Tales of Humour Gallantry and Romance: New from the Italian Tales

(Illustrated)

{ILLUSTRATED}

By

Anonymous

Illustrated by George Cruikshank

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Preface (About the Book)

TALES

OF

Humour, Gallantry, & Romance

SELECTED AND TRANSLATED

FROM THE ITALIAN.



These tales are translated from a variety of authors. The translator has been chiefly led to the task by the hope of composing an entertaining volume out of materials not generally accessible. The works in which many of them are found, are by no means common, and the indelicacy with which almost all collections of Italian tales are polluted, deservedly excludes them from general perusal. Such care has,

however, been employed in the following selection, and such liberties taken with the originals, when they appeared objectionable on this account, that it is hoped this little book will escape the censure too justly cast upon Italian works of humour, in general—a censure which falls heavily upon many of the otherwise admirable tales of Boccaccio. While, however, such trifling alterations have been made as appeared necessary, these tales may still justly be considered as fair specimens of the Italian *Novella*, and like the celebrated collection already alluded to, furnish us with a very lively idea of the early manners of the Italians. Those tales, from which our great dramatist borrowed parts of his plots, and some of his incidents, have a double interest, both from their own nature, and as they illustrate the process by which his genius, "by happy alchemy of mind," turned all the materials which fell in his way to gold. Two or three of this kind have been purposely selected.

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The unexpected Reply.

TALES OF HUMOUR, GALLANTRY & ROMANCE

Selected And Translated From The Italian. With Sixteen Illustrative Drawings by George Cruikshank

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY {e-Kitap Projesi}



ITALIAN TALES

The Teacher Taught

There dwelt in Rome two very intimate friends and relations of the family of Savelli, the one named Bacciuolo, and the other Pietro Paolo, both nobly bom and possessed of sufficient wealth. These young men determined to go and complete their studies at Bologna; one wished to study the common law, and the other the canon law. They accordingly took leave of their friends, and came to Bologna, and assiduously applied themselves to their respective pursuits, which they continued for some time. Now, as you no doubt know, the former improved himself much sooner than Pietro Paolo, for which reason, being now a licentiate, he determined to return to Rome, and said to Pietro Paolo—"Brother, since I am now a licentiate, I have resolved to return home." Peter Paul answered, "I prithee do not leave me here—oblige me by remaining the winter—then in the spring we will go together—thou in the mean time mayest learn some other science, by which means thou wilt not waste thy time." Bacciuolo willingly agreed to the proposal, promised to

wait for him, and in order not to lose his time, went to the professor, and said, "Sir, having made up my mind to remain with my friend and relation, I would be glad if it pleased you to teach me some noble science during my stay." The professor answered, that he would most willingly do it. "Chuse which science you prefer, and I will teach it you with pleasure." Bacciuolo then replied, "Worthy Sir, I would learn how to make love, and to set about it." The professor, smiling, answered, "this is a good joke, thou couldst not have hit on a science in which I am a greater adept. Now then go thy ways on Sunday morning to the church of the minor friars—there thou wilt see numbers of fine women assembled, and wilt be able to pitch upon some one that may take thy fancy. When thou hast selected the one, follow her until you find out where she lives—then return to me. This is the first part of my instructions." Bacciuolo departed, and on the following Sunday, going to the church as he had been desired, and eyeing all the pretty women, for there were many, he saw one among them that pleased him much—she being very handsome and graceful. When she left the church, Bacciuolo took care to follow her close, and saw, and marked the house where she dwelt, not however, without the lady perceiving that the young student had taken a fancy to her. Bacciuolo returned to the professor, and said, "I have done as you desired me, and I have seen one whom I like very much." Upon which the professor said he was highly pleased, and smiled at Bacciuolo, seeing

what species of science he was anxious to learn, and he said to him, "be sure you make a point of passing by her house, as it were carelessly, two or three times every day, and have your eyes about you, and take care that no one observes you looking at her, but enjoy as much as thou mayest the sight of her, and let her perceive that thou art in love with her; then return to me. This is the second part of my instructions." Bacciuolo left the professor, and cautiously began to walk to and fro before the lady's house; so that the lady perceived that he must certainly walk to and fro before the house, for the purpose of seeing her—she, therefore, began to eye him; insomuch that Bacciuolo began to bow most respectfully to her, and she returned the salutation several times, the which persuaded Bacciuolo that the lady did not dislike him. He, of course, reported the whole to the professor; who answered, "well, I am pleased with this, and you have ruled yourself well hitherto. Now you must endeavour to find one of those female pedlers, that sell trinkets, purses, and such like in the streets of Bologna, and set her to make the lady acquainted with your passion, how much you are devoted to her, and that there is none you could prefer to her, and how happy you would be if she would lay upon you any commands, by which you could prove your devotion to her: thou wilt hear what she says to this, and thou wilt report it to me, and I will direct thy future conduct." Bacciuolo immediately went out and found a pedler perfectly well acquainted with her trade, and

