicero (106–43 B.C.E.), Roman orator; *Tusculan Disputations* 2.27. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:A commander in Alexander's army who was killed by him during an argument, an act Alexander immediately and bitterly regretted, as related by Plutarch in his *Life of Alexander*, chaps. 50–52. Return to reference 3
- Note 4: *On Duties (De officiis)* 1.21. Return to reference 4
- Note 5: *Paradoxes* 5. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:An English captain who fought in France and died there in 1453. Return to reference 6
- Note 7: *Epistles* 71. Return to reference 7

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• Note 8: *Epistles* 120. Return to reference 8
• Note 9: *Elegies* 2.1.75–76. Return to reference 9

Of Coaches

It is very easy to demonstrate that great authors, when they write about causes, adduce not only those they think are true but also those they do not believe in, provided they have some originality and beauty. They speak truly and usefully enough if they speak ingeniously. We cannot make sure of the master cause; we pile up several of them, to see if by chance it will be found among them.

> For one cause will not do;
> We must state many, one of which is true.
>
> LUCRETIUS[1]

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Do you ask me whence comes this custom of blessing those who sneeze? We produce three sorts of wind. That which issues from below is too foul; that which issues from the mouth carries some reproach of gluttony; the third is sneezing. And because it comes from the head and is blameless, we give it this civil reception. Do not laugh at this piece of subtlety; it is, they say, from Aristotle.

It seems to me I have read in Plutarch (who, of all the authors I know, is the one who best combined art with nature and judgment with knowledge) that he gives the reason for the heaving of the stomach that afflicts those who travel by sea, as fear, having found some reason by which he proves that fear can produce such an effect. I, who am very subject to seasickness, know very well that this cause does not affect me, and I know it, not by reasoning, but by necessary experience. Not to mention what I have been told, that the same thing often happens to animals, and especially to pigs, without any apprehension of danger; and what an acquaintance of mine has told me about himself, that though he was very subject to it, the desire to vomit had left him two or three times when he found himself oppressed with fright in a big storm. And hear this ancient: *I was too sick to think about the danger* [Seneca].[2] I was never afraid on the water, nor indeed anywhere else (and I have often enough had just occasions, if death is one), at least not to the point of being confused or bewildered.

Fear sometimes arises from want of judgment as well as from want of courage. All the dangers I have seen, I have seen with open eyes, with my sight free, sound, and entire; besides, it takes courage to be afraid. It once served me in good stead, compared with others, so to conduct myflight and keep it orderly, that it was carried out, if not without fear, at all events without terror and without dismay; it was excited, but not dazed or distracted.

Great souls go much further yet and offer us examples offlights not merely composed and healthy, but proud. Let us tell of the one that Alcibiades reports of Socrates, his comrade in arms:[3] “I found him,” he says, “after the rout of our army, him and Laches, among the last of the fugitives; and I observed him at my leisure and in safety, for I was on a good horse and he on foot, and we had fought that way. I noticedfirst how much presence of mind and resolution he showed compared with Laches; and then the boldness of his walk, no different from his

ordinary one, hisfirm and steady gaze, considering and judging what was going on around him, looking now at one side, now the other, friends and enemies, in a way that encouraged the former and signified to the latter that he was a man to sell his blood and his life very dear to anyone who should try to take them away. And thus they made their escape; for people are not inclined to attack such men; they run after the frightened ones." That is the testimony of that great captain, which teaches us what we experience every day, that there is nothing that throws us so much into dangers as an unthinking eagerness to get clear of them. *Where there is less fear, there is generally less danger* [Livy].[4]

Our common people are wrong to say that such-and-such a man fears death, when they mean to say that he thinks about it and foresees it. Foresight is equally suitable in whatever concerns us, whether for good or ill. To consider and judge the danger is in a way the opposite of being stunned by it.

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I do not feel myself strong enough to sustain the impact and impetuosity of this passion of fear, or of any other vehement passion. If I were once conquered and thrown by it, I would never get up again quite intact. If anything made my soul lose its footing, it would never set it back upright in its place; it probes and searches itself too keenly and deeply, and therefore would never let the wound that had pierced it close up and heal. It has been well for me that no illness has yet laid it low. Each attack made on me I meet andfight offin my full armor; thus thefirst one that swept me offmy feet would leave me without resources. I have no secondary defense: no matter where the torrent should break my dike, I would be helpless and be drowned for good.

Epicurus[5] says that the wise man can never pass into a contrary state. I have an opinion about the converse of this saying: that anyone who has once been very foolish will never at any other time be very wise.

God tempers the cold according to the cloak, and gives me passions according to my means of withstanding them. Nature, having uncovered me on one side, has covered me up on the other; having disarmed me of strength, she has armed me with insensibility and a controlled, or dull, apprehensiveness.

Now I cannot long endure (and I could endure them less easily in my youth) either coach, or litter, or boat; and I hate any other transportation than horseback, both in town and in the country. But I can endure a litter less than a coach, and for the same reason I can more easily bear a rough tossing on the water, whereby fear is produced, than the movement felt in calm weather. By that slight jolt given by the oars, stealing the vessel from under us, I somehow feel my head and stomach troubled, as I cannot bear a shaky seat under me. When the sail or the current carries us along evenly or when we are towed, this uniform movement does not bother me at all. It is an interrupted motion that annoys me, and most of all when it is languid. I cannot otherwise describe its nature. The doctors have ordered me to bind and swathe my abdomen with a towel to remedy this trouble; which I have not tried, being accustomed to wrestle with the weaknesses that are in me and overcome them by myself.

If my memory were sufficiently stored with them, I should not begrudge my time to tell here the infinite variety of examples that histories offer us of the use of coaches in the service of war, varying according to the nations and according to the age; of great effect, it seems to me, and very necessary, so that it is a wonder that we have lost all knowledge of them. I will say

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only this, that quite recently, in our fathers' time, the Hungarians put coaches very usefully to work against the Turks, there being in each one a targeteer and a musketeer and a number of harquebuses lined up, loaded and ready, the whole thing covered with a wall of shields, like a galiot. They formed their battlefront of three thousand such coaches, and after the cannon had played, had them advance and made the enemy swallow this salvo before tasting the rest; which was no slight advantage. Or they launched them into the enemy squadrons to break them and open them up; not to mention the advantage they could derive from them byflanking enemy troops on their march through open country where they were vulnerable, or by covering a camp in haste and fortifying it.

In my time a gentleman on one of our frontiers, who was unwieldy of person and found no horse capable of bearing his weight, having a feud on his hands, Full p. C-397 went about the country in a coach of this very description, and made out very well. But let us leave these war coaches. The kings of ourfirst dynasty went about the country in a chariot drawn by four oxen.

Mark Antony[6] was thefirst who had himself drawn in Rome—and a minstrel girl beside him—by lions harnessed to a chariot. Heliogabalus did as much later, calling himself Cybele, the mother of the gods; and also by tigers, imitating the god Bacchus; he also sometimes harnessed two stags to his coach, and another time four dogs, and yet again four naked wenches, having himself, stark naked too, drawn by them in pomp. The Emperor Firmus had his chariot drawn by ostriches of marvelous size, so that it seemed rather tofly than to roll.

The strangeness of these inventions puts into my head this other notion: that it is a sort of pusillanimity in monarchs, and evidence of not sufficiently feeling what they are, to labor at showing offand making a display by excessive expense. It would be excusable in a foreign country; but among his own subjects, where he is all-powerful, he derives from his dignity the highest degree of honor he can attain. Just as, it seems to me, for a gentleman it is superfluous to dress with studied care at home: his house, his retinue, his cuisine, answer for him sufficiently.

The advice that Isocrates[7] gives his king seems to me not without reason: that he be splendid in furniture and plate, since that is a lasting investment which passes on to his successors; and that he avoid all magnificences thatflow away immediately out of use and memory.

I liked to adorn myself when I was a youth, for lack of other adornments, and it was becoming to me; there are those on whomfine clothes weep. We have marvelous stories of the frugality of our kings about their own persons and in their gifts—kings great in prestige, in valor, and in fortune. Demosthenes[8] fights tooth and nail against the law of his city that allotted public monies to lavish games and feasts; he wants the greatness of the city to be manifest in its quantity of well-equipped ships and of good, well-supplied armies.

And Theophrastus[9] is rightly blamed for setting forth a contrary opinion in his book on riches, and maintaining that lavish expenditure was the true fruit of opulence. These are pleasures, says Aristotle, that touch only the lowest of the people, that vanish from memory as soon as people are sated with them, and that no judicious and serious man can esteem. The outlay would seem to me much more royal as well as more useful, just, and durable, if it were spent on ports, harbors, fortifications, and walls, on sumptuous buildings, churches, hospitals, colleges, and the improvement of streets and roads, for which Pope Gregory XIII is gratefully

remembered in my time, and in which our Queen Catherine[1] would leave evidence for many years of her natural liberality and munificence, if her means were equal to her wish. Fortune has given me great displeasure by interrupting the construction of the handsome new bridge[2] of our great city, and depriving me of the hope of seeing it in full use before I die.

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Besides, it seems to the subjects, spectators of these triumphs, that they are given a display of their own riches, and entertained at their own expense. For peoples are apt to assume about kings, as we do about our servants, that they should take care to prepare for us in abundance all we need, but that they should not touch it at all for their own part. And therefore the Emperor Galba,[3] having taken pleasure in a musician's playing during his supper, sent for his money box and gave into his hand a handful of crowns that hefished out of it, with these words: "This is not the public money, this is my own." At all events, it most often happens that the people are right, and that their eyes are feasted with what should go to feed their bellies.

Liberality itself is not in its proper light in the hands of a sovereign; private people have more right to exercise it. For, to be precise about it, a king has nothing that is properly his own; he owes his very self to others.

The authority to judge is not given for the sake of the judge, but for the sake of the person judged. A superior is never appointed for his own benefit, but for the benefit of the inferior, and a doctor for the sick, not for himself. All authority, like all art, has its end outside of itself: *no art is directed to itself* [Cicero].[4]

Wherefore the tutors of young princes who make it a point to impress on them this virtue of liberality and preach to them not to know how to refuse anything, and to think nothing so well spent as what they give away (a lesson that I have seen in great favor in my time), either look more to their own profit than to their master's, or do not well understand to whom they speak. It is all too easy to impress liberality on a man who has the means to practice it all he wants at the expense of others. And since its value is reckoned not by the measure of the gift, but by the measure of the giver's means, it amounts to nothing in such powerful hands. Theyfind themselves prodigal before they are liberal. Therefore liberality is little to be commended compared with other royal virtues, and it is the only one, as the tyrant Dionysius said, that goes with tyranny itself. I would rather teach him this verse of the ancient farmer: that whoever wants to reap a good crop must sow with the hand, not pour out of the sack; he must scatter the seed, not spill it; and that since he has to give, or, to put it better, pay and restore to so many people according to their deserts, he should be a fair and wise distributor. If the liberality of a prince is without discretion and without measure, I would rather he were a miser.

Royal virtue seems to consist most of all in justice; and of all the parts of justice, that one best marks kings which accompanies liberality; for they have particularly reserved it as their function, whereas they are prone to exercise all other justice through the intermediary of others. Immoderate largesse is a feeble means for them to acquire good will; for it alienates more people than it wins over: *The more you have already practiced it on, the fewer you will be able to practice it on. What is more foolish than to take pains so that you can no longer do what you enjoy doing?* [Cicero.][5] And if it is exercised without regard to merit, it puts to shame him who receives it, and is received ungraciously. Tyrants have been sacrificed to the hatred of the

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people by the hands of the very ones whom they have unjustly advanced; for such men think to assure their possession of undeserved goods by showing contempt and hatred for the Full p. C-399 man from whom they received them, and rallying to the judgment and opinion of the people in that respect.

The subjects of a prince who is excessive in gifts become excessive in requests; they adjust themselves not to reason but to example. Surely we often have reason to blush for our impudence; we are overpaid according to justice when the recompense equals our service; for do we owe no service to our prince by natural obligation? If he bears our expenses, he does too much; it is enough that he helps out. The surplus is called benefit, and it cannot be exacted, for the very name of liberality rings of liberty. By our method, it is never done; the receipts are no longer taken into account; people love only the future liberality. Wherefore the more a prince exhausts himself in giving, the poorer he makes himself in friends. How could he assuage desires that grow the more they are fulfilled? He who has his mind on taking, no longer has it on what he has taken. Covetousness has nothing so characteristic about it as ingratitude.

The example of Cyrus[6] will not be amiss here to serve the kings of our time as a touchstone for ascertaining whether their gifts are well or ill bestowed, and to make them see how much more happily that emperor dealt them out than they do. Whereby they are reduced to doing their borrowing from unknown subjects, and rather from those they have wronged than from those they have benefited; and from them they receive no aid that is gratuitous in anything but the name.

Croesus reproached Cyrus for his extravagance and calculated how much his treasure would amount to if he had been more close-fisted. Cyrus, wanting to justify his liberality, sent dispatches in all directions to the grandees of his state whose career he had particularly advanced, and asked each one to help him out with as much money as he could for an urgent need of his, and to send him a declaration of the amount. When all these statements were brought to him, since each of his friends, thinking it was not enough to offer him merely as much as he had received from his munificence, added much that was more properly his own, it turned out that the total amounted to much more than the savings estimated by Croesus. Whereupon Cyrus said to him: “I am no less in love with riches than other princes, and am rather a more careful manager of them. You see at how small a cost I have acquired the inestimable treasure of so many friends, and how much more faithful treasurers they are to me than mercenary men without obligation, without affection, would be; and how much better my wealth is lodged than in coffers, where it would call down upon me the hatred, envy, and contempt of other princes.”

The emperors derived an excuse for the superfluity of their public games and spectacles from the fact that their authority depended somewhat (at least in appearance) on the will of the Roman people, who from time immemorial had been accustomed to beingflattered by that sort of spectacle and extravagance. But it was private citizens who had nourished this custom of gratifying their fellow citizens and companions, chiefly out of their own purse, by such profusion and magnificence; this had an altogether differentflavor when it was the masters who came to imitate it. *The transfer of money from its rightful owners to strangers should not be regarded as liberality* [Cicero].[7]

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Philip, because his son was trying to win the good will of the Macedonians by presents, scolded him for it in a letter in this manner: “What, do you want your subjects to regard you as their purser, not as their king? Do you want to win them over? Win them over with the benefits of your virtue, not the benefits of your coffers.”[8]

It was, however, afine thing to bring and plant in the amphitheater a great quantity of big trees, all branching and green, representing a great shady forest, arranged in beautiful symmetry, and on thefirst day to cast into it a thousand ostriches, a thousand stags, a thousand wild boars, and a thousand fallow deer, leaving them to be hunted down by the people; on the next day to have a hundred big lions, a hundred leopards, and three hundred bears slaughtered in their presence; and for the third day, to have three hundred pairs of gladiatorsfight it out to the death, as the Emperor Probus[9] did.

It was also afine thing to see those great amphitheaters faced with marble on the outside, wrought with ornaments and statues, the inside sparkling with many rare enrichments—

> Here is the diamond circle, the golden portico
>
> CALPURNIUS[1]

—all the sides of this vast spacefilled and surrounded from top to bottom with three or four score tiers of seats, also of marble, covered with cushions—

> “Let him begone,” he says,
> “And leave the cushioned seats of knights, seeing he pays
> None of the lawful tax”
>
> JUVENAL[2]

—where a hundred thousand men could sit at their ease. Also,first of all, to have the place at the bottom, where the games were played, open artificially and split into crevasses representing caverns that vomited forth the beasts destined for the spectacle; and then, second, toflood it with a deep sea, full of sea monsters and laden with armed vessels to represent a naval battle; and third, to level it and dry it offagain for the combat of the gladiators; and for the fourth show to strew it with vermilion and storax instead of sand, in order to set up a stately banquet there for all that huge number of people—thefinal act of a single day:

> How often have we seen
>
> Part of the sandyfloor sink down, wild beasts emerge
> Out of the open chasm, and from its depths upsurge
> Forests of golden growing trees with yellow bark.
> Not only forest monsters were for us to mark,
> But I saw sea-calves mingled in withfighting bears,

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> And hippopotami, the shapeless herd that wears
> The name of river-horse.

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CALPURNIUS[3]

Sometimes they created a high mountain there, full of fruit trees and other trees in leaf, spouting a stream of water from its top as from the mouth of a living spring. Sometimes they brought in a great ship which opened and came apart of itself and, after having spewed forth from its belly four orfive hundredfighting beasts, closed up again and vanished without assistance. At other times, from thefloor of the place, they made spouts and jets of water spring forth which shot upward to an infinite height, then sprinkled and perfumed that infinite multitude. To protect themselves against damage from the weather, they had that immense space hung with awnings, sometimes made of purple worked with the needle, sometimes of silk of one color or another, and they drew them forward or back in a moment, as they had a mind to:

> The awnings, though the sun scorches the skin,
> Are, when Hermogenes appears, drawn in.

MARTIAL[4]

The nets, too, which they put in front of the people to protect them from the violence of the loosened beasts, were woven of gold:

> Even the woven nets
> Glitter with gold.

CALPURNIUS[5]

If there is anything excusable in such extravagances, it is when the inventiveness and the novelty of them, not the expense, provide amazement.

Even in these vanities we discover how fertile those ages were in minds different from ours. It is with this sort of fertility as with all other productions of Nature. This is not to say that she then put forth her utmost effort. We do not go in a straight line; we rather ramble, and turn this way and that. We retrace our steps. I fear that our knowledge is weak in every direction; we do not see very far ahead or very far behind. It embraces little and has a short life, short in both extent of time and extent of matter:

> Ere Agamemnon, heroes were the same;
> Many there were, but no one knows their name;
> They all are hurried on unwept
> Into unending night.

HORACE

> Before the Trojan War, before Troy fell,
> Were other bards with other tales to tell.

LUCRETIUS[6]

And Solon's story of what he had heard from the priests of Egypt about the long life of their state, and their manner of learning and preserving the histories of other countries, does not seem to me a testimony to be rejected in this consideration. *If we could view that expanse of countries and ages, boundless in every direction, into which the mind, plunging and spreading itself, travels so far and wide that it can find no limit where it can stop, there would appear in that immensity an infinite capacity to produce innumerable forms* [adapted from Cicero].[7]

Even if all that has come down to us by report from the past should be true and known by someone, it would be less than nothing compared with what is unknown. And of this very image of the world which glides along while we live on it, how puny and limited is the knowledge of even the most curious! Not only of particular events which fortune often renders exemplary and weighty, but of the state of great governments and nations, there escapes us a hundred times more than comes to our knowledge. We exclaim at the miracle of the invention of our artillery, of our printing; other men in another corner of the world, in China, enjoyed these a thousand years earlier. If we saw as much of the world as we do not see, we would perceive, it is likely, a perpetual multiplication and vicissitude of forms.

There is nothing unique and rare as regards nature, but there certainly is as regards our knowledge, which is a miserable foundation for our rules and which is apt to represent to us a very false picture of things. As vainly as we today infer the decline and decrepitude of the world from the arguments we draw from our own weakness and decay—

> This age is broken down, and broken down the earth
>
> LUCRETIUS[8]

—so vainly did this poet infer the world's birth and youth from the vigor he saw in the minds of his time, abounding in novelties and inventions in various arts:

> The universe, I think, is very new,
> The world is young, its birth not far behind;
> Hence certain arts grow more and more refined
> Even today; the naval art is one.
>
> LUCRETIUS[9]

Our world has just discovered another world (and who will guarantee us that it is the last of its brothers, since the daemons, the Sibyls,[1] and we ourselves have up to now been ignorant of this one?) no less great, full, and well-limbed than itself, yet so new and so infantile that it is still being taught its A B C; notfifty years ago it knew neither letters, nor weights and measures, nor clothes, nor wheat, nor vines. It was still quite naked at the breast, and lived only on what its nursing mother provided. If we are right to infer the end of our world, and that poet is right about the youth of his own age, this other world will only be coming into the light when ours is leaving it. The universe will fall into paralysis; one member will be crippled, the other in full vigor.

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I am much afraid that we shall have very greatly hastened the decline and ruin of this new world by our contagion, and that we will have sold it our opinions and our arts very dear. It

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was an infant world; yet we have not whipped it and subjected it to our discipline by the advantage of our natural valor and strength, nor won it over by our justice and goodness, nor subjugated it by our magnanimity. Most of the responses of these people and most of our dealings with them show that they were not at all behind us in natural brightness of mind and pertinence.

The awesome magnificence of the cities of Cuzco[2] and Mexico (and, among many similar things, the garden of that king in which all the trees, the fruits, and all the herbs were excellently fashioned in gold, and of such size and so arranged as they might be in an ordinary garden; and in his curio room were gold replicas of all the living creatures native to his country and its waters), and the beauty of their workmanship in jewelry, feathers, cotton, and painting, show that they were not behind us in industry either. But as for devoutness, observance of the laws, goodness, liberality, loyalty, and frankness, it served us well not to have as much as they: by their advantage in this they lost, sold, and betrayed themselves.

As for boldness and courage, as forfirmness, constancy, resoluteness against pains and hunger and death, I would not fear to oppose the examples I couldfind among them to the most famous ancient examples that we have in the memories of our world on this side of the ocean. For as regards the men who subjugated them, take away the ruses and tricks that they used to deceive them, and the people's natural astonishment at seeing the unexpected arrival of bearded men, different in language, religion, shape, and countenance, from a part of the world so remote, where they had never imagined there was any sort of human habitation, mounted on great unknown monsters, opposed to men who had never seen not only a horse, but any sort of animal trained to carry and endure a man or any other burden; men equipped with a hard and shiny skin and a sharp and glittering weapon, against men who, for the miracle of a mirror or a knife, would exchange a great treasure in gold and pearls, and who had neither the knowledge nor the material by which, even in full leisure, they could pierce our steel; add to this the lightning and thunder of our cannon and harquebuses—capable of disturbing Caesar[3] himself, if he had been surprised by them with as little experience and in his time—against people who were naked (except in some regions where the invention of some cotton fabric had reached them), without other arms at the most than bows, stones, sticks, and wooden bucklers; people taken by surprise, under color of friendship and good faith, by curiosity to see strange and unknown things: eliminate this disparity, I say, and you take from the conquerors the whole basis of so many victories.

When I consider that indomitable ardor with which so many thousands of men, women, and children came forth and hurled themselves so many times into inevitable dangers for the defense of their gods and of their liberty, and that noble, stubborn readiness to suffer all extremities and hardships, even death, rather than submit to the domination of those by whom they had been so shamefully deceived (for some of them when captured chose rather to let Full p. C-404 themselves perish of hunger and fasting than to accept food from the hands of such basely victorious enemies), I conclude that if anyone had attacked them on equal terms, with equal arms, experience, and numbers, it would have been just as dangerous for him as in any other war we know of, and more so.

Why did not such a noble conquest fall to Alexander or to those ancient Greeks and Romans? Why did not such a great change and alteration of so many empires and peoples fall into hands that would have gently polished and cleared away whatever was barbarous in

them, and would have strengthened and fostered the good seeds that nature had produced in them, not only adding to the cultivation of the earth and the adornment of cities the arts of our side of the ocean, in so far as they would have been necessary, but also adding the Greek and Roman virtues to those originally in that region? What an improvement that would have been, and what an amelioration for the entire globe, if thefirst examples of our conduct that were offered over there had called those peoples to the admiration and imitation of virtue and had set up between them and us a brotherly fellowship and understanding! How easy it would have been to make good use of souls so fresh, so famished to learn, and having, for the most part, suchfine natural beginnings! On the contrary, we took advantage of their ignorance and inexperience to incline them the more easily toward treachery, lewdness, avarice, and every sort of inhumanity and cruelty, after the example and pattern of our ways. Who ever set the utility of commerce and trading at such a price? So many cities razed, so many nations exterminated, so many millions of people put to the sword, and the richest and most beautiful part of the world turned upside down, for the traffic in pearls and pepper! Base and mechanical victories! Never did ambition, never did public enmities, drive men against one another to such horrible hostilities and such miserable calamities.

Coasting the sea in quest of their mines, certain Spaniards landed in a fertile, pleasant, well-populated country, and made their usual declarations to its people: that they were peaceable men, coming from distant voyages, sent on behalf of the king of Castile, the greatest prince of the habitable world, to whom the Pope, representing God on earth, had given the principality of all the Indies; that if these people would be tributaries to him, they would be very kindly treated. They demanded of them food to eat and gold to be used in a certain medicine, and expounded to them the belief in one single God and the truth of our religion, which they advised them to accept, adding a few threats.

The answer was this: As for being peaceable, they did not look like it, if they were. As for their king, since he was begging, he must be indigent and needy; and he who had awarded their country to him must be a man fond of dissension, to go and give another person something that was not his and thus set him at strife with its ancient possessors. As for food, they would supply them. Gold they had little of, and it was a thing they held in no esteem, since it was useless to the service of their life, their sole concern being with passing life happily and pleasantly; however, they might boldly take any they couldfind, except what was employed in the service of their gods. As for one single God, the account had pleased them, but they did not want to change their religion, having followed it so advantageously for so long, and they were not accustomed to take counsel except of their friends and acquaintances. As for the threats, it was a sign of lack of judgment to threaten people whose nature and means were unknown to them. Thus they should promptly hurry up and vacate their land, Full p. C-405 for they were not accustomed to take in good part the civilities and declarations of armed strangers; otherwise they would do to them as they had done to these others—showing them the heads of some executed men around their city.

There we have an example of the babbling of this infancy. But at all events, neither in that place nor in several others where the Spaniards did notfind the merchandise they were looking for, did they make any stay or any attack, whatever other advantages there might be; witness my Cannibals.[4]

Of the two most powerful monarchs of that world, and perhaps of this as well, kings of so many kings, the last two that they drove out, one, the king of Peru, was taken in a battle and

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put to so excessive a ransom that it surpasses all belief; and when this had been faithfully paid, and the king in his dealings had given signs of a frank, liberal, and steadfast spirit and a clear and well-ordered understanding, the conquerors, after having extracted from him one million three hundred and twenty-five thousandfive hundred ounces of gold, besides silver and other things that amounted to no less, so that their horses thenceforth went shod with solid gold, were seized with the desire to see also, at the price of whatever treachery, what could be the remainder of this king's treasures, and to enjoy freely what he had reserved. They trumped up against him a false accusation and false evidence that he was planning to rouse his provinces in order to regain his freedom. Whereupon, in a beautiful sentence pronounced by those very men who had set afoot this treachery against him, he was condemned to be publicly hanged and strangled, after being permitted to buy his way out of the torment of being burned alive by submitting to baptism at the moment of the execution. A horrible and unheard-of calamity, which nevertheless he bore without belying himself either by look or word, with a truly royal bearing and gravity. And then, to lull the people, stunned and dazed by such a strange thing, they counterfeited great mourning over his death and ordered a sumptuous funeral for him.

The other one, the king of Mexico, had long defended his besieged city and shown in this siege all that endurance and perseverance can do, if ever prince and people did so, when his bad fortune put him in his enemies' hands alive, on their promise that they would treat him as a king; nor did he in his captivity show anything unworthy of this title. After this victory, his enemies, notfinding all the gold they had promised themselves,first ransacked and searched everything, and then set about seeking information by inflicting the cruelest tortures they could think up on the prisoners they held. But having gained nothing by this, andfinding their prisoners' courage stronger than their torments, theyfinallyflew into such a rage that, against their word and against all law of nations, they condemned the king himself and one of the principal lords of his court to the torture in each other's presence. This lord,finding himself overcome with the pain, surrounded with burning braziers, in the end turned his gaze piteously toward his master, as if to ask his pardon because he could hold out no longer. The king,fixing his eyes proudly and severely on him in reproach for his cowardice and pusillanimity, said to him only these words, in a stern,firm voice: "And I, am I in a bath? Am I more comfortable than you?" The other immediately after succumbed to the pain and died on the spot. The king, half roasted, was carried away from there, not so much out of pity (for Full p. C-406 what pity ever touched souls who, for dubious information about some gold vase to pillage, had a man grilled before their eyes, and what is more, a king so great in fortune and merit?), but because his fortitude made their cruelty more and more shameful. They hanged him later for having courageously attempted to deliver himself by arms from such a long captivity and subjection, and he made an end worthy of a great-souled prince.

Another time they burned alive, all at once and in the samefire, four hundred and sixty men, the four hundred being of the common people, the sixty from among the chief lords of a province, all merely prisoners of war.

We have these narrations from themselves, for they not only admit them but boast of them and preach them. Would it be as a testimonial to their justice or their zeal for religion? Truly, those are ways too contrary and hostile to so holy an end. If they had proposed to extend our faith, they would have reflected that faith is not spread by possession of territory but by possession of men, and they would have been more than satisfied with the murders brought

about by the necessity of war, without adding to these an indiscriminate butchery, as of wild animals, as universal asfire and sword could make it, after purposely sparing only as many as they wanted to make into miserable slaves for the working and service of their mines: with the result that many of the leaders were punished with death by order of the kings of Castile, who were justly shocked by the horror of their conduct; and almost all were disesteemed and loathed. God deservedly allowed this great plunder to be swallowed up by the sea in transit, or by the intestine wars in which they devoured one another; and most of them were buried on the spot without any profit from their victory.

As for the fact that the revenue from this, even in the hands of a thrifty and prudent prince,[5] corresponds so little to the expectation of it given to his predecessors and to the abundance of riches that wasfirst encountered in these new lands (for although much is being gotten out, we see that it is nothing compared with what was to be expected), the reason is that the use of money was entirely unknown, and that consequently their gold was found all collected together, being of no other use than for show and parade, like a chattel preserved from father to son by many powerful kings who were constantly exhausting their mines to make that great heap of vases and statues for the adornment of their palaces and their temples; whereas our gold is all in circulation and in trade. We cut it up small and change it into a thousand forms; we scatter and disperse it. Imagine it if our kings thus accumulated all the gold they couldfind for many centuries and kept it idle.

The people of the kingdom of Mexico were somewhat more civilized and skilled in the arts than the other nations over there. Thus they judged, as we do, that the universe was near its end, and they took as a sign of this the desolation that we brought upon them. They believed that the existence of the world was divided intofive ages and into the life offive successive suns, of which four had already run their time, and that the one which gave them light was thefifth. Thefirst perished with all other creatures by a universalflood of water. The second, by the heavens falling on us, which suffocated every living thing; to which age they assign the giants, and they showed the Spaniards some of their bones, judging by the size of which these men must have stood Full p. C-407 twenty hands high. The third, byfire, which burned and consumed everything. The fourth, by a turbulence of air and wind which beat down even many mountains; the men did not die, but they were changed into baboons (to what notions will the laxness of human credulity not submit!). After the death of this fourth sun, the world was twenty-five years in perpetual darkness, in thefifteenth of which a man and a woman were created who remade the human race; ten years later, on a certain day of their calendar, the sun appeared newly created, and since then they reckon their years from that day. The third day after its creation the old gods died; the new ones have been born since little by little. What they think about the manner in which this last sun will perish, my author[6] did not learn. But their calculation of this fourth change coincides with that great conjunction of stars which produced, some eight hundred years ago, according to the reckoning of the astrologers, many great alterations and innovations in the world.

As for pomp and magnificence, whereby I entered upon this subject, neither Greece nor Rome nor Egypt can compare any of its works, whether in utility or difficulty or nobility, with the road which is seen in Peru, laid out by the kings of the country, from the city of Quito as far as Cuzco (a distance of three hundred leagues), straight, even, twenty-five paces wide, paved, lined on both sides withfine high walls, and along these, on the inside, two ever-flowing streams, bordered by beautiful trees, which they call *molly* . Wherever they encountered

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mountains and rocks, they cut through and leveled them, andfilled the hollows with stone and lime. At the end of each day's journey there arefine palaces furnished with provisions, clothes, and arms, for travelers as well as for the armies that have to pass that way.

In my estimate of this work I have counted the difficulty, which is particularly considerable in that place. They did not build with any stones less than ten feet square; they had no other means of carrying than by strength of arm, dragging their load along; and they had not even the art of scaffolding, knowing no other device than to raise an equal height of earth against their building as it rose, and remove it afterward.

Let us fall back to our coaches. Instead of these or any other form of transport, they had themselves carried by men, and on their shoulders. That last king of Peru, the day that he was taken, was thus carried on shafts of gold, seated in a chair of gold, in the midst of his army. As many of these carriers as they killed to make him fall—for they wanted to take him alive—so many others vied to take the place of the dead ones, so that they never could bring him down, however great a slaughter they made of those people, until a horseman seized him around the body and pulled him to the ground.

Footnotes

- Note 1: *On the Nature of Things* 6.704–705. Return to reference 1
- Note 2: *Moral Epistles* 53.3. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Plato, *Symposium* . Return to reference 3
- Note 4:Titus Livius (59 B.C.E.–17 C.E. or 64 B.C.E.–12 C.E.), Roman historian; *On the Founding of Rome* 22.5. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:Greek moral and natural philosopher (341–270 B.C.E.) Return to reference 5
- Note 6:Marcus Antonius (83–31 B.C.E.), Roman general, libertine, and triumvir, whose associations with Eastern luxury and religious cults are invoked here. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:Athenian orator (436–338 B.C.E.). Return to reference 7
- Note 8:Greatest Athenian orator (384–322 B.C.E.). Return to reference 8
- Note 9:Greek philosopher and botanist, follower of Aristotle (c. 370–288 B.C.E.). Return to reference 9
- Note 1:Catherine de Médici (1519–1589). Return to reference 1
- Note 2:The Pont Neuf, as it is still called, was completed in 1604 [translator's note]. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Roman emperor (c. 3 B.C.E.–69 C.E.) after Nero. Return to reference 3
- Note 4: *De finibus* 5.6.16. Return to reference 4
- Note 5: *On Duties* 2.15.52–54. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:Ideal prince of Xenophon's *Education of Cyrus* . Return to reference 6
- Note 7: *On Duties* 1.14.43. Return to reference 7
- Note 8: *On Duties* 2.15.53–54; Philip of Macedon was the father of Alexander the Great. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:Marcus Aurelius Probus (232–282 C.E.), a stern disciplinarian, eventually killed by his own troops. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:Calpurnius Siculus (1st century C.E.), pastoral poet; *Bucolics* 7.47. Return to reference 1
- Note 2: *Satires* 3.153–55. Return to reference 2

- Note 3: *Bucolics* 7.64–75. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:Marcus Valerius Martial (c. 40–c. 104 C.E.), famous for his witty epigrams; *Epigrams* 12.29.15–16. Return to reference 4
- Note 5: *Bucolics* 7.53–54. Return to reference 5
- Note 6: *On the Nature of Things* 5.327–28. Above, *Odes* 4.9.25–28. Return to reference 6
- Note 7: *On the Nature of the Gods* 1.20.54. Solon (c. 200 C.E.), geographer. Return to reference 7
- Note 8: *On the Nature of Things* 2.1136. Return to reference 8
- Note 9: *On the Nature of Things* 5.331–35. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:Female prophets. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Former capital of the Inca Empire in southeastern Peru. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Julius Caesar (100–44 B.C.E.), the great Roman general and conqueror. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:“Of Cannibals.” Return to reference 4
- Note 5:Philip II of Spain (1527–1598). Return to reference 5
- Note 6:López de Gómara (1511–1564), a Spanish contemporary of Montaigne; Montaigne read his histories of Cortés and the West Indies in translation [translator’s note]. Return to reference 6

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MIGUEL DE CERVANTES 1547–1616

Often described as the first novel, Miguel de Cervantes’ *Don Quixote* uses the conventions of fiction to question the accepted truths of his own society. What happens when readers take books at their word, or try to live out ideal versions of the world around them, as does the would-be knight Don Quixote? How does life in early modern Spain fall short of the wishful fictional version? In *Don Quixote*, the narrative breaks off and leaves the reader hanging, characters reflect on what it means to exist in print, and a complicated cast of antagonistic narrators all quarrel over the *real* truth, as Cervantes ironically surveys his world while examining the nature of fiction.

LIFE

The author of Don Quixote’s extravagant adventures himself had a most unusual and adventurous life. As a student, soldier, captive, and tax collector, he witnessed his contemporaries at their best and at their worst. His skeptical, ironic perspective on both the literary and political pieties of his day is combined in his works with a profound sympathy for human striving. The son of an apothecary, Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra was born in Alcalá de Henares, a university town near Madrid. Almost nothing is known of his childhood and early education. Only in 1569 is he mentioned as a favorite pupil by a Madrid humanist, Juan López. Records indicate that by the end of that year he had left Spain and was living in Rome, for a time in the service of a future cardinal. He enlisted in the Spanishfleet under the command of Don John of Austria and took part in the struggle of the allied forces of Christendom against the Ottomans. He was at the crucial Battle of Lepanto (1571), where in spite of fever he fought valiantly and received three gunshot wounds, one of which

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permanently impaired the use of his left hand, “for the greater glory of the right.” After further military action at Palermo and Naples, he and his brother Rodrigo, bearing testimonials from Don John and from the viceroy of Sicily, began the journey back to Spain, where Miguel hoped to obtain a captaincy. In September 1575 their ship was captured near Marseille by Barbary pirates, and the two brothers were taken as prisoners to Algiers. Cervantes’ captors, considering him a person of some consequence because of the letters he carried, enslaved and held him for a high ransom. His daring and fortitude as he attempted repeatedly to escape excited the admiration of Hassan Pasha, the viceroy of Algiers, who bought him forfive hundred crowns afterfive years of captivity.

Cervantes wasfinally ransomed on September 15, 1580, and reached Madrid in December of that year, though his experience of captivity would remain with him throughout his literary career. That career began rather inauspiciously; he wrote some ten to twenty plays, with middling success, and in 1585 published *Galatea*, a pastoral romance that anticipates the formal experimentation of *Don Quixote* but ends inconclusively. None of these established his reputation or, more importantly, allowed him to live from his writing. At about this time he had a daughter with Ana Franca Full p. C-409 de Rojas, and during the same period Shorter p. 1620 married Catalina de Salazar, who was eighteen years his junior. Seeking nonliterary employment, he obtained a position in the navy, requisitioning and collecting supplies for the “Invincible Armada.” Irregularities in his administration, for which he was held responsible if not directly guilty, caused him to spend more time in prison. In 1590 he was denied colonial employment in the New World. Later he served as tax collector in the province of Granada but was dismissed from government service in 1597.

The following years of Cervantes’ life are the most obscure; there is a legend that *Don Quixote* wasfirst conceived and planned while its author was in prison in Seville. In 1604 he was in Valladolid, then the temporary capital of Spain, living in sordid surroundings with the numerous women of his family (his wife, daughter, niece, and two sisters). It was in Valladolid, in late 1604, that he obtained the official license for the publication of *Don Quixote* (Part I). The book appeared in 1605 and was a popular success. Cervantes followed the Spanish court when it returned to Madrid, where he continued to live poorly in spite of a popularity with readers that quickly made proverbialfigures of his heroes. A false sequel to his book appeared, prompting him to write his own continuation, *Don Quixote*, Part II, published in 1615. His *Exemplary Novellas* had appeared in 1613. He died on April 23, 1616. *Persiles and Sigismunda*, his last novel, was published posthumously in 1617.

TIMES

Cervantes’ Spain was a great empire, with huge possessions in the New World, in Italy, and in Flanders, sustained by an equally enormous army of disciplined soldiers organized in infantry battalions—the famous *tercios españoles* . It was ruled by Philip II, the devout Habsburg monarch who became known as “the prudent king” for his careful administration. In 1580, Philip annexed the Portuguese crown and its commercial empire in Asia, Africa, and the New World, rendering Spain a truly global power. At the same time, the enormous influx of gold from the Americas led to inflation and widespread poverty, and to the general perception that everything and everyone could be bought. As the vivacious Preciosa jokes to an impoverished official in one of Cervantes’ novellas, if he only took bribes as everyone expects him to do, he

would not be so poor. Both as a tax collector and as a convict, Cervantes had ample experience of a down-and-out, picaresque Spain that held the law in small regard, a world depicted in colorful detail in the earthier episodes of *Don Quixote* .

Overburdened with military expenses and foreign debt, the Crown experienced repeated bankruptcies despite the heavy taxes it imposed on its subjects. After suffering the added indignity of the Armada's defeat by the English navy, Spain entered a long period of decline and disillusion. Philip's death in 1598 signaled the end of an era. Cervantes marked the occasion with a devastating sonnet on the king's funerary monument. Its greatness, the poem suggests, is but an illusion: as soon as the admiring glances of the impressionable viewers wander, king, reign, and monument are reduced to nothingness.

Meanwhile, the Counter-Reformation led to an increased emphasis on religious orthodoxy, and heightened suspicions of the humanist reform traditions that had shaped Cervantes' thought. Increasingly, his society scrutinized not only people's religious practices but also their roots, stigmatizing them for Jewish or Muslim forebears and holding all *conversos* and *Moriscos* (converts from Judaism and Islam, respectively) Full p. C-410 Shorter p. 1621 suspect. Cervantes' own fortunes may have been complicated by his origins: we cannot be sure whether he came from a line of *conversos*, but his family connections to the medical profession, the denial of his request for New World employment, and the refusal of the authorities to reward his heroic military service and captivity with any real preferment all suggest a striking disregard for his services. If he was in fact descended from Jews, Cervantes would have been barred from many honors and privileges in his time, however sincere his own Christian faith. Cervantes mocked the Inquisitorial and popular anxiety about origins in his dramatic interlude *The Miracle Show* . In this satire of Spanish obsessions with honor, legitimacy, and "blood purity," rascally entertainers trick village notables by convincing them that only those who are legitimate and free of the Jewish "taint" can actually see their marvelous show. In his version of "The Emperor's New Clothes," Cervantes holds up a sly theatrical mirror to his own society's prejudices.

During Cervantes' life, Spain faced challenges to both its political power and its religious orthodoxy. Protestants across Europe and humanist reformers within the Catholic Church constantly defied the strictures of the Counter-Reformation. The Ottoman Empire, which encroached on Italy, the Mediterranean, and North Africa, represented the greatest geopolitical threat to Spain, and also the religious threat of Islam as a competing faith. In its own territories, Spain struggled to incorporate the descendants of its Muslim subjects. Though this population had been forcibly converted to Christianity, their place and that of their descendants within a belligerently Christian nation were increasingly threatened. Their customs and language were forbidden by law in an attempt to enforce acculturation. Beginning in 1609, the Moriscos, though Christians, were forcibly expelled from Spain, prompting widespread condemnation by Church authorities across Europe. Cervantes comments directly on the situation of the Moriscos in *Don Quixote* . In "The Captive's Tale" of Part I, he considers how Spanish society might receive a hugely sympathetic young woman, a fresh convert from Islam, who had saved a Spanish captive much like the author himself. In Part II, published after the expulsions, in a section not included in this anthology, Sancho Panza, Don Quixote's earthy sidekick, runs into his Morisco former neighbor, Ricote, now back in Spain disguised as a German pilgrim. They proceed to share a communal meal, with plenty of wine to go around. Thus Cervantes turns again and again to his own experience of captivity

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and to the Morisco problem within Spain, to explore how a newly unified and forcibly homogenized nation might include those it had led to Christianity.

DON QUIXOTE

The Ingenious Gentleman Don Quixote de la Mancha was a popular success from the time Part I was published in 1605, although it was only later recognized as an important work of literature. This delay was due partly to the fact that in a period of established and well-defined literary genres such as the epic, the tragedy, and the pastoral romance (Cervantes himself had tried his hand at some of these forms), the unconventional combination of elements in *Don Quixote* resulted in a work of considerable novelty, with the serious aspects hidden under a mocking surface.

The proclaimed purpose of the book was to satirize the romances of chivalry. In those long yarns—based on the Carolingian and Arthurian legends, and full of supernatural deeds of valor, implausible and complicated adventures, duels, Full p. C-411 Shorter p. 1622 and enchantments—the literature that had expressed the medieval spirit of chivalry and romance had become conventional and formulaic (much as, in our day, certain literary conventions have become "pulp"fiction andfilm melodrama). Up to a point, then, what Cervantes set out to do was to produce a parody, a caricature of a hugely popular literary type. But he did not limit himself to such a relatively simple and direct undertaking. To expose the silliness of the romances of chivalry, he showed to what extraordinary consequences they would lead a man insanely infatuated with them, once this man set out to live "now" according to their patterns of action and belief. While the anachronism of Don Quixote makes him afigure of fun, it also allows Cervantes to examine the realities of his own time: an impoverished Spain full of underemployed noblemen; an overextended empire burdened by too many modern, impersonal wars; widespread anxiety about religious and political conformity, as well as genealogical "purity."

So what we have is not mere parody or caricature, for there is a great deal of difference between presenting a remote and more or less imaginary world and presenting an individual deciding to live by the standards of that world in a modern and realistic context. Thefirst consequence is a mingling of genres. Don Quixote sees the world through the lens of medieval chivalry as its authors had portrayed it, and often the narrator echoes his vision, albeit in an ironic mode. The chivalric world is continuously jostled by elements of contemporary life evoked by the narrator—the realities of landscape and speech, peasants and nobles, inns and highways. The hero attempting to re-create the world of the romances is not, as we know, a cavalier; he is an impoverished country gentleman who embraces that code in the "modern" world. His squire, the peasant Sancho Panza, is only too happy to point out Don Quixote's delusions. Nevertheless, he too becomes invested in the quest, in search of material wealth and aggrandizement. The exchanges between Don Quixote and Sancho pit a gentleman against a peasant, yet more often than not the twofind common ground in their conviction that they can improve their lot through their own actions.

Don Quixote soonfinds that he is not the only one modeling his life after books. Other characters follow their own idealizing genres, such as the pastoral romance to which Don Quixote and his friends will turn at the end. All must make their peace with the reality of the world that surrounds them. That debased world, in turn, produces its own stories, such as the

picaresque “life” that the rascally Ginés de Pasamonte has written in prison (Part I, chapter 22), and the mix of recent history and romance that is the “Captive’s Tale,” related by its protogonist at the inn.

Along the way, Cervantes casts doubt on the possibility of reconstructing history from written sources. The facts about Don Quixote are never fully available to the primary narrator, who confesses to the many gaps in his knowledge and keeps losing track of the story. While the prologue describes the text as the author’s “child,” the narrator is not even certain of his protagonist’s name. More spectacularly, thefirst part of the novel breaks offentirely at the end of chapter 8, leaving both characters and readers in suspense. The problem offinding more text then leads to one of Cervantes’ most interesting narrative games: a second author, Cid Hamete Benengeli, who just happens to be an “Arabic historian,” and whose disheveled account must be translated from a forbidden language by a “Spanish-speaking Moor”—a Morisco. Full p. C-412 Shorter p. 1623 The entire story from this point forth is thus supposedly written by a Moor, the traditional enemy of a Spanish knight, and translated by a marginalized contemporary Morisco. Don Quixote and his narrator both worry about the implications of such authorship for the story on which they are embarked: will the Moorish author distort Don Quixote’s adventures, or diminish his greatness? Part I also moves away from Don Quixote and Sancho to present a number of other stories that play with generic conventions—of lovelorn shepherds and the shepherdesses who puncture their illusions, young lovers who fall prey to ignoble lords, friendships undone by sexual jealousy, and captives redeemed by mysterious ladies. The narrative games are fullyfleshed out in Part II, when Don Quixote and Sancho, now famous from Part I, must confront their own celebrity and grapple with the selves that the printing press has given them, while the authorial voice of Cide Hamete intervenes more and more frequently to make sure that the reader gets the “right” story.

Generally speaking, the encounters between the ordinary world and Don Quixote confront reality with illusion, and reason with imagination. Among thefirst adventures are some that have most contributed to the popularity of the Don Quixote legend: he sees windmills and decides they are giants, country inns become castles, andflocks of sheep become armies. Though the conclusions of such episodes often have the ludicrousness of slapstick comedy, there is a powerfully imposing quality about Don Quixote’s insanity; his madness always has method, a commanding persistence and coherence. And there is perhaps an inevitable sense of moral grandeur in the spectacle of anyone remaining so unflinchingly faithful to his or her own vision. The world of “reason” may win in point of fact, but we come to wonder whether, from a moral point of view, Quixote is not the victor.

Yet at the same time the novel explores the deterioration of the chivalric ideals that inspire its protagonist—for instance, the notion of love as devoted “service.” Don Quixote loves a purely fantastic lady, Dulcinea, so remote and unattainable that she does not even exist. Other plots interwoven through the text, and not included in our selection, show lovers struggling with problems of class and religious difference, and pervasive sexual jealousy. *Don Quixote* also examines the anachronism of individual heroics: new forms of warfare had rendered knights passé in more than the literary sense—battles are now fought with artillery and squadrons of infantry. The episode of the lions (Part II, chapter 17) features the knight, crowned with cottage cheese, seeking a challenge at all costs. That challenge comes in the ironic form of a lion, caged while being sent to the king, that has no intention of engaging in battle. Unwilling to confront the futility of the knight in an age of gunpowder, Don Quixote will

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take whatever he can get in the form of challenges. The ridiculousness of the situation is counterbalanced by the basic seriousness of Quixote's motives; his notion of courage for its own sake appears, and is recognized, as singularly noble, a sort of generous display of integrity in a world usually ruled by lower standards. Thus the distinction between reason and madness, truth and illusion, becomes, to say the least, ambiguous. The hero's delusions are indeed exposed when they come up against hard facts, but the authority of such facts is seen to be morally questionable. A similar ambiguity colors a later episode where he frees a thuggish group of prisoners being sent to the galleys (Part I, chapter 22). Don Quixote, comically anachronistic, ignores the existence of a centralized state with its own justice Shorter p. 1624 system, which Full p. C-413 has tried the men and found them guilty. Yet his intervention and his determination to hear out the prisoners raises basic questions of social justice, and insists on the imagination, however anachronistic, as a basic tool for rethinking the status quo.

Don Quixote has been intensely read and reread, since itsfirst publication, for its broad humor and its slippery ironies alike. Both parts of the novel were immediately translated across Europe, giving rise to such rewritings and imitations as the Jacobean comedy *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* (1607), the early feminist novel *The Female Quixote* (1752), and, more recently, the Broadway musical *Man of la Mancha* (1964). In Spain, *Don Quixote* has long been embraced as the symbol of a kind of national idealism; the philosopher Miguel de Unamuno in his *Life of Don Quixote and Sancho* (1905) argued that the novel was the true "Spanish Bible," a degree of respect that might well have amused the more irreverent Cervantes.

D ON Q UIXOTE[1]

Footnotes

- Note 1:Translated by Kimi Traube. Return to reference 1

From Part I

PROLOGUE

Idle reader: even without my swearing to it, you can surely believe me when I tell you how much I wish this book—the child of my mind—could be the most beautiful, gallant, discreet story imaginable. But I have found no way around the laws of Nature, which decree that no apple can fall far from its tree, and, since like always sires like, the son must inevitably resemble the father. As such, what could my sterile, uncultivated imagination sire but the story of a shriveled son, wizened and capricious, full of strange and sundry thoughts never before imagined by anyone—fitting for a child sired inside prison walls, at the very seat of vexation, where every sorrowful sound makes its home.[2]

Tranquility, peace and quiet, the contentment of the countryside, serene skies, murmuring springs, a soothing space, and quietude of spirit go a long way toward charming even the most barren muses into showing their fertile sides, birthing into the world stories brimming with

amusement and wonder. A father may have an ugly son, utterly lacking in graces, yet his love will blind him to his son's everyflaw, and he will instead think them witticisms and charms and go around telling his friends stories about his son's foibles, as if they were funny or clever. But though I may seem to be his father, I am in fact the stepfather of don Quixote,[3] and so I do not wish to follow the usual pattern and beg you, dearest reader—almost with tears in my eyes, as others do—to forgive or ignore theflaws you mayfind in this child of mine. For you are no relative nor friend of his, and you have your own soul in your body, and as much free will as anyone, and there you are, in your own home, where your Full p. C-414 word is law, just like the king with his taxes, and you know what they say, your Shorter p. 1625 home is your castle, and "under cover of my cloak, I can even kill the king."[4] All of which exempts and releases you of any obligation to respect it, and so you may say whatever you like about this history, without fear of being slandered if you pan it, or applauded if you laud it.

I would have liked to give you this story in the raw, without dressing it up with a prologue and the customary catalogue of endless epigrams, sonnets, and elegies that so often appear at the beginning of a book. Because I can tell you, though it was a fair bit of work to compose it, no part seemed as onerous to me as writing this preface you now read.

Many times, I took up the quill to write it, and many times I set it down again, because I did not know what to say. At one point, while I sat bewildered with my parchment before me and my quill behind my ear, elbow on desk, hand on cheek, wondering what to say—just when I was least expecting visitors—a charming, clever friend of mine came calling, and asked me why I seemed so lost in thought. I did not hide the truth from him. I told him I was thinking about the prologue I needed to write for the history of don Quixote, and it was getting to the point that I was ready to write the whole prologue off—and yet, I could not imagine how I could publish or bring forth the great deeds of this noble knight to the light of day without one.

"For how could I be anything but upset about what people will say—especially that ancient judge they call the masses—when they see after all these years I've spent slumbering silent and forgotten, that suddenly now, old as I am, I come charging out with a legend dry as straw, foreign in imagination, shriveled in style, lacking in conceit, empty of erudition and deficient in doctrine, with none of the footnotes and annotations I see in other books? Even lay books ofiction or fantasy are stuffed to the brim with quotes from Aristotle, Plato, and that whole horde of philosophers, to impress readers and establish their authors as learned men of great erudition and eloquence.

"And when they come in quoting Holy Scripture? Why, they are no less than afine pack of Saint Aquinases, or other distinguished doctors of the Church.[5] And they cleave so cleverly to decorum, they can paint the portrait of a panting lover on the page, so long as they follow it up with a little Christian sermon (which is, of course, always a joy and a gift to hear or read) on the next. But my book will be missing all of that, because I have nothing to write in footnotes or annotations, and I have no idea which authors I may be alluding to, so I have no names to put at the beginning of the book, like everyone else does, running right through the alphabet from Aristotle on down to Xenophon or Zoilus or Zeuxis, even though one was a slanderer and the other a painter.

"My book will also be short on sonnets at the beginning—at least sonnets written by dukes, marquises, counts, bishops, ladies, or illustrious poets. Although there are two or three wordsmiths I know, friends of mine, who I am sure could compose some sonnets to outshine

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those of the most famous poets of our Spain. Essentially, señor my friend," I went on, "I have decided señor don Quixote will have to remain entombed in the archives of La Mancha until Heaven sends someone down to adorn my text with all the things it lacks, since Full p. C-415 Shorter p. 1626 Ifind myself incapable of affixing what is missing, on account of my limited education and general inadequacy, and because I am naturally indolent and lazy about looking up authors just to see if they say the same things I know perfectly well how to say without them.

"This, my friend, is the source of the consternation and confoundment youfind me in—more than enough cause to send me into the state I just described."

Hearing this, my friend slapped his palm to his forehead and burst out laughing, saying:

"By God, brother, you've just disabused me of an illusion I've been holding onto this whole time I knew you! All this time, I always thought you were clever and prudent in everything you do, but now I see you're as far from that as Heaven is from Earth. How is it possible that something so unimportant and easily remedied as this could have the power to confound and bewilder a mind as mature as yours, made for bursting through and riding roughshod over far greater difficulties? By my faith, the problem here is not inadequacy, but a surfeit of laziness and a dearth of words.

"Do you want to see if what I say is true? Well, listen closely and in the blink of an eye, I will dispel all your difficulties andfix everything missing from your novel, which you say has left you too consternated and cowardly to birth into the world the story of your legendary don Quixote, light and mirror of all errant chivalry."

"Tell me," I replied on hearing this, "how exactly do you plan to plug up the void of my terror and bring clarity to the chaos of my confusion?"

To which he replied:

"Thefirst thing you canfix is the missing sonnets, epigrams, or elegies at the beginning, which are supposed to be from serious characters with distinguished titles. This can easily be remedied with just a bit of work on your part. Write them yourself, and then you can baptize them with any name you please, adopting them out to Prester John of the Indies, or the Emperor of Trebizond—who, I have heard, were famous poets.[6] And even if they were not, and some academics and pedants snipe at you behind your back and whisper about misrepresentation and precision and criticize you for it, there is no need for you to give a *maravedi*,[7] because even if they call you out on your lie, they are not going to chop offthe hand you wrote it with.

"As for the annotations with the titles and names of the authors of the proverbs you put in your story, all you have to do is shoehorn in a few quotes or Latin phrases you know by heart, or whichever ones will take the least amount of work to look up. For instance, if your story touches on freedom and captivity, you can put:

Non bene pro toto libertas venditur auro.[8]

And then, in the footnote, you cite Horace or whoever wrote it. If the power of death comes up, you can swoop in with:

Full p. C-416 Shorter p. 1627

Pallida mors aequo pulsat pede pauperum tabernas

Regumque turres.[9]

"If you are talking about the friendship and love God commands us to show our enemies, you can dive right in with the Holy Scripture. With just a bit of creativity, you can include the language (at least) of God Himself: '*Ego autem dico vobis: diligite inimicos vestros.*'[1] If you are writing about evil thoughts, turn to the Gospels: '*De corde exeunt cogitations malae .*'[2] For thefickleness of friends, Cato is there to lend you his couplet:

Donec eris felix, multos numerabis amicos.

Tempora si fuerint nubila, solus eris.[3]

"And with these little Latinisms and a few more like them, the world shall take you for a grammarian—no small honor and advantage in these times. As for endnotes, you can surely remedy that thusly: if you have a giant in your book, name him Goliath, and just like that, easy as pie, you've got yourself a good long annotation, because then you can put, 'The giant Goliath, or Golias, was a Philistine whom the shepherd David killed with a single slingshot blow, in the Valley of Terebinth, as is described in the Book of Kings . . .' in whatever chapter it's in.[4]

"After that, to make yourself seem like afinely educated man—quite erudite in cosmography and the liberal arts—make sure you get in a mention of the Tagus River, and you'll get yourself another legendary annotation right there. You can put, 'The Tagus River is named after a king of Spain; it springs forth in such-and-such a place andflows into the Ocean Sea, kissing the walls of the legendary city of Lisbon, and its sandbanks are believed to be made of gold . . .,' etc. If there are any thieves in your story, I will tell you the tale of Cacus,[5] which I know by heart. For loose women, there's the Bishop of Mondoñedo ready to lend you Lamia, Laida, and Flora,[6] along with an endnote that will lend great credibility to your book. If you need a cruel woman, Ovid can offer you Medea. If it's enchanters and witches, Homer has Calypso and Virgil has Circe.[7] For valiant captains, Julius Caesar himself will lend you his own example in his *Commentaries*, and Plutarch can give you a thousand Alexanders. If you are writing on love, just an ounce or two of Italian will bring you Full p. C-417 Shorter p. 1628 León Hebreo, who'll have you straining at the seams.[8] And if you'd rather not wander through foreign lands, right here at home you have Fonseca's *Treatise on the Love of God*,[9] which catalogues everything you or even the most ingenious man in the world could ever want on the subject. In short, all you have to do is drop a few names and stick in a few references to the stories I've just told you. Leave the footnotes and annotations up to me: I promise to put a note in every margin andfill up four full pages with annotations at the end.

"Which brings us to the bibliography of authors, which other books have, and yours does not. The solution to this is quite simple. All you need to do isfind a book that cites every author from A to Z, as you say, and put that same alphabet into your own. For even if it is obviously copied, since you had so little need to refer to them, it does not matter. Perhaps someone will be simpleminded enough to believe you actually allude to all of them in your simple little story. At the very least, if nothing else, that lengthy catalogue of authors will lend greater weight to your book. What's more, no one will bother to check if you did or did not allude, since there is nothing for anyone to gain from it. Furthermore, if I understand correctly, this

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book of yours really has no need of any of these things you say it is missing, because all of it is an invective against books of chivalry, which Aristotle knew nothing about, nor did San Basilio have anything to say on the topic, nor Cicero. This tale of fabulous idiocy is not concerned with thefiner points of truth and philosophy, nor the observations of astrology, nor is geometry in any way relevant, nor debating arguments with rhetoric, nor do you have cause to preach to anyone at all, entangling human concerns into the Divine, spinning a snarled and blended fabric no Christian mind should don. All you need to do is imitate as you write, for the better your imitation, the better your book will be. And since this book of yours seeks no more than to destroy the authority and influence books of chivalry have on the masses and the world, there is no reason for you to go around begging quotes offphilosophers, advice offthe Holy Scripture, fables offpoets, arguments offrhetoricians, and miracles offsaints. Instead, say it straight, with substantial, honest, well-placed words, and let your sentences and syntax peal forth, sonorous and festive, by saying exactly what you mean and setting down your ideas clearly without complicating or hiding them. Write your story such that reading it moves the melancholy to laughter and the giggly to guffaws, so it does not offend the simpleminded, but the clever can still admire its ingenuity, and so it does not cause the serious to scoff, nor permit the prudent to scant its praises. Essentially, focus on toppling the shoddy machinery of these books of chivalry—abhorred by so many and adored by so many more—for if you can pull that off, it will be no small feat indeed."

In great silence, I sat listening to my friend's reasoning. I was so impressed that without further dispute or discussion, I approved of his reasons and included them in this prologue. Herein, gentle reader, you will see the great Full p. C-418 wisdom of my friend, my good fortune infinding such an advisor in my hour of Shorter p. 1629 need, and your own relief to be able to read this sincere and straightforward story of the legendary don Quixote of La Mancha, believed by all the inhabitants of the rural district known as Montiel[1] to have been the most chaste lover and the most valiant knight seen in those parts for many years. I do not wish to overstate the service I am doing you by introducing you to so noble and honorable a knight. I do, however, want you to thank me for introducing you to the legendary Sancho Panza, his squire, in whom, I believe, I have compiled all the squirely graces scattered across the whole gaggle of those vain books of chivalry. And with that, may God grant you good health and not forget me either.

Vale.[2]

Footnotes

- Note 2:Cervantes was imprisoned in Seville in 1597 and 1602. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:The translator has styled honorifics ("don" among them) lowercase throughout. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:I.e., the king does not control everything you do in private. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274), Italian philosopher and theologian, venerated by Roman Catholics as a "Doctor of the Church." Return to reference 5
- Note 6:"Prester John": in medieval and early modern European folklore, the priest-monarch of a lost Christian kingdom in Asia or Africa. "Trebizond": successor state to the Byzantine Empire in modern-day Türkiye; itflourished from the 13th to the 15th century. Return to reference 6

- Note 7:Coin worth a thirty-fourth of a *real*; “two cents.” Return to reference 7
- Note 8:Liberty is worth more than all the gold in the world (from a Latin version of “The Dog and the Wolf,” from *Aesop’s Fables*). Return to reference 8
- Note 9:Pale death knocks at the cottages of the poor and the palaces of kings with equal foot (Latin, from Horace, *Odes* 1.4.13–14). Return to reference 9
- Note 1:But I say unto you, love your enemies (Latin, Matthew 5.44). Return to reference 1
- Note 2:For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts (Latin, Matthew 15.19). Return to reference 2
- Note 3:As long as you are happy, you will count many friends, but if times become clouded, you will be alone (Latin; not from Cato but instead Ovid, *Sorrows* 1.9.5–6). Return to reference 3
- Note 4:1 Samuel 17.48–49. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:Gigantic thief defeated by Hercules in Virgil’s *Aeneid* 8. In Roman mythology, Cacus stole some of Hercules’ cattle, concealing the theft by having them walk backward into his cave; he wasfinally discovered and slain. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:Three influential ancient courtesans, discussed in various classical sources and also in the writings of Antonio de Guevara (c. 1481–1545), who served as Bishop of Mondoñedo in his later years. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:Medea helped Jason secure the Golden Fleece, then killed the children she had with him when he abandoned her. Calypso and Circe: nymphs encountered by Odysseus on his voyage home to Ithaca. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:Julius Caesar’s (100–44 B.C.E.) *Commentaries* described his experiences in the Gallic Wars. Plutarch (46–c. 119 C.E.): Greek historian known for his *Parallel Lives*, biographies of famousfigures including the Macedonian conqueror Alexander the Great. Judah Leon Abravanel, known as León Hebreo (c. 1465–c. 1523), Neoplatonic author of the *Dialogues of Love* (1535). Return to reference 8
- Note 9:Cristóbal de Fonseca, *Treatise of the Love of God* (1592). Return to reference 9
- Note 1:A small town in what is today Castilla-La Mancha, in central Spain. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Farewell (Latin). Return to reference 2

[“I Know Who I Am, and I Know Who I Can Be”]

CHAPTER I

Which deals with the condition and occupation of the famous gentleman don Quixote of La Mancha

Somewhere in La Mancha,[3] in a spot whose name I’d rather not recall, not long ago, there lived a gentleman—the kind that kept a lance hung over the mantel, an ancient leather shield, a skinny nag, and a racing hound. Beef more than lamb, leftovers most nights, Woes and Wounds[4] —or eggs and hash—on Saturdays, lentils on Fridays, and perhaps, as a treat, a scrawny squab on Sundays: this ate up three quarters of the income of his estate. The rest was enough for his holiday best: a broadcloth tunic with velvet breeches and slippers to match. Weekdays were honored with hisfinest burlap. He had a housekeeper over forty and a niece

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under twenty, plus a groom who took care of everything from saddling the nag to trimming the shrubbery. Our gentleman's face was gaunt and his frame wiry; he was pushingfifty, though still in vigorous good health. He was an early riser and quite fond of the hunt. Although some claim his family name was "Quixada" or "Quesada"—the authors writing on him disagree somewhat—it was most likely "Quixana." This, however, does not matter much to our tale: so long as the telling of it doesn't stray one bit from the truth.

So, we are given to understand the aforementioned gentleman dedicated his spare time—which was most of his time—to reading books of chivalry with such zeal and delight, he forgot about the hunt almost entirely, and even about administering his estate. He was so far gone in his curiosity and his idiocy that he sold offmany acres of farmland to buy books of chivalry, packing his house with as many as he could. Of all his books, thefinest—he felt—were those written by the famous Feliciano de Silva,[5] since the clarity of de Silva's prose and his intricately complicated reasons seemed, to our gentleman, like pearls. Especially when he read all thoseflowery compliments and challenges to the Full p. C-419 Shorter p. 1630 death, where he often found phrases like: "The reasoning of the reasonlessness that pits itself against my reason is such that my reasoning grows rickety, and thus with reason I complain of thy beauteousness." And also: "The heights of Heaven, which fortify thy divine divinity with stars, make thee worthy of the worthiness thy greatness is worth."

With reasons such as these, the poor knight lost his mind. He spent his nights trying to understand and untangle the guts of their meaning, when Aristotle himself couldn't have unraveled and understood them, even if he were brought back from the dead to do that and nothing else. Our gentleman was a bit concerned about all the wounds given and received by don Belianís,[6] for he imagined no matter how great the physicians who cured him might be, Belianís's face and body would still have to be covered in marks and scars. Even so, he praised the author for ending the book with the promise of unending adventure. He often felt the desire to take the book up on its promise—to grab a pen and faithfully write out those unending adventures—and there's no doubt he would have done it, and even published it, too, if other, grander, ceaseless thoughts had not been troubling him. He often argued with his local priest—who was a learned man, with a certificate from thefine University of Sigüenza[7] —about who had been the better knight: Palmerín of England or Amadís of Gaul, though master Nicolás, the barber of the town, said no one could touch the Knight of Phoebus, and if anyone could even compare, it would have to be don Galaor, the brother of Amadís of Gaul,[8] because he took everything in stride, and what's more, he wasn't afinicky knight, or as much of a crybaby as his brother, and in terms of gallantry he was second to none.

In brief, our gentleman dove so deeply into his books, he spent his nights reading from dusk till dawn and his days reading fromfirst light to last, and between too much reading and too little sleep, his brain dried up and he lost his mind. He wasfilled with the fantasy of everything he had read, from enchantments to quarrels, battles, challenges, wounds, sweetflatteries, beloveds, tempests, and all sorts of impossible idiocy. And what he read lodged so deeply in his imagination that for him, the whole machinery of trumped-up make-believe was true; for him, there was no truer story in the world. He would say El Cid Ruy Díaz had been a very good knight, but nowhere near the level of the Knight of the Flaming Sword, who split twofierce, colossal giants in half with a single, backhand blow.[9] He was fonder of Bernardo del Carpio,

because at the Battle of Roncevaux Pass, del Carpio had killed Roland the Enchanted by imitating the ingeniousness of Hercules when he throttled Antaeus, the son of Earth, between his arms.[1] Our gentleman had many good things to say about Full p. C-420 Shorter p. 1631 the giant Morgante,[2] for even though all giants are arrogant and discourteous, Morgante alone was friendly and polite.

But his favorite was Reinaldos of Montalbán,[3] especially the stories about him leaving his castle to rob anybody he ran into, and the time when he crossed the seas to steal an idol of Mohammed made of gold,[4] or so the story goes. For a chance to land a kick on the traitor Galalón,[5] our gentleman would have traded in his housekeeper and his niece, to boot. In effect, with his mind utterly gone, he began to think the strangest thought of any madman in all the world. Namely, to increase his own honor and to serve his nation, it seemed to him not onlyfitting but necessary to become a knight-errant and travel the world with his sword and his steed in search of adventures. He would dedicate himself to all the things he'd read that knights-errant dedicated themselves to: righting all types of wrongs, facing down danger and getting into tight spots which—when he got out of them—would surely bring him fame and make his name eternal. The poor man was already imagining himself crowned by the valor of his arm, ruling at the very least the Empire of Trebizond. And so, full of these pleasurable thoughts, swept up in the strange delight they brought him, he hurried to put his plans into effect.

Thefirst thing he did was clean offhis great-grandfathers' armor, which was caked in rust and mildew, having spent centuries forgotten in a corner. He scraped the armor clean and straightened it up as best he could, but he found it had a majorflaw, which was that the headpiece had no visor for the face; it was just a simple helm. Nevertheless, he applied his industriousness, and out of pasteboard he made a sort of half-helmet that, when attached to the helm, gave the appearance of a full headpiece. It's true that—to test its strength and see if it would protect him from a blow—he took out his sword and gave the visor two good whacks, and with just thefirst, he destroyed what had taken him a week to create. Troubled by how easily he had hacked the thing to pieces, he refashioned it, reinforcing the inside with a few strips of iron to better protect himself. Satisfied with its strength, and not wanting to repeat the experience, he declared it to be a veryfine helmet indeed.

Then he went to see his nag, and though the horse had more scratches than a penny and more scars than Gonella's pony—that bag of skin and bones who "tantum pellis et ossa fuit"[6] —to our gentleman, not even Alexander's steed Bucephalus[7] nor El Cid's mount Babieca could compete. He spent four days dreaming up the right name to give him, since—he told himself—there was no reason for the mount of such a famous knight, such a worthy horse in his own right, to go without a name of renown. Our gentleman sought the precise name that would declare who the horse had been before his master became a Full p. C-421 knight-errant, and who he was now. He reasoned that since his master's condition was Shorter p. 1632 changing, the horse's name should also change to something that would draw fame, something thunderous andfitting for his new position and profession. And so, after shaping, erasing, subtracting, adding, undoing, and redoing many names in his memory and his imagination, at last he settled on "Rocinante," which seemed to him musical and meaningful, revealing what his

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mount had been before, which was a nag,[8] and what he was now, which was the foremost nag in all the world.

His horse named, and so delightfully well, our gentleman was ready to name himself. He spent another eight days in thought, landing in the end on “don Quixote,” which is the reason the authors of this very true story assert that his name must surely have been “Quixada” and not “Quesada,” as others have claimed. However, recalling how the valiant Amadís of Gaul had not been content to call himself just plain “Amadís,” but added the name of his kingdom to bring it fame, our good knight wished to add the name of his fatherland to his own, and so he called himself “don Quixote of La Mancha,”[9] which to his mind gave a lively declaration of his lineage and his nation, and bestowed on it the honor of being his surname.

Armor cleaned, headpiece fashioned, nag named and himself confirmed in his cause, he realized there was nothing left to do but look for a lady to fall in love with, because a knight-errant without love was a tree without leaves or fruit, a body without a soul. He said to himself: “If I, as punishment for my sins or in a stroke of good fortune,find myself facing offwith some giant—as often happens to knights-errant—and I fell him in one blow, or I split him down the middle or, essentially, defeat and conquer him, wouldn’t it be good to have someone to send him to? For him to go and kneel before my sweet lady, and say in a humble, conquered voice: ‘I, milady, am the giant Butterface, Lord of the Isle of Shady Ladies,[1] defeated in single combat by the never-sufficiently-praised knight don Quixote of La Mancha, who sent me to throw myself on thy mercy; may thy grandeur make use of me in accordance with thy whim!”

Oh, how pleased our good knight was when he made this speech, and even more so when he found someone to name as his lady! One town over, there lived a very good-looking girl who worked thefields, with whom it is believed he had once been in love, although she had no inkling or idea this was the case. Her name was Aldonza Lorenzo, and he decided to crown her lady of his thoughts. Searching for a name that would not clash much with his own,fit and befitting for a princess and a grand lady, he decided to call her “Dulcinea of Toboso,” because she was from Toboso.[2] To him, this name seemed musical, mystical, and meaningful, as were all the other names he had given to himself and to his things.

Full p. C-422 Shorter p. 1633

CHAPTER II

Which deals with the ingenious gentleman don Quixote’s first foray beyond his own land

And, once these precautions were taken, he could not wait to put his idea into action. He wasfilled with urgency as he imagined how his tardiness was depriving the world, for he planned to right wrongs, straighten out the crooked, remedy reasonlessness, ameliorate abuses, and exact payback. And so he set out one morning without telling anybody what he had in mind, and without anyone seeing him go. Before the break of dawn, on one of those hot July days, he donned all his armor and mounted Rocinante, pulling on his poorly made headpiece, strapping his shield to his arm, and taking up his lance. He opened the side gate, riding out of the corral and into the countryside, thoroughly pleased and elated at the ease

with which he had begun the undertaking of hisfine desires. But once he was in the countryside, he was struck by a thought so terrible, it almost led him to abandon the entire enterprise. Namely, he remembered that he had not been dubbed a knight, and as such, according to the laws of chivalry, he neither could nor should take up arms against any knights at all. And if he did, they would have to be blank white arms, like a novice, with no insignia on the shield, until he won the right to an emblem by the strength of his arm. These thoughts made him waver in his resolve; but, since his madness was more potent than any other reason, he decided he would have himself dubbed a knight thefirst chance he got, following in the footsteps of plenty of others who had done things that way, according to what he had read in the books that had left him in such a state. As for the blank white arms, he planned—as soon as he got the chance—to burnish his armor till it shone whiter than ermine. And with that, he settled down and journeyed on, letting his horse lead the way, for therein—he believed—lay the heart of adventuring.

Well, ourflaming adventurer spoke to himself as he went riding along, saying:

"Who would doubt that, in times to come, when the true story of my famous deeds comes to light, the sage who writes my history will—when telling this, the tale of myfirst foray, so early in the morn—put it like so:

"Rubicund Apollo[3] had scarcely spread the golden locks of his gorgeous hair across the face of the broad and spacious land, the lovely little birds with their sugarplum tongues had barely begun to greet, in harmony mellifluous and sweet, the arrival of rosy Dawn, who, leaving the soft bed of her heedful husband behind, had just begun to reveal herself to mortal eyes through the doors and balconies of the Manchegan horizon, when the legendary knight don Quixote of La Mancha, arising from his slothful bed, mounted his horse Rocinante and began to ride through the ancient and renowned countryside of Montiel."

And it's true; that's where he was riding. He went on, saying:

"Fortunate the age and fortunate the era when my famous deeds shall come to light, such deeds as will be worthy of casting in bronze, sculpting in marble, and painting on panels for future remembrance. Oh, you sage enchanter, whosoever you might be, you who will be tasked with chronicling this marvelous Full p. C-423 Shorter p. 1634 tale! I beg you, do not forget my good Rocinante, eternal companion of mine on every road and highway."

And he went on as if he were really in love, saying:

"Oh princess Dulcinea, lady of this captive heart! Much injury hast thou inflicted on me by sending me away and reproaching me with such rigorousfirmness not to appear before thy beauteousness. Pray, señora, remember me, your shackled heart, who—for your love—suffers so much sorrow."

Along with these, he tried out other idiocies, all of them in the style his books had taught him, imitating their language as best he could. The whole while he was riding along so slowly, and the sun was rising so quickly and beating down sofiercely, it would have been enough to melt his brains, if he had had any.

He went along most of the day without anything worth talking about happening, which drove him to despair, because he had wanted to run into somebody right away against which he could test the valor and strength of his arm. Some authors say thefirst adventure he happened across was the one in Puerto Lápice; others say it was the windmills; but what I have been able ascertain from my research in the annals of La Mancha is he rode all day long,

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and by nightfall, he and his nag were tired and famished, and so when he looked around to see if he couldfind some castle or shepherds' camp where he could lay his head and tend to his great hunger and need, and he spotted an inn not far off, it was as if he had seen a star shining over the fortress—if not the gates—of Heaven. He hurried along and arrived as night began to fall.

It just so happened that outside the door of the inn were two working girls, the kind they call ladies of the night. They were traveling to Sevilla with some mule-drivers and had stopped at the inn to spend the night. Since our adventurer took everything he thought, saw, or imagined as fact, and since he imagined it all unfolding in the style of his books, as soon as he saw the inn, he took it for a castle, with four towers and spires of shining silver and whatnot, complete with a deep moat and a drawbridge, and all the otherfinishing touches. He reined in Rocinante not far from the inn which seemed like a castle, waiting for some dwarf or another to lean over the battlements and sound a trumpet to announce that a knight had arrived. But seeing how long waiting was taking, and considering Rocinante's rush to get to the stables, he made his way over to the gate of the inn and saw the two wayward women standing there. To him, they seemed like two beautiful damsels, or two gracious noble ladies, taking their leisure outside the castle walls. Right at that moment, a swineherd sounded his horn, calling in his drove of pigs (no apologies; that's what they're called). Immediately, don Quixote took it to be what he wanted, which was a dwarf announcing his arrival. And so, full of strange delight, he rode right up to the gate of the inn where the ladies were leaning. They werefilled with fear at the sight of a man approaching in armor like that, carrying a lance and shield, and they started to rush back inside. But don Quixote, inferring their fright from theirflight, raised his pasteboard visor, uncovering his dusty face, and, with a genteel air and in a measured voice, he said:

"Flee not, your graces! Fear no transgression from me, forasmuch as none have cause for trouble or concern from the order of chivalry which I profess, so much less so do such highborn damsels as your graces evidently must be."

Full p. C-424 Shorter p. 1635

When he spoke, the wenches turned to look at him, searching for his face under the battered visor. But when they heard him call them damsels, something so diametrically opposed to their profession, they couldn't hold their laughter back. They laughed so hard and for so long that don Quixote grew quite offended, and he told them:

"Forbearance is most becoming in beauteous ladies, and mirth for no reason is impudence, though I say this not to suggest you have cast yourselves in ill light, nor to reproach you for showing ill will, for mine is none other than to serve thy ladyships."

The language, which the ladies didn't understand at all, combined with the ridiculous appearance of our knight, only made them laugh harder, which made him even angrier, and things would have gotten out of hand if the innkeeper hadn't come out at that point.

The innkeeper was a very fat man, and so a very peaceable one. When he saw that cockeyedfigure, armed with his mismatched bridle, lance, shield, and armor, the innkeeper was inches away from joining the damsels in their chuckles. But, fearing that whole machinery of weaponry, he decided to restrain himself. And so he said:

"Señor knight, if your grace is looking for lodging, with the exception of beds, because this inn doesn't have any, you'llfind plenty of everything else here."

Don Quixote, pleased with the humility of the governor of the fortress (which is what the innkeeper and the inn seemed to him), replied:

"For me, señor castellan, anything will do, for 'armor is my only ornament, my only respite's war,'[4] etc."

The host thought don Quixote had called him "castellan" on account of his resemblance to the veryfine men of Castilla, although he was from Andalucía.[5] In his youth, the innkeeper had been one of the regulars running the beaches at Sanlúcar, with stickierfingers than Cacus[6] and more mischief in him than a seasoned page. And so he responded with the rest of the refrain, saying:

"Well then, your grace's bed must be rocky mountaintops, and your only rest the endless watch, in which case you can go ahead and get offyour horse, because I can assure you, in this shack there's enough to keep you from sleeping for a whole year, let alone just a night."

As he spoke, he went over to hold a stirrup for don Quixote, who dismounted laboriously, with great difficulty, like somebody who hasn't eaten anything all day.

Don Quixote told his host to be very careful with Rocinante, because he was the best piece of horseflesh to ever eat bread. The innkeeper took a look: the horse didn't seem quite as good as don Quixote said, not by half. Once he had settled Rocinante in the stables, he came back to see what his guest might need. The damsels had made up with don Quixote by then, and they had helped him out of his breastplate and backplate, but they could notfigure out how to get the neckpiece offof him, nor the cockeyed headpiece, which he'd tied on with green ribbon. They could not loosen the knots enough to untie Full p. C-425 them, and they would have cut the thing off, but don Quixote would not consent to that under Shorter p. 1636 any circumstance, so he spent the whole night with his helmet on, striking the strangest, funniestfigure you could picture. While they unbuckled his armor, don Quixote imagined these trollops and tarts to be the principal señoras and ladies of the castle. With great aplomb, he said:

> "No knight was ever
> Served any better,
> By ladies fairer,
> Than don Quixote
> On hisfirst foray.
> Damsels tended to his needs,
> Princesses, to his nag's,[7]

and that nag's name, señoras, is Rocinante—my steed—and I am don Quixote of La Mancha. Although I did not wish to reveal my identity unto you until my deeds *in pro* and service to you had served to introduce me, my effort to tailor the old ballad of Lancelot to the present moment has caused you to know my name before the moment was ripe. But the hour is nigh when thy ladyships shall command and I shall obey, and the valor of mine arm shall reveal the deep desire I have to serve you."

The strumpets, who weren't used to hearing that kind of rhetoric, didn't say a word in response. They just asked him if he'd like something to eat.

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“I would feast on anything,” replied don Quixote, “for, by my lights, it would do me much good.”

As chance would have it, that day happened to be a Friday, and all they had at the inn were a few servings of afish that in Castilla is called saltfish, and in Andalucía jackfish, and in some parts they call it walleye, and in others, pickerel. They asked him if his grace happened to like pickerel, because that’s the onlyfish they had to serve him.[8]

“If there are plenty of pickerel,” replied don Quixote, “together they might add up to a pike, for I do not care if you give me eight *reales* in change or in a single piece of eight. What’s more, it could be that these pickerel are like veal, which is better than beef, or lamb, which is better than mutton. But, whatever the case, bring it quickly, for my labor and the weight of armor cannot be borne without properly governing the guts.”

They set up a table in the doorway where it was nice and cool, and the host brought over a serving of poorly soaked and even worse-cooked saltfish, with a hunk of bread as black and grimy as our knight’s armor. It was quite a laugh to see him eat, for since he had the helmet on and was holding it open, he could not take a bite without somebody else there feeding him. He needed somebody else’s hands just to get his food to his mouth, so one of the aforementioned ladies took on the task. But drinking was impossible, and it would have stayed that way if the innkeeper had not hollowed out a reed, put the bottom into don Quixote’s mouth, and poured wine into the top. Don Quixote endured all of this patiently, in exchange for not cutting the ribbons of his helmet.

Full p. C-426 Shorter p. 1637

As this was going on, a pig gelder happened to come by the inn, and as he passed, he blew on his panpipe four orfive times to offer his services. For don Quixote, this fully confirmed that he was at some famous castle and they were serving dinner with musical entertainment, and the walleye was pike, the bread white as snow, the harlots highborn ladies, and the innkeeper the castle’s castellan. It was all he needed to decide that his doggedness in setting forth on this sally had been justified. Still, he was greatly troubled by the fact that he had not yet been dubbed a knight, for it seemed to him he couldn’t legitimately begin adventuring until he’d received the order of knighthood.

CHAPTER III

Which describes the amusing manner in which don Quixote was dubbed a knight

And, exhausted by that thought, don Quixote cut short his scanty inn supper. Once he’d cleaned his plate, he got up and called the innkeeper, and they went over to the stables, where don Quixote shut both of them in. He knelt down at the innkeeper’s feet and declared:

“Never again shall I rise from this spot, valiant knight, unless thy courtesy bestows on me the boon I seek to beseech of thee, a boon that shall redound to accolades for you, and serve *in pro*[9] of all humankind!”

The innkeeper—seeing his guest at his feet, spouting reasons such as these—was quite confused. He stared at him, unsure of what to do or say. He tried to get don Quixote to stand, but he refused to move until,finally, the innkeeper agreed to grant his boon.

“I expected no less of thy beneficence, señor,” responded don Quixote. “And so I shall tell you, the boon I seek, which thy generosity has granted, is for you to knight me. Tonight I shall keep vigil over my arms in the chapel of your castle, and tomorrow you may fulfill my fervent desire (as I’ve said) and dub me a knight so that I may roam, as I should, to the four corners of the Earth, in search of adventures and *in pro* of the needy, which is the charge of chivalry and knights-errant such as I, whose desires incline toward such deeds.”

The innkeeper, as previously mentioned, was a bit of a rascal. He had already gotten an inkling of his guest’s lunacy, which was fully confirmed when he heard don Quixote’s reasoning. Thinking it might lead to a good laugh that night, the innkeeper decided to play along and follow his guest’s lead.

And so he told don Quixote he was quite right in his desires and requests, and such a proposition was both suitable and natural for distinguished knights, as he seemed to be and as his gallant appearance so clearly revealed he was. The innkeeper mentioned that, in his younger years, he too had dedicated himself to that honorable profession, riding all over the world in search of adventures. He’d frequented the best black markets in all the land, from the Percheles in Málaga, the Riarán Isles, the Compás neighborhood in Sevilla, Azoguejo in Segovia, and La Olivera in Valencia, to Rondilla in Granada, the beaches of Sanlúcar, Potro in Córdoba, Las Ventillas in Toledo,[1] and many other places where he’d honed the lightness of his feet and the stickiness of his Full p. C-427 fingers, Shorter p. 1638 shaking down crooks, bedding plenty of widows, undoing a handful of damsels, fooling a few pupils, and,finally, hearing his name resound in almost every court and tribunal in all of Spain. In the end, he’d retired here to his castle, where he lived offhis estate and the estates of others, welcoming all knights-errant of any caliber and in any condition, purely out of the great fondness he felt for them, generously allowing them to share with him their belongings, as repayment for hisfine desires.

He explained that the castle had no chapel for don Quixote to keep vigil in, because, since they were planning to build a new chapel, they’d knocked the old one down. But the innkeeper assured him that in a pinch, a knight could keep vigil over his arms wherever he happened to be, so that night he could stand watch over his armor in one of the castle’s courtyards, and in the morning, God willing, they’d perform all the necessary ceremonies for him to be made a knight—indeed, the knightliest knight the world had ever seen.

The innkeeper asked how much money he had on him, and don Quixote told him he didn’t have a single *blanca*[2] because he’d never read anything about knights-errant carrying money in any of the many books he’d read on the subject. The innkeeper informed him he was mistaken, for even if the books didn’t mention things as necessary and obvious as money and clean undershirts, that was no reason to believe that knights didn’t have them. And so he could take it as a verified fact that each and every one of the countless knights jammed and packed into all the many books of chivalry always made sure to keep his pockets full, even if only as a precaution. The innkeeper assured don Quixote that, for the very same reason, knights also carried clean undershirts and a little chest of unguents and salves to heal any wounds they might receive, because there wouldn’t always be someone around to heal them should they be wounded in thefields and deserted wastelands where they did battle. That is, of course, unless they happened to be friends with some sage enchanter who could come to their aid lickety-split, summoning some damsel or another—or maybe a dwarf—on a cloud, bearing aflask of elixir that with a single drop heals the gashes and wounds of whosoever lets it wet

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their lips, until they're good as new, without a single scratch on them. But unless they happened to have a friend like that, the knights of yore made sure their squires were well provisioned with money and other necessities, like bandages and healing salves. And if a knight didn't happen to have a squire—which was very rare and seldom occurred—he carried everything himself, in very subtle saddlebags that were so slim you could scarcely see them on the horses'flanks, and if you did spot them, you were sure to think they werefilled with something far more important than mere money, for—other than in circumstances such as these—saddlebags were somewhat frowned upon among knights-errant, which is why they are mentioned so infrequently. And so, he told don Quixote that as his soon-to-be godfather, he could instruct and advise him from here on out never to travel without plenty of money and the other previously mentioned provisions, promising he would see how they would come in handy when he least expected it.

Don Quixote promised he'd put his host's advice into action posthaste, and the innkeeper instructed him to go keep vigil over his arms in the large corral Full p. C-428 Shorter p. 1639 next to the inn. Gathering up his armor, don Quixote piled it all on top of a watering trough next to a well inside the corral. Strapping on his shield and taking up his lance, he began, with genteel composure, to pace back and forth before the trough in the dwindling light.

The innkeeper told everyone at the inn about his guest's madness: how he was keeping vigil over his armor, how he expected to be dubbed a knight. Everyone marveled at such a strange strain of lunacy, and they all went over to watch him from afar. They saw how sometimes he paced back and forth peacefully, and sometimes he leaned on his lance and stared straight at his armor for a good long while. Night had fallen by then, but the moon was bright enough to rival the orb who loans her his light, so everybody had a clear view of every move made by the novice knight.

Just then, one of the mule-drivers staying at the inn felt the urge to go water his herd; to do so, he had to take don Quixote's armor offthe trough. Seeing him approach, don Quixote called out in a loud voice:

"O you, whosoever you may be! Insolent knight, you dare touch the armor of the most valiant knight-errant ever to strap on a sword?! Watch what you're doing! Lay not afinger on my armor unless you wish to pay for your insolence with your life!"

The mule-driver paid no heed to these reasons (though it would've been better for him if he had, because he ended up paying with his health). Before don Quixote hadfinished speaking, the mule-driver grabbed the armor by its cords andflung it a good way away. Seeing this, don Quixote raised his eyes to heaven and, turning his thoughts—or so it seemed—to his lady Dulcinea, he cried:

"Avail me, my lady, in thisfirst affront thy vassal heart confronts! Deny me not thy favor and thy protection in this, myfirst adversity!"

And, shouting this and other things, he dropped his shield, hoisted his lance up with both his hands, and brought it down on the mule-driver's skull with so much force that the man was laid outflat. He was in such bad shape that if don Quixote had followed hisfirst blow with a second, the mule-driver would have had no need for a doctor anymore.

With that, don Quixote picked up his armor and returned to his pacing with the same serenity as before. After a little while, without realizing what had happened—because thefirst mule-driver was still out cold—another mule-driver showed up with the same idea of watering his mules. As soon as he'd picked up the armor to clear offthe trough, don Quixote—

without saying a word or asking anybody's favor this time—dropped the shield, hoisted the lance up again, and—without cracking his lance—cracked the second mule-driver's head into more than three pieces, for it split in four.

Everyone at the inn, including the innkeeper, rushed over at the sound. Seeing them, don Quixote strapped on his shield and, with his hand on the pommel of his sword, he cried:

"O lady of beauteousness, vim and vigor of my debilitated heart! Now is the moment to turn the eyes of thy grandeur to this, thy captive knight, for such a sizeable adventure simply *must* be beheld!"

This seemed to rally his spirits so thoroughly that even if every mule-driver in the world had come at him, he would not have taken a single step back. The injured men's companions, seeing the state their friends were in, began—from afar—to rain rocks down on don Quixote, who blocked them with his shield Full p. C-429 Shorter p. 1640 the best he could, not daring to move away from the trough and abandon his armor. The innkeeper shouted at them to stop, because he had already told them the man was crazy, and he was sure to get offon insanity even if he killed them all. Don Quixote shouted too, even louder, saying they were treacherous traitors, each and every one, and the lord of the castle was a lowborn cowardly knight if this was how he let knights-errant be treated, and if it were not for the fact that don Quixote had not yet been knighted, he would be delighted to instruct his host how to rue such skullduggery.

"But as for you lot, you vile and inferior riffraff, I have no qualms at all: throw your rocks! Come here, approach and affront me as much as you please! You'll soon learn the price of your insolence and your idiocy!"

He shouted this with such intensity and such verve that the approaching men werefilled with terror. These words, and the innkeeper's pleas, convinced them to stop throwing rocks at don Quixote, who magnanimously let them drag away the wounded men, returning to his vigil with the same serenity and tranquility as when he had begun.

The innkeeper was not thrilled with his guest's antics, so he decided to cut things short and give him the blasted order of chivalry right then and there, before he could cause any more trouble. He went over to don Quixote and apologized for the impertinence of his lowborn guests, claiming he'd had no idea what they were doing in the moment, but that his esteemed guest had been right to punish them for their insolence. He reminded don Quixote there was no chapel in the castle, as he had said, but told him they didn't need one for the rest of the ritual, because being dubbed a knight was merely a matter of getting smacked with a sword on the shoulders and the nape of the neck, according to the innkeeper's knowledge of chivalric ceremony. And that, he continued, could be done anywhere, even in the middle of afield, since don Quixote had already completed the vigil over his arms, for the vigil requirement was just two hours and he'd done more than four already. Don Quixote believed every word, assuring the innkeeper he would obey his instructions, for he too wished to conclude the ceremony as quickly as possible, since if someone were to affront him again once he had been dubbed a knight, he had no intention of leaving anyone in the castle alive, excepting those the innkeeper indicated, whom he would spare out of respect for his host.

The castellan, thus warned and worried, hurried offto get the book where he kept the mule-drivers' tabs for what they owed for oats and hay. With the stub of a candle that a boy brought over, and the two aforementioned damsels at his side, he approached don Quixote and instructed him to kneel. The innkeeper began to read his book of accounts aloud like some pious prayer. In the middle of his reading, he raised his hand and gave don Quixote a good

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smack on the back of the neck. Then, with the knight's own sword, he tapped him lightly, murmuring between his teeth the whole time as if in prayer. Once that was done, he told one of the damsels to buckle on don Quixote's sword, which she did with great grace and discretion. It took quite a lot of discretion indeed not to burst out laughing at each point in the ceremony, but the feats she'd just witnessed from the novice knight were enough to hold her laughter at bay. Once she had buckled on his sword, the good lady said:

"May God make your grace a very fortunate knight, and send you lots of fortune when youfight."

Full p. C-430 Shorter p. 1641

Don Quixote asked for her name, so he could know from then on to whom he was obliged for the mercy he had just received, as he planned to ascribe to her some part of the honor he earned by the valor of his arm. She replied very humbly that people called her La Tolosa, and her father was a ragpicker from Toledo, who lived near the Plaza de Sancho Bienaya, but wherever he found her, she was at his service and would be pleased to have him as her lord. Don Quixote begged her to do him the mercy, on account of his love, of adding the honorific *don* to her name, and go by doña Tolosa from then on. She promised she would. He then had almost exactly the same conversation with the other woman as she buckled on his spurs. He asked for her name, and she said she was called La Molinera, the Miller's Girl, because she was the daughter of a right honorable miller from Antequera. Don Quixote begged her to add *don* to her name too and call herself doña Miller's Girl, once again offering his services and his thanks. Well, having raced through these never-before-seen ceremonies at breakneck and lightning speed, don Quixote could wait no longer, impatient as he was to see himself up on horseback and out in search of adventure. He swiftly saddled and mounted Rocinante, and, embracing his host, expressed his gratitude at being knighted in a series of sentences so strange, they're impossible to repeat. The innkeeper, anxious to see him leave, responded in kind, with no less high-flown rhetoric, albeit significantly fewer words, and—with nary a mention of his unpaid tab—sent don Quixote offon his merry way.

CHAPTER IV

On what happened to our knight once he left the inn

It must have been around dawn when don Quixote rode out of the inn, feeling so gallant, so exceedingly ecstatic atfinally being knighted, that the magnitude of his delight nearly busted the cinch offhis saddle. But recalling his host's advice about stocking up on the necessary precautions—money and clean undershirts in particular—he decided to head back home and outfit himself fully with all the provisions, including a squire. He had a neighbor in mind, a farmer who—though he was poor, and he did have kids—would make a perfectlyfine squire. With that thought, don Quixote turned Rocinante towards their town. The nag, as if recognizing the road back to his stables, began to trot so eagerly, his hooves scarcely seemed to touch the ground.

They hadn't gotten far when, offto the right, in the thicket of a forest that lined the road, don Quixote thought he heard a sort of delicate shouting, like someone crying out. As soon as the sound reached his ears, he said:

“I raise my thanks to Heaven for the mercy granted me in so swiftly offering me opportunities to practice my profession and pluck the fruit of myfine desires! This shouting must surely be coming from some needy sir—or indeed, lady—in dire need of my favor and assistance.”

Tugging on Rocinante’s reins, he turned the horse in the direction he thought the shouting was coming from. He was only a few steps into the forest when he spotted a mare tied to an oak, and a boy tied to another, all offifteen years old, stripped naked from the waist up. He was the one who’d been shouting, and not without reason, for afine-looking farmer was whipping him over and over with a belt, punctuating each blow with reproachful advice. He was saying:

Full p. C-431 Shorter p. 1642

“A silent tongue and a watchful eye!”

And the boy was crying:

“I won’t do it again, señor! For the love of God, I won’t do it again! I promise, from now on, I’ll be more careful with theflock!”

Seeing this, don Quixote called out in a lofty voice:

“Discourteous knight, it’s unseemly to do battle with those who cannot defend themselves. Mount thy horse and take up thy lance,” because there was a lance leaning against the oak where the mare was tied, “and I shall show you how your actions are the stuffof cowards!”

The farmer—who looked up to see a bizarre armedfigure practically on top of him, brandishing a lance in his face—thought he was as good as dead. Carefully crafting his response withfine words, he replied:

“Señor knight, this boy I’m punishing is a servant of mine. He’s supposed to watch theflock of sheep I keep in these parts, but he’s so careless, I’m losing a sheep a day. And even though I’m only punishing him for his negligence, or perhaps his treachery, he claims I’m doing it to get out of paying him the salary I owe him, which I swear to God on my soul is a lie.”

“Lie?! You dare say the word ‘lie’ in my presence, loathsome villein?!”[3] bellowed don Quixote. “By the sun that shines upon us, I am on the verge of breaking every inch of your body with this lance! Pay him quickly, and without further argument. If you do not, by God Almighty, I shall annihilate and end you on the spot. Free him immediately!”

The farmer bowed his head and untied his servant without a word. Don Quixote asked the boy how much his master owed him, and he replied nine months, at a rate of seven *reales* a month. Don Quixote did the math and found it came out to seventy-three *reales* . He told the farmer to hand them over immediately, unless he wished to choose this as his hill to die on. The chickenhearted villein replied that by the path he walked and the vow he’d taken—though he hadn’t taken any vows—he didn’t owe the boy as much as he said, because you had to take into account and deduct the three pairs of shoes the boy had gone through, plus another *real* to pay for the two bloodlettings they’d had to do for him when he was sick.

“That’s all well and good,” replied don Quixote, “but he rendered his payment for the shoes and the bloodlettings when you lashed him without reason. For if he wore holes in the soles of his shoes, you wore holes in his hide when you whipped him. And if the barber drew offblood when he was sick,[4] you’ve now drawn his blood when he was sound. Therefore and on that account, he owes you nothing.”

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“The trouble is, señor knight, I don’t have a *blanca* on me. Let Andrés come back to my house with me, and I’ll be sure to pay him hand overfist.”

“Me go with him?!” cried the boy. “Fat chance! No, señor, I don’t even want to think about it, ’cause as soon as we’re alone, he’llflay me like San Bartolomé!”[5]

“He’ll do no such thing,” replied don Quixote. “For if I command him not to, he shall respect me and obey. And if he swears to me on his vow of chivalry, I shall let him go free and ensure he pays your salary.”

Full p. C-432 Shorter p. 1643

“Your grace, señor, look at what you’re saying,” said the boy. “There’s nothing chivalrous about my master! He’s no knight, he’s Juan Dubious the Rich, who lives in Quintanar.”

“That matters not,” replied don Quixote, “for there may be knights even among the Dubious, since each man is the child of his deeds.”

“That’s very true,” said Andrés, “but what kind of deeds is my master the child of, when he refuses to pay me my salary after I’ve given him my sweat and my labor?”

“I am not refusing, brother Andrés,” responded the farmer. “And if you’ll do me the pleasure of accompanying me, I swear on every vow of chivalry in the whole wide world that I’ll pay you, just like I said. Hand overfist, with a cherry on top.”

“You may forgo the cherry,” said don Quixote. “Simply give him what you owe him in coin and I shall be content. And be sure to do as you’ve sworn! Otherwise, by that selfsame vow, I swear to come back tofind and punish you, even if you skitter offlike a lizard to hide. And, should you wish to know the name of he who so commands you—that my true identity may compound the compulsion you feel to fulfil your promise—know I am the valiant don Quixote of La Mancha, righter of wrongs and of reasonlessness. Go with God, and let what you have promised and sworn stray not from your thoughts, on pain of the pain I’ve promised.”

Saying this, he spurred Rocinante and rode off. The farmer watched him go. Once don Quixote had left the forest and could no longer be seen, he turned back to his servant Andrés and said:

“Come here, my boy, and let me give you what I owe you, just as the righter of wrongs commanded!”

“I swear,” said Andrés, “your grace better follow through and do as thatfine knight—may he live a thousand years!—commanded you! He’s so brave, and such a good judge, by God, if you don’t pay me, he’s sure to come back and punish you just like he promised!”

“Oh, I swear too,” said the farmer. “But since I have so much love for you, I want to rack up some more debt, to pay you back all the more.”

And, wrenching the boy around by the arm, the farmer tied him to the oak once more, and lashed the youth until he was at death’s door.

“Go on, señor Andrés!” the farmer laughed. “Go call your righter of wrongs! You’ll see how he won’t right this one. Though I think I’m not done wronging you just yet, because I’ve got an itch toflay you alive, just as you feared!”

But, in the end, he untied the boy and let him go offin search of his judge, in hopes the knight would execute his promised punishment. Andrés left somewhat sulkily, swearing he’dfind the valiant don Quixote of La Mancha and tell him, point by point, everything that had happened after he’d left, and his master would have to pay him what he owed, and with

interest, too. But even so, Andrés limped away crying while his master stayed to laugh and laugh.

And so don Quixote righted hisfirst wrong. He was quite content with how things had gone, for it seemed to him he had gotten his chivalry offto a felicitous and noble start. Thoroughly pleased with himself, he rode on toward his village, murmuring:

"You may rightly call yourself the most fortunate woman alive, oh beauty of beauties, Dulcinea of Toboso! For you have the fortune of having captured and Full p. C-433 Shorter p. 1644 bent to thy every will and whim such a valiant and renowned knight as is—and shall be—don Quixote of La Mancha! Who, as everyone knows, yesterday received the order of chivalry, and today has righted the worst wrong ever wrought by reasonlessness, or committed by cruelty. For today, he wrested the lash from the hand of a merciless enemy, who was senselessly thrashing a delicate youth."

As he was talking, he came to a four-way fork in the road. In his imagination, he saw the great crossroads where knights-errant would pause and ponder which path to follow. Following their lead, he sat there for a while in silence. After pondering it quite well, he loosened Rocinante's reins and let the nag choose the path. Rocinante continued the way he had been going, following the road back to his barn.

After about two miles, don Quixote came across a great throng of people, who—it later came to light—were a group of merchants from Toledo, on their way to Murcia[6] to buy some silk. There were six of them, well equipped, with sunshadesfixed to their saddles, alongside four servants on horseback, and three mule-boys leading the pack animals on foot. As soon as don Quixote spied them in the distance, he imagined a new adventure was upon him. He'd wanted a chance to imitate the *pasos* he had read about, where knights would guard a bridge or other pass, challenging whosoever wished to cross. Here was the perfect opportunity for what he had in mind.

And so, with genteel countenance, and full of daring, he settled his feet in his stirrups, grasped his lance, brought his shield to his chest and, stationing himself in the middle of the road, waited for all those distant knights—since that is what he took them for and judged them to be—to arrive. When they were close enough to see and hear him, don Quixote raised his voice, and, with an arrogant air, shouted:

"None shall pass, unless all confess that in all the world no damsel is more beauteous than that Empress of La Mancha, the peerless Dulcinea of Toboso!"

The merchants stopped cold at the sound and sight of the bizarrefigure before them. They could tell he was a lunatic by his reasoning and his outfit, but they wanted tofigure out what this confession he was demanding was all about. One of the merchants, who was a bit of a rascal and known for his deadpan wit, responded:

"Señor knight, we don't know thisfine lady you're referring to. Show us, for if she is as beautiful as you say, we will happily and freely confess the fact, as you request."

"If I showed her to you," replied don Quixote, "what good would there be in your confessing such an evident truth? The important thing is to believe, confess, affirm, swear, and defend her beauty *without* seeing her. Otherwise, you shall do battle with me, you colossal and arrogant men! Whether you come at me one by one, as the order of chivalry decrees, or all at once, as is the nasty habit of your type, here I wait and await thee, with faith that I am in the right and reason is on my side!"

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“Señor knight,” responded the merchant. “On behalf of all us princes you see here before you, I beg you, spare our consciences the burden of confessing Shorter p. 1645 something about someone we’ve never seen nor heard of. Especially since the Full p. C-434 confession you require casts the Empresses and Queens of Alcarria and Estremadura[7] in such a bad light. If your grace would just show us a portrait of the lady, even if it’s no bigger than a grain of wheat—for as they say, enough’s as good as a feast—we will surely be satisfied, and your grace will be content and have our confessions as recompense. I’d even go so far as to say we’re sofirmly on your side that—even if the portrait shows that she’s cross-eyed and oozes brimstone and vermillion—just to make you happy, we’ll still praise her any way you like.”

“She does not ooze, you vile miscreant!” cried don Quixote, aflame with rage. “She does not ooze, I say, whatever it was you said! She oozes amber! And delicate musk! And she is neither cross-eyed, nor crooked, nor hunchbacked in any way, but straighter and more upright than a Guadarrama spindle![8] You shall pay dearly for your great blasphemy against my gem of a lady!”

As he bellowed this, he lowered his lance and charged the man who had spoken. Don Quixote was so full of rage and fury that, if luck had not led Rocinante to trip and fall before our knight had gotten halfway there, things would have gone quite badly for the impertinent merchant. But Rocinante fell, and so his master went rolling offinto the countryside. He tried to get up but could not, weighed down as he was by the lance, shield, spurs, and helmet, not to mention the pounds and pounds of ancient armor. As he struggled—and failed—to rise, he hollered:

“Flee not, you cowards! You slaves! Mark that my horse—and not I—is to blame for the fact that here I lie!”

One of the mule-boys, who must not have been entirely guileless, couldn’t stand hearing the fallen knight’s arrogance without leaving a response on his ribs. He walked over to where don Quixote lay, yanked the lance out of his hands, and, after breaking it to pieces, began beating the knight with a chunk of his own lance. He hit him so many times that even with his armor to protect him, don Quixote was beaten to a pulp. The mule-boy’s masters shouted at him, saying enough already and let him go. But the mule-boy had his ace in hand, and he wasn’t going to fold until he’d wagered the rest of his rage, so he picked up the other pieces of the broken lance and beat the miserable fallen knight with them until they split into splinters. And even with that torrent of blows raining down on him, not once did don Quixote shut his mouth, shouting threats at the earth and the sky, and at the ruffians, which is how he saw the merchants.

Eventually the mule-boy wore himself out and the merchants went on their way, laden with enough gossip over the poor thrashed knight to last them the rest of their trip. As soon as he was alone, don Quixote tried again to see if he could stand. But if he could not do it hale and healthy, how could he manage it beaten and broken? And still he counted himself lucky, because it seemed to him that this was exactly the kind of misfortune that befell knights-errant. So he blamed it all on his horse and lay there, unable to get up, too black and blue to move.

Full p. C-435 Shorter p. 1646

CHAPTER V

Which continues the story of our knight's misfortune

Well, once he realized he was not going to be able to wiggle his way upright, don Quixote turned to his usual solution, which was to think of some passage in his books. His madness brought him the memory of the old ballad of Valdovinos and the Marquis of Mantua, when Carloto left him wounded in a thicket—that timeless tale which children know by heart, adolescents are aware of, and old men celebrate and believe to be history, even though it's about as true as the miracles of Mohammed.[9] The tale seemed tailor-made for the situation don Quixote found himself in; and so, full of pathos, he began to roll around on the ground and shout—with weakened breath—the very same words that wounded knight was said to have sung in the forest:

> "Where are you, my lady,
> that my agony fails to wound thee?
> Either you are unaware I lie here like this,
> Or, señora, you are false and treacherous,"

and he kept on singing the ballad, until he got to the verse that goes:

> "Oh, noble Marquis of Mantua,
> my uncle and my bloodlord!"[1]

As luck would have it, just as don Quixote was singing this verse, a neighbor of his—a farmer from the same town—happened to pass by on his way back from the mill, where he had gone to drop offa load of wheat. Seeing a man laid outflat on the ground, the farmer went over to him, asking who he was, what hurt, and why he was singing such a sad lament. Don Quixote believed without a doubt this must be the Marquis of Mantua, his uncle, and so his only response was to keep singing the ballad, where he related his misfortune and the love between his wife and the Emperor's son, following the lyrics to the word.

The farmer was dumbstruck to hear such nonsense. Lifting up the visor—which was in pieces from the beating—he wiped don Quixote's dust-caked face. As soon as he had cleaned him off, the farmer recognized him. He said:

"Señor Quixana!" for that must have been his name back when he was still sane, before he'd changed from a placid gentleman to a knight-errant. "Who's left your grace in such a state?"

But don Quixote just kept on going with his ballad, singing in response to every question the farmer asked. The good man did his best to unbuckle the breastplate and the backplate to see if don Quixote had a wound that needed tending, but he did not spot any blood or broken skin. He tried to lift him up offthe ground, and, with more than a bit of work, the farmer managed to get don Quixote on top of his donkey, which seemed like the calmer steed. He Shorter p. 1647 picked up the armor, and even the splinters of broken lance, bundled them all Full p. C-436 up, and tied them onto Rocinante. With the horse's reins in one hand and the donkey's halter in the other, the farmer headed back to town, ruminating on the nonsense don Quixote had been spouting. Our knight was no less pensive. Bruised and broken, he kept sliding offthe burro, and every so often, he would heave a sigh so loud, it seemed he was trying to reach the ears of

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heaven, until the farmer felt obliged to ask him again where he was hurting. Well, the Devil himself must have been supplying don Quixote with stories tofit his situation, because at that point—forgetting all about Valdovinos—he remembered what the Moor Abindarráez had said when the Governor of Antequera, Rodrigo de Narváez, had taken him captive and brought him, shackled, to his castle.[2] And so, when the farmer again asked how he was doing and where it hurt, don Quixote replied with the very same words and reasons the captive Abencerraje used when responding to Rodrigo de Narváez, according to what he had read in Jorge de Montemayor's *La Diana*, where the story appears.[3] It suited his situation so perfectly that the farmer spent a good stretch of road swearing under his breath at having to hear that whole machinery of idiocy. And so he realized his neighbor had gone mad, and hurried to town, eager to unload the aggravation don Quixote was causing him with his lengthy harangue. When he hadfinallyfinished, don Quixote continued, saying:

"Your grace should know, señor don Rodrigo de Narváez, that the beautiful Jarifa of whom I speak is at present the lovely Dulcinea of Toboso, for whom I have performed, am performing, and shall perform the most famous feats of chivalry the world ever has or will see."

To this, the farmer replied:

"Look, señor your grace. Sinner that I am, I'm not don Rodrigo de Narváez or the Marquis of Mantua, but Pedro Alonso, your neighbor. And your grace isn't Valdovinos, or Abindarráez either, but the honorable gentleman señor Quixana."

"I know who I am," replied don Quixote, "and I know who I can be, which is not only those I've said, but also all the Twelve Peers of France, and even the Nine Worthies.[4] For all their deeds, singly and combined, shall surely be surpassed by mine!"

And it went on like that until they arrived, which was around dusk. The farmer waited on the outskirts of town until it got a bit darker, so folks wouldn't see the pulverized gentleman on such a lowly steed. Well, once the farmerfigured it was dark enough, he walked into town and right up to don Quixote's house, which he found in chaos. The town's priest and barber—great friends of don Quixote's—were inside, and the housekeeper was shouting:

"How do you like that, señor pastor Pero Pérez," for that was the priest's name. "The misfortune of my master! Three days we haven't seen head nor tail Shorter p. 1648 of him, or the nag, or the shield, or the lance, or the armor! Wretched me! Now Full p. C-437 I realize—and this is the truth, just as I was born to die—those damn books of chivalry he keeps and reads all the time have gone and broken his brain. How many times did I hear him talking to himself, saying he wanted to be a knight-errant and travel the world in search of adventures? Satan and Barrabas[5] take those books! They've ruined thefinest mind in all La Mancha!"

The niece was saying the same, and more:

"You should know, señor barber-surgeon Nicolás," which was the barber's name, "many times, my señor uncle would stay up reading those soulless books of misadventure for two days straight, and two nights, too, and then he'dfling the book from his hands, grab his sword, and start stabbing the walls! And when he was all worn out, he'd say he'd just killed four giants the size of four towers and the sweat from all that running around was blood from the grave wounds he'd received in battle. And then he'd drink a big jug of cold water, and go back to being calm and sane, saying it was a priceless beverage that the wizard Mervin[6] had given him, a grand old sage and friend of his. It's all my fault; I should have told your graces about

my señor uncle's nonsense sooner, and you could've made him better before it came to this! And burned all those wicked books! He's got a lot that fully deserve to burn like heretics at the stake."[7]

"I agree completely," said the priest, "and by my faith, before tomorrow ends, I shall give those books a public hearing and condemn them to theflames, so that no one else may read them and go on to do what myfine friend must have done."

Don Quixote and the farmer could hear all this clearly, and so the farmerfinally understood his neighbor's ailment. He began to shout:

"Your graces, open up for señor Marquis of Mantua and señor Valdovinos, who's gravely wounded, and for the Moor señor Abindarráez, captive of the valiant Rodrigo de Narváez, Governor of Antequera!"

As soon as they heard him, everybody rushed outside. They recognized their friend, master, and uncle—who still hadn't gotten offof the donkey, because he couldn't—and they all ran over to embrace him. Don Quixote said:

"Halt, for I am gravely wounded, and it's my horse who is to blame. Take me to my bed, and call, if possible, for the sage Bisi Boti,[8] that she may examine and heal my wounds."

"Speak of the Devil!" said the housekeeper. "See? My heart told me true; I know which leg my poor lord limps on. I'll take you upstairs your grace, happy to do it. We can patch you up right here; no need to call any busybodies. I'll say it once and a hundred times over: damn those books of chivalry for leaving your grace in such a state!"

They carried him up to bed, and, examining his wounds, they found there were none tofind. Don Quixote told them he was merely bruised from a great fall he had taken from his horse Rocinante while battling ten behemoths more immense and impudent than almost any in the land.

Full p. C-438 Shorter p. 1649

"Tsk, tsk," said the priest. "Now we've got behemoths in the mix? I swear on my vows, I'll burn those books tomorrow before the sun goes down."

They asked don Quixote a thousand questions, and he would not answer a single one. He just asked them to give him something to eat and let him sleep, for that was what he needed most. They did so, and the farmer informed the priest in abundant detail about the state don Quixote had been in when he found him. He told the priest everything, from the nonsense he'd been spouting when he wasflat on his back to the strange things he'd said on the way home. This further sharpened the priest's desire to do what he did the next day, which was to call on his friend, the barber-surgeon Nicolás, and go over with him to the house of don Quixote . . .

Footnotes

- Note 3:Efforts at identifying the village have proved inconclusive. La Mancha is a region of central Spain south of the capital, Madrid. Return to reference 3
- Note 4: *Duelos y quebrantos* conveys mourning and lamentation. Likely a hash or bit and pieces of leftovers. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:Author of chivalric novels (16th century); the lines that follow are from his *Don Florisel de Niquea* . Return to reference 5

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- Note 6:Hero of an eponymous chivalric novel by Jerónimo Fernández (1545). Return to reference 6
- Note 7:Ironic, for Sigüenza was the seat of a minor and discredited university. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:Knight of Phoebus, or Knight of the Sun: heroes of chivalric novels customarily adopted emblematic names and also changed them according to circumstances. “Palmerin . . . Amadís”: each a hero of a very famous chivalric novel, as are those mentioned in the following paragraphs. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:El Cid (Arabic, “the lord”): Ruy Díaz de Vivar (c. 1043–1099), celebrated Spanish warlord and hero of *Poema del Cid* (12th century). Knight of the Flaming Sword: Amadís of Greece, in one of the many sequels to *Amadís of Gaul* . Return to reference 9
- Note 1:Bernardo del Carpio: mythical Spanish hero said to have defeated the French invaders at Roncevaux (778). Roland (or Orlando) was a military leader under the Frankish king Charlemagne; in legend he became the hero of many popular romances. The mythological Antaeus was invulnerable as long as he maintained contact with his mother, Earth. The hero Hercules killed him while holding him raised in his arms. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:In Pulci’s *Morgante Maggiore* (1483), a comic-epic poem of the Italian Renaissance. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Roland’s cousin in Boiardo’s *Roland in Love* (*Orlando Innamorato*) and Ariosto’s *Orlando Furioso*, romantic and comic-epic poems of the Italian Renaissance. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:An episode in one of the Spanish chivalric novels that take up thefigure of the knight Reinaldos and relate his adventures as a crusader, including as emperor of the Byzantine region of Trebizond. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:Alternative name for Ganelón, the villain in the Charlemagne legend who betrayed the French at Roncevaux. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:Was so much skin and bones (Latin, which Cervantes likely took from an epigram by Teofilo Folengo about Gonella, a legendary fool in the Renaissance court of Ferrara). Return to reference 6
- Note 7:The horse of Alexander the Great. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:In Spanish, *rocín* . The suffix *-ante* is comically taken from *antes* (Spanish, “before”). Return to reference 8
- Note 9:Ironic, in that a man of the protagonist’s class did not have the right to use the title “don.” *Quijote* in Spanish is a cuisse, the portion of armor that covers the thigh, and the ending *-ote* is often used to comic effect for something outsize. One of the meanings of La Mancha in Spanish is “the stain.” Return to reference 9
- Note 1:Dishonest women, in a Spanish loanword from the Italian. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Ironic pairing: *Dulcinea* is an idealizing name that recalls chivalric and pastoral conventions, but Toboso, like Montiel, is a little town in La Mancha. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Don Quixote describes the unremarkable dawn in La Mancha in the elaborate diction of both chivalric novels and Homeric epic, invoking the sun god Apollo. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:Don Quixote invokes a popular ballad about the harshness of a knight’s existence, which the host picks up on in his response. Return to reference 4

- Note 5:The Spanish *castellano* means both “castellan” and “Castilian” (i.e., a native of Castile, or, more generally, of Spain). Return to reference 5
- Note 6:See p. 416, n. 5. “Sanlúcar”: A location associated with criminality and those seeking to escape the authorities. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:Don Quixote substitutes his own name within a traditional Spanish ballad on the Arthurian knight Lancelot. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:Catholicism requires abstinence from meat on Fridays, in remembrance of Christ’s sacrifice on Good Friday. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:In favor of. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:All reputed to be haunts of robbers and rogues. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:A coin of small value. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:A serf or feudal tenant. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:Barbers were also surgeons. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:Martyr and saint who wasflayed to death. He was often depicted holding his own skin. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:Murcia, in the southeast of Spain, was the heart of silk production in the period. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:Ironic, because both were known as particularly backward regions. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:Hardwood spindles (implements for spinning wool) from this region were particularly prized. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:The allusion is to an old ballad about Charlemagne’s son Charlot (Carloto) wounding Baldwin (Valdovinos), nephew of the Marquis of Mantua. The narrator’s ironic comparison of this story to the miracles of Mohammed is itself undermined by the ballad’sfirm hold on its audience. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:Despite it being so familiar, Don Quixote gets this line wrong. The original reads “my lord and uncle by blood.” Return to reference 1
- Note 2:The reference is to *The Abencerraje*, the tale of the love of Abindarráez, a captive Moor, for the beautiful Jarifa, published in various versions in the 1560s. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Jorge de Montemayor’s *La Diana* (1559) was a pastoral best seller in the period. Later editions included *The Abencerraje* as an interpolated text. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:In a tradition originating in France, the Nine Worthies consisted of three biblical, three classical, and three Christianfigures (David, Hector, Alexander, Charlemagne, etc.). In French medieval epics, the Twelve Peers (Roland, Oliver, etc.) were warriors all equal in rank, forming a kind of guard of honor around Charlemagne. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:The thief whose release, rather than that of Jesus, the crowd requested when Pilate was ready to have one prisoner set free. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:I.e., Merlin. The niece cannot quite remember the characters she associates with her uncle’s condition. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:As she condemns the books, the niece invokes the act of publicly burning a heretic at the stake by the Spanish Inquisition. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:The original refers here to Urganda, with the pun *hurgada* (poked around, rummaged) as the niece mishears her name. Return to reference 8

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[Fighting the Windmills and a Choleric Biscayan]

CHAPTER VII

On the second foray of our good knight don Quixote of La Mancha

* * *

Don Quixote spentfifteen days calmly in his home, without showing any signs of wanting to second the experience of hisfirst dalliance. He passed the time in delightful discussions with his two compadres, the priest and the barber, telling them what the world needed most was knights-errant, and that he would be the one to revive errant chivalry. Sometimes the priest argued with him, and sometimes he conceded the point, for without such a stance, there was no dealing with don Quixote.

Over the course of those days, our knight also solicited the services of a neighbor of his, a peasant and a noble man (if that title can be given to a poor man), though not the sharpest tool in the shed. In short, don Quixote said so many things, promising and persuading him so much, that the poor villein agreed to join in his journey and serve as his squire.

Among other things, don Quixote told him he could ride forth in good spirits, for they just might come across an adventure that could lead them to win, in the blink of an eye, someínsula[9] or another, which he could rule over as governor. With these promises and others like them, Sancho Panza (for that was the peasant's name) left his wife and children and signed on to be his neighbor's squire. Don Quixote gave the order to raise some funds, and by selling this and pawning that, and hocking everything for a fraction of its worth, they managed to scrape up a reasonable sum.

Don Quixote also outfitted himself with a buckler shield he borrowed from a friend. Refurbishing his broken visor the best he could, he told his squire the day and time he planned to set out so Sancho could attend to any necessary arrangements. Above all, don Quixote entrusted him with the task of bringing saddlebags. Sancho said he'd bring some, and he'd bring a veryfine donkey to match, because he wasn't much one for walking. The donkey business gave don Quixote a bit of Full p. C-439 Shorter p. 1650 pause, as he wondered if he could recall ever hearing of a knight-errant with an asinine squire. None came to mind. Nevertheless, he decided to allow it, under the premise that they would outfit Sancho with a more honorable mount as soon as the occasion presented itself, by seizing the horse of thefirst discourteous knight they came across. Don Quixote provisioned himself with undershirts and everything else he couldfind, in accordance with the innkeeper's advice.

Once all that was arranged and attended to, without Panza saying goodbye to his children or his wife, nor don Quixote to his housekeeper or his niece, they set out one night without being seen. They rode so far through the night that by dawn they were sure nobody wouldfind them, even if somebody were to look. Sancho Panza was riding high on his donkey, feeling like a patriarch with his saddlebags and his wineskin, bursting with desire to see himself named governor of theínsula his master had promised. Don Quixote happened to follow the same route and road as hisfirst journey, winding his way through the countryside of Montiel, albeit somewhat less sorrowfully than before, for the morning sunrays shone at a gentler angle and did not beat down quite as hard. As they rode along, Sancho Panza said to his master:

“Look, your grace, señor knight-errant, don’t forget about thatínsula you promised me. I’ll know how to govern it, no matter how big it is.”

To which don Quixote replied:

“You should know, Sancho Panza, my friend, it was quite a common practice among the errant knights of yore to install their squires as governors of theínsulas or kingdoms they won along the way, and I am determined that such a gratifying custom shall not be lost on my account. Moreover, I plan to go even further, for those ancient knights sometimes—perhaps even most of the time—waited until their squires were old, and only after they were worn out from service, from bad days and worse nights, would the squires receive the title of Count, or at most, Marquis of some little valley or province or another. But if you live and I live, it could well be that before six days have passed, I will have won such a kingdom as will have other kingdoms attached to it, which would be perfect for crowning you king of one. Marvel not, for such occasions and situations present themselves to us knights, in ways that have never before been seen or imagined. So much so, that I could easily end up giving you even more than what I have promised.”

“If that happens,” replied Sancho Panza, “if by some miracle, I became king like your grace says, that would mean Juana Gutiérrez, my old lady, would be Queen, and my kids would be Infantes.”[1]

“Who could doubt it?” said don Quixote.

“Me, I doubt it,” said Sancho. “Because if you ask me, even if God rained kingdoms down on the Earth, no crown would sit right on Mari[2] Gutiérrez’s head. You should know, señor, she’d be no good as a Queen. Countess would suit her better, but even then she’d need God and plenty of help.”

“Leave it in the hands of God, Sancho,” responded don Quixote. “For He will give her what best suits her. But do not shrink your spirit such that you come to settle for less than conqueror.”

“I won’t, señor,” said Sancho. “Especially with such a principled master as your grace, who’ll know to give me just what suits me best, and nothing I can’t handle.”

Full p. C-440 Shorter p. 1651

CHAPTER VIII

On the excellent incident of don Quixote’s harrowing and unimaginable adventure with the windmills, along with other occurrences worthy of fond remembrance

As they were talking, they rode past some thirty or forty of the windmills that are so common in that part of the countryside. As soon as don Quixote saw them, he said to his squire:

“Fortune is guiding our affairs better than we could even have hoped! For over there, Sancho Panza, my friend, you will see there are thirty or more titanic giants, and I intend to do battle with and slay each and every one. We will begin to amass our fortune with the spoils we strip from them, for our war is righteous, and we do a great service to God by wiping such an evil race offthe face of the earth.”

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“What giants?” asked Sancho Panza.

“Those that you see over there,” replied his master, “with the long arms. Some giants are known to have arms that stretch almost two leagues in length.”

“Look, your grace,” responded Sancho. “Those things you see over there aren’t giants, they’re windmills. And the things that look like arms are the sails that move the millstone when they spin in the wind.”

“Clearly,” replied don Quixote, “you are poorly versed in adventures. Those are giants, and if you are afraid, stand back and pray while I ride forth to meet them infierce and unequalled combat!”

As he said this, he spurred his horse Rocinante and ignored Sancho’s shouts as he tried to warn his master that, beyond a shadow of a doubt, the things he was charging were not giants but windmills. Nevertheless, don Quixote was so set on them being giants, he closed his ears to Sancho’s shouts and didn’t bother to look, even when he was quite close, to see for himself what they were. Instead, he bellowed out:

“Flee not, you vile and cowardly creatures! For it is but a single knight who attacks you!”

Just then, the wind kicked up a bit and the massive sails began to move. Seeing this, don Quixote cried:

“You canflail more arms than the giant Briareos,[3] and still I shall make you pay!”

Shouting this, and entrusting himself wholeheartedly to his lady Dulcinea, whom he implored to favor him in this tribulation, he shielded himself with his round buckler, locked his lance into position, rallied Rocinante into a gallop, and charged the closest windmill. He stabbed it in the sail, which the wind whipped around with such fury that his lance snapped in half, sending both horse and knightflying. Don Quixote went rolling offa ways into thefield, bruised and battered. Sancho Panza went over to help, as fast as his ass could take him. When he got to his side, Sancho found don Quixote unable to move, for in their fall, Rocinante had nearly squashed him.

“¡Válame Dios!”[4] cried Sancho. “Didn’t I tell your grace to watch what you were doing? They’re nothing but windmills, and only somebody with windmills for brains could miss that!”

Full p. C-441 Shorter p. 1652

“Peace, Sancho my friend,” replied don Quixote. “For in war especially, things are always shifting. What’s more, I think—and so it is true—that sage Frestón who stole my books and my library must have turned these giants into windmills, to steal from me the glory of defeating them. Such is the enmity he bears me. But in the end, his evil arts shall be no match for the righteousness of my blade.”

“God willing,” replied Sancho Panza.

Sancho helped don Quixote up, and he climbed back onto Rocinante, whose saddle had slid significantly sideways. As they talked over their recent adventure, they got back on the road to Puerto Lápice, for don Quixote said they couldn’t help butfind many different adventures there, with so many people passing through. But still, he was quite gloomy over the loss of his lance. Turning to his squire, he said:

“I remember reading about a Spanish knight named Diego Pérez de Vargas who, having broken his sword in battle, ripped a heavy branch or trunk offan oak. With it, he performed such feats, mashing and mauling so many Moors that they added Machuca[5] to his name. From

that day forward, he and all his descendants were known as Vargas y Machuca. I have told you this because as soon as I see an oak or an elm, I plan to tear offanother trunk, exactly as excellent as I imagine Vargas y Machuca's was. And with it, I plan to perform such deeds that you will consider yourself fortunate indeed for being deemed worthy to see and witness such incredible feats as can barely be believed."

"With God's help," said Sancho. "I believe it'll all be just as you say, your grace. But straighten up a little, for it seems you're sliding halfway offyour horse, probably on account of your fall."

"That is true," responded don Quixote, "and if I do not complain of the pain, it is because knights-errant are not wont to complain of their wounds, even those which disgorge their very guts."

"If that's the case, I won't argue," replied Sancho. "But Lord knows I'd rather your grace complain when something's hurting. Me, I'm known to complain about even the slightest pain —assuming squires don't also have to follow the no-complaining rule."

Don Quixote burst out in laughter at the simplicity of his squire. He declared Sancho was welcome to complain whenever and however he wished—reluctantly or eagerly—as he'd never read of anything to the contrary in the order of chivalry. Sancho said it was time for lunch, and his master declined, saying that at the moment he had no need for food, but that Sancho should eat whenever he pleased. Permission granted, Sancho did his best to adapt to lunch on donkeyback; pulling out of the saddlebags what he'd put into them, he rode along behind his master, munching contentedly. Every so often, he took a swig from his wineskin with such gusto and evident delight that he could've drawn the envy even of Málaga's most refined palates.[6] Sancho rode along sipping on wine, without a care in the world, not even remembering the promises his master had made him, for it seemed to him it was less a job and more a vacation to ride offin search of adventures, however dangerous they might be.

Full p. C-442 Shorter p. 1653

And so, they spent the night in a grove of trees. Don Quixote tore down a dry branch that could almost serve as a lance and put the iron tip from the broken lance on the end of it. He stayed up all night thinking about his lady Dulcinea, just like he'd read about in his books, where many knights spent many a night sleepless in forests and emptyfields, wrapped up in memories of their lady loves.

Sancho Panza did not follow suit. He hadfilled his belly, and not with chicory tea, either, so he slept all night long. If his master hadn't woken him, he would've happily slept through thefirst rays of sun shining on his face and quite a plentiful number of birds tweeting with great exuberance as they greeted the new day. Getting up, Sancho gave the wineskin a squeeze and found it significantly less full than the night before, which hurt his heart, for it didn't seem likely that the road they were taking would lead somewhere he couldfill it back up anytime soon.

Don Quixote didn't want to eat breakfast, because, as mentioned earlier, he was set on nourishing himself with nothing but delicious memories. They got back on the road to Puerto Lápice, where they arrived around three in the afternoon.

"Here," said don Quixote, surveying the town, "Sancho Panza, my brother, we can plunge ourselves up to our elbows in this thing called adventure. But I caution you—even if you see me in the greatest danger in all the world, you are not to put a hand to your sword in my

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defense, unless you see that those who offend me are lowborn riffraff, in which case you can very well help me. But if they are knights, it is in no way permissible nor permitted by the laws of chivalry for you to help me, until you yourself are dubbed a knight."

"Of course, señor," replied Sancho. "I'll obey your grace completely. What's more, for my part, I'm a peaceable man. I'm opposed to getting myself into any arguments or brawls. Though it's plenty true that as far as protecting myself goes, I won't pay much attention to those laws, since the laws of God and man both say we're allowed to defend ourselves against anybody trying to hurt us."

"I do not disagree," replied don Quixote, "but as far as assisting me against knights, you must restrain your natural impulses."

"I said I would," responded Sancho. "I'll follow your decree as faithfully as rest on Sundays."

As they discussed this, two Benedictine monks came riding down the road on two camels—or at least, their mules were big enough to be camels—all wrapped up for the road, with traveling spectacles and sunshades. Behind them was a carriage accompanied by four orfive riders and two mule-boys on foot. Inside the carriage—as was later discovered—was a Basque lady traveling to Sevilla to meet her husband, who was setting sail for the Indies, having been appointed for a post of some distinction.[7] The monks were not with her, though they were traveling down the same road. As soon as don Quixote caught sight of them, he said to his squire:

"If I'm not mistaken, this shall be the most famous adventure ever seen, for those dark shapes over there seem to be—and so, without a doubt, are—some Full p. C-443 Shorter p. 1654 wizards, who have kidnapped the princess in that carriage. I must right this wrong with all my might!"

"This is going to be worse than the windmills," said Sancho. "Look, señor, those are Benedictine monks, and the carriage must belong to some other travelers. Look, I'm telling you, look carefully at what you're doing. You wouldn't want the Devil to fool you."

"I have already told you, Sancho," replied don Quixote, "how little you know on the subject of adventuring. What I say is true, as you soon shall see."

Saying this, he rode on ahead and positioned himself in the middle of the road, not far from the monks. Once he believed them to be within earshot, he shouted:

"Bedeviled and irregular people, release the highborn princesses you hold captive in that carriage at once! Otherwise, prepare yourselves for imminent death, as just punishment for your wicked deeds."

The monks pulled back on their reins, as astonished by don Quixote's appearance as by his words, to which they replied:

"Señor knight, we are neither bedeviled nor irregular, merely two holy men of San Benito traveling this road. We have no idea whether or not that carriage holds any captive princesses."

"Your mealy-mouthed words mean nothing to me, for I know who you truly are, faithless riffraff!" cried don Quixote.

And without waiting for a reply, he spurred Rocinante, lowered his lance, and charged at thefirst monk with such fury and daring that—if the monk hadn't slid offhis mule—he would've been knocked quite unpleasantly to the ground, or perhaps even gravely wounded, if

not struck dead. The second monk, seeing the treatment his companion received, gave a kick to his castle of a mule andfled into the countryside faster than the wind itself.

Seeing the monk on the ground, Sancho Panza hopped offhis ass, went over, and began to strip offhis habit. As he was pulling offthe monk's clothes, the two mule-boys came over and asked Sancho what exactly he thought he was doing, stripping their master down to his skivvies. Sancho told them the habit was rightfully his, as spoils of the battle his señor don Quixote had just won. The mule-boys—who had no head for jokes and didn't understand this business of spoils and battles—saw don Quixote had gone offto speak to the people in the carriage, so they lunged at Sancho and knocked him to the ground. They kicked him to a pulp and left him lying there without a hair left in his beard, knocked out and winded. Without missing a beat, the monk—who was terrified and timorous and pale in the face—got back atop his mule. As soon as he was in the saddle, he took offafter his companion, who was waiting for him a good way off, staying out of harm's reach until the danger passed. The second monk caught up to thefirst, and, with no desire to wait and watch the rest of the incident unfold, they took offimmediately, riding away and crossing themselves more than if the Devil himself were at their backs.

Don Quixote, as indicated earlier, was speaking with the lady of the carriage, saying:

"Señora, thy beauteousness is free to dispose of thy person in accordance with thy whim, for thine arrogant captors lie fallen on the ground, toppled by the strength of this, mine arm. Pine not to know the name of thy liberator, but know rather that I am don Quixote of La Mancha, knight-errant and Full p. C-444 Shorter p. 1655 adventurer, captive of the peerless and beautiful doña Dulcinea of Toboso. And, in payment for the beneficence I have bestowed on you, I ask nothing more than for you to return to Toboso and present yourself before that lady on my behalf and describe to her the great deeds by which I have secured thy liberty."

Don Quixote's every word was heard by one of the Basque squires accompanying the carriage. When he realized don Quixote intended to prevent the carriage from continuing along, wanting them instead to turn back towards Toboso, he approached the knight and, grabbing him by the lance, told him—in bad Spanish and even worse Basque[8] —the following:

"Go on, knight, you go wrong. By God my crater, if you don't pass carriage, so I be Basque, so you be dead!"

Don Quixote understood him perfectly, and he calmly replied:

"If you were a knight, which you are not, I would already have punished you for your idiocy and your impertinence, you captive creature."

To which the Basque replied:

"I not knight? I swear God, so I be Christian, so you lie! If lance you thrust and sword unsheathe, we see how quick cat take to water! Basque by birth, noble by sea, knight by Devil. Otherwise says liar!"

"We'll see about that, cried Agrajes!"[9] replied don Quixote.

And, throwing his lance to the ground, he unsheathed his sword, strapped on his shield, and charged the Basque, determined to take his life. The Basque, seeing him coming, would have preferred to dismount his mule, since it was one of those rented mules you can never trust, but there was no time to do anything other than draw his sword. As luck would have it, he happened to be right next to the carriage, so he reached in and grabbed a cushion to serve as his shield, and then the two of them went at each other like mortal enemies. Everyone else

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tried to stop them, but they could not, because the Basque declared in his tongue-twisted terms that if they didn't let himfinish his battle, he'd kill his mistress himself, along with anyone else who got in his way. The lady of the carriage, amazed and afraid of what she was seeing, had the coachman move the carriage a way off. From afar, she watched the two go through their rigorous bout, during which the Basque took such a mighty chop at one of don Quixote's shoulders that—had it not hit his shield—it would have sliced him open all the way to his waist. Don Quixote, feeling the force of that frenzied blow, began to shout at the top of his lungs:

"Oh lady of my soul, Dulcinea, blossom of beauteousness! Come to the aid of this thy knight, who—to satisfy you and win your favor—finds himself facing such demanding danger!"

He shouted this, grasped his sword, shielded himself with his buckler, and charged the Basque all at once, determined to bet it all on a single blow.

The Basque, seeing don Quixote charge him, understood his rage and thus his daring, and so he too went all in, shielding himself with his cushion, unable to move the mule who, exhausted and unimpressed with such childishness, refused to take a single step.

Full p. C-445 Shorter p. 1656

Well, as previously mentioned, don Quixote was charging at the wary Basque, sword raised over his head, determined to split him in half. And the Basque awaited him with his own sword raised, shielding himself with his cushion. And everyone watching was on edge, hanging on their every move, afraid of what would happen when those two terrible blowsfinally met. And the lady of the carriage and her handmaids were praying and making a thousand vows and promising offerings to every holy image and house of worship in all of Spain, if only God would save them and their squire from the great danger they were facing.

The trouble is, exactly at that point, after those very words, the author leaves the story of this battle hanging, apologizing that he could notfind any more written on the above-mentioned deeds of don Quixote. It is quite true that the second author[1] of this work didn't want to believe such a curious story could be lost to the ages, nor that the wits of La Mancha could be so incurious that—among their archives or piled on their desks—there wouldn't be at least a few pages dealing with this famous knight. And thus, imagining it so, he did not despair over being unable tofind the end of this mild-mannered story, which, since Heaven was on his side, found its way to him, as shall be described in the second part.

Second Part of the Ingenious Gentleman Don Quixote of La Mancha

CHAPTER IX

Which concludes and completes the tale of the stupendous battle between the brave Basque and the valiant Manchegan

Thefirst part of this story left offwith the valiant Basque and the legendary don Quixote staring each other down, their naked blades raised in the air, about to unleash upon each other two furious blows, which—had they landed full force—would have, at the very least, sliced each of them open and split them down the middle like pomegranates. And right at that moment, at

the height of suspense, this delectable story cut off, truncated, with no word from its author on where tofind the rest of it.

Thisfilled me with dismay, for my delight at beginning the story soon turned to disgruntlement as I thought of the hard road that lay ahead tofind the missing part of this toothsome tale. To me, it seemed impossible, and quite beyond the pale, to think such afine knight could have been bereft of some sage to take on the task of writing down his never-before-seen deeds. For no knight-errant,

> of the kind, as folks say,
>
> with adventures in mind,[2]

Full p. C-446 Shorter p. 1657

had ever been so deprived before. It was standard issue for each and every one of them to have at least one sage, if not two, not only to write down their deeds, but to detail their every thought and idiocy, no matter how carefully concealed. As such, our knight simply could not have been so misfortunate as to go without what Platir[3] and the rest had in spades. Thus, I could not bring myself to believe such a gallant story would truly be left like that, amputated and armless and maimed, and so I blamed the malevolence of time, devourer and digester of all things, which had either concealed the rest of don Quixote's history, or consumed it.

On the other hand, it seemed to me—since his library held such modern texts as *Jealous Disenchantments* and *Nymphs and Shepherds of Henares*[4] —that it must be fairly recent history, and even if it hadn't been written down, it would still live on in the memories of the people of his town and others nearby. I was stirred as I imagined this,filled with desire to really and truly know the entirety of the life and miracles of our famous Spaniard, don Quixote of La Mancha, that shining light, that mirror of Manchegan chivalry. For he was thefirst of our era—in these calamitous times—to dedicate himself to the role and profession of errant knighthood: righting wrongs, comforting widows, helping damsels—especially the kind riding wild on a palfrey, her whip and her virginity at her side, traveling from valley to valley and peak to peak. And unless some scoundrel, or some villain with a cap and an axe, or some colossal giant forces himself upon her, well, there have been damsels who have made it to eighty without spending a single night indoors and gone to the grave as intact as the mothers who bore them.

And so, what I mean to say is that in this and many other regards, our gallant don Quixote is worthy of continual and memorable praise, which you shouldn't deny me either, on account of my hard work and diligence in hunting down the end of this enjoyable story—though I am well aware that without the help of Heaven, Fortune, and circumstance, the world would have been bereft of the almost two hours of entertainment and amusement awaiting the careful reader.

And so, here is how it happened:

I was in the Alcanámarket in Toledo[5] one day when a boy came by, selling old papers to silkmakers. Since I love to read—even if it's torn-up pages on the street—I was spurred by my natural inclination to pick up one of the folios the boy was selling, and on it I saw a script I knew to be Arabic. Since I can recognize the language but I can't read it, I went around looking

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for a Morisco[6] who spoke Spanish and could read the Arabic script for to me. It was not hard tofind such an interpreter, for even if I'd been looking for help with a still older and better language,[7] I could have found it there. In short, luck led me to one, Full p. C-447 Shorter p. 1658 and once I told him my wishes and put the book in his hands, he opened it up at random, began reading, and burst out laughing.