addressed her thus:—"I wish you to do me a great kindness, and I will reward you handsomely." The woman answered, "I will obey your orders, for I have nothing to look to but to get money." Bacciuolo gave her a crown-piece, and said, "I wish you to go today to a house in a street called the Maccarella; there lives a damsel, called the Lady Giovanna, whom I love more than any other living creature; and I wish you to get me into her good graces, and tell her I would gladly do any thing that might give her pleasure; and say all the pretty coaxing things, which I am sure you can say on such occasions; therefore I entreat you to exert your skill." The little old woman answered, "rest assured, kind Signor, I will do my best, and find a favourable opportunity for the purpose."

"Go, my good woman," said Bacciuolo, "and I will wait for you here." She immediately set forth with her little basket of trinkets, and went up to the lady, whom she found sitting at her door to breathe the cool air. Courtesying to her, she said, "Lady, are there any of these trinkets that you would like to have? Take whatever you please, lady," said she, and seated herself by the lady, shewing her some purses, looking-glasses, laces, and other little things; after looking at all the wares, she noticed a purse, and said, "if I had money about me, I should willingly purchase that purse." The little woman cried, "La! Ma'am, don't think about that, take it if it pleases you, for every thing in this basket is paid for." The lady was surprized to hear this, and said, "Good woman, what do

you mean, what are you saying?" The little old woman, with tears in her eyes, said, "Why, Madam, I will tell you. The truth is, a young gentleman, whose name is Bacciuolo, and who is desperately in love with you, has sent me. He says, you are the only creature on earth he loves, and that he would willingly do any thing to merit your regard, and that to obey any commands of yours will be the greatest happiness to him. Indeed, I fear he cannot live unless you allow him to speak to you. As for my part, I never saw so genteel a youth in my life." The lady on hearing these things blushed, and turning to the woman, said, "were it not for my honour's sake, old woman, I would expose you to the world, and that would make you repent. Art thou not ashamed, thou good-for-nothing old hag, to come on such an errand to a modest woman, a plague upon thee!"—and so saying, the lady seized hold of a stick which lay behind the door to give her a beating, adding, "if ever thou comest here again, I will beat thee black and blue." Upon which the old woman quickly packed up her wares, and made off as fast as she could waddle, in a great fright, nor did she stop on the way till she got to Signor Bacciuolo.



The Teacher taught.

When Bacciuolo saw her, he eagerly asked how matters had gone with her—"Bad enough," said she, "I never was in such a fright. However, the case is, she will neither see nor hear you; and had I not been pretty quick in making off, I should have had a sound beating. For my part, I will not go near her again, and I advise you to have nothing more to do with her."

Bacciuolo was quite broken-hearted at this intelligence, and went to report it to the professor, and related the whole transaction. "Be not alarmed, Bacciuolo, because the oak does not fall at the first stroke of the axe. There—go past the house this evening, and observe with what sort of an eye she views thee; find out, by the kind of glance she casts upon thee, whether she be angry or no; then

come and tell me." Bacciuolo went forth towards the lady's house. When she saw him, she instantly called her maid, and said to her, "Go after that young man, and tell him to come to speak to me this evening, and not to fail." So the maid went to him, and told him that the Lady Giovanna desired he would come that evening to her, as she wished to speak to him. Bacciuolo was in a strange surprize, but answered that he would most willingly do so; and then immediately returned to the professor, and informed him of what had happened. The professor was a little staggered, for somehow or other a suspicion struck him that it might be his own wife, and he thought to himself, if it should!—> And so it was in fact. "Well," said he, "wilt thou go?"—"Certainly," said Bacciuolo. "Well," said the professor, "when you do go, go straight from here."

"Very well, so I will," said Bacciuolo.

This lady was the wife of the professor, but Bacciuolo did not know that. The professor, however, began to feel uneasy; for, in the winter, he used to sleep at the college to lecture the students late in an evening, and his wife lived alone with her maid. "I would not," said the professor, "that this fellow should learn to make love at my expense—but I will know further."

Evening coming on, Bacciuolo came to him, saying, "Good Sir, I am going."—"Well," said the professor, "speed be with you, but be wise." Bacciuolo said, "leave me alone for that, you have not taught me for nothing," and went away. He had put on a good cuirass, and

provided himself with a stout rapier, and a stiletto in his girdle. When Bacciuolo was gone, the professor followed close at his heels, Bacciuolo little thinking whom he had got behind him. When arrived at the door, he tapped gently, and the lady herself instantly let him in, and the professor saw, to his astonishment, that it really was his wife. "Oh! oh! I see," said he, "the fellow has made his progress at my cost and he began to think of killing him." He went back to the college, bought a sword and a stiletto, returned furiously to the house, fully determined to make Signor Bacciuolo pay for his instructions, and reaching the door, he began to knock loudly. The lady was seated by the fire with Bacciuolo, and hearing the knocking, she immediately apprehended it might be her husband, and therefore concealed her lover under a heap of damp unironed linen which had been bundled up in a comer near the window. She then ran to the door, and demanded who was there. "Open the door, thou wicked woman," cried the professor from without, "and thou wilt soon know it." The lady opened the door, and, seeing him with a sword in his hand, exclaimed, "good heavens! what means this, my dear Sir?"—"Thou well knowest whom thou hast in the house," he said. "Good heavens," cried the lady, "what is it you mean, are you mad? Look over the house," she said, "and if you find any one, I give you leave to execute your threats. How should I think of conducting myself otherwise than I always have done; beware, Sir, lest

the evil spirit take possession of you, and lead you to destruction."

The husband, having got a candle, went looking about all over the house; in the cellar, behind and under all the casks, butts, and indeed in every corner: then ran up stairs like a madman; searched every part 'of the room, but the right one; under the bed; thrust his sword into every square inch of the bedding, yet could he not find any thing. The lady, who stuck close to him with a light in her hand, often repeated to him, "good master! cross yourself, for assuredly the evil spirit is in you, and has tempted you to seek after what does not exist, for if I had the most distant thought of such wickedness, I would be the death of myself. Therefore, I do entreat you not to suffer yourself to be seduced by such wicked thoughts." Upon which the professor, unable to find the object of his search, and hearing what the lady had said, began to think he was mistaken in his suspicions, and so put out the light, and returned to the college.

The lady immediately brought out Bacciuolo from under the clothes, and lighted a large fire; put on it a famous fine capon to boil, and they pledged each other merrily, the lady often saying, "You see, my good little man has not found us out;" and so they cheerfully spent some hours together. In the morning Bacciuolo went to the professor, and said, "Oh, my good sir! I will make you laugh."

"How is that?" said the professor. "Last night, after I had been a short time at the lady's house, in came the husband, and though he hunted every where in search of me, he could not find me, for she had hidden me under a heap of damp linen, that were going to be dried; and the lady talked the poor fellow over so, that he soon went away; when we had a large capon for supper, drank some excellent wine, and had the best fun you can imagine, and I have promised to return again to night."

"Be sure," said the professor, "when you go this evening, to let me know." Bacciuolo answered he would, and left the professor.

The professor meanwhile was in the utmost rage, and actually beside himself—so much so that he was not able to attend at the classes, he was so broken hearted. However, he consoled himself with the idea that he should catch him at night. So he purchased a breast plate, a light armour, and with his cuirass, rapier, and stiletto, cut quite a martial figure. When the time came, Bacciuolo innocently went to the professor, and said, "I am going."

"Well," said the professor, "go, and return to-morrow, and relate to me what may have happened."

"I will," said Bacciuolo, and marched off to the lady's house. The professor put on his armour, and followed Bacciuolo close at his heels, and thought of overtaking him at the door. The lady, who was upon the watch, opened the door quickly, let in her lover, and shut it again like lightning. When the professor reached the house he

began to knock with all his might, making a tremendous noise. The lady in an instant put out the light, and made Bacciuolo slide behind her, opened the door, and clasping her arms on the neck of her husband, whirled him round and gave Bacciuolo an opportunity of slipping out; at the same time crying, "help! help! the man is mad, the man is mad;" still holding the poor gentleman tight round the waist.



The Teacher Taught.

The neighbours, upon hearing this noise, ran out, and seeing the professor thus armed at all points, with his huge breast-plate, cuirass, helmet, long rapier, and stiletto, and the lady crying out, "Hold him, hold him, he is mad; he has cracked his brain with study;" thought it was really

true, and that he had lost his wits. They began to say to him, "what means all this, good Signor? go to bed and rest—do not torment yourself in this way."

"How can I rest," he shouted, "when this wicked woman is harbouring a man in the house? I saw him go in with my own eyes."

"Oh wretched woman that I am," cried the lady, "ask these neighbours, all, whether they have ever witnessed improper conduct in me." They all with one voice answered, both men and women—"Do not think, Signor, so base a thing, for never was a better woman born than this lady—more virtuous or more decorous."