I asked him what he was laughing at, and he told me it was an annotation in the margin of the book. I told him to read it to me, and, through his laughter, he said:

"Here, like I told you, in the annotation, it says, 'It is said that this Dulcinea of Toboso, so often referenced in the present history, cured pork better than any woman in La Mancha.'"[8]

When I heard "Dulcinea of Toboso," I was shaken and stirred, for I immediately realized those folios held the history of don Quixote. Imagining it so, I urged the Morisco to read to me from the beginning. He did as I asked, turning the Arabic to Spanish as he went. He told me it said: *History of Don Quixote of La Mancha, Written by Cide Hamete Benengeli, Arab Historian* .[9] It took a great deal of discretion on my part to hide my happiness when I heard the book's title. Before the silkmaker could get the chance, I bought up all the boy's papers and folios, for half a *real* . If the boy had been a bit sharper and known how much I wanted them, he could have done better for himself, because I would've spent six *reales* just to get my hands on them.

I drew the Morisco aside into the cloister of the main church and begged him to rewrite the papers—all of which were about don Quixote—in Spanish, without leaving anything out or putting anything in, telling him he could name his price. He was content with two *arrobas*[1] of raisins and two bushels of wheat, promising he would translate it all faithfully and quickly and very well. But I—as much to facilitate our agreement as to avoid letting such an excellentfind out of my hands—brought him to my house, where in just over a month and a half, he translated it all, exactly as it appears here.

Thefirst folio had a very realistic painting of the battle between don Quixote and the Basque facing off, just as the story describes, with their swords raised high, one shielding himself with his buckler and the other with his cushion. The Basque's mule was so lifelike, you could tell it was a rental from a stone's throw away. At the Basque's feet was an inscription which read "Don Sancho of Azpetia," which must surely have been his name, and at Rocinante's feet was another, reading "Don Quixote." Rocinante was marvelously rendered, so stretched out and saggy, so scrawny and thin, you could even see his spine right through his skin. He looked so consumptive, it was clear how properly and accurately he had been named Rocinante. Sancho Panza was next to him, holding his ass by the halter. At his feet was another inscription reading "Sancho Zancas." And I should say the illustration shows he was short, with a great big gut and long shanks, which explains why the story sometimes refers to him as Sancho Panza—or Sancho the Gut—and sometimes as Sancho Zancas—or, Sancho Shanks. There were a few other details worth noticing, but none very important or relevant to the truthful telling of this story, which—like all stories—cannot be bad, so long as it's true.

Full p. C-448 Shorter p. 1659

If any objection can be made as to the truth of this history, it could only be that its author was an Arab, as the people of that nation are quite prone to lying.[2] However, given that they are our sworn enemies, it stands to reason that its author would have been more likely to say too little, rather than too much. And so it seems to me that when opportunities arise to extend

his pen in praise of such afine knight, this historian passes over them in silence, seemingly on purpose. This is poorly done, and worse thought-out, for those who tell the tale of history should be precise, truthful, and utterly dispassionate, such that neither favor nor fear, rancor nor predilection twists their path away from the truth, whose mother is history, mirror of time, archive of all actions, witness to the past, role model and cautionary tale for the present, and forewarning for what's to come. In these pages, I know we shallfind everything we could wish for in thefinest of stories. And if something good is missing, what I would say is, blame it on the dog who wrote it, rather than ascribing any fault to its subject. And so, according to the translation, the second part begins like this:

Sharpened blades unsheathed and raised against the sky, the two valiant, enraged foes seemed to threaten Heaven, Earth, and the Abyss: such was their boldness and their bearing. And thefirst to loose a blow was the belligerent Basque, who slashed down with such strength and fury that—if his sword hadn't turned on the way downward—with that single blow, he could've put an end to the rigorous bout, and ended all our knight's adventures. But Fortune, who was saving don Quixote for greater things, twisted his foe's sword in the air, so that even though the blow landed on don Quixote's left shoulder, no harm befell him, beyond the left half of his armor falling off, along with most of his helmet and half his ear, all of which clanged frightfully to the ground, leaving him in very bad shape indeed.

¡Válame Dios! Who could possibly describe precisely the rage thatfilled our Manchegan's heart, seeing himself treated this way! Suffice it to say, he straightened himself in his stirrups, gripped his sword with both hands, and furiously slashed at the Basque, the blow landing squarely on his cushion and his head. The cushion wasn't much protection; it was as if a mountain had fallen atop him. He started bleeding from his nose and his mouth and his ears, swaying like he was about to fall offhis mule. And doubtless he would have, if he hadn't locked his arms around its neck. But with all that, the Basque's feet had slipped out of his stirrups, and he had to let go of the neck of the mule who, spooked by the terrifying blow, took offinto the countryside, managing, after just a few bucks, to dump his rider on the ground.

Don Quixote watched all of this quite calmly. Once he saw that his foe had fallen, he hopped offhis horse and bounded over to the Basque, putting the tip of his sword between the Basque's eyes and telling him to surrender, or else he would cut offhis head. The Basque was so perturbed, he could not speak a word, and things would've gone quite badly for him, given how blinded by rage don Quixote was, if the ladies of the carriage—who had been watching the bout with great dismay up to that point—had not gone over and begged don Full p. C-449 Shorter p. 1660 Quixote, desperately and earnestly, to do them the great mercy and favor of pardoning their squire and sparing his life. To which don Quixote replied, intoning gravely, with great gravitas:

"Of course, beauteous ladies, I am happy to do as you ask. But there must be one condition and commitment, which is that this knight must promise me he shall go to the village of Toboso and present himself on my behalf to the peerless doña Dulcinea, so she may dispose of him as per her whim."

The lady, frightened and distraught, without understanding what don Quixote was demanding, or bothering to ask who Dulcinea was, promised her squire would do exactly as instructed.

"Then with thy word as bond, I shall do him no further harm, despite what he deserves."

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CHAPTER X

On what further befell don Quixote with the Basque, and how he was put in peril by a posse of Yangüesans[3]

By that point, Sancho Panza was back on his feet, albeit a bit battered by the mule-boys. As he watched don Quixote's battle, he begged God from the bottom of his heart to send his lord victory and let him win anínsula to give to Sancho to govern, like he'd promised. Well, seeing the quarrel was over and his master was about to remount Rocinante, Sancho went over to hold his stirrup. Before don Quixote could mount up, Sancho knelt before his master. He grabbed his hand and kissed it as he said:

"My good señor don Quixote, may it serve your grace to make me governor of theínsula you have just won in this rigorous bout—however big it might be—for I believe I have what it takes to govern it, as much and as well as anybody else who's ever governed anínsula!"

To which don Quixote responded:

"Mark, brother Sancho, that this adventure and others like it are notínsula adventures, but crossroads adventures, in which nothing is won beyond a broken head, or an absent ear. Have patience. Adventures shall present themselves to us that will allow me not only to make you a governor, but to advance your station even further."

Sancho thanked him profusely, bending down again to kiss don Quixote's hand and the hem of his chainmail. He helped him up onto Rocinante, then climbed atop his ass and followed along after his master, who took offlike a shot into the forest lining the road, without bothering to say goodbye or anything else to the ladies in the carriage. Sancho followed behind him at his donkey's fastest trot, but Rocinante was so much faster that Sancho fell behind and had to call to his master to wait. Don Quixote did so, pulling back on Rocinante's reins until his tired squire could catch up. As soon as he did, Sancho said:

"Seems to me, señor, it'd be a good idea for us to hole up and take refuge in a church. Because the man you battled ended up so battered, it wouldn't take much Full p. C-450 Shorter p. 1661 for the Holy Brotherhood[4] to catch word and come after us. And if they do, by my faith, we'll be sweating through our beards before we make it out of jail."

"Peace," said don Quixote, "for when have you ever seen or read of a knight-errant being brought to justice, no matter how many times he committed homicide?"

"Harm aside?[5] I wouldn't know," replied Sancho. "Never seen that in my life. But I do know the Holy Brotherhood arrests anybody caughtfighting in the countryside. As far as setting harm aside, that's no business of mine."

"Fear not, friend," replied don Quixote, "for I shall save you from the very hands of Babylon, let alone the Brotherhood. But on your life, tell me: have you ever seen a knight as valiant as I, in all the discovered world? Have you ever read, in any of the histories, of another with such boldness and daring, such long-winded perseverance, such skill in causing injury, such talent for triumph?"

"Truthfully," responded Sancho, "I've never read a single history, because I don't know how to read or write. But I'd go so far as to bet I've never served a master bolder than your grace in all the days of my life, and God grant we don't end up paying for that boldness like I said. But I

beg you, your grace, at least tend to your ear. It's bleeding a lot. I have bandages and a bit of healing salve in the saddlebags."

"We wouldn't need any of that," replied don Quixote, "if I could remember how to craft aflask of the balm of Fierabrás.[6] For with no more than a drop, we'd save ourselves both time and medicine."

"Whatflask and what balm is that?" asked Sancho Panza.

"It is a balm," replied don Quixote, "whose recipe resides in my memory. With it, one need have no fear of death, nor worry over wounds. Thus, once I've concocted it and entrusted it to you, if you see in battle that I've been chopped in half—as often occurs—all you must do is gently pick up the section of me that's fallen to the ground, and place it—swiftly, before the blood begins to set—atop the half still in the saddle, making sure to line everything up correctly and settle everything evenly. Then you have only to bring the balm I described to my lips and tip in two swallows. You shall see how it restores me, leaving mefit as afiddle once more."

"If that exists," said Panza, "I'll give up governing theínsula you promised right here and now, and all I want in payment for my extensive and excellent service is for your grace to give me the recipe for that exceptional potion. Because if you ask me, an ounce would be worth more than two *reales* anywhere you please, and that's all I need to live a life of honor and ease. Though now I need to know how much it costs to make it."

"It costs less than three *reales* to concoct three *azumbres*[7] of balm," replied don Quixote.

"Sinner that I am!" cried Sancho. "Well, what is your grace waiting for? Go on and concoct it and show me how!"

"Quiet, friend," replied don Quixote. "For I plan to show you even greater secrets than this and bestow upon you even greater mercies. As for now, let's tend to my ear, for it is more painful than I would prefer."

Full p. C-451 Shorter p. 1662

Sancho pulled the bandages and salve out of the saddlebags. But when don Quixote noticed his headpiece had broken, he thought about losing his mind. With one hand on the hilt of his sword, he raised his eyes to the skies, shouting:

"I vow before the Creator of All Things, and the Four Holy Gospels, and all described therein that I shall do as the great Marquis of Mantua did when he swore to avenge his nephew Valdovinos, vowing to forgo breaking bread at tables set withfine linens, and dallying with his woman, and other things which I do not recall but hereby consider enumerated, until I take full vengeance upon he who did commit this crime unto my person!"

Hearing this, Sancho said:

"Look, your grace, señor don Quixote, if that knight obeyed your command and went and presented himself before my lady Dulcinea of Toboso, he'll have served his sentence. He doesn't deserve another punishment unless he commits another crime."

"You have spoken well and your point is good," replied don Quixote. "And thus, I hereby annul my vow insofar as the taking of new vengeance. But I still recommit to and confirm my vow to live as I have said until an opportunity arrives to forcibly seize another helmet of the same style and caliber from some passing knight. And do not think, Sancho, I am being hasty

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or burning hay in this, for I have afine example to imitate. The very same thing occurred, to the letter, with the Helm of Mambrino, for which Sacripante paid so dearly."[8]

"To Hell with those vows, señor your grace," replied Sancho. "They're terrible for your health and toxic for your conscience. Or else tell me: what happens if we don't see anyone wearing armor and a headpiece? Then what do we do? We'd still have to follow the vow and keep doing all those inconvenient, uncomfortable things, like sleeping with our clothes on, and never spending the night in a town, and the thousand other kinds of penance in that crazy old Marquis of Mantua's vow, that your grace wants to recommit to now! Look, your grace. Men in armor don't travel these roads—just mule-drivers and merchants with carts, who not only don't wear headpieces, they've probably never heard of a headpiece in their whole lives!"

"You are mistaken," said don Quixote. "For before two hours pass us at these crossroads, more armed men will go by than all who charged the Albraca to conquer Angelica the Beautiful."[9]

"All right,fine. It'll be like you say," said Sancho. "God grant things start going well for us. Let's hurry up and win thisínsula I'm paying for so dearly, and then I can die."

"I have told you, Sancho, not to worry about that. For even should we not acquire anínsula, there remain the kingdoms of Denmark and Sobradisa, which wouldfit like a ring on yourfinger. Moreover, they should please you even more than theínsula, for they are on terrafirma.[1] But let us set this aside for now. Investigate the saddlebags to see if there is anything to eat, so we may swiftly begin our search for a castle wherein to spend the night and concoct the balm I mentioned, for I swear here before you and God, my ear is hurting quite a lot."

Full p. C-452 Shorter p. 1663

"I've got an onion in here, plus a hunk of cheese and I-don't-know-how-many crusts of bread," said Sancho, "but they're not the delicacies a valiant knight like your grace deserves."

"How little you understand chivalry!" replied don Quixote. "I'll have you know, Sancho, it is a point of honor for knights-errant to go an entire month without eating anything at all, and when they do eat, it's merely what they have at hand. And you would know this to be true if you had read as many histories as I. Furthermore, in the very many I have read, there has not been a single description of a knight-errant eating in any, except for the occasional sumptuous banquet thrown in their honor. The rest of the time they lived offthin air. And although we understand they could not fully refrain from eating and all the other bodily necessities—for, in effect, they were men, like us—we also understand they spent most of their lives in dense forests or desertedfields, and they didn't bring cooks with them. Thus, their most frequent food would have been rustic viands, such as the ones you offer me now. Therefore Sancho, my friend, be not vexed with worry over what I prefer: for you should not seek to make the world anew, nor knock the order of errant chivalry offits hinges."

"Forgive me, your grace," said Sancho. "Since I don't know how to read or write, like I told you before, I've never heard or learned the rules for the profession of chivalry. From here on out, I'll be sure to stock the saddlebags with all kinds of dried fruits and nuts for your grace, since you're a knight. And for me, since I'm not, I'll get morefine-feathered,filling food."

"I am not saying, Sancho," replied don Quixote, "that knights-errant were *required* to subsist solely on fruits and nuts, as you say, but rather that their most frequent sustenance must have

been such, along with certain herbs and greens that they were—and I am—familiar with, which they foraged from thefields."

"Good thing," said Sancho, "your grace knows those herbs and greens. The way we're going, one of these days I imagine we'll be needing them."

As he spoke, he pulled what he'd mentioned out of the saddlebags, and the two of them ate peacefully in good company. Wanting to start searching for somewhere to spend the night, theyfinished up their poor, dry meal quickly, then mounted up and hurried off, hoping tofind a town before nightfall. But just as the last rays of sun—and their hopes of reaching their goal—were slipping away, they came upon the huts of some goatherds and decided to spend the night there. Sancho's sorrow at not reaching town was as vast as his master's pleasure at sleeping under the open sky, for it seemed to don Quixote that each time he did so, he staked a further claim in proof of his chivalry.

Footnotes

- Note 9:An archaic word for *isla* (island), often appearing in chivalric novels and reflecting the period's fascination with islands, as Europeans encountered new lands and peoples. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:Title given to the children of Iberian monarchs. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Sancho's wife gets various names over the course of the novel. Here, she is Juana and Mari on the same page; in Part II she is Teresa. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:In Greek mythology, a giant with a hundred arms. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:God help me! (Spanish). Return to reference 4
- Note 5:"The Crusher," the hero of a folk ballad. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:Wines from Málaga, on Spain's southern coast, were highly regarded. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:"Basque": from the Basque Country, a region of northern Spain and southwestern France, known for itsfierce pride. "The Indies": the Americas. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:Castilian is the language of Castile; Biscayan is the Basque language. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:A violent character in the romance *Amadís de Gaula* . His challenging phrase is the conventional opener of afight. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:"The second author" is Cervantes'first narrator, adopting here—with tongue in cheek—a device used in the romances of chivalry to create suspense. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:These lines may have been part of a popular ballad, and appear in a Spanish translation of Petrarch's *Triumphs*, where they describe the knights of King Arthur's court. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Hero of a popular romance possibly by Francisco de Enciso Zárate, published in 1533. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:Pastoral novels by Cervantes' contemporaries, published in the 1580s. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:Though Cervantes invokes the market, Toledo was famed for its school of translation, where, beginning in the 12th century, Arabic, Hebrew, and Greek texts were translated into Latin and Spanish, jump-starting the recovery of ancient knowledge in Europe. Return to reference 5

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- Note 6:Term applied to forcibly converted Muslims and their descendants in 16th-century Spain. The Spanish reads "*morisco aljamiado*," which could mean either that he spoke Spanish, or that he used *aljamiado*, the Spanish written in Arabic characters that many Moriscos turned to in the period, often to circulate forbidden texts. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:I.e., Hebrew, associated here with the merchants in the Alcaná, although there were officially no Jews in Spain after the mass expulsion and forced conversions of 1492. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:The Morisco laughs at the comment on salting pork, considered unclean by Jews and Muslims. In a passage full of irony about the enduring religious diversity of Spain, the joke could lie in attributing a Jewish or Muslim origin to Dulcinea. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:Citing some ancient chronicle as the author's source and authority is very much in the tradition of the chivalric novels. "Cide": Lord (Arabic); "Benengeli": eggplant (Arabic). Return to reference 9
- Note 1:"Two arrobas": three bushels. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Cervantes voices what would have been a common prejudice in the Spain of his time, only to ironize it in what follows: had the Arab historian distorted the story, it would have been by leaving out Don Quixote's greatest deeds. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:This chapter heading may reflect Cervantes' last-minute changes to his text. The adventure with the Basque is over, and the Yangüensans (natives of the town of Yanguas) don't appear until later in the text. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:A tribunal instituted by Ferdinand and Isabella at the end of the 15th century to punish highway robbers. "Take refuge in a church": churches offered sanctuary for those wanted by the law. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:In Spanish, a wordplay on *homicidios* (homicides) / *omecillos* (grudges). Return to reference 5
- Note 6:A giant Saracen healer in the medieval epics of the Twelve Peers. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:An *azumbre* is a measure for liquids, about two quarts. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:The enchanted helmet of Mambrino, a Moorish king, is stolen by Dardinel (not Sacripante, as Don Quixote mistakenly recalls) in Boiardo's *Roland in Love* . Return to reference 8
- Note 9:Another allusion to *Roland in Love* . Return to reference 9
- Note 1:"Terrafirma": solid earth (Latin), here referring to the Firm Island, a legendaryfinal destination for the squires of knights-errant. "Sobradisa": an imaginary realm. Return to reference 1

[Of Goatherds, Roaming Shepherdesses, and Unrequited Loves]

CHAPTER XI

On what occurred when don Quixote was with the goatherds

The goatherds happily welcomed them, and once Sancho had settled in his donkey and Rocinante the best he could, he followed the scent of goat stew to the pot where certain choice cuts were bubbling over afire. Although Sancho Full p. C-453 Shorter p. 1664 wanted to taste it immediately—to see if it ready for the journey out of the pot and into his stomach—he refrained, for the goatherds were in the process of pulling the pot offthefire. They hurriedly unrolled some sheepskins and laid out their rustic spread and, with displays of goodwill all around, invited Sancho and don Quixote to join in their meal. Six goatherds sat on sheepskins at their feet, after begging don Quixote with crude ceremony to sit upon an upturned trough they dragged over. He sat. Sancho kept standing in order to pour himself some wine, which was being served in a hollowed-out horn. Seeing Sancho on his feet, his master said:

"So that you may see, Sancho, the good of errant chivalry, and how those who engage in the profession in any capacity are within arms' reach of quickly rising in station to be honored and held in high esteem by all, I wish you to sit here beside me, in front of these good people. I want you to be seated at my same level, as one with me, your master and natural lord—eat from my plate, drink from my cup. For the same can be said of errant chivalry as is said of love: It makes us all equal."

"That's very generous of you," said Sancho. "But I'll tell your grace, when I've got something good to eat, it tastes just as good—if not better—if I eat it alone on my feet as seated next to an emperor. Plus, truth be told, when I dine in my own little corner, without any fuss or formality, even if all I've got is bread and onions, it still tastes better than roast turkey served at a table where I have to chew slowly, and not drink too much, and wipe offmy face with my napkin every second, and you can't cough or sneeze or do any of the other things you're free to do on your own. And so, señor, please take this honor your grace wants to give me for engaging in the profession of errant chivalry as your grace's squire, and turn it into something I'd be more comfortable with, that I'd like better. Because, although I appreciate the gesture, I hereby renounce the honor you've offered me, from here to kingdom come."

"Even so, you have to sit, for God lifts those who sit down,"[2] and, grabbing Sancho by the arm, don Quixote forced him to share the seat.

The goatherds didn't understand all the talk about squires and knights-errant, so they just ate their food and silently watched their guests, who, with great aplomb and eagerness, wolfed down chunks of lamb the size of afist. After the meat course, they spread a great quantity of sweet acorns over the hides, along with half a wheel of cheese, which couldn't have been any harder if it'd been made out of mortar. And with all that, the winehorn did not sit idly by. Instead it made its way around the circle like a waterwheel—sometimes full, sometimes empty—so many times that they easily polished offone of the goatherds' two wineskins. Once don

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Quixote had satisfied his stomach, he plucked up a handful of acorns and, examining them carefully, letfly the following words:

"Happy the age and happy the era the Ancients called Golden. Not because in that fortunate era, gold—so esteemed in our Iron Age—could be plucked in that blessed time with little labor, but because those living in said span of time were unaware of those two little words: *yours* and *mine.* In that blessed era, everything belonged to everyone. To obtain daily sustenance, one needed do no more than reach out a hand to the robust oaks, which so freely bestowed their Shorter p. 1665 sweet and toothsome nut. Clear springs and running rivers, in magnificent Full p. C-454 abundance, offered up delectable, crystalline waters. Between mountain peaks, and in the hollows of trees, thrived republics of clever and solicitous bees, selflessly extending to any hand the fecund harvest of their sweet labor. The valiant cork trees, out of nothing but their own courtesy, tendered their broad, light bark to be used to put roofs atop rustic posts, which was all that was needed as protection from the sky's inclemency. In those days, everything was still peace, friendship, and harmony. The plow's heavy hook had not yet dared drag furrows through our piousfirst mother, tearing through her guts. Instead, she offered freely—all across her fertile and spacious bosom—everything the children who stewarded her in those days could possibly need to be satisfied, sustained, and delighted. In that era, lovely, simple young shepherdesses could truly wander freely from valley to valley and hill to rolling hill, with their hair braided up orflying free, wearing only enough clothing to honestly cover what modesty wishes and has always wished to conceal. Nor did they bedeck themselves with the fabrics so treasured in our times, martyring yards of silk or bolts of Phoenician purple from Tyre.[3] No, they dressed themselves in verdant burdock leaves stitched together with ivy, and in such garments, they were as opulent and refined as the courtesans of our times, with all the strange and bizarre inventions that idle curiosity has wrought. Back then, the soul's amorous conceits dressed simply, in the very manner and fashion they were conceived, without resorting to wordy artifice to land more sweetly. Fraud did not exist then. Malice and deception had yet to taint sincerity and truth. Justice was served on her own terms; those with vested interests did not then dare hinder or corrupt her. Not like now, when she is plagued by those who would thwart, obstruct, and pervert her. Incarceration had not even glimmered in a judge's imagination, for there was no one to judge, or be judged. Damsels and their virginity wandered, as I have said, wherever they pleased, lone and alone, with no need to fear the entitlement and lecherous intent of men. And if they did fall, it was because they chose to do so, for their own enjoyment and of their own free will.

"Unlike now. In these, our detestable centuries, no woman is safe, not even if she is cloistered offand walled into a new Cretan Labyrinth.[4] For even there, the damnable doggedness of wooing men makes its way in through a crack in the wall or riding on the air itself, and infects her with that amorous pestilence, and all her seclusion is useless. It is for her safety, as times have gone by and malice grown thick, that the order of knights-errant was founded: to defend damsels, assist widows, and comfort orphans and the needy. I belong to this order, O goatherds, my brothers, and I thank you for the warm reception you have given to me and my squire. For although it is natural law that everyone alive is required to perform favors for knights-errant, knowing that you, without even knowing this requirement, still welcomed and indulged me, is reason enough for me, from the depths of my heart, to offer my appreciation for yours."

Full p. C-455 Shorter p. 1666

This whole long harangue (which could very well have been left out) was set offbecause the acorns reminded our knight of the Golden Age, and he felt the urge to share his useless musings and reasoning with the goatherds, who didn't say a word, spellbound and astonished as they listened to him speak. Sancho didn't say anything either. He just munched on acorns and made frequent trips to visit the second wineskin, which was hanging from a cork tree to let the wine cool.

It took longer for don Quixote tofinish talking than for everyone else tofinish dinner. Once he did, one of the goatherds said:

"Señor knight-errant, to give your grace even more reason to say we welcomed you with open arms, we'd like to share with you the pleasure of hearing a companion of ours sing a few songs. He'll be here soon. He's a shepherd, and he's as full of learning as he is of love. More than anything, he knows how to read and write, and he can strum the rebec[5] as nice as you please."

As soon as the goatherd said this, the sound of a rebec reached them, followed closely by the one strumming it. He was quite a good-looking young man of twenty-two or so. After his companions asked if he'd eaten and he told them he had, the one who'd made the offer earlier said:

"In that case, Antonio, would you do us the pleasure of singing a bit, so our señor guest can see how even out here in the wilds and the wilderness, there are still folks who know about music? We've been bragging about you, so show offyour skills and prove us right. I beg you on your life, sit down and sing that love ballad your uncle the vicar composed for you, the one that's the talk of the town."

"My pleasure," replied the shepherd.

And, without making them beg him further, he sat down on the trunk of a fallen oak and, after a moment or two tuning his rebec, he began to sing—with grace and charm—the following:

A NTONIO

You adore me, Olalla, I know it's true.
Although you've never said you do,
not even with a wordless look,
for eyes are tongues to lovers, too.
But you're coy and clever, so I know,
and I affirm you love me so,
for once a love dare speak its name,
it never can be put to shame.
And sure, Olalla, you've revealed
your bosom's carved from marble crags,
your soul's as hard as bronze or steel.
But in between your reproaches,
rejections, and rebukes,
is that the skirt of Hope herself
playing peekaboo?
Praise the decoy, and the lure.

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My faith is steady; it endures.
Doesn't shrivel when you don't respond;
never swells up from being chosen.
If love is truly courtesy,

Full p. C-456 Shorter p. 1667

from what I've inferred yours to be,
my hopes' fruition
will quite likely be just as I imagine.
And if you need some acts of service
to urge your bosom toward benevolence,
There are so many things I've done
that ought to count as evidence.
Think about it.
More than once,
you've seen me on a Monday
sporting Sunday elegance.
Since love and style
go hand in hand,
whenever I was in your view,
I made sure I looked really grand,
sharp and polished, just for you.
I won't mention the dances I've done for you,
nor the songs I've sung for you,
that tickled your ears all night long
till the roosters woke to greet the dawn.
I won't say how I praise you widely,
celebrating your great beauty,
for even though I'm speaking truly,
these comments bring me ill repute. See,
Teresa of Berrocal heard me one day
when I passed by singing your praises.
Maybe she was jealous, either way she japed:
'This guy thinks he's in love with an angel,
when he's really in love with an ape!
Between her jewelry,
her wigs and weaves,
hypocrisy and made-up beauty,
she's managed to fool even Love himself
out of seeing her truly!'
I called out her lie.
She got mad, and her cousin came by.
He challenged me to a duel. And you know what he did,
and what I did too.
I don't want you any which way,
I'm not wooing and pursuing you
just for us to go shack up, the way that certain people do.

No, Olalla, you willfind
I've got nobler things in mind.
For the Church can harness us together
with silken ties instead of leather.
So bow your neck to the plow yoke's hollow,
And you'llfind out how fast I follow.
Otherwise, I swear right now
By the holiest of saints on high:
I'll never leave these mountains,
Unless I become a friar.

Full p. C-457 Shorter p. 1668

And that was the end of the goatherd's ballad. Don Quixote begged him to sing some more, but Sancho wouldn't allow it, because it was time for sleeping, not for listening to songs. And so he told his master:

"Go on and pick out a place to bed down for the night, now, your grace. These good men work hard all day, and they can't stay up all night singing."

"I understand, Sancho," replied don Quixote. "Your frequent visitations of the wine skin have clearly given you more of a yen for sleep than for music."

"Wine tastes good to everybody, thank God," responded Sancho.

"I won't deny it," replied don Quixote. "You go on and bed down where you please, for it is more seemly for those of my profession to spend the night in vigil than sleep. But even so, it would be good, Sancho, if you would tend to my ear again, for it is hurting me more than is strictly necessary."

Sancho did as he was told. Seeing don Quixote's wound, one of the goatherds told him not to worry, for he'd give him a remedy that would heal it up nice and quick. He gathered some branches from the many rosemary bushes growing there, chewed the leaves into a paste, and mixed in a bit of salt. Then the goatherd applied this mixture to don Quixote's ear, bandaged him back up, and assured him he wouldn't need any other medicine, and that was the truth.

CHAPTER XII

On what one goatherd told don Quixote and the rest

In the midst of all this, another lad arrived with supplies from the village, saying:

"Do you know what's happening in town, compañeros?"

"How could we?" one replied.

"Well, let me tell you," the young man went on. "You know that legendary scholar-shepherd called Grisóstomo? This morning, they found him dead. Rumor has it he died of a broken heart, on account of that devilish girl Marcela, daughter of Guillermo the Rich—the one who wanders around the wilderness dressed like a shepherdess."

"On account of Marcela, you say," said one.

"On account of her, I say," the goatherd replied. "It gets better: he left instructions in his will to bury him out in the open, like a Moor,[6] at the foot of the mountain crag, near the spring

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where the cork tree grows. According to legend—by which I mean, according to what people say he said—that's where hefirst saw her. And he left other instructions, too, which the village abbots say shouldn't be followed. They said it's not right to do things that smack so much of paganism.

"But his dear friend Ambrosio the scholar, who used to dress up like a shepherd along with him, says it all has to be carried out to the letter, just as Grisóstomo instructed. The whole town's in a tizzy over it. But word is Ambrosio and his shepherd friends will end up getting what they want, so tomorrow they're going to bury him, with plenty of pomp and ceremony, over there where I said. If you ask me, it's really going to be something to see. I definitely won't be missing it, even though I had been planning on heading back to the village tomorrow."

Full p. C-458 Shorter p. 1669

"Same goes for all of us," replied the goatherd. "We'll pull lots to see who has to stay behind to watch everybody's goats."

"That's a good idea, Pedro," said one, "but there's no need. I'll stay behind so everyone else can go. And don't go chalking it up to my virtuousness or accusing me of being incurious—it's just that I tripped over a root the other day, and now I can barely walk on this foot."

"Even so, we appreciate it," replied Pedro.

Don Quixote begged Pedro to tell him who this dead man and this shepherdess were. Pedro said all he knew was the dead man had been a rich gentleman, from a neighboring village in these same mountains, who'd spent some years studying at Salamanca.[7] When he came back, everybody thought him very wise and well-educated.

"The main thing he knew about, they say, was the science of the stars, and everything that happens up there in the sky, with the sun and the moon, because he'd tell us exactly when there were going to be any clips."

"It is called an *eclipse*, my friend, not a *clips*, when those two major luminaries grow dark," said don Quixote.

Pedro, paying no attention to this childishness, went on with his story, saying:

"And he could predict if it would be an abundant year for the harvest, or a still one."

"You mean *sterile*, my friend," said don Quixote.

"Still or sterile," said Pedro, "same thing. And I'll tell you, folks say he made his father very rich, and his father's friends, too—the ones who listened to him and followed his advice. He'd tell them things like, "Plant barley instead of wheat this year; next year it should be garbanzos instead of barley, and next year will bring a bumper crop of oil olives, but the three years after that won't yield a drop."

"*Astrology* is the name of that science," said don Quixote.

"I don't know its name," replied Pedro. "But that's what he knew, and more, too. Anyways, just a few months after he came back from Salamanca, one day out of nowhere, he starts dressing up like a shepherd, with a lambskin vest and a shepherd's crook and everything, casting aside his long scholar's robes. And Ambrosio—his dear friend, who'd studied with him in Salamanca—started dressing up as a shepherd right along with him. Oh, I forgot to mention that Grisóstomo, the deceased, had a real knack for writing rhymes. He was so good at it, they had him write all the carols for Christmas Eve. He even wrote the plays for Corpus Christi, and the other boys in town would act them out.[8] Everybody said he just nailed them.

“When folks in town saw these two scholars dressing up as shepherds all of a sudden, they were shocked. People couldn’t imagine what had moved them to make such a strange change. By then, Grisóstomo’s father had already died, and he’d inherited a very sizeable estate, in the form of goods, land, and quite a lot of livestock—greater and lesser—plus a large sum of money. The lad was lord of all of that, beholden to no one, and in truth, he deserved it, because he was good company, and charitable, and a friend to all good folks, plus, he had Full p. C-459 a face like a Shorter p. 1670 morning miracle. Later, we found out the costume change had been all about wandering through the wilderness in pursuit of that shepherdess Marcela, who our boy here mentioned, the object of poor, dead Grisóstomo’s love. And now I’d like to tell you—because you ought to know—who this girl is. Because it’s possible, more than possible, that you’ll never hear anything like this in all the days of your life, not even if you live longer than manyfists offleas.”

“It’s Mephistopheles,”[9] interjected don Quixote, unable to bear the goatherd bungling the saying.

“Afistful offleas lives a real long time,” replied Pedro. “What’s more, señor, if you keep harping on how I talk, a year’ll go by before we get through the plot.”

“Forgive me, my friend,” said don Quixote. “It’s only because *Mephistopheles* differs so much from *many fists of fleas* that I mentioned it. But you are quite right in your reply, for sufficient quantities offleas may outlive even Mephistopheles. Therefore proceed with your story, and I shall speak no more.”

“Well, as I was saying, señor of my soul,” the goatherd said, “in our village lived a farmer who was even richer than Grisóstomo’s father. His name was Guillermo, and God had blessed him with great wealth and a daughter. The girl’s mother, who died in childbirth, was the most honorable woman you couldfind around these parts. I can almost see her now. She had a face like heaven: one side was the moon, and the other the sun itself. Above all, she was hard-working and a friend to the poor, which is why I believe her spirit must be enjoying God’s company now in the Great Beyond.

“Her husband Guillermo couldn’t bear the death of such a good woman, so he died of sorrow, leaving his daughter Marcela—who was very young and very rich—in the care of an uncle of hers—a priest, the vicar of our town.

“The girl grew to be a striking beauty. She reminded us of her mother, who’d been stunning. Folks judged she was likely to become even more beautiful than her mother when she grew up. And so she did. By the time she was fourteen orfifteen, there wasn’t a man alive who could look at her without blessing God for His handiwork in crafting such a lovely creature. Most fell in love with her or fell apart over her. Her uncle guarded her under a watchful eye and kept her locked tightly away. But even so, the legend of her beauty—and her wealth—spread far and wide, beyond just the men of our town, to all the men of all the surrounding towns for leagues around. The best of them begged, wooed, and importuned her uncle to give her to them, each wanting her to be his own. But even though her uncle, who was a truly good Christian, would’ve rather married her offas soon as he thought her old enough, he didn’t want to do so without her consent. Her wealth, and the perks of managing the girl’s estate until she was married—perks that would be prolonged by putting offher wedding—didn’t even enter into his calculations. By my faith, I’ve heard more than one huddle of gossips humming that tune, all in praise of the good priest, of course. I want you to know, señor errant, that in far-flung parts such as these, everybody knows everything and everybody whispers about

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everyone else. And so you might say, as I do, that it takes a veryfine priest indeed to get his parishioners to speak well of him, especially in little towns like these."

Full p. C-460

"That's quite true," said don Quixote. "Proceed with the story, for it is very good, and you, my good Pedro, tell it with grace and charm."

Shorter p. 1671

"I've got the grace of God, and that's what counts. As for the rest, all you need to know is that although the uncle offered each suitor to his niece, describing the qualities of each and every one of the many men who came asking for her hand, and although he begged her to pick any one she liked and get married, she always said the same thing: that she still felt too young be married, that she was still too much of a little girl to be able to bear the burden of matrimony. Since the excuse she gave seemed fair, her uncle stopped urging her to wed, deciding to wait until she was old enough to choose someone to her liking.

"For, he said—and he spoke truly—parents shouldn't give their children away in marriage against their will. But here's the thing: one day, when we least expected it, prim and proper Marcela shows up transformed into a shepherdess. And, paying no heed to her uncle or to all the townsfolk who tried to dissuade her, she set out for thefields with the other local girls and started herding her own livestock. And ever since shefirst went out in public like that, with her beauty all out in the open, I can't tell you how many rich youngsters—noblemen and farmers both—have donned the same outfit Grisóstomo did to follow after her, full offlattery, all across thesefields. Our dearly departed was one. They say he'd stopped loving her and started worshipping her.

"And don't go thinking that just because Marcela claimed her freedom and chose to live uncloistered and unleashed, that means she lost her honesty and her modesty, for there's no sign of that—far from it. She guards her honor with constant vigilance. No matter how many men have come proposing and offering her their services, she's never given any of them cause to believe—since the truth is, that belief would be wrong—that they had any hope of acquiring the object of their desires.

"Because though she doesn't run from the shepherds, or shun their company or conversation, and she's polite and friendly to everybody, as soon as one of them reveals his intentions—even if he intends something holy and just like matrimony—sheflies away from him faster than a catapult.

"And so, by living this way she's caused more damage in these lands than the plague, because her politeness and her looks draw in the hearts of the men who want to serve and love her, until her rejection and their disappointment drive them beyond despair. They end up in such a state, they don't know what to say to her. So they shout at her, telling her she's cruel and ungrateful, and calling her all the other names that can rightly be applied to women who live like her.

"And if, señor, one day youfind yourself in these parts again, you'll witness how the very valleys and mountain peaks resound with the laments of the disappointed men who follow her wherever she goes. There's a place not far from here, where a grove of almost two dozen towering beech trees grows. Every single one of them has Marcela's name carved into its smooth bark. Some of them have a crown carved over the name, as if her besotted lover

wished to say more clearly that Marcela deserves and takes the crown, above all other human beauty.

"So you have sighing shepherds to the left of you, lamenting ones to the right, shepherds singing love songs in front of you, and overwrought poetry everywhere in sight. Every so often, one'll spend the night at the foot of some Full p. C-461 oak or some craggy peak, his tearful eyes open wide, lost in distant thoughts, until the sunfinds him at dawn. And there are others who give no quarter and Shorter p. 1672 refuse to surrender their sighing, even under peak full sun in summertime—they stretch themselves out on the burning sand, shouting their laments up to the pious heavens.

"But the beautiful Marcela freely and calmly triumphs over them all, this one and that one and all the rest. And all of us who know her are just waiting for her to get over herself. We want to know who the lucky man will be to break her, make her quit her terrible lifestyle, and partake of her extreme beauty. And since everything I've told you is verifiably true, it's my understanding that what our boy just said about the cause of Grisóstomo's death must also be true. And so, señor, I'd advise you not to miss his funeral tomorrow. It's going to be quite the thing to see, because Grisóstomo has a lot of friends, plus the spot where they're burying him isn't even half a league from here."

"I shall take that into consideration," said don Quixote, "and I thank you for the pleasure you've provided me by telling such a toothsome tale."

"Oh!" replied the goatherd. "I don't even know half of everything that's gone on with the Marcela-lovers. But we might run into some shepherd tomorrow who can tell us more. For now, it would be a good idea for you to sleep under a roof tonight, because the night air might worsen your wound—though the medicine I put on it for you is strong enough that it shouldn't give you any trouble."

Sancho Panza, who was ready to send the goatherd to hell if he didn't stop talking, went to see if his master could stay inside Pedro's hut. Pedro agreed, and don Quixote spent the rest of the night taking a page from the book of Marcela's lovers, rapt in memories of his lady Dulcinea. Sancho Panza settled himself down between Rocinante and his donkey and slept, not like a spurned lover, but like a man who's been kicked all over.

CHAPTER XIII

Which wraps up the story of Marcela the Shepherdess, along with other events

But the day had barely begun to break through the balconies of the East whenfive of the six goatherds got up and went to wake don Quixote, asking if he still intended to go see the legendary burial of Grisóstomo and offering to accompany him if he did. There was nothing don Quixote wanted more, so he got up and told Sancho to saddle and packsaddle the animals at once. Sancho did so diligently, and everyone set off, with equal diligence, down the road. They couldn't have gone a quarter league before they spotted—coming towards them on a path that crossed the road—as many as six mourning shepherds, dressed in their black lambskin vests, crowned with wreaths of somber cypress and bitter oleander, each one carrying a thick staffof holly in his hand. Two gentlemen rode along on horseback, fully outfitted with travel gear, as well as three more servants following on foot.

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When they drew close, the two groups greeted each other courteously, each asking where the other was headed. Once they established everyone was going to the burial, they all began traveling together.

One of the men on horseback, speaking to his companion, said:

"It seems to me, señor Vivaldo, it'll be well worth our time to see this legendary burial, despite the delay it causes us. There's no way it won't be legendary, Full p. C-462 Shorter p. 1673 after everything these shepherds have told us about the bizarre behavior of both the dead shepherd and the murderous shepherdess."

"It seems to me you're right," replied Vivaldo. "And it's only one day. If you ask me, it would be worth four days' delay, just to see."

Don Quixote asked them what they had heard about Marcela and Grisóstomo. The traveler told him that that morning they had run into these shepherds and, seeing them in such somber attire, had asked the reason they were dressed that way. One responded, speaking of the great beauty and great strangeness of a shepherdess called Marcela, whom so many men wooed. And he told us of the death of this Grisóstomo, to whose burial they were headed. In short, he told don Quixote everything Pedro had already said.

That conversation trailed off, and another one began, as the man called Vivaldo asked don Quixote what circumstances led him to travel so heavily armed through such peaceful lands. To which don Quixote replied:

"The profession of my practice does not allow nor permit me to travel in any other way. A life of luxury, indulgence, and leisure—that was invented for soft knighted noblemen at Court. But hard work, restlessness, and armor were created and invented solely for those the world calls knights-errant. And I, though unworthy, am the least of these."

Everyone there could tell he was offhis rocker as soon as the words left his lips. To get him to say more, and thus tease out the genus to which his madness belonged, Vivaldo asked what exactly he meant by *knights-errant* .

"Have your graces not read," replied don Quixote, "the annals and histories of England, which relate the legendary deeds of King Arthur, referred to in our Castilian ballads as King Artús?[1] Do you not know the ancient and widespread tradition, commonly believed throughout that kingdom of Great Britain, that the aforementioned king did not perish, but rather by art of enchantment was transformed into a crow, prophesied to return to rule again in times to come, once he reclaims his scepter and his kingdom, and that is why, from that era through the present, no Englishman would ever dare kill a crow?

"Well, during the time of thatfine king, the legendary Order of the Knights of the Round Table was founded, and there, down to the tiniest detail, is the love story of don Lancelot of the Lake and Queen Guinevere, abetted by their confidant and go-between, the honorable lady-in-waiting Quintañona, whose romance gave rise that wise ballad, so widely celebrated here in Spain, which begins:

> No knight was ever
> served any better,
> by ladies fairer,
> than Lancelot,
> when he left Camelot,

and then continues on with that soft, sweet tale of amorous and vigorous deeds. And so, ever since, the order of chivalry has been passed down from hand to hand, spreading and expanding across many different parts of the world. And certain members of this order have risen to great fame, their feats renowned, including the valiant Amadís of Gaul, along with all his sons and Shorter p. 1674 grandsons, through thefifth generation, and the valorous Felixmarte of Full p. C-463 Hircania, and the never-sufficiently-praised Tirante the White, and, not long before our own time, we saw and spoke and heard about the invincible, valorous knight don Belanís of Greece. Well, this, señores, is what it means to be a knight-errant. The order of which I speak is the order of errant chivalry. And I—sinner that I am—as I mentioned before, have taken it up as my profession, and so, the profession of those knights to which I have just referred is also my own. Thus, I wander through the wilds and wilderness in search of adventure, my spirit deliberately disposed to offer the strength of mine arm and mine person to contend with the worst perils Fortune sends, in aid of the deprived and those in need."

From the reasons he gave, the travelers discovered how fully don Quixote had lost his mind, and ascertained the genus of the madness ruling over him. They were struck with the same wonder experienced by anyone coming in contact with him for thefirst time. And Vivaldo, who was a clever man, with quite an impish disposition, decided that to more pleasantly pass the time they had left to travel before arriving at the mountains where the burial was to take place, he would give don Quixote a chance to expand on his inanities. And so he said:

"It seems to me, señor knight-errant, that your grace has dedicated yourself to one of the strictest orders on Earth. If you ask me, it's even stricter than the order of Carthusian friars."[2]

"It could very well be as strict," our don Quixote replied. "It is certainly just as necessary to the world, without the slightest doubt. Because if one were to speak truly, the soldier who carries out the captain's order does no less than the captain who orders him so. I mean to say that while priests, surrounded by peace and tranquility, pray to Heaven for the good of the world, it is the soldiers and knights who execute the orders of their prayers, defending the Earth with the strength of our arms and the blades of our swords, not indoors, but out beneath the open sky, an open target for the unbearable rays of the summer sun, or the goose-bumped ice of winter. And so, we are God's ministers on Earth, the arms by which His justice is enacted. And just as the work of war and everything surrounding and related to it cannot be executed without sweat, hard labor, and exertion, it follows that those who profess this order must surely work harder than those who in tranquil and peaceful repose beg God to help those who cannot help themselves. I do not mean to say, nor would such a thought ever even cross my mind, that the profession of a knight-errant is asfine as that of a cloistered monk. I wish only to offer, based on my own experience and suffering, that it is doubtless more laborious and more wretched, more full of hunger and thirst, more miserable, impoverished, broken, andflea-bitten—for there is no doubt whatsoever that knights-errant in times of yore went through many terrible travails over the course of their lives. And if some few managed to rise to the rank of emperor, through the strength of their arms, by my faith, they paid dearly for it in sweat and in blood. And even among those who were able to rise up in station, if they had lacked a sage or an enchanter to assist them, their hopes would have been squelched and their dreams dashed."

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“It seems the same to me,” replied the traveler. “But there is one little thing about knights-errant that doesn’t sit right with me, and it’s that when they’re charging into some great, perilous adventure, where they are in manifest danger of losing their lives, as they ride forth, they never entrust themselves to God, as all Christians are required to do in similar instances of danger. Instead, they entrust themselves to their lady, just as earnestly and with as much devotion as if she were God herself, which—it seems to me—smacks faintly of paganism.”

“Señor,” replied don Quixote, “nothing could be further from the truth. Any knight-errant who did otherwise would be committing a grave misstep, as it is the habit and custom of errant chivalry that when on the verge of some great deed in battle, if his lady is present, the knight shall turn his gaze softly and lovingly towards her, as if beseeching her favor and protection in the face of such uncertain adversity. And even if no one can hear him, he is required to utter a few words between clenched teeth, muttering to her with all his heart. We have innumerable examples of this available in the histories. And the mere fact of their following this tradition does not mean they do not also call out to God, for there is plenty of time left to do so in the thick of things.”

“Even so,” replied the traveler, “one qualm remains, and it’s that many times I’ve read about two knights-errant exchanging words, and somehow between the two of them, their tempersflare, and they wheel their horses around and ride a fair piece away from each other in afield, and then, just like that, they wheel around again and charge each other at top speed, and as they do, they commend themselves to their ladies. And what tends to happen is that one of them will tumble offhis horse’s rump, pierced through by the other’s lance, and the other one goesflying, too, after losing his grip on his horse’s mane. And I don’t see how the dead one could have had time to commend himself to God in the thick of such a fast-paced thing. It would be better to use the time he spent commending himself to his lady to fulfil his duty and obligation as a Christian. What’s more, my understanding is that not every knight-errant would have a lady to commend himself to, since they were not all always in love.”

“Impossible,” responded don Quixote. “I say it is impossible for any knight-errant to go without a lady, for it is as right and proper for knights to be in love as it is for the night sky to have stars, and you can rest assured that throughout history, there has never been a knight-errant lacking in love. And by the selfsame reason, if one were not in love, he would not be considered a legitimate knight, but a bastard who had snuck his way into the fortress of the aforementioned order of chivalry, entering its edifice not through the front door but over the battlements, like a bandit or a thief.”

“Even so,” the traveler said, “it seems to me, if I’m not mistaken, I’ve read that don Galaor, brother of the valiant Amadís of Gaul, never had any particular lady to commend himself to, and still, he was not held in any less esteem and was quite a valiant and legendary knight.”

To which our don Quixote replied:

“Señor, a single swallow’s return does not a summer make. What’s more, I happen to know the knight you mention was secretly very much in love. It’s just that it was his natural condition to love a great many lovely ladies, and he was helpless to resist. In summary, it’s quite well established that he had one in particular whom he chose to be lady of his heart, to whom he commended Full p. C-465 Shorter p. 1676 himself quite frequently and quite discreetly, for he prided himself on being a very private knight.”

“Then, if by definition all knights-errant are in love,” said the traveler, “one might well imagine that your grace is too, being a member of the profession. And if your grace doesn’t

pride yourself on being as private as don Galaor, then I beg you from the bottom of my heart, in my name and that of all our present company: tell us the name, nation, station, and beauty of your lady, that she may enjoy the good fortune of having the whole world know she is loved and served by such a knight as your grace seems to be."

Here, don Quixote heaved a great sigh and said:

"I cannot say whether my sweet enemy would be pleased or not by the world knowing I serve her. All I can say, in response to what you have so discreetly requested, is that her name is Dulcinea, her nation, El Toboso, which is a village in La Mancha; her station must be that of a princess at the very least, for she is my lady and my queen. Her beauty is beyond belief, for in her, all those impossible, chimerical ideals of loveliness the poets bestow upon their ladies have come true: her locks are golden, her forehead is an Elysianfield,[3] her eyebrows are rainbows, her eyes are two suns, her cheeks are red roses, her lips are corals, her teeth are pearls, her neck is alabaster, with a bosom made of marble, ivory hands, skin white as snow, and as for the parts of her that modesty conceals from sight, well, according to what I believe and understand, the most discreet consideration would be to treasure them, instead of comparing them to others."

"We would like to know her lineage, ancestry, and pedigree," responded Vivaldo.

To which don Quixote replied:

"She comes not from the ancient Curtiuses, Gaiuses, or Scipios of Rome, nor from the modern Colonnas or Ursinos, nor the Moncadas and Requenses of Cataluña, and certainly not from the Rebellas and Villanovas of Valencia, the Palafoxes, the Nuzas, the Rocabertis, the Corellas, the Lunas, the Alagones, the Urreas, the Foces y Guerras of Aragón, the Cerdas, the Manriques, the Mendozas y Guzmanes of Castilla, the Alencastros, or the Pallas and Meneses of Portugal,[4] but rather traces her ancestry to those of Toboso of La Mancha—a lineage which, though modern, could, from such generous beginnings, give rise to the most illustrious families of the coming centuries. And do not contradict me in this, lest you face the same consequences Cervino carved beneath the arms of Orlando where they hung on a tree:

> Touch them not, unless you wish
> to test your mettle 'gainst Roland's metal."[5]

"I come from the Cachopines of Laredo," replied the traveler, "though I wouldn't dare compare my line to that of Toboso of La Mancha, although—truth be told—this is thefirst time such a name has reached my ears."

"How could it not have?!" responded don Quixote.

Full p. C-466 Shorter p. 1677

Everyone was hanging on every word of this conversation, and even the goatherds and shepherds could see how utterly our don Quixote had lost his mind. Only Sancho Panza thought all the things his master was saying were true, as he had known him all his life. Although he did have his doubts as to all this business about the beautiful Dulcinea of Toboso, because he had never once heard about any princess or anybody by that name, despite living so close to Toboso.

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In the midst of these discussions, coming through a pass between the high mountain peaks, they saw as many as twenty shepherds, all dressed in black lambskin coats and crowned with garlands, some—as was later revealed—of yew and some of cypress.

Six of them carried a bier between them, strewn with a great variety of boughs andflowers.

Seeing this, one of the goatherds said:

“Those ones there are bringing Grisóstomo’s body, and that’s the foot of the mountain where he asked to be buried.”

And so everyone hurried to make their way over, which they did just as the shepherds they’d seen were setting the bier on the ground. Four of them began to dig the grave with sharp spades, at the foot of a rugged rock.

Each group greeted the other courteously, after which don Quixote and those with him went to go see the bier, where, beneath theflowers, they found a body, dressed like a shepherd, who looked to have been some thirty years old. And though he was dead, it was clear that, in life, he’d had a handsome face and a gallant air. On the bier around him, a few books and a great many papers were arranged, some open and some closed. And so, those who stood watching and those who were digging the grave and everybody else there maintained a moment of marvelous silence, until one of the men who’d brought the deceased turned to another and said:

“Give a good look, Ambrosio, and make sure this is the place Grisóstomo said, since you want to follow the instructions he left so precisely.”

“This is it,” replied Ambrosio. “Many times, my ill-starred friend here recounted to me the story of his misadventure. It was here, he told me, that hefirst laid eyes on that mortal enemy of mankind, and it was here too that hefirst declared his intentions to her, as honest as he was enamored. And it was here that Marcela, for the last time, scorned and refused him, leading to the end of the tragedy that was his miserable life. And so it is here, in memory of so much suffering, that he wished to be deposited into the depths of eternal oblivion.”

And, turning to don Quixote and the travelers, he went on, saying:

“This body, señores, upon which your graces gaze, was once the repository of a soul upon whom Heaven bestowed an infinite portion of its riches. For this is the body of Grisóstomo, unmatched in ingeniousness, unequaled in graciousness, unparalleled in charm, the apogee of courtesy, a phoenix of friendship, magnificent beyond measure, serious but not supercilious, impish but never inappropriate, and, in sum, foremost in goodness, and utterly unrivaled in wretchedness. He loved well; he was abhorred. He adored; he was scorned. He pleaded with marble, begged a wild animal, chased after the wind, shouted in solitude, served ingratitude, and his only reward was to have Death take him as spoils of war halfway down the road of his life, which was brought to an early end by a shepherdess whom he sought to immortalize so she would live forever in memory, as the papers you contemplate could easily illustrate, were Full p. C-467 Shorter p. 1678 it not for the fact that he instructed me that after giving his body to the earth, I should give them to theflames.”

“In so doing, you shall be stricter and more cruel,” said Vivaldo, “than their very owner. For it is neither just nor right for the will of someone who orders something so unreasonable to be followed. It would hardly have been reasonable for Augustus Caesar to follow the instructions the divine Mantuan left in his will.[6] Therefore, señor Ambrosio, though you now lay the body of your friend in the ground, do not condemn his writings to oblivion. For if, affronted, he so

instructed, it is not right that you should thoughtlessly carry out his instruction. Instead, give life to these papers, so the tale of Marcela's cruelty may live forever, and be an example in times to come for the living, so they may avoid and evade such pitfalls. For I and those assembled here now know the story of your enamored and disillusioned friend, your friendship, the cause of his death, and what he left instructed at the end of his life. And from this woeful tale we can infer how great must have been Marcela's cruelty, Grisóstomo's love, your faithful friendship, and the end he met, which is faced by all those who gallop with loosened reins down the road delirious love lays before their eyes. Last night we learned of the death of Grisóstomo and that he was to be buried here. And so, out of pity and curiosity, we strayed from the straight path of our journey and agreed to come see with our own eyes that which stirred in us so much sympathy and suffering to hear. And as recompense for that suffering, and out of the desire born in us to ameliorate it however we could, oh discreet Ambrosio! I, at least, for my part beg you that, rather than burning those papers, you let me take a few."

And without waiting for the shepherd's response, he stretched out his hand and grabbed a few of the closest ones. Ambrosio, seeing this, said:

"Out of courtesy, I shall allow you, señor, to keep the ones you've taken. But if you think I will not burn those that are left, you think in vain."

Vivaldo, who wanted to see what the papers said, unfolded one of them right away, and saw it was titled *Song of Despair* . Ambrosio heard this and said:

"That is the last note the poor wretch wrote. Read it aloud, señor, that you may see where his misadventures left him, for we have plenty of time before theyfinish digging the grave."

"I shall do so with great pleasure," Vivaldo said.

And since everybody else wanted to hear too, they all gathered around. In a clear voice, he read:

CHAPTER XIV

Which contains the despairing verses of the deceased shepherd, along with other unexpected events

G RISÓSTOMO'S S ONG

Since you, cruel woman, want it well known,
want tongues to wag and word to spread
about your heart, as hard as stone,
let Hell itself teach my sad bosom

Full p. C-468 Shorter p. 1679

to beat an agonizing rhythm
until my very voice is riven,
twisted from its normal tones.
For when I try to put in words
your cruelty, and my agony,
a ghastly sound pours out of me,
tangled torment mangling my guts.
So listen to me, tune your ear

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not to sweet sounds you'd rather hear,
but to the shrieking emanating
from deep inside my bitter frame,
pushed on by afierce wave of raving,
to my delight and your dismay.
The roar of the lion, the hair-raising
howling of wild wolves, the horrible hissing
of scaly serpents, the bone-chilling baying
of some monster, the ominous caws
of a murder of crows, the thunder
of headwinds over heaving waters,
the implacable bellowing of the bull,
defeated, already dying on his knees,
the heart-wrenching cooing
of turtledove widows, the sorrowful hooting
of enviable owls,[7] and all the wailing
of Hell's blackened ensemble
pour forth now from my vexèd soul,
and merge into a melody to cloud
and confound the sense and the senses
of whosoever hears its tones.
For the cruel agony churning inside of me
demands a new music, to be sung properly.
The aching echoes of this clamor
won't peal out over Father River,
across great Tagus's sandy banks, nor will they reach
the famous Baetis,[8] whose shores are lined with olive trees.
For my sorrow and my agony
shall be dispersed upon the breeze,
through mountain crags and deep ravines.
My tongue is dead; my words live on
in shadowed valleys, and along
the length of beaches bare of all humanity.
My song may even arrive
in lands bereft of warm sunlight,
or there among the venomous might
teeming upon the Libyan Plain:fierce, untamed.

Full p. C-469 Shorter p. 1680

The hoarse echoes of my agony
may ring somewhat hollow in barrens afar,
for in all the world, your harshness is singular.
But my fate—cut short—does bring one benefit:
this story shall spread across the planet.
Disdain is deadly, and suspicions—
right or wrong—spook one's patience.

Jealousy kills more harshly.
Prolonged distance upsets life's balance.
Myfirm faith that I will be blessèd and lucky
can't hold back the fear you've forgotten me.
Such things lead unavoidably
to certain death. But I! Unheard-of miracle, I
live! Jealously, abandoned, scorned, and certain
of each one of the suspicions
that lead me to my death.
Forgotten by she who stokes myflame,
amid my torment and my pain,
never shall my gaze alight
on even the shadow of hope's sweet light
nor, hopeless, shall I seek her out.
Rather, to fortify my grievance,
I'd swear to forsake her for eternal seasons.
Can hope and fear both, by chance,
within a single moment dance?
Is it right to feel them both,
when there's much more cause for fear than hope?
Must I, when jealousy besets me,
still close my eyes, when I know I must see
on through the thousand slashes in my soul?
Who would not slowly begin
to open the door and let mistrust in,
when he's faced with scorn and rejection?
And all his suspicions—oh bitter transformation!—
are proven truths, while unsoiled truth is spoiled, muddied into lies.
O in the kingdom of love, what afierce tyrant is jealousy!
Put steel in my hand, give me my weaponry!
A twisted rope, dear Scorn, bestow on me.
But woe is me! What cruel victory—
your memory drowns my agony.
I die, in summary, and although I cannot expect
a positive outcome in life or death,
I shall never repent of my fantasy.
I say he who loves well is in the right,
and it is the freest soul who accepts the plight
and sovereignty of love's ancient tyranny.
I say my eternal enemy,
whose soul's beauty matches her body,

Full p. C-470 Shorter p. 1681

forgets me on account of me.
Despite all the trouble it has caused us,
Love thus keeps its empire peaceful and just.
And with this conviction, and this rough noose,

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the miserable duration of my life is reduced.
Her scorn has brought me to this, and so
I shall offer the winds my body and soul;
nofine future for me,
no palm frond or laurel wreath.
You, who show such reasonlessness,
are the reason I'm pushed beyond reason
to end this tiresome life I loathe.
For I know you see the unmistakable signs
of heartbreak tearing me apart.
How happily I offer myself up
to your coldness. If by some stroke of luck, you realize
I deserve the bright heavens of your lovely eyes
to roil with clouds and rain when I die,
even so, don't cry. I wish no restitution
as I, in dissolution, give to you
the ruins of my very soul.
Instead, you'll laugh when they bury me,
and show how my end—for you—was a party.
Yet it is great foolishness to tell you this,
For I know your glory shall last and last,
because my life ended so fast.
Come now from the deepest abyss,
burning with thirst, come Tantalus!
Sisyphus, come under the weight
of your terrible song. Tityus, come,
bring your vulture along. Ixion,
too, on yourfiery wheel, hurry here.[9]
And the sisters working ceaselessly.[1]
Store your lethal sorrow
in my bosom, and in *voce sotto*
—if heartbroken men do so deserve—
sing to me a mournful dirge,
full of pain and wailing out
over this body, denied even its shroud.
Let Hell's three-headed gatekeeper[2] howl
while a thousand chimeras and monsters
screech out a sorrowful harmony.

Full p. C-471 Shorter p. 1682

No other ceremony, it seems, can serve;
it's what a deceased lover deserves.
Song of despair, do not complain
when you're deprived of my sad company.
You were penned for me to meet my end,
my misfortune shall be your fortune,

so don't be sad for me, even when you bury me.

Everybody listening thought Grisóstomo's song was afine one indeed, though the man who'd read it pointed out it didn't quite line up with the accounts he'd heard of Marcela's kindness and modesty, since Grisóstomo complained of jealousy, suspicions, and distance, casting doubt on Marcela's reputation and good name. Ambrosio responded like someone deeply familiar with his friend's most secret thoughts:

"To settle, señor, said doubts, you must know when the poor wretch wrote these words, he was indeed distant, for he had distanced himself from Marcela of his own free will, to see if absence would yield the usual result. And since there is nothing that does not vex a distant lover, and no fear is beyond his reach, Grisóstomo was vexed by imaginary jealousy, and could not have been more fearful of his suspicions if they'd been true. This resolves the matter of the truth as it pertains the legendary kindness of Marcela, who—other than being cruel, and a little stuck up, and quite scornful—could not and should not be faulted even by Envy herself."

"How true," Vivaldo replied.

As he leafed through the pages he'd saved from thefire, looking for another to read, he was interrupted by a marvelous sight. Namely, atop the cliffat whose foot they were digging the grave appeared the shepherdess Marcela. She was so beautiful she outshone even her own reputation. Those seeing her for thefirst time stared at her in wonder and silence, and those who saw her often did too, no less stunned than the others. But as soon as Ambrosio saw her, he seemed ready to erupt with indignation. He said:

"And by chance have you come—Ofierce basilisk[3] of these mountains!—to see if your presence can make blood spurt from the wounds of this poor wretch, who lost his life to your cruelty?[4] Or have you come to revel in your cruel deeds? Or look down from on high, another heartless Nero enjoying the blaze of Rome inflames?[5] Or to stomp haughtily upon his wretched body, as Tarquin's ungrateful daughter did to the corpse of her father?[6] Tell us quickly why you have come or what it is you want, for, since I know Grisóstomo never stopped obeying you in life, all those who call themselves his friends shall obey you in his death."

Full p. C-472 Shorter p. 1683

"I have not come—O Ambrosio!—to do anything like that," replied Marcela. "Actually, I'm here to speak in my own defense, to point out how completely unreasonable you're all being by blaming your suffering and Grisóstomo dying on me. Look, I'm begging everybody here to just listen to me for a minute, because it doesn't take a long time or a lot of words for reasonable people to recognize the truth.

"Heaven made me—according to you all—beautiful. You say my beauty makes you love me; you say you're helpless to resist. And on account of all this love you say you show me, plus the fact that you happen to want me, you claim that I'm required to love you back.

"Look. With my own God-given powers of observation, I get why you say everything beautiful is lovable. But I absolutely cannot follow your reasoning when you declare anybody you happen to love is required to love you back, claiming that beautiful things have to love whoever decides to love them. It might so happen that somebody who loves beauty is himself ugly. Since you insist ugliness deserves to be despised, it makes no sense to say, 'I only love you because you're beautiful, but you still have to love me if I'm ugly.' And even in cases where both parties are equally beautiful, it doesn't necessarily follow that their desires or interest in

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each other are the same. Because not all beauty makes you fall in love. Sometimes you just enjoy looking at something beautiful, without losing control over yourself. Because if everybody really had no choice but to fall in love with every beautiful thing they saw, nothing would ever get done. Everybody would be wandering around, helpless and confused, not knowing what to fall in love with, surrounded by infinite objects of beauty, helpless in the face of infinite desires.

“Furthermore, I’ve heard it said that true love never dies, and also that you have to agree to it willingly; it can’t be forced. If that’s true—which I believe it is—why would you want to force me to give up on my own heart’s desires, just because you said you loved me?

“Otherwise, tell me: if Heaven had made me ugly instead of beautiful, would it be fair for me to complain when you didn’t love me? Concurrently, you must take into account the fact that I did not choose to be beautiful. Heaven’s grace made me like this. I never asked for it, and I didn’t get a say. It makes no sense to shame a snake for having venom, even if she’s deadly; that’s just how Nature made her, and this is how Nature made me. I don’t deserve to be blamed for being beautiful. An honest woman’s beauty is like a far-offfire or a sharp-edged blade: it won’t burn or cut you if you just give it some space and leave it alone.

“Honor and virtue are the soul’s adornments, and no body should seem beautiful without them, looks or no looks. Therefore, if chastity is one of the highest virtues that adorn and beautify both body and soul, why should a woman have to lose that virtue just because some man loves her for her body’s beauty? Why should she give up her precious virtue to satiate the desire of some man who, thinking only of his own pleasure, sets all his strength and skills towards stripping it from her?

“I was born free. I chose the solitude of thefields so I could live my life freely. The trees of these mountaintops are my company; the rivers’ clear waters are my mirrors. I share my thoughts and my beauty with the waters and the trees. I am a distantfire, a faraway blade. Everyone who has been enamored by my looks, I’ve set straight with my words. And if it’s true that without Full p. C-473 hope, desire dies, and considering I never gave Grisóstomo or any of the others Shorter p. 1684 the slightest cause to hope, then you could say quite rightly it was his own stubbornness, not my cruelty, that killed him.

“And if you claim I’m still responsible, that because his intentions were honest, I was required to requite them, well, right here where you’re digging his grave is where he told me of hisfine intentions, and right here is where I informed him it was my intention to live in perpetual solitude, and for no one but the earth to savor the fruit of my picking and the spoils of my beauty. And after I set him completely straight, if he still insisted onflying in the face of hope and sailing against the wind, are you really surprised he ended up shipwrecked in a sea of his own stubborn nonsense?

“Going along with it would have meant betraying myself. Giving him what he wanted would have made me go against my own best interests and needs. I let him down easy, but he kept insisting. He went straight to despair without even being dumped. You tell me if that’s reason enough to blame me for his suffering! If I had led him on, now *that* would have been cause to complain. If I’d made him promises and broken them, that would be cause for despair. Let the man I send for harbor hope. Let the man I say yes to go brag. But a man I’ve never made a single promise to, never led on or sent for or ever said yes to doesn’t get to go around calling me cruel and a murderess.

“Heaven—so far—has not fated me to fall in love. As for choosing to fall in love, that strikes me as unnecessary. So let this serve as a general letdown, for every single one of you who plans on propositioning me. From here on out, let it be known that anybody dying over me isn’t doing it out of jealousy or over my perfidy, because there’s no reason to be jealous of a woman who loves no one, and saying no shouldn’t be confused with showing scorn. Any man who calls me a beast or a basilisk can very well leave me alone, as one does with such dangerous, damaging things. Any man calling me ungrateful shouldn’t be trying to serve me; any man calling me unknowable obviously doesn’t know me.

“If I’m so cruel, stop following me! Because this beast, this basilisk, this ungrateful, cruel, unknowable woman will never seek you out, or serve you, or know or follow you in any way. If it was Grisóstomo’s impatience and his audacious desires that killed him, why should my modesty and honest ways be made to take the blame? If I keep myself pure amid the company of trees, why should a man who claims to love purity try to take mine from me?

“As you know, I have my own wealth, and I don’t need or want anyone else’s. I am a freeborn woman, and I’m not inclined to let anyone rule over me. I don’t love or loathe anybody; I haven’t deceived anyone; I’ve led no one on. I’m not making fun of this guy or making time with that one. Caring for my goats and the honest conversation of the girls of these towns keep me busy. My desires range no farther than these mountains, and if they do go beyond, it’s only to contemplate the beauty of heaven, following the steps the soul takes on its journey home.”

Saying this, with no desire to hear any response, she turned on her heel and disappeared into the thickest part of the nearby forest, leaving everyone as astonished by her wisdom as they were by her beauty. And still, some of them gave signs (those who’d been wounded by the powerful arrow of her lovely gaze) of wanting to follow her, instead of taking heed of the manifestly clear letdown they’d just received. Seeing this, don Quixote felt it was an opportunity Full p. C-474 to put his chivalry to good use by assisting a damsel in need. Grasping his sword, in a loud, clear voice, he shouted:

Shorter p. 1685

“No man, no matter his condition or station, shall dare follow the beautiful Marcela, under pain of unleashing the fury of my indignance! She has demonstrated, with clear and sufficient reasons, that she bears little or none of the blame for the death of Grisóstomo, and that she lives her life virtuously, far from acquiescing to the desires of her lovers. Thus, it is onlyfitting that instead of being followed and persecuted, she should be honored and esteemed by all good men across the world, for it is clear she alone lives with such honest intentions.”

None of the shepherds went after her, either because of don Quixote’s threats, or because Ambrosio called out that they betterfinish up the rites they owed Grisóstomo. Once the grave was dug, they burned theirfine friend’s papers and put his body in the ground, with plenty of tears all around. They covered the grave with a thick slab of rock for the time being; Ambrosio said he was thinking of having a tombstone made, carved with the following epitaph:

Here lies one who loved,
his wretched corpse now cold,
once a shepherd offine goats,
now lost, for his heart broke.
He died from the sheer frigidness

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of an uppity, ungrateful shepherdess,
expanding thus the territory
of love's imperial tyranny.

Then they strewedflowers and branches atop the grave, and all the shepherds gave their condolences and their goodbyes to Ambrosio. Vivaldo and his companion did the same, and don Quixote took his leave of his hosts and of the other travelers, who begged him to accompany them to Sevilla, which they said was an excellent place tofind adventures, as on every street and corner, it offered more than any other. Don Quixote thanked them for the information and the goodwill of their offer but told them at the moment he neither could nor should go to Sevilla, until he had rid all these mountains of the thugs and thieves that—according to legend—were so plentiful there. Seeing hisfine determination, the travelers didn't wish to insist, and so, after saying a second goodbye, they left him behind and went on their way. Between the story of Marcela and Grisóstomo and don Quixote's madness, they had plenty to talk about on the road. For his part, don Quixote decided to go after the shepherdess Marcela, to offer his services and assist her in any way he could. * * *

Footnotes

- Note 2:Matthew 23.12: "He that shall humble himself shall be exalted." Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Highly prized die from the Phoenician city of Tyre, in what is today Lebanon, made from the murex sea snail and associated with royalty. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:In Greek myth, the labyrinth was constructed by Minos, King of Crete to house the monstrous Minotaur. The Greek hero Theseus nonetheless managed to kill the monster and escape the labyrinth, aided by the Cretan princess Ariadne, who had fallen in love with him. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:Three-stringed instrument played with a bow. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:Presumably because a Muslim would not be buried in a Christian graveyard, or extrapolating from the Muslim preference for very simple grave markers, if any. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:Spain's oldest and most prestigious university in this period, founded in 1134. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:The feast of Corpus Christi included processions and short religious plays called *autos*, presented in the streets of towns and villages. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:Legendary demonicfigure, the earthly agent of Satan. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:Each of the knights praised here is thefictitious hero of a romance popular in Cervantes' time. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:The Christian Carthusian order of monks, founded in 1084, required a commitment to solitude and austerity. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:In ancient Greece, the paradise to which the virtuous and heroic went after death. The description of the lover's body as a series of disparate, idealized parts is a *blazon*, a poetic device used (and overused) in Petrarchan love poetry. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:Noble and ancient lineages of ancient Rome, Italy, and various parts of Iberia. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:From Ludovico Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*, 24.57. Return to reference 5

- Note 6:Virgil (born near Mantua in 70 B.C.E.) had left instructions that his Roman epic, the *Aeneid*, should be burned after his death. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:Owls were supposedly envied by the other birds for the beauty of their eyes. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:That is, the Guadalquivir, the largest navigable river in Spain. “Tagus”: the Iberian Peninsula’s longest river. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:In Greek myth, all four are proverbial images of mortals punished by the Gods with different forms of torture: Tantalus, craving water and fruit which he always fails to reach; Sisyphus, forever vainly trying to roll a stone upward to the top of a hill; Tityus, having his liver devoured by a vulture; and Ixion, bound to a revolving wheel. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:In classical mythology, the three Fates, spinners of man’s destiny. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Cerberus, a doglike three-headed monster, the mythological guardian of Hell. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:A mythical lizardlike creature whose gaze and breath were supposed to be lethal. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:According to folklore, the corpse of a murdered person was supposed to bleed in the presence of the murderer. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:In tale and proverb, the Roman emperor Nero is supposed to have been singing (orfiddling) while he observed the burning of Rome in 64 C.E. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:The inaccurate allusion is to Tullia, actually the wife of the last of the legendary kings of early Rome, Tarquinius; she let the wheel of her carriage run over the body of her father—the previous king, Servius Tullius—whom her husband Tarquinius had vanquished. Return to reference 6

[Fighting the Sheep]

CHAPTER XVIII

Which contains the conversations had by Sancho Panza and his señor don Quixote, and other adventures worth mentioning

* * *

Don Quixote then spotted a huge, thick cloud of dust coming down the road toward them. As soon as he saw it, he turned to Sancho and said:

Full p. C-475 Shorter p. 1686

“This is the day, O Sancho, when the glory Fortune has in store for me shall be revealed! This is the day, I say, above all others, when the valor of mine arm must be shown, when I will perform feats that shall be written down in the book of fame for all the centuries to come! Do you see that dust cloud rising there, Sancho? Well, it has been stirred up by an immense army of diverse and innumerable people marching toward us.”

“If that’s true, there must be two,” said Sancho, “because coming down the other side of the road is another dust cloud just like it.”

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Don Quixote looked again and saw it was true. And, overflowing with joy, he believed beyond a doubt these were two armies marching toward each other to face offin the middle of that spacious plain. Since don Quixotefilled every hour of every day with the fantasy of those battles, enchantments, incidents, blunders, beloveds, and challenges to the death described in his books of chivalry, everything he did, thought, or said was in imitation of what he'd read. The dust clouds he saw were being stirred up by two largeflocks of sheep and rams, traveling the same road in different directions. Because of the dust, theflocks could not be seen until they came quite close, and don Quixote so fervently affirmed they were armies that Sancho came to believe him. He asked:

"Well, señor, what should we do?"

"What?" said don Quixote. "What? Favor and assist the helpless and those in need! And you should know, Sancho, this army coming toward us is led and guided by the great Emperor Ali Fanfare, lord of the great island of Ceylon.[7] This other army marching at my back belongs to his enemy, the King of the Garamantes, Pentapolín the Sleeveless, so called because he always rides into battle with his sleeve rolled up and his right arm bare."

"How come there's so much bad blood between these two señores?" asked Sancho.

"There is bad blood," replied don Quixote, "because this Ali Fanfare is a frenzied pagan, and he's in love with Pentapolín's daughter, a beauteous and also gracious lady, who is Christian. Her father does not wish to give her to the pagan king if he does notfirst forsake the laws of his false prophet Mohammed and convert to Pentapolín's creed."[8]

"By my beard!" said Sancho. "That Pentapolín's doing the right thing, and I have to help him however I can!"

"Then you shall be doing your duty, Sancho," said don Quixote, "as one need not be dubbed a knight to ride into this type of battle."

"Sounds good to me," replied Sancho, "but where do we put this donkey so we can be sure tofind him once thefighting's over? Because riding a donkey into battle, well, I don't think that's been the style up till now."

"That is true," said don Quixote. "What you can do with the donkey is leave him to his own adventures, whether or not he gets lost, because we will have so many horses after we emerge victorious that even Rocinante is in danger of being traded out. But listen to me, and look here, for I wish to tell you about the most prominent knights of these two armies, and, so that you may see and take notice more easily, let us retire to that hillock over there, from which point both armies should be revealed."

Full p. C-476 Shorter p. 1687

They did as he said and climbed a low hill, which would have afforded a good view of the twoflocks that don Quixote took for armies if the dust clouds raised by the animals had not blocked their view and made it impossible to see. But even so, seeing in his imagination what could not be seen and was not, in fact, there, don Quixote raised his voice and proclaimed:

"That knight you see there with the bright yellow armor, who bears on his shield the image of a crowned lion kneeling at the feet of a damsel—that is the valiant Counterfeitto, Lord of the Silver Bridge. The one whose armor is bedecked with goldenflowers, bearing a shield with three silver crowns on afield of blue, is the fearsome Marmoset, Grand Duke of Quirocia. And at his right hand, with the giant limbs, is the fearless Brandabarbarian of Bowling, Lord of the Three Arabias, who wears snakeskin armor and bears as his shield a door, which, according to

legend, was wrested from the ruins of the temple destroyed by Samson when he sacrificed his life to wreak vengeance on his foes.

“But turn your eyes in that direction, and you shall see at the head and front of this other army the always-victorious and never-vanquished Helmsman of Chortle, Prince of New Vizcaya. His arms are quartered in blue, green, white, and yellow. He bears on his shield a golden cat on a tawnyfield, with a motto that reads ‘Meow,’ which is the beginning of the name of his lady, who, they say, is the peerless Meowlina, daughter of Duke Weeqling of Algarve. And that knight who weighs so heavily on the withers of that powerful Percheron, bearing armor white as snow and a white shield with no insignia, is a novice knight of the French nation called Pierre Bonbon, Baron of Utrecht. The one digging his iron heels into theflanks of that striking, light-footed zebra of his, in the blue checkered armor, is the powerful Duke of Nerbia, Spartafile of the Forest, whose shield carries the insignia of an asparagus, with a legend in Spanish below it that reads: ‘Rastrea mi suerte.’”[9]

And he went on in this way, naming knights from this or that squadron he invented. He gave each his own arms, colors, insignia, name, and titles, improvising as he went, carried away by the imagination of his madness, the likes of which had never before been seen. And, without stopping, don Quixote went on, saying:

“People of various nations compose and comprise this squadron before us.[1] Here are those who drink from the sweet waters of the famous river Xanthos, the mountain men who stride across the Land of Atlas, those who sift forflecks of thefinest gold in South Arabia, those who enjoy the famed clear, fresh waters of the Thermodon, those who bleed the golden river Pactolus into many diverse channels, the Numidians with theirflimsy promises, the Persians with their legendary bows and arrows, the Parthians and the Maedi whofight as theyflee, the nomadic Arabs who move their homes, the Scythians who are as cruel as they are white, the Ethiopians with their pierced lips, and myriad more nations whose faces I see and recognize, although I do not recall their names.

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“Over there in that other squadron are those who drink from the crystalline currents of the Baetis, whose banks are lined with olive trees, those who smooth and polish their faces with the liquor of the perpetually rich golden river Tagus, those who enjoy the beneficial waters of the divine Genil, those who stride through Tartessian lands lush with grass, those whofind their joy in the Elysian Fields of Jerez, the rich Manchegans crowned with golden wheat, the ancient relics of Gothic bloodlines clad in iron, those who bathe in the famously gentle current of the river Pisuerga, those who graze their cattle in the ample meadows beside the Guadiana’s celebrated winding turns, those who shiver and freeze in the forested Pyrenees and on the white crags of the high Apennine, andfinally, all the peoples encompassed and enclosed in Europe.”

¡Válame Dios! How many provinces he pointed out! How many nations he named! How swiftly he gave each its own attributes, all of which he had soaked up and absorbed from reading his misleading books!

Sancho Panza hung on don Quixote’s every word, speechless, craning his neck every so often to see if he could spot the knights and giants his master named. Since he couldn’t see a single one, he said:

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“Señor, the devil take any man, giant, or knight your grace describes. Not one shows up in all this dust. At least, I can’t see them. Maybe it’s all an enchantment, like the phantoms from last night.”[2]

“How can you say that?” replied don Quixote. “Don’t you hear the neighing of the horses, the sounding of the trumpets, the beating of the drums?”

“I don’t hear anything,” responded Sancho, “but the bleating of rams and sheep.”

And that was the truth, because the twoflocks were drawing close.

“It is your fear, Sancho,” said don Quixote, “that prevents you from seeing and hearing properly, for one of the effects of fear is to scramble the senses, causing things to appear other than they are. If you are so fearful, step aside and leave me alone, for alone I suffice to ensure that the army I assist tastes victory!”

And saying this, he spurred Rocinante, locked his lance in position, and charged down the little hillside at lightning speed. Sancho cried out to him, saying:

“Come back, your grace, señor don Quixote! I swear to God, you’re about to ram your lance into a bunch of rams! Come back! Damn the man who sired me! What kind of madness is this? Look, there are no knights or giants, no cats or arms, no half shields or whole, no blue checkers or blue devils! Poor sinner that I am in the eyes of God, what are you doing?”

But don Quixote did not turn back. Instead, he rode on, shouting:

“Ya! All you knights who march under and follow the banner of the valiant Emperor Pentapolín the Sleeveless, follow my lead! You shall see how easily I wreak vengeance on his enemy, Ali Fanfare of Trapobana!”

Shouting this, he galloped straight into the squadron of sheep and began to spear them with his lance, full of fury and daring, as if he really were impaling his mortal enemies. The shepherds driving theflocks shouted at him to stop, but seeing how their words fell on deaf ears, they pulled out their slings and began to greet his ears with stones the size offists. Don Quixote paid no heed to the stones as he raced through the flock, shouting:

Full p. C-478 Shorter p. 1689

“Where are you, arrogant Ali Fanfare? Confront me, for I am but one knight, wishing to test your strength in single combat and strip you of your life! You shall soon rue the suffering you’ve brought the valiant Pentapolín Garamante!”

As he was saying this, a river rock the size of a candied almond struck him in the side, breaking two of his ribs. Don Quixote was so badly battered, he believed he must, without a doubt, be dead or at least gravely injured. Remembering his potion, he pulled out the little clay cruet, put it to his lips, and began pouring the liquid into his stomach. But before he’d drunk hisfill, another almond cameflying and cracked into the cruet in don Quixote’s hand. It hit so hard that the container shattered—taking three or four of his teeth and molars along with it, and brutally bruising half his hand.

Thefirst blow was so brutal, and the second one, too, that the poor knight slumped offhis horse and slid to the ground. The shepherds, making their way over, believed they had killed him. And so, with great speed, they gathered up their livestock, dragged offthe dead animals—of which there were more than seven—and without stopping to look any closer, hurried offdown the road.

All this time, Sancho had been on the ridge, watching his master’s madness and tearing out his own beard, cursing the hour and the minute in which Fortune had led them to meet.

Seeing don Quixote slumped on the ground, and seeing as the shepherds had left, Sancho came down from the ridge and went over to his master. He was in very bad shape, but still conscious. Sancho said:

"Didn't I tell you, señor don Quixote, that what you were charging wasn't armies butflocks of sheep?"

"That thieving sage, my enemy, can make things disappear and transform just like that. Know this, Sancho. It is an easy feat for those of his ilk to make things seem however they please. And the malevolent sage who hounds me, envious of the glory he saw I would attain in this battle, has changed the enemy squadrons intoflocks of sheep. If you doubt me, do one thing, Sancho, on my life, so that you may see the light and truth in what I tell you. Mount your donkey and follow them stealthily, and you shall see how after they draw away from here some distance, they shall revert to their original form, and, ceasing to be rams, they shall once again be what they are, which is upright and unwavering men, just as Ifirst described them to you. But do not go now, for I am in need of your favor and assistance. Come look and see how many molars and teeth I am missing, for I fear not a single one remains in my mouth."

Footnotes

- Note 7:Name by which the island of Sri Lanka was known to the ancient Greeks. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:In medieval romances as in chivalric novels, which Don Quixote here channels, Muslim characters were often depicted as converting for love. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:The Spanish "Rastrea mi suerte" is a pun on *rastrear* (Spanish for "to track" or "to drag"). The motto means either "On Fortune's track" or "My Fortune drags along." Return to reference 9
- Note 1:In his fantasy, Don Quixote invokes a series of geographic and ethnographic tropes, rehearsing a long-standing imaginative opposition between East and West, other and self, that extends from Virgil's *Aeneid* through medieval romance and chivalric novels. Thefirst paragraph charts what is today the Middle East and Africa, while the second turns to Europe. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:The inn where they had spent the previous night had been pronounced by Don Quixote to be an enchanted castle. Return to reference 2

["To Aid Those in Need"]

CHAPTER XXII

On the manner in which don Quixote liberated many misfortunate men who were being taken by force to a place they had no desire to go

Cide Hamete Benengeli—Arab and Manchegan author[3] of this profound, grandiloquent, subtle, sweet, imaginative history—tells us that once the legendary Full p. C-479 Shorter p. 1690 don Quixote of La Mancha and his squire Sancho Panzafinished the conversation that concluded at the end of Chapter XXI, don Quixote looked up to see as many as a dozen men in shackles walking down the road, strung together by their necks like beads on a huge iron chain.

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Alongside them were two men on horseback, and two more on foot. The ones on horseback had blunderbusses; the ones on foot had barb-tipped spears and swords. As soon as Sancho Panza saw them, he said:

"That's a chain gang of convicts headed to the galleys to work the oars of His Majesty's galleons. Those men are slaves of the King."

"What do you mean, slaves of the King?" asked don Quixote. "Could it possibly be true that the King keeps men as slaves?"

"That's not what I'm saying," Sancho replied. "I'm saying they're men who've been convicted of crimes, and their sentence is to serve the King by rowing in the galleys of his navy."

"Thus, essentially," responded don Quixote, "regardless of the specifics, these people have had their freedom stripped from them and are now being shipped offto work against their will?"

"That's right," said Sancho.

"Well, in that case," his master said, "this calls for the application of my profession: to free the enslaved, and defend and tend to the wretched."

"I should warn your grace," Sancho said, "the Justice System—in other words, the King—isn't really enslaving or oppressing men like them. They're just being punished for their crimes."

At that point, the chain gang arrived. Withfine, courteous phrases, don Quixote extended his request to the guards that they might be so kind as to educate him by informing him of the reason or reasons why they were keeping these men in chains.

One of the guards on horseback told him they were convicts who belonged to His Majesty, on their way to the galleys, and that was all he needed to know, because that's all there was to it.

"Even so," replied don Quixote, "I would like to know the particular origin of each man's misfortune." He went on, offering furtherfine reasons full of restraint, urging them again and again to tell him what he wished to know, until the other guard on horseback said:

"While we are, of course, carrying all the proper paperwork—both the register and the sentencing details for each of these wretched men—there is no time to stop and pull them out, much less stand around reading them. Your grace can go ahead and ask the men yourself. If they want to tell you, they will. And they will, because that sort loves bragging about their nasty business almost as much as doing it."

Permission thus granted—though don Quixote would've gladly given himself permission if the guards hadn't—he rode over to the chain gang and asked the man walking at the front of the line what sins had brought him to such a wretched state. The man replied it was because he had fallen in love.

"Just for that?" replied don Quixote. "If men go to the galleys for falling in love, I should already be rowing away there myself."

"It's not the kind of love your grace is thinking of," the convict said. "I fell in love with a laundry basket full of clean whites. I hugged it so tight, if the Justice System hadn't taken it from me by force, I would've never let go. I was Full p. C-480 Shorter p. 1691 caught red-handed, no

need to torture out a confession; speedy trial, speedy sentence: a hundred lashes, plus a cool three years on the benches, cue the curtains, the end."

"What do you mean by 'on the benches'?" asked don Quixote.

"On the benches means rowing in the galleys," the convict replied. He was a young man of around twenty-four who said he hailed from Piedrahíta. Don Quixote asked the same question to the second man on the chain, but he—brimming with sadness and melancholy—did not utter a word in response. Nevertheless, thefirst man answered for him, saying:

"Him, señor, he's here for being a canary. What I mean is he sang a pretty little tune."

"How can that be?" replied don Quixote. "Men go to the galleys for singing tunes?"

"Yessir," replied the convict. "Nothing's worse than singing when the screws are turned."

"I have rather heard people say," said don Quixote, "it is possible to sing one's worries away."

"Here, it's the opposite," said the convict. "You sing once, you spend the rest of your life in tears."

"I do not understand this," said don Quixote.[4]

One of the guards said:

"Singing when the screws are turned, señor knight, is what the depraved call confessing under torture. This sinner was tortured and he confessed to his sin, which was being a cattle rustler and a livestock thief. Since he confessed, he got six years in the galleys, on top of the two hundred lashes he's already wearing on his back. He's always quiet and sad, because the other thieves—the ones back home, and here too—they bully him. They shun him and make fun of him and look down on him, because he confessed, he didn't have the guts to stick it out and just say no. They say it takes the same amount of breath to say no as to say yes, and it's a lucky suspect whose survival hangs on his own word and not on witnesses and evidence. And they're not wrong, if you ask me."

"I see," responded don Quixote. And passing on to the third man, he asked him the same question he'd asked the others. The man replied swiftly and with great aplomb, saying:

"I gotfive years in Our Ladies the Galleys over ten gold *ducados* ."[5]

"I would happily give twenty," said don Quixote, "to free you from this sorrow."

"That," replied the convict, "would make me like a guy who's starving to death in the wilderness, with a wallet full of cash and nowhere to spend it. I say this because if I'd had those twenty *ducados* your grace is offering now back when I needed them, I could have greased the judge's palm and inspired the ingeniousness of my attorney enough that, today, you'dfind me in the thick of things in Toledo's Zocodover Plaza,[6] not here, walking this path, collared like a dog. But God is great, so I'll be patient and bite my tongue."

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Don Quixote went on to the fourth convict, a man with a venerable face and a white beard which fell to his waist. When he heard don Quixote ask why he was in chains, he began to weep wordlessly. Thefifth felon took a turn as his tongue, saying:

"This honorable man is on his way to serve four years in the galleys, after going through the usual rigamarole and riding the gauntlet from the prison to the pillory on assback, all dressed up, with the crier at his side."

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“I believe that means,” said Sancho Panza, “a public shaming.”[7]

“It does,” replied the convict. “And they shamed him for being a legitimate businessman in thefield of romance. What I mean is, he’s here for being a matchmaker, and for having a whiffof witchery about him.”

“Were it not for that whiff,” said don Quixote, “were he merely an upright matchmaker, he would not befit to row in the galleys, but to run them as their general. For the profession of matchmaker is unlike any other; it is a career that requires great wisdom and discretion, and one that is utterly necessary in a well-ordered republic. Only those of good breeding should be able to assume such a post, and even so, there should be supervisors and quality control, as with any other business, with each practitioner required to be registered and licensed just as they do with those who trade stocks. Doing so would avert quite a few of the problems that occur when idiots and those of little understanding take on the exercise of the profession, such asflighty girls, pranksters, and young knaves of little experience who—at the crucial moment, when the time is ripe and they must act decisively—freeze with the fork halfway in their mouth, unable to tell their right hand from left. Would that I could go on and explain the reasons why it would benefit the republic for such necessary posts to be held by elected officials, but now is not the time. One day I shall explain it to someone in a position to implement improvements. For now, all I shall say is that the compassion and suffering I was struck with when I saw those silver temples and that venerable face so racked with weariness, in punishment for mere matchmaking, was relieved completely once you added he was a witch. Although I well know there is no witchery in the world that can change or force a man’s free will, as some simpleminded people believe. For we are free to choose, and there is no herb nor enchantment that can strip that power away from us. The concoctions some simple women and certain swindling scoundrels use are particular potions and poisons that drive men mad, giving the illusion that they can force someone to fall in love when, as I said, our free will cannot be forced.”[8]

“That’s right,” said the good old man, “and honestly, señor, I’m innocent on the witch charge. I am guilty of being a matchmaker—that I can’t deny—but I never thought I was doing anything wrong, since all I wanted was for everyone to enjoy themselves and each other, living in peace and tranquility, without anyfighting or suffering. But myfine intentions failed me, so now offI go with no hope of return, between the weight of the years, and this bladder thing that won’t give me a moment’s rest.”

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Here, he returned to his weeping. Sancho felt so much compassion for the man, he pulled out a four-bit *real* and handed it to him as alms.

Don Quixote went on and asked the next man his crime. He replied with no less—in fact, with much more—gallantry than the man before.

“I’m here for having a bit too much fun with a couple of my kissing cousins, plus a set of someone else’s sisters. In the end, all the fun I had with all those girls turned our family tree into such a tangle, the Devil himself couldn’t straighten it out. They proved it was me, no clemency, I had no money, and it looked like I was headed for a hanging. I was sentenced to six years in the galleys, and I went willingly: it’s my fault I’m being punished. Plus, I’m young and I’m still alive, so anything’s possible. And if, señor knight, your grace happens to have anything with you that might be of aid to these poor souls, God will surely repay you in Heaven, and

here on Earth we'll take care of begging God in all our prayers to watch over your grace's health and your life—and may it be as long and asfine as yourfine appearance shows you deserve."

The man was wearing scholar's robes; one of the guards said he was an excellent speaker and a very genteel shyster.

At the end of the chain was afine-looking man of thirty, though closer examination revealed him to be a bit cross-eyed. His restraints were different from all the rest, for his ankles were shackled as well as his hands, attached to a long chain draped across his whole frame. There were two collars locked around his throat—the one that linked him to the chain gang, plus one of those heretic's forks they call "friend-keepers" or "friendly feet," which consist of a double-ended prod strapped around the neck in such a way that the iron forks jab into the wearer's chest and chin, forcing his head up high. Two more chains descended from that collar to the man's waist, where they were secured to his manacles with a heavy lock. Trussed up like that, he could not raise his hands to his face or drop his head to his hands.

Don Quixote asked why this man was more fettered than the rest. The guard said it was because he had more crimes than all the rest put together, and he was so bold and such a serious scoundrel, that even with all those restraints, they were still worried he would give them the slip.

"What crimes could he have committed," asked don Quixote, "if he was not given a harsher sentence than the galleys?"

"He got ten to life," replied the guard, "which makes him legally dead. All you need to know is that thisfine man is the legendary Ginés of Pasamonte, also known as Little Ginesillo of Parapilla."

"Señor warden," the convict interjected, "let's take things one step at a time, and not go around redefining names and surnames. My name is Ginés, not Little Ginesillo, and I'm from Pasamonte, not Parapilla like you're saying. And let everybody just mind his own business, since you've got plenty of your own."

"Watch your tone," the warden said, "señor superthief, unless you want me to shut that mouth up for you."

"Naturally," replied the convict, "man makes plans and God laughs, but one day somebody's gonnafind out the hard way whether or not to call me Little Ginesillo."

"Well, liar, isn't that what they call you?" asked the guard.

"It is," responded Ginés, "but I'll make sure no one ever calls me that again, unless they want me to rip them a new one. Señor knight, if you have Full p. C-483 Shorter p. 1694 something to give us, give it to us and go with God—all this business of wanting to know about other people's lives is maddening. And if you want to know about mine, know that I am Ginés of Pasamonte and my life has already been chronicled by these two thumbs."

"He's telling the truth," the warden said. "He's written his own history—can't ask for more than that—and pawned it in prison for two hundred pieces of silver."

"And I'll get it back," said Ginés, "even if it costs me two hundred pieces of gold."

"It is that good?" asked don Quixote.

"It's so good," replied Ginés, "when it comes out, it'll be a bad year for Lazarillo de Tormes[9] and all the rest of the picaresques that have ever or will ever be written. What I can tell you is

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it's a true story, with such delightful and stupendous truths, that no lies could ever match them."

"And what is the title of this book?" asked don Quixote.

"*The Life of Ginés of Pasamonte*," he replied eponymously.

"And is itfinished?" asked don Quixote.

"How could it befinished," Ginés responded, "when my life isn'tfinished? I've written down my history, from birth up through being booted back to the galleys."

"Then, you have been condemned to them before?"

"I've spent four years so far in service to God and the King. I already know the taste of hardtack and the overseer's lash," Ginés replied. "And I'm not too upset about being sent again, because in the galleys I'll get the chance tofinish my book. Because I've got a lot of things to say, and there's plenty of peace and quiet to be found in the galleys of the Spanish Navy, though I won't need much for what I want to write, because I already know it all by heart."

"You seem quite talented," don Quixote said.

"And quite misfortunate," responded Ginés, "becausefine minds are always persecuted."

"Scoundrels are persecuted," the warden said.

"I've already told you, señor warden," Pasamonte replied, "to take it one step at a time. Thosefine lords didn't give you that cane so you could abuse the poor souls walking here, they gave it to you so you could show us where we're going and take us where His Majesty commands. Or else I swear . . . Enough. One day it might all come out, even what happened at the inn, so everybody pipe down andfly straight and play nice, and let's just stick to walking. You've had enough fun."

The warden raised the cane up high, ready to beat Pasamonte for his threats, but don Quixote stepped in between them and begged him not to abuse the man, saying it was surely not too much to ask for a man so tightly tied to be permitted a little looseness of the tongue. And, turning back to the rest of the chain gang, he said:

"All that you have told me, dearest brothers, has made it clear that although you have been sentenced for your crimes, you do not relish the suffering you Full p. C-484 Shorter p. 1695 are walking toward, but rather go grudgingly and against your free will. It could very well be that this one's lack of fortitude under torture, or that one's lack of funds, or the little favor shown to this other, andfinally, the crooked judgment of the judge has been the cause of your perdition and the reason justice was not—in your cases—justly served. All of which stirs my conscience, which is telling me, persuading me, even forcing me to show you all the purpose for which Heaven brought me into the world: to take up the order of chivalry which I profess, and fulfil the vow I made on the selfsame, to aid those in need and all those oppressed by the powerful. However, I am given to understand it is prudent not to use violence when nonviolence will suffice. Therefore, I shall beg these señor guards and this señor warden, if they would be so kind, to unshackle you and let you go in peace, for there is no shortage of others who can serve the King under better circumstances. Indeed, it seems to me far too harsh to make slaves of men that God and Nature made free. What's more, señor guards," don Quixote added, "these poor men have done nothing to you. Leave each to his own sins; God is in Heaven and shall not fail to punish the wicked and reward the good. It's not right for honorable men to act as other men's executioners, especially when it is no benefit to them. I am asking calmly and

gently, so that—should you accept—I shall be able to give you my thanks. Should you refuse, this lance and this sword, and the valor of my arm, shall force you to accept against your will."

"That's hilarious," replied the warden. "After all that, what a joke! He wants us to give him the King's convicts, as if we had the authority to let them go, or he had the authority to give us the order! Go on, señor, along you go on your merry way. Straighten up that pisspot on your head and stop trying toflog a dead horse."

"It is you who are the dead horse and the joke and the pisspot!" don Quixote cried.

And he rushed the guard so suddenly, the man had no time to defend himself before being knocked to the ground, badly wounded by don Quixote's lance. It was a good thing for don Quixote, too, because that was the guard with the gun. The other guards froze in shock at this unexpected turn of events. But, coming to their senses, the ones on horseback put hand to sword and the ones on foot put hand to spear and they all charged at don Quixote, who had been calmly awaiting their counterattack. Without a doubt, things would have gone quite badly for him, if the convicts—who saw the opportunity to reclaim their freedom—had not set themselves to doing just that, working to break free from the chain they were strung along. Between trying to stop the convicts from breaking loose and charging at don Quixote—who would not stop charging them—nothing the guards did was of any use.

Sancho, for his part, helped free Ginés of Pasamonte, who was thefirst of the chain gang to slip offthe chain. Lunging at the fallen warden, he snatched the sword and the blunderbuss right out of his hands. By thrusting one and brandishing the other, withoutfiring a shot, he cleared thefield. Not a guard was left standing, because they were all running away, both from Pasamonte's blunderbuss and from all the rocks the other convicts were hurling their way.

This development greatly saddened Sancho, for as he saw it, there was no way the guards who ran offwouldn't run straight to the Holy Brotherhood, Full p. C-485 Shorter p. 1696 who would sound the alarm until the bell broke and all come pouring out looking for suspects, and he told his master exactly that. Sancho begged don Quixote for them to leave right away and go hole up in the mountains nearby.

"That's all well and good," said don Quixote, "but I am the one who knows what is best for us to do and when."

And, calling out to the convicts—who were all worked up, having looted the warden so thoroughly, there wasn't a stitch left on him—he asked them to gather round, which they did, curious to hear what he'd tell them. He said:

"Noble men know to how thank those who bestow them with benefits, and ingratitude is one of the sins that most offend God. I say this because you have already seen, señores, in light of your own experience, what I have just bestowed upon you. In payment for such, I would like and it is my will for you to immediately set forth bearing the chain I took from about your necks and bring it to the city of Toboso, where you shall present it as an offering to the Lady Dulcinea of Toboso, informing her that her Knight of the Long Face has sent you to pay tribute. You shall tell her point by point each detail of this legendary adventure, up through the point where I granted you the freedom you so deeply desired. Once this is done, you shall be free to head offwheresoever you please and Fortune be with you."

Ginés of Pasamonte responded for everybody, saying:

"Señor liberator, it is completely and utterly impossible for us to do as you command, because we can't travel the roads together—we have to split up, in ones and twos, and try to

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bury ourselves in the bowels of the Earth so we won't be found by the Holy Brotherhood, who are sure to come after us. What your grace could do—and it would be very just of you—is swap out the traveling and paying tribute to Lady Dulcinea of Toboso for some number of Ave Marias and Credos which we will pray on your grace's behalf. That's a command we could carry out night or day, inflight or at rest, in times of peace or underfire. But if you think we're going back to the pots of Egypt[1] —I mean us putting that chain back around our necks and marching to Toboso—well, that's like thinking it's nighttime right now, when it's not even ten in the morning. Expecting us to do that is like expecting an elm tree to grow pears."

"Well, I swear," said don Quixote, already enraged, "señor Son-of-a-Bitch, señor Little Ginesillo, or whatever your name is, now you shall go alone, with your tail between your legs and the whole chain on your back!"

Pasamonte—who didn't suffer fools well and was already well aware that don Quixote was offhis rocker, since he was clearly crazy to want to set them free—gave a cross-eyed wink to his companions and scurried out of the way. They began to rain rocks down on don Quixote, who fumbled with his buckler, trying to shield himself. Poor Rocinante couldn't have listened any less to his master's spurring if he'd been made of bronze. Sancho hunkered down behind his ass, hiding from the hailstorm raining down on them both. Don Quixote—unable to shield his whole body with his buckler—was peppered with who-knows-how-many pebblesflung with such force, they knocked him to the ground. The second he went down, the scholar was on top of him. He snatched Full p. C-486 Shorter p. 1697 the basin offhis head and gave don Quixote's back a good three or four whacks with it, then whacked it on the ground until it almost broke to pieces. The men took the tunic he was wearing over his armor, and they would have taken his leggings too, if his shin guards hadn't gotten in the way. They snatched offSancho's coat and stripped him down to his skivvies. Sharing the spoils of the battle amongst themselves, they each went their separate ways, far more concerned with hiding from the Brotherhood that terrified them so than getting back on the chain to go pay tribute to Lady Dulcinea of Toboso.

And so they were left on their lonesome—donkey and Rocinante, Sancho and don Quixote—the donkey, mournful, his head hung low, his earsflicking every so often, worried the storm of stones that assaulted them had not yet passed; Rocinante, sprawled out on the ground beside his master, felled by yet another stone; Sancho, coatless and terrified of the Holy Brotherhood; don Quixote, blue as could be tofind himself laid so low by the very men for whom he had just done so much.

Footnotes

- Note 3:This double description invokes the *mudéjares*, Muslims who lived in territories ruled by Christians in the late medieval period, before being forced to convert to Christianity in the early 16th century. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:Don Quixote fails to understand any of the prisoners' coded language, whether they speak in thieves' jargon or in fairly straightforwardfigurative language. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:Gold or silver coins minted in Spain and elsewhere in Europe to facilitate trade. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:Zocodover is the central town square in the city of Toledo. Return to reference 6

- Note 7:I.e., after having beenflogged in public, with all the ceremony that accompanied that punishment. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:Here Don Quixote despises charms and love potions, although often elsewhere, in his own vision of himself as a knight-errant, he accepts enchantments and spells as part of his world of fantasy. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:Widely regarded as thefirst picaresque novel, the anonymously authored *Lazarillo* is afictionalfirst-person account of its protagonist's hardscrabble life in a world that teaches him to live by his wits, with no regard for morality. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:From Exodus 16.6 in the Old Testament, in which the Israelites claim they would rather go back to Egypt, where they were enslaved but had food, than face hunger in the desert. "Ave Marias and Credos": Catholic prayers. Return to reference 1

[A Story of Captivity in North Africa, Told to Don Quixote at the Inn]

CHAPTER XXXIX

Where the captive tells the tale of his life and experiences[2]

"Somewhere in the mountains of León,[3] my lineage began. Nature was more generous with my family than Fortune was—though amidst those meager mountain towns, my father was still considered rich. And truly, he would have been, if he had applied his talents toward investing his inheritance, instead of squandering it. His condition—he was a generous wastrel—was the result of having spent his youth as a soldier. For the school of soldiering will make tightfisted men openhanded and turn openhanded men into prodigal sons. Some soldiers may be miserly, but if they are, they are like monsters—rarely seen. My father had whizzed past the point of generosity and was approaching exorbitance, which is no good for a married man with children who must carry on his line and his name. And my father had three children: all sons, all old enough to choose a career. Well, according to my father, since he was incapable of restraining his generosity, he decided to deprive himself of the means with which to be generous: he would give up his assets, leaving himself no money to spend. For with no money to give, even Alexander the Great would seem like a cheapskate.

"And so one day, he called my brothers and me to speak with him privately in an empty room. There, he offered us his reasons—something along these lines:

"'My sons, to express how dearly I love you, all I need to say is that I honor you as my sons. And to confess how poorly I love you, all I need to say is that I Full p. C-487 Shorter p. 1698 have not exactly excelled at maintaining your inheritance. Well, from here on out, so you can truly know I love you like a father—not like some stepfather yearning to leave you in ruin—there is something I want to do, something I have been planning for many days, something I havefirmly decided upon after much consideration. All of you are now old enough to choose a career, or at the very least, afield in which to specialize, one that will bring you honor and advantage down the line. I plan to divide my estate into four equal parts. I shall give three-quarters of it to you, split evenly between you three, retaining a mere quarter of the estate for myself, to live on and live offfor however many more days it pleases Heaven to give me.

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“‘But I would like, once you have each received your part of the estate, for you to follow one of the paths I tell you. There is a saying in our Spain—and to my mind, it is quite true, as they all are, for sayings are drawn from a lengthy line of wise experience. And the one I am saying now is this: “Church, Sea, or Court.” To put it more clearly, “Whoever wants to be rich and important should either join the Church, or sail the seas as a merchant plying the art of trade, or go serve the Royals at Court,” for, as they say, “A crumb from a king is worth more than all the mercies of a lord.”

“‘I say this because I plan—what I would like—is for one of you to study, another to take up trade, and the third to serve the King in his wars, since opportunities to serve him at Court are scarce. And though war does not offer a man much in the way of riches, it does tend to bring him a good deal of renown and fame. Before eight days have passed, I shall give each of you your portion in coin, and you will see I will not short any of you a penny. Now, tell me if you are inclined to follow my plan and my advice.’

“And he turned to me, as I was the eldest, and commanded I reply. After telling him not to divest himself of the estate, but rather spend it as freely as he desired—for we were young men now, old enough to know how to make it on our own—I eventually agreed we would do what he asked. In my case, I preferred to take up arms, and strike out as a soldier, serving God and my King. My younger brother, after urging our father as I did, chose to set sail for the Indies, investing his inheritance immediately. The youngest—and to my mind, the cleverest—said he wanted to join the Church or go back tofinish his studies in Salamanca.

“As soon as we had all agreed and each settled on a profession, my father gathered us all into an embrace. As quickly as he had promised, he made good on his word and gave each of us our inheritance. As I recall, we each received three thousand gold *ducados* . Our father had already sold the estate to an uncle of ours, who had paid in coin, and who wanted it to remain in the family line. That very same day, we three said goodbye to our good father. And on the selfsame day, since to me it seemed cruel and inhumane to leave my old father with so little money, I made him take two thousand of my three thousand *ducados* back, since what was left was enough for me to outfit myself with everything I might need as a soldier. Both of my brothers were inspired by my example, and they gave him a thousand *ducados* each. Thus, in the end, my father was left with four thousand *ducados* in coin, along with the three-thousand’s worth of the estate he elected not to sell, preferring property over liquidity.

“In summary, we said our heartfelt goodbyes to him and to the uncle I mentioned, with tears all around, and they charged us to keep them apprised—whenever Full p. C-488 Shorter p. 1699 we had the chance—of all our experiences of prosperity or adversity. We promised we would, and he embraced each of us in turn and gave us his blessing. And then one set offfor Salamanca, the other for Sevilla, and I headed to Alicante,[4] where I had heard there was a Genoese ship loading wool to export to Genoa.

“It has been twenty-two years since I left my father’s house, and in all those years, though I have written quite a few letters, I have heard no news of him or of my brothers. My own experiences these twenty-two years, I shall now briefly relate.

“I boarded the ship in Alicante and we made good time to Genoa. From there, I went to Milan, where I outfitted myself with arms and a few soldierly luxuries. After that, I headed to Piedmont to enlist. On the road to Alessandria della Paglia,[5] I got word that the Grand Duke of Alba was heading to Flanders, and so I changed my plans and went to join him, serving in his

campaigns. I witnessed the executions of the Counts of Egmont and Horne and rose to the rank of lieutenant under a legendary captain from Guadalajara named Diego de Urbina. After some time in Flanders, we got word His Holiness Pope Pius V—blessed be his memory—had formed a Holy League with Venice and Spain against our common enemy, the Turks, whose armada had just taken the legendary Isle of Cyprus, previously under Venetian rule—a tragic, lamentable loss.

"It was clear the General of this League would be the unshakable don Juan of Austria, natural brother of our good king, don Felipe.[6] Everyone was talking about the enormous forces being massed for battle, all of which excited me, stirring my spirit and igniting my desire to join the campaign and take part in the battles to come. And although I had an inkling —in fact, I was fairly certain—that if I stayed, I would be promoted to captain as soon as an opportunity arose, I decided to leave it all behind—which is what I did—and go join thefleet in Italy. Fortune smiled on me, and I managed to meet up with the señor General don Juan of Austria just as he stopped in Genoa before making his way to Naples to join forces with the Venetian Armada, as he did later in Messina.

"In short, I found myself in the middle of that blessed battle,[7] captaining a company of infantry—though it was my luck, more than my merits, that led me to rise to such a respectable rank. And on that day—that blessed day for Christianity, as it was the day the whole world and all its nations were made to see the error of their ways in clinging to their false belief in the invincibility of the Turkish Armada—on that day, I say, where the pride and arrogance of the Full p. C-489 Ottoman Empire was destroyed, there, among so many fortunate souls (for the Christians Shorter p. 1700 who perished there were even more fortunate than those who survived to claim victory), I alone was wrecked and wretched. Yes, for instead of the crown of gold the Romans gave victorious sailors returning home,[8] I found myself—on the selfsame night of that legendary day—bound hand and foot, in shackles and chains.

"Here's how it happened:

"The King of Algiers, uch Ali[9] —a daring, tempestuous corsair—had broadsided and vanquished theflagship of Malta, with only three knights aboard left alive, all gravely wounded. Juan Andrea,[1] captaining theflagship of Genoa—on which I sailed with my company of infantry—came to Malta's aid. As uch Ali's ship came within range alongside us, I rose to meet the moment and leapt aboard the enemy galley, which,finding itself under attack, veered suddenly away from our ship, preventing my soldiers from following my lead.

"And so, I found myself alone amidst the enemy—far too many of them for me to defeat. In the end, covered in wounds, I was forced to surrender. As you, señores, have no doubt heard, uch Ali survived with all his squadron, and I became his captive. Mine was the only misery amid so much happiness; I, the only captive among so many free men, forfifteen thousand captive Christians were freed that day from rowing the oars of the Turkish Armada.[2]

"They took me to Constantinople, where the Grand Turk Selim[3] made my new master admiral over all hisfleet, since he had done his duty in battle and brought back the banner of Malta[4] as proof of his valor. My second year of captivity—which was '72—I found myself in Navarino, rowing on the royalflagship, beneath the triple lanterns of thefleet commander.

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“I saw and lamented the opportunity Christendom missed that day. For had the Holy League descended then upon the enemyfleet, they would have caught the entire Turkish Armada at port, for all the sailors and janissaries of the Imperial Guard[5] aboard my ship were certain they were going to be rammed into the port itself. They had their traveling clothes and their *pasamaques*—which are their shoes—all ready toflee by land, for they would rather havefled us than fought us. Such is the fear our armada had struck in their hearts.

“But Heaven had other plans, and the chance that was missed was not due to carelessness on the part of the general commanding our troops, but rather a result of the sins of all of Christendom, and because God wishes and permits us to always have tormentors to punish us. In effect, uch Ali gathered hisfleet at Modon (an island near Navarino), and, stationing some soldiers on land, he Full p. C-490 fortified the mouth of the port and remained there until señor don Juan turned back. During that expedition, the galley called *La Presa* was taken, captained by the son of the legendary corsair Barbarossa. It was taken by theflagship of Shorter p. 1701 Naples, called *La Loba*, commanded by that lightning bolt of war, that father of all soldiers, that fortunate, never-vanquished Captain donÁlvaro de Bazán, the Marquis of Santa Cruz.

“I do not wish to leave out the story of how *La Presa* fell prey to the Marquis. Barbarossa’s son was so cruel and treated his captives so terribly, that as soon as the men at his oars caught sight of the *Loba* giving chase and gaining on them, they all dropped the oars at once, and together laid hands on their captain, who had been standing on the poop deck shouting at them to row faster. They grabbed him and passed him down from bench to bench, stern to prow, and as they did, the men tore chunks out of him with their teeth—he was bitten so many times, by the time his body made it past the mast, his soul was already down in Hell. Such, as I have said, was the cruelty with which he had treated his captives, and the virulence of their hatred toward him.

“We returned to Constantinople, and the following year—which was ’73—word spread that señor don Juan had conquered Tunis. He took that kingdom from the Turks and gave it to muley Hamet, dashing the hopes of muley Hamida—the cruelest, most valiant Moor the world has ever seen—of regaining the crown.[6] The Grand Turk felt this loss keenly, and, availing himself of the acumen that those of his line are known for, he made peace with the Venetians, who desired a cease-fire even more than he. The following year—’74—he returned to storm the fortress known as La Goleta—The Gullet—and the half-constructed fort señor don Juan was building near Tunis.

“I was at the oar in all these straits, with no hope whatsoever of regaining my freedom—at least, I had no hope of anyone paying my ransom, for I had decided not to send my father word of my misfortune. In the end, La Goleta was lost, along with the fort, to an army of seventy-five thousand Turkish soldiers, alongside more than four hundred thousand Moors and Arabs from across all of Africa. This massive number was outfitted with enough munitions, supplies, diggers, and sappers to bury La Goleta and the fort, too, with nothing more than their bare hands andfistfuls of dirt. La Goleta, which was thefirst to fall, had, until then, been thought impregnable. The men who defended it, who did everything they could and should have done to hold it, are not to blame for its loss. It was the fault, rather, of that desert sand, which the Turks piled up into parapets—for when digging in soil, onefinds water two hand’s-breadths down, but in that sand, the Turks could dig down two *varas*[7] with no water at all. And thus they built their parapets, with countless bags of sand, raising them so

high, they towered over the ramparts of the fort. From there, they rained death down on the men inside, who had no way of stopping the onslaught or mustering a defense.

* * *

Full p. C-491 Shorter p. 1702

CHAPTER XL

* * *

“Well, once they had taken both strongholds, the Turks gave the order to tear down La Goleta (because at that point, the fort was already rubble). They mined it in three places to demolish it as quickly and simply as possible, but not one of the mines managed to blow a hole in the old ramparts, which seemed like they would have been the weakest part. As for the new fortifications built by the Little Friar,[8] the Emperor’s engineer, the few still standing after the battle were toppled with no trouble at all.

“In summary, the armada returned—triumphant and victorious—to Constantinople. A few months later, my owner, uch Ali, also known as uch Ali Fartax, which in Turkish means the Mangy Renegade—because that’s what he was, and the custom among the Turks is to give people names related to someflaw or virtue of theirs, since there are only four surnames between them—the families who can trace their lineage to the Ottoman Dynasty—and the rest, as I said, take their surnames from either the scars on their skin or the virtues of their spirit. Mangy had put in his time at the oar—he had been a slave of the Grand Señor[9] for fourteen years. He was older than thirty-four when he converted from Christianity to Islam, out of spite. A Turk rowing alongside him slapped him across the face, and Mangy traded in his faith for his revenge. He had such valor that—without having to stoop to the scandalous methods most of the Grand Turk’s favorites used to climb their way up the ranks—he came to be named King of Algiers, and then Admiral of the Sea, which is the third-highest rank in that society.

“He was Calabrian, in terms of nationality, and in terms of morality, he was a good man and treated his captives with great humanity. He came to hold more than three thousand men captive, who were divided up after his death, as specified in his will. Some were sent to the Grand Señor (who is considered the legal heir of anyone who dies, thus entitled to the same share of the inheritance as all other heirs the deceased leaves behind), and then the rest of us were divvied up between the other renegades who had worked for him.

“I was part of the lot that went to a Venetian renegade who had been a ship’s boy before uch Ali captured him. Uch Ali loved him so much, he became one of his most spoiled manservants, and, eventually, the cruelest renegade the world has ever seen. He was called Hasan Agha,[1] and he came to be very rich, and even King of Algiers himself. I left Constantinople with him, happy—somewhat—to be so close to Spain. Not because I planned to write anyone about my misfortune, but because I wanted to see if my luck would fare better in Algiers than in Constantinople, where I had already tried a thousand different times to escape, without a lick of luck. I planned to search in Algiers for other methods to attain what I so desperately desired—for I never gave up hope of reaching freedom. Even when what I had so carefully plotted, planned, Full p. C-492 Shorter p. 1703 and put into action did not play out as I had hoped, I never

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abandoned myself, never gave up or gave into despair, but went on seeking a new hope to sustain me, no matter howflimsy or feeble.

"That's how I spent my days, locked in a prison or house the Turks call a bath,[2] where they keep their Christian captives. The captives fall into two categories: those who belong to the King, and the reserves, who belong to the Council and are made to serve the city by constructing public works and performing other labors. It is extremely difficult for them to ever regain their freedom, for, since they are slaves of the state, they have no particular owner to negotiate their ransom with, even if they do have the means to pay it.

"The prison I mentioned is where local individuals tend to keep their captives, especially if they plan to ransom them, to store them safe and sound until the money comes. The captives to be ransomed by the King are not put to work with the riffraff, unless their ransom takes too long to arrive, and then, to encourage them to pour their hearts and souls into letters begging for the money, they are put to work and made to chopfirewood alongside the rest—which is no light task.

"Well, I was one of the captives for ransom, because even though I told them I had no inheritance or estate back home and thus no way to pay, they knew I was a captain of infantry, and nothing would dissuade them from counting me among the number of knighted noblemen and others to be ransomed. They put a chain on me, though it was more an indication that I was for ransom than a restraint. And so I whiled my life away in that prison, rubbing elbows with knighted noblemen and other distinguished folk, all marked and awaiting ransom. And though, at times—or all the time—we were weary from hunger and the cold, nothing exhausted us more than constantly seeing evidence and hearing tales of the never-before-seen-or-heard-of cruelties my owner inflicted upon his Christians. He hung at least one a day, impaling this one and cutting the ears offthat one. And he did it all for reasons so small, or for no reason at all, that even the Turks recognized the real reason was because he wanted to, because it was his natural condition to want to murder the entire human race. The only one who got along with him at all was a Spanish soldier, named Something de Saavedra,[3] whom—even though in his many attempts to escape to freedom, he accomplished feats which will surely live on in memory—Agha never once beat, nor ordered beaten, nor even spoke a harsh word to, despite the fact that the rest of us were terrified and sure he would be impaled for even the slightest part of what he pulled. On more than one occasion, he was sure he would be impaled, too, and if we only had the time, I could tell you some stories of what that soldier got up to that would surely entertain and astonish you far more than the tale of my own history.

"Well, as I was saying, our prison abutted the house of a rich and distinguished Moor, whose windows looked out onto our patio. As is typical of Moorish windows, they were more like little slits, and even those were covered over with a heavy lattice, tightly slatted. It just so happened that one day, while I Full p. C-493 Shorter p. 1704 was standing beneath those windows with three of my companions—testing how far we could jump with our chains on, as a way of passing the time, for we were alone, since all the other Christians had been taken offto work—I happened to look up, and, poking out through the tight latticework of one of those narrow windows I mentioned, I saw something that seemed like a long cane, with a handkerchief tied to the end. The cane was wiggling around and moving, as if signaling for us to come take it. We set about doing just that: one of the men with me went and stood beneath the cane, to see if

whoever was holding it would lower it, or do something else. But as soon as he went over, the cane was pulled up and wagged back and forth, as if shaking its head ‘no.’ The Christian came back to where we were, and the cane came down again, wiggling like before. Another one of my companions went over, and the same thing happened to him as to thefirst. Finally, the third went, and he met the same response as thefirst and second.

“Seeing this, I wanted to try my own luck. As soon as I was beneath it, whoever was holding the cane dropped it, and it fell to thefloor of the prison and landed at my feet. Immediately, I untied the linen and found ten *cianíis*—which are a Moorish coin of partial gold, each worth ten of our silver *reales*—knotted inside.

“There is no need for me to describe the joy I felt onfinding this. I was as full of happiness as of wonder at who had given us this boon, given it to me in particular, for it was clear from the way whoever was holding the cane would not drop it for anyone but me that this mercy was meant to be mine. I took myfine coins, broke the cane into pieces, looked up at the window and saw, slipping through the lattice, an incredibly pale hand, quickly opening and closing into afist. We understood—or imagined—this meant some woman living in that house must have bestowed this beneficence upon us. To show our gratitude, we performed *zalemas*[4] in the Moorish style, tucking in our heads and bowing deep, arms across our chests.

“Moments later, a little cross made of cane briefly slipped out through that same window and was quickly pulled back in. This signal confirmed to us that some Christian woman must be a captive in that house, and that she was the one who had blessed us with this boon. But the paleness of the hand and the expensive bangles adorning it disabused us of that notion, and so we imagined she must be a Christian renegade, for those women’s owners often take them as their lawful and legitimate wives and count themselves as lucky, for such men consider Christian women who convert more desirable than the women of their own nation. All our conjectures, however, fell quite far from the truth.

“From then on, we spent all our time watching the window, orienting ourselves like compasses toward our true North, where the cane had appeared. But a goodfifteen days went by without any of us seeing the cane, or the hand, or any other sign whatsoever. And although we did everything we could over the course of those days tofigure out who lived in that house, if there was a Christian renegade woman living there, we were unable tofind anyone who could tell us anything beyond the fact that it was the house of a rich and distinguished Full p. C-494 Shorter p. 1705 Moor named Agi Morato, who had been governor of Fort La Pata, which, among them, is an office of high caliber indeed.[5]

“But then, when we least expected it to rain *cianíis* ever again, the cane reappeared out of the blue, with another kerchief tied to its end, bulging with another, even bulkier knot. Just as before, it appeared when the prison was empty, and we were alone. We performed our previous test, with each of my companions—the same three as before—going over to stand beneath it, but the cane would only drop for me, for as soon as I went over, down it came. I untied the knot in the cloth and found forty Spanish *escudos*[6] of gold, along with a note written in Arabic, with a large cross drawn below the words.

“I kissed the cross, pocketed the *escudos*, and went back to my companions; we all bowed our *zalemas* in thanks as before. I caught one more glimpse of the hand and signaled with gestures that I would read the note. The hand withdrew, and the window closed once more.

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“All of us were confused and overjoyed at what had happened. Since none of us spoke Arabic, our desire to know what the note said was great indeed, surpassed only by the difficulty offinding someone to read it for us. In the end, I decided to put my trust in a renegade—a man from Murcia who considered himself a great friend of mine—once we had passed each other’s tests and made a pact for secrecy. Because it is common for some renegades—when they want to return to Christendom—tofirst gather letters of recommendation from prominent and distinguished captives, attesting however they can that Such-and-Such renegade is an upright man who has always done right by Christians and always intended toflee and reconvert to Christianity at the veryfirst opportunity.

“There are some renegades who gather these recommendations in good faith, and others who keep them in their back pocket, just in case: if they happen to be captured while they’re offraiding Christian lands, they pull out their letters and declare the papers are proof of the real reason they have come, namely to convert back and return to Christendom, and it just so happens that the only transportation they couldfind was this corsair ship of Turkish pirates. Thus, they escape punishment and reconcile with the Church without being harmed or handed over to the Inquisition.[7] And then, whenever they get the chance, they go right back to Barbary and convert back to Islam all over again.

“There are, however, other renegades who gather and use these letters in good faith, and they do stay in Christendom when they return. Well, my friend, the renegade I mentioned, was one of the latter, and he had already collected letters and signatures from all our company, where we praised him to the highest degree we could. If the Moors had caught him with those papers, they would have burned him alive. I knew he knew Arabic very well, and not just how to speak it, but how to write it, too. But before I told him everything that had happened, I asked him to read the note for me, claiming I had come across Full p. C-495 Shorter p. 1706 it by chance, stuffed in a hole in the wall of my shelter. He unrolled it and spent a good while looking at it and making sense of it, murmuring between his teeth. I asked him if he could understand it; he told me he understood it perfectly. He said if I wanted him to translate it for me word for word, I’d better get him a quill and some ink. We got what he asked for, and, bit by bit, he translated the letter. Once hefinished, he said:

“‘Everything written here in Spanish is precisely what this Moorish note says. And you should know here where it says lela Marién, it means Our Señora the Virgin María.’

“So we read the note, which said:

‘When I was a little girl, my father had a Christian slave. She taught me the Christian prayer in my own language and told me a great many things about lela Marién. When she died, I know she did not go to the flames, but to Allah,[8] because she appeared to me twice after she passed, telling me to go to Christian lands to see lela Marié n, who loved me dearly. I do not know how to go. I have seen many Christian men through this window, and none have seemed chivalrous, except for you. I am young and beautiful, and I have a great deal of coin to take with me. See if you can find a way for us to leave, and when we arrive you will be my husband, if you like, and if not, I won’t mind a bit, for lela Marién will send me someone to marry. I wrote this note myself; be careful who you give it to. Trust no Moor, for they are all treacherous. This worries me greatly; I beg you not to tell anyone what you are doing, for if my father were to find out, he would throw me into a well and fill it up with stones.

‘I will tie a string to the cane. Tie your response to it. If you do not have anyone who can write Arabic for you, give me your answer in signs and gestures, for lela Marién will make sure I understand. May She and Allah keep you safe, along with this cross, which I kiss again and again, as my father’s captive taught me.’

“You tell me, señores, if it stands to reason that this note should spur us to wonder and joy! Between one thing and another, it dawned on the renegade that this was no chance note we’d come across—whoever had written it wrote it to one of us. He pleaded for us to tell him if what he suspected was true, begging us to trust him and tell him everything, promising to risk his life for our freedom. As he spoke, he pulled out a little metal crucifix he wore under his clothes, over his heart. Streaming tears, he swore to the God represented by that symbol that although he was a wretched sinner, he was still a true and faithful believer of the Christian creed. He pledged his loyalty and promised to keep our secret, or as much of it as we wanted to tell him, because from what he could see and surmise from the note he had translated, this might well lead to freedom for him, as well as for us. Because his greatest desire was to return to the fold of the Holy Mother Church, from which he—like a rotting appendage—had been amputated and removed, on account of his own ignorance and sin.

“As he spoke, the renegade’s tears poured copiously down his face, and he seemed so genuinely regretful that we all agreed to do as he asked and tell him what was going on. We told him everything, concealing nothing. Then we Full p. C-496 Shorter p. 1707 pointed out the window where the cane had appeared. He took note of the house, promising he would take great and special care tofind out who lived there. We all agreed it would be good to write back to the Moorish lady, considering we had someone who knew how to write Arabic on hand. Right away, the renegade began writing down, in Arabic, the words I dictated to him in Spanish, which were, right down to the letter, exactly the ones I will repeat now, for not a single detail of the best parts of my story has ever slipped from my memory, nor will I ever forget them, for as long as I live. In short, this is what we wrote back to the Moorish lady:

‘ May the true Allah keep you, my lady, and Blessed Marién, who is the true mother of God and the one who planted in your heart the desire to journey to Christian lands, on account of Her great love for you. Beg Her, if She pleases, tell you how you might go about putting into action this journey She has called on you to undertake, for She is so good, She will surely answer. On behalf of myself and all the Christian men here with me, I offer to do anything and everything I can for you, even unto death. Be sure to write back and let me know what your plan is, and I will reply for great Allah has given us a captive Christian who knows how to speak and write your language well, as you can see from this note. Thus, you can inform us of anything you like, with no need to fear. In regards to marrying me when we arrive in Christian lands, I give you my word as a good Christian—and you know Christians keep their word better than Moors do—that we will be wed. May Allah and His Mother Marién protect you, my lady.’

“Once the letter was written and sealed, I waited two days for the prison to empty out as usual before heading to the accustomed spot under the window to see if the cane would appear, which, before long, it did. As soon as I saw it, even though I could not see the hand that held it, I held up my note as a sign for them to tie a string to the cane. But the string was already there, so I tied on the note, and up it went. A few moments later, our guiding star—the cane—reappeared, the whiteflag of peace tied into a fat knot at its end. Down came the cane; I

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unknotted it and found many different coins of silver and gold—worth more thanfifty gold *escudos*, which increased our joyfifty-fold and sealed our hopes we truly would reach freedom.

"That very night, our renegade returned and told us he had learned that house belonged to a Moor called Agi Morato, an excessively rich man with only one child—a daughter, the heir to his entire estate, who was widely considered to be the most beautiful woman in all of Barbary. Many a viceroy had come asking for her hand, but she had never wanted to marry. The renegade told us he had also found out the daughter once had a captive Christian woman, who had died. Everything he learned confirmed what she had written in her note. Immediately, we sat down with the renegade to discuss our plan to spring the Moorish lady and return to Christian lands. In the end, we agreed that for the time being, we would wait for Zoraida[9] — who now wanted to be called María—to send us her response. For it was quite clear it was she and no other who Full p. C-497 Shorter p. 1708 would be the way out of our woes. Everyone agreed, and the renegade assured us we had no need to worry, because he would either die trying, or he'd get us to freedom.

"For four days, the prison was packed with people, so for four days, we waited for the cane's return. Finally, once the prison was empty, out came the cane as usual, weighed down this time by a knot so pregnant and pendulous, it promised an utterly delightful birth. Down came the cane with its kerchief—inside I found another note and a hundred gold *escudos*, not a penny more. The renegade was there with us, so we went right inside our cell and gave him the note to read. He told us that it said:

> *'I do not know, señor, how to arrange our journey to Spain, nor has lela Marié n told me, though I have asked. What could be arranged, however, is for me to give you a great many coins of gold, lowered from this window. Take them and ransom yourself and your friends, and then send one ahead to Christian lands with the remaining gold. There he can buy a ship and return for the rest. As for me, you will find me in my father's gardens near the Gate of Babazon,[1] along the shore, where I will be spending the summer with my father and our servants. There, you will be able to spirit me away under cover of night, with nothing to fear, and take me to the ship. And remember, you are to be my husband, and that is how you must treat me, or I will pray to Marién to punish you. If you do not trust anyone else to return with the ship, pay your own ransom and go yourself—for I know you will be sure to return, moreso than any other, as you are a knight and a gentleman and a Christian. Find out where the gardens are, and when I see you there, I will know the prison has been left bare, and I will give you quite a lot of money. May Allah keep you safe, my dear señor.'*

"These were the words and contents of the second note, which, once we had all seen it, led to everyone offering to be the one ransomed, promising to go and return with perfect promptness, myself included. But the renegade was completely against it, saying he would never agree to a plan where just one or two of us got their freedomfirst—everyone had to go together, for experience had taught him how seldom free men kept the promises they made as slaves. Many distinguished captives had made the same plan, ransoming one man and sending him with gold to Valencia or Mallorca, with the instruction to ready a ship and come back for those who had paid his ransom. None of them ever returned. Once they were free, the thrill of freedom and the fear of returning to slavery erased every other obligation from their memories. As proof of the truth of what he was saying, he offered us an example, telling us the tale of certain Christian knighted noblemen who had made almost the exact same plan. And it

was a tale of the strangest thing ever to happen in those parts, though there, one comes face to face, every day, with strangeness spurring shock and wonder.

“Essentially, his point was that what we could and should do with the money we were thinking of using to ransom one of us was instead to give it to him. For he could buy a ship right there in Algiers, under the premise of becoming a merchant and trading in Tetouan[2] and all along the coast. And once he was in Full p. C-498 Shorter p. 1709 charge of a ship, it would be easy to make arrangements to get all of us out of the prison and onto the ship. What’s more, if the Moorish lady kept her word and gave us enough money to ransom everyone, once we were free, we could board the ship with no trouble at all, even in broad daylight.

“The biggest obstacle to this plan was the fact that the Moors do not allow renegades to own or buy boats (other than the massive ones meant for corsair raids), because they suspect any renegade buying a boat—especially a Spaniard—wants it for no reason other than to return to Christian lands. Nevertheless, our renegade promised he couldfinesse this inconvenience by partnering with a Tagarine,[3] splitting both the work of running the ship and the profits. Then, under cover of the Tagarine, he would come to run the ship, after which the rest would be easy.

“Even though my companions and I thought it would be better to send someone to Mallorca for the ship, as the Moorish lady had instructed, no one dared contradict him, because we were afraid if we did not do as he said, he would turn us in and then we would be in danger of losing our lives if the deal with Zoraida was discovered, for each of us would have given our own life for hers. And so we put ourselves in God’s—and the renegade’s—hands.

“We wrote back to Zoraida immediately, telling her we would do everything she had advised, for the plan she laid out was as clear as if it had come from lela Marién Herself. I reminded her she alone had the power to set it into motion, and once again offered myself as her husband. The next time the prison emptied out, the cane and its cloth made multiple trips, for she gave us two thousand gold *escudos* and a note saying the following *jumá*—which is Friday—she would depart for her father’s gardens, but she would give us more money before she went. She urged us, if it was not enough, to tell her, promising to give us however much we needed, for her father had so much coin, he would never notice what was missing, and what’s more, she had keys to all the coffers.

“Right away, we gavefive hundred *escudos* to the renegade, to buy the ship. I ransomed myself with eight hundred more, giving the money to a Valencian merchant who happened to be in Algiers so he could ransom me from the King. I was released into the merchant’s custody on his word that the rest of my ransom was coming on the very next ship from Valencia—because if he had paid the whole ransom up front, the King of Algiers would wonder how long he had been keeping that money in the city and suspect him of hiding his profits to avoid his taxes. Essentially my owner was so canny and so paranoid, I did not dare hand over all the money at once.

“The Thursday before the Friday on which the beautiful Zoraida was to leave for the gardens, she gave us another thousand *escudos* and reminded us of her departure, begging me, if I was ransomed, to immediatelyfind out where the gardens of her father were andfind an opportunity to go there and see her. I replied in few words, saying I would and asking her to pray for us to lela Marién, with all the prayers her captive had taught her.

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“From there, we set about arranging the ransoms of our three companions, to speed up our exit from the prison, and because I did not want them to grow Full p. C-499 Shorter p. 1710 resentful—seeing me ransomed and themselves still captive, when we already had the funds to ransom them—and let the Devil persuade them act out in some way that might endanger Zoraida. For although they were who they were—knighted noblemen, one and all—and that should have assuaged my fears, even so, I did not want to put the whole business at risk. So I had them ransomed in the same manner I ransomed myself, handing all the money over to the merchant, so he could put down the deposits with confidence and security, although we never revealed the secret truth of our business to him, given the danger.”

CHAPTER XLI

Where the captive continues with his tale

“Beforefifteen days had passed, our renegade had bought afine boat, with room for more than thirty aboard. To cement his pretense and be sure of its success, he decided to—and did—make a trading trip to a place called Sargel, which is thirty leagues from Algiers towards Oran, and a major hub for driedfigs. He ran the route two or three times, accompanied by the Tagarine I mentioned. (*Tagarine* is what people in Barbary call the Moors of Aragón. The ones from Granada they call *mudéjares*, although, in the Kingdom of Fez, *mudéjares* are known as *elches*, and it is they whom the King relies upon most often to serve in his wars.)

“Well, as I was saying, on each trip to Sargel, he anchored the ship in a cove not two crossbow shots from the gardens where Zoraida awaited. While he was there, the renegade deliberately joined the Moors who rowed the oars in their prayers and practiced what he meant to do for real, accompanying them to Zoraida’s gardens to ask for fruit, which her father would give him, not knowing who he was. And though—as he later told me—he wished he could speak with Zoraida and tell her not to worry and to rest assured, for he was the one who, upon my command, would ferry her to Christian lands, he was unable to do so, because a Moorish lady never shows herself to any Muslim, Moor or Turk, unless her husband or her father commands it. But with captive Christians, they speak and spend time often, perhaps more than is strictly reasonable. It would have bothered me if he had managed to speak with her, for she might have been upset to hear her business coming out of some renegade’s mouth. But God arranged things otherwise and thwarted thefine desires of our renegade. Having seen how easily he could enter and leave Sargel, laying anchor whenever and wherever he pleased, and having established that his companion the Tagarine’s only desire was to do whatever the renegade wanted, and having confirmed that I had already been ransomed, the only thing left to do was tofind some Christians to row the oars. And so he told me to pick whom I wanted to bring along, aside from the ransomed men, and tell them to be ready to go thefirst Friday of the month, which was when he had decided we would leave.

“So I spoke to a dozen Spaniards, all valiant men at oars, and all among the captives who could most freely leave the city. Finding even a dozen was no small task at the time, for there were twenty corsair ships out on raids that had taken all the oarsmen along with them. I would not have found the ones I did were it not for the fact that their owner decided to skip the pirating season that Full p. C-500 Shorter p. 1711 year tofinish work on a small galley he had at the dry docks. The only thing I told any of them was to leave the city, one by one, without being

seen, on the afternoon of thefirst Friday, then go to Agi Morato's gardens and wait for me there. I gave each of them this instruction while we were alone, warning them, even if they saw other Christians outside the gardens, to tell them nothing beyond the fact that I had told them to go there and wait.

"Once that loose end had been tied, there was only one thing left—the most important one—which was to let Zoraida know where things stood with the plan, so she would be aware and ready to go and not be frightened if we suddenly came by to kidnap her sooner than she believed we would be able to get a ship and return.

"I decided to go to the gardens to see if I could speak with her. One day before we were set to leave, under the pretext of going to gather some herbs and greens, I made my way to the gardens. Thefirst person I came across was her father, who addressed me in the language captives and Moors use to speak to each other across all of Barbary, and even as far as Constantinople. It is neither Spanish nor Moorish, nor the tongue of any nation, but rather a fusing of many languages into a hybrid we can all understand. Well, as I was saying, addressing me in that language, he asked me who I was, and what my business was in his garden. I told him I was a slave of Arnaute Mamí[4] (because I knew for certain the two were dear friends), and I was looking for some herbs and greens to make a salad. He wanted to know if I was for ransom and how much my owner was asking for me. In the middle of all these questions and answers, the lovely Zoraida, who had spotted me long before I saw her, came out of the house and into the garden. And, since Moorish ladies have no qualms about seeing or being seen by Christians, as I have said, there was nothing stopping her from walking over to stand next to her father. Indeed, when he saw her in the distance, he called her over, commanding she to come to his side.

"It would be too much now for me to speak of the great beauty, gentility, elegance, and opulence with which my beloved Zoraida revealed herself to my eyes. All I shall say is that her neck, her ears, and lovely locks were adorned with more pearls than she had hairs on her head. Her ankles were bare, in Moorish fashion, and on them she wore two *carcajes* (that is how you say 'anklet' or 'bangle' in Moorish) made of pure gold, encrusted with endless diamonds, which, she later told me, her father had appraised at ten thousand gold *doblas* .[5] The ones she wore around her wrists were equally expensive. And then there was the great number offine pearls, for Moorish ladies' favorite opulence and indulgence is to adorn themselves in thefinest pearls of the rivers and the seas. That is why there are more pearls among the Moors than all other nations combined. Zoraida's father had a reputation for having the greatest number and highest quality pearls in all of Algiers, along with more than two hundred thousand Spanish *escudos*, all of which she who is now my lady was lady of.

"Whether she was beautiful, so bejeweled, you may surmise for yourselves. See how much her loveliness shines now, after so many difficulties, and imagine how she looked in more prosperous times. For it is well known that the beauty of certain women has its days and seasons, its ebb andflow, and it is Full p. C-501 Shorter p. 1712 natural for the passions of the soul to enhance that beauty or detract from it, though most of the time, such passions destroy it. Essentially, what I mean to say is at that moment she was dazzlingly adorned and blindingly beautiful, or at least that is how she seemed to me—the most beautiful woman I had ever seen. And considering the promise and commitment I had made to her, when Ifirst saw her, I felt I stood before a Goddess sent from Heaven, come down to Earth to thrill me and deliver me.

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“As soon as she came close, her father told her in their language that I was a captive of his friend Arnaute Mamí, and I had come seeking salad. She turned to me and asked, in the mix of languages I have described, if I was a knighted nobleman, and why I had not yet been ransomed. I replied that I had, and I could see how highly my owner valued me in the price he set, for I had paidfifteen hundred gold *zoltanís*[6] for myself. To which she replied:

“‘Truly, if you belonged to my father, I would make him set your price at twice that. For you Christians lie every time you speak, pretending to be poor just to fool us Moors.’

“‘That may well be, señora,’ I replied, ‘but the truth is I did not lie to my master, for I always speak truly and will keep speaking truly to everyone in the world.’

“‘And when are you leaving?’ asked Zoraida.

“‘Tomorrow, I think,’ I said, ‘because there is a ship from France setting sail tomorrow, and I plan to be aboard.’

“‘Would it not be better,’ Zoraida replied, ‘to wait for a ship to come from Spain and return with them, and not with the French, who are no friends of the Spaniards?’

“‘No,’ I responded, ‘although of course, if news comes that a ship is on its way from Spain, I will wait for it. But the surest thing is to leave tomorrow, for my desire to see myself in my own land, alongside the people I love, is so strong, it will not permit me to await any other opportunity that may require delay, no matter how much better it may be.’

“‘Surely, you must be married in your lands,’ Zoraida said, ‘and are eager to see your wife.’

“‘I am,’ I replied, ‘“not married, but I have given my word to be wed when I arrive.’

“‘And is she beautiful, the woman to whom you gave your word?’ asked Zoraida.

“‘So beautiful,’ I replied, ‘that, to tell the truth and truly describe her beauty, I could say she looks quite a bit like you.’

“Her father burst out laughing and said:

“‘Wallah, Christian, if she looks like my daughter—the most beautiful woman in this whole kingdom—she must truly be something to see! If you don’t believe me, go on and take a good look at her, and see if what I say is true.’

“For most of these words and reasons we exchanged, Zoraida’s father served as our interpreter. For although she could communicate in the bastard language that, as I mentioned, is used down there, she expressed her meaning more with gestures than with words, whereas her father spoke with deft ease.

Full p. C-502 Shorter p. 1713

“As we were exchanging these and many other words, a Moor came running toward us, shouting at the top of his lungs that four Turks had jumped the walls of the garden and were running around picking fruit that wasn’t even ripe. The old man grew quite pale, as did Zoraida, for it is a common and almost natural state for Moors to be afraid of Turks, especially Turkish soldiers, who are so contemptuous and tyrannical towards the Moors they rule over, they treat them worse than slaves.

“Well, as I was saying, Zoraida’s father told her:

“‘Daughter, go into the house and lock yourself inside while I go speak to these curs. And you, Christian, pick your herbs and greens and get going, and may Allah send you safely back to your lands.’

“I bowed, and he went offafter the Turks, leaving me alone with Zoraida. She took a few steps in the direction her father had commanded, but as soon as he disappeared among the trees of the orchard, she returned to my side, eyes brimming with tears, and said:

“‘*Amexi*, Christian, *amexi*?’ (Which means: ‘Are you leaving, Christian, are you leaving?’)

“I replied:

“‘Yes, señora, but not, under any circumstances, without you. Wait for me on thefirst *jum*á, and do not be frightened when you see me and my men, for there is no doubt we will succeed in our journey to Christian lands.’

“I told her this in such a way that she understood perfectly every reason we exchanged, and she threw her arm around my neck and began to walk with stumbling steps toward the house. As luck would have it—and here, things could have gone quite badly indeed, had Heaven not arranged them otherwise—just as the two of us were in the particular position and posture I just described, with her arm around my neck, her father—who was heading back, having gotten rid of the Turks—happened to see us, touching and draped all over each other. We saw him see us. But Zoraida, always clever and discreet, did not pull her arm away—instead, she leaned closer to me, laying her head against my chest and letting her knees buckle a bit, giving clear signs and indications that she was about to faint, and so I acted like I was holding her up, against my will, to keep her from falling. Her father came running over, and, seeing his daughter in such a state, asked her what was wrong. When she did not respond, he said:

“‘No doubt the shock of those curs’ incursion caused her to faint.’

“And, taking her offmy chest, he settled her onto his own. She, her eyes still wet with tears, sighing, said once more:

“‘Á*mexi*, Christian ,á*mexi* .’ (Leave, Christian, leave.)

“To which her father replied:

“‘It is of no matter, my daughter, if the Christian leaves, for he has done you no harm and now the Turks are gone. Do not be afraid, for there is nothing to frighten you anymore, since, as I said, the Turks heeded my pleas and left the way they came.’

“‘They, señor, were the ones who frightened her, as you said,’ I told her father, ‘but since she says I should leave, I do not want to upset her. Peace be with you, and with your permission, I shall come back later, if necessary, for some herbs from your garden, which, according to my master, grows the best salad greens in all the world.’

Full p. C-503 Shorter p. 1714

“‘Come back whenever you like,’ Agi Morato replied, ‘for my daughter did not say that because you or any other Christians anger her, but rather because, in trying to say the Turks should leave, she said you should leave, or else because it was time for you to go offand gather your herbs and greens.’

“With that, I took my leave of them. She—though it seemed to rend her very soul—went inside with her father, and I, under the pretext of gathering my greens, made my way around, scoping out the garden at my leisure. I made note of the entrances and exits, and the house’s fortifications, and how well all of it could lend itself to our plans.

“Once that was done, I returned to the ship and told the renegade and my companions everything that had occurred. I could not wait for the moment when, without having to fear, I could delight in the lovely, beautiful Zoraida with whom Fortune had blessed me. In short, time passed and the day and moment we had been awaiting arrived. Following the plan we

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had so carefully considered over the course of so many long discussions, we found the success we so deeply desired. Because on the Friday after the day I spoke to Zoraida in the garden, once night had fallen, our renegade anchored the ship almost directly in front of where the dazzlingly beautiful Zoraida was waiting. By this point, the Christians who were to man the oars had been notified and hidden themselves in various parts thereabouts. They were all on edge and in suspense, waiting for me and eyeing the ship, eager to charge. Because they had no idea the renegade was in on the plan—they thought they would have tofight their way to freedom by the strength of their arms, slaughtering all the Moors aboard.

"Well, as it happened, as soon as I and my companions arrived, the others who had been waiting came out of hiding to meet us. At that hour, the city gates had been closed and the streets were empty. Once we were all assembled, we debated whether it would be better to get Zoraidafirst, or to take the shipfirst by overpowering the Moorish oarsmen. As we stood there discussing it, our renegade came over to ask what the holdup was, for the time was right and his Moors were all offguard, and most of them asleep. We told him what we were debating, and he said the most important thing was to take the shipfirst—which we could now do with tremendous ease, running no danger whatsoever—and then we could go get Zoraida. This seemed good to all of us, so without further ado, with our renegade as our guide, we made our way down to the ship. He was thefirst to leap aboard, and with his hand on the hilt of his cutlass, speaking in Moorish, he shouted out:

"'Nobody move, or it'll cost you your life!'

"By that point, almost all the Christians were aboard. The Moors showed no sign of moving, shocked to see their own *arráez*[7] saying such things to them. Without a single one reaching for his weapon—few if any of them were armed, anyway—they surrendered without a word, holding out their hands to be tied by the Christians, who did so quickly, threatening that if a single Moor tried to shout or cry out in any way or form, the Christians would skewer them all.

"Once that was done, we left half our number on the ship to guard the Moors, and the rest of us—again with the renegade as our guide—went to the gardens of Agi Morato. Luck was with us as we tried the gate, for it presented Full p. C-504 Shorter p. 1715 no more obstacle than if it had been wide open, and so, stealthily, we made our way to the house without being noticed. The immensely beautiful Zoraida was standing at her window, waiting for us. As soon as she heard us, she asked in a low voice if we were *nizarani*, which was the same as asking if we were Christians. I said yes and told her to come down. She recognized my voice and made no delay, for without saying a word, she came downstairs immediately, opening the door to reveal herself in all her glory. She was so lovely and so opulently dressed, it was more than I can describe. As soon as I saw her, I took her hand and began to kiss it, and the renegade did the same, and so did my two companions. And the rest, who did not know what was happening, did the same thing they saw us do, as it seemed we were thanking her for our freedom and honoring her as our lady of liberty.

"The renegade asked her, in the Moorish tongue, if her father was still there. She replied he was upstairs sleeping.

"'Well then, we'll just have to wake him up,' the renegade replied, 'and take him with us, along with everything worth anything in these lovely gardens.'

"'No!' she said. 'Under no circumstances is anyone to lay a hand on my father, and there is nothing of value in this house other than what I have with me, which is enough to make you all rich and happy. Wait a moment and you'll see.'

"Saying this, she went back into the house, telling us she would quickly return, urging us to stay put and make no sound. I asked the renegade what he had said to her, and he told me. I told him he was not to do anything but follow the commands of Zoraida, who returned carrying a little chest so weighed down with gold *escudos*, she could hardly hold it up. But our luck had soured, and her father awoke, hearing the noise in the gardens and going to look out his window. Immediately recognizing the men outside were Christians, he began shouting, over and over, in loud, frenetic Arabic:

"'Christians, Christians! Thieves, thieves!'

"These cries threw us all into tremendous, terrifying confusion. But the renegade, seeing the danger we were in, and considering how deeply he wanted to carry out his plan before we got caught,flew up the stairs into Agi Morato's room, followed by a number of our men—though I did not follow, for I did not dare leave Zoraida unprotected, as she had once again let herself fall, as if in a faint, into my arms. In short, the men upstairs had such a knack for kidnapping, that in an instant, they were back with a trussed-up Agi Morato—his hands tied and a kerchief stuffed in his mouth to keep him from speaking—threatening him, all the while, that a single word would cost him his life.

"When his daughter saw him, she covered her eyes and would not look at him, and her father was shaken, not knowing how willingly she had placed herself in our hands. But since the moment called more for feet than for hands, we swiftly and rapidly returned to the boat where the rest of our number awaited us, fearful something had gone wrong.

"It was barely two hours after midnight by the time we were all aboard. Zoraida's father was untied, and the kerchief taken out of his mouth, but the renegade told him again not to say a word or they'd kill him. He, seeing his daughter aboard, began to heave anguished sighs, especially when he saw how tightly I was holding her in my arms, and how she leaned against me with no struggle or complaint. But even with all that, he kept quiet, so no one would put into effect the renegade's many threats.

Full p. C-505 Shorter p. 1716

"Well, Zoraida, seeing herself aboard the ship, and how eager we were to get our oars in the water, looked at her father and the other tied-up Moors and told the renegade to tell me in Spanish to do her the mercy of freeing the Moors and her father, for she would rather throw herself into the sea than see—before her very eyes and on her account—the father who had so loved her enslaved. The renegade told me what she said, and I replied I would be perfectly happy to do so, but the renegade said it would be a bad move, because if we let them go there, they were sure to sound the alarm and wake the whole city up, and then they'd come looking for us in light frigates and overtake us by land and by sea, so we could not escape. He said what we could do would be to free them on thefirst piece of Christian soil we came to. We all agreed, and when we explained to Zoraida the reason we could not do what she wished just yet, she, too, was satisfied.

"Then, in joyful silence and with chipper swiftness, each of our brave oarsmen took up his oar, and calling out to God with all our hearts, we laid course for the islands of Mallorca, which was the closest Christian land. But the north wind began to blow and the sea grew so choppy, we could not keep course for Mallorca. Instead, we were forced to hug the coast and head west

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toward Oran—which troubled us greatly, for we feared being spotted from Sargel, which is sixty miles down the coast from Algiers. We were also afraid of running into one of the galliots[8] that generally sail with their wares from Tetouan, although each and every one of us felt sure that if we did come up against a merchant galliot—as long as it was not one of the corsair ones—not only would we not be lost, we'd take the other ship, which would allow usfinish our journey more securely.

"As we sailed along, Zoraida buried her face in my hands to avoid looking at her father; I could feel her begging lela Marién to help us. We must have gone some thirty miles by the time dawn overtook us, some three shots from shore, which we saw was empty desert, with no one there to spot us. But even so, by the strength of the oarsmen's arms, we pushed farther out to sea, which by then was considerably less choppy. Once we were two leagues from shore, the order came down to start rowing in shifts, so everyone could have a bite to eat, for the ship was well stocked with provisions. But the oarsmen said this was no time to rest, and the others could feed them while they rowed if they wished, but under no circumstances would they let go of their oars. And so they did.

"As the other Christians were feeding the oarsmen, the winds began to blow against us, and we had no choice but to hoist the sail, raise the oars, and head toward Oran, for no other course was possible. All this was done swiftly, and we sailed along at eight miles an hour, our only fear that we might come across a corsair ship. We fed the Moors rowing the oars, and the renegade consoled them, telling them they were not captives, and as soon as he had the opportunity, he would set them free. Zoraida's father was told the same, and he replied:

"'Any other offer, I could believe or even expect from someone of your good breeding and generosity, O Christians! Any offer except for giving me my freedom for free. I am not as simple as you imagine—you did not risk yourselves to strip my freedom from me only to return it so magnanimously, especially knowing—as Shorter p. 1717 you do—who I am, and the profit you could make selling my liberty Full p. C-506 back to me. If you would like to put a number on it, right here and now, I offer you however much you want for myself and for this unlucky daughter of mine. Or else name your price to at least free her, for she is the better andfiner part of my soul.'

"As he spoke, he began to weep so bitterly, we were all moved to compassion, and even Zoraida was forced to look at him. Seeing him weeping struck her so deeply, she stood up from her seat at my feet and went over to embrace her father. Pressing her face to his, the two began to sob so tenderly that many of us present wept with them. But when her father noticed she was wearing a party dress and bedecked with herfinest jewelry, he asked her (in their language):

"'What is this, daughter? Last night, before this terrible misfortune befell us, I saw you wearing your usual clothes, and now—when you've had no time to get dressed, and have received no joyous news worth putting on your jewels and dressing up for, here you are in thefinest garments I could furnish you with in more fortunate times. Answer me this, for I am more shocked and bewildered by this than by the very misfortune in which Ifind myself.'

"The renegade translated everything the Moor said to his daughter—she spoke not a word in response. But when he spotted, stashed in the ship, the little chest where she kept her jewels—which he was sure she had left in Algiers, not brought with her to the garden—he grew even more perturbed, asking her how the chest had come into our hands, and what it held inside. Without waiting for Zoraida to respond, the renegade replied saying:

“‘Don’t waste your breath, señor, asking your daughter all these questions. I’ll tell you something that will answer them all. I want you to know your daughter is a Christian, and she freed us from our chains, led us out of our captivity and into liberty. She’s here of her own free will and is as happy to be here—I imagine—as someone coming out of darkness into the light, out of death into life, and out of suffering and into glory.’

“‘Is this true, daughter?’ asked the Moor.

“‘It is,’ replied Zoraida.

“‘You mean to say,’ responded the old man, ‘you are a Christian woman, and it was you who delivered your own father into the hands of his enemies?’

“To which Zoraida replied:

“‘I am a Christian woman, but not the one who brought you into this. My desire was never to abandon or wrong you, just to do what was right for me.’

“‘And what is it you have done that is so right for you, daughter?’

“‘That,’ she replied, ‘is a question for lela Marién, who will know how to answer better than I.’

“As soon as the Moor heard this, quick as lightning, he threw himself overboard, plummeting headfirst into the sea, where he indubitably would have drowned, had his long, billowing garments not caused him to slightlyfloat. Zoraida shouted at once to pull him out, and we all answered her call. Grabbing him by his tunic, wefished him out, unconscious and half drowned. Zoraida was struck with such suffering at the sight, she began to wail over her father, her cries ragged and tender, as if he were actually dead.

“Weflipped him over onto his belly and he spewed out quite a lot of seawater. Two hours later, he awoke. By then, the winds had shifted again, and we Full p. C-507 Shorter p. 1718 had to hug the shore and lean on the oars to keep from running aground. But Fortune was with us, and we came to a cove alongside a small peninsula or cape known to the Moors as the Cape of the *Cava Rumía*, which in our language means ‘wicked Christian woman.’ Word among the Moors is that the cape is the burial place of La Cava, on whose account Spain was lost,[9] because *cava* in their language means ‘wicked woman,’ and *rumía* means ‘Christian.’ Some say it is bad luck to lay anchor there when forced to by necessity—because they would never do so willingly—but what we found was not the haven of a wicked woman, but a safe port to shelter us from the angry sea.

“We sent a few men ashore to keep watch; the rest of us kept our hands on the oars as we ate the provisions the renegade had provided and begged God and Our Lady, with all our hearts, to smile on us and bless us with a fortunatefinal stretch for a journey so blessedly begun. At Zoraida’s pleading, the order was given to put her father and the other tied-up Moors ashore, for she had neither the heart nor the stomach to see her father and others of her land captive and chained. We promised to do so as soon as we were ready to leave, for there was no danger leaving them there, as the cape was empty and uninhabited.

“Our prayers were not in vain. Heaven heard them and turned the winds in our favor, calming the seas and welcoming us to happily resume our journey. Seeing this, we untied the Moors and set them ashore, one by one, to their astonishment. But when it was time for Zoraida’s father—who by then was fully awake—to go, he said:

“‘Why, Christians, do you think this wicked woman is happy to see you free me? Do you think it isfilial piety? No, certainly not. She is only happy because my presence is an obstacle to

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her wicked desires. Nor should the fact that she converted from our religion to yours lead you to believe yours is better than ours. It is merely because dishonesty, in your lands, is tolerated with more generosity than in ours.'

"And turning to Zoraida—whom I and another Christian held by the arms to be sure she would not do anything foolish—he said:

"'O infamous child, wayward girl! Where is it you are going so blindly, so senselessly, in the power of these curs, our natural-born enemies? Goddamn the moment I sired you and all the luxury in which I raised you!'

"It looked like he was planning on going on in this vein for quite a while, so I hurried to put him ashore. There, he continued shouting curses and laments, begging Mohammed to beg Allah to destroy us, confound us, and send us to our ends. Even when we had sailed offso far we could no longer hear his words, we could still see what he was doing—namely, ripping out his beard, tearing out his hair, and dragging himself along the ground. Just once, he mustered a shout so loud, we were able to make out his words, which were:

"'Come back, beloved daughter, come back here—I forgive you for everything! Give those men the money, for it is already theirs, and come back and console your miserable father, who will lay down his life on these desert sands, if you leave him!'

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"Zoraida heard it all, aching and weeping, but she did not know how to answer him, except with this:

"'O Father, may Allah allow lela Marién, who is the reason I became Christian, to console you in your sorrow. Allah knows there was nothing else for me to do but what I have done, and these Christians owe me nothing, for even if I had wanted to stay home and not go with them, it would have been impossible, since my soul so urged me to hurry and enact this plan which is, in my mind, just as good as you, beloved father, judge it wicked.'

"By the time she said this, her father could no longer hear her, nor could we even see him. And so I consoled Zoraida as we continued on our voyage, sped along by fortunate winds. We made such good time, everyone believed that by the next day's dawn, we would be standing on the shores of Spain. But since good luck seldom or never comes pure and simple and on its own, and is instead accompanied or followed by some ill luck to muddy or outweigh the good, it was our Fortune—or perhaps it was the curses the Moor had heaped upon his daughter, for a father's curses must always be feared, no matter the father—that, some three hours after midnight, as we were traveling the high seas at full sail with the oars stowed—for a good wind saved us the labor of needing them—beneath the bright moon's light, we saw, headed our way, a square-rigged ship at full sail with her keel dropped, angling to cut us off. The ship came so close, we were forced to drop sail to keep from colliding. They cut against the wind and slid up alongside us, asking us who we were, where we were going, where we had come from. But since they asked all this in French, our renegade said:

"'Nobody answer, for these are surely French pirates, who steal everything theyfind.'

"Thus warned, no one spoke a word. Pulling ahead a bit, into the wind, they suddenlyfired two pieces of artillery which, apparently, were both loaded with chainshot, for thefirst snapped our mast right off, toppling the sail into the sea. Right away, the other onefired, sending a chainshot ripping through our broadside, tearing a huge hole in the hull. The rest of the ship wasfine, but since we were sinking, we all began to shout for help, begging the men

on the other ship to bring us aboard before we went under. They dropped sail and launched a skiff, or dinghy, with as many as twelve Frenchmen aboard, all armed to the teeth, brandishing their blunderbusses with the fuses lit, as they boarded our ship.

“Once they saw how few of us there were, and how quickly our ship was sinking, they rowed us back with them, saying all of this was our fault for so discourteously refusing to respond to their questions. Our renegade grabbed Zoraida’s treasure chest and tossed it into the sea before it was seen. In summary, we all boarded the French vessel. The Frenchmen—once we had answered all their questions—treated us like mortal enemies, stripping us of everything we had. They even took Zoraida’s anklets. But that did not trouble me as much as my fear that they would not stop at stripping Zoraida of her jewelry, but would go on to take her most precious jewel, the one she cherished most. But their desires, as it turned out, extended no further than lust for coin, though in that realm, their greed was so bottomless, they would have taken the cassocks offour backs, had they been of any use to them.

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“A number of the Frenchmen thought it would be best to tie us up in a sail and toss us into the sea, because they had planned to stop at several Spanish ports, pretending to be Bretons, and if they brought us along, alive, the jig would be up and they would be punished. But their captain, who was the one who had stripped Zoraida of her riches, said he was happy enough with the haul he had and did not want to try any more ports in Spain, but instead sail back through the Strait of Gibraltar under cover of night, or however they could manage it, and return to La Rochelle. And so they agreed they would give us their ship’s skiffand everything we needed for the short distance that remained. The next day they did just that and set us offwithin eyeshot of the Spanish shore. The sight alone erased all our troubles and our poverty from our minds, as if none of it had happened: so great is the satisfaction of regaining freedom.

“It must have been around noon when they put us offthe ship, loading up the dinghy with two barrels of water and some hardtack. The captain, moved by I-don’t-know-what-kind of mercy, gave Zoraida as many as forty gold *escudos* before she disembarked, forbidding his soldiers from stripping her of the very garments she wears now. We got into the boat and thanked them for the good turn they had done us, more grateful than upset. They sped away from shore, setting course straight for the straits. And we, with no North Star but the land we saw before us, threw ourselves into rowing with such haste that by sundown, we were so close, it seemed we would surely make landfall just after we lost the light. But there was no moon that night, and the skies were dark, and since we did not know where exactly we were, we felt it was not safe to beach the skiffright then and there, as many of us wished—saying we should make land immediately, even if it had to be in the wilderness, amid mountain peaks, to avoid the very reasonable fear that Tetouan pirates might be lurking nearby. The corsairs of Tetouan leave the shores of Barbary at dusk and reach Spain at dawn, where they do their usual looting and pirating, then go home and sleep in their beds. But the rest of us had other ideas, and the one we all agreed upon was to make our way along shore little by little, and if the sea was calm enough, to make land in the best place we found.

“And so we did. It must have been a bit before midnight by the time we arrived at the foot of an enormous misshapen mountain, far enough from the water’s edge to give us room to comfortably disembark. We beached the skiffand kissed the sand, shedding joyous tears of happiness as we thanked Our Lord God for the incomparable boon he had bestowed upon us.

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Once we pulled the provisions from the skiff, we dragged it up onto the shore and hiked a fair ways up the mountain. Even there, we could not calm our pounding hearts, nor fully believe wefinally stood upon Christian land.

“Dawn came later—to my mind—than we would have liked. We climbed to the top of the mountain, to see if we could spot a town or some shepherds’ cabins from up there. But no matter how we scoured the landscape, there was not a village, person, road, or path tofind. Even so, we decided to head inland, for it could not be long before we would come across someone who could tell us where we were. But what wearied me most was seeing Zoraida on foot in that rough terrain. However, when I carried her on my shoulders, she was more wearied by my weariness than restored by her rest, and thus, she did not wish me to take on that labor, and so, with great patience and pleasure, I led Full p. C-510 Shorter p. 1721 her by the hand. We must have walked a little less than a quarter league when the sound of a cowbell reached our ears—a sure sign livestock was nearby. Everyone was eagerly looking around to see if we could spot anyone, when suddenly we saw a young cowherd lying against a cork tree, languid and carefree, whittling a stick.

“We called out to him, and he looked up and then sprang to his feet. As we were later informed, thefirst people he saw were the renegade and Zoraida, and since they were wearing Moorish clothes, he thought all of Barbary was after him. Strangely light on his feet, he darted offinto the forest, shouting at the top of his lungs:

“‘Moors! Moors on land! Moors, Moors! Take up arms, take up arms!’

“We were all confused by his shouting and did not know what to do. But considering he was likely to rouse the entire country, and the coastal cavalry would soon show up to see what was going on, we agreed that the renegade should trade his Turkish clothes for a *gilecuelco* or captive’s cassock that one of the others handed him, though the man was then left in his undershirt. And so, entrusting ourselves to God, we followed the road the cowherd had taken, expecting the coastal cavalry to descend upon us at any moment.

“And we were not wrong. Before two hours had gone by, we had left the wilderness and made our way down to the valley, where as many asfifty knights of the coastal cavalry were loping lightly toward us. As soon as we saw them, we stopped to wait. But when they arrived and saw—instead of the Moors they were looking for—so many poor Christians, they were confused, and one of them asked us if we, by any chance, were the reason a cowherd had raised the alarm.

“‘Yes,’ I said. But just as I was about to launch into what had happened and where we were coming from and who we were, one of the Christians with us suddenly recognized the rider who had asked the question. Before I could say another word, he said:

“‘Thanks be to God, señores, for bringing us to such afine part of this land! Because unless I am mistaken, the soil we are standing on is Vélez Málaga, for not even my many years in captivity could strip from me the memory that you, señor asking who we are, are Pedro de Bustamante, my uncle.’

“As soon as the captive Christian said this, the rider leapt offhis horse and into the young man’s arms, crying:

“‘My nephew! Nephew of my soul, of my life! Now I recognize you! You, whom I mourned for dead, as did my sister—your mother—and all your family still alive, to whom God has granted the years they needed to once again delight in the sight of you! We knew you were in

Algiers, and by the looks of your garments, and those of this whole company, I can see by some miracle you have made your way to freedom.'

"'That's right,' he replied. 'There will be plenty of time for me to tell you everything.'

"Once the men on horseback understood we were captive Christians, they dismounted and invited us to ride their horses the rest of the way to the city of Vélez Málaga, which was a league and a half from where we were. A few of the cavalry went back to the beach to bring the skiffto the city after we told them Full p. C-511 Shorter p. 1722 where we had left it, and the rest lifted us up onto their horses' haunches, with Zoraida atop the captive's uncle's mount.

"The whole town came out to receive us, since someone had gone on ahead with word of our arrival. The people on that coast see plenty of freed captives and captured Moors, but when they saw Zoraida's beauty, they were stunned. The weariness of the journey and the joy offinallyfinding herself in Christian lands, no longer having to fear she would lose her way, only enhanced her beauty, bringing out such lovely colors in her face that—unless my affection colored my vision—I dare say, never has there been a creature more lovely in all the world, that I had seen, at least. We went straight to the Church to give our thanks to God for the mercies he had bestowed upon us. As soon as Zoraida set foot inside the Church, she exclaimed that it held faces that looked like lela Marién's. We told her they were Her holy icons, and the renegade explained their meaning the best he could, so she could worship and adore them as the faces of very same lela Marién who had spoken to her.

"Zoraida, with her nimble mind and insightful nature, immediately understood everything we told her about holy icons. After that, various townspeople offered to host our companions, but the renegade, Zoraida, and I went with the captive nephew to the home of his family, who were fairly well off, which was modest but comfortable, and where they showered us with as much love as they showed their own son. Six days we spent in Vélez, after which the renegade —who had gotten his letters and papers in order—left for the city of Granada, to humble himself before the Holy Inquisition and return to the fold of Mother Church. The remaining freed Christians went offwhere they sawfit, leaving only Zoraida and me, with nothing to our names but the *escudos* the Frenchman's courtesy bestowed upon Zoraida, which I used to purchase the animal upon which she rides. Thus far I have served as her father and her squire, not her husband, as we intend to go see if my father is still alive, or if any of my brothers had better fortune than mine, although there is no bounty I could ever value higher than the gift Heaven gave me by making me the companion of Zoraida. The patience with which she bears the discomforts of poverty and her clear desire to become a Christian is so great, that I am amazed and moved to serve her for all the days of my life. However, the joy I feel at being hers, and her being mine, is clouded and troubled by the fact that I do not know if I willfind any corner of my family's lands left where we mayfind refuge, or if time and death have made grave changes to the life and station of my father and my brothers. For if I do notfind them there, I would be hard pressed tofind anyone else who would still know me.

"There is no more, señores, of my tale to tell. Yourfine minds will judge whether it was delightful and captivating—for my part, all I can say is I wish I had told it more succinctly, though the fear of offending you by going on too long stripped more than four curious circumstances from my tongue."

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Footnotes

- Note 2:Chapters 39–41 show Don Quixote once again listening to other characters' interpolated stories, in this case, that of a former captive who had arrived at the inn with a mysterious veiled woman. Cervantes himself spentfive years as a captive in North Africa, and the captive's marvelous narrative is full of precise details about piracy in the Mediterranean, life in captivity, and the complicated connections across the Christian–Muslim divide. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:A region in northern Spain, associated with Christian resistance to the Muslim invasion of the peninsula. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:Sevilla was the port city for trade and travel to the New World; Alicante was a port for Mediterranean trade. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:All thefigures mentioned here are historical. The captivefights for Habsburg Spain on various fronts: in Flanders, where the Spanish general Fernando Alvarez de Toledo, Duke of Alba (1507–1582), was charged with putting down the revolt of the Northern Provinces, and in the Mediterranean, where Spain joined in a "Holy League" with the papacy and Venice to combat the Ottoman Empire ("the Turks"). "Counts of Egmont and Horne": Belgian nobles executed for their rebellion in 1568. "Diego de Urbina": Cervantes served under this captain at the naval battle of Lepanto in 1571, where the Ottomans were defeated. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:Don Juan of Austria, half brother of Philip II, king of Spain, served as commander of the Holy League's forces at Lepanto. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:I.e., the Battle of Lepanto, fought in the Ionian Sea near Corinth, Greece. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:Awarded to thefirst man to board an enemy ship during battle. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:Uch (an honorific title also spelled *uluj*) Ali (1519–1587), viceroy of Algiers (an Ottoman protectorate) and commander of the Ottomanfleet, defeated the Malteseflagship at Lepanto. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:The Genoese admiral Giovanni Andrea Doria (1539–1606), who led the forces of the Holy League at Lepanto. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Captives on either side of the Habsburg–Ottoman conflict were primarily put to work as oarsmen in Mediterranean galleys. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Selim II (1524–1574, r. 1566–74), sultan of the Ottoman Empire. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:I.e., theflag of the militant Christian religious order based on the island of Malta, in the Mediterranean, from where they attacked North African ships. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:Ottoman soldiers; originally an elite corps made up of captured Christian boys. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:Muley Hamet (muley Mohammed) became ruler of Tunis in 1573, but was captured by the Ottomans the following year. His brother muley Hamida (Ahmed Sultan) had joined the attack on Tunis by John of Austria. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:One *vara* is a measure equivalent to about 2.8 feet. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:Nickname for the Italian architect Giacomo Paleazzo, who served Philip II. Return to reference 8

- Note 9:“Grand Señor” and “Grand Turk” were terms used for the sultan of the Ottoman Empire. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:Hasan Aga, or Hasan the Venetian, was captured at a young age and converted to Islam. A protegéof uch Ali, he ruled Algiers from 1577 to 1578. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Often rendered as *bagnio* (*baño* in Spanish), a prison where Mediterreanean captives were held. Cervantes wrote a play about captives entitled *Los baños de Argel* (*The Bagnios of Algiers*). Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Cervantes refers to himself here; his full name was Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:Deep bows in reverence; salaams. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:Hajji Murad, a Slavonian who converted to Islam and became a powerful official in Algiers, an *alcaide* or commander of a fortress or garrison, in this case the city of al-Batha. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:The *escudo*, worth a little less than a *ducado*, was introduced as the main Spanish coin by Charles V in the 1530s. Its use spread across the Mediterranean and the Spanish Empire. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:Institution within the Catholic Church charged with rooting out heresy, including conversion to Islam. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:The writer uses the Arabic for God and the Virgin Mary (Meryem) and the Arabic word for prayer (*ṣalāh*) even as she relates her experience of Christianity. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:Zoraida is based on a historicalfigure. Hajji Murad had a daughter named Zahara, who marriedfirst Abd al-Malik, future sultan of Morocco, and then, after his death, Hasan Pasha, with whom she moved to Constantinople. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:Bab Azoun, gate to the city of Algiers. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Port city in northern Morocco, hub of trade with the broader Mediterranean. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Term used in North Africa for a Muslim who had lived among Christians, particularly in the kingdom of Aragon. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:The corsair captain who captured Cervantes himself in 1575. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:Gold coin worth six *reales* . Return to reference 5
- Note 6:Ottoman coin worth seventeen *reales* . Return to reference 6
- Note 7:Captain, from the Arabic *raʾīs* (“chief”) . Return to reference 7
- Note 8:Small, fast galleys. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:Legend had it that Rodrigo, the last Visigothic king of Iberia, seduced Florinda (“La Cava”), the daughter of Count Julián. Her father took revenge on Rodrigo by betraying Spain to the invading Moors in 711. Return to reference 9

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[To Free a Fine Lady]

CHAPTER LII

On the brawl between don Quixote and the goatherd, along with the peculiar adventure of the self-scourging flagellants, where he secured a happy ending at the cost of his sweat and tears[1]

* * *

The goatherd took a look at don Quixote's ragged hide and battered face, turned to the barber —who was next to him—in wonder, and asked:

"Señor, who is this man, looking like *this* and talking like *that*?"

"Who else could he be," the barber replied, "but the legendary don Quixote of La Mancha, righter of wrongs, straightener of the crooked, protector of damsels, terror of giants, and victor of all battles?"

"That seems to me," responded the goatherd, "like something you might read in a book about knights-errant, who do all the things your grace says this man does. Although if you ask me, I think either your grace is joking, or this gentleman must have a few screws loose."

"Shameless scoundrel that you are!" don Quixote spat back. "It is *you* who are loose and cowardly and a son of a bitch, for *I* am far tighter than the whore of a mother who bore you!"

And, leaping into action as he spoke, don Quixote snatched up a nearby loaf of bread, and with it, he whacked the goatherd across the face with such fury, it dented the man's nose. The goatherd, who could not take a joke, seeing how seriously he was being mistreated—with no respect for the rug, or the tablecloth, or all the people dining there—leapt upon don Quixote and wrapped both his hands around his neck, and without a doubt he would have strangled him, if Sancho Panza had not appeared at that very moment, grabbed him from behind, andflipped him onto the table, shattering the plates, smashing the glasses, and squashing and scattering about all the rest of the meal. Don Quixote,finding himself free, went over to climb atop the goatherd, who was crawling along the tabletop—his face full of blood, bruised and battered by Sancho—searching for some knife with which to wreak bloody vengeance. The canon and the priest prevented this, while the barber did nothing to keep the goatherd from pouncing on top of don Quixote, upon whom he rained down such a tremendous number of smacks and slaps that the poor knight's face began pouring forth as much blood as his own.

The canon and the priest split their sides laughing, and the officers jumped for joy, egging them on like they were at a dogfight. Only Sancho was full of despair, because he could not break free from one of the canon's servants, who was getting in the way of Sancho coming to his master's aid.

In summary, everyone was full of joy and merriment, except for the two clobbering and clawing at each other, when suddenly they all heard the mournful Full p. C-513 Shorter p. 1724 sound of a trumpet. It was so full of sadness, everyone turned to face the direction it seemed to be coming from. But the one most shaken by the sound was don Quixote, who—although he remained beneath the goatherd, quite against his will, and more than half beaten—looked up and said:

“Demon, my brother—for you must surely be one since you have the valor and strength to overcome my own—I beg we make a truce, for an hour, no more, as the mournful sound of that trumpet now reaching our ears seems to beckon me to some new adventure.”

The goatherd, who had grown weary of pummeling and being pummeled, let him go. Don Quixote rose to his feet, turning to face the sound, and suddenly spotted a great many men descending a nearby slope, all dressed in white, as is the style of self-scourgingflagellants.

It just so happened that year that the clouds had denied the earth their dew, and all throughout that region, the people were holding processions, petitions, andflagellations, begging God to open the hands of His mercy and let it rain. To that end, the people of a nearby town were making their way in procession to a sacred shrine located on a slope of that valley.

Don Quixote, seeing the strange outfits of theflagellants—without remembering a single one of the many times he must have seen people dressed that way—imagined it was the stuffof adventures, and, as a knight-errant, he alone was called to undertake it. This was further confirmed in his imagination when he believed the holy icon of Mother Mary draped in mourning they were carrying must surely be some noble and distinguished lady, taken by force by those wicked, discourteous miscreants. As soon as this thought appeared in his mind, he ran lightly over to Rocinante, who was grazing, pulled his bridle and his buckler from the saddle horn, and bridled the horse in aflash. Asking Sancho for his sword, he mounted Rocinante and strapped on his buckler, crying out to all those present:

“Now, valiant company, you shall see how important it is for the world to have knights who profess the order of errant chivalry! Now, I say, you shall see, when I free thatfine lady being held captive over there, if knights-errant should be held in high esteem!”

As he said this, he squeezed his thighs to Rocinante—because he had no spurs—and galloping at his top speed—for not once in the entirety of this true story does it say that Rocinante mustered a “breakneck pace”—he rode offto face theflagellants. The priest and the canon and the barber made afine effort to dissuade him, but it was impossible, nor was he discouraged by the shouting of Sancho, who said:

“Where are you going, señor don Quixote? What demon is possessing you to cross our Catholic faith? Look, goddamn me, that’s a procession offlagellants, and that lady they’re carrying is a holy icon of the Immaculate Virgin. Look, señor, at what you’re doing, for this time, it could well be said, these things really are not what they seem!”

But Sancho’s efforts were in vain, because his master was so set on reaching the men in sheets and freeing the lady in mourning that he did not hear a word, and even if he had, he would not have turned back, not even for a command from the King. Well, he made it to the procession and stopped Rocinante, who was already in the mood to slow down, and in a hoarse and broken voice he said:

“You, who cover your faces—perhaps because you are not good men—hark and listen to what I wish to tell you.”

Full p. C-514 Shorter p. 1725

Thefirstflagellants to stop were the ones carrying the icon. One of the four clerics singing the Litany, seeing the strangefigure cut by don Quixote, the skinniness of Rocinante, and other laugh-worthy details, responded, saying:

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“Señor, my brother, if you wish to tell us something, say it quickly, for these brothers here are rending theirflesh as they walk, and we cannot and should not stop to hear anything at all, if it is not short enough to say in two words.”

“I shall say it in one,” don Quixote replied, “which is this: you must immediately and at once free that beautiful lady, whose tears and forlorn face provide clear evidence that you are transporting her against her will and must have done her some notorious wrong. I, who was born into this world to right wrongs such as this, shall not allow you to take another step until you give her the longed-for freedom she so deserves.”

This made it clear to all in earshot that don Quixote must be some sort of madman, and they all had a good laugh. Their guffaws must have poured gunpowder on don Quixote’s rage, because without saying another word, he unsheathed his sword and charged the statue. One of the men carrying it, leaving that burden to his companions, went out to meet don Quixote, brandishing the stick or staffhe used to hold up the statue when they needed to rest. He held it up to block a mighty chop don Quixote rained down upon him, which broke it into two parts. With the third part left in his hand, he gave don Quixote a whack on the shoulder of his sword-arm—which the buckler could not protect from such villainous might—with such force that poor don Quixote fell to the ground in quite bad shape indeed.

Sancho Panza, panting his way over, saw his master fall and shouted at the man pummeling him to stop, not one more punch, since he was just a poor enchanted knight who had never harmed anyone in all the days of his life. But what stopped the villain was not Sancho’s shouting, but the fact that don Quixote was no longer moving, not even his hands or feet. Thinking he had killed him, theflagellant quickly hiked his tunic up to his waist and bounded offinto thefields, quick as a stag.

In the midst of this, the rest of don Quixote’s company made their way over. But the men in the procession saw them approaching, crossbow-armed constables at their side, and feared the worst. They formed a whirling swarm around the icon, pointed hoods held high, gripping their whips as the priests armed themselves with the candlesticks, awaiting the oncoming assault, determined tofight in their own defense, and even in offense against their attackers, if they could manage it. But Fortune arranged things better than anyone could have imagined, because when Sancho made it to his master, what did he do but throw himself atop the body of his señor, sobbing with the most heartrending and hilarious weeping in the world, for he was sure don Quixote was dead.

The priest was recognized by another priest from the procession, and this recognition calmed the mistrust that had gripped both squadrons. Thefirst priest told the second, in a couple quick words, who don Quixote was, and the second priest along with the whole mob offlagellants went over to see if the poor knight was dead. They listened as Sancho Panza, with tears in his eyes, wailed out:

“Oflower of chivalry, cut down with a single blow, ending the career of yourfinely spent years! O honor to your lineage, honor and glory of all of La Mancha, all the world, even—which, without you in it, will end up full of evildoers Full p. C-515 Shorter p. 1726 unafraid of being punished for their evil doings! O you who were more generous than all the Alexanders, because for less than eight months of service, you were going to give me the bestínsula to ever be surrounded by the seas! O you who were humble with the haughty and haughty with the humble! Conqueror of dangers, sufferer of aggrievements, lover without a cause, imitator of

the best, scourge of the worst, enemy of the deplorable, in summary, you knight-errant, which is all that could ever be said!”

Sancho’s shouting and moaning revived don Quixote, and the veryfirst thing he said was:

“He who lives for you in absentia, sweetest Dulcinea, has been subject to greater miseries than this. Help me, Sancho my friend, get into the enchanted cart, for I am no longer in condition to weigh down Rocinante’s saddle, as my shoulder has been smashed to bits.”

“I’m more than happy to, my señor,” Sancho replied. “Let’s go back to town in the company of these señores who only want the best for you, and from there, we can plan out another foray that will be sure to bring us more success and fame.”

“Well put, Sancho,” responded don Quixote. “It would be greatly prudent to allow the current misfortunate alignment of stars to pass.”

The canon and the priest and the barber told him he was quite right to do as he said. And so, full of mirth over the idiocies spouted by Sancho Panza, they loaded don Quixote back into the cart. The procession lined up again and carried on their way; the goatherd took his leave of everybody; the constables would go no further, so the priest paid them what they were owed; the canon asked the priest to keep him apprised of don Quixote, whether his madness improved or continued, took his leave, and continued on his journey. In summary, everyone split up and went their separate ways, leaving only the priest and the barber, don Quixote and Panza, and good Rocinante, who faced everything he saw with as much patience as his master.

The oxherd yoked his oxen and settled don Quixote down on a bundle of hay, and with his customary nonchalance, plodded down the road the priest preferred. Six days later, they arrived at the village of don Quixote, which they entered in broad daylight. It happened to be a Sunday, and all the people in the village were still out in the plaza. Don Quixote’s cart rolled right through the middle of the square, and everyone came over to see. When they recognized their compatriot, they were amazed, and a boy went running to bring the news to the housekeeper and the niece that their uncle and señor was on his way, gaunt and yellow and stretched out on a pile of hay in the back of an oxcart. It was heartrending to hear the wails of those two good ladies, to see how they slapped their cheeks and tore their hair and cursed those goddamn books of chivalry all over again, renewing this performance as soon as don Quixote came in the door.

When she got word of the arrival of don Quixote, Sancho Panza’s woman—who knew Sancho had gone with him to serve as his squire—came by, and as soon as she saw Sancho, thefirst thing she asked was whether the ass was all right. Sancho replied it was better offthan its master.

“Thank God for that,” she replied, “for all the good it’s done me. But tell me now, my friend, what good has come out of all your squiring? What nice dress have you brought for me? What shoes have you brought for your children?”

Full p. C-516 Shorter p. 1727

“I didn’t bring anything like that,” said Sancho, “o woman of mine, but I did bring other, more important and significant things.”

“I’m very glad to hear it,” the woman replied. “Show me these important and significant things, my friend. I want to see them, to give a little thrill to this heart of mine, which has been very unhappy and very unsatisfied all the centuries you’ve been gone.”

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“Once we get home, I’ll show you, woman,” said Panza. “For now, be happy, for God willing, the next time we come back from searching for adventures, you’llfind me a count, or governor of anínsula—and not just old anyínsula, but the best one you couldfind.”

“Heaven willing, my husband—Lord knows we need it. But tell me what’s all this about*ínsulas*, because I don’t know what that means.”

“Honey’s not meant for the donkey’s mouth,” Sancho replied. “You’llfind out in good time, woman. You’ll even watch in wonder as all your vassals call you Her Ladyship.”

“What are you talking about, Sancho? What’s all this about Ladyships andínsulas and vassals?” responded Juana Panza, which was Sancho’s woman’s name (not that they were related—in La Mancha, it is common for women to take their husband’s last name).

“Don’t tie yourself in knots, Juana, wanting to know everything all at once. It’s enough for you to know I’m telling you the truth, and sew your mouth shut. All I can say, in passing, is there is nothing more delightful in the world for an honorable man than to be squire of a knight-errant in search of adventures. It is true that most of them don’t turn out quite the way one would like, because out of a hundred you come across, ninety-nine tend to turn out wrong and go sideways. This I know from experience, for some ended in blanket-tossing, and others in getting pummeled. But even so, it’s a lovely thing to cross the countryside waiting tofind out what’s around the next bend, scouring the wilderness, scaling mountain crags, staying in castles, and sleeping in inns whenever you want, without paying a devil-damned *maravedí*!”[2]

As Sancho Panza and Juana Panza, his wife, were having these conversations, don Quixote’s housekeeper and niece took him in, took offhis armor and clothes, and laid him down in his old bed. He looked up at them through half-closed eyes and had no idea where he was. The priest charged the niece to be sure to pamper her uncle and make sure not to let him escape again, considering what it had taken to get him back. At this, the two women again began wailing to the skies, renewing their curses on all books of chivalry, and begging Heaven to send the authors of such lies and madness straight to the center of the abyss. Essentially, they were upset and afraid their uncle and master would slip offagain as soon as he regained his strength, and they were right.

But the author of this history, despite having searched with great curiosity and diligence for the deeds done by don Quixote in his third foray, was unable tofind a word written about it—at least, not in authentic sources.

FINIS

Footnotes

- Note 1:Last chapter of Part I. Through various devices, including the use of Don Quixote’s own belief in enchantments and spells, the curate and the barber have persuaded the knight to let himself be taken home in an oxcart. A canon from Toledo has joined Don Quixote and his guardians, conversing about chivalry with the knight. Eugenio, a very literate goatherd whom they have met on the way, has just told them the story of his unhappy love for Leandra: after eloping with aflashy soldier and being abandoned by him, she had been put by her father in a convent. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Spanish coin of very small value. Return to reference 2

From Part II

PROLOGUE TO THE READER

¡Válame Dios! How hungrily you must be awaiting, illustrious (or even plebeian) reader, this prologue—believing that inside you'llfind talk of vengeance, quarrels and squabbles, acrid insults and bitter vituperation directed at the author of the knock-off*Don Quixote*, by which I mean the one which, rumor has it, was sired in Tordesillas and birthed in Tarragona![1] Well, in truth, I will not give you that satisfaction. For although such affronts inspire ire in even the humblest chests, mine must prove the exception to the rule. You may want to see me smear him, calling him an ass and an imbecile and an insolent idiot, but such a thing would never cross my mind. Let his own sins be his punishment; he can butter his bread any way he wants, it's no skin offmy nose. What did hurt, however, were the jabs about me being old and one-armed, as if I had the power to stop time or avoid aging, as if I lost my arm in some tavern brawl instead of in the greatest battle ever seen in past and present centuries, and all those to come.[2] Though my scars may not shine in the eyes of all who see them, they are respected, at least, by those who know where they came from. For it is better for a soldier to die in battle than survive as a deserter. I live by this creed so deeply that even if I were offered the impossible—a chance to change history—I would still choose to take my place among the prodigious number battling that day, rather than be healed of all my wounds by never having fought at all.

The scars of a soldier's face and chest are stars, guiding the way for the rest with celestial honor, and greatly deserving of worthy praise. And it should also be noted that a man does not write with his hair—gray or otherwise—but with his mind, which improves over time. I also resent his calling me envious and then defining envy, as if I were an ignoramus who did not know what it was.

The truth of the matter is there are two types of envy, and I am only familiar with the holy kind, the noble, well-intentioned kind. Since that is the case, which it is, I have no need to go persecuting any priests, especially ones who minister the Holy Inquisition.[3] And if the one who wrote it was indeed referring to who he seems to be, he completely missed the mark, because I adore his ingeniousness as much as I admire his achievements and his work for Mother Church.

And yet, I do appreciate what this señor author has said, that my *Exemplary Novels*[4] make for better satire than moral examples, but they are good, just the same, which they could not be if they did not touch on just about everything.

You seem to say, dear reader, that I am being quite restrained, refraining from so much, leaving so much unsaid on account of my modesty, knowing that there is no sense in further afflicting the afflicted—and without a doubt, this señor is Full p. C-518 Shorter p. 1729 greatly afflicted, for he does not dare take thefield openly, under clear skies, but rather hides his name and makes up a hometown, as if he had committed high treason. If, by chance, you happen to meet him, tell him for me that I do not consider myself affronted, for I know the Devil's temptations

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well, and one of the greatest is to make a man believe he can write and publish a book that will bring him as much wealth as fame, and as much fame as wealth. As evidence, I would like you—with your own particular drollery—to tell him this tale:

There was once a madman in Sevilla whose madness took the most hilarious form of any madman in all the world. Namely, he made a tube out of a reed and sharpened the end, and whenever he caught a dog on the street, or anywhere else, he would hold down one of its hind feet with one of his own, and pull the other one up in his hand, and then, as best he could, he would stick the tube into the dog, right in the part that—when he blew through the tube—let him puffthe dog up till it was round as a ball. Once he had it like that, he would give it two little pats on the belly and let it go, telling everyone who had gathered to watch—and there was always a crowd—"Now will your graces believe it is an easy task to inflate a dog?"

Now will your grace believe it is an easy task to write a book?

And if that story does not cut it for him, you will tell him—reader, my friend—this other one, which is also about a madman and a dog:

There was another madman in Córdoba who had the habit of carrying around a chunk of a marble slab, or some other rather hefty rock, and whenever he came across a dog offits guard, he would creep up and drop the rock down onto it. This vexed the dog, who would take offbarking and howling and wouldn't stop for three streets straight.

Well, it just so happened that one of the dogs he dropped his load on belonged to a hatter, who loved his dog dearly. The madman dropped the rock right onto the dog's head, and the battered creature yelped. His master saw what happened, and, gravely offended, grabbed a yardstick, leapt upon the madman, and broke all his bones. And every time he hit him with the stick, he said, "My *whippet*, you thieving dog? Can't you see, cruel wretch, my dog is a whippet?!" And he kept on saying *whippet* over and over as he pounded the madman into pulp.

Well, the madman learned his lesson and took off. He stayed away from the plaza for a month, after which he came back with his same tricks and a heavier load. He'd walk up to a dog and examine it carefully, not wanting nor daring to drop the rock, saying: "This one's a whippet—watch out!"

In effect, every dog he saw—whether it was a mastiffor a yapdog—he called a whippet, and so, he never dropped the stone again. Perhaps something along these lines might happen to this pseudonymed historian, who would never dare drop the weight of his intellect upon us again in books, which—when they are bad—are heavier than boulders.

You can also tell him his threat to strip me of my livelihood with his book does not bother me one bit.[5] For—borrowing the words of the famous sketch *The Trollop*[6] for my reply—I say long live my friends in high places, and Christ be with us all. Long live the great Count of Lemos, whose Christianity and generosity—already Full p. C-519 Shorter p. 1730 so well known—have kept me afloat whenever I have been buffeted by the blows of Fortune, and long live the incomparable charity of the illustrious Count of Toledo, don Bernardo de Sandoval y Rojas,[7] even if there is not a single printing press left in all the world, even if they print more knockoffnovels than all the letters in all the lines of *The Couplets of Mingo Revulgo* .[8] These two princes among men, without requiring the supplication of my adulation, or any other kind of applause, out of nothing more than the goodness of their hearts, have taken it upon themselves to favor me and bestow mercies upon me. I consider myself luckier and wealthier

now than if Fortune had led me down the usual paths to success. A poor man may be honorable, but not a man of vice; poverty can only cloud nobility, not darken it completely. But as virtue gives offits own light, even if only through the narrowest of cracks and gaps, it will surely come to be appreciated and esteemed in the end by all high and noble souls, and—as such—shown favor.

Say no more to him, nor will I say any more to you, beyond letting you know you can consider this second part of *Don Quixote* that I offer you here to be cut from the very same cloth as thefirst, in which I give you don Quixote in his glory, and, in the end, dead and buried. So now no one will dare raise him from his grave in new tales, since these ones are enough, and it's enough that an honorable man has brought news to the world of such discreet lunacy, without somebody else getting into it all over again. For one can have too much of a good thing, and as for bad things, the less said, the better.

I forgot to tell you to look out for *Persiles*, which I amfinishing up, along with the second part of *Galatea* .[9]

Footnotes

- Note 1:A continuation of Don Quixote was published by a writer who gave himself the name of Avellaneda and claimed to come from Tordesillas. The mood of the second prologue is grim in comparison to the optimistic and witty prologue to Part I. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Cervantes received three gunshot wounds in the Battle of Lepanto (1571); one of them cost him the use of his left hand. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:An allusion to the Spanish playwright Lope de Vega (1562–1635), who had been made a priest and appointed an official of the Spanish Inquisition. Avellaneda accused Cervantes of envying Lope's enormous popularity. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:A collection of novellas published by Cervantes in 1613. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:Avellaneda asserted that his second part would earn the profits Cervantes might have expected from a continuation of his own. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:An entremés, or interlude (a short, comic one-act play), *La Perendenga* . No interlude by this name has survived. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:Archbishop of Toledo, uncle of the duke of Lerma, and patron of Cervantes. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:Long verse satire, well known in Cervantes' time; it is alluded to again in Part II, chapter 73. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:Cervantes published *The Trials of Persiles and Sigismunda* in 1617, two years after Part II of *Don Quixote* . A second part of *The Galatea* (1585), Cervantes' early pastoral novel, was never published. Return to reference 9

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[“Put into a Book”]

CHAPTER III

On the ridiculous reasoning exchanged between don Quixote, Sancho Panza, and the graduate Sansón Carrasco

Brooding, pensive, and lost in thought was don Quixote as he awaited the arrival of the graduate Carrasco,[1] from whom he hoped to hear word of how he had been stuck into a book, as Sancho put it. Don Quixote could not be convinced such a history truly existed in print, for the blood of his slain enemies was still wet on his blade, and they wanted to tell him his high acts of chivalry were already published. Even so, he imagined that by the art of enchantment, some sage—be he friend or foe—must have put them in print. If friendly, to Full p. C-520 Shorter p. 1731 exalt his great deeds, raising them up above even the most notable knights-errant of yore. If foesome, to debase them and place them lower than even the vilest acts of the vilest squire ever described, considering—he said to himself—no deeds of squires have ever been described or written about. Nevertheless, if such a history did indeed exist, being a tale of chivalry, it must surely be grandiloquent, exalted, distinguished, magnificent, and totally true.

This thought consoled him somewhat, but soon he was disconsolate again when he remembered the author was a Moor, as evidenced by his title *cide*,[2] and no truth whatsoever can ever be expected from the Moors, for they are all swindlers and liars and chimeracists. He feared his love life might have been treated somewhat indecently, which would reflect poorly on and tarnish the reputation of his lady Dulcinea of Toboso. He hoped the author had clearly declared his greatfidelity and how he had always treated her with respect and decorum, spurning queens, empresses, and damsels of all calibers, holding at bay the urging of his natural desires. And so he was wrapped up and rapt in these and many other imaginings when he was found by Sancho and Carrasco, whom he received with the utmost courtesy.

The graduate—despite being named after Samson—was not particularly big in build, but he had a deadpan wit. He was somewhat wan and haggard, around twenty-four years of age, with a round face, a broad nose, and a big mouth—all signs of an impish disposition with a penchant for puns and pranks. This was on full display as he greeted don Quixote, kneeling at his feet as he said:

“Give me thy greatness’s hands, señor don Quixote of La Mancha, for by the habit of San Pedro I wear[3] —though I have only completed thefirst four vows of priesthood—your grace is one of the most famous knights-errant in all the world, in times past and those to come. Praise be to cide Hamete Benengeli, who wrote the history of your acts of greatness, and even more praise to the curious soul who took the time to have them translated from Arabic into everyday Spanish, for the universal entertainment and enjoyment of everybody.”

Don Quixote made him stand and said:

“Then it is true that my history has been written down, and it was a Moorish sage who wrote it?”

“Señor, it is so true,” said Sansón, “that from what I understand, to date, more than twelve thousand copies of the book have been printed. If you don’t believe me, ask Portugal,

Barcelona, and Valencia, where they're being pressed. Rumor has it there are even new copies coming out in Amberes,[4] and by my lights, soon it'll be printed in every nation and translated into every language in the world."

"One of the things," don Quixote said, "a virtuous and eminent man must value most, which must bring him great contentment, is to see, during his own lifetime, his good name on the tongues of everyone, published and in print. And note I said *good* name, for were the opposite the case, it would be worse than the most wretched death."

"If it's good names and legendary reputations we're talking," said the graduate, "your grace takes the cake over all other knights-errant, because the Moor in his language and the Christian in his own took great care to paint vivid depictions of your grace's gallant bravery, your unflagging spirit in the face of Full p. C-521 Shorter p. 1732 danger, your patience when ensconced in adversity and suffering, struck by both ill-fortune and sticks, your honesty and restraint in terms of the very platonic love between your grace and my lady doña Dulcinea of Toboso."

"Not once," interjected Sancho Panza, "have I ever heard anyone use the title *doña* when referring to my lady Dulcinea. It's just "lady Dulcinea of Toboso." So, clearly, the story is already wrong."

"That's not important to the story," Carrasco replied.

"No, of course not," don Quixote responded. "But tell me, your grace, señor graduate, what deeds of mine are most admired in this history?"

"In that regard," the graduate replied, "opinions differ, just as tastes do. Some say it's the adventure of the windmills, which to your grace seemed like giants on the scale of Briareos. Others say it's the fulling hammers,[5] or the description of the two armies that ended up being twoflocks of rams. There are some who love the adventure with the body being taken to be buried in Segovia, and some who say the best adventure of them all is the one with the galley slaves, and more still who proclaim no other adventure comes close to the one with the two gigantic Benedictine monks and the battle with the valiant Basque."

"Tell me, señor graduate," Sancho said, "is the adventure of the Yangüesans in there, when ourfine Rocinante got a hankering for hanky-panky and set offtrying to dig for roots in the sea?"[6]

"There was nothing," Sansón replied, "left behind in the inkwell by that sage: he makes note of and describes everything, even theflips ourfine Sancho did in the blanket."

"I didn't doflips in the blanket," responded Sancho. "I did them in the air, and more than I would have liked."

"I imagine," don Quixote said, "no human history in all the world is free of foibles, especially those dealing with chivalry, which can never be full of only fortuitous events."

"Even so," the graduate replied, "there are those who have read the story and say they would not have minded if its authors had indeed forgotten a few of the infinite number of beatings señor don Quixote endured on various occasions."

"But that's the truth of the story," Sancho said.

"They could have cut them, in the interest of a more fair and balanced history," said don Quixote, "for events that do not alter or change the central truth of the story do not need to be included, especially if they reflect poorly on the protagonist. By my faith, Aeneas was not so pious as Virgil paints him, nor Odysseus as clever as Homer describes."

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“That’s true,” Sansón replied, “but it’s one thing to write poetry and another to write history. A poet can speak or sing of things not as they were, but as they should have been. A historian has to write things down the way they did happen, not the way they should have, without adding or subtracting anything from the truth.”

“Well, if it turns out that this señor Moor is going around telling the truth,” said Sancho, “then I’m sure, alongside all the beatings suffered by my dear Full p. C-522 Shorter p. 1733 señor, are my own. For they never broke your back without breaking my whole body. But I shouldn’t be amazed, since—just like my señor says—when the head is in pain, the appendage has to ache.”

“Sancho, you are a scoundrel,” don Quixote replied. “Your memory ceases to be faulty whenever you wish.”

“How I wish I could forget all the clobberings I’ve gotten,” Sancho said, “but the latest batch of bruises is still fresh on my ribs.”

“Quiet, Sancho,” said don Quixote. “Do not interrupt the señor graduate, whom I beseech go on in describing what is said, in said history, about me.”

“And about me,” said Sancho. “They say I’m one of the main cataracters, too.”

“It’s *characters,* not *cataracters*, Sancho my friend,” Sansón said.

“Another grammar stickler?” said Sancho. “You two start up with that again and it’ll take us a whole lifetime tofinish.”

“May God make mine wretched, Sancho,” the graduate replied, “if you aren’t the second-most important person in the story. There are some who would prefer to hear what you have to say over the words of any other character in the whole book, although there are others, too, who say you were utterly gullible to believe you could really receive governorship of thatínsula promised to you by señor don Quixote, right here.”

“There is still sunlight upon the parapets,” said don Quixote. “The sun has yet to set on that promise. Furthermore, with each passing year, Sancho gains the benefit of additional experience, and will thus grow more apt and able to be governor than he is now.”

“By God, señor,” Sancho said, “any island I can’t govern now with the age I’ve got, I won’t be able to govern, even if I grow as old as Methusalah.[7] The problem is theínsula has gotten held up—I don’t know where—not that I don’t have the gumption to govern it.”

“Entrust it to God, Sancho,” don Quixote said, “for all shall be made right, and perhaps even better than you imagine, for not a single leaffluttering on a tree moves unless God wills it so.”

“That’s true,” Sansón said. “If it’s God’s will, Sancho will have a thousand islands to govern, let alone one.”

“If you ask me,” Sancho said, “some governors I’ve seen seem lower than the sole of my shoe. But they get called ‘Your Lordship’ and are served on silver, just the same.”

“Those are notínsula governors,” Sansón replied. “They govern other, simpler things.Ínsula governors must, at the very least, know their grammar.”

“I don’t mind a gram of this or that,” Sancho said, “but I won’t mess with the *mar*, because I don’t know what it is. Let’s leave the governor business in the hands of God, I say, and let Him decide how to put me to use, señor graduate Sansón Carrasco. I am infinitely thrilled and pleased that the author of the story described me positively, without anything he said about me making anyone angry. For by my faith as afine squire, if he said anything about me that wasn’t very Old Christian, like I am, even the deaf will hear me lay into him.”

“That would take a miracle,” Sansón replied.

Full p. C-523 Shorter p. 1734

“Miracle or no,” Sancho said, “everybody should watch what they say and write about their cataracters, and not just go writing willy-nilly thefirst thing that comes into their heads.”

“One of the criticisms of this history,” the graduate went on, “has been that its author chose to include within it a story titled *The Cocksure Meddler.* Not because it was bad or poorly reasoned, but because it was out of place and had nothing to do with the history of your grace señor don Quixote.”[8]

“I’ll bet,” Sancho said, “that Moorish son-of-a-dog was mixing collards and cabbages.”[9]

“Now, I say,” don Quixote said, “the author of my history was no sage, but rather some ignorant interlocuter, who plunged blindly and thoughtlessly into writing my history, however it came out, like Orbaneja, painter ofÚbeda,[1] who—when they asked him what it was he painted—said, ‘Whatever comes out.’ He once painted a rooster so poorly and so strangely, he had to write ‘This Is a Rooster’ alongside it in gothic script. So must it be with my history—understanding it will require footnotes and annotations.”

“No, not that,” Sansón replied, “because it’s so clear, there’s nothing to get confused by. Children carry it around, adolescents read it, grown men understand it, and old men celebrate it. In summary, your history is so well known and widely read and referenced by all sorts of people, that as soon as somebody sees a skinny nag, they say, ‘There goes Rocinante.’ It’s a favorite of pages—there’s not a single señor’s parlor where you won’tfind at least one *Don Quixote* . Some take him and others leave him, some go charging right at him and others ask aroundfirst. Essentially, this history is one of the most delightful and least damaging forms of entertainment ever seen, to date, because it has not a whiffof a word of dishonesty, nor a thought written in it that’s anything but Catholic.”

“Were it any other way,” said don Quixote, “it would not be the truth, it would be lies, and historians who lean on lies should be burned at the stake like those who counterfeit coin. I do not know what moved the author to lean on novellas and unrelated stories, when he had plenty to say with my own. Without a doubt, he should have heeded what they say, not to ‘fill your gut with straw and hay,’ etcetera. For in truth, by merely depicting my thoughts, my sighs, my tears, myfine desires, and my daring conquests, he couldfill up quite a large volume, as long or longer than the collected works of El Tostado.[2] In effect, what I am getting at, señor graduate, is this: to compose books, stories and histories of any type or variety, it is necessary to have afine mind and mature judgment. Humor and jest are the products of ingenious minds. The most discreetfigure in any comedy is the fool, for those who play the fool are not so simple as they seem. History is sacred because it is true, and where there is truth, there is God, insofar as truth goes. Nevertheless, there are some who write out and toss offbooks as if they were buñuelos.”[3]

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“There is no book so bad,” the graduate said, “it doesn’t have at least something good in it.”

“There is no doubt of that,” don Quixote replied, “but it often occurs that those which have been deservedly lauded and raised to great fame for their writingfind, once their words appear in print, they lose it all, or are otherwise criticized.”

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“The reason for that,” said Sansón, “is because when a story is written down, instead of told, people spend a long time looking at it, and thus can easily see itsflaws. And the greater the fame of its author, the more carefully they scour it for errors. Men of legendary intellect, great poets, and illustrious historians are always, or at least usually, envied by those who derive delight from judging the writing of others, without having published anything themselves.”

“That is not shocking,” don Quixote said, “for there are plenty of armchair theologists who, having spent no time in the pulpit, are experts in recognizing the faults andflaws of whoever’s preaching.”

“That’s quite right, señor don Quixote,” Carrasco said. “But I, for one, wish those critics were a bit more merciful and a bit less scrupulous, withoutfixating on microscopic details when the sun of the novel they’re whispering about is shining brightly and clearly down on them. For if *aliquando bonus dormitat Homerus*,[4] consider how fully awake he must have been to bring forth his work with as little shade as possible! It just might be that what the critics think is bad or wrong is actually beauty marks, which often enhance the loveliness of the face that bears them. And so, I say, it is an enormous risk to publish a book, as it is utterly impossible to write it in such a way that will fully satisfy and please everyone who reads it.”

“The book about me,” said don Quixote, “must not have pleased many.”

“Quite the opposite. For just as *stultorum infinitus est numerus*,[5] there are also an infinite number of people who thoroughly enjoyed your story. Some have accused its author of forgetfulness and fraud, for he forgot to say who the thief was who stole Sancho’s dappled gray,[6] and the story never appears in the text, so one simply has to infer that it was stolen from Sancho’s response, and then a few pages later we see him riding the very same donkey, without it ever having returned. They also say he forgot to put what Sancho did with the hundred gold *escudos* he found in a satchel in the Sierra Morena mountains. They never come up again, and there are plenty of people who want to know what Sancho did with them, what he spent them on, as it is one of the biggest things missing from the book.”

Sancho responded:

“I, señor Sansón, am in no shape to be telling stories or giving accounts, because I suddenly have a pit in my stomach, and if I don’tfix it with two swigs of the good stuff, I’ll be stuck on the spine of Santa Lucía.[7] I’ve got some at home, and my old lady’s waiting. I’ll come back around after lunch and satisfy the curiosity of your grace and the whole world, answering whatever questions you please, about the loss of my donkey and how I spent the money.”

And, without waiting for a response or saying another word, Sancho went home. Don Quixote asked and begged the graduate to stay to sup alongside Full p. C-525 Shorter p. 1736 him. The graduate accepted his invitation, and along with the usual fare, they each had a scrawny squab as they spoke of chivalry, Carrasco following Quixote’s lead. Banquetfinished, they took their siesta, after which Sancho returned, and they picked up their previous conversation.

Footnotes

- Note 1:I.e., the bachelor of arts Sansón Carrasco, an important new character who appears at the beginning of Part II and will play a considerable role in the story with his attempts at “curing” don Quixote. In the preceding chapter he has been telling Sancho

about a book relating the adventures of don Quixote and his squire, by which the two have been made famous; the book is, of course, *Don Quixote*, Part I. Return to reference 1

- Note 2:That is, *sidi*: honorific for master, lord (Arabic). The allusion is to cide Hamete Benengeli. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:The dress of one of the minor clerical orders. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:Antwerp, in modern-day Belgium, under Spanish rule in the period and one of the major publishing centers in Europe. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:In Part I, chapter 20, Don Quixote and Sancho are both terrified of a loud noise they hear in the dark, which turns out to be nothing more than six hammers pounding cloth in a water mill, a process known as fulling. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:In chapter 15 of Part I, Don Quixotefinally meets the mule drivers from Yanguas announced in chapter 10. Rocinante promptly creates havoc by chasing their mares. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:In the Book of Genesis, a man who lived 969 years. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:The story, a tragic tale about a jealousy-ridden husband, occupies several chapters of Part I. Here, as elsewhere in this chapter, Cervantes echoes criticism aimed at his book. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:I.e., has jumbled together things of different kinds. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:This painter, possibly Cervantes' invention, has never been identified. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Alonso de Madrigal (c. 1400–1455), bishop ofÁvila, a prolific author of devotional works. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Fritters. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:Good Homer sometimes nods, too (Latin)—Horace, *Art of Poetry*, l. 359. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:Infinite is the number of fools (Latin). Return to reference 5
- Note 6:In Part I, chapter 23. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:I.e., I shall be weak and exhausted (proverbial). Return to reference 7

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[A Victorious Duel]

CHAPTER XII

On the valiant don Quixote's strange adventure with the fearsome Knight of Sequins[8]

The night after the day they faced Death, don Quixote and his squire settled down to sleep beneath a towering stand of shady trees,[9] having already—upon Sancho's persuasion—eaten the provisions in the saddlebags of the dappled gray. During their dinner, Sancho said to his señor:

"Señor, what a fool I would have been if I'd chosen the spoils of your grace's next successful adventure as my reward, instead of the foals of those three lady donkeys![1] Essentially, essentially, better a bird in the hand than a vulture overhead."[2] "Still," don Quixote responded, "if you, Sancho, had allowed me to take on—as I had wished—the most recent adventure, you would have had, for your spoils, at the very least the Empress's golden crown and Cupid's priceless wings,[3] which I would have torn from his back and placed in your hands."

"The crowns and scepters of costume emperors," Sancho replied, "are never real gold, just tinsel and tinfoil."

"That is true," don Quixote responded, "for it would not be right for the costumes of comedy to be made offine materials. They should, rather, be simulacrums and shams, to echo the essence of acting itself. And I do wish, Sancho, for you to hold comedy in high esteem, and similarly esteem those who perform and compose works of comedy, for they are all instrumental in bestowing a great benefit upon the republic, by holding up a mirror to society itself. For through theater, one can see the actions and reactions of humanity brought to life—there is no more vivid representation of who we are and who we ought to be than those performed on stage. Otherwise, tell me: have you not seen some play performed featuring kings and emperors, priests and pontiffs, knighted noblemen, high ladies, and other various characters? One plays the ruffian, another the trickster, another the trader, another the soldier, another the Full p. C-526 Shorter p. 1737 astute fool, another the fool in love. And once the play is over, all the actors shed their costumes and are once more all the same."

"Yes, I've seen that," Sancho replied.

"Well, the same is true," said don Quixote, "in comedies and in life. Some play emperor, others pontiff—every character you could think to include in a play—but in the end, when life is over, Death strips them of all the garments they believed set them apart, some above the others, and all are made equal in the tomb."

"That's afine comparison," Sancho said, "though it's not exactly new. I've heard it told by different folks many times before, just like the one about chess—while the game plays out, each piece has its own role and restrictions, and once the game is through, they're all mixed together and thrown into a bag, just like we all end up in the grave."

"With each passing day, Sancho," don Quixote said, "you are becoming less and less foolish, and more and more astute."

“Yes, well, some of your grace’s astuteness must be rubbing offon me,” Sancho replied, “for with enough bullshit and cultivation, even dry and sterile soil can end up bearing fruit. What I mean to say is that my conversations with your grace are the fertilizer given to the sterile soil of my dry mind. The cultivation is the time I’ve spent serving and speaking with you, and so I hope to bear some blessings as my fruit, the kind that won’t veer offor stray from the path of growth and greenery that your grace has nurtured in my sun-scorched mind.”

Don Quixote laughed at Sancho’s overwrought reasoning, though it did seem true what he said about his growth and improvement, because every so often he said something in such a way that left don Quixote amazed, even though generally when Sancho wanted to make an opposing argument or speak in courtly terms, his reasons usually ended up tumbling offthe cliffof his simplicity into the depths of his ignorance. On the whole, his most elegant and memorable moments were when he broke into folk sayings, whether or not they had anything to do with what he was talking about, as has been and will be seen over the course of this story.

They spent most of the night in these and other discussions, until Sancho got the urge to drop the drawbridge on his eyes, which is what he said when he wanted to sleep. He undressed his dappled gray, giving him generous and abundant quantities of grass to graze, but did not take the saddle offRocinante, for it was the express command of his señor that when they were on campaign or sleeping under the open sky, he was not to unsaddle Rocinante, as per the ancient custom of knights-errant. Taking offthe bridle and hanging it from the pommel of the saddle was one thing, but lo and beware unsaddling your mount!

Sancho followed these instructions to the letter, taking offRocinante’s bridle and giving him the same freedom he had given his dappled gray. Rocinante and the dappled gray were thick as thieves, and their friendship was so unique that legend has it—in a tradition passed down from father to son—that the author of this true history wrote entire chapters on the friendship of these two beasts. However, in the interests of the decency and decorum such a heroic history requires, he did not include said chapters, although sometimes he forgets about not including them and writes about how as soon as they were free, the two beasts would sidle up to each other and scratch each other’s backs, and Full p. C-527 when they were all tired out and satisfied, Rocinante would cross his neck over Shorter p. 1738 the dapple gray’s (even though he was a good half a *vara* taller), and they would stay like that, looking down at the ground, for three days, or at least as long as they were allowed to, until they felt hungry enough to go looking for food.

I will say, it is rumored that one of the things the author left out was a comparison of their friendship to that of Nisus and Euryalus, or Pylades and Orestes[4] —which, if true, would clearly illuminate, to universal wonder and admiration, how strong the bond of friendship must have been between these two peaceful animals, to the chagrin of man, who struggles to be a friend to his fellow man. Which is why they say:

> No friend for a friend:
> Even reeds become lances;[5]

and the other one which goes:

> From friend to friend, bedbugs spread, etc.[6]

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And let no one think the author was straying from his lane here in comparing the friendship of these two animals to friendship among men, for men have learned great lessons from the beasts, and animals have taught us on topics of great significance. From storks, we learned enemas; from dogs, gratitude and vomit; from cranes, vigilance; foresight and providence from ants; honesty from elephants; and loyalty from horses.[7]

In the end, Sancho fell asleep at the foot of a cork tree, and don Quixote dozed against the trunk of a robust oak. But before long, he was awakened by a rustling behind him. Leaping to his feet in concern, he turned to look and listen for the origin of the sound and saw it was two men on horseback. One of them, sliding down from his saddle, said to the other:

"Dismount, my friend, and unbridle the horses, for it seems to me this locale has an abundance of herbs and greenery for them to graze upon, and an abundance of silence and solitude for my enamored thoughts."

As he said this, he lay down on the ground, speaking and sprawling simultaneously, and his sword gave a telltale clank—this unmistakable sound was all the sign don Quixote needed to recognize that the man must surely be a knight. He crept back over to Sancho, who was still sleeping, and grabbed him by the arm. With no small effort, don Quixote managed to wake him, whispering:

"Sancho my brother, we have an adventure."

"God grant it be a good one," Sancho replied. "And where exactly, my señor, is my lady the adventure?"

"Where, Sancho?" don Quixote said. "Look over there and see for yourself. There is a knight-errant lying on the ground over there, and by my lights, not a particularly happy one, for I saw himfling himself from his horse and sprawl upon the ground in what seemed a somewhat spiteful manner, and when he hit the earth, his sword clanked."

"Well, where does your grace see an adventure in that?" asked Sancho.

Full p. C-528 Shorter p. 1739

"I am not saying," don Quixote replied, "that this is the whole adventure, but rather the beginning of one, for this is how adventures begin. But listen, for now, it seems, he is strumming some lute or vihuela,[8] and, given the way he is spitting and clearing his throat, he must be about to sing."

"I'll bet you're right," said Sancho, "and I bet he's an enamored knight."

"All knights-errant are enamored knights," responded don Quixote. "Let us listen, for strand by strand, we shall unravel the skein of his thinking, if he does sing—because when the heart overflows, no mouth can stay closed."

Sancho wished to reply to his master, but the voice of the Knight of the Forest—which was neither particularly bad nor particularly good—stopped him. Sancho and don Quixote stood in shock, listening as the Knight of the Forest sang the following:

S ONNET

"Give me your terms, my lady,
and I shall happily be
whatever suits your fancy,
for what pleases you pleases me.

If you like, I can be shy,
and if you want, I'll even die
and cease my many weary sighs.
Or if you'd like to hear my plight
of woe and weariness and spite,
then love itself shall speak for me
to tell the tale of my ennui.
Yes, there is a unity
of opposites inside of me.
I am soft as wax and diamond-hard,
I hold love's laws in fond regard.
Soft or hard, here is my heart,
yours to shape and yours to carve.
Engrave my chest with what you please,
and I shall treasure it eternally."

And with an ¡ay!—torn, it seemed, from the very depths of his soul—the Knight of the Forestfinished his song. Shortly thereafter, in an aching, anguished voice, he said:

"O you most beautiful and ungrateful woman in all the globe! How is it possible, supremely serene Casildea of Vandal-landia,[9] that you permit this, your captive knight, to consume his life in continuous pilgrimage and ceaseless labors? Is it not enough that I have wrested a confession that you are the most beautiful woman in the world from all the knights of Navarra, of León, of Andalucía , of Castilla, and,finally, all the knights of La Mancha?"

"Not so," muttered don Quixote, "for I am from La Mancha and have never confessed such a thing, nor could nor should I confess something so demeaning to the beauty of my lady. This knight you see here, Sancho, is talking nonsense. But let us listen a little further: perhaps he will speak some more."

Full p. C-529 Shorter p. 1740

"He sure will," Sancho replied. "By the looks of it, he's aiming to keep complaining for a month straight."

But that is not what happened, because—having heard them whispering in the bushes—the Knight of the Forest ceased his lamenting, stood up, and called out in a sonorous, cautious tone:

"Who goes there? What sort of men are you? Are you, by chance, one of the happy number, or are you among the tempest-tossed, wretched refuse of the teeming shore?"

"We are among the wretched," don Quixote responded.

"Well then, come unto me," he of the Forest replied, "and you shall see I am the quintessence of wretchedness and despair."

Don Quixote, seeing the Knight of the Forest's tender, restrained response, went over to him, with Sancho not a step behind.

The lamenting knight grasped don Quixote by the arm, saying:

"Sit here, señor knight—for to understand you are a knight-errant, I need merely see you spend the night out here, with solitude and tranquility for your company, which is of course the natural bed and rightful place of errant knights."

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To which don Quixote replied:

“I am indeed a knight-errant, as you say, and though my soul is the very seat of sadness, misadventure, and tragedy, that has not shaken from me the compassion I feel for the misfortunes of others. From what you just sang, I gather yours are enamored misfortunes—I mean to say, relating to the love you feel for the beautiful ingrate you mentioned in your lamentation.”

At that point they were sitting down together upon the stony ground, peacefully and in good company, with no sign they would be trying to break each other’s skulls by the break of dawn.

“Are you, señor knight,” he of the Forest asked don Quixote, “by chance an enamored knight?”

“By mischance, I am,” responded don Quixote, “though the pain of pining for a worthy object of one’s affections should be considered more a blessing than a curse.”

“Very true,” he of the Forest replied, “so long as our minds and reasoning are not perturbed by scorn, which—in sufficient quantities—seems like torture.”

“My lady has never scorned me,” said don Quixote.

“She sure hasn’t!” said Sancho, who was right there. “My lady’s like a little lamb. She’s softer than a plop of lard.”

“This is your squire?” asked the Knight of the Forest. “He dares speak when his master is speaking? Mine, at least, is over there—he’s just as large as his father, and he would never dare unfold his lips when I am talking.”

“Well, by my faith,” Sancho said, “I’m talking, too, and there’s more than a few things I could say to such a . . . But let’s leave it there and not stir the pot.”

The Squire of the Forest grasped Sancho’s arm, saying:

“Let’s go somewhere we can speak squirely, as much as we please, and leave these señor masters of ours here to compare lances and tales of their loves. I am sure the day will break before theyfinish talking.”

“Good timing,” said Sancho. “And I’ll tell your grace about me, and you can see if I stack up against the chattiest of squires.”

With that, the two squires walked off, ensconced in a conversation as funny as their masters’ was grave.

Full p. C-530 Shorter p. 1741

CHAPTER XIII

Which continues the adventure of the Knight of the Forest, along with the clever, charming, novel conversation of the Squires

Divided were the knights and squires—the latter offtrading stories of their lives, the former, of their loves. But this history focusesfirst on the reasoning of the underlings before moving on to their masters. And so, it says, once they had gone offa ways, he of the Forest said to Sancho:

“It is a hard life we live, myfine señor, we squires of errant knights. In truth, we make our bread with the sweat of our brows, which was one of the curses God hurled upon our earliest ancestors.”[1]

“You could even say,” added Sancho, “we make it with the ice in our bones, for who suffers more from heat or cold than we miserable squires of errant chivalry? And that’s if we eat at all, for suffering is worse on an empty stomach, and there are times we go a day or two with nothing to eat but the wind on our teeth.”

“And we suffer through all of it and bear it,” he of the Forest said, “in hopes of being richly rewarded. Because unless a squire’s knight-errant is wretched indeed, he’s only ever a few jousts away from being rewarded with a lovely governorship of somefineínsula or distinguished dukedom.”

“I,” Sancho replied, “have told my master I would be content with anínsula, and he is so noble and generous, he has promised it to me on many different occasions.”

“I,” he of the Forest said, “would be satisfied with a canonry[2] in return for my services, and my master has already arranged it all for me—and what afine canonry it is!”

“It must be,” Sancho said, “the case that your grace’s master is an ecclesiastic knight, and that’s how he can bestow such mercies on hisfine squires. Mine is merely a lay knight, although I do remember a time when certain astute—but, if you ask me, ill-intentioned—characters tried to persuade him to aspire to archbishop, but he decided to go for emperor instead. In that moment I was shaking like a leaf, afraid he’d choose to join the Church, since I don’t have the skills I’d need for a post like that. Because I’ll tell your grace, I may look like a man, but as far as Church jobs go, I’m just beastly.”

“Well, truly, your grace is mistaken,” he of the Forest said, “for not all insular governorships are worthwhile. Some are twisted, some poor, some full of melancholy, and,finally, even the most upright and righteousínsula brings with it a heavy load on a man’s mind, full of worry, the weight of which all falls on the shoulders of the misfortunate wretch lucky enough to govern it. It would be far better for those of us in this goddamn servitude of a profession to go back home and spend our time on easier activities, like, say, hunting, orfishing. For what squire in the world is so poor he does not have at least an old nag, a pair of whippets, and afishing rod to pass his time at home?”

Full p. C-531 Shorter p. 1742

“It’s not that I’m missing any of that,” Sancho replied. “Though it’s true that I don’t have a nag. But my ass is worth twice as much as my master’s horse! Let God damn me next Easter for saying it, but I’d never swap his mount for mine, not if he threw in four *fanegas*[3] of barley on top. Your grace must think it’s funny how dearly I value my dappled gray—for dappled gray is the shade of my donkey. And I’m never short on dogs, since there are plenty running around, plus, hunting is more fun on someone else’s dime.”

“Really and truly,” he of the Forest replied, “señor squire, I’m thinking—in fact, I’ve decided—I’m going to leave all these chivalry shenanigans behind, go back to my village, and raise my children—I’ve got three, each one like afine pearl.”

“I’ve got two,” said Sancho, “fine enough to present to the Pope himself. Especially my girl, whom I’m raising to be a countess, God willing, even though her mother’s against it.”

“And how old is this señora being raised to be a countess?” he of the Forest inquired.

“Fifteen years old, give or take a few. But she’s as tall as a lance and as fresh as an April morning, plus she’s got the strength of a farmhand.”

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“With those qualities,” he of the Forest replied, “she could be a countess and a nymph of the verdant forest, too! O, what a magnificent little bitch she must be! Sturdy little wench, just like her mother!”

Sancho, somewhat put out, replied:

“She’s not a wench, and neither was her mother; God willing, neither of them will have to go into that profession so long as I’m alive. And speak a bit more courteously, please. For someone who’s been raised among knights-errant—who are gentility itself—your grace sure doesn’t seem to speak like it.”

“O, how little your grace knows, señor squire,” he of the Forest replied, “on the subject of compliments! How can you not know that when some knight gives a tremendous thrust with his lance and pierces the hide of a bull in the ring, or when someone does something particularly well, the masses often cry out, ‘O, thatfine bastard, that magnificent little bitch! He’s gone and done it now!’ and the very words that seem so spiteful are, in this context, high praise indeed? For truly, señor, you should cast out the son or daughter whose actions don’t bring their parents such praises.”

“Sure, I’ll cast them out,” Sancho replied, “and then, by that same reasoning your grace can throw a whole whorehouse at me on the topic of my children and my woman, because everything they do and say is extremely worthy of praise. And I beg God to let me see them again, and save me from this mortal sin, which is the same thing as saving me from this dangerous profession of squiredom, in which I now make my second incursion, having been lured and seduced by a satchel with a hundred *ducados* I found one day in the heart of the Sierra Morena mountains.[4] And so I know the Devil may drop, before my very eyes—here, there, not over there, maybe over in that other spot—a rucksack full of doubloons, which I can almost feel myself caress with every step, can feel it in my arms at night, and soon enough I’ll bring one home, make some investments, buy some real estate, and just live offthe rent, like a prince. As soon as I think Full p. C-532 about that, it feels perfectly easy and totally tolerable to suffer through Shorter p. 1743 any number of labors with my lunatic of a master, who I know is more a madman than a knight.”

“That’s why,” he of the Forest replied, “they say greed splits the seams of theflour sack. Speaking of madmen, my master’s the worst in the world, for he doesn’t know when to mind his own business, and as they say, ‘tend your neighbor’sfield andfind your own ass killed.’ In trying to restore another knight to sanity, my master’s acting like he’s lost his own mind,[5] running around looking for something that—if hefinds it—might just blow up in his face.”

“And, is he an enamored knight, by any chance?”

“Yes,” he of the Forest said. “He’s in love with one Casildea of Vandal-landia, the most cold-blooded, hot-headed lady in all the world. But her coldness is not the only leg she limps on—there are other worse deceits growling around in her belly, which I’m sure he’ll talk about before too long.”

“There’s no road so smooth,” Sancho replied, “that it doesn’t have a bump or two. My neighbor’s pot has fava beans, and mine has only herbs and greens, and madness seems to have more servants and better company than sense itself. But if it’s true what they say, that many hands makes the labor light, then I can console myself with your grace’s company, since the master you serve’s as much a moron as my own.”

“A moron, but a brave one,” he of the Forest responded. “Really more of a rascal than moronic or brave.”

“Not mine,” Sancho replied. “I mean, there’s not a whiffof rascal about him. He’s as sound as a clay jug, he wouldn’t hurt afly—he does right by everybody; there’s no malice in his heart. A child could convince him it’s midnight at noon, and it’s that simplicity that makes me love him like the fabric of my own heart. I don’t have it in me to leave him, no matter how many times he descends into idiocy.”

“Even so, señor brother,” he of the Forest said, “when the blind lead the blind, both run the risk of falling into a hole. It’d be better for us to run along back home and tend to our own business, for those who go looking for adventures don’t alwaysfind good ones.”

Throughout their conversation Sancho had been spitting with some frequency, horking up a certain kind of sticky, somewhat dry saliva. The charitable forestly squire, observing Sancho’s spitting, said:

“It seems to me all our talk must have stuck our tongues to our palates. But I have just the thing to unstick them, hanging offthe horn of my saddle, and a pretty good one, at that.”

He stood up and walked away for a moment, then swiftly returned with an enormous wineskin and an empanada half a *vara* long. That’s not an exaggeration, because inside it was a white rabbit the size of a man’s forearm. It was so big, when Sancho saw it, he thought it must have not a lamb but a whole sheep inside. Ogling the empanada, he said:

“What’s that you’ve got there, señor?”

Full p. C-533

“Well, what did you expect?” the other replied. “Do I seem, by chance, like some penniless squire, the bread and water kind? I pack better snacks in my saddlebags than a general on the march.”

Shorter p. 1744

Sancho didn’t have to be asked twice; he devoured the empanada in the darkness, wolfing down mouthfuls the size of slipknots as he said:

“Your grace sure is a faithful and righteous squire, plain and simple, magnificent and distinguished, as can be clearly seen by this banquet—which, though it may not have appeared here by an act of magic, certainly seemed like it did—not like me, haplessly broke, with no more in my saddlebags than a hunk of old cheese, hard enough to bash a giant’s brains in, along with four dozen carob beans and just as many walnuts and hazelnuts, mercies bestowed on me by my miserly owner, who is of the opinion that the rule for knights-errant is to eat nothing but nuts and the herbs and greens of thefields.”

“By my faith, brother,” he of the Forest replied, “I don’t have the stomach for thistles and wild pears and roots in the wilderness. Our owners can believe and obey any opinions and laws of chivalry they like—and they can eat whatever those laws require. Me, I’m bringing delicacies, along with that wineskin hanging offmy saddle, whether they like it or not. My lady wineskin never lets me down, and I love her so dearly, that I take her in my arms and give her kisses constantly.”

As he spoke, he passed the wine to Sancho, who chugged it, holding the bottom straight up in the air as he gazed at the stars for a quarter hour. When hefinished drinking, he let his head fall to the side, heaved a happy sigh, and said:

“What a magnificent little bitch! That’s a good Catholic wine!”

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“See,” said the Squire of the Forest, hearing Sancho swear, “how you have complimented the wine by calling it a little bitch?”

“I say,” Sancho replied, “I confess and recognize it is no insult to call somebody a little bitch when it is understood to be complimentary. But tell me, señor, on your mother’s grave, is this wine from Ciudad Real?”[6]

“Señor sommelier!” he of the Forest exclaimed. “Truly, it is none other than the terroir you say. And what’s more, it’s beenfinely aged.”

“You don’t say!” said Sancho. “Don’t go thinking my palate isn’tfine enough to recognize that and then some! What would you say, señor squire, if I told you I have such excellent instincts and natural talent in tasting wines, that with just a sniffI can tell you the terroir, the grape type, theflavor, what kind of casks it was aged in, and where it’ll go from here, along with every other relevant detail? But there’s no need to be amazed, for among my ancestors on my father’s side were the two best sommeliers La Mancha had seen in many years. As proof of this, let me tell you a true story of something that happened to them:

“They were both asked to taste the wine from a new cask, and asked their thoughts on its quality and condition, goodness or badness. One dipped just the tip of his tongue into the wine; the other merely breathed in its aroma. ‘Opens with a bolt of iron, closes with a supplefinish,’ said thefirst. ‘Meaty, with dusty notes of goat and leather,’ said the second. The winemaker who hired them swore the cask was clean and nothing had been added to the wine Full p. C-534 that would give it aflavor of iron or leather. Even so, the two famous sommeliers stood by their assessments. Time passed, the wine was sold, and the cask emptied. And when the winemaker went to clean it, what did hefind at the bottom but a small iron key, hanging on a goat leather strap. So you tell me, your grace, if somebody from such a lineage could give you a run for your money on the topic of wine!”

Shorter p. 1745

“That’s what I’m saying,” he of the Forest said. “We should stop running around looking for adventures, already. We have homes, don’t we? Let’s not go looking for nuts, but go home to our huts, and let Godfind us there, if He’s willing.”

“I’ll serve my master till he reaches Zaragoza, and then we’ll all come to some agreement.”

Essentially, these twofine squires talked and drank so freely, sleep had to come tie their tongues and temper their thirst—for such thirst as theirs was impossible to quench completely. And so, having practically emptied the wineskin between the two of them, they both fell soundly asleep, where we will leave them for now, as we turn to what occurred between the Knight of the Forest and the Knight of the Long Face.

CHAPTER XIV

Which continues the adventure with the Knight of the Forest

Among the many words traded between don Quixote and the Knight of the Wood, the history tells us he of the Forest said to don Quixote:

“In summary, señor knight, I wish you to know it was my destiny—or more precisely, my own free will—that led me to fall in love with the peerless Casildea of Valdal-landia. I call her peerless because she is, both in terms of the glory of her body, and her extreme nobility and

beauty. Well, this Casildea I describe to you repaid myfine intentions and restrained desires by tasking me—as Hercules' stepmother tasked him[7] —with many dangerous labors, promising me after each one that uponfinishing the next one, I would receive my heart's desire. But my labors have joined together in an endless chain, whose links I can no longer count, nor do I know what thefinal task shall be that will end with the fulfilment of myfine desires. Once she sent me to challenge that famous giant lady known as La Giralda[8] —the Weathervane—a woman as upright and strong as if cast of bronze. She never moves from where she's planted, but she'll whip around and change direction faster than theficklest of women. I came, I saw her, and I conquered her, held her at bay and forced her to stand still, because for more than a week, only north winds blew through. Another time she commanded me to weigh those ancient stones, the valiant Bulls of Guisando[9] —more a task for a day laborer than a knight. On another occasion, she commanded me to descend into and plumb the depths Full p. C-535 of the chasm of La Cabra,[1] that goatly hole that leads straight to Hell, through singular danger and fearsome fathomage, to bring her a detailed description of what lies in those shadowy depths.

"I made La Giralda stop her spinning, weighed the Bulls of Guisando, plunged into the abyss to bring the chasm's hidden secrets out of darkness, and still my hopes are deader than dead, and still her commands and her scorn are Shorter p. 1746 livelier than life. In conclusion, most recently she commanded me to scour all the provinces of Spain and make all knights-errant wandering through them confess that she alone is the most beautiful woman alive, and I am the most valiant, and the most tremendously enamored knight on the globe. I have crossed most of Spain to complete this task, and I have vanquished many knights who dared contradict me. But of all them, the one Ifind most gratifying to boast about is the time I defeated, in single combat, that legendary knight don Quixote of La Mancha and made him confess my Casildea is more beautiful than his Dulcinea. For vanquishing him, by my account, is the same as having vanquished every knight in the world, because this don Quixote has vanquished them all, and by vanquishing him, all his glory, fame, and honor transfer to me and now count as mine, for

> the greater the reputation of the conquered,
> the more honor goes to the conqueror,[2]

and therefore, all the innumerable deeds of the aforementioned don Quixote pass to me and henceforth shall be considered as my own."

Don Quixote was shocked to hear the Knight of the Forest say such a thing. A thousand times he found himself inches from calling him a liar. The word was burning on the tip of his tongue, but he restrained himself the best he could so as to force the Knight of the Forest to confess his lie with his own mouth. And so, quite calmly, he said:

"Regarding your grace's claim, señor knight, of having vanquished every knight-errant in Spain, or even in all the world, I make no comment. But I question the veracity of your claim that you have vanquished don Quixote of La Mancha. Perhaps it was someone else who looked like him, though there are few like him in caliber."

"You doubt it?" he of the Forest replied. "By Heaven above, I swear I fought don Quixote, conquered and vanquished him. He's a tall man, with a wizened face, shriveled, stretched-out

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limbs, salt and pepper hair, a beak of a nose with a bit of a hook, and a big black mustache. He campaigns under the name the Knight of the Long Face, and travels with his squire, a peasant named Sancho Panza. He weighs down the withers and handles the bridle of a legendary horse named Rocinante, and,finally, the lady of his will is one Dulcinea of Toboso, previously known as Aldonza Lorenzo, a native of Toboso. Just like mine—since her name is Casildea, and she is from Andalucía, I call her Casildea of Vandalia.[3] If all these details are insufficient evidence for you of my veracity, here is my sword, which can make a believer out of incredulity itself."

Full p. C-536

"Calm yourself, señor knight," don Quixote said. "And listen to what I wish to tell you. Know this don Quixote of whom you speak is my closest friend in all the world, so close in fact, I could say it is as if he and I were one. From the details you have described of him—so accurate and true—I cannot help but think it was he you defeated. Nevertheless, by the sight of my own eyes and Shorter p. 1747 the feel of my own hands, I know it could not possibly have been him, unless—given his many enchanter enemies—and one in particular who hounds him—one of them happened to take on the appearance and form of don Quixote, in order to allow himself to be vanquished and thus defraud him of the fame his legendary acts of high chivalry have garnered and won him across the entirety of the discovered world? And as evidence of this, I also wish you to know that it's scarcely been two days since these—his enemy enchanters—transformed thefigure and person of the beautiful Dulcinea of Toboso into a lowly, vulgar villager. By the same means, they must have transformed themselves into don Quixote. And if all this is not enough to make you realize the truth of what I say, here is don Quixote himself, ready to stand up for the truth with the blade of his sword, on foot or on horseback, or howsoever you please."

Saying this, he rose to his feet and gripped his sword, waiting to see how the Knight of the Forest would respond. He replied in an equally calm voice, saying:

"I've got no problem putting my money where my mouth is. A man who has already vanquished an enchanted don Quixote can surely expect to vanquish him again, in theflesh. But, as it is not right for knights to conduct their feats of arms at night, in the darkness, like robbers and ruffians, let us await the break of day, that the sun may bear witness to our deeds. And the condition of our battle must be that the conquered will be at the conqueror's mercy, and must do anything and everything he commands—within the bounds of decency appropriate to the actions a knight-errant can be commanded to perform."

"I am more than content with this condition and stipulation," don Quixote replied.

Having come to an agreement, they went offin search of their squires,finding them snoring loudly, in the same positions they were in when sleep overtook them. They woke the squires, commanding them to ready the horses, for at the break of dawn, the two would enter into bloody, unequaled single combat. This news left Sancho shocked and stunned, and scared for his master, given the feats of daring he had heard the Squire of the Forest describe. But the two of them went offwithout a word to look for the animals, since all three horses and the dappled gray had smelled each other and come together in the darkness.

As they were walking, the Squire of the Forest said to Sancho:

"You should know, brother, the custom when brawling in Andalucía is that any man who's a godfather to the brawl should not sit by with idle hands, but instead grapple mano a mano

with any opposing godfathers while their godsons are duking it out. I say this to warn you that while our masters are battling, we too mustfight till we break each other to splinters."

"This custom, señor squire," Sancho replied, "may befine and dandy out there between the ruffians and brawlers you describe. But between squires of knights-errant—don't even think about it. I, at least, have never heard my master speak of anything of the kind, and he knows all the laws of errant chivalry by heart. No matter how much I wish it were truly an explicit rule of chivalry that Full p. C-537 squires mustfight while their señores do, I still wouldn't follow it. I'd pay whatever fee theyfine pacifist squires—which I'm sure can't be more than two Shorter p. 1748 pounds of wax[4] —and what's more, I'd be happy to pay it, since I know the wax'll cost me less than the gauze I'd use bandaging my head back together, because at this point I consider it as good as cracked open and split in two. Plus, I can't possiblyfight, since I don't have a sword, and I've never held one in all my life."

"I have afinefix for that," he of the Forest replied. "I've got twoflour sacks here of equal size. You take one and I'll take the other, and we'll sack each other in a fair brawl, equally armed."

"In that case, I'm all in," Sancho responded, "for a brawl like that will dust us offmore than hurt us."

"Not necessarily," the other replied, "because we shall load up the sacks with half a dozen pebbles, nice and round, of equal weight, so we can sack each other without doing any harm or damage."

"Look, damnit! By my father's corpse!" Sancho exclaimed. "Fill the sacks with furs, or clumps of cotton, so our heads aren't bashed in and our bones all broken! But even if youfill them with the cocoons of silkworms, myfine señor, I won'tfight you. Leave thefighting to our masters, and let us mind our own business, have a drink, and stay alive, for Time will be sure to take our lives in the end, without us running around looking for ways to hurry it or entice Death to harvest us before we've had time to grow ripe and fall on our own."

"Even so," he of the Forest replied, "we have tofight at least a little bit. Half an hour, tops."

"Not so," responded Sancho. "I will not be so discourteous nor so ungrateful as tofight someone I've broken bread and drunk wine with, not even briefly. What's more, I'm neither angry nor enraged, and who the devil could work themselves up to a brawl for no reason at all?"

"That," said the Squire of the Forest, "I canfix. Before we startfighting, I'll sneak up on your grace and give you three or four smacks across the face until I've slapped you to the ground. That's sure to wake your rage, even if it's drowsier than a dormouse."

"If that's your move, I've got one of my own," responded Sancho, "to top it: I'll grab a stick, and before your grace sneaks up to wake my rage, I'll put yours to sleep with my stick, until you're sleeping sound enough only the Devil could wake you, because let me tell you—I'm not the type of man to let anybody manhandle my face. So everybody can just mind his own business, although it would be better for everybody to just let their rage go on sleeping, since no man knows what's in another's soul, and those who go looking for wool often come back shorn, and God blessed peace and cursedfighting. Because if a cornered cat, with his back against the wall, turns into a lion, then I, who am a man—well God knows what I could turn into, and so, señor squire, I am warning you that whatever harm or damage may result from ourfighting will be on your head."

"Fine," he of the Forest replied. "We'll deal with it tomorrow."

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As they were speaking, the trees began tofill with the twitters and trills of a thousand types of lovely little birds. Their symphony of happy singing seemed to greet and welcome the dewy dawn, which was already beginning to Full p. C-538 show the beauty of her face through the doors and balconies of the East, shaking from her hair an infinite number of liquid pearls, their gentle liqueur bathing the Shorter p. 1749 herbs and greenery until they seemed like springs, birthing and raining down tiny transparent pearls. The willows trickled with this delicious Manna; the creeks chuckled, the streams gurgled, and the forests andfields grew joyful with the arrival of rosy Dawn. But as soon as it was light enough to see, the veryfirst thing Sancho Panza saw was the enormous nose on the Squire of the Forest. It was so huge, it practically shaded his entire body. The story goes, in effect, that it was hugely oversized, pitted in the middle, and full of warts all over. It was a sort of bruised purplish color, like an eggplant, and hung a full twofingers' breadth below his mouth. The size, color, warts, and pits of the nose were so unsettling that as soon as Sancho saw it, he began shaking like a kid with epilepsy, swearing in his heart to let himself be slapped around two hundred times before he let himself get mad enough to brawl with that gnoll.

Don Quixote looked at his opponent. He had already put his helmet on and lowered the visor, so his face could not be seen, but he was a robust man, albeit not a very tall one. Over his armor, he wore a tunic or coat made from a fabric that shone likefine gold, and was studded with tiny moons made from shiny sequins. He looked tremendously gallant andflashy; atop his helmetflew quite a number of feathers, in green, yellow, and white; and his lance, which he had leaned against a tree, was huge and thick, with an iron tip more than a palm's breadth long.

Don Quixote saw and noticed all of this, judging from what he had seen that said knight must be very strong. But this did not strike fear in the heart of don Quixote, as it did to Sancho Panza. Instead, with genteel daring, he said to the Knight of Sequins:

"If your great desire tofight, señor knight, has not burned through your courtesy, I ask you to lift up your visor somewhat, that I may see if the gallantry of your face corresponds to that of your disposition."

"Whether you are the vanquished or the vanquisher in this business of ours, señor knight," he of Sequins replied, "there will be plenty of time to see me. And if I do not satisfy your desire at the moment, it is because I feel it would offend the beautiful Casildea of Vandal-landia for me to delay our battle for the time necessary to raise up my visor, before forcing you to confess what you already know I desire."

"Well, while we are mounting our horses," don Quixote said, "would be afine time for you to tell me if I am the don Quixote you claim to have conquered."

"My answer to that," the Knight of Sequins said, "is you look just the same. As similar as one egg is to another, that is how closely you resemble the knight I conquered. But since you say you are hounded by evil enchanters, I dare not affirm it was or was not you."

"That's good enough for me," responded don Quixote, "to believe you have been misled. Nevertheless, to dispel any lingering doubts in your mind, bring forth the horses, for in less time than it would have taken you to lift up your visor, if God, my lady, and my arm avail me, I shall see your face, and you shall see I am not the conquered don Quixote you imagine!"

And so, with but the briefest of words exchanged, they mounted their horses, and don Quixote reined Rocinante around to take thefield and pace out the Full p. C-539 distance before turning to face his opponent. He of Sequins did the same. But before don Quixote had gone

twenty paces, he heard the Knight of Sequins call out to him. Both of them paused halfway as he of Sequins shouted:

Shorter p. 1750

"Remember, señor knight, the condition of our battle! The vanquished, as we agreed earlier, will be at the whim and discretion of the vanquisher."

"I am aware of that," don Quixote replied, "providing whatever is demanded and commanded not fall outside the laws of chivalry."

"That is the understanding," he of Sequins responded.

As they spoke, don Quixote's eyes alighted on the strange nose of the squire, and he was left no less amazed at the sight than Sancho. So shocked was don Quixote, he took the squire to be some sort of monster, or a new kind of man, never seen before on Earth. Sancho, who saw his master pacing out thefield, didn't want to be left alone with the squire's savage schnoz, afraid a singleflick of that nose against his own would be enough to knock him out of thefight, leaving him stretched out on the ground—either from the blow or his fear—and so he ran alongside his Rocinante, holding onto his owner's stirrup strap, until he felt it was time to turn, when he said:

"I'm begging your grace, señor, before you begin your bout, help me climb up into that cork tree, which will let me see, much better than on the ground, the gallant encounter your grace is about to have with that knight."

"I rather think, Sancho," said don Quixote, "you wish to perch above the peril, and sit unscathed up in the stands as the bulls run beneath you."

"To tell the truth," Sancho replied, "the colossal shnoz of that squire scares me. I don't have the stomach to stand there next to him."

"Such a nose," said don Quixote, "would shock me, too, were I not who I am. And so I shall help you climb up where you say."

In the time it took don Quixote to help Sancho up into the cork tree, he of Sequins paced out thefield, and—believing don Quixote had done the same—without awaiting a trumpet or any other signal, he reined his horse—which was no better-looking nor lighter on its feet than Rocinante—around, and, as fast as his horse could run (which was a sort of middling trot), charged his enemy. But,finding his enemy occupied with boosting Sancho up, the Knight of Sequins pulled back on his reins and stopped halfway through his charge, for which the horse was deeply grateful, since it couldn't go any farther. Don Quixote, believing his enemy to beflying at him, savagely spurred Rocinante's skeletal sides and goaded him—in what this history tells us is the only instance Rocinante ever really ran, since all other times he was decidedly trotting—into a gallop, and with this never-before-seen fury, he arrived at the side of the Knight of Sequins, who, despite digging his spurs in up to the buttons, could not get his horse to move an inch from where its trot had stalled.

In thisfine fettle don Quixote found his opponent, hampered by his horse, and holding onto his lance, having either not had the chance to lock it into position, or tried to lock it in and missed. Don Quixote, not noticing any of this, safe and sound and without suffering a single scratch, walloped the Knight of Sequins with his lance, knocking him offhis horse and onto the ground. He didn't move a muscle, didn't twitch a hand or foot, giving manifest indications of being dead.

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As soon as Sancho saw him fall, he slid down out of the cork tree and ran as fast as he could to his señor's side. Don Quixote, dismounting Rocinante, went Full p. C-540 over to the Knight of Sequins, and cutting the cords of his helmet to see if he was dead, or give him air if he was somehow still alive, he saw . . .

Who could say what he saw without causing wonder, marvel, shock and terror in those who heard the words? He saw, the story says, the very same face and Shorter p. 1751 figure, the same aspect and appearance, the same physiognomy, the very effigy, the one and only graduate Sansón Carrasco. As soon as he saw him, don Quixote began shouting:

"Come look, Sancho, and see what you will never believe! Spur yourself, son, and see what magic can do, the utter power of wizards and enchanters!"

Sancho went over, and as soon as he saw the graduate Carrasco's face, he crossed himself a thousand times, then crossed himself a thousand more. Throughout all this, the fallen knight gave no sign of being alive, and Sancho said to don Quixote:

"Seems to me, señor, that just in case, your grace shouldfinish offthis man who looks like the graduate Sansón Carrasco. Kneel down next to him and stick your sword down his throat. Maybe you'll end up killing one of your enchanter enemies."

"Not a bad idea," said don Quixote. "For as far as enemies goes, the fewer the better."

And just as don Quixote was unsheathing his sword to execute Sancho's advice, the Squire of Sequins arrived, bereft of the behemoth nose that had made him so baleful, and shouting at the top of his lungs:

"Look what your grace is doing, señor don Quixote! The man at your feet is your friend the graduate Sansón Carrasco, and I am his squire!"

Sancho, seeing the Squire of Sequins free of his former deformity, asked:

"And your nose?"

To which the squire replied:

"I've got it in my pocket."

And, sticking his hand into his right pocket, he pulled out the paper-mache nose, which was painted in varnish in the style earlier described. Sancho looked closer and closer at the squire, and in a shocked voice, he shouted:

"¡Santa María save me! Aren't you Niblin Fishstix, my neighbor and compadre?"

"I sure am!" shouted back the de-nosed squire. "It's me, Niblin Fishstix, compadre and friend of Sancho Panza. Later I'll tell you all the yarns, snarls, and tangles that led me here, but in the meantime, tell and beg your señor master not to wound, harm, or touch a hair on the head of the Knight of Sequins, who lies now at his feet, because there is absolutely no doubt that knight is the bold but ill-advised graduate, Sansón Carrasco, our neighbor and compatriot."

While Niblin was speaking, the Knight of the Forest regained his senses. Don Quixote, seeing this, put the naked tip of his sword to the fallen knight's face and said:

"You are dead, knight, unless you confess the peerless Dulcinea of Toboso is more beautiful than your Casildea of Vandal-landia. And after that, you also must swear—should you survive—that you will go to the city of Toboso and present yourself to her on my behalf, so that she may dispose of you in accordance with her whim. And if she should return unto you your life and your liberty, you must also promise to comefind me—for the trail of myfine feats will not be hard to follow—and when you reach me, you must tell me everything Full p. C-541 you said to

and did for her, in detail. These conditions you are bound to, as per our agreement prior to doing battle, as they in no way violate the laws of errant chivalry."

"I confess," the fallen knight said, "Dulcinea's little pink slipper, no matter how worn-out andfilthy, is far more lovely than the perfectly clean curlies of Shorter p. 1752 Casilda's beard, and I promise to present myself to her and then to you, and give you a full and detailed account, as you request."

"You must also confess and believe," don Quixote went on, "the knight you vanquished was not and could not have been don Quixote of La Mancha, but rather some other knight who looked like him, as I shall confess and believe that you—though you look just like the graduate Sansón Carrasco—are not, but rather someone else my enemies have set before me in his image and likeness, to cool the impetus of my rage and remind me to be merciful in the glory of conquest."

"All this I confess, judge, and feel to be just as you believe, judge, and feel it to be," the brokeback knight replied. "Now allow me to rise, I beg you, if I still can after that fall, which has bent me exceedingly out of shape."

The Knight of Sequins was helped to his feet by don Quixote and Niblin Fishstix, his squire. Sancho couldn't take his eyes offthe Squire of Sequins, whom he peppered with questions, the answers to which gave manifest evidence he was indeed Niblin Fishstix, as he had said. But don Quixote's words about enchanters changing the Knight of Sequins into the graduate Carrasco had seeded Sancho with doubt, and he was no longer sure he could believe the truth his eyes might see. In the end, master and servant remained mistaken, as Sequins and squire retired in search of somewhere to patch up and poultice the ribs of the doleful defeated knight. Don Quixote and Sancho continued down the road to Zaragoza, where the story leaves them for now, to tell the tale of the true identities of the Knight of Sequins and his schnozly squire.

CHAPTER XV

Which tells the tale and relates the history of the Knight of Sequins and his squire, along with their true identities

Smug, self-satisfied, and extremely pleased with himself, don Quixote contemplated his victory over such a valiant knight as he imagined he of Sequins to be, and from whom he would soon have knightly word whether or not his lady remained enchanted—for the vanquished knight would have to keep his word or surrender his knighthood—as well as a detailed description of everything she said to him. But don Quixote had one thing in mind, and the Knight of Sequins another, since at that point his only destination was somewhere he could poultice his bruises, as mentioned earlier.

Well, as the story goes, when the graduate Sansón Carrasco advised don Quixote to return to his previously abandoned chivalry, it was actually because he was in cahoots with the priest and the barber to stay home, calm and quiet, without being battered by all his ill-sought adventures. And so, all of them unanimously and Carrasco particularly cooked up a plan, which was to let don Quixote leave—since stopping him seemed impossible—and have Full p. C-542 Sansón dress up as a knight-errant, meet him out on the road, and do battle with him—since there would surely be no shortage of things tofight over—and defeat him, which Sansón

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believed would be easy enough to do. He would be sure to make a pact with don Quixote that the vanquished would be at the mercy of the vanquisher, and once he had vanquished him, the knighted graduate would command don Quixote to return to his town and abode and remain there for two years, or until commanded otherwise. Don Quixote would Shorter p. 1753 indubitably comply, so as not to contravene the laws of chivalry, and it might just be his time in seclusion would lead him to forget his vanity, or at least give the rest of them time tofind some convenient remedy for his insanity.

Carrasco agreed, and Niblin Fishstix—compadre and neighbor of Sancho Panza, and a happy, if somewhat harebrained, man—volunteered to be his squire. Sansón donned the arms and armor previously described, and Niblin Fishstix affixed, on top of his natural nose, the massive paper-mache shnoz described before, so his compadre would not recognize him on sight. And just like that, they followed the same route don Quixote had taken, arriving almost in time for the adventure of the cart of Death, and,finally, found them in the forest, where everything the reader has just read transpired.

Were it not for the extraordinary mental gymnastics of don Quixote—who led himself to believe the graduate was not the graduate—the señor graduate would have bit the dust before he made it to hisfinal vows, hoisted by his own petard, for he couldn't evenfind nests where he'd been sure there'd be birds.

Niblin Fishstix, seeing how terribly sideways theirfine desires had gone, and the trouble their plan had brought them, said to the graduate:

"Surely, señor Sansón Carrasco, we got what we deserved. It's easy enough to think up a plan and go charging into it, but pulling it offor getting out in one piece is generally much harder. Don Quixote's crazy, we're sane, but he rides offlaughing, without a scratch on him, while your grace's left here all bruised and sorrowful. Well then, who's the bigger lunatic, the one who can't help losing his mind, or the one who chooses to lose it?"

To which Sansón replied:

"The difference between those two lunatics is the one who can't help it will be crazy forever, and the one who is willingly crazy can quit it whenever he wishes."

"Well, that's true," Niblin Fishstix said. "I chose, of my own free will, to lose my mind and become your grace's squire, and now, with that same free will, I'm choosing to quit being crazy and go home."

"That is your prerogative," Sansón responded. "But if you expect me to go back before I have thoroughly beaten don Quixote with a stick, you are deeply mistaken. It is no longer my wish to help him regain his sanity that drives me, but a thirst for vengeance! Unfortunately, the profound pain in my ribs prevents me from proffering any more pious preaching."

And so the two rode along, bandying reasons back and forth, until they arrived at a town which, fortunately, had a bonesetter, who reset the ribs of wretched Sansón. Niblin Fishstix went home, leaving him behind to plot his revenge. The history returns to his story in due course, but leaves him now, so as not to miss the chance to laugh at don Quixote.

Full p. C-543

CHAPTER XVI

On what occurred between don Quixote and a discreet knight of La Mancha

Full of joy, satisfaction, and smugness, as mentioned above, don Quixote went on with his journey, imagining himself—on account of his recent victory—to be the most valiant knight-errant of his era in all the world. In his mind, he had already taken on and overcome every adventure he could possibly encounter from then on out. Enchanters and their enchantments were nothing to Shorter p. 1754 him; forgotten were the innumerable thrashings he had received over the course of his errant chivalry, as well as the stone that knocked out half his teeth, the ungratefulness of the galley slaves, the impudence of the Yangüesans, and the storm of staffs that broke upon him. In summary, he said to himself, if he couldfind a manner, form, or way to disenchant his lady Dulcinea, he would have no cause to envy even thefinest fortune of the most fortunate knight-errant ever to live. He was fully wrapped up in his imagination when Sancho said:

"Isn't it strange, señor? I feel I can still see—right before my very eyes—that massive, colossal schnoz of my compadre Niblin Fishstix."

"Do you really, by chance, Sancho, believe the Knight of Sequins was the graduate Carrasco, and his squire, your compadre Niblin Fishstix?"

"I don't know what to believe, as far as that goes," responded Sancho. "All I know is that the descriptions he gave me of my house, my wife, and my kids couldn't have come from anyone but Niblin. And his face, once he lost the schnoz, was Niblin Fishstix's face, just as I've seen him time after time in my town and over the garden wall, and his voice sounded the same, too."

"Let us reason through this, Sancho," don Quixote replied. "Look here: who could believe that the graduate Sansón Carrasco would dress up as a knight-errant, with weapons and armor, and ride forth tofight me? Am I, by chance, his enemy? Have I ever given him any reason to hold a grudge against me? Am I his rival, or has he become a knight, for him to envy the fame I have gained in the same activity?"

"Well, what can we say, señor," responded Sancho, "about why that knight—whoever he is—looks just like the graduate Carrasco, and his squire looks just like Niblin Fishstix, my compadre? If it's an enchantment, as your grace has said, why—of all the people in the world—those two in particular?"

"It is all plots and deception," replied don Quixote, "on the part of the sinister sages who pursue me, for—foreseeing that I was fated to triumph in this battle—they furnished the vanquished knight with the face of my friend the graduate, so that our bond of friendship would interpose itself between the blade of my sword and the rigor of mine arm, tempering the righteous rage of my heart, and allowing that knight—who with dupery and deception sought to end my life—to escape with his own. As proof of this, ¡O Sancho! you already know from your own experience—which will not allow you to deceive, dissemble, or lie—how easy it is for enchanters to switch one face for another, making the beautiful ugly and the ugly beautiful. For it has not even been two days since you saw, with your very own eyes, the beauty and elegance of the peerless Dulcinea, in her pure and natural state, and I saw her made ugly and brought low, transformed into a coarse, uncouth peasant, with eyes full of cataracts, and vile, reeking breath. What's more, for Full p. C-544 the perverse enchanter who

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dared enact such an evil enchantment, it is child's play to transform the faces of Sansón Carrasco and your compadre, to snatch away the glory of victory from my very hands. But even so, I shall console myself, for in the end, whosoever he was or was not, I have vanquished my enemy."

"God knows what the truth of it all is," Sancho replied.

But since Sancho knew Dulcinea's transformation had been his own plot and deception, he was not very satisfied with his master's chimerical answer, though he decided it was better not to reply, so as not to accidentally say anything that might reveal his fabrication.

Shorter p. 1755

In the midst of this, a man traveling in the same direction passed them on the road. He rode a beautiful silver roan mare and wore a greatcoat offine green fabric, lined with tawny velvet, with a velvet hat to match. The mare was adorned in simple style, with matching green and purple livery and a short-stirrup saddle. The man wore a Morisco scimitar[5] on a belt of green and gold, with matching riding boots. His spurs, though not gold, had been varnished with a green glaze and polished until they shone, and they complimented the rest of his outfit so well, they looked better than if they had been gold. As he passed by, he greeted them courteously and spurred his mare to give them ample berth, but don Quixote called out to him:

"Señor dapper gentleman, if your grace is traveling the same road as we and not in a hurry, I would be grateful if you would do us the mercy of accompanying us in our travels."

"Truly," he of the mare replied, "I would not pass you so quickly were it not for fear that the company of my mare might bestir your stallion."

"Sure could, señor," said Sancho, "I say, you sure could ride alongside us, because this horse of ours is the most honest and well-behaved stallion in the world. Never, on similar occasions, has he committed any vileness whatsoever, and the one time he tried, me and my señor paid for it seven-fold. So, like I said, you sure can slow down and ride with us, if you like, because even if she was served up on a silver platter, it's a sure bet this stallion wouldn't even give her a sniff."

The traveler slowed his mount, amazed by the handsome face of don Quixote, who was traveling without his helmet on, since Sancho was using it as a carrying case and had tied it to the front of the packsaddle of the dappled gray. And if the man in green was eyeing don Quixote, it was not nearly as much as he was eyeing the man in green, for he seemed to don Quixote a man of virtue and principles. The one in green looked to be aroundfifty, with just a touch of gray in his hair, an aquiline face, and an expression somewhere between frivolity and gravity, and,finally, garb that revealed him to be man offinery.

As for what the man in green made of don Quixote, he believed he had never seen anyone like him before. He was amazed by the svelteness of his stallion, the lankiness of his frame, the gaunt sallowness of his features, his armor, his air of composure: a sight that had not been seen in those lands since the days of yore. Don Quixote noticed the traveler's studious stare and divined his desires from his lingering gaze. Since he prided himself on his courtesy, and was in Full p. C-545 favor of pleasing everyone, before the man in green could ask him anything, don Quixote came right out with it, saying:

"Since thefigure I cut, as your grace can see, is so novel and unusual, I would not marvel if it led you to marvel. But your grace can cease being astonished when I tell you, as I now do, that I am a knight

of the kind, as folks say,
with adventures in mind.[6]

Shorter p. 1756

I left my land behind, pawned my estate, forsook the leisure of my station, and threw myself into the arms of Fortune, allowing her to take me wheresoever she pleased. My desire was to resuscitate the long-dead art of errant chivalry, and after many days of tripping here, falling there, tumbling offa peak over there, and getting back up again over here, I have fulfilled most of my desires: assisting widows, helping damsels, performing favors for married ladies, orphans, and students—the rightful and natural profession of knights-errant. And so, by my many valiant, Christian deeds, I have earned the right to ride forth in print in most, or at least many, of the nations of the world. Thirty thousand copies of my history have been printed, and it shall soon be thirty million, if Heaven does not decree otherwise. In summary, to put it briefly in few words, or a single one, I say I am don Quixote of La Mancha, also known as the Knight of the Long Face. And though it is poor form to praise oneself, I am, at times, forced to sing my own praises, as there is not always someone around to sing them for me. And so, señor gentleman, be no longer amazed by this horse, nor this lance, nor this shield nor this squire, nor all my arms combined, nor the sallowness of my face, nor the gauntness of myfigure, knowing now, as you do, who I am and the vocation to which I dedicate myself."

Once he said this, don Quixote fell silent. The man in green was quiet for so long, it seemed he would not respond. But, after a good long while, he said:

"You have hit the mark, señor knight, in deducing my desires from my gaze, but you have not stripped me of my astonishment at seeing you. For although you, señor, say knowing your name should shake my amazement, I have not found this to be the case. Rather, knowing what I do now, Ifind myself all the more astonished and amazed. How is it possible, in this day and age, for there to be wandering knights in the world, and books printed with the true histories of their knightly deeds? Ifind it hard to believe there are men these days favoring widows, assisting damsels, honoring married ladies, and helping orphans, and had I not seen your grace with my own eyes, I would not believe it at all. God is great! For this history your grace says has been printed of your true acts of high chivalry must have eclipsed even the memory of all those innumerablefictional knights the world is full of, to the disservice of good custom and the detriment offine histories."

"There is much to be said," don Quixote replied, "on whether or not the histories of knights-errant arefictional."

"Well, is there anyone who questions," he in Green responded, "thefictionality of those stories?"

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"I question it," don Quixote answered, "and let's leave it at that, for if our journey together continues, I hope to God to lead your grace to understand you are mistaken in joining the trend of believing such tales of chivalry to be untrue."

On hearing that last comment, the traveler surmised don Quixote must be some sort of moron and awaited further confirmation of his hypothesis. But before they could bandy more reasons back and forth, don Quixote begged the man to tell him who he was, since don

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Quixote had told the traveler the story of his life and vocation. The Man in the Green Greatcoat replied:

"I, señor Knight of the Long Face, am a gentleman, a local nobleman of the town where we shall lunch today, God willing. I am more than moderately rich, Shorter p. 1757 and my name is don Diego de Miranda. I spend my life with my wife, my children, and my friends. I hunt and Ifish, but I do not keep falcons or hunting hounds. Instead, I keep a placid partridge or two, and a few feisty ferrets.[7] I have as many as six dozen books, some in Spanish and some in Latin, some histories and some prayerbooks, but tales of chivalry have yet to darken the doors of my library. I peruse the profane[8] titles more often than the pious, so long as they are upright and honest forms of entertainment, bringing delight with their wordplay, and amazement and astonishment with their imagination and invention, although truly there are few thatfit that bill in Spain. I dine sometimes with neighbors and friends, and often host dinners for them. The feasts I put on are fastidiously clean and certainly not skimpy. I do not care for whispers and rumors, nor do I allow others to spread rumors in front of me. I have no need to scrutinize the lives of others; I have no eagle eye for others' deeds. I go to Mass daily and give alms to the poor without trumpeting my own good deeds, in order to bar hypocrisy and vanity entry into my heart—for such enemies can quietly conquer even the demurest of souls. I seek to bring peace to those I know have lost their way. I am a devotee of Our Lady[9] and trust always in the infinite mercy of God Our Lord."

Sancho had been hanging on every word the gentleman said in description of his life and pastimes, and he seemed to him both high and holy, like a man who must be able to make miracles happen. At breakneck speed, Sancho threw himself offhis dappled gray and went to clasp the right stirrup of the man in green. With pure devotion in his heart and tears almost spilling from his eyes, he kissed the traveler's boot, again and again. The gentleman, seeing this, asked Sancho:

"What are you doing, brother? What are these kisses?"

"Let me kiss," Sancho insisted, "for your grace is thefirst short-stirruped saint I've ever seen in all the days of my life."

"Not a saint," the gentleman responded, "but a sinner. You, brother, must surely be truly good, as can be seen in your simple sincerity."

Sancho got back atop the dappled gray, having drawn his master out of his deep melancholy, bringing him to break into laughter and stirring further wonder in don Diego.

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Don Quixote asked him how many children he had, saying one of the points that those ancient philosophers of yore—who lacked a true understanding of God—were utterly accurate on was that the greatest boon a man can receive from Nature or Fortune is to have many friends and manyfine children.

"I, señor don Quixote," the gentleman replied, "have a son, though if I did not, perhaps I would consider myself more fortunate—not because he is bad, but because he is not quite as good as I would like. He's around eighteen and has spent the past six years in Salamanca, learning Latin and Greek, but when I wanted him to turn his focus to the study of other sciences, I found him so soaked in the science of poetry (if it can be called a science) that it was impossible to make him study law instead, as I had wished, or even the queen of all sciences, theology.

“I wanted him to be the crowning jewel of his lineage, for we live in a century when kings richly reward those who penfine, virtuous words, sincefine words without virtue are like pearls in a latrine. He spends his days investigating whether Homer was right or wrong in such and such verse of the *Iliad*, if Martial was being honest or dishonest in this or that epigram, if these or those verses of Virgil should be understood this way or that. In summary, the only thing he will speak of in conversation is the books of the aforementioned poets, along with those of Horace, Persius, Juvenal, and Tibullus,[1] for he thinks little of all modern authors who write in Spanish. But despite his distaste for Spanish poetry, he is currently absorbed and obsessed with crafting a poetic gloss for four verses from Salamanca, which, I believe, is part of some literary joust.”[2]

To all that, don Quixote replied:

“Children, señor, are pieces of their parents’ hearts, and therefore they must be loved by their parents, however good or bad they may be, just as we love the souls that give us life. It is a parent’s duty to set their children on the right path from the time they are young, and steer them through the steps of virtue, good manners, andfine Christian customs, so that when they are grown they may be the cane that supports their parents in old age, and the glory of their posterity. And so, insofar as forcing one’s children to study thisfield or that goes, I do not believe it is prudent, although there is no harm in trying to persuade them. And when one need not earn one’s daily bread by one’s studies, like those who need their degrees for their *pane lucrando*,[3] when a student is fortunate enough that Heaven has sent him parents to support him, I am of the mind he should be allowed to pursue his studies in whatever science toward which he is most inclined. For although poetry is perhaps less useful than delightful, it is not a science, generally, that brings shame to those who master it.

“Poetry, señor gentleman, to my mind, is like a tender young damsel, exceedingly beautiful, who has been cared for, adorned, polished, and embellished by many other damsels—which are the other sciences—and she makes use of all of them, and they are all accredited in her. But this damsel does not like to be manhandled, or taken out in the streets, or plastered out in public, in the corner of a plaza or some palace’s hidden nooks. She is made of an alchemy of Full p. C-548 such virtue that he who knows how to treat her well will be rewarded with priceless, purest gold. She should be had by those who can keep her in line, not let her run loose in uncouth satires or soulless sonnets. She must never, under any condition, be sold, except in heroic epics, heartrending tragedies, or happy, cunning comedies. She should never be left in the hands of charlatans, nor the vulgar masses of the ignorant, unable to understand or appreciate the treasures she hides within her. And do not think, señor, that I refer only to the plebeians and humble poor when I say the vulgar masses, for anyone unstudied—even a prince or a lord—can and should be counted among the vulgar. And so, when a scholar with the required skills I have mentioned takes up poetry, he shall surely be legendary, and his name known and admired in every nation-state in the world.

“Insofar as to what you mentioned, señor, about your son thinking little of Spanish poetry, I must say I believe he is somewhat mistaken, and here is the Shorter p. 1759 reason: great Homer did not write in Latin, because he was Greek. Virgil did not write in Greek, because he was Roman. In summary, all the ancient poets wrote in their mother tongue, in the words they drank in with their mother’s milk. They did not feel the need to reach for foreign tongues to

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declare their lofty concepts, and given this, it stands to reason that this custom would extend to all nations. Thus, it is not right to scorn a German for writing in his own tongue, or a Castilian, or even a Basque for writing in his. But your son, señor, from what I imagine, is not against all Spanish poetry, but rather poets who exclusively write in the vernacular tongues and know no other languages or sciences with which to adorn and awaken and assist their natural impulse toward poetry. But it is possible that even there he may have erred, for according to true opinion, poets are born. That is to say, a natural poet is a poet from the moment he leaves his mother's womb. And with that God-given inclination—without even having studied or developed his skills—he composes things that prove the truth of he who said *est Deus in nobis*,[4] etc. But I will also say that a natural poet who goes on to hone his art shall far exceed and eclipse a poet who has merely craft without natural talent. The reason for this is that craft can never surpass talent, only perfect it. And so, by mixing natural gifts with studied skills, nature with art and art with nature, a perfect poet can be formed.

"And so, let me conclude my talk, señor gentleman, with this: let your son follow the path of his passion and strive to be the best student he can, for since he has scaled thefirst step of the sciences, which is Greek and Latin, he will be more than able to climb to the peak of the Humanities—which befit a knighted nobleman as much as his sword or his cape—and shall adorn, honor, and elevate him as the miter does the bishop, or the robes do the judge. Your grace would be in the right to squabble with your son were he writing satires that swipe at the honor of others—if he does, punish him and tear them up. But if he is crafting sermons after Horace, where he condemns vice in general, with all the elegance of Horace's words, then praise him, for it is right for a poet to write against envy, and speak ill of the envious in his verses, as well as the various other vices, so long as he does not single out any one person in particular, for poets who publish words of malice run the risk of being exiled to the isles of Full p. C-549 Ponto.[5] If a poet is chaste in his habits, he will be so in his verses, for the pen is the tongue of the soul: the concepts held within are the same that shall be written out. And when kings and princes see such mastery of the miraculous science of poetry in subjects who are prudent, virtuous, and grave, they honor them and lift them up, enriching them, and even crowning them with a wreath of leaves from the tree that even lightning dare not strike,[6] as if a sign that none shall strike those whose temples are honored and adorned by such crowns."

He of the Green Greatcoat was speechless at the reasoning of don Quixote—so much so that he began to doubt his previous conviction that the man was a moron. However, halfway through his master's speech, Sancho—who was not particularly interested in such things—had wandered offthe road to ask some shepherds who were milking their sheep if they could spare a spot of milk. The gentleman was just about to speak, extremely impressed by don Quixote's discretion and hisfine words, when the knight spotted—coming down the road Shorter p. 1760 toward them—a carriage covered in royalflags. Believing this must be some new adventure, don Quixote shouted to Sancho, commanding him to come give him his helmet. Sancho, hearing him call, left the shepherds and spurred his donkey to his fastest pace, hurrying over with great haste to the side of his master, who found himself face to face with a terrifying and senseless adventure.

Footnotes

- Note 8:Until he earns this title (in chapter 15), he will be referred to as the Knight of the Forest. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:Don Quixote and his squire are now in the woody region around El Toboso, Dulcinea's hometown. Sancho has been sent to look for his knight's lady and has saved the day by pretending to see the beautiful damsel in an ordinary young peasant from the town. But by his imaginative lie he has succeeded, as he had planned, in setting in motion Don Quixote's belief in spells and enchantments: enemy magicians, envious of him, have hidden his lady's splendor only from his sight. While the knight was still under the shock of this experience, farther along their way he and his squire have met a group of itinerant players dressed in their proper costumes for a religious play, *The Parliament of Death* . Return to reference 9
- Note 1:Don Quixote has promised them to Sancho as a reward for bringing news of Dulcinea. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:I.e., a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:The Empress and Cupid are characters in *The Parliament of Death* . Return to reference 3
- Note 4:Famous examples of friendship in Virgil's *Aeneid* and in Greek tradition and drama. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:From a popular ballad. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:The Spanish expression in the source suggests that even friends cannot be trusted. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:All folkloric and proverbial beliefs about the virtues of animals. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:An early Spanish plucked string instrument shaped like a guitar. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:The Knight of the Forest's counterpart to Don Quixote's Dulcinea del Toboso. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:Cf. Genesis 3.19: "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground." Return to reference 1
- Note 2:That is, an appointment as a canon—a member of the church who serves on the staffof a cathedral—and the money that comes with the office. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:One *fanega* is about 1.6 bushels, or 56 liters. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:When Don Quixote retired there in Part I, chapter 23. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:In the Sierra Morena, Don Quixote had decided to imitate Amadís de Gaula and Ariosto's Roland by playing the part of a man driven mad by love. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:The main town in La Mancha and the center of a wine-producing region. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:In Greek mythology, Hercules, the hero born to Zeus and Alcmena, was persecuted by Zeus's wife, Hera. After she tricked him into killing his own wife and children, he was charged with accomplishing twelve labors thought to be impossible. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:Actually the bell tower of the cathedral of Seville, originally built as a minaret. Return to reference 8

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- Note 9:Statues representing animals and supposedly marking a place where Caesar defeated Pompey. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:Possibly an ancient mine in the Sierra de Cabra near Cordova. *Cabra* in Spanish is "goat." Return to reference 1
- Note 2:From Alonso de Ercilla y Zúñiga's *Araucana*, a poem about the Spanish struggle against the Araucanian people indigenous to Chile, mentioned as part of don Quixote's library in Part I. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Andalucía, a region in the south of Spain, was sometimes called Vandalia in reference to the Germanic Vandal peoples who lived there in the 5th century C.E . Return to reference 3
- Note 4:In some confraternities, penalties for being absent were paid in wax, presumably to make church candles. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:A curved sword characteristic of North Africa and the Middle East. Like the short-stirrup saddle (*jineta*), it is part of the enduring material presence of Al-Andalus in Iberia. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:These two verses, which recall medieval popular romance ballads, appear in a Spanish translation of Petrarch's allegorical poem, the *Triumphs*, although they are not in the original. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:Tame male partridges were used to attract wild females with their call, and ferrets to chase rabbits from their burrows. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:I.e., secular, nonreligious. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:The Virgin Mary, mother of Jesus. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:Roman poets of the 1st century B.C.E. to the 1st century C.E. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Poetic competitions were very popular in Spain in this period. They were often sponsored by the literary societies of the time and were an important part of major events and festivities. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Earning one's bread (Latin). Return to reference 3
- Note 4:There is a god in us (Latin); Ovid's *Fasti* 6.5. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:As the poet Ovid was exiled by the Roman emperor Augustus in 8 C.E. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:An ancient folk belief about the laurel. Return to reference 6

["What's a Little Lion to Me?"]

CHAPTER XVII

Describing the final moments and utter lengths to which don Quixote's unheard-of spirit went or could have gone in the happily concluded adventure of the lions

The story goes that when don Quixote was shouting to Sancho to bring him the helmet, Sancho was buying a bit of fresh cheese from the shepherds. Hounded by his master's hollering to hurry, he didn't know what to do with his cheese or how to bring it back with him. Not wanting to leave it—since he'd already paid for it—Sancho decided to stick the cheese in his

master's helmet, safely stashing it while he went back tofind out what it was don Quixote wanted. As soon as Sancho arrived, his master said:

"My friend, hand me my helmet, for either I know little of adventures, or the one ahead beckons me, and for it, I must don my armor and take up arms."

He of the Green Greatcoat, hearing don Quixote say this, looked all around, but all he saw was a carriage coming toward them,flying two or three littleflags that indicated it must be carrying some coin for His Majesty's coffers, and he said so to don Quixote, who did not believe him, thinking and believing—as always—that everything that happened to him must be adventures and more adventures. And so, he replied to the green greatcoated gentleman:

"A man on alert receives half as much hurt. I lose nothing by remaining alert, for I know from experience that my enemies are both visible and invisible, Full p. C-550 and I do not know when, or where, or at what point, or in what form they shall attack me."

And he turned back to Sancho, asking him again to pass him his helmet. Sancho, who had had no chance to relocate his cheese, was forced to give it to him, cheese and all. Don Quixote took the helmet, and—without looking inside—swiftly swung it up onto his head. As the cheese was squashed and squished between his skull and the basin, whey began to run down his face and into his beard. Don Quixote was so startled, he said:

"What can this be, Sancho? Why does it seem my skull has grown soft or my brain is melting, or I am sweating from head to toe? And if I am indeed sweating, truly, it is not from fear, though I have no doubt the adventure approaching me shall be terrible indeed. Hand me, if you have it, something with which I may wipe my face, for this copious sweat is leaving me blind."

Sancho handed him a handkerchief and said nothing, thanking God his señor had notfigured out his mistake. Don Quixote wiped himself offand removed his helmet to see what it was that—to his mind—had sent such a chill down his spine. Seeing the inside all smeared with white, he held it up to his nose, took a long sniff, and said:

Shorter p. 1761

"On the life of my lady Dulcinea of Toboso, this is cheese you've put in my helmet, you traitor, you scallywag, you shameless squire!"

To which, with unshakable composure and great cunning, Sancho replied:

"If that is cheese, give it to me, your grace, and I'll eat your hat. But let the Devil eat it, since it must have been him that put it there! Me? Would I be so bold and daring as to dirty your grace's helmet? You've caught me—I'm a real daring one, I am. By my faith, señor, God's led me to understand I must have enchanters after me too, as your grace's appendage and sidekick. It must have been them that put that dreck in there, to transform your patience to rage and make you wallop me—as you do—on the ribs. Well, truly, their efforts this time will be in vain, because I trust in my señor's powers of deduction, since you surely know already I have no cheese, nor milk, nor anything else like that, and if I did, I'd put it in my stomach, not your helmet."

"Anything's possible," don Quixote said.

The gentleman watched this play out, amazed by all of it, especially when—after don Quixote had cleaned his head, face, beard, and helmet—he put the basin back on his head, settled his feet in his stirrups, checked his sword, grasped his lance, and said:

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“Now, come what may, let it come, for I have spirit enough to take on Satan himself!”

Just then, the wagon with theflags arrived at their side. The only people traveling with it were the driver leading the mules, and one other man, riding up front. Don Quixote stood in the middle of the road in front of them and said:

“Where are you going, brothers? What wagon is this? What are you carrying within it, and what are all theseflags?”

To which the driver replied:

“The wagon is mine. Inside are twofierce, caged lions, sent by the General of Oran to the Court, as a gift for His Majesty. These are theflags of Our Lord the King, indicating that what’s inside belongs to him.”

“And are they large lions?” asked don Quixote.

Full p. C-551

“So large,” the other man replied, gesturing at the wagon door, “no larger lions—or even lions of the same size—have ever journeyed from Africa to Spain before. I am the lion handler, and I’ve handled other lions, but none like these. It’s a pair: a male and a female. The male is in thisfirst cage closest to the door, and the female’s cage is behind it. They’re hungry right now, because they haven’t eaten yet today, so please get out of the road, your grace, for we must hurry to our next stop, where they can be fed.”

To which don Quixote, smiling a little, replied:

“What’s a little lion to me? To me? A couple little lions in the afternoon? Well by God, those señores who sent them here shall see whether I am the sort of man to be afraid of a lion! Dismount, my good man, since you are the lion handler. Open those cages and bring forth thesefierce beasts, for right here in thesefields I shall show them who don Quixote of La Mancha truly is, to the great chagrin and shame of the enchanters who sent these lions to intercept me!”

“Aha!” said the gentleman to himself. “Ourfine knight is showing his hand! Surely the cheese must have softened his skull and spoiled his brains.”

Sancho made his way over to the gentleman and said:

Shorter p. 1762

“Señor! For the love of God, your grace, do something to stop my señor don Quixote fromfighting those lions, because if he does, they’re sure to tear us all to shreds!”

“Well, is your master so mad,” the gentleman asked, “that you fear and believe he wouldfight suchfierce animals?”

“He’s not mad,” Sancho replied, “he’s daring.”

“I will ensure he does not dare,” the gentleman answered.

And, making his way over to don Quixote—who was pressuring the lion handler to hurry up and open the cages already—the gentleman said:

“Señor knight, knights-errant must take on adventures that have some hope of ending happily, not those which are clearly hopeless. Because bravery that strays into the territory of rash recklessness is more a display of madness than of strength. Furthermore, these lions have not come for your grace, nor would they even dream of doing so. They are a gift going to be presented to His Majesty, and it would not be right to detain them or impede their journey.”

“Your grace can go, señor gentleman,” don Quixote replied, “tell it to your pet partridge and your feisty ferret, and let each man tend to his own profession. This is mine, and I know perfectly well whether or not these señor lions have come for me.”

And, turning back to the lion handler, he said:

“I swear, don Scoundrel, if you do not open these cages this instant, with this lance I shall affix you to the wagon!”

The driver, registering the sheer determination of that armed and armored phantasm, said:

“Señor, would your grace at least, out of the goodness of your heart, let me unhitch the mules and take them and myself a safe distance away before you unleash the lions? Because if they kill my mules, I’ll be dead in the water the rest of my life, since my only estate is these mules and this wagon.”

“O man of little faith!” don Quixote responded. “Dismount and unhitch and do what you wish, for soon you shall see your labor was in vain and you could have saved yourself the trouble of such diligence.”

Full p. C-552

As the driver hurriedly dismounted and began to unhitch the team, the lion handler shouted at the top of his lungs:

“Let everyone here be witness to how I am being forced, against my will, to open these cages and let loose these lions, and that I have protested to this señor that all the harm and damage these beasts incur shall be upon his head and upon his checkbook, and he will further be responsible for all my future lost income and fees! Your graces, señores, should take cover before I let them out, for I know the lions will do *me* no harm.”

The gentleman tried one last time to persuade don Quixote not to commit such an act of lunacy, for it amounted to tempting God to insist on such nonsense. Don Quixote merely replied he knew what he was doing. The gentleman asked him to look again, for it was his understanding the knight was mistaken.

“Now, señor,” don Quixote replied, “if your grace does not wish to be party to what, to your mind, shall surely be a tragedy, then spur your silver roan and ride offto safety.”