"How!" said the professor, "why I saw the man enter the house, and I am sure he is in it now." In the mean time two of the lady's brothers arrived, and when she saw them, she burst into tears, and said, "my dear brothers! this husband of mine is raving mad, and will have it that I have a man in the house, and wants to be the death of me, and you well know whether I am a woman likely to fall into such abominations." The brothers said to the armed philosopher, who foamed at the mouth with rage, "we marvel much, Sir, that you should dare suspect a sister of ours of such an act, and wonder what can make you dream of such a thing, having lived with her so long."

"I tell you," said the professor, "that there *is* a man in the house, and I have seen him."

"Well!" said the brothers, "let us hunt him out, and if he is found here, we will give her such a lesson as shall

make you full amends." One of the brothers drew the lady aside, and said, "Hast thou in truth really got any one in the house?"

"Alas!" said the lady, "heaven forbid! may I die before I harbour such a thought as no woman of our family was ever guilty of. Art thou not ashamed to put such a question?" Upon which the brother felt quite happy, and the three went up to search. The professor directly made for the damp linen, pulled them about, and stabbed them through and through in every direction, hardly leaving an inch through which he did not stick his sword, and the while taunting and insulting Bacciuolo as if he had actually been under them.



The Teacher taught.

"Well," said the lady, "did I not tell you he was mad? see how he spoils the linen: thou hast not been at the trouble of getting them up—that is very clear." The brothers then began to think he was truly mad, and after seeking every where, and not finding any one, one brother said, "This fellow is certainly mad." The other then said, "Signor, in truth you do an infamous injustice to this sister of ours, in giving her so vile a character." But the professor, who well knew how matters stood, being in a rage, began to quarrel violently with them, and kept his naked sword in his hand. So each of them took a good stick, and being determined to administer a little wholesome correction, they laid them about the poor professor most unmercifully, and when they had nearly broken the sticks on his back, they bound him for a madman, telling every body that he had cracked his brain by intense study, and so they tied him up all night. In the morning they sent for the doctor, who ordered him to be put to bed by a fire, and desired that he should not speak to any one, or any one to him, and that particular attention should be paid to his diet, till he recovered his senses.

The news that the Signor had gone mad soon spread all over Bologna; every body was much concerned. Some said, "I suspected it would be so, for he could not attend the lectures the other day." Others said, "I thought it would be so, I observed him so materially altered of late." The report was universally credited, and many went to see him. Bacciuolo unacquainted with what had taken place,

went in the morning to the college, with the intention of telling the professor of his adventure; but on reaching the place, he was told how the Signor had become mad. Bacciuolo wondered at this, and was very sorry for it, and went to see him with the rest, and being arrived at the house, Bacciuolo began to be staggered, and almost fainted, seeing how things stood; but in order to prevent any one noticing how affected he was, he went in with them, and on reaching the apartment, he saw the Signor all over bruises, and chained to the bed. All the students began to condole with him, and express their sorrow at seeing him in such a state. Bacciuolo's turn coming, he said, "good Signor, I am as much grieved at your situation, as though you were my father; and if I can do any thing to relieve you, I pray you deal with me as if I were your son." Upon which the professor answered, "Bacciuolo, Bacciuolo, I pray thee go in peace, for thou hast learned much at my cost." The lady prevented farther discourse, by saying, "do not mind him, for he has lost his wits, and does not know what he says." Bacciuolo then departed, and came to Paolo, and said, "Brother, Heaven guard thee, for I have learned so much, that nothing remains for me to learn; therefore will I return back to my home as fast as my legs can carry me."

The Unexpected Reply

'Tis now a few years since there were two eminent and worthy lawyers, the one was named Alano, and the other Piero; in fact, there were not in Christendom two greater men than these two, who were invariably in opposition to one another. Alano, however, always came off conqueror, being by much the greatest rhetorician then known, and one whose principles were of a sounder kind than those of Piero, who was something of a heretic, and would often have inflicted a severe blow on religion, had it not ever been defended by Alano, who knocked down all his arguments. Alano determined to go to Rome to visit the holy relics, the pope, and his court: in consequence, taking several servants with him, clothes, and other baggage, he departed for Rome and visited the pope and his court; observed its elegance and grandeur, and wondered much, considering that it ought to be the foundation of Christianity and holy faith, at seeing it so corrupted and full of simony. He was so ashamed of this, he determined to forsake the world and give himself up entirely to the service of his Maker. He therefore departed from Rome with all his servants, and when he came near Saint Chirico of Rosana, he told them to go forward towards the inn, and leave him to himself. When Alano saw them gone forward, he turned towards the mountain and galloped off, and arrived in the evening at a shepherd's cottage. Alano dismounted, and stopped that night with him; the next