Hearing this, Sancho, with tears in his eyes, begged don Quixote to stop this lion business, which made the windmills, the terror of the fulling Shorter p. 1763 hammers,[7] and, essentially, every adventure or deed he ever attempted in all his life look like cakes and painted bread.

“Look, señor,” Sancho pleaded. “There’s nothing enchanted or anything like that going on here, because I’ve looked through the cracks in the carriage, and seen through the bars the real claw of a real lion! And by the size of it, the lion whose claw it is must be bigger than a mountain.”

“Your fear, at least,” don Quixote replied, “will make it seem, to you, more massive than half the Earth. Withdraw now, Sancho, and leave me, and if I should die here, you remember our old agreement: you shall go see Dulcinea, and I shall say no more.”

He added a few additional reasons on top of these, removing any remaining hope that he could be convinced not to carry out his deranged desires. He of the Green Greatcoat wished to stop him, but found himself out-armed and felt it would be madness to take on a lunatic, since he was fully convinced that’s what don Quixote was. Don Quixote, for his part, hurried the lion handler and reiterated his threats, leading the gentleman to spur his mare, and Sancho his

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dappled gray, and the coachman his mules, as they all tried to get as far away from the carriage as they could before the lions were unleashed.

Sancho was bawling over the imminent death of his señor, for, this time, he was sure that don Quixote would bite the dust between the claws of a lion. Sancho started kicking himself and thinking surely he'd been soft in the head when he got the bright idea to serve as don Quixote's squire once more. Nevertheless, though he wept and wailed, doing so didn't stop him from giving a whack to the dappled gray to hurry away from the wagon. Well, the lion handler —seeing those who hadfled were far enough away—turned back to don Quixote to inform and notify him once more of that which he had already been informed and notified, to which the knight replied he had heard him thefirst time and there was no need for any further notifications or information, any of which would be in vain, and also, to hurry up.

Full p. C-553

As the lion handler opened thefirst cage, don Quixote weighed whether it would be better to do battle mounted or on foot. Ultimately, he decided tofight on foot, for fear Rocinante would spook at the sight of the lions. And so, he leapt offhis horse, tossed aside his lance, and strapped on his shield, and, unsheathing his sword, step by step, with marvelous daring and a valiant heart, don Quixote stood before the carriage door, entrusting himself with all his heart,first to God, and then to his lady Dulcinea.

It should be noted here that at this particular point in this true history, its author exclaims and proclaims the following: O strong and bold-beyond-words don Quixote of La Mancha, mirror for all valiant men, second coming and new incarnation of Manuel de León,[8] who was the glory and honor of Spanish knighthood! With what words am I to describe this, your frightful feat? With what sentences shall I make it believable to future centuries? What words of praise would you not deserve, even if they were unto the hyperbole of hyperboles? You, on foot; you, alone; you, intrepid; you, magnanimous, with nothing but a sword, and not even one of the legendary dog-marked blades of Toledo,[9] and a shield of Shorter p. 1764 not particularly clean or shining steel—you await and attend the fury of the two most ferocious lions ever born in the forests of Africa. May your own deeds trumpet your praises, valiant Manchegan; I shall set them down here spare and simple, as Ifind myself bereft of worthy words with which to praise them.

Here ends the above-mentioned exclamation from the author, after which he goes on, picking up the thread of the story once more, and saying that the lion handler—seeing don Quixote in position, knowing that he had no choice but to loose the male, on pain of falling into the indignant, daring knight's ill graces—threw open the door to thefirst cage where, as mentioned earlier, the lion—who seemed to be of extraordinary size and a terrible and terrifying appearance—lay.

Thefirst thing the lion did when the cage was open was roll around on thefloor where he had been lying,flex his claws, and stretch himself out. Then he opened his mouth into a long yawn, and with almost two palms'-width of tongue, wiped the dust offhis eyes and licked his face clean. Once he hadfinished, he stuck his head out of the cage and looked around, his eyes two burning coals, his expression and posture enough to terrify temerity itself. Alone, don Quixote watched the lion's every move, wishing he would leap out of the carriage already andfling himself into his bare hands, with which he planned to tear the lion apart.

Such were the extremes to which his never-before-seen madness extended! But the generous lion, more temperate than arrogant, uninterested in childishness and bravado, after taking a good look all around, as mentioned before, turned his back on don Quixote and lay back down in his cage, offering afine view of his rear end. Seeing this, don Quixote commanded the lion handler to beat him with a stick and annoy him into leaving the cage.

"I'm not going to do that," the lion handler replied, "because if I annoy him, thefirst one he'll tear to pieces will be me. Señor knight, your grace, be content Full p. C-554 with what you have done, which is all that could be asked for in terms of bravery, and don't tempt Fortune again. The lion's cage is open: it is up to him whether to go out or stay in, but since he hasn't come out by now, he's sure to stay inside all day long. The greatness of your grace's heart has already been proven. No brave warrior, as far as Ifigure, is required to do more than challenge his enemy and await him on thefield. If his opponent never shows, he forfeits to his infamy, and the challenger automatically wins the crown of victory."

"That is true," don Quixote responded. "Close the cage, my friend, and be my witness, declaring, to the best of your abilities, what you saw me do here today, namely: how you opened the lion's cage, and I awaited him, and he did not come out, and I awaited him some more, and he did not come out some more, and how,finally, the lion lay back down. I owe no more than this, and enchantments aside, God save reason and truth and true chivalry, so close the cage, as I have said, while I signal to the hidden and thefled, that they may hear, from your lips, my deeds."

The lion handler did as he was told, and don Quixote, affixing to the tip of his lance the cloth with which he had cleaned himself after being drenched in the downpour of cheese, began calling out to the others, who had not stoppedfleeing, or looking back with every step, all of them together, led by the gentleman. But Sancho, spotting the whiteflag of the handkerchief, said:

"Well I'll be damned if my señor hasn't gone and vanquished the ferocious beasts, since there he is, calling us back!"

Shorter p. 1765

They all stopped running and turned to see the one signaling them was don Quixote. Losing some part of their fear, little by little, they inched closer until they could clearly hear don Quixote's shouts, calling them to return. In the end, they made their way back to the wagon. As soon as they arrived, don Quixote said to the driver:

"Come, brother, hitch your mules once more and proceed on your journey. And you, Sancho, give him two gold *escudos*, for him and for the lion handler, as compensation for my causing them this delay."

"I'm happy to do that," Sancho responded, "but what's become of the lions? Are they alive or are they dead?"

At that point, the lion handler began to tell the tale—beat by beat, in great detail—of the conclusion of don Quixote's faceoffwith the lion, exaggerating to the best of his ability, how he saw the great valor of don Quixote, the sight of which scared the cowardly lion so terribly, it did not dare leave its cage, even though the cage door was wide open for a good while; and how he informed the knight it was tantamount to tempting God to provoke the lion to force it to come out, and though don Quixote had desired to provoke the lion, against his wishes and to his chagrin, he had permitted the cage door to be closed again.

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“What do you think about that, Sancho?” asked don Quixote. “Can any enchantment stand in the way of true bravery? These enchanters may strip me of my good luck, but they shall never strip away my vigor or my spirit!”

Sancho gave the men the gold *escudos*, the coachman hitched up his mules, the lion handler kissed don Quixote’s hands in thanks, promising to tell the tale of his valiant deed to the King himself, once he got to Court.

“And if His Majesty should ask who it was who did this deed, tell him it was the Knight of the Lions, for from now on I wish to change, exchange, shift, and switch my name to that one instead of the one I have had until now, the Knight Full p. C-555 of the Long Face. In so doing I am following the ancient custom of knights-errant, who changed their names whenever they pleased, or whenever they found it opportune to do so.”

The carriage went on its way, and don Quixote, Sancho, and he of the Green Greatcoat returned to their journey.

The whole time, don Diego de Miranda had not said a word, attentively watching and noting the words and deeds of don Quixote, who seemed to him a sane madman, or a sane man who could pass for mad. He had not yet encountered thefirst part of don Quixote’s history, for if he had read it, surely he would cease to be astonished by his words and deeds, knowing the genus of his madness. But, since he had not, he waffled on whether don Quixote was mad, since the things he said were harmonious, elegant, and eloquent, and the things he did were reckless, rash, and idiotic. He of the Green Greatcoat wondered to himself,

“What greater madness could there be than putting a helmet full of cheese on your head and convincing yourself that enchanters are melting your brains? And what greater recklessness and rashness that wishing to force afight with a lion?”

He was plucked from these imaginings and his soliloquy by don Quixote, who said:

“Who would doubt, señor don Diego de Miranda, that your grace must take me for a lunatic and a madman? And it would not be surprising if you did, for Shorter p. 1766 my actions attest to nothing less. Well, nevertheless, I wish your grace to know I am not as mad or as brainless as I must seem. A bullfighting knight is esteemed in the eyes of his king when, in the middle of a great plaza, he lands his lance in the heart of a raging bull. A knight at arms is esteemed when he bursts through the banner in shining armor, stepping out onto thefield to joust in happy bouts before the ladies. And all knights are esteemed when they participate in military exercises or similar activities, to delight, entertain, and—if such things can be said—honor the courts of their princes. But even more esteemed than all of these is the knight-errant who wanders the wilds and the wilderness, across crossroads, deserts,fields, and forests, in search of dangerous adventures, with the intention of bringing them to a fortunate and fortuitous conclusion, all in search of glory and lasting fame. There is more to esteem, I say, in a knight-errant assisting a widow in some wasteland than in a knighted nobleman wooing a damsel in the heart of town. Each type of knight has his own particular profession. A knighted nobleman serves the ladies, lends the authority of his livery to the court of his king, provides for poor knights with the splendid dishes of his own table, arranges jousting bouts, holds tournaments, and shows himself to be great, generous, and magnificent, and above all, a good Christian, and thus he fulfills his particular obligations. But the knight-errant searches every corner of the world, descending into the most intricate of labyrinths, achieving, at every turn, the impossible, withstanding the burning rays of summer sun in empty wastelands, and the harsh inclemency of wind and ice in winter. He has no fear of lions; he does not quail before gnolls,

nor tremble at the sight of hydras, for searching these monsters out and vanquishing them are all principal exercises of his true profession. Well, as Ifind myself among the fortunate number of knights of errant chivalry, I must not shrink from taking on whatever it is I encounter that, to my mind, falls Full p. C-556 under the jurisdiction of my profession. And so, taking on the lions, as I have done just now, is my rightful prerogative, even though I was aware it was wanton recklessness, because I know perfectly well what bravery is—it is a virtue balanced between two extremes of vice, namely cowardice and recklessness. But it is better for a brave man to rise to the point of recklessness than stoop to the depths of cowardice, for just as it is easier for a spendthrift than a miser to become generous, it is easier for the reckless man to temper himself to true bravery than it is for the coward to climb his way up to valor. And, as far as taking on adventures goes, believe me, your grace señor don Diego, it is better to err on the side of more, rather than less, for in anyone's ears, it sounds much better to hear 'that knight is reckless and bold,' than 'that knight is timid and cowardly.'"

"I say, señor don Quixote," don Diego replied, "all your grace has done and said is right in line with reason itself, and I can see if the laws and decrees of errant chivalry were ever lost, they could still be found in your grace's chest, exactly as they appear in their own repository and archive. But let us hurry, for the hour grows late, andfinish our journey so I can welcome you to my town and my house, where your grace can rest from your recent labor, which—while it was not a bodily labor—was a labor of the spirit, which at times may lead to bodily weariness."

"I deeply appreciate the favor and mercy you bestow upon me with this invitation, señor don Diego," don Quixote replied.

Shorter p. 1767

They picked up the pace, hurrying more than they had. It must have been around two in the afternoon when they arrived at the town and home of don Diego, whom don Quixote called the Knight of the Green Greatcoat.

Footnotes

- Note 7:See p. 521, n. 5. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:Don Manuel Ponce de León, a paragon of gallantry and knightly courtesy, from the time of Ferdinand and Isabella. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:The trademark of a famous armorer of Toledo and Zaragoza. Return to reference 9

[Last Duel]

CHAPTER LXIV

Regarding the adventure that gave don Quixote more grief than any other he had ever faced before[1]

And, one morning, as don Quixote stepped out for a walk down the beach, outfitted with all his arms and armor—for they were, as he so often said, his only adornment, and battle his only rest, and he would not be caught dead without them—he saw a knight approaching, also

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armed to the teeth, a glowing moon painted upon his shield. Once he was within earshot, the knight began to shout, addressing don Quixote, saying:

“Illustrious and never-sufficiently-praised knight don Quixote of La Mancha! I am the Knight of the White Moon, whose unheard-of feats you may now perhaps be remembering! I have come to do battle with you, and test the strength of your arm, the reason for which is to make you concede and confess Full p. C-557 that my lady, whoever she might be, is far more beautiful than your Dulcinea of Toboso. If you confess this truth without hesitation or delay, you shall spare yourself from impending death, and spare me the labor of killing you. And if you choose tofight, and I vanquish you, I wish no satisfaction beyond your laying down your arms and abstaining from adventures, and going home and staying there for one year, without putting hand to sword, in peaceable tranquility and profitable leisure, since that’s what’s best for the expansion of your estate and the salvation of your soul. And if you vanquish me, you shall have my head to do with as you please, and all my arms and armor, along with my horse, shall be your spoils, and the fame of my deeds shall be transferred to your own. Make your choice and tell me now, for our business begins and ends today.”

Don Quixote was shocked and stunned, both at the Knight of the White Moon’s arrogance, and the reason for his challenge. With great restraint and a severe expression, he replied:

“Knight of the White Moon, news of whose deeds has yet to reach me, I would venture to swear you have never seen the illustrious Dulcinea, for if you had seen her, I know you would cease to seek such concessions and confessions, as the sight of her would remove from you the misapprehension that there ever has been or ever could be any beauty comparable to hers. And so I do not say you lie, but rather that you are mistaken. And, under the conditions Shorter p. 1768 you mentioned, I accept your challenge immediately, so as not to exceed the date you have decided upon, with the sole exception of the fame of your deeds passing to me, since I do not know of what kind or what caliber they might be. I am content with my own deeds and need no others. So then, take thefield and pace out the distance you wish, which I shall match, and whosoever’s life God curtails herein, may San Pedro[2] bless him and welcome him through the pearly gates.”

Somebody spotted the Knight of the White Moon from within the city walls and informed the Viceroy that he was out there speaking with don Quixote of La Mancha. The Viceroy—believing this was surely some new adventure cooked up by don Antonio Moreno or another one of the city’s knighted noblemen—rode out onto the beach, accompanied by don Antonio and others, just in time to see don Quixote rein Rocinante around, having taken the appropriate amount offield.

Well, the Viceroy—seeing they were clearly about to charge at each other—interposed himself, stepping into their path to ask what cause it was that stirred them to such sudden battle. The Knight of the White Moon replied it was an issue of beauty rankings, relating, in brief words, what he had told don Quixote, including the agreed-upon conditions of the challenge consented to by both parties. The Viceroy went over to don Antonio and asked if perchance he knew who this Knight of the White Moon might be, if this was another prank they were pulling on don Quixote. Don Antonio told him he had no idea who it was, or whether the challenge was in jest or in earnest. This response perplexed the Viceroy, and he pondered whether he should permit the battle to proceed, but as he could not bring himself to believe it was anything but a prank, he stepped aside, saying:

Full p. C-558

"Señor knights, if there can truly be no other solution than confession or death, and if señor don Quixote is quite set on sticking to his thirteen,[3] and your grace of the White Moon to your fourteen, then I leave it in the hands of God: have at it."

He of the White Moon offered a few courteous, clever reasons expressing his gratitude to the Viceroy for granting permission, as did don Quixote. And, entrusting himself with all his heart to Heaven and his Dulcinea—as was his habit before entering into battle—he turned around to pace out a bit more of thefield, since he saw his opponent doing the same. Lacking the blast of trumpets or some other bellicose brass to sound the signal to charge, they nevertheless wheeled their horses around as one, and, since he of the White Moon's mount was lighter on its feet, he reached don Quixote before the latter had managed to complete even two-thirds of his charge, smashing into him with such power and force that—without even scratching him with his lance (which he had lifted up out of position, seemingly on purpose)—both don Quixote and Rocinante were knocked, quite frightfully, to the ground. The Knight of the White Moon rushed at them, and, touching the tip of his lance to the visor of don Quixote's helmet, he said:

Shorter p. 1769

"You are vanquished, knight, and soon you shall be dead, should you not confess, as per the conditions of our challenge."

Don Quixote, battered and bewildered, without lifting his visor, in an ailing, feeble voice, as if already speaking from beyond the grave, said:

"Dulcinea of Toboso is the most beautiful woman in the world, and I am the world's most wretched knight. It would not be right for my insufficient strength to imperil this truth. Grip your lance, knight, and strip me of my life as you have stripped me of my honor."

"I most certainly will not," he of the White Moon replied. "Live, long live the fame and glory of the beautiful lady Dulcinea of Toboso. So long as the great don Quixote retires to his home for one year, or until I command him otherwise, as we agreed before entering into this battle, I shall be content."

The Viceroy and don Antonio, along with the many others present, heard he of the White Moon say this, and they heard don Quixote respond, saying so long as he was not asked to do or declare anything to the detriment of Dulcinea, he would fulfill all other stipulations placed upon him, as was his duty as a true, punctilious knight.

Thus hearing don Quixote's confession, he of the White Moon wheeled his horse around, nodded to the Viceroy, and loped back into the city.

The Viceroy commanded don Antonio to follow him andfind out, by whatever means necessary, the identity of the Knight of the White Moon. They got don Quixote back up on his feet, unvisored his face, and found him white as a ghost and drenched in cold sweat. Rocinante was in such bad shape, they couldn't get him to move. Sancho, sorrowful and sick at heart, didn't know what to do or say: it seemed to him the whole episode must surely have been a dream, the whole business the stuffof enchantments. He looked at his Full p. C-559 señor, defeated, barred from taking up arms for a whole year; Sancho imagined the glory of his master's deeds cast into shadow, any hope of fulfilling his new promises swept away like smoke on the breeze. He wasn't sure whether Rocinante would end up lame, or his master end up brained, or even—if his luck had truly run out—permanently sane.[4] In the end, the Viceroy

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sent for a stretcher, and don Quixote was carried back into the city. The Viceroy rode behind, eager to discover the true identity of this Knight of the White Moon, who had defeated don Quixote so terribly.

CHAPTER LXV

Which reveals the true identity of the Knight of the White Moon

Don Antonio Moreno trailed the Knight of the White Moon as he wound his way through the city. A horde of exuberant boys also followed the knight—mobbing him until he managed to slip inside an inn. Don Antonio entered right behind him. A squire came out to receive the Knight of the White Moon, removing his armor and retiring with him to an adjacent sitting room. They were hotly followed by don Antonio, whose bread simply would not rise until he discovered the identity of this knight. Well, noticing the knighted nobleman was clinging to him like a shadow, he of the White Moon, said:

Shorter p. 1770

"I know perfectly well, señor, why you have come: tofind out who I am. And since there is no need for me to refuse you, while this, my squire, removes my armor, I shall tell you the truth of the matter, down to the very last letter.

"Know, then, señor: I am the graduate Sansón Carrasco. I hail from the same town as don Quixote of La Mancha, whose madness and idiocy move everyone who knows him to pity, myself included. Thus, believing the key to restoring his health lies in getting him home to his own town to rest, I set out to compel him do so. It must be about three months since Ifirst rode forth as a knight-errant, calling myself the Knight of Sequins, intending to do battle with don Quixote and vanquish him without hurting him, stipulating the condition of our bout would be the obedience of the vanquished to the vanquisher's command. And the command I planned to give him—since in my mind, he was vanquished before we even began—was to go back home and stay there for a whole year, during which time he could be cured. But luck arranged things otherwise, for it was he who vanquished me and knocked me offmy horse, thus foiling my plan. He went along his merry way, and I went home vanquished, routed, and battered from the fall, which was quite frightful. Nevertheless, none of this diminished my desire to hunt him down and vanquish him, as you have seen me do today. And, since he is so punctilious in adhering to the laws of errant chivalry, he will indubitably keep his word and do as he was told. That, señor, is my story, and I have nothing more to say. I beg you not to reveal my identity, nor tell it to don Quixote, so myfine desires may take effect and a man of thefinest sanity shall, surely, soon regain his mind, leaving behind all this idiocy of chivalry."

Full p. C-560

"O señor!" cried don Antonio. "May God forgive you for the wrong you have done to the whole world in desiring to restore the sanity of the greatest madman on Earth! Do you not see, señor, whatever benefit don Quixote's sanity might bring could never equal the delight his insanity engenders? But—I imagine—even all your diligence and cleverness, señor graduate, will not suffice to drag back to sanity a man so magnificently mad. And, were it not rather uncharitable, I would say that I hope don Quixote never regains his sanity, for not only would we lose the amusement of his charms, we would also lose those of his squire Sancho Panza, who can cheer up melancholy itself. Nevertheless, I shall hold my tongue and tell him nothing,

if only to see if I am right in suspecting that all your diligent efforts, señor Carrasco, will be for naught."

Carrasco responded that his plan was already offto a good start, and he hoped for a happy ending. And—as don Antonio had already offered him whatever he might need, and Carrasco had already loaded his armor onto a mule—right then and there, atop the very same horse he rode into battle, he rode out of the city that very same day and went home without anything happening to him worth including in this true history.

Footnotes

- Note 1:Don Quixote and Sancho, after a great many encounters and experiences (of which the most prominent have been Don Quixote's descent into the cave of Montesinos and their residence at the castle of the prankish ducal couple who give Sancho the "governorship of an island" for ten days), are now in Barcelona. Famous as they are, they meet the viceroy and the nobles; their host is Don Antonio Moreno, "a gentleman of wealth and discernment who was fond of amusing himself in an innocent and kindly way." Return to reference 1
- Note 2:That is, Saint Peter, traditionally held to be the gatekeeper of Heaven. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:The Spanish phrase *estarse en sus trece* means to stick to one's position or beliefs. Possible origins of the expression include the "antipope" Benedict XIII, who insisted on reigning from Avignon while rival popes held the office in Rome, and the thirteen principles of the Jewish faith, which believers embraced in the face of religious persecution. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:The original Spanish has an untranslatable pun on *deslocado*, which means "out of joint" ("dislocated") and also "cured of madness" (from *loco*, "mad"). Return to reference 4

Shorter p. 1771

[Homecoming and Death]

CHAPTER LXXIII

On the omens encountered by don Quixote upon arriving at his village, along with other events that adorn and accredit this great history

As soon as he entered the village—cide Hamete Benengeli informs us—don Quixote saw two boys arguing in the threshing grounds. One yelled at the other:

"Let it go, Periquillo! You'll never see her again—never in all your life!"

Don Quixote heard this and said to Sancho:

"Do you not realize, my friend, what that boy has said: 'You shall never see her again in all your life!'?"

"Well, sure," said Sancho. "And why is that important?"

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“Why?” don Quixote replied. “Can you not see?! The application of that proclamation to my situation surely means I shall never see Dulcinea again!”

Sancho wanted to respond, but he was stopped by the sight of a hare inflight, pursued by hounds and hunters. The terrified hare bounded straight up to them, huddling between the feet of the dappled gray. Sancho snatched it up without a scratch and presented it to don Quixote, who was murmuring:

“*Malum signum*, evil omen![5] The hareflees, the hounds follow: Dulcinea shall not appear!”

“Your grace sure is strange,” Sancho said. “Let’s say this hare is Dulcinea of Toboso, and those hounds hunting her are the evil enchanters who turned her into a farmgirl. Sheflees, I grab her, and I give her to your grace to caress and hold in your arms: how is that a bad sign? Who could possibly see an evil omen in that?”

The two squabbling boys came over to see the hare, and Sancho asked one of them what they werefighting over. The one who’d said “You’ll never see her again in all your life” Full p. C-561 explained that he had taken the other boy’s pet cricket, and he had no intention of giving the cricket or her cage back in all his life. Sancho pulled four *cuartos* out of his coin pouch and gave them to the boy in exchange for the caged cricket, which he put in don Quixote’s hands, saying:

“Here, señor, are your destroyed and discredited omens, which I believe—fool that I may be—have no more to do with us than with the clouds of yesteryear. And if I’m not mistaken, I’ve heard the priest of our town say it’s not right for wise Christian people to put stock in such childish superstitions, which your grace yourself has even said to me in days past, explaining how all those Christians who believe in omens are fools. And there’s no need to press the point, so let’s just keep going and ride on into town.”

Just then, the hunters arrived and asked for their hare, which don Quixote gave to them. He and Sancho went on, and at the entrance of town they found the priest and the graduate Carrasco praying together in a little meadow. It’s worth knowing that Sancho Panza had draped the buckram tunic painted withfieryflames—that he himself had worn at the castle of the Duke on the night Altisidora[6] came back to life—over the back of dappled gray, securing it over the armor like a tarp to keep it dry. He’d also settled the pontiff’s Shorter p. 1772 pointy hat atop the head of the gray, completing the creature’s utterly novel transformation into the most fashionable andfinely adorned donkey ever seen in all the world.

The priest and the graduate recognized them immediately and came over with open arms. Don Quixote dismounted and clasped each in a close embrace. Some local boys with eyes as sharp as lynxes spotted the donkey’s pointy hat and came over to have a look, saying to each other:

“Come on, boys, let’s go see Sancho Panza’s ass all dressed up, and that beast of don Quixote somehow even scrawnier than the day they left!”

Finally, surrounded by boys and accompanied by the priest and the graduate, they walked into town and went to don Quixote’s house. At the door, they found his niece and the housekeeper, who had already gotten word of their arrival. The same word had made its way to Teresa Panza, Sancho’s wife,[7] who—all disheveled and half-dressed, pulling her daughter Sanchica by the hand—had come to see her husband. When she saw that he wasn’t as well-dressed as she thought he should be, given that he was supposed to be a governor, she said:

“Why do you look like this, my husband, like you’ve walked the whole way on aching feet, more like an ungovernable man than a governor?”

“Quiet, Teresa,” Sancho replied, “just because you see a rack doesn’t mean there’s bacon. Let’s go home, and there, you’ll hear things to make you marvel. I’ve brought money, which is the important thing, earned by my ingenuity, without doing any harm to anybody.”

“You just bring the money, myfine husband,” Teresa said, “however it was you earned it, since whatever you did, I’m sure you weren’t thefirst in the world to do it.”

Full p. C-562

Sanchica embraced her father and asked if he’d brought anything back for her, saying she’d been waiting for him like the rains of May. She put her arm around his waist, and his wife took his hand, and with Sanchica leading the dappled gray, they headed home, leaving don Quixote in his own home, in the hands of his niece and his housekeeper and the company of the priest and the graduate.

Don Quixote, paying no heed to the time, went offat that very moment to speak privately with the graduate and the priest, describing briefly how he had been vanquished, and the obligation he was under to remain in town for a year, which he planned to follow to the letter, without straying a sliver from the command, as was right andfitting for a knight-errant ruled by the laws and order of errant chivalry, and that furthermore he planned to spend the year as a shepherd, entertaining himself in the solitude of thefields, where he would have free rein to lose himself in amorous thoughts while practicing the virtuous profession of shepherdom.[8] He begged them—if they were not too busy or otherwise impeded by affairs of greater importance—to join him, promising to buy enough sheep and cattle to earn them the title of shepherds. He also informed them that the most important part of this undertaking was already taken care of, as he had found each of them names that wouldfit like a glove. Shorter p. 1773 The priest asked him to tell them what they were. Don Quixote replied that he would be the Shepherd Quixótiz, the graduate would be the Shepherd Carrascón, the priest would be the Shepherd Priestolo, and Sancho Panza would be the Shepherd Pancino.

They were all shocked to see don Quixote’s new form of lunacy, but—in order to prevent him skipping town again to seek out his chivalries and hoping he might possibly be cured over the course of the year—they agreed to his new plan and approved of his new insanity, offering to accompany him in shepherdom.

“What’s more,” said Sansón Carrasco, “since I am—as everyone knows—an esteemed poet, at every turn I shall compose pastoral verses, or courtly ones, or whatever kind comes to my mind, to entertain us in those wildernesses which we shall walk. The next most pressing issue, señores, is for each of us to choose a name for the shepherdess we shall celebrate in our poems, whose name we shall carve into every tree, no matter how hard its bark, as is the practice and custom of enamored shepherds.”

“That suits me perfectly,” replied don Quixote, “but I have no need tofind a name for afictional shepherdess, since there remains the peerless Dulcinea of Toboso, glory of these shores, jewel of these meadows, bedrock of beauty, cream of the crop in quips, andfinally, subject worthy of all possible praise, however hyperbolical it may be.”

“Quite true,” said the priest, “but we shall search around for some nice shepherdesses who—even if they aren’t a perfectfit—will stillfit usfine enough.”

To which Sansón Carrasco added:

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“And if we can’tfind any, we’ll pick some of the names already published and in print for the world is overflowing with Fílidas, Amarilises, Dianas, Fléridas, Full p. C-563 Galateas, and Belisardas. Since they sell them in town squares, surely we can buy a few for ourselves and call them our own. If my lady, or I should say my shepherdess, happens to be called Ana, I shall celebrate her under the name Anarda, and if she’s Francisca, I’ll call her Francenia, and if she’s Lucía, Lucinda, and it can all go on from there. And Sancho Panza, if he is to enter into this brotherhood, can celebrate his wife Teresa Panza by the name of Teresaina.”

Don Quixote laughed at the graduate’s astute application of names, and the priest praised to the heavens his honest and honorable decision, offering once more to accompany him every moment he was not forced to attend to other obligations. With that, they took their leave of don Quixote, advising and begging him to tend to his health and take good care of himself.

As luck would have it, the niece and the housekeeper had overhead the whole conversation, and as soon as the priest and the graduate left, they went in to see don Quixote. His niece asked:

“What’s this, señor uncle? Just when we thought your grace had come home to stay, to live out your days quietly and honorably and under your own roof, now you want to go running into other labyrinths, and become some ‘little shepherd heading homeward, little shepherd heading off’?[9] Well, it’s true what they say, señor: you’re no spring chicken, and this barley’s far too dry for making shepherd’s pipes.”[1]

The housekeeper added:

Shorter p. 1774

“And could your grace weather the heat of high noon in summertime, the long nights of the winter watch, the howling of the wolves out there in thefields? No, surely not, because that’s a profession for men who are robust, seasoned and hardened and raised for such labor, practically from the moment they’re born. Being a shepherd is even worse than being a knight-errant. Look, señor, take my advice: for it comes not from a belly full of bread and wine, but from hunger and the more thanfifty years I’ve been alive: stay at home, tend to your estate, go to Confession often, give alms to the poor, and be it on my head if any ill comes to you.”

“Quiet, my daughters,” don Quixote replied. “I know what is right for me. Take me to my bed, for it seems I am not too well, and rest assured, whether as a knight-errant or a shepherd-to-be, I shall never cease tending to whatever you might need, as you shall see by my deeds.”

And, like good daughters (which the niece and the housekeeper surely were), they took him offto bed, where they fed him and made him as comfortable as could.

CHAPTER LXXIV

On how don Quixote fell ill, his last will and testament, and his death

Since nothing human can be eternal, and everything must dwindle down from its beginnings until it meets its end—especially the lives of men—and since the life of don Quixote was given no special exemption from Heaven to detain its natural course, he came to hisfinal chapter and met his end when he least expected it. Whether from the melancholy he felt at being vanquished, or Full p. C-564 simply because it was the will of heaven, he fell into a fever and spent six days in bed, during which time he received frequent visits from his friends the priest, the

graduate, and the barber, and at his bedside, for six days straight sat Sancho Panza, his dear squire.

Believing that the grief at being vanquished and unable to fulfil his desire to disenchant and free Dulcinea must be the cause of his condition, they did everything they possibly could to cheer him. The graduate told him to rally his spirits and rise so they could set out and start their shepherdly profession, for which he had already composed an eclogue that would outshine every other eclogue ever written, having already bought, with his own money, two legendary sheepdogs to guard the herd, named Brindle and Merle, purchased from a shepherd in Quintanar. But still don Quixote did not stir from his sorrows.

His friends called the doctor, who took his pulse, made a face, and said just to be safe it would be a good idea to tend to the state of his soul, because his body was on its last leg. Don Quixote took in this news tranquilly, unlike his housekeeper, his niece, and his squire, who began sobbing uncontrollably, as if already standing beside his grave. The doctor was of the opinion that melancholy and misfortune had brought him to his end. Don Quixote begged them to leave his side, for he wished to sleep a while. They did as he asked and he slept more than six hours straight. He slept so much, the niece and the housekeeper thought he might never wake again, but he did, after the aforementioned hours, shouting out in a booming voice:

Shorter p. 1775

“Praise be to God Almighty, who has been so generous with me! In the end, His mercy has no limit and cannot be constrained nor confounded by the sins of men.”

The niece paid close attention to her uncle’s words, which seemed to her more sane than what he usually said, at least in the era of his madness, and she asked:

“What’s this your grace is saying, señor? Is there some news? What mercy do you speak of, what sins of men?”

“The mercy, niece,” don Quixote replied, “is the one God has bestowed upon me in this very moment, a mercy, as I said, unimpeded by my sins. My mind is free and clear again, unfogged by the shadows of ignorance that clouded it as a result of my bitter and ceaseless reading of those detestable books of chivalry. Now I see their idiocy and deceit, and my only regret is that my disillusionment has come so late, when there is no time to make up for the damage by reading holy texts to illuminate my soul. I feel, my niece, that I am near the end. I would like to die in such a way as makes it clear that my life was not so wicked that I should be remembered as a madman, for, though I have been one in life, I would rather not confirm that truth in death. My friend, call myfine friends here—the priest, the graduate Sansón Carrasco, and master Nicolás the barber—for I wish to confess and give my last will and testament.”

Just then, the three men walked into the room, saving the niece the trip. As soon as don Quixote saw them, he said:

“Congratulate me, myfine señores! I am no longer don Quixote of La Mancha, but Alonso Quixano, whose habits led some to call me the Good. I am now the enemy of Amadís of Gaul and his whole infinite horde of descendants. Those profane stories of errant chivalry are now hateful to me. Now I see my foolishness and the danger I faced for having read them. Now, by the mercy of God, I have learned my lesson and abhor them.”

Full p. C-565

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When the three men heard this, they believed without a doubt some new madness must be upon him. Sansón said:

“Now, señor don Quixote? Now that we’ve just received word that lady Dulcinea has been disenchanted, your grace comes out with this? Now, when we are on the verge of becoming shepherds, to spend our lives singing like princes, now your grace wants to go it alone? Enough already, on your life, come back to your senses and stop with these silly stories.”

“The stories up to this point,” don Quixote replied, “which I once considered true—to my detriment—now, at the moment of my death, I will—with the help of Heaven—turn to my benefit. Señores, I feel Death hurrying me. Set the jokes aside and bring me someone to give me my last rites and a notary to take down my will, for moments like these are no time for a man to joke about his soul, and so, I beg you, fetch the notary while I give my last confession to the señor priest.”

They all looked at each other, shocked by the reasoning of don Quixote, whom they decided to believe, warranted or not. And one of the signs that led them to deduce he was indeed dying was the ease with which he had made the switch from mad to sane, for to the aforementioned reasons he added many more, so well put, so Christian, and so coherent that they dispelled any remaining doubts, and they all believed him sane.

The priest asked for privacy and, when they were alone, he took hisfinal confession. The graduate went to get the notary, returning shortly with both Shorter p. 1776 him and Sancho Panza, who had heard from the graduate the news about the state of his señor. When Sancho saw the niece and the housekeeper with tears in their eyes, his own eyes welled up and he began to sniffle and stifle sobs. Once the priest hadfinished with the confession, he came out and said:

“He truly is dying, and he truly is sane. Now is the time to gather at his bedside and hear the last will and testament of Alonso Quixano the Good.”

This terrible news was more than the brimming eyes of the niece, the housekeeper, and Sancho Panza, his dear squire, could take; tears poured down their cheeks and a hundred heavy sighs heaved from their chests. Because in truth, as it has been mentioned before, whether don Quixote was just plain Alonso Quixano the Good, or whether he was don Quixote of La Mancha, he was always calm and pleasant and a delight to deal with, which is why he was not only beloved by his nearest and dearest, but also by everyone who knew him.

The notary went in with everyone else, and after the preamble had been written and don Quixote’s soul had been put in order, with all those rites that Christian tradition requires, they arrived at the will and the bequeathals. He said:

“Item one: it is my will that of the sum of money that Sancho Panza, who in my madness I made my squire, has been holding—given that we have between us outstanding accounts as yet unsettled–he shall not be held to account for any of it, but rather, if anything is left over after he has paid himself what I owe him, the remainder shall also be his, and though it shall not be much, may it serve him well. And if, when I was mad, I was responsible for giving him governorship of anínsula, now that I am sane, if I could, I would give him a kingdom, for the simple sincerity of his heart and his great loyalty surely deserve it.”

And, turning to Sancho, he said:

Full p. C-566

“Forgive me, my friend, for tempting you to follow me into madness, for dragging you with me into my own error of believing knights-errant truly did and do exist in our world.”

“¡Ay!” replied Sancho through heavy tears. “Don’t die, your grace! Señor, don’t die, take my advice instead and live for many more years, because the craziest thing a man can do in this life is just let himself keel over and die, without having been killed by anybody or slain by any hands other than those of melancholy itself. Look, don’t be lazy your grace, get up out of that bed and let’s go offinto the countryside dressed up as shepherds, like we planned! Maybe behind some shrubbery we’llfind a disenchanted lady Dulcinea, nice as you please. Or if you’re dying because you’re ashamed of being vanquished, you can put the blame on me and say you were only defeated because I put Rocinante’s saddle on wrong and forgot to tighten his cinches. Plus, I’m sure your grace has seen in your books of chivalry how normal it is for knights to vanquish each other, and today’s vanquished are tomorrow’s vanquishers.”

“That’s true,” said Sansón. “Good Sancho Panza here is quite correct about such cases.”

“Señores,” don Quixote said, “let us slow down and take things one step at a time, for the nests of yesteryear now are empty. I was mad and now am sane. I was don Quixote of La Mancha, and am now, as I have said, Alonso Quixano Shorter p. 1777 the Good. Pray let my repentance and my truth restore me in your graces’ esteem, and allow the notary to proceed.

“Item two: I leave my entire estate, in its current condition, to Antonia Quixana, my niece, here present, after setting aside, in whatever manner is most convenient, the amount required for the other bequests I make, thefirst of which shall be payment of the salary owed to the housekeeper for the years she has served me, plus twenty *ducados* for a dress. Execution of which I entrust to the executors of my estate, the señor priest and the señor graduate Sansón Carrasco, here present.

“Item three: it is my wish that if Antonia Quixana, my niece, should seek to marry, itfirst be verified that the man she wishes to wed knows nothing of books of chivalry. And if it is found that he does know about books of chivalry and, nevertheless, she insists on marrying him, she shall lose the inheritance stipulated above, which my executors can then distribute to charitable causes, to be chosen at their own discretion.

“Item four: I beg the aforementioned señores, my executors, that if good fortune should ever lead them to meet the author who, they say, composed a history which is making the rounds under the title *A Continuation of the History and Adventures of the Renowned Don Quixote of La Mancha*, they should ask him, on my behalf, as politely as possible, to forgive the opportunity I unwittingly gave him to write so many utter idiocies as that title contains, for I leave this world still burdened by the qualm of having given him occasion to write them.”

With that, he concluded his will and, swooning, lay back down in the bed. Everyone was concerned and hurried over to help him. For the full three days that he lived after leaving his will and testament, he was often beset by faints and swoons. The whole house was upset, but, even so, the niece still ate, the housekeeper still raised a glass, and Sancho Panza still was somewhat cheered, for inheritance smooths or at least softens the blow of grief that the deceased necessarily leaves in his wake.

Full p. C-567

In the end, after he had been given all the appropriate rites and sacraments and forsworn and abhorred—with replete and astute reasoning—all books of chivalry, don Quixotefinally reached the end. The notary was present, and he said that in all the books of chivalry he had read, he had never heard of any knight-errant dying in his own bed, in such a peaceful, Christian manner as don Quixote, who, surrounded by the compassion and tears of those present, quietly sent his spirit home, by which I mean he died.

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Seeing this, the priest asked the notary to witness and attest that Alonso Quixano the Good, often called don Quixote of La Mancha, had passed from this present life and perished of natural causes, explaining that he did so in order to remove the temptation from any other author but cide Hamete Benengeli of bringing him falsely back to life with the aim of churning out other endless histories of his amazing deeds.

Thus the ingenious gentleman of La Mancha met his end. Cide Hamete did not wish to specify which particular town in La Mancha, so that all its towns and villages could compete to adopt him and make him their own, as the seven city-states of Greece competed over Homer.

The heartbreaking sobbing of Sancho, the niece, and the housekeeper—new epitaphs upon don Quixote's tomb—cannot be transcribed. But the epitaph Sansón Carrasco wrote for him can, and it went like this:

Shorter p. 1778

> Here lies a stalwart gentleman
> whose valor was so genuine
> and taken to such extremes,
> that many deem and believe
> although in the end, he perished,
> his life remained unvanquished.
> He thought little of our world,
> was its monster and its effigy
> to such a degree
> his fortune decreed
> he would die sane and live madly.

And cide Hamete, quite prudently, said to his quill: "Here I shall hang you up, upon this kitchen rack, suspended by this wire, O quill of mine—though I cannot say whether you are sharp or dull—and here you shall stay for centuries to come, assuming no presumptuous scoundrel of a historian pulls you down to profane you. But, before they do, you could warn them by telling them, as best as you can:

> "'Scurry away, smug little scamps!
> Lay not afinger on me!
> for that honor, myfine king,
> is reserved for me exclusively.

"'Don Quixote was born for me alone, and I was born for him: he knew how to achieve his feats and I knew how to write them, and we two alone together are one, to the dismay and discomfit of thatfictional writer feigning to hail from Tordesillas who has dared or will dare to scratch out with an ostrich quill some ham-handed account of the deeds of my valiant knight, who is not his burden to carry, nor any business of his frigid intellect. And you can tell him—should Full p. C-568 you happen to meet him—to let the weary, rotting bones of don Quixote rest in peace, and not try to raise him back up again—which wouldfly in the face of all the laws of death—and put him on the road to Castilla La Vieja, dragging him from his grave where he really and truly lies, stretched out and buried, utterly unable to undertake a third journey or ever sally forth again. For to skewer all the sorties of all the endless tomes of errant chivalry, he needed no more than two journeys, which he undertook to the delight and entertainment

of everyone who heard of them, both here and in foreign lands.'" And with that, O quill, you will have fulfilled your Christian duty, by giving good advice to those who wish you ill, and I shall be satisfied and pleased to be thefirst writer to fully enjoy the fruits of his writing, as I wished, for my only desire has been to lead mankind to loathe those idiotic, untrue histories in books of chivalry, which—in the face of my don Quixote's true story—are already stumbling, and surely, shortly, shall fall. *Vale.*

Footnotes

- Note 5:Meeting a hare was considered a bad sign. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:A young woman in the Duke's castle, where Don Quixote and Sancho were guests for a time. She dramatically pretended to be in love with Don Quixote. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:Sancho's wife, here referred to as Teresa, is earlier named Juana. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:Because the knight-errant's life has been forbidden him by his defeat, Don Quixote considers living according to another, no less "literary" code: the pastoral. The following paragraphs refer humorously to the conventions of pastoral literature. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:From a pastoral ballad. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:A proverb. Return to reference 1

POPOL VUH transcribed 1554–58

A compendium of stories cherished by the ancient, the colonial, and even the modern Quiché Maya people of Guatemala, the sixteenth-century *Popol Vuh* has been compared to the ***Odyssey*** of the Greeks and the ***Mahabharata*** of India. Woven together, its stories form an epic narrative that leads from the creation of the world and of humankind to the time of the text's writing, amid the violence of the Spanish Conquest. Inevitably, following the conquest of Mexico Shorter p. 1839 in 1521, Spanish imperialism cast its eye toward Guatemala, and in 1524, after a brief struggle, Quiché fell to Spanish and Mexican troops under the command of Pedro de Alvarado (called "the sun" by Native people). By the 1530s, Quiché scribes, presumably including the *Popol Vuh* author, were being trained to use alphabetic writing. The book thus represents the cultural and intellectual mix born of the encounter: it is written in the Quiché language but in the Roman alphabet, and translates into book form what may have been an earlier text. In the narrative itself the anonymous author hints at the existence of a certain "council book" (*popol vuh*), presumably a pre-Columbian screen-fold (type of book with pages assembled like an accordion fan) that served him as a source. The Maya were the only civilization in the New World to have developed a full writing system, based on an elaborate system of glyphs.

The sixteenth-century Quiché were well acquainted with "council books," some dating from the classic period of Maya culture (100–900 C.E .), which saw the rise of such imposing centers as Tikal, Copán, and Palenque. By the time of European contact those important sites, abandoned in the mysterious collapse of Maya civilization ca. 900 C.E., lay in ruins. But Maya learning survived in southern Guatemala among the Quiché and their neighbors, and in the northern part of the Yucatán peninsula. Mayanists conclude that although the *Popol Vuh* is not

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an actual transcription of ancient screen-folds, it no doubt borrows from them. Full p. C-569 The modern text survives thanks to a copy made by a Dominican friar in the early eighteenth century, but it may have lost accompanying illustrations or hieroglyphs, which were standard for Mayan writings.

Stylistically, the text is fascinated by numbers, as evidenced in the pairing, tripling, and quadrupling of phrases. Major characters and deities also are paired, occasionally tripled, with a strong suggestion that they are the same. The work has a repeating structure,fitted to a traditional pattern of four successive worlds, or creations: thefirst three are said to have ended in failure; our own is the fourth. Yet against the background of this formal pattern, the hero-gods appear as light-hearted boys, even as tricksters. Their adventures, which are sometimes quite bawdy, have a playful, anecdotal quality.

As the author plainly states in the preamble that begins part 1, “We shall write about this now amid the preaching of God, in Christendom now.” Admittedly, then, the *Popol Vuh* is written after the conquest, but the question of how much of it was influenced by Christian missionaries is not easy to settle. Most critics have assumed that the account of the Earth’s creation that immediately follows the preamble owes something to the book of **Genesis** . If so, the material has been thoroughly assimilated to the Maya pantheon and to the Native American concept of primordial water. The text may be as easily compared to Aztec accounts of creation, in which the gods deliberate, then place the Earth on the surface of a preexisting sea, as to Genesis.

Part 1 continues with a description of thefirst three efforts at creating humans, in line with a widespread pattern shared by Aztec and other Mesoamerican traditions. As part 1 ends, the narrative moves on to the exploits of the divine heroes Hunahpu and Xbalanque. The work of these two heroes may be said to prepare the world for society and for the well-being of individuals within society when they bring low the overproud Seven Macaw, while part 3, the most celebrated portion of the *Popol Vuh*, confronts the scourge of death.

In the cycle of tales that comprises part 3, Hunahpu and Xbalanque vanquish the lords of the Maya underworld, called Xibalba (a term of obscure etymology, provisionally translated “place of fright”). This material is quintessentially Maya: scenes from the story are preserved on painted vases of the classic period, recovered by archaeologists from Maya burial Shorter p. 1840 chambers. The story told here must have aided the Maya in their journey through the realms of death somewhat as the *Book of the Dead* comforted the ancient Egyptians. Parts 4 and 5 complete the vast epic, relating the connected stories of the origin of humans, the discovery of corn, the birth of the sun, and the history of the Quiché tribes and their royal lineages down to the time of the Spanish Conquest and, subsequently, to the 1550s.

Old as the stories are, they are also new. Narratives of the origin and destruction of early humans can still be heard in traditional Maya storytelling sessions. The tale of the discovery of corn continues to be widely told; and the exploits of the trickster Zipacna and the hero twins also persist in shorter versions. Beyond the Native community, knowledge of the *Popol Vuh* among Central Americans is not only widespread but taken for granted. For the Salvadoran novelist Manlio Argueta (*Cuzcatlán*, 1986) the story of the origin of humans from corn as told in the *Popol Vuh* is a reminder, in Argueta’s words, that “the species will not perish.” The theme appears also in the 1949 novel *Men of Maize* by the Guatemalan Nobel laureate Miguel Angel Asturias, inspired by the same source.

In the translation printed here, wherever the text solidifies into a string of three or more couplets, the passage is set apart as though it were a poem. This is a device of the translator. It is not meant to imply that the lines were chanted but rather to show offthe more pronounced moments of formalism in a prose that borders on oratory.

Full p. C-570

From Popol Vuh[1]

FROM PART 1

[*Prologue, Creation*]

THIS IS THE BEGINNING OF THE ANCIENT WORD, here in this place called Quiché. Here we shall inscribe, we shall implant the Ancient Word, the potential and source for everything done in the citadel of Quiché, in the nation of Quiché people.

And here we shall take up the demonstration, revelation, and account of how things were put in shadow and brought to light by

> the Maker, Modeler,
> named Bearer, Begetter,
> Hunahpu Possum, Hunahpu Coyote,
> Great White Peccary,
> Sovereign Plumed Serpent,
> Heart of the Lake, Heart of the Sea,
> plate shaper,
> bowl shaper,[2] as they are called,
> also named, also described as
> the midwife, matchmaker
> named Xpiyacoc, Xmucane,

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> defender, protector,[3]
> twice a midwife, twice a matchmaker,

as is said in the words of Quiché. They accounted for everything—and did it, too—as enlightened beings, in enlightened words. We shall write about this now amid the preaching of God, in Christendom now. We shall bring it out because there is no longer

> a place to see it, a Council Book,
> a place to see “The Light That Came from
> Beside the Sea,”
> the account of “Our Place in the Shadows,”
> a place to see “The Dawn of Life,”

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as it is called. There is the original book and ancient writing, but the one who reads and assesses it has a hidden identity.[4] It takes a long performance and account to complete the lighting of all the sky-earth:

the fourfold siding, fourfold cornering,
measuring, fourfold staking,
halving the cord, stretching the cord

Full p. C-571

in the sky, on the earth,
the four sides, the four corners,[5]
by the Maker, Modeler,
mother-father of life, of humankind,
giver of breath, giver of heart,
bearer, upbringer in the light that lasts
of those born in the light, begotten in the light;
worrier, knower of everything, whatever there is:
sky-earth, lake-sea.

THIS IS THE ACCOUNT, here it is:

Now it still ripples, now it still murmurs, ripples, it still sighs, still hums, and it is empty under the sky.

Here follow thefirst words, thefirst eloquence:

There is not yet one person, one animal, bird,fish, crab, tree, rock, hollow, canyon, meadow, forest. Only the sky alone is there; the face of the earth is not clear. Only the sea alone is pooled under all the sky; there is nothing whatever gathered together. It is at rest; not a single thing stirs. It is held back, kept at rest under the sky.

Whatever there is that might be is simply not there: only the pooled water, only the calm sea, only it alone is pooled.

Whatever might be is simply not there: only murmurs, ripples, in the dark, in the night. Only the Maker, Modeler alone, Sovereign Plumed Serpent, the Bearers, Begetters are in the water, a glittering light. They are there, they are enclosed in quetzal feathers, in blue-green.

Shorter p. 1842

Thus the name, “Plumed Serpent.” They are great knowers, great thinkers in their very being.

And of course there is the sky, and there is also the Heart of Sky. This is the name of the god, as it is spoken.

And then came his word, he came here to the Sovereign Plumed Serpent, here in the blackness, in the early dawn. He spoke with the Sovereign Plumed Serpent, and they talked, then they thought, then they worried. They agreed with each other, they joined their words, their thoughts. Then it was clear, then they reached accord in the light, and then humanity was clear, when they conceived the growth, the generation of trees, of bushes, and the growth of life, of humankind, in the blackness, in the early dawn, all because of the Heart of Sky, named Hurricane. Thunderbolt Hurricane comesfirst, the second is Newborn Thunderbolt, and the third is Sudden Thunderbolt.[6]

So there were three of them, as Heart of Sky, who came to the Sovereign Plumed Serpent, when the dawn of life was conceived:

"How should the sowing be, and the dawning? Who is to be the provider, nurturer?"[7]

"Let it be this way, think about it: this water should be removed, emptied out for the formation of the earth's own plate and platform, then should come the Full p. C-572 sowing, the dawning of the sky-earth. But there will be no high days and no bright praise for our work, our design, until the rise of the human work, the human design," they said.

And then the earth arose because of them, it was simply their word that brought it forth. For the forming of the earth they said "Earth." It arose suddenly, just like a cloud, like a mist, now forming, unfolding. Then the mountains were separated from the water, all at once the great mountains came forth. By their genius alone, by their cutting edge[8] alone they carried out the conception of the mountain-plain, whose face grew instant groves of cypress and pine.

And the Plumed Serpent was pleased with this:

"It was good that you came, Heart of Sky, Hurricane, and Newborn Thunderbolt, Sudden Thunderbolt. Our work, our design will turn out well," they said.

And the earth was formedfirst, the mountain-plain. The channels of water were separated; their branches wound their ways among the mountains. The waters were divided when the great mountains appeared.

Such was the formation of the earth when it was brought forth by the Heart of Sky, Heart of Earth, as they are called, since they were thefirst to think of it. The sky was set apart, and the earth was set apart in the midst of the waters.

Such was their plan when they thought, when they worried about the completion of their work.[9]

Footnotes

- Note 1:Translated by Dennis Tedlock. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:All thirteen names refer to the Creator or to a company of creators, a designation applicable clearly to thefirst four names and *Sovereign Plumed Serpent. Heart of the Lake* and *Heart of the Sea* also apply, since the creators will later be described as "in the water," and somewhat obscurely, so does the last pair of names (*plate* and *bowl* may be read as "earth" and "sky," respectively). *Hunahpu Possum, Hunahpu Coyote, Great White Peccary*, and *Coati* refer specifically to the grandparents of the gods, usually called Xpiyacoc and Xmucane. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Four names for Xpiyacoc and Xmucane. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:The hieroglyphic source (*Council Book*) was suppressed by missionaries; it was said to have been brought to Quiché in ancient times from the far side of a lagoon (*Sea*). The reader hides his identity to avoid the missionaries. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:As though a farmer were measuring and staking a cornfield. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:Alternate names for Heart of Sky, the deity who cooperates with Sovereign Plumed Serpent. The triple naming adapts the Christian trinity to native theology, perhaps more in the spirit of defiant preemption than of conciliation. Return to reference 6

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- Note 7:That is, humanity, which alone is capable of *nurturing* the gods with sacrifices. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:[. . .] Refers to the cutting offflesh with a knife. [. . .] In the present context, it implies that “the mountains were separated from the water” through an act resembling the extraction of the heart (or other organs) from a sacrifice [translator’s note]. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:That is, the creation of humans; an account of thefirst three, unsuccessful, attempts at creating humans occupies the remainder of part 1. Return to reference 9

Shorter p. 1843

FROM PART 2

[*The Twins Defeat Seven Macaw*]

HERE IS THE BEGINNING OF THE DEFEAT AND DESTRUCTION OF THE DAY OF SEVEN MACAW by the two boys, thefirst named Hunahpu and the second named Xbalanque.[1] Being gods, the two of them saw evil in his attempt at self-magnification before the Heart of Sky.

* * *

This is the great tree of Seven Macaw, a nance,[2] and this is the food of Seven Macaw. In order to eat the fruit of the nance he goes up the tree every day. Since Hunahpu and Xbalanque have seen where he feeds, they are now hiding beneath the tree of Seven Macaw, they are keeping quiet here, the two boys are in the leaves of the tree.

And when Seven Macaw arrived, perching over his meal, the nance, it was then that he was shot by Hunahpu. The blowgun shot went right to his jaw, breaking his mouth. Then he went up over the tree and fellflat on the ground. Suddenly Hunahpu appeared, running. He set out to grab him, but actually it was the arm of Hunahpu that was seized by Seven Macaw. He yanked it straight back, he bent Full p. C-573 it back at the shoulder. Then Seven Macaw tore it right out of Hunahpu. Even so, the boys did well: thefirst round was not their defeat by Seven Macaw.

And when Seven Macaw had taken the arm of Hunahpu, he went home. Holding his jaw very carefully, he arrived:

“What have you got there?” said Chimalmat, the wife of Seven Macaw.

“What is it but those two tricksters! They’ve shot me, they’ve dislocated my jaw.[3] All my teeth are just loose, now they ache. But once what I’ve got is over thefire—hanging there, dangling over thefire—then they can just come and get it. They’re real tricksters!” said Seven Macaw, then he hung up the arm of Hunahpu.

Meanwhile Hunahpu and Xbalanque were thinking. And then they invoked a grandfather, a truly white-haired grandfather, and a grandmother, a truly humble grandmother—just bent-over, elderly people. Great White Peccary is the name of the grandfather, and Great White Coati is the name of the grandmother.[4] The boys said to the grandmother and grandfather:

“Please travel with us when we go to get our arm from Seven Macaw; we’ll just follow right behind you. You’ll tell him:

‘Do forgive us our grandchildren, who travel with us. Their mother and father are dead, and so they follow along there, behind us. Perhaps we should give them away, since all we do is pull worms out of teeth.’ So we’ll seem like children to Seven Macaw, even though *we’re* giving *you* the instructions,” the two boys told them.

“Very well,” they replied.

After that they approached the place where Seven Macaw was in front of his home. When the grandmother and grandfather passed by, the two boys were Shorter p. 1844 romping along behind them. When they passed below the lord’s house, Seven Macaw was yelling his mouth offbecause of his teeth. And when Seven Macaw saw the grandfather and grandmother traveling with them:

“Where are you headed, our grandfather?” said the lord.

“We’re just making our living, your lordship,” they replied.

“Why are you working for a living? Aren’t those your children traveling with you?”

“No, they’re not, your lordship. They’re our grandchildren, our descendants, but it is nevertheless *we* who take pity on *them* . The bit of food they get is the portion we give them, your lordship,” replied the grandmother and grandfather. Since the lord is getting done in by the pain in his teeth, it is only with great effort that he speaks again:

“I implore you, please take pity on me! What sweets can you make, what poisons[5] can you cure?” said the lord.

“We just pull the worms out of teeth, and we just cure eyes. We just set bones, your lordship,” they replied.

“Very well, please cure my teeth. They really ache, every day. It’s insufferable! I get no sleep because of them—and my eyes. They just shot me, those two tricksters! Ever since it started I haven’t eaten because of it. Therefore take pity on me! Perhaps it’s because my teeth are loose now.”

“Very well, your lordship. It’s a worm, gnawing at the bone.[6] It’s merely a matter of putting in a replacement and taking the teeth out, sir.”

Full p. C-574

“But perhaps it’s not good for my teeth to come out—since I am, after all, a lord. Myfinery is in my teeth—and my eyes.”

“But then we’ll put in a replacement. Ground bone will be put back in.” And this is the “ground bone”: it’s only white corn.

“Very well. Yank them out! Give me some help here!” he replied.

And when the teeth of Seven Macaw came out, it was only white corn that went in as a replacement for his teeth—just a coating shining white, that corn in his mouth. His face fell at once, he no longer looked like a lord. The last of his teeth came out, the jewels that had stood out blue from his mouth.

And when the eyes of Seven Macaw were cured, he was plucked around the eyes, the last of his metal came off.[7] Still he felt no pain; he just looked on while the last of his greatness left him. It was just as Hunahpu and Xbalanque had intended.

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And when Seven Macaw died, Hunahpu got back his arm. And Chimalmat, the wife of Seven Macaw, also died.

Such was the loss of the riches of Seven Macaw: only the doctors got the jewels and gems that had made him arrogant, here on the face of the earth. The genius of the grandmother, the genius of the grandfather did its work when they took back their arm: it was implanted and the break got well again. Just as they had wished the death of Seven Macaw, so they brought it about. They had seen evil in his self-magnification.

After this the two boys went on again. What they did was simply the word of the Heart of Sky.

Footnotes

- Note 1:First mention of the twin hero gods (their origin is recounted in part 3). Here they confront the false god Seven Macaw, who has arisen during the time of primordial darkness, boasting, “My eyes are of metal; my teeth just glitter with jewels, and turquoise as well. . . . I am like the sun and the moon.” Note that all the characters in parts 1, 2, and 3 are supernatural; humans are not created until part 4. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:A pickle tree (*Byrsonima crassifolia*). Return to reference 2
- Note 3:This is the origin of the way a macaw’s beak looks, with a huge upper mandible and a small, retreating lower one [translator’s note]. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:Animal names of the divine grandparents, Xpiyacoc and Xmucane, who are also the twins’ genealogical grandparents. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:Play on words as *qui* is translated as both “sweet” and “poison.” Return to reference 5
- Note 6:The present-day Quiché retain the notion that a toothache is caused by a worm gnawing at the bone [translator’s note]. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:This is clearly meant to be the origin of the large white and completely featherless eye patches and very small eyes of the scarlet macaw [translator’s note]. Return to reference 7

Shorter p. 1845

FROM PART 3

[*Victory over the Underworld*]

AND NOW WE SHALL NAME THE NAME OF THE FATHER OF HUNAHPU AND XBALANQUE . Let’s drink to him, and let’s just drink to the telling and accounting of the begetting of Hunahpu and Xbalanque. We shall tell just half of it, just a part of the account of their father. Here follows the account.

These are the names: One Hunahpu and Seven Hunahpu,[8] as they are called.

* * *

AND ONE AND SEVEN HUNAHPU WENT INSIDE DARK HOUSE .[9]

And then their torch was brought, only one torch, already lit, sent by One and Seven Death, along with a cigar for each of them, also already lit, sent by the lords. When these were brought to One and Seven Hunahpu they were cowering, here in the dark. When the bearer of their torch and cigars arrived, the torch was bright as it entered; their torch and both of their cigars were burning. The bearer spoke:

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"'They must be sure to return them in the morning—notfinished, but just as they look now. They must return them intact,' the lords say to you," they were told, and they were defeated. Theyfinished the torch and theyfinished the cigars that had been brought to them.

And Xibalba is packed with tests, heaps and piles of tests.

This is thefirst one: the Dark House, with darkness alone inside.

And the second is named Rattling House, heavy with cold inside, whistling with drafts, clattering with hail. A deep chill comes inside here.

And the third is named Jaguar House, with jaguars alone inside, jostling one another, crowding together, with gnashing teeth. They're scratching around; these jaguars are shut inside the house.

Bat House is the name of the fourth test, with bats alone inside the house, squeaking, shrieking, darting through the house. The bats are shut inside; they can't get out.

And thefifth is named Razor House, with blades alone inside. The blades are moving back and forth, ripping, slashing through the house.

These are thefirst tests of Xibalba, but One and Seven Hunahpu never entered into them, except for the one named earlier, the specified test house.

And when One and Seven Hunahpu went back before One and Seven Death, they were asked:

"Where are my cigars? What of my torch? They were brought to you last night!"

"Wefinished them, your lordship."

"Very well. This very day, your day isfinished, you will die, you will disappear, and we shall break you off. Here you will hide your faces: you are to be sacrificed!" said One and Seven Death.

Shorter p. 1846

And then they were sacrificed and buried. They were buried at the Place of Ball Game Sacrifice,[1] as it is called. The head of One Hunahpu was cut off; only his body was buried with his younger brother.

"Put his head in the fork of the tree that stands by the road," said One and Seven Death.

And when his head was put in the fork of the tree, the tree bore fruit. It would not have had any fruit, had not the head of One Hunahpu been put in the fork of the tree.

This is the calabash tree, as we call it today, or "the skull of One Hunahpu," as it is said.

And then One and Seven Death were amazed at the fruit of the tree. The fruit grows out everywhere, and it isn't clear where the head of One Hunahpu is; now it looks just the way the calabashes look. All the Xibalbans see this, when they come to look.

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The state of the tree loomed large in their thoughts, because it came about at the same time the head of One Hunahpu was put in the fork. The Xibalbans said among themselves:

“No one is to pick the fruit, nor is anyone to go beneath the tree,” they said. They restricted themselves; all of Xibalba held back.

Full p. C-576

It isn’t clear which is the head of One Hunahpu; now it’s exactly the same as the fruit of the tree. Calabash came to be its name, and much was said about it. A maiden heard about it, and here we shall tell of her arrival.

AND HERE IS THE ACCOUNT OF A MAIDEN, the daughter of a lord named Blood Gatherer.[2]

And this is when a maiden heard of it, the daughter of a lord. Blood Gatherer is the name of her father, and Blood Moon is the name of the maiden.

And when he heard the account of the fruit of the tree, her father retold it. And she was amazed at the account:

“I’m not acquainted with that tree they talk about. ‘“Its fruit is truly sweet!” they say,’ I hear,” she said.

Next, she went all alone and arrived where the tree stood. It stood at the Place of Ball Game Sacrifice:

“What? Well! What’s the fruit of this tree? Shouldn’t this tree bear something sweet? They shouldn’t die, they shouldn’t be wasted. Should I pick one?” said the maiden.

And then the bone spoke; it was here in the fork of the tree:

“Why do you want a mere bone, a round thing in the branches of a tree?” said the head of One Hunahpu when it spoke to the maiden. “You don’t want it,” she was told.

“I do want it,” said the maiden.

“Very well. Stretch out your right hand here, so I can see it,” said the bone.

“Yes,” said the maiden. She stretched out her right hand, up there in front of the bone.

And then the bone spit out its saliva, which landed squarely in the hand of the maiden.

Shorter p. 1847

And then she looked in her hand, she inspected it right away, but the bone’s saliva wasn’t in her hand.

“It is just a sign I have given you, my saliva, my spittle. This, my head, has nothing on it—just bone, nothing of meat. It’s just the same with the head of a great lord: it’s just theflesh that makes his face look good. And when he dies, people get frightened by his bones. After that, his son is like his saliva, his spittle, in his being, whether it be the son of a lord or the son of a craftsman, an orator. The father does not disappear, but goes on being fulfilled. Neither dimmed nor destroyed is the face of a lord, a warrior, craftsman, orator. Rather, he will leave his daughters and sons. So it is that I have done likewise through you. Now go up there on the face of the earth; you will not die. Keep the word. So be it,” said the head of One and Seven Hunahpu—they were of one mind when they did it.

This was the word Hurricane, Newborn Thunderbolt, Sudden Thunderbolt had given them. In the same way, by the time the maiden returned to her home, she had been given many instructions. Right away something was generated in her belly, from the saliva alone, and this was the generation of Hunahpu and Xbalanque.

And when the maiden got home and six months had passed, she was found out by her father. Blood Gatherer is the name of her father.

* * *

Full p. C-577

AND THEY CAME TO THE LORDS .[3] Feigning great humility, they bowed their heads all the way to the ground when they arrived. They brought themselves low, doubled over,flattened out, down to the rags, to the tatters. They really looked like vagabonds when they arrived.

So then they were asked what their mountain[4] and tribe were, and they were also asked about their mother and father:

“Where do you come from?” they were asked.

“We’ve never known, lord. We don’t know the identity of our mother and father. We must’ve been small when they died,” was all they said. They didn’t give any names.

“Very well. Please entertain us, then. What do you want us to give you in payment?” they were asked.

“Well, we don’t want anything. To tell the truth, we’re afraid,” they told the lord.

“Don’t be afraid. Don’t be ashamed. Just dance this way:first you’ll dance to sacrifice yourselves, you’ll setfire to my house after that, you’ll act out all the things you know. We want to be entertained. This is our heart’s desire, the reason you had to be sent for, dear vagabonds. We’ll give you payment,” they were told.

So then they began their songs and dances, and then all the Xibalbans arrived, the spectators crowded thefloor, and they danced everything: they danced the Weasel, they danced the Poorwill,[5] they danced the Armadillo. Then the lord said to them:

“Sacrifice my dog, then bring him back to life again,” they were told.

Shorter p. 1848

“Yes,” they said.

When they sacrificed the dog
he then came back to life.
And that dog was really happy
when he came back to life.
Back and forth he wagged his tail
when he came back to life.

And the lord said to them:

“Well, you have yet to set my home onfire,” they were told next, so then they setfire to the home of the lord. The house was packed with all the lords, but they were not burned. They quicklyfixed it back again, lest the house of One Death be consumed all at once, and all the lords were amazed, and they went on dancing this way. They were overjoyed.

And then they were asked by the lord:

“You have yet to kill a person! Make a sacrifice without death!” they were told.

“Very well,” they said.

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And then they took hold of a human sacrifice.

And they held up a human heart on high.

And they showed its roundness to the lords.

Full p. C-578

And now One and Seven Death admired it, and now that person was brought right back to life. His heart was overjoyed when he came back to life, and the lords were amazed:

“Sacrifice yet again, even do it to yourselves! Let’s see it! At heart, that’s the dance we really want from you,” the lords said now.

“Very well, lord,” they replied, and then they sacrificed themselves.

AND THIS IS THE SACRIFICE OF HUNAHPU BY XBALANQUE . One by one his legs, his arms were spread wide. His head came off, rolled far away outside. His heart, dug out, was smothered in a leaf,[6] and all the Xibalbans went crazy at the sight.

So now, only one of them was dancing there: Xbalanque.

“Get up!” he said, and Hunahpu came back to life. The two of them were overjoyed at this—and likewise the lords rejoiced, as if they were doing it themselves. One and Seven Death were as glad at heart as if they themselves were actually doing the dance.

And then the hearts of the lords werefilled with longing, with yearning for the dance of little Hunahpu and Xbalanque, so then came these words from One and Seven Death:

“Do it to us! Sacrifice us!” they said. “Sacrifice both of us!” said One and Seven Death to Hunahpu and Xbalanque.

“Very well. You ought to come back to life. What is death to you?[7] And aren’t we making you happy, along with the vassals of your domain?” they told the lords.

And this one was thefirst to be sacrificed: the lord at the very top, the one whose name is One Death, the ruler of Xibalba.

And with One Death dead, the next to be taken was Seven Death. They did not come back to life.

Shorter p. 1849

And then the Xibalbans were getting up to leave, those who had seen the lords die. They underwent heart sacrifice there, and the heart sacrifice was performed on the two lords only for the purpose of destroying them.

As soon as they had killed the one lord without bringing him back to life, the other lord had been meek and tearful before the dancers. He didn’t consent, he didn’t accept it:

“Take pity on me!” he said when he realized. All their vassals took the road to the great canyon, in one single mass theyfilled up the deep abyss. So they piled up there and gathered together, countless ants, tumbling down into the canyon, as if they were being herded there. And when they arrived, they all bent low in surrender, they arrived meek and tearful.

Such was the defeat of the rulers of Xibalba. The boys accomplished it only through wonders, only through self-transformation.

* * *

Such was the beginning of their disappearance and the denial of their worship.

Their ancient day was not a great one,
these ancient people only wanted conflict,

Full p. C-579

their ancient names are not really divine,
but fearful is the ancient evil of their faces.

They are makers of enemies, users of owls,[8]
they are inciters to wrongs and violence,
they are masters of hidden intentions as well,

they are black and white,[9]
masters of stupidity, masters of perplexity,

as it is said. By putting on appearances they cause dismay.

Such was the loss of their greatness and brilliance. Their domain did not return to greatness. This was accomplished by little Hunahpu and Xbalanque.

Footnotes

- Note 8:Twin sons of Xpiyacoc and Xmucane; the elder of these twins, One Hunahpu, will become the father of Hunahpu and Xbalanque. “As for Seven Hunahpu,” according to the text, “he has no wife. He’s just a partner and just secondary; he just remains a boy.” Return to reference 8
- Note 9:Thefirst of the “test” houses in Xibalba (the underworld) to which One and Seven Hunahpu, avid ballplayers, have been lured by the underworld lords, One and Seven Death; the lords have promised them a challenging ball game. The Mesoamerican ball game, remotely comparable to both basketball and soccer, was played on a rectangular court, using a ball of native rubber. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:Probably not a place name, but rather a name for the altar where losing ball players were sacrificed [translator’s note]. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Fourth-ranking lord of Xibalba, whose commission is to draw blood from people. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Forced toflee the underworld the maiden (Blood Moon)finds refuge on earth with Xmucane. There she gives birth to the twins, who, like their father and uncle, become ballplayers and are enticed to the underworld. Surviving the Dark House and other tests, they disguise themselves as vagabonds and earn a reputation as clever entertainers among the denizens of Xibalba; as such they are summoned to entertain the high lords. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:A metonym for almost any settlement, but especially a fortified town or citadel, located on a defensible elevation [translator’s note]. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:The goatsucker. The dances apparently were imitations of these animals and birds. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:As a tamale is wrapped. In the typical Mesoamerican heart sacrifice, the victim’s arms and legs were stretched wide and the heart was excised and offered to a deity. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:Evident sarcasm. Return to reference 7

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- Note 8:The lords had used owls as messengers to lure the ballplayers to Xibalba. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:Contradictory, duplicitous. Return to reference 9

FROM PART 4

[*Origin of Humanity, First Dawn*]

AND HERE IS THE BEGINNING OF THE CONCEPTION OF HUMANS, and of the search for the ingredients of the human body. So they spoke, the Bearer, Begetter, the Makers, Modelers named Sovereign Plumed Serpent:

"The dawn has approached, preparations have been made, and morning has come for the provider, nurturer, born in the light, begotten in the light. Morning has come for humankind, for the people of the face of the earth," they said. It all came together as they went on thinking in the darkness, in the night, as they searched and they sifted, they thought and they wondered.

And here their thoughts came out in clear light. They sought and discovered what was needed for humanflesh. It was only a short while before the sun, moon, and stars were to appear above the Makers and Modelers. Split Place, Bitter Water Place is the name: the yellow corn, white corn came from there.

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And these are the names of the animals who brought the food: fox, coyote, parrot, crow. There were four animals who brought the news of the ears of yellow corn and white corn. They were coming from over there at Split Place, they showed the way to the split.[1]

And this was when they found the staple foods.

And these were the ingredients for theflesh of the human work, the human design, and the water was for the blood. It became human blood, and corn was also used by the Bearer, Begetter.

And so they were happy over the provisions of the good mountain,filled with sweet things, thick with yellow corn, white corn, and thick with pataxte and cacao, countless zapotes, anonas, jocotes, nances, matasanos,[2] sweets—the rich foodsfilling up the citadel named Split Place, Bitter Water Place. All the edible fruits were there: small staples, great staples, small plants, great plants. The way was shown by the animals.

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And then the yellow corn and white corn were ground, and Xmucane did the grinding nine times. Corn was used, along with the water she rinsed her hands with, for the creation of grease; it became human fat when it was worked by the Bearer, Begetter, Sovereign Plumed Serpent, as they are called.

After that, they put it into words:

> the making, the modeling of ourfirst mother-father,
> with yellow corn, white corn alone for theflesh,
> food alone for the human legs and arms,

for ourfirst fathers, the four human works.

It was staples alone that made up theirflesh.

THESE ARE THE NAMES OF THE FIRST PEOPLE WHO WERE MADE AND MODELED .

This is thefirst person: Jaguar Quitze.
And now the second: Jaguar Night.
And now the third: Not Right Now.
And the fourth: Dark Jaguar.[3]

And these are the names of ourfirst mother-fathers.[4] They were simply made and modeled, it is said; they had no mother and no father. We have named the men by themselves. No woman gave birth to them, nor were they begotten by the builder, sculptor, Bearer, Begetter. By sacrifice alone, by genius alone they were made, they were modeled by the Maker, Modeler, Bearer, Begetter, Sovereign Plumed Serpent. And when they came to fruition, they came out human:

They talked and they made words.
They looked and they listened.
They walked, they worked.

Shorter p. 1851

They were good people, handsome, with looks of the male kind. Thoughts came into existence and they gazed; their vision came all at once. Perfectly they saw, perfectly they knew everything under the sky, whenever they looked. The moment they turned around and looked around in the sky, on the earth, everything was seen without any obstruction. They didn't have to walk around before they could see what was under the sky; they just stayed where they were.

As they looked, their knowledge became intense. Their sight passed through trees, through rocks, through lakes, through seas, through mountains, through plains. Jaguar Quitze, Jaguar Night, Not Right Now, and Dark Jaguar were truly gifted people.

And then they were asked by the builder and mason:

"What do you know about your being? Don't you look, don't you listen? Isn't your speech good, and your walk? So you must look, to see out under the sky. Don't you see the mountain-plain clearly? So try it," they were told.

And then they saw everything under the sky perfectly. After that, they thanked the Maker, Modeler:

"Truly now,
double thanks, triple thanks
that we've been formed, we've been given
our mouths, our faces,
we speak, we listen,

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we wonder, we move,
our knowledge is good, we've understood

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what is far and near,
and we've seen what is great and small
under the sky, on the earth.
Thanks to you we've been formed,
we've come to be made and modeled,
our grandmother, our grandfather,"

they said when they gave thanks for having been made and modeled. They understood everything perfectly, they sighted the four sides, the four corners in the sky, on the earth, and this didn't sound good to the builder and sculptor:

"What our works and designs have said is no good:

'We have understood everything, great and small,' they say." And so the Bearer, Begetter took back their knowledge:

"What should we do with them now? Their vision should at least reach nearby, they should see at least a small part of the face of the earth, but what they're saying isn't good. Aren't they merely 'works' and 'designs' in their very names? Yet they'll become as great as gods, unless they procreate, proliferate at the sowing, the dawning, unless they increase."

"Let it be this way: now we'll take them apart just a little, that's what we need. What we've found out isn't good. Their deeds would become equal to ours, just because their knowledge reaches so far. They see everything," so said

the Heart of Sky, Hurricane,
Newborn Thunderbolt, Sudden Thunderbolt,
Sovereign Plumed Serpent,
Bearer, Begetter,
Xpiyacoc, Xmucane,
Maker, Modeler,

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as they are called. And when they changed the nature of their works, their designs, it was enough that the eyes be marred by the Heart of Sky. They were blinded as the face of a mirror is breathed upon. Their visionflickered. Now it was only from close up that they could see what was there with any clarity.

And such was the loss of the means of understanding, along with the means of knowing everything, by the four humans. The root was implanted.

And such was the making, modeling of ourfirst grandfather, our father, by the Heart of Sky, Heart of Earth.

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AND THEN THEIR WIVES AND WOMEN CAME INTO BEING . Again, the same gods thought of it. It was as if they were asleep when they received them, truly beautiful women were there with Jaguar Quitze, Jaguar Night, Not Right Now, and Dark Jaguar. With their women there they really came alive. Right away they were happy at heart again, because of their wives.

Red Sea Turtle is the name of the wife of Jaguar Quitze.

Prawn House is the name of the wife of Jaguar Night.

Water Hummingbird is the name of the wife of Not Right Now.

Macaw House is the name of the wife of Dark Jaguar.

So these are the names of their wives, who became ladies of rank, giving birth to the people of the tribes, small and great.

* * *

AND HERE IS THE DAWNING AND SHOWING OF THE SUN, MOON, AND STARS . And Jaguar Quitze, Jaguar Night, Not Right Now, and Dark Jaguar were overjoyed when they saw the sun carrier.[5] It came upfirst. It looked brilliant when it came up, since it was ahead of the sun.

After that they unwrapped their copal[6] incense, which came from the east, and there was triumph in their hearts when they unwrapped it. They gave their heartfelt thanks with three kinds at once:

Mixtam Copal is the name of the copal brought by Jaguar Quitze.

Cauiztan Copal, next, is the name of the copal brought by Jaguar Night.

Godly Copal, as the next one is called, was brought by Not Right Now.

The three of them had their copal, and this is what they burned as they incensed the direction of the rising sun. They were crying sweetly as they shook their burning copal,[7] the precious copal.

After that they cried because they had yet to see and yet to witness the birth of the sun.

And then, when the sun came up, the animals, small and great, were happy. They all came up from the rivers and canyons; they waited on all the mountain peaks. Together they looked toward the place where the sun came out.

So then the puma and jaguar cried out, but thefirst to cry out was a bird, the parrot by name. All the animals were truly happy. The eagle, the white vulture, small birds, great birds spread their wings, and the penitents and sacrificers knelt down.

Footnotes

- Note 1:In the widespread Mesoamerican story of the discovery of corn, one or more animals reveal that corn and other foods are hidden within a rock or a mountain, accessible through a cleft; in some versions the mountain is split apart by lightning. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Quincelike fruits of the tree *Casimiroa edulis* . Pataxte (*Theobroma bicolor*) is a species of cacao that is inferior to cacao proper (*T. cacao*). Zapotes are fruits of the sapota tree (*Lucuma mammosa*). Anonas are custard apples (genus *Anona*). Jocotes are yellow plumlike fruits of the tree *Spondias purpurea* . Return to reference 2
- Note 3:The four original Quiché males. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:That is, parents, although only thefirst three founded lineages; Dark Jaguar had no son. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:The morning star. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:Resin used as incense. Return to reference 6

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- Note 7:Note that the Mesoamerican pottery censer must be shaken or swayed back and forth to keep the incense burning. Return to reference 7

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FROM PART 5

[*Prayer for Future Generations*]

AND THIS IS THE CRY OF THEIR HEARTS, HERE IT IS:

> “Wait! On this blessed day,
> thou Hurricane, thou Heart of the Sky-Earth,
> thou giver of ripeness and freshness,
> and thou giver of daughters and sons,
> spread thy stain, spill thy drops
> of green and yellow;[8]
> give life and beginning
> to those I bear and beget,
> that they might multiply and grow,
> nurturing and providing for thee,
> calling to thee along the roads and paths,
> on rivers, in canyons,
> beneath the trees and bushes;
> give them their daughters and sons.
> “May there be no blame, obstacle, want or misery;
> let no deceiver come behind or before them,
> may they neither be snared nor wounded,
> nor seduced, nor burned,

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> nor diverted below the road nor above it;
> may they neither fall over backward nor stumble;
> keep them on the Green Road, the Green Path.
> “May there be no blame or barrier for them
> through any secrets or sorcery of thine;
> may thy nurturers and providers be good
> before thy mouth and thy face,
> thou, Heart of Sky; thou, Heart of Earth;
> thou, Bundle of Flames;[9]
> and thou, Tohil, Auilix, Hacauitz,[1]
> under the sky, on the earth,
> the four sides, the four corners;
> may there be only light, only continuity within,
> before thy mouth and thy face, thou god.”

Footnotes

- Note 8:The imagery, denoting human offspring, alludes to semen and plant growth. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:A sacred relic left to the Quiché lords by Jaguar Quitze; like the sacred bundles of the North American peoples, a cloth-wrapped ark with mysterious contents [translator's note]. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:Patron deities of the Quiché lineages. Return to reference 1

THE ENCOUNTER OF EUROPE AND THE NEW WORLD

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A 1592 engraving by Theodore de Bry that depicts the encounter between the Spanish and Indigenous people at the Río de San Francisco in Brazil, 1549.

As it dawned on Europeans that **Christopher Columbus**'s voyages had led him not to the East Indies but to a continent previously unknown to them, the enormity of Columbus's "discovery" shattered the certainties of the medieval world, introducing a new era of extensive exploration around the globe and increased skepticism about received knowledge. Both the "brave new world" (in **William Shakespeare**'s phrase) and its inhabitants produced in the Europeans a sense that reality had been decisively altered and could never revert to older,

familiar ways. Europe, with its traditions rooted in the medieval and ancient eras, seemed almost magically transformed into the Old World by its encounter with the New World. Columbus's initial forays into the Caribbean were soon followed by multiple expeditions to present-day Brazil, Central America, Mexico, and Peru, as the European presence gradually spread over the American continent. Portuguese, Dutch, French, and English explorers all set sail in an attempt to emulate the Spanish conquests and establish colonial outposts.

Wonder at radically different cultures and landscapes permeates the early Spanish and Portuguese accounts of the New World. The Europeans idealize the Native peoples for their artlessness and generosity, while keeping a sharp eye on the commercial and extractive possibilities that such innocence enables. "Of anything they have, if it be asked for, they never say no," Columbus exclaims, yet he also reveals that he has taken some of the Native people "by force" to train them as interpreters, while leaving a group of his men behind in a well-armed fort. Columbus reads his surroundings largely by denying all evidence of culture: a cursory glance tells him that these people have no clothing, no religion, no guile, even as he confesses that he can barely communicate with them.

The contradictions in Columbus's letter to Ferdinand and Isabella regarding his first voyage are magnified in later texts that relate the conquest of the powerful Aztec Empire for Spain by **Hernán Cortés**, as wonder gives way to military calculation. The conquest of Mexico forever changed the stakes of New World exploration, as other European nations were forced to grapple with the enormous power and riches that it granted Spain. The immediate consequence of the fall of Tenochtitlán (now Mexico City) was the dismantling of the Aztec Empire, which had stretched from the Gulf Coast to the Pacific and from what is now the state of San Luis Potosí in central Mexico eastward to just within the present boundary of Guatemala. In due course, Tenochtitlán became the base from which Spain launched further conquests, ultimately reaching to the upper Rio Grande Valley and deep into Central America. Cortés's example inspired a generation of opportunistic intruders, notably Francisco Pizarro, whose conquest of the Inca Empire of Peru was completed in 1533. Exploration Full p. C-586 by other European nations, including Britain and Portugal, had begun even before Cortés, and within a hundred years of the initial contact, European outposts would be implanted all along the eastern rim of the Americas.

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With Spain's huge empire came administrative and moral dilemmas. Spain established vice-royalties in Mexico (1535) and Peru (1542) that ruled over impossibly large territories. As Indigenous labor proved insufficient for the colonists' needs, Spain and other nations began importing enslaved Africans into the New World. The conquest remained a work in progress, as Spaniards were forced to confront native hierarchies that complicated any possible allegiance to Spain, religious beliefs that seemed quite capable of surviving the forcible teaching of Christianity, and a bewildering admixture of populations. All these made the conquest a long and complex process.

While Spain's European rivals eagerly circulated reports of Spanish cruelty and greed (a war of words known as the "black legend"), the Spaniards themselves embarked on a vigorous internal debate about the legitimacy of the conquest and the status of their Indigenous subjects. The most famous advocate for Native peoples was the Spanish friar **Bartolomé de las Casas**, who loudly denounced Spanish excesses in an effort to reform the colonial administration. Las Casas persuaded the Spanish Crown to pass laws protecting the "Indians," but exploitation of the Native population in mines and other forms of forced labor was intractable.

Devastating to Native people and permanently disruptive to long-established Full p. C-587 cultures, the conquests nevertheless prepared the way for exchange. Wheat, livestock, horses,

and firearms entered the so-called New World. From the Americas came tomatoes, chocolate, chilies, avocados (the names are all from Nahuatl, the language of the Aztecs: *tomatl*, *xocolatl*, *chilli*, *ahuacatl*), not to mention tobacco, corn, potatoes, and the near-legendary gold and silver that heated the economy of Europe through the sixteenth century.

There were intellectual exchanges as well. In Aztec territory Spaniards, especially members of the clergy, learned Nahuatl, while Native people became proficient in Spanish. Founded in 1536, the Royal College of Santa Cruz in the borough of Tlatelolco (part of Mexico City) taught young Aztec men to read and write Spanish and Nahuatl and sometimes even Latin. This Franciscan-run academy proved to be the principal training ground for what in retrospect would be recognized as the great era of Nahuatl letters, extending to about 1650. During this period **Aesop**'s ***Fables*** , the "Life of Saint Francis," portions of the **Bible**, and writings by **St. Augustine**, Calderón de la Barca, **Lope de Vega**, and other authors were translated into Nahuatl and recorded in the alphabetic script used by Europeans (the Aztecs had used a pictographic and ideographic recording system rather than a standardized written language). At the same time, the Spaniards published grammars of many of the native languages that they encountered, as part of their efforts to convert Indigenous peoples to Christianity.

During these years, works of Aztec poetry and history were recorded for posterity and, in some cases, translated into Spanish. Among the most noteworthy is the massive ***Florentine Codex*** (including traditional narratives, oratory, and the history of the Spanish Conquest). Because of censorship and fear of encouraging native religion, however, none of these works, whether in the native language or in translation, was published in its own time. Instead, they were prepared in manuscript and stored in libraries on both sides of the Atlantic. In some cases missionary-scholars served as the recorders, writing from the dictation of a knowledgeable elder. In other cases Native scribes actually wrote from live recitals or transcribed old pictorial books. These often magnificent volumes were bark-paper screen-folds that opened to form a lengthy streamer, crowded with illustrations typically read from right to left. Although the pictures contained a few phonetic features, they were essentially mnemonic, intended to call forth a text that had been learned orally.

As the Europeans solidified control over the New World, the texts that they encountered and in some cases helped produce—the ***Popol Vuh*** , the ***Huarochirí Manuscript*** , the *Florentine Codex*—made it clear that this world was new only to Europeans and that it had its own origin myths and revered ancients. These texts make the point that New World cultures had carefully charted their own histories, political organization, and belief systems, however much Columbus idealized their material and religious innocence. The European project of collecting and preserving information about the cultures the Europeans encountered, in a kind of early ethnography, contrasts markedly with the violence and rapacity of the conquest.

The conquest also produced Indigenous responses, as *mestizo* (born of a Spaniard and an "Indian") and Native writers struggled to present their view of their societies and of the cataclysmic disruption of the conquest. Authors such as **Inca Garcilaso de la Vega** and **Guaman Poma** wrote extensive histories, using their knowledge of their homelands to correct and augment Spanish accounts and offering in the process advice to Spanish rulers on how better to administer the colonies by incorporating Full p. C-588 Native expertise. Written decades after the conquest, these accounts chart the cultural and political negotiation that came of the encounter, and the urgent claims by both Indigenous and *mestizo* voices to participate in the debates.

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THE HUAROCHIRÍ MANUSCRIPT

At the turn of the seventeenth century, sixty years after the Spanish conquest of Peru, the anonymous Indigenous author of this text (compiled ca. 1598) was charged by a Spanish friar, Francisco de Avila, with documenting non-Christian religious practices, presumably in order to put an end to the beliefs that challenged Spanish efforts at Christianization. Despite this mandate, the text manages to demonstrate that pre-Hispanic religion had its own logic and complexity. Although the manuscript is written mostly in Quechua, its frequent Christian and biblical references make it clear that no "pure" Indigenous voice can exist by this late point, and that even accounts of the pre-Hispanic past are colored by the tremendous rupture of the conquest.

The Andean religious imaginary described here is populated by *huacas*—deities who inhabit the landscape in very concrete terms, as sacred objects and places. The first selection describes an ancient time before the appearance of Paria Caca, the most important deity in the text, who is associated with an imposing mountain. A second excerpt relates the prophecy of the Spaniards' arrival and the end of the cult of Paria Caca, events that had occurred in the author's own lifetime. A final section ties the power of the *huacas* to the Incas' own conquest of the region, long before the arrival of the Spaniards, and depicts the uneven power struggles between rulers and deities.

From The Huarochirí Manuscript[1]

[PREFACE]

If the ancestors of the people called Indians[2] had known writing in earlier times, then the lives they lived would not have faded from view until now.

As the mighty past of the Spanish Vira Cochas[3] is visible until now, so, too, would theirs be.
But since things are as they are, and since nothing has been written until now,
I set forth here the lives of the ancestors of the Huaro Cheri people, who all descend from one forefather:

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What faith[4] they held, how they live up until now, those things and more;
Village by village it will be written down: how they lived from their dawning age onward.

CHAPTER I

How the Idols of Old Were, and How They Warred among Themselves, and How the Natives Existed at That Time

In very ancient times, there were *huacas* named Yana Ñamca and Tuta Ñamca.

Later on another *huaca* named Huallallo Caruincho defeated them.
After he defeated them, he ordered the people to bear two children and no more.

He would eat one of them himself.

The parents would raise the other, whichever one was loved best.

Although people did die in those times, they came back to life on the fifth day exactly.

And as for their foodstuffs, they ripened exactly five days after being planted.

These villages and all the others like them were full of Yunca.[5]

When a great number of people had filled the land, they lived really miserably, scratching and digging the rock faces and ledges to make terraced fields.

These fields, some small, others large, are still visible today on all the rocky heights.

And all the birds of that age were perfectly beautiful, parrots and toucans all yellow and red.

Later, at the time when another *huaca* named Paria Caca[6] appeared, these beings and all their works were cast out to the hot Anti lands[7] by Paria Caca's actions.

Further on we'll speak of Paria Caca's emergence and of his victories.

Also, as we know, there was another *huaca* named Cuni Raya.[8]

Regarding him, we're not sure whether he existed before Paria Caca or maybe after him.

However, Cuni Raya's essential nature almost matches Vira Cocha's.[9] For when people worshiped this *huaca*, they would invoke him, saying,

> "Cuni Raya Vira Cocha,
> You who animate mankind,
> Who charge the world with being,
> All things are yours!
> Yours the fields and yours the people."

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And so, long ago, when beginning anything difficult, the ancients, even though they couldn't see Vira Cocha, used to throw coca leaves to the ground,[1] talk to him, and worship him before all others, saying,

> "Help me remember how,
> Help me work it out,
> Cuni Raya Vira Cocha!"

And the master weaver would worship and call on him whenever it was hard for him to weave.

For that reason, we'll write first about this *huaca* and about his life, and later on about Paria Caca.

* * *

CHAPTER 18

We already mentioned that the Inca revered Paria Caca and acted as *huacsa* .[2]

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It's said that he, the Inca himself, decreed, "Let thirty men from the Upper Yauyos and the Lower Yauyos serve Paria Caca according to the full and waning lunar cycles."

In obedience to that command, thirty men served him in shifts of fifteen days, offering him food and feeding him.

One day they sacrificed one of his llamas, a llama named Yauri Huanaca.

When those thirty people examined the heart and entrails of the llama, one of the thirty, a fellow called Quita Pariasca the Mountain Man, spoke up and said,

"Alas, brothers, the world is not good! In coming times our father Paria Caca will be abandoned."

"No," the others retorted, "you're talking nonsense!"

"It's a good augury!"

"What do you know?"

One of them called out, "Hey, Quita Pariasca! What makes you think that? In these llama innards our father Paria Caca is foretelling something wonderful!"

But at the time he said that, the mountaineer hadn't even approached the llama to inspect its innards. He had prophesied so just by watching from afar.[3]

The mountaineer spoke out and rebuked them: "It's Paria Caca himself who says it, brothers."

Then they derided Quita Pariasca with spiteful words:

"That smelly mountain man, what could he know?"

"Our father Paria Caca has subjects as far away as the limits of the land called Chinchay Suyo.[4] Could such a power ever fall desolate?"

"What does a guy like that know?"

They talked in great anger.

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But just a very few days after the day when he'd said these things, they heard someone say, "Vira Cochas[5] have appeared in Caxa Marca!"

A certain man who was also from Checa, named Tama Lliuya Casa Lliuya, a member of the Caca Sica *ayllu*[6] is known to have dwelt as one of Paria Caca's retainers.

At that time, they say, there were thirty priests at Paria Caca and this Casa Lliuya Tama Lliuya was the eldest of them all.

When the Vira Cochas, the Spaniards, arrived there, they kept asking insistently, "What about this *huaca*'s silver and garments?"

But the thirty refused to reveal anything.

Because they did, the Spanish Vira Cochas got furious, and, ordering some straw piled up, they burned Casa Lliuya.

When half the straw had burned, the wind began to blow it away.

And so although this man suffered horribly, he did survive.

But by that time the others had handed the clothing and the rest of the things over to the Spaniards.

It was then that all the men said, “Very truly indeed were we warned by this mountain man Quita Pariasca!”

“Brothers, let’s go away, let’s disband.”

“The world is no longer good,” they said. And so they dispersed, each going back to his own village.

When the burned man from Checa healed up, he arrived at a village called Limca in the territory of the Quinti, carrying along a child of Paria Caca named Maca Uisa.

We’ll describe these things in the next chapter.

* * *

CHAPTER 23

We Shall Write Here about the Inca’s Summons to All the Huacas *. We Shall Also Speak Here of Maca Uisa’s Victory*

When Tupay Ynga Yupanqui was king, they say, he first conquered all the provinces and then happily rested for many years.

But then enemy rebellions arose from some provinces: those called Alancu Marca, Calanco Marca, and Chaque Marca.

These peoples didn’t want to be peoples of the Inca.

The Inca mobilized many thousands of men and battled them for a period of about twelve years.

They exterminated all the people he sent, and so the Inca, grieving deeply, said, “What’ll become of us?” He became very downhearted.

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One day he thought to himself, “Why do I serve all these *huacas* with my gold and my silver, with my clothing and my food, with everything I have? Enough! I’ll call them to help me against my enemies.”

He summoned them: “From every single village, let all those who have received gold and silver come here!”

The *huacas* responded, “Yes!” and went to him. Even Pacha Camac went, riding in a litter, and so did the local *huacas* from the whole of Tauantin Suyo all in their own litters.

When all the village *huacas* had arrived at Aucay Pata,[7] Paria Caca hadn’t yet arrived. He was still grumbling, “Should I go or not?”

Finally Paria Caca sent his child Maca Uisa, saying, “Go and find out about it.”

Maca Uisa arrived and sat at the end of the gathering on his litter called *chicsi rampa* .

Then the Inca began to speak: “Fathers, *huacas* and *villcas*,[8] you already know how wholeheartedly I serve you with my gold and my silver. Since I do so, being at your service as I am, won’t you come to my aid now that I’m losing so many thousands of my people? It’s for this reason that I’ve had you called together.”

But after he said this not a single one spoke up. Instead they sat there mute.

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The Inca then said, “Yao! Speak up! Shall the people you’ve made and fostered perish in this way, savaging one another? If you refuse to help me, I’ll have all of you burned immediately!

“Why should I serve you and adorn you with my gold, with my silver, with basketfuls of my food and drinks, with my llamas and everything else I have? Now that you’ve heard the greatness of my grief, won’t you come to my aid? If you do refuse, you’ll burn immediately!”

Then Pacha Camac spoke up: “Inca, Mid-Day Sun! As for me, I didn’t reply because I am a power who would shake you and the whole world around you. It wouldn’t be those enemies alone whom I would destroy, but you as well. And the entire world would end with you. That’s why I’ve sat silent.”

As the other *huacas* sat mute, Maca Uisa then spoke up: “Inca, Mid-Day Sun! I’ll go there. You must remain right here, instructing your people and making plans. I’ll go and subdue them for you, right away, once and for all!”

While Maca Uisa spoke, a bright greenish-blue color blew from his mouth like smoke.

At that very moment he put on his golden panpipe (his flute was likewise of gold) and he wrapped the *chumprucu* around his head. His *pusuca*[9] was of gold, too, and as for his tunic, it was black.

For Maca Uisa’s journey the Inca gave him a litter, called the *chicsi rampa*, made for the travels of an Inca in person.

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The people called Calla Uaya were chosen by the Inca because they were all very strong.

These people could carry him, in a few days, a journey of many days.

They were the ones who carried Maca Uisa and bore his litter to the battlefront.

As soon as they brought him up a hill, Maca Uisa, child of Paria Caca, began to rain upon them, gently at first.

The natives of that country said, “What could this mean?” and began to ready themselves.

When they did so, Maca Uisa reduced all those villages to eroded chasms by flashing lightning and pouring down more rain, and washing them away in a mudslide. Striking with lightning bolts, he exterminated the great *curacas*[1] and all the other strong-men. Only a few of the common people were spared. If he had wanted to, he could have exterminated them all. When he had overpowered them completely, he drove some of the people back to Cuzco.

From that time onward, the Inca revered Paria Caca even more, and gave him fifty of his retainers.

The Inca said, “Father Maca Uisa, what shall I give you? Ask me for anything you want. I will not stint.”

“I don’t want anything,” Maca Uisa replied, “except that you should serve as *huacsa* the way our children from the Yauyo do.”

The Inca was deeply afraid when he said this, and answered, “Very well then, father!” He was willing to offer Maca Uisa anything at all, for he thought to himself, “He could destroy me, too!”

The Inca then said, “Father, eat!” and had some food served to him, but Maca Uisa replied with a demand:

“I am not in the habit of eating stuff like this. Bring me some thorny oyster shells!”

As soon as the Inca gave him thorny oyster shells, Maca Uisa ate them all at once, making them crunch with a “Cap cap” sound.

Since Maca Uisa didn’t want anything else to eat, the Inca ordered some of his Inca ladies of the nobility assigned to him; but he didn’t agree to that either.

So Maca Uisa went back home to inform his father Paria Caca.

From then on, and for a long time afterward, the Inca acted as *huacsa* in Xauxa and danced ceremonially, holding Maca Uisa in great honor.

They gathered in Cuzco at Aucay Pata square as we mentioned, the *huacas*, all of them.

Among these *huacas* seated there, as we said before, it was Siua Caña Villca Coto who was the most beautiful of all. None of the other *huacas* could match this one in beauty.

This much we know about them.

Footnotes

- Note 1:Translated by Frank Salomon and George L. Urioste. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:The original uses the term *indio* here, which flattens the distinctions among the many peoples described in the text. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:In colonial as in modern Quechua, the name of this principal deity is often used to refer to the Spanish. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:The original uses the Spanish term *fe*, for non-Christian religious practice, making the indigenous cults analogous to the true faith, and therefore subject to greater penalties from colonial religious authorities than mere “superstition.” Return to reference 4
- Note 5:The warm regions of the Pacific coast of Peru, their flora and fauna, and the peoples who lived there. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:A sacred mountain, Paria Caca is the dominant deity in the manuscript. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:The eastern slopes of the Andes and western fringes of Amazonia. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:A coastal water deity, creator of irrigation. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:A tricksterlike deity associated with the transformation of landforms. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:Either as a sacrifice or for purposes of divination. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:A priestlike figure responsible for ritual dances. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:The “mountain man” seems to see easily what the other soothsayers cannot even divine, a possible reflection on the failure to foresee the disastrous Spanish invasion. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:The northern quarter of the Inca state included parts of Peru, Ecuador, and Colombia. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:I.e., the Spaniards. Cajamarca, as it is spelled today, is the place where the Incas first encountered the troops of Francisco Pizarro, in 1532, and where the Inca Atahualpa was taken prisoner by the Spaniards. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:An Inca social and political unit, a kind of extended family around which life was organized. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:A plaza in the heart of Cuzco, the Inca’s capital. Return to reference 7

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- Note 8:Sacred ones. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:Possibly a lower-body garment. "*Chumprucu*": turbanlike garment. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:Officials, magistrates. Return to reference 1

Full p. C-594

CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS

Born in Italy, most likely in Genoa, Columbus (1450–1506) became a sailor on the Mediterranean and the Atlantic oceans, eventually establishing himself also as a navigator and mapmaker. While most thinkers of his day agreed that the Earth was spherical, there was considerable disagreement over its size and the habitability of its various zones. Convinced that he was led by Providence, Columbus persuaded the Spanish King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella to fund an expedition in 1492 that he hoped would find a shorter route to the East Indies and its lucrative spice trade by sailing west. In this sense, the discovery of the New World was an accident, and Columbus continued to believe for some time that he had reached Asia, hence the pervasive misnomer "Indians" that he uses for the peoples he encounters. In Hispaniola (present-day Haiti and the Dominican Republic), he found what seemed to him an earthly paradise, filled with an inexhaustible variety of flowers and fruits, and gentle natives who, in his telling, denied him nothing.

Columbus's letter about his first voyage is a public version of the more sensitive information that he sent his patrons, and emphasizes the potential utility of the islands as a source of gold and other commodities. Columbus also envisions the island's population as future converts, introducing the theme of evangelization that was to be an important justification for the conquest, or as docile laborers. Although it idealizes the islands, the letter also reveals the difficulties that attended the encounter, and the threat of violence that overshadows the idyll. Excited at the promise of gold on the next island beyond the horizon, he disregards both the actual scarcity of treasure and the native peoples' urgent insistence that he move on to search elsewhere.

Later voyages were to prove far less idyllic: Columbus returned to Hispaniola to find the fort he had left there destroyed and his men lost, and a great deal more hostility from the people who had suffered their depredations. In Spain, meanwhile, he faced strong opposition to his demands for reward and recognition, and increasing skepticism as gold remained elusive in the Caribbean. For the Taínos, the native inhabitants of the Caribbean islands, the contact with Europeans proved fatal: through a combination of war, smallpox, and the violent exploitation of their labor by the Spanish, their population was decimated by the mid-sixteenth century. Although Columbus's early accounts cannot envision such dire outcomes, the tremendous destruction wrought on this population has tainted the legacy of his voyages over the centuries.

Letter Concerning the First Voyage[1]

Sir: As I know that you will have pleasure from the great victory which our Lord hath given me in my voyage, I write you this, by which you shall know that in thirty-three days I passed over to the Indies with the fleet which the most illustrious King and Queen, our Lords, gave

me; where I found very many islands peopled Full p. C-595 with inhabitants beyond number. And, of them all, I have taken possession for their Highnesses, with proclamation and the royal standard displayed; and I was not gainsaid. To the first which I found, I gave the name Sant Salvador, in commemoration of His High Majesty, who marvellously hath given all this: the Indians call it Guanaham. The second I named the Island of Santa Maria de Concepcion, the third Ferrandina, the fourth, Fair Island, the fifth La Isla Juana; and so for each one a new name. When I reached Juana, I followed its coast westwardly, and found it so large that I thought it might be mainland, the province of Cathay. And as I did not thus find any towns and villages on the sea-coast, save small hamlets with the people whereof I could not get speech, because they all fled away forthwith, I went on further in the same direction, thinking I should not miss of great cities or towns. And at the end of many leagues, seeing that there was no change, and that the coast was bearing me northwards, whereunto my desire was contrary, since the winter was already confronting us, I formed the purpose of making from thence to the South, and as the wind also blew against me, I determined not to wait for other weather and turned back as far as a port agreed upon; from which I sent two men into the country to learn if there were a king, or any great cities. They traveled for three days, and found innumerable small villages and a numberless population, but nought of ruling authority; wherefore they returned. I understood sufficiently from other Indians whom I had already taken, that this land, in its continuousness, was an island; and so I followed its coast eastwardly for a hundred and seven leagues as far as where it terminated; from which headland I saw another island to the east, eighteen leagues distant from this, to which I at once gave the name La Española. And I proceeded thither, and followed the northern coast, as with La Juana, eastwardly for a hundred and eighty-eight great leagues in a direct easterly course, as with La Juana. The which, and all the others, are most fertile to an excessive degree, and this extremely so. In it, there are many havens on the sea-coast, incomparable with any others that I know in Christendom, and plenty of rivers so good and great that it is a marvel. The lands thereof are high, and in it are very many ranges of hills, and most lofty mountains incomparably beyond the island of Tenerife, all most beautiful in a thousand shapes, and all accessible, and full of trees of a thousand kinds, so lofty that they seem to reach the sky. And I am assured that they never lose their foliage; as may be imagined, since I saw them as green and as beautiful as they are in Spain during May. And some of them were in flower, some in fruit, some in another stage according to their kind. And the nightingale was singing, and other birds of a thousand sorts, in the month of November, there where I was going. There are palm-trees of six or eight species, wondrous to see for their beautiful variety; but so are the other trees, and fruits, and plants therein. There are wonderful pine-groves, and very large plains of verdure, and there is honey, and many kinds of birds, and many various fruits. In the earth there are many mines of metals; and there is a population of incalculable number. Española is a marvel; the mountains and hills, and plains, and fields, and the soil, so beautiful and rich for planting and sowing, for breeding cattle of all sorts, for building of towns and villages. There could be no believing, without seeing, such harbors as are here, as well as the many and great rivers, and excellent waters, most of which contain gold. In the trees and fruits and plants, there are great diversities from those of Juana. In this, there are many spiceries, and great mines of gold and other metals. The people of this island, and of all the others that I have found and seen, or not Full p. C-596 seen, all go naked, men and women, just as their mothers bring them forth; although some women cover a single place with the leaf of a plant, or a cotton something which they make for that purpose. They have no iron or steel, nor

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any weapons; nor are they fit thereunto; not because they be not a well-formed people and of fair stature, but that they are most wondrously timorous. They have no other weapons than the stems of reeds in their seeding state, on the end of which they fix little sharpened stakes. Even these, they dare not use; for many times has it happened that I sent two or three men ashore to some village to parley, and countless numbers of them sallied forth, but as soon as they saw those approach, they fled away in such wise that even a father would not wait for his son. And this was not because any hurt had ever been done to any of them:—on the contrary, at every headland where I have gone and been able to hold speech with them, I gave them of everything which I had, as well cloth as many other things, without accepting aught therefore; —but such they are, incurably timid. It is true that since they have become more assured, and are losing that terror, they are artless and generous with what they have, to such a degree as no one would believe but him who had seen it. Of anything they have, if it be asked for, they never say no, but do rather invite the person to accept it, and show as much lovingness as though they would give their hearts. And whether it be a thing of value, or one of little worth, they are straightway content with whatsoever trifle of whatsoever kind may be given them in return for it. I forbade that anything so worthless as fragments of broken platters, and pieces of broken glass, and strap buckles, should be given them; although when they were able to get such things, they seemed to think they had the best jewel in the world, for it was the hap of a sailor to get, in exchange for a strap, gold to the weight of two and a half castellanos, and others much more for other things of far less value; while for new blancas they gave everything they had, even though it were [the worth of] two or three gold castellanos, or one or two arrobas of spun cotton. They took even pieces of broken barrel-hoops, and gave whatever they had, like senseless brutes; insomuch that it seemed to me bad. I forbade it, and I gave gratuitously a thousand useful things that I carried, in order that they may conceive affection, and furthermore may become Christians; for they are inclined to the love and service of their Highnesses and of all the Castilian nation, and they strive to combine in giving us things which they have in abundance, and of which we are in need. And they knew no sect, nor idolatry; save that they all believe that power and goodness are in the sky, and they believed very firmly that I, with these ships and crews, came from the sky; and in such opinion, they received me at every place where I landed, after they had lost their terror. And this comes not because they are ignorant: on the contrary, they are men of very subtle wit, who navigate all those seas, and who give a marvelously good account of everything, but because they never saw men wearing clothes nor the like of our ships. And as soon as I arrived in the Indies, in the first island that I found, I took some of them by force, to the intent that they should learn [our speech] and give me information of what there was in those parts. And so it was, that very soon they understood [us] and we them, what by speech or what by signs; and those [Indians] have been of much service. To this day I carry them [with me] who are still of the opinion that I come from Heaven [as appears] from much conversation which they have had with me. And they were the first to proclaim it wherever I arrived; and the others went running from house to house and to the neighboring villages, with loud cries of “Come! come to see the people from Heaven!” Then, as soon as their minds were reassured about Full p. C-597 us, every one came, men as well as women, so that there remained none behind, big or little; and they all brought something to eat and drink, which they gave with wondrous lovingness. They have in all the islands very many *canoas*, after the manner of rowing-galleys, some larger, some smaller; and a good many are larger than a galley of eighteen benches. They are not so wide, because they are made of a single log of timber, but a galley could not keep up

with them in rowing, for their motion is a thing beyond belief. And with these, they navigate through all those islands, which are numberless, and ply their traffic. I have seen some of those *canoas* with seventy and eighty men in them, each one with his oar. In all those islands, I saw not much diversity in the looks of the people, nor in their manners and language; but they all understand each other, which is a thing of singular advantage for what I hope their Highnesses will decide upon for converting them to our holy faith, unto which they are well disposed. I have already told how I had gone a hundred and seven leagues, in a straight line from West to East, along the sea-coast of the Island of Juana; according to which itinerary, I can declare that that island is larger than England and Scotland combined; as, over and above those hundred and seven leagues, there remain for me, on the western side, two provinces whereto I did not go—one of which they call Avan, where the people are born with tails—which provinces cannot be less in length than fifty or sixty leagues, according to what may be understood from the Indians with me, who know all the islands. This other, Española, has a greater circumference than the whole of Spain from Col[ibre in Catal]unya, by the sea-coast, as far as Fuente Ravia in Biscay; since, along one of its four sides, I went for a hundred and eighty-eight great leagues in a straight line from west to east. This is [a land] to be desired,—and once seen, never to be relinquished—in which (although, indeed, I have taken possession of them all for their Highnesses, and all are more richly endowed than I have skill and power to say, and I hold them all in the name of their Highnesses who can dispose thereof as much and as completely as of the kingdoms of Castile) in this Española, in the place most suitable and best for its proximity to the gold mines, and for traffic with the mainland both on this side and with that over there belonging to the Great Can, where there will be great commerce and profit, I took possession of a large town which I named the city of Navidad. And I have made fortification there, and a fort (which by this time will have been completely finished) and I have left therein men enough for such a purpose, with arms and artillery, and provisions for more than a year, and a boat, and a [man who is] master of all seacraft for making others; and great friendship with the king of that land, to such a degree that he prided himself on calling and holding me as his brother. And even though his mind might change towards attacking those men, neither he nor his people know what arms are, and go naked. As I have already said, they are the most timorous creatures there are in the world, so that the men who remain there are alone sufficient to destroy all that land, and the island is without personal danger for them if they know how to behave themselves. It seems to me that in all those islands, the men are all content with a single wife; and to their chief or king they give as many as twenty. The women, it appears to me, do more work than the men. Nor have I been able to learn whether they held personal property, for it seemed to me that whatever one had, they all took share of, especially of eatable things. Down to the present, I have not found in those islands any monstrous men, as many expected, but on the contrary all the people are very comely; nor are they black like those in Guinea, but have flowing hair; and they are not begotten where there is an excessive violence of the rays of Full p. C-598 the sun. It is true that the sun is there very strong, although it is twenty-six degrees distant from the equinoctial line. In those islands, where there are lofty mountains, the cold was very keen there, this winter; but they endure it by being accustomed thereto, and by the help of the meats which they eat with many and inordinately hot spices. Thus I have not found, nor had any information of monsters, except of an island which is here the second in the approach to the Indies, which is inhabited by a people whom, in all the islands, they regard as very ferocious, who eat human flesh. These have many canoes with which they run through all the islands of India, and plunder and take

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as much as they can. They are no more ill-shapen than the others, but have the custom of wearing their hair long, like women; and they use bows and arrows of the same reed stems, with a point of wood at the top, for lack of iron which they have not. Among those other tribes who are excessively cowardly, these are ferocious; but I hold them as nothing more than the others. These are they who have to do with the women of Matinino—which is the first island that is encountered in the passage from Spain to the Indies—in which there are no men. Those women practise no female usages, but have bows and arrows of reed such as above mentioned; and they arm and cover themselves with plates of copper of which they have much. In another island, which they assure me is larger than Española, the people have no hair. In this there is incalculable gold; and concerning these and the rest I bring Indians with me as witnesses. And in conclusion, to speak only of what has been done in this voyage, which has been so hastily performed, their Highnesses may see that I shall give them as much gold as they may need, with very little aid which their Highnesses will give me; spices and cotton at once, as much as their Highnesses will order to be shipped, and as much as they shall order to be shipped of mastic,—which till now has never been found except in Greece, in the island of Xio, and the Seignory sells it for what it likes; and aloe-wood as much as they shall order to be shipped; and slaves as many as they shall order to be shipped,—and these shall be from idolators. And I believe that I have discovered rhubarb and cinnamon, and I shall find that the men whom I am leaving there will have discovered a thousand other things of value; as I made no delay at any point, so long as the wind gave me an opportunity of sailing, except only in the town of Navidad till I had left things safely arranged and well established. And in truth I should have done much more if the ships had served me as well as might reasonably have been expected. This is enough; and [thanks to] Eternal God our Lord who gives to all those who walk His way, victory over things which seem impossible; and this was signally one such, for although men have talked or written of those lands, it was all by conjecture, without confirmation from eyesight, amounting only to this much that the hearers for the most part listened and judged that there was more fable in it than anything actual, however trifling. Since thus our Redeemer has given to our most illustrious King and Queen, and to their famous kingdoms, this victory in so high a matter, Christendom should have rejoicing therein and make great festivals, and give solemn thanks to the Holy Trinity for the great exaltation they shall have by the conversion of so many peoples to our holy faith; and next for the temporal benefit which will bring hither refreshment and profit, not only to Spain, but to all Christians. This briefly, in accordance with the facts. Dated, on the caravel, off the Canary Islands, the 15 February of the year 1493.

At your command,

T HE A DMIRAL .

Footnotes

- Note 1:Translated by Clements R. Markham. Return to reference 1

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PERO VAZ DE CAMINHA

Vaz de Caminha (ca. 1468–ca. 1520) was a captain on the first Portuguese expedition to reach present-day Brazil, and his account is the first report of its land and people, a vibrant description of an almost unimaginably verdant landscape. Vaz de Caminha provides far more detail on the first encounter with the Indigenous Tupi people than **Columbus** does in his report, turning from idealization to derision and back again. The brief convivial interlude in which the Tupi and Portuguese share a dance ends abruptly when the Indigenous people flee, Vaz de Caminha tells us, "like sparrows at a feeding-place." This ambivalence about how to categorize the Indigenous peoples of the Americas would haunt the Iberian colonizers, as scholars, churchmen, and government officials debated the extent of their humanity and their capacity for reason, which had serious implications for the legitimacy of the conquest and the exploitation of Indigenous labor. Although Vaz de Caminha's vision of Europeans intermingled with the Indigenous population has often been romanticized as an early harbinger of a Brazilian melting-pot, or as a sign that the Portuguese Empire was less violent than the Spanish, his letter reveals much of the same ambivalence and calculation as Columbus's account, even as it observes the New World from a less distanced perspective.

From Letter to King Manuel[1]

* * *

And afterwards the captain moved up along the river, which flows continuously even with the shore, and there an old man was waiting who carried in his hand the oar of an *almadia* .[2] When the captain reached him he spoke in our presence, without any one understanding him, nor did he understand us with reference to the things he was asked about, particularly gold, for we wished to know whether they had any in this land. This old man had his lip so bored that a large thumb could be thrust through the hole, and in the opening he carried a worthless green stone which closed it on the outside. And the captain made him take it out; and I do not know what devil spoke to him, but he went with it to put it in the captain's mouth. We laughed a little at this and then the captain got angry and left him; and one of our men gave him an old hat for the stone, not because it was worth anything but to show. And afterwards the captain got it, I believe to send it with the other things to Your Highness. We went along there looking at the river, which has much and very good water. Along it are many palms, not very high, in which there are many good sprouts. We gathered and ate many of them. Then the captain turned towards the mouth of the river where we had disembarked, and on the other side of the river were many of Full p. C-600 them, dancing and diverting themselves before one another, without taking each other by the hand, and they did it well. Then Diogo Dias, who was revenue officer of Sacavem,[3] crossed the river. He is an agreeable and pleasure-loving man, and he took with him one of our bagpipe players and his bagpipe, and began to dance among them, taking them by the hands, and they were delighted and laughed and accompanied him very well to the sound of the pipe. After they had danced he went along the level ground, making many light turns and a remarkable leap which astonished them, and they laughed and enjoyed themselves greatly. And although he reassured and flattered them a great deal with this, they soon became skittish like wild animals and went away upstream. And then the

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captain crossed over the river with all of us, and we went along the shore, the boats going along close to land, and we came to a large lake of sweet water which is near the seashore, because all that shore is marshy above and the water flows out in many places. And after we had crossed the river some seven or eight of the natives joined our sailors who were retiring to the boats. And they took from there a shark which Bartolomeu Dias killed and brought to them and threw on the shore. It suffices to say that up to this time, although they were somewhat tamed, a moment afterwards they became frightened like sparrows at a feeding-place. And no one dared to speak strongly to them for fear they might be more frightened; and everything was done to their liking in order to tame them thoroughly. To the old man with whom the captain spoke he gave a red cap; and in spite of all the talking that he did with him, and the cap which he gave him, as soon as he left and began to cross the river, he immediately became more cautious and would not return again to this side of it. The other two whom the captain had on the ships, and to whom he gave what has already been mentioned, did not appear again, from which I infer that they are bestial people and of very little knowledge; and for this reason they are so timid. Yet withal they are well cared for and very clean, and in this it seems to me that they are rather like birds or wild animals, to which the air gives better feathers and better hair than to tame ones. And their bodies are so clean and so fat and so beautiful that they could not be more so; and this causes me to presume that they have no houses or dwellings in which to gather, and the air in which they are brought up makes them so. Nor indeed have we up to this time seen any houses or anything which looks like them. The captain ordered the convict Affonso Ribeiro[4] to go with them again, which he did. And he went there a good distance, and in the afternoon he returned, for they had made him come and were not willing to keep him there; and they had given him bows and arrows and had not taken from him anything which was his. On the contrary, he said, one of them had taken from him some yellow beads which he was wearing and fled with them; and he complained and the others at once went after him and returned to give them back to him. And then they ordered him to go back. He said that he had not seen there among them anything but some thatched huts of green branches, and made very large, like those of Entre Doiro e Minho.[5] And thus we returned to the ships to sleep when it was already almost night.

Footnotes

- Note 1:Translated by William Brooks Greenlee. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:A bark canoe. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:City northeast of Lisbon, in Portugal. “Diogo Dias”: brother of Bartolomeu Dias, and commander of one of the caravels on the expedition. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:A young convict who was a servant on the expedition. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:Northernmost province of Portugal and Caminha’s homeland. Return to reference 5

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HERNÁN CORTÉS

The heroism and brutality of conquest are the main themes in the life of Hernán Cortés (1485–1547). As he encountered in the Aztec Empire the untold riches that had eluded Christopher

Columbus in the Caribbean, Cortés was forced to negotiate a formidable and sophisticated enemy that he barely understood. Yet he proved remarkably astute at harnessing local discontent with Aztec rule, establishing alliances with Native peoples who also served as interpreters and spies. Despite the evasiveness of the Aztec ruler Moctezuma, Cortés and his men took him prisoner, and he died while in their custody. After many setbacks and the destruction of Tenochtitlán, chief city of the Aztecs, Cortés succeeded in his conquest—an astonishing achievement given the slender resources with which he faced the massive and well-organized Aztec Empire.

Cortés had disobeyed his superiors' explicit orders in pressing on to the land he would name New Spain. His letters to the Spanish ruler Charles V must therefore make the case that his spectacular achievements far outweighed his transgressions. Cortés foregrounds his heroic role as wise military leader, conveying the magnificence of the defeated empire while carefully justifying his own violent acts. "The manner of living among the people is very similar to that in Spain," he states, recognizing the sophistication of Aztec civilization even as he destroys it. Religion plays an important role in Cortés's effort to justify his military actions and the authority he had already claimed for himself in Mexico. Emphasizing his own efforts to convert the Aztecs to Christianity, he suggests to both Moctezuma and to Charles V that the Aztecs met their downfall because they refused to give up their devotion to their local gods. In Cortés's account, certain religious and sexual practices (human sacrifice and sodomy) of the Aztecs become mandates for the conquest. Finally, the Aztecs' belief that the Spanish conquerors were ancestral gods returning to claim their vassals is ably harnessed by Cortés: although he neither accepts nor denies the identification, it serves him as proof of Aztec idolatry and as sanction for the Spanish conquest of Mexico.

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From The Second Letter[1]

On the following day I set out again and after half a mile entered upon a causeway which crosses the middle of the lake arriving finally at the great city of Tenochtitlán[2] which is situated at its center. This causeway was as broad as two lances and very stoutly made such that eight horsemen could ride along it abreast, and in these two leagues either on the one hand or the other we met with three cities all containing very fine buildings and towers, especially the houses of the chief men and the mosques and little temples in which they keep Full p. C-602 their idols. In these towns there is quite a brisk trade in salt which they make from the water of the lake and what is cast up on the land that borders it; this they cook in a certain manner and make the salt into cakes which they sell to the inhabitants and neighboring tribes. I accordingly proceeded along this causeway and half a league from the city of Tenochtitlán itself, at the point where another causeway from the mainland joins it, I came upon an extremely powerful fort with two towers, surrounded by a six foot wall with a battlement running round the whole of the side abutting on the two causeways, and having two gates and no more for going in and out. Here nearly a thousand of the chief citizens came out to greet me, all dressed alike and, as their custom is, very richly; on coming to speak with me each performed a ceremony very common among them, to wit, placing his hand on the ground and then kissing it, so that for nearly an hour I stood while they performed this ceremony. Now quite close to the city there is a wooden bridge some ten paces broad, which cuts the causeway and under which the water can flow freely, for its level in the two parts of the lake is constantly changing: moreover it serves as a fortification to the city, for they can remove certain very long and heavy beams which form the bridge whenever they so desire; and there are many such bridges throughout the city as your Majesty will see from that which I shall presently relate.

When we had passed this bridge Moctezuma himself came out to meet us with some two hundred nobles, all barefoot and dressed in some kind of uniform also very rich, in fact more so than the others. They came forward in two long lines keeping close to the walls of the street, which is very broad and fine and so straight that one can see from one end of it to the other, though it is some two-thirds of a league in length and lined on both sides with very beautiful, large houses, both private dwellings and temples. Moctezuma himself was borne along in the middle of the street with two lords one on his right hand and one on his left. * * * All three were dressed in similar fashion except that Moctezuma wore shoes whereas the others were barefoot. The two lords bore him along each by an arm, and as he drew near I dismounted and advanced alone to embrace, but the two lords prevented me from touching him, and they themselves made me the same obeisance as did their comrades, kissing the earth. * * * After he had spoken to me all the other lords who were in the two long lines came up likewise in order one after the other, and then re-formed in line again. And while speaking to Moctezuma I took off a necklace of pearls which I was wearing and threw it round his neck; whereupon having proceeded some little way up the street a servant of his came back to me with two necklaces wrapped up in a napkin, made from the shells of sea snails, which are much prized by them; and from each necklace hung eight prawns fashioned very beautifully in gold some six inches in length. The messenger who brought them put them round my neck and we then continued up the street in the manner described until we came to a large and very handsome house

which Moctezuma had prepared for our lodging. There he took me by the hand and led me to a large room opposite the patio by which we had entered, and seating me on a daïs very richly worked, for it was intended for royal use, he bade me await him there, and took his departure. After a short time, when all my company had found lodging, he returned with many various ornaments of gold, silver and featherwork, and some five or six thousand cotton clothes, richly dyed and embroidered in various ways, and having made me a present of them Full p. C-603 he seated himself on another low bench which was placed next to mine, and addressed me in this manner:

"Long time have we been informed by the writings of our ancestors that neither myself nor any of those who inhabit this land are natives of it, but rather strangers who have come to it from foreign parts. We likewise know that from those parts our nation was led by a certain lord (to whom all were subject), and who then went back to his native land, where he remained so long delaying his return that at his coming those whom he had left had married the women of the land and had many children by them and had built themselves cities in which they lived, so that they would in no wise return to their own land nor acknowledge him as lord; upon which he left them. And we have always believed that among his descendants one would surely come to subject this land and us as rightful vassals. Now seeing the regions from which you say you come, which is from where the sun rises, and the news you tell of this great king and ruler who sent you hither, we believe and hold it certain that he is our natural lord: especially in that you say he has long had knowledge of us. Wherefore be certain that we will obey you and hold you as lord in place of that great lord of whom you speak, in which service there shall be neither slackness nor deceit: and throughout all the land, that is to say all that I rule, you may command anything you desire, and it shall be obeyed and done, and all that we have is at your will and pleasure. And since you are in your own land and house, rejoice and take your leisure from the fatigues of your journey and the battles you have fought; for I am well informed of all those that you have been forced to engage in on your way here from Potonchan, as also that the natives of Cempoal and Tlascala have told you many evil things of me; but believe no more than what you see with your own eyes, and especially not words from the lips of those who are my enemies, who were formerly my vassals and on your coming rebelled against me and said these things in order to find favor with you: I am aware, moreover, that they have told you that the walls of my houses were of gold as was the matting on my floors and other household articles, even that I was a god and claimed to be so, and other like matters. As for the houses, you see that they are of wood, stones and earth." Upon this he lifted his clothes showing me his body, and said: "and you see that I am of flesh and blood like yourself and everyone else, mortal and tangible."

Grasping with his hands his arms and other parts of his body, he continued: "You see plainly how they have lied. True I have a few articles of gold which have remained to me from my forefathers, and all that I have is yours at any time that you may desire it. I am now going to my palace where I live. Here you will be provided with all things necessary for you and your men, and let nothing be done amiss seeing that you are in your own house and land."

I replied to all that he said, satisfying him in those things which seemed expedient, especially in having him believe that your Majesty was he whom they had long expected, and with that he bade farewell. On his departure we were very well regaled with great store of chickens, bread, fruit, and other necessities, particularly household ones. And in this wise I

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continued six days very well provided with all that was necessary and visited by many of the principal men of the city.

I have already related, most catholic Lord, how at the time when I departed from the town of Vera Cruz in search of this ruler Moctezuma, I left in it a Full p. C-604 hundred and fifty men to finish the fortress which I had already begun: likewise how that I had left many neighboring towns and strongholds under the dominion of your royal Majesty, and the natives very peaceably disposed and loyal subjects of your Majesty. Being in the city of Cholula I received letters from the officer whom I left in Vera Cruz, by which I learnt that Qualpopoca, the native ruler of Almería, had sent in messengers to say that he desired to become a vassal of your Majesty, the reason for his delay being that enemy country lay between him and Vera Cruz and he had been chary of passing through it, but that if four Spaniards would return to his land, the enemies through whose country they would have to pass would refrain from molesting them and he would come forthwith to make his submission. The officer, thinking the message to have been sent in good faith, for many others had done the same, sent four Spaniards as requested. But Qualpopoca having once received them into his house ordered them to be killed . . . and two of them thus died.

* * *

Having passed six days, then, in the great city of Tenochtitlán, invincible Prince, and having seen something of its marvels, though little in comparison with what there was to be seen and examined, I considered it essential both from my observation of the city and the rest of the land that its ruler should be in my power and no longer entirely free; to the end that he might in nowise change his will and intent to serve your Majesty, more especially as we Spaniards are somewhat intolerant and stiff-necked, and should he get cross with us he would be powerful enough to do us great damage, even to blot out all memory of us in the land; and in the second place, could I once get him in my power all the other provinces subject to him would come more promptly to the knowledge and service of your Majesty, as indeed afterward happened. I decided to capture him and place him in the lodging where I was, which was extremely strong.

* * *

But before beginning to relate the wonders of this city and people, their rights and government, I should perhaps for a better understanding say something of the state of Mexico itself which contains this city and the others of which I have spoken, and is the principal seat of Moctezuma. The province is roughly circular in shape and entirely surrounded by very lofty and rocky mountains, the level part in the middle being some seventy leagues[3] in circumference and containing two lakes which occupy it almost entirely, for canoes travel over fifty leagues in making a circuit of them. One of the lakes is of fresh water, the other and larger one of salt. A narrow but very lofty range of mountains cuts across the valley and divides the lakes almost completely save for the western end where they are joined by a narrow strait no wider than a sling's throw which runs between the mountains. Commerce is carried on between the two lakes and the cities on their banks by means of canoes, so that land traffic is avoided. Moreover, since the salt lake rises and falls with the tide sea water pours from it at

high tide into the fresh water lake with the rapidity of a mountain torrent, and likewise at low tide flows back from the fresh to the salt.

Full p. C-605

The great city of Tenochtitlán is built in the midst of this salt lake, and it is two leagues from the heart of the city to any point on the mainland. Four causeways lead to it, all made by hand and some twelve feet wide. The city itself is as large as Seville or Córdova. The principal streets are very broad and straight, the majority of them being of beaten earth, but a few and at least half the smaller thoroughfares are waterways along which they pass in their canoes. Moreover, even the principal streets have openings at regular distances so that the water can freely pass from one to another, and these openings which are very broad are spanned by great bridges of huge beams, very stoutly put together, so firm indeed that over many of them ten horsemen can ride at once. Seeing that if the natives intended any treachery against us they would have every opportunity from the way in which the city is built, for by removing the bridges from the entrances and exits they could leave us to die of hunger with no possibility of getting to the mainland, I immediately set to work as soon as we entered the city on the building of four brigs, and in a short space of time had them finished, so that we could ship three hundred men and the horses to the mainland whenever we so desired.

The city has many open squares in which markets are continuously held and the general business of buying and selling proceeds. One square in particular is twice as big as that of Salamanca and completely surrounded by arcades where there are daily more than sixty thousand folk buying and selling. Every kind of merchandise such as may be met with in every land is for sale there, whether of food and victuals, or ornaments of gold and silver, or lead, brass, copper, tin, precious stones, bones, shells, snails and feathers; limestone for building is likewise sold there, stone both rough and polished, bricks burnt and unburnt, wood of all kinds and in all stages of preparation. There is a street of game where they sell all manner of birds that are to be found in their country, including hens, partridges, quails, wild duck, fly-catchers, widgeon, turtle doves, pigeons, little birds in round nests made of grass, parrots, owls, eagles, vulcans, sparrow-hawks and kestrels; and of some of these birds of prey they sell the skins complete with feathers, head, bill and claws. They also sell rabbits, hares, deer and small dogs which they breed especially for eating. There is a street of herb-sellers where there are all manner of roots and medicinal plants that are found in the land. There are houses as it were of apothecaries where they sell medicines made from these herbs, both for drinking and for use as ointments and salves. There are barbers' shops where you may have your hair washed and cut. There are other shops where you may obtain food and drink. There are street porters such as we have in Spain to carry packages. There is a great quantity of wood, charcoal, braziers made of clay and mats of all sorts, some for beds and others more finely woven for seats, still others for furnishing halls and private apartments. All kinds of vegetables may be found there, in particular onions, leeks, garlic, cresses, watercress, borage, sorrel, artichokes, and golden thistles. There are many different sorts of fruits including cherries and plums very similar to those found in Spain. They sell honey obtained from bees, as also the honeycomb and that obtained from maize plants which are as sweet as sugar canes; they also obtain honey from plants which are known both here and in other parts as *maguey*,[4] which is preferable to grape juice; from *maguey* in Full p. C-606 addition they make both sugar and a kind of wine, which are sold in their markets. All kinds of cotton thread in various

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colors may be bought in skeins, very much in the same way as in the great silk exchange of Granada, except that the quantities are far less. They have colors for painting of as good quality as any in Spain, and of as pure shades as may be found anywhere. There are leathers of deer both skinned and in their natural state, and either bleached or dyed in various colors. A great deal of chinaware is sold of very good quality and including earthen jars of all sizes for holding liquids, pitchers, pots, tiles and an infinite variety of earthenware all made of very special clay and almost all decorated and painted in some way. Maize is sold both as grain and in the form of bread and is vastly superior both in the size of the ear and in taste to that of all the other islands or the mainland. Pasties made from game and fish pies may be seen on sale, and there are large quantities of fresh and salt water fish both in their natural state and cooked ready for eating. Eggs from fowls, geese and all the other birds I have described may be had, and likewise omelettes ready made. There is nothing to be found in all the land which is not sold in these markets, for over and above what I have mentioned there are so many and such various other things that on account of their very number and the fact that I do not know their names, I cannot now detail them. Each kind of merchandise is sold in its own particular street and no other kind may be sold there: this rule is very well enforced. All is sold by number and measure, but up till now no weighing by balance has been observed. A very fine building in the great square serves as a kind of audience chamber where ten or a dozen persons are always seated, as judges, who deliberate on all cases arising in the market and pass sentence on evildoers. In the square itself there are officials who continually walk among the people inspecting goods exposed for sale and the measures by which they are sold, and on certain occasions I have seen them destroy measures which were false.

There are a very large number of mosques or dwelling places for their idols throughout the various districts of this great city, all fine buildings, in the chief of which their priests live continuously, so that in addition to the actual temples containing idols there are sumptuous lodgings. These pagan priests are all dressed in black and go habitually with their hair uncut; they do not even comb it from the day they enter the order to that on which they leave. Chief men's sons, both nobles and distinguished citizens, enter these orders at the age of six or seven and only leave when they are of an age to marry, and this occurs more frequently to the first-born who will inherit their fathers' estates than to others. They are denied all access to women, and no woman is ever allowed to enter one of the religious houses. Certain foods they abstain from and more so at certain periods of the year than at others. Among these temples there is one chief one in particular whose size and magnificence no human tongue could describe. For it is so big that within the lofty wall which entirely circles it one could set a town of fifteen thousand inhabitants.

Immediately inside this wall and throughout its entire length are some admirable buildings containing large halls and corridors where the priests who live in this temple are housed. There are forty towers at the least, all of stout construction and very lofty, the largest of which has fifty steps leading up to its base: this chief one is indeed higher than the great church of Seville. The workmanship both in wood and stone could not be bettered anywhere, for all the stonework Full p. C-607 within the actual temples where they keep their idols is cut into ornamental borders of flowers, birds, fishes and the like, or trelliswork, and the woodwork is likewise all in relief highly decorated with monsters of very various device. The towers all serve as burying places for their nobles, and the little temples which they contain are all dedicated to a different idol to whom they pay their devotions.

There are three large halls in the great mosque where the principal idols are to be found, all of immense size and height and richly decorated with sculptured figures both in wood and stone, and within these halls are other smaller temples branching off from them and entered by doors so small that no daylight ever reaches them. Certain of the priests but not all are permitted to enter, and within are the great heads and figures of idols, although as I have said there are also many outside. The greatest of these idols and those in which they placed most faith and trust I ordered to be dragged from their places and flung down the stairs, which done I had the temples which they occupy cleansed for they were full of the blood of human victims who had been sacrificed, and placed in them the image of Our Lady and other saints, all of which made no small impression upon Moctezuma and the inhabitants. They at first remonstrated with me, for should it be known, they said, by the people of the country they would rise against me, believing as they did that to these idols were due all temporal goods, and that should they allow them to be ill used they would be wroth against them and would give them nothing, denying them the fruits of the earth, and thus the people would die of starvation. I instructed them by my interpreters how mistaken they were in putting their trust in idols made by their own hands from unclean things, and that they must know that there was but one God, Lord of all, Who created the sky, the earth and all things, Who made both them and ourselves, Who was without beginning and immortal, Whom alone they had to adore and to believe in, and not in any created thing whatsoever: I told them moreover all things else that I knew of touching this matter in order to lead them from their idolatry and bring them to the knowledge of Our Lord: and all, especially Moctezuma, replied that they had already told me that they were not natives of this land but had come to it long time since, and that therefore they were well prepared to believe that they had erred somewhat from the true faith during the long time since they had left their native land, and I as more lately come would know more surely the things that it was right for them to hold and believe than they themselves: and that hence if I would instruct them they would do whatever I declared to be best. Upon this Moctezuma and many of the chief men of the city went with me to remove the idols, cleanse the chapels, and place images of the saints therein, and all with cheerful faces. I forbade them moreover to make human sacrifice to the idols as was their wont, because besides being an abomination in the sight of God it is prohibited by your Majesty's laws which declare that he who kills shall be killed. From this time henceforth they departed from it, and during the whole time that I was in the city not a single living soul was known to be killed and sacrificed.

* * *

Finally, to avoid prolixity in telling all the wonders of this city, I will simply say that the manner of living among the people is very similar to that in Spain, and Full p. C-608 considering that this is a barbarous nation shut off from a knowledge of the true God or communication with enlightened nations, one may well marvel at the orderliness and good government which is everywhere maintained.

* * *

On the day of Saint John after having heard mass I entered the city about midday, seeing few people about, and certain doors at the crossroads and turnings taken down, which appeared to be a bad sign, although I considered that it was done out of fright for what had already

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occurred and that my entrance would serve to calm them. I went straight to the fortress and the great temple next to it in which my men had taken up their quarters, and where they received us with such joy as if we had given them back their lives which they counted already lost: and so we remained there very much at ease throughout the rest of that day and night, thinking that all disturbance had settled down. Next day after hearing mass I despatched a messenger to Vera Cruz giving them the good news that I had entered the city to find the Christians alive and the city now quiet. But in half an hour he returned all covered with bruises and wounds, crying that the whole populace of the city was advancing in war dress and all the bridges were raised. And immediately behind him came a multitude of people from all parts so that the streets and house-roofs were black with natives; all of whom came on with the most frightful yells and shouts it is possible to imagine.

The stones from their slings came down on us within the fortress as if they were raining from the sky; the arrows and darts fell so thickly that the walls and courtyards were full of them and one could hardly move without treading on them. I made sallies in one or two parts and they fought against us with tremendous fury; one of my officers led two hundred men out by another door and before he could retire they had killed four of them and wounded both him and many others. I myself and many of my men were also wounded. We killed but few of them for they were waiting for us on the other side of the bridges, and did us much damage from the flat housetops with stones: some of these flat roofs we gained possession of and burnt the houses. But there were so many and so strongly fortified, being held by such numbers of natives and all so well provided with stones and other missiles, that we were not numerous enough to take all of them nor to hold what we had taken, for they could attack us at their pleasure.

The fight went on so fiercely in the fortress itself that they succeeded in setting fire to it in many parts, and actually burnt a large portion, without our being able to stop the flames until at last we broke down a stretch of wall and thus prevented it from spreading further. Indeed, had it not been for the strong guard I placed there of musketeers, crossbowmen and guns they would have entered under our eyes without our being able to stop them. We continued thus fighting all day until night was well come, though even then the yelling and commotion did not cease. During the night I ordered the doorways which had suffered by the fire to be repaired and all other places of the fortress which seemed to me weak. I decided upon the squads that were to defend the various parts of the fortress on the morrow and also the one that was to sally out with me to attack the Indians outside: I also ordered the wounded to be looked to, who numbered more than eighty.

Full p. C-609

As soon as it was day the enemy began to attack us with greater fury even than the day before: they came on in such numbers that the gunners had no need to take aim but simply poured their shot into the mass. Yet in spite of the damage done by the guns, for there were three arquebuses[5] without counting muskets and crossbows, they made so little impression that their effect could hardly be perceived, for wherever a shot carried away ten or a dozen men, the gap closed up with others so that it seemed as if no damage had been done. Upon this, leaving such suitable guard as I could in the fortress I sallied out and got possession of a few houses, killing many of those who were defending them: but their numbers were so great that although we had done still greater damage it would have had but slight effect. Moreover,

whereas we had to continue fighting all the day they could fight for several hours and then give way to others, for their forces were amply sufficient. They again wounded as many as fifty to seventy Spaniards that day, although no one was killed, and so we fought on till nightfall when we had to retire worn out to the fortress.

Seeing then the great damage that our enemies did us, and that they could wound and kill us almost unhurt themselves, we spent the whole of that night and next day in making three wooden engines, each one of which would protect twenty men when they had got inside it: the engines were covered with boards to protect the men from the stones which were thrown from the housetops; and those chosen to go inside were crossbowmen and musketeers together with others provided with pickaxes, hoes and iron bars to burrow under the houses and tear down the barricades which they had erected in the streets. All the while these wooden affairs were being made fighting did not cease for a moment, in such wise that as we prepared to make a sally[6] out of the fortress they attempted to force an entrance, and it was as much as we could do to resist them. Moctezuma, who was still a prisoner together with his son and many other nobles who had been taken on our first entering the city, requested to be taken out on to the flat roof of the fortress, where he would speak to the leaders of the people and make them stop fighting. I ordered him to be brought forth and as he mounted a breast-work that extended beyond the fortress, wishing to speak to the people who were fighting there, a stone from one of their slings struck him on the head so severely that he died three days later: when this happened I ordered two of the other Indian prisoners to take out his dead body on their shields to the people, and I know not what became of it; save only this that the fighting did not cease but rather increased in intensity every day.

The day that Moctezuma was wounded they called out to me from the place where he had been struck down saying that some of the native captains wished to speak to me; and thither I went and spent much time talking with them, begging them to cease fighting against me, for they had no reason to do so, and should consider that I had always treated them very well. They replied that I should depart and abandon their land when they would immediately stop fighting; but otherwise they were of a mind to kill us, or die themselves to a man. This they said, as it appeared, in order to persuade me to leave the fortress, when they would fall upon us at their pleasure between the bridges as we left Full p. C-610 the city. I replied that they were not to think that I besought them for peace because I feared them in any way, but because I was grieved at the damage I was doing them and should have to do them, and in order not to destroy so fine a city: to which they still replied that they would not cease fighting until I should leave the city.

* * *

They forced their way almost to the inner towers and succeeded in taking the temple, the chief tower of which was quickly filled with as many as five hundred Indians, all seemingly of high rank. Forthwith they proceeded to carry up large stores of bread, water and other food, together with plentiful supplies of stones. Most of them, moreover, were armed with long lances with heads of flint broader but no whit less sharp than our own; and from their position they did great damage to my men within the fortress for they were very close. The Spaniards two or three times attacked this tower and attempted to mount it, but as it was very tall and steep, having more than a hundred steps, and those above were well provided with stones and arms and moreover protected to a certain extent since we had been unable to take

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the neighboring roofs, they were forced to descend every time they attempted, and suffered many casualties; whereupon the natives in other parts of the city were so encouraged as to rush on the fortress without any signs of fear. Seeing that if our enemies were allowed to hold the tower they would not only do us much damage but would encourage the rest, I sallied out from the fortress, though disabled in the left hand from a wound received in the first day's fighting. Tying my shield on to my arm, however, I made for the tower followed by certain others and we surrounded it entirely at its base; this was done with no great difficulty, although not without danger, since my men had to deal with the enemy who were rushing up on all sides to support their comrades. I myself with a few behind me began to mount the staircase of the tower. And although they defended themselves very furiously, so much so that three or four Spaniards were knocked spinning downstairs, nevertheless with the help of God and our Gracious Mother, to whose honor the building had been dedicated and crowned with her statue, we finally got up the tower, and fought with them on top so fiercely that they were forced to leap down on to certain flat roofs, between which and the tower there was a gap of about a yard. There were about three or four of these all about eighteen feet below the top of the tower. Some fell right to the ground and were either broken by the fall or dispatched by the Spaniards who were below. Those who escaped on to the flat roofs continued to fight with extreme bravery so that it was more than three hours before we finished with them, and then there was not a man left alive. And your Majesty may well believe that had not God broken their ranks twenty of them might have stopped a thousand men from mounting the tower. Nevertheless those who died fought very valiantly. When it was all over I set fire to this tower and the other towers of the temple, having already abandoned them and removed all the images of the saints which we had placed there.

They lost somewhat of their pride on our taking this stronghold from them; so much so that on all sides their attack slackened, on which I returned to the housetop and spoke to the captains with whom I had already held speech and who were somewhat dismayed by what they had seen. On their approach I Full p. C-611 bade them note that they could not help themselves, that each day we should do them great hurt and kill many of them; already we were burning and destroying their city and would have to continue so to do until nothing of it or of them remained. To which they replied that they plainly perceived this but were determined to die to a man, if need be, to finish with us. And they bade me observe that the streets, squares and rooftops were all packed full of people, and that they had reckoned that if twenty-five thousand of them were to die for every one of us yet we should perish sooner, for we were few and they were many; and they gave me to know that all the bridges in the streets had been removed, as was indeed the case excepting a single one. We had therefore no way of escape except by water. Moreover, they knew well that we had but slight store of food and drinking water so that we could not hold out long without dying of hunger, even if they should not kill us themselves. And in truth they were perfectly right: for had we no other foes than hunger and general shortness of provisions, we were like to die in a short time. Many other arguments were put forward each supporting his own position.

After nightfall I went out with a few Spaniards and taking them off their guard succeeded in capturing a whole street in which we burnt more than three hundred houses. So soon as the natives had rushed there I returned by another street where I likewise set fire to many houses, especially to certain ones with low flat roofs lying close to the fortress from which they had

inflicted great damage upon us. What was done that night inspired them with great terror. * * *

Footnotes

- Note 1:Translated by J. Bayard Morris. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:The capital of the Aztec Empire, site of present-day Mexico City. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Cortés's estimations of distance are approximate; a Spanish league is about three to four miles. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:Mexican aloe. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:A heavy but portable gun of the 15th century. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:A rush made by the defense on an attacking army. Return to reference 6

THE FLORENTINE CODEX

Compiled over three decades (1547–79), the encyclopedic *Florentine Codex* represents the joint effort of the Franciscan missionary-ethnographer Bernardino de Sahagún and the knowledgeable Aztec elders and scribes who labored with him to produce a permanent record of Aztec culture. There had never been a document quite like this, and there have been few since. In view of its linguistic precision, its scope, and its objectivity, it can be considered the first work of modern anthropology. The name *Florentine Codex* is merely a latter-day scholar's designation for the most finished version of a corpus properly known as *General History of the Things of New Spain* . Several versions of the *History* have survived. But the manuscript now at the Laurentian Library in Florence, although it lacks some texts preserved in the so-called Madrid codices, is the copy that best deserves to be called complete.

Written in paired columns, with Nahuatl on the left and a Spanish paraphrase on the right, the Codex's twelve books begin with descriptions of the preconquest gods and ceremonies, followed by detailed expositions of native astronomy, botany, zoology, commerce, industry, medicine, time counting, prophecy, and other topics. The final book is devoted to a native history of the Spanish Conquest.

Full p. C-612

The excerpt reproduced here relates the initial Aztec encounter with the Spaniards: messengers relay the news of the strangers' extraordinary appearance and weapons to Moctezuma, as terror takes hold of the land. It shows **Hernán Cortés** taking advantage of Native alliances and enmities, while the various Indigenous groups also arguably take advantage of him, as when the Tlaxcallans use the Spaniards to destroy their enemies, the Cholulans, in an infamous massacre in a temple courtyard. The eventual meeting between Moctezuma and Cortés is described in all its magnificence, with the emperor receiving the conqueror as the embodiment of the prophecy that gods would return from the east. The text recognizes the important role played by the female interpreter Malintzin (known as Doña Marina or La Malinche to the Spaniards), who advised and guided Cortés.

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From The Florentine Codex[1]

BOOK 12, THE CONQUEST OF MEXICO

What the messengers who had gone to see the boats told Moctezuma.

And when this was done, they thereupon reported to Moctezuma; so they told him how they had gone marveling, and they showed him what [the Spaniards'] food was like.

And when he had so heard what the messengers reported, he was terrified, he was astounded. And much did he marvel at their food.

Especially did it cause him to faint away when he heard how the gun, at [the Spaniards'] command, discharged [the shot]; how it resounded as if it thundered when it went off. It indeed bereft one of strength; it shut off one's ears. And when it discharged, something like a round pebble came forth from within. Fire went showering forth; sparks went blazing forth. And its smoke smelled very foul; it had a fetid odor which verily wounded the head. And when [the shot] struck a mountain, it was as if it were destroyed, dissolved. And a tree was pulverized; it was as if it vanished; it was as if someone blew it away.All iron was their war array. In iron they clothed themselves. With iron they covered their heads. Iron were their swords. Iron were their crossbows. Iron were their shields. Iron were their lances.And those which bore them upon their backs, their deer, were as tall as roof terraces.And their bodies were everywhere covered; only their faces appeared. They were very white; they had chalky faces; they had yellow hair, though the hair of some was black. Long were their beards; they also were yellow. They were yellow-bearded. [The Negroes' hair] was kinky, it was curly.

And their food was like fasting food—very large, white; not heavy like [tortillas]; like maize stalks, good-tasting as if of maize stalk flour; a little sweet, a little honeyed. It was honeyed to eat; it was sweet to eat.

And their dogs were very large. They had ears folded over; great dragging jowls. They had fiery eyes—blazing eyes; they had yellow eyes—fiery yellow Full p. C-613 eyes. They had thin flanks—flanks with ribs showing. They had gaunt stomachs. They were very tall. They were nervous; they went about panting, with tongues hanging. They were spotted like ocelots; they were varicolored.

And when Moctezuma so heard, he was much terrified. It was as if he fainted away. His heart saddened; his heart failed him.

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How Moctezuma wept, and [*how*] *the Mexicans wept, when they knew that the Spaniards were very powerful.*

And Moctezuma loudly expressed his distress. He felt distress, he was terrified, he was astounded; he expressed his distress because of the city.

And indeed everyone was greatly terrified. There were terror, astonishment, expressions of distress, feelings of distress. There were consultations. There were formations of groups; there were assemblies of people. There was weeping—there was much weeping, there was weeping

for others. There was only the hanging of heads, there was dejection. There were tearful greetings, there were tearful greetings given others. There was the encouragement of others; there was mutual encouragement. There was the smoothing of the hair; the hair of small boys was smoothed. Their fathers said: “Alas, O my beloved sons! How can what is about to come to pass have befallen you?” And their mothers said: “My beloved sons, how will you marvel at what is about to befall you?”

And it was told, declared, shown, announced, made known to Moctezuma, it was fixed in his heart, that a woman from among us people here brought them here; she interpreted for them. Her name was Marina.[2] Her home was Teticpac. There on the coast they had first come to take her.

And then at that time [this] began—that no more was there the placing of themselves at [the Spaniards’] feet. The emissaries, those who had interceded for them for everything, everywhere, that they might need, just went, turning their backs.

And at just this same time [the Spaniards] came enquiring about Moctezuma: “What sort [of man is he]? Is he perchance a youth? Is he perchance mature? Is he perchance already old? Is he perchance already advanced in years? Is he perchance an able old man? Is he perchance already an aged man? Is he perchance already white-headed?” And they answered the gods, the Spaniards: “He is a mature man, not fat but rather slender; thin—rather thin.”

And when Moctezuma had thus heard that he was much enquired about, that he was much sought, [that] the gods wished to look upon his face, it was as if his heart was afflicted; he was afflicted. He would flee; he wished to flee; he needed to flee; he would take himself hence. He would hide himself; he needed to hide himself; he would hide himself—he wished to take refuge from the gods. And he was determining for himself in secret, he determined for himself in secret; he was imagining to himself, he imagined to himself; he was inventing, he invented; he thus was consulting within his heart, he consulted within his heart; he was saying to himself, he secretly said to himself that he would somewhere enter a cave. And of those whom he much unburdened himself to, confided in, held especially easy conversation with, some told what they knew; they said: “[Some] know where Mictlan is, and Tonatiuh ichan, and Full p. C-614 Tlalocan, and Cincalco,[3] that one may be benefited. [Determine] in what place indeed is thy need.”

And indeed he wished, he desired [to go] there to Cincalco. So was it well known; it was so rumored.

But this he could not do. He could not hide. He could not take refuge. No longer had he strength; no longer was there any use; no longer had he energy. No longer were verified, no longer could be accomplished the words of the soothsayers by which they had changed his mind, had misled him, had troubled him. Thus they were taking vengeance upon him when they were feigning to be wise in knowing [the way] there [to places] named.

[Moctezuma] only awaited [the Spaniards]; he made himself resolute; he put forth great effort; he quieted, he controlled his heart; he submitted himself entirely to whatsoever he was to see, at which he was to marvel.

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How the Spaniards arrived in Tlaxcalla.

[The Tlaxcallans] went guiding them. They accompanied them there; they guided them there in order to go to leave them, to quarter them, in their palaces. They made very much of them. They gave them whatsoever they required; they attended to them. And then they gave them their maidens.

Then [the Spaniards] asked them: “Where is Mexico? What manner of place is it? Is it yet distant?”

[The Tlaxcallans] answered them: “It is by no means distant now; it may be reached in perhaps but three days. It is a very good place. And [the Mexicans] are very strong, very brave. They are conquerors; they go everywhere.”

And the Tlaxcallans had formerly been at enmity with the Cholulans. There was regarding with rage, there was regarding with hatred; there was detesting. They were disgusted; they could have nothing to do with them. Wherefore they incited [the Spaniards] against them, so that they might harm them.

They said to them: “They are very wicked. They are our foes. The Cholulan is as strong as the Mexican. He is the Mexican’s friend.”

When the Spaniards had so heard, they then went to Cholula. The Tlaxcallans and the Cempoallans accompanied them. They went arrayed for war. When they went arriving, thereupon there was calling out, there was shouting [that] all the noblemen, the lords, those who led one, the brave warriors and the commoners should come. There was crowding into the temple courtyard. And when all had come together, then [the Spaniards and their allies] closed off each of the entrances—as many places as there was entrance.

There was thereupon the stabbing, the slaying, the beating of the people. The Cholulan had suspected nothing; neither with arrows nor with shields had he contended against the Spaniards. Just so were they treacherously slain, deceitfully slain, unknowingly slain. For in truth the Tlaxcallans had incited [the Spaniards] against them.[4]

And of all which had come to pass, they gave, told, related all the account to Moctezuma. And all the messengers who arrived here all departed; they just Full p. C-615 went fleeing. No longer did there remain listening anyone to hear the news which was to be heard. And indeed everyone among the commoners went about overwrought; often they rose in revolt. It was just as if the earth moved; just as if the earth rebelled; just as if all revolved before one’s eyes. There was terror.

And when there had been death in Cholula,[5] then [the Spaniards] started forth in order already to come to Mexico. They came grouped, they came assembled, they came raising dust. Their iron lances, their halberds seemed to glisten, and their iron swords were wavy, like a water [course]. Their cuirasses, their helmets seemed to resound. And some came all in iron; they came turned into iron; they came gleaming. Hence they went causing great astonishment; hence they went causing great fear; hence they were regarded with fear; hence they were dreaded.

And their dogs came leading; they came preceding them. They kept coming at their head; they remained coming at their head. They came panting; their foam came dripping [from their mouths].

* * *

How Moctezuma sent emissaries to the Spaniards.

And Moctezuma thereupon sent [and] charged the noblemen, whom Tziuacpopocatzin led, and many others besides of his officials, to go to meet [Cortés] between Popocatepetl and Iztac tepetl, there in Quauhtechcac.[6] They gave them golden banners, precious feather streamers, and golden necklaces.

And when they had given them these, they appeared to smile; they were greatly contented, gladdened. As if they were monkeys they seized upon the gold. It was as if there their hearts were satisfied, brightened, calmed. For in truth they thirsted mightily for gold; they stuffed themselves with it; they starved for it; they lusted for it like pigs.

And they went about lifting on high the golden banners; they went moving them back and forth; they went taking them to themselves. It was as if they babbled. What they said was gibberish.

* * *

How Moctezuma went peacefully to meet the Spaniards.

And when this had happened, when [the Spaniards] had come to reach Xoloco,[7] when already matters were at this conclusion, had come to this point, thereupon Moctezuma arrayed himself, attired himself, in order to meet them, and also a number of great lords [and] princes, his ruling men, his noblemen [arrayed themselves]. Thereupon they went to meet them. In gourd supports they set out precious flowers—helianthus, talauma,[8] in the midst of which went standing popcorn flowers, yellow tobacco flowers, cacao blossoms, wreaths for the head, garlands of flowers. And they bore golden necklaces, necklaces with pendants, plaited neck bands.

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And already Moctezuma met them there in Uitzillan.[9] Thereupon he gave gifts to the commandant, the commander of soldiers; he gave him flowers, he bejeweled him with necklaces, he hung garlands about him, he covered him with flowers, he wreathed his head with flowers. Thereupon he had the golden necklaces laid before him—all the kinds of gifts of greeting, with which the meeting was concluded. On some he hung necklaces.

Then [Cortés] said to Moctezuma: “Is this not thou? Art thou not he? Art thou Moctezuma?”

Moctezuma replied: “Indeed yes; I am he.”

Thereupon he arose; he arose to meet him face to face. He inclined his body deeply. He drew him close. He arose firmly.

Thus he besought him: he said to him: “O our lord, thou hast suffered fatigue, thou hast endured weariness. Thou hast come to arrive on earth. Thou hast come to govern thy city of Mexico; thou hast come to descend upon thy mat, upon thy seat, which for a moment I have watched for thee, which I have guarded for thee. For thy governors are departed—the rulers Itzcoatl, Moctezuma the Elder, Axayacatl, Tizoc, Auitzotl, who yet a very short time ago had come to stand guard for thee, who had come to govern the city of Mexico. Under their

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protection thy common folk came. Do they yet perchance know it in their absence? O that one of them might witness, might marvel at what to me now hath befallen, at what I see quite in the absence of our lords. I by no means merely dream, I do not merely see in a dream, I do not see in my sleep; I do not merely dream that I see thee, that I look into thy face. I have been afflicted for some time. I have gazed at the unknown place whence thou hast come—from among the clouds, from among the mists. And so this. The rulers departed maintaining that thou wouldst come to visit thy city, that thou wouldst come to descend upon thy mat, upon thy seat. And now it hath been fulfilled; thou hast come; thou hast endured fatigue, thou hast endured weariness. Peace be with thee. Rest thyself. Visit thy palace. Rest thy body. May peace be with our lords."

And when Moctezuma's address which he directed to the Marquis was ended, Marina then interpreted it, she translated it to him. And when the Marquis had heard Moctezuma's words, he spoke to Marina; he spoke to them in a barbarous tongue; he said in his barbarous tongue:

"Let Moctezuma put his heart at ease; let him not be frightened. We love him much. Now our hearts are indeed satisfied, for we know him, we hear him. For a long time we have wished to see him, to look upon his face. And this we have seen. Already we have come to his home in Mexico. At his leisure he will hear our words."

Thereupon [the Spaniards] grasped [Moctezuma] by the hand. Already they went leading him by it. They caressed him with their hands to make their love known to him.

And the Spaniards looked at him; they each looked at him thoroughly. They were continually active on their feet; they continually mounted, they continually dismounted in order to look at him.

And the rulers who had gone with him were, first, Cacamatzin, ruler of Texcoco; second, Tetlepanquetzatzin, ruler of Tlacopan; third, the *tlacochcalcatl*[1] Itzquauhtzin, ruler of Tlatilulco; fourth, Topantemoctzin, Moctezuma's Full p. C-617 storekeeper in Tlatilulco. These went. And still other noblemen of Tenochtitlan were Atlixcatzin, the *tlacateccatl*; Tepeuatzin, the *tlacochcalcatl*; Quetzalaztatzin, the *tiçociauacatl*;[2] Totomotzin, Ecatenpatiltzin, Quappiatzin. When Moctezuma was made captive, they not only hid themselves, took refuge, [but] they abandoned him in anger.

How the Spaniards took Moctezuma with them when they went to enter the great palace, and what there happened.

And when they had gone to arrive in the palace, when they had gone to enter it, at once they firmly seized Moctezuma. They continually kept him closely under observation; they never let him from their sight. With him was Itzquauhtzin. But the others just came forth [unimpeded].

And when this had come to pass, then each of the guns shot off. As if in confusion there was going off to one side, there was scattering from one's sight, a jumping in all directions. It was as if one had lost one's breath; it was as if for the time there was stupefaction, as if one were affected by mushrooms, as if something unknown were shown one. Fear prevailed. It was as if everyone had swallowed his heart. Even before it had grown dark, there was terror, there was astonishment, there was apprehension, there was a stunning of the people.

And when it dawned, thereupon were proclaimed all the things which [the Spaniards] required: white tortillas, roasted turkey hens, eggs, fresh water, wood, firewood, charcoal,

earthen bowls, polished vessels, water jars, large water pitchers, cooking vessels, all manner of clay articles. This had Moctezuma indeed commanded.

But when he summoned forth the noblemen, no longer did they obey him. They only grew angry. No longer did they come to him, no longer did they go to him. No longer was he heeded. But nevertheless he was not therefore neglected; he was given all that he required—food, drink, and water [and] fodder for the deer.

And when [the Spaniards] were well settled, they thereupon inquired of Moctezuma as to all the city's treasure—the devices, the shields. Much did they importune him; with great zeal they sought gold. And Moctezuma thereupon went leading the Spaniards. They went surrounding him, scattered about him; he went among them, he went in their lead; they went each holding him, each grasping him. And when they reached the storehouse, a place called Teocalco, thereupon were brought forth all the brilliant things; the quetzal feather head fan, the devices, the shields, the golden discs, the devils' necklaces, the golden nose crescents, the golden leg bands, the golden arm bands, the golden forehead bands.

Thereupon was detached the gold which was on the shields and which was on all the devices. And as all the gold was detached, at once they ignited, set fire to, applied fire to all the various precious things [which remained]. They all burned. And the gold the Spaniards formed into separate bars. And the green stone, as much as they saw to be good they took. But the rest of the green stone the Tlaxcallans just stole. And the Spaniards walked everywhere; they went everywhere taking to pieces the hiding places, storehouses, storage places. They took all, all that they saw which they saw to be good.

Footnotes

- Note 1:Translated by Arthur J. O. Anderson and Charles E. Dibble. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:The Spanish name for Malintzin. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Lands to the north, east, south, and west, respectively. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:The Tlaxcallans, like the neighboring Cempoallans, were Indigenous groups that allied with the Spaniards against the Aztecs, and used them in their own rivalries with other groups, in this case the Cholulans. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:The massacre at Cholula was one of the key events in the conquest of Mexico, and one of the most violent. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:A nearby town. "Popocatepetl and Iztac tepetl": two peaks southeast of Tenochtitlán. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:A locality on the outskirts of Tenochtitlán, to the south. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:Mexican magnolia, a flower reserved for the nobility. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:Cortés describes this as a large and beautiful building. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:High general. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:A great lord. "*Tlacateccatl*": general. Return to reference 2

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BARTOLOMÉ DE LAS CASAS

A Spanish priest and colonist, Bartolomé de las Casas (1484–1566) experienced first-hand the brutality of Spain's conquest of the New World and became a passionate and energetic

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defender of the rights of native populations. Although las Casas had participated in the conquests of Hispaniola and Cuba, the violence he witnessed spurred him to spiritual conversion (he became the first priest ordained in the New World) and political activism. He used the resources of law, the Church, and the press to sway the Spanish Crown and public sentiment. Most effective were his published accounts of the practices—slavery, torture, and mass murder among them—used by the colonists to subjugate the Indigenous populations, including the explosive *Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies* (1552) from which this excerpt is taken. He worked especially hard to reform the *encomienda*, a system designed to offer legal protection, religious instruction, and a small wage to Indians placed in the care of a Spaniard, but which quickly devolved into highly abusive forced labor. Las Casas believed that the Indigenous population should be brought to Christianity, yet he advocated a system of peaceable conversion that respected their humanity.

Las Casas's writings circulated widely through Europe—and especially the Protestant states—because they provided powerful anti-Spanish propaganda, yet none of Spain's imperial rivals underwent the same internal debates and political tussles over the legitimacy of the conquest. Although the conquest was almost unimaginably violent, it is highly debatable whether Spain was more cruel than other European nations in their own encounters with native populations. What is undeniable is that figures such as las Casas forced Spain into a uniquely serious and consequential debate about whether the conquest was permissible.

From A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies[1]

PROLOGUE

of Bishop Brother Bartolomé de las Casas, or Casaus, to the most high and most mighty Prince of Spain, our Lord the Prince Philip

Most high and most mighty Lord:

As Divine Providence has ordained that the world shall, for the benefit and proper government of the human race, be divided into kingdoms and peoples and that these shall be ruled by kings, who are (as Homer has it) fathers and shepherds to their people and are, accordingly, the noblest and most virtuous of beings, there is no doubt, nor could there in all reason be any such doubt, but that these kings entertain nothing save that which is morally unimpeachable. It Full p. C-619 follows that if the commonwealth suffers from some defect, or shortcoming, or evil, the reason can only be that the ruler is unaware of it; once the matter is brought to his notice, he will work with the utmost diligence to set matters right and will not rest content until the evil has been eradicated. This would appear to be the sense of the words of Solomon in the Bible: "A king that sitteth in the throne of judgment scattereth away all evil with his eyes."[2] For, granted the innate and natural virtue of the ruler, it follows that the simple knowledge that something is wrong in his kingdom is quite sufficient to ensure that he will see that it is corrected, for he will not tolerate any such evil for a moment longer than it takes him to right it.

Contemplating, therefore (most mighty Lord), as a man with more than fifty years' experience of seeing at first hand the evil and the harm, the losses and diminutions suffered by those great kingdoms, each so vast and so wonderful that it would be more appropriate to refer to them as the New World of the Americas—kingdoms granted and entrusted by God and His Church to the Spanish Crown so that they might be properly ruled and governed, converted to the Faith, and tenderly nurtured to full material and spiritual prosperity[3] —I am persuaded that, if Your Highness had been informed of even a few of the excesses which this New World has witnessed, all of them surpassing anything that men hitherto have imagined even in their wildest dreams, Your Highness would not have delayed for even one moment before entreating His Majesty to prevent any repetition of the atrocities which go under the name of "conquests," excesses which, if no move is made to stop them, will be committed time and again, and which (given that the indigenous peoples of the region are naturally so gentle, so peace-loving, so humble and so docile) are of themselves iniquitous, tyrannical, contrary to natural, canon, and civil law, and are deemed wicked and are condemned and proscribed by all such legal codes. I therefore concluded that it would constitute a criminal neglect of my duty to remain silent about the enormous loss of life as well as the infinite number of human souls despatched to Hell in the course of such "conquests," and so resolved to publish an account of a few such outrages (and they can be only a few out of the countless number of such incidents that I could relate) in order to make that account the more accessible to Your Highness.

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[PREFACE]

The Americas were discovered in 1492, and the first Christian settlements established by the Spanish the following year. It is accordingly forty-nine years now since Spaniards began arriving in numbers in this part of the world. They first settled the large and fertile island of Hispaniola,[4] which boasts six hundred leagues of coastline and is surrounded by a great many other large islands, all of them, as I saw for myself, with as high a native population as anywhere on earth. Of the coast of the mainland, which, at its nearest point, is a little Full p. C-620 over two hundred and fifty leagues from Hispaniola, more than ten thousand leagues had been explored by 1541, and more are being discovered every day. This coastline, too, was swarming with people and it would seem, if we are to judge by those areas so far explored, that the Almighty selected this part of the world as home to the greater part of the human race.

God made all the peoples of this area, many and varied as they are, as open and as innocent as can be imagined. The simplest people in the world—unassuming, long-suffering, unassertive, and submissive—they are without malice or guile, and are utterly faithful and obedient both to their own native lords and to the Spaniards in whose service they now find themselves. Never quarrelsome or belligerent or boisterous, they harbor no grudges and do not seek to settle old scores; indeed, the notions of revenge, rancor, and hatred are quite foreign to them. At the same time, they are among the least robust of human beings: their delicate constitutions make them unable to withstand hard work or suffering and render them liable to succumb to almost any illness, no matter how mild. Even the common people are no

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tougher than princes or than other Europeans born with a silver spoon in their mouths and who spend their lives shielded from the rigors of the outside world. They are also among the poorest people on the face of the earth; they own next to nothing and have no urge to acquire material possessions. As a result they are neither ambitious nor greedy, and are totally uninterested in worldly power. Their diet is every bit as poor and as monotonous, in quantity and in kind, as that enjoyed by the Desert Fathers. Most of them go naked, save for a loincloth to cover their modesty; at best they may wrap themselves in a piece of cotton material a yard or two square. Most sleep on matting, although a few possess a kind of hanging net, known in the language of Hispaniola as a hammock. They are innocent and pure in mind and have a lively intelligence, all of which makes them particularly receptive to learning and understanding the truths of our Catholic faith and to being instructed in virtue; indeed, God has invested them with fewer impediments in this regard than any other people on earth. Once they begin to learn of the Christian faith they become so keen to know more, to receive the Sacraments, and to worship God, that the missionaries who instruct them do truly have to be men of exceptional patience and forbearance; and over the years I have time and again met Spanish laymen who have been so struck by the natural goodness that shines through these people that they frequently can be heard to exclaim: “These would be the most blessed people on earth if only they were given the chance to convert to Christianity.”

It was upon these gentle lambs, imbued by the Creator with all the qualities we have mentioned, that from the very first day they clapped eyes on them the Spanish fell like ravening wolves upon the fold, or like tigers and savage lions who have not eaten meat for days. The pattern established at the outset has remained unchanged to this day, and the Spaniards still do nothing save tear the natives to shreds, murder them and inflict upon them untold misery, suffering and distress, tormenting, harrying and persecuting them mercilessly.
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The reason the Christians have murdered on such a vast scale and killed anyone and everyone in their way is purely and simply greed. They have set out to line their pockets with gold and to amass private fortunes as quickly as possible Full p. C-621 so that they can then assume a status quite at odds with that into which they were born. Their insatiable greed and overweening ambition know no bounds; the land is fertile and rich, the inhabitants simple, forbearing, and submissive. The Spaniards have shown not the slightest consideration for these people, treating them (and I speak from first-hand experience, having been there from the outset) not as brute animals—indeed, I would to God they had done and had shown them the consideration they afford their animals—so much as piles of dung in the middle of the road. They have had as little concern for their souls as for their bodies, all the millions that have perished having gone to their deaths with no knowledge of God and without the benefit of the Sacraments. One fact in all this is widely known and beyond dispute, for even the tyrannical murderers themselves acknowledge the truth of it: the indigenous peoples never did the Europeans any harm whatever; on the contrary, they believed them to have descended from the heavens, at least until they or their fellow-citizens had tasted, at the hands of these oppressors, a diet of robbery, murder, violence, and all other manner of trials and tribulations.

HISPANIOLA

As we have said, the island of Hispaniola was the first to witness the arrival of Europeans and the first to suffer the wholesale slaughter of its people and the devastation and depopulation of the land. It all began with the Europeans taking native women and children both as servants and to satisfy their own base appetites; then, not content with what the local people offered them of their own free will (and all offered as much as they could spare), they started taking for themselves the food the natives contrived to produce by the sweat of their brows, which was in all honesty little enough. Since what a European will consume in a single day normally supports three native households of ten persons each for a whole month, and since the newcomers began to subject the locals to other vexations, assaults, and iniquities, the people began to realize that these men could not, in truth, have descended from the heavens. Some of them started to conceal what food they had, others decided to send their women and children into hiding, and yet others took to the hills to get away from the brutal and ruthless cruelty that was being inflicted on them. The Christians punched them, boxed their ears and flogged them in order to track down the local leaders, and the whole shameful process came to a head when one of the European commanders raped the wife of the paramount chief of the entire island. It was then that the locals began to think up ways of driving the Europeans out of their lands and to take up arms against them. Their weapons, however, were flimsy and ineffective both in attack and in defence (and, indeed, war in the Americas is no more deadly than our jousting, or than many European children's games) and, with their horses and swords and lances, the Spaniards easily fended them off, killing them and committing all kind of atrocities against them.

They forced their way into native settlements, slaughtering everyone they found there, including small children, old men, pregnant women, and even women who had just given birth. They hacked them to pieces, slicing open their bellies with their swords as though they were so many sheep herded into a pen. They even laid wagers on whether they could manage to slice a man in Full p. C-622 two at a stroke, or cut an individual's head from his body, or disembowel him with a single blow of their axes. They grabbed suckling infants by the feet and, ripping them from their mothers' breasts, dashed them head-long against the rocks. Others, laughing and joking all the while, threw them over their shoulders into a river, shouting: "Wriggle, you little perisher." They slaughtered anyone and everyone in their path, on occasion running through a mother and her baby with a single thrust of their swords. They spared no one, erecting especially wide gibbets on which they could string their victims up with their feet just off the ground and then burn them alive thirteen at a time, in honor of our Savior and the twelve Apostles, or tie dry straw to their bodies and set fire to it. Some they chose to keep alive and simply cut their wrists, leaving their hands dangling, saying to them: "Take this letter"—meaning that their sorry condition would act as a warning to those hiding in the hills. The way they normally dealt with the native leaders and nobles was to tie them to a kind of griddle consisting of sticks resting on pitchforks driven into the ground and then grill them over a slow fire, with the result that they howled in agony and despair as they died a lingering death.

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After the fighting was over and all the men had been killed, the surviving natives—usually, that is, the young boys, the women, and the children—were shared out between the victors. One got thirty, another forty, a third as many as a hundred or even twice that number; everything depended on how far one was in the good books of the despot who went by the title of governor. The pretext under which the victims were parceled out in this way was that their new masters would then be in a position to teach them the truths of the Christian faith; and thus it came about that a host of cruel, grasping and wicked men, almost all of them pig-ignorant, were put in charge of these poor souls. And they discharged this duty by sending the men down the mines, where working conditions were appalling, to dig for gold, and putting the women to labor in the fields and on their master's estates, to till the soil and raise the crops, properly a task only for the toughest and strongest of men. Both women and men were given only wild grasses to eat and other unnutritious foodstuffs. The mothers of young children promptly saw their milk dry up and their babies die; and, with the women and the men separated and never seeing each other, no new children were born. The men died down the mines from overwork and starvation, and the same was true of the women who perished out on the estates. The islanders, previously so numerous, began to die out as would any nation subjected to such appalling treatment. For example, they were made to carry burdens of three and four *arrobas*[5] for distances of up to a hundred or even two hundred leagues, and were forced to carry their Christian masters in hammocks, which are like nets slung from the shoulders of the bearers. In short, they were treated as beasts of burden and developed huge sores on their shoulders and backs as happens with animals made to carry excessive loads. And this is not to mention the floggings, beatings, thrashings, punches, curses and countless other vexations and cruelties to which they were routinely subjected and to which no chronicle could ever do justice nor any reader respond save with horror and disbelief.

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It is of note that all these island territories began to go to the dogs once news arrived of the death of our most gracious Queen Isabella, who departed this life in 1504. Up to then, only a small number of provinces had been destroyed through unjust military action, not the whole area, and news of even this partial destruction had by and large been kept from the queen, because, she—may her soul rest in peace—took a close personal interest in the physical and spiritual welfare of the native peoples, as those of us who lived through those years and saw examples of it with our own eyes can attest. There is one other general rule in all this, and it is that, wherever the Spaniards set foot, right throughout the Americas, they subjected the native inhabitants to the cruelties of which we have spoken, killing these poor and innocent people, tyrannizing them, and oppressing them in the most abominable fashion. The longer they spent in the region the more ingenious were the torments, each crueler than the last, that they inflicted on their victims, as God finally abandoned them and left them to plummet headlong into a life of full-time crime and wickedness.

Footnotes

- Note 1:Translated by Nigel Griffin. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Proverbs 20.8. Return to reference 2

- Note 3:Pope Alexander VI granted sovereignty over the Americas to Ferdinand and Isabella in 1493 and required the Spanish kings to convert the natives to Christianity. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:Present-day Haiti and the Dominican Republic. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:A unit of weight about 25 pounds. Return to reference 5

JEAN DE LÉRY

Jean de Léry's *History of a Voyage to the Land of Brazil*, his account of a year among the Tupinamba Native population, is a marvel of early modern ethnography, with unprecedented detail presented in a remarkably sympathetic tone. Léry's life (1534–1613) was shaped by the violent conflicts over religion that swept across Europe and divided France, and his narrative connects the experience of the New World with the upheavals of the Reformation. In 1554, Léry sailed on the first Protestant mission to the New World, landing where Rio de Janeiro stands today. Both the French and the Portuguese, who had established an earlier claim to Brazil, interacted with the Tupinamba of the coast, but the French seem to have maintained friendlier relations with them as traders and guests. Some even moved into their villages and adopted their ways, becoming invaluable liaisons for the missionaries.

Upon his return to France, Léry found a nation torn apart by religious differences. Partly because of the violence of the times, his account of Brazil was not written until years later, after he had experienced the persecution of Huguenots amid scenes of unimaginable cruelty. The violence that Léry witnessed among his compatriots profoundly marked his sense of what constituted savagery and civilization, and gave his subsequent description of the Tupinamba a strikingly detached, even-handed tone. Léry watches closely, reports in detail, yet recognizes the limits of his own knowledge. He acknowledges his interpreter—perhaps one of the Frenchmen who had gone to live with the Tupinamba—and shows the reader how experience changes his initial impressions. This constant recalibration, as Léry keeps himself and his reader from jumping to conclusions, makes *History of a* *Full p. C-624* *Voyage* a fascinating example of the skeptical relativism that reaches its greatest incarnation in **Montaigne's *Essays*** . Montaigne's famous "**Of Cannibals**" was based in part on his reading of Léry.

From History of a Voyage to the Land of Brazil[1]

Law and Civil Order among the Savages

As for the civil order of our savages, it is an incredible thing—a thing that cannot be said without shame to those who have both divine and human laws—how a people guided solely by their nature, even corrupted as it is, can live and deal with each other in such peace and tranquillity. (I mean, however, each nation within itself, or among allied nations: as for enemies, you have seen in another chapter how harshly they are treated.) Nevertheless, if it happens that some of them quarrel (which occurs so rarely that during almost a year I was with them I only saw them fight with each other twice), by no means do the others try to separate them or make peace; on the contrary, even when the adversaries are on the point of putting each others' eyes out, they let them go ahead without saying a word to prevent them. However, if anyone is wounded by his neighbor, and if he who struck the blow is apprehended,

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he will receive a similar blow in the same part of his body by the kinsmen of the one injured. If the wounds of the latter prove to be mortal, or if he is killed on the spot, the relatives of the dead man will take the life of the killer in the same way. In short, it is a life for a life, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, and so forth; but as I have said, this is very rarely seen among them.

The real property of this people consists of houses and of many more excellent pieces of land than they need for their subsistence. In a given village of five or six hundred people, while several families may live in the same house, nevertheless each has its own place, and the husband keeps his wife and children separate; however, there is nothing to keep you from seeing down the full length of these buildings, which are usually more than sixty feet long.

It is a curious fact worth noting that the Brazilians, who usually stay only five or six months in a place, carry with them the big pieces of wood and tall *pindo* plants, with which their houses are made and covered; thus they often move their very villages from place to place. These, however, still retain their former names, so that we have sometimes found villages at a quarter- or half-league's distance from the location where we had visited them before. Their dwellings being so easily transported, you can imagine that they have no great palaces (such as those attributed to the Peruvian Indians, whose wooden houses are so well built that there are rooms one hundred fifty feet long and eighty feet wide); and no one of the Tupinamba nation ever begins a dwelling or any other building that he will not see built and rebuilt twenty times in his life, if he lives to the age of manhood. If you ask them why they move their Full p. C-625 household so often, they simply answer that the change of air keeps them healthier, and that if they did other than what their grandfathers did, they would die immediately.

* * *

Although the Tupinamba receive very humanely the friendly strangers who go to visit them, nevertheless the Frenchmen and others from over here who do not understand their language find themselves at first marvelously disconcerted in their midst. The first time that I myself frequented them was three weeks after we arrived at Villegagnon's island,[2] when an interpreter took me along to four or five villages on the mainland. The first one—called *Yabouraci* in the native language and "Pepin" by the French (because of a ship that loaded there once, whose master had that name)—was only two leagues from our fort. When we arrived there, I immediately found myself surrounded by savages, who were asking me "*Marapé-derere, marapé derere?*" meaning "What is your name? What is your name?" (which at that time I understood no better than High German). One of them took my hat, which he put on his head; another my sword and my belt, which he put around his naked body; yet another my tunic, which he donned. Deafening me with their yells, they ran through the village with my clothing. Not only did I think that I had lost everything, but I didn't know what would become of me. As experience has shown me several times since, that was only from ignorance of their way of doing things; for they do the same thing to everyone who visits them, and especially those they haven't seen before. After they have played around a little with one's belongings, they carry them all back and return them to their owners.

The interpreter had warned me that they wanted above all to know my name; but if I had said to them Pierre, Guillaume, or Jean, they would have been able neither to retain it nor to pronounce it (in fact, instead of saying "Jean," they would say "Nian"). So I had to

accommodate by naming something that was known to them. Since by a lucky chance my surname, "Léry," means "oyster" in their language, I told them that my name was "*Léry-oussou*," that is, a big oyster. This pleased them greatly; with their "*Teh!*" of admiration, they began to laugh, and said, "That is a fine name; we have not yet seen any *Mair* (that is, a Frenchman) of that name." And indeed, I can say with assurance that never did Circe metamorphose a man into such a fine oyster, nor into one who could converse so well with Ulysses, as since then I have been able to do with our savages.[3]

One must note that their memory is so good that as soon as someone has told them his name, if they were to go a hundred years (so to speak) without seeing him, they will never forget it. Presently I will tell about the other ceremonies they observe when they receive friends who go to see them.

But for the moment I will continue to recount some of the noteworthy things that happened to me during my first journey among the Tupinamba. That same day the interpreter and I were going on to spend the night in another village called *Euramiri* (the French call it "Goset," because of an interpreter of that Full p. C-626 name who stayed there). Arriving at sunset, we found the savages dancing and finishing up the *caouin* of a prisoner whom they had killed only six hours earlier, the pieces of whom we saw on the *boucan* .[4] Do not ask whether, with this beginning, I was astonished to see such a tragedy; however, as you will hear, that was nothing compared to the fright that I had soon after.

We had entered one of the village houses, where each of us sat, according to custom, in a cotton bed hung in the air. After the women had wept (in a manner that I will describe in a moment) and the old man, the master of the house, had made his speech of welcome, the interpreter—who was not new to the customs of the savages, and who, moreover, liked to drink and *caouiner*[5] as much as they did—without saying a single word to me, nor warning me of anything, went over to the big crowd of dancers and left me there with some of the savages. So after eating a little root flour and other food they had offered us, I, weary and asking only for rest, lay down in the cotton bed I had been sitting on.

Not only was I kept awake by the noise that the savages made, dancing and whistling all night while eating their prisoner; but, what is more, one of them approached me with the victim's foot in hand, cooked and *boucané*, asking me (as I learned later, for I didn't understand at the time) if I wanted to eat some of it. His countenance filled me with such terror that you need hardly ask if I lost all desire to sleep. Indeed, I thought that by brandishing the human flesh he was eating, he was threatening me and wanted to make me understand that I was about to be similarly dealt with. As one doubt begets another, I suspected straight away that the interpreter, deliberately betraying me, had abandoned me and delivered me into the hands of these barbarians. If I had seen some exit through which to flee, I would not have hesitated. But seeing myself surrounded on all sides by those whose intentions I failed to understand (for as you will hear, they had not the slightest thought of doing me harm), I firmly expected shortly to be eaten, and all that night I called on God in my heart. I will leave it to those who understand what I am saying, and who put themselves in my place, to consider whether that night seemed long.

At daybreak my interpreter (who had been off carousing with those rascals of savages all night long in other village houses) came to find me. Seeing me, as he said, not only ashen-faced and haggard but also feverish, he asked me whether I was sick, or if I hadn't rested well.

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Distraught, I answered wrathfully that they had well and truly kept me from sleeping, and that he was a scoundrel to have left me among these people whom I couldn't understand at all; still as anxious as ever, I urged that we get ourselves out of there with all possible speed. Thereupon he told me that I should have no fear, and that it wasn't us they were after. When he recounted the whole business to the savages—who, rejoicing at my coming, and thinking to show me affection, had not budged from my side all night—they said that they had sensed that I had been somewhat frightened of them, for which they were very sorry. My one consolation was the hoot of laughter they sent up—for they are great jokers—at having (without meaning to) given me such a scare.

* * *

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Now to return to the treatment the savages offer visitors. After the guests have drunk and eaten, in the way I have described, and rested or slept in their houses, if they are courteous, they ordinarily present knives to men, or scissors, or tweezers for plucking out beards; to the women, combs and mirrors; and to the little boys, fishhooks. If beyond that there are dealings about food supplies or other things that they have, you ask what they want for it, and upon giving them whatever is agreed upon, you can carry it off and go on your way.

Since, as I have said elsewhere, there are no horses, donkeys, or other beasts of burden in their country, they simply travel on their own two feet. If the foreign visitors are weary, they have only to present a knife or some other object to the savages; the latter, prompt as they are to please their friends, will offer to carry them. In fact, while I was over there, there were those who put us on their shoulders, with their heads between our thighs and our legs hanging against their bellies, and carried us that way more than a league without resting. Sometimes, to give them some relief, we told them to stop; laughing at us, they would say in their language: "What? Do you think we are women, or so slack and weak of heart that we might faint under the burden?" "I would carry you a whole day without stopping for rest," said one of them who had me around his neck. We, for our part, would roar with laughter at these two-footed mounts, applauding them and cheering them on, and saying, "Well then! Let's keep going!"

As for their natural fellow-feeling, every day they distribute and present each to each the venison, fish, fruit, and the other good things of their country, and not only would a savage die of shame (so to speak) if he saw his neighbor lacking what he has in his power to give, but also, as I have experienced it, they practice the same liberality toward foreigners who are their allies. As an example of this I will recount the time when, as I mentioned in Chapter X, two Frenchmen and I had lost our way in the woods—when we thought we were going to be eaten by a huge and terrifying lizard—, and moreover, during the space of two days and a night that we were lost, suffered greatly from hunger. When we finally found ourselves in a village called *Pauo*, where we had been on other occasions, we could not have received a better welcome than we had from the savages of that place. To begin with, when they heard us recount the troubles we had endured, and the danger we had been in—not only of being devoured by cruel beasts, but also of being seized and eaten by the Margaia, our enemy and theirs, whose land we had unintentionally approached—and when they saw the state we were in, all scratched up by the thorns that we had gone through in the wilderness, they took such pity on us that I can't help saying that the hypocritical welcomes of those over here who use only

slippery speech for consolation of the afflicted is a far cry from the humanity of these people, whom nonetheless we call “barbarians.”

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Footnotes

- Note 1:Translated by Janet Whatley. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:An island in the mouth of Guanabara Bay, in what is today Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, named after the French explorer who led Léry’s expedition. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:In the *Odyssey*, the sorceress Circe transformed Odysseus’s men into animals. “Ulysses”: the Latin name for Odysseus. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:A grill. Léry explains elsewhere that *caouin* is an alcoholic drink brewed from a grain called *avati*, here by extension a feast. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:To carouse. Return to reference 5

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INCA GARCILASO DE LA VEGA

Born in the city of Cuzco, in present-day Peru, to a prominent Spanish conquistador and an Inca princess, the young *mestizo* Gómez Suárez de Figueroa (1539–1616) traveled to Spain as a young man. Fashioning himself as a man of letters, he took on a new name that combined his indigenous expertise on the New World with the authority of Spanish literary forebears (his distant relative **Garcilaso de la Vega** was the Petrarchan poet whose sonnets appear in this anthology), hence the *Inca Garcilaso* . His most famous work, the *Royal Commentaries of the Incas* (1609) describes their world before the arrival of the Spaniards, including the expansion of the Inca Empire, while the *General History of Peru* (published posthumously in 1617) narrates the Spanish conquest of Peru and its aftermath. By the time Garcilaso wrote these massive works, the Spaniards had written countless histories of the conquest. Acutely aware of the prejudice and even surprise with which European readers might respond to a *mestizo* writer going over the same ground, Garcilaso astutely establishes his own authority, explaining with a mixture of tact and pride how his intimate knowledge of Inca culture allows him to correct the misunderstandings that plague Spanish accounts. The very name Peru, he explains, comes from one such misunderstanding. Garcilaso admires the Inca Empire, comparing it both to Rome and to the Spaniards, thus suggesting that the problem is not so much empire itself but its mismanagement. He takes pride in his *mestizo* identity, and describes the tremendous mixing of peoples that ensued from the New World encounter.

From Royal Commentaries of the Incas and General History of Peru[1]

PREFACE

Though there have been learned Spaniards who have written accounts of the states of the New World, such as those of Mexico and Peru and the other kingdoms of the heathens, they have

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not described these realms so fully as they might have done. This I have remarked particularly in what I have seen written about Peru, concerning which, as a native of the city of Cuzco, which was formerly the Rome of that empire[2] I have fuller and more accurate information than that provided by previous writers. It is true that these have dealt with many of the very remarkable achievements of that empire, but they have set them down so briefly that, owing to the manner in which they are told, I am scarcely able to understand even such matters as are well known to me. For this reason, impelled by my natural love for my native country, I have Full p. C-629 undertaken the task of writing these *Commentaries*, in which everything in the Peruvian empire before the arrival of the Spaniards is clearly and distinctly set down, from the rites of their vain religion to the government of their kings in time of peace and war, and all else that can be told of these Indians, from the highest affairs of the royal crown to the humblest duties of its vassals. I write only of the empire of the Incas, and do not deal with other monarchies, about which I can claim no similar knowledge. In the course of my history I shall affirm its truthfulness and shall set down no important circumstances without quoting the authority of Spanish historians who may have touched upon it in part or as a whole. For my purpose is not to gainsay them, but to furnish a commentary and gloss, and to interpret many Indian expressions which they, as strangers to that tongue, have rendered inappropriately. This will be fully seen in the course of my history, which I commend to the piety of those who may peruse it, with no other interest than to be of service to Christendom and to inspire gratitude to Our Lord Jesus Christ and the Virgin Mary His mother, by whose merits and intercession the Eternal Majesty has deigned to draw so many great peoples out of the pit of idolatry and bring them into the bosom of His Roman Catholic Church, our mother and lady. I trust that it will be received in the same spirit as I offer it, for this is the return my intention deserves, even though the work may not. I am still writing two other books about the events that took place in my land among the Spaniards, down to the year 1560 when I left it. I hope to see them finished, and to make the same offering of them as I do of these. Our Lord, etc.

Notes on the General Language of the Indians of Peru

For the better understanding of what, with divine aid, we shall write in this history, it will be well to give some notes on the general language of the Indians of Peru, many words of which we shall quote. The first is that there are three different ways of pronouncing some of the syllables. They are quite different from the pronunciation in Spanish, and the differences of pronunciation give different meanings to the same word. Certain syllables are pronounced on the lips, others on the palate, and others in the lower part of the throat, as we shall show later by examples as they occur. To accentuate the words it must be noticed that the stress almost always falls on the penultimate syllable, rarely on the antepenultimate, and never at all on the last syllable. This does not contradict those who say that words of barbarous languages should be stressed on the last syllable: they say this because they do not know the language. It is also to be noted that in the general language of Cuzco (of which it is my purpose to speak, rather than of the local pronunciations of each province, which are innumerable), the following letters are lacking: *b, d, f, g, jota* . There is no single *l*, only double *ll*; on the other hand, there is no double *rr* at the beginning of words or in the middle: it is always pronounced single. There is no *x*; so that in all six letters of the Spanish ABC's are missing, and we might say eight if we include single *l* and double *rr* . The Spaniards add these letters to the detriment and

corruption of the language; and as the Indians do not have them, they usually mispronounce Spanish words where they occur. To avoid further corruption, I may be permitted, since I am an Indian, to write like an Indian in this history, using the letters that should be used in these words. Let none who Full p. C-630 read take exception to this novelty in opposition to the incorrect usage that is usually adopted: they should rather be glad to be able to read the words written correctly and with purity. As I have to quote much from Spanish historians in support of what I say, I shall copy their words as they write them with their corruptions; and I must warn the reader that it does not seem to me inconsistent to write the letters I have mentioned which do not appear in the Indian language, since I only do so to quote faithfully what the Spanish author has written.

It is also noteworthy that there is no plural number in the general language, though there are particles that indicate plurality. The singular is used for both numbers. If I put any Indian word in the plural, it will be a Spanish corruption used to keep the agreement of words, for it would sound wrong to write Indian words in the singular and Spanish adjectives or relatives in the plural. In many other respects the language differs from Castilian, Italian, and Latin. These points will be noted by learned mestizos and creoles, since the language is their own. For my part, it is sufficient that I point out for them from Spain the principles of their language, so that they may maintain its purity, for it is certainly a great pity that so elegant a language should be lost or spoilt, especially as the fathers of the Holy Society of Jesus,[3] as well as those of other orders, have worked a great deal at it so as to speak it well, and have greatly benefited the instruction of the Indians by their good example, which is what matters most.

* * *

CHAPTER 4

The derivation of the name Peru.

As we have to deal with Peru, we may properly say here how this name was derived, since the Indians do not have it in their language. In 1513 Vasco Núñez de Balboa, a gentleman born at Jerez de Badajoz, discovered the Southern Sea,[4] and was the first Spaniard to set eyes upon it. He was granted by the Catholic monarchs the title of *adelantado*[5] of this sea with the right to conquer and govern any kingdoms he might discover on its shores, and in the few years he had to live after receiving this honor—until his own father-in-law, Governor Pedro Arias de Ávila, instead of rewarding him with the many favors his deeds had merited, had him beheaded—this knight strove to discover and know what was the land running from Panama southwards and what it was called. For this purpose he had three or four ships built, which he sent one by one at various seasons of the year to reconnoiter that coast while he made the necessary preparations for its discovery and conquest. These ships made as many investigations as they could and returned with report of many lands on those shores.

One ship went further than the rest and passed the equinoctial line southwards; and not far beyond it, while hugging the shore—which was the method of navigation then employed on this voyage—sighted an Indian fishing at the mouth of one of the numerous rivers that flow from that land into the sea. The Spaniards on the ship landed four of their number who were

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good swimmers Full p. C-631 and runners as quickly as possible some distance from where the Indian was, so that he should not escape by land or water. Having taken this precaution, they passed before the Indian in the ship so that he fixed his gaze on it, unmindful of the trap that had been prepared for him. Seeing on the sea so strange a sight as a ship with all sail set, something never before seen on that shore, he was lost in amazement and stood astonished and bewildered, wondering what the thing he beheld on the sea before him could be. He was so distracted and absorbed in this thought that those who were to capture him had seized him before he perceived their approach, and so they took him on board with general rejoicings and celebrations.

Having petted him to help him overcome his fear at the sight of their beards and unaccustomed clothes, the Spaniards asked him by signs and words what land it was and what it was called. The Indian understood that they were asking him something from the gestures and grimaces they were making with hands and face, as if they were addressing a dumb man, but he did not understand what they were asking, so he told them what he thought they wanted to know. Thus fearing they might do him harm, he quickly replied by giving his own name, saying, "*Berú*," and adding another, "*pelú* ." He meant: "If you're asking my name, I'm called *Berú*, and if you're asking where I was, I was in the river." The word *pelú* is a noun in the language of that province and means "a river" in general, as we shall see from a reliable author. To a like question the Indian in our history of Florida[6] answered by giving the name of his master saying, "*Breços*" and "*Bredos*" (Book VI, ch. xv, where I inserted this passage referring to that incident: I now remove it to put it in its proper place). The Christians understood what they wanted to understand, supposing the Indian had understood them and had replied as pat as if they had been conversing in Spanish; and from that time, which was 1515 or 1516, they called that rich and great empire *Peru*, corrupting both words, as the Spaniards corrupt almost all the words they take from the Indian language of that land. Thus if they took the Indian's name, *Berú*, they altered the *B* to a *P*, and if they took the word *pelú*, "a river," they altered the *l* to an *r*, and in one way or another they turned it into *Peru* . Others, more modern, and priding themselves on their refinement, alter two letters and write *Pirú* in their histories. The older historians such as Pedro de Cieza de León and the treasurer Agustín de Zárate, and Francisco López de Gómara, and Diego Fernández de Palencia, and also the Reverend Father Jerónimo Román, though more modern, all write *Peru* and not *Pirú* . And as the place where this happened chanced to be in the confines of the land the Inca kings had conquered and subjected to their rule, they called everything from there onwards *Peru*, that is from the district of Quito to the Charcas,[7] or the main part over which they reigned. The region is over seven hundred leagues in length, though their empire reached as far as Chile, which is five hundred leagues beyond and is another most rich and fertile kingdom.

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CHAPTER 11

The fruit of larger [plants and] trees.

There is another excellent fruit which the Spaniards call cucumbers, because they rather resemble these in shape, though not in taste or in their wholesomeness for those suffering from fever or in the ease with which they are digested: in these ways they are rather the

opposite of the Spanish cucumber. I do not recall the Indian name, though I have often racked my brain for days on end, and when I reproved memory for failing to retain so many words in our language it offered as an apology the word *cácham*, for cucumber. I do not know if my memory, relying on my inability easily to rectify its mistakes because of the distance that separates me from my own people, is indeed deceiving me: my relatives, the Indians and mestizos of Cuzco and the whole of Peru, shall be the judges of this piece of ignorance on my part and doubtless of many others in my work. I hope they will forgive me, for I am all theirs and have only undertaken a task so out of proportion with my feeble strength as this book, and without any hope of reward from anyone, in order to serve them. The cucumbers are of three sizes: the smallest are heart-shaped and are the best. They grow in small clumps. Another fruit called *chili* reached Cuzco in 1557. It has an excellent taste and is a great delicacy. It grows on a low plant which almost rests on the ground. It has berries like the arbutus, and is of the same size, though instead of being round it is rather elongated in the shape of a heart.

* * *

Another fruit is what the Spaniards call *piña* because in appearance and shape it resembles a Spanish pinecone, though there is no other connection between the two plants. The Peruvian *piña*, when the rind is removed with a knife, reveals a very tasty white pulp, all of which can be eaten. It has a faintly acid taste which makes it even more palatable. In size they are twice as big as pine cones. There is also in the Antis[8] another fruit which the Spaniards call *manjar blanco*,[9] since when cleft in two it resembles two bowls of *manjar blanco* in color and flavor. It has inside black pips like small almonds, which are not edible. In size the fruit is like a small melon. It has a hard rind like a dry calabash and almost as thick. Inside the much-esteemed pulp is found. It is sweet but with a slight bitter tang which makes it luscious.

Many other fruits grow wild in the Antis, such as what the Spaniards call “almonds” and “walnuts” because of some slight resemblance with those of Spain. For the first Spaniards who went to the Indies had a mania for applying the names for Spanish fruits to American fruits with very little likeness and no real connection. Indeed when compared the fruits are seen to differ in far more respects than they resemble one another, and some are even the opposite, not only in taste but in their properties, as are these walnuts and almonds, which are of little importance and which we shall dismiss together with other fruits and vegetables of the Antis to turn to others of greater worth and note.

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CHAPTER 31

New names for various racial groups.

We were forgetting the best imports into the Indies, namely the Spaniards, and the Negroes who have since been taken there as slaves, for they were previously unknown in my country. These two races have mingled [with the Indians] in various ways to form others which are distinguished by the use of different names. Although I spoke a little about this in the *History of Florida*, I have decided to repeat it here, as being the proper place. Thus any Spanish man or

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woman who arrives from Spain is called a Spaniard or Castilian, the two words being quite interchangeable in Peru; and I have used them indifferently in this history and in the *Florida* . The children of Spaniards by Spanish women born there are called *criollos* or *criollas*, implying that they were born in the Indies. The name was invented by the Negroes, as its use shows. They use it to mean a Negro born in the Indies, and they devised it to distinguish those who come from this side and were born in Guinea from those born in the New World, since the former are held in greater honor and considered to be of higher rank because they were born in their own country, while their children were born in a strange land. The parents take offence if they are called *criollos* . The Spaniards have copied them by introducing this word to describe those born in the New World, and in this way both Spaniards and Guinea Negroes are called *criollos* if they are born in the New World. The Negro who arrives there from the Old World is called Negro or Guineo. The child of a Negro by an Indian woman or of an Indian and a Negro woman is called *mulato* or *mulata* . Their children are called *cholos*, a word from the Windward Islands: it means a dog, but is not used for a thoroughbred dog, but only for a mongrel cur: the Spaniards use the word in a pejorative and vituperative sense. The children of Spaniards by Indians are called mestizos, meaning that we are a mixture of the two races. The word was applied by the first Spaniards who had children by Indian women, and because it was used by our fathers, as well as on account of its meaning, I call myself by it in public and am proud of it, though in the Indies, if a person is told: "You're a mestizo," or "He's a mestizo," it is taken as an insult. This is the reason why they have adopted with such enthusiasm the name *montañés* which some potentate applied to them, among other slights and insults, instead of the word mestizo. They do not stop to consider that, although in Spain the word *montañés* is an honorable appellation, on account of the privileges that have been bestowed on the natives of the Asturian and Basque mountains,[1] if it is applied to anyone who is not from these parts, it assumes a pejorative sense derived from its original meaning "something from the mountains." This is brought out by our great master Antonio de Lebrija,[2] to whom all good Latinists in Spain today are indebted, in his vocabulary. In the general language of Peru the word for a mountaineer is *sacharuna*, properly "savage," and whoever applied the word *montañés* was privately calling them savages: those of my own generation, not understanding Full p. C-634 this malicious implication, took pride in the insulting epithet, when they should rather have avoided and abominated it, using the name our fathers bestowed on us rather than accepting new-fangled indignities.

The children of a Spaniard and a mestizo, or vice versa, are called *cuatralvos*, meaning they have one part of Indian blood and three of Spanish. The children of a mestizo and an Indian, or vice versa, are called *tresalvos*, meaning that they have three parts of Indian blood and one of Spanish. All these names, and others which we omit to avoid tedium, have been devised in Peru to describe the racial groups that have come into existence since the arrival of the Spaniards, and we can therefore say that they were brought in together with the other things not previously found in Peru. With this we return to the Inca kings, the children of the great Huaina Cápac,[3] who are calling us to relate great events that occurred in their time.

Footnotes

- Note 1:Translated by Harold V. Livermore. Return to reference 1

- Note 2:I.e., the capital city of the Inca Empire. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:To more effectively Christianize the Indigenous population, the Jesuits learned native languages. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:The Pacific Ocean. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:Military title granted to Spanish conquerors. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:Garcilaso had published *La Florida del Inca*, an account of Hernando de Soto's expedition to Florida, in 1605. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:Quito is in what is now Ecuador, Charcas (today Sucre), in Bolivia. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:Andes. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:A dessert made of milk and almonds. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:People from these regions claimed that their Christianity went back further than anyone else's in Spain, as they had not been conquered in the Muslim invasions. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Antonio de Lebrija (or Nebrija) (1441–1552), Spanish humanist who in 1492 produced the first European grammar for a modern language, the *Gramática de la lengua castellana* . Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Inca ruler who died in 1525, shortly before the arrival of the Spaniards. Return to reference 3

GUAMAN POMA DE AYALA

Poma (ca. 1535–ca. 1616) was an Indigenous Peruvian born soon after Francisco Pizarro conquered Peru. Educated and converted to Christianity by the Spaniards, Poma was an *indio ladino*, or Spanish-speaking Indian. He also spoke at least two indigenous languages, *quechua* and *aymara*, and had apparently traveled widely across Peru. In the early years of the seventeenth century, Poma wrote an impassioned nine-hundred-page letter to the king of Spain, now known as *The First New Chronicle and Good Government*, to alert him to the abuses he saw in the colonial administration around him, complete with recommendations for improvement. Almost four hundred illustrations accompany the text, registering an Indigenous perspective and eloquently making visible Poma's case to the king. The *New Chronicle* relates Peruvian history from a new perspective, while *Good Government* lays out the author's recommendations, including the wishful suggestion that an Indigenous viceroy—Poma generously volunteers his son—should rule Peru for the king of Spain.

Poma's massive letter apparently never reached its destination, and was instead collected in a Danish archive as proof of Spanish excesses in the New World. It was not until 1908 that it was rediscovered and its immense importance as auto-ethnography (a description of a culture by one of its own members) recognized. Poma provides a wealth of information on colonial Peru, yet his text is much more a polemic than a description. He strongly condemns *mestizaje* —unions between Spaniards and Indians—claiming that it will gradually lead to the disappearance of his besieged Full p. C-635 culture. In a vividly imagined chapter toward the end of the text, Poma pictures himself in direct conversation with the king, forcefully addressing his recommendations to the one man who he imagined could right the wrongs committed in Peru. Like many other *mestizo* and Native writers, Guaman Poma was a colonial subject who acknowledged Spanish rule, as long as it preserved the status of the local elite as mediators.

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From The First New Chronicle and Good Government[1]

[*Letter to the King*]

* * *

You must consider the great majesty of the Inca Topa Inca Yupanqui, king of Peru, and of Wayna Capac Inca.[2] For, having read in all the histories and chronicles of the world of all the kings, princes, and emperors of the world—the Christians, the Great Turk, the king of China, the emperors of Rome and all of Christendom, and of the Jews, and the kings of Guinea—I have found none with such great majesty. [All the others] were lesser; none have ever had such great majesty or been such great kings with such high crowns as my grandfather,[3] the king Topa Inca Yupanqui, and Wayna Capac—the Incas, whose majesty was extremely great.

Consider: if any king were to see another king or great lord, he would immediately kill him or have him killed, and then would dethrone him and rule alone. Yet the Inca kept four kings, for the four parts of this kingdom.[4] The greatest of them was the *capac apo*[5] himself; he made Waman Chawa of the Allauca Wanoco–Yaro Willca lineage his second-in-command and viceroy. Once he had given them the crown, his sons and grandsons never took it away from them; such was the case with my most honorable great-grandfather. Likewise, the three princes were crowned to accompany and increase the grandeur of His Royal Majesty the Inca, who ordered that he be crowned with the crown of his ancestors. In this way, the Inca king gave himself authority and rose up higher, and because of the majesty of the Inca, no one could talk to him nor communicate with him nor laugh with him, nor could he feast with gentlemen nor with commoners, nor could he ever cry; rather, His Majesty the Inca was always contented. He would eat and drink and offer toasts, [but he did not] toast the common people; instead, he honored the kings who were his ancestors. With this, he expanded his city and his kingdom, and his majesty was greater and greater.

Secondly: no king in any city, town, or countryside, had a throne in the public square like the Inca's.

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Thirdly: throughout the kingdom he kept all the roads clean, divided into day's travels, with inns all set up so that they even had dispensaries, and measured league by league and marked along the way.

Fourth: he ate shellfish that were brought to him live from a thousand leagues away, *mullo* from the city of Tumi.[6]

Fifth: he kept the chiefs of the naked *Chuncho* Indians, who eat human flesh, for the memory and the greatness of the world.

Consider the greatness of the Inca king, who, though he was barbarian, was descended in the woman's line from the lady Mama Waco, the *Coya* or queen, [a line] that had governed this kingdom for fifteen hundred years.

Thus, considering that my grandfather, for the greatness of the world, had been the monarch of all the people created by God in the four parts of the world, the monarch should

be the king Don Philip III, may God prolong his life, to provide for the government of the world and the defense of our holy Catholic faith in the service of God.

[To serve as his] first [viceroy], I offer one of my sons, a prince of this kingdom, a grandson and great-grandson of Topa Inca Yupanqui, the tenth king, a great wise man who established laws; he should keep the prince in his court for the memory and greatness of the world.

The second [viceroy should be] a prince of the black king of Guinea.

The third [viceroy should be a prince] of the king of the Christians of Rome or some other kingdom of the world.

The fourth [viceroy should be] the king of the Moors of the Great Turk.

All four shall be crowned, with their scepters and fleece. In the center of these four parts of the world shall be the majesty and monarch of the world, king Don Philip, may God save his high crown. He represents the monarch of the world, and the four kings mentioned represent his lower, equal crowns. Whenever His Majesty, the monarch, goes out on foot, they should all go out on foot; whenever he goes on horseback, they should go on horseback with their mantels: on his right hand, the Christian king; behind him, the Moorish king; on his left hand, the king of the Indies; behind him, the black king of Guinea. In this way, he will represent the monarch of the world, for no king nor emperor could equal this monarch; for the king is the king of his jurisdiction, and the emperor is the emperor of his jurisdiction, but the monarch has no jurisdiction: he holds under his hand the worlds of these crowned kings. They should be salaried employees of his court, for the greatness of the universal world of all nations and kinds of people: the Indians, blacks, Christian Spaniards, Turks, Jews, and Moors of the world. A consideration for the greatness of His Majesty the king.

* * *

His Majesty Questions, the Author Replies

* * *

His Royal Catholic Majesty questions the author Ayala to learn everything there is to know about the kingdom of the Indies of Peru, for good government and justice, for remedying troubles and misfortunes, for the poor Indians of Full p. C-637 the kingdom to multiply, and for the reform and good example of the Spaniards, *corregidores*, justices, *doctrina* padres, *encomenderos*, noble *caciques*,[7] and petty authorities.

Hearing His Majesty's questions, the author replies and speaks with His Majesty, saying:

"Your Royal Catholic Majesty, you should listen closely to me. When I have finished, please ask me questions. I am delighted to give you my report on everything in the kingdom, for the memory of the world and Your Majesty's greatness."

Your Royal Catholic Majesty, I will communicate with Your Majesty regarding the service of God our Lord and regarding the service to your royal crown and the increase and welfare of the Indians of this kingdom, because some people report lies to you, others report the truth, and others give their reports in order to get Your Majesty to grant them a position as bishop, dean, canon, president, *Audiencia*[8] judge, or some other rank and post.

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I, as the grandson of the king of Peru, would like to serve Your Majesty; to meet with you face to face; to speak and communicate about these things in your presence. But I cannot travel so far, being eighty years old and infirm. I hope you will be pleased with my thirty years of working in poverty, leaving my house, children, and estates to serve Your Majesty. Therefore, we will meet through writing and sending letters. So, Your Majesty, please ask me questions, and I will reply to them in this way.

His Majesty asks: "Don Felipe, author Ayala, tell me how the Indians of this kingdom had multiplied even before there was an Inca."

I say to Your Majesty that, in those times, there were a king and nobles. [The people] peacefully served the king, mining gold and silver, serving in fields and pastures, and upholding fortresses. Even a little pueblo had many women; the smallest one would have a thousand soldiers. Others had fifty thousand to a hundred thousand. Therefore, they had warfare and fortresses among them.

"Tell me, Don Felipe Ayala, about those times: how could there have been so many Indians in the time of the Incas?"

I say to Your Majesty that, in those times, the Inca alone was king, though there were also dukes, counts, marquises, and great noble lords. But they lived under the laws and commandments of the Incas, and, because they had a king, they peacefully served in this kingdom; they multiplied, and had estates, plenty to eat, and their own children and wives.

"Tell me, author, why do the Indians not multiply now? Why are they becoming poor?"

I will say to Your Majesty, first, that they do not multiply because all the best women and maidens are taken by the *doctrina* padres, *encomenderos*, *corregidores*, Spaniards, stewards, deputies, and officers, and their servants. That is why there are so many little mestizos and mestizas in this kingdom. They claim that the women have lovers as a pretext for taking them and their estates from the poor. Because of all these things, all these offenses and harms, the Indians Full p. C-638 hang themselves, as the *Changas* did in Andahuayllas—that was a small mountain range, once filled with Indian men and women; they preferred to die once and for all rather than face all the harm that was being done to them.

"Tell me, author, how will the people multiply?"

I say to Your Majesty, just as I have written: the padres, priests, *encomenderos, corregidores*, other Spaniards, and noble *caciques* should live as Christians, as Your Majesty has ordained, and not go beyond that. They should let [the people] enjoy their wives and estates, and should leave their maidens alone. There should not be so many kings and justices over the people, and they should let the people multiply, or else be severely punished and removed from their offices and benefices.

"Tell me, author, how will the Indians become rich?"

Your Majesty should know that they should keep community estates (which they call *sapsi*), with fields planted with corn, wheat, potatoes, peppers, *macno*,[9] cotton, and grapes, [as well as] textile workshops, dyeworks, coca fields, and fruit orchards. The maidens and widows should spin and weave—ten women working on one piece of cloth. On one portion of the community land (*sapsi*), they should keep Castilian cattle. Each Indian man and woman should have a piece of an estate from their community land (*sapsi*).

Overseeing this, in every province there should be an administrator with a salary set at one seventh [of the income from the community lands]—one main overseer for each province.

Whenever there is need, Your Majesty would be able to borrow money and take your royal fifth from the commoners.

With this, the Indians of this kingdom will become rich people; God and Your Majesty's royal crown will be served in this kingdom; and the Indians will increase in this kingdom.

"Tell me, author: how can the absent Indians in that kingdom be gathered in?"

I say to Your Majesty that, in every province, these Indian men, women, and children should be gathered into some old pueblo, for they are lost. Give them cropland and bounded pastures, so that they may serve God and Your Majesty. Let them be called your royal crown Indians, and let them pay taxes and tribute, and hold no other office. Their administrator, the noble *cacique*, should be subject to you. No one but the administrator should take a salary from what they pay, in keeping with the Indians' wishes; the rest [of their taxes] should be applied to the service of your royal crown. In this way, [the absent Indians] will be gathered in throughout the kingdom. It should be the administrator's office to gather them.

Your Royal Catholic Majesty: As you must know, the dozen learned men and the four notaries of the world[1] set forth, in their council, an order and a law for the world: that there should be no slaves or tribute for priests, and that no tribute should be paid to priests or to any other such person in the world. Therefore, the *doctrina* padres and priests may not take a salary from the tribute; instead, they must make their living by working at the altar. A priest can make two thousand pesos a year, or one thousand pesos at the very least, from celebrating Mass, offerings, and prayers for the dead, and from gifts, Christmas Full p. C-639 bonuses, and alms. That would easily provide a man with plenty to be able to dress and eat. But collecting tribute, and calling himself "proprietor," is NULL AND VOID by the laws of God and the holy Church. He should live from the tithes and the first-fruits paid by the Spanish.

* * *

"Tell me, author, how will it be possible for the Indians of that kingdom not to die, become ill from quicksilver poisoning, or suffer hard labor?"

Regarding this, I say to Your Majesty: first, they are greatly harmed by the mine owners and the justices who enter with them. They hang them by their feet, and they whip them while they are hanging with their shameful parts exposed. They force them to work day and night and do not pay them. When they do pay them, they give them only half their wages and steal the other half. They send them out to the low plains, where they die. Of every eleven Indians, only one gets out alive.

What they should do is draw lots. One province should be given six months to rest while the next province comes in.

Also, Your Majesty should order that a grant be given to any Indian, black, or Spaniard who discovers how to cure quicksilver poisoning and heal the ill; let him be paid. In this way, the poor Indians will multiply and will not begrudge the labor.

"Tell me, author, how will the hidden mines of that kingdom be discovered?"

I say to Your Majesty that, as soon as mines are discovered—mines of gold, silver, quicksilver, lead, tin, copper, dyes—as soon as they are discovered, the Spaniards immediately meddle, take them over, and mistreat the Indians. That is why the Indians do not want to report to the mines. If Your Majesty would arrange to grant the mining rights to the discoverer,

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all the good mines would be discovered, the kingdom would become very rich, and Your Majesty would be very rich—richer than all other kings. Your Majesty will be the greatest monarch in the world; if you carry out what is started here, Your Majesty will be very rich, as will your royal crown. Because of all this, you may enjoy the kingship over all the world, in service to God and your royal crown.

Your Royal Catholic Majesty, I tell you that in this kingdom the Indians are coming to an end, and they will come utterly to an end. Twenty years from now, there will be no Indians in this kingdom to serve your royal crown and defend our holy Catholic faith. Without the Indians, Your Majesty is worth nothing, because, remember, Castile is Castile because of the Indians. His Serenity the emperor-king (may God keep him in heaven) was powerful because of the Indians of this kingdom.[2] Your Majesty's father was also a monarch of great power and renowned strength because of the Indians of this kingdom.[3] The same is true of Your Majesty.

Your Majesty should consider the idea of losing so valuable a kingdom, one which has been so valuable—losing it and seeing the end of all the Indians, for they are already being depopulated. Where there were once a thousand souls, now there are not even one hundred, and all of them are old men and women who can no longer multiply. Even if there are a few unmarried men, they marry old women who cannot give birth. Besides this, they are oppressed with great troubles, Full p. C-640 disturbed, and robbed. Even their daughters, sons, and married women are being stolen. And there is no remedy, because everyone has joined together—the judges, *corregidores*, deputies, *encomenderos*, stewards, other Spaniards and mestizos, inspectors of the Holy Mother Church, vicars, priests. All work together against the poor; all have joined hands to favor the Spanish Dons and the lady Doñas.[4] They take advantage of all the poor; not only that, but they enter into their possessions, estates, lands, pastures, and houses, by force and against their will.

Writing this is enough to make one cry. None of them report these things to Your Majesty. I will say the truth regarding the value, price, benefits, income, and services that the Indians have had and should have, and which they are losing and will lose throughout the kingdom. Your Majesty should know that you are being served by the Indians when, every six months—twice a year—they pay silver, corn, wheat, clothes, chickens, pullets, local cattle, and other products. In addition, they serve in the mines, the plazas, and the *tambos* [royal inns]. They also fix the bridges in your kingdom, and clean the roads and byways. It is from them that the royal fifth,[5] the tithe, the personal tax, and the excise tax are paid, because Your Majesty does not get as much benefit at all from the mestizos, mulattos, or even the Spaniards. Therefore, I place their worth at a very estimable value.

Take care that this kingdom should not lose these Indians, because, if a Spaniard steals and keeps four Indian women to give birth to his little mestizos, he will refuse to recognize them before the bribed judges; nor is there any point, because [Spaniards] have so many [*mestizo* children] and so many women. This is, first, because the Spaniards look for women in their houses and scattered settlements. They do not leave them alone, day or night. If the women's fathers and mothers defend them, they are mistreated. The Spaniards go to seek them out where they hold their fiestas. They do not allow them to get married or to lead a married life with their husbands. Married Indian women do not have children by their husbands; instead, they give birth to little mestizo children, and then refuse to recognize them. The mestizo children wander around dressed like poor Indians. The whole kingdom is like this.

As soon as an Indian woman appears who has given birth by a poor Indian man, everyone comes down on her right away—the inspector, the vicar, the priest, the *corregidor*, the deputy, the *encomendero* . They punish her, fine her, and banish her to the house of some lady or to the padre's kitchen. There they fornicate with her right away, and she soon gives birth to a mestizo. No one is upset about this. Thus, they prefer to have her living in sin and giving birth to mestizos.

Then they go out to search for more Indian women, since they look on them so favorably, as I have said. When one gives birth to an Indian man's son, they are all thrown into an uproar—it seems like the sky is falling. They punish the mothers and fathers in the public stocks, and they shear the mother's hair. Telling these stories and writing them is an endless task.

"Tell me, author Ayala. You have told me many rueful stories and described how the Indians are coming to an end: they are suffering troubles and cannot multiply because people come in and steal their wives, daughters, and their property in houses and land, utterly skinning them. I do not send my judges to Full p. C-641 do harm and damage and to rob, but rather to honor the nobles, *caciques*, petty authorities, and the poor Indians, that they might increase and multiply in the service of God and the defense of the holy Catholic faith and in service of my royal crown. Tell me now, author Ayala, how can these things be remedied?"

I say to Your Majesty that all the Spaniards should live like Christians. They should endeavor to marry ladies of equal station, and should leave the poor Indian women to multiply. They should leave their property—their lands and houses—alone; they should return those that they have entered by force, and should pay for the use that they have enjoyed of them. The penalties for these things should be enforced.

Next, whoever deflowers a virgin Indian, makes a married Indian woman give birth, or forces her to fornicate, should be banished for six years to the galleys or to Chile, and all his possessions should be taken as a fine for your royal treasuries and to pay the Indian woman and court expenses. If the judge does not execute this sentence, he deserves the same punishment. All these things should be carried out, and no justice should be against the poor Indians. Those who are not justices—the *doctrina* padres, *encomenderos*, and other Spaniards—should not pretend to be justices. Whoever does so should be well punished, fined, and banished from among the Indians of this kingdom. In this way, the Indians will multiply.

Your Royal Catholic Majesty, about the community lands (*sapsi*) of the Indians and the churches, religious brotherhoods, and hospitals: so that these may multiply and increase in this kingdom, it would be beneficial that [the Indians] be asked to give an accounting to [me, as] the second-in-command of the Inca and Your Majesty in this kingdom. They should come give [me] an accounting every sixth month of the year, paying me a salary of one-seventh throughout the kingdom, so that I will be able to send myself to the service of God and your royal crown, should the need arise, and collect the royal fifth. In this, I will serve God, Your Majesty, the well-being of the Indians of this kingdom, and the increase of wealth.

Your Royal Catholic Majesty should request that each noble *cacique*, second-in-command, and petty authority in this kingdom come here to receive their testimonies, so that I may give testimony of what they each deserve; for, as the second-in-command of the Inca and of Your Majesty, I know all about them, their ways and manners. I and my descendents must give these testimonies to you, according to the law, signed in my name in perpetuity. In this way, no one will make himself a *curaca*[6] by force, or take the title of Don or Doña in this kingdom, or wear Spaniards' clothes. They will have to be well-proven, loyal, and Christian, eager to serve

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God and Your Majesty; and they will favor the poor. Only then will Your Majesty give them titles, throughout the kingdom.

* * *

“Well, tell me, author: since you are the grandson of Topa Inca Yupanqui, the tenth former king, and you are the son of his second-in-command and viceroy, how is it that you do not favor them in my name and stand up for them?”

That is indeed why I stand up for them, Your Royal Catholic Majesty, as a prince of the Indians of this kingdom. I have suffered such poverty, and I have labored for thirty years in the service of God and Your Majesty. I defend the Full p. C-642 kingdom, and that is why I am writing this history—to be a memorial, to be placed in the archive, so that justice may be seen.

It would be very beneficial for Your Majesty to send a general inspector to punish the prelates, and, if necessary, to banish them to the court in Spain, for these reasons. The inspector should stay in the city of Los Reyes de Lima and be sent out from there to inspect every city in its jurisdiction.

If Your Majesty does not agree with this idea, then please communicate with His Holiness, so that he might send us his second-in-command, a cardinal who would rank higher than all the priests and prelates, and who could punish or banish anyone who needs punishment—prelates, cathedral chapters, clerics, friars, monasteries, everything relating to the Holy Mother Church. He should also come with a special charge to help the nobles and other poor Indians of this kingdom. Then the Indians will multiply and be tranquil, and will rally to the service of God and Your Majesty in this kingdom.

Footnotes

- Note 1:Translated by David Frye. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Topa Inca Yupanqui ruled 1471–93, father of Wayna Capac. Wayna Capac (alternate spelling for Huayna [Hvaina] Capac) died in 1525, shortly before the arrival of the Spaniards. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Guaman Poma’s forebear Waman Chaua, of the Yarovilca culture, served as a governor for the Incas, and his mother may have been a descendant of Topa Inca Yupanqui. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:The Incas referred to their empire as Tawantinsuyu, or “the four regions.” It had four provincial governments with strong rulers. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:Ruler. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:The city of Tumi (Tumibamba, now Cuenca, in Ecuador) is nearly 1,000 miles from Cuzco. “*Mullo*”: mullu, a thorny oyster, a luxury food. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:Indigenous rulers. “*Corregidores*”: local Spanish administrators. “*Doctrina* padres”: catechizing priests. “*Encomenderos*”: Spaniards who were granted a monopoly on Indigenous laborers, ostensibly in exchange for their Christianization. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:Local Spanish administrative and legislative institution. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:Cochineal, a red dye extracted from insects that live on cacti. Return to reference 9

- Note 1:I.e., the twelve apostles and the four evangelists of the New Testament. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Holy Roman Emperor Charles V (Charles I of Spain). Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Philip II, father of Philip III, whom Poma imagines himself addressing. Return to reference 3
- Note 4: *Don* and *Doña* are male and female honorifics in Spanish. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:The royal fifth was the tax levied by the Crown on all mineral wealth from the New World. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:Magistrate. Return to reference 6

LOPE DE VEGA 1562–1635

The foremost dramatist of the Spanish golden age, Félix Lope de Vega y Carpio achieved enormous popularity and admiration in his lifetime. His contemporary, **Miguel de Cervantes**, called him a “monster of nature” for his outsize talent. By his own reckoning, Lope produced some 1,500 plays, of which 425 have survived. An accomplished poet who moved easily between low and high culture, Lope insisted that the theater must cater to the pleasure of the people, and in this, he led by example. Many of the thousands of characters he created were based on favorite types he frequently recycled, yet they never failed to appeal to his appreciative audience. Lope’s successful formula of three-act plays with comic or serious subplots dominated Spanish drama well into the eighteenth century.

LIFE AND TIMES

Born in the bustling new Spanish capital, Madrid, to a family of modest means, Lope de Vega led a tumultuous early life as a soldier and poet. His prodigious talent was recognized early on, and, after a Jesuit education, he was sent to university by the Bishop ofÁvila. Soon famous for his romantic entanglements, however, Lope did not attempt to enter the priesthood. Instead, he enlisted in the army and eventually returned to Madrid to attempt his career as a playwright in its newly built playhouses. When a long-term affair with the actress Elena Osorio ended in her rejecting him for another suitor, Lope took his revenge with his pen, in satirical writings about her and her family. This outburst led to his trial for libel and eight years of exile from Castile, which he spent writing in the city of Valencia before making his way once again to Madrid. Eventually married twice, Lope had at least sixteen children (six in wedlock) and innumerable affairs chronicled in his passionate verse. Nonetheless, religious faith played a serious role in his private and public lives: Lope finally Full p. C-643 took holy orders in 1614, was elected a judge by the Spanish Inquisition, and served as an official censor. A series of personal tragedies late in his life, including the death of his son at sea, reinforced his religious fervor. Lope’s enormous output reflects his various passions: as a dramatist he wrote comedies and also brilliant sacred plays, while as a poet he produced both religious and love poetry, much of it among the finest examples of the period.

Lope’s efforts to link his plays to the idea of Spain as a nation are, perhaps, the clearest evidence of a consistent theme in his drama. He believed that plays should deal with historically important issues, such as “the events, wars, peace, counsels, fortune, change, prosperity, the decline of kingdoms and epochs of great empires and monarchies,” as he puts it in his play *The Bell of Aragon* . Although many of his plays are far more lighthearted than this

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list would suggest, a significant subset concerns questions of political authority and representation.

Lope's Spain was undergoing a great transformation: a number of small medieval realms became a modern dynastic state when Isabel of Castile married Ferdinand of Aragon in 1469, uniting the two crowns. The central political problem of early-modern Spain, as for many emerging European nations, was how to organize a strong centralized monarchy that would triumph over feudal lords while avoiding the excesses of absolutism. The new political reality destabilized the traditional balance of power among lords, their king, and their vassals, pitting older arrangements against the necessities of the new state. These political quandaries were hardly abstract questions: they governed the everyday realities of taxation, political representation, and social hierarchies. As Spain took on its foes abroad and at home in countless expensive wars, the issue of how much a ruler could extract from his subjects became particularly pressing. Lope had a special talent for translating these problems into powerful dramatic terms, pitting poor villagers against abusive lords, with the wise monarchs as their judges and saviors. One play is tellingly titled *The Best Judge, the King* .

FUENTEOVEJUNA

In *Fuenteovejuna* (1614), Lope explores the problem of political authority in a specific historical context: the civil war fought in Spain in the 1470s between the supporters of the new Queen Isabel of Castile and Juana, the dispossessed heir to the throne. Such tumultuous times required towns and nobles to give their allegiance to one leader or the other, and provided the perfect backdrop for Lope to explore questions of loyalty and obedience. While the villagers of Fuenteovejuna are trying to decide how much fealty they owe a governor who abuses them, the Comendador (Commander) and his superior, the young Maestre (Master) of the military Order of Calatrava, must decide whether to support Isabel and her husband Ferdinand. Plot and subplot work together to bring to the stage pressing debates over dominion by consent, divine right, and force.

Lope did not invent the subject of *Fuenteovejuna*: he drew on historical events that took place in the small pastoral village of that name in the province of Córdoba. His principal source records that the Commander "committed great injuries and dishonors to the people of the village, taking their daughters and wives by force, and robbing their households to maintain his soldiers." At last the villagers, calling out "long live Kings Ferdinand and Isabel, and death to traitors and bad Christians," rebelled, killing him along with fourteen of his men. The rebels were promptly arrested, and tortured to identify the ringleaders. Had a single villager collapsed under torture and identified the ringleaders in order to save his or her own skin, the events at Full p. C-644 Fuenteovejuna would be chronicled as a lurid and bloody uprising during a period of widespread upheaval in Spanish history. But since each was willing to die for the others, they left a memorable and even proverbial example of resistance and solidarity.

Lope's *Fuenteovejuna* is a comedy ending in a jubilant affirmation of community and social order. Along the way, it makes daring forays into questions about law and government. The play hews quite closely to the historical record, with an important exception: Lope invents the Commander's most glaring transgression, and portrays in individualized detail the human costs of his highhandedness. Throughout, the playwright shows considerable sympathy for his peasants, who are goaded into their seditious frenzy. Left to their own devices, the villagers

are law abiding and peaceable: even their names—Frondoso ("Leafy") and Laurencia ("Laurel")—associate them with a pastoral nature, as they celebrate the loves of young couples. The villagers speak in a simple, everyday language full of lively humor; although they are not idealized, they are very appealing characters. Lope's unforgiving spotlight shines instead on the Commander's abuses, and his violent disregard for consent, the key term in all social contracts. What compels Lope's imagination is the villagers' redemptive commitment to their community. The playwright uses the historical events of Fuenteovejuna to raise fundamental questions of political philosophy: Does authority come from above (God) or below (the people)? Is government based on a social contract? Do laborers have the right to dignity? Are the people, if governed cruelly, entitled to revoke their consent or even to resist by violence? Lope, who was no political radical, suggests that government without popular consent and mutual respect is morally bankrupt.

The rapacious and arrogant style of dominion exemplified by Lope's Guzmán contrasts with the military and judicial policies of the so-called Catholic kings, Isabel and Ferdinand, whom Lope celebrates as prudent, just, and respectful of law. Guzmán violates the reciprocal obligations governing the relationship of the good ruler and his subjects: he contemptuously rejects the suggestion that he owes anything to the villagers, and it is in the role of bad counselor that he coerces the powerful but impressionable Master of Calatrava. The Catholic kings, on the other hand, exemplify the magnanimous and prudential nature of good monarchs.

The Commander's abuses habitually force peasants—otherwise typical comic characters—to think strenuously about the nature of social contracts. They conclude that those who govern owe a debt to those who serve and that communal bonds are formed by love: the willingness to enter into a social relationship and to treat the interests of others as one's own. This is the lesson that gives the villagers the courage to protect their community despite torture. In Lope's play, love is both the mainstay of comedy and the harmonizing principle of government: in matters of the heart and of law, the subject must have the right to consent.

Eventually deemed "the first proletarian drama," *Fuenteovejuna* became increasingly popular from the nineteenth century on, as critics and audiences warmed to its revolutionary portrayal of resistance. Politically trenchant yet full of humor and pastoral idealism, the play transcends its immediate historical context to serve as a lasting meditation on the power of community.

Full p. C-645

Fuenteovejuna[1]

CHARACTERS

FERNÁN GÓMEZ DE GUZMÁN, Commander of the Order of Calatrava

FLORES
ORTUÑO } his retainers

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RODRIGO TÉLLEZ GIRÓN, Master of the Order of Calatrava

LAURENCIA
PASCUALA
JACINTA
FRONDOSO
MENGO
BARRILDO
} villagers

ESTEBAN
ALONSO
} village magistrates

CUADRADO, village alderman
JUAN ROJO, village councilman
QUEEN ISABEL OF CASTILE
KING FERDINAND OF ARAGON
DONMANRIQUE , a courtier, Master of the Order of Santiago
A JUDGE
LEONELO, a University of Salamanca graduate
CIMBRANOS, a soldier
A BOY
ALDERMEN from Ciudad Real, SOLDIERS, VILLAGERS, MUSICIANS

The action takes place in 1476.

Footnotes

- Note 1:Translated by G. J. Racz. Return to reference 1

Act I

[A Room in the Palace of Rodrigo Téllez Girón, Master of the Order of Calatrava]

(Enter the COMMANDER , Fernán Gómez de Guzmán, with his retainers FLORES and ORTUÑO .)

COMMANDER The Master[2] knows I mark my time
Awaiting him.
FLORES Indeed, he does.
ORTU Ñ O He’s more mature, sir, than he was.
COMMANDER Enough to be aware that I’m
Still Fernán Gómez de Guzmán?
FLORES He’s just a boy. Don’t take this wrong.

COMMANDER He has to have known all along
The title that's conferred upon
Me is Commander of the Ranks.
ORTU Ñ O His counselors undoubtedly
Incline him toward discourtesy.
COMMANDER This stance will win him little thanks,
For courtesy unlocks the gate
Behind which man's goodwill resides
As surely as offense betides
An enmity fomenting hate.
ORTU Ñ O If only men so keen to slight
Knew how they were abhorred by all—
Not least by sycophants who fall
Full p. C-646
To kiss their feet and praise their might—
They'd much prefer to die before
Insulting anyone again.
FLORES Mistreatment from unmannered men
Is harsh and something to deplore,
Yet while discourtesy between
Two equals is a foolish game,
When men aren't peers, it's not the same
But vile, tyrannical and mean.
No sense to take offense, my lord.
He's still a boy and ignorant of
The need for your auspicious love.
COMMANDER The obligation that the sword
He girded on when first this Cross
Of Calatrava graced his chest
Bids courtesy be shown all, lest
Our noble Order suffer loss.
FLORES We'll know soon if his heart's been set
Against your person or your cause.
ORTU Ñ O Leave now if all this gives you pause.
COMMANDER I'll take the stripling's measure yet.
(Enter the MASTER of Calatrava, Rodrigo Téllez Girón, with retinue.)
MASTER Dear Fernán Gómez de Guzmán!
I've just been told that you were come

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And rue this inattention from
My heart's own core.
COMMANDER I looked upon
The matter ill, with wounded pride,
As I'd thought my affection for
You and my standing would ensure
More noble treatment by your side,
We two of Calatrava, you
The Master, I Commander, though
Your humble servant, well you know.
MASTER I only was alerted to
Your presence here at this late hour,
Fernán, and join you now in fond
Embrace.
COMMANDER You honor well our bond
As I've done all that's in my power—
Nay, risked my life—to ease affairs
For you, petitioning the pope[3]

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To disregard your youth.
MASTER I hope
That, by this holy sign each wears
Upon his chest, as I repay
Your kindness with respect, you'll own
Such honor as my sire had known.
COMMANDER I'm satisfied with what you say.
MASTER What news have you about the war?
COMMANDER Attend these words and soon you'll learn
How duty makes this your concern.
MASTER It's this report I've waited for.
COMMANDER Rodrigo Téllez Girón, this
Illustrious station you've attained
Derives from the profound esteem
Your sire claimed for your family name.[4]
When he relinquished, eight years past,
The rank of Master to his son,
Commanders joined with kings to pledge
The cross should pass to one so young

While further confirmation came
From papal bulls that blessed soul
His Holiness Pope Pius wrote,
Which Paul[5] did follow with his own.
Your uncle, Juan Pacheco,[6] then
The Master of Santiago, was
Appointed your coadjutor
And, when he died, we placed our trust
In your ability to lead
Our Order at your tender age.
Upholding past allegiances
Is vital in the present case
To honor these progenitors,
So know your kin, since Henry's[7] death,
Support Alfonso,[8] Portugal's
Good king, who has inherited
Castile, your blood contend, because
His queen, they vow, was Henry's child.
Prince Ferdinand of Aragon[9]
Disputes this claim, and through his wife

Full p. C-648

And Henry's sister, Isabel,[1]
Asserts his title to the throne
Against your family's cause. In short,
Yours see no treachery imposed
By Juana's[2] just succession here.
Your cousin keeps her under guard
Until the day when she will reign.
I come, then, with this counsel: charge
Your Knights of Calatrava in
Almagro here to mount their steeds
And capture Ciudad Real,[3]
Which straddles the frontier between
Castile and Andalusia, thus
Strategically commanding both.
You'd hardly need a host of men
To have it fall to your control;

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Their only soldiers left there are
Its landowners and citizens
Who still defend Queen Isabel
And follow Ferdinand as king.
How grand, Rodrigo, to avail
Yourself of such a siege and prove
Those wrong who think these shoulders far
Too slight to bear the cross you do!
Your gallant ancestors, the Counts
Of Urueña,[4] beckon from
Their eminence in proud display
Of all the laurels they have won;
The Marquis of Villena,[5] too,
And countless other captains, ones
So noble that the wings of Fame
Could scarcely bear them higher up!
Come, bare the whiteness of your sword
And stain its blade in fierce assaults
With blood red as our Order's sign
So that you may be rightly called
By all men Master of that Cross
You wear upon your chest! If white
It stays, that title stays unearned.
Yes, both the weapon at your side

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And that dear cross must shine blood-red.
Thus you, magnificent Girón,
Shall be at last enshrined the first
Among your line and most extolled!
MASTER Fernán Gómez, it's my intent
To side with blood in a dispute
Whose rightness seems beyond refute,
So rest assured of this event.
If Ciudad Real, then, must
Be leveled by my hands, I'll burn
Its walls with lightning speed and turn
The city into ash and dust.
The friend or stranger who insists

That with my uncle died my youth
Could not be farther from the truth:
The spirit of my years persists.
I'll bare this still-white blade and lead
My forces by its dazzling light
Till, like these crosses, it shines bright
With blood the reddened wounded bleed.
Do any soldiers now subsist
Among your village retinue?
COMMANDER They're loyal servitors, though few,
But should you summon them to list
With you, they'll fight like lions, for
In Fuenteovejuna all
The townsfolk heed the humble call
Of agriculture, not of war,
And farm to reap their daily fare.
MASTER You've quarters near?
COMMANDER It pleased the crown
To grant me land once in that town
So, mid these perils, I dwell there.
MASTER I'll need a tally of our strength.
COMMANDER No vassal there shall stay behind!
MASTER This day you'll see me ride, and find
My couching lance atilt full length!

(Exit COMMANDER and MASTER .)

[The Town Square in Fuenteovejuna]

(Enter the village women PASCUALA and LAURENCIA .)

LAURENCIA I'd hoped that he was gone for good!
PASCUALA To tell the truth, I really thought
The news of his return here ought
To have perturbed you . . . and still would!
LAURENCIA I wish to God, I swear to you,
That we had seen the last of him!
PASCUALA Laurencia, I've known girls as prim
And tough as you—nay, more so—who,
Full p. C-650
Beneath the guise of harsh facades,
Have hearts as soft as cooking lard.

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LAURENCIA You couldn’t find an oak as hard
And dry as I am toward these clods!
PASCUALA Go on, now! You don’t mean to say
You’d never drink to quench your thirst?
LAURENCIA I do, though I won’t be the first
To have to protest in this way.
Besides, how would it profit me
To yield to all Fernán’s false woo?
I couldn’t marry him.
PASCUALA That’s true.
LAURENCIA I can’t abide his infamy!
So many girls were gullible
In trusting the Commander’s plights
And now live days that rue those nights.
PASCUALA Still, it would be a miracle
If you don’t wind up in his grasp.
LAURENCIA Pascuala, one full month’s gone by
Since you first saw this scapegrace try
In vain to land me in his clasp.
His pander, Flores, and that knave,
Ortuño, came by with a hat,
A jerkin and a choker that
Their master had assumed I’d crave.
They started off regaling me
With vows his lovelorn heart declared,
Which left me all a little scared,
Though just as disinclined to see
Myself his latest vanquished maid.
PASCUALA Where did they speak to you?
LAURENCIA Down by
The brook six days ago, as I
Recall.
PASCUALA Laurencia, I’m afraid
They’ll end up getting what they wish.
LAURENCIA From me?
PASCUALA No, from the priest—yes, you!
LAURENCIA The meat on this young chick he’d woo
Is still too tough to grace his dish.

I mean, good lord, Pascuala! Look:
You know how much I'd rather take
A slice of ham when I awake
And place it on the fire to cook;
Then eat it with a hunk of bread
I baked and kneaded by myself
With wine pinched off my mother's shelf
From jugs that tightly store her red;
And how much happier I'd be
At noon to watch beef frolicking
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With heads of cabbage, rollicking
In frothy pots of harmony!
Or, when I come home peeved and tired,
To marry eggplant in full bloom
With bacon—there's no rasher groom!—
For just the pick-me-up required.
Then later, for some toothsome snacks
To hold me till our supper's served,
I'd pick grapes off my vines, preserved
By God alone from hail attacks.
For dinner, I would eat the lot
Of spicy peppered meat in oil,
Then go to bed content with toil
And give thanks with a "lead us not
Into temptation"[6] of sheer praise.
But you know how men are: until
They get their way in love, what skill
They use in finding crafty ways
To make us, in the end, forlorn!
When, worn down, we give up the fight,
They take their pleasure in the night
And leave us wretched on the morn.
PASCUALA You're right, Laurencia! It's no joke!
Once men are sated, they grow rude
And show us more ingratitude
Than sparrows do to villagefolk.
In winter, when the weather keeps

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Our snowy fields devoid of crops,
These birds swoop down from off the tops
Of houses, all sweet coos and cheeps,
But indoors, head straight for the room
Where they can feed upon our crumbs.
Then, once the warm spring weather comes
And sparrows see the fields in bloom,
We hear the last of all their coos.
Forgetting our benevolence
And cutting off their blandishments,
They chirp accusingly: "Jews? Jews?"[7]
Yes, men are like that, too. As long
As they desire us, we're their soul,
Their heart, their everything, their whole
Life's being, and can do no wrong,
But once the fire of passion's spent,

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They start to treat us worse than Jews
And what were once seductive coos
Now chastise us for our consent.
LAURENCIA You can't trust any of their kind.
PASCUALA Laurencia, sweetheart, I'm with you!

(Enter the villagers MENGO, BARRILDO, and FRONDOSO .)

FRONDOSO Barrildo, argue till you're blue,
You'll never change old Mengo's mind!
BARRILDO Now, here's a person who could bring
An end to this discussion, men.
MENGO Let's all be in agreement, then,
Before you ask her anything:
If she concurs that I'm correct,
You promise that you won't forget
To hand me over what we've bet?
BARRILDO That's fine with me. I don't object,
But what do we net if you lose?
MENGO My boxwood rebec,[8] which I hold
More precious than a granary's gold,
If I may be allowed to choose.
BARRILDO That's good enough.

FRONDOSO Then, let's not wile.
God keep you, lovely ladies both.
LAURENCIA Frondoso, "ladies"? By my oath!
FRONDOSO Just keeping with the latest style:
These days, a college boy goes by
"Professor," "one-eyed" means you're blind,
The cross-eyed "squint," lame are "inclined,"
And now a spendthrift's a "good guy."
The dumbest person is called "bright,"
The none-too-brave are "placable";
No one has thick lips—lips are "full"—
And beady eyes are "piercing," right?
The nitpicker is "thorough," while
The meddler is "engaged." In speech,
A windbag is "well-spoken," each
Annoying bore said to "beguile."
Thus, cowards are "dispirited"
And blowhards "full of fight." With twits,
The useful catchword "fellows" fits
While loons are "uninhibited."
The cheerless are alone "discreet";
"Authority" falls to the bald.
If silliness is "charm," who called
"Well-grounded" someone with big feet?

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A "chest cold" means the pox in code;
The haughty now are "self-possessed";
The shrewd are "sly," but here's the best:
The humpback "shoulders quite a load"!
So maybe now you'll comprehend
Just how you're "ladies," and although
I've more examples, I'll forego
Reciting all of them on end.
LAURENCIA Well, that may pass for courtesy,
Frondoso, with the city folk,
But I've heard other people cloak
Their thoughts in language that strikes me
As far more coarse in every phrase
They use and every cutting word.

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FRONDOSO Give us a taste of what you've heard.
LAURENCIA It's just the opposite of praise:
You're "tiresome" if you're serious
And "brazen" if you look well heeled.
You're "somber" if you're even-keeled
And "spiteful" if you're virtuous.
Give counsel and you "interfere";
You "lavish" when you freely give.
Love justice and you're "punitive,"
Show mercy and be "inaustere."
The steadfast now are "dull as sin,"
Politeness is "sheer flattery,"
Sweet charity, "hypocrisy,"
And Christian faith "the sure way in."
"Dumb luck" is hard-won merit's name
While truth-telling is "recklessness."
Forbearance is deemed "cowardice"
And misadventure now means "blame."
A decent woman's called a "ponce,"
A proper, lovely girl is "plain,"
A chaste . . . Why should I wrack my brain
More? Let this serve as my response.
MENGO The devil! That was quite a list!
BARRILDO She's not a half-bad orator!
MENGO I bet the priest who christened her
Laid on the salt, fist after fist![9]
LAURENCIA What quarrel is it brings you here,
If I have heard you right, today?
FRONDOSO Just listen, on your soul.
LAURENCIA Tell, pray.
FRONDOSO Laurencia, lend me but your ear.

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LAURENCIA I'll give it to you out and out,
A special present, not a loan.
FRONDOSO I trust your judgment as my own.
LAURENCIA So, what's this famous bet about?
FRONDOSO Barrildo casts his lot with me.
LAURENCIA And Mengo?

BARRILDO He insists upon
Denying a phenomenon
That's clearly real.
MENGO It cannot be;
Experience refutes its name.
LAURENCIA Which is . . .?
BARRILDO That love does not exist.[1]
LAURENCIA Love's vital and would sure be missed.
BARRILDO Yes, vital; it's a silly claim.
This world has a most pressing need
For love, or life would fade away.
MENGO Philosophy's not my forte
And now I wish that I could read,
But here goes: if the elements[2] —
Earth, water, fire and air—all live
In endless discord and then give
Our very bodies sustenance—
Their melancholy and, let's see,
Blood, choler . . . phlegm[3] —I've proved my point.
BARRILDO This world is nowhere out of joint,
Dear Mengo; all is harmony[4]
For harmony is love distilled
And love, pure concert from above.
MENGO I don't dispute that natural love
Abides on earth, as God has willed.
Love does exist, but of the sort
That rules relations in advance—
Compulsory ties, not bonds of chance—
Among all beings these realms support.
And never once have I denied
That each man's humor finds some fit
Full p. C-655
With love that corresponds to it
To keep his being unified.
If someone tries to punch my face,
I block the impact with my arm
And when I'm facing bodily harm,
My feet run to a safer place.

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My lids and lashes likewise move
To counter danger to my eye
And all from natural love, I vie.
PASCUALA What point is it you seek to prove?
MENGO I mean that we should be agreed
That only self-love rules the day.
PASCUALA That's not true, Mengo, if I may,
For isn't there a vital need
A man experiences when
He loves a woman, or a brute
Its mate?
MENGO Yes, but without dispute,
It's self-love and not true love, then.
Now, what is love?
PASCUALA It's a desire
For beauty.[5]
MENGO And why does love pursue
Said beauty, in your humble view?
PASCUALA For pleasure.
MENGO Right! May I inquire,
Then, whether this enjoyment might
Serve love itself?
PASCUALA I'm sure that's so.
MENGO So, self-love, then, will make love go
And seek what causes it delight?
PASCUALA Why, yes.
MENGO Then, as I'm claiming, there
Can be no love but of the kind
That everybody seeks to find
By courting pleasure everywhere.
BARRILDO I seem to have some memory of
A sermon I heard by and by
Regarding Plato,[6] some Greek guy
Who taught humanity to love,
Although the love he felt was aimed
At virtue and his loved one's soul.
PASCUALA This line of thought has, on the whole,
Both stumped great intellects and shamed

Top scholars in our ’cademies
Full p. C-656
Who fry their brains debating it.
LAURENCIA She’s right; don’t fly into a snit
By arguing for such fallacies.
Go thank your stars for leaving you
Without love, Mengo, in this sphere.
MENGO Don’t you love?
LAURENCIA Just my honor here.
FRONDOSO I hope God makes you jealous, too.
BARRILDO So, who’s the winner?
PASCUALA You can take
That question to the sacristan.
If he won’t tell you, the priest can
And that should settle what’s at stake.
As I’ve not much experience
And our Laurencia loves not well,
I wonder how we’ll ever tell?
FRONDOSO To suffer such indifference!
(Enter FLORES .)
FLORES God keep you, good folk! As you were.
PASCUALA So the retainer’s sent to talk
For the Commander.
LAURENCIA Chicken hawk!
What brings you here today, fine sir?
FLORES You see this uniform, don’t you?
LAURENCIA So then, Fernán is coming back?
FLORES The battle’s won, though our attack
Entailed the loss of not a few
Brave men and blood of good allies.
FRONDOSO Do tell us how the fighting raged.
FLORES Who better to, since war was waged
Before these witnesses, my eyes?
To undertake this swift campaign
Against a city by the name
Of Ciudad Real, our most
Courageous, noble Master raised
An army of two thousand men—

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All loyal vassals—with whom rode
Three hundred more of mounted troops
Comprised of friars and laymen both
For anyone who wears this Cross
Must rally to its battle cry,
Including priests, especially when
The foes are Moors,[7] you read me right?
Thus did the gallant youth ride forth
Bedecked in an embroidered coat
Full p. C-657
Of green with golden monograms.
His glistening brassards[8] alone
Shone through the openings in his sleeves
Held fast by hooks with golden braids.
A sturdy charger rode he, bred
In our fair South and dapple-gray,
And grazed upon the fertile spots
Nearby. Its tailpiece was adorned
With buckskin straps, its curled forelock
In pure-white bows resembling cloth
That expert weavers deftly wove
To match the patches on its hide,
Or “flies on snow,” as they are known.
Your liege lord, Fernán Gómez, rode
Beside him on a honeyed steed
That bore some white upon its nose,
Accenting its black mane and feet.
Atop a Turkish coat of mail
His armor breast- and back-plate shone
Both bordered with an orange trim
Relucent with pearls set in gold.
And from his burnished helmet waved
A crown of plumes that seemed to stretch
In orange-blossom whiteness down
To meet his orange vestment’s edge.
A red and white brace held his lance
In readiness, although this bore
More likeness to a huge ash tree

To petrify Granada's[1] Moors.
And so the city took up arms
In affirmation of the stance
That it obeyed the rightful crown
And would defend its king and lands.
The Master mounted an attack
And, after fierce resistance there,
Decreed that all who'd wagged their tongues
Against his honor be prepared
To die beheaded for their crime,
While those who rallied round the flag
Among the simple city folk
Were flogged in public, bound and gagged.
There in the city he abides,
As well loved as he is well feared;

Full p. C-658

A man who battles, castigates
And crushes foes, still raw in years,
The town believes will come to be
The scourge of Africa someday,
Subjecting blue and crescent moons[2]
To that Red Cross his garb displays.
So many gifts has he bestowed
On our Commander and on all,
It seems that he's despoiling not
The city, but his private vaults.
But listen! Hear the music play?
Come welcome your great hero home,
For no wreath suits a victor like
The good will shown him by his own.

(Enter the COMMANDER and ORTUÑO, MUSICIANS, Village Magistrates ESTEBAN and ALONSO, and Village Councilman JUAN ROJO .)

MUSICIANS *(Singing) All hail, victorious*
Commander! Thy bold deeds be praised!
For thou hast slain our foes
And left their rebel cities razed!
Long life to thy Guzmáns
And to our Master's proud Giróns!

Troy University Resources

In times of peace thy speech
Is couched in calm and measured tones
Though thou wouldst battle Moors
Courageous as an oak is strong.
From Ciudad Real
To Fuenteovejuna throng
Thy still triumphant troops
And here thy lofty pennants wave!
Fernán Gómez, God grant
A thousand years to one so brave!
COMMANDER Kind villagers, I thank you for this true
Outpouring of affection I've been shown.
ALONSO'Tis but a fraction of our love for you
And scarce reflects the sentiments you're known
To merit.
ESTEBAN Fuenteovejuna deems
Your presence here an honor, and our own
Town council begs you to accept what seems
No doubt a paltry offering conveyed
By cart to one the village so esteems
And tendered in goodwill mid poles arrayed
With ribbons, though the gifts themselves be small.
To start, glazed earthenware our potters made.
Next, an entire stock of geese—see all

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Their heads protruding through the mesh to voice
Praise for your valor with their cackling call!
Ten salted hogs, each specimen more choice,
Jerked beef, rich delicacies, and pork hides
Which, more than perfumed gloves, make men rejoice.
A hundred capons and plump hens, the brides
Of future widowed roosters of the same
Sort dotting these lush fields, are yours besides.
You'll not fetch arms or horses for your fame,
Nor trappings here embroidered with pure gold
Unless you take for gold the love you claim.
And having said "pure," may I be so bold
As to suggest these wineskins bear such wine
That poor bare soldiers scarce would mind the cold

As they patrolled outdoors if they could line
Their stomachs with this, steelier than steel,
For wine can cause the dullest blades to shine.
I'll skip the savories and the cheese you'll feel
Most tempted by, except to say it's right
That we should pay you tribute for our weal
And wish your household hearty appetite.
COMMANDER For this, much thanks, good councilmen.
You may retire with all my best.
ALONSO We bid you, sir, enjoy some rest
And welcome you back home again.
This sedge and bulrush at your door,
A touch of grace our town unfurls,
Might well have been oriental pearls—
Though surely you deserve far more—
Had we but means to furnish these.
COMMANDER Kind folk, I doubt not what you say.
May God be with you.
ESTEBAN Singers, play
Our song of triumph once more, please.
MUSICIANS *(Singing.) All hail, victorious*
Commander! Thy bold deeds be praised!
For thou hast slain our foes
And left their rebel cities razed!

(Exit MUSICIANS . The COMMANDER turns toward his residence but stops at the entrance to speak with LAURENCIA and PASCUALA .)

COMMANDER Abide a while, the two of you.
LAURENCIA What can we do for you, good sir?
COMMANDER Why, just the other day you were
Aloof toward me, is that not true?
LAURENCIA It's you he's coming to harass.
PASCUALA Oh God, no! Let it not be that!
COMMANDER I'm talking both to you, wildcat,
And to this other lovely lass,

Full p. C-660

For aren't you mine?
PASCUALA Good sir, no doubt,
But hardly for such things as these.
COMMANDER Just come inside and be at ease.

Troy University Resources

You see my servants are about.
LAURENCIA Well, had the magistrates come, too—
For one's my father, you may know—
It might have seemed correct to go.
COMMANDER You, Flores!
FLORES Sir!
COMMANDER Can it be true
That they refuse what I implore?
FLORES He said, go in!
LAURENCIA Stop grabbing, man!
FLORES You're being foolish.
PASCUALA While you plan
To lock us in and bolt the door?
FLORES He only thought you'd like to see
The spoils he gathered in this batch.
(The COMMANDER turns to enter his dwelling.)
COMMANDER *(Aside to Ortuño.)* If they do enter, draw the latch.
LAURENCIA I told you, Flores, leave us be!
ORTUÑO You mean the two of you are not
More booty?
PASCUALA Let it rest awhile
And get out of my way or I'll . . .
FLORES Enough, for now. You see they're hot.
LAURENCIA How much more tribute would it take
To make him happy with these meats?
ORTUÑO Your meats would be the sweeter treats.
LAURENCIA I hope they make his belly ache!
(Exit LAURENCIA and PASCUALA .)
FLORES He'll give us both an earful when
We dare return without the girls
And curse us like a pair of churls
While we take his abuse again.
ORTUÑO Well, masters sometimes grow annoyed.
To prosper in the servant class,
You have to let their foul moods pass:
Be patient or be unemployed.
(Exit FLORES and ORTUÑO .)

[A Room in the Palace of the Catholic Kings]

(Enter King FERDINAND , Queen ISABEL , the courtier Don MANRIQUE , and retinue.)

ISABEL You would do well to heed the threat
Alfonso's army now presents.
His Portuguese have pitched their tents
Full p. C-661
In nearby fields and must be met
With troops who'll counter this deceit
By striking ere these foes attack
For if our men don't drive them back
Our side will suffer sure defeat.

FERDINAND Navarre and Aragon[3] both aid
Our righteous cause and shall until
We steel our forces in Castile
And see their re-formation made,
A measure which should guarantee
Our triumph in an allied thrust.

ISABEL Your Royal Majesty, we must
Be certain of this victory.

MANRIQUE Your Highness, there are aldermen
From Ciudad Real here who
Request an audience with you.

FERDINAND Brave Don Manrique, show them in.

(Enter two ALDERMEN from Ciudad Real.)

1ST ALDERMAN Great Ferdinand, most Catholic king,
Whom Heaven's sent with grace to reign
Through all Castile and Aragon,
Our noble succor and true aid,
On Ciudad Real's behalf
We've come to sue for royal help
In true humility before
Your valiant and all-powerful self.
We'd held our own selves fortunate
To be the subjects of this crown
Till adverse fortune intervened
And turned our destinies around.
Rodrigo Téllez Girón, sire,
Famed bearer of his family name

Troy University Resources

Whose courage on the battlefield
And strength belie his tender age,
Of Calatrava Master, has
Assailed our city to expand
The Order's power and estate,
His lands erstwhile by royal grant.
We bravely readied our defense
In hopes resistance would rebuff
His forces, but our streams ran red,
Discolored with the fallen's blood.
In short, he took the city but
He never could have had Fernán
Gómez withheld his counsel, troops,

Full p. C-662

And guidance in this treacherous plot.
He bides still in our captured town,
His vassals and sad subjects we
Who suffer this loss with regret
And hope it soon be remedied.
FERDINAND And where is Fernán Gómez now?
1ST ALDERMAN In Fuenteovejuna, sire,
The village where he makes his home
And where his seat of power resides,
The cruel Commander acts unchecked,
More freely than we care to state,
And keeps his vassals there as far
From happiness as they can stay.
FERDINAND Have you no captain in your ranks?
2ND ALDERMAN It's sure we haven't anymore,
As every nobleman they seized
Was wounded or has faced the sword.
ISABEL This matter begs a quick display
Of strength, for cautious remedy
Would only make this enemy
The bolder given our delay.
Thus Portugal might view this stall
A chance occasion fortune yields,
Thrust through Extremadura's[4] fields

And so bring grievous harm to all.
FERDINAND Manrique, take two companies
Of soldiers to their bivouac
And launch a merciless attack
To quell such excesses as these.
The Count of Cabra, widely famed
For bravery and a Córdoba,[5]
Will ride with you, and never a
More valiant soldier has Spain claimed!
This seems the most expedient
Proceeding we can now effect.
MANRIQUE Your judgment, sire, is most correct
And this dispatch most provident.
As long as life runs through my veins,
I'll see them all put in their place.
ISABEL I'm confident success shall grace
Our cause with such men at the reins.
(Exit all.)

Full p. C-663

[An Open Field in Fuenteovejuna]

(Enter LAURENCIA and FRONDOSO .)

LAURENCIA I had to leave the wash half wet,
Frondoso, just to keep the town
From gossiping. The brook's no place
For men to gallivant around.
The villagers are whispering
About how you persist. They know
I've caught your eye as you have mine
And keep their eyes now on us both.
As you're the type of brazen swain
To strut throughout the village clad
In elegant attire that costs
Far more than any other lad's,
There's not a girl or guy about
These woodlands, meadows, groves, and brush
Who isn't saying to himself
That we two are already one.

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They all await that blessed day
When Juan Chamorro, sacristan,
Will leave the church's organ long
Enough to carry out our banns,
Though they'd be better off by far
To see their granaries duly stuffed
With heaps of autumn's golden wheat
And have their wine jars filled with must.
The rumors that the villagers
Keep spreading here have caused me pique
But aren't so irritating as
To have deprived me of dear sleep.
FRONDOSO Your harsh disdain so flusters me,
Laurencia, that I fear each time
I see your face or hear your voice
I place existence on the line!
For if you know my sole desire
Is that we marry, why repay
These good intentions with such scorn?
LAURENCIA I know but one way to behave.
FRONDOSO How can it be you feel no pain
To see me in the grip of grief
When, at the merest thought of you,
I lose desire for food and sleep?
How can that sweet, angelic face
Bring such hardheartedness with it?
But, Lord, how rabidly I rave!
LAURENCIA Then you must seek a curative.
FRONDOSO The cure I seek resides in you
So we can be like turtledoves

Full p. C-664

That perch together rubbing beaks
And coo contentedly in love—
I mean, provided that the church . . .
LAURENCIA Go ask my uncle from your heart,
The good Juan Rojo. Though I feel
No passion yet, I sense a spark.
FRONDOSO Oh, no! Look over there—it's him!
LAURENCIA He must be hunting deer nearby.

Quick, run and hide within these woods!
FRONDOSO It's jealousy I need to hide!
(Enter the COMMANDER .)
COMMANDER I can't say it displeases me
To set out for a fearsome buck
And come upon a lovely doe.
LAURENCIA I left my pile of wash half done
For this brief respite from my chores
But now, I fear, the brook awaits
So, by your leave, I'll go now, sir.
COMMANDER The brusqueness in your cruel disdain,
Laurencia, is a sharp affront
To all the grace and comely looks
The heavens have bestowed on you
And makes you seem unnatural.
You've managed in the past to flee
The loving of my arms' embrace
But now this field, our silent friend,
Has pledged to keep our secret safe.
Come, there's no need for diffidence
Or any reason to avert
Your gaze from me, your rightful lord,
As if I were some peasant churl.
Did not Pedro Redondo's wife
Sebastiana gladly yield,
And young Martín del Pozo's, too,
Although the latter's wedding seal
Had scarcely dried, our happy tryst
But two days after she was wed?
LAURENCIA These women, sir, could by that time
Claim much experience with men
As that same road you took to them
Had been well traveled for some years
By all the lads with whom they'd lain.
God keep you as you hunt your deer;
Were you not costumed with that cross,
I'd take you for the devil's spawn
To hound me so relentlessly.

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COMMANDER What haughty insolence you flaunt!
I'll lay my crossbow on the ground
Full p. C-665
And use these hands to put an end
To all your mincing ways.
LAURENCIA How now?
You don't mean you'd be capable . . .
(Enter FRONDOSO, who picks up the crossbow.)
COMMANDER *(Not noticing* FRONDOSO *.)* Don't try to fight me off.
FRONDOSO *(Aside.)* I pick
His weapon up, but hope to God
I'll have no cause for using it.
COMMANDER Relent already!
LAURENCIA Heavens, help
A girl in need!
COMMANDER We're all alone.
There's no need now to be afraid.
FRONDOSO Commander, you've a generous soul
So leave her be or rest assured
I'll make a bull's-eye of your chest
Though, even in my rage, that cross
Elicits my profound respect.
COMMANDER Vile dog!
FRONDOSO I see no dogs round here.
Quick, run, Laurencia!
LAURENCIA Careful now,
Frondoso!
FRONDOSO Off with you, I said!
(Exit LAURENCIA .)
COMMANDER The fool who'd lay his own sword down
Deserves the trouble he incurs.
I feared my prey would hear its clap
So I pursued the hunt ungirt.
FRONDOSO By God, don't make me loose the catch
Or you'll be pierced like game, my lord.
COMMANDER She's gone! Come, give the crossbow up,
You thieving, treacherous, peasant rogue!
Just give it here, I said!

FRONDOSO For what,
So you could take my life with it?
Remember, sir, that love is deaf
And, from that day it reigns supreme,
Will not be swayed by argument.
COMMANDER Am I to turn my back upon
A village churl? Shoot! Shoot, you knave,
But be prepared to stand on guard,
For as a nobleman I break
Chivalric code to challenge you.
FRONDOSO No need, sir, for I'm satisfied
With my low station here on earth

Full p. C-666

But, as I must protect my life,
I'll take this crossbow as I flee.
COMMANDER He plays a rash and perilous game
But I shall have my vengeance for
This crime of standing in my way!
Why didn't I just attack the clod?
The heavens see how I've been shamed!

Footnotes

- Note 2:Leader of the Order of Calatrava, a Spanish military and religious order founded by Cistercian monks in the 12th century to defend against Moorish attacks. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Pope Pius II (1405–1464), elected to the papacy in 1458. Before his death he issued a papal bull granting Master Pedro Girón's request that he be allowed to relinquish his post and appoint his illegitimate son, Rodrigo, to the position of Master. Pius's successor, Paul II, reaffirmed Pius's decree (see line 80) and in 1466 the eight-year-old Rodrigo was appointed Master and his uncle, Don Juan Pacheco, coadjutor (see lines 81–83). In 1474 (not long before the action of the play unfolds), Rodrigo attained his majority and was able to assume full command of the Order of Calatrava. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:The historical father of Rodrigo Téllez-Girón, Pedro Girón, relinquished leadership of the Order of Calatrava in order to marry the Infanta Isabel, sister of King Henry IV of Castile, but died before their marriage could take place. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:Pope Paul II (1417–1471), elected pope in 1464. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:Marquis of Villena (see line 125), first duke of Escalona and leader of the chivalric Order of Santiago. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:King Henry IV of Castile (1420–1474, r. 1454–74). Return to reference 7

Troy University Resources

- Note 8:King Alfonso V of Portugal (1432–1481, r. 1438–81), who married King Henry's daughter Juana in 1475 (see lines 94, 101). Return to reference 8
- Note 9:The future King Ferdinand II of Aragón (1452–1516, r. 1479–1516) and King Ferdinand V of Castile (r. 1474–1516); he claimed the Castilian throne through his marriage to Isabel and was known as "Ferdinand the Catholic." Return to reference 9
- Note 1:Queen Isabel (sometimes Isabella) of Castile (1451–1504, r. 1474–1504), half sister of King Henry IV. Following her marriage to Ferdinand of Aragón in 1469, Pope Alexander VI named them the "Catholic Monarchs." Return to reference 1
- Note 2:King Henry IV's only child (1462–1504); because of the alleged infidelity of her mother, Princess Joana of Portugal, Juana was considered illegitimate by many, and upon her father's death the crown of Castile passed not to Juana but to her aunt, Isabel of Castile, sparking the War of the Castilian Succession (the backdrop of *Fuenteovejuna*). Return to reference 2
- Note 3:A city in south-central Spain whose name means "Royal City." "Almagro": a town near Ciudad Real and the seat of the Order of Calatrava. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:Among these ancestors was Alfonso Téllez-Girón, the father of Juan Pacheco and grandfather of Rodrigo. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:That is, Juan Pacheco (see line 81 and note). Return to reference 5
- Note 6:From the Lord's Prayer: see Matthew 6.13; Luke 11.4. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:Intolerance for all non-Christian religions increased during the Reconquest of territories from Muslim forces, and Jews who did not convert to Catholicism were expelled from Spain in 1492. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:A bowed string instrument of medieval origin, played while held against the arm or under the chin like a violin. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:Prior to the Second Vatican Council (1962–65), Roman Catholic baptisms often included the placing of a small amount of salt on a baby's lips as a symbol of purification and wisdom. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:The following is a comic pastiche of tenets of classical philosophy. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:I.e., the four elements that make up all matter (earth, air, fire, and water); this theory of matter, still current during the Renaissance, was first propounded by the Greek philosopher Empedocles (c. 493–c. 433 B.C.E.) Return to reference 2
- Note 3:According to the humoral theory of psychology and physiology, elaborated by the Greek physician Galen (129–c. 199 C.E.) and dominant for centuries, imbalances between the four humors, or bodily fluids, determined health and personality. An excess of black bile (a cold, dry substance in the body corresponding to the earth) made people melancholic, while blood and air were associated with the sanguine; yellow bile and fire, with the choleric; and phlegm and water, with the phlegmatic. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:I.e., the harmony produced by a balance in bodily systems; "pure concert from above" (line 382) also suggests the harmony produced by the music of the spheres, a concept generally credited to the Greek mathematician and philosopher Pythagoras (6th century B.C.E.) but taken up more literally in the Middle Ages. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:A position drawn from Plato's *Symposium* (c. 384 B.C.E.). See line 423 and note. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:Greek philosopher (c. 427–c. 347 B.C.E.), whose themes were much debated in the 15th century by Neoplatonists. Return to reference 6

- Note 7:North African Muslims who conquered Spain and Portugal in 711 and ruled for centuries over much of the Iberian Peninsula (see line 500 and note). Return to reference 7
- Note 8:Armor for protecting the arm, usually from elbow to shoulder. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:A river that passes through the southern Spanish cities of Córdoba and Seville. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:A city in southern Spain; the site of the Alhambra, the palace of the Moorish kings, it was the Moors' last stronghold, from which they were expelled in 1492. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Islamic insignia. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Provinces of northern Spain. Following the events depicted in this play, Ferdinand succeeded his father as king of Aragón in 1479; in 1511 he conquered the southern half of the kingdom of Navarre, uniting it with Spain. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:A province of southwest Spain bordering Portugal. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:Diego Fernandez de Córdoba (b. 1438), count of Cabra and marshal of Baena. Return to reference 5

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Act II

[The Town Square in Fuenteovejuna]

(Enter ESTEBAN and Village Alderman CUADRADO .)

ESTEBAN We've still abundant stocks of wheat reserved
But really mustn't raid our granaries more.
These recent forecasts have us all unnerved
And I believe our strength lies in this store
Though some don't see what good these stocks have served.
CUADRADO I've always been of one mind on this score;
Abundance means there's governance in peace.
ESTEBAN We'll tell Fernán Gómez, then, this must cease.
These fool astrologers do irritate!
Though ignorant of the future, they've a hoard
Of unconvincing prattles that relate
Grave secrets vital only to the Lord.
They think they're theologians and conflate
Before and after into one accord:
Ask any one about the present, though,
And you'll soon learn how little any know!
What, do they own the clouds that dot the air
Or the trajectory of the heavens' light?
How can they see what's happening up there
To give us all an endless case of fright?
They tell us when to plant our crops and where—
Wheat there, now greens, your barley to the right,
Here mustard, pumpkins, now cucumber beds—
I swear to God that they're the pumpkin heads!
First, they predict a herd of cows will die
And die they do—in Transylvania![6]
They forecast that our wine yield won't be high
But see beer flowing in Westphalia.[7]
The cherry frost in Gascony[8] they spy
And hordes of tigers in Hyrcania.[9]
Plant what we will, though, blessed by them or cursed,
The year still ends December thirty-first.

Full p. C-667

(Enter the university graduate LEONELO and BARRILDO .)

LEONELO Looks like the gossip corner's doing well;
The tardy pupil can't be teacher's pet!

BARRILDO Was Salamanca[1] grand?
LEONELO I've much to tell.

BARRILDO You'll be Law's second Bartolus.[2]
LEONELO Not yet.
A barber, maybe. What I'd dwell
Upon is doctrine for the jurist set.
BARRILDO I'm sure you studied with the utmost care.
LEONELO I tried to gain important knowledge there.
BARRILDO So many volumes are in print today
The multitudes imagine they are wise.
LEONELO Yet they know less, it saddens me to say,
For so much wisdom's hard to summarize
And all their vain attempts to find a way
Just make the letters swim before their eyes.
The more a person reads the printed word
The more the letters on the page look blurred.
I don't doubt that the art of print has saved
The best cuts from this cloth of rhetoric
By salvaging sage works from Time's depraved
Consignment of all earthly things to quick
Oblivion; this the printing press has staved.

To Gutenberg[3] we owe this curious trick,
A German from the town of Mainz whose fame
Is more than any Fame herself can claim.
Some writers who were once deemed erudite,
Though, lost their erudition on the page
While dumber men who never learned to write
Have published using names of men more sage.
Still others have penned treatises so trite
That, overcome by jealousy and rage,
They've signed their rivals' names to these poor works
To make their readers think these authors jerks!
BARRILDO They couldn't do such things!
LEONELO It's natural
For fools to reap revenge on real success.

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BARRILDO Still, Leonelo, print is notable.
LEONELO We've lived for centuries without the press
And I don't see these modern times more full
Full p. C-668
Of Saint Augustines or Jeromes,[4] do you?
BARRILDO Let's sit a while before you start to stew.
(Enter JUAN ROJO and a VILLAGER .)
JUAN ROJO If what we've seen is true, you couldn't raise
A dowry out of what four farms would yield.
Now anyone who'd know the truth can gaze
Upon our town's disruption unconcealed.
VILLAGER Peace, friend. What news of the Commander's days?
JUAN ROJO He cornered poor Laurencia in a field!
VILLAGER That lecherous animal! I'd love to see
The villain hanging from that olive tree!
(Enter the COMMANDER with ORTUÑO and FLORES .)
COMMANDER God keep you, townsfolk, in His grace.
CUADRADO My lord.
COMMANDER Good villagers, at ease
Now, as you were.
ESTEBAN Your lordship, please
Be seated in your wonted place.
We'll stand, as this suits everyone.
COMMANDER I'll order you to sit down, then.
ESTEBAN You honor us as only men
Of honor can, as men who've none
Can scarcely proffer what they've not.
COMMANDER Come, sit. I'd like us to confer.
ESTEBAN Have you received the greyhound, sir?
COMMANDER The dog continues to besot
My valets, magistrate, and stuns
The servants with its noble speed.
ESTEBAN A fine example of its breed!
Good lord, that noble creature runs
As fast as any suspect or
Delinquent that the law pursues.
COMMANDER Well, given but the choice, I'd choose
To have you point the dog straight for

A certain frisky little hare
Too swift for any but this hound.
ESTEBAN I will, but where might she be found?
COMMANDER I'm speaking of your daughter there.
ESTEBAN My daughter?
COMMANDER Yes.
ESTEBAN How could she be
A consort suitable for you?
COMMANDER Do give her a good talking to.
Full p. C-669
ESTEBAN Why, pray?
COMMANDER She's set on vexing me.
A lady here in town you'd call
Distinguished noted my designs
And, at the first sign of my signs,
Succumbed.
ESTEBAN Then she disgraced us all.
If you don't mind me saying, sir,
Your language ought to be less free.
COMMANDER The rustic speaks so loftily!
Ah, Flores! Have this villager
Read one of Aristotle's tomes,
The *Politics.*[5]
ESTEBAN We of the land
Are glad to live by your command
And seek but honor for our homes
As Fuenteovejuna, too,
Can boast distinguished residents.
LEONELO (*Aside.*) To hear that villain's insolence!
COMMANDER Has what I said offended you
Or any gathered here today?
CUADRADO Commander, this is most unjust.
You're wrong to say such things and must
Not stain our honor in this way.
COMMANDER Your what? Who do you think you are,
The Friars of Calatrava, then?
CUADRADO No doubt that Order numbers men
Who wear the cross with bloodlines far

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Less pure than simple townsfolk own.
COMMANDER So should our lines mix, theirs would be
Forever fouled?
CUADRADO Iniquity
Defiles, not cleanses—that's well known.
COMMANDER Whatever reasoning you seek,
Your women should be honored so.
ESTEBAN Such words do shame us all, and no
One thinks you'd do the deeds you speak.
COMMANDER These peasants can be tiresome!
In cities they know how to treat
A man of qualities and meet
His every wish when he is come.
There, husbands deem it flattery
When other men pursue their wives.
ESTEBAN You say this so we'll all live lives
Of equal moral laxity.
God still inhabits cities, though,
Where vengeance is more swift and clean.

Full p. C-670

COMMANDER That's it! Be on your way!
ESTEBAN You mean
You wish the two of us to go?
COMMANDER No, I don't want to see a soul!
Now clear the square and don't come back!
ESTEBAN We're leaving then.
COMMANDER Not in a pack!
FLORES Sir, please, a little self-control.
COMMANDER They'll plot against me left alone,
Each boor a co-conspirator.
ORTUÑO Have patience with these rustics, sir.
COMMANDER I marvel at how much I've shown.
Now head off home, the lot of you—
I won't have anything amiss.
LEONELO *(Aside.)* Just heavens, will you suffer this?
ESTEBAN It's time that I returned home, too.

(Exit the Villagers.)

COMMANDER Men, don't you find these clods absurd?

ORTUÑO They know you scarcely deign to mask
Your condescension when they ask
That their petitioning be heard.
COMMANDER So now they think us peers of sorts?
FLORES Who equals whom does not pertain.
COMMANDER How does that crossbow thief remain
At large, unsentenced by our courts?
FLORES I thought I'd spied him lingering near
Laurencia's doorstep late last night,
Though now I know I wasn't right:
I slit some knave's throat ear to ear
When I mistook his cloak to be
Frondoso's in the eventide.
COMMANDER I can't imagine where he'd hide.
FLORES Oh, he'll turn up eventually.
COMMANDER Would anyone who tried to kill
A man like me remain close by?
FLORES The heedless bird will blithely fly
Into a snare lured by a trill,
The foolish fish swim toward the hook.
COMMANDER To think a clod, a boy at best,
Could point a crossbow at the chest
Of this brave captain, whose sword shook
Granada and Córdoba both!
It's at an end, this world we knew!
FLORES He acted as love bid him to.
You're still alive, so by my oath,
I think you're in the peasant's debt.
COMMANDE I swear, Ortuño, had I not
Disguised my feelings toward this lot,

Full p. C-671

Two hours would not have passed by yet
And I'd have run the whole town through.
Until I judge the time is right,
I'll keep the reins on vengeance tight
And then do what I need to do.
What says Pascuala?
FLORES She replied
That any day now she's to wed.

Troy University Resources

COMMANDER If she'd still care to lend her bed . . .
FLORES She's sending you where they'll provide
Your lordship with such things for cash.
COMMANDER What says Olalla, then?
ORTUÑO The girl's
A lively one.
COMMANDER Her quips are pearls.
To wit?
ORTUÑO She and her husband clash
Of late because, she'd have you know,
He's jealous of the notes I bring
And mad that you'd go visiting
His wife with manservants in tow.
Just wait until he drops his guard
And you'll be first inside again!
COMMANDER This knight is glad upon it, then.
The peasant watches her but hard.
ORTUÑO It's true, though his attention strays.
COMMANDER And sweet Inés?
FLORES Who?
COMMANDER Anton's bit.
FLORES Her offer stands most definite
And ought to liven up your days.
We spoke in the corral outside—
Go round the back and in that door.
COMMANDER Loose women I've a soft spot for
But less so once I'm satisfied.
Ah, Flores, if they only were
Aware of what their charms are worth!
FLORES As letdowns go, there's none on earth
Like plain capitulation, sir.
A woman's quick surrender blights
The pleasure men anticipate,
Though certain girls corroborate
A wise philosopher[6] who writes
That females crave male company
As form desires material shape,
Which shouldn't leave your mouths agape

For this is but reality.
COMMANDER A man whom ardor's heat lays waste
Is glad to have his pleasure sealed
By lady friends who readily yield,
Though he disdain them for this haste.
The surest course for love to run
Once all delight has been bestowed
Is down oblivion's well-worn road
Of favors far too easily won.

(Enter CIMBRANOS, a soldier.)

CIMBRANOS Is the Commander hereabouts?
ORTUÑO What, don't you see him standing there?
CIMBRANOS Oh, brave Fernán Gómez! Throw off
Your hunter's cap and be prepared
To strap your battle helmet on!
Replace your cloak with armor now!
The Master of Santiago and
The Count of Cabra's troops surround
Young Don Rodrigo Girón in
Support of the Castilian queen
At Ciudad Real. Good sir,
I'm certain you can plainly see
That all the blood your Order's lost
Will be for naught should they succeed.
Our forces can already glimpse
The figures on their coats of arms:
Castile's two castles paired with lions
By Aragon's heraldic bars.[7]
So while the King of Portugal
Would like to honor staunch Girón,
The youth would do well just to reach
Almagro and be safely home.
Quick, saddle up your charger, sir;
They'll head back to Castile as soon
As you ride boldly into sight.
COMMANDER Be still while I think what to do.
Ortuño, have the trumpet sound

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So all may hear it from the square.
How many soldiers have I here?
ORTUÑO Some fifty horsemen stand prepared.
COMMANDER Inform them that we sally forth.
CIMBRANOS If we don't start out now, good sirs,
Then Ciudad Real will fall.
COMMANDER Fear not, we shan't let this occur.

(Exit all.)

Full p. C-673

[An Open Field in Fuenteovejuna]

(Enter MENGO, LAURENCIA, and PASCUALA, fleeing.)

PASCUALA Oh, please don't leave us here alone!
MENGO How can these fields inspire such dread?
LAURENCIA I think it's best for us to head
To town now, Mengo, on our own—
Just women, unaccompanied—
In case we should cross paths with him.
MENGO He couldn't make our lives more grim
Were he the very demon's seed!
LAURENCIA He's sure to hound us till we're his.
MENGO Oh, lightning bolts, cast down your fires
And purify these mad desires!
LAURENCIA A bloody beast is what he is,
Our arsenic and pestilence
In town.
MENGO Laurencia, I've been told
That poor Frondoso grew so bold
In championing your innocence
He aimed at the Commander's chest.
LAURENCIA You know how much I've hated men
But, Mengo, I confess since then
I've realized he's not like the rest.
How valiant Frondoso was!
I fear this bravery might mean
His death.
MENGO He never can be seen
In town, whatever else he does.

LAURENCIA I love the man, although it's plain
That I, too, know that he must flee.
Still, he responds to such a plea
With raging anger and disdain
While our Commander wastes no breath
Affirming he'll hang upside down.
PASCUALA I hope he chokes and spares our town.
MENGO I'd rather see him stoned to death.
Sweet heavens, if I only knew
Some way to use my sling, I vouch
Just stretching back this leather pouch
Would good as crack his skull in two!
You wouldn't find depravity
Like his in Rome's own Sabalus.[8]
LAURENCIA You mean Heliogabalus,[9]
Whose reign surpassed indecency.

Full p. C-674

MENGO Sir Gawain's[1] misdeeds were no worse.
Though history's outside my ken,
Our own Commander's crueler than
This legendary rogue of verse.
Has nature spawned another fiend
Of Fernán Gómez's brute ilk?
PASCUALA It had to be off tigress milk
That such a furious man was weaned.
(Enter JACINTA, a village woman.)
JACINTA For God's sake, if you hold our oath
Of friendship dear, just help me hide!
LAURENCIA Jacinta, you look petrified!
PASCUALA You may rely upon us both.
JACINTA The vile Commander's men head towards
Old Ciudad Real, a place
Where, armed with their innate disgrace
Far more than with ennobled swords,
They'd take me to him as he bade.
LAURENCIA God free you from the wrongs they'd do,
But if he'd be so free with you,
How cruelly would he treat this maid?

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(Exit LAURENCIA .)

PASCUALA A man might help you to escape;
I can’t defend you in distress.

(Exit PASCUALA .)

MENGO I’ll have to act like one, I guess,
As I’m a man in name and shape.
Come by my side and never fear.
JACINTA But have you arms?
MENGO The oldest known
To man.
JACINTA A sling without a stone?
MENGO Jacinta, there are stones right here.

(Enter FLORES and ORTUÑO .)

FLORES Thought you could run away, did you?
JACINTA Now I’m as good as dead!
MENGO Good sirs,
How can these honest villagers . . .
ORTUÑO So, mustering up the derring-do
To champion a lady’s cause?
MENGO I’d first defend her with my pleas,
Full p. C-675
As I’m male kin, but failing these,
Would look to force and nature’s laws.
FLORES Enough, now. Run the beggar through.
MENGO Compel me to unsling my sling
And you will rue the day I fling
A volley of these rocks at you.

(Enter the COMMANDER and CIMBRANOS .)

COMMANDER A person of my rank alight
To settle such a petty case?
FLORES The rabble in this horrid place,
Which you could purge by every right
For giving you no end of grief,
Now brandish arms against our own.
MENGO Good sir, if you cannot condone
Such conduct, as is my belief,
Then punish these vile soldiers who’d
Abduct this woman in your name.

Her husband's and her parents' fame
Bespeaks the highest rectitude.
Now, by your leave, I'll take the girl
Back home where all her family wait.
COMMANDER My leave, you want? Retaliate,
Men, by my leave, against the churl.
Come, drop the sling.
MENGO My lord, they bade . . .
COMMANDER Peace! Flores and Ortuño, bind
His hands. Cimbranos, help in kind.
MENGO You'd act thus, called to virtue's aid?
COMMANDER What do the townsfolk think of me
In Fuenteovejuna, cur?
MENGO How has our village or I, sir,
Offended you so grievously?
FLORES Are we to kill him, then?
COMMANDER Why draw
Your swords to sully steel you'd grace
With honor in a better place?
ORTUÑO What are your orders?
COMMANDER Whip him raw.
There, lash the peasant to that oak
And, when his back is bared, go seize
Your horse's reins . . .
MENGO Have mercy, please,
Sir! Mercy! You are gentlefolk.
COMMANDER . . . And flog this man relentlessly
Until the studs fly off the straps.
MENGO Do heaven's righteous laws collapse
To grant these deeds impunity?

Full p. C-676

(Exit FLORES, ORTUÑO, CIMBRANOS, and MENGO .)

COMMANDER You, girl, what are you running for?
You find a clod that tills the earth
More pleasing than a man of worth?
JACINTA Is this the way you would restore
Lost honor when it was your plan
To have me carried off by force?

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COMMANDER So, I desired you?
JACINTA Of course,
Because my father is a man
Well spoken of, though not your peer
In birth, with manners gentler still
Than any you possess.
COMMANDER This shrill
Effrontery will not, I fear,
Assuage my wrath or aid your plight.
Now, come along at once.
JACINTA With you?
COMMANDER Correct.
JACINTA Pay heed to what you do.
COMMANDER I'll heed your detriment, all right.
Who needs you? Why should I deprive
The troops of coveted supplies?
JACINTA Not all the force beneath the skies
Could make me suffer this alive!
COMMANDER Come on now, strumpet, move along.
JACINTA Have mercy!
COMMANDER Mercy won't exist.
JACINTA Then I've no choice but to enlist
The heavens to redress this wrong.

(The COMMANDER exits as soldiers carry JACINTA off. Enter LAURENCIA and FRONDOSO .)

LAURENCIA How can you show your face around
Here unafraid?
FRONDOSO I thought that some
Such recklessness would make you come
To see the troth to which we're bound.
I watched the dread Commander part
While hiding in the hills above
And, seeing you deserve my love,
Lost all the fear that plagued my heart.
I hope he goes far off to thrive!
Good riddance, too!
LAURENCIA Don't waste your breath.
Besides, the more men wish your death,

The longer you'll remain alive.
FRONDOSO If that's so, then long life to him,
For both sides profit by this quirk:
Full p. C-677
I live while our best wishes work
Against him in the interim!
Laurencia, is there any place
For me in your affections, dear?
I need to know if my sincere
Devotion's found its port of grace.
I mean, the village speaks as one
By now, considering us a pair,
And it astounds the townsfolk there
To see our coupling left undone.
So put aside these harsh extremes
And tell me if there is or not.
LAURENCIA I swear to both you and that lot
That all will soon be as it seems.
FRONDOSO For this great mercy, let me kiss
Your lovely feet, my future wife!
You've granted me a second life,
I must confess, in saying this.
LAURENCIA Enough with blandishments! We mince
Words when it's evident to us
That you have only to discuss
The matter with my father since
He comes now with my uncle, see?
Frondoso, don't lose faith, for I'm
To be your wedded wife in time—
That much is sure.
FRONDOSO God bolster me!
(They hide. Enter ESTEBAN, ALONSO, and JUAN ROJO .)
ALONSO So, in the end, the townsfolk rose
In vocal protest on the square,
And rightly so, for they'll not bear
More crimes from him resembling those.
The scale of his intemperance
These days can scarcely fail to stun

Troy University Resources

While poor Jacinta's now the one
Who suffers his incontinence.
JUAN ROJO All Spain will soon be governed by
The Catholic Kings, whose well-earned fame
For piety bestows their name,
Which they do both exemplify.
Soon, too, brave Santiago will
Reach Ciudad Real's razed lands
And win it back from Girón's hands
By marshaling his general's skill.
I'm sorry for Jacinta, though,
A stalwart lass in every way.
ALONSO They whipped old Mengo's hide, you say?
JUAN ROJO No ink or flannel that I know
Full p. C-678
Of ever looked more black or blue.
ALONSO Enough! You know my blood begins
To boil just picturing the sins
That make his reputation true.
Why should I carry this baton
Of office if it serves no use?
JUAN ROJO His men inflicted the abuse,
So why should you feel woebegone?
ALONSO Well, what about the time they found
Redondo's wife in this deep glen,
Left raped by the Commander's men,
Among whom she'd been passed around
Detestably when he did cease
To take by force what she'd deny?
JUAN ROJO I hear someone! Who's there?
FRONDOSO Just I,
Who look for leave to speak my piece.
JUAN ROJO Frondoso, as my house is yours,
Speak freely if you feel the need.
You owe life to your sire's seed
But I'm owed what your grace ensures.
You're like a son to me; I reared
You with much love.
FRONDOSO Then, sir, I seek—

Based on this love of which you speak—
A gracious favor volunteered.
You know who fathered this proud son.
ESTEBAN Were you aggrieved by that crazed beast
Fernán Gómez?
FRONDOSO To say the least.
ESTEBAN I thought as much—another one.
FRONDOSO This pledge of love that you confide
Now moves me likewise to profess
I love Laurencia and express
My wish here that she be my bride.
This tongue deserves a reprimand
For hastiness, which you'll excuse,
As usually another sues
The sire for his daughter's hand.
ESTEBAN Your swift return here is a boon,
Frondoso, and prolongs my years.
Dispelling what my heart most fears,
Your coming is most opportune
And so I thank the skies above
That you've emerged to cleanse my name
And thank your passion just the same
For showing purity in love.
It's only right that your good sire
Should learn at once what you've proposed.

Full p. C-679

For my part, I am well disposed
To help you realize this desire.
I would consider myself blessed
If this sweet union came to pass.
JUAN ROJO Well, first we'd better ask the lass
To verify she's acquiesced.
ESTEBAN You needn't go through all that fuss;
In this case nothing is untoward:
The two were firmly of accord
Before he pled his case to us.
We may as well, then, at our ease,
Discuss the dowry that is due.
The sum I gladly offer you

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Was saved up in *maravedís* .[2]
FRONDOSO If I decline, don't feel forlorn;
What I don't need can pass unwept.
JUAN ROJO You should be thankful he'll accept
The girl as bare as she was born.
ESTEBAN That may be, but in any case,
I'll ask the maid if she approves.
FRONDOSO Good thinking, as it ill behooves
Your pressing what she won't embrace.
ESTEBAN Sweet child! Laurencia!
LAURENCIA Father dear.
ESTEBAN I'm sure she will, though you decide.
You see how promptly she replied?
My child, Laurencia! Only sheer
Love urges me to ask today—
Come closer, girl—would you commend
Frondoso marrying your friend,
Good Gila? He's some fiancé,
The most upstanding of our men,
Proud Fuenteovejuna's son.
LAURENCIA What? Gila wed . . .?
ESTEBAN If any one
Among our maids deserves him, then . . .
LAURENCIA I do commend their union, yes.
ESTEBAN Yes—though she's ugly, which makes some
Believe Frondoso should become
Your husband. That we all could bless.
LAURENCIA Oh, father! Still inclined to jest
And gibe at your advanced age, too!
ESTEBAN You love him, child?
LAURENCIA He knows I do
And, though his love's likewise professed,
Unpleasant actualities . . .
ESTEBAN Should I inform him you consent?

Full p. C-680

LAURENCIA Yes, bring him news of my intent.
ESTEBAN So then it's I who hold the keys?
Well, said and done! Let's all away

To seek our good friend in the square.
JUAN ROJO Let’s go.
ESTEBAN My lad, as for a fair
Amount in dowry, would you say
Four thousand might work like a charm?
I’ve that much in *maravedís* .
FRONDOSO How can you speak of such things? Please,
You do my honor grievous harm.
ESTEBAN Come now, son, you’ll feel otherwise
Within a day for, by my word,
A dowry that’s left unconferred
Goes wanting in some other guise.
(All exit except FRONDOSO and LAURENCIA .)
LAURENCIA Frondoso, are you happy, dear?
FRONDOSO Just happy? I’m so overjoyed,
The state I’m in leaves me devoid
Of all my senses when you’re near!
The smiles to which my heart is prone
Pour out in gladness from my eyes
To think, Laurencia, my sweet prize,
That I can claim you as my own.
(Exit FRONDOSO and LAURENCIA . Enter the MASTER, the COMMANDER, FLORES, and ORTUÑO .)
COMMANDER Sir, flee! We can’t do more to hold our ground!
MASTER The weakness of these city walls before
Their army’s forces brought about our fall.
COMMANDER The blood it’s cost them, and the countless lives!
MASTER They failed to seize our standard, though, to count
The Calatravan colors mid their spoils,
Though it had brought great honor to their toils.
COMMANDER Your stratagems are at an end, Girón.
MASTER What can I do if turns of fate from night
To morn appear to be blind Fortune’s will?
VOICES *(Within.)* A victory for the monarchs of Castile!
MASTER Our foes now crown the battlements with lights,
Emblazoning the windows in the towers
Above with standards marking victory.
COMMANDER And well they might, for all the blood it’s cost.

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Their joy seems tragic given what they've lost.
MASTER I'll set back out for Calatrava, then.
COMMANDER And I to Fuenteovejuna while
You ponder whether to support your kin
Or pledge allegiance to the Catholic king.
MASTER I'll write when I'm resolved of my intent.
Full p. C-681
COMMANDER Here Time itself will be your guide.
MASTER Ah, youth!
May your deceptions keep me not from Truth!

[ESTEBAN 's House]

(The wedding is in progress. Enter MUSICIANS, MENGO, FRONDOSO, LAURENCIA, PASCUALA, BARRILDO, ESTEBAN, ALONSO, and JUAN ROJO .)

MUSICIANS *Oh, many happy years*
To you, sweet bride and groom!
Oh, many happy years!
MENGO You dashed that off in seconds flat,
Now didn't you? It's not much good.
BARRILDO What? You don't mean to say you could
Compose a better song than that?
FRONDOSO He's more familiar with the lash
Than with the melodies of verse.
MENGO Don't shrink, but some have suffered worse.
One man that blackguard didn't thrash
Was taken to the vale one day . . .
BARRILDO Stop, Mengo, please! Be merciful!
That homicidal animal
Dishonors all who pass his way.
MENGO A hundred soldiers—not one less—
Administered my pummeling.
I'd nothing on me but my sling
And never suffered such duress.
But, as I was just saying, a
Fine man whose name I won't evoke,
Esteemed by all the village folk,
Was given quite the enema
Of ink and pebbles all in one.
Who'd stand for vileness of that sort?

BARRILDO The savage looked on it as sport.
MENGO Well, enemas are far from fun
And, while they are salubrious,
I'd rather that my death come fast.
FRONDOSO So, may we hear now at long last
The ditty you've composed for us?
MENGO *Oh, many happy years to you,*
Dear newlyweds! God's grace decree
That envy and vile jealousy
Should never come between you two!
And when your years on earth are through,
Depart this life from satiety!
Oh, many happy years!
FRONDOSO A curse upon the rhyming hack
Who dashed off such a poor refrain!
BARRILDO It did sound hasty.
MENGO Let me deign

Full p. C-682

To say a word about this pack:
You know how fritter-makers throw
Their bits of batter in the oil
And add more as they watch it boil
Until the kettle's filled with dough?
How some look swollen when they're turned,
Misshapen and a sorry sight,
Some lumpy on the left or right,
Some nicely fried but others burned?
That's what I've come to understand
A poet does to draft a strain,
Material sprung from his brain
Like dough he forms with pen in hand.
Then, whoosh! He plops the poetry
On sheets—the role the kettle plays—
Assuming that a honey glaze
Will mute the public's mockery.
Though once the audience takes a look,
There's scarce a buyer to be found
Because the only one around
Who'll eat that rubbish is the cook!

Troy University Resources

BARRILDO I think we've heard enough of this;
It's time the lovers made a speech.
LAURENCIA Give us your hand, sir, we beseech.
JUAN ROJO Sweet child, my hand you wish to kiss?
First ask your father for this grace
On both yours and Frondoso's part.
ESTEBAN I pray God sees it in His heart
To fold them in His fond embrace
And bless the new life they've begun.
FRONDOSO May you both bless us all life long.
JUAN ROJO We shall. Come, lads, let's have a song
For now these two are joined as one!
MUSICIANS *The maid with flowing tresses roamed*
Through Fuenteovejuna's vale
And all the while, unknown to her,
A Knight of Calatrava trailed.
She hid within the leafy wood,
Pretending she had spied him not
And, by turns bashful and abashed,
Concealed herself amid the copse.
"Why do you steal away, fair lass?"
He asked the maiden in the grove,
"You know full well my lynx-eyed love
Has penetrated walls of stone."
The knight approached the maiden who,
Abashed and quite disquieted,
Began to fashion jealousies
From boughs entangled overhead.

Full p. C-683

But just as anyone who loves
Will think it insignificant
To cross the mountains and the seas,
The knight asked his fair maid again:
"Why do you steal away, fair lass,
My lovely maiden in the grove?
You know full well my lynx-eyed love
Has penetrated walls of stone."

(Enter the COMMANDER, FLORES, ORTUÑO, and CIMBRANOS .)

COMMANDER Don’t stop the feast on my account.
Calm now, no need to be distraught.
JUAN ROJO We recognize you’re in command,
But this, sir, is no game you halt.
Sit here if you would stay. What cause
Is there for such warlike array?
Had you some triumph? But, why ask?
FRONDOSO Stars, I’m a dead man! Send me aid!
LAURENCIA Frondoso, flee while you’ve the chance!
COMMANDER Not this time. Bind the peasant tight.
JUAN ROJO Resign yourself to prison, son.
FRONDOSO I’ll never leave the place alive!
JUAN ROJO Why? What is your offense?
COMMANDER I’m not
The sort to kill without due cause
For, if I were, this cur who stands
Before us would by now have lost
His life, run through here by my guard.
Confine him to a prison cell
Until his father should pronounce
The punishment his crime compels.
PASCUALA Please, sir, not on his wedding day.
COMMANDER Why should these nuptials change my mind?
Are there no other men in town?
PASCUALA You’re able to forgive his crime;
You have that power.
COMMANDER Were I the one
Aggrieved, Pascuala, then I could.
But Master Téllez Girón was
Insulted by this criminal,
His Order and his honor both,
And it’s imperative that all
Bear witness to this punishment
In case some other foe feels called
To raise a standard versus his.
You may have heard one afternoon
He aimed a crossbow at the chest—
My vassals, such a loyal group!—

Troy University Resources

Of your esteemed commander here.

Full p. C-684

ESTEBAN Sir, if a father-in-law may
Defend a deed of his new son,
It isn't hard to contemplate
How someone so in love as he
Might well have rankled with chagrin
If it is certain you conspired
To take his wife away from him.
What swain would not have done the same?
COMMANDER You're talking nonsense, magistrate.
ESTEBAN I speak for your own virtue, sir.
COMMANDER I'm innocent of all you claim;
She wasn't yet his wife back then.
ESTEBAN You're guilty, sir. I'll say no more
But rest assured the king and queen
Who rule Castile will issue forth
New orders for disorder's end.
They'd be remiss, though now at rest
From war, to suffer that their towns
And far-flung villages let men
As powerful and cruel as you
Display a cross so grandiose.
This sign is but for noble breasts
So let it grace the monarch's robes
And not the cloaks of lesser men.
COMMANDER You, there! Relieve him of the staff.
ESTEBAN Obedient, I surrender it.
COMMANDER *(Striking Esteban.)* I'll use it on you as I'd lash
An untamed and unruly horse.
ESTEBAN As you're my lord, I must submit.
PASCUALA You'd cudgel an old man like that?
LAURENCIA He thrashes him because he is
My sire. Avenge yourself on me!
COMMANDER You, take her to the prison grounds
And station ten guards at her cell.
(The COMMANDER exits with his men.)
ESTEBAN Sweet heavens, send your justice down!

(Exit ESTEBAN .)

PASCUALA The wedding has become a wake!

(Exit PASCUALA .)

BARRILDO Who'll speak? Are there no men around?

MENGO I took my licks, thanks much! The welts

Are red as cardinals[3] on my back

Full p. C-685

So save yourselves that trip to Rome!

Let someone else provoke his wrath.

JUAN ROJO We'll speak to him as one.

MENGO Perhaps,

Though now we'd best let silence reign;

Don't you recall they whipped my cheeks

Till they were pink as salmon steaks?

Footnotes

- Note 6:A region of present-day Romania, invoked here as a place remote from Spain. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:A western region of present-day Germany. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:A region of southwest France. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:An area of ancient Persia (present-day northern Iran), associated in classical and later literature with tigers. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:A city in western Spain where the country's oldest university was founded in 1134 and chartered in 1218. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Bartolus of Saxoferrato (1313–1357), Italian jurist, author of influential doctrines based on Roman civil law. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Johannes Gutenberg (c. 1400–1468), inventor of the movable-type printing press in Europe (print had existed in Asia for centuries). Return to reference 3
- Note 4:Two revered church fathers: Saint Augustine (354–430), bishop of Hippo and author of many commentaries and the *Confessions*; Saint Jerome (c. 347–419 or 420), author of ecclesiastical histories, exegeses, and a Latin version of the Bible (the Vulgate). Return to reference 4
- Note 5:A treatise on the city-state by the Greek philosopher (384–322 B.C.E.) Return to reference 5
- Note 6:That is, Aristotle, who expresses this idea (in less sexualized terms) in his *Physics* and *On the Generation of Animals.* Return to reference 6
- Note 7:The symbols of two formerly autonomous kingdoms joined by the marriage of Isabel of Castile and Ferdinand of Aragón. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:A chieftain in North Africa (1st century C.E.) who unsuccessfully revolted against Roman rule. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:The Roman emperor Elagabalus (r. 218–22), whose reign was marked by sexual decadence, cruelty, and his devotion to a non-Roman god. Return to reference 9

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- Note 1:One of the legendary Knights of the Round Table (and King Arthur's nephew); he is generally presented in English versions of the tales as heroic, courtly, and brave, but in some French works he is cruel and treacherous. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Relatively low-value Spanish coins. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Newly invested cardinals of the Catholic Church are given a scarlet cap, and other scarlet vestments further signify their rank. In Spanish, *cardenal* also means "bruise." Return to reference 3

Act III

[The council chamber in Fuenteovejuna]

(Enter ESTEBAN, ALONSO, and BARRILDO .)

ESTEBAN What's keeping them?
BARRILDO They know full well we wait.
ESTEBAN Assembling here grows riskier by the hour.
BARRILDO Most everyone's heard why we congregate.
ESTEBAN With poor Frondoso captive in the tower
And my Laurencia under such duress,
If God does not do all within His power . . .
(Enter JUAN ROJO and CUADRADO .)
JUAN ROJO Why raise your voice, Esteban, when our chief
Aid must be stealth if we're to have success?
ESTEBAN It's shocking I'm not louder, to be brief.
(Enter MENGO .)
MENGO I'll slip into the meeting hall as well.
ESTEBAN An old man whose gray hairs are bathed in grief
Asks you, good villagers, how best the bell
For our dear town's lost honor might be tolled
Now that she's been so ravished and abused.
And how, if these be honors, can we hold
Such rites? Is there a single man left here
Whom that barbarian has not unsoulled?
Why don't you answer? Is it, as I fear,
That you've all had your honor basely used?
Then, make your firm commiseration clear
For, if this common loss can't be excused,
What stays your hand? Or have these blows been slight?
JUAN ROJO The world knows none more wretched and diffused
Though news now reaching us appears more bright:
The Catholic kings, who brought peace to Castile,

Will stop soon in Córdoba, where we might
Dispatch two aldermen who'll sue until
They're pledged redress, bowed at their royal feet.
BARRILDO Before the monarchs do come, though, we will
Still need to find a remedy to meet
This enemy in that our king, who smote
Full p. C-686
So many foes, has others yet to beat.
CUADRADO If anyone here asks me for my vote,
I vote that we forsake this baneful town.
JUAN ROJO We haven't time; besides, they might take note.
MENGO If the Commander hears the noise, he'll frown
So on this council, he might kill us all.
CUADRADO Our tree of patience has come crashing down,
Our ship of fear floats lost beneath this pall.
For such an upright man, who leads this land,
To watch his daughter dragged away in thrall
To brutes, and have the staff of his command
So splintered on his head, I ask of you,
What slave endures more from his master's hand?
JUAN ROJO What is it you would have our village do?
CUADRADO Die, die or put those tyrants to the sword.
We've many villagers, while they are few.
BARRILDO Rise up in arms against our rightful lord?
ESTEBAN The king's our only lord by heaven's laws,
Not that barbaric and inhuman horde.
If God assists us in our righteous cause,
What have we all to lose?
MENGO Take care, good sirs,
Rash actions such as these should give us pause.
I speak for all the simple villagers
Who bear the brunt of this vile injury
And fear still more harm from these tormentors.
JUAN ROJO We suffer this misfortune equally;
Why should we wait until our lives are lost?
They burn our homes and vineyards down with glee;
Revenge upon such tyrants bears no cost!

(Enter LAURENCIA, disheveled.)

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LAURENCIA You let me pass, for I've a right
To enter where the men confer.
A woman may not have a vote
But she can make her voice be heard.
Don't you know me?
ESTEBAN Good God, are you
My daughter?
JUAN ROJO You don't recognize
Your own Laurencia?
LAURENCIA I'm afraid
I must appear a dreadful sight
For you to doubt it's I you see.
ESTEBAN My child!
LAURENCIA Don't dare call me your child
Again.
ESTEBAN Why not, my dearest heart,
Why not?

Full p. C-687

LAURENCIA I've reasons of all kinds,
But let the first among them be
Allowing tyrants, unavenged,
To snatch me from my family's grasp
Without you seeking due revenge.
I'm not Frondoso's wife yet, so
You cannot claim reprisal's weight
Devolves upon a husband's lot
When such revenge is yours to take.
Until the wedding night has passed,
Our codes prescribe that you'd assume
This obligation stands among
A father's duties, not a groom's.
For even if I buy a jewel,
Until it isn't brought to me,
It's not my place to fret about
Who's guarding it or who's a thief.
You watched Fernán Gómez abduct
A maid and didn't lift a hand
Like coward shepherds who allow
The wolf to carry off the lamb.

How many daggers at my heart
And lewd advances I endured!
How many threats and foul misdeeds
From one who'd be my paramour
And yearned to see my chastity
Surrendered to his appetites!
Look at my hair for evidence
Of how I fought him through the night
And see the blood spilt by his blows.
Have you no honor left as men?
Have I no kinsmen here, no sire?
How has my sorry plight not left
Your likes contorted with the pain
Of seeing me so cruelly pained?
You're lambs, the sheep from which our town's
Old sheep well takes its timid name![4]
Give me your weapons, then, if you'd
Stand useless there like stones, bronze shards
Or jasper blocks. Brute tigers! No,
Not tigers. While these creatures are
Unfeeling, they hunt down and kill
The beasts that rob them of their cubs.
Not even waves can harbor those
That venture to attack their young.
You cowards were born craven hares,

Full p. C-688

Not Spaniards but barbarians,
Frail chickens—hens!—whose women are
Abandoned to their captors' whims!
Wear distaffs[5] on your belts, not swords!
Why even gird those rapiers on?
By God above, I'll see to it
That only womenfolk respond
To tyrants who'd leave honor stained
By seeking their perfidious blood!
They'll just throw stones at you and laugh,
You spinning women! Sissies! What
Men, cowardly as little girls!

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Perhaps, tomorrow you can use
Our headdresses and petticoats
Or make your faces up with rouge!
That cruel Commander, meanwhile, plans
To hang Frondoso for his crime
From high upon a battlement
In secret and without a trial.
He'll do the same to all of us,
You half-men, which is why I yearn
For that day when our town, bereft
Of every woman, will revert
To that illustrious Golden Age
Of Amazons[6] who made men quake.
ESTEBAN Brave child, I cannot count myself
Among those you would designate
With such dishonorable terms.
I'll go myself now, even if
The whole world stands against my cause.
JUAN ROJO I, too, however daunted with
The power of this enemy.
CUADRADO We'll die together, then.
BARRILDO A rag
Tied to a stick is flag enough.
Now let those monsters breathe their last!
JUAN ROJO What order should we recognize?
MENGO Kill all of them disorderly!
The village must be of one mind
And all the villagers agreed
The tyrant and his men must die.
ESTEBAN Then grab your cudgels and your bows,
Your pikes and swords and lances, too!
MENGO Long live the Catholic kings, our sole
True lords!

Full p. C-689

ALL Long may they live and reign!
MENGO And death to tyrant traitors! Death!
ALL Yes, traitorous tyrants, you must die!

(The men exit.)

LAURENCIA *(To the village women.)* The heavens echo your behest,
So forward, women of the town!
March on if you would set about
Regaining your lost honor! March!

(Enter PASCUALA, JACINTA, and other village women.)

PASCUALA What's happening? We heard these shouts.
LAURENCIA Girls, can't you see the town is off
To kill Fernán Gómez today?
The merest boys have joined the men
To send that devil to his grave.
But why should they alone enjoy
The honor stemming from this feat?
As women we have suffered most
The outrage from his foul misdeeds.
JACINTA What is it you would have us do?
LAURENCIA Let's all of us form ordered ranks
And undertake an act so bold
We'll leave the wondering world aghast.
Jacinta, for your suffering,
I name you corporal; you're in charge
Of this brave women's squadron here.
JACINTA Yet you've endured much worse by far.
LAURENCIA Pascuala, standard-bearer, right?
PASCUALA I'll look around here for a pole
So we can hoist a flag on it.
You'll see I'm worthy of the post!
LAURENCIA We haven't time for that right now
Since fortune presses us to fight
But let us use our headdresses
As pennants we can wave on high.
PASCUALA We'll have to name a captain, though.
LAURENCIA Not true.
PASCUALA How so?
LAURENCIA Because who needs
A Cid or Rodomonte[7] when
It's I who'll lead with gallantry?

Full p. C-690

[A Room in the Commander's Residence]

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(Enter FRONDOSO with his hands bound, FLORES, ORTUÑO, CIMBRANOS, and the COMMANDER .)

COMMANDER Now take the extra rope you used to bind
His hands and hang him so he's punished more.
FRONDOSO You're leaving a black legacy behind.
COMMANDER This battlement should serve us on that score.
FRONDOSO But sir, it never even crossed my mind
To seek your death!
FLORES What's all the ruckus for?

(Loud noise is heard offstage.)

COMMANDER What ruckus?
FLORES Would the peasants in this town
Obstruct our justice?
ORTUÑO Sir, the doors are down!

(The noise grows louder.)

COMMANDER How dare they when they know this is the seat
Of our command?
FLORES Together they rebel!
JUAN ROJO *(Offstage)* Now burn and raze the place! We'll not retreat!
ORTUÑO These popular revolts are hard to quell.
COMMANDER They rise against their lord?
FLORES The peasants beat
Your doors down, sir, from grudges that impel
Their fury on.
COMMANDER Come, set the prisoner free.
Frondoso, calm the magistrate for me.
FRONDOSO Yes, sir. It's love that made their passion wake.

(He exits.)

MENGO *(Offstage)* May Ferdinand and Isabel prevail!
But death to traitors!
FLORES Sir, for your own sake
I urge you, flee!
COMMANDER It's futile to assail
A garrison one cannot hope to take.
They'll soon turn back.
FLORES Those wronged on such a scale
Aren't likely to retreat until blood flows
And they've exacted vengeance on their foes.

COMMANDER We'll make a stand here in this room and fight,
This door as good as any gate, I gauge.
FRONDOSO *(Offstage)* On, Fuenteovejuna!
COMMANDER Hey, they've quite
A leader there! I say we meet their rage.
FLORES It's your rage, sir, not theirs that gives me fright.
Full p. C-691
ESTEBAN The tyrant and accomplices, I wage.
Fight, Fuenteovejuna! Tyrants, fall!
(Enter all.)
COMMANDER Wait, men!
ALL No, vengeance cannot wait at all!
COMMANDER Then tell me where I've erred. Upon the crown
And as a knight, I'll make it up to you.
ALL Long live King Ferdinand! Onward, town!
Die, wicked Christians and false traitors, too!
COMMANDER I'm speaking to you and you shout me down?
I am your rightful lord!
ALL Our sole true lords
Remain the Catholic kings!
COMMANDER Men, wait. Stand by!
ALL On, Fuenteovejuna! Now you die!
(The COMMANDER and his men flee, pursued by the men of Fuenteovejuna. Enter the village women, armed.)
LAURENCIA Let's stop a bit and reconnoiter here,
Not women but brave soldiers in my ken!
PASCUALA For vengefulness, a woman has no peer.
We'll spill his blood right here! If not now, when?
JACINTA Yes, let's impale his body on a spear.
PASCUALA We're all agreed. Come on, let's do it then!
ESTEBAN *(Offstage)* Now die, Commander traitor!
COMMANDER Here's my death!
I beg Your mercy, Lord, with my last breath.
BARRILDO *(Offstage)* There's Flores!
MENGO That's the rogue so quick to dole
My lashes out. Lay into him and how!
FRONDOSO *(Offstage)* I'll be avenged when I tear out his soul!
LAURENCIA We need no leave to enter.

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PASCUALA Steady now.
We'll guard the door.
BARRILDO *(Offstage)* I've lost all self-control
So, tears, my lordships, we can disallow.
LAURENCIA I'm going in, Pascuala, for my sword
Must stay unsheathed until my name's restored.
(She exits.)
BARRILDO *(Offstage)* Look, there's Ortuño!
FRONDOSO *(Offstage)* Slash his ugly face!
(FLORES enters, fleeing, with MENGO in pursuit.)
FLORES Have mercy, Mengo, please! I'm not to blame!
MENGO If being his pimp could not secure our case,
Your flogging me would fault you all the same.
PASCUALA Come, hand him to us women. Where's the race,
Full p. C-692
Man? Stop your pointless running.
MENGO Sure, I'm game.
This sounds like punishment enough to me.
PASCUALA You'll be avenged.
MENGO That's all I want to see.
JACINTA Die!
FLORES Being killed by women isn't just.
JACINTA Seems quite a turn of fate.
PASCUALA What tears are these?
JACINTA Perverse procurer for your master's lust!
PASCUALA Oh, die now, traitor!
FLORES Mercy, ladies, please!
(Enter ORTUÑO, fleeing from LAURENCIA .)
ORTUÑO Look here, I'm not . . .
LAURENCIA I know you well, I trust!
Come, let the blood of these vile dogs appease
Your swords!
PASCUALA Oh, let me meet death slaughtering!
ALL On, Fuenteovejuna! Thrive, dear king!
(Exit all.)

[A Room in the Palace of the Catholic Kings]

(Enter King FERDINAND, Queen ISABEL , and Don MANRIQUE .)

MANRIQUE Our plan of action worked so well
That all objectives were attained
And we were met with no sustained
Resistance as the city fell.
The opposition, sire, was light
But, had their side presented more
To counteract our force at war,
It surely would have proven slight.
The Count of Cabra stays behind
To guard the city from attack
In case their army doubles back
To mount a second thrust in kind.
FERDINAND We deem it wise that he remain
To muster and command our troops,
Ensuring that our force regroups
And curbing passage through the plain.
It ought to be impossible
For any harm to blight us, then,
Although Alfonso gathers men
To join his force in Portugal.
It's fitting that the city should
Be left in such reliable hands
For, where our able Count commands,
All marvel at his hardihood.

Full p. C-693

In this way, he can turn aside
The danger threatening our realm,
A loyal guardian at the helm
Who'll keep our kingdom fortified.

(Enter FLORES, wounded.)

FLORES King Ferdinand, good Catholic sire,
To whom the heavens did concede
The crown of proud Castile in light
Of all your noble qualities,
Attend to this account of acts
Unmatched in cruelty by men
Throughout this world, from where the sun
First rises bright to where it sets.

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FERDINAND Come, steady now, man!
FLORES Sovereign king,
The wounds you see would not consent
To my delaying this report
For this life surely nears its end.
In Fuenteovejuna, sire,
That farming town from which I've fled,
The people with inclement breast
Have put their rightful lord to death.
Fernán Gómez lies murdered there,
A victim of the grievances
Those traitorous vassals claimed to bear,
For those aggrieved scarce need pretext.
Thus, dubbing him tyrannical
By full consensus, these vile plebs
Became emboldened over time
To carry out this treachery.
They stormed through the Commander's home
And, though he was a nobleman,
Did not provide him with the chance
To quit these debts and make amends.
Not only were his pleas ignored
But, spurred by their impulsiveness,
The villagers left him with wounds
That rent the cross worn on his chest
Then hurled him out a window down
Into a furious waiting horde
Of women, who proceeded to
Impale him on their pikes and swords.
They dragged his body to a house
And, each displaying greater rage,
Began to pluck his hair and beard
While cruelly slicing up his face.
So outsized did their fury seem
And fierce their mounting hate appear,

Full p. C-694

The largest pieces left intact
On the Commander were his ears!
Expunging, next, his coat of arms,

They shouted that they wished, instead,
To march beneath your own because
The former caused them great offense.
Then, lastly, they ransacked his home
As if it were some enemy's
And happily among themselves
Divided up his property.
All this I saw with my two eyes
For, infelicitously, fate
Would not consent that I should die
While lying in my hiding-place,
My wounds fresh, waiting out the day
In hope the dark of night would come
So I could steal away unseen
And tell you what the town had done.
You're merciful and just, good sire,
So see these wanton criminals
Are punished by your code of law
For acts so reprehensible.
Oh, hear his spilt blood crying out
And make them pay harsh recompense!
FERDINAND Brave fellow, you may rest assured
They won't escape our punishment.
So grievous are these late events
We find ourselves bereft of words
And therefore deem it best a judge
Should verify such deeds occurred
To castigate the culpable
And make examples of their breed.
A captain shall escort him hence
To warrant his security.
Malfeasance such as this deserves
Exemplary punition soon.
But now, look to this soldier here
And be attentive to his wounds.

(Exit all.)

[The Town S quare in Fuenteovejuna]

(Enter the villagers, with the head of Fernán Gómez on a lance.)

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MUSICIANS *Oh, many happy years*
To you, good Catholic kings,
And death to tyrants all!
BARRILDO Frondoso, let's hear your song now.
FRONDOSO Here goes, however freshly penned.
Let quibblers with my meter mend
The verse the best way they know how.

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Long live our lovely Isabel
And Ferdinand of Aragon,
Whose union is a paragon
And who, though two, are one as well!
Saint Michael[8] *take you both to dwell*
In Heaven when you hear God's call.
Long life to you, we wish,
But death to tyrants all!
LAURENCIA Your turn, Barrildo.
BARRILDO Here goes mine.
I put a lot of thought in it.
PASCUALA Recite the poem as you see fit
And it should come out sounding fine.
BARRILDO *Oh, many happy years to you,*
Famed monarchs, fresh from victory!
From this day forward you shall be
Our lords, who bring us luck anew!
May evil dwarves and giants, too,
Succumb before your battle call
And death to tyrants all!
MUSICIANS *Oh, many happy years*
To you, good Catholic kings,
And death to tyrants all!
LAURENCIA Now Mengo sing.
FRONDOSO Let's hear your stuff.
MENGO I dabble, so I'll take a whack.
PASCUALA Those hash marks on your belly's back
Are witness you've had whacks enough!
MENGO *'Twas on a lovely Sunday morn*
When I, on orders of this here,

Was whipped until my aching rear
Writhed frightfully, its soft skin torn,
I bearing what hence won't be borne.
Long live our Christian monarchers
And death to all these tyranters!
MUSICIANS *Oh, many happy years!*
ESTEBAN Remove his noggin from that lance.
MENGO His face has all a hanged man's charms.
(Enter JUAN ROJO, bearing an escutcheon with the royal coat of arms.)
CUADRADO Look here, the royal coat of arms.
ESTEBAN Let our whole village cast a glance.
JUAN ROJO Where should its splendidness be hung?
CUADRADO Right here, upon our own town hall.
ESTEBAN Shine on, brave shield!
BARRILDO Bring joy to all!
Full p. C-696
FRONDOSO The warm sun rising here among
These symbols hails a bright new day.
ESTEBAN Long live León! Castile, live on,
And prosper, bars of Aragon,[9]
But death to tyrants and their sway!
Dear Fuenteovejuna, heed
The sage advice of this old man
For none who've marked my counsel can
Affirm I've ventured to mislead.
It won't be long before the crown
Sends someone to investigate
The goings-on round here of late
And, with the king lodged near our town,
We ought devise, while there's still time,
Some story no one can dismiss.
FRONDOSO Your thoughts?
ESTEBAN Claim unto death that this
Was Fuenteovejuna's crime
So none be taken off to die.
FRONDOSO By us, then, all must be agreed:
It's Fuenteovejuna's deed.
ESTEBAN Is this how we will answer?

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ALL Aye!
ESTEBAN Why don't I act like I've the task
Of the investigator now
So I might best instruct you how
To face the questions he will ask?
Here, let's have Mengo be the first
Upon the rack.
MENGO You couldn't choose
A frailer guy?
ESTEBAN I'll only use
You to rehearse.
MENGO Then, do your worst!
ESTEBAN Who killed the town's Commander, you?
MENGO All Fuenteovejuna, sir!
ESTEBAN Don't make me torture you, vile cur!
MENGO Kill me and it would still be true!
ESTEBAN Confess, thief!
MENGO I do as I'm told.
ESTEBAN So?
MENGO Fuenteovejuna! There!
ESTEBAN Pull tight.
MENGO It's nothing I can't bear.
ESTEBAN We'll foul up any trial they hold!

(Enter CUADRADO .)

Full p. C-697

CUADRADO What are you doing, dallying here?
FRONDOSO Cuadrado, what's so troublesome?
CUADRADO The crown's investigator's come.
ESTEBAN Hide quickly while the coast is clear!
CUADRADO A captain also guards the man.
ESTEBAN The Devil watch his back this day!
We all know what we have to say.
CUADRADO They're seizing everyone they can
As hardly any soul has hid.
ESTEBAN There's no need fear should make us weak.
You, who killed the Commander? Speak!
MENGO Who? Fuenteovejuna did!

(Exit all.)

[*A Room in the Mansion of the Master of Calatrava*]

(Enter the MASTER of Calatrava and a SOLDIER .)

MASTER This murderous deed's left me distraught.
That such should be his last reward!
I ought to put you to the sword
As payment for the news you've brought.
SOLDIER I'm just a message-bearer, sir,
And didn't meant to cause you ire.
MASTER To have a town turned mob conspire
And wrong me thus may not occur.
I'll take five hundred men with me
And raze the village to the ground.
The lawless names of those still found
There will be struck from memory.
SOLDIER You might well calm such fury down
As they're now subjects of the king
And surely not for anything
Would one wish to enrage the crown.
MASTER But they fall under my command
So whence their fealty to Castile?
SOLDIER These grievances our own courts will
Consider when the time's at hand.
MASTER Now when did any such assize
Remove possessions from the throne?
They are our sovereign lords, I own,
A truth I duly recognize.
We're all the monarch's vassals now
And, given this, I'll check my ire
Although an audience with my sire
Might serve my case best and allow
A youthful aspect to excuse
Whatever grave offense I've done.
My tender age may well be one
Defense this loyal heart can use.

Full p. C-698

I'll go to see the king in shame,
Compelled by honor to proceed
With fortitude in pressing need

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To clear my honorable name.

(They exit.)

[The Town Square in Fuenteovejuna]

(Enter LAURENCIA, alone.)

LAURENCIA True love's concern for its beloved's good
Becomes thereafter love's appended pain
For fear harm may befall love is a bane
That brings concern as all new worries would.
Though watchful thought decrease this likelihood,
The mind, perturbed, will readily show strain
As love's well-being, stolen, roils the brain,
A torment nowise easily withstood.
I do adore my husband and this dire
Occasion will condemn me to duress
Should fortune fail to favor him on high.
His happiness is all that I desire;
When he is present, sure is my distress,
When he is absent, just as sure I die.

(Enter FRONDOSO .)

FRONDOSO Laurencia, love!
LAURENCIA Sweet husband, here?
This move displays a steely nerve!
FRONDOSO Does such solicitude deserve
This cold reception from you, dear?
LAURENCIA I beg you, darling mine, beware,
For here you'll meet a ghastly end.
FRONDOSO Laurencia, may the skies forfend
That my well-being should cause you care.
LAURENCIA Aren't you afraid to view the throes
Your townsmen face in their ordeal
Or the investigator's zeal
In hastening to inflict their woes?
Stay out of harm's way while you can
And flee before they capture you.
FRONDOSO What? How could you expect me to
Do deeds unworthy of a man?
Would it be proper to betray

The others in this circumstance
Or not see you when I've the chance?
Don't order me to go away.
What reason would there be for me
To save myself, untouched and whole,
But not acknowledge my own soul
When facing such calamity?

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(Cries are heard offstage.)

If I can trust my ears, it seems
The noise I'm hearing are the cries
Some tortured wretch hurls toward the skies.
Come listen closely to his screams.

(The JUDGE is heard interrogating villagers offstage.)

JUDGE The truth and you'll be freed, kind gent.
FRONDOSO They torture an old man to make
Him speak.
LAURENCIA He's too strong-willed to break.
ESTEBAN Pray, loose the ropes a bit.
JUDGE Relent.
Now say, who killed Fernán, good man?
ESTEBAN Give Fuenteovejuna blame.
LAURENCIA Brave father, may God praise your name!
FRONDOSO What courage!
JUDGE Grab that boy there. Wretch!
Lay on! Still tighter! Cur! Yes, I'm
Convinced you know. Who did this crime?
No answer? Stretch him, drunkard, stretch!
BOY Sir, Fuenteovejuna did!
JUDGE Dumb clods, by all the king commands,
I'll strangle you with my own hands!
Who murdered the Commander, kid?
FRONDOSO To think a tender lad could face
Such torment and resist so long!
LAURENCIA Brave villagers!
FRONDOSO Yes, brave and strong!
JUDGE You, seize that woman there and place
Her body next upon the rack.

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Now it will be the maiden's turn.
LAURENCIA His anger's causing him to burn.
JUDGE You'll tell me or I'll kill the pack
Of you right here if he's not caught.
Which one's the guilty villager?
PASCUALA It's Fuenteovejuna, sir!
JUDGE Still tighter!
FRONDOSO This is all for naught.
LAURENCIA Pascuala hasn't said a thing.
FRONDOSO The children, either. What's to fear?
JUDGE Have you bewitched the townsfolk here?
Pull!
PASCUALA Heaven ease my suffering!
JUDGE What are you, deaf? I told you, pull!
PASCUALA Still Fuenteovejuna, yes!
JUDGE That fat oaf clad in tattered dress
Is next, the one whose paunch looks full.
LAURENCIA Poor Mengo! Who else could it be?

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FRONDOSO Though no one's broken yet, he might.
MENGO Ow, ow!
JUDGE Just slowly stretch him tight.
MENGO Ow!
JUDGE This should jog your memory.
MENGO Ow, ow!
JUDGE Come, bumpkin, out with it:
Who laid the town's Commander low?
MENGO Please stop! I'll tell you all I know!
JUDGE You, let up on the ropes a bit.
FRONDOSO He's breaking.
JUDGE Use your back until
The lever halts.
MENGO I'll tell you when
You stop!
JUDGE All right, who slew him, then?
MENGO Old Fuenteovejunaville!
JUDGE I've never seen such villainy!
They make a mockery of pain!
The one I thought could least refrain

From talking held up valiantly.
I'm weary. Come, let us depart.
FRONDOSO Good Mengo, may God keep you near!
Your courage has dispelled the fear
I felt for us both in my heart.
(Enter MENGO, BARRILDO, and CUADRADO .)
BARRILDO Three cheers there, Mengo!
CUADRADO Yes, my word!
BARRILDO And one cheer more!
FRONDOSO That was some feat!
MENGO Ooh!
BARRILDO Here, friend, have a bit to eat
And drink.
MENGO What is it?
BARRILDO Lemon curd.
MENGO Ooh!
FRONDOSO There you go, man, drain the cup!
BARRILDO I knew you could.
FRONDOSO He's swilling, so it must be good.
LAURENCIA More food here while he's drinking up.
MENGO Ooh, ooh!
BARRILDO This round is my treat, too.
LAURENCIA He's stately as he knocks them back.
FRONDOSO It's easy once you're off the rack.
BARRILDO More?
MENGO Ooh! As long as it's on you . . .
FRONDOSO Drink up, old friend. Lord knows you've grounds.
LAURENCIA This makes one quaff per turn, all told.

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FRONDOSO Bring him some clothes, he must be cold.
BARRILDO More still?
MENGO Uh, maybe three more rounds.
Ooh, ooh!
FRONDOSO Yooh . . . want the wine you've earned?
BARRILDO Yooh dooh? Here's more to slake your thirst.
Home brew should fill resisters first.
What's wrong?
MENGO I think this wine has turned.

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Let’s go before I catch a chill.
FRONDOSO This jug, you’ll see, holds better wine,
But who killed the Commander, swine?
MENGO Old Fuenteovejunaville!

(Exit all except FRONDOSO and LAURENCIA .)

FRONDOSO He’s honored by our show of love
But could you please inform me, wife,
Who took the town Commander’s life?
LAURENCIA Who? Fuenteovejuna, dove.
FRONDOSO Who killed him?
LAURENCIA Stop, you’re scaring me!
Sure, Fuenteovejuna, churl!
FRONDOSO And how did I slay you, sweet girl?
LAURENCIA By loving me so tenderly.

(Exit FRONDOSO and LAURENCIA .)

[The Queen’s Chamber]

(Enter FERDINAND and ISABEL .)

ISABEL Your presence here is a surprise,
My lord. Good fortune smiles on me.
FERDINAND You are a glorious sight to see,
My queen, a comfort to these eyes.
We make for Portugal and seize
This chance to stop en route and rest.
ISABEL Your Majesty knows when it’s best
To change his course and take his ease.
FERDINAND How did you leave our dear Castile?
ISABEL In peace, sire, quiet and serene.
FERDINAND We wonder not when such a queen
Imparts tranquility at will.

(Enter Don MANRIQUE .)

MANRIQUE Sire, Calatrava is now just
Arrived and seeks an audience
With you in humble reverence
To pledge his troth and ask your trust.
ISABEL It’s been my hope to meet the lad.
MANRIQUE My lady, though he may look young,

I promise you he ranks among
The finest soldiers we have had.

(The MASTER of Calatrava enters as Don MANRIQUE exits.)

MASTER I'm Rodrigo Téllez Girón,
Your servant, sire, and Master of
The Calatravan ranks whose love
Entreats forgiveness from the throne.
I here confess I've been deceived
Into transgressing noble laws
Established by Castile because
Of faulty counsel I'd received
From cruel Fernán, who led me down
A road of false self-interest, true
But faithless. As you now construe,
I beg forgiveness of the crown
And, should Your Highness grant to me
This mercy, which I scarce deserve,
I promise this day forth to serve
The royal cause stoutheartedly
In, say, your long campaign, my lord,
Against Granada, where you ride
And where you will observe with pride
The valor latent in my sword
Whose unsheathed steel will bravely vie
With foes who'll suffer crushing loss
So I might drape my Order's cross
O'er Moorish battlements on high.
For this, I'll send five hundred men
To fight beside your own troops now
And hereby give my solemn vow,
Sire, never to displease again.
FERDINAND Rise, Master, off this bended knee,
For we two hold your presence dear
And you are always welcome here.
MASTER These favors are grief's remedy.
ISABEL Your words are equally as fine
As your brave feats and gallant air.
MASTER You are, dear queen, an Esther fair

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And you a Xerxes,[1] sire, divine!

(Enter Don MANRIQUE .)

MANRIQUE Your Majesty, the judge is back
From Fuenteovejuna, whence
He comes with news of the events
There that occasioned the attack.

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FERDINAND You judge the rogues who cut him down.
MASTER I'd show them, were you not here, sire,
What doom awaits those who conspire
To kill Commanders of the crown.
FERDINAND Their punishment rests with the throne.
ISABEL I do confess, I'd love to see
My lord wield this authority
Should it please God this power be shown.

(Enter the JUDGE .)

JUDGE I rode, sire, with due diligence
To Fuenteovejuna where,
Attending to my charge with care,
I acted with expedience,
Investigating how this crime
Was carried out before I'd come
But bear no signed confession from
A soul there after all this time.
The townsfolk spoke as one with stout
Conviction for their common good
And when I'd ask "Who did this?" would
Shout "Fuenteovejuna" out!
Three hundred villagers there swore
That they knew nothing through their pain
And I despair we'll ever gain
More information on that score.
We even lashed lads ten years old
Upon the rack who held their peace
Despite our promises to cease
And other such things they were told.
In short, I've started so to frown
On finding someone to condemn

That either you must pardon them
Or else eradicate the town.
To back these findings I've made known,
All journeyed hence to make their case
And tell you more of this disgrace.
FERDINAND Then let them come before the throne.

(Enter ESTEBAN, ALONSO, FRONDOSO, LAURENCIA, the village women, and as many other villagers as are needed.)

LAURENCIA Are those the monarchs over there?
FRONDOSO Castile's own might, however far.
LAURENCIA My God, what handsome beings they are!
Saint Anthony[2] exalt the pair!
ISABEL Are these the murderers you mean?
ESTEBAN Amassed before you at a stroke

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Stand Fuenteovejuna's folk
Who humbly wish to serve their queen.
It was the tyranny and cursed
Insistence on purveying dread
Of that Commander who's now dead—
But not before he'd done his worst—
That was behind our vengeful role.
He had our scant possessions seized
And raped our women when he pleased,
All mercy alien to his soul.
FRONDOSO So much so that when finally
This lovely lass the heavens sent
To make my heart on earth content
And me as happy as can be
Agreed to take me as her spouse,
He acted as if he'd been wived
And, when our wedding night arrived,
Had her abducted to his house!
Were that pure girl not prone to fend
Off the advances he'd begun,
I think it's clear to everyone
Her virtue would have met its end.
MENGO Is it not time I said a word?

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If, by your leave, I may say so,
You'll all be scandalized to know
How bruised I was by what occurred
For rushing straight to the defense
Of one of our poor village girls
As she was being snatched by churls
To undergo some vile offense.
My sorry derriere still aches
From that perverted Nero's[3] lash
And darn it if they didn't thrash
My backside pink as salmon steaks!
Three men administered the belts
So utterly unsparingly
That I'm convinced you still can see
The stripes they left beneath the welts.
All told, the ointment and the salve
Concocted from the myrtle shrub
Which I use as a soothing rub
Are worth more than the farm I have!
ESTEBAN In short, sire, we do gladly serve
As humble vassals of the crown
And have long since hung in our town
Your coat of arms, which all observe.
We ask, my lord, that you respond

Full p. C-705

With clement mercy in this case.
To recompense this act of grace,
We pledge our innocence as bond.
FERDINAND As it appears that at no time
There'll be confessions signed in ink,
Though murder is most foul, we think
To grant forgiveness for this crime.
It's well the village should repair
To the protection of Castile
And may depend on us until
We send a new Commander there.
FRONDOSO This speech, Your Majesty, commends
The measure of your providence

So with these words, wise audience,

Here *Fuenteovejuna* ends.

Footnotes

- Note 4: *Fuente ovejuna,* “fount (or well) of sheep” (Spanish). Return to reference 4
- Note 5:Staffs used in spinning to hold flax or wool, and a traditional symbol of women’s work and of women in general. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:In classical mythology, a fierce race of women warriors. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:Both great fighters. Rodomonte, a major character in Ludovico Ariosto’s Italian romance *Orlando Furioso* (1516, 1532), is a fearsome and boastful leader of the Moors; El Cid (“the Lord” in Arabic) is Rodrigo (or Ruy) Díaz de Vivar (c. 1043–1099), a Spanish military leader who is the hero of the 12th-century Castilian epic *The Poem of My Cid.* Return to reference 7
- Note 8:The archangel who, in Christian tradition, guides the souls of the faithful to heaven. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:I.e., heraldic bars (see line 1120 and note). “León”: a province of northwestern Spain. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:The Greek name of the king of Persia (r. 486–465 B.C.E .) whom the Bible calls Ahasueros. The Book of Esther recounts how he made Esther his queen, not knowing that she was Jewish, and how she prevented a massacre of her people. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Saint Anthony of Padua (1195–1231), a Franciscan missionary who was born in Lisbon. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:A Roman emperor (r. 54–68 C.E.) notorious for his cruelty and dissolution. Return to reference 3

Shorter p. 1779

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE 1564-1616

Whether as thought experiment, colonial fantasy, or meditation on power, *The Tempest* (1611) has resonated widely throughout the centuries. Like **More**’s ***Utopia*** , *The Tempest* finds islands good to think with, as they can be isolated from broader cultural dynamics. Shakespeare’s microcosm serves as refuge to Prospero, exiled Duke of Milan, and his daughter Miranda. While he plots his revenge on the brother who deposed him, Prospero educates his daughter and uses his magic to extract labor from the two other, earlier inhabitants of the island, the accommodating Ariel and the resistant Caliban. *The Tempest* examines relationships to places old and new, and among people of different statuses. What kinds of claims do birth or experience have on us? What counts as an ethical use of power? Readers and audiences over the centuries have understood these questions, and the play itself, in radically different ways.

LIFE AND TIMES

William Shakespeare was born in the rural community of Stratford-upon-Avon in Warwickshire. His father, John Shakespeare, was a glover, prominent in the town’s

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government. Little is known of Shakespeare's early life, although it is likely that he received an education at the good local grammar school. He married Anne Hathaway, about seven years his senior, when he was eighteen. The couple had three children, Susanna (1583) and the twins Judith and Hamnet (1585).

Shakespeare lived in a period of great nationalist fervor. Under Queen Elizabeth I (1533–1603, ruled 1558–1603), a successful and much beloved ruler, England solidified its sense of itself as a small but heroic Protestant nation valiantly resisting the encroachment of Spain and other enemies. In 1587, fearing a Catholic conspiracy, Elizabeth put Full p. C-706 to death her cousin, Mary Queen of Scots, who had sought refuge in England in 1568. Even after a powerful storm scattered the Spanish Armada, the fleet sent to invade England in 1588, the nation continued to fear Spanish invasion and Catholic plots against Elizabeth. At the same time, England was eager to emulate Spanish imperial expansion beyond Europe. By the early seventeenth century, accounts of European exploration and settlement in the New World circulated widely, and England had begun its own attempts to establish colonies, via both overseas voyages and a brutal conquest of Ireland.

After a youth spent in the provinces, by 1592 Shakespeare had made his way to the burgeoning city of London, already the site of a robust literary and theater scene. There, Shakespeare found actors and writers with whom to collaborate and experiment, as well as expanding audiences eager to consume the latest play. He rapidly became the "greatest shake-scene" around, in the irritated words of a rival who envied Shakespeare's ability to impress audiences despite his lack of a university education. Shakespeare soon became a shareholder in a prominent players' company that claimed the Lord Chamberlain as patron and the tragic actor Richard Burbage and the comedian Will Kempe as members. Shakespeare's Shorter p. 1780 company originally performed at the Theatre, north of the city of London, where its actor-owner James Burbage faced steady opposition from puritanical city officials who sought to close the theaters, which they considered to be hotbeds of immorality. Burbage conceived of a means to escape civic legislation against theatrical performances, and secretly moved the boards of his playhouse across the river Thames to the south bank; with these planks he constructed the Globe, the theater most often associated with Shakespeare's name.

The Globe was open to all social classes: anyone who wished could enter the theater by paying a penny, and at the cost of another, get a bench, cushion, and protection (in the boxes) from inclement weather. This mixing of social classes in his audience was echoed in Shakespeare's plays: rather than submitting to the stricter forms of classical drama, Shakespeare mixed comic routines with tragic soliloquies, the speech of common soldiers and bawds with the elegant language of the court. The Globe used almost no scenery and few stage props, so Shakespeare and his company had to evoke scenes through language and deploy props sparingly. Only the costumes were lavish and constituted one of the most valuable possessions of the company. Shakespeare knew the theater inside out and his plays use its resources to the fullest, including sudden entrances and concealed eavesdroppers, brutal swordfights and touching love scenes, witty asides and striking double entendres.

In addition to his sonnets and early narrative poems, much admired by aristocratic patrons, Shakespeare wrote approximately thirty-eight plays, and probably had a hand in a few others. Beyond his documented collaboration with John Fletcher, scholars today generally assume that Shakespeare's plays—like his contemporaries'—were all collaborative to some degree, crafted in the back-and-forth of the theater and its demands. Despite the unparalleled success of his

plays, Shakespeare seems to have valued them only in performance, and never sought to have them printed. Early on, they were often published in unauthorized versions, in some cases based on actors' recollections of their lines. After Shakespeare's death in 1616, his friends published most of his plays in the collection we know as the "First Folio" (1623), the basis for most later editions. There, the plays are divided into comedies, histories—as his plays about England's recent kings and wars are known—and tragedies. Shakespeare's Full p. C-707 late plays, including *The Tempest*, are often described as tragicomedies or "romances" for their mix of high and low, devastating loss and restoration.

Shakespeare is widely credited with enriching the English language by importing many words from other languages and even inventing new ones, at a time when English writers were acutely aware of their own language's limitations. The influence of Shakespeare's plays on the course of English literature and language is matched only by the King James translation of the Bible. In his time, Shakespeare garnered the interest of two British monarchs (Elizabeth I and James I), the love of popular audiences, and the respect of such tough critics as the poet and playwright Ben Jonson, who saw him as the "the Soule of the Age" yet recognized that he was "Not of an age, but for all time!"

THE TEMPEST

The storm that gives its name to the play does not take long to materialize: act 1 begins with this powerful theatrical device, all billowing sails and artful chaos. As it churns up the (onstage) seas, the storm also undoes social arrangements. Struggling with the winds, the sailors cast off their deference to their noble passengers, and roughly order them out of the way: "What cares these roarers for the name of king? To cabin! Silence! Shorter p. 1781 Trouble us not." From the eccentric point of view that the island provides, *The Tempest* will ask us to reexamine the social and political arrangements we generally take for granted.

The tempest of the opening scene is soon revealed to be the product of Prospero's magic—a spectacular play within the play. As Miranda expresses her concern for those on board, her father reassures her, launching into what is surely one of the longest expositions in any Shakespeare text. He relates how, as Duke of Milan, he became consumed by his studies, how his brother Antonio deposed him, how the loyal Gonzalo put him on a boat with his baby daughter and his all-important books, and how father and daughter found refuge. Now, Prospero concludes as he lulls Miranda to sleep, his tempest has finally brought his enemies to the island. What he does not tell her is that she, too, has an important part to play in his plans: Prospero will have Miranda fall in love with Ferdinand, son of the King of Naples—with one stroke, the dynastic union between the two must undo Prospero's usurpation and reconcile Naples and Milan. With Miranda asleep, Prospero summons Ariel to set the wheels turning.

As the plot proceeds, largely but not entirely according to Prospero's design, *The Tempest* both revels in his authority and explores its limits. Prospero's frequent admonitions to those he controls on the island underscore both his outsize power and the fact that it is strongly contested by those he would dominate. Using his books to produce powerful magic, Prospero becomes at once a colonial master and a figure for the playwright. A work long celebrated as the culmination of the older Shakespeare's art before he, like Prospero, finally gives up his magic, *The Tempest* also examines the bounds of even the most seemingly absolute power.

Shakespeare's late tragicomedies have also been read as stories of restoration—the knitting together of familial and political bonds torn asunder. Prospero is certainly interested in these

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goals, yet *The Tempest* does not quite grant his wishes. Instead, the play offers conflicting, even contradictory reflections on power and resistance, complicating what we think we know about various characters and the ties that bind them. Ariel—the only character indigenous to the island, and a magical being himself—owes Prospero his freedom from an Full p. C-708 earlier captivity. Yet he is freed only to be immediately pressed into Prospero's own service. He complies with Prospero's wishes, yet wonders ever more loudly when his debt will finally be paid. The enslaved Caliban, who voices the most forceful resistance in the play, is both of the island and not of it, though it is the only home he has ever known. (His mother, Sycorax, gave birth to him there after being exiled from Algiers for witchcraft.) Caliban speaks of the island in marvelously poetic terms, demonstrating the range of his humanity and countering Prospero's negative account of him, yet admits to having attempted to force Miranda to bear his children, to populate that same island with little Calibans. His credulous acceptance of the buffoonish servants Stefano and Trinculo as they conspire against Prospero, moreover, casts doubt on his judgment even as we sympathize with his plight. Still, it is impossible to disentangle Caliban from the servitude and prejudice in which he has existed: there is no "nature" to him that has not been fundamentally affected by the "culture" of his contact with Prospero and Miranda.

Not even Prospero's status is certain. However loaded the dice might seem in his favor, his control is incomplete: he is surprised to discover the comic conspiracy against him, and ultimately cannot compel his brother, Antonio, to ask for forgiveness. Instead, Prospero forgives the silent Antonio, begging the question of whether anything has actually been accomplished. The play is full of imperfect endings, Shorter p. 1782 from Antonio's non-apology to the non-resolution of Caliban's fate.

The Tempest is intensely interested in both aesthetic and political representation. How stories are told fundamentally changes what we think of them, as Prospero's carefully managed explanations to Miranda seem to acknowledge. Caliban's eloquence is expressed in the language his master taught him—a tool he now uses to curse him. Prospero's magic creates powerful spectacles—from the all-too-convincing storm at the start to the banquet that tantalizes the shipwrecked nobles to the celebratory wedding masque rudely interrupted by the drunkards' conspiracy. Key aspects of the play's resolution are presented as tableaux, such as Ferdinand and Miranda playing chess together, as though Prospero, behind the scenes, were always directing the show.

Yet in the political sphere the question of authority and representation is more complex. While Prospero spent all his time with his books, his brother Antonio played the role of leader, until he convinced himself he would actually make a better Duke. (Given what we see of Prospero's rule over his daughter, Ariel, and Caliban, is that so farfetched?) The same magic that lost Prospero his power at home gives him, once on the island, the power to rule. Yet beyond naked power, what makes political authority valid, especially among newcomers? To put it another way, what is the nature of political legitimacy on the island? These are important questions, yet the play seems to pull away from them by the end, as the Europeans abandon the island, leaving Caliban's fate very much up in the air. "This thing of darkness I acknowledge mine," Prospero says of Caliban, and that is the last we hear of him.

The location of the island is hard to pin down—perhaps one reason that *The Tempest* has proved so resonant for different colonial experiences. Is it in the Atlantic, where England was establishing its colonial presence, whether in Ireland or the Americas? Caliban's refusal to

accept Prospero's authority recalls the strong resistance by the Irish to English incursions in the period. His name, as perceptive readers have long noted, is an anagram for *cannibal*—a derivation of *Caribe* that became a constant trope in early European accounts of the Americas. Sycorax's deity, Setebos, also points Full p. C-709 to the Americas: an account of Magellan's circumnavigation assigns that name to the god worshipped by the "Patagonians" (the Indigenous peoples we know as Tehuelches or Aónikenk). One of the key sources for the play is an account of the huge storm that shipwrecked an English vessel, meant to relieve hapless colonists in Virginia, on the shores of Bermuda in 1609, with all aboard miraculously saved. The counselor Gonzalo imagines the island as a primitive paradise in its Golden Age, in terms reminiscent of **Columbus** or **Montaigne**, yet his idealism is relentlessly mocked.

Conversely, there is much that points to the Mediterranean: Prospero's enemies are on their way back to Italy from marrying off Ferdinand's sister Claribel to the King of Tunis, which leads Gonzalo to muse about the ***Aeneid*** ("This Tunis, sir, was Carthage"), perhaps the most powerful classical text about empire. Caliban's mother, Sycorax, was supposedly exiled to the island from Algiers, some five hundred miles west of Tunis on the southern Mediterranean coast.

These conflicting geographic details are not so much inconsistencies as reminders that the Mediterranean and the Atlantic were tightly linked in the new age of European expansion, and that the power dynamics the play examines are not exclusive to any one location. Colonial encounters were often managed by assuming that new territories would conform to what Europeans already thought they knew about places beyond their own borders: conflating Mediterranean and Atlantic islands is thus a powerful domesticating move.

Shorter p. 1783

The Tempest was hugely popular in the Restoration, when William Davenant and John Dryden refashioned it into the royalist romp *The Tempest, or The Enchanted Island* (1667). An operatic musical version of their adaptation was consistently produced (and preferred) into the early nineteenth century, essentially becoming the only version of the play for generations of viewers. By the nineteenth century, readers influenced by Romanticism increasingly grappled with the problem of what to make of Caliban, and mapped the conflicts of Shakespeare's play onto the British imperial experience and its racial ideologies. The play's imprecise location has made it particularly mobile. *The Tempest* has long found readers far beyond Europe, becoming a touchstone for postcolonial thinkers from Octave Mannoni, whose *Prospero and Caliban* (1956) examined the psychology of French colonizers and Malagasi colonized on the African island of Madagascar, to Martinican AiméCésaire, whose multiracial *Une tempête* (1969) explored Black enslavement, to Cuban Roberto Fernández Retamar, whose fierce *Calibán* (1971) argued for the revolutionary potential of his essay's namesake.

Full p. C-710

The Tempest

THE PERSONS OF THE PLAY

PROSPERO, the right Duke of Milan

MIRANDA, daughter to Prospero

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ANTONIO, his brother, the usurping Duke of Milan

ALONSO, King of Naples

SEBASTIAN, his brother

FERDINAND, son to Alonso

GONZALO, an honest old councillor

ADRIAN and FRANCISCO, lords

ARIEL, an airy spirit

CALIBAN, a savage and deformed slave

TRINCULO, a jester

STEFANO, a drunken butler

MASTER of a ship

BOATSWAIN

MARINERS

SPIRITS *appearing as*

IRIS

CERES

JUNO

N ymphs

R eapers

THE SCENE: An uninhabited island.

1.1

A tempestuous noise of thunder and lightning heard.

Enter a ship [’s] MASTER and a BOATSWAIN .

MASTER Boatswain!

BOATSWAIN Here, Master. What cheer?

MASTER Good,[1] speak to th’ mariners. Fall to’t yarely,° or we run ourselves aground. Bestir, bestir! *Exit.*

Enter MARINERS .

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5

BOATSWAIN Heigh, my hearts![°] Cheerly, cheerly, my hearts! Yare, yare! Take in the topsail.[2] Tend[°] to th' Master's whistle. [*to the storm*] Blow till thou burst thy wind, if room enough![3]

Enter ALONSO , SEBASTIAN , ANTONIO , FERDINAND , GONZALO , and others.

ALONSO Good Boatswain, have care. Where's the Master? [*to the* MARINERS] Play the men![°]

BOATSWAIN I pray now, keep below.

ANTONIO Where is the Master, Boatswain?

BOATSWAIN Do you not hear him? You mar our labor. Keep your cabins: you do assist the storm!

GONZALO Nay, good,[°] be patient.

BOATSWAIN When the sea is. Hence! What cares these roarers for the name of king?[4] To cabin! Silence! Trouble us not.

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GONZALO Good, yet remember whom thou hast aboard.

BOATSWAIN None that I more love than myself. You are a councillor:[5] if you can command these elements to silence and work the peace of the present,[6] we will not hand[°] a rope more. Use your authority! If you cannot, give thanks you have lived so long, and make yourself ready in your cabin for the mischance of the hour, if it so hap.[°] [*to the* MARINERS] Cheerly, good hearts! [*to* GONZALO] Out of our way, I say!

Exit [BOATSWAIN with MARINERS].

GONZALO I have great comfort from this fellow. Methinks he hath no drowning mark[7] upon him; his complexion is perfect gallows.[8] Stand fast, good Fate, to his hanging; make the rope of his destiny our cable,[9] for our own doth little advantage.[°] If he be not born to be hanged, our case is miserable.

Exeunt [GONZALO, ALONSO , SEBASTIAN , ANTONIO , and FERDINAND].

Enter BOATSWAIN .

BOATSWAIN Down with the topmast![1] Yare! Lower, lower! Bring her to try with main-course.[2] (*A cry within.*) A plague upon this howling! They are louder than the weather or our office.[3]

Enter SEBASTIAN , ANTONIO , and GONZALO .

Yet again? What do you here? Shall we give o'er[°] and drown? Have you a mind to sink?

SEBASTIAN A pox o' your throat, you bawling, blasphemous, incharitable dog!

Shorter p. 1785

BOATSWAIN Work you, then.

ANTONIO Hang, cur! Hang, you whoreson insolent noise-maker! We are less afraid to be drowned than thou art.

Troy University Resources

GONZALO I'll warrant him from drowning,[4] though° the ship were no stronger than a nutshell and as leaky as an unstanched° wench.

BOATSWAIN Lay her a-hold, a-hold! Set her two courses![5] Off to sea again! Lay her off!

Enter MARINERS, wet.

MARINERS All lost! To prayers, to prayers! All lost!

[Exeunt MARINERS .]

BOATSWAIN What, must our mouths be cold?[6]

GONZALO The King and Prince at prayers! Let's assist them, for our case is as theirs.

SEBASTIAN I'm out of patience.

Full p. C-712

ANTONIO We are merely° cheated of our lives by drunkards. This wide-chopped° rascal—would thou mightst lie drowning the washing of ten tides![7]

GONZALO He'll be hanged yet, though every drop of water swear against it and gape at widest to glut° him.

A confused noise within.

MARINERS [*within*] Mercy on us! We split, we split! Farewell, my wife and children! Farewell, brother! We split, we split, we split!

[Exit BOATSWAIN .]

ANTONIO Let's all sink wi'th' King.

SEBASTIAN Let's take leave of him.

Exit [with ANTONIO].

GONZALO Now would I give a thousand furlongs of sea for an acre of barren ground: long heath, brown furze,[8] anything. The wills above be done, but I would fain die a dry death.

Exit.

Footnotes

- Note 1: Short for "good man." Return to reference 1
- Note 2:To reduce the surface area of the sail and thereby lessen the force of the wind pushing the ship toward the island. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Blow as hard as you like, as long as we have room between the ship and the rocks. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:"Roarers," referring here to the waves, was also a term for riotous people. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:Member of the king's council; also an adviser or persuader. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:Of the present circumstances. Return to reference 6

- Note 7:Birthmark whose position was held to portend death by drowning. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:His physiognomy, or appearance, shows that he will certainly be hanged. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:Anchor cable (an anchor is actually useless in a storm). Return to reference 9
- Note 1:To reduce the top weight of the ship and make it more stable. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Bring the ship close to the wind, sailing only with the mainsail. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Duties (in shouting orders). Return to reference 3
- Note 4:I'll guarantee him against drowning. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:Set the foresail in addition to the mainsail. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:To be cold in the mouth—to be dead—was proverbial; may also suggest that the mariners warm their mouths with liquor (line 50). Return to reference 6
- Note 7:Pirates were hanged on the shore at low-water mark and left there for the ebbing and flowing of three tides. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:Heather and gorse—both shrubs that grow in poor soil. Return to reference 8
- Note °: promptly Return to reference °
- Note °: hearties Return to reference °
- Note °: Attend Return to reference °
- Note °: Act like men Return to reference °
- Note °: good man Return to reference °
- Note °: handle Return to reference °
- Note °: happen Return to reference °
- Note °: good Return to reference °
- Note °: up Return to reference °
- Note °: even if Return to reference °
- Note °: freely menstruating Return to reference °
- Note °: utterly Return to reference °
- Note °: large-mouthed Return to reference °
- Note °: its widest to swallow Return to reference °

Troy University Resources

1.2

Enter PROSPERO and MIRANDA .

MIRANDA[9] If by your art,[1] my dearest father, you have

Put the wild waters in this roar, allay them.

The sky, it seems, would pour down stinking pitch

But that the sea, mounting to th' welkin's° cheek,

5

Dashes the fire out. Oh, I have suffered

With those that I saw suffer: a brave° vessel—

Who had, no doubt, some noble creature in her—

Dashed all to pieces! Oh, the cry did knock

Against my very heart! Poor souls, they perished.

10

Shorter p. 1786

Had I been any god of power, I would

Have sunk the sea within the earth or ere°

It should the good ship so have swallowed and

The fraughting souls[2] within her.

PROSPERO[3] Be collected.

No more amazement.° Tell your piteous° heart

There's no harm done.

MIRANDA Oh, woe the day!

15

PROSPERO No harm.

I have done nothing but in care of thee—

Of thee, my dear one, thee, my daughter—who

Art ignorant of what thou art, naught knowing

Of whence I am, nor that I am more better°

Than Prospero, master of a full poor cell[4]

And thy no greater father.

Full p. C-713

MIRANDA More to know

Did never meddle with° my thoughts.

PROSPERO 'Tis time

I should inform thee farther. Lend thy hand

And pluck my magic garment from me.—

[She helps him remove the cloak, and he puts it aside.]

—So,

Lie there, my art.—Wipe thou thine eyes; have comfort.

The direful spectacle of the wreck, which touched

The very virtue of compassion in thee,

I have with such provision° in mine art

So safely ordered that there is no soul—

No, not so much perdition° as an hair

Betid° to any creature in the vessel

Which° thou heard'st cry, which thou saw'st sink. Sit down,

For thou must now know farther.

MIRANDA You have often

Begun to tell me what I am, but stopped

And left me to a bootless inquisition,°

Troy University Resources

Concluding, “Stay: not yet.”

PROSPERO The hour’s now come;

The very minute bids thee ope° thine ear.

Obey, and be attentive. Canst thou remember

A time before we came unto this cell?

40

I do not think thou canst, for then thou wast not

Out° three years old.

MIRANDA Certainly, sir, I can.

PROSPERO By what? By any other house or person?

Of anything the image tell me that

Hath kept with thy remembrance.

Shorter p. 1787

MIRANDA ’Tis far off,

45

And rather like a dream than an assurance°

That my remembrance warrants.° Had I not

Four or five women once that tended me?

PROSPERO Thou hadst, and more, Miranda. But how is it

That this lives in thy mind? What seest thou else

50

In the dark backward° and abysm of time?

If thou rememb’rest aught° ere thou cam’st here,

How thou cam’st here thou mayst.

MIRANDA But that I do not.

PROSPERO Twelve year since, Miranda, twelve year since,

Thy father was the Duke of Milan and

A prince of power.

55

MIRANDA Sir, are not you my father?

PROSPERO Thy mother was a piece° of virtue,° and

She said thou wast my daughter, and thy father

Was Duke of Milan, and his only heir

And princess no worse issued.°

MIRANDA O the heavens!

60

What foul play had we that we came from thence?

Full p. C-714

Or blessèd° was't we did?

PROSPERO Both, both, my girl.

By foul play, as thou say'st, were we heaved thence,

But blessedly holp° hither.

MIRANDA Oh, my heart bleeds

To think o'th' teen° that I have turned you to,

65

Which is from° my remembrance! Please you, farther.

PROSPERO My brother and thy uncle, called Antonio—

I pray thee mark me, that a brother should

Be so perfidious!—he whom next° thyself

Of all the world I loved, and to him put

70

The manage° of my state, as at that time

Through all the signories° it was the first

And Prospero the prime° duke, being so reputed

Troy University Resources

In dignity, and for the liberal arts[5]

Without a parallel. Those being all my study,

75

The government I cast upon my brother

And to my state grew stranger, being transported[6]

And rapt in secret studies. Thy false uncle—

Dost thou attend me?

MIRANDA Sir, most heedfully.

PROSPERO Being once perfected how to grant suits,[7]

80

How to deny them, who t'advance, and who

To trash for overtopping,[8] new created

Shorter p. 1788

The creatures° that were mine, I say, or changed 'em,

Or else new formed 'em; having both the key°

Of officer and office, set all hearts i'th' state

85

To what tune pleased his ear, that° now he was

The ivy which had hid my princely trunk

And sucked my verdure° out on't. Thou attend'st not.

MIRANDA O good sir, I do.

PROSPERO I pray thee, mark me.

I, thus neglecting worldly ends, all dedicated

90

To closeness° and the bettering of my mind

With that which, but° by being so retired,

O'er-prized all popular rate,[9] in my false brother

Awaked an evil nature; and my trust,

Like a good parent,[1] did beget of him

95

A falsehood in its contrary° as great

As my trust was, which had indeed no limit,

A confidence sans° bound. He being thus lorded

Not only with what my revenue yielded,

Full p. C-715

But what my power might else exact, like one

100

Who, having into truth by telling of it,

Made such a sinner of his memory

To credit his own lie,[2] he did believe

He was indeed the duke, out o'th'° substitution

And executing° th'outward face° of royalty

105

With all prerogative. Hence his ambition growing—

Dost thou hear?

MIRANDA Your tale, sir, would cure deafness.

PROSPERO To have no screen between this part he played

And him he played it for, he needs will be

Absolute Milan.[3] Me,° poor man, my library

110

Was dukedom large enough. Of temporal royalties°

He thinks me now incapable; confederates,°

Troy University Resources

So dry° he was for sway,° wi'th' King of Naples

To give him annual tribute, do him homage,

Subject his coronet to his crown, and bend

115

The dukedom yet unbowed—alas, poor Milan!—

To most ignoble stooping.[4]

MIRANDA O the heavens!

PROSPERO Mark his condition° and th'event;° then tell me

If this might be a brother.

MIRANDA I should sin

To think but° nobly of my grandmother.

Good wombs have borne bad sons.

120

Shorter p. 1789

PROSPERO Now the condition.

This King of Naples, being an enemy

To me inveterate, hearkens my brother's suit;

Which was that he, in lieu o'th' premises

Of homage and I know not how much tribute,

125

Should presently extirpate me and mine

Out of the dukedom and confer fair Milan,

With all the honors, on my brother. Whereon,

A treacherous army levied, one midnight

Fated to th' purpose did Antonio open

130

The gates of Milan, and i'th' dead of darkness,

The ministers° for th' purpose hurried thence

Me and thy crying self.

MIRANDA Alack, for pity!

I, not remembering how I cried out then,

Will cry it o'er again; it is a hint°

That wrings mine eyes to't.

135

PROSPERO Hear a little further,

And then I'll bring thee to the present business

Which now's upon's, without the which this story

Full p. C-716

Were most impertinent.°

MIRANDA Wherefore did they not

That hour destroy us?

PROSPERO Well demanded, wench:

140

My tale provokes that question. Dear, they durst not,

So dear the love my people bore me, nor set

A mark so bloody on the business, but

With colors fairer painted their foul ends.

In few,° they hurried us aboard a bark,°

145

Bore us some leagues to sea, where they prepared

A rotten carcass of a butt,[5] not rigged,

Nor tackle, sail, nor mast—the very rats

Instinctively have quit it. There they hoist us

To cry to th' sea that roared to us; to sigh

150

To th' winds, whose pity, sighing back again,

Troy University Resources

Did us but loving wrong.[6]

MIRANDA Alack, what trouble

Was I then to you!

PROSPERO Oh, a cherubin

Thou wast that did preserve me. Thou didst smile,

Infusèd with a fortitude from heaven,

155

When I have decked° the sea with drops° full salt,

Under my burden groaned, which° raised in me

An undergoing stomach° to bear up

Against what should ensue.

MIRANDA How came we ashore?

Shorter p. 1790

PROSPERO By Providence divine.

160

Some food we had and some fresh water that

A noble Neapolitan, Gonzalo,

Out of his charity—who being then appointed

Master of this design—did give us, with

Rich garments, linens, stuffs, and necessaries,

165

Which since have steaded° much. So, of his gentleness,[7]

Knowing I loved my books, he furnished me

From mine own library with volumes that

I prize above my dukedom.

MIRANDA Would I might

But ever see that man.

PROSPERO Now I arise.

Sit still,° and hear the last of our sea-sorrow.
Here in this island we arrived, and here
Have I, thy schoolmaster, made thee more profit°
Than other princes can, that have more time
For vainer hours, and tutors not so careful.°

MIRANDA Heavens thank you for't. And now I pray you, sir,
For still 'tis beating in my mind, your reason
For raising this sea-storm?

Full p. C-717

PROSPERO Know thus far forth:
By accident most strange, bountiful Fortune,
Now my dear lady,[8] hath mine enemies
Brought to this shore; and by my prescience
I find my zenith[9] doth depend upon
A most auspicious star, whose influence
If now I court not but omit,° my fortunes
Will ever after droop. Here cease more questions.

Thou art inclined to sleep. 'Tis a good dullness,°
And give it way. I know thou canst not choose.

[MIRANDA sleeps.]

[*to* ARIEL] Come away,° servant, come! I am ready now.
Approach, my Ariel. Come!

Troy University Resources

Enter ARIEL .

ARIEL All hail, great master; grave sir, hail! I come

To answer thy best pleasure, be’t to fly,

To swim, to dive into the fire, to ride

On the curled clouds. To thy strong bidding task

Ariel and all his quality.°

PROSPERO Hast thou, spirit,

Performed to point° the tempest that I bade thee?

ARIEL To every article.

I boarded the King’s ship. Now on the beak,°

Now in the waist,° the deck,° in every cabin,

I flamed amazement. Sometimes I’d divide

Shorter p. 1791

And burn in many places;[1] on the topmast,

The yards, and bowsprit would I flame distinctly,

Then meet and join. Jove’s lightning, the precursors

O’th’ dreadful thunderclaps, more momentary

And sight-outrunning° were not. The fire and cracks

Of sulfurous roaring the most mighty Neptune

Seem to besiege and make his bold waves tremble,

Yea, his dread trident shake.

PROSPERO My brave spirit!

Who was so firm, so constant, that this coil°

Would not infect his reason?

ARIEL Not a soul

But felt a fever of the mad° and played

210

Some tricks of desperation. All but mariners

Plunged in the foaming brine and quit the vessel,

Then all afire with me; the King's son Ferdinand,

With hair upstaring° —then like reeds, not hair—

Was the first man that leapt, cried, "Hell is empty,

And all the devils are here!"

215

PROSPERO Why, that's my spirit.

But was not this nigh shore?

Full p. C-718

ARIEL Close by, my master.

PROSPERO But are they, Ariel, safe?

ARIEL Not a hair perished.

On their sustaining garments not a blemish,

But fresher than before; and, as thou bad'st° me,

220

In troops° I have dispersed them 'bout the isle.

The King's son have I landed by himself,

Whom I left cooling of° the air with sighs

In an odd angle° of the isle, and sitting,

His arms in this sad knot.[2]

PROSPERO Of the King's ship,

225

Troy University Resources

The mariners, say how thou hast disposed,

And all the rest o'th' fleet.

ARIEL Safely in harbor

Is the King's ship; in the deep nook where once

Thou called'st me up at midnight to fetch dew

From the still-vexed° Bermudas, there she's hid;

230

The mariners all under hatches stowed,

Who, with° a charm joined to° their suffered labor,

I have left asleep; and for the rest o'th' fleet,

Which I dispersed, they all have met again

And are upon the Mediterranean float,°

235

Bound sadly home for Naples,

Supposing that they saw the King's ship wrecked

And his great person perish.

Shorter p. 1792

PROSPERO Ariel, thy charge

Exactly is performed; but there's more work.

What is the time o'th' day?

ARIEL Past the mid-season.°

240

PROSPERO At least two glasses.° The time twixt six and now

Must by us both be spent most preciously.

ARIEL Is there more toil? Since thou dost give me pains,°

Let me remember° thee what thou hast promised,

Which is not yet performed me.

PROSPERO How now? Moody?

What is't thou canst demand?

245

ARIEL My liberty.

PROSPERO Before the time be out? No more.

ARIEL I prithee,

Remember I have done thee worthy service,

Told thee no lies, made no mistakings, served

Without or° grudge or grumblings. Thou did promise

To bate° me a full year.

250

PROSPERO Dost thou forget

From what a torment I did free thee?

ARIEL No.

PROSPERO Thou dost, and think'st it much to tread the ooze

Full p. C-719

Of the salt deep,

To run upon the sharp wind of the north,

255

To do me business in the veins o'th' earth

When it is baked° with frost.

ARIEL I do not, sir.

PROSPERO Thou liest, malignant thing! Hast thou forgot

The foul witch Sycorax, who with age and envy

Was grown into a hoop?° Hast thou forgot her?

ARIEL No, sir.

260

PROSPERO Thou hast. Where was she born? Speak. Tell me.

Troy University Resources

ARIEL Sir, in Algiers.

PROSPERO Oh, was she so? I must

Once in a month recount what thou hast been,

Which thou forgett'st. This damned witch Sycorax,

For mischiefs manifold and sorceries terrible

265

To enter human hearing, from Algiers,

Thou know'st, was banished. For one thing she did

They would not take her life.[3] Is not this true?

ARIEL Ay, sir.

PROSPERO This blue-eyed hag was hither brought with child

270

And here was left by th' sailors. Thou, my slave,

As thou report'st thyself, was then her servant;

And for° thou wast a spirit too delicate

To act her earthy and abhorred commands,

Shorter p. 1793

Refusing her grand hests,° she did confine thee,

275

By help of her more potent ministers,°

And in her most unmitigable rage,

Into a cloven pine; within which rift

Imprisoned thou didst painfully remain

A dozen years, within which space she died

280

And left thee there, where thou didst vent thy groans

As fast as millwheels strike.° Then was this island—

Save for the son that she did litter° here,

A freckled whelp, hag-born—not honored with

A human shape.

ARIEL Yes, Caliban her son.

285

PROSPERO Dull thing, I say so: he, that Caliban

Whom now I keep in service. Thou best know'st

What torment I did find thee in: thy groans

Did make wolves howl, and penetrate° the breasts

Of ever-angry bears. It was a torment

290

To lay upon the damned, which Sycorax

Could not again undo. It was mine art,

When I arrived and heard thee, that made gape

The pine and let thee out.

ARIEL I thank thee, master.

Full p. C-720

PROSPERO If thou more murmur'st, I will rend an oak

295

And peg thee in his° knotty entrails till

Thou hast howled away twelve winters.

ARIEL Pardon, master.

I will be correspondent° to command

And do my spriting gently.°

PROSPERO Do so, and after two days

I will discharge thee.

ARIEL That's my noble master!

300

Troy University Resources

What shall I do? Say what, what shall I do?

PROSPERO Go make thyself like a nymph o'th' sea. Be subject

To no sight but thine and mine, invisible

To every eyeball else. Go, take this shape°

And hither come in't. Go! Hence with diligence.

Exit [ARIEL].

305

[*to* MIRANDA] Awake, dear heart, awake! Thou hast slept well.

Awake.

MIRANDA The strangeness of your story put

Heaviness° in me.

PROSPERO Shake it off. Come on;

We'll visit Caliban, my slave, who never

Yields us kind answer.

MIRANDA 'Tis a villain, sir,

I do not love to look on.

310

PROSPERO But, as 'tis,

We cannot miss° him. He does make our fire,

Fetch in our wood, and serves in offices°

Shorter p. 1794

That profit us. What ho! Slave! Caliban!

Thou earth, thou: speak!

CALIBAN (*within*) There's wood enough within.

315

PROSPERO Come forth, I say! There's other business for thee.

Come, thou tortoise! When?

Enter ARIEL like a water nymph.

—Fine apparition! My quaint[4] Ariel,

Hark in thine ear.

[He whispers.]

ARIEL My lord, it shall be done. *Exit.*

PROSPERO Thou poisonous slave, got° by the devil himself

320

Upon thy wicked dam,° come forth!

Enter CALIBAN .

CALIBAN As wicked dew as e’er my mother brushed

With raven’s feather from unwholesome fen°

Drop on you both! A southwest[5] blow on ye

And blister you all o’er!

325

PROSPERO For this, be sure, tonight thou shalt have cramps,

Side-stitches that shall pen thy breath up; urchins°

Full p. C-721

Shall forth at vast of° night that they may work

All exercise on thee; thou shalt be pinched

As thick as honeycomb, each pinch more stinging

Than bees that made ’em.°

330

CALIBAN I must eat my dinner.

This island’s mine by Sycorax my mother,

Which thou tak’st from me. When thou cam’st first

Thou strok’st me and made much of me; wouldst give me

Water with berries in’t, and teach me how

335

Troy University Resources

To name the bigger light and how the less[6]

That burn by day and night. And then I loved thee

And showed thee all the qualities o'th' isle:

The fresh springs, brine-pits, barren place and fertile.

Cursèd be I that did so! All the charms°

340

Of Sycorax—toads, beetles, bats—light on you!

For I am all the subjects that you have,

Which first was mine own king; and here you sty me°

In this hard rock whiles you do keep from me

The rest o'th' island.

PROSPERO Thou most lying slave,

345

Whom stripes° may move, not kindness. I have used° thee,

Filth as thou art, with humane care, and lodged thee

In mine own cell till thou didst seek to violate

The honor of my child.

Shorter p. 1795

CALIBAN Oh ho, oh ho! Would't had been done!

Thou didst prevent me; I had peopled else

This isle with Calibans.

350

MIRANDA[7] Abhorrèd slave,

Which any print° of goodness wilt not take,

Being capable of° all ill. I pitied thee,

Took pains to make thee speak, taught thee each hour

One thing or other. When thou didst not, savage,

355

Know thine own meaning but wouldst gabble like

A thing most brutish, I endowed thy purposes

With words that made them known. But thy vile race,°

Though thou didst learn, had that in't which good natures

Could not abide to be with; therefore wast thou

360

Deservedly confined into this rock,

Who hadst deserved more than a prison.

CALIBAN You taught me language, and my profit on't

Is I know how to curse. The red plague rid you

For learning me your language!

PROSPERO Hag-seed,° hence!

365

Fetch us in fuel; and be quick, thou'rt best,

To answer other business.° Shrugg'st thou, malice?

If thou neglect'st or dost unwillingly

Full p. C-722

What I command, I'll rack thee with old cramps,

Fill all thy bones with aches, make thee roar,

That beasts shall tremble at thy din.

370

CALIBAN No, pray thee.

[*aside*] I must obey. His art is of such power

It would control my dam's god Setebos[8]

And make a vassal of him.

PROSPERO So, slave, hence. *Exit* CALIBAN .

Enter FERDINAND , and ARIEL , invisible, playing and singing.

Troy University Resources

ARIEL [*sings*] Come unto these yellow sands,

And then take hands.

Curtsied when you have, and kissed,

The wild waves whist.°

Foot it featly° here and there,

And sweet sprites bear°

The burden.[9]

SPIRITS [*within, sing the*] (*burden dispersedly*) Hark, hark! Bow-wow!

The watch-dogs bark: bow-wow!

ARIEL Hark, hark. I hear

The strain of strutting Chanticleer

Cry cock-a-diddle-dow.

Shorter p. 1796

FERDINAND Where should this music be? I'th' air or th'earth?

It sounds no more; and sure it waits° upon

Some god o'th' island. Sitting on a bank,

Weeping again the King my father's wreck,

This music crept by me upon the waters,

Allaying both their fury and my passion°

With its sweet air.° Thence I have followed it,

Or it hath drawn me rather; but 'tis gone.

No, it begins again.

ARIEL [*sings*] Full fathom five thy father lies;

Of his bones are coral made;

Those are pearls that were his eyes;

Nothing of him that doth fade,

But doth suffer a sea-change

400

Into something rich and strange.

Sea-nymphs hourly ring his knell.

SPIRITS [*within, sing the*] (*burden*) Ding dong.

ARIEL Hark, now I hear them.

SPIRITS [*within*] Ding dong, bell.

FERDINAND The ditty does remember° my drowned father.

405

This is no mortal° business, nor no sound

That the earth owes.° I hear it now above me.

PROSPERO [*to* MIRANDA] The fringèd curtains of thine eye advance°

And say what thou seest yond.

Full p. C-723

MIRANDA What is't? A spirit?

Lord, how it looks about. Believe me, sir,

410

It carries a brave° form. But 'tis a spirit.

PROSPERO No, wench, it eats and sleeps and hath such senses

As we have—such. This gallant° which thou seest

Was in the wreck; and but° he's something° stained

With grief—that's beauty's canker[1] —thou mightst call him

415

Troy University Resources

A goodly person. He hath lost his fellows

And strays about to find 'em.

MIRANDA I might call him

A thing divine, for nothing natural

I ever saw so noble.

PROSPERO [*aside*] It° goes on, I see,

As my soul prompts it. [*to* ARIEL] Spirit, fine spirit, I'll free thee

Within two days for this.

420

FERDINAND Most sure, the goddess

On whom these airs attend! Vouchsafe° my prayer

May know if you remain° upon this island,

And that you will some good instruction give

How I may bear me° here. My prime request,

Shorter p. 1797
425

Which I do last pronounce, is—O you wonder![2] —

If you be maid[3] or no?

MIRANDA No wonder, sir,

But certainly a maid.

FERDINAND My language? Heavens!

I am the best[4] of them that speak this speech,

Were I but where 'tis spoken.

PROSPERO How? The best?

430

What wert thou if the King of Naples heard thee?

FERDINAND A single[5] thing, as I am now, that wonders

To hear thee speak of Naples. He does hear me,[6]

And that he does I weep. Myself am Naples,°

Who with mine eyes, never since at ebb,° beheld

The King my father wrecked.

435

MIRANDA Alack, for mercy!

FERDINAND Yes, faith, and all his lords, the Duke of Milan

And his brave son[7] being twain.

PROSPERO [*aside*] The Duke of Milan

And his more braver daughter could control thee

If now 'twere fit to do't. At the first sight

440

They have changed eyes.[8] [*to* ARIEL] Delicate° Ariel,

Full p. C-724

I'll set thee free for this! [*to* FERDINAND] A word, good sir.

I fear you have done yourself some wrong.[9] A word.

MIRANDA Why speaks my father so ungently?° This

Is the third man that e'er I saw, the first

445

That e'er I sighed for. Pity move my father

To be inclined my way.

FERDINAND Oh, if a virgin,

And your affection not gone forth,[1] I'll make you

The Queen of Naples.

PROSPERO Soft, sir! One word more.

[*aside*] They are both in either's powers. But this swift business

450

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I must uneasy° make, lest too light[2] winning

Make the prize light. [*to* FERDINAND] One word more! I charge thee

That thou attend me. Thou dost here usurp

The name thou ow'st° not, and hast put thyself

Upon this island as a spy to win it

From me, the lord on't.°

Shorter p. 1798
455

FERDINAND No, as I am a man.

MIRANDA There's nothing ill can dwell in such a temple.[3]

If the ill spirit have so fair a house,

Good things will strive to dwell with't.

PROSPERO [*to* FERDINAND] Follow me.

[*to* MIRANDA] Speak not you for him: he's a traitor. [*to* FERDINAND] Come!

460

I'll manacle thy neck and feet together.

Sea-water shalt thou drink; thy food shall be

The fresh-brook mussels,[4] withered roots, and husks

Wherein the acorn cradled. Follow!

FERDINAND No.

I will resist such entertainment° till

Mine enemy has more power.

He draws [his sword] , and is charmed from moving.

465

MIRANDA O dear father,

Make not too rash a trial of him, for

He's gentle and not fearful.[5]

PROSPERO What, I say,

My foot° my tutor? [*to* FERDINAND] Put thy sword up, traitor,

Who mak'st a show but dar'st not strike, thy conscience

470

Is so possessed with guilt. Come from thy ward,°

For I can here disarm thee with this stick°

And make thy weapon drop.

MIRANDA Beseech you, father—

PROSPERO Hence! Hang not on my garments.

Full p. C-725

MIRANDA Sir, have pity.

I'll be his surety.

PROSPERO Silence! One word more

475

Shall make me chide thee, if not hate thee. What,

An advocate for an imposter? Hush!

Thou think'st there is no more such shapes° as he,

Having seen but him and Caliban. Foolish wench,

To° th' most of men this is a Caliban,

And they to him are angels.

480

MIRANDA My affections

Are then most humble. I have no ambition

To see a goodlier man.

PROSPERO [*to* FERDINAND] Come on, obey.

Thy nerves° are in their infancy again,

And have no vigor in them.

FERDINAND So they are.

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My spirits,° as in a dream, are all bound up.

My father's loss, the weakness which I feel,

The wreck of all my friends, nor this man's threats

To whom I am subdued, are but light to me,

Shorter p. 1799

Might I but through my prison once a day

Behold this maid. All corners else o'th' earth

Let liberty make use of; space enough

Have I in such a prison.

PROSPERO [*aside*] It works. [*to* FERDINAND] Come on!

[*to* ARIEL] Thou hast done well, fine Ariel. [*to* FERDINAND] Follow me.

[*to* ARIEL] Hark what thou else shalt do me.

MIRANDA [*to* FERDINAND] Be of comfort;

My father's of a better nature, sir,

Than he appears by speech. This is unwonted°

Which now came from him.

PROSPERO [*to* ARIEL] Thou shalt be as free

As mountain winds; but then° exactly do

All points of my command.

ARIEL To th' syllable.

PROSPERO [*to* FERDINAND] Come, follow. [*to* MIRANDA] Speak not for him.

Exeunt.

Footnotes

- Note 9: *Miranda* in Latin means “admirable” or “wondering.” Miranda uses the formal “you,” contrasting with Prospero’s more familiar “thou.” Return to reference 9
- Note 1:Skill; magic; learning; science. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Souls constituting the freight; perhaps also suggesting “burdened.” Return to reference 2
- Note 3:”Prospero” in Italian and Spanish means “fortunate” or “prosperous.” Return to reference 3
- Note 4:Suggesting a hermit’s or a poor man’s dwelling. “Full”: very. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:As opposed to the “mechanical arts,” the “liberal arts” encompassed the trivium (grammar, logic, and rhetoric) and the quadrivium (arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy). Return to reference 5
- Note 6:Enraptured, with suggestions of “conveyed to another place.” “Grew stranger”: grew alienated from; became a foreigner to. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:Having mastered the handling of formal requests. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:For rising too high. “Trash”: restrain, hold back (as by a leash). Return to reference 8
- Note 9:Became too precious for the people to value or understand. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:From the colloquial “Good parents breed bad children.” Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Like someone who comes to believe his own repeatedly stated lie. “To”: So as to. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:He wanted to be the Duke of Milan in actual fact, rather than merely exercising power as the Duke’s proxy. “Screen”: partition, barrier. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:By making Milan, previously free, a tributary subject of Naples. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:Cask or tub: here, deprecatory for “boat.” Return to reference 5
- Note 6:The winds, responding sympathetically to our sighs, only blew us farther out to sea. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:Nobility; kindness. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:Traditional characterization of Fortune as a woman changeable in her affections. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:Highest point, as of a star in the sky. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:The phosphorescent effect of St. Elmo’s fire, caused in a thunderstorm by the charge of static electricity that builds up particularly around metal projections. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Folded sadly, like this (folded arms implied sorrow). Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Only because she got pregnant. Capital sentences were commuted for pregnant women; ordinarily, condemned witches were either hanged or burned at the stake. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:The term could simultaneously mean “ingenious,” “curious in appearance,” and “elegant.” Return to reference 4
- Note 5:A southerly wind was considered plague-bearing. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:Recalls Genesis 1.16: “God then made two great lights: the greater light to rule the day, and the less light to rule the night.” Return to reference 6

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- Note 7:For roughly two and a half centuries, editors reassigned this speech to Prospero, finding it inappropriate for Miranda. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:A name found in travel narratives as a god of the Patagonians. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:“Burden” is a technical term from Renaissance music meaning “refrain” or “undersong.” Return to reference 9
- Note 1:Cankerworm; caterpillar (“beauty” being seen as a flower); spreading sore. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Miracle, punning on the meaning of Miranda’s name. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Unmarried virgin; made (human). Return to reference 3
- Note 4:Highest in rank, assuming he has succeeded his father. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:Weak and helpless; solitary; one and the same. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:“He” and “me” both refer to Ferdinand. Presuming his father to be dead, Ferdinand takes himself to be the new King of Naples (and as such, he hears himself speaking). Alternatively, Ferdinand thinks his father’s spirit hears him. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:The only instance in which Antonio is said to have a son. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:Exchanged loving glances; fallen in love at first sight. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:Euphemistic for “told a lie about yourself.” Return to reference 9
- Note 1:Given over to someone else. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Easy; playing on the meanings of “little valued” and also “promiscuous” in line 451. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:A common metaphor for the body; also, a conventional Renaissance notion that moral qualities were physically manifest. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:Freshwater mussels are inedible. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:He’s noble and, therefore, not cowardly. Alternatively, not fearsome. Return to reference 5
- Note °: sky’s Return to reference °
- Note °: splendid Return to reference °
- Note °: before Return to reference °
- Note °: consternation Return to reference °
- Note °: pitying Return to reference °
- Note °: higher in rank Return to reference °
- Note °: intrude upon Return to reference °
- Note °: foresight Return to reference °
- Note °: loss Return to reference °
- Note °: Happened Return to reference °
- Note °: Whom Return to reference °
- Note °: profitless inquiry Return to reference °
- Note °: open Return to reference °
- Note °: Fully Return to reference °
- Note °: a certainty Return to reference °
- Note °: guarantees is true Return to reference °
- Note °: past Return to reference °
- Note °: anything Return to reference °
- Note °: perfect example Return to reference °

- Note °: chastity Return to reference °
- Note °: no less nobly born Return to reference °
- Note °: providential Return to reference °
- Note °: helped Return to reference °
- Note °: sorrow; trouble Return to reference °
- Note °: out of Return to reference °
- Note °: after Return to reference °
- Note °: control Return to reference °
- Note °: lordships Return to reference °
- Note °: foremost Return to reference °
- Note °: dependents Return to reference °
- Note °: control Return to reference °
- Note °: so that Return to reference °
- Note °: vitality; power Return to reference °
- Note °: seclusion Return to reference °
- Note °: merely Return to reference °
- Note °: inverse qualities Return to reference °
- Note °: without Return to reference °
- Note °: as a consequence of the Return to reference °
- Note °: portraying Return to reference °
- Note °: image Return to reference °
- Note °: As for me Return to reference °
- Note °: rule Return to reference °
- Note °: (he) plots Return to reference °
- Note °: thirsty Return to reference °
- Note °: power Return to reference °
- Note °: treaty Return to reference °
- Note °: outcome Return to reference °
- Note °: anything but Return to reference °
- Note °: agents Return to reference °
- Note °: an occasion Return to reference °
- Note °: irrelevant Return to reference °
- Note °: short Return to reference °
- Note °: ship Return to reference °
- Note °: covered; adorned Return to reference °
- Note °: tears Return to reference °
- Note °: (Miranda’s smile) Return to reference °
- Note °: A courage Return to reference °
- Note °: been useful Return to reference °
- Note °: Continue to sit Return to reference °
- Note °: profit more Return to reference °
- Note °: caring Return to reference °
- Note °: disregard Return to reference °
- Note °: drowsiness Return to reference °
- Note °: Come here Return to reference °
- Note °: cohorts; faculties Return to reference °

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- Note °: in detail Return to reference °
- Note °: prow Return to reference °
- Note °: midship Return to reference °
- Note °: poop Return to reference °
- Note °: quicker than the eye Return to reference °
- Note °: turmoil Return to reference °
- Note °: such as madmen feel Return to reference °
- Note °: standing on end Return to reference °
- Note °: commanded Return to reference °
- Note °: groups Return to reference °
- Note °: cooling Return to reference °
- Note °: corner Return to reference °
- Note °: ever-stormy Return to reference °
- Note °: by virtue of Return to reference °
- Note °: with Return to reference °
- Note °: billow; sea Return to reference °
- Note °: noon Return to reference °
- Note °: hourglasses Return to reference °
- Note °: tasks Return to reference °
- Note °: remind Return to reference °
- Note °: either Return to reference °
- Note °: remit; excuse Return to reference °
- Note °: dried and hardened Return to reference °
- Note °: bent over with age Return to reference °
- Note °: because Return to reference °
- Note °: commands Return to reference °
- Note °: agents; slaves Return to reference °
- Note °: hit the water Return to reference °
- Note °: give birth to Return to reference °
- Note °: arouse sympathy in Return to reference °
- Note °: its Return to reference °
- Note °: compliant Return to reference °
- Note °: graciously Return to reference °
- Note °: appearance; disguise Return to reference °
- Note °: Sleepiness Return to reference °
- Note °: avoid; do without Return to reference °
- Note °: capacities; duties Return to reference °
- Note °: begot Return to reference °
- Note °: harmful, foul mother Return to reference °
- Note °: bog Return to reference °
- Note °: hedgehogs Return to reference °
- Note °: during the boundless Return to reference °
- Note °: (honeycomb cells) Return to reference °
- Note °: spells Return to reference °
- Note °: pen me up Return to reference °
- Note °: lashes Return to reference °

- Note °: treated Return to reference °
- Note °: impression Return to reference °
- Note °: susceptible to Return to reference °
- Note °: hereditary nature Return to reference °
- Note °: Offspring of a hag Return to reference °
- Note °: perform other tasks Return to reference °
- Note °: hush Return to reference °
- Note °: Dance nimbly Return to reference °
- Note °: spirits sing Return to reference °
- Note °: attends Return to reference °
- Note °: grief Return to reference °
- Note °: melody Return to reference °
- Note °: commemorate Return to reference °
- Note °: human Return to reference °
- Note °: owns Return to reference °
- Note °: raise Return to reference °
- Note °: splendid; gallant Return to reference °
- Note °: fine gentleman Return to reference °
- Note °: except that Return to reference °
- Note °: somewhat Return to reference °
- Note °: (My plan) Return to reference °
- Note °: Grant Return to reference °
- Note °: dwell Return to reference °
- Note °: conduct myself Return to reference °
- Note °: King of Naples Return to reference °
- Note °: ceasing to flow Return to reference °
- Note °: Graceful; artful Return to reference °
- Note °: discourteously Return to reference °
- Note °: difficult Return to reference °
- Note °: own Return to reference °
- Note °: of it Return to reference °
- Note °: treatment Return to reference °
- Note °: inferior Return to reference °
- Note °: defensive stance Return to reference °
- Note °: magician’s wand Return to reference °
- Note °: forms; men Return to reference °
- Note °: Compared to Return to reference °
- Note °: sinews Return to reference °
- Note °: mental powers Return to reference °
- Note °: unusual Return to reference °
- Note °: until then Return to reference °

2.1

Enter ALONSO , SEBASTIAN , ANTONIO , GONZALO , ADRIAN , and FRANCISCO .

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GONZALO Beseech you, sir, be merry. You have cause—

So have we all—of joy; for our escape

Is much beyond our loss. Our hint° of woe

Is common: every day some sailor's wife,

5

The masters of some merchant, and the merchant[6]

Full p. C-726

Have just° our theme of woe. But for the miracle—

I mean our preservation—few in millions

Can speak like us. Then wisely, good sir, weigh

Our sorrow with° our comfort.

ALONSO Prithee, peace.[7]

10

SEBASTIAN [*to* ANTONIO] He receives comfort like cold porridge.°

ANTONIO [*to* SEBASTIAN] The visitor[8] will not give him o'er so.°

SEBASTIAN Look, he's winding up the watch of his wit; by and by it will strike.

GONZALO [*to* ALONSO] Sir—

15

SEBASTIAN One. Tell.°

GONZALO When every grief is entertained° that's offered, comes to th'entertainer[9] —

SEBASTIAN A dollar.[1]

20

GONZALO Dolor° comes to him, indeed. You have spoken truer than you purposed.

SEBASTIAN You have taken it wiselier than I meant you should.

GONZALO [*to* ALONSO] Therefore, my lord—

Shorter p. 1800

ANTONIO Fie, what a spendthrift is he of his tongue!

ALONSO I prithee, spare.°

25

GONZALO Well, I have done. But yet—

SEBASTIAN He will be talking.

ANTONIO Which of he or Adrian, for a good wager, first begins to crow?

SEBASTIAN The old cock.

30

ANTONIO The cockerel.[2]

SEBASTIAN Done. The wager?

ANTONIO A laughter.[3]

SEBASTIAN A match.

ADRIAN Though this island seem to be desert° —

35

ANTONIO Ha, ha, ha!

SEBASTIAN So, you're paid.[4]

ADRIAN Uninhabitable and almost inaccessible—

SEBASTIAN Yet—

ADRIAN Yet—

40

ANTONIO He could not miss't.

ADRIAN It must needs be of subtle, tender, and delicate[5] temperance.°

ANTONIO Temperance was a delicate wench.[6]

Full p. C-727

SEBASTIAN Ay, and a subtle, as he most learnedly delivered.[7]

45

ADRIAN The air breathes upon us here most sweetly.

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SEBASTIAN As if it had lungs, and rotten ones.

ANTONIO Or as 'twere perfumed by a fen.°

GONZALO Here is everything advantageous to life.

ANTONIO True, save° means to live.

SEBASTIAN Of that there's none, or little.

GONZALO How lush and lusty° the grass looks! How green!

ANTONIO The ground indeed is tawny.

SEBASTIAN With an eye° of green in't.

ANTONIO He misses not much.

SEBASTIAN No, he doth but mistake the truth totally.

GONZALO But the rarity of it is, which is indeed almost beyond credit—

SEBASTIAN As many vouched° rarities are.

GONZALO That our garments being, as they were, drenched in the sea, hold notwithstanding their freshness and gloss, being rather new-dyed than stained with salt water.

ANTONIO If but one of his pockets could speak, would it not say he lies?

SEBASTIAN Ay, or very falsely pocket up his report.[8]

Shorter p. 1801

GONZALO Methinks our garments are now as fresh as when we put them on first in Africa, at the marriage of the King's fair daughter Claribel to the King of Tunis.

SEBASTIAN'Twas a sweet marriage, and we prosper well in our return.

ADRIAN Tunis was never graced before with such a paragon to° their queen.

GONZALO Not since widow Dido's[9] time.

ANTONIO Widow?[1] A pox o' that! How came that "widow" in? Widow Dido!

SEBASTIAN What if he had said “widower Aeneas” too? Good Lord, how you take° it!

ADRIAN “Widow Dido,” said you? You make me study of° that: she was of Carthage, not of Tunis.

GONZALO This Tunis, sir, was Carthage.[2]

80

ADRIAN Carthage?

GONZALO I assure you, Carthage.

ANTONIO His word is more than the miraculous harp.[3]

Full p. C-728

SEBASTIAN He hath raised the wall, and houses too.

ANTONIO What impossible matter will he make easy next?

85

SEBASTIAN I think he will carry this island home in his pocket and give it his son for an apple.

ANTONIO And sowing the kernels° of it in the sea, bring forth more islands.

GONZALO Ay.

90

ANTONIO Why, in good time.

GONZALO [*to* ALONSO] Sir, we were talking, that our garments seem now as fresh as when we were at Tunis at the marriage of your daughter, who is now queen.

ANTONIO And the rarest that e’er came there.

95

SEBASTIAN Bate,° I beseech you, widow Dido.

ANTONIO Oh, widow Dido? Ay, widow Dido.

GONZALO Is not, sir, my doublet as fresh as the first day I wore it? I mean, in a sort.[4]

ANTONIO That “sort” was well fished for.

100

GONZALO When I wore it at your daughter’s marriage.

ALONSO You cram these words into mine ears against

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The stomach of my sense.[5] Would I had never

Married my daughter there; for coming thence

My son is lost, and, in my rate,° she too,

105

Who is so far from Italy removed

I ne'er again shall see her. O thou mine heir

Shorter p. 1802

Of Naples and of Milan, what strange fish

Hath made his meal on thee?

FRANCISCO Sir, he may live.

I saw him beat the surges under him

110

And ride upon their backs. He trod the water

Whose enmity he flung aside, and breasted

The surge, most swol'n, that met him. His bold head

'Bove the contentious waves he kept, and oared

Himself with his good arms in lusty° stroke

115

To th' shore, that o'er his wave-worn basis bowed,[6]

As° stooping to relieve him. I not° doubt

He came alive to land.

ALONSO No, no, he's gone.

SEBASTIAN Sir, you may thank yourself for this great loss,

That would not bless our Europe with your daughter,

120

But rather loose° her to an African,

Where she, at least, is banished from your eye,

Who° hath cause to set the grief on't.

ALONSO Prithee, peace.

SEBASTIAN You were kneeled to and importuned otherwise[7]

Full p. C-729

By all of us; and the fair soul herself

125

Weighed, between loathness and obedience, at

Which end o'th' beam should bow.[8] We have lost your son,

I fear, forever. Milan and Naples have

More widows in them of this business' making

Than we bring men to comfort them. The fault's

Your own.

130

ALONSO So is the dearest o'th' loss.[9]

GONZALO My lord Sebastian,

The truth you speak doth lack some gentleness,

And time° to speak it in. You rub the sore

When you should bring the plaster.[1]

SEBASTIAN Very well.

135

ANTONIO And most chirurgeonly.°

GONZALO [*to* ALONSO] It is foul weather in us all, good sir,

When you are cloudy.

SEBASTIAN Foul weather?

ANTONIO Very foul.

GONZALO Had I plantation[2] of this isle, my lord—

ANTONIO He'd sow't with nettle-seed.

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SEBASTIAN Or docks, or mallows.[3]

Shorter p. 1803

GONZALO And were the king on't, what would I do?

SEBASTIAN Scape being drunk for want of wine.

GONZALO I'th' commonwealth I would by contraries

Execute all things.[4] For no kind of traffic°

Would I admit; no name of magistrate;

Letters° should not be known; riches, poverty,

And use of service,° none; contract, succession,

Bourn,° bound of land, tilth,° vineyard, none;

No use of metal, corn,° or wine, or oil;

No occupation, all men idle, all;

And women too, but innocent and pure;

No sovereignty—

SEBASTIAN Yet he would be king on't.

ANTONIO The latter end of his commonwealth forgets the beginning.

GONZALO—All things in common° nature should produce

Without sweat or endeavor. Treason, felony,

Sword, pike, knife, gun, or need of any engine°

Would I not have; but nature should bring forth

Full p. C-730

Of its own kind, all foison,° all abundance,

To feed my innocent people.

160

SEBASTIAN No marrying ’mong his subjects?

ANTONIO None, man, all idle: whores and knaves.

GONZALO I would with such perfection govern, sir,

T’excel the golden age.[5]

SEBASTIAN Save° his majesty!

ANTONIO Long live Gonzalo!

165

GONZALO And do you mark me, sir?

ALONSO Prithee, no more. Thou dost talk nothing to me.

GONZALO I do well believe your highness, and did it to minister occasion[6] to these gentlemen, who are of such sensible° and nimble lungs that they always use° to laugh at nothing.

170

ANTONIO’Twas you we laughed at.

GONZALO Who in this kind of merry fooling am nothing to you. So you may continue, and laugh at nothing still.

ANTONIO What a blow was there given!

SEBASTIAN An it had not fallen flatlong.[7]

175

GONZALO You are gentlemen of brave mettle;[8] you would lift the moon out of her sphere if she would continue in it five weeks without changing.[9]

Enter ARIEL [invisible,] playing solemn music.

Shorter p. 1804

SEBASTIAN We would so, and then go a-bat-fowling.[1]

ANTONIO Nay, good my lord, be not angry.

180

GONZALO No, I warrant you, I will not adventure my discretion so weakly.[2] Will you laugh me asleep, for I am very heavy?°

ANTONIO Go sleep, and hear us.

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[All sleep, except ALONSO , SEBASTIAN , and ANTONIO .]

ALONSO What, all so soon asleep? I wish mine eyes

Would, with themselves, shut up my thoughts. I find

They are inclined to do so.

185

SEBASTIAN Please you, sir,

Do not omit° the heavy offer° of it.

It seldom visits sorrow; when it doth,

It is a comforter.

ANTONIO We two, my lord,

Will guard your person while you take your rest,

And watch your safety.

190

ALONSO Thank you. Wondrous heavy.

[ALONSO sleeps. Exit ARIEL .]

SEBASTIAN What a strange drowsiness possesses them!

Full p. C-731

ANTONIO It is the quality o'th' climate.

SEBASTIAN Why

Doth it not then our eyelids sink? I find

Not myself disposed to sleep.

195

ANTONIO Nor I: my spirits are nimble.

They fell together all as by consent;°

They dropped, as by a thunderstroke. What might,

Worthy Sebastian, oh, what might—? No more.

And yet methinks I see it in thy face

200

What thou shouldst be. Th'occasion speaks° thee, and

My strong imagination sees a crown

Dropping upon thy head.

SEBASTIAN What? Art thou waking?°

ANTONIO Do you not hear me speak?

SEBASTIAN I do, and surely

It is a sleepy language, and thou speak'st

205

Out of thy sleep. What is it thou didst say?

This is a strange repose, to be asleep

With eyes wide open; standing, speaking, moving,

And yet so fast asleep.

ANTONIO Noble Sebastian,

Thou lett'st thy fortune sleep—die rather; wink'st°

Whiles thou art waking.

210

SEBASTIAN Thou dost snore distinctly;°

There's meaning in thy snores.

ANTONIO I am more serious than my custom. You

Must be so too, if heed° me; which to do

Trebles thee o'er.

SEBASTIAN Well, I am standing water.[3]

ANTONIO I'll teach you how to flow.

215

SEBASTIAN Do so. To ebb

Hereditary sloth[4] instructs me.

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ANTONIO Oh!

If you but knew how you the purpose cherish

Whiles thus you mock it; how in stripping it

You more invest° it. Ebbing° men, indeed,

220

Most often do so near the bottom run

By their own fear or sloth.

SEBASTIAN Prithee, say on.

The setting° of thine eye and cheek proclaim

A matter° from thee; and a birth, indeed,

Which throes[5] thee much to yield.

ANTONIO Thus, sir:

225

[*indicating* GONZALO] Although this lord of weak remembrance,° this,

Full p. C-732

Who shall be of as little memory°

When he is earthed,° hath here almost persuaded—

For he's a spirit of persuasion, only

Professes to persuade—the King his son's alive,

230

'Tis as impossible that he's undrowned

As he that sleeps here swims.

SEBASTIAN I have no hope

That he's undrowned.

ANTONIO Oh, out of that no hope

What great hope have you! No hope that way° is

Another way so high a hope that even

Ambition cannot pierce a wink° beyond,

But doubt discovery there. Will you grant with me

That Ferdinand is drowned?

SEBASTIAN He's gone.

ANTONIO Then tell me,

Who's the next heir of Naples?

SEBASTIAN Claribel.

ANTONIO She that is Queen of Tunis; she that dwells

Ten leagues beyond man's life;° she that from Naples

Can have no note,° unless the sun were post° —

The man i'th' moon's too slow—till newborn chins

Be rough and razorable; she that from° whom

We all were sea-swallowed, though some cast again,

And by that destiny to perform an act

Whereof what's past is prologue, what to come

Shorter p. 1806

In yours and my discharge.°

SEBASTIAN What stuff is this? How say you?

'Tis true my brother's daughter's Queen of Tunis;

So is she heir of Naples, twixt which regions

There is some space.

ANTONIO A space whose ev'ry cubit°

Seems to cry out, "How shall that Claribel

Troy University Resources

Measure us° back to Naples? Keep° in Tunis,

And let Sebastian wake.”° Say this were death

That now hath seized them: why, they were no worse

255

Than now they are. There be that° can rule Naples

As well as he that sleeps; lords that can prate

As amply and unnecessarily

As this Gonzalo; I myself could make

A chough of as deep chat.[6] Oh, that you bore

260

The mind that I do! What a sleep were this

For your advancement! Do you understand me?

SEBASTIAN Methinks I do.

ANTONIO And how does your content

Tender° your own good fortune?

Full p. C-733

SEBASTIAN I remember

You did supplant your brother Prospero.

ANTONIO True:

265

And look how well my garments sit upon me,

Much feater° than before. My brother’s servants

Were then my fellows; now they are my men.

SEBASTIAN But for your conscience?

ANTONIO Ay, sir, where lies that? If ’twere a kibe,[7]

270

’Twould put me to° my slipper; but I feel not

This deity in my bosom. Twenty consciences

That stand twixt me and Milan, candied be they,

And melt ere they molest. Here lies your brother,

No better than the earth he lies upon

If he were that which now he's like—that's dead—

Whom I with this obedient steel,° three inches of it,

Can lay to bed forever; whiles you, doing thus,

To the perpetual wink for aye° might put

This ancient morsel, this Sir Prudence, who

Should not upbraid our course. For all the rest,

They'll take suggestion° as a cat laps milk;

They'll tell the clock° to any business that

We say befits the hour.

SEBASTIAN Thy case, dear friend,

Shall be my precedent. As thou gott'st Milan,

I'll come by Naples. Draw thy sword: one stroke

Shorter p. 1807

Shall free thee from the tribute which thou payest,

And I the King shall love thee.

ANTONIO Draw together;

And when I rear my hand, do you the like

To fall it on Gonzalo.

SEBASTIAN Oh, but one word.

Enter ARIEL , [invisible,] with music and song.

Troy University Resources

ARIEL My master through his art foresees the danger

That you his friend are in, and sends me forth—

For else° his project dies—to keep them[8] living.

[*He*] *sings in Gonzalo's ear.*

While you here do snoring lie,

Open-eyed conspiracy

295

His time° doth take.

If of life you keep a care,

Shake off slumber and beware.

Awake, awake!

ANTONIO Then let us both be sudden.

[ANTONIO and SEBASTIAN draw their swords.]

300

GONZALO [*waking*] Now, good angels preserve the King.

[He wakes ALONSO .]

Full p. C-734

ALONSO Why, how now? Ho! Awake! Why are you° drawn?

Wherefore this ghastly° looking?

GONZALO What's the matter?

SEBASTIAN Whiles we stood here securing° your repose,

Even now we heard a hollow burst of bellowing,

305

Like bulls, or rather lions. Did't not wake you?

It struck mine ear most terribly.

ALONSO I heard nothing.

ANTONIO Oh, 'twas a din to fright a monster's ear,

To make an earthquake: sure it was the roar

Of a whole herd of lions.

ALONSO Heard you this, Gonzalo?

310

GONZALO Upon mine honor, sir, I heard a humming,

And that a strange one too, which did awake me.

I shaked you, sir, and cried.° As mine eyes opened,

I saw their weapons drawn. There was a noise,

That's verily.° 'Tis best we stand upon our guard,

315

Or that we quit this place. Let's draw our weapons.

ALONSO Lead off this ground, and let's make further search

For my poor son.

GONZALO Heavens keep him from these beasts,

For he is sure i'th' island.

ALONSO Lead away.

ARIEL Prospero my lord shall know what I have done.

320

So, King, go safely on to seek thy son. *Exeunt.*

Footnotes

- Note 6:The chief officers of some merchant ship and its owner. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:Sebastian takes this as "pease," as in "pease porridge." Return to reference 7
- Note 8:Antonio compares Gonzalo with one who visits and comforts the sick and distressed. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:There comes to the person who accepts that grief. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:English name for the German thaler, a coin. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:"The young cock crows as the old hears" was proverbial. "Old cock" refers to Gonzalo and "cockerel" to Adrian. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:From the proverb "He laughs that wins." Return to reference 3
- Note 4:Antonio's laugh is his prize. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:Exquisite, but in Antonio's usage (line 43), "given to pleasure." "Subtle": fine, but in Sebastian's usage (line 44), "sexually expert" or "crafty." Return to reference 5
- Note 6:Antonio takes "Temperance" to be the name of a girl. Return to reference 6

Troy University Resources

- Note 7:“Learnedly delivered” was a popular phrase among puritans who wanted to appear pious. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:The evidence of stained pockets would confute Gonzalo’s words and reputation for honesty. “Pocket up”: suppress, or keep silent; also, receive unprotestingly. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:Queen of ancient Carthage, whose tragic love affair with Aeneas is related in Virgil’s *Aeneid.* Return to reference 9
- Note 1:Antonio picks on this designation for a woman abandoned by her lover as being either irrelevant or conspicuously prudish. Dido, however, was in fact a widow when she met Aeneas. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:The city of Tunis was actually built ten miles from the site of ancient Carthage. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Referring to Amphion’s harp, to the music of which the walls (but not the houses) of Thebes arose. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:Comparatively speaking; Antonio plays on “drawing lots.” Return to reference 4
- Note 5:The image is of one being force-fed words against the appetite (“stomach”) for hearing them. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:That extended out and drooped over the foot of the cliff, which had been eroded by waves. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:To act differently. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:Weighed loathness to marry against obedience to her father to find out which end of the scales’ beam would sink. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:That is, the most grievous, or costliest, part of the loss is also my own. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:A soothing remedy. “To rub the sore” was proverbial. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Had I responsibility for colonization of the island; but also interpreted as “planting” by Antonio and Sebastian. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Cited as wild plants prone to grow on uncultivated land; but dock is a traditional soother of nettle stings, and mallow roots were used to make soothing ointment. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:I would advance the opposite to what would be usual. This speech is based on a passage in Montaigne’s essay “Of Cannibals.” Return to reference 4
- Note 5:In classical mythology, the earliest of the ages—a time without strife, labor, or injustice, when abundant food grew without cultivation. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:Afford opportunity. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:If it had not fallen on the flat, harmless side of the sword. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:Courage; punning on “metal,” as of a sword blade. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:You would even steal the moon, if she were to stand still in her orbit (“sphere”). Return to reference 9
- Note 1:Trapping birds by using light to attract them and bats to strike them down; may also mean swindling and victimizing the simple. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:I will not put my sound judgment at risk so foolishly. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Between tides, and thus open to suggestion; also, associated with being slothful. “Trebles thee o’er”: Makes you three times as great. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:Inherited laziness, or the slowness to attain prosperity arising from being born a younger brother. Return to reference 4

- Note 5:Which puts in agony, as in childbirth. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:I could train a jackdaw (known for imitating speech) to speak as profoundly. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:Chilblain; sore on the heel. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:Gonzalo and Alonso. Return to reference 8
- Note °: occasion Return to reference °
- Note °: exactly Return to reference °
- Note °: against Return to reference °
- Note °: broth Return to reference °
- Note °: leave him alone Return to reference °
- Note °: Keep count Return to reference °
- Note °: harbored Return to reference °
- Note °: Sorrow Return to reference °
- Note °: spare your words Return to reference °
- Note °: uninhabited Return to reference °
- Note °: climate Return to reference °
- Note °: bog Return to reference °
- Note °: except Return to reference °
- Note °: tender and luxuriant Return to reference °
- Note °: tinge Return to reference °
- Note °: alleged; accepted Return to reference °
- Note °: for Return to reference °
- Note °: fuss about Return to reference °
- Note °: examine Return to reference °
- Note °: seeds Return to reference °
- Note °: Don’t mention Return to reference °
- Note °: consideration Return to reference °
- Note °: vigorous Return to reference °
- Note °: As if Return to reference °
- Note °: do not Return to reference °
- Note °: lose; release Return to reference °
- Note °: (Claribel) Return to reference °
- Note °: (appropriate time) Return to reference °
- Note °: surgeonlike Return to reference °
- Note °: commerce Return to reference °
- Note °: Writing; erudition Return to reference °
- Note °: servants Return to reference °
- Note °: Boundary Return to reference °
- Note °: tillage Return to reference °
- Note °: grain Return to reference °
- Note °: for communal use Return to reference °
- Note °: weapon Return to reference °
- Note °: plenty Return to reference °
- Note °: God save Return to reference °
- Note °: sensitive Return to reference °
- Note °: are accustomed Return to reference °

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- Note °: tired; serious Return to reference °
- Note °: neglect Return to reference °
- Note °: opportunity Return to reference °
- Note °: consensus Return to reference °
- Note °: opportunity speaks to Return to reference °
- Note °: awake Return to reference °
- Note °: shut your eyes Return to reference °
- Note °: meaningfully Return to reference °
- Note °: if you heed Return to reference °
- Note °: clothe Return to reference °
- Note °: Declining Return to reference °
- Note °: fixed look Return to reference °
- Note °: Something important Return to reference °
- Note °: memory Return to reference °
- Note °: as little remembered Return to reference °
- Note °: buried Return to reference °
- Note °: (that he’s not drowned) Return to reference °
- Note °: catch a glimpse Return to reference °
- Note °: lifetime journey Return to reference °
- Note °: information Return to reference °
- Note °: messenger Return to reference °
- Note °: returning from Return to reference °
- Note °: performance Return to reference °
- Note °: about 18 to 22 inches Return to reference °
- Note °: (the cubits) Return to reference °
- Note °: Stay Return to reference °
- Note °: (to his opportunity) Return to reference °
- Note °: those that Return to reference °
- Note °: Regard; care for Return to reference °
- Note °: more trimly Return to reference °
- Note °: make me wear Return to reference °
- Note °: sword Return to reference °
- Note °: sleep forever Return to reference °
- Note °: prompting to evil Return to reference °
- Note °: chime; agree Return to reference °
- Note °: otherwise Return to reference °
- Note °: opportunity Return to reference °
- Note °: your weapons Return to reference °
- Note °: fearful Return to reference °
- Note °: guarding Return to reference °
- Note °: called out Return to reference °
- Note °: the truth Return to reference °

Shorter p. 1808

2.2

Enter CALIBAN with a burden of wood.

CALIBAN All the infections that the sun sucks up

From bogs, fens, flats,° on Prosper fall, and make him

By inchmeal° a disease!

A noise of thunder heard.

His spirits hear me,

And yet I needs must curse. But they'll nor pinch,

5

Fright me with urchin-shows,[9] pitch me i'th' mire,

Nor lead me like a firebrand in the dark

Out of my way, unless he bid 'em. But

For every trifle are they set upon me;

Sometime like apes that mow° and chatter at me

10

And after bite me; then like hedgehogs, which

Lie tumbling in my barefoot way and mount

Their pricks at my footfall; sometime am I

All wound with° adders, who with cloven tongues

Do hiss me into madness.

Enter TRINCULO .

Lo, now, lo!

Full p. C-735

15

Here comes a spirit of his, and to torment me

For bringing wood in slowly. I'll fall flat.

Perchance he will not mind° me.

20

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25
30
35

TRINCULO Here's neither bush nor scrub to bear off° any weather at all, and another storm brewing: I hear it sing i'th' wind. Yond same black cloud, yond huge one, looks like a foul bombard[1] that would shed his liquor. If it should thunder as it did before, I know not where to hide my head. Yond same cloud cannot choose but fall by pailfuls. [*He sees* CALIBAN .] What have we here? A man or a fish? Dead or alive? A fish: he smells like a fish; a very ancient and fishlike smell; a kind of not-of-the-newest poor-john.[2] A strange fish. Were I in England now, as once I was, and had but this fish painted,[3] not a holiday fool there but would give a piece of silver. There would this monster make a man;[4] any strange beast there makes a man. When they will not give a doit° to relieve a lame beggar, they will lay out ten to see a dead Indian.[5] Legged like a man, and his fins like arms. Warm, o'my troth! I do now let loose my opinion, hold it no longer: this is no fish, but an islander that hath lately suffered by a thunderbolt. [*Thunder.*] Alas, the storm is come again. My best way is to creep under his gaberdine; there is no other shelter hereabout. Misery acquaints a man with strange bedfellows. I will here shroud° till the dregs of the storm be past.

Shorter p. 1809

[He crawls under Caliban's cloak.]

Enter STEFANO singing.

STEFANO I shall no more to sea, to sea,

40

Here shall I die ashore.

This is a very scurvy tune to sing at a man's funeral. Well, here's my comfort.

[He] drinks [and] sings.

The master, the swabber, the boatswain and I,

The gunner and his mate,

45

Loved Moll, Meg, and Marian, and Margery,

But none of us cared for Kate.

For she had a tongue with a tang,°

Would cry to a sailor, "Go hang!"

She loved not the savor of tar nor of pitch,

50

Yet a tailor might scratch her where'er she did itch.

Then to sea, boys, and let her go hang!

This is a scurvy tune, too; but here's my comfort.

[He] drinks.

CALIBAN Do not torment me! Oh!

STEFANO What's the matter?° Have we devils here? Do you put tricks upon 's with savages and men of Ind?° Ha? I have not Full p. C-736 scaped drowning to be afeared now of your four legs; for it hath been said, "As proper a man as ever went on four legs[6] cannot make him give ground"; and it shall be said so again, while Stefano breathes at'° nostrils.

CALIBAN The spirit torments me! Oh!

STEFANO This is some monster of the isle with four legs who hath got, as I take it, an ague.° Where the devil should he learn our language? I will give him some relief if it be but for that. If I can recover° him and keep him tame and get to Naples with him, he's a present for any emperor that ever trod on neat's leather.°

CALIBAN Do not torment me, prithee! I'll bring my wood home faster.

STEFANO He's in his fit now, and does not talk after° the wisest. He shall taste of my bottle. If he have never drunk wine afore, it will go near to° remove his fit. If I can recover him and keep him tame, I will not take too much for him.[7] He shall pay for him that hath° him, and that soundly.

CALIBAN Thou dost me yet but little hurt; thou wilt anon, I know it by thy trembling. Now Prosper works upon thee.

STEFANO Come on your ways.° Open your mouth: here is that which will give language to you, cat.[8] Open your mouth: this will shake° your shaking, I can tell you, and that soundly. [CALIBAN *drinks.*] You cannot tell who's your friend. Open your chaps again.

Shorter p. 1810

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TRINCULO I should know that voice. It should be—but he is drowned, and these are devils. Oh, defend me!

85

STEFANO Four legs and two voices: a most delicate° monster! His forward voice now is to speak well of his friend; his backward voice is to utter foul speeches and to detract. If all the wine in my bottle will recover him,[9] I will help his ague. Come. [CALIBAN *drinks.*] Amen.° I will pour some in thy other mouth.

TRINCULO Stefano!

90

STEFANO Doth thy other mouth call me? Mercy, mercy! This is a devil and no monster. I will leave him; I have no long spoon.[1]

TRINCULO Stefano? If thou beest Stefano, touch me and speak to me, for I am Trinculo—be not afeard—thy good friend Trinculo.

95

STEFANO If thou beest Trinculo, come forth: I'll pull thee by the lesser legs. If any be Trinculo's legs, these are they. [*He pulls him out.*] Thou art very° Trinculo indeed! How cam'st thou to be the siege° of this mooncalf?[2] Can he vent° Trinculos?

Full p. C-737
100

TRINCULO I took him to be killed with a thunderstroke. But art thou not drowned, Stefano? I hope now thou art not drowned. Is the storm overblown? I hid me under the dead mooncalf's gaberdine, for fear of the storm. And art thou living, Stefano? O Stefano, two Neapolitans scaped!

105

STEFANO Prithee, do not turn me about, my stomach is not constant.

CALIBAN [*aside*] These be fine things, an if° they be not sprites. That's a brave° god, and bears celestial liquor. I will kneel to him.

110

STEFANO How didst thou scape? How cam'st thou hither? Swear by this bottle how thou cam'st hither. I escaped upon a butt of sack° which the sailors heaved o'erboard, by this bottle, which I made of the bark of a tree, with mine own hands, since I was cast ashore.

115

CALIBAN I'll swear upon that bottle to be thy true subject, for the liquor is not earthly.

STEFANO Here. Swear then how thou escaped'st.

TRINCULO Swum ashore, man, like a duck. I can swim like a duck, I'll be sworn.

120

STEFANO [*giving* TRINCULO *the bottle*] Here, kiss the Book.[3] Though thou canst swim like a duck, thou art made like a goose.

TRINCULO O Stefano, hast any more of this?

125

STEFANO The whole butt, man. My cellar is in a rock by the seaside, where my wine is hid. [*to* CALIBAN] How now, mooncalf, how does thine ague?

Shorter p. 1811

CALIBAN Hast thou not dropped from heaven?

STEFANO Out o'th' moon I do assure thee. I was the man i'th' moon, when time was.°

130

CALIBAN I have seen thee in her, and I do adore thee. My mistress° showed me thee, and thy dog, and thy bush.[4]

STEFANO [*giving the bottle to* CALIBAN] Come, swear to that: kiss the Book. I will furnish it anon with new contents. Swear.

135

TRINCULO By this good light,° this is a very shallow monster. I afeared of him? A very weak monster. The man i'th' moon? A most poor credulous monster. Well drawn,° monster, in good sooth.

140

CALIBAN I'll show thee every fertile inch o'th' island, and I will kiss thy foot. I prithee, be my god.

TRINCULO By this light, a most perfidious and drunken monster! When 's god's asleep he'll rob his bottle.

CALIBAN I'll kiss thy foot. I'll swear myself thy subject.

STEFANO Come on, then: down and swear.

145

TRINCULO I shall laugh myself to death at this puppy-headed monster. A most scurvy monster. I could find in my heart to beat him—

Full p. C-738

STEFANO [*to* CALIBAN] Come, kiss.

Troy University Resources

150

TRINCULO—but that the poor monster's in drink.° An abominable monster.

CALIBAN I'll show thee the best springs; I'll pluck thee berries;

I'll fish for thee, and get thee wood enough.

A plague upon the tyrant that I serve!

I'll bear him no more sticks but follow thee,

155

Thou wondrous man.

TRINCULO A most ridiculous monster, to make a wonder of a poor drunkard.

CALIBAN I prithee, let me bring thee where crabs° grow;

And I with my long nails will dig thee pig-nuts,°

160

Show thee a jay's nest, and instruct thee how

To snare the nimble marmoset. I'll bring thee

To clust'ring filberts, and sometimes I'll get thee

Young scamels[5] from the rock. Wilt thou go with me?

165

STEFANO I prithee now lead the way without any more talking. Trinculo, the King and all our company else being drowned, we will inherit here. [*to* CALIBAN] Here, bear my bottle.—Fellow Trinculo, we'll fill him° by and by again.

CALIBAN (*sings drunkenly*) Farewell, master; farewell, farewell.

TRINCULO A howling monster, a drunken monster.

170

CALIBAN [*continuing to sing*] No more dams I'll make for° fish,

Nor fetch in firing°

At requiring,

Shorter p. 1812

Nor scrape trencher, nor wash dish,

’Ban, ’Ban, Ca-Caliban

175

Has a new master: get a new man.[6]

Freedom, high-day;[°] high-day, freedom; freedom, high-day, freedom!

STEFANO O brave[°] monster, lead the way! *Exeunt.*

Footnotes

- Note 9:With the sight of hedgehoglike spirits. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:Large leather drinking vessel; stone-throwing military engine. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Dried hake, a poor person’s staple. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:On a sign to attract spectators. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:Make a fortune for a man; become a man. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:An allusion to exhibitions of American Indians in London. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:Comically varying “on two legs” (upright); also suggesting “on crutches.” Return to reference 6
- Note 7:No sum can be too high for him. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:“Ale will make a cat speak” was proverbial. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:If it takes all the wine in my bottle to cure him. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:From the proverbial “He should have a long spoon that sups with the devil.” Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Deformed creature; miscarriage, owing to the supposed detrimental influence of the moon. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Confirming an oath by kissing the Bible; or the proverbial “Kiss the cup” (“Drink”). Return to reference 3
- Note 4:A dog and a thornbush were traditional attributes of the man in the moon. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:Shakespeare may have invented this word, which appears nowhere else in the English language, but it seems more likely that “scamel” was the result of an error in transmission. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:Addressed to the old master, Prospero. Return to reference 6
- Note °: marshes Return to reference °
- Note °: inch by inch Return to reference °
- Note °: grimace Return to reference °
- Note °: entwined by Return to reference °
- Note °: notice Return to reference °
- Note °: ward off Return to reference °
- Note °: small coin Return to reference °
- Note °: take cover Return to reference °
- Note °: sting Return to reference °
- Note °: What’s going on? Return to reference °
- Note °: India Return to reference °

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- Note °: at the Return to reference °
- Note °: a fit of fever Return to reference °
- Note °: cure Return to reference °
- Note °: cowhide; shoes Return to reference °
- Note °: in the manner of Return to reference °
- Note °: almost Return to reference °
- Note °: gets Return to reference °
- Note °: Come on Return to reference °
- Note °: dislodge Return to reference °
- Note °: exquisitely made Return to reference °
- Note °: Enough Return to reference °
- Note °: actual Return to reference °
- Note °: excrement Return to reference °
- Note °: defecate Return to reference °
- Note °: an if = if Return to reference °
- Note °: an excellent; a fine Return to reference °
- Note °: cask of wine Return to reference °
- Note °: once upon a time Return to reference °
- Note °: (Miranda) Return to reference °
- Note °: sun Return to reference °
- Note °: drunk Return to reference °
- Note °: drunk Return to reference °
- Note °: crab apples Return to reference °
- Note °: edible tubers Return to reference °
- Note °: it Return to reference °
- Note °: to trap Return to reference °
- Note °: firewood Return to reference °
- Note °: holiday Return to reference °
- Note °: excellent; fine Return to reference °

3.1

Enter FERDINAND , bearing a log.

FERDINAND There be some sports are painful, and their labor

Delight in them sets off.[7] Some kinds of baseness

Are nobly undergone, and most poor matters

Point to rich ends. This my mean° task

5

Would be as heavy to me as odious, but°

The mistress which I serve quickens° what’s dead

And makes my labors pleasures. Oh, she is

Ten times more gentle than her father's crabbed,

And he's composed of harshness. I must remove

Full p. C-739

Some thousands of these logs and pile them up,

Upon a sore° injunction. My sweet mistress

Weeps when she sees me work and says such baseness

Had never like executor. I forget;

But these sweet thoughts do even refresh my labors,

Most busil'est,° when I do it.

Enter MIRANDA , and PROSPERO [unseen].

MIRANDA Alas now, pray you,

Work not so hard. I would the lightning had

Burnt up those logs that you are enjoined to pile.

Pray set it down and rest you. When this burns

'Twill weep[8] for having wearied you. My father

Is hard at study. Pray now, rest yourself.

He's safe° for these three hours.

FERDINAND O most dear mistress,

The sun will set before I shall discharge

What I must strive to do.

MIRANDA If you'll sit down

I'll bear your logs the while. Pray give me that:

I'll carry it to the pile.

Troy University Resources

FERDINAND No, precious creature,

I had rather crack my sinews, break my back,

Than you should such dishonor undergo

While I sit lazy by.

MIRANDA It would become me

As well as it does you; and I should do it

Shorter p. 1813

With much more ease, for my goodwill is to it,

And yours it is against.

PROSPERO [*aside*] Poor worm, thou art infected:[9]

This visitation[1] shows it.

MIRANDA You look wearily.

FERDINAND No, noble mistress, 'tis fresh morning with me

When you are by at night. I do beseech you,

Chiefly that I may set it in my prayers,

What is your name?

MIRANDA Miranda.—O my father,

I have broke your hest° to say so!

FERDINAND Admired[2] Miranda!

Indeed the top of admiration, worth

What's dearest to the world. Full many a lady

I have eyed with best regard, and many a time

Th' harmony of their tongues hath into bondage

Brought my too diligent° ear. For several virtues

Have I liked several° women; never any

With so full soul but some defect in her

Full p. C-740

Did quarrel with the noblest grace she owed°

And put it to the foil.[3] But you, O you,

So perfect and so peerless, are created

Of every creature's best.

MIRANDA I do not know

One of my sex; no woman's face remember

Save, from my glass,° mine own. Nor have I seen

More that I may call men than you, good friend,

And my dear father. How features are abroad[4]

I am skilless° of; but by my modesty,°

The jewel in my dower,° I would not wish

Any companion in the world but you,

Nor can imagination form a shape

Besides° yourself to like of. But I prattle

Something° too wildly, and my father's precepts

I therein do forget.

FERDINAND I am in my condition°

A prince, Miranda; I do think a king—

I would° not so!—and would no more endure

This wooden slavery than to suffer

Troy University Resources

The flesh fly[5] blow my mouth. Hear my soul speak:

The very instant that I saw you did

Shorter p. 1814

My heart fly to your service, there resides

To make me slave to it, and for your sake

Am I this patient log-man.

MIRANDA Do you love me?

FERDINAND O heaven, O earth, bear witness to this sound,

And crown what I profess with kind event°

If I speak true! If hollowly,° invert

What best is boded° me to mischief!° I,

Beyond all limit of what° else i'th' world,

Do love, prize, honor you.

MIRANDA I am a fool

To weep at what I am glad of.

PROSPERO [*aside*] Fair encounter

Of two most rare affections. Heavens rain grace

On that which breeds between 'em.

FERDINAND Wherefore weep you?

MIRANDA At mine unworthiness, that dare not offer

What I desire to give, and much less take

What I shall die to want.[6] But this is trifling,

And all the more it seeks to hide itself

The bigger bulk it shows.[7] Hence, bashful cunning,°

And prompt me, plain and holy innocence!

I am your wife if you'll marry me;

If not, I'll die your maid.° To be your fellow°

85

You may deny me, but I'll be your servant

Whether you will or no.

FERDINAND My mistress,° dearest,

And I thus humble ever.

MIRANDA My husband, then?

FERDINAND Ay, with a heart as willing°

As bondage e'er of freedom. Here's my hand.[8]

90

MIRANDA And mine, with my heart in't. And now farewell

Till half an hour hence.

FERDINAND A thousand thousand!°

Exeunt [FERDINAND and MIRANDA , separately].

PROSPERO So glad of this as they I cannot be,

Who are surprised withal;° but my rejoicing

At nothing can be more. I'll to my book,°

95

For yet ere suppertime must I perform

Much business appertaining. *Exit.*

Footnotes

- Note 7:The greater effort invested amounts to more pleasure; the labor of painful activities ("sports") is offset by whatever delight we take in them. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:By exuding drops of resin. Return to reference 8

Troy University Resources

- Note 9:Afflicted with lovesickness. “Worm”: an expression of tenderness; but a worm was often thought to carry disease. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:Suggesting a pastoral or charitable visit to the sick; or may indicate a visit by the plague—here, lovesickness. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Playing on the meaning of Miranda’s name. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Foiled it, or made it ineffectual; challenged it, as in a fencing match (compare “quarrel” in line 45). Return to reference 3
- Note 4:What people look like elsewhere. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:Species of fly that deposits its eggs (“blows”) in dead flesh. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:Miranda is not at liberty to bestow her virginity or to obtain the consummation that she desires and lacks. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:An image of secret pregnancy. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:Such an exchange could actually constitute a marriage ceremony. Return to reference 8
- Note °: lowly Return to reference °
- Note °: except that Return to reference °
- Note °: enlivens Return to reference °
- Note °: harsh Return to reference °
- Note °: busily Return to reference °
- Note °: We are safe from him Return to reference °
- Note °: disobeyed your command Return to reference °
- Note °: attentive Return to reference °
- Note °: various Return to reference °
- Note °: owned Return to reference °
- Note °: mirror Return to reference °
- Note °: ignorant Return to reference °
- Note °: virginity Return to reference °
- Note °: dowry Return to reference °
- Note °: Other than Return to reference °
- Note °: Somewhat Return to reference °
- Note °: rank Return to reference °
- Note °: wish it were Return to reference °
- Note °: favorable outcome Return to reference °
- Note °: falsely Return to reference °
- Note °: foretold to Return to reference °
- Note °: misfortune Return to reference °
- Note °: whatsoever Return to reference °
- Note °: artful shyness Return to reference °
- Note °: virgin; servant Return to reference °
- Note °: equal Return to reference °
- Note °: sweetheart Return to reference °
- Note °: desirous Return to reference °
- Note °: (farewells) Return to reference °
- Note °: overwhelmed by all Return to reference °
- Note °: book of magic Return to reference °

3.2

Enter CALIBAN , STEFANO , and TRINCULO .

STEFANO Tell not me. When the butt is out we will drink water, not a drop before. Therefore bear up and board 'em.[9] —Servant monster, drink to me!

TRINCULO "Servant monster"? The folly° of this island! They say there's but five upon this isle. We are three of them; if th'other two be brained° like us, the state totters.

STEFANO Drink, servant monster, when I bid thee. Thy eyes are almost set° in thy head.

TRINCULO Where should they be set° else? He were a brave monster indeed if they were set in his tail.

STEFANO My man-monster hath drowned his tongue in sack.° For my part, the sea cannot drown me. I swam, ere I could recover the shore, five and thirty leagues,° off and on.[1] By this light, thou shalt be my lieutenant, monster, or my standard.[2]

TRINCULO Your lieutenant, if you list;° he's no standard.

STEFANO We'll not run, Monsieur Monster.

TRINCULO Nor go° neither, but you'll lie[3] like dogs and yet say nothing neither.

STEFANO Mooncalf, speak once in thy life, if thou beest a good mooncalf.

Full p. C-742

CALIBAN How does thy honor? Let me lick thy shoe.

I'll not serve him; he is not valiant.

TRINCULO Thou liest, most ignorant monster; I am in case° to jostle a constable. Why, thou debauched fish thou, was there ever man a coward that hath drunk so much sack as I do today? Wilt thou tell a monstrous lie, being but half a fish and half a monster?

CALIBAN Lo, how he mocks me. Wilt thou let him, my lord?

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TRINCULO “Lord,” quoth he? That a monster should be such a natural![4]

CALIBAN Lo, lo again! Bite him to death, I prithee.

STEFANO Trinculo, keep a good tongue in your head. If you prove a mutineer, the next tree![°] The poor monster’s my subject, and he shall not suffer indignity.

35

CALIBAN I thank my noble lord. Wilt thou be pleased

To hearken once again to the suit I made to thee?

STEFANO Marry, will I. Kneel and repeat it. I will stand, and so shall Trinculo.

Enter ARIEL invisible.

CALIBAN As I told thee before, I am subject to a tyrant,

40

A sorcerer, that by his cunning hath

Cheated me of the island.

Shorter p. 1816

ARIEL Thou liest.

CALIBAN [*to* TRINCULO] Thou liest, thou jesting monkey, thou!

I would my valiant master would destroy thee.

I do not lie.

45

STEFANO Trinculo, if you trouble him any more in ’s tale, by this hand, I will supplant[°] some of your teeth.

TRINCULO Why, I said nothing.

STEFANO Mum, then, and no more.—Proceed.

CALIBAN I say by sorcery he got this isle;

50

From me he got it. If thy greatness will

Revenge it on him—for I know thou dar’st,

But this thing[5] dare not—

STEFANO That’s most certain.

CALIBAN Thou shalt be lord of it, and I'll serve thee.

55

STEFANO How now shall this be compassed?° Canst thou bring me to the party?°

CALIBAN Yea, yea, my lord. I'll yield him thee asleep,

Where thou mayst knock a nail into his head.[6]

ARIEL Thou liest; thou canst not.

60

CALIBAN What a pied ninny's° this! Thou scurvy patch!°

I do beseech thy greatness give him blows

And take his bottle from him. When that's gone,

Full p. C-743

He shall drink naught but brine, for I'll not show him

Where the quick freshes° are.

65

STEFANO Trinculo, run into no further danger. Interrupt the monster one word further and, by this hand, I'll turn my mercy out o'doors and make a stockfish of thee.[7]

TRINCULO Why, what did I? I did nothing. I'll go farther off.

STEFANO Didst thou not say he lied?

70

ARIEL Thou liest.

STEFANO Do I so?

[He beats TRINCULO .]

Take thou that! As you like this, give me the lie° another time.

75

TRINCULO I did not give the lie! Out o'your wits, and hearing too? A pox o'your bottle. This can sack and drinking do. A murrain° on your monster, and the devil take your fingers!

CALIBAN Ha, ha, ha!

STEFANO Now forward with your tale.—Prithee stand further off.

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CALIBAN Beat him enough. After a little time I'll beat him too.

STEFANO Stand farther.—Come, proceed.

CALIBAN Why, as I told thee, 'tis a custom with him

I'th' afternoon to sleep. There° thou mayst brain him,

Having first seized his books; or with a log

Batter his skull, or paunch° him with a stake,

Or cut his weasand° with thy knife. Remember

Shorter p. 1817

First to possess his books, for without them

He's but a sot° as I am, nor hath not

One spirit to command—they all do hate him

As rootedly as I. Burn but his books.

He has brave utensils, for so he calls them,

Which, when he has a house, he'll deck withal.

And that most deeply to consider is

The beauty of his daughter. He himself

Calls her a nonpareil.° I never saw a woman

But only Sycorax my dam and she;

But she as far surpasseth Sycorax

As great'st does least.

STEFANO Is it so brave° a lass?

CALIBAN Ay, lord. She will become thy bed, I warrant,

And bring thee forth brave brood.

STEFANO Monster, I will kill this man. His daughter and I will be king and queen—save° our graces—and Trinculo and thyself shall be viceroys. Dost thou like the plot, Trinculo?

TRINCULO Excellent.

105

STEFANO Give me thy hand. I am sorry I beat thee. But while thou liv'st, keep a good tongue in thy head.

Full p. C-744

CALIBAN Within this half hour will he be asleep.

Wilt thou destroy him then?

STEFANO Ay, on mine honor.

ARIEL [*aside*] This will I tell my master.

CALIBAN Thou mak'st me merry. I am full of pleasure;

110

Let us be jocund. Will you troll° the catch°

You taught me but whilere?°

STEFANO At thy request, monster, I will do reason, any reason.° Come on, Trinculo, let us sing.

(*Sings.*) Flout 'em, and scout 'em

115

And scout° 'em, and flout 'em.

Thought is free.

CALIBAN That's not the tune.

ARIEL plays the tune on a tabor and pipe.

STEFANO What is this same?

120

TRINCULO This is the tune of our catch, played by the picture of Nobody.[8]

STEFANO If thou beest a man, show thyself in thy likeness. If thou beest a devil, take't as thou list.°

TRINCULO Oh, forgive me my sins!

125

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STEFANO He that dies pays all debts. I defy thee! Mercy upon us!

CALIBAN Art thou afeard?

STEFANO No, monster, not I.

CALIBAN Be not afeard: the isle is full of noises,

Sounds and sweet airs° that give delight and hurt not.

Shorter p. 1818

130

Sometimes a thousand twangling instruments

Will hum about mine ears; and sometimes voices,

That, if I then had waked after long sleep,

Will make me sleep again; and then, in dreaming,

The clouds methought would open and show riches

135

Ready to drop upon me, that when I waked

I cried to dream again.

STEFANO This will prove a brave kingdom to me, where I shall have my music for nothing.

CALIBAN When Prospero is destroyed.

140

STEFANO That shall be by and by:° I remember the story.

[Exit ARIEL playing music.]

TRINCULO The sound is going away; let's follow it, and after do our work.

STEFANO Lead, monster, we'll follow. I would I could see this taborer: he lays it on.[9]

145

TRINCULO [*to* CALIBAN] Wilt come? I'll follow Stefano.

Exeunt.

Full p. C-745

Footnotes

- Note 9:Force a way aboard, continuing the terminology of naval warfare; take onboard (drink). "Bear up": sail to the attack. Return to reference 9

- Note 1:Tacking away from and toward the shore. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Standard-bearer; but in Trinculo's reply, "one who can stand up." Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Lie (down); tell lies; excrete. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:An idiot, punning on the idea that monsters were unnatural. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:Trinculo; or perhaps Caliban himself. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:As Jael murdered sleeping Sisera in Judges 4.21 and 5.26. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:Proverbial allusion to the beating of dried fish before cooking it. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:"Nobody" was a character in a comedy who was depicted on the title page of the printed text. Large breeches up to his neck made him appear to have no trunk. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:He sets himself to his music vigorously. Return to reference 9
- Note °: absurdity Return to reference °
- Note °: have brains Return to reference °
- Note °: fixed by drunkenness Return to reference °
- Note °: placed Return to reference °
- Note °: white wine Return to reference °
- Note °: about 100 miles Return to reference °
- Note °: wish Return to reference °
- Note °: walk Return to reference °
- Note °: prepared Return to reference °
- Note °: (for a gallows) Return to reference °
- Note °: uproot Return to reference °
- Note °: accomplished Return to reference °
- Note °: person concerned Return to reference °
- Note °: fool in motley Return to reference °
- Note °: jester; idiot Return to reference °
- Note °: fast-flowing springs Return to reference °
- Note °: call me a liar Return to reference °
- Note °: plague Return to reference °
- Note °: Then Return to reference °
- Note °: disembowel Return to reference °
- Note °: windpipe Return to reference °
- Note °: stupid fool Return to reference °
- Note °: one without equal Return to reference °
- Note °: excellent; fine Return to reference °
- Note °: God save Return to reference °
- Note °: sing Return to reference °
- Note °: round; song Return to reference °
- Note °: a short time ago Return to reference °
- Note °: anything reasonable Return to reference °
- Note °: mock Return to reference °
- Note °: wish Return to reference °
- Note °: tunes Return to reference °

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• Note °: very soon Return to reference °

3.3

Enter ALONSO , SEBASTIAN , ANTONIO , GONZALO , ADRIAN , and FRANCISCO .

GONZALO By’r lakin,[1] I can go no further, sir.

My old bones aches. Here’s a maze trod indeed

Through forthrights and meanders.° By your patience,

I needs must rest me.

ALONSO Old lord, I cannot blame thee,

Who am myself attached° with weariness

To th’ dulling of my spirits. Sit down and rest.

Even° here I will put off my hope, and keep it

No longer for° my flatterer: he is drowned

Whom thus we stray to find, and the sea mocks

Our frustrate° search on land. Well, let him go.

ANTONIO [*aside to* SEBASTIAN] I am right glad that he’s so out of hope.

Do not, for° one repulse, forgo the purpose

That you resolved t’effect.

SEBASTIAN [*aside to* ANTONIO] The next advantage

Will we take throughly.°

ANTONIO [*aside to* SEBASTIAN] Let it be tonight;

For now they are oppressed with travail,° they

Will not nor cannot use such vigilance

As when they are fresh.

SEBASTIAN [*aside to* ANTONIO] I say tonight: no more.

Solemn and strange music. [Enter] PROSPERO on the top,[2] *invisible.*

Shorter p. 1819

ALONSO What harmony is this? My good friends, hark!

20

GONZALO Marvelous sweet music.

Enter several strange shapes, bringing a banquet; and dance about it with gentle actions of salutations, and inviting the King etc. to eat, they depart.

ALONSO Give us kind keepers,° heavens! What were these?

SEBASTIAN A living drollery.[3] Now I will believe

That there are unicorns; that in Arabia

There is one tree, the phoenix' throne, one phoenix[4]

At this hour reigning there.

25

ANTONIO I'll believe both;

And what does else want credit,° come to me,

And I'll be sworn 'tis true. Travelers ne'er did lie,

Though fools at home condemn 'em.

GONZALO If in Naples

I should report this now, would they believe me?

Full p. C-746

30

If I should say I saw such islanders—

For certes° these are people of the island—

Who, though they are of monstrous shape, yet note

Their manners are more gentle, kind, than of

Our human generation you shall find

Many, nay, almost any.

35

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PROSPERO [*aside*] Honest lord,

Thou hast said well; for some of you there present

Are worse than devils.

ALONSO I cannot too much muse°

Such shapes, such gesture, and such sound, expressing—

Although they want the use of tongue° —a kind

Of excellent dumb discourse.

40

PROSPERO [*aside*] Praise in departing.[5]

FRANCISCO They vanished strangely.

SEBASTIAN No matter, since

They have left their viands° behind; for we have stomachs.°

Wilt please you taste of what is here?

ALONSO Not I.

GONZALO Faith, sir, you need not fear. When we were boys,

45

Who would believe that there were mountaineers,°

Dewlapped like bulls, whose throats had hanging at 'em

Wallets° of flesh? Or that there were such men

Whose heads stood in their breasts? Which now we find

Each putter-out of five for one[6] will bring us

Good warrant of.

50

ALONSO I will stand to and feed;°

Shorter p. 1820

Although my last, no matter, since I feel

The best is past. Brother, my lord the duke,

Stand to and do as we.

[ALONSO , SEBASTIAN , and ANTONIO approach the table.] Thunder and lightning.

Enter ARIEL , like a harpy;[7] *claps his wings upon the table, and with a quaint device*° *the banquet vanishes.*

ARIEL You are three men of sin, whom destiny—

55

That hath to° instrument this lower world

And what is in't—the never-surfeited sea

Hath caused to belch up you, and on this island,

Where man doth not inhabit—you 'mongst men

Being most unfit to live. I have made you mad;

60

And even with suchlike valor men hang and drown

Full p. C-747

Their proper selves.°

[ALONSO , SEBASTIAN , and ANTONIO draw their swords.]

You fools, I and my fellows

Are ministers of fate. The elements

Of whom your swords are tempered[8] may as well

Wound the loud winds, or with bemocked-at stabs

65

Kill the still-closing[9] waters, as diminish

One dowl° that's in my plume.° My fellow ministers

Are like° invulnerable. If you could hurt,

Your swords are now too massy° for your strengths

And will not be uplifted. But remember—

70

For that's my business to you—that you three

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From Milan did supplant good Prospero;

Exposed unto the sea, which hath requit it,

Him and his innocent child; for which foul deed

The powers, delaying not forgetting, have

Incensed the seas and shores—yea, all the creatures—

Against your peace. Thee of thy son, Alonso,

They have bereft; and do pronounce by me

Ling'ring perdition[1] —worse than any death

Can be at once—shall step by step attend

You and your ways; whose[2] wraths to guard you from,

Which here in this most desolate[3] isle else falls

Upon your heads, is nothing° but heart's sorrow

And a clear life° ensuing.

Shorter p. 1821

He vanishes in thunder; then, to soft music, enter the shapes again, and dance with mocks and mows, ° and [then exeunt] , carrying out the table.

PROSPERO [*aside*] Bravely the figure of this harpy hast thou

Performed, my Ariel; a grace it had, devouring.[4]

Of my instruction hast thou nothing bated°

In what thou hadst to say. So with good life[5]

And observation strange[6] my meaner ministers°

Their several kinds° have done.° My high charms work,

And these mine enemies are all knit up

In their distractions. They now are in my power;

And in these fits I leave them, while I visit

Young Ferdinand, whom they suppose is drowned,

And his and mine loved darling. [*Exit.*]

Full p. C-748
95

GONZALO I'th' name of something holy, sir, why stand you

In this strange stare?

ALONSO Oh, it is monstrous, monstrous!

Methought the billows spoke and told me of it,

The winds did sing it to me, and the thunder,

That deep and dreadful organ pipe, pronounced

100

The name of Prosper. It did bass my trespass.[7]

Therefore° my son i'th' ooze is bedded, and

I'll seek him deeper than e'er plummet sounded,

And with him there lie mudded. [*Exit.*]

SEBASTIAN But one fiend at a time,

I'll fight their legions o'er!°

ANTONIO I'll be thy second.

Exeunt [SEBASTIAN and ANTONIO].

105

GONZALO All three of them are desperate: ° their great guilt,

Like poison given to work° a great time after,

Now gins to bite the spirits. I do beseech you

That are of suppler joints, follow them swiftly,

And hinder them from what this ecstasy°

May now provoke them to.

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ADRIAN Follow, I pray you.

Exeunt.

Footnotes

- Note 1:Ladykin: a colloquial form of reference to the Virgin Mary. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:A small acting area above the upper stage. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:A puppet show with live actors. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:The unicorn and phoenix, a bird, were two mythological creatures that sometimes figured in travelers' tales. Only one phoenix was said to exist in the world at any one time. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:Reserve your praise until the end of the event. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:A traveler could profit from a voyage by laying down a sum with a broker before departing and undertaking to bring back evidence of having reached his destination; if successful, he was repaid fivefold. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:A mythological monster with a vulture's wings and claws and a woman's face. Aeneas and his companions encountered these harpies, who stole their meals and threatened to punish them with slow starvation. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:Compounded and hardened. Metal was sometimes thought of as being compounded of earth and fire, here contrasted with winds and waters. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:Self-healing, since they close immediately once parted. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:Slow starvation; hell on earth of spiritual suffering. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Refers to "the powers" in line 74. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Joyless, wretched; barren, deserted. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:In clapping his wings, Ariel has created the illusion of having devoured the banquet. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:Convincingly; with vitality. "So": In the same way. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:Remarkable attention to the requirements of their parts, or instructions. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:The thunder proclaimed my sin ("trespass") in a bass voice, or with a bass background; perhaps, wordplay on the "utter baseness" of trespass. Return to reference 7
- Note °: direct and winding paths Return to reference °
- Note °: seized Return to reference °
- Note °: Exactly Return to reference °
- Note °: as Return to reference °
- Note °: vain Return to reference °
- Note °: on account of Return to reference °
- Note °: thoroughly Return to reference °
- Note °: journey; effort Return to reference °
- Note °: guardian angels Return to reference °
- Note °: lack belief Return to reference °
- Note °: certainly Return to reference °

- Note °: marvel at Return to reference °
- Note °: language Return to reference °
- Note °: food Return to reference °
- Note °: good appetites Return to reference °
- Note °: mountain dwellers Return to reference °
- Note °: Pouches Return to reference °
- Note °: begin eating Return to reference °
- Note °: an ingenious mechanism Return to reference °
- Note °: as its Return to reference °
- Note °: Themselves Return to reference °
- Note °: featherlet Return to reference °
- Note °: plumage Return to reference °
- Note °: similarly Return to reference °
- Note °: heavy Return to reference °
- Note °: there is no alternative Return to reference °
- Note °: a life innocent of sin Return to reference °
- Note °: grimaces Return to reference °
- Note °: omitted Return to reference °
- Note °: lesser spirits Return to reference °
- Note °: various roles Return to reference °
- Note °: performed Return to reference °
- Note °: For that Return to reference °
- Note °: from beginning to end Return to reference °
- Note °: in despair; reckless Return to reference °
- Note °: take effect Return to reference °
- Note °: madness Return to reference °

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4.1

Enter PROSPERO , FERDINAND , and MIRANDA .

PROSPERO [*to* FERDINAND] If I have too austerely punished you,

Your compensation makes amends, for I

Have given you here a third[8] of mine own life—

Or that for which I live—who° once again

Shorter p. 1822

I tender° to thy hand. All thy vexations

Were but my trials of thy love, and thou

Hast strangely° stood the test. Here, afore heaven,

I ratify this my rich gift. O Ferdinand,

Do not smile at me that I boast her off,°

For thou shalt find she will outstrip all praise

And make it halt° behind her.

FERDINAND I do believe it against an oracle.[9]

PROSPERO Then, as my guest, and thine own acquisition

Worthily purchased,° take my daughter. But

If thou dost break her virgin-knot° before

All sanctimonious° ceremonies may

With full and holy rite be ministered,

No sweet aspersion° shall the heavens let fall

To make this contract grow; but barren hate,

Full p. C-749

Sour-eyed disdain, and discord shall bestrew

The union of your bed with weeds[1] so loathly

That you shall hate it both. Therefore take heed,

As Hymen's[2] lamps shall light you.

FERDINAND As I hope

For quiet days, fair issue,° and long life,

25

With such love as 'tis now, the murkiest den,°

The most opportune place, the strong'st suggestion°

Our worser genius can,[3] shall never melt

Mine honor into lust, to take away

The edge° of that day's celebration

30

When I shall think or° Phoebus' steeds are foundered,[4]

Or night kept chained below.

PROSPERO Fairly spoke.

Sit then and talk with her: she is thine own.

—What,° Ariel! My industrious servant, Ariel!

Enter ARIEL .

ARIEL What would my potent master? Here I am.

35

PROSPERO Thou and thy meaner° fellows your last service

Did worthily perform, and I must use you

In such another trick. Go bring the rabble[5]

O'er whom I give thee pow'r here to this place.

Incite them to quick motion, for I must

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40

Bestow upon the eyes of this young couple

Some vanity[6] of mine art. It is my promise,

And they expect it from me.

ARIEL Presently?°

Shorter p. 1823

PROSPERO Ay, with a twink.[7]

ARIEL Before you can say “come” and “go,”

45

And breathe twice and cry “so, so,”

Each one tripping on his toe,

Will be here with mop and mow.[8]

Do you love me, master? No?

PROSPERO Dearly, my delicate Ariel. Do not approach

Till thou dost hear me call.

50

ARIEL Well; I conceive.° *Exit.*

PROSPERO [*to* FERDINAND] Look thou be true;[9] do not give dalliance

Too much the rein.[1] The strongest oaths are straw

Full p. C-750

To th’ fire i’th’ blood. Be more abstemious,

Or else good night your vow.

FERDINAND I warrant you, sir,

55

The white cold virgin snow upon my heart

Abates the ardor of my liver.[2]

PROSPERO Well.

—Now come, my Ariel: bring a corollary°

Rather than want° a spirit. Appear, and pertly.°

Soft music.

No tongue, all eyes! Be silent!

Enter IRIS .[3]

60

IRIS Ceres, most bounteous lady, thy rich leas[4]

Of wheat, rye, barley, vetches,[5] oats, and peas;

Thy turfy mountains where live nibbling sheep,

And flat meads° thatched with stover,[6] them to keep;

Thy banks with pionèd and twillèd[7] brims,

65

Which spongy° April at thy hest betrims[8]

To make cold nymphs chaste crowns; and thy broom-groves,[9]

Whose shadow the dismissèd bachelor° loves,

Being lass-lorn; thy poll-clipped vineyard,[1]

And thy sea-marge,° sterile and rocky-hard,

70

Where thou thyself dost air° —the queen o'th' sky,[2]

Whose wat'ry arch° and messenger am I,

Shorter p. 1824

Bids thee leave these, and with her sovereign grace,

Here on this grass-plot, in this very place

To come and sport. Her peacocks fly amain.[3]

75

Approach, rich Ceres, her to entertain.

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Enter CERES .

CERES Hail, many-colored messenger, that ne’er

Dost disobey the wife of Jupiter;°

Who with thy saffron wings upon my flowers

Diffusest honey-drops, refreshing showers,

And with each end of thy blue bow dost crown

My bosky° acres and my unshrubbed down,

Rich scarf[4] to my proud earth. Why hath thy queen

Summoned me hither to this short-grassed green?

Full p. C-751

IRIS A contract of true love to celebrate

And some donation freely to estate°

On the blessed lovers.

CERES Tell me, heavenly bow,°

If Venus or her son,[5] as° thou dost know,

Do now attend the Queen? Since they did plot

The means that dusky Dis[6] my daughter got,

Her and her blind boy’s scandaled° company

I have forsworn.

IRIS Of her society

Be not afraid. I met her deity

Cutting the clouds towards Paphos,[7] and her son

Dove-drawn[8] with her. Here thought they to have done

Some wanton charm upon[9] this man and maid,

Whose vows are that no bed-right[1] shall be paid

Till Hymen's torch be lighted;[2] but in vain.

Mars's hot minion° is returned again;

Her waspish-headed[3] son has broke his arrows,

100

Swears he will shoot no more but play with sparrows,[4]

And be a boy right out.°

JUNO descends.

CERES Highest queen of state,

Great Juno comes; I know her by her gait.°

JUNO How does my bounteous sister? Go with me

To bless this twain that they may prosperous be

105

And honored in their issue.

Shorter p. 1825

[JUNO and CERES] sing.

Honor, riches, marriage-blessing,

Long continuance and increasing,

Hourly joys be still° upon you,

Juno sings her blessings on you.

110

CERES Earth's increase and foison° plenty,

Barns and garners° never empty,

Vines with clust'ring bunches growing,

Plants with goodly burden bowing;

Troy University Resources

Spring come to you at the farthest,

115

In the very end of harvest.[5]

Scarcity and want shall shun you,

Ceres' blessing so is on you.

Full p. C-752

FERDINAND This is a most majestic vision, and

Harmonious charmingly.[6] May I be bold°

To think these spirits?

120

PROSPERO Spirits, which by mine art

I have from their confines[7] called to enact

My present fancies.

FERDINAND Let me live here ever!

So rare a wondered° father and a wise

Makes this place paradise.

JUNO and CERES whisper, and send IRIS on employment.

PROSPERO Sweet° now, silence.

125

Juno and Ceres whisper seriously.

There's something else to do. Hush and be mute,

Or else our spell is marred.

IRIS You nymphs called naiads of the wind'ring[8] brooks,

With your sedged crowns° and ever-harmless looks,

130

Leave your crisp channels, and on this green land

Answer your summons; Juno does command.

Come, temperate nymphs, and help to celebrate

A contract of true love. Be not too late.

Enter certain Nymphs.

—You sunburned sicklemen° of August weary,

135

Come hither from the furrow and be merry;

Make holiday; your rye-straw hats put on,

And these fresh nymphs encounter every one

In country footing.

Enter certain Reapers, properly habited.[9] *They join with the Nymphs in a graceful dance, towards the end whereof PROSPERO starts suddenly and speaks, after* *Shorter p. 1826* *which, to a strange, hollow, and confused noise, they heavily vanish.*[1]

PROSPERO I had forgot that foul conspiracy

140

Of the beast Caliban and his confederates

Against my life. The minute of their plot

Is almost come. [*to the Spirits*] Well done. Avoid;° no more!

FERDINAND This is strange: your father's in some passion

That works° him strongly.

MIRANDA Never till this day

145

Saw I him touched with anger so distempered.°

PROSPERO You do look, my son, in a movèd sort,°

As if you were dismayed. Be cheerful, sir.

Our revels[2] now are ended. These our actors,

As I foretold you,° were all spirits and

150 Full p. C-753

Are melted into air, into thin air;

Troy University Resources

And like the baseless fabric[3] of this vision,

The cloud-capped towers, the gorgeous palaces,

The solemn temples, the great globe[4] itself,

Yea, all which it inherit,[5] shall dissolve,

And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,

Leave not a rack° behind. We are such stuff

As dreams are made on,° and our little life

Is rounded[6] with a sleep. Sir, I am vexed.

Bear with my weakness: my old brain is troubled.

Be not disturbed with my infirmity.

If you be pleased, retire into my cell

And there repose. A turn or two I'll walk

To still my beating mind.

FERDINAND *and* MIRANDA We wish your peace. *Exeunt.*

PROSPERO Come with a thought.[7] I thank thee, Ariel. Come.

Enter ARIEL .

ARIEL Thy thoughts I cleave to. What's thy pleasure?

PROSPERO Spirit,

We must prepare to meet with Caliban.

ARIEL Ay, my commander. When I presented[8] Ceres

I thought to have told thee of it, but I feared

Lest I might anger thee.

PROSPERO Say again, where didst thou leave these varlets?°

ARIEL I told you, sir, they were red hot with drinking;

So full of valor that they smote the air

For breathing in their faces, beat the ground

Shorter p. 1827

For kissing of their feet; yet always bending°

175

Towards their project. Then I beat my tabor,

At which like unbacked° colts they pricked their ears,

Advanced° their eyelids, lifted up their noses

As° they smelt music. So I charmed their ears

That calf-like they my lowing° followed through

180

Toothed briars, sharp furzes, pricking gorse,° and thorns,

Which entered their frail shins. At last I left them

I'th' filthy-mantled[9] pool beyond your cell,

There dancing up to th' chins, that° the foul lake

O'erstunk[1] their feet.

PROSPERO This was well done, my bird.°

185

Thy shape invisible retain thou still.

The trumpery° in my house, go bring it hither

For stale° to catch these thieves.

Full p. C-754

ARIEL I go, I go. *Exit.*

PROSPERO A devil, a born devil, on whose nature

Nurture can never stick; on whom my pains,

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Humanely taken, all, all lost, quite lost;

And, as with age his body uglier grows,

So his mind cankers.° I will plague them all,

Even to roaring.

Enter ARIEL, laden with glistering apparel, etc.

—Come, hang them on this line.[2]

Enter CALIBAN , STEFANO , and TRINCULO , all wet.

CALIBAN Pray you tread softly, that the blind mole may not

Hear a foot fall. We now are near his cell.

STEFANO Monster, your fairy, which you say is a harmless fairy, has done little better than played the jack° with us.

TRINCULO Monster, I do smell° all horse-piss, at which my nose is in great indignation.

STEFANO So is mine. Do you hear, monster? If I should take a displeasure against you, look you —

TRINCULO Thou wert but a lost monster.

CALIBAN Good my lord, give me thy favor still.

Be patient, for the prize I'll bring thee to

Shall hoodwink[3] this mischance. Therefore speak softly;

All's hushed as midnight yet.

TRINCULO Ay, but to lose our bottles in the pool!

STEFANO There is not only disgrace and dishonor in that, monster, but an infinite loss.

TRINCULO That's more to me than my wetting. Yet this is your harmless fairy, monster.

STEFANO I will fetch off[4] my bottle, though I be o'er ears° for my labor.

CALIBAN Prithee, my king, be quiet. Seest thou here:

This is the mouth o'th' cell. No noise, and enter.

Do that good mischief which may make this island

Thine own forever, and I, thy Caliban,

For aye° thy foot-licker.

STEFANO Give me thy hand. I do begin to have bloody thoughts.

TRINCULO O King Stefano, O peer! O worthy Stefano, look what a wardrobe here is for thee.

CALIBAN Let it alone, thou fool. It is but trash.

TRINCULO Oh ho, monster! We know what belongs to a frippery.° O King Stefano!

STEFANO Put off that gown, Trinculo: by this hand, I'll have that gown.

TRINCULO Thy grace shall have it.

CALIBAN The dropsy[5] drown this fool! What do you mean

To dote thus on such luggage?° Let't alone

And do the murder first. If he awake,

From toe to crown he'll fill our skins with pinches,

Make us° strange stuff.

STEFANO Be you quiet, monster. Mistress line, is not this my jerkin?° Now is the jerkin under the line.[6] Now, jerkin, you are like to lose your hair and prove a bald jerkin.[7]

TRINCULO Do, do! We steal by line and level,[8] an't like° your grace.

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STEFANO I thank thee for that jest. Here's a garment for't. Wit shall not go unrewarded while I am king of this country. "Steal by line and level" is an excellent pass of pate.[9] There's another garment for't.

TRINCULO Monster, come, put some lime upon your fingers[1] and away with the rest.

CALIBAN I will have none on't. We shall lose our time

245

And all be turned to barnacles,[2] or to apes

With foreheads villainous° low.

STEFANO Monster, lay to° your fingers. Help to bear this away, where my hogshead of wine is, or I'll turn you out of my kingdom. Go to, carry this.

250

TRINCULO And this.

Shorter p. 1829

STEFANO Ay, and this.

A noise of hunters heard. Enter diverse° SPIRITS in shape of dogs and hounds, hunting them about, PROSPERO and ARIEL setting them on.

PROSPERO Hey, Mountain, hey!

ARIEL Silver! There it goes, Silver!

PROSPERO Fury, Fury! There, Tyrant, there! Hark, hark!

[CALIBAN , STEFANO , and TRINCULO are chased off by SPIRITS .]

255

[*to* ARIEL] Go, charge my goblins that they grind their joints

With dry convulsions, shorten up their sinews

With agèd cramps, and more pinch-spotted[3] make them

Than pard or cat o'mountain.[4]

ARIEL Hark, they roar!

PROSPERO Let them be hunted soundly.° At this hour

260

Lies at my mercy all mine enemies.

Shortly shall all my labors end, and thou

Shalt have the air at freedom. For a little,

Follow and do me service.

Exeunt.

Footnotes

- Note 8:Miranda. The usual poetic conceit was a half; commentators variously conjecture the other third to be his dukedom, his books, or his late wife. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:I would believe it even if an oracle said otherwise. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:Weeds in place of the flowers traditionally strewn on the marriage bed. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Ancient Greek god of marriage. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Is capable of. “Worser genius”: evil spirit corresponding to a guardian angel. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:Collapsed and made lame. “Phoebus’ steeds”: the mythological horses that drew the chariot of the sun. Ferdinand anticipates that on his wedding day he will, in his impatience, think that the night will never come. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:Troupe of lesser spirits. “Trick”: theatrical device, or clever artifice. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:Trifle; conceit; illusion; display. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:In the twinkling of an eye. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:With derisive and grimacing gestures. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:Take care that you remain faithful to your promise. Prospero may have caught the lovers just indulging in dalliance. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:To “give the rein” is to make a horse gallop. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Virgin snow lies on his heart because he has remained chaste, never having given in to his ardent liver. The liver was held to be the seat of passion. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Goddess of the rainbow and messenger of Juno; her apparel is in the colors of the rainbow, and she wears “saffron wings” (line 78). Return to reference 3
- Note 4:Arable land. Ceres was the Roman goddess of agriculture and generative nature. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:Pealike plants grown for fodder. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:Hay for winter fodder. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:Reinforced with channels (“pioned”) and with entwined branches (“twilled”) to prevent riverbank erosion. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:Adorns with flowers. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:Thickets of gorse, yellow-flowered shrubs. “Cold”: chaste. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:Vineyard with vines embracing, twined around, their supporting poles; pruned vineyard. “Lass-lorn”: abandoned by the girl he wooed. “Poll-clipped”: pruned short. Return to reference 1

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- Note 2:Juno, in Roman mythology, queen of the heavens and goddess of women, held to protect marriages and preside over childbirth. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:In haste. Peacocks, sacred to Juno, drew her chariot. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:Ornamental and hung across the body rather than around the neck. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:Cupid, proverbially blind. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:King of the underworld in Roman mythology. Venus and her son Cupid made him fall in love with Ceres' daughter Proserpine, whom he abducted (Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 5.395ff). Return to reference 6
- Note 7:City in Cyprus: associated with Venus. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:Doves were sacred to Venus and drew her chariot. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:Cast a lustful spell upon. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:Right to consummate the marriage; also, suggesting a rite, as in line 17. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Until the wedding ceremony is performed. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Peevish, irritable, and with arrows like the wasp's sting. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:Sparrows were associated with Venus because they were proverbially lustful. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:Let spring return immediately after harvest, without any intervening winter. (In Greco-Roman mythology, winter was originally caused by Ceres abandoning the earth in search of Proserpine.) Return to reference 5
- Note 6:Delightfully; magically; harmoniously. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:Regions of dwelling. The word is accented on the second syllable. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:Perhaps a conflation of "wandering" and "winding." The naiads were mythical river nymphs. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:Either appropriately or finely dressed. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:Sorrowfully depart. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Entertainment, in both festive and theatrical senses. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:An edifice or substance without foundations; insubstantial, alluding to buildings in masque scenery. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:World; also, with a passing allusion to the Globe theater. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:All who come into possession of it. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:Rounded off; surrounded; or, possibly, crowned. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:Come as fast as thought, a colloquial simile. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:Acted; produced the masque of; introduced while playing Iris. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:Covered with filthy scum. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:Made smelly; smelled worse than. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Variant of lind, the lime tree or linden. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Blind with a hood, as was done to pacify a hawk—hence, make harmless; also, put out of sight. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:Recover; rescue; drink off. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:A disease characterized by the accumulation of fluid in connective tissue. Return to reference 5

- Note 6:Below the lime tree; south of the equator; below the waist. Also, a possible allusion to the proverb “Thou hast stricken the ball under the line,” meaning “You have cheated.” Return to reference 6
- Note 7:Baldness caused either through tropical disease or by sailors who customarily shaved the heads of passengers when they crossed the line of the equator for the first time. “Under the [waist]line” (line 234) could also be an allusion to baldness from syphilis. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:An idiomatic expression for “properly, by the rules”—literally, “by plumb line and carpenter’s level”; also, punning on “lime.” “Do, do”: an expression of approval. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:Thrust of wit (fencing term). Return to reference 9
- Note 1:Be “lime-fingered,” sticky-fingered (alluding to birdlime, a gluey substance used to catch birds). Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Barnacle geese, also known as “tree geese” and supposed to begin life as barnacle shells. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Spotted with bruises from pinches. “Agèd cramps”: the convulsions of old age. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:Both terms are synonymous with “leopard”; the second is from Jeremiah 13.23: “May a man of Ind change his skin, and the cat of the mountain her spots?” (Bishops’ Bible). Return to reference 4
- Note °: whom Return to reference °
- Note °: offer Return to reference °
- Note °: wonderfully Return to reference °
- Note °: sing her praises Return to reference °
- Note °: limp Return to reference °
- Note °: Gained by effort Return to reference °
- Note °: hymen Return to reference °
- Note °: holy Return to reference °
- Note °: shower of grace Return to reference °
- Note °: children Return to reference °
- Note °: cave Return to reference °
- Note °: temptation Return to reference °
- Note °: unblunted desire Return to reference °
- Note °: either Return to reference °
- Note °: Now then Return to reference °
- Note °: lesser Return to reference °
- Note °: At once Return to reference °
- Note °: understand Return to reference °
- Note °: surplus Return to reference °
- Note °: lack Return to reference °
- Note °: briskly Return to reference °
- Note °: meadows Return to reference °
- Note °: wet Return to reference °
- Note °: rejected suitor Return to reference °
- Note °: seashore Return to reference °
- Note °: take fresh air Return to reference °

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• Note °: rainbow Return to reference °
• Note °: (Juno) Return to reference °
• Note °: wooded Return to reference °
• Note °: bestow Return to reference °
• Note °: rainbow Return to reference °
• Note °: as far as Return to reference °
• Note °: scandalous; notorious Return to reference °
• Note °: lover; Venus Return to reference °
• Note °: an ordinary boy Return to reference °
• Note °: majestic bearing Return to reference °
• Note °: always Return to reference °
• Note °: abundance Return to reference °
• Note °: granaries Return to reference °
• Note °: Would I be right Return to reference °
• Note °: endowed with wonders Return to reference °
• Note °: Softly Return to reference °
• Note °: garlands of reeds Return to reference °
• Note °: harvesters Return to reference °
• Note °: Begone Return to reference °
• Note °: agitates Return to reference °
• Note °: troubled; distracted Return to reference °
• Note °: disturbed manner Return to reference °
• Note °: told you before Return to reference °
• Note °: wisp of cloud Return to reference °
• Note °: of Return to reference °
• Note °: ruffians Return to reference °
• Note °: aiming Return to reference °
• Note °: never-ridden Return to reference °
• Note °: Opened Return to reference °
• Note °: As if Return to reference °
• Note °: mooing Return to reference °
• Note °: prickly shrubs Return to reference °
• Note °: so that Return to reference °
• Note °: chick; dear Return to reference °
• Note °: cheap goods Return to reference °
• Note °: decoy; bait Return to reference °
• Note °: festers Return to reference °
• Note °: knave; will-o’-the-wisp Return to reference °
• Note °: smell of Return to reference °
• Note °: drowned Return to reference °
• Note °: ever Return to reference °
• Note °: old-clothes shop Return to reference °
• Note °: encumbrances Return to reference °
• Note °: Turn us into Return to reference °
• Note °: leather jacket Return to reference °
• Note °: if it please Return to reference °

- Note °: wretchedly Return to reference °
- Note °: apply Return to reference °
- Note °: various Return to reference °
- Note °: thoroughly Return to reference °

5.1

Enter PROSPERO in his magic robes, and ARIEL .

PROSPERO Now does my project gather to a head:[5]

My charms crack not, my spirits obey, and time

Goes upright with his carriage.[6] How's the day?

ARIEL On the sixth hour; at which time, my lord,

You said our work should cease.

5

PROSPERO I did say so

When first I raised the tempest. Say, my spirit,

How fares the King and 's° followers?

ARIEL Confined together

In the same fashion as you gave in charge,

Just as you left them; all prisoners, sir,

10

In the line-grove which weather-fends[7] your cell:

They cannot budge till your release.° The King,

His brother, and yours abide all three distracted,°

And the remainder mourning over them,

Brimful of sorrow and dismay; but chiefly

15

Him that you termed, sir, the good old Lord Gonzalo:

His tears runs down his beard like winter's drops

From eaves of reeds.° Your charm so strongly works 'em

Troy University Resources

That if you now beheld them, your affections°

Would become tender.

Shorter p. 1830

PROSPERO Dost thou think so, spirit?

ARIEL Mine would, sir, were I human.

20

PROSPERO And mine shall.

Hast thou, which art but air, a touch,° a feeling

Of their afflictions, and shall not myself—

One of their kind, that relish all as sharply

Passion as they[8] —be kindlier[9] moved than thou art?

25

Though with their high° wrongs I am struck to th' quick,

Yet with my nobler reason 'gainst my fury

Do I take part.° The rarer action is

In virtue than in vengeance. They being penitent,

The sole drift of my purpose doth extend

30

Not a frown further. Go, release them, Ariel.

My charms I'll break, their senses I'll restore,

And they shall be themselves.

Full p. C-757

ARIEL I'll fetch them, sir. *Exit.*

[PROSPERO makes a circle on the stage.][1]

PROSPERO[2] Ye elves of hills, brooks, standing lakes, and groves,

And ye that on the sands with printless foot

35

Do chase the ebbing Neptune, and do fly him

When he comes back; you demi-puppets[3] that

By moonshine do the green sour ringlets[4] make,

Whereof the ewe not bites; and you, whose pastime

Is to make midnight° -mushrooms, that rejoice

40

To hear the solemn curfew;[5] by whose aid—

Weak masters[6] though ye be—I have bedimmed

The noontide sun, called forth the mutinous winds,

And twixt the green sea and the azured vault°

Set roaring war; to the dread rattling thunder

45

Have I given fire, and rifted° Jove's stout oak

With his own bolt;° the strong-based promontory

Have I made shake, and by the spurs° plucked up

The pine and cedar. Graves at my command

Have waked their sleepers, oped, and let 'em forth

50

By my so potent art. But this rough[7] magic

I here abjure; and when I have required°

Some heavenly music—which even now I do—

To work mine end upon their senses that°

This airy[8] charm is for, I'll break my staff,

Shorter p. 1831

55

Bury it certain° fathoms in the earth,

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And deeper than did ever plummet sound

I'll drown my book.

> *Solemn music.*
>
> *Here enters ARIEL before; then ALONSO with a frantic gesture, attended by GONZALO ; SEBASTIAN and ANTONIO in like manner, attended by ADRIAN and FRANCISCO . They all enter the circle which PROSPERO had made, and there stand charmed; which PROSPERO observing, speaks.*[9]

A solemn air° and° the best comforter

To an unsettled fancy° cure thy brains,

60

Now useless, boiled within thy skull. There stand,

For you are spell-stopped.

Full p. C-758

Holy Gonzalo, honorable man,

Mine eyes, e'en sociable° to the show° of thine,

Fall fellowly drops. [*aside*] The charm dissolves apace

65

And, as the morning steals upon the night,

Melting the darkness, so their rising senses

Begin to chase the ignorant fumes[1] that mantle°

Their clearer° reason.—O good Gonzalo,

My true preserver and a loyal sir°

70

To him thou follow'st, I will pay° thy graces

Home° both in word and deed. Most cruelly

Didst thou, Alonso, use me and my daughter.

Thy brother was a furtherer° in the act:

Thou art pinched° for't now, Sebastian. Flesh and blood,

You, brother mine, that entertained ambition,

Expelled remorse and nature,[2] whom° with Sebastian—

Whose inward pinches therefore are most strong—

Would here have killed your king, I do forgive thee,

Unnatural though thou art. [*aside*] Their understanding

Begins to swell,° and the approaching tide

Will shortly fill the reasonable shore

That now lies foul and muddy. Not° one of them

That yet looks on me or would know me.—Ariel,

Fetch me the hat and rapier[3] in my cell.

[ARIEL exits and returns.]

I will discase° me and myself present

As I was sometime Milan.[4] Quickly, spirit!

Thou shalt ere long be free.

ARIEL sings and helps to attire him.

ARIEL Where the bee sucks, there suck I;

In a cowslip's bell I lie;

There I couch when owls do cry;

Shorter p. 1832

On the bat's back I do fly

After summer merrily.

Merrily, merrily shall I live now,

Under the blossom that hangs on the bough.

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PROSPERO Why, that's my dainty Ariel! I shall miss

Thee, but yet thou shalt have freedom.—So, so, so.

To the King's ship, invisible as thou art;

There shalt thou find the mariners asleep

Under the hatches. The Master and the Boatswain

100

Being awake, enforce them to this place,

And presently,° I prithee.

ARIEL I drink the air before me and return

Or ere° your pulse twice beat. *Exit.*

Full p. C-759

GONZALO All torment, trouble, wonder, and amazement°

105

Inhabits here. Some heavenly power guide us

Out of this fearful° country!

PROSPERO Behold, sir King,

The wrongèd Duke of Milan, Prospero.

For more assurance that a living prince

Does now speak to thee, I embrace thy body

110

And to thee and thy company I bid

A hearty welcome.

ALONSO Whe'er° thou beest he or no,

Or some enchanted trifle[5] to abuse° me—

As late I have been—I not know. Thy pulse

Beats as of flesh and blood; and since I saw thee,

115

Th'affliction of my mind amends, with which,

I fear, a madness held me. This must crave° —

An if this be at all[6] —a most strange story.

Thy dukedom I resign and do entreat

Thou pardon me my wrongs. But how should Prospero

Be living, and be here?

120

PROSPERO [*to* GONZALO] First, noble friend,

Let me embrace thine age,° whose honor cannot

Be measured or confined.

GONZALO Whether this be

Or be not, I'll not swear.

PROSPERO You do yet taste

Some subtleties[7] o'th' isle, that will not let you

125

Believe things certain. Welcome, my friends all.

[*aside to* SEBASTIAN *and* ANTONIO] But you, my brace° of lords, were I so minded

I here could pluck his highness' frown upon you

And justify° you traitors. At this time

I will tell no tales.

SEBASTIAN [*to* ANTONIO] The devil speaks in him!

Shorter p. 1833

PROSPERO No.

130

[*to* ANTONIO] For you, most wicked sir, whom to call brother

Would even infect my mouth, I do forgive

Thy rankest fault—all of them—and require

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My dukedom of thee, which perforce° I know

Thou must restore.

ALONSO If thou beest Prospero,

Give us particulars of thy preservation;

How thou hast met us here, whom three hours since

Were wrecked upon this shore, where I have lost—

How sharp the point of this remembrance is—

My dear son Ferdinand.

PROSPERO I am woe° for't, sir.

Full p. C-760

ALONSO Irreparable is the loss, and patience

Says it is past her cure.

PROSPERO I rather think

You have not sought her help, of° whose soft grace°

For the like loss I have her sovereign aid

And rest myself content.

ALONSO You the like loss?

PROSPERO As great to me as late;° and supportable

To make the dear loss[8] have I means much weaker

Than you may call to comfort you, for I

Have lost my daughter.[9]

ALONSO A daughter?

O heavens, that they were living both in Naples,

The King and Queen there! That they were, I wish

Myself were mudded in that oozy bed

Where my son lies. When did you lose your daughter?

PROSPERO In this last tempest. I perceive these lords

At this encounter do so much admire°

155

That they devour their reason[1] and scarce think

Their eyes do offices of truth,° their words

Are natural breath. But, howsoe'er you have

Been jostled from your senses, know for certain

That I am Prospero, and that very duke

160

Which was thrust forth of Milan, who most strangely

Upon this shore where you were wrecked, was landed

To be the lord on't. No more yet of this,

For 'tis a chronicle of day by day,

Not a relation for a breakfast, nor

165

Befitting this first meeting. Welcome, sir;

This cell's my court. Here have I few attendants

And subjects none abroad.[2] Pray you look in.

My dukedom since you have given me again,

Shorter p. 1834

I will requite you with as good a thing;

170

At least bring forth a wonder to content ye

As much as me my dukedom.

Here PROSPERO discovers[3] *FERDINAND and MIRANDA playing at chess.*

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MIRANDA Sweet lord, you play me false.°

FERDINAND No, my dearest love,

I would not for the world.

MIRANDA Yes, for a score of kingdoms you should wrangle,

And I would call it fair play.[4]

175

ALONSO If this prove

Full p. C-761

A vision of the island, one dear son

Shall I twice lose.

SEBASTIAN A most high miracle!

FERDINAND Though the seas threaten, they are merciful:

I have cursed them without cause.

[FERDINAND kneels.]

ALONSO Now all the blessings

180

Of a glad father compass thee about!°

Arise, and say how thou cam'st here.

MIRANDA Oh, wonder!

How many goodly creatures are there here!

How beauteous mankind is! Oh, brave new world

That has such people in't!

PROSPERO 'Tis new to thee.

185

ALONSO [*to* FERDINAND] What is this maid with whom thou wast at play?

Your eld'st° acquaintance cannot be three hours.

Is she the goddess that hath severed us

And brought us thus together?

FERDINAND Sir, she is mortal;

But by immortal Providence she's mine.

I chose her when I could not ask my father

For his advice, nor thought I had one. She

Is daughter to this famous Duke of Milan—

Of whom so often I have heard renown

But never saw before—of whom I have

Received a second life; and second father

This lady makes him to me.

ALONSO I am hers.[5]

But oh, how oddly will it sound that I

Must ask my child° forgiveness!

PROSPERO There, sir, stop.

Let us not burden our remembrances with

A heaviness° that's gone.

Shorter p. 1835

GONZALO I have inly wept,

Or should have spoke ere this. Look down, you gods,

And on this couple drop a blessèd crown.

For it is you that have chalked forth° the way

Which brought us hither.

ALONSO I say "Amen," Gonzalo.

GONZALO Was Milan° thrust from Milan that his issue

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Should become kings of Naples? Oh, rejoice

Beyond a common joy and set it down

With gold on lasting pillars:[6] in one voyage

Did Claribel her husband find at Tunis,

210

And Ferdinand her brother found a wife

Full p. C-762

Where he himself was lost; Prospero his dukedom

In a poor isle; and all of us ourselves

When no man was his own.[7]

ALONSO [*to* FERDINAND *and* MIRANDA] Give me your hands.

215

Let grief and sorrow still° embrace his heart

That° doth not wish you joy.

GONZALO Be it so. Amen.

Enter ARIEL , with the MASTER and BOATSWAIN amazedly following.

Oh, look, sir, look, sir: here is more of us.

I prophesied if a gallows were on land

This fellow could not drown. [*to* BOATSWAIN] Now, blasphemy,°

220

That swear’st grace o’erboard, not an oath on shore?

Hast thou no mouth by land? What is the news?

BOATSWAIN The best news is that we have safely found

Our king and company; the next, our ship,

Which but three glasses° since we gave out° split,

225

Is tight and yare[8] and bravely rigged as when

We first put out to sea.

ARIEL [*to* PROSPERO] Sir, all this service

Have I done since I went.

PROSPERO [*to* ARIEL] My tricksy° spirit!

230

ALONSO These are not natural events; they strengthen°

From strange to stranger. Say, how came you hither?

BOATSWAIN If I did think, sir, I were well awake,

I'd strive to tell you. We were dead of° sleep

And—how we know not—all clapped° under hatches,

235

Where but even now with strange and several° noises

Of roaring, shrieking, howling, jingling chains,

And more diversity of sounds, all horrible,

We were awaked; straightway at liberty,

Where we, in all our trim, freshly beheld

240

Our royal, good, and gallant ship, our Master

Shorter p. 1836

Cap'ring to eye° her. On° a trice, so please you,

Even in a dream were we divided from them

And were brought moping° hither.

ARIEL [*to* PROSPERO] Was't well done?

PROSPERO [*to* ARIEL] Bravely, my diligence. Thou shalt be free.

245

ALONSO This is as strange a maze as e'er men trod,

And there is in this business more than nature

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Was ever conduct° of. Some oracle

Must rectify our knowledge.

PROSPERO Sir, my liege,

Do not infest° your mind with beating on[9]

250

The strangeness of this business. At picked leisure,

Full p. C-763

Which shall be shortly, single° I'll resolve you—

Which to you shall seem probable° —of every

These happened accidents.° Till when, be cheerful

And think of each thing well. [*to* ARIEL] Come hither, spirit.

255

Set Caliban and his companions free:

Untie the spell. [*Exit* ARIEL .]

[*to* ALONSO] How fares my gracious sir?

There are yet missing of your company

Some few odd lads that you remember not.

Enter ARIEL , driving in CALIBAN , STEFANO , and TRINCULO in their stolen apparel.

260

STEFANO Every man shift for all the rest, and let no man take care for himself;[1] for all is but fortune. *Coraggio,* bully monster,[2] *coraggio*!

TRINCULO If these° be true spies which I wear in my head, here's a goodly sight!

CALIBAN O Setebos, these be brave spirits indeed!

265

How fine° my master is! I am afraid

He will chastise me.

SEBASTIAN Ha, ha! What things are these, my lord Antonio?

Will money buy 'em?

ANTONIO Very like.° One of them

Is a plain° fish, and no doubt marketable.

270

PROSPERO Mark but the badges[3] of these men, my lords;

Then say if they° be true. This misshapen knave,

His mother was a witch, and one so strong

That could control the moon, make flows and ebbs,

And deal in her command without her power.[4]

275

These three have robbed me, and this demi-devil[5] —

For he's a bastard one—had plotted with them

To take my life. Two of these fellows you

Shorter p. 1837

Must know and own;[6] this thing of darkness I

Acknowledge mine.

CALIBAN I shall be pinched to death.

280

ALONSO Is not this Stefano, my drunken butler?

SEBASTIAN He is drunk now. Where had he wine?

ALONSO And Trinculo is reeling-ripe.° Where should they

Find this grand liquor that hath gilded° 'em?

How cam'st thou in this pickle?[7]

285

TRINCULO I have been in such a pickle since I saw you last that I fear me will never out of my bones: I shall not fear flyblowing.[8]

Full p. C-764

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SEBASTIAN Why, how now, Stefano?

STEFANO Oh, touch me not! I am not Stefano, but a cramp.

PROSPERO You'd be king o'the isle, sirrah?

290

STEFANO I should have been a sore° one then.

ALONSO [*indicating* CALIBAN] This is a strange thing as e'er I looked on.

PROSPERO He is as disproportioned in his manners°

As in his shape. Go, sirrah, to my cell;

Take with you your companions. As you look

295

To have my pardon, trim° it handsomely.

CALIBAN Ay, that I will; and I'll be wise hereafter

And seek for grace. What a thrice-double ass

Was I to take this drunkard for a god

And worship this dull fool!

PROSPERO Go to, away.

300

ALONSO Hence, and bestow your luggage where you found it.

SEBASTIAN Or stole it rather.

[Exeunt CALIBAN , STEFANO , and TRINCULO .]

PROSPERO Sir, I invite your highness and your train

To my poor cell, where you shall take your rest

For this one night; which—part of it° —I'll waste°

305

With such discourse as, I not doubt, shall make it

Go quick away: the story of my life

And the particular accidents° gone by

Since I came to this isle. And in the morn

I'll bring you to your ship, and so to Naples,

310

Where I have hope to see the nuptial

Of these our dear-belovèd solemnized,

And thence retire me to my Milan, where

Every third thought shall be my grave.

ALONSO I long

To hear the story of your life, which must

Take° the ear strangely.

315

PROSPERO I'll deliver° all,

And promise you calm seas, auspicious gales,

And sail so expeditious that shall° catch

Shorter p. 1838

Your royal fleet far off.—My Ariel, chick,

That is thy charge. Then to the elements

Be free, and fare thou well.—Please you draw near.

320

Exeunt all [except PROSPERO].

EPILOGUE

Spoken by PROSPERO .

Now my charms are all o'erthrown,

And what strength I have's mine own,

Which is most faint. Now 'tis true

I must be here confined by you,

5

Or sent to Naples. Let me not,

Full p. C-765

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Since I have my dukedom got

And pardoned the deceiver, dwell

In this bare island° by your spell,

But release me from my bands°

10

With the help of your good hands.°

Gentle breath° of yours my sails

Must fill or else my project fails,

Which was to please. Now I want°

Spirits to enforce, art to enchant;

15

And my ending[9] is despair,

Unless I be relieved by prayer,

Which pierces so that it assaults

Mercy itself and frees all faults.

As you from crimes would pardoned be,

20

Let your indulgence[1] set me free. [*Exit.*]

Footnotes

- Note 5:Draw to its fulfillment. “Project” suggests an alchemical projection or “experiment.” Return to reference 5
- Note 6:Because his carriage, or burden, is now light. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:Which protects from the weather. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:Who feel as much strong emotion as they do. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:More tenderly; more naturally. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:The original text does not indicate when the circle is drawn. Other possibilities are at the beginning of the scene or before the entry at line 57. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Prospero’s speech closely follows Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* 7.265–77, in Arthur Golding’s translation (1567); the speaker in Ovid is the sorceress Medea, who uses her witchcraft to vengeful ends. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Puppets; elves; quasi puppets. Return to reference 3

- Note 4:Fairy rings: distinctive circles of grass supposed to be caused by dancing fairies but actually caused by mushrooms. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:The bell rung at nightfall, indicating the time when spirits are abroad. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:Ineffectual when acting independently; without supernatural power; subordinate spirits. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:Violent; discordant; crudely approximate. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:Wrought by spirits of the air. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:Prospero remains invisible and inaudible to Alonso and his party until he greets Alonso at line 106. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:Fogs of ignorance; the image is of the sun ("rising senses") dissipating morning mist. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Pity and brotherly affection. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Elements of normal aristocratic dress. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:Formerly, when Duke of Milan. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:With a suggestion of the old sense of "trifle" as "deception." Return to reference 5
- Note 6:If this is really happening. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:You still experience some of the illusions. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:In order to make the heartfelt loss bearable. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:Prospero apparently means that Alonso still has a child, his daughter Claribel, to comfort him. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:"Reason" has the additional sense of "discourse"; hence, the phrase is an extension of "swallow their words." Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Elsewhere about the island; beyond the cell. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Reveals by drawing back a curtain. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:You could quarrel for twenty kingdoms, and I would still call it fair play. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:I will be her second father: Alonso's assent to the betrothal. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:Suggesting, perhaps, the triumphal arches commissioned to celebrate notable occasions. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:When we all had lost our senses. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:Is sound and ready to sail. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:With repeatedly worrying about. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:Stefano drunkenly confuses the saying "Every man for himself." Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Gallant monster. "*Corragio*": "Take courage" (Italian). Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Livery. Servants often wore their master's emblem, but Prospero probably refers to the stolen apparel. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:And wield her (the moon's) power without her authority, or beyond the reach of her might. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:Being the offspring of Sycorax and the devil. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:And acknowledge to be yours. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:Sorry plight; Trinculo takes up the literal sense of "preserving liquid," recalling both his drunkenness and his drenching in the lake. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:Not fear being infested with flies, since he has been "pickled" (preserved). Return to reference 8

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• Note 9:Punning on the sense “death.” Return to reference 9
• Note 1:Approval; appeasement; remission for sin. Return to reference 1
• Note °: and his Return to reference °
• Note °: you release them Return to reference °
• Note °: out of their wits Return to reference °
• Note °: thatched roofs Return to reference °
• Note °: feelings Return to reference °
• Note °: sense Return to reference °
• Note °: great Return to reference °
• Note °: side Return to reference °
• Note °: springing up overnight Return to reference °
• Note °: the sky Return to reference °
• Note °: split Return to reference °
• Note °: lightning bolt Return to reference °
• Note °: roots Return to reference °
• Note °: summoned Return to reference °
• Note °: the senses of whom Return to reference °
• Note °: several Return to reference °
• Note °: song Return to reference °
• Note °: which is Return to reference °
• Note °: imagination Return to reference °
• Note °: sympathetic Return to reference °
• Note °: appearance Return to reference °
• Note °: envelop Return to reference °
• Note °: growing clearer Return to reference °
• Note °: gentleman Return to reference °
• Note °: requite Return to reference °
• Note °: Fully Return to reference °
• Note °: an accomplice Return to reference °
• Note °: tortured; afflicted Return to reference °
• Note °: who Return to reference °
• Note °: (as does a tide) Return to reference °
• Note °: There is not Return to reference °
• Note °: undress Return to reference °
• Note °: immediately Return to reference °
• Note °: Before Return to reference °
• Note °: bewilderment Return to reference °
• Note °: fearsome Return to reference °
• Note °: Whether Return to reference °
• Note °: delude; maltreat Return to reference °
• Note °: requires, as explanation Return to reference °
• Note °: old body Return to reference °
• Note °: pair Return to reference °
• Note °: prove Return to reference °
• Note °: necessarily Return to reference °
• Note °: I grieve Return to reference °

- Note °: by Return to reference °
- Note °: mercy Return to reference °
- Note °: recent Return to reference °
- Note °: wonder Return to reference °
- Note °: function accurately Return to reference °
- Note °: trick me Return to reference °
- Note °: surround you Return to reference °
- Note °: longest Return to reference °
- Note °: (Miranda) Return to reference °
- Note °: sorrow Return to reference °
- Note °: marked out Return to reference °
- Note °: the Duke of Milan Return to reference °
- Note °: always Return to reference °
- Note °: Who Return to reference °
- Note °: blasphemer Return to reference °
- Note °: hourglasses Return to reference °
- Note °: declared Return to reference °
- Note °: capricious; neat Return to reference °
- Note °: increase Return to reference °
- Note °: with Return to reference °
- Note °: shut up Return to reference °
- Note °: various Return to reference °
- Note °: Dancing to see Return to reference °
- Note °: In Return to reference °
- Note °: dazed Return to reference °
- Note °: conductor Return to reference °
- Note °: trouble Return to reference °
- Note °: in private Return to reference °
- Note °: plausible Return to reference °
- Note °: occurrences Return to reference °
- Note °: these eyes Return to reference °
- Note °: splendidly dressed Return to reference °
- Note °: likely Return to reference °
- Note °: mere Return to reference °
- Note °: (the men); (the badges) Return to reference °
- Note °: drunk Return to reference °
- Note °: flushed Return to reference °
- Note °: an inept; severe; pained Return to reference °
- Note °: behavior Return to reference °
- Note °: tidy; decorate Return to reference °
- Note °: part of which Return to reference °
- Note °: spend Return to reference °
- Note °: events Return to reference °
- Note °: Captivate Return to reference °
- Note °: relate Return to reference °
- Note °: it will Return to reference °

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- Note °: (the stage) Return to reference °
- Note °: fetters Return to reference °
- Note °: (applause) Return to reference °
- Note °: Favorable comment Return to reference °
- Note °: lack Return to reference °

Full p. C-766 Full p. C-767

REFORMATIONS: GOD, CHURCH, AND SELF IN EUROPE



This 16th-century engraving by Lucas Cranach the Elder depicts the Protestant dispensation of two types of communion to congregants, a practice that stood in sharp contrast to the Catholic Church's more restrictive policies regarding the sacrament of communion.

Over the course of the sixteenth century, the lands formerly known as "Christendom" underwent profound religious transformations that would forever fracture the Catholic Church. The Protestant Reformation, as the reform movements are collectively known, drastically changed the European political landscape, contributing to the development of

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nation-states and in many cases new national churches that no longer recognized the authority of the Pope.

Led by Desiderius Erasmus, humanists proposed reforms from within the Church, targeting the rigidity of Church institutions and the corruption and venality of its hierarchy, and in doing so, they laid the groundwork for the Reformation. They stressed the importance of personal devotion over public ritual, and of the original text of the Bible over its interpretation or commentary. In the religious realm, the humanist admonition to go to the sources ("*Ad fontem*!") meant that the individual reader of the Bible was granted as much insight and authority as his or her priest. In the face of the threat of Protestantism, simply reading the Bible in the local language, or circulating a translation, was soon considered proof of heresy.

The Reformation began in earnest in 1517, when the German monk and theologian **Martin Luther** (1483–1546) nailed onto the door of a church in Wittenberg his "Ninety-Five Theses," a detailed protest against the Church's sale of indulgences to the faithful. An indulgence promised a reduction in the time one's soul would spend in Purgatory expiating one's sins. Functioning as "get-out-of-jail-free" cards for the sinner, indulgences proved an easy target for reformists. The Church had long sold indulgences as a way to raise funds, but the crass marketing involved in using them to build St. Peter's Basilica in Romefinally led Luther to protest what seemed like the buying and selling of salvation.

Luther went much further with his program than did Erasmus and his followers, however, because he challenged the Church hierarchy and urged a definitive break with Rome. His revolutionary propositions included clerical marriage (for which he himself set the example, by marrying a nun); the translation of the Bible into local languages (his celebrated version of the New Testament in German was published in 1522, and the complete Bible in 1534); and the denial of salvation through good works. Only grace (*sola fide*), Luther argued, could save the sinner, so that the entire Church apparatus of rewards and punishments was irrelevant. Not surprisingly, Luther was excommunicated in 1521, ending any possibility that his reforms could operate from within the Catholic Church, even as his writing circulated widely Full p. C-768 across Europe. Included below is a section of Luther's letter **"To the Christian Nobility,"** in which he exhorts his readers to question the authority of the Pope, denouncing error and instead standing up for "the whole community" as interpreters of the Bible.

As Protestantism spread throughout Europe, rulers found themselves required to choose sides, and religion became intertwined as never before with national identity. When Henry VIII of England broke with Rome and established the Church of England with himself as its head, his actions had profound implications not just for religious practice in England but also for its development as a nation-state. Conversely, in Spain Philip II took on the role of "Defender of the Faith," making the containment of Protestantism one of his main foreign policy goals.

In response to the tremendous upheavals unleashed by the Protestant reform movements, the Catholic Church convened the Council of Trent (1545–63) to denounce what it considered Protestant heresies and offer its own prescriptions for reform. This retrenchment and increased policing of conformity to Catholic tenets is known as the Counter-Reformation, a religious and cultural movement that affected writers and artists all over Catholic Europe.

The Counter-Reformation was not merely repressive, however: it also channeled some of the reformist fervor of Protestantism within Catholicism. Reformers stressed the importance of restoring religious orders to their original purpose and fostered a personalized, intimate

relationship with the divinity. Some of the most significant reformers within the Church in this period were women, as in the case of the hugely successful and charismatic **Teresa of Ávila** (1515–1582), whose vision for the formation of a reformed convent appears below. Teresa's influential autobiography, **The Book of Her Life**, relates her intensely personal relation to God, even as shefinds her place within the Church.

At the same time, exceptional women remained outspoken critics of Church abuses, especially those that concerned their own sex. An aristocratic woman consigned to a convent against her will at a young age, **Arcangela Tarabotti** (1604–1652), voices a passionate complaint against a system that disregarded the will of the woman in such an important matter as religious enclosure. Tarabotti's **Paternal Tyranny** indicts her society—even after the Counter-Reformation reforms—for putting convenience and tradition ahead of the will of the individual, and for replacing monastic ideals with a hypocritical sham.

With its focus on the speaker's inward thoughts, lyric poetry was particularly well suited to exploring the effects of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation on the Renaissance subject. The Catholic emphasis on devotional intimacy found its most sublime literary expression in the poetry of the Spanish mystics, which mobilizes all the resources of the Petrarchan tradition to explore the soul's desire for Christ. The poetry of St. Teresa, **San Juan de la Cruz**, and Luis de León uses very simple language in an attempt to describe ineffable searching and spiritual longing. These men and women were all born into families of *conversos* (Jews forced to convert to Christianity but nonetheless stigmatized by their forebears' religion), and their mysticism channels into the Counter-Reformation much older traditions of contemplation and communion with the divine.

The poems of **John Donne** (1572–1631), a poet and preacher born into a Catholic family who eventually joined the Church of England, offer a much more intellectualized, though similarly urgent, invocation of the divine. Central to his poetry is the conviction that little can be taken for granted: who we are and what the nature of our relationship to the divinity might be are under constant review. In hisfinely wrought Full p. C-769 language of extended metaphors and paradoxes, Donne cries out to his God for attention. In a world marked by religious upheaval and new uncertainties, the poetry of John Donne calls for a skeptical focus on the place of humankind in a mysterious universe and, simultaneously, an act of faith.

Although Catholics deplored the profound division in their Church occasioned by the Protestant "schism," the Reformation invigorated thought and letters across Christendom, as writers struggled with conceiving a more immediate and vibrant relationship to their God. Just as Renaissance humanism's challenge to medieval canons of learning led to a hugeflourishing of intellectual activity, the negotiation of God, church, and self in a time of reformation produced powerful statements of devotion and of criticism.

MARTIN LUTHER

The German priest and theologian Martin Luther (1483–1546) was arguably the mainfigure behind the Protestant Reformation, and was swiftly excommunicated for his positions in 1521. His program of reform was truly radical: he questioned the authority of the Pope and the entire Church hierarchy, arguing that every baptized Christian was part of the priesthood and that everyone should personally read the Bible in everyday language, a case he makes in his letter "To the Christian Nobility," excerpted below. Luther believed that only faith could

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achieve salvation, and that no number of good works (and much less the indulgences that the Church sold for money) could buy God's grace. His own marriage to the former nun Katharina von Bora in 1525 was a resounding statement against clerical celibacy. In his later years, Luther became more and more embittered by the resistance to his ideas, and his writing became increasingly strident, particularly in his positions toward the Jews.

From To the Christian Nobility[1]

* * *

The Romanists[2] want to be the only masters of Holy Scripture, although they never learn a thing from the Bible all their life long. They assume the sole authority for themselves, and, quite unashamed, they play about with words before our very eyes, trying to persuade us that the pope cannot err in matters of faith,[3] regardless of whether he is righteous or wicked. Yet they cannot point Full p. C-770 to a single letter.[4] This is why so many heretical and un-Christian, even unnatural, ordinances stand in the canon law. But there is no need to talk about these ordinances at present. Since these Romanists think the Holy Spirit never leaves them, no matter how ignorant and wicked they are, they become bold and decree only what they want. And if what they claim were true, why have Holy Scripture at all? Of what use is Scripture? Let us burn the Scripture and be satisfied with the unlearned gentlemen at Rome who possess the Holy Spirit! And yet the Holy Spirit can be possessed only by pious hearts. If I had not read the words with my own eyes, I would not have believed it possible for the devil to have made such stupid claims at Rome, and to have won supporters for them.

But so as not tofight them with mere words, we will quote the Scriptures. St. Paul says in I Corinthians 14 [:30], "If something better is revealed to anyone, though he is already sitting and listening to another in God's word, then the one who is speaking shall hold his peace and give place." What would be the point of this commandment if we were compelled to believe only the man who does the talking, or the man who is at the top? Even Christ said in John 6 [:45] that all Christians shall be taught by God. If it were to happen that the pope and his cohorts were wicked and not true Christians, were not taught by God and were without understanding, and at the same time some obscure person had a right understanding, why should the people not follow the obscure man? Has the pope not erred many times? Who would help Christendom when the pope erred if we did not have somebody we could trust more than him, somebody who had the Scriptures on his side?

Therefore, their claim that only the pope may interpret Scripture is an outrageous fancied fable. They cannot produce a single letter to maintain that the interpretation of Scripture or the confirmation of its interpretation belongs to the pope alone. They themselves have usurped this power. And although they allege that this power was given to St. Peter when the keys were given him, it is clear enough that the keys were not given to Peter alone but to the whole community.[5] Further, the keys were not ordained for doctrine or government, but only for the binding or loosing of sin. Whatever else or whatever more they arrogate to themselves on the basis of the keys is a mere fabrication. But Christ's words to Peter, "I have prayed for you that your faith fail not" [Luke 22:32], cannot be applied to the pope, since the majority of the popes have been without faith, as they must themselves confess. Besides, it is not only for

Peter that Christ prayed, but also for all apostles and Christians, as he says in John 17 [:9, 20], "Father, I pray for those whom thou hast given me, and not for these only, but for all who believe on me through their word." Is that not clear enough?

Just think of it! The Romanists must admit that there are among us good Christians who have the true faith, spirit, understanding, word, and mind of Christ. Why, then, should we reject the word and understanding of good Christians and follow the pope, who has neither faith nor the Spirit? To follow Full p. C-771 the pope would be to deny the whole faith as well as the Christian church. Again, if the article, "I believe in one holy Christian church," is correct, then the pope cannot be the only one who is right. Otherwise, we would have to confess, "I believe in the pope at Rome." This would reduce the Christian church to one man, and be nothing else than a devilish and hellish error.

Besides, if we are all priests, as was said above, and all have one faith, one gospel, one sacrament,[6] why should we not also have the power to test and judge what is right or wrong in matters of faith? What becomes of Paul's words in I Corinthians 2 [:15], "A spiritual man judges all things, yet he is judged by no one"? And II Corinthians 4 [:13], "We all have one spirit of faith"? Why, then, should not we perceive what is consistent with faith and what is not, just as well as an unbelieving pope does?

We ought to become bold and free on the authority of all these texts, and many others. We ought not to allow the Spirit of freedom (as Paul calls him [II Cor. 3:17]) to be frightened offby the fabrications of the popes, but we ought to march boldly forward and test all that they do, or leave undone, by our believing understanding of the Scriptures. We must compel the Romanists to follow not their own interpretation but the better one. Long ago Abraham had to listen to Sarah, although she was in more complete subjection to him than we are to anyone on earth [Gen. 21:12]. And Balaam's ass was wiser than the prophet himself [Num. 22:21–35]. If God spoke then through an ass against a prophet, why should he not be able even now to speak through a righteous man against the pope? Similarly, St. Paul rebukes St. Peter as a man in error in Galatians 2 [:11–12]. Therefore, it is the duty of every Christian to espouse the cause of the faith, to understand and defend it, and to denounce every error.

* * *

Footnotes

- Note 1:Translated by Charles M. Jacobs. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Those who follow Rome, i.e., the Pope. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:The doctrine of papal infallibility held that the Pope, when speaking as pope, could not err. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:I.e., a single passage in the Bible to support their claim. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:In Christian tradition, the keys of heaven, which Peter received from Jesus, represented papal authority. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:I.e., baptism. Return to reference 6

TERESA OF ÁVILA

A tireless reformer who worked within the Catholic Church in Spain, Teresa (1515–1582) was born into a family of Jewish origins. As she narrates in *The Book of Her Life*, she had been a

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highly imaginative girl who loved stories of knights and saints. Teresa entered the convent at a young age. Frequently ill, she experienced in her youth a series of powerful mystical visions of Jesus Christ. The desire to find a practical outlet for her intense spirituality eventually led her to found a reformed convent, the Order of the Discalced (barefoot) Carmelites. Teresa describes a richly spiritual interiority, achieved through mental prayer and the pursuit of a mystical communion with God.

Full p. C-772

From The Book of Her Life[1]

CHAPTER 1

[*Her Childhood*]

* * *

We were in all three sisters and nine brothers. All resembled their parents in being virtuous, through the goodness of God, with the exception of myself—although I was the most loved of my father. And it seemed he was right—before I began to offend God. For I am ashamed when I recall the good inclinations the Lord gave me and how poorly I knew how to profit by them.

My brothers and sisters did not in any way hold me back from the service of God. I had one brother about my age. We used to get together to read the lives of the saints. (He was the one I liked most, although I had great love for them all and they for me.) When I considered the martyrdoms the saints suffered for God, it seemed to me that the price they paid for going to enjoy God was very cheap, and I greatly desired to die in the same way. I did not want this on account of the love I felt for God but to get to enjoy very quickly the wonderful things I read there were in heaven. And my brother and I discussed together the means we should take to achieve this. We agreed to go offto the land of the Moors[2] and beg them, out of love of God, to cut offour heads there. It seemed to me the Lord had given us courage at so tender an age, but we couldn't discover any means. Having parents seemed to us the greatest obstacle. We were terrified in what we read about the suffering and the glory that was to last forever. We spent a lot of time talking about this and took delight in often repeating: forever and ever and ever. As I said this over and over, the Lord was pleased to impress upon me in childhood the way of truth.

When I saw it was impossible to go where I would be killed for God, we made plans to be hermits. And in a garden that we had in our house, we tried as we could to make hermitages piling up some little stones which afterward would quickly fall down again. And so in nothing could wefind a remedy for our desire. It gives me devotion now to see how God gave me so early what I lost through my own fault.

I gave what alms I could, but that was little. I sought out solitude to pray my devotions, and they were many, especially the rosary, to which my mother was very devoted; and she made us devoted to it too. When I played with other girls I enjoyed it when we pretended we were nuns in a monastery, and it seemed to me that I desired to be one, although not as much as I desired the other things I mentioned.

I remember that when my mother died I was twelve years old or a little less. When I began to understand what I had lost, I went, afflicted, before an image of our Lady and besought her with many tears to be my mother. It seems to me that although I did this in simplicity it helped me. For I have found favor with this sovereign Virgin in everything I have asked of her, and in the end she has Full p. C-773 drawn me to herself. It wearies me now to see and think that I was not constant in the good desires I had in my childhood.

O my Lord, since it seems You have determined to save me, I beseech Your Majesty that it may be so. And since You have granted me as many favors as You have, don't You think it would be good (not for my gain but for Your honor) if the inn where You have so continually to dwell were not to get so dirty? It wearies me, Lord, even to say this, for I know that the whole fault was mine. It doesn't seem to me that there was anything more for You to do in order that from this age I would be all Yours. If I start to complain about my parents, I am not able to do so, for I saw nothing but good in them and solicitude for my own good.

As I grew older, when I began to know of the natural attractive qualities the Lord had bestowed on me (which others said were many), instead of thanking Him for them, I began to make use of them all to offend Him, as I shall now tell.

CHAPTER 32

[A Vision of Hell, and a New Monastery]

Discusses how the Lord desired to put her spirit in a place in hell she had deserved because of her sins. Gives a brief account of what was shown her there. Begins to deal with the way in which the monastery of St. Joseph, where she now is, was founded.

A long time after the Lord had already granted me many of the favors I've mentioned and other very lofty ones, while I was in prayer one day, I suddenly found that, without knowing how, I had seemingly been put in hell. I understood that the Lord wanted me to see the place the devils had prepared there for me and which I merited because of my sins. This experience took place within the shortest space of time, but even were I to live for many years I think it would be impossible for me to forget it. The entrance it seems to me was similar to a very long and narrow alleyway, like an oven, low and dark and confined; thefloor seemed to me to consist of dirty, muddy water emitting a foul stench and swarming with putrid vermin. At the end of the alleyway a hole that looked like a small cupboard was hollowed out in the wall; there I found I was placed in a cramped condition. All of this was delightful to see in comparison with what I felt there. What I have described can hardly be exaggerated.

What I felt, it seems to me, cannot even begin to be exaggerated; nor can it be understood. I experienced afire in the soul that I don't know how I could describe. The bodily pains were so unbearable that though I had suffered excruciating ones in this life and according to what doctors say, the worst that can be suffered on earth (for all my nerves were shrunken when I was paralyzed, plus many other sufferings of many kinds that I endured, and even some, as I said, caused by the devil), these were all nothing in comparison with the ones I experienced there. I saw furthermore that they would go on without end and without ever ceasing. This, however, was nothing next to the soul's agonizing: a constriction, a suffocation, an affliction so

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keenly felt and with such a despairing and tormenting unhappiness that I don't know how to word it strongly enough. To say the experience is as though the soul were continually Full p. C-774 being wrested from the body would be insufficient, for it would make you think somebody else is taking away the life, whereas here it is the soul itself that tears itself in pieces. The fact is that I don't know how to give a sufficiently powerful description of that interiorfire and that despair, coming in addition to such extreme torments and pains. I didn't see who inflicted them on me, but, as it seemed to me, I felt myself burning and crumbling; and I repeat the worst was that interiorfire and despair.

Being in such an unwholesome place, so unable to hope for any consolation, I found it impossible either to sit down or to lie down, nor was there any room, even though they put me in this kind of hole made in the wall. Those walls, which were terrifying to see, closed in on themselves and suffocated everything. There was no light, but all was enveloped in the blackest darkness. I don't understand how this could be, that everything painful to see was visible.

The Lord didn't want me to see any more of hell at that time. Afterward I saw another vision of frightful things, the punishment of some vices. With respect to the sight they seemed much more frightening, but since I didn't feel the pain, they didn't cause me so much fear. For in the former vision the Lord wanted me actually to feel those spiritual torments and afflictions, as though the body were suffering. I don't know how such an experience was possible, but I well understood that it was a great favor and that the Lord desired me to see with my own eyes the place His mercy had freed me from. It amounts to nothing to hear these pains spoken of, nor have I at other times thought about different torments (although not many, since my soul did not fare well with such fearful thoughts; that is, that devils tear offtheflesh with pincers, or other various tortures I've read about) that are anything in comparison to this pain; it is something different. In sum, as a resemblance to the reality, being burned here on earth is very little when compared to being burned by thefire that is there.

I was left terrified, and still am now in writing about this almost six years later, and it seems to me that on account of the fear my natural heat fails me right here and now. Thus I recall no time of trial or suffering in which it doesn't seem to me that everything that can be suffered here on earth is nothing; so I think in a way we complain without reason. Hence I repeat that this experience was one of the greatest favors the Lord granted me because it helped me very much to lose fear of the tribulations and contradictions of this life as well as to grow strong enough to suffer them and give thanks to the Lord who freed me, as it now appears to me, from such everlasting and terrible evils.

Since that time, as I say, everything seems to me easy when compared to undergoing for a moment what I suffered there in hell. I marvel how after having often read books in which the pains of hell were somewhat explained I didn't fear them or take them for what they were. Where was I? How could Ifind relaxation in anything when I was causing myself to go to such an evil place? May You be blessed, my God, forever! How obvious it is that You loved me much more than I did myself! How many times, my Lord, have You freed me from so dark a prison, and how often have I put myself in it again against Your will!

* * *

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I was thinking about what I could do for God, and I thought that thefirst thing was to follow the call to the religious life, which His Majesty had given me, by keeping my rule as perfectly as I could. Even though there were many servants of God in the house where I was, and He was very well served in it, the nuns because of great necessity often went out to places where they could stay—with the decorum proper to religious. Also, the rule was not kept in its prime rigor, but was observed the way it was in the whole order, that is, according to the bull of mitigation.[3] There were also other disadvantages; it seemed to me the monastery had a lot of comfort since it was a large and pleasant one. But this disadvantage of going out, even though I was one who did so a great deal, was now a serious one for me because some persons to whom the superiors couldn't say "no" liked to have me in their company; and when urged, the superiors ordered me to go. So, by reason of their commands I wasn't able to remain in the monastery much. The devil must have helped partly to keep me from staying home; for since I was sharing with some of the nuns what those with whom I was consulting were teaching me, much good was being done.

It happened once while I was with someone that she mentioned to me and to the others in the group that if we couldn't be nuns like the discalced,[4] it would still be possible to found a monastery. Since I was having these desires, I began to discuss the matter with that lady companion of mine, the widow I mentioned, who had the same desires. She began to draw up plans to provide the new house with income. Now I see that there was little chance these plans would succeed, but our desire made us think they would. Yet since, on the other hand, I was so perfectly content in the house in which I was because it was very much to my liking and the cell in which I lived was just what I wanted, I was still delaying. Nevertheless, we agreed to pray fervently to God over the matter.

One day after Communion, His Majesty earnestly commanded me to strive for this new monastery with all my powers, and He made great promises that it would be founded and that He would be highly served in it. He said it should be called St. Joseph and that this saint would keep watch over us at one door, and our Lady at the other, that Christ would remain with us, and that it would be a star shining with great splendor. He said that even though religious orders were mitigated[5] one shouldn't think He was little served in them; He asked what would become of the world if it were not for religious and said that I should tell my confessor what He commanded, that He was asking him not to go against this or hinder me from doing it.

* * *

Footnotes

- Note 1:Translated by Kieran Kavanaugh and Otilio Rodriguez. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:North Africa. After defeating the "Moors" (Muslims) in Granada in 1492, Spain continued its territorial expansion into North Africa. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Pope Eugenius IV had moderated the order's 13th-century rule of strict poverty, chastity, and obedience in a Bull of Mitigation in 1432. The modified rule did not require that nuns renounce their worldly possessions upon entering the convent. Return to reference 3

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- Note 4:A religious order that, striving for simplicity, went barefoot or wore sandals. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:Moderated. Return to reference 5

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SAN JUAN DE LA CRUZ

Born in humble circumstances as Juan de Yepes, the mystic and reformer best known in English as St. John of the Cross (1542–1591) was a close associate of **Teresa of Ávila** . He worked with her to reform the Carmelite religious order, to which he belonged. At Salamanca, Juan had studied with the great, controversial scholar and poet Luis de León, who had produced a daring translation of the Song of Songs into Spanish. Juan was persecuted by opponents of religious reform within his order, and wrote some of his work while imprisoned under harsh conditions. His poems conjure a world in which there is nothing but the soul and her (the soul is typically described as female in this poetry) longing for Christ, a longing virtually erotic in its force. Figured as the lover, the soul embarks on an intense, erotically charged journey from her "dark night" (the title of one of the poems below) to the perfect union with Christ, her beloved. The transcendent imagery of the poetry contrasts with the simplicity of Juan's language and form, creating a powerful lyricism. The intimacy of the lyric "I"'s connection to the divine makes these poems a burning record of intense emotion.

Song II: The Dark Night[1]

Songs
Of the soul that rejoices at having reached
the high state of perfection, which
is union with God, by means of the path
of spiritual denial of the self
On a dark night, deep and black,
when I, onfire with the passions of love
—what great good fortune was mine!—
slipped out, hidden, unseen,
when my sleeping house was silent and still;
and protected in the dark,
concealed by the quiet, secret staircase
—what great good fortune was mine!—
in the ebon dark, well-hidden
when my sleeping house was silent and still;
and on that fortunate night,
in secret, when no one's eyes could see me,

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I saw nothing around me
and had no light or guide
but the one that was blazing in my heart.
This was thefire that led me,

more clear and certain than the light of noon,
to where he waited for me
—I knew who he was, oh I knew—
there where no one was seen, no one appeared.
O dark night who guided me!
O night, kinder by far than any dawn!
O night, you who have joined
lover with beloved,
beloved into lover here transformed!
On myflowering bosom,
meant only for him, kept for him alone,
he rested his head to sleep,
and I with love caressed him,
and the swaying cedars sent a breeze for him.
The wind from the battlements
when I loosed his hair and smoothed it, unbound,
with serene and tranquil hand,
struck my neck, pierced and wounded it,
dimming and suspending all my senses.
I stayed there, self forgotten,
lowered my face, leaning over my lover,
all things ceased, self abandoned,
abandoning all my care
that lies, forgotten, there among the lilies.

Footnotes

- Note 1:This and the following poem translated by Edith Grossman. Return to reference 1

Song III: Flame of Living Love

Songs
Of the soul in the intimate communion
of its union with God's love
Oflame of living love
that wounds with such tenderness
the deep, the deepest center of my soul,
now that you have come to me,
conclude, if you so wish,
and rend the fabric of this sweet encounter.
Oh, so gentle the searing!
Oh, so delicate the wound!
Oh, sweet the hand, oh, soft so soft the blow
that tastes of life eternal
Full p. C-778
and pays each and every debt!

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By killing, you have changed death into life.
O burning lamps offire
in whose brilliant, searing light
the inmost caves and caverns of our senses,
which once were dark and blind,
now offer their heat and light
and give an unknown joy to their beloved!
How peaceful and how loving
you waken on my bosom
where you alone do dwell so secretly;
and with your perfumed breath,
sofilled with good and glory,
how delicately you show your love to me.

ARCANGELA TARABOTTI

Born Elena Cassandra, the writer and polemicist Arcangela Tarabotti (1604–1652) was a forceful protofeminist voice and a passionate foe of forcing women into convents. From behind the walls of the Benedictine convent of Sant' Anna in Venice, Tarabotti devoted much of her literary life to speaking out against the enclosure of women and girls with no religious vocation. She debated some of the major literary voices of seventeenth-century Venice, defending her sex against charges of vanity and frivolity and the more serious accusation that women lacked souls. Tarabotti's six surviving works demonstrate a sharp wit, a deep engagement with her literary milieu, and a keen grasp of the political underpinnings of coercing women into convents. Today, Tarabotti is considered a fundamental figure in the evolution of feminist discourse in early modern Italy.

Full p. C-779

From Paternal Tyranny[1]

BOOK ONE

The Crime of Enforced Enclosure

Men's depravity could not have devised a more heinous crime than the wanton defiance of God's inviolable decrees. Yet day in and day out, men never cease defying them by deeds dictated by self-interest.

Among their blameworthy excesses, pride of place must go to enclosing innocent women within convent walls under apparently holy (but really wicked) pretexts. Men dare to endanger free will, bestowed on men and women alike by the Divine Majesty; they force women to dwell in life-long prisons, although guilty of no fault other than being born the weaker sex—and consequently more deserving of compassion, assistance, and support, rather than being locked up forever in dungeons.

* * *

Merits of a Freely Chosen Religious Life

* * * I would be willing to pour out blood as well as ink if it meant that cloistered nuns led a holy life, following the rules of their orders to the letter, for the honor and glory of the Catholic faith. I bear a holy envy of the religious life of true nuns, called by the Holy Spirit to follow their vocations: giving good example and performing holy deeds for the glory of God in the highest, their own salvation, and the encouragement of devout souls desirous of walking along the path of perfect virtue. These nuns deserve to enjoy the virginal crown in Heaven. Saints Euphrosina and Teresa of Avila[2] were like that; the former dedicated herself to God as a young girl against her parents' wishes, and the latter made such progress in the religious life that she left volumes of writings in which even the learned are amazed to read by what means the Redeemer led her to perfect holiness—not to mention innumerable hordes of virgins whose praises I would like to sing in lofty style and with sublime conceits, since I revere them with all my heart. Our age is not worthy of such exemplars; nor can I speak about them. I can only relate what I have heard or read, since even when it comes to the modern condition of religious forced to take vows, I am only able to have an imperfect and shadowy knowledge, as I myself am a layperson.[3]

It nevertheless pains me not to have at least eloquent speech and learning, as I might perhaps be able to restrain fathers or other men convinced of such wicked barbarity. I might exhort religious superiors as well to inquire more diligently whether the vocations of young girls are dictated by a heavenly spirit or rather a kind of human spirit deserving the title of infernal. Dear, immortal God, of how many, many evils are cruel spirits the source! What kinds of woe do they invent for wretched unwilling nuns! I can describe their state only by means of a comparison so repulsive it causes everyone who has colluded in this crime in any way to shudder.

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Convents Are a Living Hell for Those without Vocation

The place where these unfortunate women dwell—I refer always to unwilling nuns—can be likened to an inferno. The word is dreadful to hear, but a true comparison. Only Hell itself bears a likeness to the suffering of these enforced slaves of Christ. Over the gate of Hell, Dante says, are inscribed the words

Abandon every hope, who enter here.[4]

The same could be inscribed over the portals of convents. Indeed, at such sorrowful entrances, one could intone mournfully with a voice like a dying swan, "The sorrows of death surrounded me . . . the sorrows of Hell encompassed me" (Ps 17:5–6). In this life, all adversity can be mitigated by hope, which provides relief even when in vain. But if "Hope that is deferred afflicteth the soul" (Prv 13:12), what can be said of an anguish that torments with the thought of eternal pain? This is an incomparable, if not incomprehensible torment. In like fashion, these enforced nuns experience a short Hell in this life as a prelude to the eternal Hell they are doomed to endure on account of your cruelty.

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We read in Genesis how Cain and Abel, thefirst two sons of Adam and Eve, both offered sacrifice to the Lord, different in kind and in intention. Cain offered the most contemptible things he possessed, a sign and proof of his heart's meanness and wickedness, intent solely on material gain. Abel, on the other hand, a biblical type of the innocent, gladly sacrificed the fattest, unblemished lambs of his herd to the Lord with sincere heart and thus symbolized the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. The Divine Majesty looked upon Abel's offerings with benign compassion: "And the Lord had respect to Abel and to his offerings. / But to Cain and his offerings he had no respect" (Gn 4:4–5). Whereupon, enraged with envy, Cain drew his innocent brother to a secreted place away from the parental eye and brutally murdered him.

For his purity and innocence, Abel was afigure of Christ Our Lord; Cain, perpetrator of fratricide, was in my opinion a perfect example of those followers of Lucifer I speak of. In imitation of the traitor of traitors, they seek out the most maimed creatures within their own households and consecrate these to the Lord, divine maledictions slipping their minds: "Cursed is the deceitful man that hath in hisflock a male, and making a vow offereth in sacrifice that which is feeble to the Lord" (Mal 1:14). They do not offer as brides of Jesus their most beautiful and virtuous daughters, but the most repulsive and deformed: lame, hunchbacked, crippled, or simple-minded. They are blamed for whatever natural defect they are born with and condemned to lifelong prison.

* * *

Myfinal point: if murderous Cain slew the livingflesh of his own innocent brother because he contradicted and opposed Cain's impious counsel about there being no justice and no judge, no reward for the just in another world, and no punishment for the wicked,[5] male relatives are not so very different. They too seek to satisfy their every craving and show by their deeds that they believe that after death there is no pleasure and that the Lord does not see them. If they were not heretics, would they put to death—I don't say an innocent Full p. C-781 brother—but their own long-suffering daughters and sisters, who will end their days feeling smothered, overwhelmed by despair at notfinding some spiritual escape from the intricate labyrinth enclosing them. Oh, what dire happenings will befall these women!

Fathers Should Make Allowance for Individual Talents and Desires

God did not grant one and the same will, one and the same desire, one and the same motivation to each and every woman; although He Himself is unchangeable and everlasting in Himself, He nevertheless takes pleasure in creation's variety. The dispositions of those sinning are diverse; and if the great fabric of the world, created with such design and skill by the Eternal Artificer, did not abound in almost infinite variety, if everything were instead similar to everything else, it would not prove so delightful to the observer.

* * *

Why, then, do you defy the works of the Most Just One by decreeing that many women should live all together, alike in dress, dwelling place, food, and conduct, when the Lord of Lords makes it a miracle of His infinite wisdom for all things He created to be different? Why do you want to bend to your whim contrasting wills created so by nature? It is nothing less than wanting to change and correct the deeds of a Creator who cannot err. For each young girl

inclined to lead a secluded life, a thousand others will shun it. If a young girl is pleased to consecrate her life to God in a cloister, is granted supernatural grace, and is attracted by the Holy Spirit's promptings, then do not fail to attend to her desire by giving her your blessing. Do not dissuade her from her good thoughts, for you would be guilty of sin; and whatever is against one's conscience is sin. If, on the other hand, her inclination runs contrary to this life and she wants to live with modest means in the world, do not force her into the cloister, for I assure you that the eternal abyss awaits you as punishment.

* * *

Ponder my words, judicious Reader, for I have undertaken to describe only in part the sacrilege of these inhumane men who mass together wealth, titles, and prestige for their male offspring (who then go on to dissipate the wealth, despise the titles, and sully the prestige with their dissolute life, vices, and degradation), but who cast away as wretches their ownflesh and blood that happens to be born female. I believe it was said of them in prophecy, "[Jerusalem's]filthiness is on her feet, and she hath not remembered her end" (Lam 1:9). This passage undoubtedly refers to the souls of men who never think about their mortality, but walk along thefilthy road of sin, which leads to perdition. Their conduct leads one to believe that they truly imagine that happiness lasts forever in this temporary, precarious life; they wake up to their wretchedness too late, since "the thoughts of men . . . are vain" (Ps 93:11). Their chimerical hopes often delude them, as when, overtaken by divine justice (it cannot err!), they remain deprived of the sons meant to bring them glory and from whom they hoped for immortality in further progeny. The fathers themselves die of grief in ignominy, only to be shut up forever within a narrow tomb—afitting punishment for having shut up their own daughters within four walls.

Footnotes

- Note 1:Translated by Letizia Panizza. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:See p. 771. "Euphrosina": a virgin who entered a male monastery to escape her parents' persecution. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Tarabotti writes from the convent but considers herself an observer or reporter rather than a nun. Return to reference 3
- Note 4: *Inferno* 3.9. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:Genesis 4.1–17. The biblical account does not mention Abel opposing Cain on these grounds. Return to reference 5

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JOHN DONNE

John Donne (1572–1631) was born into a Catholic family in Protestant England, which prevented him from taking a university degree despite years of study. Yet his great intellectual talents led him to an important position as secretary to Sir Thomas Egerton, who presided over the House of Lords. Donne destroyed his own prospects by secretly marrying Anne More, Lady Egerton's niece, and the couple spent many years in great financial hardship, with an ever larger family to support. Donne eventually converted to the Church of England, which

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made his advancement much easier, and followed a Church career as an alternative to public service. Most famous in our time for the finely wrought wit of his erotic poetry, Donne brought to his pastoral charge as priest and dean of St. Paul's Cathedral the same passion and intelligence that seduced readers of his verse. His *Holy Sonnets*, two of which are reproduced here, were probably written during the period 1609–10, when he wrestled with his religious allegiance amid great financial penury. In "Oh my black soul," he despairs of the possibility of grace, while "I am a little world" contrasts the confident new geographical discoveries with the poet's own inability to transcend sin without God's forceful intervention. "Batter my heart," he pleads, for only such divine force can overcome his conflicted resistance. Donne's religious poetry displays the same talent for the precise conceit, the unexpected metaphor, and the powerful turn of phrase as his love poetry, as he examines humankind's connection with a God too inattentive to compel faith in any satisfying fashion.

H OLY S ONNETS

4

Oh my black soul, now thou art summoned
By sickness, Death's herald and champion,
Thou'rt like a pilgrim, which abroad hath done
Treason, and dar'st not turn to whence he'sfled,
Or like a thief, which till death's doom be read,
Wisheth himself deliver'd from prison,
But damn'd and haled[1] to execution,
Wisheth that still he might be imprisoned.
Yet grace, if thou repent, thou canst not lack,
But who shall give thee that grace to begin?[2]

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Oh, make thyself with holy mourning black,
And red with blushing, as thou art with sin,
Or wash thee in Christ's blood, which hath this might,
That being red, it dyes red souls to white.

Footnotes

- Note 1:Hauled. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:The Reformation included heated debates over whether divine grace predates human actions, and the extent to which humanity's free will can change it. Return to reference 2

5

I am a little world made cunningly
Of elements, and an angelic sprite,
But black sin hath betray'd to endless night

My world's both parts, and, oh, both parts must die.
You which beyond that heaven which was most high
Have found new spheres, and of new lands can write,[3]
Pour new seas in mine eyes, that so I might
Drown my world with my weeping earnestly,
Or wash it if it must be drown'd no more.[4]
But oh, it must be burnt, alas![5] Thefire
Of lust and envy have burnt it heretofore
And made it fouler; let theirflames retire,
And burn me, Oh Lord, with afiery zeal
Of Thee and Thy house, which doth in eating heal.[6]

Footnotes

- Note 3:Astronomers who made new observations, and explorers who described their discoveries. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:God made a covenant with Noah never again to destroy the earth byflood (Genesis 9. 11–17). Return to reference 4
- Note 5:According to 2 Peter 3.10, the world will be consumed byfire. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:Psalm 69.9: "For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up." Return to reference 6

14

Batter my heart, three-person'd God;[7] for you
As yet but knock, breathe, shine, and seek to mend,
That I may rise, and stand; o'erthrow me, and bend
Your force, to break, blow, burn, and make me new.
I, like an usurp'd town, to another due,
Labor to admit you, but oh, to no end.
Reason, your viceroy in me, me should defend,
But is captived, and proves weak or untrue.
Yet dearly I love you, and would be loved fain,[8]
But am betroth'd unto your enemy.
Divorce me, untie, or break that knot again,
Take me to you, imprison me, for I,
Except you enthrall me, never shall be free,
Nor ever chaste, except you ravish me.

Footnotes

- Note 7:The three persons of the Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:Eagerly. Return to reference 8

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JOHN MILTON 1608–1674

A passionate advocate of political liberty during the heady years of the English Civil War (1642–51), John Milton is best known to us for his epic retelling of Adam and Eve's fall from Paradise. Milton's strong beliefs in the pursuit of knowledge and the wisdom of experience make his version of the Fall a profound exploration of human possibility, in which the adventurer Satan is often the most compelling character. Milton's reliance on the classical tradition as he tells a central Christian story makes his poem a grand compendium of Renaissance inquiry and knowledge.

LIFE AND TIMES

Milton's life divides into three stages: a period of long study, which culminated in the great pastoral elegy *Lycidas* (1637) and his travels on the Continent (1638–39), during which he met important literaryfigures in addition to the astronomer Galileo; his long involvement in doctrinal and political controversy and his service as secretary to Oliver Cromwell's Council of State (1640–60); and, after the restoration of the English monarchy and his banishment from politics, the more solitary and disillusioned years in which Milton (totally blind since 1651) produced his major poetic works, *Paradise Lost* (1667), *Paradise Regained* (1671), and *Samson Agonistes* (1671).

Born in London, Milton received an excellent education at St. Paul's in London and Christ's College, Cambridge, where he prepared for a career

in the ministry. Due to his growing dissatisfaction with the Church of England, however, he did not take orders. Instead, he lived reclusively at his father's estate at Horton, near Windsor, where he continued his studies and followed his dream curriculum of science and the new discoveries, mathematics, Greek and Latin authors, music, the systematic research of world history, and volumes upon volumes of poetry. In his view, his intensive studies were preparing him for the poet's role as moral leader: whoever hopes to write well, he wrote in an autobiographical sketch, "ought himself to be a true poem, that is, a composition and pattern of the best and honorablest things; not presuming to sing high praises of heroic men or famous Cities, unless he have in himself the experience and the practice of all that is praiseworthy."

Politics and not poems were on Milton's mind, however, when he returned from his travels in Italy. Political trouble was brewing at home: tensions between King Charles I (r. 1625–49) and his Parliament over the limits of royal power tried the patience of the Puritans, who agitated for religious freedom. The Puritans'fight for tolerance became part of a larger struggle to limit the king's powers and restore the role of Parliament as a check on royal power. By 1642, the differences between Charles and the parliamentary party had led to outright war. The triumph of the rebellious Parliament culminated in the unprecedented execution of Charles I in 1649 for his abuses of power. Amid Full p. C-785 huge social, political, and religious unrest, the Puritan Oliver Cromwell (1599–1658) became Lord Protector of the Commonwealth (1653–58), in an autocratic regime widely perceived to replicate many of the abuses it was designed to correct.

During this turbulent period, Milton wrote pamphlets that he hoped would inspire debate, even while he served the Puritan regime. Some of his political arguments shaped the concepts of religious, civil, and domestic liberties that he explores in *Paradise Lost* (1667). His most notable tract, *Areopagitica* (1644), opposed censorship of the press and took to task the parliamentary government for trying to restrict the opposition: Parliament was historically bound to defend the liberties of the people, and Milton could not stand by while this principle was violated. Throughout his public career he forcefully insisted on popular liberty from arbitrary rule, going so far as to defend, in print, the execution of his king. How could he justify regicide? Law, he felt, should arise from the reasoning conscience of the individual Christian; to deprive individuals of the free exercise of their reason called for violent resistance.

His most notorious prose writings, however, were inspired by hisfirst, failed marriage and earned him the epithet "the Divorcer": at thirty-two he married the seventeen-year-old Mary Powell, who left him after six weeks. Milton complained bitterly of the English law that permitted divorce only to those who had not consummated their marriages and protested that the law left unhappy couples to "grind in the mill of an undelighted and servile copulation." Without depth of conversation, he argued, men and women were not joined in a genuine marriage. God, he claimed, meant spouses to be spiritual helpmeets and partners in "civil fellowship." In *Paradise Lost*, where Adam and Eve make love without shame and converse with delight, he illustrates his ideal of marriage. Conversation and the "sweet intercourse / Of looks and smiles" turn out to be the essential ingredients of a successful marriage. Eventually, Milton reconciled with Mary Powell and, after her death, was married two more times.

After Cromwell's death in 1658, the English soon became disillusioned with the Puritan regime, and in 1660 Charles II (1630–1685) returned from his exile in the Spanish Netherlands for a peaceful restoration of the Stuart dynasty. Milton was imprisoned andfined for his service to the Commonwealth. He began his work on *Paradise Lost* after his banishment from public life: Restoration England had "fallen on evil days," and to his mind no longer had political glory to celebrate. For his greatest poem, Milton thus turned away from the Renaissance epic's preoccupation with the birth of a nation, in the tradition of **Virgil's *Aeneid*** , and chose instead a biblical, cosmic theme.

PARADISE LOST

Renaissance epic poets, like Christian humanists, struggled in varying degrees with their mixed allegiances to secular knowledge and to religious faith. Throughout his work, Milton draws liberally from the classical tradition and from Puritan Christianity, although the two are often in tension. This conflict comes to a head in *Paradise Lost*, where Milton tackles the story of Genesis with the toolkit of a classical epic poet. Milton tells a highly individual version of "man'sfirst disobedience": the story of Adam and Eve breaking God's prohibition and eating from the tree of knowledge offers an opportunity to set forth and examine his own ideas about liberty, knowledge, doubt, sexuality, and marriage.

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Milton's chief source for *Paradise Lost* is the biblical account of Creation, Eden, the Fall, and the expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise. From thefirst three chapters of Genesis, he forged twelve books of epic verse, which hefleshed out with his vast knowledge of the classics,

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history, theology, and science. Milton's subject, he insists, is more heroic than his epic precedents: "Not less but more heroic than the wrath / Of stern Achilles" or the "rage / of Turnus," that Aeneas must defeat in order to found Rome. It is also, he claims, historical, as opposed to those romance tales that feature merely "*fabled* knights / In battles *feigned* ." While epic poets usually claim continuity with earlier examples of the genre, Milton insists that his own poem disrupts the tradition. *Paradise Lost* alone, he implies, is genuinely concerned with historical origins and is wholly original as creative verse. The poem also breaks with established form: instead of the rhyming couplets and stanzas of the epic tradition, Milton gives us long rolling sentences in unrhymed verse (iambic pentameter)—a formal departure that shocked his readers but was quickly adopted by other poets tackling weighty subjects.

Even more bewildering than its new form was the poem's truly cosmic scope, summoning for the reader the vast spaces of Heaven, Hell, and Paradise. *Paradise Lost* opens with a council of devils, intent on revenge for their own fall from Heaven. Satan suggests corrupting Man as afitting reprisal, and undertakes the epic voyage from Hell to Paradise. In thesefirst books, especially, Satan is a complex and dramaticfigure, whose resistance against God's tyranny makes him disturbingly sympathetic. The Romantic poet William Blake (1757–1827) claimed that Milton was "of the Devil's party without knowing it," and many readers have found in Satan the epic hero of the poem. But Adam and Eve attain their own tragic condition, as they come to terms with what they have lost and gained through their fall.

The status of knowledge is a central problem in *Paradise Lost* . In *Areopagitica*, Milton had argued that virtue is meaningful only when it is gained and tested by experience. Goodness based on mere ignorance of evil, for him, seems inferior to the reasoned choice of the good over a known and alluring evil. Milton speculated that the Fall caused a change in the way that human beings gained knowledge. In Eden humanity knew only good; after the Fall, humanity knew good by distinguishing it from evil. "What wisdom can there be to choose, what continence to forbear without the knowledge of evil?" he asked. "I cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue, unexercised and unbreathed, that never sallies out and sees her adversary."

This is the position that the more cautious Milton of *Paradise Lost* places in the mouth of his "Adventurous" Eve just before the Fall. Eve, always more independent than Adam, wants to work alone in another part of the Garden, and when she suspects that her husband mistrusts her ability to withstand the temptations of Satan by herself, she grows adamant about facing a trial, should Satan come her way: "what is Faith, Love, Virtue unassay'd / Alone, without exterior help sustain'd?" Like the younger and rasher Milton, she considers such virtue "but a name"; she rejects the idea that her obedience has any significance if it is maintained only by "exterior help." If she is to enjoy a reputation for virtue, she wants it to arise from a personal history of her experiences and trials.

Adam, by contrast, seems both curious and anxious about his relationship to knowledge. In his conversations with God and with the angel Raphael, he reveals how inquisitive he is about Full p. C-787 himself, Eve, the world around him, and above all, the mysterious heavens. When Raphael warns him that "Heav'n is for thee too high / To know what passes there; be lowly wise; / Think only what concerns thee and thy being; / Dream not of other Worlds," Adam declares himself "cleared of doubt." He assures the angel (or himself) that it is better to refrain from unbounded curiosity or restless thoughts, only to be chastened by experience. Although the difference between receiving a warning and learning from experience is great, Adam takes a very conservative attitude toward the pursuit of knowledge, as summed up in the caution to

“be lowly wise”: don’t analyze or use empirical observation to make inquiries that can lead only to hypothesis and speculation.

Adam’s caution casts Eve’s independence in a different light. In the classical tradition, beautiful temptresses (like **Homer**’s Circe and Ariosto’s Alcina) waylay epic heroes who are otherwise constant and honorable. To a limited extent, this model of heroic manhood threatened by female corruption applies to *Paradise Lost* . Yet Milton also complicates the traditional scapegoating of Eve by making her a complex character, with her own motivations. More important, for Milton, the “kindly rupture” of sexual experience relates to the acquisition of knowledge and therefore can never be considered purely negative.

Milton’s achievements in *Paradise Lost* include his powerful rendering of human spiritual need and its relationship to marital life. His poem is “adventurous” in its explorations of the rational, sexual, and emotional factors that lead his Adam and Eve to fall, although it is also uncompromising about the fatal error of the Fall. Milton committed himself intellectually to questioning the received wisdom of the classics and the Church in order to discover truths verifiable by experience. In the story of Genesis he discovers questions central both to the Renaissance and to the Reformation: how do we know things? to what extent should “external help” such as warnings govern us? how much more rewarding—and dangerous—is the wisdom of experience? can we learn from vicarious experiences, such as sympathy and interpretation (a possibility that enlarges the moral role of art)? John Milton, who wished to break the bonds constraining the intellectual and imaginative possibilities of his readers, bestowed on them the burden of interpreting art and life on their own: Milton works to make the reading of *Paradise Lost* a simultaneously demanding and highly personal experience.

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Paradise Lost

FROM BOOK 1

The Argument[1]

Thisfirst book proposes,first in brief, the whole subject, man’s disobedience, and the loss thereupon of Paradise wherein he was placed: then touches the prime cause of his fall, the Serpent, or rather Satan in the Serpent; who revolting from God, and drawing to his side many legions of angels, was by the command of God driven out of Heaven with all his crew into the great deep. Which action passed over, the poem hastes into the midst of things,[2] presenting Satan with his angels now fallen into Hell, described here, not in the center[3] (for Heaven and Earth may be supposed as yet not made, certainly not yet accursed) but in a place of utter darkness,fitliest called Chaos: here Satan with his angels lying on the burning lake, thunderstruck and astonished, after a certain space recovers, as from confusion, calls up him who next in order and dignity lay by him; they confer of their miserable fall. Satan awakens all his legions, who lay till then in the same manner confounded; they rise, their numbers, array of battle, their chief leaders named, according to the idols known afterwards in Canaan and the countries adjoining. To these Satan directs his speech, comforts them with hope yet of regaining Heaven, but tells them lastly of a new world and new kind of creature to be created,

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according to an ancient prophecy or report in Heaven; for that angels were long before this visible creation, was the opinion of many ancient Fathers.[4] Tofind out the truth of this prophecy, and what to determine[5] thereon he refers to a full council. What his associates thence attempt. Pandemonium the palace of Satan rises, suddenly built out of the deep: the infernal peers there sit in council.

Footnotes

- Note 1: *Paradise Lost* appeared originally without any sort of prose aid to the reader, but the printer asked Milton for some "Arguments," or summary explanations of the action in the various books, and these were prefixed to later issues of the poem. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:According to Horace, the epic poet should begin, "*in medias res* ." Return to reference 2
- Note 3:I.e., of the earth. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:Church Fathers, the Christian writers of the 1st century. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:I.e., what action to take. Return to reference 5

[*"This Great Argument"*]

Of man'sfirst disobedience, and the fruit[6]
Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste[7]
Brought death into the world, and all our woe,
With loss of Eden, till one greater Man[8]
Restore us, and regain the blissful seat,
Sing Heav'nly Muse,[9] that on the secret top

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Of Oreb, or of Sinai, didst inspire
That shepherd, whofirst taught the chosen seed,[1]
In the beginning how the Heavens and earth
Rose out of Chaos: or if Sion hill
Delight thee more, and Siloa's brook thatflowed
Fast by the oracle of God,[2] I thence
Invoke thy aid to my adventurous song,
That with no middleflight intends to soar
Above th' Aonian mount,[3] while it pursues
Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme.
And chiefly thou O Spirit,[4] that dost prefer
Before all temples th' upright heart and pure,
Instruct me,[5] for thou know'st; thou from thefirst
Wast present, and, with mighty wings outspread,
Dove-like sat'st brooding[6] on the vast abyss,

And mad'st it pregnant: what in me is dark
Illumine, what is, low raise and support;
That, to the height of this great argument,[7]
I may assert Eternal Providence,
And justify the ways of God[8] to men.

25

Footnotes

- Note 6:The apple itself, and also the consequences of Adam and Eve's disobedience. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:The tasting of which brought mortality into the world. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:Christ. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:The opening invocation to the muse who will inspire (*sing* to) the poet is a regular feature of epic poems. Milton's heavenly muse elsewhere in the poem (7.1) is given the name of the mythological Urania; in another passage (9.21) she is given the adjective *celestial* . Both words—of Greek and Latin derivation, respectively—mean "heavenly." Clearly and typically, in Milton's heavenly muse pagan elements and images are adopted and given new substance within the framework of Judeo-Christian culture and beliefs. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:The Hebrew people. Oreb and Sinai designate the mountain where God spoke to Moses (*that shepherd*), who in Genesis taught the Hebrew people the story of the Creation. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:The Temple. The biblical localities suggested here as haunts for Milton's muse are emblematic of his certainty about the higher nature of his theme compared with the epic subjects of pagan antiquity. The fact that *Siloa's brook* isflowing by the Temple suggests the holy nature of Milton's subject. "Adventurous" (line 13): perilous, as the poet is daring something new (see line 16). Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Helicon, the Greek mountain that was the seat of the Nine Muses. The spring Aganippe, which gives poetic power, and an altar of Zeus were part of that landscape (compare the location of Siloa's brook, lines 11–12). Return to reference 3
- Note 4:Described in Milton's Latin treatise on Christian doctrine as "that impulse or voice of God by which the prophets were inspired," the *Spirit* is a further source of inspiration over and above the heavenly muse. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:The poet asks not for song but for knowledge (*instruct me*) and identifies the Spirit with the Spirit of God that "moved upon the face of the waters" (Genesis 1.2). Return to reference 5
- Note 6:As a bird hatching eggs. The image is pursued in line 22 with *pregnant.* "Dove-like": the traditionalfiguration of the Holy Spirit (for example, Luke 3.22: "the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove"). Return to reference 6
- Note 7:Subject, theme. "Assert" (line 25): champion, vindicate. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:Demonstrate the justice of the course of God's providence. Return to reference 8

[*Satan on the Fiery Lake*]

Sayfirst, for Heav'n hides nothing from thy view

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Nor the deep tract of Hell, sayfirst what cause[9]
Moved our grand parents in that happy state,
Favored of Heav'n so highly, to fall off
From their Creator, and transgress his will
For one restraint, lords of the world besides?
Whofirst seduced them to that foul revolt?
Th' infernal Serpent; he it was, whose guile
Stirred up with envy and revenge, deceived
The mother of mankind, what time his pride
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Had cast him out from Heav'n, with all his host
Of rebel angels, by whose aid aspiring
To set himself in glory above his peers,
He trusted to have equaled the Most High,
If he opposed; and with ambitious aim
Against the throne and monarchy of God
Raised impious war in Heav'n and battle proud
With vain attempt. Him the Almighty Power
Hurled headlongflaming from th' ethereal sky
With hideous ruin and combustion down
To bottomless perdition, there to dwell
In adamantine chains and penalfire,
Who durst defy th' Omnipotent to arms.
Nine times the space that measures day and night
To mortal men, he with his horrid crew
Lay vanquished, rolling in thefiery gulf
Confounded though immortal: but his doom
Reserved him to more wrath; for now the thought
Both of lost happiness and lasting pain
Torments him; round he throws his baleful eyes
That witnessed huge affliction and dismay
Mixed with obdúrate pride and steadfast hate:
At once as far as angels ken[1] he views
The dismal situation waste and wild,
A dungeon horrible, on all sides round
As one great furnaceflamed, yet from thoseflames
No light, but rather darkness visible
Served only to discover sights of woe,
Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace
And rest can never dwell, hope never comes
That comes to all; but torture without end
Still urges, and afiery deluge, fed
With ever-burning sulphur unconsumed:
Such place Eternal Justice had prepared
For those rebellious, here their prison ordained

In utter darkness, and their portion set
As far removed from God and light of Heav'n
As from the center thrice to th' utmost pole.[2]
O how unlike the place from whence they fell!
There the companions of his fall, o'erwhelmed
Withfloods and whirlwinds of tempestuousfire,
He soon discerns, and welt'ring by his side
One next himself in power, and next in crime,
Long after known in Palestine, and named
Beëlzebub.[3] To whom th' Arch-Enemy,
And thence in Heav'n called Satan,[4] with bold words

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Breaking the horrid silence thus began.
"If thou beest he; but O how fall'n! how changed
From him, who in the happy realms of light
Clothed with transcendent brightness didst outshine
Myriads though bright: if he whom mutual league,
United thoughts and counsels, equal hope
And hazard in the glorious enterprise,
Joined with me once, now misery hath joined
In equal ruin: into what pit thou seest
From what height fall'n, so much the stronger proved
He with his thunder: and till then who knew
The force of those dire arms? Yet not for those,
Nor what the potent victor in his rage
Can else inflict, do I repent or change,
Though changed in outward luster, thatfixed mind
And high disdain, from sense of injured merit,
That with the mightiest raised me to contend,
And to thefierce contention brought along
Innumerable force of Spirits armed
That durst dislike his reign, and me preferring,
His utmost power with adverse power opposed
In dubious battle on the plains of Heav'n,
And shook his throne. What though thefield be lost?
All is not lost; the unconquerable will,
And study of revenge, immortal hate,
And courage never to submit or yield:
And what is else not to be overcome?
That glory never shall his wrath or might
Extort from me. To bow and sue for grace
With suppliant knee, and deify his power
Who from the terror of this arm so late
Doubted his empire, that were low indeed,
That were an ignominy and shame beneath

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This downfall; since by fate the strength of gods
And this empyreal[5] substance cannot fail,
Since through experience of this great event
In arms not worse, in foresight much advanced,
We may with more succesful hope resolve
To wage by force or guile eternal war
Irreconcilable, to our grand foe,
Who now triúmphs, and in th' excess of joy
Sole reigning holds the tyranny of Heav'n."
So spake th' apostate angel, though in pain,
Vaunting aloud, but racked with deep despair:
And him thus answered soon his bold compeer.
"O Prince, O Chief of many thronéd Powers,
That led th' embattled Seraphim[6] to war
Under thy conduct, and in dreadful deeds
Full p. C-792
Fearless, endangered Heav'ns perpetual King;
And put to proof his high supremacy,
Whether upheld by strength, or chance, or fate;
Too well I see and rue the dire event,
That with sad overthrow and foul defeat
Hath lost us Heav'n, and all this mighty host
In horrible destruction laid thus low,
As far as gods and heav'nly essences
Can perish: for the mind and spirit remains
Invincible, and vigor soon returns,
Though all our glory extinct, and happy state
Here swallowed up in endless misery.
But what if he our conqueror (whom I now
Of force believe almighty, since no less
Than such could have o'erpow'red such force as ours)
Have left us this our spirit and strength entire
Strongly to suffer and support our pains,
That we may so suffice his vengeful ire,
Or do him mightier service as his thralls
By right of war, whate'er his business be
Here in the heart of Hell to work infire,
Or do his errands in the gloomy deep;
What can it then avail though yet we feel
Strength undiminished, or eternal being
To undergo eternal punishment?"
Whereto with speedy words th' Arch-Fiend replied.
"Fall'n Cherub, to be weak is miserable
Doing or suffering: but of this be sure,
To do aught good never will be our task,

But ever to do ill our sole delight,
As being the contrary to his high will
Whom we resist. If then his providence
Out of our evil seek to bring forth good,
Our labor must be to pervert that end,
And out of good still tofind means of evil;
Which ofttimes may succeed, so as perhaps
Shall grieve him, if I fail not, and disturb
His inmost counsels from their destined aim.
But see the angry victor hath recalled
His ministers of vengeance and pursuit
Back to the gates of Heav'n: the sulphurous hail
Shot after us in storm, o'erblown hath laid
Thefiery surge, that from the precipice
Of Heav'n received us falling, and the thunder,
Winged with red lightning and impetuous rage,
Perhaps hath spent his shafts, and ceases now
To bellow through the vast and boundless deep.
Let us not slip th' occasion, whether scorn,
Or satiate fury yield it from our foe.
Seest thou yon dreary plain, forlorn and wild,
The seat of desolation, void of light,

Full p. C-793

Save what the glimmering of these lividflames
Casts pale and dreadful? Thither let us tend
From offthe tossing of thesefiery waves,
There rest, if any rest can harbor there,
And reassembling our afflicted powers,[7]
Consult how we may henceforth most offend
Our enemy, our own loss how repair,
How overcome this dire calamity,
What reinforcement we may gain from hope,
If not what resolution from despair."

[*Satan summons his army of fallen angels, who rise from the Fiery lake to attend their commander.*]

* * * he above the rest
In shape and gesture proudly eminent
Stood like a tow'r; his form had yet not lost
All her[8] original brightness, nor appeared
Less than Archangel ruined, and th' excess
Of glory obscured: as when the sun new-ris'n
Looks through the horizontal misty air
Shorn of his beams, or from behind the moon
In dim eclipse disastrous twilight sheds

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On half the nations, and with fear of change
Perplexes monarchs. Darkened so, yet shone
Above them all th' Archangel: but his face
Deep scars of thunder had intrenched, and care
Sat on his faded cheek, but under brows
Of dauntless courage, and considerate pride
Waiting revenge: cruel his eye, but cast
Signs of remorse and passion to behold
The fellows of his crime, the followers rather
(Far other once beheld in bliss) condemned
For ever now to have their lot in pain,
Millions of Spirits for his fault amerced[9]
Of Heav'n, and from eternal splendorsflung
For his revolt, yet faithful how they stood,
Their glory withered: as when Heaven'sfire
Hath scathed the forest oaks, or mountain pines,
With singèd top their stately growth though bare
Stands on the blasted heath. He now prepared
To speak; whereat their doubled ranks they bend
From wing to wing, and half enclose him round
With all his peers: attention held them mute.
Thrice he essayed, and thrice, in spite of scorn,
Tears such as angels weep burst forth: at last
Words interwove with sighs found out their way.

Full p. C-794

"O myriads of immortal Spirits, O Powers
Matchless, but with th' Almighty, and that strife
Was not inglorious, though th' event[1] was dire,
As this place testifies, and this dire change
Hateful to utter: but what power of mind
Foreseeing or presaging, from the depth
Of knowledge past or present, could have feared,
How such united force of gods, how such
As stood like these, could ever know repulse?
For who can yet believe, though after loss,
That all these puissant[2] legions, whose exile
Hath emptied Heav'n, shall fail to reascend
Self-raised, and repossess their native seat?
For me, be witness all the host of Heav'n,
If counsels different, or danger shunned
By me, have lost our hopes. But he who reigns
Monarch in Heav'n, till then as one secure
Sat on his throne, upheld by old repute,
Consent or custom, and his regal state
Put forth at full, but still his strength concealed,

Which tempted our attempt, and wrought our fall.
Henceforth his might we know, and know our own
So as not either to provoke, or dread
New war, provoked; our better part remains
To work in close design, by fraud or guile
What force effected not: that he no less
At length from us mayfind, who overcomes
By force, hath overcome but half his foe.
Space may produce new worlds; whereof so rife[3]
There went a fame[4] in Heav'n that he ere long
Intended to create, and therein plant
A generation, whom his choice regard
Should favor equal to the sons of Heaven:
Thither, if but to pry, shall be perhaps
Ourfirst eruption, thither or elsewhere:
For this infernal pit shall never hold
Celestial Spirits in bondage, nor th' abyss
Long under darkness cover. But these thoughts
Full counsel must mature: peace is despaired,
For who can think submission? War then, war
Open or understood must be resolved."
He spake: and to confirm his words, outflew
Millions offlaming swords, drawn from the thighs
Of mighty Cherubim; the sudden blaze
Far round illumined Hell: highly they raged
Against the Highest, andfierce with grasp'ed arms
Clashed on their sounding shields the din of war,
Hurling defiance toward the vault of Heav'n.

Footnotes

- Note 9:An opening question like this is an epic convention. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:Range of sight. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:According to the Ptolemaic conception of the universe, the earth is the center of the cosmos of ten concentric spheres; the fall from Heaven to Hell is thrice as far as the distance from the center (earth) to the outermost sphere. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:A Phoenician deity, or Baal, he is called the prince of devils in Matthew 12.24. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:In Hebrew the name means "adversary." Return to reference 4
- Note 5:Divine element. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:One of nine orders of angels, including the cherubim, thrones, dominions, virtues, powers, principalities, archangels, and angels. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:Military forces. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:"Forma" in Latin is feminine. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:Deprived. Return to reference 9

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- Note 1:Outcome. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Powerful. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Common. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:Rumor. Return to reference 4

FROM BOOK 2

The Argument

The consultation begun, Satan debates whether another battle be to be hazarded for the recovery of heaven: some advise it, others dissuade: a third proposal is preferred, mentioned before by Satan, to search the truth of that prophecy or tradition in heaven concerning another world, and another kind of creature equal or not much inferior to themselves, about this time to be created: their doubt who shall be sent on this difficult search: Satan their chief undertakes alone the voyage, is honored and applauded. The council thus ended, the rest betake them several ways and to several employments, as their inclinations lead them, to entertain the time till Satan returns. He passes on his journey to hell gates,finds them shut, and who sat there to guard them, by whom at length they are opened, and discover to him the great gulf between hell and heaven; with what difficulty he passes through, directed by Chaos, the power of that place, to the sight of this new world which he sought.

[*The Devil's Consult*]

High on a throne of royal state, which far
Outshone the wealth of Ormus and of Ind,[5]
Or where the gorgeous East with richest hand
Show'rs on her kings barbaric pearl and gold,
Satan exalted sat, by merit raised
To that bad eminence; and from despair
Thus high uplifted beyond hope, aspires
Beyond thus high, insatiate to pursue
Vain war with Heav'n, and by success untaught
His proud imaginations[6] thus displayed.
"Powers and Dominions, deities of Heaven,
For since no deep within her gulf can hold
Immortal vigor, though oppressed and fall'n,
I give not Heav'n for lost. From this descent
Celestial Virtues rising, will appear
More glorious and more dread than from no fall,
And trust themselves to fear no second fate.
Me though just right, and thefixed laws of Heav'n
Didfirst create your leader, next, free choice,
With what besides, in counsel or infight,
Hath been achieved of merit, yet this loss
Thus far at least recovered, hath much more
Established in a safe unenvied throne
Yielded with full consent. The happier state
In Heaven, which follows dignity, might draw

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Envy from each inferior; but who here
Will envy whom the highest place exposes
Foremost to stand against the Thunderer's aim
Full p. C-796
Your bulwark, and condemns to greatest share
Of endless pain? Where there is then no good
For which to strive, no strife can grow up there
From faction; for none sure will claim in Hell
Precédence, none, whose portion is so small
Of present pain, that with ambitious mind
Will covet more. With this advantage then
To union, andfirm faith, andfirm accord,
More than can be in Heav'n, we now return
To claim our just inheritance of old,
Surer to prosper than prosperity
Could have assured us; and by what best way,
Whether of open war or covert guile,
We now debate; who can advise, may speak."
He ceas'd, and next him Moloch, sceptered king
Stood up, the strongest and thefiercest Spirit
That fought in Heav'n; nowfiercer by despair:
His trust was with th' Eternal to be deemed
Equal in strength, and rather than be less
Cared not to be at all; with that care lost
Went all his fear: of God, or Hell, or worse
He recked[7] not, and these words thereafter spake.
"My sentence[8] is for open war: of wiles,
More unexpert, I boast not: them let those
Contrive who need, or when they need, not now.
For while they sit contriving, shall the rest,
Millions that stand in arms, and longing wait
The signal to ascend, sit lingering here
Heav'n's fugitives, and for their dwelling-place
Accept this dark opprobrious den of shame,
The prison of his tyranny who reigns
By our delay? No, let us rather choose
Armed with Hellflames and fury all at once
O'er Heav'n's high tow'rs to force resistless way,
Turning our tortures into horrid[9] arms
Against the Torturer; when to meet the noise
Of his almighty engine[1] he shall hear
Infernal thunder, and for lightning see
Blackfire and horror shot with equal rage
Among his angels; and his throne itself

Mixed with Tartarean[2] sulfur, and strangefire,
His own invented torments. But perhaps
The way seems difficult and steep to scale
With upright wing against a higher foe.
Let such bethink them, if the sleepy drench
Of that forgetful lake benumb not still,
That in our proper motion we ascend
Full p. C-797
Up to our native seat: descent and fall
To us is adverse. Who but felt of late
When thefierce foe hung on our broken rear
Insulting, and pursued us through the deep,
With what compulsion and laboriousflight
We sunk thus low? Th' ascent is easy then;
Th' event is feared; should we again provoke
Our stronger, some worse way his wrath mayfind
To our destruction: if there be in Hell
Fear to be worse destroyed: what can be worse
Than to dwell here, driven out from bliss, condemned
In this abhorrèd deep to utter woe;
Where pain of unextinguishablefire
Must exercise us without hope of end
The vassals of his anger, when the scourge
Inexorably, and the torturing hour
Calls us to penance? More destroyed than thus
We should be quite abolished and expire.
What fear we then? What[3] doubt we to incense
His utmost ire? which to the heighth enraged,
Will either quite consume us, and reduce
To nothing this essential,[4] happier far
Than miserable to have eternal being:
Or if our substance be indeed divine,
And cannot cease to be, we are at worst
On this side nothing;[5] and by proof we feel
Our power sufficient to disturb his Heav'n,
And with perpetual inroads to alarm,
Though inaccessible, his fatal[6] throne:
Which if not victory is yet revenge."
He ended frowning, and his look, denounced
Desperate revenge, and battle dangerous
To less than gods. On th' other side up rose
Belial, in act more graceful and humane;
A fairer person lost not Heav'n; he seemed
For dignity composed and high exploit:

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But all was false and hollow; though his tongue
Dropped manna, and could make the worse appear
The better reason, to perplex and dash
Maturest counsels: for his thoughts were low;
To vice industrious, but to nobler deeds
Timorous and slothful: yet he pleased the ear,
And with persuasive accent thus began.
“I should be much for open war, O Peers,
As not behind in hate; if what was urged
Main reason to persuade immediate war,
Did not dissuade me most, and seem to cast
Full p. C-798
Ominous conjecture on the whole success:
When he who most excels in fact of arms,
In what he counsels and in what excels
Mistrustful, grounds his courage on despair
And utter dissolution, as the scope
Of all his aim, after some dire revenge.
First, what revenge? The tow’rs of Heav’n arefilled
With armèd watch, that render all access
Impregnable; oft on the bordering deep
Encamp their legions, or with óbscure wing
Scout far and wide into the realm of Night,
Scorning surprise. Or could we break our way
By force, and at our heels all Hell should rise
With blackest insurrection, to confound
Heav’n’s purest light, yet our great enemy
All incorruptible would on his throne
Sit unpolluted, and th’ ethereal mold[7]
Incapable of stain would soon expel
Her mischief, and purge offthe baserfire
Victorious. Thus repulsed, ourfinal hope
Isflat despair: we must exasperate
Th’ almighty victor to spend all his rage,
And that must end us, that must be our cure,
To be no more; sad cure; for who would lose,
Though full of pain, this intellectual being,
Those thoughts that wander through eternity,
To perish rather, swallowed up and lost
In the wide womb of uncreated night,
Devoid of sense and motion? And who knows,
Let this be good, whether our angry foe
Can give it, or will ever? How he can
Is doubtful; that he never will is sure.
Will he, so wise, let loose at once his ire,

Belike[8] through impotence, or unaware,
To give his enemies their wish, and end
Them in his anger, whom his anger saves
To punish endless? ‘Wherefore cease we then?’
Say they who counsel war, ‘We are decreed,
Reserved and destined to eternal woe;
Whatever doing, what can we suffer more,
What can we suffer worse?’ Is this then worst,
Thus sitting, thus consulting, thus in arms?
What when wefled amain, pursued and strook[9]
With Heav’n’s afflicting thunder, and besought
The deep to shelter us? This Hell then seemed
A refuge from those wounds. Or when we lay
Chained on the burning lake? That sure was worse.
What if the breath that kindled those grimfires
Full p. C-799
Awaked should blow them into sevenfold rage
And plunge us in theflames? Or from above
Should intermitted vengeance[1] arm again
His red right hand to plague us? What if all
Her[2] stores were opened, and thisfirmament
Of Hell should spout her cataracts offire,
Impendent[3] horrors, threat’ning hideous fall
One day upon our heads; while we perhaps
Designing or exhorting glorious war,
Caught in afiery tempest shall be hurled
Each on his rock transfixed, the sport and prey
Of racking whirlwinds, or for ever sunk
Under yon boiling ocean, wrapped in chains;
There to converse with everlasting groans,
Unrespited, unpitied, unreprieved,
Ages of hopeless end; this would be worse.
War therefore, open or concealed, alike
My voice dissuades; for what can force or guile[4]
With him, or who deceive his mind, whose eye
Views all things at one view? He from Heav’n’s high
All these our motions[5] vain, sees and derides;
Not more almighty to resist our might
Than wise to frustrate all our plots and wiles.
Shall we then live thus vile, the race of Heav’n
Thus trampled, thus expelled to suffer here
Chains and these torments? Better these than worse
By my advice; since fate inevitable
Subdues us, and omnipotent decree,

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The victor's will. To suffer, as to do,
Our strength is equal, nor the law unjust
That so ordains: this was atfirst resolved,
If we were wise, against so great a foe
Contending, and so doubtful what might fall.
I laugh, when those who at the spear are bold
And vent'rous, if that fail them, shrink and fear
What yet they know must follow, to endure
Exile, or ignominy, or bonds, or pain,
The sentence of their conqueror: This is now
Our doom; which if we can sustain and bear,
Our Súpreme Foe in time may much remit
His anger, and perhaps thus far removed
Not mind us not offending, satisfied
With what is punished; whence these ragingfires
Will slacken, if his breath stir not theirflames.
Our purer essence then will overcome
Their noxious vapor, or inured not feel,
Or changed at length, and to the place conformed
Full p. C-800
In temper and in nature, will receive
Familiar thefierce heat, and void of pain;
This horror will grow mild, this darkness light,
Besides what hope the never-endingflight
Of future days may bring, what chance, what change
Worth waiting, since our present lot appears
For happy though but ill, for ill not worst,[6]
If we procure not to ourselves more woe."
Thus Belial, with words clothed in reason's garb,
Counseled ignoble ease and peaceful sloth,
Not peace: and after him thus Mammon spake.
"Either to disenthrone the King of Heav'n
We war, if war be best, or to regain
Our own right lost: him to unthrone we then
May hope when everlasting fate shall yield
Tofickle chance, and Chaos judge the strife:
The former vain to hope argues as vain
The latter: for what place can be for us
Within Heav'n's bound, unless Heav'n's Lord supreme
We overpower? Suppose he should relent
And publish grace to all, on promise made
Of new subjection; with what eyes could we
Stand in his presence humble, and receive
Strict laws imposed, to celebrate his throne
With warbled hymns, and to his Godhead sing

Forced hallelujahs; while he lordly sits
Our envied Sovran,[7] and his altar breathes
Ambrosial[8] odors and ambrosialflowers,
Our servile offerings. This must be our task
In Heav'n, this our delight; how wearisome
Eternity so spent in worship paid
To whom we hate. Let us not then pursue
By force impossible, by leave obtained
Unácceptable, though in Heav'n, our state
Of splendid vassalage,[9] but rather seek
Our own good from ourselves, and from our own
Live to ourselves, though in this vast recess,
Free, and to none accountable, preferring
Hard liberty before the easy yoke
Of servile pomp. Our greatness will appear
Then most conspicuous, when great things of small,
Useful of hurtful, prosperous of adverse
We can create, and in what place soe'er
Thrive under evil, and work ease out of pain
Through labor and endurance. This deep world
Of darkness do we dread? How oft amidst
Full p. C-801
Thick clouds and dark doth Heav'n's all-ruling Sire
Choose to reside, his glory unobscured,
And with the majesty of darkness round
Covers his throne; from whence deep thunders roar
Must'ring their rage, and Heav'n resembles Hell?
As he our darkness, cannot we his light
Imitate when we please? This desert soil
Wants[1] not her hidden luster, gems and gold;
Nor want we skill or art, from whence to raise
Magnificence; and what can Heav'n show more?
Our torments also may in length of time
Become our elements, these piercingfires
As soft as now severe, our temper[2] changed
Into their temper; which must needs remove
The sensible of pain.[3] All things invite
To peaceful counsels, and the settled state
Of order, how in safety best we may
Compose our present evils, with regard
Of what we are and where, dismissing quite
All thoughts of war: ye have what I advise."
He scarce hadfinished, when such murmurfilled
Th' assembly, as when hollow rocks retain

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The sound of blust'ring winds, which all night long
Had roused the sea, now with hoarse cadence lull
Seafaring men o'erwatched, whose bark by chance
Or pinnace anchors in a craggy bay
After the tempest: such applause was heard
As Mammon ended, and his sentence pleased,
Advising peace: for such anotherfield
They dreaded worse than Hell: so much the fear
Of thunder and the sword of Michaël[4]
Wrought still within them; and no less desire
To found this nether empire, which might rise
By policy, and long process of time,
In emulation opposite to Heav'n.
Which then Beëlzebub perceived, than whom,
Satan except, none higher sat, with grave
Aspect he rose, and in his rising seemed
A pillar of state; deep on his front engraven
Deliberation sat and public care;
And princely counsel in his face yet shone,
Majestic though in ruin: sage he stood
With Atlantean[5] shouldersfit to bear
The weight of mightiest monarchies; his look
Drew audience and attention still as night
Or summer's noontide air, while thus he spake.

Full p. C-802

"Thrones and imperial Powers, offspring of Heav'n
Ethereal Virtues; or these titles[6] now
Must we renounce, and changing style be called
Princes of Hell? for so the popular vote
Inclines, here to continue, and build up here
A growing empire. Doubtless! while we dream,
And know not that the King of Heav'n hath doomed
This place our dungeon, not our safe retreat
Beyond his potent arm, to live exempt
From Heav'n's high jurisdiction, in new league
Banded against his throne, but to remain
In strictest bondage, though thus far removed,
Under th' inevitable curb, reserved
His captive multitude: for he, be sure,
In height or depth, stillfirst and last will reign
Sole King, and of his kingdom lose no part
By our revolt, but over Hell extend
His empire, and with iron scepter rule
Us here, as with his golden those in Heav'n.
What sit we then projecting peace and war?

War hath determined us, and foiled with loss
Irreparable; terms of peace yet none
Vouchsafed or sought; for what peace will be giv'n
To us enslaved, but custody severe,
And stripes, and arbitrary punishment
Inflicted? And what peace can we return,
But, to our power,[7] hostility and hate,
Untamed reluctance,[8] and revenge though slow,
Yet ever plotting how the conqueror least
May reap his conquest, and may least rejoice
In doing what we most in suffering feel?
Nor will occasion want, nor shall we need
With dangerous expedition to invade
Heav'n, whose high walls fear no assault or siege,
Or ambush from the deep. What if wefind
Some easier enterprise? There is a place
(If ancient and prophetic fame in Heav'n
Err not) another world, the happy seat
Of some new race called Man, about this time
To be created like to us, though less
In power and excellence, but favored more
Of him who rules above; so was his will
Pronounced among the gods, and by an oath,
That shook Heav'n's whole circumference, confirmed.
Thither let us bend all our thoughts, to learn
What creatures there inhabit, of what mold,
Or substance, how endued, and what their power,
And where their weakness, how attempted best,

Full p. C-803

By force or subtlety. Though Heav'n be shut,
And Heav'n's high arbitrator sit secure
In his own strength, this place may lie exposed,
The utmost border of his kingdom, left
To their defense who hold it:[9] here perhaps
Some advantageous act may be achieved
By sudden onset, either with Hellfire
To waste his whole creation, or possess
All as our own, and drive as we were driven,
The puny habitants, or if not drive,
Seduce them to our party, that their God
May prove their foe, and with repenting hand
Abolish his own works. This would surpass
Common revenge, and interrupt his joy
In our confusion, and our joy upraise
In his disturbance; when his darling sons

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Hurled headlong to partake with us, shall curse
Their frail original,[1] and faded bliss,
Faded so soon. Advise[2] if this be worth
Attempting, or to sit in darkness here
Hatching vain empires." Thus Beëlzebub
Pleaded his devilish counsel,first devised
By Satan, and in part proposed: for whence,
But from the author of all ill could spring
So deep a malice, to confound the race
Of mankind in one root,[3] and earth with Hell
To mingle and involve, done all to spite
The great Creator? But their spite still serves
His glory to augment. The bold design
Pleased highly those infernal States, and joy
Sparkled in all their eyes; with full assent
They vote: whereat his speech he thus renews.
"Well have ye judged, well ended long debate,
Synod of gods, and like to what ye are,
Great things resolved, which from the lowest deep
Will once more lift us up, in spite of fate,
Nearer our ancient seat; perhaps in view
Of those bright confines, whence with neighboring arms
And opportune excursion we may chance
Re-enter Heav'n; or else in some mild zone
Dwell not unvisited of Heav'n's fair light
Secure, and at the bright'ning orient beam
Purge offthis gloom; the soft delicious air,
To heal the scar of these corrosivefires
Shall breathe her balm. Butfirst whom shall we send
In search of this new world, whom shall wefind
Sufficient? Who shall tempt with wand'ring feet

Full p. C-804

The dark unbottomed infinite abyss
And through the palpable obscure[4] find out
His uncouth[5] way, or spread his aeryflight
Upborne with indefatigable wings
Over the vast abrupt,[6] ere he arrive
The happy isle? what strength, what art can then
Suffice, or what evasion bear him safe
Through the strict senteries[7] and stations thick
Of angels watching round? Here he had need
All circumspection, and we now no less
Choice in our suffrage; for on whom we send,
The weight of all and our last hope relies."

This said, he sat; and expectation held
His look suspense, awaiting who appeared
To second, or oppose, or undertake
The perilous attempt: but all sat mute,
Pondering the danger with deep thoughts; and each
In other's count'nance read his own dismay
Astonished. None among the choice and prime
Of those Heav'n-warring champions could be found
So hardy as to proffer or accept
Alone the dreadful voyage; till at last
Satan, whom now transcendent glory raised
Above his fellows, with monarchal pride
Conscious of highest worth, unmoved thus spake.
"O progeny of Heav'n, empyreal Thrones,
With reason hath deep silence and demur[8]
Seized us, though undismayed: long is the way
And hard, that out of Hell leads up to light;
Our prison strong, this huge convex offire,
Outrageous to devour, immures us round
Ninefold[9] and gates of burning adamant
Barred over us prohibit all egress.
These passed, if any pass, the void profound
Of unessential Night receives him next
Wide gaping, and with utter loss of being
Threatens him, plunged in that abortive gulf.
If thence he scape into whatever world,
Or unknown region, what remains him less
Than unknown dangers and as hard escape?
But I should ill become this throne, O Peers,
And this imperial sovranty, adorned
With splendor, armed with power, if aught proposed
And judged of public moment, in the shape
Of difficulty or danger could deter
Me from attempting. Wherefore do I assume
These royalties, and not refuse to reign,

Full p. C-805

Refusing to accept as great a share
Of hazard as of honor, due alike
To him who reigns, and so much to him due
Of hazard more, as he above the rest
High honored sits? Go therefore mighty Powers,
Terror of Heav'n, though fall'n; intend[1] at home,
While here shall be our home, what best may ease
The present misery, and render Hell
More tolerable; if there be cure or charm

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To respite or deceive, or slack the pain
Of this ill mansion: intermit no watch
Against a wakeful foe, while I abroad
Through all the coasts of dark destruction seek
Deliverance for us all: this enterprise
None shall partake with me." Thus saying rose
The monarch, and prevented all reply,
Prudent, lest from his resolution raised
Others among the chief might offer now
(Certain to be refused) what erst they feared;
And so refused might in opinion stand
His rivals, winning cheap the high repute
Which he through hazard huge must earn. But they
Dreaded not more th' adventure than his voice
Forbidding; and at once with him they rose;
Their rising all at once was as the sound
Of thunder heard remote. Towards him they bend
With awful reverence prone; and as a god
Extol him equal to the Highest in Heav'n:
Nor failed they to express how much they praised,
That for the general safety he despised
His own: for neither do the Spirits damned
Lose all their virtue; lest bad men should boast
Their specious deeds on earth, which glory excites,
Or close ambition varnished o'er with zeal.
Thus they their doubtful consultations dark
Ended rejoicing in their matchless chief:
As when from mountain tops the dusky clouds
Ascending, while the north wind sleeps, o'erspread
Heav'n's cheerful face, the louring element
Scowls o'er the darkened landscape snow, or show'r;
If chance the radiant sun with farewell sweet
Extend his evening beam, thefields revive,
The birds their notes renew, and bleating herds
Attest their joy, that hill and valley rings.
O shame to men! Devil with devil damned
Firm concord holds, men only disagree
Of creatures rational, though under hope
Of heavenly grace: and God proclaiming peace,
Yet live in hatred, enmity, and strife
Full p. C-806
Among themselves, and levy cruel wars,
Wasting the earth, each other to destroy:
As if (which might induce us to accord)
Man had not hellish foes enow besides,
That day and night for his destruction wait.

[*Satan leaves Hell to find and destroy Eden.*]

* * *

Footnotes

- Note 5:India. “Ormus”: an island in the Persian Gulf, modern Hormuz, famous for pearls. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:Plans or schemes. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:Cared. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:Judgment. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:Bristling, terrible. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:The thunderbolt. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:“Tartarus” is a classical name for Hell. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Why. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:Essence. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:I.e., we are already experiencing the worst possible form of existence. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:Established by Fate, deadly to challenge. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:“Ether” is the purest of the elements. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:Perhaps. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:Struck. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:Revenge temporarily suspended. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Hell’s. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Looming, overhanging. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:The verb “achieve” is understood. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:Proposals. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:I.e., although happiness is not possible, our state could be worse. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:Sovereign, lord. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:Divinely aromatic. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:Servitude. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:Lacks. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Constitution. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Pain felt by the senses. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:The warrior angel, chief of the angelic armies. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:Atlas, the Titan who held up the heavens on his shoulders. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:The official titles of angelic orders. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:I.e., to the best of our ability. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:Resistance. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:To be defended by the occupants. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:Original orfirst parent. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Consider. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Adam, thefirst man, is the “root” of the human race. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:Darkness so heavy it oppresses the senses. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:Unfamiliar. Return to reference 5

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- Note 6:Chaos. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:Sentries. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:Hesitation. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:Hell’s walls have nine thicknesses. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:Consider. Return to reference 1

FROM BOOK 4

The Argument

Satan now in prospect of Eden, and nigh the place where he must now attempt the bold enterprise which he undertook alone against God and man, falls into many doubts with himself, and many passions, fear, envy, and despair; but at length confirms himself in evil, journeys on to Paradise, whose outward prospect and situation is described, overleaps the bounds, sits in the shape of a cormorant on the Tree of Life, as highest in the Garden to look about him. The Garden described; Satan’sfirst sight of Adam and Eve; his wonder at their excellent form and happy state, but with resolution to work their fall; overhears their discourse, thence gathers that the Tree of Knowledge was forbidden them to eat of, under penalty of death; and thereon intends to found his temptation, by seducing them to transgress: then leaves them a while, to know further of their state by some other means. Meanwhile Uriel descending on a sunbeam warns Gabriel, who had in charge the gate of Paradise, that some evil Spirit had escaped the deep, and passed at noon by his sphere in the shape of a good angel down to Paradise, discovered after by his furious gestures in the mount. Gabriel promises tofind him ere morning. Night coming on, Adam and Eve discourse of going to their rest: their bower described; their evening worship. Gabriel drawing forth his bands of nightwatch to walk the round of Paradise, appoints two strong angels to Adam’s bower, lest the evil Spirit should be there doing some harm to Adam or Eve sleeping; there theyfind him at the ear of Eve, tempting her in a dream, and bring him, though unwilling, to Gabriel; by whom questioned, he scornfully answers, prepares resistance, but hindered by a sign from heaven,flies out of Paradise.

[*Satan’s Entry into Paradise; Adam and Eve in Their Bower*]

O for that warning voice which he[2] who saw
Th’ Apocalypse heard cry in Heaven aloud,
Then when the dragon, put to second rout,
Came furious down to be revenged on men,
Woe to the inhabitants on Earth! that now,
While time was, ourfirst parents had been warned
The coming of their secret foe, and scaped,
Haply so scaped, his mortal snare! For now

Full p. C-807

Satan, nowfirst inflamed with rage, came down,
The tempter ere th’ accuser of mankind,
To wreak on innocent frail man his loss
Of thatfirst battle, and hisflight to Hell.

Yet not rejoicing in his speed though bold
Far offand fearless, nor with cause to boast,
Begins his dire attempt; which nigh the birth
Now rolling, boils in his tumultuous breast,
And like a devilish engine[3] back recoils
Upon himself. Horror and doubt distract
His troubled thoughts, and from the bottom stir
The Hell within him; for within him Hell
He brings, and round about him, nor from Hell
One step no more than from himself canfly
By change of place. Now conscience wakes despair
That slumbered, wakes the bitter memory
Of what he was, what is, and what must be
Worse; of worse deeds worse sufferings must ensue.
Sometimes towards Eden, which now in his view
Lay pleasant, his grieved look hefixes sad;
Sometimes towards heaven and the full-blazing sun,
Which now sat high in his meridian tower;
Then, much revolving, thus in sighs began:
“O thou that with surpassing glory crowned
Look’st from thy sole dominion like the god
Of this new world—at whose sight all the stars
Hide their diminished heads—to thee I call,
But with no friendly voice, and add thy name,
O sun, to tell thee how I hate thy beams,
That bring to my remembrance from what state
I fell, how glorious once above thy sphere,
Till pride and worse ambition threw me down,
Warring in Heaven against Heaven’s matchless King!
Ah, wherefore? He deserved no such return
From me, whom he created what I was
In that bright eminence, and with his good
Upbraided none; nor was his service hard.
What could be less than to afford him praise,
The easiest recompense, and pay him thanks,
How due! Yet all his good proved ill in me,
And wrought but malice. Lifted up so high,
I’sdained[4] subjection, and thought one step higher
Would set me highest, and in a moment quit
The debt immense of endless gratitude,
So burdensome, still paying, still to owe,
Forgetful what from him I still received;
And understood not that a grateful mind
By owing owes not, but still pays, at once
Indebted and discharged—what burden then?

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O had his powerful destiny ordained
Me some inferior angel, I had stood
Then happy; no unbounded hope had raised
Ambition. Yet why not? Some other power
As great might have aspired, and me, though mean,
Drawn to his part. But other powers as great
Fell not, but stand unshaken, from within
Or from without to all temptations armed!
Hadst thou the same free will and power to stand?
Thou hadst. Whom hast thou then, or what, to accuse,
But Heaven's free love dealt equally to all?
Be then his love accursed, since, love or hate,
To me alike it deals eternal woe.
Nay, cursed be thou; since against his thy will
Chose freely what it now so justly rues.
Me miserable! which way shall Ifly
Infinite wrath and infinite despair?
Which way Ifly is Hell; myself am Hell;
And in the lowest deep a lower deep
Still threatening to devour me opens wide,
To which the Hell I suffer seems a Heaven.
O then at last relent! Is there no place
Left for repentance, none for pardon left?
None left but by submission; and that word
Disdain forbids me, and my dread of shame
Among the spirits beneath, whom I seduced
With other promises and other vaunts
Than to submit, boasting I could subdue
Th' omnipotent. Ay me! they little know
How dearly I abide that boast so vain,
Under what torments inwardly I groan.
While they adore me on the throne of Hell,
With diadem and scepter high advanced,
The lower still I fall, only supreme
In misery: such joy ambitionfinds!
But say I could repent and could obtain
By act of grace my former state, how soon
Would height recall high thoughts, how soon unsay
What feigned submission swore! Ease would recant
Vows made in pain, as violent and void.
For never can true reconcilement grow
Where wounds of deadly hate have pierced so deep;
Which would but lead me to a worse relapse
And heavier fall: so should I purchase dear
Short intermission, bought with double smart.

This knows my punisher; therefore as far
From granting he, as I from begging, peace.
All hope excluded thus, behold, instead
Of us outcast, exiled, his new delight,
Mankind created, and for him this world!

Full p. C-809

So farewell hope, and with hope farewell fear,
Farewell remorse! All good to me is lost;
Evil, be thou my good: by thee at least
Divided empire with Heaven's king I hold,
By thee, and more than half perhaps will reign;
As man ere long, and this new world, shall know."
Thus while he spake, each passion dimmed his face,
Thrice changed with pale—ire, envy, and despair;
Which marred his borrowed visage, and betrayed
Him counterfeit, if any eye beheld:
For heavenly minds from such distempers foul
Are ever clear. Whereof he soon aware
Each perturbation smoothed with outward calm,
Artificer of fraud; and was thefirst
That practiced falsehood under saintly show,
Deep malice to conceal, couched with revenge:
Yet not enough had practiced to deceive
Uriel,[5] once warned; whose eye pursued him down
The way he went, and on th' Assyrian mount[6]
Saw him disfigured, more than could befall
Spirit of happy sort: his gesturesfierce
He marked and mad demeanor, then alone,
As he supposed, all unobserved, unseen.
So on he fares, and to the border comes
Of Eden, where delicious Paradise,
Now nearer, crowns with her enclosure green
As with a rural mound the champaign head
Of a steep wilderness, whose hairy sides
With thicket overgrown, grotesque and wild,
Access denied; and overhead up grew
Insuperable height of loftiest shade,
Cedar, and pine, andfir, and branching palm,
A sylvan scene, and as the ranks ascend
Shade above shade, a woody theater
Of stateliest view. Yet higher than their tops
The verdurous wall of Paradise up sprung;
Which to our general sire gave prospect large
Into his nether empire neighboring round.
And higher than that wall a circling row

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Of goodliest trees loaden with fairest fruit,
Blossoms and fruits at once of golden hue,
Appeared, with gay enameled colors mixed;
On which the sun more glad impressed his beams
Than in fair evening cloud, or humid bow,
When God hath showered the earth: so lovely seemed
That landscape. And of pure now purer air
Meets his approach, and to the heart inspires
Full p. C-810
Vernal delight and joy, able to drive[7]
All sadness but despair. Now gentle gales,
Fanning their odoriferous wings, dispense
Native perfumes, and whisper whence they stole
Those balmy spoils. As when to them who sail
Beyond the Cape of Hope, and now are past
Mozambic, offat sea northeast winds blow
Sabean[8] odors from the spicy shore
Of Araby the Blest, with such delay
Well pleased they slack their course, and many a league
Cheered with the grateful smell old Ocean smiles;
So entertained those odorous sweets thefiend
Who came their bane, though with them better pleased
Than Asmodëus[9] with thefishy fume
That drove him, though enamored, from the spouse
Of Tobit's son,[1] and with a vengeance sent
From Media post to Egypt, there fast bound.
Now to th' ascent of that steep savage hill
Satan had journeyed on, pensive and slow;
But further way found none; so thick entwined,
As one continued brake, the undergrowth
Of shrubs and tangling bushes had perplexed
All path of man or beast that passed that way.
One gate there only was, and that looked east
On th' other side; which when th' arch-felon saw,
Due entrance he disdained, and in contempt
At one slight bound high overleaped all bound
Of hill or highest wall, and sheer within
Lights on his feet. As when a prowling wolf,
Whom hunger drives to seek new haunt for prey,
Watching where shepherds pen theirflocks at eve
In hurdled cotes amid thefield secure,
Leaps o'er the fence with ease into the fold;
Or as a thief, bent to unhoard the cash
Of some rich burgher, whose substantial doors,

Cross-barred and bolted fast, fear no assault,
In at the window climbs, or o'er the tiles;
So clomb thisfirst grand thief into God's fold:
So since into his church lewd hirelings climb.
Thence up heflew, and on the Tree of Life,
The middle tree and highest there that grew,
Sat like a cormorant; yet not true life
Thereby regained, but sat devising death
To them who lived; nor on the virtue thought
Of that life-giving plant, but only used
Full p. C-811
For prospect, what, well used, had been the pledge
Of immortality. So little knows
Any, but God alone, to value right
The good before him, but perverts best things
To worst abuse, or to their meanest use.
Beneath him with new wonder now he views
To all delight of human sense exposed
In narrow room Nature's whole wealth; yea more,
A Heaven on Earth; for blissful Paradise
Of God the garden was, by him in the east
Of Eden planted. Eden stretched her line
From Auran eastward to the royal towers
Of great Seleucia, built by Grecian kings,
Or where the sons of Eden long before
Dwelt in Telassar.[2] In this pleasant soil
His far more pleasant garden God ordained.
Out of the fertile ground he caused to grow
All trees of noblest kind for sight, smell, taste;
And all amid them stood the Tree of Life,
High eminent, blooming ambrosial fruit
Of vegetable gold; and next to life,
Our death, the Tree of Knowledge, grew fast by—
Knowledge of good bought dear by knowing ill.
Southward through Eden went a river large,
Nor changed his course, but through the shaggy hill
Passed underneath engulfed; for God had thrown
That mountain, as his garden-mold, high raised
Upon the rapid current, which, through veins
Of porous earth with kindly thirst up drawn,
Rose a fresh fountain, and with many a rill
Watered the garden; thence united fell
Down the steep glade, and met the netherflood,
Which from his darksome passage now appears,
And now, divided into four main streams,

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Runs diverse, wandering many a famous realm
And country, whereof here needs no account;
But rather to tell how, if art could tell,
How from that sapphire fount the crispèd brooks,
Rolling on orient pearl and sands of gold,
With mazy error under pendant shades
Ran nectar, visiting each plant, and fed
Flowers worthy of Paradise; which not nice art
In beds and curious knots, but Nature boon
Poured forth profuse on hill and dale and plain,
Both where the morning sunfirst warmly smote
The openfield, and where the unpierced shade
Embrowned the noontide bowers. Thus was this place,
A happy rural seat of various view:
Groves whose rich trees wept odorous gums and balm;

Full p. C-812

Others whose fruit, burnished with golden rind,
Hung amiable—Hesperian fables[3] true,
If true, here only—and of delicious taste.
Betwixt them lawns, or level downs, andflocks
Grazing the tender herb, were interposed,
Or palmy hillock; or theflowery lap
Of some irriguous valley spread her store,
Flowers of all hue, and without thorn the rose.
Another side, umbrageous grots and caves
Of cool recess, o'er which the mantling vine
Lays forth her purple grape, and gently creeps
Luxuriant; meanwhile murmuring waters fall
Down the slope hills dispersed, or in a lake,
That to the fringèd bank with myrtle crowned
Her crystal mirror holds, unite their streams.
The birds their choir apply; airs, vernal airs,
Breathing the smell offield and grove, attune
The trembling leaves, while universal Pan,[4]
Knit with the Graces and the Hours in dance,
Led on th' eternal spring. Not that fairfield
Of Enna, where Proserpin gatheringflowers,
Herself a fairerflower, by gloomy Dis
Was gathered, which cost Ceres all that pain
To seek her through the world;[5] nor that sweet grove
Of Daphne, by Orontes and th' inspired
Castalian spring,[6] might with this Paradise
Of Eden strive; nor that Nyseian isle,
Girt with the river Triton, where old Cham,

Whom Gentiles Ammon call and Libyan Jove,
Hid Amalthea and herflorid son
Young Bacchus from his stepdame Rhea's eye;[7]
Nor where Abassin kings their issue guard,
Mount Amara (though this by some supposed
True Paradise), under the Ethiop line[8]
By Nilus's head, enclosed with shining rock,
A whole day's journey high, but wide remote
From this Assyrian[9] garden, where thefiend
Full p. C-813
Saw undelighted all delight, all kind
Of living creatures, new to sight and strange.
Two of far nobler shape, erect and tall,
Godlike erect, with native honor clad
In naked majesty, seemed lords of all,
And worthy seemed; for in their looks divine
The image of their glorious Maker shone,
Truth, wisdom, sanctitude severe and pure—
Severe, but in truefilial freedom placed,
Whence true authority in men; though both
Not equal, as their sex not equal seemed;[1]
For contemplation he and valor formed,
For softness she and sweet attractive grace;
He for God only, she for God in him.[2]
His fair large front and eye sublime declared
Absolute rule;[3] and hyacinthine locks
Round from his parted forelock manly hung
Clustering, but not beneath his shoulders broad:
She, as a veil down to the slender waist,
Her unadornèd golden tresses wore
Disheveled, but in wanton ringlets waved
As the vine curls her tendrils, which implied
Subjection,[4] but required with gentle sway,
And by her yielded, by him best received,
Yielded with coy submission, modest pride,
And sweet, reluctant, amorous delay.
Nor those mysterious parts were then concealed;
Then was not guilty shame. Dishonest shame
Of Nature's works, honor dishonorable,
Sin-bred, how have ye troubled all mankind
With shows instead, mere shows of seeming pure,
And banished from man's life his happiest life,
Simplicity and spotless innocence!
So passed they naked on, nor shunned the sight

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Of God or angel, for they thought no ill;
So hand in hand they passed, the loveliest pair
That ever since in love's embraces met:
Adam the goodliest man of men since born
His sons; the fairest of her daughters Eve.
Under a tuft of shade that on a green
Stood whispering soft, by a fresh fountain-side,
They sat them down; and after no more toil
Full p. C-814
Of their sweet gardening labor than sufficed
To recommend cool Zephyr,[5] and made ease
More easy, wholesome thirst and appetite
More grateful, to their supper fruits they fell,
Nectarine fruits which the compliant boughs
Yielded them, sidelong as they sat recline
On the soft downy bank damasked[6] withflowers.
The savory pulp they chew, and in the rind
Still as they thirsted scoop the brimming stream;
Nor gentle purpose, nor endearing smiles
Wanted, nor youthful dalliance, as beseems
Fair couple linked in happy nuptial league,
Alone as they. About them frisking played
All beasts of th' earth, since wild, and of all chase
In wood or wilderness, forest or den.
Sporting the lion ramped, and in his paw
Dandled the kid; bears, tigers, ounces, pards,[7]
Gamboled before them; th' unwieldy elephant
To make them mirth used all his might, and wreathed
His lithe proboscis;[8] close the serpent sly,
Insinuating, wove with Gordian twine
His braided train, and of his fatal guile
Gave proof unheeded. Others on the grass
Couched, and nowfilled with pasture gazing sat,
Or bedward ruminating; for the sun,
Declined, was hasting now with prone career
To th' ocean isles, and in th' ascending scale
Of heaven the stars that usher evening rose:
When Satan, still in gaze asfirst he stood,
Scarce thus at length failed speech recovered sad:
"O Hell! what do mine eyes with grief behold?
Into our room of bliss thus high advanced
Creatures of other mold, Earth-born perhaps,
Not spirits, yet to heavenly spirits bright
Little inferior; whom my thoughts pursue

With wonder, and could love; so lively shines
In them divine resemblance, and such grace
The hand that formed them on their shape hath poured.
Ah! gentle pair, ye little think how nigh
Your change approaches, when all these delights
Will vanish, and deliver ye to woe,
More woe, the more your taste is now of joy:
Happy, but for so happy ill secured
Long to continue, and this high seat, your Heaven,
Ill fenced for Heaven to keep out such a foe
As now is entered; yet no purposed foe
To you, whom I could pity thus forlorn,
Though I unpitied. League with you I seek,
Full p. C-815
And mutual amity so strait, so close,
That I with you must dwell, or you with me,
Henceforth. My dwelling, haply, may not please,
Like this fair Paradise, your sense; yet such
Accept your Maker's work; he gave it me,
Which I as freely give. Hell shall unfold,
To entertain you two, her widest gates,
And send forth all her kings; there will be room,
Not like these narrow limits, to receive
Your numerous offspring; if no better place,
Thank him who puts me, loath, to this revenge
On you, who wrong me not, for him who wronged.
And should I at your harmless innocence
Melt, as I do, yet public reason just—
Honor and empire with revenge enlarged
By conquering this new world—compels me now
To do what else, though damned, I should abhor."
So spake thefiend, and with necessity,
The tyrant's plea, excused his devilish deeds.
Then from his lofty stand on that high tree
Down he alights among the sportful herd
Of those four-footed kinds, himself now one,
Now other, as their shape served best his end
Nearer to view his prey, and unespied
To mark what of their state he more might learn
By word or action marked. About them round
A lion now he stalks withfiery glare;
Then as a tiger, who by chance hath spied
In some purlieu[9] two gentle fawns at play,
Straight couches close; then, rising, changes oft
His couchant[1] watch, as one who chose his ground,

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Whence rushing he might surest seize them both
Gripped in each paw; when Adamfirst of men
Tofirst of women Eve thus moving speech,
Turned him all ear to hear new utteranceflow.
“Sole partner and sole part of all these joys,
Dearer thyself than all; needs must the power
That made us, and for us this ample world,
Be infinitely good, and of his good
As liberal and free as infinite,
That raised us from the dust and placed us here
In all this happiness, who at his hand
Have nothing merited, nor can perform
Aught of which he hath need; he who requires
From us no other service than to keep
This one, this easy charge, of all the trees
In Paradise that bear delicious fruit
So various, not to taste that only Tree
Full p. C-816
Of Knowledge, planted by the Tree of Life,
So near grows death to life, whate’er death is,
Some dreadful thing, no doubt; for well thou know’st
God hath pronounced it death to taste that tree,
The only sign of our obedience left
Among so many signs of power and rule
Conferred upon us, and dominion given
Over all other creatures that possess
Earth, air, and sea. Then let us not think hard
One easy prohibition, who enjoy
Free leave so large to all things else, and choice
Unlimited of manifold delights;
But let us ever praise him, and extol
His bounty, following our delightful task
To prune these growing plants and tend theseflowers,
Which were it toilsome, yet with thee were sweet.”
To whom thus Eve replied: “O thou for whom
And from whom I was formedflesh of thyflesh,
And without whom am to no end, my guide
And head, what thou hast said is just and right.
For we to him indeed all praises owe
And daily thanks, I chiefly who enjoy
So far the happier lot, enjoying thee
Preeminent by so much odds, while thou
Like consort to thyself canst nowherefind.
That day I oft remember, when from sleep
Ifirst awaked, and found myself reposed
Under a shade onflowers, much wondering where

And what I was, whence thither brought, and how.
Not distant far from thence a murmuring sound
Of waters issued from a cave and spread
Into a liquid plain, then stood unmoved,
Pure as th' expanse of heaven; I thither went
With unexperienced thought, and laid me down
On the green bank, to look into the clear
Smooth lake that to me seemed another sky.
As I bent down to look, just opposite,
A shape within the wat'ry gleam appeared,
Bending to look on me. I started back,
It started back; but pleased I soon returned,
Pleased it returned as soon with answering looks
Of sympathy and love. There I hadfixed
Mine eyes till now, and pined with vain desire,[2]
Had not a voice thus warned me: 'What thou seest,
What there thou seest, fair creature, is thyself;
With thee it came and goes. But follow me,
And I will bring thee where no shadow stays
Full p. C-817
Thy coming, and thy soft embraces, he
Whose image thou art, him thou shalt enjoy
Inseparably thine, to him shalt bear
Multitudes like thyself, and thence be called
Mother of human race.'[3] What could I do
But follow straight, invisibly thus led?
Till I espied thee, fair indeed and tall
Under a platan, yet methought[4] less fair,
Less winning soft, less amiably mild
Than that smooth wat'ry image. Back I turned;
Thou following cried'st aloud, 'Return, fair Eve,
Whomfli'st thou? whom thoufli'st, of him thou art,
Hisflesh, his bone; to give thee being I lent
Out of my side to thee, nearest my heart,
Substantial life, to have thee by my side
Henceforth an individual solace dear.
Part of my soul I seek thee, and thee claim
My other half.' With that, thy gentle hand
Seized mine, I yielded, and from that time see
How beauty is excelled by manly grace
And wisdom, which alone is truly fair."
So spake our general mother, and with eyes
Of conjugal attraction unreproved
And meek surrender, half embracing leaned
On ourfirst father; half her swelling breast

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Naked met his under theflowing gold
Of her loose tresses hid. He in delight
Both of her beauty and submissive charms
Smiled with superior love, as Jupiter
On Juno smiles,[5] when he impregns the clouds
That shed Mayflowers, and pressed her matron lip
With kisses pure. Aside the Devil turned
For envy, yet with jealous leer malign
Eyed them askance, and to himself thus plained:
“Sight hateful, sight tormenting! thus these two
Imparadised in one another’s arms,
The happier Eden, shall enjoy theirfill
Of bliss on bliss, while I to Hell am thrust,
Where neither joy nor love, butfierce desire,
Among our other torments not the least,
Still unfulfilled with pain of longing pines.
Yet let me not forget what I have gained
From their own mouths: all is not theirs, it seems.
One fatal tree there stands, of knowledge called,
Forbidden them to taste. Knowledge forbidden?
Full p. C-818
Suspicious, reasonless. Why should their lord
Envy them that? Can it be sin to know,
Can it be death? and do they only stand
By ignorance, is that their happy state,
The proof of their obedience and their faith?
O fair foundation laid whereon to build
Their ruin! Hence I will excite their minds
With more desire to know, and to reject
Envious commands, invented with design
To keep them low whom knowledge might exalt
Equal with gods. Aspiring to be such,
They taste and die; what likelier can ensue?
Butfirst with narrow search I must walk round
This garden, and no corner leave unspied;
A chance but chance may lead where I may meet
Some wandering spirit of Heaven, by fountain side
Or in thick shade retired, from him to draw
What further would be learnt. Live while ye may,
Yet happy pair; enjoy, till I return,
Short pleasures, for long woes are to succeed.”

* * *

Footnotes

- Note 2:St. John, author of Revelation. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:A cannon. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:Disdained. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:An angel set to guard Eden from Satan's assault. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:Niphates, a mountain on the border of Armenia and Assyria. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:Drive out. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:Sheba of the Bible. Mozambique was an important Portuguese province in the trade route. Milton joins biblical, classical, and modern sources to describe the otherworldly pleasures of Eden. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:Demon lover of Sara in the Apocryphal Book of Tobit. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:Tobias. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:City in Eden. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:In Ovid's *Metamorphoses* 10, a dragon guarded the golden apples on the islands known as the Hesperides. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:A pastoral god whose name Renaissance mythographers took from the Greek *pas* or *pan*, meaning "all" (or "universal"). Return to reference 4
- Note 5:In Ovid's *Fasti* 4, Dis, the god of the underworld, abducts Proserpine, daughter of Ceres (the goddess of the Earth's natural fecundity). Because she eats seven seeds of a pomegranate in the underworld, Proserpine must remain there seven months of each year, during which time Ceres mourns and blights the Earth. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:The groves of Daphne by the river Orontes in Syria had a temple to Apollo and a spring named after the Castalian spring of Parnassus. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:Ammon, king of Libya, had an affair with the nymph Amalthea, who bore the god Bacchus; Ammon hid the child from his jealous wife, Rhea, on the island of Nysa. Ammon was identified with the Libyan Jove and with Ham, or Cham, son of Noah. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:I.e., on the equator in Abyssinia. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:The garden was near the Euphrates in Assyria. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:Milton includes both biblical accounts of creation, beginning with Genesis 1.27: "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." He next uses the account of creating Eve from Adam's rib. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:"The head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man" (1 Corinthians 11.3). Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Adam's body "declares" the political theory associated with monarchical absolutism. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:Eve's body "implies" the subjection that fulfills Adam's "Absolute rule," but negotiates the distribution of "Authority in men." In *Tetrachordon*, Milton writes of the "golden dependence of [male] headship and [female] subjection" in marriage. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:West wind. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:Richly patterned. Return to reference 6

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- Note 7:Leopards. “Ounces”: in Milton’s time, large wildcats generally. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:Trunk. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:Region on the outskirts of a given area. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:From heraldry: lying down with the head raised. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Like Ovid’s Narcissus in *Metamorphoses* 3.339–510, Eve falls in love with her image; unlike Narcissus, she is led by God’s voice to Adam, whose image she is. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Eve means “Mother of all things living” (11.159). Return to reference 3
- Note 4:It seemed to me. “Platan”: a plane tree. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:In Greco-Roman mythology, Jupiter is king of the gods and Juno is his sister and wife. The marital hierarchies of the pagan gods and of the human couple differ. While Jupiter reigns (and rains) supreme, Adam and Eve enjoy “give and take.” Adam smiles *with superior love*, yet Eve is physically “on top.” Return to reference 5

FROM BOOK 8

The Argument

Adam inquires concerning celestial motions, is doubtfully answered, and exhorted to search rather things more worthy of knowledge: Adam assents, and still desirous to detain Raphael, relates to him what he remembered since his own creation, his placing in Paradise, his talk with God concerning solitude andfit society, hisfirst meeting and nuptials with Eve, his discourse with the angel thereupon; who after admonitions repeated departs.

[*Adam Describes His Own Creation and That of Eve; The Angel Repeats His Warning and Departs*]

* * *

“Solicit not thy thoughts with matters hid,[6]
Leave them to God above, him serve and fear;
Of other creatures, as him pleases best,
Wherever placed, let him dispose: joy thou
In what he gives thee, this Paradise
And thy fair Eve; heaven is for thee too high
To know what passes there; be lowly wise:
Think only what concerns thee and thy being;
Dream not of other worlds, what creatures there
Live, in what state, condition or degree,
Contented that thus far hath been revealed

Full p. C-819

Not of earth only but of highest heaven.”
To whom thus Adam cleared of doubt, replied.
“How fully hast thou satisfied me, pure
Intelligence of heaven, angel serene,

And freed from intricacies, taught to live,
The easiest way, nor with perplexing thoughts
To interrupt the sweet of life, from which
God hath bid dwell far offall anxious cares,
And not molest us, unless we ourselves
Seek them with wandering thoughts, and notions vain.
But apt the mind or fancy is to rove
Unchecked, and of her roving is no end;
Till warned, or by experience taught, she learn,
That not to know at large of things remote
From use, obscure and subtle, but to know
That which before us lies in daily life,
Is the prime wisdom, what is more is fume,
Or emptiness, orfind impertinence,
And renders us in things that most concern
Unpracticed, unprepared, and still to seek.
Therefore from this high pitch let us descend
A lowerflight, and speak of things at hand
Useful, whence haply mention may arise
Of something not unseasonable to ask
By sufferance, and thy wonted favor deigned.
Thee I have heard relating what was done
Ere my remembrance: now hear me relate
My story, which perhaps thou hast not heard;
And Day is yet not spent; till then thou seest
How subtly to detain thee I devise,
Inviting thee to hear while I relate,
Fond, were it not in hope of thy reply:
For while I sit with thee, I seem in heaven,
And sweeter thy discourse is to my ear
Then fruits of palm-tree pleasantest to thirst
And hunger both, from labor, at the hour
Of sweet repast; they satiate, and soonfill,
Though pleasant, but thy words with grace divine
Imbued, bring to their sweetness no satiety."
To whom thus Raphael answered heavenly meek.
"Nor are thy lips ungraceful, sire of men,
Nor tongue ineloquent; for God on thee
Abundantly his gifts hath also poured
Inward and outward both, his image fair:
Speaking or mute all comeliness and grace
Attends thee, and each word, each motion forms.
Nor less think we in heaven of thee on earth
Than of our fellow servant, and inquire
Gladly into the ways of God with man:
For God we see hath honored thee, and set

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On man his equal love: say therefore on;
Full p. C-820
For I that day was absent, as befell,
Bound on a voyage uncouth and obscure,
Far on excursion toward the gates of hell;[7]
Squared in full legion (such command we had)
To see that none thence issued forth a spy,
Or enemy, while God was in his work,
Lest he incensed at such eruption bold,
Destruction with creation might have mixed.
Nor that they durst without his leave attempt,
But us he sends upon his high behests
For state, as sovereign king, and to inure
Our prompt obedience. Fast we found, fast shut
The dismal gates, and barricadoed strong;
But long ere our approaching heard within
Noise, other than the sound of dance or song,
Torment, and loud lament, and furious rage.
Glad we returned up to the coasts of light
Ere Sabbath evening: so we had in charge.
But thy relation now; for I attend,
Pleased with thy words no less than thou with mine."
So spake the godlike power, and thus our sire:
"For man to tell how human life began
Is hard; for who himself beginning knew?
Desire with thee still longer to converse
Induced me. As new waked from soundest sleep,
Soft on theflowery herb I found me laid
In balmy sweat, which with his beams the sun
Soon dried, and on the reeking[8] moisture fed.
Straight toward heaven my wondering eyes I turned,
And gazed a while the ample sky, till raised
By quick instinctive motion up I sprung
As thitherward endeavoring, and upright
Stood on my feet; about me round I saw
Hill, dale, and shady woods, and sunny plains
And liquid lapse of murmuring streams; by these,
Creatures that lived and moved, and walked orflew,
Birds on the branches warbling. All things smiled;
With fragrance and with joy my heart o'erflowed.
Myself I then perused, and limb by limb
Surveyed, and sometimes went and sometimes ran
With supple joints as lively vigor led:
But who I was, or where, or from what cause,
Knew not. To speak I tried, and forthwith spake,

My tongue obeyed, and readily could name
Whate'er I saw. 'Thou sun,' said I, 'fair light,
And thou enlightened earth, so fresh and gay,
Ye hills and dales, ye rivers, woods, and plains,
And ye that live and move, fair creatures, tell,
Tell, if ye saw, how came I thus, how here?
Full p. C-821
Not of myself; by some great maker, then,
In goodness and in power preëminent.
Tell me how may I know him, how adore,
From whom I have that thus I move and live,
And feel that I am happier than I know.'
"While thus I called, and strayed I knew not whither
From where Ifirst drew air andfirst beheld
This happy light, when answer none returned,
On a green shady bank profuse offlowers
Pensive I sat me down; there gentle sleep
First found me and with soft oppression seized
My drowsèd sense—untroubled, though I thought
I then was passing to my former state
Insensible, and forthwith to dissolve;
When suddenly stood at my head a dream,
Whose inward apparition gently moved
My fancy to believe I yet had being
And lived. One came, methought, of shape divine,
And said, 'Thy mansion wants thee, Adam, rise,
First man, of men innumerable ordained
First father; called by thee I come thy guide
To the garden of bliss, thy seat prepared.'
So saying, by the hand he took me raised,
And overfields and waters, as in air
Smooth sliding without step, last led me up
A woody mountain whose high top was plain,
A circuit wide, enclosed, with goodliest trees
Planted, with walks and bowers, that what I saw
Of earth before scarce pleasant seemed. Each tree
Loaden with fairest fruit that hung to the eye
Tempting, stirred in me sudden appetite
To pluck and eat; whereat I waked, and found
Before mine eyes all real, as the dream
Had lively shadowed. Here had new begun
My wandering, had not he who was my guide
Up hither, from among the trees appeared,
Presence divine. Rejoicing, but with awe,
In adoration at his feet I fell
Submiss: he reared me, and, 'Whom thou soughtest I am,'

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Said mildly, 'author[9] of all this thou seest
Above or round about thee or beneath.
This Paradise I give thee, count it thine
To till and keep, and of the fruit to eat.
Of every tree that in the garden grows
Eat freely with glad heart; fear here no dearth.
But of the tree whose operation brings
Knowledge of good and ill, which I have set
The pledge of thy obedience and thy faith
Amid the garden by the Tree of Life,
Remember what I warn thee, shun to taste
Full p. C-822
And shun the bitter consequence: for know
The day thou eat'st thereof, my sole command
Transgressed, inevitably thou shalt die,
From that day mortal, and this happy state
Shalt lose, expelled from hence into a world
Of woe and sorrow.' Sternly he pronounced
The rigid interdiction, which resounds
Yet dreadful in mine ear, though in my choice
Not to incur; but soon his clear aspèct
Returned, and gracious purpose thus renewed:
'Not only these fair bounds, but all the Earth
To thee and to thy race I give; as lords
Possess it, and all things that therein live,
Or live in sea or air, beast,fish, and fowl.
In sign whereof each bird and beast behold
After their kinds; I bring them to receive
From thee their names, and pay thee fealty
With low subjection; understand the same
Offish within their watery residence,
Not hither summoned, since they cannot change
Their element to draw the thinner air.'
As thus he spake, each bird and beast behold
Approaching two and two, these cowering low
With blandishment, each bird stooped on his wing.
I named them as they passed, and understood
Their nature, with such knowledge God endued
My sudden apprehension. But in these
I found not what methought I wanted[1] still,
And to the heavenly vision thus presumed:
"'O by what name, for thou above all these,
Above mankind, or aught than mankind higher,
Surpassest far my naming, how may I
Adore thee, author of this universe

And all this good to man, for whose well-being
So amply and with hands so liberal
Thou hast provided all things? But with me
I see not who partakes. In solitude
What happiness? Who can enjoy alone,
Or all enjoying, what contentmentfind?'
Thus I presumptuous; and the vision bright,
As with a smile more brightened, thus replied:
"'What callest thou solitude? Is not the earth
With various living creatures, and the air,
Replenished, and all these at thy command
To come and play before thee? Knowest thou not
Their language and their ways? They also know
And reason not contemptibly; with these
Find pastime and bear rule; thy realm is large.'
So spake the universal Lord, and seemed
So ordering. I with leave of speech implored
Full p. C-823
And humble deprecation, thus replied:
"'Let not my words offend thee, heavenly power,
My maker; be propitious while I speak.
Hast thou not made me here thy substitute,
And these inferior far beneath me set?
Among unequals what society
Can sort, what harmony or true delight?
Which must be mutual, in proportion due
Given and received. But in disparity,
The one intense, the other still remiss,
Cannot well suit with either, but soon prove
Tedious alike. Of fellowship I speak
Such as I seek,fit to participate
All rational delight, wherein the brute
Cannot be human consort. They rejoice
Each with their kind, lion with lioness,
Sofitly them in pairs thou hast combined:
Much less can bird with beast, orfish with fowl
So well converse, nor with the ox the ape;
Worse then can man with beast, and least of all.'
"Whereto the Almighty answered, not displeased:
'A nice and subtle happiness I see
Thou to thyself proposest, in the choice
Of thy associates, Adam, and wilt taste
No pleasure, though in pleasure, solitary.
What thinkest thou then of me and this my state?
Seem I to thee sufficiently possessed
Of happiness or not? who am alone

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From all eternity, for none I know
Second to me or like, equal much less.
How have I then with whom to hold converse
Save with the creatures which I made, and those
To me inferior, infinite descents
Beneath what other creatures are to thee?'
"He ceased, I lowly answered: 'To attain
The height and depth of thy eternal ways
All human thoughts come short, supreme of things.
Thou in thyself art perfect, and in thee
Is no deficience found; not so is man,
But in degree, the cause of his desire
By conversation with his like to help
Or solace his defects. No need that thou
Shouldst propagate, already infinite,
And through all number absolute, though one.
But man by number is to manifest
His single imperfection, and beget
Like of his like, his image multiplied,
In unity defective, which requires
Collateral[2] love and dearest amity.
Thou in thy secrecy although alone,

Full p. C-824

Best with thyself accompanied, seekest not
Social communication; yet, so pleased,
Canst raise thy creature to what height thou wilt
Of union or communion, deified;
I by conversing cannot these erect
From prone, nor in their ways complacencefind.'
Thus I emboldened spake, and freedom used
Permissive, and acceptance found, which gained
This answer from the gracious voice divine:
"'Thus far to try thee, Adam, I was pleased,
Andfind thee knowing, not of beasts alone
Which thou hast rightly named, but of thyself,
Expressing well the spirit within thee free,
My image, not imparted to the brute,
Whose fellowship, therefore unmeet for thee,
Good reason was thou freely shouldst dislike;
And be so minded still. I, ere thou spak'st,
Knew it not good for man to be alone,
And no such company as then thou sawest
Intended thee, for trial only brought,
To see how thou couldst judge offit and meet.
What next I bring shall please thee, be assured:

Thy likeness, thyfit help, thy other self,
Thy wish exactly to thy heart's desire.'
"He ended, or I heard no more, for now,
My earthly by his heavenly overpowered
Which it had long stood under, strained to the height
In that celestial colloquy sublime,
As with an object that excels the sense
Dazzled and spent, sunk down and sought repair
Of sleep, which instantly fell on me, called
By nature as in aid, and closed mine eyes.
Mine eyes he closed, but open left the cell
Of fancy,[3] my internal sight, by which
Abstract as in a trance methought I saw,
Though sleeping, where I lay, and saw the shape
Still glorious before whom awake I stood;
Who stooping opened my left side, and took
From thence a rib, with cordial[4] spirits warm
And life-blood streaming fresh. Wide was the wound,
But suddenly withfleshfilled up and healed.
The rib he formed and fashioned with his hands;
Under his forming hands a creature grew,
Manlike, but different sex, so lovely fair
That what seemed fair in all the world seemed now
Mean, or in her summed up, in her contained,
And in her looks, which from that time infused
Sweetness into my heart, unfelt before,
And into all things from her air inspired
The spirit of love and amorous delight.

Full p. C-825

She disappeared, and left me dark; I waked
Tofind her or forever to deplore
Her loss, and other pleasures all abjure;
When out of hope, behold her, not far off,
Such as I saw her in my dream, adorned
With what all Earth or Heaven could bestow
To make her amiable. On she came,
Led by her heavenly maker, though unseen,
And guided by his voice, nor uninformed
Of nuptial sanctity and marriage rites.
Grace was in all her steps, heaven in her eye,
In every gesture dignity and love.
I overjoyed could not forbear aloud:
"'This turn hath made amends; thou hast fulfilled
Thy words, Creator bounteous and benign,
Giver of all things fair, but fairest this

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Of all thy gifts; nor enviest. I now see
Bone of my bone,flesh of myflesh, my self
Before me; woman is her name, of man
Extracted; for this cause he shall forego
Father and mother, and to his wife adhere,
And they shall be oneflesh, one heart, one soul.'
"She heard me thus, and though divinely brought,
Yet innocence and virgin modesty,
Her virtue and the conscience of her worth
That would be wooed and not unsought be won,
Not obvious, not obtrusive, but retired,
The more desirable—or, to say all,
Nature herself, though pure of sinful thought,
Wrought in her so that, seeing me, she turned.
I followed her; she what was honor knew,
And with obsequious[5] majesty approved
My pleaded reason. To the nuptial bower
I led her blushing like the morn. All heaven
And happy constellations on that hour
Shed their selectest influence; the earth
Gave sign of gratulation,[6] and each hill;
Joyous the birds; fresh gales and gentle airs
Whispered it to the woods, and from their wings
Flung rose,flung odors from the spicy shrub,
Disporting, till the amorous bird of night
Sung spousal, and bid haste the evening star
On his hill-top, to light the bridal lamp.
"Thus have I told thee all my state, and brought
My story to the sum of earthly bliss
Which I enjoy, and must confess tofind
In all things else delight indeed, but such
As, used or not, works in the mind no change,
Nor vehement[7] desire—these delicacies
I mean of taste, sight, smell, herbs, fruits, andflowers,

Full p. C-826

Walks and the melody of birds. But here,
Far otherwise, transported I behold,
Transported touch; here passionfirst I felt,
Commotion strange, in all enjoyments else
Superior and unmoved, here only weak
Against the charm of beauty's powerful glance.
Or nature failed in me and left some part
Not proof enough such object to sustain,
Or from my side subducting[8] took perhaps

More than enough; at least on her bestowed
Too much of ornament, in outward show
Elaborate, of inward less exact.
For well I understand in the prime end
Of nature her th' inferior, in the mind
And inward faculties which most excel,
In outward also her resembling less
His image who made both, and less expressing
The character of that dominion given
O'er other creatures. Yet when I approach
Her loveliness, so absolute she seems
And in herself complete, so well to know
Her own, that what she wills to do or say
Seems wisest, virtuousest, discreetest, best.
All higher knowledge in her presence falls
Degraded; wisdom in discourse with her
Loses discountenanced, and like folly shows;
Authority and reason on her wait
As one intendedfirst, not after made
Occasionally;[9] and to consùmmate all,
Greatness of mind and nobleness their seat
Build in her loveliest, and create an awe
About her as a guard angelic placed."
To whom the Angel with contracted brow:
"Accuse not nature, she hath done her part;
Do thou but thine, and be not diffident
Of wisdom; she deserts thee not if thou
Dismiss not her when most thou need'st her nigh
By àttributing overmuch to things
Less excellent, as thou thyself perceiv'st.
For what admir'st thou, what transports thee so?
An outside? Fair no doubt, and worthy well
Thy cherishing, thy honoring, and thy love;
Not thy subjection. Weigh her with thyself,
Then value. Ofttimes nothing profits more
Then self-esteem, grounded on just and right
Well managed. Of that skill the more thou know'st,
The more she will acknowledge thee her head,
And to realities yield all her shows—
Made so adorn for thy delight the more,

Full p. C-827

So aweful[1] that with honor thou may'st love
Thy mate, who sees when thou art seen least wise.
But if the sense of touch whereby mankind
Is propagated seem such dear delight

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Beyond all other, think the same vouchsafed
To cattle and each beast; which would not be
To them made common and divulged if aught
Therein enjoyed were worthy to subdue
The soul of man, or passion in him move.
What higher in her society thoufind'st
Attractive, human, rational—love still;
In loving thou dost well, in passion not,
Wherein true love consists not. Love refines
The thoughts, and heart enlarges, hath his seat
In reason, and is judicious, is the scale
By which to heavenly love thou may'st ascend,
Not sunk in carnal pleasure, for which cause
Among the beasts no mate for thee was found."
To whom thus half abashed Adam replied:
"Neither her outside formed so fair, nor aught
In procreation common to all kinds
(Though higher of the genial[2] bed by far
And with mysterious reverence I deem)
So much delights me as those graceful acts,
Those thousand decencies that dailyflow
From all her words and actions, mixed with love
And sweet compliance, which declare unfeigned
Union of mind, or in us both one soul,
Harmony to behold in wedded pair
More grateful than harmonious sound to the ear.
Yet these subject not; I to thee disclose
What inward thence I feel, not therefore foiled,
Who meet with various objects from the sense
Variously representing; yet still free
Approve the best, and follow what I approve.
"To love thou balm'st me not, for love thou say'st
Leads up to Heaven, is both the way and guide;
Bear with me then, if lawful what I ask:
Love not the heavenly spirits, and how their love
Express they, by looks only, or do they mix
Irradiance, virtual or immediate touch?"
To whom the Angel with a smile that glowed
Celestial rosy red, love's proper hue,
Answered: "Let it suffice thee that thou know'st
Us happy, and without love no happiness.
Whatever pure thou in the body enjoy'st
(And pure thou wert created), we enjoy
In eminence, and obstaclefind none
Of membrane, joint, or limb, exclusive bars.

Easier than air with air, if spirits embrace,
Full p. C-828
Total they mix, union of pure with pure
Desiring; nor restrained conveyance need
Asflesh to mix withflesh, or soul with soul.
But I can now no more; the parting sun
Beyond the earth's green cape and verdant isles
Hesperian sets, my signal to depart.
Be strong, live happy, and love, butfirst of all
His whom to love is to obey, and keep
His great command; take heed lest passion sway
Thy judgment to do aught which else free will
Would not admit; thine and of all thy sons
The weal or woe in thee is placed: beware.
I in thy persevering shall rejoice,
And all the blest. Stand fast; to stand or fall
Free in thine own arbitrement[3] it lies.
Perfect within, no outward aid require;
And all temptation to transgress repel."
So saying, he arose; whom Adam thus
Followed with benediction: "Since to part,
Go, heavenly guest, ethereal messenger,
Sent from whose sovereign goodness I adore.
Gentle to me and affable[4] hath been
Thy condescension, and shall be honored ever
With grateful memory. Thou to mankind
Be good and friendly still, and oft return."
So parted they, the Angel up to Heaven
From the thick shade, and Adam to his bower.

Footnotes

- Note 6:In conversation with the angel Raphael, Adam has asked questions about astronomy and expressed uncertainty about divine intention. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:God sent Raphael to watch the gates of hell and prevent Satan from disturbing Him during the creation of the world. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:Steaming. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:Creator, augmenter. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:Desired, lacked. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Equal, with a pun on Latin *latus, lateris*, the "side" from which Eve will be formed. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Imagination. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:From the Latin *cors, cordis* relating to the heart. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:Obedient ("following," literally), displaying the essential virtue of the wife. Return to reference 5

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- Note 6:Congratulation. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:Overpowering, distracting. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:Taking away. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:For a particular purpose or occasion, i.e., Adam's request for a companion. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:Awe-inspiring. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Procreative. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Judgment. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:Easy to converse with. Return to reference 4

Full p. C-829

BOOK 9

The Argument

Satan, having compassed the Earth, with meditated guile returns as a mist by night into Paradise; enters into the serpent sleeping. Adam and Eve in the morning go forth to their labors, which Eve proposes to divide in several places, each laboring apart: Adam consents not, alleging the danger lest that enemy of whom they were forewarned should attempt her found alone. Eve, loath to be thought not circumspect orfirm enough, urges her going apart, the rather desirous to make trial of her strength; Adam at last yields. The serpentfinds her alone: his subtle approach,first gazing, then speaking, with muchflattery extolling Eve above all other creatures. Eve, wondering to hear the serpent speak, asks how he attained to human speech and such understanding not till now; the serpent answers that by tasting of a certain tree in the garden he attained both to speech and reason, till then void of both. Eve requires him to bring her to that tree, andfinds it to be the Tree of Knowledge forbidden: the serpent, now grown bolder, with many wiles and arguments induces her at length to eat. She, pleased with the taste, deliberates a while whether to impart thereof to Adam or not; at last brings him of the fruit; relates what persuaded her to eat thereof. Adam, atfirst amazed, but perceiving her lost, resolves, through vehemence of love, to perish with her, and, extenuating the trespass, eats also of the fruit. The effects thereof in them both; they seek to cover their nakedness; then fall to variance and accusation of one another.

[*Temptation and Fall*]

No more of talk where God or angel guest[5]
With man, as with his friend, familiar used
To sit indulgent, and with him partake
Rural repast, permitting him the while
Venial[6] discourse unblamed. I now must change
Those notes to tragic; foul distrust, and breach
Disloyal, on the part of man, revolt
And disobedience; on the part of Heaven,
Now alienated, distance and distaste,
Anger and just rebuke, and judgment given,

5

That brought into this world a world of woe,
Sin and her shadow Death, and Misery,
Death's harbinger. Sad task! yet argument
Not less but more heroic than the wrath
Of stern Achilles on his foe pursued
Thrice fugitive about Troy wall;[7] or rage
Of Turnus for Lavinia disespoused;[8]
Or Neptune's ire, or Juno's, that so long
Perplexed the Greek, and Cytherea's son:[9]
If answerable style I can obtain
Of my celestial Patroness,[1] who deigns
Her nightly visitation unimplored,
And dictates to me slumbering, or inspires
Easy my unpremeditated[2] verse,
Sincefirst this subject for heroic song
Pleased me,[3] long choosing and beginning late,
Not sedulous by nature to indite
War, hitherto the only argument
Heroic deemed, chief mastery to dissect[4]
With long and tedious havoc fabled knights
In battles feigned (the better fortitude
Of patience and heroic martyrdom

Full p. C-830

Unsung), or to describe races and games,[5]
Or tilting furniture, emblazoned shields,
Impresses quaint, caparisons and steeds,
Bases[6] and tinsel trappings, gorgeous knights
At joust and tournament; then marshaled feast
Served up in hall with sewers and seneschals:[7]
The skill of artifice or office mean;
Not that which justly gives heroic name
To person or to poem. Me,[8] of these
Nor skilled nor studious, higher argument
Remains, sufficient of itself to raise
That name, unless an age too late, or cold
Climate, or years, damp my intended wing[9]
Depressed; and much they may if all be mine,
Not hers who brings it nightly to my ear.
The sun was sunk, and after him the star
Of Hesperus, whose office is to bring
Twilight upon the Earth, short arbiter
'Twixt day and night, and now from end to end

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Night's hemisphere had veiled the horizon round,
When Satan, who latefled before the threats
Of Gabriel out of Eden,[1] now improved
In meditated fraud and malice, bent
On man's destruction, mauger[2] what might hap
Of heavier on himself, fearless returned.
By night hefled, and at midnight returned
From compassing the Earth—cautious of day
Since Uriel, regent of the sun, descried
His entrance, and forewarned the Cherubim[3]
That kept their watch. Thence, full of anguish, driven,
The space of seven continued nights he rode
With darkness; thrice the equinoctial line
He circled, four times crossed the car of Night
From pole to pole, traversing each colure;[4]
On the eighth returned, and on the coast averse[5]
From entrance or cherubic watch by stealth
Found unsuspected way. There was a place
(Now not, though sin, not time,first wrought the change)
Where Tigris, at the foot of Paradise,[6]

Full p. C-831

Into a gulf shot under ground, till part
Rose up a fountain by the Tree of Life.
In with the river sunk, and with it rose,
Satan, involved in rising mist; then sought
Where to lie hid. Sea he had searched and land
From Eden over Pontus, and the pool
Maeotis, up beyond the river Ob;[7]
Downward as far antarctic; and, in length,
West from Orontes to the ocean barred
At Darien,[8] thence to the land whereflows
Ganges and Indus.[9] Thus the orb he roamed
With narrow search, and with inspection deep
Considered every creature, which of all
Most opportune might serve his wiles, and found
The serpent subtlest beast of all thefield.[1]
Him, after long debate, irresolute
Of thoughts revolved, hisfinal sentence chose
Fit vessel,fittest imp[2] of fraud, in whom
To enter, and his dark suggestions hide
From sharpest sight; for in the wily snake
Whatever sleights none would suspicious mark,

As from his wit and native subtlety
Proceeding, which, in other beasts observed,
Doubt[3] might beget of diabolic power
Active within beyond the sense of brute.
Thus he resolved, butfirst from inward grief
His bursting passion into plaints thus poured:
“O Earth, how like to Heaven, if not preferred
More justly, seat worthier of Gods, as built
With second thought, reforming what was old!
For what God, after better, worse would build?
Terrestrial Heaven, danced round by other Heavens,
That shine, yet bear their bright officious[4] lamps,
Light above light, for thee alone, as seems,
In thee concent’ring all their precious beams
Of sacred influence! As God in Heaven
Is center, yet extends to all, so thou
Cent’ring receiv’st from all those orbs; in thee,
Not in themselves, all their known virtue appears,
Productive in herb, plant, and nobler birth
Of creatures animate with gradual life
Of growth, sense, reason, all summed up in man.[5]
With what delight could I have walked thee round,
If I could joy in aught; sweet interchange
Of hill and valley, rivers, woods, and plains,
Full p. C-832
Now land, now sea, and shores with forest crowned,
Rocks, dens, and caves! But I in none of these
Find place or refuge; and the more I see
Pleasures about me, so much more I feel
Torment within me, as from the hateful siege[6]
Of contraries; all good to me becomes
Bane,[7] and in Heaven much worse would be my state.
But neither here seek I, no, nor in Heaven,
To dwell, unless by mastering Heaven’s Supreme;
Nor hope to be myself less miserable
By what I seek, but others to make such
As I, though thereby worse to me redound.
For only in destroying Ifind ease
To my relentless thoughts, and him[8] destroyed,
Or won to what may work his utter loss,
For whom all this was made, all this[9] will soon
Follow, as to him linked in weal or woe:
In woe then, that destruction wide may range!
To me shall be the glory sole among

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The infernal Powers, in one day to have marred
What he, Almighty styled, six nights and days
Continued making, and who knows how long
Before had been contriving? though perhaps
Not longer than since I in one night freed
From servitude in glorious well-nigh half
Th' angelic name,[1] and thinner left the throng
Of his adorers. He, to be avenged,
And to repair his numbers thus impaired,
Whether such virtue,[2] spent of old, now failed
More angels to create (if they at least
Are his created),[3] or to spite us more,
Determined to advance into our room
A creature formed of earth, and him endow,
Exalted from so base original,
With heavenly spoils, our spoils. What he decreed
He effected; man he made, and for him built
Magnificent this World, and Earth his seat,
Him lord pronounced, and, O indignity!
Subjected to his service angel-wings
Andflaming ministers, to watch and tend
Their earthy charge. Of these the vigilance
I dread, and to elude, thus wrapt in mist
Of midnight vapor, glide obscure, and pry
In every bush and brake, where hap mayfind
The serpent sleeping, in whose mazy folds
To hide me, and the dark intent I bring.

Full p. C-833

O foul descent! that I, who erst contended
With Gods to sit the highest, am now constrained
Into a beast, and, mixed with bestial slime,
This essence[4] to incarnate and imbrute,
That to the height of deity aspired!
But what will not ambition and revenge
Descend to? Who aspires must down as low
As high he soared, obnoxious,[5] first or last,
To basest things. Revenge, atfirst though sweet,
Bitter ere long back on itself recoils.
Let it; I reck not, so it light well aimed,
Since higher[6] I fall short, on him who next
Provokes my envy, this new favorite
Of Heaven, this man of clay, son of despite,
Whom, us the more to spite, his Maker raised
From dust: spite then with spite is best repaid."

So saying, through each thicket, dank or dry,
Like a black mist low-creeping, he held on
His midnight search, where soonest he mightfind
The serpent. Him fast sleeping soon he found,
In labyrinth of many a round self-rolled,
His head the midst, well stored with subtle wiles:
Not yet in horrid shade or dismal den,
Nor nocent[7] yet, but on the grassy herb,
Fearless, unfeared, he slept. In at his mouth
The devil entered, and his brutal sense,
In heart or head, possessing soon inspired
With act intelligential; but his sleep
Disturbed not, waiting close[8] th' approach of morn.
Now, when as sacred light began to dawn
In Eden on the humidflowers, that breathed
Their morning incense, when all things that breathe
From th' Earth's great altar send up silent praise
To the Creator, and his nostrilsfill
With grateful smell, forth came the human pair,
And joined their vocal worship to the choir
Of creatures wanting[9] voice; that done, partake
The season, prime for sweetest scents and airs;
Then còmmune how that day they best may ply
Their growing work; for much their work outgrew
The hands' dispatch of two gardening so wide:
And Evefirst to her husband thus began:
"Adam, well may we labor still[1] to dress
This garden, still to tend plant, herb, andflower,
Our pleasant task enjoined; but, till more hands
Aid us, the work under our labor grows,

Full p. C-834

Luxurious by restraint: what we by day
Lop overgrown, or prune, or prop, or bind,
One night or two with wanton growth derides,
Tending to wild. Thou, therefore, now advise,
Or hear what to my mindfirst thoughts present.
Let us divide our labors; thou where choice
Leads thee, or where most needs, whether to wind
The woodbine round this arbor, or direct
The clasping ivy where to climb; while I
In yonder spring[2] of roses intermixed
With myrtlefind what to redress till noon.
For, while so near each other thus all day
Our task we choose, what wonder if so near

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Looks intervene and smiles, or objects new
Casual discourse draw on, which intermits
Our day's work, brought to little, though begun
Early, and th' hour of supper comes unearned!"
To whom mild answer Adam thus returned:
"Sole Eve, associate sole, to me beyond
Compare above all living creatures dear!
Well hast thou motioned,[3] well thy thoughts employed
How we might best fulfil the work which here
God hath assigned us, nor of me shalt pass
Unpraised; for nothing lovelier can be found
In woman than to study household good,
And good works in her husband to promote.
Yet not so strictly hath our Lord imposed
Labor as to debar us when we need
Refreshment, whether food or talk between,
Food of the mind, or this sweet intercourse
Of looks and smiles; for smiles from reasonflow,
To brute denied, and are of love the food,
Love, not the lowest end[4] of human life.
For not to irksome toil, but to delight,
He made us, and delight to reason joined.
These paths and bowers doubt not but our joint hands
Will keep from wilderness[5] with ease, as wide
As we need walk, till younger hands ere long
Assist us. But, if much converse perhaps
Thee satiate, to short absence I could yield;
For solitude sometimes is best society,
And short retirement urges sweet return.
But other doubt possesses me, lest harm
Befall thee, severed from me; for thou know'st
What hath been warned us, what malicious foe,
Envying our happiness, and of his own
Despairing, seeks to work us woe and shame
By sly assault, and somewhere nigh at hand
Watches, no doubt, with greedy hope tofind

Full p. C-835

His wish and best advantage, us asunder,
Hopeless to circumvent us joined, where each
To other speedy aid might lend at need.
Whether hisfirst design be to withdraw
Our fealty from God, or to disturb
Conjugal love, than which perhaps no bliss
Enjoyed by us excites his envy more;

Or this, or worse,[6] leave not the faithful side
That gave thee being, still shades thee and protects.
The wife, where danger or dishonor lurks,
Safest and seemliest by her husband stays,
Who guards her, or with her the worst endures."

To whom the virgin[7] majesty of Eve,
As one who loves, and some unkindness meets,
With sweet austere composure thus replied:
"Offspring of Heaven and Earth, and all Earth's lord!
That such an enemy we have, who seeks
Our ruin, both by thee informed I learn,

And from the parting angel[8] overheard,
As in a shady nook I stood behind,
Just then returned at shut of eveningflowers.
But that thou shouldst myfirmness therefore doubt
To God or thee, because we have a foe
May tempt it, I expected not to hear.
His violence thou fear'st not, being such
As we, not capable of death or pain,
Can either not receive, or can repel.
His fraud is, then, thy fear; which plain infers
Thy equal fear that myfirm faith and love
Can by his fraud be shaken or seduced:
Thoughts, which how found they harbor in thy breast,

Adam, misthought of her to thee so dear?"[9]
To whom, with healing words, Adam replied:
"Daughter of God and man, immortal Eve,

For such thou art, from sin and blame entire,[1]
Not diffident of thee do I dissuade
Thy absence from my sight, but to avoid
Th' attempt itself, intended by our foe.

For he who tempts, though in vain, at least asperses[2]
The tempted with dishonor foul, supposed

Not incorruptible of faith,[3] not proof
Against temptation. Thou thyself with scorn
And anger wouldst resent the offered wrong,
Though ineffectual found; misdeem not, then,
If such affront I labor to avert
From thee alone, which on us both at once
The enemy, though bold, will hardly dare;

Full p. C-836

Or, daring,first on me th' assault shall light.
Nor thou his malice and false guile contemn—
Subtle he needs must be who could seduce

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Angels—nor think superfluous others' aid.
I from the influence of thy looks receive
Access in every virtue;[4] in thy sight
More wise, more watchful, stronger, if need were
Of outward strength; while shame, thou looking on,
Shame to be overcome or overreached,[5]
Would utmost vigor raise, and raised unite.
Why shouldst not thou like sense[6] within thee feel
When I am present, and thy trial choose
With me, best witness of thy virtue tried?"
So spake domestic Adam in his care
And matrimonial love; but Eve, who thought
Less[7] àttributed to her faith sincere,
Thus her reply with accent sweet renewed:
"If this be our condition, thus to dwell
In narrow circuit straitened by a foe,
Subtle or violent, we not endued[8]
Single with like defence wherever met,
How are we happy, still in fear of harm?
But harm precedes not sin: only our foe
Tempting affronts us with his foul esteem
Of our integrity: his foul esteem
Sticks no dishonor on our front,[9] but turns
Foul on himself; then wherefore shunned or feared
By us, who rather double honor gain
From his surmise proved false,find peace within,
Favor from Heaven, our witness, from th' event?
And what is faith, love, virtue, unassayed
Alone, without exterior help sustained?[1]
Let us not then suspect our happy state
Left so imperfect by the Maker wise
As not secure to single or combined.
Frail is our happiness, if this be so;
And Eden were no Eden, thus exposed."
To whom thus Adam fervently replied:
"O woman, best are all things as the will
Of God ordained them; his creating hand
Nothing imperfect or deficient left
Of all that he created, much less man,
Or aught that might his happy state secure,
Secure from outward force. Within himself
The danger lies, yet lies within his power;
Against his will he can receive no harm.
But God left free the will; for what obeys

Reason is free; and reason he made right,
But bid her well beware, and still erect,[2]
Lest, by some fair appearing good surprised,
She dictate false, and misinform the will
To do what God expressly hath forbid.
Not then mistrust, but tender love, enjoins
That I should mind[3] thee oft; and mind thou me.
Firm we subsist, yet possible to swerve,
Since reason not impossibly may meet
Some specious object by the foe suborned,[4]
And fall into deception unaware,
Not keeping strictest watch, as she was warned.
Seek not temptation, then, which to avoid
Were better, and most likely if from me
Thou sever not: trial will come unsought.
Wouldst thou approve[5] thy constancy, approve
First thy obedience; th' other who can know,
Not seeing thee attempted, who attest?
But if thou think trial unsought mayfind
Us both securer[6] than thus warned thou seem'st,
Go; for thy stay, not free, absents thee more.
Go in thy native innocence; rely
On what thou hast of virtue; summon all;
For God towards thee hath done his part: do thine."
So spake the patriarch of mankind; but Eve
Persisted; yet submiss,[7] though last, replied:
"With thy permission, then, and thus forewarned,
Chiefly by what thy own last reasoning words
Touched only, that our trial, when least sought,
Mayfind us both perhaps far less prepared,
The willinger I go, nor much expect
A foe so proud willfirst the weaker seek;
So bent, the more shall shame him his repulse."
Thus saying, from her husband's hand her hand
Soft she withdrew, and like a wood nymph light,
Oread or dryad, or of Delia's train,[8]
Betook her to the groves, but Delia's self
In gait surpassed and goddesslike deport,
Though not as she with bow and quiver armed,
But with such gardening tools as art yet rude,
Guiltless offire[9] had formed, or angels brought.
To Pales, or Pomona, thus adorned,

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Likest she seemed, Pomona when shefled

Full p. C-838

Vertumnus, or to Ceres in her prime,
Yet virgin of Proserpina from Jove.[1]
Her long with ardent look his eye pursued
Delighted, but desiring more her stay.
Oft he to her his charge of quick return
Repeated; she to him as oft engaged
To be returned by noon amid the bower,
And all things in best order to invite
Noontide repast, or afternoon's repose.
O much deceived, much failing, hapless Eve,
Of[2] thy presumed return! Event perverse!
Thou never from that hour in Paradise
Found'st either sweet repast, or sound repose;
Such ambush hid among sweetflowers and shades
Waited with hellish rancor imminent[3]
To intercept thy way, or send thee back
Despoiled of innocence, of faith, of bliss.
For now, and sincefirst break of dawn, thefiend,
Mere serpent in appearance, forth was come,
And on his quest, where likeliest he mightfind
The only two of mankind, but in them
The whole included race, his purposed prey.
In bower andfield he sought, where any tuft
Of grove or garden-plot more[4] pleasant lay,
Their tendance[5] or plantation for delight;
By fountain or by shady rivulet
He sought them both, but wished his hap mightfind
Eve separate; he wished, but not with hope
Of what so seldom chanced; when to his wish,
Beyond his hope, Eve separate he spies,
Veiled in a cloud of fragrance, where she stood,
Half spied, so thick the roses bushing round
About her glowed, oft stooping to support
Eachflower of slender stalk, whose head though gay
Carnation, purple, azure, or specked with gold,
Hung drooping unsustained, them she upstays
Gently with myrtle band, mindless the while
Herself, though fairest unsupportedflower,
From her best prop so far, and storm so nigh.
Nearer he drew, and many a walk traversed
Of stateliest covert, cedar, pine, or palm;
Then voluble and bold, now hid, now seen

Among thick-woven arborets andflowers
Embordered on each bank, the hand[6] of Eve:
Full p. C-839
Spot more delicious than those gardens feigned[7]
Or of revived Adonis, or renowned
Alcinous, host of old Laertes's son,[8]
Or that, not mystic, where the sapient king
Held dalliance with his fair Egyptian spouse.[9]
Much he the place admired, the person more.
As one who long in populous city pent,
Where houses thick and sewers annoy[1] the air,
Forth issuing on a summer's morn to breathe
Among the pleasant villages and farms
Adjoined, from each thing met conceives delight,
The smell of grain, or tedded[2] grass, or kine,
Or dairy, each rural sight, each rural sound:
If chance with nymphlike step fair virgin pass,
What pleasing seemed, for her[3] now pleases more,
She most, and in her look sums[4] all delight.
Such pleasure took the serpent to behold
Thisflowery plat,[5] the sweet recess of Eve
Thus early, thus alone; her heavenly form
Angelic, but more soft, and feminine,
Her graceful innocence, her every air
Of gesture or least action overawed
His malice, and with rapine[6] sweet bereaved
Hisfierceness of thefierce intent it brought:
That space the evil one abstracted[7] stood
From his own evil, and for the time remained
Stupidly good, of enmity disarmed,
Of guile, of hate, of envy, of revenge.
But the hot Hell that always in him burns,
Though in mid Heaven, soon ended his delight,
And tortures him now more, the more he sees
Of pleasure not for him ordained: then soon
Fierce hate he recollects, and all his thoughts
Of mischief, gratulating,[8] thus excites:
"Thoughts, whither have ye led me? with what sweet
Compulsion thus transported to forget
What hither brought us? hate, not love, nor hope
Of Paradise for Hell, hope here to taste
Of pleasure, but all pleasure to destroy,

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Save what[9] is in destroying; other joy
To me is lost. Then let me not let pass
Full p. C-840
Occasion which now smiles; behold alone
The woman, opportune to all attempts,[1]
Her husband, for I view far round, not nigh,
Whose higher intellectual more I shun,
And strength, of courage haughty, and of limb
Heroic built, though of terrestrial mold.[2]
Foe not informidable, exempt from wound,
I not; so much hath Hell debased, and pain
Enfeebled me, to what I was in Heaven.
She fair, divinely fair,fit love for gods,
Not terrible, though terror be in love
And beauty, not approached by stronger hate,[3]
Hate stronger, under show of love well feigned,
The way which to her ruin now I tend."
So spake the enemy of mankind, enclosed
In serpent, inmate bad, and toward Eve
Addressed his way, not with indented wave,[4]
Prone on the ground, as since, but on his rear,
Circular base of rising folds, that towered
Fold above fold a surging maze; his head
Crested aloft, and carbuncle[5] his eyes;
With burnished neck of verdant gold, erect
Amidst his circling spires, that on the grass
Floated redundant.[6] Pleasing was his shape,
And lovely; never since of serpent kind
Lovelier, not those that in Illyria changed
Hermione and Cadmus,[7] or the god
In Epidaurus,[8] nor to which transformed
Ammonian Jove, or Capitoline was seen,
He with Olympias, this with her who bore
Scipio, the height of Rome.[9] With tract oblique
Atfirst, as one who sought access, but feared
To interrupt, sidelong he works his way.
As when a ship by skillful steersman wrought
Nigh river's mouth or foreland, where the wind
Veers oft, as oft so steers, and shifts her sail:
So varied he, and of his tortuous train
Curled many a wanton wreath in sight of Eve,
Full p. C-841
To lure her eye: she busied heard the sound

Of rustling leaves, but minded not, as used
To such disport before her through thefield,
From every beast, more duteous at her call,
Than at Circean call the herd disguised.[1]
He bolder now, uncalled before her stood:
But as in gaze admiring; oft he bowed
His turret[2] crest, and sleek enameled neck,
Fawning, and licked the ground whereon she trod.
His gentle dumb expression turned at length
The eye of Eve to mark his play: he, glad
Of her attention gained, with serpent tongue
Organic, or impulse of vocal air,[3]
His fraudulent temptation thus began.
“Wonder not, sovereign mistress, if perhaps
Thou canst, who art sole wonder; much less arm
Thy looks, the heaven of mildness, with disdain,
Displeased that I approach thee thus, and gaze
Insatiate, I thus single, nor have feared
Thy awful brow, more awful thus retired.
Fairest resemblance of thy Maker fair,
Thee all things living gaze on, all things thine
By gift, and thy celestial beauty adore
With ravishment beheld, there best beheld
Where universally admired: but here
In this enclosure wild, these beasts among,
Beholders rude, and shallow[4] to discern
Half what in thee is fair, one man except,
Who sees thee? (and what is one?) who shouldst be seen
A goddess among gods, adored and served
By angels numberless, thy daily train.”
So glozed the tempter, and his proem[5] tuned;
Into the heart of Eve his words made way,
Though at the voice much marveling: at length,
Not unamazed, she thus in answer spake.
“What may this mean? Language of man pronounced
By tongue of brute, and human sense expressed?
Thefirst at least of these I thought denied
To beasts, whom God on their creation-day
Created mute to all articulate sound;
The latter I demur, for in their looks
Much reason,[6] and in their actions oft appears.
Thee, serpent, subtlest beast of all thefield
Full p. C-842
I knew, but not with human voice endued:

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Redouble then this miracle, and say,
How cam'st thou speakable of mute,[7] and how
To me so friendly grown above the rest
Of brutal kind, that daily are in sight?
Say, for such wonder claims attention due."
To whom the guileful tempter thus replied:
"Empress of this fair world, resplendent Eve!
Easy to me it is to tell thee all
What thou command'st and right thou shouldst be obeyed:
I was atfirst as other beasts that graze
The trodden herb, of abject thoughts and low,
As was my food, nor aught but food discerned
Or sex, and apprehended nothing high:
Till on a day, roving thefield, I chanced
A goodly tree far distant to behold
Loaden with fruit of fairest colors mixed,
Ruddy and gold; I nearer drew to gaze;
When from the boughs a savory odor blown,
Grateful to appetite, more pleased my sense
Than smell of sweetest fennel, or the teats
Of ewe or goat dropping with milk[8] at even,
Unsucked of lamb or kid, that tend their play.
To satisfy the sharp desire I had
Of tasting those fair apples, I resolved
Not to defer: hunger and thirst at once,
Powerful persuaders, quickened at the scent
Of that alluring fruit, urged me so keen.
About the mossy trunk I wound me soon,
For, high from ground, the branches would require
Thy utmost reach, or Adam's: round the tree
All other beasts that saw, with like desire
Longing and envying stood, but could not reach.
Amid the tree now got, where plenty hung
Tempting so nigh, to pluck and eat myfill
I spared not; for such pleasure till that hour
At feed or fountain never had I found.
Sated at length, ere long I might perceive
Strange alteration in me, to degree
Of reason[9] in my inward powers, and speech
Wanted not long, though to this shape retained.[1]
Thenceforth to speculations high or deep
I turned my thoughts, and with capacious mind
Considered all things visible in Heaven,
Or Earth, or middle, all things fair and good:

But all that fair[2] and good in thy divine
Semblance, and in thy beauty's heavenly ray
United I beheld: no fair to thine
Equivalent or second, which compelled
Me thus, though importune perhaps, to come
And gaze, and worship thee of right declared
Sovereign of creatures, universal dame."[3]
So talked the spirited[4] sly snake: and Eve
Yet more amazed, unwary thus replied:
"Serpent, thy overpraising leaves in doubt
The virtue of that fruit, in theefirst proved.
But say, where grows the tree, from hence how far?
For many are the trees of God that grow
In Paradise, and various, yet unknown
To us; in such abundance lies our choice,
As leaves a greater store of fruit untouched,
Still hanging incorruptible, till men
Grow up to their provision, and more hands
Help to disburden Nature of her bearth."[5]
To whom the wily adder, blithe and glad:
"Empress, the way is ready, and not long,
Beyond a row of myrtles, on aflat,
Fast by a fountain, one small thicket past
Of blowing[6] myrrh and balm: if thou accept
My conduct, I can bring thee thither soon."
"Lead then," said Eve. He leading swiftly rolled
In tangles, and made intricate seem straight,
To mischief swift. Hope elevates, and joy
Brightens his crest; as when a wanderingfire
Compact of unctuous vapor,[7] which the night
Condenses, and the cold environs round,
Kindled through agitation to aflame
(Which oft, they say, some evil spirit attends),
Hovering and blazing with delusive light,
Misleads th' amazed night-wanderer from his way
To bogs and mires, and oft through pond or pool,
There swallowed up and lost, from succor far:
So glistered the dire snake, and into fraud
Led Eve our credulous mother, to the tree
Of prohibition,[8] root of all our woe:
Which when she saw, thus to her guide she spake:
"Serpent, we might have spared our coming hither,
Fruitless to me, though fruit be here to excess,

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The credit of whose virtue rest with thee;[9]

Full p. C-844

Wondrous indeed, if cause of such effects!
But of this tree we may not taste nor touch:
God so commanded, and left that command
Sole daughter of his voice; the rest,[1] we live
Law to ourselves; our reason is our law."
To whom the tempter guilefully replied:
"Indeed? Hath God then said that of the fruit
Of all these garden trees ye shall not eat,
Yet lords declared of all in Earth or air?"
To whom thus Eve, yet sinless: "Of the fruit
Of each tree in the garden we may eat,
But of the fruit of this fair tree amidst
The garden, God hath said, 'Ye shall not eat
Thereof, nor shall yet touch it, lest ye die.'"
She scarce had said, though brief, when now more bold,
The tempter, but with show of zeal and love
To man, and indignation at his wrong,
New part puts on, and as to passion moved,
Fluctuates disturbed, yet comely, and in act
Raised,[2] as of some great matter to begin.
As when of old some orator renowned
In Athens or free Rome, where eloquence
Flourished, since mute, to some great cause addressed,
Stood in himself collected, while each part,[3]
Motion, each act, won audience ere the tongue,
Sometimes in height began, as no delay
Of preface brooking,[4] through his zeal of right.
So standing, moving, or to height upgrown
The tempter all impassioned thus began:
"O sacred, wise, and wisdom-giving plant,
Mother of science![5] now I feel thy power
Within me clear, not only to discern
Things in their causes, but to trace the ways
Of highest agents, deemed however wise.
Queen of this universe! do not believe
Those rigid threats of death. Ye shall not die;
How should ye? By the fruit? it gives you life
To[6] knowledge; by the Threatener? look on me,
Me who have touched and tasted, yet both live,
And life more perfect have attained than Fate
Meant me, by venturing higher than my lot.
Shall that be shut to man, which to the beast

Is open? Or will God incense his ire
For such a petty trespass, and not praise
Full p. C-845
Rather your dauntless virtue, whom the pain
Of death denounced, whatever thing death be,
Deterred not from achieving what might lead
To happier life, knowledge of good and evil?
Of good, how just! Of evil, if what is evil
Be real, why not known, since easier shunned?
God therefore cannot hurt ye, and be just;
Not just, not God; not feared then, nor obeyed:
Your fear itself of death removes the fear.[7]
Why then was this forbid? Why but to awe,
Why but to keep ye low and ignorant,
His worshipers? He knows that in the day
Ye eat thereof, your eyes that seem so clear,
Yet are but dim, shall perfectly be then
Opened and cleared, and ye shall be as gods,
Knowing both good and evil, as they know.
That ye should be as gods, since I as man,
Internal man,[8] is but proportion meet,
I, of brute, human; ye, of human, gods.
So ye shall die perhaps, by putting off
Human, to put on gods:[9] death to be wished,
Though threatened, which no worse than this can bring.
And what are gods that man may not become
As they, participating godlike food?
The gods arefirst, and that advantage use
On our belief, that all from them proceeds.
I question it; for this fair Earth I see,
Warmed by the sun, producing every kind,
Them nothing: If they[1] all things, who enclosed
Knowledge of good and evil in this tree,
That whoso eats thereof forthwith attains
Wisdom without their leave? And wherein lies
Th' offense, that man should thus attain to know?
What can your knowledge hurt him, or this tree
Impart against his will if all be his?
Or is it envy, and can envy dwell
In heavenly breasts? These, these, and many more
Causes import[2] your need of this fair fruit.
Goddess humane, reach then, and freely taste!"
He ended, and his words, replete with guile,
Into her heart too easy entrance won:

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Fixed on the fruit she gazed, which to behold
Might tempt alone, and in her ears the sound
Yet rung of his persuasive words, impregned[3]
Full p. C-846
With reason, to her seeming, and with truth;
Meanwhile the hour of noon drew on, and waked
An eager appetite, raised by the smell
So savory of that fruit, which with desire,
Inclinable[4] now grown to touch or taste,
Solicited her longing eye; yetfirst
Pausing a while, thus to herself she mused:
“Great are thy virtues, doubtless, best of fruits,
Though kept from man, and worthy to be admired,
Whose taste, too long forborne, atfirst assay
Gave elocution to the mute, and taught
The tongue not made for speech to speak thy praise:
Thy praise he also who forbids they use,
Conceals not from us, naming thee the Tree
Of Knowledge, knowledge both of good and evil;
Forbids us then to taste; but his forbidding
Commends thee more, while it infers[5] the good
By thee communicated, and our want:
For good unknown, sure is not had, or had
And yet unknown, is as not had at all.
In plain[6] then, what forbids he but to know?
Forbids us good, forbids us to be wise!
Such prohibitions bind not.[7] But if Death
Bind us with after-bands, what profits then
Our inward freedom?[8] In the day we eat
Of this fair fruit, our doom is, we shall die.
How dies the serpent? He hath eaten and lives,
And knows, and speaks, and reasons, and discerns,
Irrational till then. For us alone
Was death invented? Or to us denied
This intellectual food, for beasts reserved?
For beasts it seems: yet that one beast whichfirst
Hath tasted, envies not, but brings with joy
The good befallen him, author unsuspect,[9]
Friendly to man, far from deceit or guile.
What fear I then, rather what know to fear
Under this ignorance of good and evil,[1]
Of God or death, of law or penalty?
Here grows the cure of all, this fruit divine,

Fair to the eye, inviting to the taste,
Of virtue[2] to make wise: what hinders then
To reach, and feed at once both body and mind?”

Full p. C-847

So saying, her rash hand in evil hour,
Forth reaching to the fruit, she plucked, she eat.[3]
Earth felt the wound, and Nature from her seat
Sighing through all her works gave signs[4] of woe,
That all was lost. Back to the thicket slunk
The guilty serpent, and well might, for Eve
Intent now wholly on her taste, naught else
Regarded; such delight till then, as seemed,
In fruit she never tasted, whether true
Or fancied so, through expectation high
Of knowledge; nor was godhead from her thought.[5]
Greedily she engorged without restraint,
And knew not eating[6] death: satiate at length,
And heightened as with wine, jocund and boon,[7]
Thus to herself she pleasingly began:
“O sovereign, virtuous, precious of all trees
In Paradise! of operation blest
To sapience, hitherto obscured, infamed,[8]
And thy fair fruit let hang, as to no end
Created; but henceforth my early care,
Not without song each morning, and due praise
Shall tend thee, and the fertile burden ease
Of thy full branches offered free to all;
Till dieted by thee I grow mature
In knowledge, as the gods who all things know;
Though others envy what they cannot give:
For had the gift been theirs, it had not here
Thus grown.[9] Experience, next to thee I owe,
Best guide; not following thee I had remained
In ignorance; thou open’st Wisdom’s way,
And giv’st access, though secret she retire.
And I perhaps am secret; Heaven is high,
High and remote to see from thence distinct
Each thing on Earth; and other care perhaps
May have diverted from continual watch
Our great Forbidder, safe[1] with all his spies
About him. But to Adam in what sort[2]
Shall I appear? Shall I to him make known
As yet my change, and give him to partake

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Full happiness with me, or rather not,
But keep the odds[3] of knowledge in my power
Without copartner? so to add what wants
In female sex, the more to draw his love,
And render me more equal, and perhaps,
Full p. C-848
A thing not undesirable, sometime
Superior: for, inferior, who is free?
This may be well: but what if God have seen
And death ensue? Then I shall be no more,
And Adam, wedded to another Eve,
Shall live with her enjoying, I extinct;
A death to think. Confirmed then I resolve,
Adam shall share with me in bliss or woe:
So dear I love him, that with him all deaths
I could endure, without him live no life."[4]
So saying, from the tree her step she turned,
Butfirst low reverence done, as to the power
That dwelt within, whose presence had infused
Into the plant sciential[5] sap, derived
From nectar, drink of gods. Adam the while
Waiting desirous her return, had wove
Of choicestflowers a garland to adorn
Her tresses, and her rural labors crown,
As reapers oft are wont their harvest queen.
Great joy he promised to his thoughts, and new
Solace in her return, so long delayed:
Yet oft his heart, divine of[6] something ill,
Misgave him; he the faltering measure[7] felt;
And forth to meet her went, the way she took
That morn whenfirst they parted. By the Tree
Of Knowledge he must pass; there he her met,
Scarce from the tree returning; in her hand
A bough of fairest fruit that downy smiled,
New gathered, and ambrosial smell diffused.
To him she hastened, in her face excuse
Came prologue, and apology to prompt,[8]
Which with bland words at will she thus addressed:
"Hast thou not wondered, Adam, at my stay?
Thee I have missed, and thought it long, deprived
Thy presence, agony of love till now
Not felt, nor shall be twice; for never more
Mean I to try, what rash untried I sought,
The pain of absence from thy sight. But strange

Hath been the cause, and wonderful to hear:
This tree is not as we are told, a tree

Full p. C-849

Of danger tasted,[9] nor to evil unknown
Opening the way, but of divine effect
To open eyes, and make them gods who taste;
And hath been tasted such.[1] The serpent wise,
Or not restrained as we, or not obeying,
Hath eaten of the fruit, and is become,
Not dead, as we are threatened, but thenceforth
Endued with human voice and human sense,
Reasoning to admiration,[2] and with me
Persuasively hath so prevailed, that I
Have also tasted, and have also found
Th' effects to correspond, opener mine eyes,
Dim erst, dilated spirits, ampler heart,
And growing up to godhead; which for thee
Chiefly I sought, without thee can despise.
For bliss, as thou hast part, to me is bliss,
Tedious, unshared with thee, and odious soon.
Thou therefore also taste, that equal lot
May join us, equal joy, as equal love;
Lest, thou not tasting, different degree[3]
Disjoin us, and I then too late renounce
Deity for thee, when Fate will not permit."[4]
Thus Eve with countenance blithe her story told;
But in her cheek distemper[5] flushing glowed.
On th' other side, Adam, soon as he heard
The fatal trespass done by Eve, amazed,
Astonied stood and blank, while horror chill
Ran through his veins, and all his joints relaxed;[6]
From his slack hand the garland wreathed for Eve
Down dropped, and all the faded roses shed.
Speechless he stood and pale, till thus at length
First to himself he inward silence broke:
"O fairest of creation, last and best
Of all God's works, creature in whom excelled
Whatever can to sight or thought be formed,
Holy, divine, good, amiable, or sweet!
How art thou lost, how on a sudden lost,
Defaced, deflowered, and now to death devote?[7]
Rather how hast thou yielded to transgress
The strict forbiddance, how to violate

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The sacred fruit forbidden! Some cursèd fraud
Of enemy hath beguiled thee, yet unknown,[8]
And me with thee hath ruined, for with thee
Certain my resolution is to die.
How can I live without thee, how forgo
Full p. C-850
Thy sweet converse and love so dearly joined,
To live again in these wild woods forlorn?
Should God create another Eve, and I
Another rib afford, yet loss of thee
Would never from my heart; no, no! I feel
The link of nature draw me:flesh offlesh,
Bone of my bone thou art, and from thy state
Mine never shall be parted, bliss or woe.”
So having said, as one from sad dismay
Recomforted, and after thoughts disturbed
Submitting to what seemed remediless,
Thus in calm mood his words to Eve he turned:
“Bold deed thou hast presumed, adventurous Eve
And peril great provoked, who thus hath dared
Had it been only coveting to eye
That sacred fruit, sacred to abstinence,
Much more to taste it, under ban to touch.
But past who can recall, or done undo?
Not God omnipotent, nor Fate! Yet so
Perhaps thou shalt not die, perhaps the fact
Is not so heinous now, foretasted fruit,
Profanedfirst by the serpent, by himfirst
Made common and unhallowed ere our taste,
Nor yet on him found deadly; he yet lives,
Lives, as thou saidst, and gains to live as man
Higher degree of life: inducement strong
To us, as likely, tasting, to attain
Proportional[9] ascent, which cannot be
But to be gods, or angels, demigods.
Nor can I think that God, Creator wise,
Though threatening, will in earnest so destroy
Us his prime creatures, dignified so high,
Set over all his works, which in our fall,
For us created, needs with us must fail,
Dependent made; so God shall uncreate,
Be frustrate, do, undo, and labor lose;
Not well conceived of God,[1] who, though his power
Creation could repeat, yet would be loath
Us to abolish, lest the adversary

Triùmph and say: ‘Fickle their state whom God
Most favors; who can please him long? Mefirst
He ruined, now mankind; whom will he next?’
Matter of scorn, not to be given the foe.
However, I with thee havefixed my lot.
Certain[2] to undergo like doom: if death
Consort with thee, death is to me as life;
So forcible within my heart I feel
The bond of nature draw me to my own,
Full p. C-851
My own in thee, for what thou art is mine;
Our state cannot be severed; we are one,
Oneflesh; to lose thee were to lose myself.”
So Adam, and thus Eve to him replied:
“O glorious trial of exceeding love,
Illustrious evidence, example high!
Engaging me to emulate; but short
Of thy perfection, how shall I attain,
Adam? from whose dear side I boast me sprung,
And gladly of our union hear thee speak,
One heart, one soul in both; whereof good proof
This day affords, declaring thee resolved,
Rather than death or aught than death more dread
Shall separate us, linked in love so dear,
To undergo with me one guilt, one crime,
If any be, of tasting this fair fruit;
Whose virtue (for of good still good proceeds,
Direct, or by occasion)[3] hath presented
This happy trial of thy love, which else
So eminently never had been known.
Were it[4] I thought death menaced would ensue
This my attempt, I would sustain alone
The worst, and not persuade thee, rather die
Deserted, than oblige[5] thee with a fact
Pernicious to thy peace, chiefly assured
Remarkably so late of thy so true,
So faithful love unequaled; but I feel
Far otherwise th’ event,[6] not death, but life
Augmented, opened eyes, new hopes, new joys,
Taste so divine, that what of sweet before
Hath touched my sense,flat seems to this, and harsh.
On my experience, Adam, freely taste,
And fear of death deliver to the winds.”
So saying, she embraced him, and for joy

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Tenderly wept, much won that he his love
Had so ennobled, as of choice to incur
Divine displeasure for her sake, or death.
In recompense (for such compliance bad
Such recompense best merits), from the bough
She gave him of that fair enticing fruit
With liberal hand; he scrupled not to eat,
Against his better knowledge, not deceived,[7]
But fondly overcome with female charm.
Earth trembled from her entrails, as again
In pangs, and Nature gave a second groan.
Sky lowered, and muttering thunder, some sad drops

Full p. C-852

Wept at completing of the mortal sin
Original; while Adam took no thought,
Eating hisfill, nor Eve to iterate
Her former trespass feared, the more to soothe
Him with her loved society; that now
As with new wine intoxicated both,
They swim in mirth, and fancy that they feel
Divinity within them breeding wings
Wherewith to scorn the Earth. But that false fruit
Far other operationfirst displayed,
Carnal desire inflaming; he on Eve
Began to cast lascivious eyes, she him
As wantonly repaid; in lust they burn,
Till Adam thus 'gan Eve to dalliance move:
"Eve, now I see thou art exact of taste,
And elegant, of sapience[8] no small part,
Since to each meaning savor we apply,
And palate call judicious. I the praise
Yield thee, so well this day thou hast purveyed.
Much pleasure we have lost, while we abstained
From this delightful fruit, nor known till now
True relish, tasting; if such pleasure be
In things to us forbidden, it might be wished,
For[9] this one tree had been forbidden ten.
But come; so well refreshed, now let us play,
As meet is, after such delicious fare;
For never did thy beauty, since the day
I saw theefirst and wedded thee, adorned
With all perfections, so enflame my sense
With ardor to enjoy thee, fairer now
Than ever, bounty of this virtuous[1] tree."

So said he, and forbore not glance or toy
Of[2] amorous intent, well understood
Of Eve, whose eye darted contagiousfire.
Her hand he seized, and to a shady bank,
Thick overhead with verdant roof embowered
He led her, nothing loath;flowers were the couch,
Pansies, and violets, and asphodel,
And hyacinth, Earth's freshest, softest lap.
There they theirfill of love and love's disport
Took largely, of their mutual guilt the seal,
The solace of their sin, till dewy sleep
Oppressed them, wearied with their amorous play.
Soon as the force of that fallacious fruit,
That with exhilarating vapor bland
About their spirits had played, and inmost powers
Full p. C-853
Made err, was now exhaled, and grosser sleep
Bred of unkindly fumes,[3] with conscious dreams
Encumbered, now had left them, up they rose
As from unrest, and each the other viewing,
Soon found their eyes how opened, and their minds
How darkened. Innocence, that as a veil
Had shadowed them from knowing ill, was gone;
Just confidence, and native righteousness,
And honor from about them, naked left
To guilty Shame; he covered, but his robe
Uncovered more. So rose the Danite[4] strong,
Hercùlean Samson, from the harlot-lap
Of Philìstean Dàlilàh, and waked
Shorn of his strength;[5] they destitute and bare
Of all their virtue. Silent, and in face
Confounded, long they sat, as strucken mute;
Till Adam, though not less than Eve abashed,
At length gave utterance to these words constrained:
"O Eve, in evil hour thou didst give ear
To that false worm,[6] of whomsoever taught
To counterfeit man's voice, true in our fall,
False in our promised rising; since our eyes
Opened wefind indeed, andfind we know
Both good and evil, good lost, and evil got:
Bad fruit of knowledge, if this be to know,
Which leaves us naked thus, of honor void,
Of innocence, of faith, of purity,
Our wonted ornaments now soiled and stained,

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And in our faces evident the signs
Of foul concupiscence; whence evil store,
Even shame, the last[7] of evils; of thefirst
Be sure then. How shall I behold the face
Henceforth of God or angel, erst with joy
And rapture so oft beheld? Those heavenly shapes
Will dazzle now this earthly[8] with their blaze
Insufferably bright. O might I here
In solitude live savage, in some glade
Obscured, where highest woods, impenetrable
To star or sunlight, spread their umbrage broad,
And brown[9] as evening! Cover me, ye pines,
Ye cedars, with innumerable boughs
Hide me, where I may never see them[1] more!
But let us now, as in[2] bad plight, devise
What best may for the present serve to hide
The parts of each from other, that seem most
Full p. C-854
To shame obnoxious,[3] and unseemliest seen;
Some tree whose broad smooth leaves together sewed,
And girded on our loins, may cover round
Those middle parts, that this newcomer, Shame,
There sit not, and reproach us as unclean."
So counseled he, and both together went
Into the thickest wood; there soon they chose
Thefigtree, not that kind for fruit renowned
But such as at this day, to Indians known,
In Malabar or Deccan[4] spreads her arms
Branching so broad and long, that in the ground
The bended twigs take root, and daughters grow
About the mother tree, a pillared shade
High overarched, and echoing walks between;
There oft the Indian herdsman, shunning heat,
Shelters in cool, and tends his pasturing herds
At loopholes cut through thickest shade. Those leaves
They gathered, broad as Amazonian targe,[5]
And with what skill they had, together sewed,
To gird their waist; vain covering, if to hide
Their guilt and dreaded shame! O how unlike
To thatfirst naked glory! Such of late
Columbus found th' American, so girt
With feathered cincture,[6] naked else and wild
Among the trees on isles and woody shores.

Thus fenced, and, as they thought, their shame in part
Covered, but not at rest or ease of mind,
They sat them down to weep; nor only tears
Rained at their eyes, but high winds worse within
Began to rise, high passions, anger, hate,
Mistrust, suspicion, discord, and shook sore
Their inward state of mind, calm region once
And full of peace, now tossed and turbulent:
For Understanding ruled not, and the Will
Heard not her lore, both in subjection now
To sensual Appetite, who, from beneath
Usurping over sovereign Reason, claimed
Superior sway.[7] From thus distempered breast,
Adam, estranged in look and altered style,
Speech intermitted thus to Eve renewed:
"Would thou hadst hearkened to my words, and stayed
With me, as I besought thee, when that strange
Desire of wandering, this unhappy morn,
Full p. C-855
I know not whence possessed thee! we had then
Remained still happy, not as now, despoiled
Of all our good, shamed, naked, miserable.
Let none henceforth seek needless cause to approve
The faith they owe;[8] when earnestly they seek
Such proof, conclude, they then begin to fail."
To whom, soon moved with touch of blame, thus Eve:
"What words have passed thy lips, Adam severe?
Imput'st thou that to my default, or will
Of wandering, as thou call'st it, which who knows
But might as ill have happened, thou being by,
Or to thyself perhaps? Hadst thou been there,
Or here th' attempt, thou couldst not have discerned
Fraud in the serpent, speaking as he spake;
No ground of enmity between us known,
Why he should mean me ill, or seek to harm?
Was I to have never parted from thy side?
As good have grown there still a lifeless rib.
Being as I am, why didst not thou, the head,
Command me absolutely not to go,
Going into such danger, as thou saidst?
Too facile then, thou didst not much gainsay,
Nay, didst permit, approve, and fair dismiss.
Hadst thou beenfirm andfixed in thy dissent,
Neither had I transgressed, nor thou with me."[9]
To whom, thenfirst incensed, Adam replied:

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“Is this the love, is this the recompense
Of mine to thee, ingrateful Eve, expressed[1]
Immutable when thou were lost, not I,
Who might have lived and joyed immortal bliss,
Yet willingly chose rather death with thee?
And am I now upbraided as the cause
Of thy transgressing? not enough severe,
It seems, in thy restraint![2] What could I more?
I warned thee, I admonished thee, foretold
The danger, and the lurking enemy
That lay in wait; beyond this had been force,
And force upon free will hath here no place.
But confidence then bore thee on, secure
Either to meet no danger, or tofind
Matter of glorious trial and perhaps
I also erred in overmuch admiring
What seemed in thee so perfect, that I thought
No evil durst attempt thee! but I rue
That error now, which is become my crime,
Full p. C-856
And thou th’ accuser. Thus it shall befall
Him who, to worth in women overtrusting,
Lets her will rule; restraint she will not brook,[3]
And, left to herself, if evil thence ensue,
Shefirst his weak indulgence will accuse.”
Thus they in mutual accusation spent
The fruitless hours, but neither self-condemning;
And of their vain contést appeared no end.

Footnotes

- Note 5:Raphael, the “affable archangel,” who in preceding books (5–8) has sat with Adam sharing “rural repast” and discoursing on such highly relevant matters as Lucifer’s fall, the Creation, the structure of the universe. To him, Adam has told of the warning he has received from God not to touch the Tree of Knowledge. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:Unblemished. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:At the end of the *Iliad* Achilles, whose *wrath* is the subject announced in thefirst line of the epic, will chase his enemy, the Trojan Hector, three times around the walls of Troy before killing him. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:In Virgil’s *Aeneid*, Lavinia, fated to be Aeneas’s wife, had earlier been promised to King Turnus. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:In the *Odyssey* Neptune (Poseidon) is the god hostile to Odysseus (*the Greek*). In the *Aeneid* the hero is persecuted by the wrath of the goddess Juno, who had quarreled with Aeneas’s mother, Cytherea (Venus). Return to reference 9

- Note 1:Urania, originally the Muse of astronomy. To Milton she is the source of *celestial* inspiration. “Answerable”: suitable. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:In other passages of the poem, Milton refers to inspiration coming to him at night or at early dawn, with spontaneous (*unpremeditated*) ease. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:The choice of his present heroic theme had occurred early, as had the rejection of the kind of subject matter described in the following lines. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:To analyze but also to cut up; a possible allusion to the abundance of bloody battle wounds described in classical epics. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:There are long descriptions of games in the *Iliad* (23) and in the *Aeneid* (10). Return to reference 5
- Note 6:Skirtlike housing for warhorses. “Tilting furniture”: the paraphernalia of arms tournaments. “Impresses”: fancy emblems on shields. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:Attendants at meals and stewards in noble households. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:To me. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:The notion that nordic climates *damp* (benumb) human wit was accepted by Milton and is as old as Aristotle. “That name”: that of epic poet. “An age too late”: a time no longerfit for epic poetry. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:As described in the conclusion of book 4. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:In spite of. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Gabriel’s troops. Uriel (whose name means “fire of God”) is, according to Milton, *regent of the sun* and heat. In book 4, he warns Gabriel and his troops against Satan entering Eden. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:A celestial circle that crosses the poles. Satan manages always to stay on the dark side of the Earth by circling it three times along the equator (*the equinoctial line*) and twice on each of the two colures. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:The side opposite the gate guarded by Gabriel. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:Cf. Genesis 2.10: “And a river went out of Eden to water the garden.” Return to reference 6
- Note 7:Siberian riverflowing into the Arctic Ocean. “Pontus”: the Black Sea. “Maeotis”: the Sea of Azov. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:The Isthmus of Panama. “Orontes”: a river in Syria. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:Rivers in India. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:Cf. Genesis 3.1: “Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of thefield.” Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Offspring, with a devilish connotation. “Sentence”: decision. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Suspicion. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:Performing their function. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:What Adam called (5.509) “the scale of Nature” ascends from the vegetable order (pure growth), to the animal (sensation), to the human (the two plus reason). Return to reference 5
- Note 6:Seat, place. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:Poison. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:Man. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:All of created nature. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:Family, clan. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Power, force. Return to reference 2

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- Note 3:Inciting the angels to rebellion, Satan pretended that they were not God's creation, but "self-begot" (5.860). Return to reference 3
- Note 4:The supernatural substance of which he considers himself to be made. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:Exposed to. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:Against God. "I reck not": I don't mind. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:Harmful. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:Hidden. "Act intelligential": intellectual activity. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:Lacking. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:Constantly. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Thicket, grove. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Suggested. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:Object. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:Wildness. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:Whether his design be this or something even worse. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:Pure, sinless. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:Raphael. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:A misjudgment (*misthought*) of me. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:Intact. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Literally, sprinkles. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Faithfulness, loyalty. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:Increased strength. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:Outdone. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:Sensation. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:Less than she deserves. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:Endowed. "Straitened": confined. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:Brow. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:Without being put to test by outside forces. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:On the alert against temptation, because God has "created Man free and able enough to have withstood his Tempter" (3, "The Argument"). Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Remind. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:Procured for treacherous purposes. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:Give proof, test. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:Less careful, less alert to danger. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:Submissive. Eve's submissiveness, however, is qualified by Adam's reluctant tone as he agrees to let her go and by the fact that it is she who speaks thefinal words of their dialogue. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:Delia (born on the island of Delos) is the goddess Diana (Artemis), the huntress, with her train of nymphs. In Greek mythology the oreads were mountain nymphs and the dryads were wood nymphs. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:The ability to producefire will become necessary only after the Fall (cf. 10.1070–82). Return to reference 9
- Note 1:In practical-minded Roman mythology, Pales and Pomona are deities who preside overflocks and fruit, respectively. Ceres is the goddess of agriculture in general. Both Pomona and Ceres are presented here in virginal youth: Pomonafleeing from her suitor

Vertumnus (another agriculture deity), and Ceres before the time when Jove (Jupiter) made her the mother of Proserpina. Return to reference 1

- Note 2:About. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Ominously ready. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:Particularly. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:A spot that they tended. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:Handiwork. “Voluble”: rolling. “Arborets”: shrubs. “Embordered on each bank”: bordering a walk. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:Imagined by the poets (cf. 9.31). Return to reference 7
- Note 8:Odysseus. Alcinous was the king of the Phaeacians. His perpetuallyflowering garden is described in the *Odyssey* (7). “Of revived Adonis”: the mythical garden where Aphrodite (Venus) nursed her lover Adonis, wounded by a boar. The most famous description of the garden, certainly known to Milton, is in Spenser’s *Faerie Queene* 3. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:Pharaoh’s daughter (see 1 Kings 3.1). “Not mystic”: not mythical like the previous “feigned” gardens of pagan antiquity. “Sapient king”: Solomon. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:Make noisome, pollute. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Spread out for drying. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Because of her. “If chance”: if it should happen that. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:Rounds out and brings to perfection. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:Plot. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:Theft. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:Drawn off, separated. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:Rejoicing. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:Whatever pleasure. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:In the appropriate situation for Satan’s attempts on her. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Formed of earth. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:If not approached, and counteracted, by hate. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:Zigzagging. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:Fiery red. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:In great abundance. “Spires”: coils, loops. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:Those that Hermione and Cadmus were turned into. Cadmus, the founder of Thebes, and his wife Hermione (Harmonia), according to their story as told by Ovid (*Metamorphoses* 4.562–602), were transformed into snakes when they retired to Illyria after much family tragedy. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:The place in Greece where Aesculapius, the god of medicine, had his major temple and appeared to worshippers in the form of an erect,flashy-eyed serpent (Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* 15.622–744). Return to reference 8
- Note 9:According to hero-deifying legends, Jove, in his personification as Jupiter Ammon (a mingling of Greco-Roman and Egyptian cults), loved Princess Olympias and became the father of Alexander the Great. As the Capitoline Jupiter (worshiped in the major Roman temple on the Capitol), he fathered Scipio, the supreme hero (*the height*) of Rome’s African wars. In both cases, the father god appeared in the form of a snake. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:The enchantress Circe, in the *Odyssey* (10), is surrounded by subjected beasts and transforms some of the hero’s companions into swine. Return to reference 1

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- Note 2:Towering. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Producing a voice either by using his serpent's (*organic*) tongue or by some more direct impulse on the air. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:Mentally inadequate. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:Preamble, introduction. "Glozed":flattered. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:Eve, well acquainted with animals, which are *duteous at her call* (line 521), questions the notion (*I demur*) that they are wholly deprived of *human sense and reason* . Return to reference 6
- Note 7:How did you acquire speech after being dumb? Return to reference 7
- Note 8:According to old folklore, snakes were fond of fennel, which was supposed to sharpen their eyesight, and of goat's milk. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:To the point of acquiring the faculty of reason. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:Restrained, kept to his outward appearance. "Wanted not long": the faculty of speech soon followed. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Fairness, beauty. "Middle": the air. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Mistress of this world. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:Possessed by an evil spirit. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:Products. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:Blossoming. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:Composed of greasy vapor. "Wanderingfire": will-o'-the-wisp, a light attributed to marsh gas. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:The forbidden Tree of Knowledge. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:Because the forbidden tree is as good as fruitless to Eve, the only proof of its power (*virtue*) will remain with the Serpent. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:For the rest. "Sole daughter of his voice": translation from the Hebrew of God's command, described as "one easy prohibition" (4.433). Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Assuming the orator's posture. "New part": new role, as of an actor in drama. "Fluctuates": undulates his body. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Of the body. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:Plunging into the middle of the subject (*in medias res*), without any preamble. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:Knowledge. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:As well as. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:The Serpent's captious argument is that God is by definition just, but because a death-giving God would not be just, he would not be God; consequently, he would not have to be feared and obeyed. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:The Serpent has acquired human faculties although his outer form has remained unchanged (compare *inward*, line 600). Return to reference 8
- Note 9:Divinity. "Human": humanity. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:If they produced. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Imply, indicate. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Impregnated,filled. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:Favorably disposed. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:Implies. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:In plain words. Return to reference 6

- Note 7:Eve, who has learned from the Serpent the art of sophistical argument, claims that God himself, by naming the tree, has indicated the *good* in it, but a *good unknown* is as nothing. Besides, forbidding the experience of the Tree of Knowledge is forbidding humanity *to be wise;* hence the prohibition is not binding. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:Death would constitute a later bond (*after-bands*), after God has granted free will (*inward freedom*). Return to reference 8
- Note 9:An unsuspectable authority on the subject. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:Having no knowledge of good and evil, Eve doesn't know what is to be feared. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:With the power. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Ate. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:Omens, metaphorically given as—and punning with—the sighs of Nature; forebodings of disaster. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:She thought of acquiring divinity. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:That she was eating. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:Cheerful. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:Made famous. "Blest to sapience": endowed with the power to give wisdom. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:Eve has adopted the Serpent's argument (cf. lines 720–30). Return to reference 9
- Note 1:Not dangerous. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Manner. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Advantage. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:In these crucial lines Eve's thoughts are shown moving through three stages:first, the idea of not sharing her knowledge with Adam, so as to enhance her own power, with the gratuitous notion that lesser power brings no freedom at all; then jealously at the thought of her own possible death and Adam *wedded to another Eve*;finally, with an opportune resurgence of *love*, the resolve to be with Adam *in bliss or woe*, i.e., to make him her partner in sin. Thus the passage is centrally representative of Milton's characterization of Eve in her relation to Adam and possibly of some of the poet's own conceptions of women in general (cf. lines 377–84, 869–85, and 1155–61). Return to reference 4
- Note 5:Infusing knowledge. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:Divining, foreseeing. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:Irregularity of heartbeats. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:A pleading expression on her face came as an introduction (the *prologue* to a play) to prepare for (*prompt*) the formal *apology* . Return to reference 8
- Note 9:When tasted. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:Has been proved by tasting. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Admirably. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:A difference in rank between us. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:Cf. lines 825–33. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:Disharmony in the body's humors, disease. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:Slackened. "Astonied": stunned. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:Doomed. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:Unknown enemy. Return to reference 8

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- Note 9:Proportionate to our human status (compare the Serpent's argument, lines 710–12). Return to reference 9
- Note 1:That would be a wrong conception of God. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Resolved. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Indirectly. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:If. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:Involve Adam in her guilty action. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:The eventual consequence of her transgression. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:Adam, unlike Eve, acts in full consciousness, not having been *deceived* by the Serpent. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:In both meanings—"wisdom" and "taste." Both *sapience* and *savor* (line 1018) are from the Latin *sapere* . "Elegant": choosy, refined. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:Instead of. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:Endowed with special power (compare lines 649 and 778). Return to reference 1
- Note 2:With. "Toy": toying, playing. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Unnatural exhalations. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:Of the tribe of Dan. Shame (personified) covered them, but his cover (*robe*) only made them aware of their nakedness (*uncovered more*). Return to reference 4
- Note 5:See Judges 16.4–20. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:I.e., the Serpent, now disparaged. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:Extreme, ultimate. "Evil store": an abundance of evils. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:Adam's now earthly nature and sense. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:Dark. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:The *heavenly shapes* (line 1081). Return to reference 1
- Note 2:As we are in. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Exposed to. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:In southern India. "Figtree": identified as the banyan or Indianfig tree, also classified in botany as *Ficus religiosa* . Return to reference 4
- Note 5:Shield. The Amazons were women warriors in Greco-Roman myth (and in Virgil's *Aeneid*). Actually the tree's leaf is small; Milton's inaccurate notion comes from contemporary sources and goes back to antiquity. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:Belt. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:The victory of *Sensual Appetite* over *Reason* (cf. line 113) and over humankind's free will (cf. lines 351ff.)—humanity's distinguishing traits—summarizes the history of the Fall. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:Own. "Approve": prove by testing. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:The notion of man's authority over woman—recognized by Milton's Eve (e.g., in 4.442–43: "my guide / and head") and echoing St. Paul (1 Corinthians 11.3: "the head of the woman is the man") is here used by her to make Adam her equal in guilt, accusing him of indulgence in letting her go (*too facile*). Return to reference 9
- Note 1:Demonstrated, proved. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:In restraining Eve. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Put up with. Return to reference 3

FROM BOOK 10

The Argument

Man's transgression known, the guardian Angels forsake Paradise, and return up to Heaven to approve their vigilance, and are approved; God declaring that the entrance of Satan could not be by them prevented. He sends his Son to judge the transgressors; who descends, and gives sentence accordingly; then, in pity, clothes them both, and reascends. Sin and Death, sitting till then at the gates of Hell, by wondrous sympathy feeling the success of Satan in this new World, and the sin by Man there committed, resolve to sit no longer confined in Hell, but to follow Satan, their sire, up to the place of Man: to make the way easier from Hell to this World to and fro, they pave a broad highway or bridge over Chaos, according to the track that Satanfirst made; then, preparing for Earth, they meet him, proud of his success, returning to Hell; their mutual gratulation. Satan arrives at Pandemonium; in full assembly relates, with boasting, his success against Man; instead of applause is entertained with a general hiss by all his audience, transformed, with himself also, suddenly into Serpents, according to his doom given in Paradise; then, deluded with a show of the Forbidden Tree springing up before them, they, greedily reaching to take of the fruit, chew dust and bitter ashes. The proceedings of Sin and Death: God foretells thefinal victory of his Son over them, and the renewing of all things; but, for the present, commands his Angels to make several alterations in the Heavens and Elements. Adam, more and more perceiving his fallen condition, heavily bewails,[4] rejects the condolement of Eve; she persists, and at length appeases him: then, to evade the curse likely to fall on their offspring, proposes to Adam violent ways; which he approves not, but, conceiving better hope, puts her in mind of the late promise made them, that her seed should be revenged on the Serpent, and exhorts her, with him, to seek peace of the offended Deity by repentance and supplication.

[*Acceptance, Reconciliation, Hope*]

* * * Thus began
Outrage from lifeless things; but Discordfirst,
Daughter of Sin, among th' irrational
Death introduced throughfierce antipathy:[5]

Full p. C-857

Beast now with beast 'gan war, and fowl with fowl,
Andfish withfish: to graze the herb all leaving,
Devoured each other; nor stood much in awe
Of man, butfled him, or with countenance grim
Glared on him passing. These were from without
The growing miseries, which Adam saw
Already in part, though hid in gloomiest shade,
To sorrow abandoned, but worse felt within,
And in a troubled sea of passion tossed,
Thus to disburden sought with sad complaint:

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"O miserable of happy! Is this the end
Of this new glorious world, and me so late
The glory of that glory? who now, become
Accursed of blessèd, hide me from the face
Of God, whom to behold was then my height
Of happiness! Yet well, if here would end
The misery; I deserved it, and would bear
My own deservings; but this will not serve.
All that I eat or drink, or shall beget,
Is propagated curse.[6] O voice, once heard
Delightfully, 'Increase and multiply,'
Now death to hear! for what can I increase
Or multiply, but curses on my head?
Who of all ages to succeed, but, feeling
The evil on him brought by me, will curse
My head: 'Ill fare our ancestor impure!
For this we may thank Adam!' but his thanks
Shall be the execration;[7] so besides
Mine own that bide upon me, all from me
Shall with afierce reflux on me redound,
On me, as on their natural center, light
Heavy, though in their place. Ofleeting joys
Of Paradise, dear bought with lasting woes!
Did I request thee, Maker, from my clay
To mold me man? Did I solicit thee
From darkness to promote me, or here place
In this delicious garden? As my will
Concurred not to my being, it were but right
And equal to reduce me to my dust,
Desirous to resign and render back
All I received, unable to perform
Thy terms too hard, by which I was to hold
The good I sought not. To the loss of that,
Sufficient penalty, why hast thou added
The sense of endless woes? Inexplicable
Thy justice seems; yet to say truth, too late
I thus contèst; then should have been refused

Full p. C-858

Those terms whatever, when they were proposed.
Thou didst accept them; wilt thou enjoy the good,
Then cavil[8] the conditions? And though God
Made thee without thy leave, what if thy son
Prove disobedient, and reproved, retort,
'Wherefore didst thou beget me? I sought it not.'
Wouldst thou admit for his contempt of thee

That proud excuse? Yet him not thy election,
But natural necessity begot.
God made thee of choice his own, and of his own
To serve him; thy reward was of his grace;
Thy punishment then justly is at his will.
Be it so, for I submit; his doom is fair,[9]
That dust I am and shall to dust return.
O welcome hour whenever! Why delays
His hand to execute what his decree
Fixed on this day? Why do I overlive?
Why am I mocked with death, and lengthened out
To deathless pain? How gladly would I meet
Mortality, my sentence, and be earth
Insensible! how glad would lay me down
As in my mother's lap![1] here I should rest
And sleep secure; his dreadful voice no more
Would thunder in my ears; no fear of worse
To me and to my offspring would torment me
With cruel expectation. Yet one doubt
Pursues me still, lest all I cannot die;
Lest that pure breath of life, the spirit of man
Which God inspired, cannot together perish
With this corporeal clod; then, in the grave,
Or in some other dismal place, who knows
But I shall die a living death? O thought
Horrid, if true![2] Yet why? It was but breath
Of life that sinned; what dies but what had life
And sin? the body properly hath neither.
All of me then shall die: let this appease
The doubt, since human reach no further knows.
For though the Lord of all be infinite,
Is his wrath also? Be it, man is not so,
But mortal doomed. How can he exercise
Wrath without end on man whom death must end?
Can he make deathless death? That were to make
Strange contradiction, which to God himself

Full p. C-859

Impossible is held, as argument
Of weakness, not of power.[3] Will he draw out,
For anger's sake,finite to infinite
In punished man, to satisfy his rigor
Satisfied never? That were to extend
His sentence beyond dust and Nature's law;
By which all causes else according still

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To the reception of their matter act,
Not to th' extent of their own sphere.[4] But say
That death be not one stroke, as I supposed,
Bereaving sense, but endless misery
From this day onward, which I feel begun
Both in me and without[5] me, and so last
To perpetuity—Ay me! that fear
Comes thundering back with dreadful revolution
On my defenseless head! Both death and I
Am found eternal, and incorporate both:[6]
Nor I on my part single; in me all
Posterity stands cursed. Fair patrimony
That I must leave ye, sons! O, were I able
To waste it all myself, and leave ye none!
So disinherited, how would ye bless
Me, now your curse! Ah, why should all mankind
For one man's fault thus guiltless be condemned,
If guiltless? But from me what can proceed,
But all corrupt, both mind and will depraved,
Not to do only, but to will the same
With me? How can they then acquitted stand
In sight of God?[7] Him, after all disputes,
Forced I absolve. All my evasions vain
And reasonings, though through mazes, lead me still
But to my own conviction:first and last
On me, me only, as the source and spring
Of all corruption, all the blame lights due;
So might the wrath! Fond[8] wish! Couldst thou support
That burden, heavier than the earth to bear;
Than all the world much heavier, though divided
Full p. C-860
With that bad woman? Thus, what thou desir'st,
And what thou fear'st, alike destroys all hope[9]
Of refuge, and concludes thee miserable
Beyond all past example[1] and future;
To Satan only like, both crime and doom.[2]
O Conscience! into what abyss of fears
And horrors hast thou driven me; out of which
Ifind no way, from deep to deeper plunged!"
Thus Adam to himself lamented loud
Through the still night, not now, as ere man fell,
Wholesome and cool and mild, but with black air
Accompanied, with damps and dreadful gloom;

Which to his evil conscience represented
All things with double terror. On the ground
Outstretched he lay, on the cold ground, and oft
Cursed his creation; Death as oft accused
Of tardy execution, since denounced
The day of his offense. “Why comes not Death,”
Said he, “with one thrice-àcceptàble stroke
To end me? Shall Truth fail to keep her word,
Justice divine not hasten to be just?
But Death comes not at call; Justice divine
Mends not her slowest pace for prayers or cries.
O woods, O fountains, hillocks, dales, and bowers!
With other echo late I taught your shades
To answer, and resound far other song.”
Whom thus afflicted when sad Eve beheld,
Desolate where she sat, approaching nigh,
Soft words to hisfierce passion she essayed;
But her with stern regard he thus repelled:
“Out of my sight, thou serpent! that name best
Befits thee, with him leagued, thyself as false
And hateful: nothing wants, but that thy shape,
Like his, and color serpentine, may show
Thy inward fraud, to warn all creatures from thee
Henceforth; lest that too heavenly form, pretended[3]
To hellish falsehood, snare them. But for thee
I had persisted happy, had not thy pride
And wandering vanity, when least was safe,
Rejected my forewarning, and disdained
Not to be trusted, longing to be seen
Though by the devil himself, him overweening
To overreach,[4] but, with the serpent meeting,
Fooled and beguiled; by him thou, I by thee,
Full p. C-861
To trust thee from my side, imagined wise,
Constant, mature, proof against all assaults;
And understood not all was but a show
Rather than solid virtue, all but a rib
Crooked by nature—bent, as now appears,
More to the part sinìster—from me drawn;
Well if thrown out, as supernumerary
To my just number found![5] Oh, why did God,
Creator wise, that peopled highest Heaven
With spirits masculine, create at last
This novelty on earth, this fair defect
Of nature, and notfill the world at once

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With men, as angels, without feminine;
Orfind some other way to generate
Mankind?[6] This mischief had not then befallen,
And more that shall befall—innumerable
Disturbances on earth through female snares,
And strait conjunction with this sex. For either
He never shallfind outfit mate, but such
As some misfortune brings him, or mistake;
Or whom he wishes most shall seldom gain,
Through her perverseness, but shall see her gained
By a far worse, or, if she love, withheld
By parents, or his happiest choice too late
Shall meet, already linked and wedlock-bound
To a fell[7] adversary, his hate or shame:
Which infinite calamity shall cause
To human life, and household peace confound."
He added not, and from her turned; but Eve,
Not so repulsed, with tears that ceased notflowing,
And tresses all disordered, at his feet
Fell humble, and, embracing them, besought
His peace, and thus proceeded in her plaint:
"Forsake me not thus, Adam! witness Heaven
What love sincere and reverence in my heart
I bear thee, and unweeting have offended,
Unhappily deceived! Thy suppliant[8]
I beg, and clasp thy knees; bereave me not,
Whereon I live, thy gentle looks, thy aid,
Thy counsel in this uttermost distress,
My only strength and stay: forlorn of thee,
Whither shall I betake me, where subsist?
While yet we live, scarce one short hour perhaps,
Between us two let there be peace; both joining,
As joined in injuries, one enmity
Full p. C-862
Against a foe by doom express assigned us,
That cruel serpent. On me exercise not
Thy hatred for this misery befallen;
On me already lost, me than thyself
More miserable. Both have sinned, but thou
Against God only; I against God and thee,
And to the place of judgment will return,
There with my cries importune Heaven, that all
The sentence, from thy head removed, may light
On me, sole cause to thee of all this woe,
Me, me only, just object of his ire."

She ended weeping; and her lowly plight,
Immovable[9] till peace obtained from fault
Acknowledged and deplored, in Adam wrought
Commiseration. Soon his heart relented
Towards her, his life so late and sole delight,
Now at his feet submissive in distress,
Creature so fair his reconcilement seeking,
His counsel, whom she had displeased, his aid;
As one disarmed, his anger all he lost,
And thus with peaceful words upraised her soon:
"Unwary, and too desirous, as before,
So now, of what thou know'st not,[1] who desir'st
The punishment all on thyself! Alas!
Bear thine ownfirst, ill able to sustain
His full wrath, whose thou feel'st as yet least part,[2]
And my displeasure bear'st so ill. If prayers
Could alter high decrees, I to that place
Would speed before thee, and be louder heard,
That on my head all might be visited,
Thy frailty and infirmer sex forgiven,
To me committed, and by me exposed.[3]
But rise; let us no more contend, nor blame
Each other, blamed enough elsewhere,[4] but strive
In offices of love, how we may lighten
Each other's burden in our share of woe;
Since this day's death denounced, if aught I see,
Will prove no sudden, but a slow-paced evil,
A long day's dying to augment our pain,
And to our seed (O hapless seed!) derived."[5]
To whom thus Eve, recovering heart, replied:—
"Adam, by sad experiment I know

Full p. C-863

How little weight my words with thee canfind,
Found so erroneous, thence by just event
Found so unfortunate. Nevertheless,
Restored by thee, vile as I am, to place
Of new acceptance, hopeful to regain
Thy love, the sole contentment of my heart,
Living or dying from thee I will not hide
What thoughts in my unquiet breast are risen,
Tending to some relief of our extremes,
Or end, though sharp and sad, yet tolerable,
As in our evils,[6] and of easier choice.

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If care of our descent[7] perplex us most,
Which must be born to certain woe, devoured
By Death at last (and miserable it is
To be to others cause of misery,
Our own begotten, and of our loins to bring
Into this cursed world a woeful race,
That, after wretched life, must be at last
Food for so foul a monster), in thy power
It lies, yet ere conception, to prevent
The race unblest, to being yet unbegot.[8]
Childless thou art; childless remain. So Death
Shall be deceived his glut,[9] and with us two
Be forced to satisfy his ravenous maw.
But, if thou judge it hard and difficult,
Conversing, looking, loving, to abstain
From love's due rites, nuptial embraces sweet,
And with desire to languish without hope
Before the present object[1] languishing
With like desire—which would be misery
And torment less than none of what we dread—
Then, both our selves and seed at once to free
From what we fear for both, let us make short;
Let us seek Death, or, he not found, supply
With our own hands his office on ourselves.
Why stand we longer shivering under fears
That show no end but death, and have the power,
Of many ways to die the shortest choosing
Destruction with destruction to destroy?"[2]
She ended here, or vehement despair
Broke offthe rest; so much of death her thoughts
Had entertained as dyed her cheeks with pale.
But Adam, with such counsel nothing swayed,
To better hopes his more attentive mind
Laboring had raised, and thus to Eve replied:—

Full p. C-864

"Eve, thy contempt of life and pleasure seems
To argue in thee something more sublime
And excellent than what thy mind contemns:
But self-destruction therefore sought refutes
That excellence thought in thee, and implies
Not thy contempt, but anguish and regret
For loss of life and pleasure overloved.[3]
Or, if thou covet death, as utmost end
Of misery, so thinking to evade

The penalty pronounced, doubt not but God
Hath wiselier armed his vengeful ire than so
To be forestalled. Much more I fear lest death
So snatched will not exempt us from the pain
We are by doom to pay; rather such acts
Of contumacy will provoke the Highest
To make death in us live. Then let us seek
Some safer resolution—which methinks
I have in view, calling to mind with heed
Part of our sentence,[4] that thy seed shall bruise
The Serpent's head. Piteous amends! unless
Be meant whom I conjecture,[5] our grand foe,
Satan, who in the Serpent hath contrived
Against us this deceit. To crush his head
Would be revenge indeed—which will be lost
By death brought on ourselves, or childless days
Resolved as thou proposest; so our foe
Shall scape his punishment ordained, and we
Instead shall double ours upon our heads.
No more be mentioned, then, of violence
Against ourselves, and wilful barrenness
That cuts us offfrom hope, and savors only
Rancor and pride, impatience and despite,
Reluctance[6] against God and his just yoke
Laid on our necks. Remember with what mild
And gracious temper he both heard and judged,
Without wrath or reviling. We expected
Immediate dissolution, which we thought
Was meant by death that day; when, lo! to thee
Pains only in child-bearing were foretold,
And bringing forth, soon recompensed with joy,

Full p. C-865

Fruit of thy womb. On me the curse aslope
Glanced on the ground.[7] With labor I must earn
My bread; what harm: Idleness had been worse;
My labor will sustain me; and, lest cold
Or heat should injure us, his timely care
Hath, unbesought, provided, and his hands
Clothed us unworthy, pitying while he judged.
How much more, if we pray him, will his ear
Be open, and his heart to pity incline,
And teach us further by what means to shun
The inclement seasons, rain, ice, hail, and snow!
Which now the sky, with various face, begins

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To show us in this mountain,[8] while the winds
Blow moist and keen, shattering the graceful locks
Of these fair spreading trees; which bids us seek
Some better shroud, some better warmth to cherish
Our limbs benumbed—ere this diurnal star
Leave cold the night, how we his gathered beams
Reflected may with matter sere foment,[9]
Or by collision of two bodies grind
The air attrite tofire;[1] as late the clouds,
Justling, or pushed with winds, rude in their shock,
Tine the slant lightning, whose thwart[2] flame, driven down,
Kindles the gummy bark offir or pine,
And sends a comfortable heat from far,
Which might supply the Sun. Suchfire to use,
And what may else be remedy or cure
To evils which our own misdeeds have wrought,
He will instruct us praying,[3] and of grace
Beseeching him; so as we need not fear
To pass commodiously this life, sustained
By him with many comforts, till we end
In dust, ourfinal rest and native home.
Full p. C-866
What better can we do, than to the place
Repairing where he judged us, prostrate fall
Before him reverent, and there confess
Humbly our faults, and pardon beg, with tears
Watering the ground, and with our sighs the air
Frequenting,[4] sent from hearts contrite, in sign
Of sorrow unfeigned and humiliation meek?
Undoubtedly he will relent, and turn
From his displeasure, in whose look serene,
When angry most he seemed and most severe,
What else but favor, grace, and mercy shone?”
So spake our Father penitent; nor Eve
Felt less remorse. They, forthwith to the place
Repairing where he judged them, prostrate fell
Before him reverent, and both confessed
Humbly their faults, and pardon begged, with tears
Watering the ground, and with their sighs the air
Frequenting, sent from hearts contrite, in sign
Of sorrow unfeigned and humiliation meek.

Footnotes

- Note 4:The selection printed here starts toward the end of Adam's long lamentation. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:I.e., Discord introduced death to the irrational (beasts) through antipathy; Milton paves the way for the role of sympathy in reconciling Adam to Eve. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:Eating, drinking, and procreating all increase or extend God's curse. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:I.e., posterity's curses on Adam. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:Raise petty objections. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:In his inner debate, Adam has just been arguing to himself that God created us "of choice his own, / and of his own to serve him." Hence in the same way as reward "was of his [God's] grace," so punishment "justly is at his will" and, therefore, acceptable. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:I.e., the earth (in 11.536, Michael, addressing Adam, calls the Earth "thy mother's lap"), probably an echo of Job 3. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Adam fears that the soul, breathed (*inspired*) into the *corporeal clod* at Creation, may be immortal and so suffer a *living death* in the grave. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Adam corrects himself, arguing (as Milton did in his theological writings) that because only the spirit (*breath of life*, line 784) sinned it shall die with the body (and, implicitly, await resurrection). Otherwise, according to the same theological line of thinking, there would be *strange contradiction*, an inadmissible sign of weakness in God. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:Once body and spirit die, further punishment is impossible. According to *Nature's law* the power of all agents, God excepted (*all causes else*), cannot be exercised to its utmost (the *extent of their own sphere*) but is limited by the capacity for *reception* that the object of that power possesses. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:Outside. "Bereaving sense": removing all sensory powers. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:The use of *am*, the singular form, stresses Adam's concentration on himself and on the fact that he and death are now united in one body (*incorporate*). Return to reference 6
- Note 7:Inheriting Adam's original sin, his descendants, like him (*with me*), are going to act sinfully by their own free will. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:Foolish. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:Actually, by his desperate self-accusation and by wanting to assume, alone, the burden of guilt, Adam is shown to be already on the way to full repentance and to his own regeneration. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:That of the fallen angels. "Concludes thee": demonstrates that you are. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:The comparison is clearly invalid, Adam's remorse and repentant despair being opposite to Satan's choice, as seen, for example, in 4.109–10: "Farewell remorse! All good to me is lost; / Evil, be thou my good." Return to reference 2
- Note 3:Put up as a screen. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:Overestimating your power to outwit him. Return to reference 4
- Note 5:Folklore has it that the rib from which Eve was created was an extra rib on Adam's left (Latin: *sinister*) side. Note double meaning of *sinister* . Return to reference 5

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- Note 6:Adam's frenzied speech belongs to a tradition of misogynistic rhetoric that goes back to antiquity. These lines, in particular, seem to echo Euripides' *Hippolytus*, lines 617–20 (Euripides was one of Milton's favorite writers). Return to reference 6
- Note 7:Fierce, bitter. "Already linked": i.e., when he is already linked. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:As thy suppliant. "Unweeting": unknowingly. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:Modifies both Eve in her lowly posture of repentance and Adam in hisfirst reluctance to forgive. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:Once more Eve is *too desirous* of the unknown, but her situation and her tone are now totally different—as are those of Adam, *whose counsel* and *aid* she has sought. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Eve would not be able to bear the weight of God's full wrath, of which she has until now experienced only the smallest part. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:In the present atmosphere of reconciliation, Adam seems to accept Eve's earlier charge (see p. 855, n. 9); now he blames himself for having exposed her to temptation. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:I.e., at the place of judgment (see also lines 932, 953, and 1098–99). Return to reference 4
- Note 5:Transmitted. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:We being in such evils. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:Descendants, lineage. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:To forestall, by abstinence, the birth of descendants. Return to reference 8
- Note 9:Shall be cheated of itsfill. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:Eve herself, object of Adam's love, and now in his presence. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Destroy destruction (Death's power to destroy future mankind) by destroying ourselves now. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:The suicide project excludes (*refutes*) the idea that Eve be contemptuous of life and pleasure in view of *something more sublime;* it rather implies *anguish and regret* at the thought of losing those goods. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:Earlier in this book (the Argument and lines 163–208) the Lord gives sentence on the Serpent and the transgressors. The references here are to that passage, which is quite literally based on Genesis 30 (esp. lines 179–81; "Between thee and the Woman I will put / Enmity, and between thine and her seed; / Her seed shall bruise thy head, thou bruise his heel"). Return to reference 4
- Note 5:The notion that Satan spoke through the Serpent was not atfirst given to humanity (lines 170–71: "Concerned not Man. . . . / Nor altered his offense"). Adam is late in coming to that conclusion (*I conjecture*), and on it he bases the following eloquent argument in favor of survival, hope, procreation, and activity. Return to reference 5
- Note 6:Resistance, opposition. Return to reference 6
- Note 7:The curse descending (*aslope*) on Adam took an oblique course (*glanced*) toward the ground. Thus Adam is not only accepting the Lord's sentence (in lines 201–02 and 205; "Curs'd is the ground for thy sake; thou in sorrow / Shalt eat thereof all the days of thy life; / . . . In the sweat of thy face thou shalt eat bread") but turning it into a project for an active life after the Fall. Return to reference 7
- Note 8:In his description of *delicious Paradise* (4.132–58), Milton situates it on a high plateau at the top of a "steep wilderness" that denies access to the "enclosure green" and

its "Insuperable height of loftiest shade, / Cedar, and pine, andfir, and branching palm, / A sylvan scene, and as the ranks ascend / Shade above shade, a woody theater / Of stateliest view" where "gentle gales / . . . dispense / Native perfumes, and whisper whence they stole / Those balmy spoils." That stately and blissful order is now disrupted, and after the radical alterations in the heavens and in the elements that God has commanded, Adam is preparing to cope with the hardships and challenges of his mortal state in a time-conditioned universe of seasonal changes, dawns and sunset, heat and ice, and shattering winds. Return to reference 8

- Note 9:Heat, warm. "Diurnal star": day star, the sun. "How": seek how. Return to reference 9
- Note 1:The implied belief is that rubbing two *bodies* (as twoflints) against each other, the air thus ground down by the attrition (*attrite*) turns intofire. Return to reference 1
- Note 2:Passing across the sky. "Tine": kindle; thatfire was produced by lightning is one of the ancient theories about its origin on earth. Return to reference 2
- Note 3:If we pray to him. Return to reference 3
- Note 4:Filling. Return to reference 4

FROM BOOK 12

[*After God's acceptance of the transgressors' prayers and the decree that "they must no longer abide in Paradise" (11, "The Argument"), Michael the archangel, with a band of cherubim, has been sent "to dispossess them." After Eve's lamentation and his own pleading, Adam has submitted; Michael has led him up to a high hill where, in a mixture of prophecy and instruction, he has set "before him in vision" the future of humankind, from Cain and Abel through Noah (11) and the prophets, thus coming "by degrees to explain who that Seed of Woman shall be which was promised Adam and Eve in the Fall: his incarnation, death, resurrection, and ascension; the state of the Church till his second coming" (12, "The Argument"). Toward the close of his speech, Michael has recommended the exercise of the basic Christian virtues, culminating in love, "By name to come called Charity, the soul / Of all the rest: then will thou not be loath / To leave this Paradise, but shalt possess / A Paradise within thee, happier far" (12.584–87). Michael has just ended his long speech.*]

["*The World Was All before Them*"]

* * *

He ended, and they both descend the hill.
Descended, Adam to the bower where Eve
Lay sleeping[5] ran before, but found her waked;
And thus with words not sad she him received:

Full p. C-867

"Whence thou return'st and whither went'st, I know;
For God is also in sleep, and dreams[6] advise,
Which he hath sent propitious, some great good
Presaging, since, with sorrow and heart's distress

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Wearied, I fell asleep. But now lead on;
In me is no delay; with thee to go
Is to stay here; without thee here to stay
Is to go hence unwilling; thou to me
Art all things under Heaven, all places thou,
Who for my willful crime art banished hence.
This further consolation yet secure
I carry hence: though all by me is lost,
Such favor I unworthy am vouchsafed,
By me the Promised Seed shall all restore."
So spake our mother Eve; and Adam heard
Well pleased, but answered not; for now too nigh
Th' archangel stood, and from the other hill[7]
To theirfixed station, all in bright array,
The cherubim descended; on the ground
Gliding meteorous, as evening mist
Risen from a river o'er the marish[8] glides,
And gathers ground fast at the laborer's heel
Homeward returning. High in front advanced,[9]
The brandished sword of God before them blazed,
Fierce as a comet; which with torrid heat,
And vapor as the Libyan air adust,[1]
Began to parch that temperate clime; whereat
In either hand the hastening angel caught
Our lingering parents, and to th' eastern gate[2]
Led them direct, and down the cliffas fast
To the subjected[3] plain; then disappeared.
They, looking back, all th' eastern side beheld
Of Paradise, so late their happy seat,
Waved over by thatflaming brand,[4] the gate
With dreadful faces thronged andfiery arms.
Some natural tears they dropped, but wiped them soon;
The world was all before them, where to choose
Their place of rest,[5] and Providence their guide.
They, hand in hand, with wandering steps and slow,
Through Eden took their solitary way. Full p. C-868

Footnotes

- Note 5:Michael has just said to Adam (lines 594–97): "Go, waken Eve; / Her also I with gentle dreams have calmed, / Portending good, and all her spirits composed / To meek submission." Return to reference 5